

West Windsor Selectboard Meeting

Monday, January 9, 2023

Present in Person: Brett Myers, Matt Kantola, Mike Spackman, Chris Dolan, Siobhan Hulihan, Cathy Archibald.

Present via Zoom: Mark Harley, Mark Higgins, Deb Shearer, Michael Coughlin (VT Standard), Bill Ley, Catherine Baumgartner, Cathy Boedtke, Dick Beatty.

Call to Order:

Matt called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

Changes or Additions to Agenda

None

Public Comment

None

Town Clerk's Orders

Brett asked about a towing bill from Reeds. Mike explained that it was for pulling a town truck out of a ditch; there was no damage to the truck.

Mark Higgins asked whether town employee pay rates were increased as of Jan. 1 (as opposed to making the increases retroactive following Town Meeting). Matt said yes, they went into effect the first week in January.

Leashed Dog Walking Area Request

Matt mentioned the dog attack in the Town Forest that had been recently reported on Front Porch Forum and asked if anyone wanted to discuss anything.

Catherine Baumgartner clarified that she asked for the agenda item because she has a rescue dog that doesn't do well when other dogs run up to it. Lately with the increase in people walking dogs in West Windsor, it's been harder for her to go for walks with her dog because other dogs

that are running at large harass her dog, even when their owner is nearby. She clarified that even when the other dogs are friendly, the problem is that her dog does not react well to being approached. She wondered if there was any creative solution that wouldn't overly burden anyone, such as maybe a small, designated on-leash area that would provide a safer place for people with dogs who weren't good with other dogs.

Brett asked how it would be designated. Chris D. said that we have a dog ordinance that forbids dogs to be running at large, so maybe it was an enforcement issue.

Catherine shared some ordinances from other regions that define "under control" in different, specific ways. Brett suggested that talking to your neighbors is a first step.

Cathy Boedtke said that we already have a dog ordinance and should enforce it rather than punishing everyone with leash laws because of a few bad apples. She suggested putting something on Front Porch Forum and/or sending an e-mail blast to residents noting that we have a dog ordinance and where they can make any complaints about nuisance dogs.

Matt suggested reminding people to keep their aggressive dogs under control. Siobhan noted that the reminder should not say "aggressive" dogs, because Catherine's issue is not with aggressive dogs, it is with uncontrolled dogs.

Matt suggested recommending that people use leashes when they are on town roads.

Catherine said that she'd prefer not to have to deal with issues after the fact, and said that she is still open to creative solutions for where she might safely walk her dog.

Selectboard Vacancy Announcement

Matt pointed out that it's not always easy for residents to find out when there is a selectboard vacancy. Brett said that her thought was that anyone interested should put something about themselves on Front Porch Forum to give people some background about who they are voting for.

Mark Higgins pointed out that it's important to inform people that the nominations occur from the floor, so that while it is good for people to let the town know they are interested in serving, it is not a prerequisite. The elections for Selectboard seats happen via floor nomination.

Better Connections Grant

Chris said there is no news on the Better Connections Grant yet; the town is in the pre-application process but will have an update at the next Selectboard meeting.

Other Business

Matt mentioned the Dubois and King sewer feasibility study and said that it would be available on Zoom for people who want to attend on Friday, January 13.

Town Budget

Matt said that the Selectboard's goal is to have the budget finalized on the Selectboard end by January 18.

Tree Work Invoice

Knox tree service evidently finished a \$12,000.00 project that came in at \$120.00 over the contracted cost. Matt said that the town will not pay the additional \$120.00.

Highway Foreman's Report

The highway department received a quote of \$1,550 for the removal of the salt shed roof, which was damaged during a December storm. A proposal process is in place to hire someone to put a new roof on. Matt suggested that the issue is an emergency and so the bid process should be skipped.

Mike said that sand levels are good. There was a maintenance issue with the 2018 truck prior to the last storm: the sander assembly broke and had to be taken to Williston for repair, so the department was down one truck for four days. Mike said the department is still cleaning up from the last storm, but that there are no emergency situations or hazard trees, just routine cleanup. He noted that there is a large branch on a cable television line on Coon Club Rd., but it is not within the highway department's control.

Matt motioned to approve the minutes of December 28. Brett seconded and the motion passed.

Matt made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:15. The motion was seconded and passed.

Respectfully submitted:

Christina Dolan