

Westfield Selectboard Minutes
December 4, 2023 @ 4:00 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 (Partial Attendance); Eric Kennison, Road commissioner (Partial Attendance); Niki Dunn, Selectboard Clerk

Continuance from 12/1/23 meeting

- 1. Continue Meeting from 12/1/23:** Jacques reconvened the meeting at 4:03 pm.
- 2. Approve Minutes from the 12/1/2023 Meeting:** Jacques motioned to approve the December 1, 2023, meeting minutes, Richard seconded. Motion passed.
- 3. Additions/ Deletions to the Agenda:** LaDonna added the items Hazen's Notch Parking and Wild and Scenic Grant.
- 4. Draft Highway Budget:** There was a discussion on why the snow plowing for the town buildings is done by a few different people. It was determined that it ended up that way after the Town Office was constructed, but it does not need to continue to be done that way. There has also been an issue with the Community Center having snow piles left that need to be shoveled out of the way for people to get into the building. Currently having anyone from town doing the shoveling is a liability and this is something that should be completed by whoever does the plowing. It was noted that the plowing can all go out to bid next September with the shoveling being included as part of the required duties. LaDonna will put it on the agenda for September 2024's Selectboard meeting.

Jacques also noted that when leaving the Community Center after dark you cannot see the ramp because the open door blocks the light. He would like to have some extra lighting installed to make it safer.

Cemetery Road was damaged this past weekend by farm equipment. Eric had to bring in loads of gravel and use the grader to get it fixed. It was agreed upon by the board to invoice the person responsible for the damage.

The highway budget was gone through line by line, and the following are areas that were discussed/ had changes made to them:

State Aid to Highways: LaDonna explained that the actual for FY23 is higher because the 1st quarter payment for 2024 was already sent to the town to help with

the flooding costs. The town will only receive 3 payments next year due to this. It should be around \$42,000.

Better Roads Grant, Route 58: This work will be completed in 2024. The town's share of this grant has already been raised. The reimbursement from the state will come in FY24.

Better Roads Grant, Buck Hill: Deadline to enter for this grant is 12/20/2023, so the town won't know if they are getting the grant or not until 2024. It was determined to leave it off the revenue in case the grant does not come through and if it does the town's portion of the money can come from the road budget.

NVDA Grants In Aid: This grant Eric received an extension for. A second of these grants should be received in 2024.

Payroll: With the 3.2% COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) the payroll expense increases to around \$45,000. This will be adjusted when Lisa gets the total for the current year finalized. VMERS is going up in July, Lisa will need to get the calculations done for this. Currently the employee pays 6.125%, and the employer pays 6.75%. In July the employee will pay 6.375% and the employer will pay 7%. VMERS is the state retirement plan, and the state sets the rates.

Employee Health Insurance: Health insurance offerings were discussed, and the board agreed to leave the health insurance the same and add the vision plan. Dennis motioned to continue with the MVP Platinum Plan and add the MVP Vision 1 plan, both plans employer pays 80% and employee pays 20%, Richard seconded. Motion passed. The health insurance plan is going up by \$124 per month.

Electricity: Rates are increasing 8%.

Town Garage Maintenance: The board would like to get the front of the building pressure washed. Jacques also thought they could change out the outdoor light to something that doesn't attract bugs to keep the building a little cleaner. The pressure washing is estimated to be around \$380.

Grader Expense: The grader expense was set at \$5,000 to have enough to purchase bits and fuel.

Grader Reserve Fund Transfer: The board will be keeping the amount transferred to the grader reserve fund at \$8,000 for FY24. It is estimated that there is currently around \$75-\$80,000 in the account.

Hired Equipment: The current amount for FY23 is higher than normal because of the spring storm work. It includes work that FEMA will be reimbursing.

Eric's Contract: Lisa questioned if Eric would like to continue having his contract run from Oct to Oct or if he would like to have it start in January instead. It was determined that he will change it to start in January and he will not have any increases in his pricing for the new contract.

FEMA: LaDonna would like to have a separate category to show FEMA expenses and revenue. Jacques felt that would be easier to track. Lisa will make that change.

Paving: Jacques inquired what the cost would be to pave a half a mile of roadway and Eric estimated it to be around \$50,000. He explained that the state grant to help with paving will not come through for another couple of years, and in the meantime the town should keep up with the paving as much as possible. It was determined to budget \$40,000 for paving for FY24.

Culverts: \$5,000 was budgeted as that would be the cost for two smaller size culverts.

Road Signs: LaDonna suggested budgeting \$1,000 as the cost of the signs are getting more expensive. This includes hardware to put the signs up.

The rough estimate of the highway budget at this time is looking at around \$10,000 more than last year.

5. **Hazen’s Notch Parking:** LaDonna received notice from a resident on Monteith Road about people parking on the closed section of road and camping/ having campfires. The board agreed to get a road sign to notify people that there is no parking allowed there. Until the road sign goes up Dennis will get a temporary sign to put up. LaDonna will inquire as to where specifically they are parking. After speaking with Eric it was determined that putting up a municipal turnaround sign instead would be a better solution.

6. **Wild and Scenic Grant:** LaDonna let the board know that the town did receive the Wild and Scenic Grant that was applied for (\$10,000 total).

7. **Adjourn:** Richard motioned to adjourn at 6:04 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