

**Town of Vershire Selectboard Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, July 19, 2022 at 7:00pm at Vershire Town Center building.**  
**There will be a remote option for this meeting via Zoom or by phone.**

**Attendance:** Vernal Stone-chair, Ken Bushey, Nicole White-Fogarty, Gene Craft-clerk/treasurer, Gretchen Harvey-secretary, Alan Lyford-highway foreman, Reva Seybolt, James Coe, Alex Meyer, Mike Gunn, Tonya Gunn, David Hooke, and Mark Fogarty

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

**Agenda Review & Modifications:** Added action item of Health Officer position renewal.

**Public & Staff Comments:** None at this time.

**Highway: Road Report:** A. Lyford expects that almost all the mowing should be completed by Thursday. He is still waiting to hear back about paving the aprons when they start working on VT113. Once he does, he will inquire about a price for paving the town center parking lot as well. **Equipment:** A. Lyford reported that the backhoe needed some significant repairs recently. He had hoped it would last until the garage was finished but, given its age (2003) and the number of hours on the machine (7000), the repairs to keep it running will in all likelihood increase in frequency. He indicated that a functioning backhoe is now their priority and that it might be time to start thinking about its replacement, especially if supply-chain backlogs begin to ease up. During more normal times, looking for used equipment or renting might have been options to buy some time, but demand for both remains very heavy.

**Approval of Last Meeting Minutes:** N. White-Fogarty moved to approve the minutes of July 5, 2022 as written. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Current Period Warrants Approval:** V. Stone moved to approve the current period warrants. K. Bushey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Alex Meyer-Mountain School Director:** Introductions were made for the benefit of the new Mountain School director. He wanted to hear about what has worked well in the past with respect to interacting with the town. He is supportive of continuing the traditions of The Harvest Feast and the Snowshoe-a-Thon. With respect to volunteers, K. Bushey suggested that student/faculty participation in winter recreation activities (ice rink) and Greenup Day would be welcome. R. Seybolt mentioned that fresh produce donations to the food bank, in addition to volunteers on food distribution days, would be another possibility for town-school engagement. R. Seybolt also suggested that an open house for Vershire residents would be a helpful way to make introductions and for residents to learn more about the school's plans and activities. G. Craft noted that having the academic calendar/schedule for the school year would benefit both the planners of town-wide events and the road crew, who were called on to help stranded parents during mud season this past spring. Mr. Meyer was asked if he predicted any changes at the school. He responded that they anticipate some in the curriculum. He and the faculty are discussing with the farm manager the agricultural learning goals for the students: i.e., how much off-site learning students might do at working farms versus how much on-site farming they will do at the school. If there are additional suggestion or questions, residents can contact Mr. Meyers directly via email: [Alex.meyers@mountainschool.org](mailto:Alex.meyers@mountainschool.org)

**Garage Request for Proposal (RFP) Document Review w/ J. Coe via Zoom:** J. Coe sent the SB two types of contracts to consider for bidding the town garage. One is a traditional hard bid (fixed price) contract and the other is a cost plus contract with a guaranteed maximum price listed. The latter offers more flexibility under current economic conditions. The maximum amount would logically be set as the bond vote amount. The hard bid type functions exactly how it

sounds: the contractor takes on all the risk for rising costs during the project and provides a bid amount for total costs. The town takes on no risk for these rising costs. The contractor's markup is not disclosed, however, because supply costs are unpredictable. The number of hard bids that come in could be quite low. The benefits of the cost plus contract model is that it likely will bring in more bids from which to choose because the town takes on some of the risk with respect to supply costs. The cost-plus contract has no hidden markups, which would be set at the time of the bid submission. If materials costs do rise, the town's costs would rise also. The upper limit would be set by the bond amount. G. Craft will review the cost plus contract model with both the town attorney and bond counsel before a decision is made on the type of contract to use for the bid. J. Coe recommends the cost plus model. He also noted that if the town wants the project to begin next year, it ought to be put out to bid sooner rather than later. There is no way to predict how competitive it will be in future months. The slowing economy appears to be in the town's favor right now with contractors beginning to look for work. J. Coe can have the bid documents ready by the end of July (next week) and will work with G. Craft regarding insurance requirements and other technical details of bidding this type of project.

The SB will review the finalized paperwork by the time of its next meeting on August 2nd. The bidding process will run for approximately one month, but it is advisable to start advertising now that the town will be looking for bids for its town garage. The town will follow the federal rules for an open and fair bidding process and this will make it eligible to apply for grant funding if those opportunities arise. The SB will schedule a pre-bid informational meeting for interested parties to be located at the town garage. This meeting is tentatively set for August 16th at 10am. Questions asked by contractors will be routed through J. Coe, who will share the answers with all interested parties so that the process is fair. Tentative dates to begin/end the formal bidding process are Aug. 8--Sept. 9, 2022. Once the bidding process has ended, interviews with contractors can be scheduled.

**Recycling Check-in:** M. Gunn reported on the operation of the recycling/trash center. They are still having some issues with bags being dropped off after hours and are continuing to find solutions for those residents who find it difficult to visit the site when it is open. Occasionally, there are traffic flow holdups but most cars navigate the cones properly. He asked if anyone has an update on the proposed kiosk for the site. He and C. Kinney both like the idea of it and once it is erected, they will alter the set up so that it can become a place for residents to stop and visit if desired. G. Craft will email the members of the energy committee who are taking charge of this project for an update. M. Gunn is reminding new and/or summer residents that putting food scraps in the trash is no longer allowed. Having information at the kiosk about composting or other disposal options for large or electronic items would be a helpful service. He offered to post the occasional recycling reminders and helpful tips on the listserv. The SB thought this would be helpful.

**Property Tax Rate Set:** G. Craft summarized the setting of the property tax rate formula for the coming tax year. It includes articles passed at Town Meeting and the education rate set by the state of Vermont. Overall, the tax rate will be slightly lower than last year. **Action:** V. Stone moved to approve the municipal tax rate at .9450 (this is a combined rate that includes the veterans exemption and the municipal tax rate). K. Bushey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Old/Unfinished Business:** Social Media Policy (postponed).

**Committee Reports:**

TCB Committee: R. Seybolt thanked Mr. Avery for the picnic tables he built for the TC but learned that during Vershire day, they tended to bow when too many people sat on them. She shared this information with Mr. Avery who set about fixing the benches right away with 2x4 supports. The SB agreed to pay the cost of the extra materials needed considering that Mr. Avery already donated his labor to reinforce them properly. Another problem the TC committee requests feedback for is the mess and/or items left behind after town center events. The TCB use agreement paperwork will need to make clear that items left behind will be disposed of if not claimed promptly after each event. Other edits to this agreement could be considered as well. G. Craft will pass along any additional cleaning needs and scheduling with the person contracted to clean the Town Center. R. Seybolt also brought up the need for additional shelving in the storage area of the TCB. This is especially pronounced now that there is a town food shelf and recreation equipment to store in this space. She will research some options and come back to the SB with a proposal for shelving. She also asked the SB to consider putting a new Green book discussion on its agenda. All agree they are valuable to residents but gathering the residential information is time consuming and is best accomplished by volunteers with deep, local knowledge.

Village Center designation was discussed at the Planning Commission meeting of 7/13/22. R. Seybolt conveyed that it wants to recommend to the SB that Reva Seybolt and Gregory Wilson be designated leads on putting together the application for submission. Debra Kingsbury-Lister has also agreed to assist with gathering the information needed for the application. The SB would like to see a draft of the application, ideally by its August 2nd meeting.

Recreation Committee: K. Bushey is looking to use funds already in the recreation budget to purchase an ice rink liner, which is on sale until July 30th. There may be some additional materials needed to increase the size of the perimeter of the rink. He first needs clarity on the exact location of the leach field/septic tank to avoid misplacement of the ice rink next winter.

Energy Committee: no report

#### **Action Items/Assignments:**

**Executive Session:** V. Stone moved to enter an executive session to discuss a town employee's responsibilities under 1 V.S.A 313(a)(3). N. White-Fogarty seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The SB exited executive session at 10:00pm with the finding that the town-clerk/treasurer requested administrative support in order to carry out the additional duties of administrative assistant to the selectboard. This action will not increase the current staff budget. **Action:** K. Bushey moved to approve hiring Gretchen Harvey at an hourly rate of \$20/hr. to provide administrative support as delineated by Gene Craft. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Audit Approvals:** The Selectboard reviewed the letters from Sullivan and Powers for services performed in 2020-21. **Action:** V. Stone moved to sign the letters accepting the fee arrangement from Sullivan and Powers for their audits of the town's books in the years 2020 and 2021. K. Bushy seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Action:** N. White-Fogarty moved to reappoint Steve Atwood as town Health Officer conditional to his acceptance. K. Bushey seconded. The motion passed unanimously,

**Adjourn:** N. White-Fogarty moved to adjourn the meeting at:10:08pm. K. Bushey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.