

Westfield Selectboard Minutes
November 15, 2021 @ 5:00 p.m. In-Person Meeting at the Westfield Town Office, 38 School St.

Town Officials Present: Selectboard members: Jacques Couture (Chair) and Anne Lazor; Assistant Treasurer, Lisa Deslandes; Town Clerk, LaDonna Dunn; Assistant Town Clerk, Karen Blais; and Road Commissioner, Eric Kennison (for a portion of the meeting)

Members of the Public: Jason Belisle (for a portion of the meeting)

1. Call Meeting to Order & Moment of Silence in Remembrance of Mary Lou Jacobs – Jacques Couture, Chair: Jacques called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. and asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of our friend and Treasurer Mary Lou.

2. Public Comment – 5 Minutes: None

3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda: Added 19C: Emerald Ash Borer; 19D: Format for Informational Meeting; and 19E: Community Center Events.

4. Approve Minutes of the 10/11/21 Meeting & Business from the Minutes: Tabled

5. Auditor Discussion – Kay Courson, Chair: Kay said it is a struggle to get three people on the Board of Auditors. They have been without a third Auditor for a couple of years. Kay is planning to retire at the end of her term in 2022. She said she thinks the other Auditor may resign at that time. Kay suggested having a professional auditor going forward. She recognizes it will be costly. The two current Auditors will do the audit and reports for 2021. She is waiting for confirmation that the other Auditor will be resigning. If this is the case, there will need to be a vote by Australian ballot to eliminate the Town Auditors and hire a professional CPA firm to complete the yearly audits. Jacques thanked Kay for her many years of service.

6. Town Health Officer to Discuss Mask Wearing – Shelley Martin:

- Shelley presented the Selectboard with a letter outlining her request as the Town Health Officer to require masks to be worn in establishments in the Town of Westfield which are open to the public. She pointed out that Orleans County is currently among the most active with Covid cases in the State. She recognizes the Governor has left the decisions up to the towns discretion to require masks to help bring down the case count. Shelley said she is appealing to the Selectboard to make such a policy. Jacques stated his opinion is to wait and see if the Governor mandates such a policy. Anne felt the data is confusing. It was decided to take no action now and to continue to discuss and monitor the situation. They thanked Shelley for her concern and asked to keep the lines of communication open.
- Maresca house in the Village: Shelley plans to send a certified letter asking the owners to contact the Town because of animals in the house and the possibility the sewage system is starting to fail. Shelley is waiting to hear back from the Fire Marshal to see if the house can be condemned.

7. Road Update:

A. Location of 2022 Better Roads Grant Project – Submitted with Jason Sevigny (AOT-District 9): The grant location is Buck Hill Road starting at Route 100 and going up to where the tar ends near Balance Rock Road. The grant would be for ditching, rock and culvert work.

B. Location of 2022 Grants in Aid Project & Status of Application Process: Eric has talked with Doug Morton and he said we can apply into July 2022. He doesn't have a location yet.

C. Status of Closing out 2021 Grants in Aid Project with Doug Morton (NVDA): The closeout for the Monteith Road grant will be submitted tomorrow to NVDA.

D. Discuss Applying for Municipal Roads Grants in Aid Program Equip. Purchase – LOI Due 11/19/21: Motion by Jacques and second by Anne to sign the Letter of Intent to apply for a leaf blower with an estimated cost of \$7,000; State maximum award of 80% is \$5,600; cash match required from the Town 20% \$1,400. Eric will talk to Doug Morton to see if this money can be used to purchase grader blades. If not, the second choice is a leaf blower.

E. Location of 2022 Wild and Scenic Grant Project & Status of Application Process – Deadline 12/1/21: The project being submitted is the culvert on the Loop Road near Emily Austin's house. It's currently a plastic culvert that is failing. LaDonna said Heather Johnson is going to write the grant by the deadline. Eric will provide pictures.

F. Completion of Paving Debra Dykeman's Driveway Before Winter – (phone Debra when ready for her): Eric stated the paving will be completed on the next warm stretch of weather.

G. Troubleshoot Broken Radar Sign on North End of Town: Jacques said he will get D & D Electric over to check the wiring. If the wirings in order, the batteries will be checked next.

H. Continue Discussion on Reclassifying Reservoir Road and Lane Road: Jason Sevigny sent paperwork for the Selectboard to review. The Selectboard feels the precedent is Reservoir Road is a class 3 road that the Town has never plowed in the winter.

I. Status of Closing Reservoir Road and Traffic Barricade Options Recommended by VLCT/PACIF: The cement barricades will be up on December 1st. Jacques is ordering the road closed signs.

J. Reminder of Highway Budget Meeting on 12/7/21 at 8 a.m. – Town Office: Eric will be present.

K. VAST Request: VAST officials asked Eric about the Town replacing a culvert on Verge Rd. The Selectboard decided to wait until later in 2022.

8. Appoint New Treasurer: There was a motion by Anne and second by Jacques to appoint Lisa Deslandes as the Treasurer until Town Meeting 2022 at which time she will run for the unexpired term of Mary Lou Jacobs, ending Town Meeting 2024. Lisa was congratulated and welcomed.

9. Treasurer's Report:

A. Approve Warrants for Expenditures Dated: 10/13/21 \$12,202.93 (bills) & \$3,949.13 (payroll); 10/21 \$1,773.43 (bills); 10/27 \$16,627.62 (bills) & \$3,724.38 (payroll); 11/4 \$12,543.60 (bills); 11/10 \$938,922.56 (bills-school payments) & \$5,326.29 (payroll): Motion by Anne and second by Jacques to approve the warrants as listed.

B. Review Budget Status Report, Checking Account Balance & Investment Accounts: (emailed in advance) Lisa reported she is working to get all of the grant income posted. The oil account shows being over budget because of pre-paying for 2022. She will be transferring money to the grader fund and to the Good Neighbor Fund.

C. Discuss/Approve Health Insurance Plan for LaDonna Dunn & Eric Kennison: LaDonna and Eric are happy with the switch last year to MVP. It was a substantial savings to the Town switching from Blue Cross/Blue Shield. The new rate for the Platinum1 MVP VT (Standard) Plan is \$810.54. There was a motion by Anne and second by Jacques to continue with the current Platinum MVP Plan.

D. Review Status of Authorized Signatures at Community National Bank & North Country Fed. Credit Union: Everyone has signed the new signature cards.

E. Discuss Timing of Adding New Treasurer to Edward Jones Account: Lisa will be added to the Edward Jones Account. After the new Selectboard member is elected, new signature cards will need to be made.

10. Recycling Update:

A. Follow-up on Ways to Heat the Recycling Area for Winter: Jacques reported the strips hanging from the door would cost approximately \$600. This would help stop the wind. We could possibly have patio heaters by the money table to help the person taking the money stay warm in the winter. Another idea was a shanty with a gas heater. It was felt this would have to be anchored but seems a feasible solution. Possibly Jason Belisle could make it for the town.

B. Discuss/Hire Recycling Attendant: Jacques would like to concentrate longer on developing a team approach. More people are expressing willingness to help occasionally. There are numerous teams forming.

C. Discuss Raising Tire Prices Due to Increase from NEKWMD & Doug Demers Offer to Dispose of Tires: Tire prices will be increased by \$.50/per tire. It was decided to discuss with Eric Kennison the possibility of him bringing tires to Lyndonville in his truck. The Selectboard thought it would be a more cost-effective way to dispose of the tires. Jacques will talk with Eric.

D. Determine Alternate Dates and/or Closing on Christmas and New Year's – both on Saturdays: It was decided to close on Christmas Day and open on Sunday, December 26th and open on New Years Day, Saturday, January 1st regular hours 8 a.m. until Noon. LaDonna will make flyers to hand out at recycling and promote in town, on social media and the municipal website.

11. Septic Problem at Community Center: Jacques reported the problem was the pump failed. It has been replaced and the septic pumped so hopefully the problem is resolved.

12. Loss Control Follow-up with Building Inspections – VLCT/PACIF: Jacques will visit the town buildings and review the list to make sure all the suggested corrections have been made and LaDonna will report the updates to VLCT/PACIF.

13. Ambulance Report from Roger Gosselin: Town Representative Roger Gosselin was unable to attend the Selectboard meeting but provided a detailed report. The discussion continues about the service towns pitching in to retire the IRS debt using ARPA funds. The Towns would like to get a letter from Kate at VLCT stating this is an acceptable usage of the funds.

14. Review American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds Including County Portion: Westfield is receiving \$52,029.81 from the State (NEU Amount) and \$96,536.42 for the County portion for a total of \$148,566.23. We have received in 2021 the first payment of \$26,014.91 from the State and \$48,268.21 for the County portion. The balance will be paid in 2022. This money will be put in a separate fund for tracking and set aside until it can be determined how it will be used and who will determine how it is spent. The Town has five years to use the money.

15. Resignation of Yvan LaPlume and Shawn Baraw from Planning Commission: LaDonna read letters of resignation from Yvan LaPlume and Shawn Baraw. With appreciation for the years of service, the Selectboard accepted their resignations. The Planning Commission members are discussing replacements and will make recommendations to the Selectboard soon.

16. Sheriff's Report for October: Three patrol hours were reported with one ticket issued and \$249 in fines.

17. Update on Cemeteries and Discussion with Heritage Memorials – LaDonna Dunn: LaDonna met Heritage Memorials and Todd Morey (Sexton) at the North Hill Cemetery, and they gave her some pointers on how the graves should be dug and filled back in.

18. Executive Session if Necessary: There was motion by Anne and second by Jacques to enter Executive Session to discuss a contract situation. Concluding the discussion there was a motion by Anne and second by Jacques to exit Executive Session. Lisa will draft the appropriate contract for signatures.

19. Other Business:

A. Reminder of Budget Meetings – 12/7/21 (Highway) 8 a.m. & 12/21/21 (General Fund) 8 a.m.

B. Discuss Whether 12/20/21 Selectboard Meeting is Needed: The regular monthly meeting on 12/20/21 at 5 p.m. was kept on the calendar.

C. Emerald Ash Borer: LaDonna reported there was an email that indicated the Emerald Ash Borer has been confirmed in Bakersfield. This means that Westfield is now considered within the "infested area" (a 10-mile radius from a known infested site). The purpose of the email is to inform town leadership within the new infestation area and to share resources.

D. Format for Informational Meeting: Moderator, Pat Sagui and LaDonna are working out a format for the Informational Meeting which will include a 5-minute introduction by each candidate running for Selectboard and a question-and-answer period with rebuttal and closing comments of one minute per candidate.

E. Community Center Events: LaDonna discussed with the Selectboard their opinions about allowing the scheduled events at the Community Center during the month of December to occur with the current level of covid in Orleans County. The Selectboard felt the events were safe to hold if the renters followed the suggested guidelines of social distancing and mask wearing. LaDonna said she has discussed this recommendation with the parties.

20. Adjourn: Following a motion by Anne and second by Jacques the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Westfield Selectboard Approval: Date: 1/13/22 with 0 change(s)

Jacques Couture
Jacques Couture, Chair

Minutes Submitted by: LaDonna Dunn
LaDonna Dunn, Town Clerk

Anne Lazor
Anne Lazor