

Vershire Selectboard minutes for 6/23/20 via "Zoom" Approved

In attendance: Vernal Stone-Chair, Marc McKee, Alan Lyford-Hwy Foreman, Gene Craft-Admin Asst., Debra Kingsbury –Sec’y. Guests: Candidates running for VT State Legislature Representative: Kate MacLean, Levar Cole & Samantha Lefebvre. Upper Valley Snow Packers representative: Stuart Bacon

Vernal Stone called the meeting to order at 7:07pm and invited each of the candidates to share why they were running for Representative. McLean shared that she was currently on the Chelsea Selectboard, heads up the Chelsea Farmers Market, and she and her husband own and operate a beef and pork farm. Lefebvre shared that she and her husband own/operate a bread delivery business and own rental properties and was encouraged by her daily interactions to run for office. Cole shared that he too is presently on the Chelsea Selectboard, and resides with his family in Chelsea after retiring from a federal government position. He has enjoyed meeting local residents at gatherings the last few years, Fall Festival and Vershire Day and enjoys interacting with Fire Chief Ward.

Craft asked the candidates why they felt the need to run and what concerns they had about how things were presently being handled.

McLean said she always wanted to be involved in politics and now that her child is in public school, she has time to be more involved. She added that when the pandemic hit she felt it would be important to integrate with other towns and harness goods and services at a regional level. McLean stated that she has been impressed with Carl Demrow’s interaction with the community. She felt that often our district gets pushed aside. Rural VT is marketed as “front yard” but treated as “back yard”. The surprise suggestion of VTC closing and other VT colleges were very disturbing. And through organized feedback from local taxpayers they got the message across that closing campuses was not okay. All students and workers are the pride of Vermont. McLean is running as a Democrat.

Lefebvre stated she wanted to make a difference as she grew up in Chittendon and had been an EMT on the Fire Department there before moving to central

Vermont. She presently works at the hospital in Burlington. Her home town of Orange is an integral part of her family now and she and her husband have a bread route out of Berlin. She stated that it's all about relationships and people weren't being heard. She wants to represent the other voices of rural VT and wants her children to enjoy the benefits of living in VT. Lefebvre felt VT was doing a good job keeping its residents healthy but very concerned about business aspects. She expressed her concerns about residents losing their homes and that Veterans need more healthcare. The system needs more transparency. Lefebvre is running as a Republican.

Cole stated that he was running as many older residents and new families have asked him to run to represent their voices and integrate their concerns into the system as a whole. He noted that opinions and views are important in our VT government. Fundamentals and government accountability are key. It is important to make financial ends meet. VT has a different perspective than national politics. Cole is running as a Republican.

Stone posed a question to all three, asking about their thoughts on the condition of secondary roads (State Class 2). All expressed that Route 113, 110 and 302 had serious flaws and needed to be corrected but needed to research the funding aspect.

Lyford stated that presently several area towns are working together to share equipment and reciprocating with services and housing of the equipment. Cole was pleased for that info and thought a good cost savings for the future.

Stuart Bacon, of Upper Valley Snow Packers, informed the Board that work needs to be done on the trail bridges on town land on Durgin Hill Rd. He has spoken to Patrick Ross from the State AOT about stream crossings and he's agreeable to the group's proposal to move/repair the bridge there. Bacon added that the bridge/crossing on Moody Hill Rd, beyond Hammer's, needs to be re-decked. Grant funds to VAST are available but the group needs permission from the town and other landowners to meet the requirements. Lyford stated that the road beyond Hammers had been "thrown up" some time ago so the town has no say in that crossing. Lyford added that another land owner may need to be contacted in

that area. Bacon stated he would do that. Stone made a motion to allow the UVSP, part of the VAST for over 50 years, to make the necessary repairs to the crossing/bridge on the town owned land on Durgin Hill Rd. McKee seconded the motion was approved.

Highway Foreman report: Lyford stated that he has a call into Nortrax to rent an excavator next month to enable the crew to do additional round bottom ditching. Two of the areas will be Chamberlain Hill and Parker roads. Lyford informed the Board that he has concerns about the beavers undermining the road structure on Eagle Hollow Road. Craft stated that will contact the beaver specialist at the State again. Lyford is concerned that should the road fail in that area someone could get hurt. The Board agreed that notice from the town attorney should be mailed to the land owner. Another area of concern is on Beaver Meadow Road. A new beaver baffle should correct the problem there. Stone stated that he has viewed the ongoing beaver issues now on both sides of the road in that area.

Craft stated that Tilden Electric had flagged the underground electric lines on the town property on VCR and that M&W was coming on Thursday to do the soil test borings.

McKee has been speaking to Rob Townsend, Engineer, about completing a survey at the Durgin site and having him finalize a septic design there as well. An approved septic design would then run with the land forward, giving additional value when the town may wish to subdivide. McKee moved to authorize that Townsend complete the survey and septic design. Stone seconded and all present were in favor.

Craft asked the Board to approve funds when using NEMRC to connect via “the cloud” now that the town computers have all been updated to Windows 10. This program would enable town officials to work from home at a cost of \$10 per user per month, allowing much more flexibility while keeping in mind Covid19 guidelines and restrictions. McKee made the motion to approve funds to interface via the cloud server when working in the NEMRC system, should Craft deem it necessary and expedient after a bit more research. Stone seconded and all present were in favor.

The Board confirmed having the field above the town center building to be brush-hogged (this is included in the Vershire Day budget every year) even though Vershire has been cancelled for 2020.

The maintenance of fields at the town land on Durgin Hill and 815 VCR were also discussed.

Lyford inquired about any additional information on the Mero Rd issue. Stone stated that, per a neighbor on Mero Road, an ANR violation investigator had visited. The town has not yet been contacted by ANR regarding the matter. Craft reported that the Town Attorney requested the state contact information, and would then write another letter to the land owner. It was decided that the Board would invite ANR to the next meeting or accommodate an emergency meeting with ANR as the issue needs resolution.

Craft spoke to Mike Gunn earlier he wished to remind everyone that as of July 1<sup>st</sup> food scraps must be kept out of the rubbish. He has plans to speak with Bob Sandberg in Corinth about assisting the town with compost collecting at the Durgin site. Ham Gillette from UVSWD will also be contacted to see what grant funds, if any, might be available for compost containers. Lyford expressed concerns about the compost being at the Durgin site, and that it needs to be removed each Saturday.

No information from HO Atwood in reference to the Parker Rd site at this time.

Craft stated that the town offices are still closed to unscheduled foot traffic by the public but can be accessed for research or trash bags by appointment.

It was agreed to continue to hold the Selectboard meetings via "Zoom" for the next two sessions.

The orders will be reviewed and signed when each Board member can go into the town office individually.

Minutes for 5/26 and 6/9 were approved as amended. Meeting adjourned at 8:47pm.