

Dave Gauthier mentioned there were several dead trees near roadways he would like taken care of, one is on Westford Milton Road. Nanette will contact John to have him look.

BUDGET PROPOSALS

Bill mentioned that last fiscal year they were looking for level funded or below budgets to relieve those potentially affected by COVID hardships. Due to some unforeseen town news this year we may have some unforeseen expenditures so he's asking for the same budgetary fiscal conservancy this year.

WESTFORD CEMETERY COMMISSION FY'23 BUDGET PROPOSAL

Lynn Gauthier was present. The Cemetery Commission is requesting \$8,000 which is level funded from the current year. This year they are having the remaining section of Pleasant View cleaned and restored. They are also hoping this year to finish Osgood Hill and have received positive feedback from what's been done so far.

Their plan for FY'23 is to finish restoration projects, hire a mowing contractor and monitor several trees that will eventually have to be removed. One day they would like to get a veterans' monument in the Town Center. There is also a \$400 stipend being requested for Lynn because of the amount of work she does, such as organizing burials. The stipend is also level funded. Bill thanked Lynn for all her work.

WESTFORD COMMON HALL FY'23 BUDGET PROPOSAL

Marge Hamrell and George Keener were present. The Committee are trying to save the Westford Common Hall (previously the United Church of Westford). It's a real icon for the Town, but it is difficult to maintain and restore due to its size and age without sufficient funds. They are requesting \$4,500, which is level funded.

This year they received a grant to upgrade their building assessment which had not been done since 2009. They've also added Wi-Fi, upgraded the Food Shelf, and cleaned out a portion of the space for use as a potential rental. One wedding and one funeral were held, and the Music Series is starting up again.

The Committee is concerned because they have heating costs which are expected to rise, insurance, and based on an inspection, the building needs a fire escape and a handrail for the accessibility ramp, and there are concerns about the furnace. They hope to receive more grants to help with the costs. Even with grants, they will need to dip into their funds. Basic funding they'd be down to \$6,000 even with the town contribution.

George Keener, WCH treasurer, was present. He elaborated that there are some grants they are looking at such as painting, heat pumps, weatherization, and solar panels which would provide excess power they could sell back to the town, store, or residents.

Bill asked if they project that their functions or events are going to increase or is \$2,000 what they're projecting? George thinks it's hard to say after COVID. They have been doing a lot, they have a website now and are working on search optimization for that website. Things are still unknown, so they kept that number relatively small, but they are hoping to do more. They've had a lot of interest. Marge explained that if they can raise \$5,000, they'd be doing well. It's still an ambitious budget and they have a lot of hard work to do. They are also sponsoring several events such as Movie Night and Winterfest.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION FY'23 BUDGET PROPOSAL

Sarah Pinto was present. The Conservation Commission is requesting a level funded amount of \$4,000. The Commission does very well with this amount, has no major projects on the horizon, and almost spends to the penny.

The Commission and Rec Committee have passed the first step of the grant process for the construction of a Features-Track, this would augment the budget quite a bit. Bill asked that if any of the grants came to fruition would they have anything left over at year-end? Sarah explained that this is a shared grant with the Recreation Committee so she believes those extra funds would go to them.

Dave Gauthier asked about the Maple Shade Town Forest. The Town has owned it since 2018. He wants to know why nobody has been in there yet to do any forestry management. It was his understanding that the woodland was to be maintained and that there was the potential for firewood to be sold to residents. Sarah explained that the Conservation Commission are partial stewards of the property. She will speak with Ethan Tapper (count forester) and Koi Boynton about that. The wood for the town was not necessary a hard and fast plan but was mentioned as a possibility and seems like a great idea, but she doesn't think it was a mandate.

BRICK MEETING HOUSE SOCIETY FY'23 BUDGET PROPSAL

Greg Barrows and Caroline Brown from the Brick Meeting Society were present. The Brick Meeting House is requesting a level funded budget of \$4,500. They took a hard financially from COVID. Last year their income was very limited. If COVID hits bad again, the maintenance costs alone could wipe out most of their funds.

WESTFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY FY'23 BUDGET PROPOSAL

Caroline Brown was present from the Historical Society. The Society is requesting \$2,000. The Society is constructing a building on Common Road. They have incurred a lot of costs for surveying and permitting, and due to COVID, the construction costs are much more than originally anticipated. They believe they have enough to cover the construction costs but will not have enough to pay for insurance, heat and power. They plan to do some fundraising but have no idea how successful it will be.

Bill wanted to know where the initial money came from. Caroline explained that Dan Jackson had left a property to the Historical Society, which was a bit too far outside town. The Society sold the property and purchased the Spiller property, which was eventually sold to the Town. The money from the sale is being used for the construction of the building and was also used for some restoration work at the Brick Meeting House. Everything would have been covered but COVID really did put a wrench in that.

Bill thinks the new building is looking great and he is looking forward to seeing the finished product.

WELCOME SIGNS

Eric Ford from the Westford's Future Communications Committee was present. He had come to the Board several weeks ago and presented the initial concept for welcome signs and then was tasked with getting some more information. He provided the Board with images and proposals.

The proposal is for four welcome signs, two located on both ends of the Common, one on the Westford Essex town line and one on the Westford Fairfax town line to focus on the high traffic areas and entrance points to town. This idea was born out of the work that was done with VCRD and Westford's Future. Eric worked with Melissa Manka to identify landowners of where the signs would need to be placed. Those landowners still need to be approached and approve of the placement, but COVID has slowed everything down. One location is owned by the Town outside of the Common and the other three are owned by private landowners. He worked directly with Dan Emmons at Fast Signs who made the signs for the Westford Country Store and the Butcher Barn to get quotes.

Dan suggested placing slightly smaller signs entering the Common as cars are moving slower so it would be easier to read the signs. The larger signs would be near the town lines to promote visibility. The more expensive quote is the one Eric would recommend for several reasons: it's more in line with what's seen on the signage already in town and the support structure is metal, with a life expectancy of 25-30 years. The cheaper quote includes pressure treated wood and non-three-dimensional material like vinyl, so the signs would not be as eye catching or as last long.

The total cost is for the four signs in the 4D carved substrate is about \$7,300 and the cost for the cheaper flat signs is \$5,100. Neither quote includes labor, but they estimated that would be \$1,500. However, if the Town were able to leverage labor from the Road Crew to help with installation that could help with that cost. Eric has also been talking to the library and they have a possibility of funding to help support this project. Seasons also play a part in the installation; it takes six to eight weeks to fabricate the signs so it would not be ready to install until Spring even if they had the funding right now.

Dave asked about upkeep around the sign during the year. Would that be up to the landowner or the Town? Eric assumes that the agreement with the landowner would only be to place signage, the Town would maintain the signage in a situation like a car hitting it, but most of the Welcome Signage in other towns tend to be maintenance free. Dave asked about trimming/grass maintenance. Eric needs to have conversations with the landowners first, but this is highly dependent on location. Dave would like that brought up in future discussion.

Dave asked if the Board wanted less than four signs what would the recommendation be? Eric would like to explore the option for four because the Common is so well known and separate from the actual borders of the town. If they were to do two, he'd suggest the town line signage and hope that other signage would help place people to the Common.

Caroline Brown doesn't know what is wrong with the property where the town sign used to be. Having one on the property opposite that as Eric suggests may make that blind hill area even more difficult to exit the Brick Meeting House so she doesn't feel that option is the best idea. Eric explained that everything is conceptual, so he appreciates the feedback. With the Knights of Pythias location, it's on the wrong side of the road and if you were driving you would not be looking on the left side of the road for communication and road signage.

Bill was curious about the idea of splitting up the signage per fiscal year, such as two one year and two the next. He noted that the Town usually has more than one quote, so he hopes that Eric seeks out alternative quotes and be able to negotiate. Eric agreed, next steps will be to negotiate sites, get approvals, and work with the Town on the process for those multiple quotes. Eric asked what timeline would work for the Board for him to come back with more

information. Nanette explained the draft budget usually finished by early January so by the beginning of December would be ideal. Bill thinks Eric could lean on John for his opinion on sites and potential blind spots.

WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Eric Ford was present. Eric contacted a web designer with a wish list, and the web designer was able to deliver the entire wish list for \$10,000. This would replicate a lot of the existing website but make it more user friendly. The same backend would be used so that it will look familiar to people who edit the website. It would include a community calendar and one of the biggest things is a registration system for the Recreation Department. There would be annual costs for hosting and maintenance. Eric plans to get more quotes now that the Town has a baseline. He thinks the need for a new website is very great, especially considering how things have gone in the pandemic where people are doing a lot of business and services online.

Bill wanted to quell any resident concerns. He thinks ARPA funds would be able to be spent on this. Dave encouraged Eric to come to the ARPA committee. Dave noted that ARPA funds could not be used to cover operation and maintenance costs. This would help us operate during the current pandemic and any future so it would certainly fall under the ARPA umbrella. Dave explained we have three more years to allocate the ARPA funds and five more years to spend it, so Eric probably has until January or February of 2022 to get a further plan in place.

REQUEST TO USE SCHOOL TRAILS FOR X-COUNTRY SKIING

The BFA Nordic Ski group is requesting to use the trails behind the school this winter. They received approval last year and all went well. In addition to the practices, they would like to hold one race. To the best of Nanette's knowledge, it doesn't conflict with anything. Last year the Nordic Ski team helped with maintenance and grooming. Dave thinks it would be good for the team to host a race on Westford trails. The Conservation Commission had no objections.

Dave Baczewski made a motion to approve a requested submitted by the BFA Fairfax Nordic Ski group to use the trails behind the Westford School as they did last year for practice and to host a race, provided their activities do not conflict with any Town or School events, seconded by Lee McClenny. Motion passed: 3-0.

GOODRICH TRAIL PERMIT

Ben Bornstein was present. He is requesting that the Town rescind the Trail Permit issued to him to operate a motorized vehicle on the Goodrich Trail. He is requesting this because he has a court order granting him the right to use the trail and feels the permit is not necessary and may actually conflict with the court order. Bill is inclined to rescind the permit as long as the Town is not going to lose anything that hasn't already been lost due to the court order. He does however want to reach out to the town attorney to make sure the Town is not giving anything up and to make sure it doesn't set a precedence on any other trail, which he doesn't think it will. Lee and Dave agree with Bill that the Town Attorney should be consulted.

OPIOID NATIONWIDE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

Greg spoke about the agreement. Bill asked if we would be designated to spend the money on opioid prevention or can the money go elsewhere? Lee read the information on the agreement and confirmed it would need to go to opioid crisis abatement. He doesn't however know exactly what that entails. If the Town does not jump on this, it will lose the chance of

receiving funds altogether. Dave Baczewski made a motion that Westford participate in the Nationwide Opioid Settlement, seconded by Lee McClenny. Motion passed: 3-0.

LOCAL MATCH AGREEMENT FOR TOWN CENTER STORMWATER

Melissa Manka was present and explained this was for the culvert underneath the Common to the 1705 Vermont Route 128 property. Several years ago, the Town asked CCRPC (Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission) to conduct a storm water study for the town common area because of water retention on the Common and the library was having issues with flooding. The engineering company identified several areas that could be addressed with mitigation or upgraded infrastructure. The library has done several projects at their site. One of the issues identified in the storm water study was that during wet years, the Town Common stays soggy and the culvert that drains the Common infrastructure goes onto the 1705 property and it's created a great crevice with erosion amongst other things.

If a redevelopment plan was created for the 1705 property, the brownfields contamination issues and the stormwater would need to be addressed. They were granted approximately \$20,000 in funding and Hoyle and Tanner have been hired to do the work. There is a \$4,000 match required which will come out of the Planning Commission's Special Project Fund.

Bill thought most of the Special Project Fund was allocated for a grant match to something else. Melissa directed Bill to the current budget proposal where this is included in that. The Special Project Fund has several listed liabilities, and this is one of them.

Bill didn't want to micromanage the Planning Commission's Special Project Funds. He thanked Melissa for her time. Lee McClenny made a motion to approve and sign the agreement to provide a local match for the Town of Westford and CCRPC for storm water management planning, seconded by Dave Baczewski. Motion passed: 3-0.

CORRESPONDENCE

A Vermont Digger reporter reached out to all towns in Vermont to ask how they are allocating their ARPA funds. Nanette answered the email however Dave anticipates this will be ongoing reporting.

There was correspondence about insurance for Vendors on the Town Common. Dave wasn't sure what kind of vendor required insurance; he can't imagine every type of small vendor would need liability insurance. More clarification is needed.

COMMUNICATION

Dave will talk to the Vermont Digger reporter about ARPA.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE & PAYROLL WARRANTS

Greg Barrows, Treasurer, reviewed the accounts payable and payroll warrants.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Lee made a motion to enter Executive Session at 9:30 p.m. to discuss personnel, seconded by Dave Baczewski. Motion passed: 3-0. People in attendance were Bill Cleary, Lee McClenny, Dave Baczewski and Nanette Rogers. The Board exited Executive Session at 10:05 p.m. No action taken.

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October 14, 2021
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ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bill Cleary, Selectboard Chair

Callie Hamdy
Assistant Town Clerk/Minute Clerk

GUEST LIST

Ben Borstein
Marge Hamrell
George Elliot
Caroline Brown
Lynn Gauthier
Dave Gauthier
Eric Ford
Dave Lavallee
Sarah Pinto
Jim Anderson
Kati Anderson
George Keener

**TOWN OF WESTFORD HIGHWAY DEPT.
ROAD SCHEDULE
October 1, 2021 – October 14, 2021**

Work to be done

- Grade roads as needed.
- Start brush cutting.
- Put winter tires on the trucks.
- Turnaround work on Seymour Rd.

Work completed

- Graded most roads.
- Started a project on Cowie Rd. (cutting trees, ditching, make the turnaround bigger)
- Brought the one ton in for its first service. (no charge)
- Moved the granite blocks at the covered bridge and put the braces back.
- Had Westford/ Milton Rd. crack sealed.
- Moved the radar speed sign around.
- Removed a beaver dam on Old Stage Rd.

Approved at the 10/14/21 Selectboard Meeting.