

**Town of Vershire Selectboard Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, June 18, 2024 at 7:00pm, Vershire Town Center.**  
**There will be a remote option for this meeting via Zoom or by phone.**

**Attendance:** Nicole White-Fogarty, Vern Stone, Amy Record, Gretchen Harvey-secretary, Doug Stone-Road Supt, David Hooke, Mark Fogarty, Lucas Daniels, Jackie Higgins, Allen LaFlamme, and Justin Willeau.

**Call to Order:** N. White-Fogarty called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**Agenda Review & Modifications:** None at this time.

**Public and Staff Comments:** Jackie Higgins presented a petition signed by most of the residents who live adjacent to or near Allen LaFlamme's Auto Salvage Yard on VT RTE 113. Some residents are out of town and intend to sign when they return. The petition reads as follows:

*We the undersigned residents of Vermont Route 113 hereby petition the Vershire Legislative Body and Vermont District 3 Environmental Commission Act 250 Board to hold Allen L. LaFlamme, d/b/a Allen's Auto Salvage, in compliance of issued Land Use Permit #3RO410-4. Specifically #5 The crusher shall be operated from 8:00 am until 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, #6 The crusher shall be located behind the existing shop building, #9 the loader shall be maintained in good working condition. The permittee shall not operate the loader when its muffler is not functioning properly, and #11 The permittee shall not allow visitors to the site to park in the Route 113 right-of-way or travel way. Crushed or disabled vehicles shall not be located in Route 113 right-of-way.*

This discussion will be continued later in the meeting when Allen LaFlamme is scheduled on the agenda.

**Highway: Road Report:** D Stone reported on back-hoe work done yesterday on Mud Lane and Darling Hill and about grading work done on Chamberlain Hill, Darling Hill, and Beaver Meadow roads. He is shopping for the best price for tires for Truck #2. He also has a message out to Rita Seto at VLCT about redirecting some grants funds towards fixing problems on Beaver Meadow Road. The repair work on the mower/tractor is still awaiting some parts to arrive. The next few weeks he will focus on grant-funded work projects. He mentioned some options for covering road crew duties so he doesn't fall too far behind: i.e., working some extra hours on Fridays or hiring a worker with a CDL for 2-3 days per week. G. Craft passed along the name of someone who is semi-retired and might be interested in some part-time work. Garage

Report: N. White-Fogarty shared some photos that were taken of the garage site after a recent rainfall. The concern is whether or not the grading work is satisfactory. There were obvious places of some puddling, but it will be hard to assess the site work fully until there is a heavier rainfall. The SB will continue to monitor the site work during rain events. The SB expects to hear from Greg Dixon on this matter.

D. Stone wanted to thank Mark Fogarty for holding down the fort for the last two weeks and also thanked him for his work on the highway crew and for his service to the town.

**Animal Control:** N. White-Fogarty reported on some recent calls to the ACO pager and noted they all have been addressed. She noted also that there was a bear that got into the trash truck when it was parked at the old garage and heard from neighbors that the bear has been active near their gardens and chicken coops. Sgt Whipple, game warden with VT F&G, offered advice on how to deter bears but the concern remains that his particular 100# bear does not appear to be as afraid of people as it should be. The Town moved the trash packer back to the Durgin Hill location and will remain vigilant about locking it up tightly as well as considering emptying it more frequently if necessary.

**Approval of Last Meeting Minutes:** V. Stone moved to approve the regular meeting minutes of 6/4/24. A. Record seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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

**Salvage Yard:** V. Stone summarized the on-going and long-standing non-compliance of the owner of Allen's Auto Salvage Yard operation. He also summarized recent complaints from nearby residents and travelers on VT RTE 113, many of which mirror the reasons why the salvage yard's COAL (Certificate of Approval for a Location) has not been renewed since it expired in January, 2023. The concerns of residents (noted above in their petition) includes running the crusher outside regular business hours, parking and obstructing traffic on VT RTE 113 and in the right-of-way, and operating a malfunctioning (loud) loader. The traffic pile up on one day in particular was especially dangerous with only one marking cone and some volunteers directing traffic. A. LaFlammed explained that the flood last summer had damaged the entryway to his yard and this made the truck entrance/exit

slow to access. The photos show that repairing this culvert location is the land-owner's responsibility, not the Town's. The SB made it as clear as possible that A. LaFlamme needs to move all the vehicles– the trucks and cars– inside the fenced area. V. Stone noted that these problems have existed since 1997 according to past SB minutes and that A. LaFlamme will need to adhere to the rules and guidelines if he wants to get re-permitted to operate. A. LaFlamme indicated he would have gravel delivered tomorrow to repair the entryway and allow for better access into the yard.

The Selectboard issued three actions items with expected timelines to Allen LaFlamme.

1. Crushing can occur ONLY between the hours 8:00 am until 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. This rule needs to be adhered to immediately.
2. The loud muffler on the loader needs to be fixed within 1.5 days.
3. All trucks and cars need to be moved/parked inside the gate within the next week.

The Selectboard also made some additional comments/recommendations:

1. Single orange cones are NOT enough and clear signage due to this blind knoll area of RTE 113 is needed.
2. Crushing ought to be located behind the building–to make room for parking in front and inside the fence.
3. How is it that some vehicles (crushed or otherwise) are still entering the yard, which is disallowed under the current unpermitted circumstances?

An overarching concern of the SB is that with faster traffic on VT 113 since the repaving project, the risks of a bad accident have increased. The SB made it clear that excuses will not be tolerated. It doesn't matter if the truck is late on any given day, the crusher can only operate only within the time frame approved by the ACT 250 land use permit. If the work cannot get done by 5:00pm, then the driver/truck needs to return the next day or make other arrangements.

The SB will monitor compliance with the above and reassess these concerns in two weeks at its next regular meeting on July 2nd. Allen LaFlamme plans to attend the meeting as does Jackie Higgins.

### **Committee Reports:**

Recreation Committee: No report.

Energy Committee: N. White-Fogarty acknowledged the email forwarded by D. Hooke from H. Falconer-TRORC regarding energy assessments of town

buildings and the possibilities of finding grant funds (MERP) to upgrade or replace some energy systems once they age out. D. Hooke noted that the assessment phase is moving much slower than planned and that only two locations were approved: the Town Office and Town Garage. The Energy Committee is willing to research options for the other buildings: the Log Cabin and the Town Center building. The SB recommended that D. Hooke speak to E. Murphy about VEMT's (Vershire Emergency Management Team) plans for usage of both locations during emergencies. The discussion that followed focused on reviewing all options for replacements or system upgrades: mini splits, radiant heat, window AC units, fossil fuel or solar fueled systems, etc. The SB agreed to allow the EC to compile a menu of options for its consideration and to compare costs by looking 20 years out and noting system life spans. This will allow for cost comparisons and provide updated information for planning purposes if and when replacements are needed or grant funding becomes available.

VTC Committee: The discussion focused on a usage agreement between the Town and Vershare regarding the latter's plan to fund/build a new storage shed and locate it at the Town Center to store summer camp and other event equipment. Questions included the reasoning behind the 2 year waiting period, inherent contradictions in the document's language about ownership, tax assessments and insurance coverage, the need for a permit and adherence to development rules/set backs, and a suggestion to revise ownership language and instead insert the "right of first refusal" to each party and reduce the waiting period from 2 years to 6 months. Noted for the record: L. Daniels does not approve of setting this precedent whereby outside organizations and nonprofits set the terms of what does and does not happen on Town property. The agreement was edited in real time and then adopted and will be submitted to both parties for signing. **Action:** A. Record moved to accept Vershare's usage proposal for the shed. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Action Items/Assignments:**

**Administrative Assistant:** Correspondence & Report: G. Harvey reported on a few items: new posting of the Road Crew job, plans for Vershire Day, plans to meet with AOT-4 rep on Thursday, her expectation to attend the July 2 mtg remotely, and noted an open meeting law amendment that will become effective July 1, 2024.

**Adjourn:** V. Stone moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:07pm. N. White-Fogarty seconded. The motion passed unanimously.