



Town of Thetford Vermont

3910 Vermont Route 113 • P.O. Box 126 • Thetford Center, VT 05075
802-785-2922 • thetfordvermont.us

Selectboard Regular Meeting Minutes Thetford Town Offices (w/Virtual Attendance Option) Monday, January 3, 2022 7:00pm

Selectboard members present: Sharon Harkay (Chair), Li Shen (Vice-Chair), Mary Bryant, Steve Tofel

Selectboard members absent: Nick Clark

Others present: Town Manager Bryan Gazda (via Zoom), Town Clerk/Treasurer Tracy Borst
Contributing Community Members: Peggy O'Neil and Stacy Glazer with Wise, Nolan Riegler and David Forbes with the Lake Fairlee Association, Alicia Houk, Stuart Rogers

Sharon Harkay called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

1) Agenda Review

No changes to the agenda.

2) Town Manager Report – Bryan Gazda

a) FEMA Funding Update

Bryan Gazda reported movement on the FEMA projects and anticipates money will be coming to the town in a few weeks. Three more projects are still under review. The FEMA payments will be applied to the grant anticipation loan.

b) Police Benevolent Association Grievance Update

The New England Police Benevolent Association #403 grievance about the employee/employer percentage of health insurance has been resolved. Until the new contract is signed, the PBA member's percentage for health insurance will stay at 10%.

c) EEI/Green Procurement Policy Update

This will be rescheduled for January 24th.

d) Road Assessment Update

This will be rescheduled for January 24th.

e) Gender Equity

Bryan met with Selectboard member Mary Bryant and Hannah Payson. Bryan said he will be moving that forward.

f) Other

Bryan thanked Susanne Simon and the Transfer Station staff and volunteers for working the last two Sundays.

3) Public Comment

No public comment.

4) Social Service Agencies and Other Organizations Request for Funds for 2022

Wise: Peggy O'Neil, Executive Director for Wise explained that this is the first time their organization has asked for funding from Thetford. Peggy gave an overview of their services ([see report here](#)).



Town of Thetford Vermont

3910 Vermont Route 113 • P.O. Box 126 • Thetford Center, VT 05075
802-785-2922 • thetfordvermont.us

Sharon Harkay expressed appreciation for the organization and asked for clarification on the term “gender-based violence”.

Peggy explained that gender-based violence is a term meant to encompass people who are experiencing violence based on the gender norm and gender construct in our society. This happens because of a construct that exists in our society. The term is more current with research and on-the-ground practices.

Stacy Glazer, also with Wise, added that the term acknowledges the imbalance of power that exists in our world, and the focus is more on cultural issues rather than random acts of violence. Steve Tofel asked where their primary funding comes from.

Peggy said about 50% of their funding comes from federal and state grants. They get support through municipalities and do fundraising as well.

Sharon asked if the petition process was complete, and Peggy thought they had all the signatures they need.

Lake Fairlee Association: Nolan Riegler said there was some miscommunication last year which resulted in the town not giving funds to the association. This year they are requesting the amount previously asked for, \$5,250.00. Nolan said they would be treating the lake for milfoil in the upcoming year, which consists of a chemical treatment and then pulling the weed out by hand. Milfoil treatment can cost between \$50,000 and \$120,000. The association did receive a grant and will be working on a watershed action plan to identify the cause of the increase of phosphates in the lake. The Greeter Program at the boat launch is one way to prevent introduction of milfoil and other invasive species. Greeters meet with boaters as they enter and exit the lake.

David Forbes added that they will be submitting a grant application for erosion. Additionally, they will be reviewing the Middlebrook and Blood Brook watersheds. Another source to help determine the cause of phosphates is to look at the sediment on the lake bottom. In another year or two David anticipates having enough data to be able to start making conclusions and recommendations.

Sharon asked if other towns contribute to the association.

Nolan said they do request funds from all three towns, Thetford, Fairlee and West Fairlee. The request is based on the amount of shoreline within each town. Fairlee and Thetford have about the same amount of shoreline, while West Fairlee is smaller. Other money comes from the state to support the efforts to control milfoil, and they also receive some money from businesses, summer camps, membership dues and private fundraising events.

Mary Bryant expressed appreciation for the work of the association. She wondered if Nolan had heard the series on Vermont Public Radio where favorite reporter stories are revisited. She noted that there was a report on Lake Fairlee, and she assumes that the association had something to do with the study that is being conducted. Mary thanked them for all they do as she feels the lake is very special.

David noted that Lake Fairlee is a primary economic driver of the surrounding towns. The health of Lake Fairlee will impact the economic health of the towns, and he appreciates the support. Steve Tofel wanted to know the annual budget for the Lake Fairlee Association.



Town of Thetford Vermont

3910 Vermont Route 113 • P.O. Box 126 • Thetford Center, VT 05075
802-785-2922 • thetfordvermont.us

Nolan said he could send a report to the Selectboard, but it was typically about \$100,00, noting again that it will be higher this year due to the planned milfoil treatment.

5) Possible Appointment to Conservation Commission

While outgoing member Sue Fritz was not at the meeting, Sharon Harkay wanted to publicly thank her for her many years of service on the Commission.

Sue had reached out to Alicia Houk about serving in her place. Alicia is very excited about the potential of filling Sue's spot, and Sharon is extremely impressed by her background.

Li Shen noted that Alicia has a solid background in education which is part of the Commission's mission. Li is looking forward to Alicia's contribution to that part of the Commission's work.

Mary agreed that they are extremely lucky to have Alicia on the Committee with her background.

Alicia, who was at the meeting, said it will be a real pleasure to be part of the community in this way.

Motion by Li Shen to appoint Alicia Houk to serve on the Conservation Commission beginning January 3, 2022, for a term of 4 years. All in favor (4-0-0) **Motion passed.**

6) Review of and Possible Acceptance of Lister Consultant Contract

The Selectboard reviewed and discussed the consultant contract.

Motion by Sharon Harkay that we formally approve the Lister Consultant Contract with Janet Stowell for 2022, as written in the agreement contract. All in favor (4-0-0) **Motion passed.**

7) Discussion of Tax Stabilization for Additional Housing Stock

Steve Tofel said he wanted to know if the Selectboard would be interested in pursuing tax stabilization for additional housing. The stabilization would help offset the considerable investment of the property owner. Barre City has a similar policy that, while it may not apply entirely to Thetford, might be something to review as a model policy. Steve said this would not be for this year's Town Meeting.

Sharon asked if this would be for rental properties that help people to live in Thetford and become part of the community versus something like an Air B&B.

Steve confirmed that it would be for residential rentals.

Sharon said she likes this idea because more housing is needed in Thetford, but also wondered if this should be a long-range project. As there are no other towns that have this, she wants to make sure they know what they are getting into.

Steve said he had long discussions with Lister Janet Stowell, and she expressed some objections around people moving into town who would not initially contribute money for services, such as the Fire Department, the Department of Public Works and the Police Department. Steve didn't feel that was a big issue. Once the agreement ends, the property will go through another assessment and the Grand List will be adjusted.

Stuart Rogers asked what would happen if the property were sold prior to the end of the agreement.

Steve said there is a provision at the end of the Barre policy that outlined a rescission of the agreement.

Mary Bryant was glad to be looking at something to put in the toolbox to help with housing.



Town of Thetford Vermont

3910 Vermont Route 113 • P.O. Box 126 • Thetford Center, VT 05075
802-785-2922 • thetfordvermont.us

The Selectboard agreed that they would like to have Steve pursue the project.

8) Warrants and Minutes

#26.4 \$24,939.32

#46.1 \$7,508.92

#37.3 \$46,329.45

#27.2 \$29,483.19

Motion by Li Shen to accept the warrants as presented. All in favor (4-0-0) **Motion passed.**

Sharon asked Bryan about the Bicycle Safety Grant and Bryan said the paperwork has been returned. He still has some additional documents to send.

Motion by Sharon Harkay to accept the regular Selectboard meeting minutes of December 13th, 2021, as edited. All in favor (4-0-0) **Motion passed.**

Motion by Sharon Harkay to accept the special Selectboard meeting minutes December 15th, 2021, as edited. All in favor (4-0-0) **Motion passed.**

Motion by Sharon Harkay to accept the regular Selectboard meeting minutes of December 20th, 2021, as edited. All in favor (4-0-0) **Motion passed.**

9) Adjourn

Motion by Steve Tofel to adjourn the regular Selectboard meeting at 8:07 PM. All in favor (4-0-0) **Motion passed.**