

**West Windsor Selectboard Minutes**  
**Monday, September 25, 2023**  
**6:30 pm Town Hall and Zoom**

**Present in Person:** Matt Kantola, Mark Higgins, Mark Harley, Cathy Archibald, Mike Spackman, Matt Frederick, John Mudgett

**Present via Zoom:** Aaron Rubin (Vermont Standard), Paul Hansen (Ecopixel)

**1. Call to Order**

Matt Kantola called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**2. Changes or Additions to Agenda**

Mark Harley mentioned that, beginning with this meeting, the Approving of the Minutes would occur following the Announcements/Public Comment agenda item instead of near the end of the meeting.

**3. Announcements/Public Comment**

Dick Beatty is resigning as a member of the Mary L. Blood Memorial Library Board of Trustees and as a member of the West Windsor Development Review Board, effective September 30, 2023, owing to a move out of state. Matt K read Dick's resignation letter and offered praise, saying, "he has meant a lot to the town, and he will be missed."

Matt K stated that he and Town Administrator Matt Frederick met with Brook Field Service at the Albert Bridge School to get a second generator quote, which will be forthcoming. The generator quotes will be presented for discussion at an upcoming Selectboard Meeting.

Matt K mentioned a recent post on Front Porch Forum about a dog shooting on Weeden Hill Road. This incident has been reported to the Windsor Police Department.

**4. Approve Minutes of September 11<sup>th</sup>**

Matt K motioned to approve the minutes of September 11<sup>th</sup>. Mark Higgins seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

**5. Town Clerk's Orders**

Matt K stated that he had reviewed the Town Clerk's Orders. The main item of note was the payment to Weathersfield for the Transfer Station fees.

## **6. Unregistered Dogs in West Windsor**

Town Clerk Cathy Archibald compiled a list of unregistered dogs in town. Matt K stated this has been a chronic problem, and the Selectboard engaged in discussion about how to remedy it. It was decided that, in the short term, Cathy will place a notice on the bulletin boards at Butcher & Pantry and the Post Office, and Matt F will post a news article on the town website to urge compliance with the law.

## **7. Highway Foreman's Report**

Mike Spackman asked about the pending paving on Hotel Road. Matt K said that Windsor had cuts that needed patching as well, and that Greg Blanchard would be doing the patching over a couple of days.

The tractor that was in for repairs was returned to use, but within a week was having the same problem again while mowing. Mike stated that they are currently "at a standstill."

The Highway Department's 2018 truck needs a new water pump. Mike was informed today that the part is still under warranty, so there should be no cost to the town for repairs.

The Highway Department has resumed ditching and grading, which is roughly 70% complete.

There are a few culverts left on the list for remaining work to be completed this fall.

Mike stated that he is waiting to hear back from Chris Yurek for any MRGP grant updates.

The new truck may still be "a few weeks away". When it's ready it will "look similar but not exactly the same" as the trucks currently in the fleet.

Mike reminded the Selectboard that he will be on vacation from 10/7-10/14.

## **8. Highway Access Permit: West Windsor Moonlighters (Coon Club Rd)**

Mike stated that before either Highway Access Permit on the agenda is approved, he has concerns with sight distances. He said that "the one on Skyhawk isn't as bad", but that the one on Coon Club Road is "a corner sight distance issue" and recommended the board visit the site prior to approval. The board discussed options relating to safety at the requested Coon Club Road permit site and agreed that they would all visit the site. Matt K motioned to table the Coon Club Road Highway Access Permit application until it can be investigated further by the Selectboard. Mark Higgins seconded the motion, and all members were in favor.

## **9. Highway Access Permit: H. Paul Overstreet (Skyhawk Ln)**

Mike stated that the sight line is okay for the Skyhawk Lane Highway Access Permit as long as the trees are being kept cut back. Matt K motioned to approve the permit. Mark Higgins seconded the motion, and it received unanimous approval.

## **10. Financial Audit Report w/ John Mudgett, C.P.A.**

John Mudgett spoke on the Financial Audit Report. He stated that it is very similar to last year and explained the breakdown of the report format. John stated that “the financial statements do fairly present the results of operations and the financial position at the end of last year.”

Matt K asked if we were in a “better financial situation than last year” and John responded that he thinks the town is in a “stable financial situation”. He stated that there is more debt in the water and sewer funds, but that there is very low debt elsewhere, and that overall “the town is in a good, sound financial position.”

Matt K asked about adding more debt via new sewer and water additions and John said, “I think you’re on the low end of liabilities compared to most towns he’s seen over the years”. John stated that West Windsor has been “fiscally prudent”, especially compared to some other towns, and that he “didn’t see any reason why that couldn’t happen.”

Mark Higgins brought up the issue of lack of valuations on older town assets, and there was a discussion about the ways to identify the missing information. Mark asked if the lack of valuation on capital assets would negatively impact the Town’s ability to borrow in the future, and John stated that he did not believe that it would be a negative. Matt K spoke on the history of the Town Hall and there was further discussion about where to find more information.

Addressing internal controls and segregation of duties, John stated that there would be a way to “institute more control” by separating the Town Clerk/Town Treasurer positions. Mark Higgins asked about ‘best practices’ to keep those positions together, and John said it’s been “traditional” in small towns to have the treasurer to do a lot of the bookkeeping, with oversight from a selectboard and elected auditors. John stated that having town auditors doing more oversight would be a good step, especially given the impending retirement of Town Clerk/Town Treasurer Cathy Archibald, which will place a new person in charge of the Town’s accounts. Matt K asked about what other towns are doing in similar situations. John stated one thing was for the selectboard and auditors to take more of a role in oversight of the treasurer, including reviewing reports from the NEMRC system, such as sampling of transaction reports, regular reviewing of budgets vs actuals, and checking for variances.

Mark Harley asked about best practices to avoid embezzlement, and any consistent patterns to avoid putting the Town at risk. John said the biggest thing that he has seen is too much reliance on one person, along with a lack of oversight, a lack of asking questions, and not noticing inconsistencies. There was discussion about ways to improve accounting and auditing training, along with getting a good understanding of the NEMRC system. Mark Harley confirmed via the VLCT website that they do offer auditor training.

Mark Higgins spoke about the material weakness of not fully utilizing the NEMRC system. John praised Cathy for her setup in NEMRC and spoke about ways to further integrate NEMRC into daily use. John spoke about increased ways to use NEMRC going forward and how that would help to integrate other systems more fully, like capital assets. John spoke about the time and

effort it takes to do tasks without NEMRC, and how it may be a timesaver in the long-term to use it more.

Mark Higgins thanked John Mudgett for his hard work and praised him for making a complicated report easier to comprehend. Matt K signed off on the audit report.

## **11. FEMA Update**

Mark Higgins spoke about the FEMA meeting on Friday 09/22, which mainly focused on categorizing our Damage Inventory. Mark stated that Erik Boedtke and Matt F are teaming up to make sure the Town is well-positioned on the necessary paperwork required. The next meeting is Wednesday 09/27, which will focus on EEI (Essential Elements of Information) on the FEMA Grants Portal. Matt K asked about when reimbursement from FEMA may occur. Mark said it likely wouldn't be until at least January 2024.

Mark stated that the historic bridge on Churchill Rd would likely be the last to be fixed considering the historic nature of the bridge and the paperwork involved with that. Mark stated that we are ahead of most towns in our position, and again praised the Highway Department's work, noting how this experience has been a catalyst in changing the SOP for the Highway Department. They will now be documenting, including pictures, any event that caused damage that may affect the Town's budget, regardless of whether they are declared disasters.

Matt K spoke about making a line item for emergency repair funds, and Mark Higgins spoke about stockpiling materials for future events and the importance of budgeting for hazard mitigation and being able to use documentation to help quantify expected future expenses.

## **12. Other Business**

No other business.

## **13. Executive Session**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Selectboard unanimously voted to enter executive session at 7:29 p.m. for the reasons set forth in 1 V.S.A. § 313(3).

The Selectboard came out of executive session at 7:51 p.m.

## **14. Final Decisions**

No decisions to note.

## **15. Adjourn**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Selectboard unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:51 p.m.