



## Town of Thetford Vermont

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### Selectboard Re-Organizational Meeting Minutes

– Online Only –

March 8, 2021 7:00 pm

Please note Section 6 of H.681, signed into law on March 30th, 2020, for the temporary suspension of designated physical meeting location requirements.

Selectboard Members present: Mary Bryant, Nick Clark, Sharon Harkay, Li Shen, Steve Tofel  
Others present: Bryan Gazda (Town Manager), Tracy Borst (Town Clerk/Treasurer), Martie Betts (Selectboard Assistant)

Total Zoom attendees: 24

Town Manager Bryan Gazda called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.

Bryan welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked the Town Clerk to swear in re-elected Selectboard members Sharon Harkay and Li Shen.

#### **1. Swearing in of Newly Elected Selectboard Members by Town Clerk**

Town Clerk Tracy Borst issued the Oath of Office to Li Shen for a 3-year term to the Selectboard, and to Sharon Harkay for a 2-year term to the Selectboard.

#### **2. Annual Reorganization & Business of the Selectboard**

##### **• Election of a Selectboard Chair, presided over by the Town Manager**

Bryan Gazda asked for nominations for the Selectboard Chair. Mary Bryant nominated Sharon Harkay who accepted the nomination. No other nominations were made.

**VOTE (3-1-1)**

Bryan turned the meeting over to the new Selectboard Chair, Sharon Harkay.

##### **• Election of a Vice-Chair**

Sharon Harkay said she would strive to have everybody participate equally. Sharon asked for nominations for Vice-Chair. Mary nominated Li Shen, who accepted the nomination.

**VOTE (4-0-1)**

##### **• Appointment of Authorized Signatories, 1 V.S.A. § 1623(a)**

**Motion** by Sharon Harkay to authorize the Selectboard Chair and Vice-Chair to be authorized signatories. **VOTE (4-0-1)**

##### **• Designation of the Paper of Record**

Alexis Jetter commented that she felt strongly that the Valley News should be considered as the paper of record. Li Shen and Tracy Borst recalled that the Journal Opinion was designated years ago based on the difference in price for advertising.

**Motion** by Sharon Harkay for the Journal Opinion to remain as the Town's paper of record.

**VOTE (4-0-1)**

- **Scheduling of Regular Selectboard Meeting**

Bryan suggested that the Selectboard return to meeting on the first and third Mondays. Steve reminded the Selectboard that on March 15<sup>th</sup> the Zillo advertisement for the land in Post Mills will end and they had previously discussed having a meeting that night to review offers.

Alexis Jetter asked for an explanation of why they would reduce the number of meetings.

Li explained that it is fairly normal once a Town Manager is in place because the manager will take over the bulk of the work that the Selectboard had been doing.

Mary Bryant said a lot of towns have their Selectboard meetings during the first and third weeks of the month.

Tracy Bach said that we need to have a sustainable approach for the Selectboard members. She would appreciate an agenda item or some type of forum that would explain or include a broader discussion on how the Selectboard will be operating with the Town Manager.

Li Shen reminded people that there is flexibility by adding in more meetings if necessary.

Tracy Borst said from the start with the Town Manager Search Committee, there was a clear idea that the Selectboard would move to meeting less than once a week. That did happen with the first new manager, then things started to happen that required weekly meetings. Two months ago, the Selectboard went back to every other week, but then the situation with the land in Post Mills required weekly meetings. Tracy said it is a good move to go back to an every other week schedule, as we need to make transition and define roles between the Selectboard and the Town Manager.

**Motion** by Sharon Harkay to set the regular Selectboard meetings for the first and third Mondays of each month at 7 pm, beginning with the April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 meeting. **VOTE (4-0-1)**

- **2021 Selectboard Rules of Procedures**

**Motion** by Mary Bryant to accept the Selectboard Rules of Procedure as presented for 2021. **VOTE (4-0-1)**

### **3. Appointment of Officers, Committee & Commission Members**

**Motion** by Sharon Harkay to appoint Sara Cavin to the Conservation Commission for a term ending in 2025. **VOTE (4-0-1)**

**Motion** by Mary Bryant to appoint Joel Legunn to the Joint Energy Committee for a term ending in 2025. **VOTE (4-0-1)**

**Motion** by Li Shen to appoint Tim Taylor to the Development Review Board for a term ending in 2025. **VOTE (4-0-1)**

**Motion** by Sharon Harkay to appoint Chad Whitcomb as Town Fire Warden for a term ending in 2022. **VOTE (4-0-1)**

**Motion** by Li Shen to appoint Sara Ecker, Nathan Hill and Stefanie Gulick to the Recreation Advisory Council for terms ending in 2025. **VOTE (4-0-1)**

**Motion** by Li Shen to appoint Jessica Eaton as Town Service Officer for a term ending in 2022. **VOTE (4-0-1)**

**Motion** by Li Shen to appoint David Goodrich as the Town Representative to Upper Valley Ambulance for a term ending in 2022. **VOTE (4-0-1)**

### **4. Appointment of Selectboard Liaisons, as necessary**

The Selectboard reviewed and redistributed liaison appointments.

## 5. **Scheduling and Restructuring of the *Selectboard Annual Retreat***

Mary Bryant said she would prefer to have it on a weekend.

Li said this is actually a regular Selectboard meeting, which means it is available to the public.

To switch to an off day when no one is expecting it would not be a good thing.

Sharon wondered if they could utilize the new audio/visual equipment. Martie said they would have to meet in Town Hall as the equipment is not portable.

There was discussion about meeting in person at Town Hall. Sharon said she would contact the Secretary of State's office and the Vermont League of Cities and Towns about meeting in-person but advertising the meeting as virtual.

Steve Tofel wondered what distinguishes this retreat from any other Selectboard meeting. Li said it was conceived by a previous Selectboard as a meeting where the Selectboard would spend their time making plans. Tracy said she always thought of it as the meeting where the Selectboard set their priorities, hopes and dreams for the year, rather than dealing with the agenda things they usually do, like warrants and the minutes.

Steve said it sounds like we don't need to check with the State, it could just be virtual on Zoom.

Mary asked if past retreats have included inviting people from different committees. Li said it wasn't that sort of a meeting. The purpose was to look at the things the Selectboard would like to accomplish.

**Motion** by Sharon Harkay to hold the Annual Selectboard Retreat on April 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM via Zoom. **(VOTE 4-0-1)**

## 6. **Town Manager Report – Bryan Gazda**

Route 132 – The engineers are working on the final design. The goal now is to get it out to bid in the next 3-4 weeks. Prior to construction Bryan said he would like to have a public forum.

Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission – Bryan received the road grading and ditching study, which includes a lot of maps and the conditions of all the roads in the town. Bryan will be working with VTrans and the road foreman on a plan to improve some of the roads pursuant to a municipal grant.

Recreation Coordinator – Bryan said he will be holding interviews for position via Zoom on Tuesday night, along with members of the Recreation Advisory Council. He said he is hoping to have the position filled by the end of the week.

Diversity Training – Bryan said he will be exploring training for town employees about diversity in the community and workplace.

## 7. **Public Comment**

Alexis Jetter thanked outgoing Selectboard Chair Nick Clark for all of the work he put in during a rough year and wished Sharon good luck as the new Chair. She also wished the best of luck to Bryan and said she has a lot of questions about the need to explain to our community what it means to have a Town Manager in control.

Mary Bryant reminded people that there was a long process involved with the community about the pros and cons of a Town Manager. Mary said she would like people to see this not as a cup half empty but half full.

Tracy Bach also thanked Nick for all the work that he has done. Tracy thanked the full Selectboard for their responses to a list of questions that she had emailed. Tracy would be interested in the State Statute about Town Manager responsibilities and while she is glad the

budget passed, she would like to talk about the police budget, and also has questions about the use of Executive Session.

### **8. Upcoming Agendas**

Sharon said the land for sale on Route 244 will be on the next agenda.

Li said that the Selectboard needs to provide the Town Manager goals within 90 days.

### **9. Warrants and Minutes**

**Motion** by Sharon Harkay to approve the warrants as presented. **VOTE (4-0-1)**

**Motion** by Sharon Harkay to approve the Selectboard meeting minutes of February 8, 2021, as amended. **VOTE (4-0-1)**

**Motion** by Sharon Harkay to approve the Selectboard meeting minutes of February 22, 2021 and the February 22, 2021 Informational Hearing minutes, as amended. **VOTE (4-0-1)**

**Motion** by Sharon Harkay to approve the special Selectboard meeting minutes of February 26, 2021, as presented. **VOTE (4-0-1)**

**Motion** by Li Shen to approve the February 27, 2021 Informational Hearing minutes, as amended. **VOTE (4-0-1)**

### **10. Adjourn**

**Motion** by Steve Tofel to adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 8:23 pm. **VOTE (4-0-1)**