



Town of Thetford Vermont

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Selectboard Regular Meeting ***Draft*** Agenda **VIRTUAL ONLY**

Pursuant to (S. 222) Act No. 78*
Monday, May 16, 2022 7:00 PM

To connect to Zoom via computer: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89080661986>
To connect via phone only: +1 (646) 558 8656 | Meeting ID: 890 8066 1986

7:00 PM – Call to Order

- 1) Agenda Review
- 2) Town Manager Report – Bryan Gazda
 - a) Cell Tower Update
 - b) Latham Road Project Update
 - c) Treasure Island Update
 - d) VT Alert Training
 - e) Meeting with VLCT Executive Director
 - f) Other
- 3) Public Comment
- 4) Consideration of Green Procurement Policy
- 5) Clerk/Treasurer Update with Tracy Borst
- 6) Discussion of a Working Draft Delinquent Taxes Policy
- 7) Thetford Elementary School Request for Certificate of Public Good for Expansion of Solar Array
- 8) Quail John Road Telecommunications Facility Request for Certificate of Public Good for Modification
- 9) Possible Agenda Posting Location Adjustment
- 10) Warrants and Minutes
- 11) Adjourn

*Sec. 2 (a)(1) a quorum or more of the members of a public body may attend a regular, special or emergency meeting by electronic or other means without being physically present at a designated meeting location.

From: Geoff Martin <gmartin@trorc.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 4, 2022 11:37 AM
To: Bryan Gazda <bgazda@thetfordvt.gov>
Subject: Re: Green Procurement Policy Concerns

Hi Bryan,

I've attached a document that includes both the changes that we made during our last meeting, and David Goodrich's suggestions. The changes that we made are tracked using the track changes function in Word (red text and underlined), and David's suggestions are highlighted and bolded, except for the one instance where our change and David's suggestion overlapped, in which case I inserted a comment to note David's suggestion. In the document that we were planning to present this Monday, I had all the remaining "shalls" bolded and underlined to show what we left in. I changed those back to plain text in this version because it was becoming overwhelming.

I would imagine that all these changes are going to start getting difficult for people to follow, and wonder if the easiest way to do it is to provide the SB with the document we were planning to present on Monday (with our changes tracked), and also provide them with the document that David sent you. But maybe you'll find the attached document easy to follow.

Let me know what you think and i'm happy to meet if it would help.

Thanks,

Geoff Martin | Intermunicipal Regional Energy Coordinator



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This email is not a legal opinion and is part of the public domain.

Overview

The purpose of this policy is to commit the Town of Thetford to a high level of fiscal, social, and environmental responsibility in the procurement of energy-related capital improvements, and to define the process for procuring these products. The Town of Thetford will prioritize improvements, systems, vehicles and equipment, and other energy-related products that are energy-efficient and powered by, or are capable of being powered by, renewable energy sources, and will eliminate, wherever feasible, the use of fossil fuel.

Background

The Town of Thetford has several energy and climate goals, including:

- Meet 90% of energy needs from renewable sources by 2050
- Cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 45% by 2030

With each purchase of goods and services, the Town has the opportunity to not only further these goals, but also to lead by example for the rest of the community and demonstrate the value of environmentally sound purchasing decisions.

This Policy provides a framework to utilize when making purchasing decisions, helping to ensure that the purchases the Town makes are in line with its stated goals and objectives related to energy and climate change. The Policy also outlines procedures that ensure the Town: utilizes the resources and incentives of the State's energy efficiency utility and the Town's electric utility, selects products that best meet the Town's operational needs, and reduces ongoing operational costs.

This Policy tasks the Green Procurement Review Committee to review proposals from Department Heads for Large Capital Improvements for consistency with this Policy. The Town Manager, in consultation with the Joint Thetford Energy Committee (JTEC), will monitor, review, and, if necessary, develop new procedures and practices related to this Policy. The Town Manager/JTEC will report progress and findings to the Selectboard at least annually and as appropriate, including any proposed alterations to the Policy.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed as requiring a department, vendor or contractor to procure goods or services that do not perform adequately for their intended use or are not available at a reasonable price or in a reasonable period of time. Decisions regarding adequacy or suitability for use shall be at the discretion of the Selectboard.

Definitions

"Alternative Fuel Vehicle (AFV)" is defined as an all-electric, Plug-in Hybrid Electric (PHEV), hybrid-electric vehicle, or biodiesel vehicle.

"Building Modifications" are defined as additions, alterations, renovations, and repairs to existing buildings.

"Emergency Repair/Replacement" is defined as a repair/replacement for which immediate action is needed to avoid harm to Town property or personnel, and/or would substantially impact the Town's ability to provide adequate services. The Town Manager shall have full discretion to determine what constitutes an Emergency Repair/Replacement, and whether, in light of the emergency situation, the procedures defined in this Policy should apply as defined or in an amended form.

"Green Procurement Review Committee" is the group responsible for reviewing budget requests for consistency with this Policy. The Green Procurement Review Committee consists of the Town Manager, the Requestor (defined below), a Selectboard-appointed JTEC representative, and the IREC (if applicable).

"Large Capital Improvements" include vehicles, equipment, and machinery (VE&M); heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) replacements, and; building modifications and new construction.

"Requestor" is the Department Head or other individual making a purchase request under this Policy.

"Small Capital Improvements" is defined as appliances and electronics, lighting, cooking equipment, and pumps, motors, and drives.

"Vehicles, equipment, and machinery (VE&M)" VE&M is defined as all light-, medium-, and heavy-duty vehicles and equipment (e.g., loaders, graders, excavators), small machinery, including but not limited to mini-excavators, ATVs, snow blowers, and lawn mowers, and small equipment, including but not limited to chainsaws and leaf blowers.

Policies

Vehicles, Equipment, and Machinery (VE&M)

It is the policy of the Town to utilize VE&M that will achieve the largest reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions possible, while meeting the operational needs of the Town and without putting an undue financial burden on the Town. VE&M were responsible for over 80% of the Town's direct GHG emissions in 2020. VE&M also contribute significantly to other air pollutants that are harmful to human health and the environment. Lowering emissions and costs from VE&M should be achieved by optimizing the fleet size, reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT), reducing idle time, transitioning to AFVs, and increasing fuel economy.

Additional VE&M Policies – Fleet Maintenance

- i. Environmentally friendly products, such as recycled coolants and re-refined oils, shall will be used where available when cost effective and when it will not void the manufacturer's warranty or negatively impact the vehicle's operation.

- ii. A reasonable effort ~~shall~~will be made to reduce or eliminate vehicle leakage of environmentally harmful substances such as coolant, oil, or fuel.
- iii. Re-treaded tires ~~shall~~will be purchased for large-wheeled or slow-moving vehicles, when applicable, and meet or exceed the performance requirements of a new tire.

Space Heating and Water Heating Replacements

It is the policy of the Town not to install new fossil fuel-based heating systems. Water heaters can last for a decade or more, and heating systems can continue to operate for several decades. Thus, decisions made today will either avoid, or lock in, fossil fuel use for many years to come. The significance of these decisions necessitates careful planning, potentially over multiple years. Replacement heating systems in particular should be evaluated in the context of current and future plans for the building. For example, in general buildings should be weatherized prior to replacing the heating system to avoid installing an oversized heating system. Evaluation of whether the existing heat distribution system (i.e., forced-air, steam, etc.) best meets the needs of the building is also necessary before selecting a replacement.

Ventilation

It is the policy of the Town to utilize effective and energy-efficient ventilation systems in municipal buildings wherever economically feasible. Installing new ventilation systems should be considered during building renovations or modifications, and replacing existing ventilation systems should be considered when the systems are not adequately protecting the health and safety of building occupants and/or the building, or when the existing system fails. Controls are an important piece of an effective, efficient ventilation system.

Air Conditioning

It is the policy of the Town to limit the use of air conditioning systems, and to utilize heat pump systems that can simultaneously replace or offset fossil-fuel use for heating wherever possible. Like a replacement heating system, new air conditioning systems can last for decades and should be evaluated in the context of existing and future plans for the building.

Building Modifications and New Construction

It is the policy of the Town to utilize best practices for efficiency during Building Modifications; to build all new construction to net-zero energy standards, and; not to install new fossil-fuel-based systems in new construction or Building Modifications. Modifications to existing buildings or the construction of new municipal buildings are opportunities to significantly lower the Town's energy use and greenhouse gas emissions for generations. Additionally, proper construction techniques lower or eliminate ongoing energy costs and can significantly extend the lifespan of buildings.

Small Capital Improvements

It is the policy of the Town that Small Capital Improvements are efficient ~~and do not use fossil fuel~~. Small Capital Improvements should be ENERGY STAR certified and/or qualify for incentives through Efficiency Vermont, where possible.

Municipal Inventory and Reporting

It is the policy of the Town maintain an inventory of the municipal vehicle fleet, facilities, energy use, and GHG emissions, and to report on these inventories annually in the Town Report.

Procedures

1. Large Capital Improvements

For Large Capital Improvements, as defined in this Policy, a review by the Joint Thetford Energy Committee (JTEC) and the Green Procurement Review Committee is required.

1.1. JTEC Review

In August of each year, the Town Manager shall provide the JTEC with a list of all Large Capital Improvements that will be considered in the upcoming budget discussions. The JTEC shall review the list and provide recommendations to the Town Manager using the respective procedure described at Attachment A (VE&M), Attachment B (HVAC), or Attachment C (building modifications and new construction). The JTEC shall return a written summary of its recommendations to the Town Manager by no later than November 1 or as mutually agreed upon by the Town Manager and the JTEC.

1.2. Green Procurement Review Committee Assessment

The Green Procurement Review Committee will review the JTEC's recommendation, assessing the recommendation against the standards established in this Policy, as well as the ability of the recommendation to meet the town's operational needs, its cost relative to alternatives, and other factors as appropriate. The Town Manager will consider the Green Procurement Review Committee's assessment when developing a final budget proposal for the Selectboard, and shall include a written description of the Green Procurement Review Committee's assessment, approved by the Committee, as part of the final budget proposal.

2. Small Capital Improvements

For Small Capital Improvements, review by the Green Procurement Review Committee is not necessary. The Town Manager shall will ensure that all requirements detailed at Attachment D are met during the procurement process.

3. Municipal Inventories

An inventory of the Town's vehicle fleet shall be maintained by the Town Manager and shall include the following information:

- I. Make, model, and year of all vehicles and equipment.
- II. Annual miles driven (or annual hours of metered equipment).
- III. Quantity of fuel consumed by fuel type.
- IV. Cost of fuel consumed by fuel type.

This inventory shall be maintained in a database of the Town Manager's choosing.

An inventory of the Town's building energy use and municipal GHG emissions shall be maintained by the IREC/JTEC. The inventory metrics should include at least the following information for Town facilities:

- I. kWh consumed and cost of electricity
- II. Gallons of fuel (if applicable) consumed and cost of fuel

This inventory shall be in Energy Star Portfolio Manager.

The municipal GHG emission inventory shall follow the Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventories. Inventories shall be maintained in the U.S. EPA's Local Greenhouse Gas Inventory Tool.

4. Fleet Utilization

The Town Manager will provide fleet utilization reports to the departments and the JTEC, and make recommendations about possible fleet reductions.

5. Reporting

A summary of the inventories described in section 3 shall be published annually in the Town Report. Additionally, the Town Manager, with support from the JTEC, shall report to the Selectboard annually on the Green Procurement Policy, including any decisions to amend or reject budget requests as a result of the Policy, and any proposed amendments to the Policy.

6. Exceptions

The Town Manager may waive the requirements detailed at Attachments A, B, and C for Emergency Repairs and Emergency Replacements only.

Contacts/Responsible Official

Questions related to the daily operational interpretation of this policy should be directed to:

[Insert responsible official]

Effective Date

Approved by:

Responsible Official

Title of the Responsible Official

Date

DRAFT

Attachment A - Vehicles, Equipment, and Machinery (VE&M) Procedures

1. VE&M need justified

In order to ensure that the Town does not invest in unnecessary or underused VE&M, the JTEC shall assess the need for the VE&M in consultation with the Requestor and by reviewing the utilization reports. The assessment should include a review of whether the VE&M could be shared among departments or rented.

2. VE&M sized for purpose

The JTEC should assess whether the requested VE&M could be smaller (e.g., a sedan instead of an SUV).

3. Fuel type guidelines

The default fuel-type for all VE&M replacements shall will be electric. The following fuel types are ranked in order of preference:

- All-electric
- Plug-in Hybrid Electric (PHEV)
- Hybrid-electric
- Biodiesel
- Gasoline/Diesel

The JTEC should search for the vehicle type using the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) AFV search engine, available [here](#). When searching the DOE AFV database, check electric, PHEV, hybrid-electric, and biodiesel only. The DOE database on AFVs is continuously updated and provides a comprehensive list of AFVs currently available in the U.S. market. If a suitable AFV is found, the form asks for the specific make and model. **If no AFV is found, an explanation must be given before evaluating a gasoline or diesel vehicle.**

Commented [GM1]: Daiyd Goodrich suggests deleting entire sentence.

4. Determine incentives

Determine available incentives through Efficiency Vermont, Green Mountain Power, and other funding sources.

5. VE&M compared for fuel economy (vehicles only)

If no AFV is found, only vehicles with high fuel economies will be considered. The JTEC should search for their desired vehicle type [here](#) and fill in the form with the highest fuel economy currently available on the market.

6. Submit recommendations to the Town Manager

Provide the Town Manager with a written recommendation(s) summarizing the JTEC's process and justifying the recommendation. The JTEC shall return a written summary of its recommendations to the Town Manager by no later than November 1 or as mutually agreed upon by the Town Manager and the JTEC.

Attachment B – HVAC Procedures

Space Heating and Water Heating Replacements

1. Fuel type guidelines

The following fuel types are ranked in order of preference:

- Heat pump (ductless, ground-source or geothermal, air-to-water, centrally-ducted, commercial water-source) or solar (hot water systems)
- Biomass
- Fossil fuel (~~Fossil fuel is never acceptable for water heater replacements~~)

2. Contact Efficiency Vermont

The Town's Efficiency Vermont representative will provide technical assistance to determine the best fuel-type, distribution (heating systems only), equipment sizing, and system efficiency. The JTEC shall include Efficiency Vermont's assessment as part of its recommendation to the Green Procurement Review Committee.

3. Determine incentives

Determine available incentives through Efficiency Vermont, Green Mountain Power, and other funding sources.

4. Submit recommendations to the Town Manager

Provide the Town Manager with a written recommendation(s) summarizing the JTEC's process and justifying the recommendation. The JTEC shall return a written summary of its recommendations to the Town Manager by no later than November 1 or as mutually agreed upon by the Town Manager and the JTEC.

Ventilation

1. Contact Efficiency Vermont

Contact Town's Efficiency Vermont representative for technical assistance to assess the need for ventilation, the appropriate type of ventilation system, and the proper controls for the system. The JTEC shall include Efficiency Vermont's assessment as part of its recommendation to the Green Procurement Review Committee.

2. New ventilation system guidelines

For the installation of a new ventilation system, only the following ventilation systems shall should be considered:

- Energy recovery
- Heat recovery

3. Replacement ventilation system guidelines

For the replacement of a failed existing ventilation system, energy and then heat recovery systems should be considered unless technically or economically infeasible. Justification must be provided for a simple replacement of a non-ERV/HRV balanced system or an exhaust-only system.

4. Submit recommendations to the Town Manager

Provide the Town Manager with a written recommendation(s) summarizing the JTEC's process and justifying the recommendation. The JTEC shall return a written summary of its recommendations to the Town Manager by no later than November 1 or as mutually agreed upon by the Town Manager and the JTEC.

Air Conditioning

1. Needs Assessment

Assess whether and where air conditioning is needed.

2. Use heat pump systems

Heat pump systems should always be the first systems considered, with the goal of completely (preferable) or partially meeting the building's heating load in addition to providing cooling. If there are documented plans to replace the building's heating system in the future, and cooling is needed immediately, a room air conditioning unit (e.g., window air conditioning unit) may be considered. The unit must be ENERGY STAR certified.

3. Contact Efficiency Vermont

Contact Town's Efficiency Vermont representative for technical assistance to assess the appropriate type of air conditioning system. The JTEC shall include Efficiency Vermont's assessment as part of its recommendation to the Green Procurement Review Committee.

4. Submit recommendations to the Town Manager

Provide the Town Manager with a written recommendation(s) summarizing the JTEC's process and justifying the recommendation. The JTEC shall return a written summary of its recommendations to the Town Manager by no later than November 1 or as mutually agreed upon by the Town Manager and the JTEC.

Attachment C – Building Modifications and New Construction Policies and Procedures

1. Contact Efficiency Vermont

The JTEC shall ensure that all applicable projects (major renovations and new construction) enroll in Efficiency Vermont's Commercial New Construction Program or equivalent. For modifications that do not qualify for Efficiency Vermont's Commercial New Construction Program, the JTEC shall ensure that the Requestor involves either an Efficiency Vermont representative or a Building Performance Institute (BPI) Certified contractor or consultant.

2. Net-zero new construction

The goal of all All-new construction shall be to achieve net-zero energy on an annual basis, as defined by one of the following standards:

- **Preferred:** Achieve a net-zero certification from Efficiency Vermont through its Commercial New Construction Program (includes incentives for successfully completion)
- Achieve a HERS Index Score of ≤ 0
- Achieve PHIUS+ Certification

3. No fossil fuels

Except where no practical alternative is available, The the Town shall not use fossil-fuel based systems in new construction or modifications, where the modification includes the need for replacing space or water heating systems, ovens, cookstoves, or any other appliance or system that traditionally requires combustion, under any circumstances. Any exception to this policy shall be reported by the Town Manager to the Selectboard for approval.

4. Submit recommendations to the Town Manager

Provide the Town Manager with a written recommendation(s) summarizing the JTEC's process and justifying the recommendation. The JTEC shall return a written summary of its recommendations to the Town Manager by no later than November 1 or as mutually agreed upon by the Town Manager and the JTEC.

Attachment D – Small Capital Improvements Procedures

Appliances and Electronics

Appliances include refrigerators, washing machines, clothes dryers, dishwashers, and dehumidifiers. Electronics include computers, monitors, and televisions. Requestors shall utilize the following process for purchases of appliances and electronics.

- Clothes dryers, dehumidifiers, and refrigerators
 - ~~Dryers shall use electricity—no gas-fired dryers shall be permitted.~~
 - Dryer must be on Efficiency Vermont's Qualified Products List or ENERGY STAR certified. For up-to-date listings, see the Rebates section on Efficiency Vermont's website.
 - Secure all eligible rebates through Efficiency Vermont.
- Computers, dishwashers, monitors, televisions, and washing machines
 - Must be on the ENERGY STAR Most Efficient list.
 - Secure all eligible rebates through Efficiency Vermont.

Lighting

Includes indoor and outdoor lighting. Requestors shall utilize the following process.

- For larger projects, ~~complete a lighting power density analysis.~~
- All replacements ~~should shall~~ be LED, and the lowest wattage LED replacement that achieves the desired lumens ~~should shall~~ be utilized.
- All replacements ~~should shall~~ be on Efficiency Vermont's Qualified Lighting Products List, if applicable, or ENERGY STAR certified if not applicable.
- For larger projects, ~~consider contacting Efficiency Vermont for consulting services or custom incentives.~~
- Consider installing motion sensors and/or daylight controls.

Cooking Equipment

Includes refrigerators, dishwashers, cookstoves, ovens, steam cookers, hot food holding cabinets, fryers, griddles, and hood fans, etc. Requestors ~~should shall~~ utilize the following process.

- ~~All cooking equipment shall be electric.~~
- Contact Efficiency Vermont for consultation on appropriate equipment and design.
- Secure all eligible rebates through Efficiency Vermont.

Pumps, Motors, and Drives

- Contact Efficiency Vermont for free consultation on energy efficient replacements and energy-saving controls.

Pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5410(g), a municipality may impose a penalty for failure to file a homestead declaration or for filing a late homestead declaration and thereby necessitating the issuance of a corrected tax bill. The penalty may be set at amount up to three percent of the education tax on the property. However, a penalty of up to eight percent of the education tax on the property may be included if: (1) the property incorrectly declared as a homestead is located in a municipality that has a lower homestead tax rate than the nonresidential tax rate; or (2) if an undeclared homestead is located in a municipality that has a lower nonresidential tax rate than the homestead tax rate.

There is authority in 32 V.S.A. § 5410(j) for a municipality to abate (forgive or reduce) the penalty. Depending on the circumstances and basis for the request, the request for abatement is handled by either the State or by town officials. If the taxpayer is appealing a domicile determination, then the appeal goes to the State Commissioner of Taxes. If the basis for the appeal is grounded in "hardship," then it is handled by the selectboard or, at the selectboard's election, by the board of civil authority (BCA) or board of abatement (BOA). All other appeals of this penalty are made to the board of listers.

Regardless of the reason for abatement, the local administrative process is the same: the request for an abatement of a homestead declaration penalty not handled by the Commissioner must be made to the town treasurer or other person designated to collect current taxes. When that request is received, it must be forwarded to the appropriate body designated to address that particular request for abatement. This is not a purely ministerial process, however, as the person forwarding that request must include "his or her recommendation." This means that the treasurer or other person designated must review the request carefully and give his or her own recommendation as to why the request should be approved or denied.

Timing is important: the taxpayer may only appeal an assessment of this kind of penalty within 14 days of its mailing. If a local official receives a request that does not designate the reason for the appeal, it is incumbent upon that official to contact the taxpayer and ask for something in writing that explains the reason for the appeal.

If the request for abatement is for hardship, then it must be forwarded to the selectboard or to the BCA or BOA if the selectboard has designated one of these boards to hear such appeals. The law defines "hardship" as:

- A. an owner's inability to pay as certified by the Commissioner of Taxes in his or her discretion; or
- B. an owner's filing an incorrect, or failing to file a correct, homestead declaration due to one or more of the following:

1. full-time active military duty of the declarant outside the state;
2. serious illness or disability of the declarant;
3. serious illness, disability, or death of an immediate family member of the declarant;
4. fire, flood, or other disaster.

A selectboard, BCA, or BOA only has the discretionary authority to abate all or a portion of the penalty, and any tax, penalty, and interest arising out of a corrected property classification for one of the reasons listed above. Whether the selectboard approves or denies the request for abatement it must state "in detail in writing the reasons for its grant or denial of the requested abatement." 32 V.S.A. § 5410(j).

Any other reason for abatement must be forwarded to the board of listers, whose decision may be appealed by the taxpayer to the BCA and from there to Superior Court.

Regardless of which public body the appeal is made to, the appeal is conducted as a quasi-judicial hearing and should be handled in the same way as a request for abatement. After the hearing, the appropriate public body should close the hearing, enter deliberative session, and issue a final written decision including the relevant facts, the applicable law, and the body's decision and reasoning.

For general information about tax abatement, see VLCT's Info Sheet on Tax Abatement.

XIV. Homestead Declarations—Classification

The education tax rate levied on a property will depend on whether it is classified as homestead or as nonresidential property. Property is classified as a homestead when a Vermont resident files a Homestead Declaration Claim (Form HS-122) with the Department of Taxes. All property not identified by homestead declaration is automatically classified as “nonresidential.” Each town and city will levy separate homestead and nonresidential school tax rates, applying them to all properties based on this classification system.

Property owners whose dwellings meet the definition of a Vermont homestead must file a Homestead Declaration annually.

Homestead: A homestead is the principle dwelling owned/occupied by a Vermont resident as the individual’s domicile. It includes the entire parcel of land surrounding the dwelling, determined without regard to any road, river, or stream that intersects the land. It does not include buildings or improvements detached from the home and used for business purposes. It does not include that portion of a principle dwelling used for business purposes-if the portion used for business purposes includes more than 25% of the floor space of the building. The value of outbuildings and other improvements not used for business purposes includes more than 25% of the floor space of the building. The value of outbuildings and other improvements not used for business purposes are included in the value of the homestead, e.g. swimming pools, tennis courts, landscaping. See 32 V.S.A. § 5401(7) and Reg. § 1.5401(7) for details and examples.

There are no extensions available to file a Homestead Declaration and Property Tax Adjustment Claim.

In order for a property to be classified as homestead property for any tax year, the Department of Taxes must receive a Homestead Declaration on or before the April due date for filing income tax returns (usually April 15). On this form, a resident is required to declare his or her homestead as of April 1. 32 V.S.A. § 5410. In the absence of a declaration, the listers will classify the property as nonresidential. If a Homestead Declaration is filed late, but by October 15, the grand list book will indicate that fact and the property tax bill will be adjusted to reflect the homestead rate, but the filer may be subject to a penalty by the town. Declaring a nonresidential property as a homestead will also subject the filer to a penalty.

Housesite and Housesite Value: Housesite value is not used in the tax classification system. It is used in the state’s income sensitivity programs. A housesite is that portion of a homestead that includes the principle dwelling and as much of the land surrounding the dwelling as is reasonably necessary for use of the dwelling as a home. However, a housesite cannot be more than 2 acres per dwelling unit. In the case of multiple dwelling units, no more than 2 acres is allowed per dwelling unit up to a maximum of 10 acres per parcel. See 32 V.S.A. § 5401(11).

It includes all improvements not used for business or rental purposes, e.g. sheds, garages, site improvements, tennis courts, swimming pools, etc. that are located on the first 2 acres.

Housesite Equalization Value (HEV): The HEV calculation is the value of the housesite on the grand list for April 1 of the taxable year, divided by the municipality’s common level of appraisal determined by equalization of the grand list for April 1 of the year preceding the taxable year.

Income Sensitivity—Housesites

Vermont has a program to lower the tax bill for low- to moderate-income residents. Residents file for this property tax adjustment claim annually. The amount of the benefit will be related to the property owner’s income and the value of their “housesite.” If an adjustment is given, the taxpayer’s property tax bill will reflect a credit for the adjustment, and a state payment will be made to the town for that amount.

listing of all properties for which a homestead declaration has been filed (annually beginning in February from the Department).

Homestead Download directions:

From Dept. of Taxes Website

From NEMRC

If the listers have good reason to believe the property is not correctly classified, they should notify the Department of Taxes as part of the annual June 1 electronic report to the Department. The Department will initially allow the declaration as filed. Based on information from towns, the Department follows-up on domicile issues by contacting the person who declared the homestead (or failed to do so) and requesting information pertinent to the person's domicile status. The listers' input is key to ensuring equitable taxation statewide.

The listers aren't expected to make decisions regarding domicile issues. The listers' input is only one tool the Department has to determine whether a person is domiciled in Vermont. If listers have good reason to believe it's not correctly classified, report back to the Department list accordingly. Use your best judgment and leave it to the Department to follow up.

Penalties—Late Filers and Non-filers

There are penalties imposed when homestead declarations are filed late, and when a person fails to make the proper declaration. If the declaration is untimely-filed with the Department (by April 15 and October 15—check dates each year for variance), the declaration will be accepted and the town notified. The grand list book must contain a field indicating the homestead declaration has been received and a notation if it was untimely-filed. The education tax bill generated from this grand list entry will be adjusted by the Town to reflect the classification as homestead. That bill will also include a penalty equal to 1% of the education tax if it was untimely-filed.

Municipalities have discretion as to whether they will impose a penalty. 32 V.S.A. § 5410(g) provides them when a municipality receives a late-filed notice of declaration "the municipality shall issue a corrected tax bill that may include a penalty." Whether to impose a penalty and the amount of the penalty are determined by the municipal legislative body. The Department has a guide that explains education property tax guidelines (for treasurers and collectors).

Don't the listers have to go through the errors and omissions process to make a change to the grand list book after it is filed?

Yes. But homestead declaration changes are a simpler process than most changes. The approval of the selectboard is not required.

When real or personal estate is omitted from the grand list by mistake, or an obvious error is found, the listers, with the approval of the selectboard, before December 31, may supply such omissions or correct such errors and make a certificate thereon of the fact; provided, however, the listers may make a correction resulting from the filing or rescission of a homestead declaration without approval of the selectboard. 32 V.S.A. § 4261.

The certificate to be attached to the grand list book need only be signed by the listers. A sample certificate appears on the following page.

If the declaration is filed with the Department after the October deadline, the declaration will be accepted and the town notified. The town cannot amend the grand list book, however. The grand list book will change only if the homestead declaration was received at the Department on or before the October deadline.

The Department will provide listers with updated information on declarations received on a regular basis. Corrected tax bills can then be issued on those properties. No reduction in taxes can be made because of a homestead declaration filed after the October deadline. If, however, the homestead tax rate in your town is higher than the nonresidential tax rate, the owner will be billed for the additional amount plus interest at the rate the town charges for delinquent taxes. Such bill will also include a penalty (1% of the education tax) for late filing (penalty is 100% if the Department has determined the late filing was result of fraud).

Taxpayer Appeals per 32 VSA § 5410(j):

A taxpayer may appeal a determination of domicile for purposes of a homestead declaration or an assessment of fraud penalty under this section to the Commissioner, in the same manner as an appeal under chapter 151 of this title. ~~A taxpayer may appeal an assessment of any other penalty under this section to the listers within 14 days after the date of mailing of notice of the penalty, and from the listers to the Board of Civil Authority and thereafter to the courts, in the same manner as an appraisal appeal under chapter 131 of this title. The legislative body of a municipality shall have authority in cases of hardship to abate all or any portion of a penalty appealable to the listers under this section and any tax, penalty, and interest arising out of a corrected property classification under this section, and shall state in detail in writing the reasons for its grant or denial of the requested abatement. The legislative body may delegate this abatement authority to the Board of Civil Authority or the board of abatement for the municipality. Requests for abatement shall be made to the municipal treasurer or other person designated to collect current taxes, and that person shall forward all requests, with his or her recommendation, to the body authorized to grant or deny abatement.~~



VMCTA

Vermont Municipal Clerks' and Treasurers' Association

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Records Retention

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[Resources/Manuals](#)

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You must keep all records until disposal has been authorized by either a General Record Schedule (GRS), available to everyone in state or local government, or a Specific Record Schedule (SRS), specific to municipalities and/or particular town officials. The GRS and SRS are authorized by the State Archivist. New schedules are always being developed. We will post a notice on the VMCTA listserve when new schedules are adopted.

When you are ready to start a records management program, here is how to go about it.

Step 1 - Attend a training. Training is offered at VSARA on the 3rd Tuesday of each month, from 1:30 until 3:00. The [VSARA website](#) is a good resource for records management.

Step 2 - Get to know the minimum retention for the types of records that you know you have. Review the [General Record Schedules](#) that apply to everyone, and the [Specific Record Schedules](#) that apply to municipalities. There are records schedules for the Municipal Clerk, the Municipal Police Department, and Supervisory Unions.

Step 3 - Adopt a policy. Each municipality (and perhaps each office within a municipality) has to adopt a records management policy. A **sample policy** is posted below. As part of the policy, you will need to adopt the GRS and SRS, in order to legally dispose of records. It is helpful to have the list of applicable GRS and SRS as an appendix to your policy, since more are being created. Document your adoption of the records schedules.

Step 4 - Create your own town-specific or office-specific retention plan. using the state schedules and timetables. This plan should be developed in consultation with other town officials who may also use or need the records or may have the same records. You may want to include your auditor(s) in this process, as well. The retention times specified by your town's retention plan may be longer but not shorter than that specified in the state schedules. This office-specific retention plan should be part of your policy but will always be evolving as more record schedules are adopted and as you find more records.

The schedule should list the type of document, the GRS or SRS authorizing disposal, the minimum retention time, the town's adopted retention time, and the method of disposal. In larger towns, the schedule may indicate which copy of the record is the copy to be retained or the person responsible for keeping the record. A **sample retention plan** is posted below.

Step 5 - Time to start going through your records. Your goal during this process should be to get rid of records that are no longer needed, to develop an inventory of what you are keeping, to develop a directory of where records are stored, and a process for ongoing management in the future. As you go through each area (box, drawer, shelf, whatever) decide what the record is and see if it is on your retention plan.

1. If it is on your plan, and it has reached its retention, move it to an area for disposal or shredding. You may want to keep a disposal log (although it is not required), noting what type of record it is, what the minimum retention is, what time frame the record




Public Relations/Newsletter

Scholarship Committee

Website Committee

covers, and the disposal method (shred or recycle). A sample **disposal log** is posted below.

2. If the record isn't on your plan, review the GRS and SRS to see if it falls under any of those schedules. If it does, add that record type to your local retention plan, and decide on your office's retention time with input from anyone else who might need the record. If you are not sure, call or email Megan at VSARA for advice. 802-828-3897, megan.wheaton-book@vermont.gov
3. If it is on your plan but has not met its retention yet, add it to your inventory list. Come up with a system to periodically review these not-permanent but not-yet-disposable records – you could use different colored folders, or store records together that have a similar disposition times. If you are boxing up records for later disposal, consider doing a disposal log sheet now to expedite disposal later.
4. Records that are not on a GRS or SRS will have to be kept indefinitely. Add these to your inventory. If it is likely that the records will be retained permanently (not just until a new GRS is developed), consider archival storage materials. The locations of these most important records should be marked clearly so that their removal can be prioritized during an emergency. This should also be part of your disaster plan.

 [Sample Policy and Retention Plan](#) links updated October 5, 2021
 [Marshfield's Records Retention Plan](#) December 18, 2017
 [Sample Disposition Log](#)

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TOWN/CITY OF *(name of town/city)*
RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY & RETENTION PLAN

I. PURPOSE

All Vermont public agencies are responsible for creating, managing and disposing of records in accordance with State and Federal laws and regulations. This policy is to ensure that all *(name of town)* employees conform with and are aware of those mandates.

II. SCOPE

All *(name of town)* records are public records defined by 1 V.S.A. § 317 as: “any written or recorded information, regardless of physical form or characteristics, which is produced or acquired in the course of public agency business.”

III. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of *(name of town)* to comply with 1 V.S.A. Chapter 5, Subchapter 3 (referred to as “Vermont’s Public Records Laws”.) All written or recorded information, regardless of physical form or characteristics, which is produced or acquired in the normal course of town/city business, shall be managed in accordance with the Record Retention Schedule below.

IV. UNIFORM LAWS, STANDARDS, AND PROCEDURES

- a. 1 V.S.A. §§315-320: Access to Public Records, including V.S.A. § 317A: Disposition of Public Records
<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/chapter/01/005>
- b. 3 V.S.A. § 117: Vermont State Archives and Records Administration
<http://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/03/005/00117>
- c. 3 V.S.A. § 218: Agency/Department Records Management Program
<http://law.justia.com/codes/vermont/2012/title03/chapter9/section218>
- d. Archives and Records Management Standards and Best Practices
<https://sos.vermont.gov/vsara/manage/information-governance/standards/>

V. GENERAL RECORD SCHEDULES and DISPOSITION ORDERS

Vermont State Archives & Records Administration’s (hereafter referred to as VSARA) General Record Schedules (GRS) shall govern the management of records, specifically access, retention, and disposition. In limited circumstances Disposition Orders (DO) may continue to be used until superseded by GRS.

In a few instances VSARA has yet to issue a GRS to define the retention period. These documents will be retained until a ruling has been made.

VI. RECORDS MANAGEMENT GUIDELINE

On an annual basis beginning in *(name of month, year)* and every *(name of month)* thereafter, the *(name of town)* will review and dispose of any records that have been completed, closed, expired, or superseded as specified in the Record Retention Schedule (below) provided that:

1. The record has been authorized for destruction through a GRS or DO; and
2. The minimum retention requirement for the record, as stated in the applicable GRS or DO, has been fully met.
3. Any additional retention requirement adopted by the town/city and included in this policy has been fully met.

Records not yet covered by a GRS or DO will not be destroyed, and will be retained by the *(name of town)*.

VSARA has defined the term "permanent retention" as meaning until the State of Vermont no longer exists.

The term "audit" is defined as an examination by a public accounting firm.

Documents may be scanned for ease of access, but this is not considered permanent retention unless provision is made by the *(name of town)* to transfer files to future file formats.

To bring the *(name of town)* into compliance with this policy, an internal review and subsequent destruction of records as authorized by this policy will take place beginning in *(name of month, year)*.

This Policy supplants any Record Retention Policy or practices in existence prior to its effective date. All earlier revisions of this document are superseded by this revision.

The *(name of town)* Select Board/City Council reviewed and approved this procedure at their most recent meeting on _____.

VII. REFERENCES

The following references are used for determining the record retention schedule: Disposition Order (DO), State of Vermont Agency of Administration, Public Record Division, State of Vermont General Record Schedule (GRS) and VSARA, and the Environmental Protection Agency. *(add/edit list of references as necessary)*

(list appropriate GRS & Dos by names/numbers)

Example:

- GRS-1000.1002 Accounting Records
https://sos.vermont.gov/media/lpsggisr/grs-10001002_accounting.pdf

DRAFT

(3) the members and staff of the public body shall not be required to be physically present at a designated meeting location.

(b) When the public body meets electronically under subsection (a) of this section, the public body shall:

(1) use technology that permits the attendance of the public through electronic or other means;

(2) allow the public to access the meeting by telephone; and

(3) post information that enables the public to directly access and participate in meetings electronically and include this information in the published agenda for each meeting.

(c) Unless unusual circumstances make it impossible for them to do so, the legislative body of each municipality and each school board shall record its meetings held pursuant to this section.

(d) Until January 15, 2023, in the event of a staffing shortage due to COVID-19, a public body may extend the time limit for the posting of minutes prescribed in 1 V.S.A. § 312(b)(2) to not more than 10 days from the date of the meeting.

(e) Notwithstanding 1 V.S.A. § 312(c)(2) and (d)(1)(B), until January 15, 2023, a municipal public body may post any meeting agenda or notice of a special meeting in two designated electronic locations in lieu of the two designated public places in the municipality or in a combination of a

designated electronic location and a designated public place. A municipal public body shall post the notice or agenda in or near the municipal clerk's office and shall provide a copy of each notice or agenda to the newspapers of general circulation for the municipality.

Sec. 3. EXPIRATION OF TEMPORARY AUTHORITY

The authority granted by this act shall expire on January 15, 2023.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.



Town of Thetford Vermont

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Selectboard Regular Meeting *Draft* Minutes

Thetford Town Offices

(w/Virtual Attendance Option)

Monday, May 2, 2022 7:00 PM

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Selectboard members present; Sharon Harkay (Chair), Li Shen (Vice-chair), Mary Bryant, David Goodrich, Steve Tofel
Others present; Town Manager Bryan Gazda, Town Clerk/Treasurer Tracy Borst, DPW Foreman Dale Lewis (via Zoom), Interim Police Chief Michael Scruggs, Alice Steward (TJEC member, via Zoom), Selectboard Assistant Martie Betts
Participating community members; Melissa Krzal, Barbara DeFelice

Sharon Harkay called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

1. Agenda Review

No changes to the agenda.

2. Town Manager Report – Bryan Gazda

1. Roads Update

Bryan reported that the DPW is in the final grading stage for gravel roads that were impacted in March. Dale Lewis (DPW Foreman) reported that they are currently on Houghton Hill, Gove Hill, New Boston Road and Picknell Road. Repairs have been done and are holding up. The mud that was pushed to the side is now being mixed back in.

Bryan said he has a preliminary draft design for Latham Road and has a meeting scheduled for this week. He hopes it will go out to bid in June.

2. Upper Valley Ambulance Update

Bryan has been made aware that Upper Valley Ambulance has acquired a new ambulance. David Goodrich, liaison to Upper Valley Ambulance, said they took possession of the new ambulance on April 11th. This ambulance is built on the chassis of a Ford F350 and has 4-wheel drive. Mary Bryant asked if the upgrade would allow them to access roads in mud season. David confirmed.

3. Water Study Update

Bryan said the water study group has been meeting every other week. They met last week and determined what should be on the Request for Qualifications (RFQ). This must be submitted to the state.

4. PM Airport Update

Bryan said there will be a meeting on Thursday at 12:30.

5. Ped/Bike Grant Update

Bryan said this has cleared environmental review and he is continuing to move it forward.

6. Chief of Police Appointment

Bryan said that he would like to appointment Michael Scruggs as the new Police Chief. Michaels has been acting interim chief for the past 4 months. The Appointment is effective as of May 1st.



Town of Thetford Vermont

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1 Michael said he has so many people to thank, including former chief, Mike Evans (present at the
2 meeting), his wife Hillary, and his daughters. He is looking forward to working with the Town of
3 Thetford to create a better community.

4 **7. Other**

5 Bryan thanked Missy Krzal for bringing hanging plant baskets for the front entry of Town Hall.
6 Sharon Harkay and Li Shen spoke about the work being done to create the pollinator gardens
7 around the community garden on the Thetford Center Green.

9 **3. Public Comment**

10 Melissa Krzall said it was her opinion to change the heating system in Town Hall all at once. If it
11 was done in 2 phases it would end up costing more.

12 Dale Lewis congratulated Mike Scruggs for being the new Police Chief.

14 **4. EV Charging Station Study Report Presentation by Thetford Joint Energy 15 Committee**

16 Alice Stewart, a member of the Thetford Joint Energy Committee, presented information from
17 the study, which can be accessed [HERE](#). The study was done in conjunction with DuBois and
18 King.

19 Alice highlighted the different charging station levels and site criteria. Using the site criteria, 20
20 sites were narrowed down to 3 priority locations: the Town Office, Thetford Elementary School
21 and Huggett's Irving Station. Each site property owner was contacted to determine interest.

22 Sharon was curious as to why nothing was selected in Post Mills, such as Bakers.

23 Alice said it was the overall feeling in the steering committee that Post Mills was a little far from
24 the interstate.

25 The next step is to talk to property owners of the sites and governing bodies for confirmation of
26 the locations. Then they should engage a qualified EV supply equipment installer for assessment
27 of locations, to identify and vet funding sources, and apply for funds. We would need to involve
28 the town attorney to draft a Memorandum of Understanding if using a private site.

29 Alice pointed out that the range of costs for the charging stations is dependent on the type of
30 equipment chosen and where it is located. For instance, it might be less expensive at Town Hall
31 because it is a dirt parking lot and not paved.

32 Mary said it almost seems as if we need to get a ballpark estimate before we can even consider a
33 Level 3 charging station.

34 Alice recommended speaking to the property owners first, to make sure they are willing to have
35 the station installed. If they say no, another location may not warrant a Level 3 charger.

36 Li asked if vehicles, other than Tesla's, have a universal plug. Alice said that was her
37 understanding.

38 Sharon asked how you keep a single person from hogging up the charging station.

39 Alice said you would want to look at putting in multiple chargers at the same site.

40 Steve asked if there was a plan in place to get payment for the electricity.

41 Alice said it depends on the type of station that is set up. Some vendors set it up to charge the
42 user fee, others take on the cost.

43 Li asked about the outside stations at Dan & Whit's. She understood that Dan & Whit's used a
44 company called ChargePoint and they (D&W) pay for the electricity they use.



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1 Alice said ChargePoint came up and we likely will not have enough business to use it.
2 The question of “what is the cost to an individual for using a level 3 and will they be willing to
3 use them at that cost?” was asked in chat. Alice said she wasn’t able to answer that question.
4 Barbara DeFelice said there were charging station at the Hannaford’s in Bradford, and behind a
5 hotel, near the I-89/I-91 intersection. She said as Alice has pointed out, this is a great report, but
6 we need to figure out what people in Thetford would be willing to do.
7 Mary said they should be looking at grant options, and maybe target more in East Thetford if
8 there was more accessibility or grants for that area.
9 Alice noted that this is really about the feasibility of installing chargers. A big challenge is that
10 technology is always changing.

11
12 **5. Town Audit – Presentation on How to Read and What to Look For by Chad Hewitt**
13 **(to access the audit, click [HERE](#))**

14 Sharon said that Chad Hewitt was at the meeting to explain what to look for and how to read the
15 audit.

16 Chad said he would be back at Town Hall next Friday, as he is scheduled to have some quality
17 time with Tracy and Kristie.

18 Chad proceeded to touch on sections of the audit, noting that pages 1-3 are called the auditors
19 opinion and it is our opinion on the financial reporting of the Town of Thetford. Unqualified
20 opinion is the best rating you can get and as long as Chad has been doing this it has been
21 unqualified. Other than the auditor’s opinion, the rest is from Tracy and Kristie.

22 Chad explained that they focus on the major funds, general and highway. These funds are the
23 majority of your activity.

24 Chad said it helps to think of funds as separate little enterprises with separate sets of books.

25 While the auditors focus on the major funds, they look at everything but to a different level.

26 Chad encouraged the department heads and others who get a budget status report from Tracy
27 every month to take the time to review it.

28 Chad said the expectation is for towns to meet their budget, and if they don’t, he will ask why.

29 There is never anything wrong going under or over, the key is knowing why.

30 Chad said he will be coming up in June to discuss the results of 2021 year.

31 Li thanked Kristie and Tracy for doing all this remarkable work all the time.

32 Mary agreed and said she is very impressed with how Kristie and Tracy keep track of everything.

33 Chad said he is always available to answer any questions.

34 The Selectboard thanked Chad for attending the meeting.

35
36 **6. Appointment of Commissioner to Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission**
37 **to Represent Thetford**

38 **Motion** by Sharon Harkay that we appoint Angela McCanna as our representative to serve as a
39 commissioner on the Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission Board. **VOTE: All in**
40 **favor (5-0-0). Motion passed.**

41

42 **7. Discussion of Whether or Not to Adjust Selectboard Stipends**

43 Steve Tofel said that when he was doing research on employee pay about a year ago, he noticed
44 that many other towns gave the Selectboard chair a higher stipend than the other board members.



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- 1 Sharon does put in more time and said he thought the chair's stipend should increase by \$500, to
2 \$1500.00.
3 Mary agreed.
4 Li Shen disagreed, saying that with a Town Manager in place, Selectboard chairs have fewer
5 responsibilities. It seemed a dis-service to previous chairs to increase the compensation now
6 when the workload is lighter.
7 David agreed with Steve and Mary.
8 **Motion** by Mary Bryant that we increase the stipend of the Selectboard Chair to \$1500.00.
9 **VOTE by Roll Call:** Mary Bryant – in favor, Steve Tofel – in favor, David Goodrich – in favor,
10 Li Shen – opposed, Sharon Harkay – abstain **Motion passed.**
11
12

8. Warrants and Minutes

14 PR#9 review#19.1	\$9293.04
15 #8.4	\$21541.94
16 #16.3	\$2245.71
17 #8.2	\$9660.27

- 18 **Motion** by Li Shen to approve the warrants as presented. **VOTE:** All in favor (5-0-0). **Motion**
19 **passed.**
20 **Motion** by Mary Bryant to accept the minutes from regular Selectboard meeting of April 18,
21 2022, as amended. **VOTE:** All in favor (5-0-0). **Motion passed.**
22

9. Adjourn

- 24 **Motion** by Steve Tofel to adjourn the regular Selectboard meeting at 8:37 PM. **VOTE:** All in
25 favor. **Motion passed.**
26