

WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD MEETING

Tuesday, May 28, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

In person at Westminster, VT Town Hall and remote by FACT TV

Selectboard Present: Dan Crocker (chair), Jason Perry (vice Chair), Real Bazin (clerk) and Katrina Hamilton – Stephen Major was absent.

Staff Present: Chuck Lawrence (road foreman) and Millie Barry (clerk)

Others Present: 1 person from FACT TV

1. Call to Order: Dan Crocker, Chair of the Board 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. Adjustments to Agenda: None

3. Acceptance of Minutes: May 14, 2024 – Jason Perry motioned to accept the minutes of May 14, 2024 as printed, Katrina Hamilton seconded, motion carried with 3 affirmative votes.

Corrections noted by clerk: The day of the meeting was Tuesday, May 14, 2024 not as written, Wednesday.

Note: Dan Crocker said from this meeting forward, while he was chair of the Board he would vote only in the case of a tie vote.

4. Communications and Public Comments: None

5. Unfinished Business:

A. Kissell Hill Water: Dan Crocker noted the Bellows Falls Village Meeting article was changed/amended and approved for all members of the water district to pay the expenses for improvements to the Kissell Hill water system, (not just Kissell Hill residents). Mr. Crocker suggested the situation be monitored.

B. John Ewald: North Westminster Community House – Information included in packet - Mr. Ewald said a grant was received to take measurements of the building to assess parking and questioned if the Board wanted to continue work to get the building back to usable shape. He continued, the fire marshal provided a list for basic use, some items are a handicap bathroom, handicap ramp, close the downstairs area, ceiling repairs due to water damage before the roof was replaced, sheet rock in the stage area, removal of the stage curtain and installing exit signs for the building. An ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) proposal was submitted but not reviewed as he believed the ARPA committee disbanded. His estimate was about \$50,000.00 to complete work recommended by the fire marshal with much of the work offset by volunteers. There were about 10 volunteers, (Friends of the North Westminster Community House) interested in the project. In answer to Real Bazin's question, there were no actual contractor estimates of work required. Mr. Bazin said an actual estimate was needed as costs could be two times Mr. Ewald's estimate. Dan Crocker expressed his concern regarding parking and the cost to establish parking. Jason Perry suggested an engineer assess the possibility of parking and when parking was established,

feasibility of use. After reading from past Board minutes, Mr. Perry believed the decision to keep the building or to spend dollars on the building was a Town decision. Mr. Crocker suggested the Friends of the North Westminster Community House make some progress with initial groundwork to present to the voters at Town Meeting. Jason Perry noted the Board would write a letter of support if needed, for the project to proceed with those people interested.

6. New Business: (Discussion/Action) –

- A.** John Ewald Lists salaries - Mr. Ewald noted he was not paid for his services as a lister and believed there were two listers doing a really good job that were underpaid. After checking with the Towns of Putney and Dummerston he said their budgets were more than Westminster's and Westminster had spent about 50% of the present budget. His estimate was about \$1,500.00 more yearly to increase the lister wage to \$25.00 per hour. Jason Perry's said, due to an increasing workload, the Town might want to look at appointed positions of 1 full time and one part time person opposed to 3 elected people and the best time to request a raise was during the budget process. He questioned, as the positions were elected, if the salary of an elected position could be changed. Real Bazin stated all employees would receive a 3.2% raise as of July 1, 2024. Katrina Hamilton noted an increase could be budgeted for 2026. Mr. Perry motioned to table lister salaries until Lou Bordeaux was available. Katrina Hamilton seconded; motion carried with 3 affirmative voice votes. Mr. Perry added he wasn't saying, 'no', just there were questions to be answered. Mr. Ewald said the listers were not asked for a budget and there was an item in the budget for a lister clerk of \$21,000.00 questioning who this person was. This item will be on an agenda for a future board meeting.
- B.** Results of Front-end loader bid opening – Information included in packet – After discussion regarding options on specific models and standard options vs options to purchase, service etc. Real Bazin motioned to not accept any bids for a front-end loader. Jason Perry seconded. Ms. Hamilton said there was an equipment replacement schedule guideline and questioned when the loader would be replaced. Real Bazin said the loader should be replaced in 2027. Motion carried with 2 yes voice votes and 1 no voice vote.
- C.** Results of Cab and Chassis Bid Opening – Information included in packet - Dan Crocker noted there were no dollars stated in bids for a trade of the Dodge RAM 5500 as this number would be provided at time of sale. He questioned age, miles, and shape of present vehicle. Mr. Lawrence did not have exact information, he recently replaced one wheel bearing and noted the truck was in poor condition. Real Bazin stated as there were currently five highway crew members, was there a need for 7 trucks? Jason Perry motioned to table the item pending more information from the Town Manager. Real Bazin seconded; motion carried by 3 affirmative voice votes.
- D.** Results of Body and Hydraulic System Bid Opening – Information included in packet - Jason Perry motioned to table the item pending more information from the Town Manager. Real Bazin seconded. In answer to Mr. Bazin's question regarding the

absence of an 'Osgood' bid, Mr. Lawrence said he submitted to Osgood and no bid was returned. Motion passed with 3 affirmative voice votes.

- E. Review and Discussion of Noise Ordinance – Information included in packet - Mr. Crocker noted the current noise ordinance dated 2005 needs to be re-written, clarified and updated. Jason Perry motioned the Town Manager review the noise ordinance, revise the ordinance, and submit to legal counsel to approve.
- F. Town Manager's Report – information included in packet – as the Town Manager was absent, there was no formal report.
- G. Road Foreman's Report –
 - Kurn Hattin Road was filled and paved, Heights Road was shimmed anticipating chipseal, not yet scheduled.
 - Green Mountain Power would like to put power across Heights Road to install charging stations at Green Mountain Power. Jason Perry suggested they line bore (no cutting or paving required) as they need 3 phase power. For complete disclosure purposes, Mr. Perry said he was asked to do the work and did not have time. Mr. Lawrence said if they could not line bore and black top was cut, the patch be filled and blended before chipseal was done.
 - Bid on paving was \$187,766.00, actual cost was \$183,152.00.
 - Mr. Lawrence wrote a Structures Grant to the SOV (State of VT) for engineering the bank in vicinity of Pearl Street and Route 121 intersection. He has received an email the project has been recommended to the SOV for approval.
 - Mr. Lawrence will attend an upcoming meeting on June 6 in Stratton, VT regarding FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) monies currently available to learn about FEMA mitigation, documenting problems for future reimbursement etc.
 - Last week the road crew worked on cemeteries, mostly concentrated in Westminster West. Mr. Lawrence said grave sites were filled, brush cut, grass/weeds whacked, stones fixed, (counted were 365 broken stones requiring major repair), and mowing. One entire road within the cemetery required reclaiming. Dan Crocker confirmed the WW cemetery was in very bad shape. Katrina Hamilton noted she believed the Hillside cemetery mowing contract has expired, recommending mowing be addressed soon. Ms. Hamilton, (a member of the cemetery commission) suggested the cemetery commission and cemeteries be put on a future Selectboard agenda inviting the Commissioner, Chris Potter. Jason Perry said there was money available to repair/clean stones. Mr. Lawrence suggested each cemetery be bid on separately as opposed to the requirement of bidding on all cemeteries and the Town Hall.
 - A crew member graded Sand Hill that is learning how to run the grader. As the crew is shorthanded, there was not time to go back over Sand Hill to

regrade.

- Kissell Hill – Grant Street – Mr. Lawrence said he and the Town Manager met with Mr. Porter and Green Mountain Power has agreed to remove several trees in the power line. Recycled asphalt will be used to fill the problem area and Mr. Porter has agreed to do something similar in his parking area to match the Town repair.

H. Executive Session (if needed) -None

7. **Boards Committees and Commissions:** None

8. **Other Business:** Jason Perry motioned to approve in the New Westminster Cemetery one burial plot in Section E row 4, grave 152 for the sum of \$310.00 to Dawn Neathawk. Katrina Hamilton seconded, motioned carried with 3 affirmative votes.

9. **Executive Session:** None

10. **Date of Next Meeting:** Tuesday, June 11, 2024

11. **Adjournment:** Real Bazin motioned to adjourn at 7:25 p.m., Katrina Hamilton seconded, meeting adjourned by 3 affirmative voice votes.

Clerk

Date

Minutes composed by Millie Barry 5/29/2024