

## MEETING OF WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD

*Wednesday, March 10, 2021*

### Meeting Held by Zoom Conferencing

**Members Present:** Susan Harlow, Kevin Hughes, Toby Young, Craig Allen and new elected member, Jason Perry

**Others Present:** Nate & Cynthia Stoddard, Russ Lazarek, Cheryl Charles, David Major, Fran Renaud, Millie Barry (Recording Clerk) and FACTV

1. **Call to Order** - Town Manager - The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Russell Hodgkins, Town Manager to re-organize the Select Board. This meeting was held remotely due to Covid19 pandemic and State of VTY recommendations regarding public meetings. Information to access a future meeting is available through FACTV Facebook page, on the Town of Westminster website or by contacting the Westminster town office
2. **Re-organization of the Selectboard** - Mr. Hodgkins asked for nominations for chair of the Select Board -
  - a) Chair -Susan Harlow moved to nominate elect Kevin Hughes as chair of the board, Toby Young seconded. Kevin Hughes accepted the nomination, nomination passed. Mr. Hughes proceeded with re-organization of the board.
  - b) Vice Chair -Toby Young nominated Craig Allen as vice chair of the board, Susan Harlow seconded. Craig Allen accepted the nomination, nomination passed.
  - c) Clerk - Craig Allen nominated Susan Harlow as clerk of the board. Toby Young seconded, Susan Harlow accepted the nomination, nomination passed. Mr. Hughes welcomed Jason Perry as the newly elected Selectboard member.

Mr. Hughes thanked K. Sheldon Beebe for his many years of service on the board and to the Town of Westminster. Mr. Hughes said Mr. Beebe would be missed as he had done a lot for the Town seen and unseen.

Craig Allen thanked Susan Harlow for her service as chair of the board in the past year during the Covid pandemic. Kevin Hughes echoed Mr. Allen's thanks.

3. **Adjustments to Agenda** - None
4. **Acceptance of Minutes** - February 24, 2021 - Susan Harlow motioned to accept the minutes of February 24, 2021, Craig Allen seconded, minutes accepted.
5. **Communications and Public Comments** - None
6. **Unfinished Business** (Discussion/Action) -
  - A. Town Meeting Procedure - rain date - In case of heavy rain on May 15, 2021 Mr. Hodgkins said May 16, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. had been chosen as the rain date for town meeting. The Board agreed with rain date.
  - B. Possible Website Renewal - update - Susan Harlow said what started as social media committee has been changed to communications committee. Russ Lazarek is volunteering and being paid to assist the committee to update the Town website and make it easier to navigate and use. The committee would like to add information including a calendar, history page and to update information on site easier and faster. Work on the website is on-going.
  - C. Collaborative Finance Processing Manual - Third draft - Information included in packet - Mr. Hodgkins said before the next meeting he would have input from Mr. Harlow to further update manual.

**7. New Business (Discussion/Action):**

- A. First Draft of Yearly Appointments of Record - Information included in packet - Mr. Hodgkins updated some officers during the meeting. The Manager will follow up with others to confirm interest. The list will be approved at a future meeting.
- B. Liquor Licenses (2) renewals - Information included in packet for licenses at Allen Brothers, Inc. and Westminster Station Market. The Manager said both businesses have had licenses for many years without problem. Susan Harlow motioned to accept the two licenses. Toby Young seconded, motion carried. Craig Allen abstained from vote,
- C. Town Land off Davidson Hill - update - The Manager said there was some interest in the land. Expenses to date are about \$7,950.00 in clean-up costs to remove/dispose of a mobile home that previously occupied the site. Also, included in expense is back taxes. The parcel is about one acre and very narrow. Through legal counsel the parcel will be auctioned after publication. Mr. Hodgkins requested the board consider a minimum price they would accept for the parcel. The price paid for the land would hopefully cover the past taxes of about \$2,400.00.
- D. Selectboard Appointment - interim five person board for the Westminster School District - information included in packet - David Major said the interim board is the result of the Town of Westminster voting to withdraw from the forced merger with the town schools of Athens and Grafton. Athens and Grafton have approved Westminster withdrawing from the district leaving the need for an interim board for Westminster school. After a lengthy discussion, including the opinion of legal counsel, Susan Harlow moved to appoint 5 Westminster town residents to an interim town school district board to effect the transition and return of operation of school and educational programs to the Town School District. Those appointed are Melissa Carlstrom, Elise Manning, Vanessa Stern, Charles Hutchinson and Cheryl Charles. Craig Allen seconded motion, motion carried. Petitions for one, two and three year positions for a permanent board will be decided at Town Meeting May 15, 2021. The possibility to conduct a paper ballot for the school board positions will be considered. Susan Harlow said the positions were advertised, with the approval of Town counsel, on the Town Facebook page and Front Porch Forum. Mr. Hodgkins stated his belief the State Board of Education takes the summer months off with the possibility there will be no approval/disapproval from the State Board until August regarding Westminster withdrawing from the forced merger. Mr. Major said a presentation to withdraw from the forced merger would be required and Cheryl Charles said she believed it was important to present commitment by a board presenting information to the State Board to recognize the Towns intent to withdraw from the forced merger.

**8. Manager's Report:**

- 1). Recycling Violations - update - Mr. Hodgkins said the Town was cracking down on violations in the program. He noted people are mixing trash and recycling, bags are not placed in lidded containers and business trash, due to expense of disposal, is being mixed with residential trash. Also, tags were being ripped in half with one half tag on a bag. There is a violation tag being placed on individual containers to be sure residents are in compliance. Nate Stoddard asked the board re-consider some of the rules when the disposal contract was renewed. He said using lidded containers was extreme and believed recycling could be easier. Mr. Hodgkins clarified it was permitted to tie two 16 gallon bags together and use one tag as long as 30 pound or 30 gallon limit is met. Tags are required to be wrapped once around the tie or neck of the bag.

2). Pavement Bids due on March 12, 2021 - Quite a few companies have shown interest in paving project.

3). Delinquent Tax Reminder - mailed March 11, 2021 for any resident owing delinquent property tax

- Tax Sale Notice (2<sup>nd</sup> mailing) - requesting action will be mailed March 25,2021
- All two plus year delinquent tax parcels with no attempt to pay or request assistance will be given to legal counsel on April 9, 2021. Residents that have contacted the Town Manager or created a contract or payment schedule will not be included on list.
- Tax Sale- beginning early to mid July 2021.

Kevin Hughes requested updated information on those owing tax and the amounts owed.

4) Selectboard seminar - contact Mr. Hodgkins with interest - Information included in packet did not include date of seminar. Mr. Hodgkins will follow up with board regarding date.

#### **9. Boards and Commissions:**

The Planning Commission is planning a sub-committee meeting Monday, March 15, 2021 to weigh in on their community mapping event. The Commission would like participation by other boards and commissions, including Selectboard.

In another matter, the Board decided to continue meeting the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

#### **10. Other Business:** Cynthia Stoddard questioned if the assistant treasurer had resigned. Mr.

Hodgkins replied this was likely but not official. There will be further information at the next meeting.

#### **11. Date of Next Meeting:** March 24, 2021

#### **12. Adjournment:** Toby Young motioned to adjourn at 7:36 p.m. Susan Harlow seconded, meeting adjourned.

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Clerk

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Date