

Westfield Selectboard Minutes

June 19, 2023 @ 5:00 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; Eric Kennison, Road Commissioner (Partial Attendance); Niki Dunn, Selectboard Clerk; Karen Blais, Library Board of Trustees (Partial Attendance); Pat Sagui, Planning Commission Chair (Partial Attendance)

Others Present: Sergeant Richard Wells, Orleans County Sheriff's Department (Partial Attendance); Sheriff Jennifer Harlow, Orleans County Sheriff's Department (Partial Attendance); Chris Roy, Newport Daily Express; Mike Piper (Partial Attendance); Kim Couture (Partial Attendance); Mike Couture Jr. (Partial Attendance); Mike Couture Sr. (Partial Attendance); Jenn Grace (Partial Attendance); Thomas Burnett (Partial Attendance); Teresa Burnett (Partial Attendance); Pat Breault (Partial Attendance)

- 1. Call Meeting to Order-Jacques Couture, Chair:** Jacques Couture called the meeting to order at 5pm.
- 2. Public Comment – 5 Minutes:** There were no public comments.
- 3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda:** There were no additions to the agenda.
- 4. Approve 5-15-23 Minutes:** Dennis Vincent motioned to approve the minutes from May 15th, 2023; Richard Degre seconded. Motion passed.
 - A. Business from the Minutes:** There was no business from the minutes.
- 5. Discuss ATV/UTV Speeding Concerns on North Hill Road – Sheriff Jennifer Harlow and Sgt. Richard Wells:** Sgt. Wells asked for a meeting with the Selectboard to hear anyone's complaints regarding speeding on North Hill and to go over the data collected from the speed cart that was placed there. The speed cart was deployed from 5/1 to 5/8 and got data from over 1,500 vehicles, determining that 1,027 were traveling above the speed limit. 37mph was the average speed with 64mph being the highest speed recorded. The 85th percentile was 10-12mph over the speed limit. The peak travel times were between 7am to 5pm with 2pm being the hour with the most traffic daily. Patrol hours can be based on this data. Jacques wondered what the numbers would look like without the speed cart there. He was not sure how true of a picture the cart data shows. Sgt. Wells said the same happens when a patrol car is on the road. You would have to hide a radar in the woods to get a more accurate data projection. Jacques gave the public a chance to speak. Jenn Grace moved to North Hill a couple years ago and she feels like the speed at which vehicles drive past her house is very high. She has a tricky driveway and is concerned when plowing, going to the mailbox, and when walking along the road. She appreciates the Selectboard addressing this issue and would like to see it continue to be monitored. Pat Breault sees a lot of vehicles go by the Westfield Store all day and he sees cars go faster than ATV's. He also sees speed being an issue on Route 100, not just North Hill. Kim Couture agrees with Pat, its motorcycles, cars trucks, etc. She sees cars passing each other in front of her house on North Hill a lot. Eric asked how often ATV's pass each other, and she noted that she has never seen ATV's passing each other. Mike Couture Sr. sees a lot of loud, fast vehicles and cars passing each other. He sees most ATV riders abiding by the rules. Thomas Burnett agreed with Mike Couture Sr. Jacques agreed the issue is not just North Hill, but it is a narrower road. He has seen grants available for traffic calming, like rumble strips, and believes it might be something to consider along with the speed radar signs like the ones in town. Richard noted that rumble strips will make noise as well. Eric felt that the radar signs are the same as putting out the speed cart, that it won't slow people down. Jacques felt like that town has had this conversation over and over the last few years and something needs to be done about it. Sgt. Wells said speeding is a county wide problem with lots of fatalities lately. He also noted that they seldom get people on Route 100 complaining about speeding. He questioned whether they should be spending all their time on North Hill and is that fair to avoid all the other roads in town. He also let everyone know that when they do get complaints, they share with everyone who patrols the town, so they know where to focus future patrols. Jacques felt that they could have patrols concentrated during the peak hours on North Hill for the next few months to try to get the problem under control. Richard felt that after hearing from everyone the problem is more with the speeders, not the ATV's. Sgt. Wells did note that they have been getting complaints

regarding Reservoir Road, however that road is not currently posted, and the current condition of the road would make it hard for anyone to speed through there. The Selectboard agreed that having patrols on North Hill more for the next few months is a step in the right direction. Sgt. Wells noted that Route 100 sees a lot of fast traffic in the morning but otherwise they can patrol North Hill. Lisa noted that people from all over drive on North Hill, not just locals, and that there are a lot of out-of-town drivers that use the road. Sheriff Harlow does think the radar signs are a deterrent. She notices that when people see they are going 10-15 mph over the speed limit they tend to slow down. She also suggested temporary speed bumps as a possible solution. Pat Breault asked how many hours a week they patrol. Sgt. Wells explained that they patrol Westfield 5 hours a week and that they are available Monday-Friday from 6am to midnight and Saturday-Sunday 2pm-midnight. Pat let Sgt. Wells know that most of the ATV riding is done on the weekends. Sgt. Wells patrolled the town last weekend, and he spent an hour and a half in town looking for ATV's and only saw two parked in the village. Jacques spoke on the issue of noise but noted that a few ATV's may be really loud and that's what gets everyone's attention. He wondered what the decibel level is that's acceptable. Sgt. Wells explained that there isn't really a specific number, however they can give tickets for defective equipment if that is the cause of the excessive noise. Richard wondered if there were any other complaints besides Reservoir Road. Sgt. Wells explained that they did get some complaints stating vehicles were going 90mph on North Hill. Jenn Grace asked about the weight limit for tractor trailers on North Hill. Dennis believed it was 24,000 pounds, and Eric explained that if they are over that weight they can apply for an overweight permit. He also doesn't believe that trucks are doing any significant damage to the road and they are typically just delivery trucks driving from Westfield to Jay.

The Sheriff's Report for April included 2 tickets, 0 warnings, \$410 fines, 0 arrests with 14 billed hours.

6. Discuss Preparing Request for Qualifications for Sewer Project – Pat Sagui, Planning Commission Chair:

Pat was looking for any questions the Selectboard may have for Tom Brown and wanted help filling in the template she is using to request statements of qualifications for engineering services. She explained that once the engineer qualifications have been received the board would pick their top three and interview them to determine who they would like to choose to do the project. She also reminded the board that the funds for the project are coming from a forgivable loan and that the cost is estimated to be around \$40,000 for this part of the project, and that the loan covers up to \$125,000. The board helped Pat fill in the template but did not set a date yet to have these received back by. The board discussed when to hold a public meeting to answer questions that people may have about the project. Eric thought it would be best to wait until the engineer had been picked because they could answer some of the more technical questions that people may have. LaDonna questioned how you would get everyone on board with the project and thought some people may not want to participate. Eric felt that if the sewer project ended up happening everyone would need to be put on the system, it would not be a choice. LaDonna questioned whether it would be its own municipality or would it join the water district. Pat let her know that there are different options and that the study would help determine which option is best. Mike Piper wondered if the system would just include the houses in the village or would it extend further. Pat said that is something they can explore when they do the feasibility study. Pat also noted that the water table and people in town having a very hard time replacing current septic systems due to the water table is a huge factor in pursuing this project. Lisa asked how quickly the state would be reimbursing the town for the work and Pat believed the turnaround would be around 3 days. Richard inquired about the new zoning plan. Pat let him know that they are waiting for the states approval on part of it and that her and Ellen Fox would like to meet with the Selectboard once more before the public meeting date is set.

7. Update from Library Trustee Board – Karen Blais, Chair of Library Trustees:

A. Discuss Hiring Librarian: The Selectboard reviewed the application from Maureen Zimmerman for the position of Librarian and all board members agreed that she would be a good choice. Karen let the board know that she was the only candidate that applied. Jacques motioned to hire Maureen Zimmerman for the position of Librarian and to have the position overseen by the Library Board of Trustees, Dennis seconded. Motion passed. Karen asked what the board would like to set the salary rate at. The board agreed to start Maureen at the same rate that Marylee was making, which was \$17.27 per hour. Karen asked if there are pay levels. Lisa let her know that those haven't been discussed yet, but it is something that needs to be worked on. Karen let the board know that the Library Board of Trustees were thinking of proposing a review for Maureen at 6 months and possibly going higher with the salary at that time. Jacques noted that they would need to make sure the salary compares to what others employed by the town are making. Lisa asked if there was a specific amount she requested. Jacques noted that on the application the requested pay was \$18 per hour. He likes the idea of the

review after 6 months and at that time the salary rate could be revisited. He also thought some of the expense could possibly come from grants. Jacques also enquired whether the job description includes cleaning. Karen noted that it does say daily upkeep, but not deep cleaning. She was not sure if a separate cleaner would be needed, but at first, they would be having volunteers come in and help clean. Karen also noted that they will need money to get the animals cleaned. Jacques would like to get an estimate before the project is started. LaDonna thought there might be grant money for that also. Jacques was not sure how to access grant money for a project like that but felt it would be very helpful.

B. Review Quote for New Roof: Richard has received two quotes. The first was an \$18,000-\$19,000 quote which was not in writing. He also received a quote from Ethan Bathalon for around \$17,600. Richard let Ethan know he needed the quote in writing. The price does include the belfry roof. Karen questioned how long it has been since the roof has been redone. Richard believes it was 15-18 years ago. Jacques was speaking with Roger at the library and while looking at the roof he suggested installing a power vent to stop the shingles on the Vermont room from curling. Dennis motioned to hire Ethan Bathalon to replace the library roof if he can provide a certificate of insurance prior to beginning the job, Richard seconded. Motion passed. Dennis noted that the library really needs a couple dehumidifiers running downstairs all the time. Jacques also felt that this summer someone should fix where the water comes in and freezes. Richard also noted that there is a window that doesn't shut that needs to be fixed. Karen wondered if there is any need for an alarm system in the building. Lisa thought grant money could possibly be used to get an alarm that alerts to fires, power outages, etc. not just break ins. Jacques thought the energy efficiency grant might be able to cover something like that as well as replace a few windows. Karen questioned who has the authority to change the libraries hours. The Selectboard agreed that the trustees oversee that. Jacques asked if they planned on being open for 2 or 3 days per week. Karen explained that they aren't sure about the set times yet, but that they do intend on being open on Saturdays. Jacques felt that the sign needed to be touched up when the hours are updated on it. Karen wondered if the locks would still be getting changed. Jacques let her know that they are still planning on changing them. Richard noted that the front door has an old key entry but that it also has a newer deadbolt and felt that the deadbolt could be changed, and the older lock could be left as is and not used. Richard will call Roger to get him started on getting the locks changed.

8. Highway Update – Eric Kennison, Road Commissioner:

A. Discuss/Approve Chloride: Dennis motioned for Eric to purchase chloride and sell it back to the town as needed; Richard seconded. Motion passed. Eric let the board know that he can put a meter on the chloride tank if the board wants, but it is already pretty accurate. Jacques wondered who owns the tank. Eric let him know that it is a lease tank, so it technically belongs to the town.

B. Inventory of Missing Road/Speed Limit Signs: Jacques noted that if the town has 25mph roads then the speed ordinance would need to be changed. The Selectboard agreed to do away with the 25mph roads and make them 35mph. Eric will work on getting signs up where they are missing and when they are all up they can determine where signs are still missing and what needs to be ordered.

C. Question about TH 29 on Tax Map: Jacques believed that this is not a road anymore, just a legal trail. The map was consulted, and it was determined that it is indeed a legal trail, not a road. The Selectboard agreed that it can be taken off the tax map as a town highway and changed to a legal trail.

D. Sign Master Agreement CWSP template Subgrants for Culverts: Jacques thought that they decided not to approve the culverts. LaDonna has reached out to Dean Pierce and has not heard back yet. Jacques felt it wouldn't hurt to sign the master agreement anyway. The Selectboard signed the master agreement.

9. Treasurer's Report – Lisa Deslandes:

A. Approve Warrants for Expenditures Dated: 5/10/23 \$14,971.87 (bills) & \$6,223.74 (payroll); 5/23/23 \$1,229.77 (bills) & \$7,176.30 (payroll); and 5/30/23 \$9,250.43 (bills): Richard motioned to approve the warrants; Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

B. Review Budget Reports and Balance Sheet (emailed in advance): Lisa let the board know that the auditor is coming next week to look at 2022 and some of 2021.

10. Cemeteries:

A. Policy on How Many Cremains per Cemetery Plot: There isn't currently anything regarding this in the policies. The Sexton let LaDonna know that he can do up to three per plot. Jacques felt that if three fits then it's fine with him. Richard motioned to allow up to three cremains per cemetery plot, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

B. Sign Quit Claim Deeds for John D. Ferrara (North Hill Cemetery) and Wendy Taylor (Westfield Cemetery): The Selectboard signed both deeds.

11. Discuss Request for Westfield to Adopt the Vermont Declaration of Inclusion: Dennis feels like anyone is welcome to our town. Jacques and Richard agreed, and Jacques particularly liked the statement that Derby put on their website. Jacques motioned to adopt the same wording as Derby and to include the statement on the town website, Dennis seconded. Motion passed. The statement reads: The Town of Westfield condemns racism and discrimination and welcomes all persons regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age or disability and wants everyone to feel safe and welcome in our community. Westfield is a Town for everyone.

12. Community Center:

A. Review Upcoming Sidewalk Repair Work and Timing of Project: Richard talked to Richard McAllister and needs to discuss with Eric about the timing of digging the sidewalk up. LaDonna let him know that Wednesdays are a good day to do it, and weekends would depend on when it is rented. Richard has an aluminum ramp that can be used to get into the building while the work is being done. The quote from Richard McAllister is \$2,800.

B. Review Plumbing/Heating Changes: The part has not been replaced yet. When Jacques spoke with Todd, he said he was going to do it Monday (19th), although Jacques was not sure if he did it or not. Jacques noted that a lot of heat is being wasted upstairs, and he would like a sperate heating zone for the upstairs. LaDonna will ask him to give a quote for the upstairs work.

13. Recycling Update: Jacques noted that on the call with Casella they discussed having a bucket of sand available for any lithium batteries that may be swelling or leaking. Dennis noted that he found plastic bags in the compost again, and he removed them. LaDonna wondered if battery chargers go in the electronic recycling. Jacques was not sure and will check into it. Jacques also noted that he hadn't heard anything new regarding the clothing boxes.

A. Recycling Attendants Schedule for July:

1st - Dennis Vincent

8th – Maurice Doyon, Roger Tetreault

15th – Richard Degre

22nd – Jacques Couture

29th – Dennis Vincent

B. Discuss Putting Window in Garage Door Panel to Allow Visual of Dumpster: The Selectboard all agreed that it would be especially helpful in the wintertime to have a window in the garage door at Recycling. Richard will check on the possibility of having a hole cut in the door and a panel of glass put in.

14. Sign Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) Mini-Grant Agreement: Chris Roy enquired as to what this grant is for, and Jacques explained it to him. The grant pays for the town buildings to be checked for energy efficiency and makes recommendations on where it could be improved. This grant is for \$4,000 to have the energy audits done along with community education. The Selectboard signed the grant agreement.

15. Update on Catering Licenses Issued for Windy River Farm Events – LaDonna Dunn: The Selectboard preciously gave LaDonna authority to sign these. She let the Selectboard know that she has signed permits for two fundraisers and nine weddings.

16. Warrant for Delinquent Dogs – LaDonna Dunn: There were 4 delinquent dog owners on the warrant, which the Board signed. The Constables will begin home visits with an additional \$25 fee being assessed per visit.

17. Update on Speed Ordinance – LaDonna Dunn: Richard asked Sgt. Wells if they could list all 35 mph roads on the speed ordinance instead of listing each road separately. Sgt. Wells explained that all the roads need to be named on the ordinance. He is trying to get all the towns in their coverage zone to have the same ordinance template. He sent the template to LaDonna. LaDonna wondered what to do for the roads that are only around 1/10th of a mile long, do they go on the ordinance? Sgt. Wells advised her to list them all along with the milage. Eric inquired about class 4 roads going on the ordinance. Sgt. Wells let him know that any road that has a speed limit needs to be listed, even if it is closed for part of the year. Listing the months that a road is closed will help enforce repercussions if people get stuck on the road during the months that it is closed. Eric asked about the speed limit posting requirements. Sgt. Wells let him know that they should be posted after every intersection and that Title 23 would explain how far apart speed limit signs need to be. Chris Roy asked for a copy of the draft of the speed ordinance and LaDonna made him one.

The Selectboard and LaDonna went over the list of roads for the speed ordinance, making sure names and placement of signs were correctly listed.

Richard motioned to approve the Town of Westfield Vermont Speed Ordinance; Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

18. Executive Session (if necessary): There was no need for an executive session.

19. Other Business:

A. Next Meeting Date July 17th: Next meeting will be held July 17th at 5pm. at the Town Office.

20. Adjourn: Richard motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 pm, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

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

WESTFIELD SELECTBOARD:

X

Jacques Couture
Selectboard Chair

X

Dennis Vincent
Selectboard

X

Richard Degre
Selectboard

Minutes submitted by Niki Dunn.