



# Town of Thetford Vermont

3910 Vermont Route 113 • P.O. Box 126 • Thetford Center, VT 05075  
802-785-2922 • [thetfordvermont.us](http://thetfordvermont.us)

## Selectboard Regular Meeting \*Draft\* Agenda

### Thetford Town Offices

(w/Virtual Attendance Option)

Monday, November 15, 2021 7:00pm

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) Agenda Review
- 2) Town Manager Report – Bryan Gazda
  - a) FEMA Update
  - b) Other
- 3) Public Comment
- 4) Request for Waiver of Homestead Declaration Late Filing Penalty
- 5) Consideration of Procurement of Replacement of Police Cruiser
- 6) Anticipated Appointment to fill Open Lister Position until March Elections
- 7) Anticipated Appointment to fill Town Moderator Position until March Elections
- 8) Discussion of Non-Union Health Insurance for 2022
- 9) Discussion of Agricultural Tax Stabilization
- 10) Possible Ratification of the New England Police Benevolent Association, Local 403 Union Contract
- 11) Warrants and Minutes
- 12) Adjourn

**From:** Evans, Michael <Michael.Evans@vermont.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 27, 2021 7:18 PM  
**To:** Bryan Gazda (bgazda@thetfordvt.gov) <bgazda@thetfordvt.gov>  
**Subject:** Police Cruiser replacement

Bryan- See below for the costs from three dealers. Ford of Claremont has the best price, and I have confidence in that salesman as he sold police & fleet vehicles for Gateway Motors in White River Junction for many years. In fact, Mike and Stuart's current cars came were purchased from him.

Can you get on the agenda for Monday, Nov 1? We *need* to get this car ordered. We have enough money in the capital fund to pay for it and the necessary equipment to outfit and install cost. Much of the more expensive equipment can be moved over (radios (2), vehicle repeater, radar, rear seat partition, while other equipment needs to be replaced (emergency lighting/siren control system, push bumper) and some just needs to be new with each new vehicle upfit (antennas).

Thetford Vermont Police Department	Ford of Claremont	Lebanon Ford	McGee Ford
<b>2022 Police Vehicle Specs</b>			
2022 Ford Police Interceptor Utility, Hybrid powertrain MSRP & Fees	\$48,460	\$48,460	\$48,460
Quoted price	40,773	41,580	41,914
Discount (Total MSPR and Dealer fees less quoted price)	7,687	6,880	6,546
5 year/100k extended warranty	2,400	3,230	2,345
Total vehicle and extended warranty	43,173	44,810	44,259
Difference from lowest quoted price	--	1,637	1,086

These are the vehicle repair expenses we have paid for this year that are attributable to keeping Officer Rogers' and Scruggs' cars well beyond 100,000 miles:

Date	Vendor	Description	Amount
02/12/21	Watson Automotive	Car 1 Front sway bar links	276.72
03/02/21	Watson Automotive	C2 struts and shocks	1,690.75
03/08/21	Watson Automotive	C2 Waterpump	1,622.99
03/23/21	Watson Automotive	C2 Replace HVAC Blend door	362.90
04/29/21	Watson Automotive	C2 Master Cylinder and brake caliper	751.27
04/22/21	Watson Automotive	C1 tie rod ends & alignment	471.87
05/13/21	Watson Automotive	Left Stab Link	231.35
05/03/21	Watson Automotive	Left Front Control Arm, Balanced Summer Tires	547.14
06/28/21	Watson Automotive	Sway bar link and control arm	524.60
07/02/21	Watson Automotive	Tie rod end, Mount tires, State Insp	551.24
07/13/21	Watson Automotive	Ignition Coil and Spark Plug	200.77
09/29/21	Watson Automotive	C2 brakes, 2 calipers, LOF	1,694.16
			\$8,925.76

Our total vehicle repair budget for the year was \$9,000, and to date we've spent That is too close to the \$8,500 spent in total on vehicle maintenance (Tires, brakes, car washes, routine repairs) in 2020, but the budget process was so non-inclusive, for some reason we level funded that line without replacing any vehicles but added a years' worth of mileage (I asked for \$11,500).



Michael S. Evans  
Chief of Police  
Thetford Police Department  
PO Box 126 | 3910 VT Route 113  
Thetford Center, VT 05075  
(802)785-2200

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**From:** Michael Kiess <michaelkiessvt@gmail.com> on behalf of Michael Kiess  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 02, 2021 10:50 AM  
**To:** Thetford Selectboard; townmanager@thetfordvt.gov; townclerk@thetfordvt.gov; Marion Betts; Thetfordboard@oesu.org; Tracy Borst; Shannon Darrah; Sharon Harkay  
**Subject:** Moderator Resignation - Mike Kiess  
**Categories:** Follow Up, Selectboard

Dear Select Board and School Board,

Please accept my resignation from the position of Town Moderator and School Moderator. It has been an honor to serve my community in these roles, particularly during the experiment of effectively hearing each other and thinking together in virtual meetings.

In December 2021, I will be relocating to Kampala, Uganda to work as the Operations Director for the Peace Corps program there, and will be away for two to three years. I hope to remain a connected member of my Thetford home through family, church, the listserv, Facebook, and Zoom attendance at some meetings.

I am willing to be available to the next appointed Moderator to support their preparation for our next meetings, if desired.

Best Regards,  
Michael Kiess  
[MichaelKiessVT@gmail.com](mailto:MichaelKiessVT@gmail.com)  
cell 802 299 5864  
68 Cobble Hill Road  
East Thetford, VT 05043 USA

# Deecie Denison

#7

November 3, 2021

Thetford Select Board  
PO Box 126  
Thetford Center, VT 05075

Re: Town and School Moderator Position

Dear Members of the Select Board,

I am interested in the positions as Moderator for the Town and the School Board meetings in February. For a number of years, I was elected to the position of School Board Moderator. Also, I have served as a member of the Select Board.

My experience and training have routinely involved moderating meetings, strategic planning processes, not-for-profit boards, and various regional organizations and committees. Moderating is not a new activity for me. I am well versed in Parliamentary Procedure and Roberts Rules of order, although I certainly must brush up on these skills.

Serving Thetford again after a long hiatus would be a privilege and honor.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or if you would like to meet me in person or by Zoom.

Sincerely,

Deecie Denison

Thetford, VT

892 Quinibeck Rd.  
Fairlee, VT 05045

Home: (802) 333-9527  
Mobile: (802)373-7065

From: **Charlie Buttrey** <[charliebuttrey@yahoo.com](mailto:charliebuttrey@yahoo.com)>  
Date: Tue, Nov 9, 2021 at 9:40 PM  
Subject: Town Moderator position  
To: [selectboard@thetfordvt.gov](mailto:selectboard@thetfordvt.gov) <[selectboard@thetfordvt.gov](mailto:selectboard@thetfordvt.gov)>

Greetings, Board --

I am writing to advise the Board that I would be happy (and honored) to step in to moderate the upcoming Town Meeting in Michael Kiess' absence. I have been attending Town Meeting since I moved to town in 1982, and have only missed meetings on those occasions when, as coach of the Thetford Academy indoor track team, I was attending the New England championship meet held on the same day (which won't happen this year since, alas, there will not be an indoor track season).

I served as the acting Town Moderator for a special meeting a few years ago when Mark McMahon had to recuse himself, and Joe Tofel asked that I serve as his parliamentarian on several occasions when he moderated the meeting. I have chaired a number of boards, including the Board of Civil Authority, the Thetford Board of School Directors, and both the Church Council and the Deaconate at the First Congregational Church in Thetford. I have also served as an acting judge in both the Orange and Windsor County Superior Courts on a few dozen occasions in the last 25 years or so.

I am certain that you will be receiving other statements of interest, and I suspect that any one of us would do a fine job, so I know that the town will be in good hands irrespective of the person you select.

Please let me know if I can provide any more information.

Cheers!

Charlie

DRAFT Revision 1

**Agricultural Tax Stabilization Procedures: Farmland Taxpayers**

**1. Operation Procedures:**<sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> a) All applications must be submitted to the Selectboard no later than February 1 of the year in which the contract is to become effective.

**To discuss:** Language to focus this on small start-up farms and not established successful farms; FOR INSTANCE:

b) Each contract so agreed upon will use a set of criteria: The farm has to demonstrate that tax stabilization would help mitigate an anticipated reduction in operational capacity. For example: "The farmer cannot afford to hire a helper this year because [e.g.: crops failed, the market changed, etc.] and a reduction in taxes would allow the farmer to hire them for the season."

c) Each contract shall specify the maximum value to be stabilized, which cannot be exceeded and the contract shall specify the individual years of contract coverage.

**2. Contract Terms and Criteria:**

a) Farming is defined as "the raising or harvesting of any agricultural commodities including the operation of a stock, dairy, poultry, bee, fruit, or truck farm; or plantation; ranch; nursery; range; or orchard; and income in the form of crop shares received from the use of the land."

<sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> b) The land, buildings, and owner-occupied dwelling are set for municipal tax assessment and appraisal purposes at no less than 50% of Fair Market Value.

c) The farmer must prove that at least two-thirds (2/3) of their gross family income including parents / parent and children, is derived from farming, by submitting copies of his Federal Income Tax Return. This requirement may be waived by a vote of the Selectboard should the Board determine that such a requirement would place an unfair burden on a beginning farmer. In this event, the Board may

set a requirement of less than two-third (2/3) of gross income, but such lower limit shall not be for a period of longer than three (3) years.

d) Any material changes in the ownership, occupancy or operation of the farm will result in the termination of the contract, unless the farmer obtains the written consent of the Selectboard within thirty (30) days of the date of said change.

e) In the event of sale of all or part of the property for consideration in excess of 50% of Fair Market Value, the farmer would have to reimburse (rollback) the Town for the difference between taxes actually paid and the taxes which would have been paid without stabilization, plus 12% interest. Nothing shall prohibit the Town from entering into a contract containing a "right of first refusal" clause.

f) In the event that the farmer leases the land which is to be stabilized, he and his family must reside and maintain a household on the leased farm throughout the term of the agreement.

g) Only one homestead may be stabilized in each individual contract.

h) Any dispute as to the terms or conditions of the Agreement is to be resolved by the Thetford Board of civil Authority.





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**Selectboard Regular Meeting \*Draft\* Minutes**  
**Thetford Town Offices**  
**(w/Virtual Attendance Option)**  
Monday, November 1, 2021 7:00pm

Selectboard members present: Chair Sharon Harkay, Vice-Chair Li Shen, Mary Bryan, Nick Clark (left the meeting at 7:53 PM), Steve Tofel  
Others present: Town Manager Bryan Gazda, Town Clerk/Treasurer Tracy Borst, Selectboard Assistant, Martie Betts  
Guest: Bryan Ruoff, Stantec

Sharon Harkay called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

**1. Agenda Review**

Bryan Gazda had not received the Police Union contract from the Town Attorney, or information on employee health insurance. Agenda items #7 and #9 will be rescheduled.

**2. Town Manager Report – Bryan Gazda**

**1. Post Mills Airport Update**

Bryan will have his first meeting with Tina Foster, Dan Mullen and the Town Attorney this coming Thursday at 10 AM to discuss the Post Mills Airport.

**2. Budget Process Update**

Bryan will be working on the budget this week. He has met with the DPW and Transfer Station Department Heads. His plan is to have the budget done by Thanksgiving or at latest, the end of the month.

**3. Municipal Planning Grant Update**

The Municipal Planning Grant did get submitted for a study of various independent water companies. Bryan feels it is a very strong grant, He received at least a half dozen support letters. Bryan said he wanted to thank everyone that put their support in and attended the two meetings that he held. Bryan wanted to thank especially Leif La White, David Fisk, Chris Hebb, and Patricia Dewey for the support they’ve given over the last week or so in getting the grant application done.

**3. Public Comment**

No public comment

**4. Request for waiver of Homestead Declaration Late Filing Penalty**

Donna Nelson explained to the Selectboard that she always files her taxes, but this year in April she was providing full-time care for her husband. She had asked for an extension of filing her taxes but did not realize that the Homestead Declaration would not extend. Her taxes were not filed until October. Ms. Nelson requests a waiver or reduction of the penalty.

Tracy Borst said the penalty amount is \$276.39.

**Motion** by Sharon Harkay that we waive the Homestead Declaration Late Filing penalty for Donna Nelson, in the amount of \$276.39. **VOTE by Roll call**; Mary Bryant – in favor, Steve



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45 Tofel – in favor, Li Shen – in favor, Nick Clark – in favor, Sharon Harkay – in favor. **Motion**  
46 **passed.**

47

## 48 **5. Overview of Route 132 Project with Bryan Ruoff of Stantec**

49 Bryan Ruoff from Stantec explained that their involvement with Phase 1 of this project was  
50 engineering only. For this phase, they are monitoring the project. There is an onsite inspector  
51 every day, and Bryan oversees all the payment requisition submittals. The work is 80%  
52 complete.

53 Bryan Gazda said the project is doing extremely well in terms of the budget, thanks to the  
54 diligence of Stantec and especially Seth Potter, who is the Stantec project manager.

55 Mary Bryant asked about the installation of the guardrails. Bryan Ruoff said they will be  
56 installed after the paving next week, and that Stantec will be on site to make sure they are  
57 installed correctly.

58 Bryan Ruoff said that the truck traffic should slow down after this week, but there will be trucks  
59 during the paving process. He will follow up with Northwoods to see if they will be using Route  
60 113 and Tucker Hill Road, or Route 5 and Route 132.

61

## 62 **6. Letter of Support for Municipal Planning Grant for Zoning Bylaw Modernization**

63 The Selectboard has signed the letter and asked the Selectboard assistant to send to Kevin  
64 Geiger, the grant manager.

65

## 66 ~~7. Possible Ratification of the New England Police Benevolent Association, Local 403~~ 67 ~~Union Contract~~

68

## 69 **8. Discussion of Non-Union Wage Increases for 2022**

70 Sharon opened by stating that this is a theoretical discussion only. They are not to discuss any  
71 specific person or nitty gritty details. When we decided on the wages for new hires, we looked at  
72 the wage matrix that was passed forward to us, the wage situation in the current times and had a  
73 long serious discussion. Given everything, it would be difficult to start people out on Level 1 as  
74 it exists. Sharon's belief is that because we did that for people that were new in those positions,  
75 with no experience of those positions, we need to do a jump in wages for non-union employees  
76 that have been working in town for a while. Sharon said she would like to bump the pay rate of  
77 people who have been here by 2 levels. While she understands that everyone doesn't want to pay  
78 more taxes, the staff in town are tremendous, with positive attitudes and we are fortunate to have  
79 them. Sharon feels we should be rewarding them appropriate to what we have given the new  
80 hires. We need to give a directive to Bryan for the budget. Do we want him to do that jump in  
81 wages of his budget or not?

82 Steve Tofel said in theory that make sense, especially when you see what's happening with  
83 salaries and wages around the Upper Valley. He thinks we need to look at the wage matrix and  
84 attach a figure to doing that. In theory, it's needed.

85 Mary Bryant said to find, maintain and retain good employees, that won't use this time as an  
86 opportunity to look for other jobs that are paying higher wages, we need to stay competitive. The  
87 institutional knowledge that we have with a lot of our employees is very valuable.



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88 Li Shen agrees that people should be compensated and not get left behind. Li thinks the  
89 employees are the most valuable resource the town has. We are facing some pretty big tax hikes  
90 this year. Li referenced a webinar about budgeting which said that spending has to be balanced  
91 by revenue. If we are going to spend more, we have to consider where it's coming from. That is  
92 the crux of this debate. The Route 132 project is going to have an impact on taxes already. We  
93 are on the second year and starting to pay off the bond payment. Next year it will go up again.  
94 We need to model what is projected, what a theoretical wage increase is going to do in the whole  
95 budget spreadsheet, and then what the bottom line is with taxes. We would need to see how  
96 much revenue is going to have to come up, and then there will have to be a reconning of where  
97 this is going to come from. Are we just going to pass it on to the taxpayers, or can we nip and  
98 tuck around the budget? Can we compromise and not go up a full 2 steps at once? There is a lot  
99 of big parts to this, and it's difficult. Li said she agrees that people should not be left behind.  
100 How can we make that a reality? Who pays for it?  
101 Sharon said if we chose to direct Bryan to put these numbers together in the budget for us, we  
102 also need to direct Bryan to look for places we can cut. We can't use DPW funds to pay salaries  
103 in town hall, but we have spent an enormous amount of money in sand and salt. And if we could  
104 cut down in that place, that's an example of where we could take money to put towards higher  
105 salaries. We are not talking about a tremendous number of people, so I would hope Bryan would  
106 find places in the budget where he can cut back to help with this new expenditure.  
107 Steve Tofel said there would also be a cola adjustment. The state has put out numbers that he  
108 believes the treasurer has. They are not binding numbers. We might be able to balance the cola  
109 with the step ups in the matrix that might turn out to be beneficial long term.  
110 Bryan said for our two collective bargaining agreements, it goes off the CPI (Consumer Price  
111 Index) for the Northeast region, which is currently 1.8%. Bryan said he believes that is what has  
112 been utilized in the past for non-union employees. So, for the highway individuals that is the  
113 percentage increase.  
114 Sharon said she also thinks in the future we need to revisit, although she's not sure this is the  
115 year to do it, but according to the wage matrix for non-union employees they only get a step up  
116 every other year. This is not true in the union contracts, they go up every single year. Not for this  
117 year, but next year's budget 2023, that should be revisited as well. Why should our non-union  
118 people be so slow to move up the ladder.  
119 Nick Clark said he thought before there is talk about equalizing new employees with old  
120 employees, the gender pay gap has to be addressed. There are a lot of very hard-working  
121 employees that have been overlooked for raises and steps for many years. Every Town Manager  
122 we have had since our first Town Manager has been assigned the task of modernizing our wage  
123 matrix, which hasn't been done and is still out of date. Before we even get there, we have to start  
124 with equalizing gender. Since a gender audit wasn't done, Nick ran some numbers, and getting  
125 close to that equalization would be increasing the non-union female employee's wages by about  
126 120%.  
127 **Motion** by Nick Clark to increase the wages of the non-union female employees by 120% in the  
128 2022 budget.  
129 Mary Bryan said before she would ever vote on something like that, she would need to look at  
130 everybody's salaries, the number of years they have worked here, and compare apples to apples,



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131 not men to women. It should be looking at everybody through the same lens. Mary said that's  
132 what she would need to do before she passed any kind of motion regarding the gender factor.  
133 Steve Tofel said he would table that for now. It hasn't been corroborated by anyone. To pass a  
134 motion like that right now as we are going into the budget makes no sense.  
135 Sharon feels that it's premature to ask for us to agree to that, at this point. We haven't even seen  
136 what the impact of raising the non-union people up two steps will be, much less dictate that  
137 we're going to raise female salaries that much at this time. She would not be in favor of doing  
138 that now.

139 Mary told Nick if he would like to share the numbers that he did, that would be very helpful.

140 **VOTE by Roll Call:** Mary Bryant – not in favor, Steve Tofel – not in favor, Sharon Harkay –  
141 not in favor, Li Shen – in favor, Nick Clark – in favor. **Motion does not pass.**

142 **Motion** by Sharon Harkay to direct Bryan to put in 2-step increases in budget figures for us to  
143 take a look at for the non-union people so we can see what the impact is on the budget, but also  
144 to try to find ways to cut an equal amount so the taxpayers aren't paying more.

145 Bryan asked if that is to include a cola increase or just a step increase.

146 Sharon said yes, also a cola increase, but she wanted to make sure he took a look at the step  
147 increases as well.

148 Mary asked if we could add in that Bryan do an evaluation with any gender issues with the  
149 salaries.

150 Sharon thought that would be a separate motion, which Mary is welcome to do after they vote on  
151 the current one.

152 Bryan said he is looking at everything we need to do and will need a lot of information. If Nick  
153 shares his information in regard to gender at this stage of the game, and how that plays into it,  
154 he's not sure I can go out and do a detailed analysis of the different gender issues between now  
155 and the end of the month.

156 Nick said an independent resident group emailed a lot of information to Bryan in April and he's  
157 wondering why that hasn't been thought of before, such as in April.

158 Bryan said the last correspondence he had from the group was in August or September and  
159 Bryan told them at that time with the wages where they are now with an employee market, he  
160 wasn't going to take a look at it. He didn't want to make major adjustments to the wage schedule  
161 this year, so he did email that group back then. It's still on the radar, but as we've all been  
162 experiencing right now, we do have an employee market out there and he didn't want to put  
163 something forward due to what is happening today. We need to think out over the long term.

164 Motion called. **VOTE by Roll Call:** Mary Bryant – in favor, Steve Tofel – in favor, Li Shen – in  
165 favor, Nick Clark – not in favor, Sharon Harkay – in favor, **Motion passed.**

166  
167 **Motion** by Mary Bryant that Bryan looks at the issues around gender equity and the pay scale for  
168 our town employees. **VOTE by Roll Call:** Mary Bryant – in favor, Steve Tofel – in favor,  
169 Sharon Harkay – in favor, Li Shen – in favor, Nick Clark – in favor **Motion Passed.**

170

171 ~~9. Discussion of Non-Union Health Insurance for 2022~~

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173 **10. Warrants and Minutes**

174 Warrants from October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021



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- 175 #21.2 \$19,679.54  
176 #36.1 \$10,590.10  
177 #25.3B \$162,783.33  
178 #26.3 \$162,783.23  
179 #35.1 \$22,494.59  
180 #20.4 \$23,770.95  
181 CT-2021-002 \$58.50 VT Department of Fish and Game  
182 **Motion** by Li Shen to accept the warrants as presented on Oct 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021. **All in favor (4-0-0)**  
183 **Motion passed.** Nick Clark left the meeting at 7:53 PM.  
184  
185 Warrants  
186 #39.1 \$7,442.78  
187 #28.3 \$121,959.98  
188 #37.1 \$3,000,000.00  
189 #37.1A \$152,466.00  
190 #22.2 \$31,263.39  
191 #21.4 \$23,433.65  
192 #38.1 \$21,395.89  
193 #37.1 \$152,466.00  
194 #27.3 \$1700.00  
195 #29.3 \$81,569.60  
196 **Motion** by Li Shen to accept the warrants as presented on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. **All in favor (4-0-0)**  
197 **Motion passed.**  
198  
199 **Motion** by Sharon Harkay to accept the regular Selectboard meeting minutes of October 18<sup>th</sup>,  
200 2021 as edited. **All in favor (4-0-0) Motion passed.**  
201  
202 **Motion** by Li Shen to approve the special Selectboard meeting minutes of October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021 as  
203 presented. **All in favor (4-0-0) Motion passed.**  
204  
205 **11. Adjourn**  
206 **Motion** by Steve Tofel to adjourn the regular Selectboard meeting at 8:00 PM. **All in favor (4-0-0)**  
207 **Motion passed.**