

**Westfield Selectboard Minutes
July 20, 2020 at 5 P.M. – Town Office**

Due to COVID-19 some people participated in person at the Town Office and some participated remotely via Zoom

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, Karen Blais and Heather Johnson; Planning Commission Chair, Pat Sagui; and Lister, Danny Young (for a portion of the meeting)

Members of the Public: Nate Deslandes

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Yves called the meeting to order at 5 p.m.

2. **Public Comment – 5 Minutes:**

A. Nate Deslandes – Lack of Internet Connectivity on Kennison Road: Nate explained there is a long stretch of Kennison Road that does not have Comcast high speed internet connectivity. He and his wife have been trying to get Comcast to provide service in this area. Comcast quoted him \$46,479.17 to bring high speed internet service to these families. Nate stated there are 8 families who may be interested in splitting the costs. Nate asked the Selectboard if there was something they could do to assist him. Anne suggested trying New England Wireless as an alternate provider. The Selectboard discussed talking to Mark Higley, Bobby Starr and Kathryn Sims. It was suggested getting a petition signed by the people who are interested parties. The town will work on drafting a letter of support to assist the property owners. Yves volunteered to talk with Bobby Starr.

3. **Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda:** None

4. **Approve Minutes of the June 15, 2020 Selectboard Meeting:** There was a motion by Jacques and second by Anne to approve the minutes with no changes. Passed unanimously.

A. Business from the Minutes: None discussed.

5. **Update on Municipal Planning Grant Kick-off Meeting – Pat Sagui/LaDonna Dunn:** Pat said the Planning Commission will review the draft of the housing needs assessment survey submitted by the consultant, Camoin Associates. It will then be forwarded to the Selectboard for review before going live on the website with paper copies being made available around town and at the Recycling Center. Pat added a Planning Commission update on the Bylaw revisions to her comments. She said the Planning Commission voted to propose that the town hire Ellen Fox to work on the organization and rewrite of the Zoning Bylaw. Pat said she will pursue grant options to help defray the cost to hire Ellen, if the Selectboard approves. She said another Municipal Planning Grant is an option. She stated Ellen is interested in doing the rewrite. The document will be reorganized to make it more user-friendly and modern. The Selectboard was in favor of pursuing available grant opportunities.

6. **Road Updates – Road Commissioner, Eric Kennison:**

A. Update on FEMA (Halloween Storm 2019) Progress – LaDonna Dunn: LaDonna stated she recently learned a grant agreement has to be issued by the state to initiate the payment. She is waiting for the paperwork to arrive.

B. Timeline Update on Unfinished Projects: Installation of Stone Barriers at Roger Tetreaults; Dykeman Culvert; Landscaping at Town Garage; Clearing out Bay next to Recycling Bay for Cement Prep; Installation of Missing Road /Speed Limit Signs; Installation of Radar Signs; Installation of Guardrails at Taft Brook Road/Buck Hill; Two Wild and Scenic River Grants; Structures Grant on Balance Rock Road: In Eric's absence, the Selectboard reviewed the list of projects needing completion before winter.

C. Sign Quote #QUO-408638-L7T1F2 (\$77,640) Structure Box Culvert for Balance Rock Road Structures Grant: There was a motion by Anne and second by Jacques to approve the purchase of the box culvert for the Structures Grant. Motion passed unanimously. The contract was signed.

D. Discuss Chloride on Cemetery Road: Yves stated he had a discussion with Marielle Tetreault who lives on the Cemetery Road. She said the dust has been very bad and wanted Cemetery Road to be tarred. Yves explained that wasn't likely to happen. He did arrange with Eric to have chloride put on the road to cut down on the dust.

7. Treasurer's Report – Treasurer, Mary Lou Jacobs:

A. Approve Warrants for Expenditures Dated: 6/17/20 \$4,366.98 bills; 6/24/20 \$13,319.91 bills / \$3,026.55 payroll; 7/1/20 \$10,998.19 bills; 7/8/20 \$327.50 bills / \$4,816.51 payroll; 7/15/20 \$5,239.09 bills & \$1,915.75 federal deposit: Motion by Jacques and second by Yves to approve the warrants as listed. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Budget Status Update (emailed in advance): Mary Lou stated there is \$23,495.34 in the General Fund checking account. We are still waiting on the Grants in Aid money to come in from the 2019 NVDA grant. Mary Lou and Heather continue to follow-up with Doug Morton at NVDA. They were told the money was to be available by the end of June but to date no payment has arrived. Danny Young asked Mary Lou to look into the -\$25,119.07 showing up in the Listers Reappraisal Payroll account. Mary Lou said it is an error which she will look into.

C. Investment Account Update (emailed in advance): The Edward Jones investment account is valued at \$152,847.66 reflecting an increase of \$1,122.57 over last month. There is \$5,426.17 in savings and \$4,388.66 in CD's at North Country Federal Credit Union. Any monies left in the reappraisal fund that are not spent on the current reappraisal will go towards the next reappraisal.

D. Set Municipal Tax Rate and Cost of Veterans Exemption: Discussion began regarding setting the tax rate based on the budget approved at Town Meeting. **Jacques was called away from the meeting.**

Motion: There was a motion by Yves and second by Anne to take \$20,000 off the tax rate for the FEMA money that will be received for the Halloween 2019 storm event. Motion passed. (Jacques not present)

Motion: There was a motion by Anne and second by Yves to set the tax rate at .9050. Motion passed. (Jacques not present)

Jacques returned to the meeting. The voting was explained to Jacques.

Motion to reconsider: Jacques made a motion to reconsider the vote regarding deducting the \$20,000 for FEMA. Anne seconded the motion. Motion passed with Yves voting no.

Motion: There was a motion by Jacques and second by Anne to set the tax rate based on the numbers presented at Town Meeting in the Warning which calculates setting the municipal tax rate at .9325/per \$100 of assessed value. The motion passed unanimously by all three Selectboard members.

E. Discuss Late Filing Penalty on Property Tax Bills: Mary Lou and Lister, Danny Young, explained the town has the authority to decide to charge a late filing penalty to taxpayers who file their HS-122 late. After discussion, there was a motion by Jacques and second by Anne to continue to charge a late fee for late filers of HS-122. The motion passed unanimously. This decision was made because of the real costs incurred for the Listers and Treasurers work associated with reprinting and processing new tax bills for late filers.

8. Appoint Interim Zoning Administrator to Replace Tom Schrock: Anne made a motion and Jacques seconded it appointing Ellen Fox to serve as the interim Zoning Administrator. LaDonna will contact VLCT to make

sure there is not a conflict for her to be the Zoning Administrator while serving on the Planning Commission. LaDonna will report back to the Selectboard via email if there is a conflict.

9. Discuss Replacement for Tom Schrock for Remainder of Mowing Contract for Community Center Areas:

Yves spoke with Westfield resident, Tom Bathalon, and explained there was a contract with Tom Schrock for mowing the Community Center/Common areas. Tom said he would be willing to continue the same mowing service for the balance due on Tom's contract (\$1,200 including the fall cleanup) for 2020. There was a motion by Yves and second by Jacques to hire Tom Bathalon to complete the mowing contract in the amount of \$1,200 for the Common, Community Center, Town Clerk's Office and the Recreation Area. Motion passed unanimously.

10. Discuss Mark Wombolt's Request to Mow Town Garage: Yves reported Dick Coburn approached him and said Mark Wombolt would like to take over mowing the Town Garage which Dick used to do. There was a motion by Anne and second by Jacques to appoint Mark Wombolt to mow and weed-whack the Town Garage area at \$25/time. Yves will speak with Mark and show him the areas to mow.

11. Sheriff's Report for June: There were 9.5 patrol hours resulting in \$337 in citations/fines reported in June.

12. Update on Stone Cleaning/Repairs at North Hill Cemetery: Yves reported the stones have all been cleaned and look very nice. Yves said there are stones that need to be repaired/straightened. Mary Lou will call and get a price on these repairs. Jacques suggested paying for the cleaning and repair costs out of the cemetery investment account.

13. Update on Town Building Repairs/Maintenance: Yves reported when he sees work at the town buildings that needs to be done he takes care of it. He said he discovered while working at the Community Center the windows in the cellar and outside stair railings needed work. He and Scott Dean completed this work. He said he needs to rent a lift to scrap the window sills at the Community Center before priming and painting. He is working on replacing the chains on the swings with coated chains, taking 4" off the cement anchors on the swing set, removing a branch near the swings and adding 5" of mulch to the playground per VLCT recommendations. He will also be pressure washing the town office, trimming the cedar trees and removing the stain from the back of the building.

14. Recycling Update: Yves stated the majority of people coming to recycling have their masks on. He does not let people in the building without masks. Cardboard is selling for \$100/ton. Glass continues to be challenging to sell. Composting has been on the increase. We need more compost totes. Mary Lou will call to order another tote.

15. Other Business:

A. ATV Passes in Jay Connecting Cross Road to North Hill Road VASA Corridor in Westfield: Jay recently voted to open four of their roads to ATV travel.

B. Sugar Maple on Common: The Selectboard decided to plant another sugar maple on the Common.

16. Adjourn: Following a motion by Anne and second by Jacques, all were in agreement to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Westfield Selectboard Approval: Date: 9/21/20 with 0 changes. Submitted by: LaDonna Burns

Yves Daigle
Yves Daigle, Chair

Jacques Couture
Jacques Couture, Co-Chair

Anne Lazor
Anne Lazor