

**Town of Vershire Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, March 13, 2024 at 7:00pm at the Vershire Town Center.**  
**There will be a remote option for this meeting via Zoom or by phone.**

**Attendance:** Gregory Wilson-co-chair, Eleanor Zue-co-chair, Justin Willeau, Seann Cram, Gretchen Harvey-secretary, Meghan Asbury, Eric Gilbert, and Eileen Murphy.

**Call to Order:** G. Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**Agenda Review & Modifications:** Not at this time.

**Public & Staff Comments:**

**Approval of Minutes:** G. Wilson moved to approve the minutes of 2/14/24. S. Cram seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Vershire Emergency Management Team:** The Planning Commissioners heard updates from Eileen Murphy-coordinator and Eric Gilbert-director and their efforts to update Vershire Emergency Management protocols and organization. E. Murphy indicated that state guidelines require every town to fill out a short and a long form so as to promote consistency across the state. The local team is focusing on the coordination of a town-wide response to emergencies, rather than looking at specific responses by separate entities—such as responding to a fire or a car accident. Planning Commissioners are encouraged to visit the VT Emergency Management website to become familiar with the terms and processes that are encouraged. The local team also wants to encourage all residents to sign up for <https://vem.vermont.gov/vtalert> where you can choose which alerts you want and how to receive them. The hope is that these forms will all be updated and ready to submit to the Selectboard for its approval in May.

Particular attention will be paid to devising an appropriate communications structure that will reach all residents, including vulnerable populations. Likewise, developing a network of resources (transportation or other) to serve transportation needs during emergencies. The 'log cabin' is being suggested as the appropriate location as a center of operations. There is a generator at the new garage site and a base radio, along with portables and a repeater at the Mountain School that will serve to keep communications flowing. As for the Town Center building, there is an important distinction between a shelter and a center. The TCB can serve as an overnight shelter but its use will be atypical. Its more likely function will be as a warming or cooling center. Preparing for this will also take logistical planning for hours and staffing. Once this background planning is finished, the work will shift to training and communications with residents so that everyone knows where to turn for help or information during a town-wide emergency.

A lot of towns our size have only 1 person in charge of this kind of planning. Vershire is very lucky to have a whole team that is knowledgeable and engaged with this work of updating protocols and communications for emergency planning.

**Recruiting Planning Commissioner(s):** G. Wilson and others agreed that putting an announcement on the Listserv to 'recruit' a Planning Commissioner to take Nate Thames place would be a good idea prior to Town Meeting on April 7, 2024

**Town Plan:** Meghan Asbury (TRORC) attended the meeting and worked with the PC to decide which sections were in good shape and which ones needed more work.

ENERGY: M. Asbury will work to incorporate the Energy Committee's feedback into the chapter on Energy. It might also make sense to incorporate some of the feedback into other chapters in the TP. A Goal for the Energy Section might be asking the Energy Committee to look into the feasibility of mini (shared) power grids if there are extended power outages predicted.

EDUCATION: The PC will ask Nate Thames to help with some updates to the Education chapter tapping into his recent service on the School Board. There was a discussion about the intersection of mental health and education and it was agreed that M. Asbury would ask her colleague who is working on community health if there are any funds available to work up some appropriate community health language to include here.

**Next Steps: Follow up needed**

Finalize the Community Survey so that it is ready for distribution by the time of Town Meeting. Decide on a distribution plan.

The Current and Future Land Use and Natural Resources chapter needs attention. See feedback from the Cemetery Committee and Vershire Historical Society.

Transportation Planning: This section ought to include discussion on how to plan for more frequent mud seasons. Are there any ongoing discussions state-wide on this topic?

**Announcements/Other:**

Meghan Asbury will plan to attend the PC meeting on May 8, 2024.

**Adjourn:** G. Wilson moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:35pm. S. Cram seconded. The motion passed unanimously.