

Westfield Selectboard Minutes
July 15, 2019 – 5 p.m. – Town Offices

Town Officials Present: Selectboard members: Yves Daigle (Chair), Jacques Couture and Anne Lazor; Treasurer, Mary Lou Jacobs; Town Clerk, LaDonna Dunn; Assistant Town Clerk, Heather Johnson; Road Commissioner; Eric Kennison; and Lister, Danny Young.

Others: Bruce Melendy, NVDA

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Yves called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.
2. **Public Comment – 5 Minutes:** None
3. **Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda:** Report from Edward Jones as 9D; added New Format for Tax Bills as 10B and Health Officer Report-Mosquito Issue as 17A.
4. **Approve Minutes of the 6-17-19 Selectboard Meeting:** Following a motion by Jacques and second by Yves, all were in agreement to approve the minutes as presented.

A. Business from the Minutes: None

5. **Discuss Joint Hazard Mitigation Plan with Jay – Bruce Melendy, NVDA:** Bruce Melendy explained that each town is required to have an updated Hazard Mitigation Plan. If a town does not have an approved Hazard Mitigation Plan and there is a disaster that funding is applied for, the town will not be given full FEMA funding. NVDA received a grant from Vermont Emergency Management Program to help towns develop a plan. Bruce is proposing that the Town of Jay and the Town of Westfield have a joint Hazard Mitigation Plan since we share some emergency services and a school. Bruce explained if the Selectboard was in agreement to enter into a joint plan the following would happen:

- A committee would be formed with at least one Selectboard member from each town, the Town Clerks, the Fire Chiefs, and community members from each town.
- A consultant would be hired to work with the committee to complete the plan.
- The work would start within a couple of months to have a completed plan by the end of the year.
- The state approves the plan before it goes to FEMA.
- FEMA likes to see the public involved as much as possible in these plans.
- We would be identifying vulnerabilities in the towns that need correcting as part of the hazard mitigation process.
- The town committee would prepare a draft for both towns to give their initial seal of approval. Once that portion is completed the document is sent to the state for approval then to FEMA for approval. The Selectboards in each town adopt the document after FEMA approval.
- If the town reaches out for help during an emergency there are four criteria that are needed: national flood insurance plan: town road and bridge standards: local emergency management plan (LEMP): and local hazard mitigation plan.
- The document does not require regional adoption by NVDA like the Town Plan does.

The Selectboard did not see any negatives to doing a joint plan with Jay. There was a motion by Jacques and second by Anne to enter into a joint Hazard Mitigation Plan with Jay pending Jay's agreement. The motion passed unanimously. The Selectboard thanked Bruce for attending the meeting to explain the process. Bruce had previously sent samples of Peacham and Barton's plans. He will send a template of a formatted plan for Orleans County.

6. Review and Adopt Local Emergency Management Plan-LEMP (previously emailed 7/1/19): Bruce Melendy from NVDA was present to answer questions about the LEMP. He works with the Clerk each year to update the document. The State of Vermont has changed the LEMP to a new format this year. Yves mentioned that there are folks missing from the vulnerable population list. Bruce stated that the vulnerable population list does not get shared and he can update with the additional names. Anne made a motion and Jacques seconded, to adopt the LEMP with the addition of the names to be added to the vulnerable population list. All were in agreement.

7. Geocaching Request from Carolyn Adams for Westfield Cemetery: Yves stated Carolyn Adams requested to have a tree at the entrance of the Westfield Cemetery as a geocaching location. The written request was reviewed by the Selectboard. Yves stated that the cemetery is a sacred place. Yves made a motion that the request be turned down, Jacques seconded, and all were in agreement.

8. Road Updates:

A. Update on Route 100 ATV/VASA Connector (General Store to Cemetery Rd.): LaDonna reported the State has put up signs from the Westfield General Store to Cemetery Road allowing ATV access.

B. Progress on Radar Signs: Mary Lou said she met with Jason Sevigny on Friday and sent all the specifications to Nate Covey regarding the radar sign. After Nate Covey approves it, Jason can assist Eric Kennison in installing the signs. Mary Lou said she will be in touch with Nate.

C. Sign Vermont Electric Coop Easements for Jerome Rondeau and Ronald Pion: Jacques made a motion that the town agrees to the right of way occupancy request by Vermont Electric Coop for Jerome Rondeau but the road needs to be up to standards to prevent erosion when the work is complete. Anne seconded and all were in favor. The Clerk will inform Jerome Rondeau of this when he comes to pick up the paperwork. Ronald Pion is not ready to complete his paperwork yet.

D. Sign Better Roads Grant for Buck Hill Rd./Taft Brook Rd. for \$16,116: The work needs to be completed by 6/30/2020. Anne made a motion to approve/sign the Better Roads Grant (BR07029) for Buck Hill Road/Taft Brook Road in the amount of \$16,116, with the towns match being 20%. Jacques seconded and all were in favor.

E. Reservoir Rd. Bus and Truck Travel Concern: The Clerk stated property owner, Carolyn Lyster, brought to her attention that the sign had not been placed on Reservoir Road discontinuing truck travel which was agreed upon in 2017 by the Selectboard. Jacques made a motion to rescind the November 13, 2017 vote (Article 6C in the minutes) and Yves seconded, regarding the request to place a sign stating no tractor trailer trucks are allowed on the Reservoir Road. The Selectboard agreed it is a class 3 road which is open for everyone's use. The vote passed unanimously. Another concern Mary Lou brought up was the signs stolen from Westfield. She stated she would talk to Deputy Brooks about the signs to see if they were among the ones recently recovered. She will also ask him about the speed radar cart that was to be made available for Town use.

9. Treasurer's Report – Mary Lou Jacobs:

A. Approve Warrants for Expenditures Dated 6/19, 6/26, 7/3 and 7/10/19: Anne made a motion which was seconded by Jacques to approve the four warrants. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Financial Update and Budget Review: The General Fund balance as of today is \$18,760.86. The school check was received in the amount of \$11,955.00. The town has \$39,300.00 towards the line of credit and an additional \$10,000 from Good Neighbor Fund, for a total amount of \$49,300.00. Jacques asked how property tax refunds were handled and how come so many get refunds. Mary Lou explained sometimes they have filed late homestead declarations, sometimes two mortgage companies have paid or the property has gone to tax sale and the property owner has overpaid.

C. Workers Comp Audit Results: Mary Lou had a workers comp audit recently. As a result VLCT/PACIF is requesting that individuals who drive their vehicles for town business provide a copy of their current license, registration, inspection and insurance. Mary Lou will ask VLCT about volunteers and if they are covered under the town insurance.

D. Report from Edward Jones: Mary Lou stated she does not have access to Edward Jones account information because she is not authorized by the Selectboard or a signer on the account. It was discussed if there are withdrawals from the account there should be dual signature. Yves said that Edward Jones will send the paperwork for Mary Lou to have authority to access the accounts. Mary Lou reported the monthly statement show an increase of \$3,680 from last month.

10. Set Municipal Tax Rate for 2019/20:

A. Education Tax Rate 2019/20 for Westfield: The education tax rate was set by the state at **\$1.39 for homestead (residential) and \$1.4683 for non-residential.**

The Selectboard, with the Treasurer, set the municipal tax rate based on the approved town budget from Town Meeting Day. **The municipal tax rate was set at .7031 per \$100 of assessed value.**

Following are the combined (education/municipal/local) tax rates which will be billed on the 2019/20 tax bills:

- Homestead (Residential) Tax Rate = 1.3900 state education tax + .7031 municipal tax + .0034 local tax (cost of the veterans exemption shared by all property owners).
The total tax rate for residential is \$2.0965 per \$100 of assessed property value.
- Non-Residential Tax Rate = 1.4683 is the state education tax + .7031 municipal tax + .0034 local tax (cost of the veterans exemption shared by all property owners).
The total tax rate for non-residential is \$2.1748 per \$100 of assessed property value.
- **Westfield's CLA is 108.56**

B. New Format for Tax Bills: The Vermont Department of Taxes has a new format for the tax bills. LaDonna explained this is a new state law requiring that the municipal tax be broken out on the opposite side of the tax bill from the state education tax. The state's publication titled "How to Understand a Property Tax Bill" was handed out for the Selectboards review. This publication (GB-1205) will be sent with all tax bills this year to help property owners understand the new format.

11. Discuss Complaints about Unsightly Properties: There was discussion about four unsightly properties in the village district. LaDonna provided definitions from the current Zoning Bylaw which included:

- **Junk:** Old or discarded scrap copper, brass, iron, steel and other old or scrap or nonferrous material, including but not limited to household appliances, furniture, rope, rags, batteries, glass, rubber debris, waste, trash, construction debris, plumbing fixtures, or any discarded, dismantled, wrecked, scrapped or ruined motor vehicles or parts thereof. Any of the above items used in a bona fide agricultural operation are excluded from this definition.
- **Junk Motor Vehicle:** A discarded, dismantled, wrecked, scrapped or ruined motor vehicle or parts thereof, or one other than an on premise utility vehicle, which is allowed to remain unregistered for a period of ninety days from the date of discovery.

LaDonna mentioned the Planning Commission is reviewing the enforcement portion of the bylaw as well as what other towns use for explanations/definitions for junk/junky yards and junk motor vehicles. The current Bylaw enforcement has to go through the Environmental Court. Sometimes the issues cross over into health issues which would involve the health department. Mary Lou will do some research and the Selectboard will proceed based on the information provided by Mary Lou. Mary Lou offered to assist the Health Officer with these issues if necessary.

12. Update on Municipal Facilities Grant for Clerk's Roof/Chimney & Radar Signs: Radar signs were discussed above.

A. Second Quote for Chimney and Roof at Clerk's Office: Yves acquired a second quote of \$13,222 from Hometown Hardware. The original quote of \$13,265 was from Bathalon Construction. The quotes do not include removal. Mary Lou will look into a dumpster. Jacques informed the Board of the grant process for the chimney and roof. He sent all requested information to the grant manager Misty Sinsigalli from the USDA. He sent the financials for three years but needed to send the quotes. The last response from her was June 6, 2019. Jacques said he will call her and follow up about what has been sent thus far.

13. Sheriff's Report for May: The hour reported were 29.75 total. Fifteen hours were made up from last year's contract time. There were \$1526 for speed zone, inspection sticker, and suspension violations.

14. Recycling Update: Yves reported prices are picking up on the recycling materials the waste management district sells. Aluminum cans are selling well. Individuals have been caught illegally dumping so a sign will be made to be put up by the dumpsters. The current price for steel is \$60/ton.

A. Purchase Pressure Washer: Yves requested the Town buy a pressure washer to clean the concrete slab at the Recycling Center and the outside of the building which gets very dirty from bugs. Yves priced one at Pick and Shovel for \$300.00. Jacques made a motion to purchase a pressure washer for the Town to be utilized at the Recycling Center as well as at other town buildings. Anne seconded. All were in favor.

15. Resolution for 2020 Municipal Planning Grant: Tabled until the next meeting.

16. Request for Window Shades for Community Center (Upstairs): Debbie Dykeman requested window shades for the upstairs windows at the Community Center to help control the heat. She called and made the request to the Clerk because she says people are not coming to the Bone Builders Exercise Group because it is too hot upstairs in the summer. The Selectboard will be consider this when they prepare the next budget.

17. Other Business:

A. Health Officers Report about Mosquito Issue: LaDonna reported the Health Officer, Joe Berchick, was approached by a resident regarding a mosquito issue. The Health Officer called the Department of Health because of the items around the property that may cause mosquitos to breed. The Health Officer will be sending a letter to the property owner asking him to clean up the items on the property that are collecting stagnant water.

B. Clerk Concern: The Selectboard has agreed to have LaDonna talk with the Town Attorney, Sarah Davies, about how to handle a safety concern at the town office.

18. Adjourn: Following a motion by Jacques and a second by Anne, all were in agreement to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: _____
Heather Johnson, Assistant Clerk

Westfield Selectboard Approval:

Date: _____ **with** _____ **changes**

Yves Daigle, Chair

Jacques Couture

Anne Lazor