



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

Selectboard Regular Meeting Minutes Thetford Town Offices

Monday, February 27, 2017 at 7:00 pm.

Stuart Rogers called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Selectboard Members present: John Bacon, James Dixon, Jessica Eaton, Bill Huff, Stuart Rogers

Others present: Jill Graff (Town Treasurer), Martie Moses (Selectboard Assistant)

Community Members present: Chad Whitcomb, Mariah Whitcomb, Bob Walker, Jesse Pacht, Tara Pacht, Wayne Parks, Douglas Stone, Edie Ham, Arthur Roy, Karen Roy, Rachel Sanders, Kerry Browne, Mike Pomeroy, Herb Gray, Tim Gray, Tim Ulman, Jean Ulman, Diana Kimball-Anderson

Public Comment 7:00 p.m.

None

Correspondence 7:01

Bill Huff said there was a bill for the engineering for the flashing light in front of the church on Thetford Hill which needs to change over to the town.

The Selectboard received an email from fire department requesting an adjustment to the minutes of the Selectboard meeting on January 30, 2017.

Stuart Rogers reported on damage to Treasure Island from the storm on Saturday night.

Minutes and Warrants 7:02 p.m.

#6.3 \$222.24

#8.2 \$11,492.18

#8.1 \$2,532.57

Review of payroll for approval

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

Motion by Stuart Rogers to accept the special Selectboard meeting minutes of February 16, 2017, as presented. Seconded by Bill Huff. **VOTE (4-0-1)** James Dixon abstain.

Motion by Stuart Rogers to accept the regular Selectboard meeting minutes of February 20, 2017, as edited. Seconded by John Bacon. **VOTE unanimous (5-0-0)**

Motion by Stuart Rogers to accept the amendments to clarify the budget discussions with the fire department, emergency management, and the fire warden, for the regular Selectboard meeting of January 30, 2017. Seconded by John Bacon. **VOTE unanimous (5-0-0)**

Candidates Forum 7:25 p.m.

Stuart Rogers noted that 3 seats were up for election this year, and 5 people were running. Stuart Rogers opened the floor to the 5 candidates.

John Bacon began by saying he has been a Selectboard member for the past 12 years and would like to finish certain projects that have been started. John Bacon said he had a great love for the town, and his family has a long history with Thetford. In response to a question about strengths, John Bacon said Thetford is his home town, he has family history and a lifelong knowledge of Thetford.

Doug Stone grew up in Strafford, but has lived in Thetford since the late 1980s. Doug Stone has been the Road Foreman for Thetford and is a former Thetford Selectboard member. Doug Stone said he is interested in giving more responsibilities to department heads, and would like to get the highway department stabilized, while working to keep taxes low.

Li Shen has lived in Thetford since the early 1980s and has been the Chair of Conservation Committee from 2008 to the present. Li Shen said her expertise was as a research scientist, and from that training you learn to try and understand data and make conclusions. Li Shen said she has no specific agenda, but taxes are a real concern.

Bill Huff said he is running for the 1-year term that was vacated last year, and he was appointed to 4 months ago. Bill Huff is a retired airline pilot and a former financial planner. Bill Huff said his focus during the past for months has been on 3 things; healthcare transition, budget considerations, and the town plan. Other projects Bill Huff said he would like to continue working on are improved department efficiencies with the DPW, and building up the fund balances.

James Dixon said he has lived in Thetford for 12 years and that it has been a privilege to serve the town of Thetford. James Dixon is an English Teacher at Hartford High School, where he is also a debate coach. James Dixon said he is running unopposed for the 2-year Selectboard term, but would like to ask the town for their support. James Dixon said he believes he is an integral

part of the Selectboard team, and has worked to create solutions for the DPW, the Fish and Game Club lease, the Lake Fairlee Dam, union negotiations, and Treasure Island, among other things.

When candidates were asked about hiring a 3rd Police officer, John Bacon stated he would defer to what Chief Evans recommends, as did James Dixon. Bill Huff would like to see the town finances more secure before a 3rd officer is hired. Doug Stone said he was not happy about a police union.

Jill Graff, the Town Treasurer, up for re-election. She has been the Town Treasurer since 2004, and said she would like to do it for another term. Jill Graff said she works with Selectboard and keeps them up to date weekly, once budget has been voted on. Jill Graff said she is very concerned about fund balances, as she believes they not sufficient to do the job.

Mary Dan Pomeroy is running for Collector of Delinquent Taxes, a position she currently fills. Mary Dan Pomeroy said her philosophy is if she is going to pay taxes then everyone else needs to pay taxes. Mary Dan Pomeroy said the Town will work with people who are behind on their taxes with a payment plan. Mary Dan Pomeroy said there are 5 properties that might have to go to tax sales this year.

Pre-Town Meeting 8:21 p.m. Mark McMahon

Mark McMahon, Town Moderator, opened the pre-town meeting by stating that these meetings are respectful and a lot of fun. Mark McMahon said pre-town meetings used to be very small, but they give community members more of an opportunity to ask questions and make an informed decision because of the information given. Mark McMahon said the Selectboard would go through the Articles as they would at town meeting and any question could be asked.

Stuart Rogers said Articles 1, 2 and 3 are yearly articles, and that Article 4 is the first article that discusses dollar amounts. (Article for the budgeted expenditures of the Town General Fund) Stuart Rogers gave an overall view of the General Budget.

There were comments made about the lack of communication with the Selectboard.

There was much discussion about the hiring of a 3rd police officer.

There were questions about property tax exemptions and appropriations for the libraries.

Article 5 (raise funds for the DPW budgeted expenditures) The Selectboard reviewed the DPW budget.

There were questions about equipment that was purchased during the year.

Article 6 (Capital Equipment funds) Stuart Rogers reviewed the Capital Expenditure Plan.

Article 7 (Tax exemption properties) No discussion

Article 8 (purchase of land in anticipation of future senior and affordable housing) Mark McMahon asked the Selectboard Chair to step in as Town Moderator so he could speak to this article. Mark McMahon gave a brief history of the search for property for senior and affordable housing. Mark McMahon gave a detailed explanation of the property warned in the article.

There was strong opposition to this article from several abutting property owners. After much discussion, Mark McMahon will discuss the possibly of withdrawing the article in light of the new information, with members of the Senior and Affordable Housing Committee.

Article 9 (Annual Appropriations) All organizations listed offer services to the Town of Thetford.

Article 10 (Community Nurse) No discussion

Article 11 (Other Business) No discussion

The pre-town meeting ended at 10:44 p.m.

Old Business 10:50 p.m.

The Selectboard reviewed updated job descriptions.

Motion by John Bacon at 11:20 p.m. to discuss personnel 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)

Motion by Stuart Rogers to exit Executive Session at 11:37 p.m. Seconded by John Bacon.

VOTE unanimous (5-0-0)

No action taken at this time.

Motion by John Bacon to adjourn the regular Selectboard meeting at 11:38 p.m. Seconded by James Dixon. **VOTE unanimous (5-0-0)**