

WESTFIELD SELECTBOARD BUDGET MEETING MINUTES
January 8, 2020 – 8 a.m. - Town Office

Town Officials Present: Selectboard members: Jacques Couture (Co-Chair) and Anne Lazor; Treasurer, Mary Lou Jacobs; Town Clerk, LaDonna Dunn; Road Commissioner; Eric Kennison (for a portion of the meeting); and Lister, Danny Young (for a portion of the meeting)

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Jacques called the meeting to order at 8:15 a.m.
2. **Public Comment – 5 Minutes:** None.
3. **Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda:** There were no changes to the agenda.
4. **Approve Minutes of the 12-2-19 Selectboard Meeting:** Following a motion by Anne and second by Jacques, the minutes were approved with one change.

A. Business from the Minutes: None

5. **Treasurer's Report – Mary Lou Jacobs, Treasurer:**

A. Approve Warrants for Expenditures Dated: 12/4/19 (bills \$12,720.40); 12/11/19 (bills \$50,391.77; payroll \$4,182.62); 12/18/19 (bills \$11,247.33); 12/26/19 (bills \$61,465.77; payroll \$9,747.15) and 12/31/19 (bills \$20,963.58): There was a motion by Anne and second by Jacques to approve the warrants as listed. Motion passed.

B. Update on New Checking Account for General Fund: Mary Lou reported there is \$230,063.98 in the new general fund, \$18,751.91 in the old general fund with \$15,583.02 in outstanding checks.

6. **2019 Equalization Study Results:** A letter was reviewed from the Department of Taxes stating the 2019 Equalization Study results reflect the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) is 104.23 percent with the Coefficient of Dispersion (COD) at 13.04 percent. A CLA below 85 percent or over 115 percent necessitates a reappraisal. A COD over 20 percent necessitates a reappraisal (32 V.S.A. § 4041a). Both numbers are in the acceptable range.

7. **Update on Better Roads/Structures Grant Application:** The Clerk reported this grant application was submitted for upgrades to culvert #70 on Kennison Road. This culvert is hydrologically inadequate and in very poor condition. The grant specifies the current 24" undersized, deteriorated culvert will be replaced with a 60" cmp with head and wingwalls. This project will create a more natural and sinuous stream reducing excessive sediment and erosion. The requested grant amount is \$36,286 plus \$9,072 local match for a total project cost of \$45,358.

During the grant discussion, it was decided to also apply for a grant offered by the Upper Missisquoi & Trout River Wild and Scenic Committee to do cleanup at/near Bridge 19 (referred to as the Davis Bridge) on the Loop Road. There was a motion by Anne and second by Jacques to apply for this grant (up to \$5,000) which will help with added cleanup needed from the storm event on October 31, 2019. The two Selectboard members present were in agreement. The Clerk will work with Eric Kennison to submit the grant by the February 3, 2020 deadline. Eric suggested an in-kind billable hourly rate of \$35/per man and \$120/hr. for the grader. Selectboard members were given copies of the grant application. This will be included in the proposed budget in anticipation of receiving the grant award.

8. **Discuss Estimate for Work Needed on Westfield Cemetery Supply Building:** There is work needed on the supply outbuilding at the Westfield Cemetery. It was decided \$3,000 will be budgeted for repairs in the 2020 proposed budget. The Westfield Cemetery investment fund will be used to reimburse this expense.

9. **Sheriff's Report for November:** The report reflected 12.25 patrol hours, 1 administrative hour and \$261 in road fines were issued.

10. **Discuss Articles for Town Meeting March 3rd:**

A. Article for Northeast Kingdom Collaborative: The Selectboard reviewed the information submitted by Katherine Sims about entering into a communications union district (CUD) to be known as NEK Community Broadband. The Selectboard reviewed the background information sheet which describes

a CUD as a municipality made of two or more towns for the purpose of building communication infrastructure. Each town in the CUD has a seat on a governing board which will plan, contract build and manage the infrastructure that will provide high speed internet. After discussion, the Selectboard was in agreement to include an article on the Warning for Town Meeting allowing the voters, ^{to} decide if Westfield will participate in the CUD.

11. Other Business:

A. Letter from Vermont Symphony Orchestra: The Clerk reported a thank you letter was received from the Vermont Symphony Orchestra for the 2019 appropriation.

B. Next Meeting Date to Approve Budget and Warning for Town Meeting-1/23/20 at 8 a.m.: Jacques will participate via phone conference.

12. Draft 2020 General Government and Highway Budgets: The Selectboard reviewed the 2019 actual totals and with input from the Treasurer, Town Clerk, Road Commissioner and Listers drafted the proposed 2020 General Government and Highway Budgets to be voted on at the March 3, 2020 Town Meeting.

Budget discussions included:

- A two percent (2%) cost of living wage increase for employees was included in the 2020 budget.
- It was moved by Jacques and seconded by Anne that whatever rate increases are approved at Town Meeting take effect October 1st following Town Meeting ad infinitum. Motion passed.
- There was a motion by Anne and second by Jacques to put \$7,500 per year into the Grader Fund rather than basing it on the number of hours the grader is used per year. Motion passed. This will be re-evaluated next year.
- There was a motion by Anne and second by Jacques to increase trash fees by 50 cents per bag and tire fees by 50 cents per tire (tires and tires with rims). Motion passed. *effective March 1, 2020.*
- The recycling helpers pay rate will increase to \$11/hour effective October 1.
- It was decided to move the accounts receivable dollars for the two road grants (NVDA Grants-in-Aid \$6,100 and Better Roads Grant/Buck Hill Road \$17,521) back into the Road Reserve Account because those dollars were expended out of the 2019 Road Budget but the income is yet to be received.

13. Adjourn: Following a motion by Anne and second by Jacques, all were in agreement to adjourn the meeting at 1:35 p.m.

Westfield Selectboard Approval: Date: 1/23/20 with 2 changes

Yves Daigle
Yves Daigle, Chair

Jacques Couture, Co-Chair

Anne Lazor
Anne Lazor

Minutes submitted by: *LaDonna Dunn*
LaDonna Dunn, Town Clerk