

Minutes of the Westmoreland Selectmen's Meeting
Thursday, March 18, 2021

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

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:00AM by Chairman Frank Reeder.
2. Approval of Minutes: March 4, 2021. Motion was made by Clayton Stalker, second by Russ Austin to accept the minutes as printed. Motion passed 3-0.
3. A motion was made by Russ Austin, second by Frank Reeder to nominate Clayton Stalker as the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen. Motion passed 3-0.
Russ Austin will be the selectmen's representative on the Planning Board.
Clayton Stalker will serve as the selectmen's representative on the Budget Committee.
4. Guests:
 - A. Fire Station Advisory Committee members were present to discuss the recent failing of the warrant article to approve a bond for the building of a new station and to discuss the next steps to take with the project.
Selectmen Reeder stated that the three issues that people talked to him about were: a) different location? b) reduce # of pieces of equipment" c) big garage instead?
Chief Nelson stated that the committee had looked at other locations, including the Highway Garage. They found it to be wet, and with possible contaminated ground due to gas, liquid asphalt, etc., there would be a large expense to clean it up. He added that the department used all of the trucks that they have, especially the two tankers.
Scott Talbot stated that another reason that the Highway Dept land was excluded was that the bridge (Red) on Route 63 occasionally floods.
Tom Finnegan asked those present why they thought people voted 'No'. Chairman Stalker believes that cost and location were the most important factors. Russ Austin added that people who vote 'No' are generally quiet about their vote and wouldn't be willing to share their feelings about it.
Susan Finnegan feels that a Town Meeting needs to take place so questions and answers can be given. Hopefully, March of 2022 will be back to normal in order to do that.
Jon Lounsbury feels that the additional cost due to the location needs to be addressed.
Randall Walter asked if a sub-committee can be established to concentrate on public relations. Selectman Reeder stated that only the Selectmen can appoint a committee, but that a group of people interested in PR can work on their own.
Selectman Stalker said that it was important to get the 'Yes' voters to attend the town meeting.
John Stronk asked if the Delano property was looked at for a possible location. Selectmen reported that they hadn't heard anything about it being available.
It was agreed by all that information about the new station and media such as the video showing the current station conditions, need to be publicized and made available to the public.
The Selectmen would like to see the same Advisory Committee continue their work. If anyone is interested in joining the committee, they should let the Selectmen know.
Susan Finnegan stated that she was glad the Selectmen were looking into the negative postcards about the new station that were sent out.
Jon Lounsbury asked if fund raising could be done to raise funds and also as a way to get information out to the voters. This can be discussed further by the committee.
 - B. Selectmen made a request to Scott Talbot to change the name of his new Facebook page to something other than 'Town of Westmoreland'. NOTE: By the end of the meeting, Scott had changed the name to 'Townie of Westmoreland'.

C. Road Agent, Dave Poklemba, was present to discuss estimates for the new backhoe. Advertising will be posted, including the Keene Sentinel, to obtain sealed bids. Bids will be opened at the April 1st Selectmen's meeting. When it is known when the new backhoe will be ready, the current backhoe will be put up for sale.

Due to the new engine needed for the 2010 Int'l, paving will probably be limited this summer.

D. John Stronk asked the Selectmen if it had been considered to build a road through the corn field (County property) on Partridge Brook Road instead of replacing the River Road South Bridge. It has been discussed in the past, but an engineering study has not been done to see if is feasible.

5. Accounts Payable: A motion was made by Frank Reeder, second by Clayton Stalker to approve a manifest of \$49,652.26 for the highway department and \$10,691.87 for all other bills for a total of \$60,344.13. Motion passed 3-0.

6. Old Business:

A. Town Hall Meetings: The Selectmen approved that Board/Committee Meetings can resume in the Town Hall dining room using social distancing and wearing masks effective April 1st.

B. Town Hall Septic: Progress will move forward with the new septic system for the Town Hall. The final design will have the potential to add the fire station if/when it is built.

7. New Business:

Signature Approval was given for the following:

Payroll: 3/9/2021

Payroll Taxes: 03/11/2021

Invoice Cloud (sign ups): 3/5/2021

Intent to Cut: R8-42, R19-27 & 28

MS-232 – Actual Appropriations Voted

A. A motion was made by Frank Reeder, second by Russ Austin, per RSA 31:19, to accept donations for the Westmoreland Veteran's Memorial Fund in the amount of \$1,014.47. Motion passed 3-0. A total of 95 bricks have been sold.

B. A motion was made by Russ Austin, second by Frank Reeder to accept cemetery trust funds in the amount of \$400.00. Motion passed 3-0.

C. Selectmen signed a letter to send to the State Attorney's office requesting an investigation into the postcard that was mailed by an unknown source to town residents regarding the proposed new fire station. State law requires political mailings to be signed.

D. Employee/Officials Raised: A motion was made by Frank Reeder, second by Russ Austin to approve raises that were passed in the 2021 budget. Motion passed 3-0. Raises start with the 1st pay in April.

E. A motion was made by Frank Reeder, second by Russ Austin to appoint the following: Motion passed 3-0.

Planning Board for 3-years: Jim Starkey, Alison Fissette

Zoning Board for 3-years: Brian Merry, Ernie Perham, John Harris (Alternate)

Conservation Commission for 3-years: Marshall Patmos, Perry Sawyer

Recreation Committee for 3-years: Susie Harris, Mark Hayward, Jr.

Building Inspector for 1-year: Larry Muchmore

Fire Chief for 1-year: Harry Nelson

Road Agent for 1-year: David Poklemba

Tax Collector for 1-year: Melissa Bonito

F. Recycling Center: Following the summary report of the Recycling Center Advisory Committee, the Selectmen discussed what steps to consider to enact the suggestions made by the Committee. Supervisor Ron Fish will be asked to attend the next meeting (April 1) to get his input. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, some actions may not be able to take place yet.

G. Jon Lounsbury asked what the issue was pertaining to the counting machine at the town elections. Town Clerk Jodi Scanlan responded that the machine was counting the ballots, but that it was not sorting the ballots properly. Because of that, Jodi and Moderator Peter Hills had decided to hand-count the ballots. Mr. Hills has called the Secretary of State's Office to report the issue.

8. Correspondence: *All correspondence is available for review in the Selectmen's office.*
A letter was received on March 4 from Chip and Lisa Huckins of Partridge Brook Road expressing concern about trees on the property of Dick and Joyce Cate on the same road. They believe the trees are dead and if they fall, they will fall on the wires and possibly start a fire.
The Road Agent will be asked to look at the situation and report back to the Selectmen if he feels that the trees are a danger to the roadway or a hazard to traffic.
If it is believed that the trees will compromise the electrical lines, Eversource should be called to make a determination about cutting or trimming the trees.

9. The meeting was adjourned at 11:45AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Ann LaBarre
Town Administrator

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Clayton Stalker, Chairman

Russ Austin

Frank Reeder

NEXT MEETING –Thursday, April 1, 2021, 10:00AM

MINUTES ARE INITIALLY POSTED AS UNAPPROVED -
SIGNATURES BY SELECTMEN DENOTE APPROVAL OF
MINUTES