

WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD MEETING

Wednesday, May 24, 2023 - 6:30 p.m.

In person at Westminster, VT Town Hall/Remote by FACT TV

Selectboard Present: Katrina Hamilton (Chair), Kevin Hughes, Jason Perry, and Dan Crocker (Clerk), - Stephen Major was absent – Dan Crocker arrived at 6:45 p.m.

Staff Present: Chuck Lawrence (Road Foreman), Millie Barry (Recording Clerk)

Others Present: Cole Streeter and Bari Shamas – Remote -Alice Caggiano

1. Call to Order: Katrina Hamilton, Chair of the board called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Information to access a future meeting using a remote connection is available on the Town of Westminster website or by calling the Westminster Town Hall

2. Adjustments to Agenda: None

3. Acceptance of Minutes: Kevin Hughes motioned to accept the minutes of May 10, 2023, Jason Perry seconded; motion carried by voice vote 3-0

4. Communications and Public Comments: None

5. Unfinished Business: (Action/Discussion)

- A. Sheriff/law enforcement discussion – Ms. Hamilton said she was collecting data she hoped to present at the next board meeting. An active police officer employed in another town has approached the Town interested in being employed by the Town of Westminster. Hamilton noted the town's present contract with the Windham County Sheriff ends at the end of June and she did not believe there could be anything finalized for new coverage by the end of the current contract. Jason Perry noted the town had used all available hours in its present contract and believed any patrolling the sheriff is currently doing is covered by a grant. He questioned, when the town calls the sheriff (when there is an actual need), would it be possible to be billed for the hours. Cole Streeter questioned if the sheriff had an obligation to respond to a town without a contract? Hamilton will clarify. Chuck Lawrence said the State Police would not respond to a break in alarm at the town garage as the town has no contract with the State Police. Bari Shamas questioned if there was a gap or period without police coverage or a contract, wouldn't this put the town at risk? Perry believed there should not be a gap. Hamilton said there would be options for a back-up plan if the town decided to employ the officer. If the officer were to take a patrol job with the town, he would give two weeks' notice at his present job. To put in place paperwork, legal matters, equipment

and other details would take most of the time. Kevin Hughes said the board would make every effort to find a solution, there were no guarantees there would not be a deficit. He said due to the history and problems of the town's present contract over the past four years, the board was not able to make guarantees. This item will be tabled to the next meeting.

B. 5-Year Capital Plan Discussion – Hamilton said the board discussed the post office at the last meeting. Information from Alison Bigwood was the basement was dry and in good shape. The front has numerous rotting areas causing the U in USPS to fall. Also reported was moisture on the roof from a leak that could be condensation. She did not know if there was a budget line item for the post office. Hughes noted when there was a full board quorum, the post office would be discussed again. This item was tabled to the next meeting.

Perry suggested looking next at the North Westminster Community House. Hamilton will post a notice if the next meeting is to be held at the North Westminster Community House.

6. New Business: (Action/Discussion) -

A. Cemetery Deed - Hughes motioned to approve a quit claim deed for \$360.00 for Rose Emma and Terry L. Sheperd, two burials, section E, row 3, graves 134 and 135 in the Westminster New Cemetery. Perry seconded, motion passed by 4-0 voice vote.

B. Road Foreman Report – Lawrence said the new saw is working well with the buffalo blower behind it.

The crew has been filling potholes in asphalt and assessing black top to put together a comprehensive plan to decide the next area to be paved. He said per the SOV (State of Vermont) the difference in maintenance costs for asphalt versus dirt is dirt is cheaper to maintain. Lawrence said this was basic maintenance not including chloride and ACT 65. He believed it was cheaper to maintain asphalt over the course of the life of the asphalt. He clarified a previous statement, noting in the future there would be no sand or gravel. If the major heavier traveled dirt roads were paved, over time with recycled material, there would be less aggregate used to maintain the road.

Several people have looked at the Westminster West loader with an interest in buying.

He is gathering information for replacement of truck L1, due to be traded next year.

The speed cart is set at the top of Westminster village hill. Perry confirmed the board is pursuing purchase of a speed sign/cart.

Lawrence said he has submitted an ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) application for a used slide in hot box. Equipment is to put asphalt in to keep it hot and use longer, or cold patch in the winter with the ability to heat. The unit new is \$20,000.00, used the cost is \$7,000.00.

He requested permission to use town equipment (excavator) for about two hours to dig the asphalt of the parking lot of the Westminster Institute before it is repaved. Also, to assist (if needed) with replacing a water line for the Westminster Fire House. Lawrence said according to the town bylaws, the road foreman and town manager could agree to use of equipment.

C. Executive Session – None

7. Boards, Committees and Commissions:

A. Planning Commission - Bari Shamas stated the Planning Commission received a four-month extension for the municipal planning grant awarded last March. The board has had difficulty maintaining momentum/focus due to departures on the board. They have the leeway to re-affirm the last town plan until the new town plan is affirmed.

B. Town Manager Search – Hamilton said MRI will be collecting resumes until June 12. At present there are a ‘handful’ of resumes they will screen. Hamilton said a candidate should apply for the town manager position through MRI as the town had a contract with the company.

8. Other Business:

The Windham Regional Commission is hosting a workshop on prolonged power outages for emergency service personnel, emergency management directors and selectboard members on June 28, 2023 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Hamilton, Hughes and Pete Smith will attend the workshop.

Hughes said he understood there were 55 houses (mostly in the historic district), including the town hall, fire station and Institute on the Westminster aqueduct. He questioned Cole Streeter regarding public and fire safety as the aqueduct now exists. Streeter said the fire station did not get water from the aqueduct for fighting fires as they had their own well. It was not crucial for emergency services. Hughes said he understood there was no variance or enough land for a well at the town hall. Streeter said the fire station had the capability to put water back into the aqueduct system from their well if there was an emergency. Perry suggested researching if a well could be drilled in the vicinity of the town hall.

9. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 14, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

Adjournment: Kevin Hughes motioned to adjourn at 7:30 p.m., Jason Perry seconded, meeting adjourned.

Clerk

Date