

**SELECTBOARD MEETING**  
**November 14, 2019**

Present: Allison Hope  
          Julia Andrews  
          Bill Cleary  
          Callie Hamdy  
          Greg Barrows  
          Nanette Rogers

Guests: See attached list

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

**CHANGES TO AGENDA**

Removed Highway Schedule & Highway Budget Discussion.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**MINUTES**

The board reviewed the minutes from October 24<sup>th</sup>. Bill made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, Julia 2<sup>nd</sup>, motion passed.

**ACCESS PERMITS**

Both access permits are part of a subdivision that is happening on Old Stage Road. Julia motioned to authorize Allison to sign the Access Permits after John has reviewed them. Bill 2<sup>nd</sup>, motion passed 3-0.

**EXCESS WEIGHT PERMITS**

Allison signed Excess Weight Permits for HLG Excavation LLC and Keelo Ent LTD.

**WESTFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT FY'21 BUDGET REQUEST**

Steve Willard was present from the Fire Department. They are asking to level fund their budget. Steve mentioned that everything is going well and encourages others to join the fire department if they can. Currently they have 11 members, historically they've had around 15 and would currently appreciate more volunteers.

Julia asked if the budget was level funded because this year is tracking to fit last year's budgeting? The Fire Department confirmed this. Truck maintenance is their biggest expense.

Steve also had a contact to install the new key safe for the library/town office. This person would volunteer their time and efforts as a donation.

**WESTFORD LIBRARY FY'21 BUDGET REQUEST**

Beth Lane was present from the Library Trustees. The Library Budget came in under \$75,000 which is an 8% increase. This increase was due to fuel expenses and employee benefits. The Library basement recently flooded during the Halloween Storm. They met with Nanette regarding the basement and are hoping it will be an easy fix.

Melissa had talked to Pat about the storm water plan for the town center. The Library is in Area 1, meaning it would be part of the first part of the project.

Nanette wants to update the capital budget with the library due to some updates to infrastructure such as their heat pump from several years ago. Allison also wanted to predict the useful life of the

new front porch/ramp. She also mentioned that at some point the Library Budget will also include capital expenditures. The Library had an average of 50x per day over the past year.

Allison commended the fact that the library offers an amazing amount of programming for the town.

#### **CONSERVATION COMMISSION – HUNTING ON WESTFORD TOWN LAND**

Joel Fay was present from the Conservation Commission to clear up confusion regarding the posting of Maple Shade Town Forest. The Conservation Commission wanted to know exactly what signs the Selectboard wanted to put up regarding hunting and access to the forest.

Bill explained that if people are going to hunt in the forest this year that instead of making it hunters responsibility to keep track of the school gun free zone that appropriate signage should be put up on the boundary to make everything clear and avoid confusion. The board doesn't want to set people up for failure.

Allison explained that Westford's situation is unique. A lot of towns that have town forests don't have schools in such proximity to public land. Joel was concerned about putting signage on Don Pouliot's land since Don has expressed his concern for unnatural objects appearing on his land.

Nanette suggested putting a map of the 1,000-foot buffer zone where the Maple Shade entrance is to help people understand the boundary. Bill suggested placing temporary stakes along the boundary that could be removed after hunting season. Bill said that the board cannot expect hunters to bring along specialized tools such as survey instruments to figure out the boundary. Julia suggested providing signage to both the Westford School and the Barn School to post on their property. Bill explained that signage and information cannot be given at the current access point because it would put people within the gun-free zone. Bill suggests that information be added to the other access, along with a "you are here" marking to indicate where in relation to the gun free zone the hunter is.

Steve Willard questioned where hunters would park. Bill explained that currently roadside parking off to the side in an appropriate area is what is currently in consideration. They had hoped to have a clear parking spot made, but because the road crew is so busy with clean up from the Halloween storm and the early snowfall that for this year they would likely have to park at the common and walk up for this year.

Joel agreed that posting the maps of the buffer zone would be helpful. He is concerned that everybody, not just hunters, will use the access on Don's property and is worried that is taking advantage of private land and the permission Don has given for hunters to cross his land. Joel can't guarantee anything will be up by the weekend, but he will contact Sarah and see what they can do.

#### **TOWN CLERK FY'21 BUDGET REQUEST**

Nanette Rogers was present, budget increased 2.7% which mostly was due to salaries and replacement of laptop that is used by town clerk/town administrator. Everything else is level funded. Some items of the budget also are used by the treasurer such as travel. BCA had an increase in education and supplies for a new voting machine as well as the supplies for the upcoming presidential election.

Julia asked about election worker costs. Nanette explained that sometimes the town has to use non-BCA members to fill spots in election officials.

#### **TREASURER FY'21 BUDGET REQUEST**

Greg Barrows was present, there was only a slight increase for salary.

### **EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE OPTIONS**

Open enrollment for insurance began 11/1. Nanette took the two plans that the town currently has available and prepared them side by side. The MVP premium is the same, but the Blue Cross Blue Shield had a signification increase this year. To Nanette, the two plans were comparable in their current form in what they offer to employees with the only major difference being their cost. Currently the Town uses Blue Cross Blue Shield.

Allison has always wanted to have selectboard work sessions on the agenda over time to talk about the opt out regarding what Westford is offering employees vs. other towns. She wants to be ready for next year's conversation and is not comfortable making those changes during budget season since it is also open enrollment and she doesn't feel like that is kind to the town employees. She wants to include employees in that conversation and doesn't want to bounce employees between health insurance providers. She also wants to have this conversation in the same conversation of salaries. She wants to be sure that Westford is paying employees a comparable amount to other towns, since we have lost employees to close by towns in the past.

Allison also suggested talking to Blue Cross Blue Shield to negotiate a better rate since that is what other small businesses do. Allison explained that the problem is that Vermont doesn't have a lot of health insurance providers so there is not a lot of choice. Nanette said that many VLCT members from other towns mentioned that they are making the switch to MVP. Allison would like employees to be able to have an input on that decision. Currently 4 town employees receive health insurance from the town, but it is no small decision since it impacts the lives of town employees overall.

Allison asked if there is a threshold for the town to stick with Blue Cross Blue Shield. Bill said the threshold would depend on how much red tape and paperwork would be required to switch providers. Nanette explained that there is enrollment paperwork for the group and individuals, but it is not usually bad.

Julia suggested a special meeting to vote on it. Allison would love to start talking about the switch starting in April.

### **HECO ACT 250 QUESTIONNAIRE - WESTFORD MILTON ROAD DEVELOPMENT**

The Heco Project requires Act 250 review, when this happens Act 250 sends out a questionnaire about how the project would impact the town and services. Nanette doesn't see any services being impacted by the Heco Project.

Allison would want to make sure that the Heco people are aware of how solid waste in Westford works, but she doesn't think they would be a burden on the solid waste. Allison thinks that this is a great project for Westford. Bill complemented the engineer that presented the project at the DRB meeting. In his opinion, they did everything right.

### **ALL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE – OPTION FOR GRANT FUNDING AND LOCAL MATCH**

Nanette mentioned an email from Melissa regarding the updating of the All Hazard Mitigation Plan. There have been some changes. Towns must now decide if the RPC will apply on behalf of the towns or not. Melissa and members of the Planning Commission recommend the town go with the first option. Nanette thinks any time somebody else can do this type of work for us, then it's a good idea. Julia says the recommendation of both Melissa and Seth is clear. The RPC and the town of Westford also have a good relationship. The RPC has helped Westford on various project.

Nanette explained that if we didn't have a All Hazard Mitigation Plan that it makes it hard to tap into the benefits of such a program. The RPC would want at minimum a 25% match. Julia motioned to pursue option 1, Allison 2<sup>nd</sup>, motion passed 3-0.

### **CAPITAL BUDGET**

Greg and Nanette have been going over the capital budget; a couple updates are needed before they are ready to go included talking to the highway department. It's looking like it will be looked over in the December meeting.

### **2017 ROAD PLAN**

The board had finally gotten the copy of the 2017 Road Plan and John is happy with the plan. It's a bit different than prior plans as it does not include any maps.

Julia mentioned that there is a spread sheet on the last page of the project, and it's cut off. She asked if the board was voting to approve the plan. Nanette confirmed this. Also, some of the work with VCRD might help move things along. Julia moved to approve, Bill 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed 3-0.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Julia wanted to recognize John and Nanette for being such good communicators during the recent weather events to help serve the best needs of the town. It was not asked of them, but the feedback has been amazing. Clearly it is appreciated. Allison was really impressed with all the extra work the road crew put in after the Halloween storm. They did a tremendous amount of work. Nanette likes when people call the town office because it gives her a sense of when trouble is happening, and she can both calm the resident and let John know so he can put it on his agenda.

The Wills had made another road complaint regarding the condition of their road. Bill did not know what the extent of the damage was, but John is aware, and the area is still passable. Roads that kept residents from being able to access main roads took priority in the recent damages from the Halloween Storm and recent snow fall.

### **COMMUNICATION**

The board wanted to communicate the hunting access. Julia is posting on Front Porch Forum regarding the access options.

### **ACCOUNTS PAYABLE & PAYROLL WARRANTS**

The Board approved the accounts payable and payroll warrants.

Julia also motioned to Approve Allison to sign payroll warrants to make up for the missed meeting at the end of December. Bill 2<sup>nd</sup>, motion passed 3-0.

### **ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Allison Hope, Chair  
Selectboard

Callie Hamdy  
Assistant Town Clerk.

TOWN OF WESTFORD  
SELECTBOARD MEETING  
GUEST LIST

Date: November 14, 2019

Name (please print)

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JOHN QUINN

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