

Town of Vershire Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 4, 2022 at 7:00pm, the Town Center Building & via Zoom

Attendance: Vernal Stone-chair, Ken Bushey, Nicole White-Fogarty, Gene Craft-clerk/treasurer, Alan Lyford-highway foreman, Gretchen Harvey-secretary, Mark Fogarty, Debra Kingsbury, Erica Thurston-animal control officer, Samantha LeFebvre, and Reva Seybolt.

Call to Order: 7:11 pm.

Agenda Review & Modifications: N. White-Fogarty requested a few minutes to summarize her experience working at the transfer station last Sunday. She also requested updates on FW Webb and the Taylor Valley road light violation.

Public & Staff Comments: none.

Highway-Equipment report: A Lyford reported on the latest on fixing the #3 truck computer and reminded the SB that it would be March 14 before the town could get a ship date on a replacement. Although he has kept the order in place, he recently sent the computer to a company in Texas that promises a 2 week turnaround on repairs. The state of VT has also lent Vershire a 10-wheeler to use until the truck is fixed. It seems to be working as needed. He also reported on the various ages of the town's trucks and on the need to create a repair and replacement schedule to avoid financing too much of either at one time. For the most part the trucks are experiencing normal wear and tear but age is a factor when planning. The grader will be 20 years old next year, the back hoe is 12 years old, truck #3 with the computer problem is 9 years old and it will take 1.5 years to get a new one because of supply backlogs. The smaller salt truck is in its 7th winter and although the truck is doing well, the salt is having an impact on the body. V. Stone asked about the likelihood of getting a new computer for Truck #3. A. Lyford noted that it's hard to predict supply chain issues and when they will be sorted out. K. Bushey noted the age of certain trucks and G. Craft agreed that budgeting a repair and purchase schedule would be important.

Road report: A. Lyford reports that the roads are holding up pretty well given the alternating freezing and thawing conditions, but he is concerned about needing to plow when they are thawed. So far the crew has been lucky but he noted that the gravel pit is now closed so it would be ideal if the roads stay cold until spring. There have been a few areas where tree limbs have needed clearing but nothing serious. He concluded the report noting that some tires had been dumped on Brown road and needed to be picked up before they made their way down the bank and into the water.

Approval of Last Meeting Draft Minutes: K. Bushey moved to accept the minutes of December 21, 2021 as amended. N. White-Fogarty seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Current Period Warrants Approval: V. Stone moved to accept the current period warrants. N. White-Fogart seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Town Garage: K. Bushey spoke with S. Pinkerton who is still waiting to receive the drawings from J. Coe. K. Bushey will follow up with J. Coe tomorrow and ask for an update on this delay. Updates on FW Webb will be made at the next SB meeting.

ATV Ordinance: G. Craft noted that two changes need to be made to the town ordinance on ATVs so that it complies with the state of VT. The two changes are: ATVs are limited to 25mph on town roads and the size that defines an ATV is now 64" wide. The process to update the ordinance is as follows: notice of the change will be posted in the JO newspaper and then residents have 44 days to file a petition containing 5% of registered voters if they object to the changes. If this occurs, the ordinance would go to Town Meeting. If there are no objections, the ordinance can be updated as written. V. Stone moved to authorize G. Craft to update the town ordinance concerning ATVs to conform to the VT standards that state the width of an ATV is defined as 64 inches, and that ATVs are restricted to 25 mph limit on town roads. K. Bushey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Marketing Durgin Hill Property: D Kingsbury has drafted a posting that will be shared with MLS if the SB approves. The listing is scheduled to run from 1/18/22 through 7/18/22. The property at 403 Durgin Hill Road would list for \$68,500 and the commission would be set at 8% divided between the seller's and buyer's agents. This is a reduction from the usual 10%. The marketing will include photos and note the other valuable features that go with the property. G. Craft will need authorization to execute the contracts on behalf of the town. V. Stone moved to have D. Kingsbury list the Durgin Hill property on the MLS as summarized above and further authorizes G. Craft to execute the contracts. N. White-Fogarty seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Town Meeting: G. Craft attended a webinar today in anticipation of the Vermont legislature allowing small towns to once again alter their town meeting formats again in 2022 due to the rise in Covid-19 cases throughout the state. Towns expect that many of the adjustments they were allowed to make in 2021 (Australian ballots and/or moving town meetings to a later date) will again be available choices in 2022, but the legislation still needs to be finalized. New or revised rules governing selectboard meetings for 2022 will also be included in the legislation. G. Craft will report back to the SB as decisions are made for Vermont towns and municipalities.

State Representative Samantha Lefebvre arrived at 7:50pm to listen in and answer any questions raised. She also noted that the legislature is still discussing both town and SB meeting rules for the coming year. K. Bushey asked her to help connect Vershire to grant opportunities for the town garage and salt shed project. She agreed to reach out right away and cc: G. Craft on the communications. G. Craft also asked her what she knows about the projected budget surplus in the state's education fund and if it will be used to reduce the education tax. She noted that she did expect some tax relief but, as the debate continues, she does not expect it to be as generous as once thought.

Old/Unfinished Business

Transfer Station: Nicole reported on the time spent at the transfer station last Sunday where she met the new employee, Craig Kinney, spoke to residents, and helped with tasks as needed. She especially wanted to find out what processes worked well and which ones might need to change. One recommendation she made is to adopt more easily identifiable bag stickers and noted that some towns have long colorful strips with the town name printed on them. G. Craft agreed that disposing of batteries can be confusing due to different rules per battery type. The transfer station might want to consider setting up a kiosk or message board that more effectively helps educate residents about VT disposal/recycling rules. A. Lyford noted too that taking the

trash away more frequently for disposal, especially during the summer months, would help prevent animals from getting into the trash.

Taylor Valley road light violation: GMP will be asked for their reasons for directing the light the way it is situated. The SB is working with the town ordinance officer to draft a letter that will be sent to the landowner.

Committee Reports:

Town Center Building Committee: R. Seybolt reported that the committee has not received any responses to the post they included in the town newsletter. She posted the same query in the Listserv today and hopes to gather some feedback that the committee plans to discuss at their meeting later this month. She also asked about trash/recycling at the town center and who is responsible. G. Craft noted that it is the responsibility of whomever uses the TCB to remove any trash/recyclables generated. N. White-Fogarty has scheduled for Valley Floors to visit the TCB on January 13, 2022 at 3:30pm to look at the flooring upstairs and the carpeting downstairs and provide an opinion about their condition and what the options might be for easier cleaning and/or sound absorption in the building. R. Seybolt wanted to know what the committee should provide for the town meeting warrant. She was asked to bring any proposals from the TCC to the next SB meeting for discussion.

Recreation Committee: K. Bushey reported that the ice rink is officially open and that the committee is planning an open house on Saturday, January 15th in the afternoon, approximately from 3-6pm. The committee has discussed providing refreshments to those who attend. He also requested that the committee be able to purchase a popcorn machine for the event. Currently, the recreation committee has no budget and although fundraising is an ideal approach, writing letters for donations and applying for grants takes time and would not produce results prior to the open-house event. G. Craft noted that there are some donations leftover that could be used for this purchase and that voluntary donations at the event could be used to offset the cost over time. N. White-Fogarty moved to approve the Recreation Committee purchase of a popcorn machine if by Thursday 1/6/22 no donations are found. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Energy Committee: no report.

Action Items/Assignments: none at this time.

Executive Session: K. Bushey moved to go into executive session at 8:53pm to discuss the current terms of employment with the Animal Control Officer, Erica Thurston. The reasons to move into executive session are due to the finding as per Vermont legal code: "that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage." Further, the Selectboard invites G. Craft-clerk/treasurer to participate in the meeting. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The SB exited the executive session at 9: 50 pm and noted the following: the SB asks the ACO, Erica Thurston, to provide documentation and oral reports of work-related activity at every other SB meeting (once/month). Further, she has been asked to provide a time-sheet account of her work hours on a bi-weekly basis.

Adjourn: 10:00pm. V. Stone moved to adjourn at 10:00pm. N. White-Fogarty seconded. The motion passed unanimously.