

Westfield Selectboard Public Hearing for Zoning Bylaws
March 18, 2024 @ 5PM
In-Person Meeting at the Westfield Town Office, 38 School St.

Town Officials Present: Jacques Couture, Selectboard Chair; Dennis Vincent, Selectboard; Richard Degre, Selectboard; LaDonna Dunn, Town Clerk; Lisa Deslandes, Treasurer; Niki Dunn, Selectboard Clerk; Ellen Fox, Planning Commission; Will Young, Zoning Administrator; Pat Sagui, Planning Commission Chair; Loren Petzoldt, Planning Commission

Others Present: Gary Sloan

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1. **Call Hearing to Order – Jacques Couture, Chair:** Jacques called the meeting to order at 5PM.
 2. **Review Hearing Procedures:** Pat reviewed the hearing procedures. Ellen explained that if the selectboard recommends significant changes then the approval meeting would need to be warned 15 days in advance. Any minor changes could be approved at this meeting. Pat noted that the bylaws can also be amended at any time in the future; and the process would not need to be as long as this full bylaw rework process took.
 3. **Public Questions/Comments:** Gary Sloan, feels that the bylaws as proposed are too restrictive. He feels that the number of permits required would limit people from wanting to purchase homes here. Ellen noted that the bylaws regarding fencing and driveways are not being changed, those bylaws already existed. The Planning Commission put out a chart showing what exactly has changed in the new update. Will noted that driveway permits are approved by the road commissioner currently and that will not be changing. Dennis just sees more permitting required for higher elevations, not any added restrictions. Jacques noted that a lot of work has been put into these new bylaws.
 4. **Create a Development Review Board:** Pat explained that this board will take effect when the zoning bylaws are adopted, and it will dissolve the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Loren noted that the Development Review Board can be made up of the current Planning Commission members or it can be other people. Ellen noted the board is generally made up of 5 members. She would like to set staggered terms, and the board will suggest two alternates for the Selectboard to approve. Will explained that anything that needs approval based on the bylaws comes to the Development Review Board, the Planning Commission only makes changes to bylaws. These could be two different boards, or they can be the same people, but they will need to only discuss relevant items at their respective meetings. The Development Review Board will not discuss Planning Commission items at their meetings and vice versa. This board will be created during the Selectboard meeting following this hearing.
 5. **Adjourn Hearing:** Richard motion to adjourn at 5:20PM, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

Westfield Selectboard Approval Date: 4/15/24 with Ø change(s)

X Jacques Couture
Jacques Couture
Selectboard Chair

X Richard Degre

Richard Degre
Selectboard

X Dennis Vincent

Dennis Vincent
Selectboard

Westfield Selectboard Meeting Minutes
March 18, 2024, Following Selectboard Public Hearing @ 5PM
In-Person Meeting at the Westfield Town Office, 38 School St.

Town Officials Present: Jacques Couture, Selectboard Chair; Dennis Vincent, Selectboard; Richard Degre, Selectboard; LaDonna Dunn, Town Clerk; Lisa Deslandes, Treasurer; Niki Dunn, Selectboard Clerk; Ellen Fox, Planning Commission (Partial Attendance); Will Young, Zoning Administrator (Partial Attendance); Pat Sagui, Planning Commission Chair (Partial Attendance); Loren Petzoldt, Planning Commission (Partial Attendance); Eric Kennison, Road Commissioner (Partial Attendance); Jennifer Johnson, Librarian Hitchcock Memorial Museum and Library (Partial Attendance)

Others Present: Gary Sloan (Partial Attendance); Carter Finegan, NVDA, MERP Representative (Partial Attendance)

1. **Call Meeting to Order – Jacques Couture, Chair:** Jacques called the meeting to order at 5:20 PM.
2. **Public Comment – 5 Minutes:** No public comments.
3. **Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda:** Pat has no updates on the village wastewater system, #21 to be tabled. 5A was added, to Create a Development Review Board.
4. **Approve Minutes:**
 - A. **Selectboard Meeting Minutes 2-12-24: (emailed in advance)** Richard motioned to approve the Selectboard meeting minutes from 2/12/24, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.
 - B. **Joint Selectboard Meeting Minutes on Rasputitsa Bike Event 2-21-24: (emailed in advance)** LaDonna noted that there have been some changes made to the contract, and the lawyer approved it. Anthony, the race coordinator, let LaDonna know they are trying to re-route the race going up Ballground Road. Jacques noted that Gaston Bathalon is working on setting up a zoom meeting to update everyone in the next couple of weeks. Dennis motioned to approve the joint selectboard meeting minutes from 2/21/24, Richard seconded. Motion passed.
 - C. **Town Meeting Minutes 3-5-24: (emailed in advance)** Jacques noted that the Pledge of Allegiance should be marked as "to the flag of the United States of America". Pat had noted a clarification she would like made in the wording regarding the delinquent tax collector article. Dennis motioned to approve the town meeting minutes from 3/5/24 with those changes made, Richard seconded. Motion passed.
5. **Adopt Zoning Bylaws:** The Selectboard acknowledged the large amount of time and work that the Planning Commission put into getting the bylaws updated. Dennis motioned to adopt the zoning bylaws; Richard seconded. Motion passed.
 - A. **Development Review Board (DRB):** Richard motioned to create a Development Review Board and to appoint the current Planning Commission members with two alternate positions, with terms of three years, staggered to start, Dennis seconded. Motion passed. Each member's beginning terms, and the alternate members will be decided upon at the Development Review Board's organizational meeting. The alternate members' names will then be brought to a Selectboard meeting for approval. Ellen explained how the record of the bylaw adoption will work. She noted that there is now a 45-day appeal period, and at the end of the 45 days the Zoning Board can start issuing permits under the new bylaws. Any permit already issued is still under the old bylaws. Any permits issued during the 45 days needs to

be issued under both the new and old bylaws. The Development Review Board will try to come back to the Selectboard with their alternates by the May Selectboard meeting.

6. Organizational Tasks/Appointments (24 V.S.A. §871):

- A. Elect Chair & Vice Chair (currently Jacques Couture and Richard Degre):** Richard motioned to elect Jacques Couture as chair, Dennis seconded. Motion passed. Dennis motioned to elect Richard Degre as Vice-Chair, Jacques seconded. Motion passed.
- B. Elect Selectboard Clerks (currently LaDonna Dunn and Niki Dunn (minutes)):** Dennis motioned to elect LaDonna Dunn and Niki Dunn as selectboard clerks, Richard seconded. Motion passed.
- C. Oath Given to New Selectboard Member, Richard Degre, by Town Clerk:** Richard signed his oath.
- D. Establish Regular Meeting Dates and Times (currently 3rd Monday each month at 5pm):** Richard motioned to keep the current meeting dates and times, 3rd Monday of each month at 5pm, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.
- E. Re-adopt Selectboard Rules of Procedure: (emailed //in advance)** Dennis motioned to re-adopt the Selectboard Rules of Procedure, Richard seconded. Motion passed.
- F. Designate Three Posting Locations (currently Clerks Office, General Store and Recycling Center):** Richard motioned to select the Clerk's Office, the General Store, and the Recycling Center as the three posting locations, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.
- G. Select Newspaper of Record (currently Newport Daily Express):** Dennis motioned to use the Newport Daily Express as the newspaper of record with The Chronicle as a backup, Richard seconded. Motion passed.
- H. Appointment of Tree Warden (currently the Selectboard):** Richard motioned to appoint the selectboard as the Tree Wardens, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.
- I. Appointment of Pound Keeper (currently Normand Piette):** Richard motioned to appoint Normand Piette as the pound keeper, Dennis seconded. Motion passed. The board will ask Mike Jacobs if he is willing to be the pound keeper on the chance that Normand no longer wants to do it.
- J. Appoint NEKWMD Supervisor and Alternate (currently Jacques Couture and Richard Degre):** Richard motioned to appoint Jacques Couture as Supervisor and Dennis Vincent and Richard Degre as alternates, Jacques seconded. Motion passed.
- K. Re-adopt Purchasing Policy: (emailed in advance)** Dennis motioned to re-adopt the Purchasing Policy, Richard seconded. Motion passed.
- L. Re-adopt Policy Regarding Conflict of Interest and Ethical Conduct: (emailed in advance)** Dennis motioned to re-adopt the Policy Regarding Conflict of Interest and Ethical Conduct, Richard seconded. Motion passed.

7. Update on Energy Audit Results (MERP) – Carter Finegan, NVDA: (emailed in advance) Carter Finegan from NVDA joined to update the board on the energy audit results and the funding becoming available. The implementation grant application has not been released yet, so she is gathering ideas on what the board feels are the most important things they would like to focus on. She explained that the energy audits are just drafts, and changes can be made to anything that is incorrect or may be missing. Westfield ranks high on the data the state is using to do the updates, which should help put them at the

top of the list once the funding becomes available. Carter went through the energy audits with the board and made notes of all the energy upgrades the board would like to do at each of the town buildings and what items on the audits do not need to be updated or changed. Carter will let the board know when the grant application opens. The timeline is currently looking at funding being awarded near the end of the year with work to start next year.

8. Highway Update – Eric Kennison, Road Commissioner:

- A. Rate Sheet Dated 1/1/24-12/31/24:** Eric brought a new rate sheet to the board that included increases in equipment usage prices. Jacques let Eric know that it would be nice to do all rate increases when the budget is being put together in the fall/winter. Eric noted that he decides his rates at this time of the year, and things like fuel prices, insurance rates and raises to his employees all factor into these rate increases. Richard had a question on invoices when they are marked as "truck and man". Eric explained that it should just say "truck" and that the labor is billed separately. Lisa noted that making this clearer would help with FEMA and the audits. Dennis motioned to accept the new rate sheet; Richard seconded. Motion passed.
- B. Letter of Understanding: (emailed in advance)** Lisa noted that the only change was to the insurance section. She would like to have separate contracts drawn up for the two employees next time to describe each employee's health insurance benefits individually. Richard motioned to approve the Letter of Understanding; Dennis seconded. Motion passed.
- C. Grant for Taft Brook Culvert: (emailed in advance)** Ted Sedell from Orleans County Conservation District told Jacques he might be willing to change which culverts are done first and thinks he may be able to get them fully funded. He will reach out to the board with more information.
- D.** Eric informed that board that he is currently working with his accountant to fix an income tax problem created during 2020. This problem was already fixed with the other employees, but it is taking more back and forth with the IRS to get this cleared up for Eric. He will let the board know how much this ends up costing him once it is all fixed.

9. Library Update – Jennifer Johnson, Librarian: Jennifer updated the board on two grant applications recently submitted. One is a capital grant, where they requested \$30,000. The first round is for larger libraries and the second round of awards is for small and rural libraries. The second grant submitted is for \$300 for hiring a performer to come at the start of the summer reading program. Jennifer has reached out to Kevin Clarkson, who owns 802 reptiles. He does library presentations where he brings snakes, and she feels this would be a great kickoff for the summer reading program. She noted that more people are accessing the library, including many people from outside of town. She noted that the toilet is not flushing well, it's not as powerful as it could be. Richard feels it may need to be updated, and they should install a handicap accessible toilet if they replace it. Members of the board will look into it.

- A. Library Website/ Facebook Page:** Jennifer would like to have a separate Facebook page for the library, currently she is having LaDonna post library updates on the town's Facebook page. To do this she would need to create a dummy account to then attach the library page to so there would be no issues transferring the account to a new librarian in the future. Jacques questioned if the Board of Trustees has a social media policy. Jennifer can get one ready for the next trustee meeting. Jennifer would also like to start a separate website to highlight parts of the library collection and the library programs available. The board is okay with this.
- B.** Lisa questioned if the board would still like the pressure washing to be done at the library. The board agreed to still have it done. Lisa will have them clean the inside of the windows and do the dusting also. Lisa will email the quote for all the work to the board once she receives it.

10. Discuss and Appoint Delinquent Tax Collector: Dennis motioned to appoint Lisa Deslandes, Town Treasurer, as the Delinquent Tax Collector, Richard seconded. Motion passed. Lisa checked with other towns to see how they handled their delinquent tax collector position's pay. The towns she checked with all give the 8% penalty monies to their treasurer if they are handling the delinquent taxes. For 2023 the delinquent taxes 8% penalty goes to Joyce Crawford. The board will discuss further how to handle the money from the 8% penalty going forward.

11. Treasurers Report – Lisa Deslandes:

- A. Approve Warrants 2/13/24 \$12,932.82 (bills), \$6,013.23 (payroll); 2/21/24 \$8,002.23 (bills); and 2/28/24 \$30,043.78 (bills), \$6,851.55 (payroll):** Richard motioned to approve the warrants, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.
- B. Review General & Highway Fund Budget Status Reports (emailed in advance):** Informational, no questions on the budget reports.
- C. Review Investments: (emailed in advance)** Investments were reviewed, no questions.
- D. Edward Jones CD Expiring, Grader \$4,996.90:** One of the grader CD's expired in February, and another grader CD is expiring in April. Rates for CD's through Edward Jones are good right now. Lisa will look at the rates at Community National Bank and put the money from both expired/expiring CD's wherever she can get the best rate.
- E. Personnel Policy - Exempt Employees: (emailed in advance)** Lisa made changes to the policy regarding salary employees and holiday pay. Salary employees do not receive extra holiday pay whether they take the holiday off or not as they are paid their same weekly salary no matter the number of hours/days worked. Dennis motioned to accept the employee personnel policy, Richard seconded. Motion passed.

12. Discuss Purchase of Map Cabinet Storage Accessories: (emailed in advance) To fit the rest of the town tax maps into the new map cabinet we will need some more plastic storage sheets. The list of supplies needed contains the materials both Danny Young and Niki Dunn need to get the map cabinet completed. Richard motioned to approve the \$671 purchase of map cabinet storage accessories using money from the restoration fund account, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

13. Update on Vault Digitization with ARPA Funds:

- A. Scanning In-House Vs. External Company:** LaDonna informed the board that the town already has the NEMRC Land Records module. This module allows the land records to be put online. Niki spoke with Katie Buckley about the use of ARPA funds to pay for in-house digitization. She let Niki know that the funds can be used to pay a current employee to do the digitization. LaDonna noted that to have an outside company do the work it would cost \$2.25 per instrument digitized and they would need to remove the land record books from the office while the work is being done. Having this work done in-house will save a significant amount of money. NEMRC recommended two different scanners that other towns have used to scan the records. There will be some additional costs still associated with NEMRC to get this fully setup and a desktop computer will need to be used to do the scanning and for public access once the records are available online.
- B. Approve Purchase of Scanner: (emailed in advance)** Richard motioned to approve the purchase of the Epson printer, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

14. Orleans County Tax (Rate of Taxation .0135, \$13,759.50 total due): (emailed in advance) Information. The town budgeted \$12,000 for this.

15. Recycling Update:

A. Recycling Schedule for April:

- April 6th – Jacques Couture
- April 13th – Maurice Doyon, Roger Tetreault
- April 20th – Richard Degre
- April 27th – Dennis Vincent

16. Sign Engagement Letter Bauer Gravel Farnham, LLP: (emailed in advance) Richard motioned to hire Bauer Gravel Farnham LLP as the town attorney and to use them for tax sales, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

17. Sheriff's Report for December 2023 & January 2024: (emailed in advance) December 2023 report included 1 Ticket, 3 Warnings, \$105 in Fines and 1 Arrest for a total of 18.75 hours. January 2024 report included 9 Tickets, 15 Warnings, \$1,070 in Fines and 1 Arrest for a total of 72.25 hours.

18. Approve Westfield General Store Liquor License: Dennis motioned to approve the Westfield General Store Liquor License; Richard seconded. Motion passed.

19. Discuss Mowing Contract: Ryan Bathalon will do spring cleaning if the board wants him to. Richard will talk with him about doing the spring cleaning and will ask him if his rates are staying the same for this year.

20. Update Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP): (emailed in advance) Jacques noticed that Dan Backus needs to be changed to Maurice Doyon.

A. Appoint a Second Voting Member to the Regional Emergency Management Committee (REMC): Dennis motioned to appoint Roger Tetreault; Richard seconded. Motion passed.

21. Update on Village Wastewater Project – Pat Sagui, Planning Commission Chair: No updates, tabled.

22. Executive Session (if needed): None needed.

23. Other Business:

A. Possible Dates for Annual AOT Meeting: LaDonna will be out of town during the originally suggested date. The board suggested a new date of April 12th at 12:30pm. LaDonna will check to see if that meeting date and time will work for the AOT members.

24. Adjourn: Richard motioned to adjourn at 9:10pm, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

Westfield Selectboard Approval Date: 4/15/24 with 0 change(s)

X Jacques Couture
Jacques Couture
Selectboard Chair

X Richard Degre

Richard Degre
Selectboard

X Dennis Vincent

Dennis Vincent
Selectboard