

WESTFIELD SELECTBOARD MEETING
Agenda
July 15th, 2024 @ 5:00 p.m.
Westfield Town Office, 38 School Street

Town Officials Present: Jacques Couture, Selectboard Chair; Dennis Vincent, Selectboard; Richard Degre, Selectboard; LaDonna Dunn, Town Clerk; Lisa Deslandes, Treasurer; Niki Dunn, Selectboard Clerk; Mike Piper, Constable; Danny Young, Lister (Partial Attendance); Shelley Martin, Lister (Partial Attendance)

Others Present: Laura Emery, CUD Representative (Partial Attendance); Kitty Ufford-Chase, Community Relations Manager NEK Broadband (Partial Attendance)

1. Call Meeting to Order – Jacques Couture, Chair: Jacques brought the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

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

3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda: Dennis would like to ask Jason Sevigny about painting the “stop here” line near the Danforth house and getting a small light put up.

4. Approve Minutes:

A. Selectboard Meeting Minutes 6-18-24: (emailed in advance) Dennis motioned to approve the minutes from the 6/18/24 meeting, Richard seconded. Motion passed.

5. Update on NEK Broadband and CVFiber Merger – Laura Emery: Laura Emery and Kitty Ufford-Chase spoke regarding the merger between NEK Broadband and CVFiber. Financial and organizational impacts were part of the reasons for the merger. The two organizations will now cover 71 towns. CVFiber serves the area around Montpelier. Federal money will be available this fall to apply for and with the larger area served they are more likely to get some of those funds. Jacques questioned if there are any cons to the merge. Laura noted struggles with combining staff and Kitty noted that the name will probably change eventually and will lose the “NEK” initials. There will be a public hearing July 16th at 6pm on zoom for anyone interested in giving their thoughts on the merge. Jacques questioned whether the boards will merge. Kitty noted that the boards will merge and there would be an executive committee board. There will still be representatives from every town on the governing boards. More rural areas of Westfield will be included in the areas they will be able to build if they receive the money they are applying for in the fall.

6. Tax Rate for 2024 – Danny Young, Lister & Lisa Deslandes, Treasurer: (emailed in advance)

A. Formally Adopt Municipal, \$0.8925, and Local (Veterans Exemption), \$0.0049, Tax Rates: Richard motioned to adopt the municipal tax rate of \$0.8925, the local (veterans exemption) tax rate of \$0.0049, the homestead education tax rate of \$1.7435 and the non-homestead education tax rate of \$1.9073, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

B. Review and Formally Adopt Education Tax Rates for FY24/25 – Homestead \$1.7435; Non-Homestead \$1.9073/ per \$100 assessed value: Motion above covered this agenda item.

C. Discuss/ Approve Penalty for Homestead Declaration Late Filers Requiring New Tax Bills (3% to 8%): The fee is currently 3%. Dennis motioned to approve a 3% penalty for late filers requiring new tax bills, Richard seconded. Motion passed.

D. Tax Bills In Mail 7/19/24: Informational.

- E. Reappraisal:** Danny has been speaking with NEMRC regarding the upcoming need for a reappraisal. NEMRC and Deanna Robitaille believe the town is eligible for a statistical update. This requires less on-site visits and the listers would be able to do the on-site work. This would cost around \$36,000 to pay NEMRC and around \$2,200 to pay the listers. This would most likely be done in 2027. A full reappraisal wouldn't be able to happen until 2029 and would cost about 50% more than the last reappraisal, which cost around \$45,000. Danny believes that with the money already set aside for reappraisal the funds should be available by 2027 to complete the statistical update. Per town policy there needs to be a second bid on reappraisal. Danny will send out requests for bids.

7. Library:

- A. Update from Library Minutes & Hitchcock Herald: (emailed in advance)** Richard questioned if the library still wanted some picnic tables. LaDonna believes they do. Jacques felt they could use some of the donation money to buy a picnic table and believes that a plastic/viny type table would last much longer than wood.

8. Highway Update – Eric Kennison, Road Commissioner: Eric was not present at the meeting.

A. Current Grants:

- i. BR1104 Better Roads Grant (TH2/ Route 58) \$15,000 – Needs to be completed by 9/30/24**
- ii. GA0461 Grants In Aid \$12,500 – Needs to be completed by 9/30/24**
- iii. GA0695 Grants In Aid \$10,000 – Needs to be completed by 9/30/24**
- iv. FY25 Grants In Aid \$6,000 – Work needs to be done between 7/1/24 and 9/30/25**
- v. Wild & Scenic Grant – Needs to be completed by 9/30/24**

- B. Hazard Mitigation Grant – Loop Road, Did Eric Review Paperwork – Deadline August 15th:**

9. Treasurers Report – Lisa Deslandes:

- A. Approve Warrants 6/04/24 \$15,631.91 (bills), \$8,743.10 (payroll); 6/17/24 \$42,397.19 (bills), \$5,527.50 (payroll); 06/25/24 \$477.54: (emailed in advance)** Richard motioned to approve the warrants, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.
- B. Review General & Highway Fund Budget Status Reports: (emailed in advance)** Board reviewed.
- C. Review Investments: (emailed in advance)** Board reviewed.
- D. Discuss Draft and Sign Delinquent Tax Collection Policy: (emailed in advance)** Dennis motioned to approve the delinquent tax collection policy, Richard seconded. Motion passed. Board and Lisa signed the policy.
- E. Review Auditors Report for FY23: (emailed in advance)** Board reviewed.
- F. Estimate from D&D Electric for Security Cameras: (emailed in advance)** Cameras will be setup at the Community Center and Town Office and the cameras will be viewable by phone. The estimate came to \$4,600 and Jacques questioned whether ARPA funds could cover this. Richard motioned to approve the purchase and installation of security cameras using ARPA funds, Dennis seconded. Lisa will ask D&D about upgrading the cameras at the recycling center.

- G. **Set Hourly Rate of Pay for Westfield Cemetery Cleanup:** Yvan Laplume cleans the Westfield cemetery and there is no set rate for this work currently. Jacques suggested the same rate as the recycling attendants. The rates of other town positions were discussed, and the board settled on \$23.25 per hour. Dennis motioned to pay Yvan LaPlume \$23.25 an hour for cemetery cleanup, Richard seconded. Motion passed.
- H. **Notice to Taxpayers (Informational):** *(emailed in advance)* Informational.
- I. **Mr. Clean:** Lisa explained that the bill for the town garage came to \$1,364 as they cleaned the whole building. The estimate for the library is \$1,410, they will need to use a special chemical to bleach the yellowing on the front of the building and will have to rent a lift. Richard noted that the playground needs to be washed. Jacques felt he could come pressure wash it himself. The bills for Mr. Clean will come out of the general budget but can be transferred to ARPA if there are extra funds that need to be used.
- J. **Delinquent Tax Collector:** Lisa would like to collect the 8% fee as the delinquent tax collector. Jacques is not opposed to this but does realize he said otherwise at town meeting. Lisa noted that other towns have their delinquent tax collector collect the 8% and their regular hourly rate. Lisa was previously doing most of the work and getting paid the hourly rate, this would just be the added 8% penalty on top of that. She will be doing more work in her personal time and taking calls at home. The board was okay with her collecting the fee.

10. Update on ARPA Funds:

- A. **Review New Quote for Community Center Windows:** *(emailed in advance)* The new quote from Poulin includes installation, it is for \$20,111.67. It is for different windows that are all vinyl, no wood and are Harvey brand. Jacques wondered if contacting Carter Finegan to see if she has any idea on when the MERP grant funds will be released so they can get an idea on whether they should wait or get the windows now.
- B. **Review Quotes for Interior Painting of the Community Center:** *(emailed in advance)* The quote for painting the interior of the community center without doing the ceilings is \$5,900, it would be an added \$2,700 to do the ceilings. There are cracks and pieces coming down from the ceiling and fixing those are included in the estimate. The board would like the ceilings done as well as the walls. Kelly Bradley can start work in the fall; she is booked until then. Dennis motioned to hire Kelly Bradley to paint the interior of the town office and the interior of the community center including the community center ceilings, Richard seconded. Motion passed. Richard will check with Annette to get a commitment for the exterior painting, he believes it should be around end of August/ beginning of September.
- C. **Review Quote for Interior Painting of Town Office:** *(emailed in advance)* The estimate to paint the interior of the town office is \$2,560. Motion made above.
- D. **List of Anticipated ARPA Projects:** There were \$97,994 available ARPA funds as of the meeting. Richard felt that they should get a quote for the heat pumps from Chris Hammond and Nick Baraw. Current projects to use ARPA funds on are the community center windows, interior painting of the community center and town office, exterior painting of the community center, finishing scanning land records, security cameras, and heat pumps at the town office. After those projects are complete it would leave about \$22,127 in ARPA funds. Lisa would also like to look into getting an exterior digital sign. Richard will talk to Steve Roberts at the American Legion to see where they got their outdoor sign.
- E. **Fred's Plumbing & Heating – Air Exchanger for Town Garage:** LaDonna asked Freds to give a quote on the air exchanger at the town garage while they are working on quotes for the heat pump for the town office.

- F. Jacques noted that his grandson helped him out around town to get in some community service hours for school and he thought it would be nice for the town to send him a thank you note.
- G. Mike Piper questioned if the library clock could be fixed. Jacques thought there might be someone who would be able to update it to an electric clock and get it working again. The suggestion will be passed on to the library committee.

11. Recycling Update:

- A. **Recycling Schedule for August:**
 - August 3rd: Jacques Couture
 - August 10th: Maurice Doyon, Roger Tetreault
 - August 17th: Richard Degre
 - August 24th: Dennis Vincent
 - August 31st: Dennis Vincent

12. Sheriff's Report for May 2024: (emailed in advance) Reviewed.

13. Pickleball Update:

- A. **Quote for Storage Building – Richard Degre:** Roger can build the storage building or a plastic storage building could be purchased. The board will wait until the equipment comes in to decide.
- B. **Frank's Line Striping Quote: (emailed in advance)** Striping will be done within the next couple of weeks. Nets have not been ordered yet, LaDonna will get them ordered. Richard would like to ask the line striper to give a quote on painting the "stop here" sign on the road. LaDonna will reach out to Jason Sevigny about this also.

14. Executive Session (if needed): Not needed.

15. Other Business:

- A. LaDonna noted that there are only a few delinquent dogs left.

16. Adjourn: Richard motioned to adjourn at 6:40pm, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

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

X

Jacques Couture
Selectboard Chair

X

Richard Degre
Selectboard

X

Dennis Vincent
Selectboard

