

Minutes of the Westmoreland Selectmen's Meeting
Thursday, February 17, 2022

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

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:00PM by Chairman Clayton Stalker.
2. Approval of Minutes February 3, 2022. Motion was made by Russ Austin second by Frank Reeder to accept the minutes as printed. Motion passed 3-0.
3. Accounts Payable: A motion was made by Russ Austin second by Frank Reeder to approve a manifest of \$27,041.04. Motion passed 3-0.
4. Guests:

Budget Committee: Susan Finnegan, Christine McKenna, Bill Chase and school rep, Dean Priebe. Referring to recent Budget Committee meetings, Bill Chase apologized to the Selectmen if they felt that the Budget Committee was trying to micromanage the highway department. He added that because the highway department is 1/3 of the town budget, the Committee felt that it was important to know details and had a lot of questions regarding paving, gravel vs. paved roads, etc. Bill stated that the Highway Department does a super job on the roads.

Selectman Reeder stated that the Highway Department budget was 39% of the entire budget in 2017 and is 31% in 2022. He added that while minutes of the Budget Committee meetings about the town budget have been submitted, he has not seen any meetings regarding the school budget.

Selectman Stalker stated that he felt the Budget Committee “veered out of their lane” at the meetings. Susan Finnegan stated their goal was not to accuse the Road Agent, but just to ask questions and understand.

Dean Priebe apologized to the Selectmen and the Road Agent. He added that the Committee was asking how the Selectmen are controlling items in the budget.

Christine McKenna stated that any information the Selectmen can give the Committee to help them in their roles would be helpful. Selectman Reeder will send some links to RSA’s and NHMA articles. Giving some history, Selectman Reeder stated that the Town had voted to have a Municipal Budget Committee in 1951. It is the Budget Committee’s budget that is presented to the Town to vote on. If the Budget Committee was an Advisory Committee, they would not be presenting a budget to the Town.
5. Old Business:
 - A. Cathy Watson, owner of the Barn & Thistle, would like to initiate a fund raiser to have a gazebo put on the town common. Regulations for a town fundraiser would be followed. The issue of trash needs to be addressed. As far as zoning, a gazebo less than 160 sq ft is considered a portable structure and would not need a permit.
 - B. A motion was made by Frank Reeder, second by Clayton Stalker to begin renting the Town Hall as of April 1, 2022. Motion passed 3-0.
 - C. A motion was made by Russ Austin, second by Clayton Stalker to appoint Nancy Zeller as an Alternate Member of the Planning Board and Kristen Riley as Planning Board Clerk. Motion passed 3-0.
6. New Business:

Signature Approval was given for the following:
Payroll: 2/8/2022
Payroll Taxes: 2/10/2022
Post Office: Mailing for Fire Station
Timber Tax: R5-33

- 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 \$100. Motion passed 3-0.
- B. A grant is being submitted by a group of volunteers who want to improve the Cheshire Rail Trail. The focus is the trail surface, drainage and vegetation. They are also discussing signage where the trails cross a Class V road in the towns. The Selectmen have no objection to the signs being erected in Westmoreland. Further information will be forthcoming if and when the grant is approved.
- C. The Town received a notice of congratulations from the Northeast Resource Recovery Association for recycling 52.64 tons of paper in 2021 – enough energy to charge 21,450,958 cell phones.
- D. A motion was made by Frank Reeder, second by Russ Austin to adopt a Fund Balance Policy. Motion passed 3-0.
- E. Selectmen reviewed and approved the existing Investment Policy with no changes.
- F. The Fire Department Facility Advisory Committee would like permission to put a banner at the Recycling Center regarding the upcoming new fire station proposal. Selectmen approved the request.
- G. The Town Report is at the printers and will be ready any day.
- H. Due to misinformation being circulated regarding the Warrant Article for the Town Hall clock, it was explained that the clock needs a total restoration/cleaning. It will be brought down from its current location and be taken apart for the work to be done by professional clockwork people. Moving the clockworks to the second floor at that time was discussed as an option due to, in part, the access and cold conditions in the winter. It would be enclosed in a glass case for all to view this historical timepiece. The clock face will still work on the town hall and future maintenance will be easier to accomplish.
- I. Frank Reeder updated news from Eversource regarding the fact that there might be rolling power outages due to the demand and possible reduction in natural gas. Blackouts could occur for 12-14 hours at a time to reduce fuel that would enable enough heat for everyone. Eversource would analysis and proportion an allotment of power to towns and cities. If this is ever going to happen, Eversource customers will be notified.

7. Correspondence: *All correspondence is available for review in the Selectmen’s office.* None

8. The meeting was adjourned at 7:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Ann LaBarre
Town Administrator

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Clayton Stalker, Chairman

Russ Austin

Frank Reeder

NEXT MEETING –Thursday, March 3, 2022, 1:00PM

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