

Westfield Selectboard Minutes
December 1, 2023 @ 12:30 p.m. In-Person Meeting at the Westfield Town Office, 38 School St.

Town Officials Present: Jacques Couture, Selectboard; Richard Degre, Selectboard; Dennis Vincent, Selectboard; LaDonna Dunn, Town Clerk; Lisa Deslandes, Treasurer; Niki Dunn, Selectboard Clerk

Others Present: Pat Sagui, Planning Commission Chair (By Phone, Partial Attendance)

1. **Call Meeting to Order – Jacques Couture, Chair:** Jacques Couture called the meeting to order at 12:43pm.
2. **Public Comment – 5 minutes:**
 - a. Carrie Glessner would like to attend the next board meeting to give an update. The board would like to have her attend, LaDonna will schedule it.
 - b. Pat Sagui inquired about the hiring of EAS, she would like to know who is going to call to let them know they are hired. The board spoke with Pat by phone, and it was agreed that Pat will make the call. Jacques would like Pat to be the point of contact for EAS but would like the board kept in the loop. Pat questioned if the board would like to meet with EAS in person to get the next steps going. The board felt that if it can be done through email or a zoom meeting that would work for them, if they need to meet in person they can. Pat will have them send the contract to the board to look over before it is sent to the state for approval. Jacques wondered if going through the contract would need to be done at a warned meeting, but Pat felt that only approving the contract would need to be done at a warned meeting.
 - c. A few chairs that were at the library were donated years ago by the Paxman family, and they are upset that the town got rid of them. Jenn Stelma will attend the next selectboard meeting to discuss the issue. The family would like to be paid \$633 for the costs they are out in attempting to retrieve the chairs. LaDonna did note that there is no current policy regarding donations at the library, however the Board of Trustees is working on one.
3. **Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda:** Items above in public comments.
4. **Approve 11-13-2023 Selectboard Minutes:** Richard Degre motioned to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2023, selectboard meeting, Dennis Vincent seconded. Motion passed.
5. **Employee Policy and Procedures Handbook – Lisa Deslandes, Treasurer:** The board was provided with an updated copy to look through. Richard questioned the need for

offering insurance to employees who are not full time, around 30 hours a week. LaDonna explained that it would be beneficial if the Town Clerk's schedule changed at some point, and they were only working 24-30 hours a week with the assistant clerk working the other hours. LaDonna also let the board know that most towns in Vermont pay 100% of their employees' insurance, Westfield is currently paying 80%. VLCT offers dental insurance that LaDonna would like to investigate. The board can also look at offering family plan insurance in the future. LaDonna will bring some numbers to the next meeting so the board has a better idea on what they would like to offer. The board reviewed the rest of the wording and made changes where needed. Jacques questioned the familial relationship wording, and it was decided that selectboard members can always recuse themselves from voting if needed. This is a hard scenario to avoid in small towns.

6. **Sign Ambulance Service Agreement for FY24:** The board reviewed and signed the agreement. Richard motioned to approve the Ambulance Service Agreement for FY24, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

7. **Draft General Fund Budget FY24:** The board went through and did an initial review of the budget numbers. The selectboard stipends were increased by \$100 ^{for FY24} per year, per member. This was done in looking towards the future, making sure future board members would not be discouraged from serving due to a lower stipend amount. The board discussed the money from Transco that was received previously, it was noted that it was a one-time adjustment and not money that the town will continue to receive. Lisa noted that having the Edward Jones numbers in the budget may not be necessary as that money constantly fluctuates due to current market value. She will see what November looks like and determine after that. Continuing to have a delinquent tax collector was discussed. It was determined that the town office staff does the majority of the work to collect the delinquent taxes so keeping that money within the towns budget may make more sense. Removing this elected position may require a vote by Australian Ballot. LaDonna will look into how it needs to be done. LaDonna would like the tires at recycling picked up around the end of the year to get the cost all in the same year's budget. Lisa got some quotes from Mr. Clean to pressure wash the buildings and windows at the library, community center and town office. The quotes were \$380 for the town office, \$450 for the community center and \$324 for the library. It was agreed that these were things that needed to be done and the costs were added to the maintenance budget lines for each building. Lisa will also get a quote from Mr. Clean on cleaning the upstairs in the library. Getting some electrical outlets installed to hook up the cameras in the library will also need to be checked out. It was discussed how ARPA funds that are spent would show up in the budget. Lisa explained that since that money does not need to be raised by taxes that she will do a separate sheet to show what the funds are being spent on and what has been allocated but not spent yet. LaDonna noted that the state would like to see all the ARPA funds allocated by town meeting 2024. Richard felt that the community center could use some of the ARPA money to get painted and get some windows replaced. The furnaces in all the buildings also need to be serviced, Richard will call Nadeau's. Dennis noted that the mold at the library is starting to come back. They will have Roger look into removing the sheetrock and possibly using some mold killing paint. The cost of the streetlights was discussed. It is currently \$4,900 per year. Jacques wondered if some type

of solar power could be used to light them instead. Workman's Compensation is based on salaries, which is why it is going up. It was discussed previously to offer Yvan Laplume a raise for taking care of the Westfield Cemetery as he has not received a raise in his stipend since he began the job. The board agreed to raise his stipend by \$300 per year. The playground maintenance fund was increased to \$2,500 for the pickleball striping that is to be added in the spring as well as a load of bark chips. Lisa will call to check on pricing for the bark chips. The community center supplies line for the FY23 actual includes \$600 for chairs that were paid for by donation. The recycling per capita fee is increasing slightly, and the hauling fee is increasing as well. It was agreed upon to move the Montgomery and Troy Fire Department budgets out of the appropriations section and into the general budget.

- a. **Salaries:** COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) is 3.2% this year. With the COLA the salaries for FY24 are as follows:
 - i. **Town Clerk:** \$49,000
 - ii. **Treasurer:** \$20,000
 - iii. **Office Assistant:** \$26,000
 - iv. **Assistant Treasurer:** \$5,000
 - v. **Librarian:** \$13,500, The librarian salary increases hourly pay to \$18, starting January 1st, 2024. Due to this increase in hourly pay the COLA adjustment that usually happens in March will not apply.
 - vi. **Recycling Payroll:** \$12,000
- b. **Budget for Three Elections in 2024:** There are three elections in FY24, so the election officials budget line is set at \$2,700 to cover the costs.
- c. **Discuss CTCL Elections Website:** LaDonna explained that there is an organization making websites for towns for elections. It costs \$300 a year to maintain it. This would be separate from the town's website and would provide information on how to get an absentee ballot, where to vote, etc.. LaDonna felt that this information is already available on the Secretary of States website, and she would prefer to work on updating the website the town already has instead. The board agreed.

8. Other Business:

- a. **Confirm Details for Caroling on the Common, 12-15-23, 6pm, Westfield Common:** Jacques spoke with Debbie Breault and she's all set with providing food and drink. Richard spoke to Bobby Jacobs, and he is all set as well. LaDonna got the items for all the kids goody bags. Lisa wondered if some of the can money could be used to get some Christmas lights for the common. LaDonna noted that they make some more commercial grade lights that may last longer.
- b. **Digital Board:** Lisa will look into the cost of getting a digital signboard. This would replace the signboard currently in use. It was discussed where the best place would be to put it and the town garage and library were two good options.

9. **Motion to Recess Meeting Until 12-4-23 at 4pm to Draft the Highway Budget:** At 3:46pm Dennis motioned to recess the meeting until December 4th at 4pm, Richard seconded. Motion passed.

Westfield Selectboard Approval Date: 12/4/23 with 1 change(s)

WESTFIELD SELECTBOARD:

X Jacques Couture
Jacques Couture
Selectboard Chair

X Richard Degre
Richard Degre
Selectboard

X Dennis Vincent
Dennis Vincent
Selectboard

