

Westfield Selectboard Meeting
MINUTES
February 10, 2020 – 5 p.m. – Town Office

Town Officials Present: Selectboard members: Yves Daigle (Chair), Jacques Couture (Co-Chair) and Anne Lazor; Treasurer, Mary Lou Jacobs; Town Clerk, LaDonna Dunn; Assistant Town Clerks Heather Johnson, Karen Blais; and Road Commissioner, Eric Kennison.

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Yves called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.
2. **Public Comment – 5 Minutes:** None
3. **Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda:** Added under Other Business: B. Ad Request from Newport Daily Express for First Responders Page.
4. **Approve Minutes of the January 23, 2020 Selectboard/Budget Meeting:** Following a motion by Anne and second by Jacques all were in agreement to approve the minutes with two changes.

A. Business from the Minutes: None

5. Road Updates – Road Commissioner, Eric Kennison:

A. Update on FEMA DR4474 Halloween Storm 2019: Heather gave an update reporting Eric assisted her with the Damage Report paperwork. The next step is to wait for a FEMA representative to be assigned to our case.

B. Town Garage Completion Update: Yves reported the garage expansion work is complete. The cost went over budget bringing it closer to \$100,000. Unanticipated duct work added to the overage because of a moisture problem in the garage. The Selectboard had figured \$87,000 but didn't anticipate Vermont Electric Coop work and the grates for the garage. Landscaping is still to be completed by Eric and will be paid out of the road budget.

6. Treasurers Report – Treasurer, Mary Lou Jacobs:

A. Approve Warrants for Expenditures Dated 2/5/20 (\$8,281.69 payroll and \$176,119.89 bills): Anne made a motion to approve the warrants as listed. Jacques seconded with the motion passing unanimously.

B. Financial Update: Mary Lou reported there is a total of \$36,482.13 in the checking accounts. The Good Neighbor Fund amount of \$10,000 is included in the current checking account balance. The Good Neighbor Fund money will be transferred out of the checking account and be invested by years end. Mary Lou gave an update stating the next state payment is due in April in the amount of \$13,000. She stated the biggest upcoming expense will be for road plowing. Mary Lou said monies needed for the reappraisal expenses will be transferred in from investments as they are expensed out. The Selectboard asked what month the line of credit was drawn on last year. Mary Lou stated it was May 2019. The Selectboard asked if the line of credit needed to be renewed each year. Mary Lou will check with the bank. Yves made a motion to approve applying for a line of credit with Community National Bank, up to \$100,000, with the municipal interest rate. Anne seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

C. Discuss Current Insured Values on Town Buildings and Contents: The Auditors asked if the Town has enough insurance on the buildings to replace the building and the contents in the event of a catastrophe. There was discussion about how a value is assigned to town buildings and if they were to be reassessed as part of the town wide reassessment. LaDonna spoke with Doug Lay from NEMRC who said exempt properties are not normally part of the reassessment process. Danny Young explained to LaDonna the Listers could take

a look at the buildings but they do not have comparables for the contents of the Library. The Listers are not trained to appraise special use buildings such as the Community Center or Library/Museum. Librarian, Mary Lee Daigle, found some inventory records for the taxidermy animals as well as some of the china cabinet items. The contents of the Town Office are currently insured for \$15,000. This will be re-evaluated. There was discussion about insurance at the Town Garage. The chains, wing, cabinets, chloride tanks, heating oil tank and the grader tank, computer/cameras and the grader are owned by the Town. Jacques asked if the town grader was insured and for what value. It was decided Karen Blais would call VLCT and discuss these questions with them and report back to the Selectboard. Karen was asked to increase the value of the Town Garage by \$100,000 to cover the addition of the new bay.

D. Refund Request for Cemetery Plots at North Hill Cemetery: A resident who was making payments on two cemetery plots has decided she does not want the plots. After discussion it was decided to approach the woman's family to see if they wish to take over the plots. Yves will contact the family. Going forward, cornerstones will not be purchased until plots are paid for in full.

E. Discuss New Good Neighbor Fund Investment: Mary Lou called the Credit Union and got a cd rate of 1.75% rate for 15 months. Edward Jones has 1.07% for one to two years. The Credit Union's rate for five years would be 5.9% and Edward Jones would be 2%. It was decided to wait on investing the money until later in the year.

7. Sign Liquor License for Westfield General Store: The Selectboard signed the Liquor License for the Westfield General Store. The Clerk will mail it to the Department of Liquor Control.

8. Sheriff's Report for January: Since no Sheriff's report was received, it was tabled.

9. Hazard Mitigation Plan:

A. Update on Hazard Mitigation Committee (Core Committee Meeting 2/24/20 at 4:00 p.m.): Alison Low will be attending the upcoming Planning Commission meeting so she suggested Pat Sagui, LaDonna, one Selectboard member and a representative from the Emergency Management (either Dan Backus or Dennis Newman) meet as a core group to begin the Hazard Mitigation Committee process. Jacques will be able to attend the meeting to be held at the Town office.

B. Sign Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between NVDA and the Towns of Westfield and Jay: NVDA Senior Planner, Alison Low, sent the MOU between NVDA, and the Towns of Westfield and Jay. The intent is to develop FEMA approved hazard mitigation plans for up to 14 communities and specifically to develop a multi-jurisdictional local hazard mitigation plan for Westfield/Jay. Jacques made a motion and Anne seconded to sign the Memorandum of Understanding. All were in agreement.

10. Discuss Issuing ATV Permits for 2020 Season: LaDonna asked the Selectboard to consider not issuing ATV permits for the 2020 season. She reminded the Selectboard that last year the permits were issued to educate ATV enthusiasts about the Towns new ATV ordinance and the roads that were open to ATV travel. The Selectboard reported they had not had any complaints during the 2019 season. LaDonna suggested posting the map and ordinance on the municipal website and on social media. LaDonna suggested the Selectboard re-evaluate the issuance of permits each year. LaDonna will contact VASA officials to see if paperwork is required to open Route 100 to ATV travel from the Westfield General Store to Cemetery Road, like last year. There was a motion by Anne and second by Jacques to not issue Town ATV permits. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Replacement for Mary Lee Daigle for Cleaning at Community Center/Town Office: Mary Lee Daigle resigned from her cleaning position at the Community Center and the Town Clerks office. Connie LaPlume is interested in cleaning the Community Center and Karen Blais offered to clean

the Town Office building. Jacques made a motion to hire Connie to clean the Community Center and Karen to clean the Town building. Anne seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

12. Sign Certificate-No Appeal or Suit Pending PVR-4155: The Selectboard signed PVR-4155 stating there are no appeals or suits pending. The document will be filed in the Grand List by the Town Clerk.

13. Reply to Auditors Management Report Suggestions: Auditor, Joe Falworth, told Yves he would like to request from the Selectboard a formal reply to the Auditors comments in the Audit Management Report. The Selectboard reviewed each item on the report.

- **Bank Statements:** Anne asked if Mary Lou was caught up and had completed the bank reconciliations for 2019. Mary Lou stated she is waiting for an onsite visit from NEMRC to help her complete a few things. Mary Lou explained we have one general fund checking account that the municipal expenses as well as the highway expenses are paid from. Mary Lou said she will do her best to have the bank account reconciled each month. Jacques requested to see the reconciled bank statements at each Selectboard meeting. Mary Lou stated she will also provide the Trial Balance and the Balance Sheet Assets. Anne requested seeing the budget comparison report so the Selectboard can see the percentage of the unused budget on a monthly basis. Jacques asked if they could see the prior year and the current year as a comparison.

- **Review of Town Property Inventory:** The town property inventory has been worked on by Heather and she will continue to put the Museum and Library documentation together. These documents will be shared with the Auditors as they are completed.

- **Cash Receipts Procedures Policy/Purchasing Policy:** The Cash Receipts Policy has been completed and is in use by the Town Clerk, Assistant Clerks and the Treasurer. There was concern by the Auditors that the Selectboard had not regularly reviewed and re-adopted the Purchasing Policy since 2014. It was reviewed and re-signed by the current Selectboard.

LaDonna said reviewing/re-signing the Purchasing Policy and the Conflict of Interest Policy will be added to the Selectboards Organizational Meeting Agenda each March.

- **Calendar Year versus Fiscal Year:** Jacques recommended making the budget earlier. Yves feels staying on a calendar year is the best. Mary Lou stated that some towns are on a June to July fiscal year to align with the schools. Mary Lou said we are working on scheduling a meeting with the Supervisory Union to get a better understanding of the school taxes and how they are calculated and paid. At this point, the Selectboard doesn't think there is an advantage to changing from a calendar year to a fiscal year.

- **Investment Reporting:** Mary Lou explained the problem with tracking the individual investment accounts at Edward Jones is due to the representative that set up the investment accounts not listing the accounts individually by name, as was requested by the Town. Consequently, they are lumped together making tracking very difficult. Edward Jones assures Mary Lou when the individual investments mature, they will be properly named. Mary Lou created a spreadsheet to make tracking easier for the Auditors until such time as they are correctly named.

- **Suggestion in looking to the future:** It was suggested by the Auditors that a Comparative Budget Analysis be completed, comparing our Road Department, as it currently exists, to purchasing Town equipment and hiring actual employees. Anne and Jacques felt that acquiring the Budgets from the Town Reports of surrounding towns would give a good comparison. Jay, Troy, Brownington, Newport Town, and Coventry own their town equipment and are the Towns that will be reviewed. LaDonna suggested that a committee be formed to pursue some of this work with the Auditors. The Selectboard felt it would be valuable for the Town to look at the comparisons. Heather will look into the road mileage for each of the five towns.

- **Selectboard Salary Increase:** The Auditors voted to authorize a \$50 pay increase for all Selectboard members as follows: Chair to \$1800; Board members to \$1450.

A. Discuss Act 70 of 2017 Conflict Interest Policy (emailed in advance): LaDonna explained the model policy came from VLCT. It is now required that all municipal boards adopt a policy. Anne made a motion to adopt the Conflict of Interest Policy. Jacques seconded and Yves was in agreement.

14. Appoint Deputy Registrar: LaDonna stated a Deputy Registrar can issue a Burial Transit Permit. If someone dies at home and the family is transporting the body themselves, they need a Burial Transit Permit to transport the body to a mortuary or a crematorium. There was a motion by Jacques which was seconded by Anne to appoint Yves as Deputy Registrar. Passed unanimously.

15. Other Business:

A. Possible Dates for Board of Abatement Hearing: A Board of Abatement Hearing has been requested by Ryland Robinson. LaDonna said she needs to have a quorum of seven. It was decided to meet on Tuesday, February 25, 2020 at 5:00 P.M. at the Town Office. The Board of Abatement consists of the Selectboard, Justices of the Peace, the Listers, the Town Treasurer and the Town Clerk.

B. Ad Request from Newport Daily Express for First Responders Page: While the Selectboard is in favor of honoring the many First Responders in the area, they were not in favor of purchasing an advertisement in the insert.

16: Adjourn: Following a motion by Anne and second by Jacques, all were in agreement to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 p.m.

Westfield Selectboard Approval: Date: _____ **with** _____ **changes**


Yves Daigle, Chair


Jacques Couture, Co-Chair


Anne Lazor

Minutes submitted by: _____
Heather Johnson, Assistant Town Clerk

Minutes reviewed by: 
LaDonna Dunn, Town Clerk