

WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 24, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

In person at Westminster, VT Town Hall

Selectboard Present: Dan Crocker (Chair), Jason Perry (Vice Chair), Real Bazin (Clerk), Katrina Hamilton and Stephen Major.

Staff Present: Lou Bordeaux (Town Manager) and Chuck Lawrence (Road Foreman)

Others Present: Ruth Grandy, Karen Blanchard, Cheryl Charles, Andrew Haas (WNESU Superintendent), Lonnie Lisai, Jessie Haas and Michael Daley

1. **Call to Order:** Dan Crocker called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. He said that FACT-TV wasn't present so there wouldn't be video coverage of the meeting.
2. **Adjustments to Agenda:** adding two items from the Town Clerk as Other Business.
3. **Acceptance of Minutes:** Real Bazin motioned to accept the minutes of August 27, 2024; Jason Perry seconded; motion passed unanimously.
4. **Communications and Public Comments:** None
5. **Unfinished Business:** none
6. **New Business:**
 - A. Cheryl Charles, WCS School Board Chair and Andrew Haas, Superintendent of Schools: Ms. Charles opened the discussion saying that the Westminster Center School student population was projected to be 144 students in K-6, however once school opened, the actual number of students was only 125. Superintendent Haas stated that 13 families moved out of town and there appeared to be difficulties in families finding suitable housing in Westminster. Ms. Charles proposed forming a committee to explore affordable housing in town. She suggested land near the high school as a prime area, if possible. Jason Perry said that some of the Town's Zoning Bylaws are restrictive and inhibit housing growth in town. Mr. Perry motioned to have the Town Manager contact Town Counsel for advice on modification of zoning bylaws. Katrina seconded the motion for discussion, at which time, Mr. Bazin suggested getting the Windham Regional Commission involved in the discussion. Perry's motion passed unanimously.
 - B. Lonnie Lisai – Revolutionary War re-enactment: Mr. Lisai was present to invite the Selectboard to a Revolutionary War re-enactment on Saturday October 12th at 1:00pm. He mentioned past events that drew several regional chapters to Westminster. He added that it's a great educational opportunity for children and they are already giving thought to the 250th anniversary in 2026.
 - C. Revolutionary War era cemetery stones cleaning – Gretchen Nichol from the Vermont Old Cemetery Association offered her service to the Town for the cleaning of Patriots of the American Revolution grave markers. Tom Giffin, president of the Vermont Old Cemetery Association, suggested getting written permission from the Selectboard. Jason Perry motioned to allow Ms. Nichol to proceed with the cleaning. Mr. Bazin seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The Selectboard members then signed a letter granting permission for the project.

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- D. Hearse Shed condition and bid: Only one bid was received for repair of the Hearse Shed at the Westminster West cemetery. That bid was from Tim Lillis, Builder who bid a range of \$34,400 to \$37,400. The project, based on a prior estimate, was to be funded by \$20,000 in ARPA funds. Following a brief discussion, Mr. Bazin suggested that the Town may be able to put the \$20,000 of work into the structure now with the remainder to possibly be voted on at next year's Town Meeting. Dr. Major motioned to approve spending the \$20,000 in ARPA funding now and ask for the remaining amount on the warning for Town Meeting. Mr. Bazin seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.
 - E. Town Manager's Report – The Town Manager reported that the radar speed signs have been partially received, with the remainder scheduled for delivery on September 25th. He attended a virtual VLCT webinar on Municipal Budgeting. Dr. Major brought up the concerns of the Board of Listers on the FY25 budget. Mr. Perry mentioned that the time is right to explore making elected positions into appointed ones. This would require some planning and a Town Meeting vote. The manager then reported on a reorganization project in his office and monitoring the progress of the box culvert project on Pine Banks Road. Mr. Bazin asked about the vacant Emergency Management Director position. The manager replied that although it appears to be vacant, a formal resignation was never received.
 - F. Road Foreman's Report – Mr. Lawrence reported that ditching work on West Road has been completed. Both the roadside mower and excavator have been working in areas around town. Culverts have been replaced on Davidson Hill and River Road, with plans to do further culvert work in Westminster West and on Kurn Hattin Road. Back Westminster Road has several headwalls in need of repair. Pine Banks Road box culvert is moving along ahead of schedule. He added that Bob Hadley has had to resign his part time position. Finally, Mr. Lawrence announced that he was resigning his position as Road Foreman effective October 6, 2024.
 - G. Executive Session: not needed
- 7. Boards, Committees and Commissions:** none
 - 8. Other Business:** Mr. Perry mentioned the Community Festival on September 14th. It was a great day, with the only complaint being that the food ran out too soon!
 - 9. Executive Session:** none
 - 10. Date of Next Meeting:** Tuesday, October 8, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.
 - 11. Adjournment:** Ms. Hamilton motioned to adjourn at 7:42pm. Mr. Bazin seconded and the meeting adjourned.

Clerk

Date

Minutes drafted by Louis Bordeaux