



Town of Thetford • PO Box 126 • Thetford Center, VT 05075 • (802) 785-2922

Selectboard Regular Meeting Minutes
Thetford Town Offices
Monday, December 19, 2016 at 6:00 pm.

Stuart Rogers called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

Selectboard members present: John Bacon (6:22 p.m.), James Dixon, Jessica Eaton, Bill Huff, Stuart Rogers

Others present: Jill Graff (Town Treasurer), Tracy Borst (Town Clerk), Marty Moses (Selectboard Assistant)

Community Members Present: Laurie Ingalls, Robin Brown, Mike Pomeroy, Heinz Trebitz, Mark McMahon

Comments of the Chair 6:07 p.m.

Stuart Rogers suggested to the members of the Selectboard that the meetings be recorded. The recordings would not take the place of minutes. If someone wanted to listen to the recordings, they would submit a public records request. The Selectboard agreed that meetings should be recorded.

Public Comment 6:17 p.m.

Laurie Ingalls wished the Selectboard a very Merry Christmas, and thanked the board members for all that they do.

Correspondence 6:18 p.m.

Letter from Ron L. Beaulieu & Co., public accountants who are interested in working with the town.

Email from Li Shen inquiring about the recommendation that the Conservation Committee had made concerning the town property that contains a dam. Stuart Rogers said he will put the discussion on the next agenda.

The Selectboard received a letter from Big Heavy World requesting an appropriation.

The Selectboard received a letter about National School Choice Week.

The Selectboard received an email from Mark Duquette with information about road signs.

Motion by Bill Huff to order road signs from Vermont Correctional Industries this week, so they would arrive by the end of the year. Seconded by Stuart Rogers. **VOTE unanimous (4-0-0)** John Bacon not present for vote.

The Selectboard received an email from Thetford Academy about the Panther Way road sign.

The Selectboard received a letter from The Preservation Trust of Vermont.

Minutes and Warrants 6:25 p.m.

#49.2 \$1949.78

#40.3 \$81,585.73

#39.3 \$2,123.68

#51.1 \$5,880.74

#50.1 \$15,228.16

Review of timesheets approved for payroll PPE 12/17/16

Motion by John Bacon to accept the warrants as presented. Seconded by Stuart Rogers. **VOTE unanimous (5-0-0)**

Motion by Stuart Rogers to accept the Selectboard Regular Meeting minutes of December 5th, 2016. Seconded by James Dixon. **VOTE unanimous (5-0-0)**

Town Road Intersection Discussion (Clay & Schoolhouse Roads, as requested) 6:47 p.m.

The discussion began with Jessica Eaton explaining that she wrote a letter to the Selectboard about the needed work at the intersection of Clay Road and Schoolhouse Road to ensure the work would get done.

Robin Brown went on to explain that she and her husband have done exactly what the Selectboard had asked them to do. The work completed at the intersection has been looked at, and approved by the Police Chief. Robin Brown expressed her dismay when she received the original letter from the Selectboard, as she had no idea there was a problem until the letter arrived. Robin Brown said she had met with Stuart Rogers, and they had come to an agreement about what needed to happen at the corner. Robin Brown said after that meeting, Jessica Eaton came to their house, asked if they had received the letter, and if they had a timeline for completing the work. Robin Brown said that visit made her uncomfortable in her own home and left her feeling harassed. Robin Brown said she feels that Jessica Eaton should recuse herself from anything that has to do with Robin's family. Robin Brown gave the Selectboard a letter

from her attorney, and said she hoped in a small town they would be able to work together without the involvement of the attorney. Robin Brown asked the Selectboard about other areas in town that required the same type of work. Stuart Rogers explained the ongoing process with Sanborn Road. Robin Brown said she would like it noted in the minutes that since the Selectboard has come to her, she would like the Selectboard to go around the entire town and figure out who else has these issues. Robin Brown said she expects them to receive letters also.

Police Chief Michael Evans said he did look at the work done by the Browns. Chief Evans said the sight line has been improved, and the stop sign can now be put where it will conform to state standards. Chief Evans said he will reevaluate the situation in the spring, once the foliage has come out.

Bill Huff said that there needs to be open and clear discussions. Bill Huff said he did not consider the letter written by Jessica Eaton to be anonymous.

Robin Brown said she was at the Selectboard meeting to stop the discrimination and harassment against them, and she had discussed this with her attorney.

Mike Pomeroy suggested that the issue be closed until the spring, when they can do a site visit.

Jessica Eaton noted that based on the comments from Chief Evans, what work has been done is enough, although her understanding of the objective hasn't been reached. Jessica Eaton told Robin Brown that she wished Robin had expressed her concerns about the visit that night. Jessica Eaton said she was not aware of how upset Robin Brown was about the visit.

Motion by Stuart Rogers that the Selectboard table the issue and revisit it no later than the end of May for sight-line review to see if more work needs to be done. Bill Huff amended to have the Police Chief visit the site the Friday before the Selectboard review. Seconded by James Dixon.
VOTE unanimous (5-0-0)

Town Committee Update Discussion 7:24 p.m.

Bill Huff had a draft letter for the Selectboard to discuss. The letter is designed to introduce the concerns of the Selectboard to committees and groups under the umbrella of the town. Bill Huff read the letter to the Selectboard.

The Selectboard discussed the letter.

Motion by Bill Huff that the letter presented, and as edited, be mailed to designated groups and committees, and signed by the Selectboard Chair, Stuart Rogers. Seconded by John Bacon.
VOTE unanimous (5-0-0)

Stuart Rogers said he will put committee discussions on the January 2nd agenda as the first item.

Library & Elections Discussion 8:11 p.m. w/ Peter Blodgett

Tracy Borst said when the Library Board of Trustees changed the terms of service from 4 years to 2 years in 2015, it began a discussion about whether the town should be electing the Library trustees. After checking with Vermont League of Cities and Towns, their comment was that the town should not be electing Library trustees. The discussion is to keep it as is, stop electing trustees, or bring it to the town to ask if we should vote for trustees. Tracy Borst then said it brings up the question of whether the town even has the authority to elect them.

There was discussion about the petition and voting process. If a trustee resigned, someone would be appointed until the term is up.

Peter Blodgett explained the different types of libraries; Municipal Libraries, funded by a municipality and staff are employees of town, Incorporated Libraries, which have their board of trustees voted in for life, and Community Libraries, such as a school library, which is funded through a town. Peter Blodgett said the Department of Libraries' intent is to have public representation at the table of the trustees. Vermont statutes state there should be an appointed trustee through the town, or an elected one, with a minimum of one on the board. The State wants a minimum board of 5.

There was discussion on how to change the current process, and the role of the Selectboard liaison. Mark McMahon said the Board of Library trustees needs someone who represents the town, and if the library was not receiving any funding from the town, that representation would not be needed.

Motion by Stuart Rogers to move forward with the recommendation from VLCT to no longer ballot the election of library trustees through the town. Seconded by John Bacon. **VOTE unanimous (5-0-0)**

Peter Blodgett asked the Selectboard about the budget that was submitted. Stuart Rogers said it had been included into the budget.

Senior & Affordable Housing Update 8:41 w/ Mark McMahon

Mark McMahon reported to the Selectboard that the Senior & Affordable Housing committee would like to buy a piece of property, and he explained the history of the Osgood property. There is an agreement to purchase the property for \$30,000. When the property is developed, there will be a plaque in recognition of the Osgood family. Mark McMahon explained some of the work that needs to be done on the septic system. Mark McMahon said he is coming to the town on behalf of the committee, in hopes that the town will release the needed \$10,000 from grant money. The Town will hold title to the property with the intent to develop for senior affordable housing.

Mark McMahon said the next step is to start working with the State, as well as the Tuck Business School for help with a business plan.

There was discussion about grant money. Bill Huff said he was curious about the relationship going forward as the Senior Affordable Committee is one that is on the list of committees that should not be under the umbrella of the town. Stuart Rogers explained that there have been discussions about those town committees because of challenges with compliance to state laws, such as the Open Meeting Law, Public Records, and the town webpage, among other things. Mark McMahon said the committee has a memorandum of understanding with OCT and Twin Pine Housing trust.

Motion by Bill Huff to approve the release of grant funds to Senior & Affordable Housing Committee, pending the appropriate paperwork, to purchase the Osgood property. Seconded by John Bacon. **VOTE unanimous (5-0-0)**

Town Health Insurance Discussion (cont'd) 9:06 p.m.

The Selectboard reviewed the health benefits currently given to town employees. The town will be working on a gradual change to 85% town contribution and 15% employee contribution. Bill Huff said that any discussion at the meeting will also have an impact on current union negotiations. Bill Huff also stated he is not in favor of a remedy for just a few individuals which might adversely affect other employees.

Motion by Bill Huff to table discussions with rank and file until Union negotiations are completed.

There was more discussion.

Motion repeated by Bill Huff to table discussions with rank and file until Union negotiations are completed.

There was more discussion.

Motion repeated again by Bill Huff to table discussions with rank and file until Union negotiations are completed. James Dixon said he was not comfortable stating that they should wait until union negotiations are completed. James Dixon said there is a current proposal submitted to the union which is still pending. There would be union discussions later in the week.

Motion withdrawn by Bill Huff.

The discussion will be moved to January 2nd, 2017.

Old Business

- 2016 Working List

- Upcoming Agendas

There was discussion about January 16th, Martin Luther King Holiday. The Selectboard will meet on Tuesday, January 17th, 2017.

January 2nd; start discussions with committees, discussion of town land options, budget discussion with Chief Evans.

January 9th: Auditor will be coming in.

Discussion about Tri-Town expenses and pending electrical work.

Stuart Rogers said he had a phone discussion with Ellis Rudy about the sale of 94 ½ acres on Buzzell Bridge Road. Mr. Rudy is trying to find out what the timber value might be.

Bill Huff had information for the Selectboard about the L30 Hydro feeder. When loaded and ready to use, it weighs more than the limit of the trailer. There was discussion about other sizes.

Other Business

- Resolution of Meeting Times for Budget Season (6:00 pm)

Motion by Stuart Rogers to extend the resolution for the regular scheduled Selectboard meetings to have a start time of 6:00 p.m. until January 30th, 2017. Seconded by Bill Huff. **VOTE unanimous (5-0-0)**

The Selectboard reviewed 3 bids for town mowing.

- Union Negotiations Update (Executive Session)

- Legal Update (Executive Session)

Motion by John Bacon at 9:47 p.m. to discuss a union negotiation update, and a legal update in an Executive Session per *Discussion of Matters as per 1 V.S.A., subsection 313, paragraphs A 1 & 3*. Seconded by James Dixon. **VOTE unanimous (5-0-0)**

The Selectboard entered Executive Session at 9:47 p.m.

Motion by John Bacon at 10:53 p.m. to exit Executive Session. Seconded by James Dixon. **VOTE unanimous (5-0-0)**

No action taken at this time.

The Selectboard opened, reviewed and discussed bids for 2017 Town property mowing. Jessica Eaton will follow up with some bidders for more clarification.

Motion by John Bacon at 11:03 pm, to adjourn the regular Selectboard meeting. Seconded by James Dixon. **VOTE unanimous (5-0-0)**

The regular Selectboard meeting adjourned at 11:03 p.m.