

Westfield Selectboard Minutes

September 18, 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); Jenn Stelma, Library Board of Trustees Chair; Niki Dunn, Selectboard Clerk

Others Present: Samantha Hillman, Telling & Hillman PC; Alison Low, NVDA

1. Call Meeting to Order-Jacques Couture, Chair: Jacques Couture brought the meeting to order at 5pm.

2. Public Comment – 5 Minutes: There were no public comments.

3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda: Jacques added trail work to the highway update section.

4. Approve 8-21-23 Minutes and Business from the Minutes: Richard Degre motioned to approve the minutes from August 21, 2023; Dennis Vincent seconded. Motion passed.

5. Review/Discuss Audit – Samantha Hillman, Telling & Hillman, PC (emailed in advance) – 5 p.m.: Samantha Hillman joined the meeting to discuss the auditor's report draft and answer any questions the board may have. Lisa explained that the new auditor's report has a lot more information than they have received in past years, and she wanted Samantha to give a brief overview of the report to the board. Samantha went through the draft report page by page and explained what is most relevant to look at. There is information included that is required to be there by the government but does not apply to the town. She explained how the town quantifies their assets. Jacques questioned if other towns keep track of their assets the same way Westfield does, and she said about ten percent of them do. Jacques questioned what value it may have to the town to get the assets valued. Samantha explained that some towns don't see the benefit in doing it and she recommended anything over \$10,000 to be valued if the town decided to go ahead with doing that. The value they use is the original cost of the asset. They then take the cost of the asset and span it across the life of the asset. Lisa asked if they don't get their assets valued if every year the auditors will have to modify their opinion and Samantha explained that they would have to. She also noted that there are no penalties or fines for not valuing the assets and that if the town decided to go ahead with doing it the first year would be the hardest because of gathering all the historical data needed. Jacques questioned some language in the report that talked about moving money from one account to another and he did not think the town ever did

that. Samantha explained that the language is just in the report and does not necessarily apply to Westfield. She explained what modified accrual is and that they use this method to follow the generally accepted accounting principles. Jacques had a question about the VMERS payments and how what they owe is calculated and Samantha let him know that she will be sending some more detailed information about this to Lisa so that she can share it with the board. There was a note in the report about related party transactions and she explained that this is because Eric Kennison is an employee of the town and the town also uses his company, Kennison & Son, to do work for the town. She explained that there is nothing wrong with that, it is just something that they need to note in the report each year.

6. Review Draft of Hazard Mitigation Plan (emailed in advance) – 5:30 p.m.: Allison Low from NVDA joined to discuss the Hazard Mitigation Plan. Alison wanted the board to look at the mitigation actions in the plan and see if they are comfortable with them or if there were any that they wanted to add. She noted that having the town wastewater system in the plan as a mitigation action may help with getting grants for that project. LaDonna questioned whether this plan would need a hearing or if the board just adopts it when they are comfortable with it. Alison explained that they don't need a hearing, but they do need to show multiple ways that people were able to get involved, such as people being able to come to board meetings to give input. Alison explained that the next step would be to make sure it's available on the town website and on social media to let people know the draft is available to be viewed. Also, it needs to be sent out to neighboring communities as that will be asked about in the review process. Alison would be the person who sends it to the neighboring communities. An evaluation of the mitigation actions will need to be submitted in the review to get it approved. Each action in the plan will get a score and the selectboard can decide who does the scoring. LaDonna felt that whoever scores the actions should have some knowledge of the community. Alison let her know that some of the scorers could be LaDonna, Pat Sagui and others involved in emergency management in the community as well as the Selectboard members. LaDonna let Alison know that the town has a new Emergency Management Coordinator, and that if they could score it as a group, it could be a good way for him to get up to speed on this. Richard questioned where the money comes from for some of the mitigation actions in the plan, like for crop insurance. Alison explained that for things like that you could choose the low cost or no cost actions such as making information about crop insurance available for people through the town website. Jacques felt comfortable with the plan the way it looks right now. Dennis questioned whether this is state or federally mandated and Alison let him know that it is required to get FEMA mitigation funds for hazard mitigation grants. LaDonna questioned whether the board could change the plan if something comes out during the scoring process that would make a different mitigation action a better choice. Alison let her know that they could absolutely do that. Alison also noted that the FEMA map updates are still not available yet. LaDonna wondered if people need to be notified when they are available so they can see if they fall in a flood zone according to the new maps. Alison explained that there should be time for people to make comments on the draft maps.

7. Update from Library Trustee Board – Jenn Stelma, Chair (emailed in advance) – 6:15 p.m.: Jenn Stelma brought some questions that the trustee board members had from their last

meeting. She also let the board know that they have been very busy at the library with the after-school program attending and a book club starting. She also noted that Jay residents have been using the library pretty frequently and the trustee board wondered if it would be appropriate for them to go to the Town of Jay to ask for an appropriation at Town Meeting. Jacques wondered if the trustee board had a number in mind that they wanted to ask for and Jenn let him know that they do not yet. LaDonna let Jenn know that they need to find out if the town requires a petition to get on the warning for town meeting and that the deadline may be around the end of the year. Jacques explained that they may have questions such as what the library needs the money for. He noted that usually Westfield gets a small writeup with an appropriation request that explains why they are asking for the money or what they would plan on doing with the money. LaDonna felt that asking for money for a specific purpose may be a better way to approach it. Richard let Jenn know that there are a bunch of desks in the basement of the community center that the library can use if they need them. Jenn noted that they are having a bake sale at the Octoberfest in Jay and that the booth was donated to them. One of the trustee board members had a question about the insurance policy for the library, whether it is up to date and if there are any restrictions on the use of the building. LaDonna let Jenn know that it is up to date, and they can't have alcohol in the building. Jacques noted that they could always contact the insurance company to get more information on any possible restrictions. Jenn also wondered if they could hire a backup librarian in case Maureen is sick or unable to come to work. She explained that it wouldn't increase the hours the library is open it would just be used as a backup to make sure the library is able to always be open during the advertised hours as many people rely on the library for their work or groups to meet. The board let her know they were okay with hiring a backup librarian. Jenn also let the board know that she is taking photos to get the library submitted to the National Historic Building Registry. Jacques let her know that it may make for some restrictions when doing work on the building, although it was noted that they may have access to more funding once on the list. She also gave the board Maureen's hours for her deep cleaning work, which totaled 25.83 hours. The hours did not include cleaning any of the cases or the taxidermy as that requires special tools and Beau is looking into getting that done. She also noted that she is looking into a Ready Grant and is waiting to hear back from someone regarding the grant but will eventually need a letter of support from the town to be considered for the grant money.

A. Discuss Status of Work to Fix Outside Pipe Before Winter: The water pipe in the winter was discussed and it was determined that the most likely cause of this is because the pipe runs alongside the stone walls of the foundation. There is a box on the wall to access the pipe and last winter it was kept open to help keep it warmer, however it still froze. Eric suggested trying heat tape as a solution.

B. Mold in Basement: Jenn let the board know that there is mold in the basement, and they would like to get a dehumidifier that will automatically drain as the one they are using now has to be manually drained every few hours and there is not somebody at the library every day to do this. Lisa looked up prices for a dehumidifier and they are around \$300-\$500 dollars. It was noted that the mold may be due to how high the water table is this year, or it could've been caused by a large number of books that were stacked up

against the wall. They do currently have an air purifier running that has a HEPA filter. Richard can get a large fan that they can run downstairs with the doors open and that may help get some fresh air into the room. Jenn will determine the square footage of the basement and give the number to Dennis who will look into getting the dehumidifier. The funds for the dehumidifier can come from the library maintenance budget.

8. Update on Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Village Wastewater Project – Pat Sagui:

A. Discuss Possible Ranking System for RFQ (emailed in advance): Pat Sagui is still working on the draft, so this item was tabled until the next meeting.

9. Zoning Bylaw Update/Discuss Tentative Work Dates– Pat Sagui, Planning Commission Chair: The work dates will be scheduled over email.

10. Highway Update – Eric Kennison, Road Commissioner:

A. Bills for Old Chloride Tank: Eric called three times this month, still cannot get a hold of anyone.

B. Status of Road Signs Installation / Buck Hill (at Route 100) Road Sign Missing:

The sign for Buck Hill went missing last week. LaDonna thinks the post is gone too. Jacques also noted that the Loop Road sign blew off the post as well. Signs will need to be ordered for Loop Road, Buck Hill and the two hidden drive signs for Jen Grace's driveway. Eric will check to see if he has a Balance Rock Road sign as that one needs to be replaced as well.

C. Status of Grants in Aid Pre-Construction Scoping Summary (Grant

Construction Deadline 9/30/23): Jason told Eric that the Letter of Intent needs to be done, LaDonna let Eric know that it was already done and sent in a while ago. Eric has been trying to get in touch with the woman who must come out and inspect the site and she still hasn't called Eric back. Eric will find out from Jason if the Letter of Intent is what they are still looking for.

D. Discuss/Sign Quote Letter for Salt from Cargill: The board signed the quote.

E. Trail Work: A homeowner on Ball Ground Road would like the town to fix the road before he has a logger come in. The maps were checked, and it was concluded that the homeowner lives on the part of the road that is a legal trail and therefore the town is not responsible for maintaining that section of road. The homeowner would need to hire someone to fix the road themselves if they would still like the work done.

F. Tree Debris Near Cemetery on North Hill: The tree debris is still on the ground near the cemetery on North Hill. Eric will move it tomorrow.

11. Treasurer's Report – Lisa Deslandes:

A. Approve Warrants for 8/2/23 \$25,593.10 (bills), \$6,457.64 (payroll); 8/16/23 \$66,635.57 (bills), \$5,155.10 (payroll); 8/29/23 \$62,620.32 (bills), \$5,474.19 (payroll): Dennis motioned to approve the warrants for August; Richard seconded. Motion passed.

B. Review Budget Reports, Balance Sheet & Investment Accounts (emailed in advance): Lisa noted that the heating bill didn't get broken down for each account, she will make the changes. Regarding the VMERS question from last month, she noticed she was double entering the amounts like it had been done in the past and she will be doing it differently going forward.

C. Discuss Request from Peter Thoms: He is requesting an extension on paying his property taxes and would like the 8% late fee waived. He is willing to pay the interest on the money. He has already given a check to Lisa for the taxes owed to be deposited in November. Interest would be around 100 dollars. Dennis felt that since he made an effort to let them know ahead of time and he has never been late on his payment before it would be okay this time. The board agreed to not charge the 8% fee, but to charge the interest, and this would be a one-time only agreement.

12. Sheriff's Reports for August: LaDonna has not received the August Sheriff's Report yet.

13. Community Center -- Discuss Quote from Nadeau's Plumbing & Heating (emailed in advance) and Progress on New Bathroom Flooring: They tried to fix the check valve but couldn't, there was too much water pressure. Jacques wondered if the system was too full of water. Nadeau's gave the board three different estimates. The necessary work estimate is \$1,059.10. This is for replacing the check valve for the sewer system. The recommended estimate is \$1,535 and is to replace the mixing valve. The board would like to get a quote for on demand hot water systems instead of replacing the mixing valve. The optional estimate is \$3,185 and is to add a sensor to the ramp to allow the heating element to turn off when it is warm outside, and the heating function is not necessary. This would save on both oil and electricity over time. Dennis will call Chris at Nadeau's to get a quote on the hot water on demand systems. Richard felt that he should get a quote from him for a heat pump for the Town Office at the same time so that it can be put in the budget for next year. Richard motioned to accept the necessary and optional quotes, which are for the check valve for the sewer system and the sensor for the handicap accessible ramp snow melt system, and to use ARPA funds to pay for this work to be done; Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

A. Floor: Roger Tetreault cannot do the floor job. Richard will check the floor again; he did not feel it move the last time he checked.

14. Recycling Update & Attendants Schedule for October:

Oct 7th: Dennis Vincent

Oct 14th: Maurice Doyon, Roger Tetreault

Oct 21st: Jacques Couture

Oct 28th: Richard Degre

A. Reminder – No E-Cycling (Electronics) Accepted until NEKWMD Notifies the Town: There is still some room to accept electronics and hold them at the recycling center for now.

B. Trash Dumping: A person was caught on camera dumping trash at night. The vehicle was recognized and matched some trash recovered from the bag that was dumped with the person's name and address on it. LaDonna will send them a warning letter.

15. Update on Delinquent Dogs – LaDonna Dunn: There are some new dogs in town, LaDonna is working on getting them registered.

16. Sign North Hill Cemetery Quit-Claim Deed for Piera Piunno (emailed in advance): Quit claim deed was signed.

A. Green Burials: LaDonna explained what green burials are. She learned about them at a training course she attended last week. They also discussed a formula that is used to determine perpetual care for your cemetery.

B. Lot Prices: Jacques would like to look at raising lot prices again to be more in line with other cemeteries in the state.

17. Discuss Possible Candidates for 1st Constable Position: Mike Jacobs is the candidate agreed upon by the board. Someone from the board will ask him if he is interested when they see him next.

18. Skateboards on Basketball Court and Damage to Court Surface: Jacques looked at the court with Mike and did notice some minor damage from skateboards, but a lot from age. There are also some very small holes in both courts that will get worse when they fill with water and freeze. LaDonna will be getting a quote to have the courts resurfaced. She let the board know that the tennis courts are used quite a bit. She also noted that there are a few skateboarders who have been asked to leave before and when they refused the Sheriff's Office had to be called. Lisa wondered if a camera could be put up and a sign informing people that they are on camera to try and cut down on damage to the courts. LaDonna also noted that the hinge on one of the gates to the tennis court is broken. Jacques will look for a hinge to fix the gate.

19. Tennis Court – Request to Add Additional Lines on Court for Pickleball: If the courts get resurfaced that's when the lines could be added. LaDonna will get a quote for this as well.

20. Executive Session (if necessary): No executive session needed.

21. Other Business:

A. Next Meeting Date October 16th: Next meeting will be at 5pm on October 16th.

B. Schedule Tentative Dates for Budget Meetings: December 4th at 4pm will be the highway budget meeting. The second meeting will be scheduled at a later date.

C. Ideas for 2023 Town Report Cover: Dennis thought putting Couture’s Barn on the cover would be nice. LaDonna thought they could do all the barns in town. The board agreed to have a collage of all the different barns in town.

D. Maurice Doyon Meeting Pay: Maurice would like to know if he can get paid to attend the emergency management meetings in Newport, they are monthly. Jacques felt that it would be a good investment. Richard thought a set amount per meeting might be the way to go. LaDonna will ask him what amount he was thinking of getting.

22. Adjourn: Richard motioned to adjourn at 8:27 pm, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

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

WESTFIELD SELECTBOARD:

X

Jacques Couture
Selectboard Chair

X

Richard Degre
Selectboard

X

Dennis Vincent
Selectboard