

**Town of Vershire Selectboard Meeting Minutes DRAFT
Tuesday, July 18, 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 Nicole White-Fogarty, Vern Stone, Alan Lyford-superintendent, Gretchen Harvey-secretary, Andrea Herrington, Alex Nuti-de Biasi, Gregory Wilson, Mark Fogarty, and Reva Seybolt.

Call to Order: K. Bushey called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Agenda Review & Modifications: TRORC presentation on MTAP rescheduled for August 1 meeting. Executive Session for road work bid no longer needed.

Public and Staff comments: There has been a request to conduct reviews of Vershire's road-crew employees. One review will be scheduled for the August 1st SB meeting and the second scheduled review is TBD.

Highway: Road Report: A. Lyford reported that the initial storm damage at Eastman Cross Road (ECR) and other locations about 7 days before the state-wide flooding event, allowed Vershire to get a fast track for authorization and equipment to repair those areas and subsequent damage. S. Vershire road is being worked on and there are some waste piles there needing removal. The crew also has also been working on some areas and shoulders of ECR and on the culvert at Mero road. Representatives from FEMA are coming to assess road damage prior to releasing funds for repairs. Some of the work could take a long time if it is done correctly. Because ECR was built in a stream bed, it's important to consider how best to move forward with needed repairs. If it is simply fixed to the condition it was in two weeks ago, similar weather events will wash it out again and again, and the town will continue to spend resources on keeping this road open on both ends. It will be important to ask a lot of questions and listen to what FEMA representatives have to say when they assess damage in Vershire.

The anticipated date for reopening of VT113 is next Monday, July 24th but there is no guarantee this date will be met. Until VT113 opens, Vershire continues to have extra traffic on its back roads. Repairs have been made to Parker and Chamberlain roads and the crew continues to monitor them closely for the extra traffic impacts they are experiencing. As repair work continues everywhere in the state, getting supplies (rock, etc.) close by will become more difficult. The photos of damages taken by the highway crew will be compiled and captioned by A. Lyford and G. Craft on Thursday for purposes of documentation.

Reports of incorrect signage continue to come in and are addressed as quickly as possible by calls for corrections. A. Herrington asked what grant-funded resources the road crew could use that would make things easier for them during future emergencies. Handheld radios and a base radio at the new garage would be very valuable.

Approval of Last Meeting Minutes: N. White-Fogarty moved to approve the meeting minutes of 7/5/23. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Town Garage Update: N. White-Fogarty suggested two paint colors for the office interior: "bright white" for the ceiling and "gray screen" for the walls. It's important to have a hard eggshell or other finish on the walls for cleaning purposes. V. Stone noted that the workers at the site need to be reminded to close windows, shut off lights, and lock up the house/garage when they leave the work site. Also the workers need a reminder to not smoke anywhere inside when they are on break.

The SB discussed issues with the temporary culvert at the site. K. Bushey has sent photos to J. Coe for follow up. They will monitor the culvert work and make sure a properly installed culvert is put in place. **Action:** K. Bushey moved to approve change order #3 for panel edge blocking. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously. K. Bushey also will discuss deductions with James Coe about items on the approved drawings but not always included in the Lajeunesse Construction Inc (LCI) work plan. It is also important that James Coe includes Gene Craft on the invoicing notices/emails if bills are to be paid according to schedule. The SB also needs to watch the invoicing from the energy companies engaged recently for service to the site. The SB has chosen to work with Irving Energy and will pay only for the gas line. All other equipment and trenching work is included in the drawings or owned by Irving.

Mark Fogarty asked for confirmation that the door locations are correct and properly sized for the frostwall/foundation. K. Bushey believes that LCI did verify this but he will make certain of it. Mark Fogarty also asked about how well LCI is meeting its timeline. K. Bushey noted that they are being held to their contracted schedule but currently are running about 3-4 weeks behind. There is a penalty for not meeting the turnkey schedule as agreed upon in the contract.

Animal Control Officer Report: N. White-Fogarty would like a message posted on the listserv directing Vershire residents to call the ACO pager if they have need of animal control services and including a reminder to get their dog licensed if they have not yet done so. The pager # is 802-240-0402 and is also listed on the website on the Town Clerk page. There have been some recent ACO calls but all have been resolved at present.

Emergency Planning: A. Herrington would like to defer the original reason for attending the SB meeting tonight (to discuss detailed emergency planning for Vershire) in favor of focusing on the immediate needs of the ongoing flooding emergency.

During the recent power outage due to flooding, there were 29 people, 3 dogs and 1 cat that made use of the TCB as a shelter space during the day. A. Herrington

noted that communications and their timeliness are big concerns that need to be accurate and consistent. She recommends encouraging the use of the "Vermont Alert" system in the future because it reaches people where they are: the messages can go out over land lines, text message, or email. Other recommendations are to make sure important emergency information is included in the next version of the local "Green Book/Vershire phone book". An Emergency Management page/section on the town's website would also be beneficial."

Because Chelsea's emergency was so grave, a command center was set up at their Fire Dept. Chelsea town officials learned an enormous amount about how to function in this crisis and how to be better prepared for the next emergency. They are putting together a manual or plan that could be an important resource for Vershire's own emergency planning agenda.

Another pressing message to send out now is to urge all residents in Orange County to report damages to homes and property for the purpose of becoming eligible for FEMA assistance. The window for reporting these damages is open until September 12th. G. Harvey will post a message to the listserv tomorrow.

At a future SB meeting she would like to discuss:

1. The position of Vershire's representative to TRORC and who might be the best candidate to fill this position, one that has a wider planning scope than just emergency services.
2. Find out who is still active and willing to take a leadership role on Vershire's existing Emergency Response Team (VERT)
3. Schedule an Emergency Response (Management) Team meeting and discuss filling out the team, scheduling planning meetings, and consider where the gaps were during the recent weather-related emergency.
4. Have the VERT assess the protocol and needs of utilizing the TCB as an emergency shelter.

Committee Reports:

Recreation Committee: K. Bushey reported that a snowblower was donated by Marty Hale to the committee for maintaining the ice rink.

Energy Committee: No report.

TCB Committee: R. Seybolt reported that the committee will not replace light bulbs on the lower level at this time due to the cost. She also noted the committee is working on input for the Planning Commission in re: town plan revisions. They also are revising the rental agreement in response to G. Wilson's concerns noted at the 7/5 SB meeting. There was some discussion about removing a downed tree and logs left from dead tree removal from the TC parking lot. This decision was deferred until the next SB meeting. There are no objections to spreading the wood chips near the foundation of the TCB to provide a weed suppressor and a buffer to keep the weed wacker away from the foundation walls. A work day is planned for August

29th to spread the wood chips and erect a replacement fence between the TC and P. Pearson's property. The pavilion dedication event has been rescheduled for September 22nd. The lumber for the replacement fence will cost approximately \$300. The paint costs will be deferred until 2024 to allow the wood to cure.

Action: N. White-Fogarty moved to purchase the lumber needed to replace the fence between the TC and P. Pearson's property. Because the wood needs to be cured before painting, the cost of paint will be integrated into next year's budget. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Sessions:

Action: N. White-Fogarty moved to enter executive session for the purpose of making a hiring decision for the administrative assistant to the selectboard under provision 1 V.S.A 313(a)(3). V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The Selectboard invited Gretchen Harvey to enter the executive session to discuss employment terms. **Action:** V. Stone moved to exit the executive session with the finding that the Selectboard offered the administrative assistant position to Gretchen Harvey who accepted. N. White-Fogarty seconded. The motion passed unanimously. **Action:** N. White-Fogarty moved to approve the purchase of a work laptop computer for use by the Administrative Assistant. K. Bushey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Action Items/Assignments: Set Municipal Tax Rate

Action: K. Bushey moved to set the Municipal Tax rate at 1.0041. N. White Fogarty seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjourn: N. White-Fogarty moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:40pm. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously.