

Town of Vershire Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 1, 2022 at 7:00pm; Remote only via Zoom, by phone, and recorded.

Attendance: Vernal Stone-chair, Ken Bushey, Nicole White-Fogarty, Gene Craft-clerk/treasurer, Alan Lyford-highway foreman, Gretchen Harvey-secretary, Reva Seybolt, Erika Thurston-ACO, Tonya Gunn, David Hooke, and Debra Kingsbury.

Call to Order: 7:00pm V Stone called the meeting to order.

Agenda Review & Modifications: The ACO report will follow the road report.

Public & Staff Comments: none

Highway: Road report: All went smoothly during last weekend's storm. The highway crew is following the progress of the storm expected this week. Truck update: A. Lyford reported that the repaired computer in truck # 3 is no longer operating and has been sent back under warranty. He is hoping for a quick turnaround but has also checked on the new computer the town ordered to see if there is an updated delivery date. He has not yet heard back but anticipates mid-March.

Animal Control Officer report: E. Thurston noted that a cat gone missing has been found and that two dogs gone missing were also found and all have been returned to their owners. There are no animals currently in her possession or at the garage. She will work with Susan Tullar and the Bradford Veterinary Clinic to set a date for a rabies clinic in the spring. The SB suggested checking in once/month and will work with her to choose the best dates.

Approval of Last Meeting Draft Minutes: V. Stone moved to accept the emergency meeting minutes of January 17 and the regular meeting of January 18, 2022 as amended. K. Bushey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Town Garage Update: K. Bushey reported that he has received a budget back from S. Pinkton. for the civil work for the town garage. It needs more analysis and review by the SB in order to generate any questions that remain concerning the estimate. He also has updated drawings and they need to be reviewed as well to make sure they represent what the town has asked for during previous reviews. K. Bushey also recommended looking for both grants and/or state funds to help cover the costs of the new town garage. K. Bushey and G. Craft will set a time to investigate funding options. V. Stone reported that he spoke with FW Webb and should hear back from them next week on a heating system estimate. D. Hooke indicated that there is a state program currently under debate that, if approved, could mitigate the cost of a move away from fossil fuels and towards electric power for this building. He suggested that J. Coe speak to an engineer about such an option. The Energy committee will also investigate whether or not there are any other towns that have moved away from fossil fuel energy systems in their town garages.

Town Meeting Date Change: After discussing the pros and cons of multiple dates for the annual town meeting, the SB settled on a date near the end of May with the expectation that an outdoor meeting would be feasible. The informational meeting preceding the town meeting will need to occur within 10 days prior to the town meeting, but the SB agreed that this date will be set at a future time. **Action:** V. Stone moved to hold the annual town meeting on Sunday, May 22, 2022 at 1pm at the Vershire Town Center building. N. White-Fogarty seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VerShare Snowshoe-a-thon Request: D. Hooke reported that the snowshoe-a-thon will be somewhat modified this year again in lieu of the Mountain school being able to host the lunch. The trails and activities will be routed back towards the TC for an outdoor lunch gathering at the finish. In order to be fully covid safe, all activities will take place outdoors, although access to the bathrooms and following all covid safe rules for masking and distancing may be an option. Online registration and a virtual participation option will again be part of the program as well. Vershare will work with the Recreation and TC committees to further refine the planning for this event and report back to the SB. **Action:** N. White-Fogarty moved to approve of holding the Vershare Snowshoe-a-thon event at the town center building on March 5, with the TCB dates of March 4-6 blocked off for the purposes of setup/cleanup. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Rivendell Interstate School District: This item was added to the agenda to address a request needing timely action by the selectboard. The RISD voted tonight to mail out ballots to every registered voter in each of its member towns. In order to do this, each town's governing board must vote to approve the use of mail-in ballots to every registered voter and also to delegate the responsibility for mailing the ballots to said voters to the RISD. **Action:** V. Stone moved to approve the use of mail-in ballots for the Rivendell Interstate School District's upcoming annual school vote on March 15, 2022, that mail-in ballots be sent to all registered voters in the district and that the responsibility for mailing the ballots be delegated to the RISD. N. White-Fogarty seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Schedule Final Budget Meetings: The SB agreed to hold its final budget meetings on Thursday, February 10 at 7pm and Tuesday, February 22 at 7pm on Zoom.

Setting Public ARPA Discussions: For what purposes towns can use ARPA funds are still being finalized. The SB agreed that more conversations are needed with VLCT, TRORC and other groups and organizations who are following these developments closely. V. Stone asked G. Craft to invite Katie Buckley to attend the next SB meeting where she can present and answer questions. This feedback will be used to plan for a town-wide public discussion on the use of ARPA funds in the future.

Social Media Policy: The SB discussed the pros and cons of using social media for communication purposes and agreed that adopting a social media policy would be an important first step. G. Craft will work with the SB and town committees to adapt the 'model' social media policy to meet the needs of Vershire.

Old/Unfinished Business:

Committee Reports:

Town Center Building: R. Seybolt has had some feedback on the wooden floor and whether or not it should be sanded. The biggest problem to address are the nails that need resetting. The discussion was tabled until a future meeting. She noted positive results from using social media to gather public input on how the TCB could be used for the benefit of residents.

Recreation Committee: K. Bushey reported that there is a thermometer near the ice rink now and he wanted to remind residents to avoid going onto the ice when the temperatures rise above 32 degrees.

Energy Committee: D. Hooke wants the town to consider using some of its funds to arrange an energy audit of the town office building. The audit would cost \$2,400 and is best done when it is cold outside. The purpose of doing the audit now is to quantify the repairs or upgrades needed. It also would provide a cost/benefit analysis that could inform a town decision on whether or not ARPA or other funds might be allocated to make this building more energy efficient.

Action Items/Assignments:

Executive Session: V. Stone moved to enter an executive session at 9pm to discuss the Taylor Valley road light violation and related grievances. The SB made a specific finding to go into executive session because “premature general public knowledge would clearly place the state, municipality, other public body, or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage.” 1 V.S.A. §§ 313(a)(1). K. Bushey seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The SB exited the executive session at 9:25pm and reported on the need to schedule a hearing with the landowner at 560 Taylor Valley road. **Action:** V. Stone moved to empower the Planning Commission to act as the Development Board of Adjustment for the town of Vershire. K. Bushey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjourn: N. White-Fogarty moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:30pm. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously.