

WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD MEETING

Wednesday, September 13, 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, Dan Crocker (clerk), Stephen Major was absent.

Staff Present: Chuck (Charles) Lawrence, (Road Foreman) Millie Barry (Recording Clerk), John Ewald (Lister),

Others Present: Peggy O'Toole, Larry Slason, Esq. (legal counsel), 1 person representing FACT TV, Sarah Waldo, Susan Harlow, Linda Fawcett, Lou Blanchard and remote – Oliver Brody

1. Call to Order: Katrina Hamilton 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 contacting the Westminster Town Hall

2. Adjustments to Agenda: None

3. Acceptance of Minutes: August 23, 2023 – Dan Crocker motioned to accept the minutes of August 23, 2023 as printed, Kevin Hughes seconded; motion carried 4-0 by voice vote.

August 30, 2023 – Special Meeting – fuel bids – Crocker motioned to accept the minutes of August 30, 2023 as printed, Hughes seconded; motion carried by 3-0 voice vote with one abstention.

September 8, 2023 – Special Meeting – town manager hiring committee - Hughes motioned to accept the minutes, Crocker seconded; motion carried by 3-0 voice vote with one abstention.

4. Communications and Public Comments: None

5. Unfinished Business – Discussion/Action –

A. Website – Sarah Waldo addressed the board questioning if there were plans to seek a person to design a new website. Waldo believed any town committee should be able to access their section on the website. In her opinion, the website was not easy to navigate, using as an example the Zoom information to access selectboard meetings. Waldo added someone might use the prior information but would rather start fresh. Susan Harlow addressed the board saying in past years there were dollars allocated for a new website and believed she had a link to access the prior design. Jason Perry said he would support a company doing the work as opposed to a person designing websites part time.

B. Aqueduct Discussion – Lou Blanchard said he had been the operator of the aqueduct for 12 years; he was licensed to do the work; it was a full-time job and hoped to get the system set up

for someone else to operate for many years in the future. He continued; it might be possible for the State of VT to forgive a loan for one half the cost of an upgrade to the system to make it 99 percent automated and a full-time operator would not be needed. Linda Fawcett said she does the bookkeeping for the system and would like someone else to be responsible for the work. Hughes confirmed there were 52 private homeowners on the system and believed the remainder of the town taxpayers might have an objection to providing funds for the water system even though the fire department, Westminster Institute, Town Hall, and post office were on the system. He asked for information for the board regarding the required policy changes from the State of Vermont, the timeline to make the changes and the cost to bring the aqueduct up to the State code. He questioned the request for ARPA funds and the cost to disable the system and migrate the 52 houses away from the system if upgrading was not possible. Mr. Blanchard said currently the system does not have electricity and low pressure in the system was a concern. Fawcett noted in the past the State had 'grandfathered' many items as the system was installed in the 1790s, it was small, and had worked well for many years. Blanchard said all water mains had been replaced in the 1960s, adding there was no lead pipe present.

C. Grants for North Westminster Community House and Westminster West Town Hall – Peggy O'Toole said grants were available through the Windham Regional Commission for funding for Municipal Energy Resilience Program, a VT program for heating systems. She was willing to pursue the grants with permission from the selectboard. The Board agreed O'Toole could pursue the funding.

John Ewald noted there was a grant (\$1,000.00 to \$3,000.) available through Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) planning and design for the North Westminster Community House. Paperwork is required by 9/30/2023 and the work is required to be facilitated through the selectboard. Dan Crocker motioned to give the paperwork to the interim town manager to complete and the board will discuss the grant at the 9/27/2023 meeting. Hughes seconded; motion carried 4-0

In another matter: Kevin Hughes motioned to move/adjust A. B. C. D. E. under New Business on the agenda number 6. To move the road foreman's report, D. to B., executive session from E. to C., Propane Tank B. to D. and FACT TV from C. to E. Crocker seconded; motion carried by 4-0 vote.

6. New Business – Discussion/Action

A. Town Plan Readoption of Old Plan (temporary) – Information included in packet - Hamilton said the Planning Commission will not have the new town plan ready on the date it is required to be approved. Information from Mike McConnell (Windham Regional Commission) working with the planning commission, is the current old plan will require updates before the Board can

approve it. Item to be tabled until there is more information.

B. Road Foreman's Report – Chuck Lawrence said mowing and work on ditches and culvert replacement continued. The grader is in Springfield for repairs. On August 10th five inches of rain was received in the McKinnon Road area where a 4-foot culvert was not large enough to take all the water. There was minor damage from the culvert failure on Pine Banks, Piggery, Daigle and Sauve Roads. The culvert has since been repaired. Lawrence has contacted ANR (Agency of Natural Resources) to assess some other culverts in town. Also, Lawrence said he was working on a plan to put money aside and or budget for future paving asking Springfield Paving and Bazin Brothers for costs of two miles of asphalt to be shimmed and paved per year. There are 20 miles of asphalt in Westminster. The shared roller will be returned from Rockingham next week and grading and rolling dirt roads will begin soon. The heaters were installed at the town garage by Decamp Plumbing and Heating, Decamp will test the heaters when the propane tanks are installed.

C. Executive Session – (town manager interviews) – Kevin Hughes motioned to go into executive session at 7:07 p.m. Jason Perry seconded; motion carried by 4-0 voice vote. Hughes motioned to reconvene regular session at 8:21 p.m., Perry seconded, motion carried by 4-0 voice vote. No action was taken.

D. Propane Tanks – Lawrence is gathering information about purchasing propane tanks for the highway garage per Dan Crocker's request. This item is tabled to the next meeting.

E. FACT TV Donation Request – information included in packet – The Board discussed hiring FACT TV to attend selectboard meetings at a cost of \$50.00 per meeting agreeing unanimously to have FACT TV attend and perform the service to record meetings. FACT TV also asked the selectboard if they would be willing to make a charitable contribution of \$2,500.00 toward the enhancement of their web services. Perry asked if FACT TV should be added to the town report each year. Kevin Hughes asked if a smaller donation was acceptable and where this funding would come from in the budget. FACT TV will be contacted to clarify if this is a one-time request.

7. Boards, Committees and Commissions: None

8. Other Business: Dan Crocker asked about the estimates for the roof on the town hall. Hamilton reported that the town manager had contacted other businesses to get estimates on repairs, but companies had not responded yet or did not have time to come out and estimate the work. As this matter would be a specific agenda item to vote it will be on the agenda for

the next meeting.

Mr. Crocker also asked about the safe in the town clerk's office. As this matter will require an engineer to make recommendations, Crocker will find an engineer to look at the issues with the safe.

9. Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday, September 27, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

10. Adjournment – Kevin Hughes motioned to adjourn at 8:50 p.m., Dan Crocker seconded motion carried by 4-0 voice vote, meeting adjourned.

Clerk

Date

Minutes composed by Millie Barry 9/17/2023