

Westfield Selectboard Minutes

**November 13, 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; Pat Sagui, Planning Commission Chair (Partial Attendance); Eric Kennison, Road Commissioner (Partial Attendance); Niki Dunn, Selectboard Clerk

Others Present: Matthew Wilson, The Chronicle (Partial Attendance); Liam Abbate, NVDA (Partial Attendance); Doug Morton, NVDA (Partial Attendance)

1. **Call Meeting to Order – Jacques Couture:** The meeting was called to order at 4:59 pm by Jacques Couture.
2. **Public Comments:** Lisa Deslandes wanted to congratulate LaDonna Dunn for receiving the award of Best Town Clerk in the State of Vermont for 2023.
3. **Additions and/ or Deletions to the Agenda:** LaDonna added the bike race “Rasputitsa” under Highway Update. The Selectboard added #4, Best Town Clerk Award congratulations and appreciation.
4. **Best Town Clerk Award:** LaDonna has received the award for being the Best Town Clerk in the State of Vermont for 2023. The Selectboard members offered their congratulations and noted how much they appreciate all the work LaDonna does for the town. She received a plaque that is hanging in her office.
5. **Approve 10/16/23 Minutes and Business from the Minutes:** Richard Degre motioned to approve the minutes from 10/16/23, Dennis Vincent seconded. Motion passed.
6. **Library Update:**
 - a. **Status of Work to Fix Outside Pipe Before Winter:** Richard and Dennis thought that making the opening to get to the pipe bigger and cutting away the spray foam insulation around it would let the heat get to it enough to keep it from freezing. Heat tape could also be put on the pipe once the spray foam insulation has been cut away. Richard will talk to Roger Tetreault about getting it taken care of.
 - b. **Mold In Basement:** Dennis stopped in to empty the dehumidifier prior to the meeting and there was no water in it. Roger took care of the mold on the walls and along with the heat now being on it seems that the problem has been fixed.

- c. **Security Cameras – Lisa Deslandes, Treasurer:** Lisa presented a couple of different options to the board. She thought that the 360-degree view cameras would work best as they follow the movement of anyone in the area. Installing two of those cameras in the upstairs area and one in the doorway is her recommendation. She also went over two different options for screen sizes to view the cameras. There is a smaller screen and a larger screen that could be mounted on the wall. The cameras can also be viewed through a phone app. Dennis wondered about having an alarm or doorbell as it's hard for Maureen to notice when people come in if she is in the back room. Lisa thought a doorbell noise would be distracting to people who were trying to read or study but thinks that the screen would light up to notify her that someone was in the doorway. The cost to have the camera events recorded is around \$100 per year. The board would like to ask Maureen which screen she would prefer before purchasing one. Richard motioned to approve the purchase of the cameras and screen, depending on the screen Maureen prefers, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.
 - d. **Repairs Completed by Roger Tetreault:** Roger cleaned up the mold on the walls downstairs and added ropes for the upstairs section.
 - e. **Computer For Library:** The computer that was discussed last month is going to cost a little bit more than previously thought. The funds for the purchase were going to be comprised of the \$600 donation from the Lions Club and the board approved an additional \$200. In looking at the costs for the computer needed it will be closer to \$900-1000 dollars in total. The cost may be less if a Black Friday deal can be found. The board agreed to the purchase of the computer at a cost of no more than \$1000 total, \$600 of which comes from the Lions Club donation.
7. **Discuss Interview with Consultant for Village Wastewater Project – Pat Sagui, Planning Commission Chair:** Pat questioned if the board would like her to call the references and was also looking for input on what kinds of questions the board would like to ask the references. Dennis noted that he would call one of the references and Pat will call the other two. She will email the list of agreed upon questions to the board. Jacques would like to know if they felt the company did a good job, how were they to work with and would they hire them again. Pat did note that all the references have worked with the company for a number of years, which is a good sign. Dennis motioned to hire AES Northeast to begin the feasibility study, pending the reference checks, Richard seconded. Motion passed.
8. **Zoning Bylaw Update and Hearing Dates – Pat Sagui, Planning Commission Chair:** Pat let the board know that on December 5th the hearing on the draft bylaws will be held at 5:30pm. Ellen Fox thinks the draft will be ready to be posted by November 16th. At the February Selectboard Meeting will be the final hearing and then the bylaws can be adopted. There is an appeal process after that if needed.
- a. **Best Ways to get the Word Out About the Public Hearings:** Handouts with this information can be given out at recycling. Neighboring townspeople can also

weigh in on the bylaws. Pat felt they should have them ready to hand out this week or next week.

9. Highway Update – Eric Kennison, Road Commissioner:

- a. Update on Grants:** NVDA has been applied for, Wild and Scenic was submitted for reimbursement and Eric is working with Jason Sevigny on the Better Roads Grant. The Better Roads Grant for this year is being put off until next year due to an extension caused by the flooding earlier in the year.
- b. Update on Installation of Hidden Drive Signs/ Road Signs:** Eric has put up all the signs. There has only been one complaint about sign placement. Eric explained that he placed the sign in the particular spot due to visibility from all the different directions traffic would be coming from and there was no other place to put it so that it could be seen well enough. The sign is in the town right of way and will be staying where it is. Eric let LaDonna know which signs still need to be ordered.
- c. Discuss Update of Road Segments for Municipal Roads General Permit with Liam Abbate – NVDA:** Liam explained that they look at all road segments within 100 feet of a waterway. 141 road segments fully meet the standards, 37 road segments do not meet the standards and 25 road segments partially meet the standards. The report sent to the board lists the individual segments and whether they meet the standards. Seven segments need to be completed annually, to have all segments in compliance by 2036. Doug noted that he would start with the segments that cause the most problems or cost the most money to repair. Eric let the board know that almost half of these have been done already as the survey was done right after the flooding this spring. Dennis questioned how long each segment is. Liam explained that each segment is just over 328 feet, unless it is at the end of a roadway and in that case it may be longer or shorter. Doug noted that this report can be used as a tool to make sure all the roads are properly classified. Liam let the board know they will need to submit a notice of intent and he will email the link to the form to LaDonna.
- d. Gaston Bathalon, Rasputitsa:** Rasputitsa is a bike race taking place in the spring. There is estimated to be between 1300-1500 bicyclists participating, and it is being promoted as the more mud the better. Troy Selectboard is getting a meeting set up with the Vermont Cities of Leagues and Towns over concern regarding damage to the roadways. Eric does not feel like it will do much damage to the roads. He is not concerned about it.
- e. Ted Sedell, Orleans County Conservation District:** Ted called Eric to let him know that there is money available to do the Corrow Basin Road culvert. There is \$160,000 available with \$200,000 being the total cost of the project, and in-kind money being \$66,750. Dennis questioned if this culvert needs to be changed. Eric explained that Fish and Wildlife did the engineering for five culverts, and they all

are to better the waterflow for the fish, it is not because the culverts need to be replaced. Jacques did not feel like this was a good use of money at this time, he felt if the culvert was failing it would be different. Eric also noted that the town should reclassify some of the roads, noting that there are class threes that really should be class fours. Jacques agreed and thought that the board should take some time at a future meeting to go through the roads and look at what needs to be reclassified. LaDonna noted it should be done before the AOT meeting, maybe in February would work best.

10. Treasurers Report – Lisa Deslandes:

- a. Approve Warrants for October: 10/11/23 \$7,309.31 (bills), \$11,480.78 (payroll); 10/18/23 \$17,605.20 (bills); 10/17/2023 \$3,062.60 (bills); 10/18/2023 \$44,691.77 (bills); 10/19/2023 \$951,805.96 (bills); 10/25/2023 9,142.82 (bills), \$7,058.97 (payroll)** Richard motioned to approve the warrants for October, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.
- b. Review Budget Reports, Balance Sheet and Investment Accounts:** The board reviewed these reports and had no questions.
- c. Determine Health Insurance Benefit for 2024 Open Enrollment:** The cost for the MVP Platinum plan is going up by \$124.45 for 2024. The vision plan could be an add on at \$6.58 per month. Currently the town pays 80% and the employees pay 20%. Richard thought that the town paying 100% had been discussed in the past. Lisa noted that it was and offering the family plan was also discussed. She explained that it should go into the Employee Personnel Policy if those changes were to be made. The board has some more time to get this finalized. Lisa also noted that Blue Cross Blue Shield for the same policy was \$1,132.59, so just a bit more than MVP. Jacques felt that they should add the vision plan, and the other board members agreed.
- d. Authorize Invoice from VCI for Road Signs:** Lisa received an invoice for signs ordered much earlier in the year. Eric does remember receiving these signs. The board authorized paying the invoice.

11. Sheriff's Report for September: 0 Tickets, 0 Warnings, 0 Fines, 0 Arrests, 6.5 Billed Hours.

12. Community Center:

- a. Update on Plumbing Work – Nadeau's Plumbing and Heating:** They are waiting for parts, will try to get it done before it gets too cold. Jacques noted that the ramp has been running. Richard noted that when the sensor gets put on the ramp won't be running all the time. Jacques has been turning the heat onto manual when the center is going to be used.

- b. Bathroom Floor Downstairs:** Dennis looked at the floor and felt there is nothing wrong with it, it just needs some wax. He did notice that it feels spongy, he thinks the under layer may be loose. He feels that the library bathroom needs a new floor though as the tiles are all broken. Richard will talk to Roger about the library bathroom floor.
- c. Request from Home Schooling Group:** The group has been using the library but felt that they would be better off using the Community Center again as they have some louder children and don't want to disrupt other people in the library, and they would like to do some cooking as well. The board is okay with them using the building for their meetings.
- d. New Exercise Chairs Donated by Community National Bank:** Community National Bank is purchasing the chairs and donating them to the town. It is 20 chairs at \$30 per chair for a total of a \$600 donation. The old chairs will need to be brought to recycling. The board agrees to accept the chairs.

13. Recycling Update:

- a. Discontinuance of Accepting High Wattage Lithium Batteries:** Batteries with over 300-watt hours are no longer accepted. LaDonna is posting the email at the Recycling Center so the attendants will know how to calculate the watt hours.
- b. Attendants Schedule for December:**
 - Dec 2 – Jacques Couture
 - Dec 9 – Maurice Doyon, Roger Tetreault
 - Dec 16 – Dennis Vincent
 - Dec 23 – Richard Degre
 - Dec 30 – Dennis Vincent
- c. Update on Plexiglass Panel in Garage Door:** Richard noted that it will not be plexiglass, they are changing the whole panel, and it has been ordered.

14. Discuss/ Edit/ Approve Employee Personnel Policy: Richard had a concern about section 8 regarding full time employees. It states that they cannot have another job aside from working for the town. He explained that this would not work for Eric. Lisa thought they could exempt the road commissioner. In reading the section further it was decided to remove the first paragraph but leave the rest which just describes not doing work for another job during the hours you are working for the town and not getting a job that interferes with town employment. Jacques noted that it says the wrong town in a couple places. Lisa explained that was because of the way she put the draft document together and will be fixed in the final draft. Jacques also felt that they should replace his/her with their/they. Lisa will make changes and request approval at the next meeting.

15. Complaint from Property Owner about Rat Poison around Building: LaDonna has received a few calls from someone in town regarding rat poison that is being put out around a commercial building. The caller's puppy ate the poison and died, and they

would like the people who put it out to clean it up. Jacques questioned how they knew where the poison came from. LaDonna explained that they approached the neighbor, and they said it was inside the buildings. She also explained that there is no leash law outside of the village. Dennis noted that there is no regulation on putting out rat poison, and the board cannot tell people what to do in those regards. Overall, the board feels that they need to work it out between the two of them, they have no oversight in situations like these.

- 16. Caroling on the Common: Date, Time, Refreshments, Santa, Fire Truck, Ambulance, Goody Bags for Kids:** The event will be held on December 14th at 6pm, LaDonna will call Dave Murphy to see if he will be Santa again this year. She will also put the goody bags together.
- 17. Approve Tobacco License for Westfield General Store:** Dennis motioned to approve the tobacco license for the Westfield General Store, Richard seconded. Motion passed.
- 18. Invitation to Commemorate Vermont and the Semi quincennial:** In 2025 Vermont is celebrating 250 years. LaDonna explained that some towns are making committees to do something to commemorate, and others are just assigning a liaison to share information. The resolution asks the town to offer volunteers to work with the Vermont committee. Jacques felt that they should go ahead with the resolution and can discuss what to do specifically further down the road. LaDonna will modify the resolution to offer a town liaison and will have it ready for the board's December meeting.
- 19. Newport Ambulance Service Report and Budget:** The board reviewed the budget, and everyone approves it. The budget is \$36,977 for 2024 plus \$850 for dispatching, for a total of \$37,827.
- 20. Other Business:**
 - a. Next Regular Monthly Meeting Date:** December 18th at 5pm.
 - b. Budget Meetings:** December 1st from 12:30pm to 4:30pm (General Fund) and December 4th from 4pm to 6pm (Highway Fund)
 - c. Thank you letters 2023 Appropriations:** LaDonna reviewed the letters she has received with the Selectboard.
 - d. Cover of Town Report:** The front and back covers will be farms around town, and the Selectboard would like the inside cover to be a photo of LaDonna with her Town Clerk of the Year plaque and the town office staff.
- 21. Executive Session:** Richard motioned to enter executive session at 7:35pm for a personnel issue, Dennis seconded. Motion passed. Motion by Dennis and seconded by Richard to exit Executive Session at 7:55 p.m. Motion passed unanimously. No action was taken on the personnel issue.

22. Adjourn: Motion by Dennis and seconded by Richard to adjourn at 7:56 p.m. Motion carried.

Westfield Selectboard Approval

Date: _____ **with** _____ **change(s)**

WESTFIELD SELECTBOARD:

X

Jacques Couture
Selectboard Chair

X

Richard Degre
Selectboard

X

Dennis Vincent
Selectboard