

## Vershire Selectboard minutes for 4/27/21 APPROVED

In Attendance: Vernal Stone, Ken Bushey, Tonya Gunn, Gene Craft-Admin. Asst., Alan Lyford-HW Foreman, Debra Kingsbury-Sec'y Steve Atwood-HO, Guests: Donna Goldberg, Alan LaFlamme, Ethel Pike, Reva Seybolt, Kevin Blakeman, Samantha Lefebvre-State Rep, Jean MacDonald, Mike Gunn, Nicole White-Fogarty

Vernal Stone called the meeting to order at 7:02 and asked if any revisions to the agenda.

Public comments: Seybolt stated that she wanted to work with the Board to review the Town Center Policies and that she, Karen Ward, McKenna Goodman were interested in having the Selectboard form a committee to investigate how to better use the building. Seybolt added that perhaps Gunn would serve as the Selectboard member on the committee. Stone asked what happened to the previous committee that was informing the Board of the condition of the building. Craft stated that the previous group had reported on needed improvements and had disbanded. Pike noted that the former committee had worked to clean and reorganize the kitchen, reviewed insurance safety recommendations for the playground and other recommendations. She reminded the Board that the playground needs a new base (chips) and that the swing and slide need updating. Pike added that some of the kitchen equipment such as coffee brewing equipment need updating and removing of items that are no longer of use. Craft added that a new layer of chips were added to the playground about six years ago. Gunn stated that townspeople were requesting to possibly host classes at the TCB and didn't know what the building insurance aspect might entail. Gunn added that staying local, minimizing driving, helping local businesses and promoting health were topics the group wants to research. Bushey asked if the Board would have the final say of any changes to activities at the TCB and asked what the committee wanted to do. Gunn stated it would be an advisory committee. Seybolt reaffirmed that the Board would retain the decision process.

Goldberg came to discuss the nesting Peregrine falcons at the Eagle Hollow ledges. She has been interacting with the VT Fish & Wildlife division and reported that the falcons have been nesting there since 2007. Goldberg stated there were two fledglings last year and these were the first ones documented to have survived in decades. Goldberg has worked with the Audubon Society and had signage on her land for several years and asked that there be signs alerting any "climbers" that traverse the Town Forest land to stay away during the nesting period. If climbers get too close to the nesting sites, it will become obvious as the birds will vocalize with stress calls and will dive bomb intruders. She added that both Markus Bradley and Sebastian Lousada monitor the area and have observed hikers/climbers and Lousada has seen the previous successful falcon pair return again. People are asked to take precautions and/or stay away from March 15 thru August 1<sup>st</sup> and she asked that signs be allowed near where the hikers park by the guardrails. Liability on Town Land was discussed and Craft will research. Goldberg asked for more information about the liability when researched. Pike stated that organized climbing groups are careful and respect the postings, but that local hikers may not do the same, and that it might be wise to mark the trails and post the "sensitive areas" as OFF LIMIT. Atwood asked who owns the ledges off Bear Notch Rd in Corinth and who monitors the wildlife in that area.

Goldberg shared that there are state maps. Gunn made the motion to approve signage to protect the nesting falcons on the town land. Bushey seconded and all were in favor. Goldberg shared that Margaret Fowle from the State is an expert on wildlife and might be willing to come speak to the Board.

Rep. Lefebvre wanted to share thanks for the opportunity to interact on the Zoom “round-table” with the public and to let the Board know that she is still interacting at the state level to see if there are funds to assist Vershire to build a sand/salt shed at the new site. Stone commented that the “round-table” was informative and that another would be encouraged after this year’s legislative session ends. Atwood shared with Rep. Lefebvre that he is involved with ECFiber branching out in West Fairlee and wondering about state funds to assist with extending the hook-ups and monthly fees. She replied that she is not on that committee but will forward the resulting comments about affordability to the other representatives. Craft echoed that \$120 for initial hook-up and the resulting month fees are not in many residents’ budgets and all agreed that the pandemic has shown the need both for education and business.

LaFlamme came to update the Board on his progress. He’s ready to reduce his inventory again. He stated he had taken out 225 vehicles last year. LaFlamme is anticipating the crushing company to arrive soon. Craft asked if the State had given him a deadline for clean up there. LaFlamme stated he’d have to look at his paperwork from last year but was still committed to removing 400 vehicles. Lyford stated that with the upcoming pavement project on Rte 113 that LaFlamme may want to see when/where the work is scheduled and suggested he contact the State Garage in Thetford. Craft will send LaFlamme the state contacts for him to firm up the road work dates. Bushey asked LaFlamme if he was going to remove another 400 cars before winter. LaFlamme replied between now and fall.

Blakeman came in to thank Health Officer Atwood for his recent inspections of Blakeman’s apartment complex on VT Route 113. Blakeman shared that conditions were somewhat improved but he still had concerns about a number of continued health aspects and mentioned there are tenants who have dogs that are not allowed per lease agreement. Atwood and the Board expressed that individual unit health issues were not a town matter and that he needed to pursue it through the civil court system. Craft added that all dogs in town are required by the State of Vermont to be licensed with proof of current rabies vaccination.

Mask requirements at the Durgin site was discussed, including the amount of time people converse at the site as well as the need for maintaining the required social distancing, especially on the recycling ramp.

Highway Foreman report: Lyford state that the crew would be removing the posted signs for the roads as mud-season seems to have come to an early end. He added that another dumpster for collecting metal would be delivered to the Durgin site before green-up day and that arrangements had been made for tire collection on Green-up day. Gunn and Bushey will assist with the tire collection on Saturday from 7-12. Kelly Bushey will post the fees for differing tire sizes on the listserv before Saturday. Craft called the City of Lebanon landfill to verify that the green-up collected trash can be

intermingled with the regular resident trash in the packer, but no furniture or tires in the trash truck.

Town Center Building update: W. Parker has completed the dehumidifier installation and submitted his invoice. Parker has also offered to sell two large shelving units to potentially be used in the storage room for the food shelf. Gunn plans to go over on Thursday to organize the rear storage area and see what can be removed during green-up day. It was noted that D. Stone may be willing to take the large rug that has been in storage. There are several game tables that need to be repurposed. MacDonald asked if we should keep the ping pong table for future tournaments.

Craft gave an update on the Highway Garage permit status. May 3rd is the date that the 30 days comment period expires for the wetland permit. Craft added that the contract for Coe & Coe to handle the upcoming steps to get the town to a Bond Vote has been signed and sent back to them. Craft plans to post the proposed highway drawing on the town website so voters can view and then a meeting time can be posted. Craft state that the Federal Grant money referred to as the Welch Earmarked funds had gotten pushed out until the end of May for project requests. Bushey stated that he had left a message with a commercial contractor for a professional cost estimate for the garage. Bushey and Craft will structure a narrative for the website to accompany the plans about the project's progress over the last two years. MacDonald stated that another email to Welch's office to remind that our already submitted paperwork needs to remain in "q" and keep our request moving forward and that the Town (and environment) would benefit greatly from the support.

Gunn asked whether the board might consider extending the lease to the tenant at 815 VCR so he can remain an extra month. The present lease expires on 5/15/21. Stone stated that preliminary site work, removing tree etc could start this spring/summer. Bushey stated that it wouldn't be wise to do that work while tenants are on the property.

Craft spoke to the State Watershed Basin Planner about money to potentially restore the old garage site. There is money available through the Regional Planning Commissions and the TRORC may be able to help with clean-up plans in the next year.

Planning Commission vacancy: Stone moved that Nicole White-Fogarty be appointed to fill the seat vacated by Bushey and serve thru town meeting day 2023. Gunn seconded and all were in favor.

Gunn asked when the Town Office might resume open hour access again. Craft noted that the office has been open throughout the pandemic, by appointment. Pike stated that it was imperative to maintain distancing until the statistics on the Covid-19 numbers continue to drop and that making appointments appears to work well for both the residents and the staff.

Vershire Day: Will it happen this year? Tabled until we see what Governor Scott and his administration determines for guidelines.

Warrants approved. The Board members will sign when they can access the town office individually.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25pm.