

Town of Vershire Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Monday, November 4, 2024 at 7:00pm, Vershire Town Center.

There will be a remote option for this meeting via Zoom or by phone.

Video: <https://youtu.be/PBSmJh4arc0>

Attendance: Nicole White-Fogarty-chair, Vern Stone, Amy Record, Doug Stone-Road Supt., Gretchen Harvey-Admin. Asst., Kellie Merritt, Eileen Murphy, Tim Lewis, Michelle Lewis, Mark Fogarty, Kathy Hooke, and David Hooke.

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: None at this time.

Highway: Road Report: D. Stone reported that Eastman Cross Road is officially open and the remaining construction signage will be removed soon. Residents still need to be cautious as this road remains narrow in places with a significantly steep bank to the brook. He wanted to thank Allie Lyford for helping out last week while he was away. He put winter tires and the plow frame on Truck #3 and worked on the Packer Truck. He will continue to make preparations for winter and, if weather permits, will do some grading this week. He also reported on EPA work crew activity and signage at the Ely mine.

Mero Road - V. Stone asked Tim Lewis about the work he plans on doing on Mero road and requested that he let the Selectboard know when and if he is going to do any of this work. There was some discussion about when a permit from ANR is required to work in the stream bed and he was encouraged to consult with ANR. T. Lewis described resetting a bridge and his need to access his land. He recently applied for driveway and building permits as he would like to put a camp on his property. The Development Administrator asked him to stake out this project and V. Stone noted that the Dev. Admin. should also be checking setbacks. N. White-Fogarty reiterated that communicating with the Selectboard about this project as it affects the roadway is important.

Mero Bridge - NECE (New England Consulting Engineers)-Dexter Lefavour was not present. G. Harvey summarized the latest information she has about this bridge design work and FEMA plans for reimbursement. She is still waiting for cost estimates from NECE. N. White-Fogarty directed her to reply to Mr. Lefavour and explain that the Selectboard would like to review the documents sent to them today, as well as the cost estimates when they arrive, before allowing this project to be out to bid and/or agree on a timetable for bid opening.

Garage Report: V. Stone reported that he met with a CTI technician and that Jeremiah Trombley is awaiting this report. J. Trombley will also make a return visit to check the system when the weather gets colder.

VEMT Updates: Eileen Murphy reported on the most recent work being done to update the Vershire Emergency Management Team response guidelines. The current work involves setting guidelines for warming and cooling center access, wifi access, notification protocols, and volunteer guidelines for staffing the designated center when open. She presented a one-page summary of the ongoing work and noted that she now has access to update emergency communications on the official town website. No concerns were expressed and the Selectboard was comfortable with the progress being made in this work.

Approval of Last Meeting Minutes: N. White-Fogarty moved to approve the regular meeting minutes of 10/22/24. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Committee Reports:

Recreation Committee: K. Hooke attended as a representative from the Recreation Committee who has been tasked with focusing on trails in Vershire. She recently assessed the snowshoe-a-thon trail and reported that it could be developed further as a multi-use, non-motorized trail in the Village Center. She noted that in 1999-2000 a grant from Vermont Recreational Trails Program funded the establishment of this foot trail that is still used annually during summer camp and for the snowshoe-a-thon. To enhance what is already in place, she proposes to appeal to the Byrne foundation first for a small grant to design further development of this trail, after which a larger grant would be applied for from the VRTP to develop the trail along the lines noted above. This latter grant requires an 80/20 match and she is confident that Vershire will be able to meet the 20% in-kind requirement. The LOI is due Dec. 6th with the full application due Jan. 31, 2025. Initially, she is seeking permission to write the letter for design funds. The Selectboard requests that she continue to provide updates once she hears back from the Byrne Foundation. **Action:** N. White-Fogarty moved to authorize Recreation Committee member K. Hooke to apply to the Byrne Foundation for an initial grant of up to \$6,000 to fund a trail design project in Vershire. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Energy Committee: D. Hooke is present to discuss the on-going effort to fund solar panel placement on the roof of the Town Garage. Currently, the Town awaits a funding decision from MERP (Municipal Energy Resilience Program), which is managed by VT BGS (Buildings and General Services and partners). The plan being proposed by the Energy Committee would require an application to the Public Utilities Commission (PUT) for net metering and to supply power to non-contiguous public/town buildings. Because this latter feature is being phased out, it's important to apply for this by the end of 2024 after which the Town has a year to implement if it wishes. Questions included costs associated with this application to the PUC, as well urging the EC to plan for recycling solar panels when they reach the end of their life. There is a \$100 cost with the net metering application and the EC will pay for this using funding it retains from a smaller MERP grant. **Action:** V. Stone moved to sign the documents needed to go forward with this project and in order not to lose the opportunity to have solar net metering serve non-contiguous public buildings in Vershire. A. Record seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VTC Committee: No Report.

Executive Session-Personnel Matters: **Action:** N. White-Fogarty moved to enter an executive session to discuss personnel matters as per 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) and invited Kellie Merritt, Doug Stone, and Gretchen Harvey into the session. V. Stone seconded. The motion passed unanimously. **Action:** N. White-Fogarty moved to exit the executive session after a finding that the Town will offer Kellie Merritt a part-time position on the road crew pending a negative drug test. A. Record seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Action Items/Assignments:

Administrative Assistant: Correspondence & Report: G. Harvey provided summaries of current projects: salvage yard site visit, cleaning service change of schedule, EC fiber proposal for Garage, fuel tank estimates for Garage, painting estimate for the TCB estimate, making copies of the DRAFT Town Plan draft, and WEC request for access to Transfer Station to take care of some trees near the lines there.

Adjourn: N. White-Fogarty moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:09pm. A. Record seconded. The motion passed unanimously.