

WESTFIELD SELECTBOARD MEETING

Minutes

October 20th, 2025 – 5 p.m.

Westfield Town Office, 38 School Street

Meeting Recordings Available to View at <https://www.youtube.com/@TownofWestfieldVT>

Town Officials Present: Jacques Couture, Selectboard Chair; Richard Degre, Selectboard; Dennis Vincent, Selectboard; LaDonna Dunn, Town Clerk; Lisa Deslandes, Treasurer; Niki Dunn, Selectboard Clerk; Mike Piper, Constable (Partial Attendance); Mike Jacobs, Constable (Partial Attendance); Jenn Stelma, Library Board of Trustees (Partial Attendance); Shelley Martin, Town Health Office & Lister (Partial Attendance); Karen Blais, Library Board of Trustees (Partial Attendance); Eric Kennison, Road Commissioner (Partial Attendance)

Others Present: Jan Degre; Lt. Richard Wells, Orleans County Sheriff's Office (Partial Attendance); Mayor Rick Ufford-Chase, Newport Vermont Mayor (Partial Attendance)

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1. **Call Meeting to Order – Jacques Couture, Chair:** Jacques called the meeting to order at 4:58PM.
 2. **Public Comment – 5 Minutes:** None
 3. **Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda:** LaDonna added one more item to 8A, Correspondence from Jennifer Grace, 8B Correspondence from Mark Couture and 19C Approve Tobacco Substitute Endorsement for Westfield General Store.
 4. **Approve Minutes: (emailed in advance)**
 - a. **Approve Minutes of the 9-22-25 Selectboard Meeting:** Dennis motioned to approve the minutes of the September 22nd, 2025, Selectboard meeting, Richard seconded. Motion passed.
 - b. **September Selectboard Meeting To-Do List:** Dennis got the cover for the septic tank at the Town Garage and will install it this week. Richard sold the sander and grader tires. Lisa has not heard back from Jeff Dunn yet but will ask him about hanging the shutters at the library when she does. Richard spoke with Shawn Warner, but he has not come into the office yet, he will call him again.
 5. **Discussion with Newport Mayor Rick Ufford-Chase (15 Minutes):** Mayor Rick Ufford-Chase came to discuss what he is working on in Newport. He first gave a brief introduction of himself and how he came to be the mayor in Newport. Some of the things Newport has worked on are starting new task forces, for things like unhoused people, the water system, etc. He is speaking to towns in the surrounding areas of Newport to discuss the work they are doing to rebuild the city. There are many vacancies on main street along with the "pit". The city council has recently voted on a ten-to-fifteen-year plan to revitalize Newport. The plans include over 400 new housing units, a hotel on the waterfront, a recreation center downtown, a new courthouse, etc. Tax increment financing is the model they are looking at to get this work done. St. Albans is one of the towns that has recently done this. Having many development agreements with partners is crucial because once the state approves the plan you only have ten years to get the project done. They are currently speaking with 4-5 developers to justify putting an application in to the state in the spring. The earliest he expects to see any development on Main Street is spring of 2027. They are looking to connect with communities who look to Newport as the center of commerce. They are interested in what would be attractive to visitors but also good for locals. They will be sending out a survey through social media to have locals tell them what they want to see downtown.
 6. **Sheriff's Report – Lt. Richard Wells, Orleans County Sheriff's Department:**
 - a. **August: (emailed in advance)**
1 Ticket, 1 Warning, \$105 in Fines, 0 Arrests, 21 Hours Billed: Board reviewed.

- b. September: (emailed in advance)**
1 Ticket, 2 Warnings Issued, \$162 in Fines, 0 Arrests, 21.5 Hours Billed: Board reviewed.
- c. Discuss Jennifer Grace's Speeding Concerns on North Hill Road:** Lt. Wells looked at the data from the speed cart that was placed near her residence and the average speed was just over 34 mph. He has sat in the parking area of the dry hydrant which is almost directly across from the residence to monitor the speed and has noted that everyone slows down when they get to the corner she lives on as it's difficult to take that corner with any amount of speed. LaDonna questioned if there is anything the town can do to try to make this property safer. Lt. Wells explained that the driveway position makes it a harder spot to get in and out because of the corner. He noted that the solar speed signs are a deterrent for a little while but are also very expensive, and speed bumps cannot be placed there because it would cause people to go off the road given the corner. He also noted that it will always look like people are driving fast around that corner when you're trying to pull out of that driveway. He noted that any calls for speed complaints should be directed to them so they can try to focus on that area. Dennis confirmed with Lt. Wells that at this point it is up to Jennifer Grace to contact the Sheriff's Office if she has anymore speeding complaints. Jacques questioned if burning rubber is illegal and Lt. Wells noted that it is. It is an offence that would result in a ticket. Sergeant Garces spends time in areas where he notices these rubber circles in the road to try to catch the people responsible for doing this. Jacques questioned if there is a time of day when there is no coverage. Lt. Wells noted that from 6am to midnight their office is open, and they have an on call person after that and the state police are available until 2am. They are open seven days a week. LaDonna thanked him for discarding the needles on Ballground Road. Jenn Stelma questioned if they should call the office when they know something like drug use is going on in an area of town. Lt. Wells noted that they should be called for these things, if they don't know about what is happening then they can't fix it.
- d. Criteria for Issuing Tickets Vs. Warnings:** Jacques noted that the Selectboard would like more information on why a warning is given vs. a ticket. Lt. Wells explained that there's no fine line on what warrants giving a ticket vs. a warning. It is the officers' discretion on what they feel deems giving a ticket or not. Investigations, and prior tickets are some things that factor into whether to give a ticket or a warning. If they have not received a ticket in many years, they may get a warning, but if they've received a ticket recently, they may not get a warning but get another ticket. There is no quota for tickets to be given anymore. There are times they run speed enforcement through the Governors Institute and those tickets and warnings will not show on the monthly report the town receives from the sheriff's office. He noted that over the years they have changed from just handing out tickets to focusing on public safety. He feels they are being present in town and the hours billed from the last two months show that. They want to handle complaints in person and not over the phone. He is aware that the numbers don't show what towns want to see for tickets, but they are in the town. Jacques noted that there are times when the speed exceeds the limit by quite a bit and they will only get a warning. He feels that doesn't make people want to slow down when they see warnings being given out for excessive speed like that. Lt. Wells explained that they had a chase begin in Westfield, however it ended in Troy, so he did receive quite a few tickets, but they didn't go on Westfield's report. They recently had a discussion on the reporting system and how to overhaul the way they report things. The town will be able to check each day on what happened the previous day in the town. He will be letting the other officers know that towns are looking for more enforcement. Mike Jacobs noted that he has put a sign out near his home, however he sees people speeding by his home all the time. He has to exit his driveway at a high rate of speed so that he doesn't get in an accident by people coming over the hill too fast. Lt. Wells explained that the radar needs to be straight on to be the most accurate, if they are at an angle then it won't be as accurate. This makes it harder to sit in a person's driveway to run radar. They do have a deputy who has a laser he uses in his cruiser which is a handheld speed measuring device.

7. **Library Report: (emailed in advance)** Jenn Stelma noted that they are looking forward to all the new updates coming to the library for the bathroom. She questioned if there were any updates to the work on the bathroom and if the contractor working on the bathroom could do the work on the children's room. Richard noted that when he spoke with Jeff Dunn, he seemed to be interested in doing the work in the children's room. Jeff will begin working on replacing the windows through the MERP grant next week. Lisa will show Jeff the idea that Jennifer Johnson had for the shelving and see if he would like to take on that project. The units they are looking for are moveable units that can be built offsite. Richard noted that Jeff can use his shop to make them. There are also plans available for the shelving if needed. Karen questioned if the walls would be redone. Lisa noted that the MERP budget for the bathroom and the entry door is capped at around \$25,000. Jenn Stelma questioned if the ramp door could be returned if they find another door for free. The door has already been purchased and has been delivered. It was discussed to possibly paint the paneling or take the paneling down and paint the sheetrock underneath if there is sheetrock there or put up v-grooved pine boards. They question if there is enough time to do all of this work. Richard noted that horizontal shiplap would be cheaper and easier to install. Lisa questioned if they had a budget for this work. Jenn noted that they would like a quote for shiplap and v-groove pine on the walls and the paneling removed. Lisa will get a quote on each of these options. Karen questioned if they need to keep carpet in the kid's room. Lisa could check with the insurance company. Jenn noted that industrial carpet would be best to replace the current carpet with. The board will be able to choose from samples prior to the carpet being installed. Richard noted that Jeff will need to know what the walls will be before he replaces the windows in that room as the wall covering could affect the depth placement of the window.

- a. **Library Supply Purchases:** LaDonna explained that the library should order all of their own supplies now that they have their own debit card, beginning January 1st. It will be easier to keep track of the cost for each building that way. Karen felt that there is no room to store any supplies. Jenn noted that they are meeting with Beau to discuss how to store or dispose the few taxidermy animals that are falling apart. He also felt that not all the pieces should be out all the time, they should be rotated. This will require storage space downstairs. They will update the Selectboard on what the process will be to dispose of some of the taxidermy pieces after they speak with Beau. LaDonna noted that they can use the Costco card for any purchases made there. This should start on January 1st, and the library board should include the supplies in their budget for next year. Lisa can help give the board an idea of what has been ordered in the past. Jenn Stelma questioned getting a box for deliveries and having the supplies delivered directly to the library.
- b. **MERP Grant Work:** The windows will begin being installed next week.

8. **Correspondence: (emailed in advance)**

- a. **Jennifer Grace – Received October 14th, 2025 @ 4:06PM & October 14th, 2025, by Certified Mail & October 12th, 2025 @ 2:04PM via Dropbox & October 20th, 2025 @ 5:45PM & October 10th, 2025 @ 10:35AM & October 10th, 2025 @ 10:34AM & October 10th, 2025 @ 9:50AM & October 16th, 2025 @ 3:01PM:** LaDonna has sent acknowledgements to each of these correspondences. The speeding issue near her home is not something the Selectboard has control over and it was noted previously in the meeting by Lt. Wells that she should direct her concerns about speeding to the Orleans County Sheriff's Office. It was noted by the Town Attorney that receipt of any correspondence makes the correspondence public record. LaDonna noted the subjects of each letter sent, including issues regarding public safety concerns not being addressed properly, not being happy with the Selectboards correspondence policy, no gossiping or speaking about things she has discussed, ongoing speeding on North Hill Road and ongoing safety concerns. LaDonna noted that there is documentation of each time these items have been discussed at recent Selectboard meetings. Jacques noted that they brought this up with Lt. Wells tonight and the Sheriffs Office is aware of where she lives, and they do patrol near there.

- b. **Mark Couture – Received October 17th, 2025 @ 11:51AM:** He recently purchased property on Buck Hill Road. They need permission to have electrical lines bored underneath the road from the pole directly across from their driveway. Vermont Electric let them know that they did not need to get an easement for this, just permission. Dennis motioned to give permission for the electrical lines to be placed under the road near 3010 Buck Hill Road, Richard seconded. Motion passed.

9. Treasurers Report – Lisa Deslandes:

- a. **Approve Warrants for September 9/4/25 \$4,341.62 (bills); 9/8/25 \$9,823.63 (bills); 9/9/25 \$12,366.14 (bills) & \$12,876.92 (payroll); 9/22/25 \$10,032.54 (bills) & \$6,953.63 (payroll):** Richard motioned to approve the warrants for September, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.
- b. **Review General & Highway Fund Budget Status Reports: (emailed in advance)** Lisa noted that the amount of the highway budget will change due to the income from the sale of the sander and grader tires. Insurance money for the garage door recently came in. Jacques questioned if that covers the cost of the damage. Lisa noted that there is a \$1,000 deductible. Richard questioned if they were supposed to get a new door opener for the garage door. The current one was damaged. Richard will reach out to Nick Bouchard to see when he is installing the opener. Lisa noted that it was in the estimate. The money for the sander and grader tires will go back into the highway budget. Jacques noted that the money for the grader tires can go into the grader fund.
- c. **Review Investments: (emailed in advance)** Board reviewed.
- d. **Returned Check Policy: (emailed in advance)** Done last month.

10. Highway Update – Eric Kennison:

- a. **Grants In Aid GA0932 – Grant Forfeited:** The pre-construction scoping summary was not completed in time.
- b. **Update on Culvert on School Street/ Ballground Road:** Not done yet.
- c. **Update on Corrow Basin Culvert:** Work is finished on this culvert. Jacques noted that the money just got approved for more culverts, so the other two may get done next year.
- d. **UMATR Grant 2026 – Location and Before Photos Needed – Grant Application Due 11/1/2025:** Eric will get pictures taken tomorrow morning. It will be on Loop Road.
- e. **Cargill Contract:** Last year they did not send it, it had to be requested. They have not sent anything yet this year. Eric would like to get the contract for 100 tons.
- f. **Blocks for Sand Pile:** Eric can get the blocks put up around the sand pile.

- 11. Update on MERP Grant Projects: (emailed in advance)** Jeff Dunn will begin putting the windows in at the library next week. Lisa will call D&D Electric to see when he can start working on the lighting at the Community Center.

12. Village Wastewater Study:

- a. **Update on 30% Report Document for Website from Kalyani Mer, AES Northeast:** LaDonna would like to check with AES Northeast regarding the edits on the 30% report before posting it online.
- b. **Review Frequently Asked Questions: (emailed in advance)** Jacques would like to clarify that money is spent from the budget that is set at town meeting. The board agrees that the questions were covered well and can be posted on the town website.

13. Discuss Possible Joint Meeting with the Towns of Troy, Jay and Lowell to Discuss

Ambulance Funding: LaDonna received a call from the ambulance service and there was an article in the paper about Jay discussing the ambulance funding. Richard feels that Jay Peak should fund some of the ambulance service as a large majority of calls are for the ski resort. Jacques is in favor of having a meeting if the other towns reach out and would like to do so.

14. Building Maintenance Updates:

a. Purchase of Old Oil Tanks at Town Garage and Community Center: Richard would like to purchase both tanks. Jacques suggested a \$700 purchase price for the two tanks. Mike Piper suggested only \$100 at most for the tank at the town garage as it's much older. Dennis motioned to sell the two tanks to Richard Degre for \$500, Jacques seconded. Richard abstained from the vote.

b. Date to Remove Tennis and Pickleball Nets: Mike Piper will help take down the tennis net as soon as the weather starts changing. Lisa will take apart the pickleball nets.

15. Review Eastman Agreement with Selectboard to Satisfy DRB Notice of Decision

Conditions: Board reviewed the agreement and signed. Will Young can reach out to the property owner to get it signed.

16. Delinquent Dog Update: Mike Jacobs explained that there is a person who has been contacted multiple times by the Town Clerk and the Constables. He has consistent excuses to not get his three dogs vaccinated and has missed some of the Tractor Supply clinics. He has been served three fines and a warning so far. The Constables have been trying to work with this person. So far, they have not turned in any paperwork showing that the dogs have their rabies vaccinations nor any money paid towards the licenses or fines. Recently one of the dogs was at the vet and it got loose while there and ran away for several days. The dog was eventually found. As of today, there still has been no attempt to pay or bring in any of their paperwork for the licenses. Mike Piper noted that the main concern is getting proof of the rabies vaccinations due to the rabies outbreaks in the area. Lt. Wells questioned if the constables have spoken to Renee Falconer. He can reach out to her tomorrow to see what she would do in this situation. She could come up and assist with this. The dogs could be taken into custody and at that point he would need to provide the proof of vaccination to get them back. Mike Piper questioned where to bring the dogs if they take them into custody. Lt. Wells noted that Renee may have a place they could house them or know where to take them. Lt. Wells questioned if the town could reach out to the place the dogs were vaccinated to get the rabies certificates. LaDonna noted that Tractor Supply won't give the town that information, it's against their policy. Dennis questioned if there are fees to impound them somewhere. Lt. Wells noted that there are at most places, and the fees would be up to the dog owner to pay.

17. Recycling Updates:

a. Schedule for November:

November 1st – Richard Degre

November 8th – Maurice Doyon & Roger Tetreault

November 15th – Jacques Couture

November 22nd – Dennis Vincent

November 29th – Dennis Vincent

b. Update on State Inspection October 8th, 2025: The inspection went well. Labels are needed for universal waste and waste oil. The person who did the inspection explained that the person taking the tires is not getting rid of the tires correctly and is not in good standing with the state. They may need to look into an alternate way to dispose of the tires.

18. Executive Session (if needed): Richard motioned to go into executive session at 7:40PM for grievances other than tax grievances, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

Exited executive session at 7:43PM, no action taken.

19. Other Business:

a. Set Dates for Budget Meetings:

- i. Meeting to Discuss Employee Benefits Packages:** November 14th at 1PM
- ii. General Budget Meeting:** December 12th at 1PM
- iii. Highway Budget Meeting:** November 21st at 1PM

b. Schedule Caroling on the Common – Jay Annual Tree Lighting December 5th, 2025:
December 10th at 6PM

c. Approve Tobacco Substitute Endorsement for Westfield General Store: Richard motioned to authorize LaDonna Dunn to approve the Tobacco Substitute Endorsement for the Westfield General Store, Dennis seconded. Motion passed.

20. Adjourn: Dennis motioned to adjourn at 7:43PM, Richard seconded. Motion passed.

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

X

Jacques Couture
Selectboard Chair

X

Richard Degre
Selectboard

X

Dennis Vincent
Selectboard