

WESTFIELD SELECTBOARD MEETING

Minutes

June 16th, 2025 – 5 p.m.

Westfield Town Office, 38 School Street

Meeting Recordings Available to View at <https://www.youtube.com/@TownofWestfieldVT>

Town Officials Present: Jacques Couture, Selectboard Chair; Richard Degre, Selectboard; Dennis Vincent, Selectboard; LaDonna Dunn, Town Clerk; Lisa Deslandes, Treasurer; Niki Dunn, Selectboard Clerk; Eric Kennison, Road Commissioner (Partial Attendance); Pat Sagui, Development Review Board (Partial Attendance); Mike Piper, Constable (Partial Attendance); Karen Blais, Library Board of Trustees (Partial Attendance); Rebecca Velazquez, Library Board of Trustees (Partial Attendance); Will Young, Zoning Administrator (Partial Attendance); Shelley Martin, Lister & Town Health Officer (Partial Attendance); Danny Young, Lister (Partial Attendance)

Others Present: Daniel Pellerin, Edward Jones (Partial Attendance)

1. **Call Meeting to Order – Jacques Couture, Chair:** Jacques called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.
2. **Public Comment – 5 Minutes:** None
3. **Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda:** 13A Propane Tank, 19D Resignation Letter and 19E Trash on Property were added.
4. **Approve Minutes: (emailed in advance)**
 - a. **Approve Minutes of the 5-19-25 Selectboard Meeting:** Dennis motioned to approve the minutes from the May 19th Selectboard meeting, Richard seconded. Motion passed.
5. **Edward Jones Investments - Daniel Pellerin:** Daniel Pellerin from Edward Jones gave a presentation regarding the current town investments and how they work. The Library Board of Trustees is looking to get funds each year from the investment dividends and inquired about that. Daniel explained to them how they could achieve that and roughly the amount they may be able to draw each year without depleting the funds. He noted that the grader/cemetery funds currently invested in CD's will be maturing at the beginning of next year and he needs to know what to do with those funds. He recommended putting \$30-\$40,000 into a CD for 5 years since the Selectboard doesn't plan on using the money for the grader anytime soon. The Library Board questioned why the money for the library was originally put into investments. Jacques explained that the library used to be funded mostly from investment income and only asked the town for \$1,500 a year to put towards their budget. Now the library is funded solely through the general budget and property taxes. Richard then explained that certain building maintenance issues came up over the years and they used some of the investment funds to fix those issues. Rebecca noted that the long-term goal would be to become a 501C3 non-profit which would give them more control over the library funds. Lisa explained that any extra funds the library receives from the investments can go into the general fund and she can move the funds into the library's specific accounts.
6. **Library Report – Karen Blais & Rebecca Velazquez: (emailed in advance)** Rebecca questioned if the board of trustees can use the donation funds they currently have towards things like the librarians raise since it was not budgeted for the current year. The Selectboard noted that they can use those funds for anything like that. The Selectboard was given a copy of the library's new phone policy to review.

- a. **Discuss Memorandum of Understanding between Library and Selectboard:** Karen likes the example from the Town of Richmond the best. The board of trustees still needs to work on the wording and get a draft to the Selectboard for review.
 - b. **Discuss Library Debit Card Account:** The Library Board would like a separate debit card for their purchases, instead of using the town's debit card. They would still give receipts to Lisa, and she would replenish the limit as it gets low. The Selectboard felt this was appropriate. The Library Board will need to decide whose name will be on the card. Dennis motioned to authorize the Library Board of Trustees to get a debit card with a \$1,000 limit, Richard seconded. Motion passed.
7. **Discuss Legal Trail Ordinance and Permit: (emailed in advance)** If the Selectboard agrees to the current draft of the ordinance, which was sent with minor changes from the Town Attorney, then the process to get it approved can begin. Pat noted that Ellen feels the current draft is good. Richard motioned to accept the current draft, from the Town Attorney, of the Town of Westfield Class 4 Highway and Legal Trail Ordinance, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.
8. **Update on Proposed Wastewater Project:** Jacques spoke with Kristen from AES Northeast regarding holding a public meeting sooner than the 30% project mark. Kristen noted that they can hold a meeting anytime. LaDonna got quite a few questions from property owners as they had not heard anything about this until they received the surveys in the mail. The public meeting is currently scheduled for July. The Selectboard felt that it was okay to keep the meeting set for July at this time.
 - a. **Sign Change of Authorized Representative Form:** This is needed to get Lisa on the list to be able to sign reports. Richard motioned to add Lisa Deslandes as an authorized representative for the wastewater project, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.
9. **Approve Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP):** Tabled until next meeting.
10. **2024 Equalization Study Results – CLA 62.2% & COD 28.21% - Danny Young & Shelley Martin: (emailed in advance)** Danny explained the equalization study results. Since the results from the previous year already require a reappraisal and the town is already working towards getting this done, being under the limit again this year has no extra effect. The contract for reappraisal begins July 2026 and the result should be ready for the 2027 grand list. The contract should be divided into 12 equal payments. There will be a data verification step that the listers will need to complete. If the data verification fails, then the town will need to do a full reappraisal rather than the statistical reappraisal. LaDonna noted that the CLA will have a huge impact on the education taxes for the town. July 1st is when the state will release the education tax numbers. Shelley also noted that the utilities assessed value has gone down for the utilities released so far and that will affect the overall value of the grand list. This will cause the amount taxpayers need to pay towards the municipal property taxes to go up. This was brought about by a statewide reassessment in the way they value utilities. Jacques questioned who the utilities were. Danny noted that it was only for electrical utilities, which would be Transco and Vermont Electrical Cooperative. There is money that Transco had paid in a previous year due to supplies that were sitting in Westfield when April 1st came around and the grand list was created. The money is still sitting in a special account. The Selectboard would like to use that towards the reappraisal cost. It is around \$17,000. Danny questioned if it needs taxpayer approval before using it as it's never been in a budget. Danny received an email from the map maker regarding showing the 1600' elevation zone on the tax maps. There is a map that NVDA will be sending showing the zoning areas, but it does not show the parcels. The quoted cost is \$650 to add the zoning to the maps as they look now, or \$300 to add the zoning and eliminate the existing color parcel identifications. They also quoted creating a separate zoning map for \$1,000. LaDonna does not feel that it's worth the money at this time and Will did not feel that he needs this to do his job properly.
11. **Treasurers Report – Lisa Deslandes:**
 - a. **Approve Warrants for May 5/06/25 \$23,933.26 (Bills), \$7,648.45 (Payroll); 5/19/25 \$20,156.04 (Bills) \$5,951.35 (Payroll); 5/27/25 \$14,344.74 (Bills): (emailed in**

advance) Richard motioned to approve the warrants for May, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

- b. **Review General & Highway Fund Budget Status Reports: (emailed in advance)** Board read and reviewed. Richard questioned how much is left in the highway budget. Lisa noted that 52% of the budget has been spent so far.
- c. **Review Investments: (emailed in advance)** Board read and reviewed. LaDonna questioned what the Selectboard decided to do with the library investments. The Selectboard felt that the library drawing just the investments each year should work out okay. Jacques questioned using the dividends from the cemetery funds towards the cemeteries at some point down the road. When the CD'S come to maturity the funds need to be separated into individual grader and cemetery funds. The Selectboard would like to keep Lisa as the sole person to speak with Edward Jones regarding all of the investment accounts so that she can keep track of what is happening with the investments.
- d. **Sign 2024 Audit:** Jacques signed the audit letter. Dennis motioned to approve the 2024 audit report, Richard seconded. Motion passed.

12. Highway Update – Eric Kennison: Eric did submit a bid for the culvert on Corrow Basin Road and he got the contract for the work. The bills for this project go through the state. The in-kind work will come out of the highway budget. The earliest the project would start is August. The debris the property owner left in the town right of way on School Street needs to be removed as its diverting water incorrectly. Eric let him know a year ago that he needed to get rid of it. Instead of removing it he had it covered with dirt. Eric feels there may be about 3 dump truck loads of concrete and construction debris there. Eric will get the number for someone at the state to have them look at it first since burying demolition materials is not allowed. Eric quoted \$4,000 for the library parking lot expansion, and \$9,000 for the cemetery walkway, which includes a mix of gravel and stay-mat. The library board needs to decide on the parking lot. Richard motioned to hire Eric to do the Westfield Cemetery walkway for \$9,000, Dennis seconded. Motion passed. Lisa will figure out where the funds for this will come from.

- a. **Sign Northwest Regional Planning Commission Master Agreement for Subgrant Amendment 1: (emailed in advance)** The dates of the work changed, which is why the amendment needed to be signed. Jacques signed.
- b. **Sign Orleans County Natural Resources Conservation District Landowner Agreement: (emailed in advance)** Richard signed.
- c. **Discuss Selling/Disposing of Used Grader Tires and Sander:** The Selectboard would like to put both items on Facebook marketplace. Eric felt that \$200 per tire would be good and \$5,500 for the sander. The sander is a Swanson 7-yard stainless steel hydraulic driven sander. Lisa will take pictures of the tires and sander.

13. Update on MERP Grant Projects: (emailed in advance)

- a. **Propane Tank:** The furnace is being installed at the Town Garage and B&H inquired about getting a bigger propane tank. Eric would like the tank out behind the building and would like a 500-gallon underground tank. Lisa will call around to get pricing.

14. Sign Mowing Contract for Spaulding Property Management: Contract signed.

15. Cemeteries:

- a. **Update on New Sexton:** Jesse Hammond will only do cremains, the monument company, Scott Bianchi, will do casket burials. Jesse's prices are \$300 on weekdays and \$400 on weekends. Bianchi is around \$800. Richard motioned to appoint Jesse Hammond and Scott Bianchi as cemetery sextons, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.
- b. **Discuss Longley Cemetery Plot:** Jean Longley wanted to buy two cemetery plots in 2020 for her two grandkids. She was going to make payments on the plots and the Selectboard agreed to purchase cornerstones at that time. Her grandson recently came in and was wondering why he did not have a cemetery plot anymore and his aunt and uncle, Paul and Lucille Longley, had purchased the plots instead. At the time Jean

Longley had stopped paying for the plots and the Selectboard agreed to refund Jean Longley her two payments and allow Paul and Lucille Longley to purchase the plots. The grandson would like to purchase a plot now and he is not a resident so he would like to purchase a plot at a cheaper price as he feels he should've been notified before his aunt and uncle purchased the plots. The Selectboard does not feel there was any responsibility for the board to notify him when the plots were not paid for and sold to someone else. They feel he should still pay the full price to purchase a plot now which is \$800 plus the cost of the cornerstones.

- c. **Permission to Bury in Family Plot Form: (emailed in advance)** Informational. This document will be collected now when cemetery plots are sold to help identify who can be buried in a purchased plot(s).
- d. **Sign Corrected Quit Claim Deeds for Blais/Comtois/Sheltra:** There was an issue with a recent burial, so the deeds were corrected to show who now owns which lot. Selectboard signed the deeds.

16. Common Areas: LaDonna would like the flagpole from the Community Center moved to the front lawn at the Town Office. Dennis noted that it's cemented into the ground. The Selectboard will look at it to see if they can move it or not.

- a. **Weeds on Playground:** Richard is going to rototill the weeds.
- b. **Items to be Fixed at Playground:** They need to install an anchor bolt on the stepping swing. The corner edging needs to be taken care of.
- c. **Schedule Work on Flowerbeds:** Work is almost completed, Dennis and Richard will continue working on this. Lisa will get some plants to fill the whiskey barrels. She will ask Berry Creek for a price.

17. Recycling Updates: The metal dumpster is full. LaDonna will call to get it picked up. This weekend is Household Hazardous Waste Day.

- a. **Schedule for July:**
 - July 5th – Richard Degre
 - July 12th – Maurice Doyon, Roger Tetreault
 - July 19th – Dennis Vincent
 - July 26th – Jacques Couture

18. Executive Session (if needed): Dennis motioned to enter executive session at 8:02pm for grievances other than tax grievances, Richard seconded. Motion passed. Dennis motioned to exit executive session at 8:13pm, Richard seconded. Motion passed. Dennis motioned to send a letter to Jennifer Grace regarding her questions on the proposed wastewater system, Richard seconded. Motion passed. The Selectboard acknowledged receipt of her letters.

19. Other Business:

- a. **Letter to Selectboard from Sandy Snyder: (emailed in advance)** Selectboard acknowledged receipt of the letter.
- b. **Letter regarding North Hill Speed, ATV Use concerns:** The speed cart is still on North Hill. LaDonna will email the sheriff to see if they have any data from it.
- c. **Change Date of September Selectboard Meeting Due to Town Office Staff Training:** Date was changed to September 22nd.
- d. **Resignation Letter:** Karen Blais gave her resignation letter. Her last day will be June 30th, 2025. The Selectboard acknowledged her resignation and will send her a card.
- e. **Trash on Property on Ballground Road:** Dennis questioned if there are any zoning violations going on at the property. Will noted that 501.01E is the closest fit. It refers to liquid or solid waste or refuse that may be polluting ground water or causing public health concerns. The vegetable oil and trash would possibly fit these criteria. The trailer is not of any concern as it's used for agricultural purposes. Dennis motioned to send a letter from the Selectboard, Will Young, Zoning Administrator, and Shelley Martin, Town Health Officer, to Dennis Bathalon, the property owner, regarding the vegetable oil and trash on

his property and notifying him that it needs to be cleaned up, Richard seconded. Motion passed.

20. Adjourn: Richard motioned to adjourn at 8:15pm, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

Westfield Selectboard Approval Date: 7/21/25 with Ø change(s)

X Jacques Couture
Jacques Couture
Selectboard Chair

X Richard Deque
Richard Deque
Selectboard

X Dennis Vincent
Dennis Vincent
Selectboard

