

WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD MEETING

Wednesday, March 13, 2024 – 6:30 p.m.

Westminster, VT Town Hall

Selectboard Present: Katrina Hamilton (chair), Dan Crocker (clerk), Stephen Major (vice chair), Real Bazin (newly elected member), and Jason Perry

Staff Present: Charles (Chuck) Lawrence (road foreman), Lou Bordeaux (town manager) and Millie Barry (clerk)

Others Present: Lise Sparrow, Lachlan Francis and 1 person from FACT TV

- 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 (when available) is on the Town of Westminster website or by contacting the Westminster Town Hall.
- 2. Selectboard Reorganization:** Jason Perry motioned to appoint Dan Crocker selectboard chair, Real Bazin seconded; motion carried by 5-0 voice vote. Real Bazin motioned to nominate Jason Perry as vice chair, Dan Crocker seconded; motion carried by 5-0 voice vote. Jason Perry motioned to elect Real Bazin clerk of the selectboard, Katrina Hamilton seconded; motion carried by 5-0 voice vote.

In another matter – Real Bazin questioned if the board meetings could be changed to a day other than Wednesday. Jason motioned to change the day of the selectboard meeting to the second and fourth Tuesday of the month. Real Bazin seconded; motion carried by 5-0 voice vote. This change will be effective at the next meeting, making the meeting date March 26, 2024.

- 3. Adjustments to Agenda:** Katrina Hamilton noted to add Pine Banks culvert under Other Business. Stephen Major questioned the process of the Town borrowing money and confirmed the Town did not have immediate plans to borrow money.
- 4. Acceptance of Minutes:** February 28, 2024 – Jason Perry motioned to accept the minutes of February 28, 2024 as printed, Katrina Hamilton seconded; motion carried by 4-0 voice vote. New member, Real Bazin abstained from vote.
- 5. Communications and Public Comments:** Lise Sparrow thanked the Board for their assistance with the Declaration of Inclusion for the Town of Westminster. She said her understanding was the next step in the process was to form a diversity and

inclusion committee seeking input from the board regarding the committee. Stephen Major noted Ms. Sparrow could provide a list of those interested in being on a committee if the Board decided to establish a committee. He added, establishing a committee would be a warned item on the Board agenda as an action item. Jason Perry questioned the purpose of a committee, what would committee members do? This item was tabled and will be on a Board agenda in April.

6. Unfinished Business (Discussion/Action)

- A. Appointments: Planning Commission, Windham Regional Commission and DV Fiber – Information included in packet – Jason Perry moved to appoint Lachlan Francis, Cassandra James, Matt Conklin and Pavel Pepeliaev to the Planning Commission, Katrina Hamilton seconded; motion carried by 5-0 voice vote. Windham Regional Commission: Lou Bordeaux will post the job description, desirable qualifications, responsibilities, and time requirements for the Commission on the Town website seeking two people to be appointed to the Commission. The item was tabled to another meeting. DV Fiber: Mr. Bordeaux will post information regarding DVFiber seeking one representative for the Town.

7. New Business: (Discussion/Action) –

- A. Conflict of Interest policy – Katrina Hamilton motioned to readopt the Conflict of Interest policy as written noting no changes have been made. Jason Perry seconded; Stephen Major motioned to table the motion to readopt the policy to further consider and thoroughly read the policy. There was no second to Mr. Major's motion. Mr. Major noted his belief the present policy should be considered in detail due to possible conflicts of interest in a small town. Katrina Hamilton said the VT League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) had approved the current policy. The policy was approved by 4-1 vote, Stephen Major voted nay.
- B. Highway Department resignation – Katrina Hamilton motioned to accept Jason Benson's (highway employee) resignation, Real Bazin seconded; motion carried by 5-0 voice vote.
- C. Highway Truck approval/payment – Dan Crocker noted the town accountant said the equipment fund does not have enough money to fully pay for the new dump truck the town recently took possession of. The final payment of the truck that was purchased in 2021 left the fund in arrears. Mr. Crocker said research of meeting minutes found no vote by the selectboard to purchase the truck. Lou Bordeaux said information from Chip Stearns, was at the beginning of the fiscal year, the Town was about \$38,758.74 short. After the December 2023 loan payment of \$44,304.29, the current balance was \$146,936.97. Katrina Hamilton explained, previously the Board had not budgeted for a payment of \$44,304.29 in

December that was paid out of the Transfer to Equipment fund. Jason Perry suggested finding the monies in the highway budget and possibly not buying as much sand or gravel in the coming year. Mr. Lawrence said he would review the highway budget to determine the amount of money spent on sand, salt and gravel and the amount of remaining supply. Jason Perry motioned to approve the purchase of the 2024 Western Star truck from Advantage Freightliner with an unpaid balance of \$185,485.00 and to ask the highway department and Town Hall employees to find where approximately \$44,000.00 shortfall would come from in the highway budget. Katrina Hamilton seconded; motion carried by 5-0 voice vote.

- D. Highway requisition for new loader. Information included in packet – Chuck Lawrence said his recommendation was the CASE loader due to the lower cost and equipment options. Jason Perry suggested, in the future, a formal bid process, RFP (request for proposal) to include the equipment specifications be submitted. Real Bazin noted the hours on loader 2 as 8,500, Mr. Lawrence believed there were about 3,500 hours on loader 1. Mr. Bazin said in 24 years loader 2 was used 384 hours per year and loader 1 was used 269 hours per year. He asked if the Town really needed 2 loaders. Mr. Lawrence said sand/stone was hauled out of Westminster West and one loader was there to save time. Mr. Lawrence asked, before he did more work on pricing, the Board communicate with him if the plan was to deviate from the equipment replacement schedule. The Board discussed current problems with loader 2, the option of ‘running it into the ground’ and possible replacement at another time. Stephen Major motioned to send an RFP to purchase and replace loader 2. Jason Perry seconded; Real Bazin suggested adding to the RFP, “the right to refuse the proposal” and Jason Perry said adding to the RFP “the quoted price needs to be good for a certain number of days”. The motion passed by 5-0 voice vote.
- E. Public Records Request process – Information included in packet – Mr. Bordeaux said due to the number of requests received for public records, a form was created, and the form was approved by Larry Slason (legal counsel). Mr. Bordeaux said the Town was not trying to eliminate requests but to standardize the process. He noted by Vermont State Statue, any request requiring research beyond 30 minutes could be billed for. The form will be available on the Town website. Jason Perry motioned to approve the public record request form as presented; Katrina Hamilton seconded; motion carried by 5-0 voice vote.
- F. Town Hall painting bid – Mr. Bordeaux said one bid was received and the contractor attended the required mandatory meeting. The base bid was \$49,500.00. Clapboard replacement, due to rot and painting the cupola made the total bid \$66,000.00. Jason Perry motioned to approve the Town Hall painting bid from Stebbins Spectacular Painting for the base price of \$49,500.00,

to include prep work/painting on the cupola at a cost of \$14,500.00 and replacement/paint of rotten clapboards at approximately \$2,000.00 for a total of \$66,000.00, Katrina Hamilton seconded, motion carried by 5-0 voice vote. The funds will come from the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act), the building will be painted white.

G. Road Foreman's Report –

- Spring grading has begun where grading is possible.
- The road crew anticipates spring cleanup at the Town Hall and Institute parking area in the next week.
- Paving work should be ready to go out to bid within the next week.
- Ditching on Daigle Road and ACT 64 work should be done in the next week.
- Mr. Lawrence said the highway department would be looking for one new employee.

Jason Perry motioned to approve the road foreman's report as presented, Katrina Hamilton seconded; motion carried by 5-0 voice vote.

H. Town Manager's Report –

- Mr. Bordeaux said he believed the records request form would standardize the records request process and there would be a paper trail for all requests and a public record of requests.
- Personnel Policy – An electronic version dated 2021 was not voted on by the Board for approval. When he has reviewed the policy, it will come before the Board at a meeting in the future for approval. Katrina Hamilton requested the policy be approved by VLCT human resources services.
- There was a meeting with Attorney Slason on March 12, 2024 to discuss a variety of matters.
- Cemetery Wall RFP – An RFP went out to ten contractors February 29, 2024. There will be a site meeting on Monday, March 18, 2024 at 11:00 a.m.

Jason Perry motioned to approve the Manager's report as presented, Katrina Hamilton seconded; motion carried by 5-0 voice vote.

I. Executive Session – None

8. Boards, Committees and Commissions: None

9. Other Business: Pine Banks Road culvert – Information included in packet – Dan Crocker noted the lowest bid was Adams Trucking and Excavating. Katrina Hamilton

motioned to award the bid for the Pine Banks Road box culvert to Adams Trucking and Excavating for a price not to exceed \$594,781.00, Jason Perry seconded; motioned carried by 4-0 voice vote. Real Bazin abstained from vote.

In another matter: Beavers Among Us – Information included in packet – Katrina Hamilton said information from Kathy Kingston was there would be a community panel discussion at the Westminster West Congregational Church Sunday, March 24, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. The panel will include include Chuck Lawrence, Denise Burchsted, River Scientist, Skip Lisle, Biologist/Beaver Deceivers, LLC, and Patti Smith, Bonnyvale Environmental Education center Naturalist.

10. Date of Next Meeting: – Tuesday, March 26, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

11. Adjournment: Jason Perry motioned to adjourn at 8:12 p.m., Katrina Hamilton seconded; meeting adjourned.

Clerk

Date

Minutes composed by Millie Barry 3/15/2024