

Town of Vershire Selectboard Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 27, 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, Nicole White-Fogarty, Ken Bushey, Gene Craft-clerk/treasurer, Alan Lyford-highway foreman, Gretchen Harvey-secretary, Erika Thurston, Representative Samantha Lefebvre, Debra Kingsbury, Mark Fogarty, David Hooke and Earl Robinson.

Call to Order: V. Stone called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.

Agenda Review & Modifications: Added LaFlamme's Salvage yard and USPS delivery.

Public & Staff Comments: None at this time.

Highway: Road Report: A. Lyford reported that Eastman Cross Rd. will be closed on Thursday to fix a stream bank. He has meetings this week concerning underground power on Taylor Valley Rd. and with the Better Roads Program representative to get feedback on ditching work on Vershire Center and Mero roads. **Equipment Updates:** The new backhoe is working well. The crew will be doing some ditching and begin preparing for the upcoming winter season.

Approval of Last Meeting Minutes: K. Bushey moved to approve the minutes of September 13, 2022 as written. N. White-Fogarty 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.

VT Route 113 Apron Work: Residents have concerns about the apron work done in relation to the paving of VT113. A. Lyford learned that the state of Vermont is now funding only the bare minimum on these aprons. This means that some of the apron work (on North road, for example) will not be done as promised earlier this year. He will look into who is responsible for the culvert at the intersection of Vershire Center Rd and VT113.

Garage Progress Update: K. Bushey reported that two bids are expected for the garage project. He just learned about a grant (state) that could fund a new salt and sand shed. The grant deadline is October 7th and he and others will try to meet it. There will be a similar grant (federal) coming up that also could be used to fund the shed.

Mero Road Trail Access: V. Stone went up Mero from South Vershire Rd as far as he could to assess the situation with respect to downed trees and water near the road. He spoke with Patrick Ross, VT. River Management Engineer, who explained that when these roads were originally constructed, no one paid attention to whether or not they crossed wetlands. Because they were built prior to wetlands laws, they need to be treated like other roads; i.e., there is no regulation that prevents residents from using them. It also is the town's responsibility to make class 4 roads minimally accessible to residents and consider the property owners on Mero road who cannot access their land because the downed trees block access on both ends.

ARPA Public Meeting: The selectboard's regular meeting on October 25th will begin at 6:30pm prior to hosting a public meeting at 7pm for discussing the funds allocated to Vershire from the American Rescue Plan Act.

LaFlamme Salvage Yard: According to the agreement between the town and the salvage yard, there should be no more than 4 cars parked on VT113 at any one time. Anecdotal accounts report that there are often many more than 4 cars parked along the roadside. Sometimes there are large trucks as well. Concerns are growing more acute about the danger of a potential collision, especially now as recent resurfacing allows for faster traffic. Winter snow plows will also find parked cars on VT113 problematic. Documentation will be made about how many vehicles are parked in the road with the results to be discussed at the next SB meeting.

USPS and Vershire Delivery: The postal carrier for Vershire indicated to G. Craft that he is being asked to stop doing dismounts, presumably as a cost cutting measure. Dismounts are those instances when the carrier gets out of the car and walks the mail over to a designated location. A dismount occurs at the Town Office. After some discussion, it was agreed that G. Craft will request that the regular dismount at the town office continues for the next three months until Vershire mail delivery has been transferred to the Chelsea post office, which does not plan to eliminate this service. Rep. Lefebvre will do what she can to support this request.

Animal Control Report: E. Thurston has been busy with some rescue kittens and their mother. She believes some notices to dog owners may have gone out to an incorrect address and she will follow up. G. Craft will provide her with an updated list of dog registrations in Vershire. There have been complaints about barking dogs on North Rd. She has had one conversation so far with the resident and will follow up. K. Bushey asked what protocols the ACO follows when animals need to be picked up or when costs for holding those animals accrue. Animals cannot be left at the town office and the Chelsea animal hospital only takes dogs that are clients already. The ACO will hold animals that are registered to Vershire residents, but it is necessary to have a temporary holding site for any dog that is found or abandoned. K. Bushey also asked if there are grant funds that help support the work of ACO's in small towns without a pound. Legally, the ACO can hold an animal for 10 days before surrendering to a shelter, but there are fees and time commitment associated with this option. V. Stone recommends that the ACO get together with the SB to come up with a plan to recoup funds spent on housing lost or stray animals.

Committee Reports:

Town Center Building: D. Kingsbury and R. Seybolt reported on a Mascoma Grant they hope to apply for with a due date this Saturday and a notification date of November 1st. If awarded, the grant will provide a solid foundation from which to launch the fundraising effort for a Town Center pavilion. D. Kingsbury and others have looked over the application and believe it is close to being ready for submission. G. Craft will look over the most recent version tomorrow morning. The committee has only determined an optimal location for the pavilion at this point; the grant is awarded for the concept and does not prohibit any future design changes or adjustments to its location. **Action:** N. White-Fogarty moved to authorize the TCB committee to submit a grant application to Mascoma Bank in the amount of \$20,000 to begin the fundraising effort for a Town Center pavilion. K. Bushey seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Village Center Designation: R. Seybolt just learned that the Vershire request for Village Designation was

unanimously approved and will run from the Post Office to the Town Center. She will provide packets for businesses and nonprofits in this location who will be able to tap the resources this designation provides. The designation can be renewed when it is set to expire in 8 (2030).
Window Dressers update: The event has been arranged and volunteers are needed to help construct inserts for the Town Center/VHS. R. Seybolt will put out the call for volunteers.

Recreation Committee: K. Bushey reported that around 60 people attended the back to school BBQ that had to be rescheduled 2x due to bad weather. There will be one last pizza-oven training event this Saturday, October 1st in conjunction with a welcome to vershire potluck supper from 4-7pm. Exact location of this year's ice rink is still being determined in light of new knowledge about the underground sewer line locations. The committee will keep the storage shed in place for now and secure it with a locked door. They are also working on a better plan to bring lights to the rink that do not require a long extension cord on the ground.

Energy Committee: D. Hooke reported on the recent trip 4 people took to visit Woodstock's new Emergency Facility, which has an air to water heat pump system with an energy storage tank that allows them to spread out their demand and avoid peak load times/costs. There have been some glitches and supply chain problems with the setup, but overall it was a good learning experience to see how it worked at this early stage of operation. D. Hooke also summarized some ongoing committee work including transportation survey, recycle center kiosk construction, weatherization 101 workshop, discussion with the Planning Commission about the town plan, and the best ways to share EC materials online.

Old/Unfinished Business:

Social Media policy (postponed)

Action Items/Assignments:

Review/Approve Cemetery Bylaws: G. Craft reported that the Cemetery Committee requests Selectboard approval to their revised bylaws. The SB requests both copies (existing and revised) of the bylaws so that they can learn what adjustments are being made before they approve the changes. V. Stone would also like to invite the trustees to a SB meeting to share updates on the special projects for which they have requested funds. Action will be tabled until the next SB meeting.

Candidate Forum Letter approval: D. Hooke and E. Murphy put together a plan for the advertising and staging of this public event. He asked if V. Stone would be willing to offer some opening remarks and also for SB approval of the letter they want to send out to the candidates. Further, he asked for suggestions for town-specific questions that they might want asked of any or all of the candidates.

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