

Town of Vershire Selectboard Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at 7:00pm, Vershire Town Center.
There will be a remote option for this meeting via Zoom or by phone.

Attendance: Ken Bushey-chair, Nicole White-Fogarty, Vern Stone, Gretchen Harvey-secretary, Andrea Herrington, Eileen Murphy, Mike Gunn, Mark Fogarty, and Mary Sarazin.

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

Agenda Review & Modifications: Place a discussion of the local emergency response effort after the warrants, and move up the Mero bridge bid document discussion to the Road report.

Public and Staff comments: None at this time.

Highway: Road Report: A. Lyford thinks it's a good idea to stock pile some gravel before the local pit closes for the winter. This is to mitigate against the kind of freezing and thawing weather we seem to be experiencing more frequently during the winter months. He also wants to start the process of ordering a replacement truck for Truck #1, which could take approximately 1.5 years before delivery. The truck is 10 years old and still runs well, but its use as a salt truck has led to a body that is completely worn out. It may be possible to put a small packer body (4-5yd) on this vehicle and repurpose it for use at the transfer station. He will try to make this truck last as a salting truck as long as possible, but the ordering process needs to begin. **Action:** N. White-Fogarty moved to give A. Lyford permission to research and get on a list for a replacement for Truck #1, after which he will provide quotes to the Selectboard before final approval. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously. **Action:** V. Stone moved to give A. Lyford permission to research the cost of a packer body for Truck #1. N. White-Fogarty seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Some discussion about office equipment needed for the new town garage, and town trucking costs that need to be passed on to Lajeunesse Construction Inc. concluded the report. G. Harvey will follow up with the Mero Bridge RFP and bring it to the Selectboard for its approval on 12/19/23.

Gene Craft & Budget Meetings: K. Bushey wanted to let G. Craft know that LCI (Lajeunesse Construction Inc) will be paying for the final month of (Consolidated) internet service as well as the early termination fee for this service at the new garage. The Selectboard will be working with ECFiber going forward. G. Craft said the easiest way to handle this is for him to prepare a statement that allows LCI to offer a credit to the Town on the next pay application. K. Bushey also wanted to ask about how the end of construction (that involves some site work to be finished in early 2024) affects the bond and the eventual transition for Mascoma Bank. The

assumption is that the final pay application will be in June/July. G. Craft will verify the bond bank application date and will let the Selectboard know how this extension of site work will impact the payment schedule. K. Bushey also asked for a final overall spreadsheet that will allow the Selectboard to have a good overview of all expenses, including extras such as additional inspections, etc. for the Garage Project and now that it is nearing completion. G. Craft will try to pull this together in the next few days. The Selectboard and the treasurer agreed to have their first budget meeting on December 12th at 6pm at which they will focus on the general budget. A 2nd meeting (tentative) was set for 12/18 with a decision to be made on the 12th. A. Lyford will participate once the general budget work is completed. The due date for all materials to be completed and ready for the printer is February 2nd this year as town meeting reverts to the first Tuesday in March.

K. Bushey asked G. Craft for clarity about some Employee Handbook policies such as which kinds of days (sick or personal) are allowed to roll over into the new year. G. Craft will provide G. Harvey with a summary explanation so that the Selectboard can approve an amended version of the Handbook. He also asked him if there were duties he still wanted to transition to the Adm Asst. G. Craft would like to turn over the Admin email and the website posting but he recognizes there are gray areas with tasks that have dedicated employees and position descriptions in larger towns (bookkeeper and human resources, for instance). Some items only come up once/year such as the Annual Report that statutorily rests with the Selectboard.

Transfer Station Report: M. Gunn reported that the metal dumpster will be removed for the winter either this week or next. The tin roof of the shed is leaking and impacting the insulation. He will try to shore it up but would welcome a donation of some insulation if anyone has a roll at home. The traffic flow is going well and there are no other problems to report.

Approval of Last Meeting Minutes: K. Bushey moved to approve the meeting minutes of 11/21/23. V. Stone 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.

Emergency Management—Andrea Herrington wanted to attend and discuss local emergency response planning since she last attended a Selectboard meeting in July. Initially, some clarity was needed about what TRORC is calling their committee that includes town representatives. At its

last meeting, the Selectboard appointed two representatives (V. Stone and E. Gilbert) to serve on TRORC's Regional Emergency Management Committee. A. Herrington wants the local team (VERT) to resume regular meetings and develop a plan that will include tracking and building out a volunteer network. Those involved in VERT include: V. Stone, L. Craft, G. Craft, S. Atwood, A. Herrington, and, R. Seybolt-chair of VTCC, has volunteered to participate as well. N. White-Fogarty asked some questions that need to be taken into consideration by this group: who will communicate with the SB when there is a need to use town facilities, who is liable, what determines an emergency or other need that requires the opening of the TCB for use. Does a 24-hour power outage and/or a need to work remotely qualify? A. Herrington suggests a plan design that includes the following: Operations & Safety, Logistics, Emergency Management, and a Public Information Officer who will oversee approved and consistent messaging to residents. E. Murphy is willing to participate in this process and is hoping that the effort will be coordinated and effective. M. Sarazin wants to request that a power outage (and internet outages) in these times of remote work, adds another dimension to power being unavailable if it means that people are struggling to earn their living. The Selectboard has asked for a report in 2 weeks on 12/19/23.

Town Garage Update: V. Stone reported that an Irving technician has 'failed' the oil tank at the house at 815 VCR. The question now is whether or not to replace the oil tank (the furnace is also old) or switch over to propane, which would require a separate tank and a new forced hot air furnace. V. Stone will get prices for each option and the topic will be discussed further at upcoming budget meetings. K. Bushey reported that after some discussion with key stakeholders, it was decided that holding back a final payment of \$25,000 until the site work is finished at 815 VCR in the spring makes the most sense. N. White-Fogarty reported that Vermont Security will be at the garage site on Monday, but that they will need power in order to install the system. V. Stone will follow up. The final walk-through and occupancy permit is expected on December 18th.

Committee Reports:

Recreation Committee: K. Bushey reported that they plan to install the rink lights soon and will coordinate with V. Stone to lay down the liner and fill with water—temperatures depending. K. Bushey now has 3 price quotes for a snow blower and they all close to the estimate of \$1400 and provide service. He will make a decision and pick it up to save the delivery fee.

Energy Committee: D. Hooke—no report.

VTC Committee: N. White-Fogarty will follow up on the need for cleaning services at the TCB. There was some discussion about the Holiday Market event and the upcoming visit by Santa on Saturday, which is expected to be popular.

Action Items/Assignments:

G. Harvey will follow up and request information necessary to finalize the following documents: the Mero Bridge RFP and the Purchasing Policy, with an expectation that they both can be approved at the next Selectboard meeting on 12/19.

Adjourn: N. White-Fogarty moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:47pm. K. Bushey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.