

Town of Vershire Selectboard Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 1, 2023 at 7:00pm at the Vershire Town Center.
There will be a remote option for this meeting via Zoom or by phone.

Attendance: Ken Bushey-chair, Vern Stone, Alan Lyford-superintendent, Gretchen Harvey-secretary, Gene Craft-clerk/treasurer, Sydney Steinle, Meghan Asbury, David Hooke, Greg Pulaski, Vanessa Waxman, Paddy McCarthy, and Reva Seybolt.

Call to Order: K. Bushey called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.

Agenda Review & Modifications: None at this time.

Public and Staff comments: None at this time.

Highway: Road Report. A Lyford reported he is waiting for the final word from FEMA to be able to go ahead with certain road repairs. They have made some improvements to South Vershire road, Vershire Center road, and expect the work on Mero road's culvert to go forward with the expectation that it will take a while for that repair to be completed. He is also waiting for FEMA to assess Eastman Cross Road. V. Stone reported that the latest update on the VT113 bridge is that it will be paved on Wednesday and guard rails installed on Thursday. It is expected to be open to regular traffic on Friday.

South Vershire Road/Ely Mine ROW: K. Bushey will contact E. Hathaway and tell him that as far as the town is concerned, SVR is a 4 rod road (2 rods each direction from the center line).

Recycle Report - Mike Gunn reported on the mishap last week when Bob Sanburg missed picking up the compost. This caused an animal(s) to strew it around. Once called, Sanburg came right away and cleaned it all up. M. Gunn also wanted to thank A. Towles for providing some helpful signage for the trash truck to clarify the new punch card system and bag size options. Parking signs are also up and this helps direct those who want to park and take their time at the recycle station.

Treasurer - Municipal Tax Rate: G. Craft explained that the selectboard still needs to approve the Veterans Exemption (passed 2007). The final MTR total will be adjusted accordingly at 1.0120. **Action:** K. Bushey moved to approve the MTR rate at 1.0055 for 2024. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously. **Action:** K. Bushey moved to approve the Veterans Exemption rate at 0.0065, putting the total MTR in 2024 at 1.0120. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Last Meeting Minutes: V. Stone moved to approve the meeting minutes of 7/18/23. K. Bushey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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

TRORC Presentation - MTAP: Sydney Steinle and Meghan Asbury attended to present on the new Municipal Technical Assistance Program (MTAP), which offers small towns assistance via their Regional Planning Commissions for tapping grant

funding. M. Asbury and S. Steinle have been assigned to work with/for Vershire to tap these funding requests that fall under the following categories: Water supply and wastewater infrastructure; Housing; Community recovery, workforce development, and business support; Climate change mitigation and resilience; and Other community economic development projects identified by a municipality and approved by the Agency of Administration (AOT). There is no application process but the sooner towns develop a list of what they might be interested in, the sooner TRORC reps can search for funding streams that work with this program.

K. Bushey asked a number of questions: does the climate change mitigation category include roads, is there retroactive funding for construction already begun, and might there be funding for a sand and salt shed. MTAP is not transportation specific and funding requests for those items might need to be directed elsewhere. TRORC is still working with AOA to define the categories. If a town is working closely with a nonprofit (Vershare or VFR) there might be opportunities with MTAP as MERP funding is not available unless the town owns the asset in question. Would the funding cover renovations of the Town Office to accommodate a new Admin. Asst. The SB will send additional questions/project ideas to M. Asbury and S. Steinle as they think of them.

The original timeline for encouraging applications has been extended somewhat because of the flooding and recovery work. The hope is to find out what towns need by December, but they will open the options up to towns not already listed in October (Vershire is on the list) so, the sooner the better for Vershire to make its requests known. Requests do not need to be documented in the minutes but it cannot hurt. Just reach out and ask as soon as possible. TRORC reps wanted to make one more point: that ARPA funds must be obligated by Dec. 31 2024 or the money goes away. It needs to be spent by Dec 31 2026.

Town Garage Update - Change Orders 4 & 5: Change order #4 has been taken care of and the SB is waiting on more detail on change order #5. K. Bushey reported that the driveway will be built next week and that they poured the slab for the office area and the 1st bay of the garage. They are working on the rebar, with sections still to be completed. The radiant tubes have been laid. A. Lyford asked about the topsoil they are excavating and will the town benefit from it. This topic needs to be brought up at the garage meeting next week.

David Hooke explained EVT's Incentive Agreement Program and requested access to the bid package in order to give them the information needed to construct an agreement for Vershire. K. Bushey explained that he wants the whole Selectboard to make this decision on 8/15/23. In the interim, K. Bushey will get the bid information to D. Hooke. D. Hooke also asked the SB if they have made a firm decision on installing a propane boiler. Yes, the SB has done so based on the best advice from Jeremiah Trombley (Tru Engineering). With respect to going forward with Town building assessments (required for tapping MERP funding), K. Bushey reiterated that he wants all SB members present before making a decision and next steps will be decided from there. D. Hooke was asked to prepare a concise proposal for the SB to consider before its next meeting on 8/15/23.

Committee Reports:

Recreation Committee: K. Bushey reported that the committee is co-organizing an event with the TCB committee for the pavilion dedication on 9/22/23. There will be pizza and music. Richard Amore and Better Places representatives will try to be there. The committee also has a band scheduled for a back-to-school event in August. More details will be worked out at their meeting tomorrow night.

Energy Committee: D. Hooke reported that P. Barnes is working to finish the kiosk. The energy fair at Vershire Day was not that popular this year. The committee might consider partnering with other towns to see if participating in a multi-town event would be more popular. He intends to present EC perspectives at the next Planning Commission topic forum on August 23 with a focus on Energy. He also noted that the meadow area near the top of Patterson MT has been ignored for some time. There was some discussion about whether or not any mowing equipment could even ascend Patterson from any direction given all the recent flooding and washouts. G. Harvey recommended D. Hooke consider how this intersects with the section of the Town Plan that mentions Patterson and speak to members of the Vershire Historical Society, which has been tasked with offering revisions to the Town Plan that cover historical and scenic resources.

TCB Committee: R. Seybolt reported that the pavilion raising is in 10 days. The committee is still recruiting volunteers for work and food. There will be a press release notifying everyone of this rescheduled event. There will be waivers for all workers to sign. The work is expected to begin at 8am each day. Tilden Electric will come back on Monday 8/14 after the raising and there will be a meeting onsite. D. Hooke will check on the invoice already received. Two plugs need to be installed inside the TCB, at the same time as the wiring for the pavilion. R. Seybolt will be at the meeting to answer questions.

Someone from the TCB committee will serve on VERT and the committee will also offer feedback to the Planning Commission with respect to the community section of the Town Plan. Members will work on installing the replacement fence between the TCB and Pearson residence, they will move the wood chips, but request permission to put the word out to have the cut logs taken by anyone who wants them. There is still one tree that needs to be taken down.

Action Items/Assignments:

Town Employee review schedule: The Selectboard will discuss the review of D. Stone during an Executive Session on 8/15/23. G. Harvey shared her payroll timesheet to make sure the Selectboard approved of its documentation. She also shared draft documents: Rules of Procedure and FAQs for Town Committees.

Greg Pulaski wanted to share his perspective on the recent flooding in the area of Eastman Cross road. He also wanted to express his strong wish that the road return to being a crossroad at some point in the future. The Selectboard will not be

making any decisions on Eastman Cross road until FEMA provides their recommendation. V. Stone will look into the conditions along the bank near the intersection of ECR and VCR.

Adjourn: K. Bushey moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:08pm. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously.