

**Westfield Selectboard & Budget Meeting Continuance
Minutes**

January 26, 2022 @ 6:00 p.m. In-Person Meeting at the Westfield Town Office, 38 School St. or Zoom

Town Officials Present: Selectboard members: Jacques Couture (Chair), Anne Lazor (Vice-Chair), and Richard Degre; Treasurer, Lisa Deslandes; Town Clerk, LaDonna Dunn; and Assistant Town Clerk, Karen Blais.

Members of the Public: Nate Deslandes

1. Call Meeting to Order -- Jacques Couture, Chair: Jacques called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. Public Comment – 5 Minutes:

A. Anne Lazor commented the Ambulance will not be asking the towns for ARPA money to help with the IRS debt during this election cycle. It will be considered later in the year after more clarification is available from VLCT.

3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda: Added 13B Recycling Schedule for February and 13C Internet Connectivity.

4. Discuss Troy Volunteer Fire Departments Dispatching Change to Newport Police Department – Bobby Jacobs: Fire Chief Bobby Jacobs shared the E-9-1-1 dispatching service that has been provided for free thus far by the Vermont State Police, is not going to be available any longer. He got a price from the Newport Police Department for the dispatching service. He wants the towns of Westfield and Troy to share the expense which was quoted by the Newport PD Police Chief to be \$3,511.63. He feels the best way to approach this is to add it to his Town appropriation request (an additional \$1,755.82 per town) and explain the increase in the letter in the Town Report. Richard made a motion in favor of this approach and Anne seconded. All agreed. Bobby will resubmit his Town Report with the updated figures and information to the voters.

5. Librarian's Report: Tabled

6. Review/Changes/Approve FY22 Highway Budget with Road Commissioner, Eric Kennison: There was a motion by Richard and second by Jacques to accept the budget with the changes as discussed. Passed unanimously.

7. Review/Changes/Approve FY22 General Fund Budget: Motion by Anne and second by Richard to approve the general fund budget as presented. Approved unanimously.

A. Discuss Professional Accountant Audit Fees Paid by Local Towns: LaDonna reported she spoke with a lawyer from the Municipal Assistance Center at VLCT and they confirmed that unless the Selectboard or voters want it, the hired public accountant hired for an annual audit doesn't have to be an in-depth, forensic audit. This is if the voters approve switching from Town elected Auditors to a professional accountant. If the vote fails, the Selectboard will need to appoint Auditors until the following Town Meeting at which time Auditors are put back on the ballot or the questions of a professional accountant audit is brought before the voters again. LaDonna also stated she communicated with some of the surrounding towns and learned they are paying between \$8,000 to \$20,000 annually for a professional audit. It is the Selectboards understanding that Kay Courson will not be running again this year when her term expires and Karen O'Donnell is resigning leaving no one running for the three Auditor positions.

8. Discuss Town Meeting March 1, 2022:

A. Review/Changes/Approve Draft of Warning for Town Meeting: The Warning was reviewed and Articles 37 and 38 listed below were calculated. There was a motion by Richard and second by Anne to approve the warning. Passed unanimously.

✓ **Calculate Figures to Complete Articles 37 & 38: The following calculations were made for the warning.**

- Article 37: Shall the voters approve general government fund expenditures of \$302,721.75, of which \$149,605.39 shall be raised by non-tax revenues and \$153,116.36 shall be raised by municipal taxes? The proposed 2022 budget is up 9.89% from the proposed budget of 2021.

transparency's sake, the following: Note: Appropriations are not included in the above general government fund expenditures. Voter approved appropriations will be added as presented in the Selectboards budget in the Town Report.

- o Article 38: Shall the voters approve highway fund expenditures of \$475,233, of which \$83,020 shall be raised by non-tax revenues and \$392,213 shall be raised by municipal taxes. The proposed 2022 budget is up 5.32% from the proposed budget of 2021.

B. Schedule Time for Selectboard to Sign Warning: Richard and Anne will sign by Thursday so LaDonna can meet the statutory posting deadline requirement of Sunday, January 30th.

C. Discuss Format for Town Informational Meeting on February 22nd at 6 p.m.: The Board agreed the meeting would be via Zoom and Pat has agreed to be the Moderator. LaDonna will be at the office facilitating the meeting because this will provide the best internet connection.

9. Discuss Concerns about Reapportionment (Redistricting): The Board of Civil Authority agreed, via email, they did not have an issue with the redistricting plan. There were no changes to Westfield's district. Westfield remained as one district.

10. Discuss Changing Signers at CNB (General Fund and CD's); Edward Jones & North Country Fed. Credit Union: Lisa said Richard is already on the Edward Jones accounts. Richard's name will be added to the Community National Bank accounts. LaDonna will initiate the paperwork with the bank and all current signers need to go sign again at the Troy branch.

11. Sheriff's Report for December 2021: There were 24.75 patrol hours with no fines issued and no arrests.

12. Executive Session for Personnel Issues (if needed): None

13. Other Business:

A. Schedule Next Meeting Date: February 14, 2022 at 5 p.m.

B. Recycling Schedule for February: The Recycling Attendant schedule was completed for February with Jacques, Anne, Richard and Dennis Vincent each taking a week. They will find their own helper.

C. Internet Connectivity: Nate Deslandes from Kennison Road came to talk about how they can get internet at his house on Kennison Road. They need it for their business and their children's schooling. Anne said Nate Purvis is someone we should be talking with. Jacques will speak with David Snedeker from NVDA to see if he can help in this area.

14. Adjourn: Following a motion by Richard and seconded by Anne, all agreed to adjourn at 8:10 p.m.

Westfield Selectboard Approval: Date: 2/14/22 with 0 change(s)

Jacques Couture
Jacques Couture, Chair

Minutes Submitted by: LaDonna Dunn
LaDonna Dunn, Town Clerk

Anne Lazor
Anne Lazor, Vice Chair

Richard Degre
Richard Degre