

Town of Vershire Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 14, 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, David Hooke, Reva Seybolt, and Neal Hochstedler.

Call to Order: 7:05pm V. Stone called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

Agenda Review & Modifications: addition of arranging a budget meeting date/time.

Public & Staff Comments: none

Highway: Road Report: A. Lyford got injured recently and the highway crew arranged for J. Beebe to cover his route during the recent snowstorm. The roads continue to soften and it is challenging to plow smoothly. D. Stone will serve as acting foreman until A. Lyford is back at work. Some members of the crew will attend a class on Tuesday to get recertified for flagging.

Truck Update: No news yet about truck #3's computer. A. Lyford requested permission to hire some truckers to haul in gravel for the town once mud season arrives in full force. The town tractor with a rock rake will be a better gravel spreader than the truck on loan from the state.

Approval of Last Meeting Draft Minutes: N. White-Fogarty moved to approve the minutes from February 15, February 22, and March 1, 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-Fogarty seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Town Garage Update: D. Hooke presented his research designed to help the town consider energy system options for the new town garage. He looked at Corinth's solar/electric-heated fire station, talked to folks at Efficiency Vermont and Dynamic Systems Integration Co. (30 years of experience with heat pumps), and he tried to find out approximate costs and benefits that the town might use to consider the options. There are three options to consider: #1 is a radiant slab system with heat pumps in the office, bathroom, and storage area. This option could be incorporated into the existing design without an engineer's report. #2 is a hybrid system with a water to heat pump system throughout. #3 is an all-heat pump option. J. Coe recommended hiring an engineer to look more closely at the heat pump

options in #2 and #3 if the town wishes to consider them. In answer to the question about heat pumps performing at sub-zero temps and/ or being up to the task of heat recovery from cold trucks and doors opening and closing, D. Hooke noted that the systems keep improving but that heat pumps still are not that efficient when it's very outside. Deciding which source of backup energy to install (propane or solar-electric) would be part of the mix of options from which the town would need to choose. Regardless of which system is chosen, having the option to upgrade it would be prudent. The options (systems and budgets) will need to be prepared so they can be shared with residents in an informational meeting. Action: K. Bushey moved to tentatively set an informational meeting with Town Garage updates for Saturday, April 9th at 1pm. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Recycling Report: G. Craft will invite M. Gunn to report at the next SB meeting. N. Hochstedler noted that P. Barnes is interested in seeing an informational kiosk placed at the recycling area. More information is needed about its purpose, access, and its shape and size. The SB recommends that P. Barnes meets with them at the site to discuss the options.

Window Dressers in November: N. Hochstedler thanked the town for being able to use the TCB last year for the window dresser build event and shared that volunteers in Vershire/Chelsea/Corinth are planning to hold another event in November of 2022. They would like to use the TCB at no charge from November 9th-18th for a 9-day window dresser construction event and with a setup/cleanup day on each end. The umbrella organization who sponsors these events (based in Maine) provides the necessary insurance. Participants in the workshop do pay for the cost of materials, however, there is a sliding fee scale for those who need it. The labor to construct the dressers is donated. The local group is putting this same request for space to hold the event before the town governments in Chelsea and Corinth. Action: V. Stone moved to let the window-dressers group use the TCB again in November of 2022 in exchange for an in-kind donation of the materials needed to build inserts for the single-paned windows in the Town Center Building. N. White-Fogarty seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mask Requirement Update: V. Stone recommended the town return to in-person meetings with masks optional. Residents may still choose to wear masks if they are more comfortable doing so, and if anyone enters the town office with a mask on, the staff will don masks out of respect for this choice. As always the situation will be monitored in the event that a return to masking is necessary for public health. Action: V. Stone moved to have all town-related meetings return to in-person meetings with a zoom option available. Further, masking will now be optional. K. Bushey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Set budget meeting: The Selectboard agreed to meet on Tuesday, March 22 at 7pm. Agenda items to include: review energy usage in the proposed budget, the OCSD proposal, and review the items to be included on the warning for town meeting.

Old/Unfinished Business: Social Media Policy: The topic will be tabled for now.

Committee Reports:

TCB Committee: R. Seybolt has three topics on her agenda. The first is a request that the town use some of its TCB funds to have the carpeting professionally cleaned. It has been at least 6-7 years since they have been cleaned and even longer since they were cleaning professionally.

Action: K. Bushey moved to pay up to \$660. to have all the carpeting in the Town Center Building professionally cleaned by Troy West Carpet Cleaning. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The second issue is the problem with the keybox freezing, requiring her to take the extra step of borrowing a key from G. Craft. G. Craft will follow up with what has been done at VFR building to see if that would be a good option for the TCB. The third request involves finishing up the revisions to the TCB rental agreement and updating some of the procedures for cleanup and the historical time-line information so that all can be posted on the town website. Updating the agreement and requirements for using the building could also serve as a teaching opportunity with respect to best practices for recycling and keeping organic matter out of the trash. The rental deposit if designed to cover cleaning costs in the event that renters neglect to clean up properly, but having clear procedures for how to leave the TCB in good condition after an event would be helpful for any group using the building. Lastly, she reported that bathrooms have been painted and trim has been repaired where needed. V. Stone will meet with G. Craft to look over the contract revisions on Thursday.

Recreation Committee: K. Bushey reported that he and R. Seybolt followed up on grant funding options. In particular, there is a USDA rural development grant that might be a good choice for supporting town projects, but the process can be long and the application complicated depending on what type of project the committees have in mind. The next round of funding would be available in April of 2023, with the application due in November. One approach to grant writing is to do as much of the application as possible and then have a professional grant writer review it for areas that need strengthening. K. Bushey also reported that the committee deposited \$178 into their account after the food sales during the Snowshoe-a-thon event. Now, the committee is discussing some kind of Easter weekend event for April.

Energy Committee: No report at this time. See above discussions about window dressers, a recycling area kiosk, and town garage energy systems as representative of EC efforts.

Action Items/Assignments:

Executive Session: none at this time.

Adjourn: 9:55 pm: N. White-Fogarty moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:55pm. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously.