

Minutes of the Westmoreland Selectmen's Meeting
Thursday, April 19, 2018

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

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:00PM by Chairman Stalker.
2. Approval of Minutes: April 4 & 5, 2018. A motion was made by Russ Austin, second by Clayton Stalker to accept the minutes as printed. Motion passed 3-0.
3. Guests (those who have asked to be on the Agenda):
 - A. Update of County projects: Steve Horton, Maplewood Consultant, Commissioner Peter Graves, County Administrator Chris Coates
 1. Chris Coates explained that three RFP's have been issued: 1) taking down the jail, 2) removal of asbestos and other hazardous materials and 3) taking down the daycare house. The County worked with DES to get a permit to dump clean concrete and rebar only in the ravine. The plan was to dump the allowed material and cover and seed the area. Unfortunately, 10 loads were dumped that included other materials, including styrofoam insulation. As it was always the County's intention to do the right thing, dumping was stopped immediately. Chris reported that he has met with DES regularly to remedy the situation and the work will be finished within the next two weeks. The concrete slabs left at the jail site will be used as a parking area for the Maplewood work being done and will be taken up when the project is finished. Fuzzy Brothers of Walpole has taken some of the concrete and ground it for road material. Other concrete will be put in the daycare house large concrete basement and will be capped over and certified by DES.
 2. The Adams and Wright families, who are leasing the farm, are doing a good job upgrading and cleaning up the farm and fields. They have gotten rid of old barrels, batteries and many old tires. They plan on doing some community days at the farm.
 3. A plan to upgrade the trails is being worked on.
 4. The house at 300 River Road is still on the market, but the County has not found a buyer yet. They have considered a controlled burn and have talked to Chief Nelson about the possibility.
 5. Steve Horton reported that the Maplewood Nursing Home design is complete and the hope is to break ground by the end of May. The addition will be built first and then residents will be moved into the new section as the old sections are updated. The changes being made do not add rooms to the nursing home. All rooms will be single with a bathroom for each room.
 6. Discussion followed regarding the replacement of the River Road South Bridge. The process for applying for and receiving State funds is confusing and clarification is being worked on. Doing the job without State involvement might be an option.
 - B. Ernie Perham, Chairman of the Town Common Committee: Ernie reported that members of the committee want to change the footprint of the sidewalks and monument. The Historical Society wants the size and shape to stay the same. The cost of his proposal was \$32-33,000. Changing the footprint could bring the cost to \$65,000. Selectmen recommended that the committee stay grounded with their ideas.
4. Accounts Payable: A motion was made by Russ Austin, second by Clayton Stalker to approve a manifest of \$6,034.92 for the Highway Department and \$20,988.90 for all other bills for a total of \$27,023.82. Motion passed 3-0.

5. Old Business:

- A. Communication Advisory Committee: names are being submitted to serve on the committee.
- B. Alternative Energy Advisory Committee: a request for members will be posted on the town web site.
- C. The Zoning Board needs two Alternate members on their board. A request will be posted on the town web site.
- D. Town Hall Survey: The estimate of cost to finish the survey by researching unknown lines for the recently purchased property behind the town hall is \$1,425±. This will be looked into further.
- E. River Road State culvert update: The permit submitted by the DOT is to expand the culvert from a 30” to a 36”. As the town’s culvert on Ferry Road is already 36”, we will not be expanding the size of our culvert. The State believes the reason for issues in the past was debris being caught on the pipe, not the actual size capacity of the pipe and that the 36” pipe should pass debris better than the 30” with the damaged end.
- F. Per a request from the Conservation Commission, the Selectmen will look into the possible noncompliance of a barn that was built at 1054 River Road. While a zoning permit was issued, there is no building permit on file. The proximity to the river might also warrant a shoreland protection permit. 30 days will be given to have all necessary permits in place.
- G. Keene Sentinel Subscription: As the Town Clerk had asked in her budget for a subscription to the Keene Sentinel so that she can read obituaries and town postings. Following town meeting and budget approval, the town clerk was informed that a digital subscription to the paper was set up and the way to access the paper. A digital subscription lets you view the paper in the same form the printed paper comes in, but is 1/3 the cost. The Selectmen’s office was notified the following week from the Sentinel that Cindi Adler had canceled the subscription.

6. New Business:

Signature Approval was given for the following:

- Payroll Manifests, General Journal Entries, Reports, Bank Statements, Misc.
- Excavation Tax Warrants: Graves, McClening, Cersosimo, Cold River Materials
- Intent to Excavate: Cersosimo
- Veteran’s Credit (3)
- Intent to Cut Timber: Cianciola
- Timber Tax Warrant: Cersosimo
- Right to Know Policy (public records are prohibited from leaving the town hall)

- A. A worker’s compensation claim was filed for a highway employee who cut their finger.
- B. Due to a recent modification by the State of the definition of a Red Listed Bridge, the Spofford Road Bridge (#138/038) is no longer a Red Listed Bridge. River Road South Bridge (#089/100) is the only bridge that is currently Red Listed in Westmoreland.

7. Correspondence: *All correspondence is available for review in the Selectmen’s office.*

- A. Carlson Barrett sent an email thanking Road Agent Dave Poklemba for cleaning up a tree that had fallen into the Edson Cemetery on Hurricane Road. No stones were damaged.
- B. Steve Robbins & Mame Odette sent a letter thanking Road Agent Dave Poklemba and his crew for being timely, courteous, thorough and professional in maintaining the roads in town.
- C. Joy & Dave Fletcher sent an email regarding a perpetual problem with gravel being directed into their field. The Road Agent will meet with the Fletchers to determine a course of action.
- D. Cindi Adler, Town Clerk & Tax Collector sent a letter dated March 31, 2018 to Selectmen Stalker and Austin and to outgoing Selectmen Zeller regarding the Town Meeting held on March 14, 2018. Selectmen discussed the following issues of concern to them that were in the letter:

1. Comparing the job of an elected official to a town employee is not relevant. An elected official can set their own hours, has their pay approved by the voters and does not receive benefits such as insurance, vacation or sick days.
2. A security door with a sliding 'teller' window was requested in Mrs. Adler's budget and will be installed in the near future. Once this is done, will security still be an issue or can evening hours be reinstated? While Selectmen have no authority in setting hours for the Town Clerk, they would prefer that she return to the 15 hours that her budgeted pay was based on. Nothing was reported to them regarding an event that happened to bring about the security concern. Selectmen Stalker and Austin have both offered to stay with Mrs. Adler on election nights while she finished her work and she has told them it wasn't necessary.
3. Mileage for making deposits as the State Agent will not be paid as it has always been a part of the job that fees were paid to the Town Clerk to do. The income from State Agent fees in 2017 was \$6,050 and that amount was figured into her new salary as of April 1, 2018.
4. Pay was not decreased. Fees received in 2017 for both positions were \$19,609 and salary being received at the end of 2017 was \$1,446.25 per month or \$17,355 per month for a total of \$36,964. The restructured salary effective April 1st that was voted at town meeting was \$37,000. A raise was not given due to the number of posted office hours that were closed in 2017 and the numerous complaints of such by townspeople. It is also noted that the budgeted salary was based on the verified posted office hours of fifteen per week. The Town Clerk has since decreased her posted office hours to twelve per week. The Selectmen recommend that her verified hours go back to fifteen.
5. The Selectmen contend that if the Tax Collector used the Avitar Tax Collection Software that was approved at town meeting in 2009 and purchased, it would eliminate hours of paperwork and increase efficiency and accuracy. A total of \$20,546 has been spent on the software (including training), computer, printer and yearly support and maintenance, with the approval of the Tax Collector.
6. In December of 2017, the Town Clerk and Tax Collector received a copy of the Audit Report with the recommendations for her departments, including pay restructuring, along with a letter asking for dates to meet with the Selectmen about her budget and to address the recommendations of the auditors prior to January 5th. Three other requests were made to attend meetings or suggest another time to meet with the last date to be January 18th as the budget needed to be finalized and submitted to the Budget Committee. Ample opportunity was given for her to meet with the Selectmen. Pay restructuring was also in the minutes of the Selectmen and on the Town Warrant that was posted on February 16, 2018.
7. State law does not require the Town Clerk to have a Deputy but does require a Deputy Tax Collector. It has been recommended for many years that Deputies be appointed to fill-in when the Town Clerk and Tax Collector are not available during posted office hours and to help with the workload. Mrs. Adler did put money in her budget and it was approved at town meeting, to have a Deputy in each department. The Selectmen are awaiting her recommendations for their approval.
8. Mrs. Adler stated in her letter that she has contacted counsel. The Selectmen feel that in following the recommendations of the auditors by enacting policies for the benefit of the town, they are doing what they were elected to do. They would not want to see a financial burden imposed on the town.
9. **As an elected official, the Town Clerk and Tax Collector cannot be told how to manage her offices. Her duties are set in State Laws. She is not subject to any supervising authority and doesn't answer to anyone except the voters.**

8. Public Business: None

9. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Ann LaBarre
Town Administrator

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Clayton R. Stalker, Chairman

Russ Austin

Frank Reeder

NEXT MEETING –Thursday, May 3, 2018, 6:00PM
MINUTES ARE INITIALLY POSTED AS UNAPPROVED
SIGNATURES BY SELECTMEN DENOTE APPROVAL OF
MINUTES