

**WESTFIELD SELECTBOARD MEETING
MINUTES
November 18th, 2024 @ 5:00 p.m.
Westfield Town Office, 38 School Street with Zoom Option**

Town Officials Present: Jacques Couture, Selectboard Chair; Dennis Vincent, Selectboard; Richard Degre, Selectboard; LaDonna Dunn, Town Clerk; Lisa Deslandes, Treasurer; Niki Dunn, Selectboard Clerk; Pat Sagui, Development Review Board Chair (Partial Attendance); Eric Kennison, Road Commissioner (Partial Attendance); Mike Piper, Constable (Partial Attendance); Will Young, Zoning Administrator (Partial Attendance)

Others Present: Karen Kotecki, NEK Broadband (Partial Attendance)

1. **Call Meeting to Order – Jacques Couture, Chair:** Jacques called the meeting to order at 5:01PM.
2. **Public Comment – 5 Minutes:** No public comments.
3. **Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda:** LaDonna added 16B – Discuss Town Report Cover
4. **Approve Minutes of the 10-28-24 Selectboard Meeting: (emailed in advance)** Dennis motioned to approve the minutes from the 10-28-24 meeting, Richard seconded. Motion passed.

A. Business from the Minutes: None

5. **CUD Report: (emailed in advance)**

A. Discuss Underground Conduits – Karen Kotecki: NEK Broadband is looking to install underground fiber on two road spans. Approximately 900 feet on Balance Rock Road and approximately 683 feet on Loop Road. There are gaps in the pole lines in these areas, which is why they are looking to put the fiber underground. If there is already an underground cable there, then they can go alongside that, if not they need to put their own in. Eric Kennison has already looked at these two spots. There is another area on Buck Hill that needs underground fiber, but they think there's a spare conduit they can use in that location. Since the town manages the right of way, NEK Broadband needs approval to occupy it. Richard motioned to allow the installation of the underground cable in the Balance Rock Road and Loop Road locations, Dennis seconded. Motion passed. LaDonna will send Karen a copy of the minutes from this meeting to keep in her file showing the approval of the project.

6. **Village Wastewater Project – Pat Sagui, DRB Chair: (emailed in advance)** Pat will follow up with Alison from NVDA. She is waiting to do the loan application with the state but is looking for help from her on getting that done. No further updates at this time.

7. **Discuss Legal Trails/ Legal Trail Policy – Will Young, Zoning Administrator:**

A. Approve Expenditure of Funds for Town Attorney Research on Legal Trail ROW: The lawyers are willing to come on Wednesday to do some more research on Crawford Trail. Will would like to know if they should focus just on Crawford Trail or also look at information on all legal trails. Dennis questioned why the permit for change of use relies on the right of way for Crawford Trail. Will explained that to receive a change of use they need to show proof of access by right of way from the DRB. The DRB would like more information before the next hearing on the right of ways for that trail or for all legal trails in the town. Existing non-conforming use is what the property owners have now because they have been able to use the ROW to get to that camp for over 15 years without it being in violation during that time. It

is just the change of use request that brings up the need for the minimum 25-foot ROW. Jacques noted that they eventually would like a policy to address all legal trails in town. LaDonna would like to ask the town attorney what evidence holds the most weight; would a town highway map be enough. Jacques felt they should have them look at all legal trails, not just that one. Richard motioned to hire the town attorney to focus research on Crawford Trail and ask them for an estimate on research into the right of ways on the other legal trails in town, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

B. DRB Hearing Continuance – Next Hearing December 3rd @ 6pm: Information only.

8. Library Update: (emailed in advance) Board reviewed.

A. Update on Assessment for CAP Grant: The assessors came out to the library to go through everything, and it was a very involved process. There is a list of things they still need that LaDonna and Niki will work on getting together for them. A couple of the animals tested positive for arsenic. They could be enclosed in glass to remediate this issue, but the report they give will have all their recommendations. The end goal of the assessment is recommendations on maintaining all the collections. Each collection has different ways of being properly maintained. There is no money available to do the preservation currently, but there may be grants available in the future.

9. Highway Update – Eric Kennison, Road Commissioner: Jacques noted that the town was approved for another Wild and Scenic grant. He mentioned these grants are becoming more competitive.

A. Current Grants:

- a. **BR1104 Better Roads Grant (TH2/ Route 58) \$15,000 – Received Payment**
- b. **GA0461 Grants in Aid \$12,500 – Submitted for Reimbursement 10/24/24; Segments Need to be Updated – Sent to Eric 11/11/24:** Eric noted that Jason has updated this.
- c. **Wild & Scenic Grant \$5,000 – Submitted for Reimbursement 10/24/24**

B. Corrow Basin Road Culvert: Dennis will try to speak with Dennis Frink regarding the temporary easement needed on his property to have the work on the culvert done. The town attorney will be drawing up the easement to send to him. Eric thought this work would not start until after July 1st, 2025. This job will need to be sent out to bid per the town's purchasing policy and federal grant standards. Eric can contact Tyler Billingsley to get the names of some companies to request bids from.

C. Progress on List of Missing Signs – Richard Degre & Dennis Vincent: Dennis and Richard will drive around and mark a map of where the signs are missing. Eric mentioned that using a post pounder, which costs around \$1800, would make this work go faster. Speed limit signs, road signs and square posts all need to be ordered. Jacques felt that any remaining ARPA money should be used to order the signs.

D. Sand Pile: Jacques would like to see that sand pile smaller by the end of spring. Eric thinks there is less than 1000 yards there. The board decided to purchase 2000 yards of sand again this year.

10. Treasurers Report – Lisa Deslandes:

A. Approve Warrants for October – 10/2/24 \$9,165.25 (bills); 10/8/24 \$1,336,150.43 (bills), \$6,514.01 (payroll); 10/15/24 \$9,725 (bills); 10/22/24 \$217,614.73 (bills), \$6,198.98

(payroll); 10/28/24 \$14,334.37 (bills): Richard motioned to approve the Octobers warrants; Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

- B. Review General & Highway Fund Budget Status Reports: (emailed in advance)** Lisa noted that it is looking like we will have a negative \$28,000, but there are delinquent taxes still owed that total roughly \$55,000. The highway fund has two grants still to come in and is currently at around \$44,000 left. Lisa noted that there is around \$1,550 left from the church's donation to the playground. She will move that to the playground account and will use it for playground equipment purchases in the future.
- C. Review Investments: (emailed in advance)** Board reviewed.
- D. FY25 PILOT Payment: (emailed in advance)** Information only.
- E. Delta Dental FY25 Rates: (emailed in advance)** The rate increase per month per person for same plan as last year is \$2.70. Richard motioned to continue with the same Delta Dental plan as last year, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

11. Review Projects and Sign MERP Grant: The MERP grant was approved for Westfield for \$466,211.19. The selectboard had questions on maintenance of these projects in the future and the logistics of when the funds become available and when they need to be expended by. LaDonna will ask Carter Finegan to come to another meeting to discuss implementing the grant. Richard noted that window installation is currently booking about 5 months out. LaDonna noted that the money for this grant is not given up front, so things will need to be scheduled over time and then get refunded. Richard questioned using the Good Neighbor Fund to help float some of these projects until they get reimbursed. Lisa noted that the money from that account is in CDs that mature in 2026. There is currently around \$51,000 in the Good Neighbor Fund, and \$23,000 in the Unexpected Funds. The Board signed the grant agreement.

12. Update on ARPA Funds:

- A. Updated Request for Purchase of Chairs at Community Center:** Connie requested Lifetime brand chairs and would like 36 chairs instead of the original amount requested. The board decided to go with the metal chairs with padded backs and seats from Costco. The town will apply for a COSTCO card and purchase the chairs using ARPA funds.
- B. Current List of Anticipated ARPA Projects:** There is around \$12,000 left in ARPA funds after the current projects are all paid for. The cameras from D&D will be around \$4,600, the concrete work for the sign installation is around \$5,000 and the chairs for the community center will be around \$1,000. Any work not being completed this calendar year will need to be under contract before the end of the year to comply with ARPA regulations. Eric noted that the town garage could use a generator, a 10kw one would work. Jacques felt they could use the rest of ARPA for the generator. Eric will talk with Tracy McAllister about getting the concrete work for the sign done this year.

13. Appoint New E911 Coordinator: Roger Gosselin is interested in this position. Richard motioned to appoint Roger Gosselin; Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

14. Recycling Update: The tires are getting close to needing to be picked up. LaDonna will call to schedule them to come pick them up.

A. Schedule for December:

December 7th: Jacques Couture
December 14th: Maurice Doyon, Roger Tetreault
December 21st: Richard Degre
December 28th: Dennis Vincent

15. Executive Session (Anticipated): Richard motioned to enter executive session at 7:15pm for discussion of a personnel issue, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.
Richard motioned to exit executive session at 7:38pm, no action taken, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

16. Other Business:

- A. Appropriation Thank You Letters:** Board reviewed.
- i. **Vermont Family Network:** *(emailed in advance)*
 - ii. **Vermont Symphony Orchestra:** *(emailed in advance)*
 - iii. **American Red Cross:** *(emailed in advance)*

B. Discuss Town Report Cover: LaDonna was thinking of doing the church for the cover with some history of it. The board agreed that is a good idea.

17. Adjourn: Dennis motioned to adjourn at 7:39pm, Richard seconded. Motion passed.

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

X

Jacques Couture
Selectboard Chair

X

Richard Degre
Selectboard

X

Dennis Vincent
Selectboard