

Westfield Selectboard Minutes
June 21, 2021 @ 5:00 p.m.
In-Person Meeting at the Westfield Town Office, 38 School Street

Town Officials Present: Selectboard members: Jacques Couture (Vice-Chair) and Anne Lazor; Treasurer, Mary Lou Jacobs; Town Clerk, LaDonna Dunn; and Assistant Town Clerk, Karen Blais

Members of the Public Present: Ellen Fox (representing Missisquoi River Basin Association – MRBA); Roger Gosselin (on behalf of Missisquoi Valley Ambulance Service); and Jen Piette (President of Missisquoi Valley Ambulance Service)

1. Call Meeting to Order – Jacques Couture, Vice Chair: Jacques called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

2. Public Comment – 5 Minutes:

A. Shelley Martin-Explanation of Intent behind Flyer for Scenic View RuralEdge Hearing: Shelley called the Town Clerk explaining she was ill the day of the Selectboard meeting and asked LaDonna to give her report to the Selectboard. In summary, Shelley stated it was not her intention by creating the “community meeting” flyer to cause trouble but rather to educate people and get people to attend the Zoning Board of Adjustments public hearing regarding the Scenic View RuralEdge project so they could learn the facts. Shelley further stated at the time she did not understand the difference between low income and affordable housing. She stated she is working with Patrick Shattuck at Rural Edge to further the senior housing project along. She plans to meet with the Lions Club to help promote the project in the community.

B. Present Shelley Martin with the Town Health Officer Certificate from the Commissioner of Health: LaDonna will give Shelley her certificate as well as a notebook with training materials the next time she sees Shelley.

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

4. Approve Minutes of the 4/19/21 & 5/26/21 Selectboard Meeting: There was a motion by Anne and second by Jacques to approve both sets of minutes with no changes. Motion passed.

A. Business from the Minutes: None

5. Librarian Report – MaryLee Daigle: (not present)

A. Status of New Computer from Grant and Discuss Outside Picnic Table: Tabled until the July 19, 2021, meeting.

B. Update on Signing Up for Training Classes: Tabled until the July 19, 2021, meeting.

6. Missisquoi River Basin Association (MRBA) – Ellen Fox: In addition to being on the Westfield Planning Commission, Ellen serves on the staff of MRBA. She stated MRBA is trying to connect with as many municipal leaders as possible. Their intention is to nurture a connection among the towns on land use issues that impact the Missisquoi River. Their aim is to open a conversation where towns can share information. She shared some insights with the Selectboard:

- New FEMA flood maps have been in the works for many years.
- Each town has a different way they approach the river. Because of this MRBA thought it would be good to have a social gathering where municipal leaders can meet and share ideas.
- There will be a social gathering of the towns along the river the end of July which will be at the Windy River Farm (wedding venue) in Westfield. Invitations will be sent to Selectboards, Planning Commissions, and Road Crews to meet and greet and collaborate as a system bigger than any single town.

Jacques asked Ellen to give a brief description of MRBA (www.mrbavt.com) vs. Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers (UMATR) Wild & Scenic Committee (<https://www.umatrwildandscenic.org/>)

- MRBA: was started 25 years ago by Paddlers and covers the entire Missisquoi River Basin. MRBA does project specific work including collecting water samples, planting trees, removing invasive species and promoting stewardship and education. MRBA spearheaded the Wild & Scenic Committee.
- Wild & Scenic: In December 2014, Vermont joined the prestigious network of the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System when a congressional action designated 46.1 miles of the Upper Missisquoi River and the Trout River as Wild & Scenic. These beautiful rivers now join other celebrated rivers in 40 U.S. states and commonwealths; these 208 designated rivers are preserved and safeguarded for their remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, and cultural values. The designated Wild and Scenic Rivers are managed by our local communities and hold river activities that protect, enhance, and encourage enjoyment of our rivers.

7. NEK Communications Union District (CUD) Update – Carrie Glessner Young: Tabled

8. Sign NVDA Letter of Intent to Participate in Municipal Roads Grants-In-Aid 2021/22: Jacques signed the Letter of Intent. The Clerk will submit by the June 25th deadline. The total grant is \$7,625 with \$6,100 being VTrans original base amount and \$1,524 the Town's 20% local match (cash or in-kind). The project must be completed by September 30, 2022.

9. Update on Roads: Eric Kennison, Road Commissioner: (not present)

A. Status of Radar Sign Battery-Jacques Couture: Jacques reported he spoke with a technician who suggested overhead electric wires could be interfering with the operation of the radar sign. Jacques repositioned the solar panel and the sign is now working.

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

A. Approve Warrants for Expenditures Dated: 4/22/21 \$7,014.19 (bills): 4/29/21 \$10,479.70 (bills); \$6,449.86 (payroll): 5/5/21 \$2,881.85 (bills): 5/13/21 \$4,593.55 (bills); \$1,663.00 (payroll): 5/26/21 \$16,793.52(bills); \$4,314.53 (payroll): 6/3/21 \$868.57 (bills): 6/11/21 \$1,266.74 (bills); \$4,150.12 (payroll): and 6/16/21 \$12,282.16 (bills): Motion by Jacques and second by Anne to approve the warrants as listed.

B. Review Budget Status Report, Checking Account Balance & Investment Accounts: (emailed in advance): Mary Lou reported the general fund account balance is \$186,553.02. There is a CD at NCFUCU in the amount of \$4,463.78 (reappraisal) and \$818.38 in various other accounts. The Edward Jones accounts are valued at \$166,621.77 reflecting an increase over last month's balance of \$165,643.06. Selectboard members reviewed the budget status reports for the general and highway funds prior to the meeting.

C. Evaluate Trash Pricing: Mary Lou stated it is too early to effectively evaluate the new trash pricing but so far, we are up \$114.80 for half of the month.

D. Update on Repayment Agreement with Jason Belisle: Mary Lou spoke with Jason about a payment Plan. To date no payment has been received. Mary Lou will draft a payment schedule and submit for the Selectboard's signatures.

E. NEMRC Contract: Mary Lou asked the Selectboard to sign the annual NEMRC contract agreement in the amount of \$5,000. The price went up considerable for all towns over last year because NEMRC had to upgrade their security protocols. There was a motion by Anne and second by Jacques to approve and sign the contract.

11. Discuss Possible Uses & Sign Request for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 Funding (\$52,030): LaDonna reported towns must take action to request ARPA funding by July 15, 2021. She also stated VLCT will be holding webinars and providing further municipal guidance for the use of these funds. LaDonna said

she learned that digitizing town land records is an acceptable use of these funds. She said if no one had an objection she would like to get some quotes from firms specializing in digitization of land records and bring them to the Selectboard for consideration. Anne and Jacques felt this would be acceptable. LaDonna stated it would have been much easier for lawyers, title searchers, property owners and surveyors during Covid shutdowns if the land records were available online. She said Karen scanned two general index books and they were posted on the towns website so title searchers could begin their work online and could email or call the town for scanned copies. This helped but was only a temporary solution. Every couple of months, as new recordings came into the office, hundreds of pages had to be rescanned keeping the records up to date. The ARPA funds will be paid in two equal payments of \$26,015 in 2021 and 2022

As recommended by VLCT, the following motions were made:

- There was a motion by Anne and second by Jacques that the Town of Westfield accept its allocation of Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funding (CLFRF) from the US Treasury, along with the Award Terms & Conditions and Assurances of Compliance with the Civil Rights Requirements that are requirements of accepting these funds. Motion passed.
- There was a motion by Anne and second by Jacques to appoint Jacques Couture to serve as the Town of Westfield's Authorized Representative as required by the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funding (CLFRF) from the US Treasury, to sign the Award Terms & Conditions and Assurances of Compliance with the Civil Rights Requirements by July 15, 2021. Motion passed.
- There was a motion by Anne and second by Jacques to name LaDonna Dunn to be the Contact Person for the Town of Westfield's CLFRF Award from U.S. Treasury. Motion passed.

13. Sign Quit-Claim Deed for Frank & Joan McAllister for North Hill Cemetery: Anne and Jacques signed the Quit-Claim Deed for the cemetery plots purchased by the McAllister's.

14. Discuss Request from Newport Ambulance for Meeting on 6/29/21 at 6 p.m. & Appoint Attendee:

LaDonna read an email she received from Jeff Johansen from Newport Ambulance requesting representatives from Selectboards attend a meeting at Newport Ambulance to discuss Missisquoi Valley Ambulance Service struggles to cover their service area. LaDonna said she forwarded the email to the Selectboard and also replied to Mr. Johansen asking if Missisquoi Valley Ambulance representatives had been invited to the meeting. She stated, to date, she had not received a reply from Mr. Johansen. Jen Piette, President of Missisquoi Valley Ambulance Service, and Roger Gosselin, a past member of the ambulance company, were present to discuss the matter with the Selectboard and provide historical background. They are planning to be at the upcoming meeting in Newport.

- Jen stated no representatives from the ambulance company were invited to the meeting. She said they are having staffing issues, as are all ambulance services across the country. She said they are in the best place they have been financially for many years. Jen said due to the leftover IRS debt from years and years ago, they have lost their 501c3 status thereby making it difficult to get grants. Jen explained that while they are still dealing with the past IRS debt, they are in 100% good standing with the IRS and are keeping up with their payment agreement with the IRS. It will still take many years to retire the debt, Jen explained.
- Roger stated the ambulance service needs better facilities to retain current members and recruit new members. He said this is the main recruiting/retention problem he has heard from people. Roger volunteered his services if a town representative was needed to be on an advisory board for the ambulance company. The Selectboard thanked him for his willingness to assist as well as thanking Jen for attending the meeting to explain the current situation.

It was decided that Anne would attend the June 29th meeting and report back to the Selectboard.

15. Recycling Update:

- Yves reported to Jacques that all of the paint cans that had been collected at recycling were turned in by Kelly Dean at the recent Hazardous Waste Day.
- Yves asked Richard McAllister Concrete for a quote to put in a 13' x 24' slab (6" thickness) under the rolloff. It will have a 3' 10" wall height (8" thickness). The Selectboard feels even though this was not a budgeted item, it is a necessary expense if the Recycling Center wants to continue accepting trash. It is working out well having the rolloff rather than dumpsters. There was a motion by Anne and second by Jacques to hire Richard McAllister for the job. Yves will be notified so he can contact Richard McAllister to get the work scheduled before winter.
- It was also reported the NEKWMD is requesting bids quotes for a new truck.

16. Other Business: None

17. Adjourn: Following a motion by Anne and second by Jacques, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Westfield Selectboard Approval: Date: 7/19/21 with Ø change(s)

Yves Daigle
Yves Daigle, Chair

Jacques Couture
Jacques Couture, Co-Chair

Anne Lazor

Minutes submitted by: LaDonna Dunn
LaDonna Dunn, Town Clerk & Selectboard Clerk