

**Town of Vershire Selectboard Meeting Minutes DRAFT
Tuesday, April 25, 2023 at 7:00pm at the Vershire Town Center.
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, Doug Stone, Debra Kingsbury, Peet Pearson, Tonya Gunn, James Coe, Mark Fogarty, and Keith Paranto.

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

Agenda Review & Modifications: Doug Stone requested to speak during the public comment period.

Public and Staff comments: Doug Stone wanted to check-in with the SB about Westshire ATV club activities as they do each year. He wanted to confirm club participation in Green Up Day. He asked if there were any requests from the SB and noted the club would continue to work on trail maintenance as they have done in the past. For cleanup day the club will go all around town, including work on Eagle Hollow, Parker, and Chamberlain Roads. The club will use trailers to collect and transport trash.

Highway: Road Report: A. Lyford reported that the recent rains have helped pull the frost from the roads and they are now starting to harden up and are ready to be graded in some locations. **Equipment:** United Construction and Forestry (Springfield) sent someone today to fix the cylinder on the loader. The dump trucks have all been converted over to summer use. He is sending out 12 tires to be recapped later this week. The grader does have a puncture in one of its tires that will need to be patched.

Approval of Last Meeting Minutes: V. Stone moved to approve the meeting minutes of 4/11/23 and 4/20/23 minutes. N. White-Fogarty seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Current Period Warrants Approval: N. White-Fogarty moved to approve the current period warrants. K. Bushey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Town Garage Update: K. Bushey received some emails from J. Coe and Lajeunesse Construction Inc with adjustments made to the contract. K. Bushey asked some questions about each of them and J. Coe answered each question, noting that the requested changes are all minor, reasonable, and meet the legal requirements. K. Bushey asked J. Coe if he was willing to consider Efficiency Vermont's inspection protocols, which are preconditions for rebates. J. Coe believes that a vapor barrier is already built into the cost of the garage, but paying for an inspection from Eff. VT. would add an additional expense. He recommended finding out if the incentives (rebates) would make the extra inspection costs worthwhile.

T. Gunn asked if there has been any news since the last SB meeting regarding Vershire's application for funding from Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS). There has been no update as of yet, and the SB is also waiting for word on the VT Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) application process. D. Kingsbury noted that there was a letter sent to the town from Sen. Peter Welch's office that indicated a potential for up to \$700,000 in funding for VT. D. Kingbury wants this information noted in the minutes. She thinks that if there is any chance that these or other funds can offset the cost of this garage project, that these funds

should be pursued. T. Gunn noted that the award letters from CDS are supposed to be mailed out by April 30th and requested that the town wait to sign the contract until the letter has arrived.

K. Bushey reiterated what he learned earlier from Eric Law (USDA-RD representative) through which the CDS funds would run. He noted that Vershire might be awarded up to \$250,000 in assistance for the garage, but this would require a 1-2 year delay, some additional costs, and there is no guarantee the funding would be granted. G. Craft explained that the town has already moved beyond this point by issuing an intent to award the contract to Lajeunesse Construction. He also urged the SB to continue to look for other grants and funding streams to help offset the costs of construction. For example, it's possible there are state funds for small towns that could be used to offset the costs of J. Coe's architectural services.

The discussion next focused on the process of moving forward and picking a date to sign the contract. It also recommended gathering additional cost information for solar installation, heat pumps, and the need for some contract language that allowed for flexibility in the short term and for the purpose of reaching a final decision on the exact configuration of the energy system to be installed. J. Coe will finalize the contract language as per the requests for flexibility this week. It will include language that allows the SB another month to decide the exact configuration of the heat technologies that will be installed in the garage. The SB will circulate the contract and then meet next Tuesday, May 2nd at 5:30pm to sign it.

Animal Control Officer Report: No report.

Committee Reports:

Town Center Building Committee: Peet Pearson wanted to tell the SB that the white fence on town center land is falling down. She offered to paint a new fence for the town if they want to replace it. V. Stone will take a look at it and the SB will make a determination about how to proceed. N. White-Fogart reported that she has two estimates for removing approximately 5-6 trees between the river and the parking lot that have been flagged because they are at the end of their life span and in danger of falling down. One estimate at \$1500 is detailed and leaves the logs and the chips for town use. The other estimate is for \$2000. Because the trees are on land owned by Vershare, the SB will want to work with them to consider the next step, along with perhaps a broader discussion about a walking bridge and future ownership of this particular strip of land that is adjacent to TC land.

Recreation Committee: K. Bushey reported that volunteers will drain the ice rink later this week and begin dismantling it.

Energy Committee: No report. Andy W. brought Mountain school students down to measure the parking as part of an effort to design a park 'n ride in that location. D. Hooke postponed the installation of the piers for the pavilion until May 8th.

Keith Paranto reminded the Selectboard that he has had a long-standing back and forth with prior selectboards about finding a resolution for his contaminated well. His water supply has been contaminated by run-off from the current town garage salt shed. In addition to making his water supply unusable, the high levels of sodium have impacted his water pipes, faucets, hot water heater, washing machine, etc. He was unable to receive state assistance for this problem

because he is located on a town road. What he needs now are minutes/records of prior discussions with earlier SB members. If he can identify approximate dates or years, G. Craft will facilitate a records search for him. Likewise, the SB will need to gather more information before they can make any decision about the matter.

Executive Session: Animal Control Officer

Action: N.White-Fogarty moved to enter an executive session for the purpose of discussing the position of Animal Control Officer as allowed by 1V.S.A. §§ 313(a)(3). G. Harvey and G. Craft were invited into the session. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously. **Action:** N. White-Fogarty moved to exit the executive session with a finding to accept Erica Thurston's resignation as ACO. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Action Items/Assignments: None.

Adjourn: V. Stone moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:50pm to a date and time certain on Tuesday, May 2, 2023 at 5:30pm for the purpose of signing a town garage contract with Lajeunesse Construction Inc. N. White-Fogarty seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Tuesday, May 2, 2023 at 5:30pm at the Vershire Town Center.

There will be a remote option for this meeting via Zoom or by phone.

Attendance: Vernal Stone-chair, Nicole White-Fogarty, Ken Bushey, Gretchen Harvey-secretary, James Coe, and David Hooke.

Call to order: V. Stone resumed the meeting at 5:30pm.

K. Bushey called James Coe to ask about next steps on the Town Garage concerning WEC and the contract with Lajeunesse Construction, Inc. J. Coe will send in the contract paperwork with noted adjustments and the agreed upon timetable tonight so that G. Craft will have what he needs to scan it for the SB chair's signature.

Action: V. Stone moved to approve the signing of the contract with Lajeunesse Construction, Inc. to build the town garage. K Bushey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Action: N. White-Fogarty moved to allow V. Stone to sign the contract with Lajeunesse Construction Inc. K. Bushey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

A discussion with D. Hooke followed and covered updates on estimating propane costs for the town garage and a timetable for discussing solar option proposals. He is hopeful the Energy Committee will be able to send a representative to discuss both more fully at the next regular SB meeting on May 9th. D. Hooke believes there is time pressure to make a decision due to the competitive nature of the MERP grant funding program. He notes that the MERP program requirements are still somewhat undefined at this time.

Adjourn: V. Stone moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:05 pm. N. White-Fogarty seconded. The motion passed unanimously.