

DRAFT/UNAPPROVED MINUTES

WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD MEETING

Tuesday, February 24, 2026 - 6:30 p.m.

Remote and in person at Westminster, VT Town Hall

Selectboard Present: Craig Allen (chair), Real Bazin (vice chair), Jason Perry (clerk), and Stephen Major – Absent: Charles (Chuck) Lawrence

Staff Present: Millie Barry (clerk) and Ben Masure (Road Foreman)

1. **Call to Order:** Craig Allen, Chair of the Board called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Information to access a future meeting using a remote connection, when available can be found on the Town of Westminster website or by contacting the Westminster Town Hall. This meeting was recorded by FACTTV.
2. **Adjustments to Agenda:** None
3. **Acceptance of Minutes:** February 10, 2026 – Real Bazin motioned to accept the minutes of February 10, 2026, Stephen Major seconded, motion carried by voice vote (Perry, Bazin, Allen, Major).
4. **Communications and Public Comments:** None
5. **Unfinished Business (Discussion/Action) –**
 - A. Certification of Road and Bridge Standards – Information included in packet – Stephen Major motioned to adopt Certification of Compliance for Town Road and Bridge Standards and Network Inventory. Real Bazin seconded, motion carried by voice vote (Perry, Bazin, Allen, Major).
6. **New Business: (Discussion/Action) –**
 - A. Road Foreman Report –
 - Ben Masure reported the Town was in good shape with their current supply of salt and sand.
 - As roads begin to warm, the highway department has switched to rubber cutting edges on plows.
 - Road posting signs will be put out soon, dependent on the weather.
 - Highway crew is cutting brush and trees as time allows.
 - F550 has been outfitted with plow frame, central hydraulics and sander.
 - There have been a lot of breakdowns during the winter including Viking equipment and bed chains.
 - Paving is ready to go out to bid for Route 121 including 2” mill, shim and overlay includes adjusting structures in Gageville. There is 200k Class II Paving Grant

to cover partial expenses of project. The Board will approve the project after Town Meeting.

- Mr. Masure noted there had been no crack sealing in several years on Town roads. He noted, Piggery, Back Westminster Road (above Picknell) and added crack sealing is less expensive than chip sealing.
- Several crew members attended a CPR/Stop the Bleed course. There are now two tourniquets in highway trucks in case of an accident.
- Recently received (information included in packet) is the updated Town Road and Bridge Standards dated January 21, 2026. The new version will require approval from the Board.

- B. Bruce Murray – Records request question – Information included in packet – Mr. Allen said Mr. Murray questioned who took the public records information off the Town website. Information from VC3 (Town’s computer support company) was Lou Bordeaux created and managed the Town’s website. The Town Manager removed the public record request information from the website and until he returns to the Town Hall the information cannot be re-instated without signing a contract with a separate website designer/manager. Mr. Allen noted he did not remove the information from the website and did not know why the information was removed from the website without Selectboard approval. This item will be on the selectboard meeting agenda for the March 10, 2026 meeting.

Stephen Major responded to a Bruce Murray email question, stating there were no recent discussions about Hearse Shed as the current arrangement with the contractor was to finish the job except for the roof by January 1, 2026. This had been done. Mr. Allen noted answers to other questions from Mr. Murray were addressed in open meeting and selectboard meeting minutes were public record and posted on the Town website.

- C. Delinquent Tax report: (Information included in packet) – Mr. Allen noted current total delinquent taxes were \$1,203,899.70. He questioned the Board about the delinquent tax report being available as a handout for the Town Meeting or putting the report in the back of the Town Report. Stephen Major noted after February 10, 2026, unpaid taxes for 2025/2026 were delinquent and the information contained in the report was public information. Mr. Major noted the Board had very few tools to collect delinquent taxes. Board members discussed indicating in the report the people that have arranged to pay delinquent amounts.

- D. Town Meeting discussion: Mr. Allen assigned articles for the Select board to present at Town Meeting. The Board discussed article 26 noting they did ***not*** support the article. Reasons noted were:

Town managers manage town employees and know employee roles and responsibilities.

A manager responds to complaints, questions, requests and taxpayers’ concerns on a

daily basis.

Managers had executive authority to respond to everyday questions and complaints.

Town Manager's deal with an entire bid process.

Town Managers are aware of the budget and are able to answer financial/tax questions.

Town Managers have the ability and knowledge to write grants.

Town selectboards with administrators often meet every week to consider and address questions and issues.

Town administrators do not have the authority to respond to a road complaint or a dog issue etc.

Mr. Major said he was aware of some taxpayers' concerns that Westminster's last four managers had departed due to areas of concern. He suggested other members consider this question. Mr. Perry noted he believed Article 26 was a response to a personal attack and the article was to remove a person. The board questioned the accuracy of information contained in public posts distributed by John Ewald regarding Town Managers vs Administrators and current administrative salaries. Mr. Allen noted the Town Hall operated well with a small staff and Westminster could not be compared to Dummerston or other local towns. Other towns had full-time listers, finance people, a treasurer and an assistant clerk. Jason Perry noted a significant difference between an administrator and manager was an administrator was an at will employee not bound by a contract.

The Board discussed Article 19 believing to approve the article was setting a precedent. Also, it was concerning to Board members that the Sojourns article did not state a specific number or amount. The Board will request (for town meeting purposes) the approximate amount of exempt taxes over five years.

The Board discussion regarding Article 20 centered around having a believable presentation/plan to renovate and use the North Westminster Community House as the building was a 'boat anchor' to Westminster taxpayers. Millie Barry noted the last documented record of use was in 2000 when the Windham County Sheriff used the building as an office location. Selectboard minutes noted at that time the Selectboard would cover the cost to bring the building up to code. The Board agreed that public information distributed by Mr. Ewald on the North Westminster Community House was disingenuous, including open house gatherings held and information regarding the VT Fire Marshall.

- E. Executive Session (if needed) – Jason Perry motioned the Board move to executive session for a contractual matter being that premature knowledge would clearly place the Municipality of the Town of Westminster or the public body, a person or persons involved at a substantial disadvantage as outlined in 1 VSA 313. Real Bazin seconded, motion carried by voice vote (Perry, Bazin, Allen, Major).

- 7. Boards, Committees and Commissions:** The next gathering of the Westminster Selectboard will be Saturday, February 28, 2026 – Westminster's Town Meeting.

- 8. **Other Business:** None
- 9. **Date of Next Meeting:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.
The Board moved to executive session at 7:29 p.m.

The Board reconvened regular session at:

The Board adjourned at:

Clerk

Date

Minutes composed by Millie Barry