

Minutes of the Westmoreland Selectmen's Meeting

Thursday, March 17, 2022

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Frank Reeder, Russ Austin, John Snowdon

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Russ Austin.
2. A motion was made by Frank Reeder, second by John Snowdon to nominate Russ Austin as the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen. Motion passed 3-0.
John Snowdon will be the selectmen's representative on the Planning Board.
Russ Austin will serve as the selectmen's representative on the Budget Committee.
3. Approval of Minutes: March 3, 2022. Motion was made by John Snowdon and seconded by Frank Reeder to accept the minutes as printed. Motion passed 3-0.
4. Accounts Payable: Motion was made by Frank Reeder, seconded by John Snowdon to approve a manifest of \$41,326.20. Motion passed 3-0.
5. Guests:
 - A. Michael Kowalczyk, Chair of the Cheshire Rail Trail Collaborative and Dan Shelley, Westmoreland Sno-Belters Club were present to discuss the work the Collaborative is doing on the rail trails. Mr. Kowalczyk gave a slide-show presentation showing the 82 miles of trails in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont. The trail from Keene, thru Surry and Westmoreland to Walpole is 7 miles. Mr. Kowalczyk explained what other towns have been and are intending to do to repair, clean and restore the trails for people to enjoy. Surveying will be done on the local trail to identify work that should be done. Grants, donations, etc. will be used to support the project.
 - B. Tom Finnegan, Emergency Management Director presented the Selectmen with a letter regarding the Mill Brook Pond dam on Route 63 in Chesterfield. The pond empties into Mill Brook Stream which flows through Westmoreland. Prior to or during heavy rains, the water is being released, causing extensive damage to property in town. Tom will speak with the Emergency Management Director in Chesterfield to determine who controls the dam and is releasing the water, in hopes of working toward alleviating future damage to town properties.
 - C. John Fitzpatrick was present to discuss the River Road South Bridge. He showed the Selectmen a print from 1944 that he had that showed County property, which includes the bridge. The ownership of the bridge has been researched several times in the past, with the outcome establishing ownership by the town (town files).
 - D. Tom Finnegan, Chair of the Fire Department Advisory Committee, was present to discuss what the next step(s) were for the newly approved Fire Department. Steve Horton, who was the Owner's Representative during the 'pre-bond period', will be the Owner's Project Manager moving forward. Frank Reeder stated that we will be looking for Steve's guidance in moving forward and will schedule a meeting in the near future.
Frank Reeder stated that, as the Fire Department Advisory Committee's duty was to recommend a proposed fire station, that their purpose was complete and the committee would be disbanded. Chief Nelson, will work with Steve Horton in moving forward. The Chief can decide if he wants to form a committee of firemen to work in an advisory role with him.
A motion was made by Frank Reeder, seconded by John Snowdon, to establish a Fire Station Construction Fund to collect donations for the new station. The Town Administrator will

write the guidelines to be followed, including the establishment of the fund with the Trustees of Trust Funds.

Chief Nelson informed the Selectmen that he had received an unsolicited bid for the construction of the new station. Once the project plans and specifications are posted, bids will be accepted.

- E. Leslie Luebke stated that she is concerned about the restoration of the town hall tower clock and presented an email from someone that she knows that works on clocks with his opinion of what needs to be done. Frank Reeder informed her that specifications will be written and bids will be obtained. A bid sheet can be sent to the person she has been in contact with if the town is given his name and contact information.

6. Old Business:

- A. Gazebo -Request to create fund for fundraising by Kathy Watson. Gazebo to be on Town Square would cost approximately \$20,000 to include site prep, vinyl gazebo and lighting. Frank Reeder - Although Selectboard has the authority to approve the request in light of it being a permanent fixture on the Town Square feels people should have a say. Russ Austin agreed, suggesting the gazebo be on next year's Town Warrant. If approved, a fund could be created.

- B. Recycling Committee Recommendations - Richard Meyer - 2 main goals of committee are to control cost and have the Town do a better job recycling.

- a. Committee recommends increasing the sticker to \$25 to help defray cost while a more long term solution is found. Keene fees 1 33gal bag \$2 and over 33gal bag \$3. Frank - second sticker for the same household could be \$5. Need to enforce no commercial dumping policy.
- b. Improved signage. The Town can get some signs from America the Beautiful for free and the rest could be printed.
- c. Committee to volunteer this spring at recycling center to instruct people on recycling
- d. Newsletter needed but would need to use website and Facebook to promote due to cost
- e. Outsourcing company to run the center advantage better sorting and potential to make money. Jo Ann - NRRA came a few years ago and their assessment was that we don't have enough recycles to make money and no place to store - Frank requests information on more towns currently doing so to see if there would be savings, and if towns are happy with arrangements.. Gilsum currently outsources to Monadnock Trucking for \$21,000 per year and pays by the bag
- f. Increase in fees for demo selectmen to review

Selectmen agreed to have a hearing about increased fees take place prior to June 1st.

- C. Adler sentencing documents received from Cheshire County. Available at the Town Hall for review.

- D. Planning Board meeting Monday, March 21st with Lisa Murphy from SWRP. All Selectmen plan to attend along with Zoning and Conservation members.

7. New Business:

Signature Approval was given for the following:

Payroll: 03/08/2022

Payroll Taxes: 03/10/2022

Town Meeting Mailing: 03/10/2022
TD Bank Signature Cards
Solar Exemption (4)
Payroll Rate Changes
MS-232–Approved Appropriations-Town Meeting
USPS: 03/14/2022
General Journal Entry #794

- A. Change of Noticing Language: “Any statements from abutters need to be received 48 hours before the hearing” - to be added to notices sent to abutters.
- B. Appointments for Town Positions - Frank - Board and Committee positions should be put out to the town to allow other people in town the opportunity to serve. Boards still would reserve the right to recommend appointments. A motion was made by Russ Austin, second by Frank Reeder to appoint the following: Motion passed 3-0.
Tax Collector for 1 year - Melissa Bonito
Zoning Administrator for 1 year: Jonathan Lifschutz
Building Inspector for 1-year: Larry Muchmore
Fire Chief for 1-year: Harry Nelson
Road Agent for 1-year: David Poklemba
Emergency Management Director for 5 years: Tom Finnegan
Emergency Management Deputy for 5 years: Bill Chase
Wantaskiquet for 3 years: Perry Sawyer
New Members
Conservation Commission Alternate for 3 years: Jonathan Lounsbury and Douglas Oatley
Selectmen discussed a proposed Zoning Permit fee increase from \$20 to \$30. It was agreed to hold a hearing of fee change at the same time as recycling fee hearing prior to June 1st.
- C. Steve Horton Owner's Representative Contract - Motion was made by Russ Austin and seconded by Frank Reeder to approve Steve Hortons contract. Motion passed 3-0.
Discussion of what happens to the Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund, and if it could be used toward the new station. - Frank Reeder - Fund can only be used for what it was created for, and that was created for work leading up to the bond. Now it will need to be returned to the General Fund.
- D. Intent to cut extension request for Jeff Ingram approved.
- E. Highway Department Employee - Road Agent to come to selectmen’s meeting to discuss need of another employee and efficiency of contracted plowing
- F. Future Town Meetings - Confusion over what could be voted on at 2020 Town Elections versus 2021 Town Elections. Many wanted an absentee ballot for the fire station, and could not understand why they could not vote on warrant articles unless at Town Meeting when able to in 2020. Explanation to be written to show how SB2 Town works (basically way done in 2020 per Covid provision allowed by the state) in comparison to traditional Town Meetings. If Town interested in the change a warrant article can be drafted for the next Town Meeting. Would need to pass by $\frac{3}{5}$ majority.

8. There was no correspondence:

9. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jodi Scanlan

Town Administrative Assistant

NEXT MEETING – MONDAY APRIL 11,,2022 1:00pm
MINUTES ARE INITIALLY POSTED AS UNAPPROVED
SELECTMEN SIGNATURES DENOTE APPROVAL

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Russ Austin, Chairman

Frank Reeder

John Snowdon