

Town of Westmore

Selectboard Meeting March 23

Meeting minutes

In attendance: In person- David Stevens, Bill Perkins, Miriam Simonds, Isaiah Casey, Jason Petrarca, Elaine Cashin, Dan Sicard, John Zimmer, Kelly Casey, Carol Davis, Meg Carter, Ethan Swift, Jen Woolard, Ellie Majchrzak; Via Zoom – Carol Casey, Maree Bushey

Call to Order: David opened the meeting at 6:03 PM

The meeting began with announcements thanking the Westmore Association and Carol Davis and the Westmore Community Church for their assistance with Town Meeting and use of Fellowship Hall.

A reminder was given that Dog Licenses are due April 1 with the Town Clerk's office being open from 9AM to 2PM on that Wednesday.

Notice was provided regarding Orleans Central Supervisory Union long-term planning public listening sessions about potential new school district construction or future plans. Sessions will be held at each elementary school in the district, with one planned for Westmore, date to be sometime in May. Residents can attend any session regardless of location.

Additions to the Agenda?

Isaiah Casey made a motion to add the Massey Ferguson tractor to the agenda. Bill Perkins seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Massey Ferguson Tractor Update

Road Foreman Dan Sicard reported that the 1975 Massey Ferguson tractor at the shop requires clutch repairs estimated at \$3,000 - \$5,000 with potential for higher costs. After considering the tractor's age, parts availability, challenges, and cost-effectiveness, the board decided to table the decision and bring the tractor back without repairs to use for beach maintenance only.

Liquor Control: Consideration of Liquor Permit Applications – Selectboard acting in its capacity of local liquor commission.

The board reviewed a limited event permit request from Bailey McCarthy for August 11-14 with bar service only on August 14th from 1PM to 11PM at the Little Farm. However, the town clerk noted that rather than the Board adding conditions of ending hour, the permit should specify service until 10PM rather than 11PM. The item was tabled until the next meeting to allow the applicant to revise the permit to reflect the correct hours.

Overweight Permits

Miriam Simonds made a motion to approve overweight permits for AmeriGas, Chris Bullock (Stix and Stuff), and Blanchard Oil. Isaiah Casey seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Swim Lessons at Lake Willoughby: Jennifer Woolard with Proposal from Teach America to Swim

Jennifer Woolard, a Westmore resident, presented a proposal to bring swimming lessons back to Lake Willoughby through Teach America to Swim. She noted that though Lake Willoughby is central to the community, many families lack access to formal swimming lessons which she added is a necessary life-skill when living near the water.

Woolard outlined three requests: use of North Beach for swim lessons during the week of July 13th in afternoons and evenings, having the town contract directly with Teach America to Swim (as most neighboring lake towns do), and consideration of town funding to offset costs for families.

The program would require a minimum of 30 swimmers at \$128 per student, totaling approximately \$3,500. Woolard noted that 12 families have already committed, putting them halfway to the minimum. She explained that Teach America to Swim provides insurance, trained lifeguards, and various lesson levels.

Board members raised questions about beach logistics during the busy July 13th week, eligibility requirements (Westmore residents vs. property owners), and maximum capacity.

Woolard offered to research grant opportunities and compile a list of potential funding sources. The board requested she provide insurance and liability information for review and return to the next meeting with more details. They tentatively scheduled consideration for April 1st to meet the program's timeline requirements.

Westmore Town Forest Management Plan Long Pond Road

Ethan Swift returned to request full selectboard approval for the forest management plan, noting that only three board members were present at the previous meeting when it was initially approved. He emphasized that the plan serves as a guidebook for the next 10 years with implementation of recommendations at the board's discretion.

Swift mentioned that the county forester Jared had invested significant time in the plan at no cost to the town and would like to see full board endorsement. Board members discussed the thoroughness of the plan and its educational value regarding forest inventory methods. When asked about additional public feedback, Ethan reported some interest in recreational opportunities and possible trail work.

Isaiah Casey made a motion to rescind the prior approval of the Long Pond Road Town Forest Management Plan that was approved with only three selectboard members present on February 9, 2026 . Bill Perkins seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Miriam Simonds made a motion to approve the Long Pond Road Town Forest Management Plan. Isaiah Casey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Credit Card Authorization for Road Commissioner

The town clerk explained that Peter Hyslop's name needed to be removed from the town's credit card and replaced. Isaiah Casey, as the road commissioner, would be the most likely candidate.

Jason Petraca made a motion to remove Peter Hyslop and to add Isaiah Casey as authorized person to the credit card as road commissioner. Miriam seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Request to Add One New Cell Phone Line and Replace One Line with ATT/FirstNet for Selectboard Members

The town clerk explained that Jason Petraca needed a town phone due to legal requirements preventing use of his work-phone for town business. Isaiah requested a town issued phone for similar requirements. Peter Hyslop's line would be transferred, and a second line would be added. The phones cost nothing initially but require \$30-50 monthly fees each. The service uses FirstNet, which provides for emergency management.

Board members discussed the rationale for separate town phones, including legal liability concerns and the need to separate business and personal communications. The phones remain town property and are intended solely for town use.

Jason Petraca made a motion to move forward with adding one new phone line and replacing one phone line with AT&T FirstNet. Miriam Simonds seconded the motion. Motion passed.

NEKWMD/Transfer Station

Miriam noted that the agenda items require more detailed discussion and suggested scheduling a separate meeting. The board scheduled a special meeting for April 1st at 9:30 AM to discuss comprehensive transfer station management, including the zero-sort dumpster plan, staffing, and operational procedures.

Bill Perkins made a motion for Miriam Simonds to assume transfer station receivables, cash reconciliation, and vendor coordination on a temporary basis until permanent management arrangements are established. Isaiah seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Westmore Fire Department

Meg Carter, secretary for the Westmore Fire Department, noted recent leadership turnover had created gaps in institutional knowledge and emphasized the need for ongoing communication with the Selectboard. Jason Petraca, with his 25 years of fire service experience and background as a Pennsylvania State Fire Academy instructor, volunteered to serve as the liaison.

Isaiah Casey made a motion to make Jason Petraca the liaison for the fire department. Miriam seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Jason suggested meeting with Fire Department representatives to review all pending items and establish clear procedures for routine versus board-approval decision. The department

plans to submit quarterly reports to the Selectboard and will coordinate with the new grant policy for funding applications.

Fire Department request to schedule events in the Town Cottage: Item tabled

Town Wide Reappraisal Bids

Members discussed two bids previously received for the town-wide reappraisal. Vermont Appraisers quoted \$88,934.60 (\$125.26 per parcel) with completion in 2028, while NEMRC quoted \$81,000 (\$114 per parcel) with completion in 2030. Each quote used the number of parcels as 710. The key differences between proposal price include timing and town involvement.

Jason Petraca emphasized fiscal responsibility, noting that NEMRC was less expensive and had no disqualifying factors. He also considered that NEMRC's approach would require less from the listers' budget.

Jason Petraca made a motion to move forward with NEMRC as the town wide reappraiser at a cost of \$81,000. Miriam Simonds seconded the motion. All members voted in favor.

North Beach Survey Distribution and Email Correspondence re: Parking Plan

The town clerk sought clarification on whether the North Beach parking survey could be distributed more widely. The board determined that while individuals can request copies at the town office, it should not be widely distributed or posted online without formal board approval, as it was an informational survey rather than an official town initiative.

Town Use Facility Policy: Amendment Needed

The town clerk reported that the Westmore Association requested removal of all references to their organization from the town cottage use policy to avoid liability concerns. This creates a question about who will handle scheduling requests going forward.

Three options were discussed:

- Appointing private citizens (Ellie or Pam) with defined responsibilities
- Creating a formal committee under the selectboard (requiring open meeting law compliance)
- Having requests go through the town clerk's office

The Board also discussed renaming the facility to Westmore Community Cottage or Center to better reflect its function and availability. The item was tabled due to the need for input from the volunteers currently handling scheduling.

Notice from Casella about Wire Down

Dan Sicard reported that Casella hit a wire while dumping at the transfer station. The wire was too low and didn't meet minimum height requirements. Casella stated they were not liable since the wire height was not up to code. The highway crew temporarily secured the wire and will install a new i-hook to properly repair it.

Power and Internet at North Beach Before It Goes Out to Bid

Dan Sicard reported that after consulting with an electrician, they recommended not installing conduit for internet due to cost versus alternative options like Starlink. The electrician suggested that by the time conduit costs are factored in, several years of wireless internet service could be purchased instead.

The board agreed to proceed with requesting bids for electrical power only, eliminating the internet conduit component. They also discussed whether to include removal of old conduits in the bid specifications, deciding it would be worthwhile to avoid future complications.

Cash Projection, Updated Through February

Treasurer John reported that cash flow remains strong. The transfer station showed significant cost reductions compared to the previous year - expenses dropped from \$16,000 in the first two months of last year to \$6,000 this year, indicating reduced usage and successful cost management. The general fund showed 21% of budget expended after two months, slightly high but lower than the previous year. Revenue was within 4% of last year's levels.

Grant Management Policy

The treasurer presented the final version of the grant management policy incorporating all comments from Jim Barlow

Jason Petraca made a motion to accept the updated Town of Westmore Grant Management Policy. Isaiah Casey seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Update on Audit Partner Search

The treasurer reported significant challenges finding a new auditor after sending 13 requests. Only four viable candidates remained, with costs expected to be 2-4 times higher than current rates (\$8,000 annually) due to tighter audit requirements and fewer available auditors.

He explained three levels of service: audit (most comprehensive), review (moderate), and compilation (minimal), noting that compilation wouldn't meet banking or grant requirements. The treasurer will investigate federal funding requirements and bond bank needs before making recommendations.

The audit for 2025 will likely occur late in the year due to scheduling challenges with existing clients taking priority.

Isaiah Casey made a motion to have John put out RFPs for audit partners for FY2025. Miriam Simonds seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Interfund Transfer Request for Payment of Backhoe/Loader

Miriam Simonds made a motion to approve the interfund transfer request from the Cash Reserves fund to the Municipal Account for the payment of the

backhoe/loader in the amount of \$188,592.26. William Perkins seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Local Citizens and Visitors:

Correspondence: All correspondence is available in the Town Clerk's office for review.

Public Comment AFDA Transition Plan VTrans

Approval of Minutes of Prior Meetings: Selectboard Meeting March 9

David Stevens made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 9 selectboard meeting. Jason seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Review Bills and Sign Select Orders & Payroll #6

Miriam Simonds made a motion to approve payroll and accounts payable number 6. Isaiah seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Isaiah motioned and Jason seconded to adjourn at 9PM. Motion passed.

David Stevens 

William Perkins 

Miriam Simonds 

Isaiah Casey 

Jason Petrarca 

Community Spaces and Activities Agenda Monday, March 30, 2026 4:00 PM

Activities update

Current grant status

Cottage Policy and status update

Education Survey results and takeaways

New and proposed activities for Spring

Chair yoga

Monthly coffee and conversations timed to catch folks after the transfer station visits

Monthly workshops/information/sharing by Westmore citizens

Fire Department information

Streets as Places grant proposal

Grant process

Westmore Old Home Day/Block party?

Connecting to our neighbors

Neighbor to neighbor program

NEKO training

Food shelf

Community events - potlucks, movie nights, etc

Connections and collaboration with the Westmore Association, the Westmore Community Church, RAMP and the Westmore Farmers Market

Next Meeting: