

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
WESTFIELD SELECTBOARD
Minutes
December 2, 2019 – 6 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; and Road Commissioner; Eric Kennison

Members of the Public: Dianne Laplante

1. Call Meeting to Order – Yves Daigle, Chair: Yves called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

2. Public Comment – 5 Minutes:

A. Dianne Laplante suggested planting a Christmas tree on the Common rather than purchasing a cut tree to decorate each year.

B. Dianne Laplante suggested putting up a 35 mph sign on Buck Hill Road coming down the hill from Trumpass Road (towards Route 100) just before Taft Brook Road (across the road from Jeanne Rogers property). She feels people drive too fast on that portion of the road.

C. Dianne Laplante informed the Selectboard and Eric Kennison that the brook between her driveway and Tony Distasi's driveway is frozen at road level.

3. Approve Minutes of the 11/18/19 Selectboard Meeting: Following a motion by Anne and second by Jacques, all were in agreement to approve the minutes with no corrections.

A. Business from the Minutes: None

4. Discuss Converting Taft Brook Road to a Dead-End Road Effective 12-9-19: Yves clarified that we are not closing Taft Brook Road but rather closing the intersection of Taft Brook Road at Buck Hill Road. Yves recapped when the State road worker came out and looked at the road, he commented the intersection was very dangerous and should be closed. At that time Yves visited the residents on the road to discuss it with them. He stated, at the time, the residents said they were not turning from Taft Brook onto Buck Hill Road because they too felt it was dangerous. This year, the Selectboard felt it was time to address the problem, before someone gets seriously injured. Eric Kennison said he almost got hit there recently. Dianne said it is a two mile trip to go around for her if the road becomes a dead-end. She said the campgrounds send people to the waterfall. She feels it will be party central if it becomes a dead-end road. She stated there has already been partying at the brook. She doesn't want her driveway to be a hangout by these people. She also expressed her concern about drug use in the area and discarded needles. She suggested making it a one-way road. Eric said he would still have to service the road. Dianne suggested a possible compromise would be to put no parking signs on the brook side of the road. Dianne liked the idea of the additional privacy it will create for her but she is concerned about the possible problem of people loitering and leaving trash. Eric suggested a sign that says No Parking – Town Truck Turnaround. Eric said he can put up 12' barricades this year and can install the road closed signs before the barricades are in place to alert residents of the change. LaDonna will make the necessary notifications with emergency management officials, schools and the post office.

A. Sign Resolution: Anne made a motion which was seconded by Jacques to approve and sign the resolution to make Taft Brook Road a dead-end road. The vote passed unanimously.

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

A. Approve Warrants for Expenditures Dated: 11/27/19 (bills \$23,069.41; payroll \$7,043.97):

There was a motion by Jacques and second by Yves to approve the warrant as listed. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Update on New Checking Account for General Fund: Jacques asked if all of the money had been put back into investment accounts that had been borrowed from before the line of credit was issued. Mary Lou said everything was in order. Mary Lou reported she is in the process of transitioning funds to the new checking account that has been established per the Selectboards recommendation at the November meeting. The fraud protection program is being setup on both accounts to protect it from future fraudulent activity. Mary Lou has learned that there is no charge for the fraud protection program. She stated she will be monitoring the account on a daily basis. The current balance in the general fund is \$376,486.42.

C. Rate Increase Letter from NEMRC: The Board reviewed a letter from NEMRC which states the annual support/license fee will increase from \$1460.81 to \$5,000.00 in 2020. The letter states in the last few years, due primarily to the global cybersecurity scare, government, insurance companies, and the tech industry are demanding major changes in software development. These changes require NEMRC to add additional cyber security staff, undertake annual expensive cyber security audits and take other measures to ensure the safety of towns electronic records. The changes are costly. The letter notes, in particular, knowledgeable cyber security personnel are in very short supply (especially in Vermont) which means they can and do command high salaries. NEMRC states they can no longer do business in this environment without a major shift in their fees to cover these new costs. They stated they were announcing these new fees now so towns had the opportunity to adequately budget for 2020. The increase will also allow for continued cloud development and conversion of all of their modules. In addition the following will be included in the new fee: training webinars will be free (including the library); additional support and programming staff; continued live phone support; improvements to software including reporting; conversion from FoxPro to .NET/SQL Software; increased cyber security; and support website redesign. Westfield currently uses the following NEMRC modules: Grand List; Accounts Payable; Tax Administration; General Ledger; and Payroll. The Selectboard felt the rate increase was exorbitant and may look into other options such as QuickBooks to replace some of NEMRC's modules.

6. Sheriff's Report for October: The report reflected 21.5 patrol hours, 1.5 administrative hours with \$372 in citations for October. June through September \$1276 was paid to the town for Sheriff fines and State Police fines.

7. Other Business:

A. Letter from Rural Fire Protection Program: The Clerk read a letter thanking the town for the 2019 appropriation of \$100.

B. Budget Meetings 1/8/20 at 8 a.m. and 1/23/20 at 8 a.m.: The Selectboard was reminded of the upcoming dates for the budget meetings.

8. Adjourn: Following a motion by Jacques and a second by Anne all were in agreement to adjourn the meeting at ~~6:40~~ 7:15 p.m.

Westfield Selectboard Approval: Date: 1/8/2020 with 1 changes

Yves Daigle, Chair

Jacques Couture

Jacques Couture, Co-Chair

Anne Lazor

Anne Lazor

Minutes submitted by:

LaDonna Dunn

LaDonna Dunn, Town Clerk