

Westfield Selectboard Minutes

October 17, 2022 @ 5:00 p.m. In-Person Meeting at the Westfield Town Office, 38 School St. with Zoom Option

Town Officials Present: LaDonna Dunn, Town Clerk; Lisa Deslandes, Treasurer; Jacques Couture, Selectboard; Richard Degre, Selectboard; Anne Lazor, by phone, Selectboard (Partial Attendance); Niki Dunn, Selectboard Clerk; Ellen Fox, Planning Commission Consultant (Partial Attendance); Pat Sagui, Planning Commission Chair (Partial Attendance); Eric Kennison, Road Commissioner (Partial Attendance)

Other In Attendance: Ted Sedell, Orleans Conservation District (Partial Attendance); Denny Lyster, Congregational Church Member (Partial Attendance)

1. Call Meeting to Order – Jacques Couture, Chair: Jacques called the meeting to order at 5:01pm.

2. Public Comment – 5 Minutes: None

3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda: Richard added to other business: Moving snowmobile trail

4. Approve/Sign 9/8/22 Minutes: Richard motioned to approve the minutes from September 8th, 2022, with a correction to #13: Gerry Bouchard talked to Jacques regarding the cemetery building, not Richard; Jacques seconded.

5. Request from Congregational Church – Presentation by Denny Lyster: Denny presented to the Selectboard on behalf of the 7 remaining members of the Congregational Church. They are in a position where after the current project they are doing, rebuilding the south wall, and putting in drainage, they will be out of money to continue to care for the building. They are facing having to put the building on the market, however they would like to offer the building to the town as a gift at no cost before putting it up for sale. The current regular expenses amount to \$1,166 per year. Potential upcoming expenses would be replacing the furnace and adding handicap access. The members came up with a list of many potential uses for the building including concerts, dance lessons, gathering space, local art shows, rummage sales, weddings, etc. Denny explained that there are ways to offer the building as a gift and with the building the current bank balance (\$17,756 as of Oct 1st, 2022) would transfer to the town as well. The church is allowed to be owned privately and there has been one offer, although Denny thinks that if the building does not go to the town, they would put it on the market to see what they could get. Jacques questioned how many buildings the town wants to own and have upkeep expenses on. He thinks the issue should go to the town for a vote and not be decided by the Selectboard alone. Denny will investigate whether there is a deed on the building or not. He would like to have the town be able to vote on the issue on town meeting day and both Richard and Jacques thought that would be a doable timeline.

6. Planning Commission Update – Ellen Fox, Consultant & Pat Sagui, Chair: Ellen and Pat presented the Ordinance Regulating Outdoor Storage (draft). To have this ordinance adopted it would need to follow the same timeline as the bylaw update as things that were removed from the bylaws are now in the ordinance. Pat would like the town attorney to go through the draft document and would like to sit down with the Selectboard to go through the changes made to the bylaws. Ellen discussed why this ordinance was made and not just updated in the zoning bylaws. Zoning has a statute of limitations of 15 years and would make certain properties exempt. For the ordinance to work there would need to be a designated official to ticket any individual in violation and from there the judicial bureau would take over. The judicial bureau would keep 10% of any fees collected and the rest would go to the town. There is a process to go about creating a complaint, it would need to be submitted in writing and would not be anonymous. The ordinance regulates storage of items from the setback to 500' into the property. For most areas in the village this would be the entire property. The solution to storing these items would be to put up a fence or vegetation so that the items cannot be seen from the roadway or neighboring properties. Once a person is found in violation, they will be fined for each day they remain in violation, fees increase each day until the third day. This ordinance was created in response to many complaints received regarding properties and out of creating equity for people who feel they have no current recourse. Jacques questioned whether this was necessary, the town has not had anything like this in the past. He also questioned the enforcement of the ordinance and felt like it would be difficult to follow through with requiring people to comply. It could also cause hard feelings among neighbors. LaDonna said most of the complaints she receives are regarding properties in the village and have more to do with junk cars. Pat thought that speaking with other towns who have enacted similar ordinances may help. The board agreed. Jacques would like more time to go through the document and think about it more. The Selectboard will meet November 1st at 5pm to go through the bylaw changes. Jacques motioned to have the town attorney go through the updated bylaws, Richard seconded. The board will aim to have a public hearing regarding the changes to the bylaws in February.

7. Highway Updates – Eric Kennison, Road Commissioner:

A. Discuss Work/Quotes for New Bay at Town Garage: Richard had no new quotes, could call Fred's or Nadeau's. Should get someone in to paint it in the next couple of weeks. Eric thought we could use fans to move the heat from one bay to the other, but paint would also help stop moisture collecting in the new bay. Jacques would like to get the painting done and go from there.

B. Federal Grant Funds for Culverts - Ted Sedell, Conservation Specialist: Ted is looking at getting funding for three culverts, all on Taft Brook. The total cost is 1.2 million dollars. He is looking into the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for most of the funding (\$600K), but also is looking at five other grant sources to cover the remainder. He will be pursuing most of these grants over the next 5 days as most are due by October 24th. Jacques would like Ted to look into funding from the Missisquoi River Basin Project as well, especially since the plans are drawn up and ready to go. He believes there needs to be phosphorous reduction to get this grant money, although Ted believes the funds can also be received if the project helps with sediment transport. Ted will look into it. He will also help LaDonna with the application process. Jacques wanted to know if

these grants were all federal funds. Ted was unsure, it could be a mix of federal and state. Ted does have the plans for the other two culverts, however since they are each around 1 million dollars each, he thought this project would be easier to get done and he is packaging all three culverts as one project. Ellen explained how the rating for the phosphorous reduction is figured out and thought it would be helpful for the town to have that information. Ted will see about getting those ratings. Jacques wanted to know if these three culverts would be able to be fully funded through grants. Ted believed that with in-kind funding, a letter in support of the project from the town and the agreement to re-home the culverts that get removed that they should get funded fully. It would be helpful to have in-kind funding with dollar amounts on the letter of support. Richard wondered what the deadline for the project would be and Ted said about 2 years. He also wanted to know when the funds from the grants are received. Ted explained that it depended on the grant. Some money would come before the project gets started and some would have to be billed after the work is done. The Selectboard is in support of the project and would like to get an idea from Eric on the value of his work for the in-kind donation. Eric just needs to measure the culverts and estimate the hours, he should be able to have the numbers by the weekend. Ted will also be using the hours his organization has contributed as an in-kind donation. Jacques motioned to support and pursue this project and a letter of support will be sent; Richard seconded.

C. Buck Hill: Paving is finished.

D. MRGP Needs Updating: Eric and Ladonna will get together to update the website next week sometime.

E. Wild and Scenic Grant: It is done and will be sent in around the end of the month. Jacques clarified that it is just money towards a project but does not need to be only a \$5,000 project. Need to think of another project for the Wild and Scenic grant due in November for \$10,000. Eric thinks anything on Loop Road would work. Lisa explained that the way we are placing the money in the budget now is not the proper way to account for it. Eric said he could create two invoices if that would help, and that culverts need to stay with the grant money. Richard would like to add extra to the budget in case the culvert project for 1.2 million comes in over cost. Anne agreed as costs of materials have gone up since the plans were created and we should keep that in mind when budgeting.

F. Sandpile: Jacques noticed the pile is really moving, especially when it rains. His grass is dying, and a ditch has been created. He saw a zoom meeting coming up with information about money available to retain sandpiles. Eric said that the recycling center traffic is changing the way the water runs through the driveway. Jacques will take down his fence in that area and Eric will pull the pile back. Richard noted that less sand in the summertime will also help.

G. Salt Quote: Jacques signed the quote; \$96 a ton for 100 tons.

8. Treasurer's Report – Lisa Deslandes, Town Treasurer:

A. Approve Warrants for Expenditures Dated 9/14/22 \$7,683.95 (bills) & \$2,927.37 (payroll); 9/19/22 \$3,169.33 (bills); 9/28/22 \$6,123.94 (payroll); 9/29/22 \$1,751.42 (bills) & \$3,722.61 (bills): Richard motioned to approve the warrants; Jacques seconded.

B. Review General and Highway Fund Budget Reports and Balance Sheets (emailed in advance): Lisa mentioned that the school tax is still showing on the balance sheet, it will be paid this month. Jacques wanted to know when appropriations get paid. LaDonna said they can go out in the beginning of November.

C. Continue Discussion on Updating Employee Handbook & Town Policy: Lisa handed out salary and benefit info to be looked at, board will take home to review, and it can be discussed at the next meeting.

D. Telling & Hillman, PC Contract to be Signed: Board signed.

E. Edward Jones Paperwork Re-signed: Timeframe was too long on previous paperwork, needed to be re-signed. Board signed.

9. Community Center:

A. Update on Foundation/Walkway Repairs: Richard got a quote from Tracy Degre Concrete Inc for \$4500 for the concrete work only. The demo and dirt work were not included. He would not be able to start the job until the spring. Richard will work on getting a quote from Richard McAllister as well. Once quotes are received the cost of the work can then be put in the new budget.

B. Update on Installation of Upstairs Door and Dishwasher Repair: Roger Tetreault installed the door upstairs, cost for labor was \$262.50. The cost for the door itself was roughly \$1300. Should be receiving a bill from Poulin for some vinyl that was used around the door. The entrance to the downstairs needs to be insulated, a lot of cold air is getting in through there. Jacques fixed the dishwasher and it cost around \$61 in parts. Richard put the signs at the library back together. Richard motioned to pay Roger Tetreault \$25 per hour as an employee, which will require taxes to be taken out, for any carpenter work he does for the town; Anne seconded. If he produces insurance, then he does not need to be paid as an employee.

10. Recycling Update:

A. Recycling Workers Schedule for November:

November 5th - Richard
November 12th – Maurice Doyon & Roger Tetreault
November 19th - Dennis Vincent
November 26th – Jacques

B. Discuss Action Taken to Resolve Issues on Notice of Alleged Violation from State Inspection: Jacques believes everything should be in compliance once more stickers are received and then the photos needed can be taken and sent in. Richard took care of the batteries. LaDonna wondered if everything needed stickers. Jacques said not everything does, but the boxes with stickers needed to be dated when the box is started and picked up within one year.

C. Painting Town Garage Bay: Richard wanted to know if he should get a quote to have the town garage painted. Jacques would like to see about purchasing the materials needed and just hiring someone to do the painting. Richard will see if Roger Tetreault would like to do the job and he can get ahead of the staging needed to get it completed.

11. Cemetery Inquiry:

A. Determine Selectboard Policy on Individuals Providing Their Own Cornerstones: Jacques doesn't mind if someone wants to put in their own cornerstones, but they need to be done professionally and of the same quality as the other cornerstones in the cemetery.

B. For Clarification, Amend 5-16-22 Minutes to Read: The cost of cornerstones is in addition to cemetery plot prices. Richard motioned to make that amendment; Anne seconded.

12. Discussion about Ways to Spend ARPA Funds: LaDonna noted that other towns have been putting together committees to go through proposals on ways to use the ARPA funds before proposals are brought to the Selectboard. Newport Daily Express has started running an article on what other towns are doing with their ARPA funds and so people have begun asking LaDonna what we will be doing with our funds. Anne inquired as to whether the Missisquoi Valley Ambulance Service was still asking for ARPA funds from towns. Jacques said he was not able to make the last meeting but believed there was no longer a push to do that. Richard noted that the library will need a new roof soon and some funds could be put towards that. There was also a thought from the Water District about purchasing land near the town water building to protect the area around the town water source. The landowner would need to consent to selling the land before anything could be done with that. LaDonna would still like to use some of the funds to digitize the town records, Jacques thinks this should be a top priority. LaDonna will go over the initial cost and monthly costs to digitize the books at the next meeting as a refresher for the board. She also thought it should be decided on whether the town will be voting on how to use the money or if the Selectboard will be deciding. If proposals are going to be submitted there should be some basic guidelines like a proposed budget for the project, the percentage of the population it would benefit, quotes on any work to be done, etc. LaDonna will investigate whether there is a boilerplate type form other towns have been using to get proposals. Jacques was thinking about using some funds to pay for the door that was recently installed at the Community Center. The total cost for installation and materials will be around \$1600 dollars. Jacques motioned to pay for installation cost and material cost for the Community Center door project with ARPA funds, Richard seconded.

13. August Sheriff's Report: Tickets 0, Warnings 1, Fines \$0, 0 Arrests. 11 Total Billed Hours.

14. Executive Session (if necessary): None

15. Other Business:

A. Snowmobile Trail: Richard spoke with Jason Delabruere from D&D Electric regarding moving the snowmobile trail to behind the basketball court because of water buildup with the current placement of the trail. The trail would go closer to Debra Dykeman's home and she told Richard she has no problem with it being moved there.

B. Cover for Town Report: LaDonna suggested using a photo of the church.

C. Schedule Budget Meeting Times: December 5th at 5pm, Highway Budget; December 15th at 8am, General Fund Budget

16. Adjourn: Richard motioned to adjourn at 8:15 pm, Anne seconded.

Westfield Selectboard Approval Date: _____ **with** _____ **change(s)**

WESTFIELD SELECTBOARD:

X

Jacques Couture
Chair

X

Anne Lazor
Vice Chair

X

Richard Degre

Minutes Submitted by: Niki Dunn, Selectboard Clerk