



Town of Thetford Vermont

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Selectboard Retreat *Draft* Agenda

– Online Only –

Monday, April 12th, 2021 7:00pm

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

To connect to Zoom via computer: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88122490498>

To connect via phone only: +1 (646) 558 8656 | Meeting ID: 881 2249 0498

Note: Selectboard meetings are in public, but not of the public. 1 V.S.A. § 312 (h) states, “At an open meeting, the public shall be given a reasonable opportunity to express its opinion on matters considered by the public body during the meeting, as long as order is maintained. Public comment shall be subject to reasonable rules established by the chairperson.”

7:00pm – Call to Order

1. Public Comment
2. Deciding Priorities and Goals for 2021
3. Adjourn

2021 Priorities – Resident Feedback	
Category	Comments
1) Selectboard (Rules & Procedures)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the chair a one-year position; provide education to chair. • Make a list of “best practices”. • When sending an email with permissible information, put a big DO NOT REPLY at the head of the message. • The board chair should immediately shut down any discussion of a person versus the issue. • Mend the relationship between the Selectboard and the Police department. • Make permanent some of the pandemic era changes to town activities that fostered civic engagement – such as Zoom meetings. • Be more open. • Work for the working people. Employees pay more of a part of their benefits. • Education sessions for Selectboard members and town employees on respectful and effective communication, how to recognize and address racial/gender discrimination, Open Meeting Law, appropriate uses of email and executive session. • Town ordinance that promotes safe gun storage and usage. • Gender age equity for town employees. • Proactive climate change practices and policies. • Mediation for Selectboard. • Clear social media policy for all town employees. • Coordinated communication effort for town news/issues. • Transparency – make it a principle for Selectboard to build trust and confidence among townspeople this year. • Town manager transition; take this year to learn what hasn’t worked. Please have a forum where the Selectboard clarifies 1)roles of Selectboard and Town Manager, 2)workflows and lines of responsibility, 3) how townspeople ensure accountability.
2) Public Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify which public issues the board won’t allow public comment or questions on and give reasons at the start of the meeting. • Creating or enhancing communication to the town about topics that may benefit from community feedback. • Centralize one place/source for official town information to avoid confusion or conflicting information that sometimes occurs between listserv and town Facebook page posts.
3) Public Safety Police/DPW/Fire-EMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speeding on West Fairlee and Lake Shore Roads. • Move funding from police department to social services which prevent and aid those people who are experiencing episodes that police are unnecessarily called to. • Pave the remainder of Latham Road.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the police department has the necessary culture and training to avoid falling into the traps of systemic bias and unequal treatment. • Add electronic sign on Tucker Hill road coming from Strafford to slow down traffic. • Set up a program similar to Hartford PD, “Special Needs Support Center”. • Reallocate police money for mental health, housing, food insecurity, gun safety measures. • With new Village Designation, work to reduce speeds and implement road sharing signage (sharrows). • Improve road maintenance for safer biking, walking and driving, but no sharrows. • Consider/include plans for safe biking/walking paths along all roads when undergoing substantial maintenance.
4) Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do whatever it takes to create workforce housing. • Continue to explore/support senior and affordable housing in town. • Support Senior and Affordable housing. • Make an effort to support younger families – example, affordable housing. • Provide incentives for property owners to offer affordable housing in auxiliary dwelling units on their property – tax breaks.
5) Community Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created safety features and beautification efforts on Pavillion Road. • Consider using the Timothy Frost building as a community enter or an expanded food pantry. • Improve use of Thetford Town green; porta-potty, picnic tables. • Swing set on town green.
6) Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebuild Recreation Department programs and match hours of the coordinator position to the responsibilities for these programs. • Increase social gatherings to build community such as concerts on the green with local performers and open mic evenings. • Food Truck Fri-yays on the green. • TA student singing groups perform on green or in town spaces. • Work with Village Store to create a “sit and relax” vibe for the town green. • For Treasure Island, have a food truck several times a summer or an ice cream truck to regularly stop by.
7) Town Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the work done in last year’s budget to allocate expenses by department, which enables the Selectboard and townspeople to analyze how tax dollars are being spent. • Explain how a 3-person police department responds to current needs. • Village Water Systems

2021 Selectboard Retreat -- Ideas from Sharon, Steve, and Li

Housing

Revitalize the Senior and Affordable Housing Committee and support their efforts to find land.

Economic Development

- Plan to help existing businesses thrive.
- Plan to develop infrastructure to allow for new businesses.
- Follow through with the Village Designation program.

Facilities, Services, and Utilities

Town Facilities

- Find land for the relocation and expansion of the DPW and Transfer Station and Recycling Center.
- Renovate and use the Timothy Frost Building for a variety of public meetings and gatherings including Selectboard meetings.

Emergencies

- Develop/Update the Emergency Alert System to include mixed communication methods such as robo calls, text messages, neighborhood captains, etc.
- Develop a plan for pet care for those staying in emergency shelters.

Animal Control

- Develop a clear plan for who handles what (volunteer ACO vs. police officers).
- Publish the explanation on the website with contact information.

Treasure Island

- Determine what needs to be repaired, renovated, constructed, demolished.
- Develop the fee schedule for day use and for specific activities with an eye toward making it fair for single people, senior citizens, and for residents of Thetford.
- Continue working on a master plan.

Dangerous Buildings

Use the new ordinance to follow through with identified dangerous buildings.

Energy

Conduct and then act on the EV Charging Station Study (JTEC).

Transportation

- Develop a realistic timeline for rebuilding, repairing, and maintaining all town roads.
- Address concerns with speeding and speed limits.
- Revisit the sharrows grant.

Historic Resources

- Consider designing a historic marker for the Peabody Library in Post Mills.
- Plan a ceremony for the mounting of the new Sayre Bridge signs.

Personnel Issues

- Develop specific 90-day goals for the Town Manager.
- Perform TM performance reviews on schedule.
- Develop an organizational structure and make the chart available to the public.
- Review and if need be develop a gender-fair salary schedule.
- Follow through with training on bias, diversity, and sensitivity.
- Expand the personnel policy to include behavior on personal social media.
- Set up a performance evaluation system.
- Complete negotiations with the DPW and with the police union.
- Fix relations with the police department personnel.
- Develop a policy on keeping confidential information safe during and after working at home.

Communication

- Decide on one, possible two, user-friendly electronic communication vehicles for all Town postings.
- Develop a way for those without internet access to stay abreast of Town postings.
- Have an ongoing way for residents to post their suggestions and concerns.

Budget and Revenue

- Consider reintroducing stipends in the 2022 budget.
- Capitalize on any new federal programs, bills, acts to help offset costs.
- Develop criteria for determining which grants are worth the effort and matching fund requirements.
- Create funds for future Town improvement projects.
- Create the criteria needed to implement the Tax Stabilization Policy for agriculture and forestry operations.
- Review and if need be update the Purchasing/Procurement Policy.
- Determine when the 5-year review for the Gun Club is due.
- Learn the steps for collecting money for fines for various violations when violators refuse to pay.

Regulations and Bylaw Reviews and Updates

- Review and adopt zoning bylaws.
- Review and adopt planning commission bylaws including the Flood Hazard and River Corridor Bylaw.
- Review and adopt subdivision regulations.
- Review and if need be re-adopt the ATV bylaw.

Monitoring Agreements

- Stay on top of the monitoring for PFAS and the BRELLA process for the Post Mills landfill water.
- Determine how to make sure that the Town forester continues to monitor the deed restriction on the acreage purchased by the Langs.

Mary Bryant

RETREAT PLANNING

VILLAGES

East Thetford

- Village designation exploration- how can it contribute to development of town/village center.
- Planning grant covering economic development, housing, village water system.
- USRD grants for water in East Thetford and new well for Post Mills residents near the contaminated landfill site.
- All villages evaluated for potential assistance from Village Designation program.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

- New site for public works including recycling center and composting operation.
- Put line item in town budget to be used for building
- Compilation of studies identifying culvert's locations and need for replacements.
- Schedule made for culvert upgrade to meet climate change predictions of storms.
- Invest in DPW employees training to provide best practices for road repair and upkeep.

- Pursue Route 132 to be upgraded and identified as a state highway to receive annual state funds (36K) for maintenance of Rt 132 road.

TOWN COMMUNICATIONS-

- town webpage as go to information site for sports events, road conditions, meetings; too many choices for communications such as facebook, snap chat etc makes for chaos. What do we do for those who do not have internet?
- Explore possible new state funds to be used for town wide Internet connection for all.

Annual InterCommunity Committees Retreat for shared vision.

- Communicate goals between committees that dovetail and impacts town goals.
- Share information at one location, one meeting day- open to public.

HOUSING

- Increase housing stock, and senior housing targeting East Thetford
- Work with Vital Communities for problem solving ideas/programs

COMMUNITY BUILDING

- "Thetford Unity in Community" Town of Thetford community vision and goals event- all town event to unite residents to voice what their concerns and goals are for Thetford. Residents would congregate at a town location such as TES or TA for meals, and large and small discussions. Ideas would be shared in small and large group discussions. Ideas would be adopted through a democratic voting process.

RECREATION

- Replace playground on Thetford Center village green.
- Evaluate other sites for playgrounds or ball fields.
- Hiking paths and bike trails.

Treasure Island

- Master Plan
- Find grant \$ for master plan.