

Minutes of the Westmoreland Selectmen's Meeting
Thursday, January 16, 2020

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Russ Austin, Frank Reeder, Clayton Stalker

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:00PM by Chairman Russ Austin.
2. Approval of Minutes: January 2, 2020. Motion was made by Clayton Stalker, second by Frank Reeder to accept the minutes as printed. Motion passed 3-0.
3. Guests:
 - A. Jan Hurley, Library: Jan spoke on the work that has to be done on the granite steps going into the old part of the library. The steps are a second (emergency) egress from the building and as they are tipping and coming away from the building, the library trustees want to have them repaired. The estimate of the work is \$1,600. The Selectmen had agreed to pay half of the cost from the 2020 budget and wanted the library to pay the other half from a building fund (\$7,000) that was established when the addition was put on. The trustees feel that the town should pay for all of the work as it is a town property and also a safety issue. A motion was made by Clayton Stalker, second by Frank Reeder, to appropriate the full amount of \$1,600 in the 2020 town budget. Motion passed 3-0.
 - B. Chief Harry Nelson and Deputy Chief Graham Gitchell were present to discuss the stipend that is paid to the volunteer firemen based on the number of calls, training, etc. that they attend. Graham presented a spreadsheet that showed the comparison of fire department budgets in the region. The spreadsheet shows that Westmoreland pays the smallest stipend to its volunteer than any other department. Graham would like to see the Selectmen raise the stipend from \$6,500 to \$12,000. The Selectmen will discuss this further when they work on the budget later in the meeting. (The Spreadsheet is available for viewing in the Selectmen's office).

Chief Nelson asked for the Selectmen's approval to sell the old set of hydraulic rescue tools as they have a new set purchased with a grant. Selectmen gave their approval.
 - C. Lori Schreier was present to discuss the proposed agreement with Consolidated (CCI) about improving broadband service in town.
 1. Lori would like the agreement to include that if and when CCI removes the current copper wiring, that they ask permission or at the least, inform the town that it will be happening. Currently, they do not have to notify the town or residents that they will not be replacing the copper wire. When that happens, it will affect people with landlines who do not opt for the proposed fiber. The Selectmen can ask CCI to notify them, but this issue is not part of the Broadband Agreement.
 2. Due to concerns regarding studies that have shown that 5G and 'small' cells are dangerous to humans, animal and insect health and also impacts privacy concerns and national security, Lori would like the agreement to state that anything being done by CCI regarding these issues should be notified to the town and permits should be issued. There are several court hearings scheduled that are dealing with this issue and when they are concluded, she would like to have ordinance changes made to include 'small cell' towers and not just large towers. Frank Reeder stated that this is broader issue and not associated with the current Broadband Agreement.
4. Accounts Payable: A motion was made by Russ Austin, second by Clayton Stalker to approve a manifest of \$5,279.88 for the highway department and \$24,798.67 for all other bills for a total of \$30,078.55. Motion passed 3-0.

5. Old Business:

- A. Fire Station: A team meeting will be held Thursday, January 23rd at 3pm in the town hall.
- B. Broadband: A hearing of the Public vs. Private Benefit Findings to improve broadband service will be held February 1st at 10am at the town hall followed by a Bond hearing at 11am to obtain a \$1,219,000 bond for the broadband service to be created.

6. New Business:

Signature Approval was given for the following:

Payroll: 1/14/2020

EFTPS - Payroll taxes: 1/15/2020

Bank Statements (Checking & Conservation): As of 12/31/2019

Reports: Balance Sheet & Budget vs. Actual – as of 12/31/2019

General Journal Entries: #695, 696, 697

- A. The DRA has established the town Equalization Ratio at 88.6%. This means that, according to sales in 2019, the assessments in town are lower than market value by 11.4%. Our next revaluation is scheduled for 2021 which will bring us closer to 100%.
 - B. The Selectmen approved to paying the recycling center employees for the time spent at yearly recertification classes they are required to attend.
 - C. The Selectmen signed a three-year contract for continued ambulance service with the City of Keene. There were only minor changes to the contract.
 - D. Due to recent damages done in the town hall following a rental and the deteriorating condition, the upstairs in the town hall will no longer be rented. A study of the town hall will be done in the near future which will include recommendations for repairs.
 - E. The Town Administrator and Town Clerk are working on establishing a fund raiser to raise funds for the repair/renovation of the veteran's memorial and sidewalk on the town common. Details of the fund raiser will be presented at the town meeting on March 11th.
7. Correspondence: *All correspondence is available for review in the Selectmen's office.* None
8. Selectmen worked on finishing the 2020 Budget and reviewed the Warrant Articles that will be presented for voting at town meeting.
9. The meeting was adjourned at 8:07pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Ann LaBarre
Town Administrator

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

NEXT MEETING –Thursday, February 6, 2020, 6:00PM
MINUTES ARE INITIALLY POSTED AS UNAPPROVED -
SIGNATURES BY SELECTMEN DENOTE APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

Russ Austin, Chairman

Frank Reeder

Clayton R. Stalker