

DRAFT/UNAPPROVED MINUTES

WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD MEETING

Tuesday, April 28, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.

In person at Westminster Fire Station & in Westminster, VT Town Hall

Selectboard Present: Craig Allen (chair), Real Bazin (vice chair), Jason Perry (clerk), and Stephen Major – (arrival at 6:33 p.m.)

Staff Present: Millie Barry (clerk), Ben Masure (road foreman)

Others Present: Jim Calchera, Lisa Merton, Daniel Sherry, John Grant, Lisa Moir, Sarah Waldo, Tatiana Schreiber and Jane Fitzwilliam

1. **Call to Order:** Craig Allen, chair of the Board, reconvened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Hall from the start time of 5:30 p.m. at the Westminster Fire station.
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 not recorded by FACTTV. It was recorded.
2. **Adjustments to Agenda:** None
3. **Acceptance of Minutes:** April 14, 2026 – Jason Perry moved to accept the minutes of April 14, 2026, Real Bazin seconded the motion for discussion purposes. Mr. Perry requested to amend the minutes under New Business, Paving Bid Result, item E. deleting, **not to exceed \$340,379.00**. The minutes were accepted with the amendment by voice vote 3-0, (Perry, Bazin, Allen).
4. **Communications and Public Comments:** None
5. **Unfinished Business: (Discussion/Action) –**
 - A. Grout Avenue update – Information included in packet - Jason Perry moved to proceed with more design plans and costs from the initial presented plan of 60% to 100% with DuBois and King, Inc. Real Bazin seconded, motion carried by voice vote 4-0 (Perry, Bazin, Allen, Major).
 - B. Delinquent taxes – Information included in packet – Present date delinquent tax total \$1,042,748.62. Craig Allen noted a year ago that about \$189,000.00 had been collected in delinquent taxes. At present time \$318,000.00 has been collected. The interim manager is working with legal counsel regarding a tax sale.
 - C. Davidson Hill – Jason Perry noted he and Ben Masure walked the property finding one of four pins. Mr. Perry noted there was a distinct stone wall including barbed wire and believed the stone wall was a property boundary. The camper in question is clearly on Town owned property. He added DiBernardo Associates had submitted two separate proposals, one to find the corners of the property, another for a complete survey to make the property saleable. Mr. Perry said the cost of either survey option was lower than Westminster’s procurement policy and a specialty service (no bid is necessary). He motioned to authorize the Chair of the Board to sign a contract with Dibernardo Associates to survey of the Town owned Davidson Hill property at a cost not to exceed \$4,000.00. Real Bazin seconded, motion carried by voice vote (Perry, Bazin, Allen, Major). Mr. Allen said he would inquire why a no trespass order from the Sheriff

could not be issued. Also, cost to complete a survey would be researched.

D. Website Discussion – Mr. Allen said he was waiting for more information on the website company used by WNESU (Windham Northeast Supervisory Union).

6. New Business: (Discussion/Action) -

A. Town Forest Forum Report – Report included in packet – Jim Calchera said the summary was the outcome of public input July 31, 2025, facilitated by the Westminster Conservation Commission and attended by about 31 participants. There are postings on the property, no ATVs are allowed and Mr. Calchera believed the ATV trails are being intentionally maintained. Mr. Major noted his belief the Conservation Commission was established specifically to take care of the Town Forest. The Forest consists of between 240 and 250 acres surrendered to the Town at various times, the property is all contiguous, including a Black Gum swamp. Mr. Calchera noted a revised forest management plan should be completed and there is a second Town forest in the vicinity of the Bellows Falls Union High School. Mr. Major said the forest at the high school was managed by the Pinnacle Association. Jason Perry motioned for the Westminster Conservation Commission to be the official steward and primary point of contact for the Town Forest. Stephen Major seconded. Motion carried by voice vote (Perry, Bazin, Allen, Major). Mr. Allen requested a yearly report, and to verify insurance coverage in the case of trail development or other activities.

B. Town Manager report – Information included in packet – Mr. Allen summarized the report.

- An overnight storm on 4-16-26 blew the weathervane off the cupola of the Town Hall. The fire department removed the pieces and stored them at Westminster Fire Station. Real Bazin said there were two places where the weathervane landed that broke slate. At the next department drill the department will assess the slate damage. It is possible to use the Town Hall Capital Reserve Fund to address roof issues, and or weathervane damage. Stephen Major questioned if there was insurance coverage to cover damage? Mr. Bazin questioned if the weathervane was worth repairing.
- A highway employee has given notice. An exit interview was completed. More detail in Road Foreman report.
- There is a concern about the number of town hall keys in circulation. Due to recent turnover and unknown entry, it seems like a good time to replace some locks. The alarm system indicates the front door sensor is inoperable and this should be addressed simultaneously. Mr. Stearns will research cost.
- Lister Jackie Atwood met with Craig Allen and Chip Stearns. The Town has advertised two additional lister positions on the Town website.
- From the report, the previous manager signed the credit card interface contract in October 2025. A Mascoma account was opened to separate credit/debit card activity from the general checking account. Two physical cards readers to simplify in-house processing have not been purchased. Mr. Allen noted Mr. Stearns is researching the cost to complete the process to accept credit cards and for the administrative assistant and town clerk to work on the same system.

In answer to Sarah Waldo's inquiry, Mr. Allen said Chip Stearns is the interim town manager. An interim manager, through a contract with NEMRC (New England Municipal

Resource Center), could make decisions a manager would make. One goal was to assist the listers and complete the work for the grand list and to advertise for a new town manager. Mr. Stearns will be in the town hall one day each week.

C. Road Foreman update –

- Ben Masure thanked Corey Noyes for seven years of service to the town. Mr. Noyes will pursue other employment interests.
- Guard rails on Route 121 are being repaired in anticipation of paving.
- First round of grading is almost done.
- Excavator is at United Construction to repair leaks to the swing and gear box.
- Asphalt patching is currently being done.
- VT Roads will sponsor a class for FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), public assistance before and after the storm, reporting, taking measurement etc. The class will be offered for the south east corner of the state at Westminster Fire station on 6/4/26.

D. Executive Session (if needed) – None

7. **Boards, Committees and Commissions:** Susan Harlow is writing an article for the Westminster Gazette about volunteers and lister, selectboard members needed in Westminster.
8. **Other Business:** John Grant and other property owners abutting property owned by Adam Hubbard addressed the Board. Owners in the vicinity of Upper Hourglass Road, off Westminster West Road, received a letter from Mr. Hubbard about constructing a proposed Verizon cell tower at the top of Hickory Ridge. Mr. Grant said nothing had been proposed as yet. There is an organization, PUC (Public Utility Commission) run by the State of VT that would authorize, with the Town, to approve or disapprove a cell tower in the proposed location. As the property is in a Ridgeline Protection Overlay, Mr. Grant read from the ordinance, concluding almost the entire proposed site is protected under the Ridgeline Protection Overlay ordinance. The group was not arguing against a cell tower, they were arguing about construction in a ridgeline protection overlay. Mr. Bazin believed the concerns should be addressed to the Westminster zoning and development review board. Mr. Allen said he would talk with Alison Bigwood, zoning administrator to be aware of a letter or contact from Verizon or Adam Hubbard.
In another matter, Stephen Major mentioned *The Guilford Guide*. A guide similar to this would be wonderful for Westminster and will be given to Susan Harlow.
9. **Date of Next Meeting** – May 12, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.
10. **Adjournment:** Jason Perry moved to adjourn at 7:33 p.m., Real Bazin seconded, motion to adjourn passed.

Clerk

Date