



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, August 1, 2022 7:00 PM

Selectboard members present: Sharon Harkay (chair), Li Shen (vice-chair 7:04 PM), Mary Bryant (joined the meeting via Zoom at 9:12 PM), David Goodrich, Steve Tofel
Others present: Town Manager Bryan Gazda, Town Clerk/Treasurer Tracy Borst, Conservation Commission Chair Jim McCracken, Planning Commission Chair David Forbes, Selectboard Assistant Martie Betts
Participating Community members: Jody Biddle, Cathy Newbury

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) Post Mills Airport Update

Bryan has been in touch with Attorney Monahan about the matter. The appraisals for real and personal property are still underway and Bryan will be notified when they are done, which will likely be sometime in September.

b) Latham Road Project Update

This project is still set to go on August 15th. There are some expected delays starting the week of August 14th. The project is anticipated to go through early November.

c) Sayre Bridge Repair

Repairs were done last Thursday, including the sideboard, and an insurance claim has been submitted. Sharon asked if the town received the money from Historical Society and Bryan said he believed the money was received.

d) Other

Chief Scruggs informed Bryan that Claremont Ford said the order for the hybrid police cruiser has been cancelled, and no reason was given. Bryan has a call into the dealership. Ford is the only company that offers a hybrid model of a police vehicle.

3) Public Comment

No public comment.

4) Update from Conservation Commission; Jim McCracken

Jim McCracken, chair of the Conservation Commission, was at the meeting to give the Selectboard an update on the activities of the commission. Jim gave statistics from Green Up Day, and the trees on Taylor property, as well as treating for invasives.

Jim talked about grants and said that they are not matching, but it would be good to know how invested the town is.



Town of Thetford Vermont

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

Jim noted that some properties are up for renewal of the land management plan. Next year will be the 15th year, and the commission has been visiting all the locations and reading about the plan in our meetings, as there are some new commission members. David Paganelli the Orange County town forester will probably write the renewed plan, at no cost. His plan is to visit all the properties this fall and, in the spring, to do his data collection. The goal of the commission will be to look at the management priorities for each property and submit them to David. They have not decided how they want to involve the public.

Jim said there was an amazing response to the pollinator education series. There is one more workshop which entails collecting seeds and preparing the pollinator gardens for winter. Because of COVID, there have not been indoor education events. One event coming up is a paddle to the three corners of Lake Fairlee on August 17th. People from West Fairlee, Fairlee and Thetford have been invited to paddle out and meet in the lake where the three town lines intersect. Jim noted that one of the commission members is stepping down so they will be looking for people who might want to join the commission. There are 2 vacancies.

5) Zoning Bylaw Revision Regarding Accessory Dwelling Units; David Forbes

David Forbes, chair of the Planning Commission, said this is the first in a series of revisions that will be made to the housing related portions of the Zoning bylaw. The information sent to the Selectboard is the result of conversations between the Planning Commission and Development Review Board chair, Tim Taylor. David said there are three changes recommended, and when discussed they could find no rationale for keeping that current section of the bylaw. The Planning Commission is working toward streamlining the process of developing an ADU (Accessory Dwelling Unit) without bypassing the best practices, the rigors of site plan review and general standards within the current zoning bylaws.

Tim Taylor gave additional comments in support of the changes.

Sharon asked if they had considered tiny houses that are on wheels when making these changes. David said one of the new commission members, Cynthia Shelton, has been a driving force behind discussion of tiny houses on wheels. David said the commission is taking a very careful approach to it. New Hampshire passed bill 482 which deals with tiny houses on wheels bill, and it has a fairly detailed and exhaustive list of provisions and requirements for such buildings. The intention is to look at that New Hampshire bill as compared to Vermont state law and statute, translate and adopt the provisions of such a bill and discuss it even further. We're not going to casually waive it through.

Jody Biddle said she heard if a tiny house is on wheels, the land is taxed but not the building. David could not confirm that but will do some research and get back to Jody.

Cynthia Shelton said she lives in a tiny house that she did not build. It falls in a crack between what an RV is and what a home is. She is looking at how to properly tax as a home. Cynthia noted it is very expensive to transport things that don't already have wheels.

There was brief discussion about septic needs for a tiny home.

Motion by Li Shen to accept the language as offered to change the Zoning Bylaw with respect to Accessory Dwelling Units. VOTE by Roll Call; Steve Tofel – in favor, Li Shen – in favor, David Goodrich – in favor, Sharon Harkay – in favor. **Motion passed.**



Town of Thetford Vermont

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

6) Setting of the 2022 Tax Rate

The Selectboard reviewed a spreadsheet that Tracy Borst provided. Bryan noted that thinking back to the budget, the only difference is an increase of \$13,600. For the town rate, we are within pennies of the proposed budget, including all of the social service articles.

Tracy noted that the education rates have decreased so the overall tax rate is down 7 cents for the residential rate, and 1 cent for the non-residential rate.

Motion by Steve Tofel to approve the tax rate as presented by the Town Manager and Treasurer for a total town rate of .855215. VOTE by Roll Call; Steve Tofel – in favor, Li Shen – in favor, David Goodrich – in favor, Sharon Harkay – in favor. **Motion passed.**

7) Discussion of ARPA Funds Survey Formats

Sharon said the intention for tonight is to look at various survey formats, see which one we like the best and then submit ideas to Bryan so he can draft a survey for review on September 12th, noting that she likes the format from the town of Underhill.

Steve Tofel agreed.

David Goodrich liked the survey from the town of Dorset, but noted that the Underhill survey is similar, but has more details.

Li Shen said the Underhill survey is very detailed but maybe people want that.

Jody Biddle, chair of the Thetford Elder Network (TEN), said she had two things would like to bring to the attention of the Selectboard and those are elders and transportation. It seemed that in the categories for using ARPA funding, a lot of focus was on youth programs and children, but not one mention of reaching out to elders or ways to serve them.

Cathy Newbury, also on the Thetford Elder Network, explained how COVID has impacted the funding for TEN, and what that means for the programs they offer seniors. She encouraged including in the survey a question for residents to think about what types of groups they would be willing to see the town invest in. Cathy said they submitted a grant for ARPA funds and denied because we are not a non-profit. They had assumed that they would qualify since they are already connected to the program. At the moment TEN doesn't receive any direct funding from the town, but they do get administrative help from the town. In the 2 years since COVID, TEN has seen a decline in their bank account of around 40%. TEN needs help to making that up and ARPA funds seem like a good way to do that.

Li said she was looking at the document from the US Treasury, and it is true that a lot of programs are emphasized around children. There is nothing about seniors at all.

Cathy also suggested that climate mitigation measures would be helpful for seniors. While there have been efforts to help with weatherization, other things are out there, such as solar

The Selectboard agreed that the Underhill survey was the format they would like to use, and they will submit category and question ideas to Bryan. He will put together a survey for review at the September 12th Selectboard meeting.

8) Possible Adoption of Revised Facilities Use Policy

The Selectboard reviewed the updated draft from Bryan. Sharon noted that two locations had been added: the Thetford Hill Green and Memorial Park in Post Mills. Sharon did not think they had control over the Thetford Hill Green. Li said that the Thetford Hill Green is town land and should be included in the policy along with the Thetford Center Green and Memorial Park.



Town of Thetford Vermont

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

Li commented on the number of cars parked on Thetford Hill during the recent Thetford Hill Fair. She felt sure there were more than 150 people on the green.

Bryan agreed and suggested a higher amount of people in the policy.

Sharon said she strongly felt that somebody needs to discuss the addition of the Thetford Hill Green with the Thetford Hill Village Improvement Society (THVIS).

Li said she spoke at length with someone on the THVIS about the fair, which has been going since 1903. The THVIS does take care of the green and the fair is the fundraiser to cover the expenses of the care. While they do take care of the property, they don't own it, the town owns it. The town would be liable for any injury on that green.

Sharon said she understood what Li was saying, she is concerned that the people who have been involved for years are going to have a different point of view.

Bryan added that he did speak with PACIF (Property & Casualty Intermunicipal Fund) and they understand the exemption for the small venues. If there was a small group with no insurance, they understand we would be the first one in line.

Sharon said with the addition of the Thetford Hill Green and Memorial Park, she did not think they could go further with the policy until Bryan reached out to the Village Improvement Society.

9) Consideration to Approve Water Study Agreement – Stantec Consulting Services

Bryan said this agreement has been vetted and is recommended by the water study committee. The amount the town will have to pay is \$2,424.00. Tracy Borst asked where that money would be coming from and wanted to confirm that the remaining amount would be the municipal planning grant.

Bryan confirmed the grant and said the town portion would come from the general fund or the planning and consulting fund.

Motion by Li Shen to authorize the Town Manager to sign the agreement with Stantec for the Municipal Planning Grant Water Study. VOTE by Roll Call; Steve Tofel – in favor, Li Shen – in favor, David Goodrich – in favor, Sharon Harkay – in favor. **Motion passed.**

10) Caterer Request for Liquor License

Motion by Sharon Harkay to suspend the Selectboard meeting to convene a meeting of the local Liquor Control Board at 8:41PM. VOTE; All in favor (4-0-0). **Motion passed.**

Motion by Sharon Harkay to approve the request from The Monkey House to include alcohol at a wedding reception on September 4th, 2022. VOTE; All in favor (4-0-0). **Motion passed.**

Motion by Sharon Harkay to approve the request from The Monkey House to include alcohol at a wedding reception on August 27th, 2022. VOTE; All in favor (4-0-0). **Motion passed.**

Motion by Sharon Harkay to approve the request from The Monkey House to include alcohol at a wedding reception on September 17th, 2022. VOTE; All in favor (4-0-0). **Motion passed.**

Motion by Sharon Harkay to adjourn the meeting of the local Liquor Control Board at 8:45 PM and reconvene the Selectboard meeting. VOTE; All in favor (4-0-0). **Motion passed.**

11) Warrants and Minutes (4 meetings)

#31.1 \$4,901.58

#15.4 \$26,570.56



Town of Thetford Vermont

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

#14.2 \$8,842.50
#27.3 \$24,462.00
#30.1 \$36,435.86
#26.3 \$367,213.30

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

Motion by Sharon Harkay to approve the regular Selectboard meeting minutes of June 20th, 2022, as edited. VOTE; (3-0-0) Li Shen abstained. **Motion passed.**

Motion by Sharon Harkay to approve the regular Selectboard meeting minutes of June 27th, 2022, as edited. VOTE; All in favor (4-0-0). **Motion passed.**

12) Anticipated Executive Session Regarding Negotiating or Securing a Real Estate Purchase or Lease Option (Initial Discussion) pursuant to 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(2).

Motion by Sharon Harkay to enter Executive Session to discuss Negotiating or Securing a Real Estate Purchase or Lease Option per 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(2) at 9:11 PM and invite the Town Manager. VOTE by Roll Call; Steve Tofel – in favor, Li Shen – in favor, David Goodrich – in favor, Mary Bryant – in favor, Sharon Harkay – in favor (5-0-0). **Motion passed.**

Motion by Sharon Harkay to exit executive session at 9:54 PM. VOTE; All in favor (5-0-0). **Motion passed.**

No action taken.

13) Adjourn

Motion by Steve Tofel to adjourn the regular Selectboard meeting at 9:55 PM. VOTE; All in favor (5-0-0). **Motion passed.**