

**Westfield Selectboard
MINUTES**

OCTOBER 26, 2020 at 5 P.M. ♦ Westfield Community Center

Due to COVID-19 some people participated in person 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 (via Zoom) and Heather Johnson (via Zoom); Constable, Mike Piper; and Road Commissioner, Eric Kennison

Members of the Public: Nate Deslandes

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Yves called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.
2. **Public Comment – 5 Minutes:** Yves commented when the warrant orders were signed there were four gallons of vinegar. Yves wanted to explain that this purchase was to kill the weeds on the playground. Nate Delandes said a heavy concentration of vinegar is an organic killer that will kill horsetail. The vinegar is called Green Globber. It is used full strength.
3. **Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda:** Added Donation of Wifi Hotspot as 13B
4. **Approve Minutes of the September 21, 2020 Selectboard Meetings:** Motion by Jacques; seconded by Anne to approve the minutes with one change. Motion passed unanimously.

A. Business from the Minutes: None

5. **Update on Housing Study Municipal Planning Grant – LaDonna Dunn:** The Project Team has been meeting every two weeks and has been reviewing each section of the housing assessment. Around Thanksgiving the draft version will be available for the Selectboard and Planning Commission to review and provide input to the consultant. LaDonna said after last month's meeting it was apparent to her that people don't stand what the purpose of the grant and housing assessment are. She explained since the town does not own the Scenic View property, we can only present the results of the housing study to Rural Edge and hope they are interested in pursuing the outcome that the Selectboard envisioned, which was to convert the building to senior housing. LaDonna will check with the Project Team to see what type of community meeting can happen once the housing assessment is completed. The results of the community survey showed people wanted to see senior housing and secondly, some sort of medical annex. LaDonna asked if the Selectboard could set aside some time to review. Jacques asked if the purpose for a public meeting was informational. LaDonna said yes.
6. **Update on Comcast Service for Kennison Road – LaDonna Dunn:** LaDonna reported the phone number provided by Sharon Rosenberger was no longer in service. She was able to reach the Western New England Region Government & Regulatory Affairs Manager, Melissa Pierce. She explained in an email two potential avenues for expanding service to Kennison Road and North Hill Road are the Contribution-in-aid Construction (CIAC) process outlined in Vermont Public Utility Commission Rule 8.313 and the Department of Public Service's Connectivity Initiative program. She provided the text of Rule 8.313, which was forwarded to the Selectboard and Nate Deslandes by LaDonna. LaDonna explained she needed assistance understanding where to go from here to help with connectivity. Yves asked about the CUD which was approved by Westfield voters at the 2020 Town Meeting. Jacques and LaDonna explained this process will take many years. Yves will be in touch with Bobby Starr to schedule a meeting to discuss this. Jacques was curious if there is any type of regulatory process. LaDonna said Comcast opened up all of their wifi through November for free. Nate said he can't accomplish any business or school work at home because he has no internet. He said he purchased a booster to get call service. LaDonna offered to bring her hotspot over to Nate's to see if there is reception at his location through Verizon. Nate is to provide the name to the Town Clerk of the person that helped get internet on the Loop Road.
7. **Road Updates – Road Commissioner, Eric Kennison:**
 - A. **Update on FEMA (Halloween Storm 2019) Progress and Other Grants– LaDonna Dunn:**
 - LaDonna reported we received the fully executed FEMA grant from the state. She said we're making progress, now we wait for the money.
 - There was a \$7 million dollar grant that got divided amongst all Vermont towns. Mary Lou reported we received \$13,876.53 for this Supplemental Grant from the Highway Department. This money will be put into savings.

- Doug Morton from NVDA sent an email stating there was a mistake and the money from the last Grants in Aid project should be coming in the next couple of weeks. Regarding the 2021 Grants in Aid, the Letter of Interest has been submitted. Eric will work with NVDA to select a location for the grant work. Anne mentioned there was a culvert on Trumpass Road that looks like it's breaking down. Eric said it's a new culvert and the water is coming off the road and going over the culvert. He will work with NVDA and select a location for the work. Heather said the site selected for this grant should be from the road inventory as well as hydrologically connected.
- There is approximately \$135,000 due to the Town coming from these cumulative grants.

B. Completed since Last Meeting; Structures Grant on Balance Rock Road: Yves said he went and looked at the Structures Grant on Balance Rock Road. The road was closed for 12 days. The culvert is made of aluminum. Mary Lou asked Eric if he had any in-kind work to report for the grant. Eric said very minimal grader time. Yves said this was a good job done that will last for many years. Eric has made arrangements for Lafayette to install the guardrails on Balance Rock Road as well as Taft Brook Road. They should be installed in three weeks. Eric said this culvert should last 80-90 years. Yves signed the TA65 Request for Reimbursement to complete the project. The project cost was \$118,123.24 minus the municipal match of \$11,812.32 for a reimbursement to the Town of \$106,310.92.

C. Timeline Update on Unfinished Projects: Installation of Stone Barriers at Roger Tetreaults; Dykeman Culvert; Installation of Missing Road/Speed Limit Signs; Installation of Radar Signs; Installation of Guardrails at Taft Brook Road/Buck Hill: Jacques suggested that someone talk to Roger Tetreault to see if he still wants the stone barriers placed in his yard. Eric said these items will be completed as his schedule permits. He mentioned there may be money left in his budget this year. Anne replied that possible some of that money could be used to hire someone to install the missing signs in town. Eric stated he should be able to get to that task soon. Anne asked when the radar signs would be installed. Eric said he had not had time during the last month. His time was devoted to completing the Structures Grant on Balance Rock Road. Eric said he had the tar extended a little further on School Street tarring project.

D. Damaged Culvert on Trumpass Road – Anne Lazor: Discussed above , 7A.

E. Sign Cargill Salt Contract: Jacques asked if there was salt available through the state. Eric said there are other chemicals mixed in that he doesn't want to use on our roads. Eric said if we salted our tar roads, the salt contract would be for 400 tons. Yves signed the contract for \$77.42/ton for winter salt.

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

A. Approve Warrants for Expenditures Dated: 9/23/20 \$72,766.63 (bills) & \$2,936.23 (bills); 10/7/20 \$2,120.82 (bills); 10/14/20 \$15,832.58 (bills) & \$5,189.87 (payroll); 10/21/20 \$960,863.51 (bills): Mary Lou added Appropriations in the amount of \$56,337.30. Motion by Anne; seconded by Yves to approve warrants as listed with the addition of Appropriations. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Budget Status Update (emailed in advance): Mary Lou stated there are a few adjustments to be made before next month's budget meeting. The General Fund Checking account balance is \$420,292.93. Yves asked if there was still \$40,000 coming from the Good Neighbor Fund (wind towers). Mary Lou will report back on the balance due next month.

C. Investment Accounts Update (emailed in advance): The Edward Jones Investment account is valued at \$155,706.58 representing a decrease of \$1,453.16 over the August totals. Anne commented the yearly total is on the plus side overall. There is \$9,906.03 in certificate/savings at North Country Federal Credit Union.

D. Discuss/Approve Health Care for 2021: The new rate sheet was reviewed and Yves asked LaDonna if she was happy with the current insurance. LaDonna said yes. The new cost for the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont Platinum plan is \$939.97 per month. Eric and LaDonna are on this plan. The town pays 80% and the employee portion is 20%. There was a motion by Jacques and second by Anne to continue with the Platinum Plan. Motion passed unanimously.

E. Delinquent Tax List: There is \$54,772.99 to be collected in delinquent taxes. Mary Lou is in contact with the Delinquent Tax Collector, Joyce Crawford with the list of delinquent taxpayers. Mary Lou said one thing we need to work on is the credit card company did not accept payments from Canadian banks. Many people used the credit card/e-bank check option this year. May using the service said it was a big help to them.

9. Discuss Grant Approval from Center for Tech and Civic Life (Covid-19 Response Grant): LaDonna reported she applied for the grant and the money is already in the bank. There is no match on this \$5,000 grant. Plexiglas sneeze guard barriers have been ordered from Wisconsin. This money is to be spent to make elections safe and secure. A new laptop and desktop will be ordered. The money has to be spent this year. The grant reporting is due next year.

10. Sheriff's Report for September: The report reflected 11 patrol hours and \$249 in fines issued.

11. Recycling/Tire Disposal Update: Yves reported the Jay tire drop-off will not happen this year. Mary Lou did some research. She discovered there is a company called Vermonters Helping Vermonters. They charge \$4/tire to pick up. Mary Lou mentioned it costs quite a bit for us to get the tires down to Lyndonville including labor to load and unload, mileage and the drop-off fee. She mentioned we haven't been paying Scott Dean for the use of his trailer. Mary Lou pointed out it is dangerous to load and unload and feels it shouldn't be taken lightly. Using this service (Vermonters Helping Vermonters), we would have to raise the price to dispose of tires. Jacques stated we don't want to make money but we don't want to lose money or end up with tires dumped on the roadside. Jacques said we need to charge what it costs to get rid of the tires. Mary Lou said she'd call Robert again and get the sizes and if there's a minimum and she will report back to the Selectboard. Yves reported that white bale wrap is currently not being accepted. Farms are being asked to store this until it can be recycled again. Yves estimates the trash cost based on weight, if it is placed in the dumpster.

12. Letter of Resignation from Town Health Officer, Joseph Berchick, and Discuss Replacement

Recommendation: Joseph Berchick has submitted his letter of resignation effective March 2, 2021. The Selectboard discussed possible candidates. The Selectboard makes a recommendation to the state for appointment of this position. The Clerk will post a notice in town to see if there are any interested candidates.

13. Other Business:

A. Complaints about Greene Property: Yves stated he continues to have complaints about the appearance of the yard on Route 100 in the village. People have complained about the number of unused cars parked in the driveway and the couch on the side of the road. After discussion, the Selectboard decided they need to wait for the Planning Commission to finish their work on the Zoning Bylaw changes as well as a proposed ordinance before taking any action.

B. Wifi Hotspot: LaDonna said there was a letter that came asking if the Town of Westfield has any locations that could use a hotspot. She read the letter with the specifications. We currently have free wifi in two locations (Community Center and Library). The Selectboard did not feel there were additional locations in town to put community wifi. People would have to park and work from their cars so it would not be an ideal situation for people on North Hill Road and Kennison who have business or remote learning challenges. No action was taken.

C. Caroling on the Common: Yves said the Caroling on the Common event is cancelled this year due to Covid.

14. Adjourn: Following a motion by Anne and second by Jacques, all were in agreement to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Westfield Selectboard Approval: Date: 12/7/20 with 1 changes


Yves Daigle, Chair


Jacques Couture, Co-Chair


Anne Lazor

Minutes submitted by: 
LaDonna Dunn, Town Clerk