



Town of Thetford Vermont

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

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

Monday, November 7, 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
 1. Latham Road/Stowell Bridge Updates
 2. Election Day/Veterans' Day Holidays
3. Public Comment
4. Discussion of Jackson Brook Class 4 Road
5. Discussion of Traffic Ordinance Revision
6. Possible Appointment to the Thetford Joint Energy Committee
7. Continuing Discussion of Agricultural Tax Stabilization
8. Discussion of Draft ARPA Survey
9. Minutes and Warrants
10. Anticipated Executive Session Pertaining to Employment or Evaluation of Public Officer or Employee per 1 V.S.A. § 313(3)(a)(3)
11. Adjourn

Town of Thetford

Town Manager's Office

Memorandum

November 2, 2022

To: Town of Thetford Selectboard

Re: Jackson Brook Road Class 4 Improvement Request

Enclosed is a request from D.R. Mani to improve approximately 1400 +/- linear feet of the Class 4 section of Jackson Brook Road (see attached map). The Mani's purchased parcel number 05-01-76 (125 acres) and request the existing Class 4 road improvements that ends in the general area of 344 Jackson Brook Road (Hack's property) driveway be improved to their southern property line. The Mani's have engaged Northwoods Excavating to perform this work and will pay for the cost of the improvements. The proposed road improvement map shows the proposed road will be 12 feet wide with three new cross culverts to replace existing culverts. In addition, there will be an underground trench for Green Mountain Power electrical and EC Fiber lines.

Of note, while researching this request, it was discovered there is a potential discrepancy between the historical road map length of Jackson Brook Road (Class 3 and 4) of .52 mile and the legal and zoning/subdivision recorded length of +/- .58 mile. Based on my research, a conversation with former Lister Janet Stowell, who also research this issue, and conversation/emails with the Mani's real estate attorney, Margaret Jacobs, we are of the same opinion the historical road length is not reflective of the legal length of the road. I have included documents and emails from attorney Margaret Jacobs for your review to this fact. In addition, I have contacted Chris Bump at VTrans and will work with VTrans on updating/correcting our road map.

I look forward to answering any questions you may have on Monday.

Bryan Gazda

From: Mani Family <manifamily.br@gmail.com> on behalf of Mani Family
Sent: Wednesday, September 14, 2022 8:41 AM
To: Bryan Gazda
Cc: Angela Jones; Dale Lewis; townmanager@thetfordvt.gov; Mary Ellen Parkman
Subject: Re: Improvements to Class 4 section of Jackson Brook Road
Attachments: Jackson Brook Road Development Plan.pdf; Revised Proposal 8.1.22.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hello Brian,

Attached is a plan showing details of the proposed improvements to the Class 4 section of Jackson Brook Road. I have reattached the proposal from Northwoods Excavating that shows the work that will be performed. Please let me know if you need any additional information or material for presentation to the Selectboard.

Best,
D. R. Mani
(978) 835-1421 (mobile)

On Tue, Aug 23, 2022 at 10:31 AM Mani Family <manifamily.br@gmail.com> wrote:
Hello Bryan,

Thanks very much for the information, and for the welcome to Thetford. We really love the property and town, and we are looking forward to spending more time there.

In the next week or so, we will draw up a site plan and email it to you for presentation to the Selectboard.

Best,
D. R. Mani & Lakshmi Kaja

On Tue, Aug 23, 2022 at 9:39 AM Bryan Gazda <bgazda@thetfordvt.gov> wrote:

Dr. Mani,

Congratulations on the purchase of your property and welcome to Thetford! Besides our zoning bylaws, I've attached our Class 4 Road Policy, which provides general information regarding Class 4 roads and the requirements you will need to follow.

It would be helpful if a site plan showing the location of improvements was provided for Selectboard when they consider your request.

Thank you,

Bryan Gazda

Town Manager

From: Mani Family <manifamily.br@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2022 5:15 PM
To: Angela Jones <ajones@thetfordvt.gov>; dlewis@thetfordvt.gov; townmanager@thetfordvt.gov
Cc: Angela Jones <zoning@thetfordvt.gov>; Mary Ellen Parkman <MaryEllen.northwoodsexcavating@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: Improvements to Class 4 section of Jackson Brook Road

We also understand that the Thetford Selectboard will need to approve this road improvement request. Hopefully the proposal and information provided in the email below will be sufficient. Please let us know if anything else is needed from us.

Best,

D. R. Mani & Lakshmi Kaja

On Mon, Aug 22, 2022 at 12:53 PM Mani Family <manifamily.br@gmail.com> wrote:

TO:

Ms. Angela Jones (Zoning Administrator)

Mr. Dale Lewis (DPW Foreman)

Mr. Bryan Gazda (Town Manager)

Hello All,

We recently purchased the property at 0 Jackson Brook Road (Parcel # 05-01-76, Span # 642-202-10230) and we are in the process of improving the Class 4 section at the end of Jackson Brook Road to make is easier to access the

#4

property and maintain the road. In addition, we are planning to run underground electrical service to the lot (which will be installed by Green Mountain Power).

The work involved for this will be performed by Northwoods Excavating Inc, and the proposal is attached. This email is an FYI for the relevant Town Authorities listed above.

Based on sections 1.04(C) and 1.04(K) of the Thetford Zoning Bylaw, we are assuming a zoning permit is **NOT** required for this work. Please let us know if our understanding is incorrect or if additional information or documentation is needed.

Regards,

D. R. Mani & Lakshmi Kaja

(978) 835-1421 (mobile)



September 11, 2022

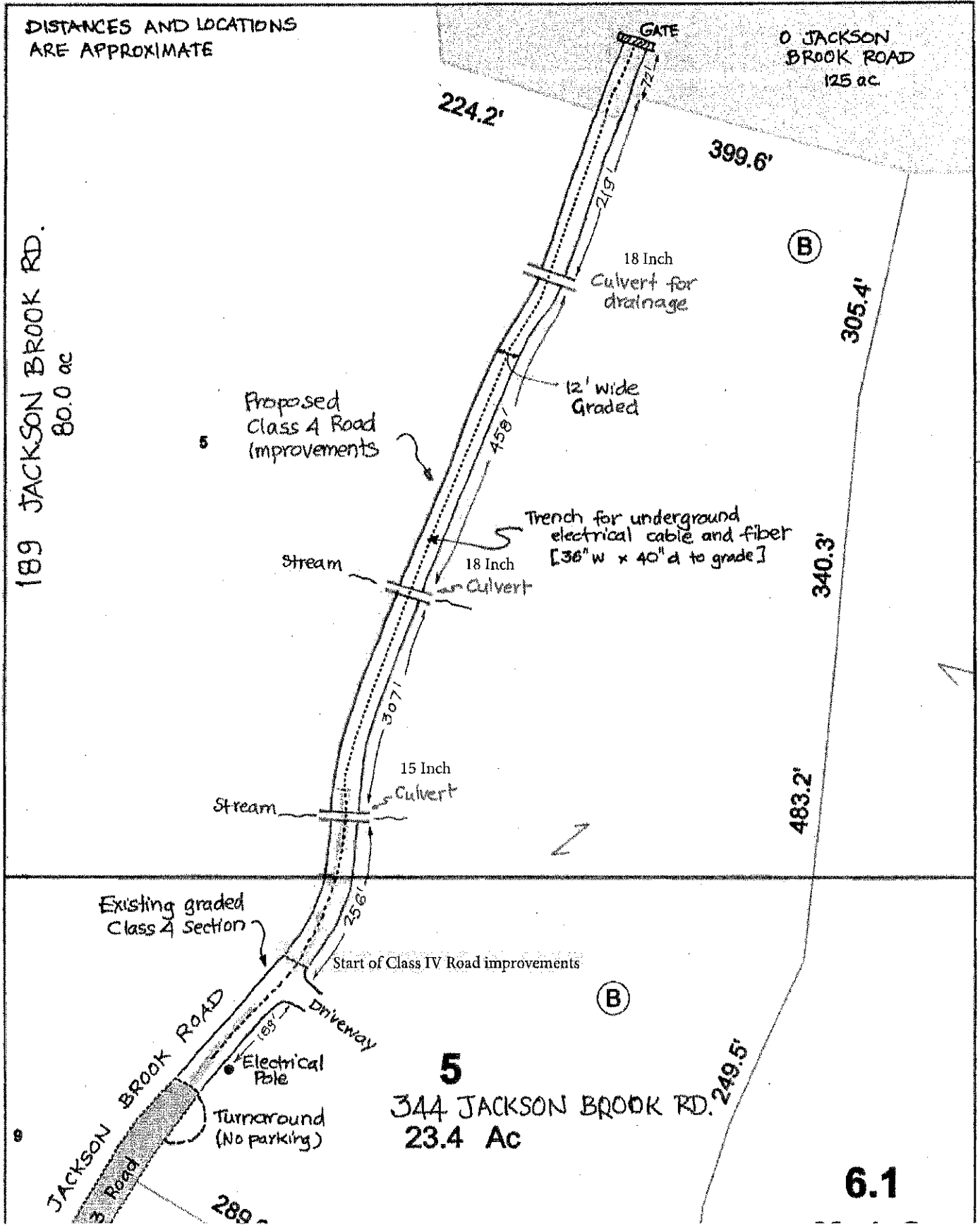
Thetford, VT

1 inch = 135 Feet



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DISTANCES AND LOCATIONS ARE APPROXIMATE



Bryan Gazda

From: Margaret Jacobs <maj@lawmaj.com> on behalf of Margaret Jacobs
Sent: Monday, October 24, 2022 4:57 PM
To: Bryan Gazda
Subject: Re: Jackson Brook Road (Mani Family Trust)

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

This is really interesting, Bryan.

This is very interesting and persuasive, Bryan. If your worry was that the abutters to Jackson Brook Road would object if the Mani Family asserted rights to Jackson Brook Road and developed the road up to their property line, it's pretty easy to point to the survey that is referenced in their deeds. That Ken LeClair survey very clearly depicts their boundary lines as Jackson Brook Road which goes right up to the Mani property.

I represented the Blumbergs when they purchased their 80 acres so I will check the title file to see if I have anything interesting.

But the LeClair survey - regardless of what VTrans says - is evidence enough. Both the Wattses and the Hacks were fully informed that their properties abutted a public road.

Margaret A. Jacobs

Law Office of Margaret A. Jacobs

45 Lyme Road, Suite 209

Hanover, NH 03755

Phone: (603) 643-5010

Fax: (603) 643-2551
maj@lawmaj.com

On Mon, Oct 24, 2022 at 4:27 PM Bryan Gazda <bgazda@thetfordvt.gov> wrote:

Hi Margaret,

#4

Bryan Gazda

From: Margaret Jacobs <maj@lawmaj.com> on behalf of Margaret Jacobs
Sent: Tuesday, November 1, 2022 2:45 PM
To: Bryan Gazda
Subject: Mani road issue

Dear Brian: Sorry I missed your call. My analysis that the two abutters knew (or should have known) that the road went to the Mani property is because both deeds were drawn with reference to a plan (the same plan) that depicted their boundary as the road and depicted the road going all the way through to the Mani property.

I don't doubt that there may not be anything on the ground to give notice of this but the deeds and the survey are clear - the road that separated the two abutters goes to the Mani property line.

I didn't mean to imply that both abutters had actual notice.

I will be in the office early tomorrow morning - by 8:00 - happy to talk.

Margaret A. Jacobs

Law Office of Margaret A. Jacobs

45 Lyme Road, Suite 209

Hanover, NH 03755

Phone: (603) 643-5010

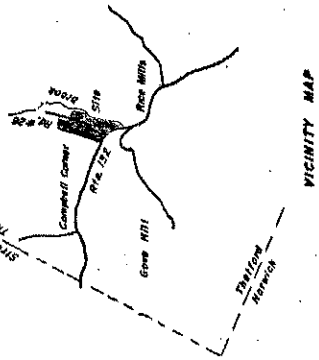
Fax: (603) 643-2551
maj@lawmaj.com

52 mile = 2745.6 BLF

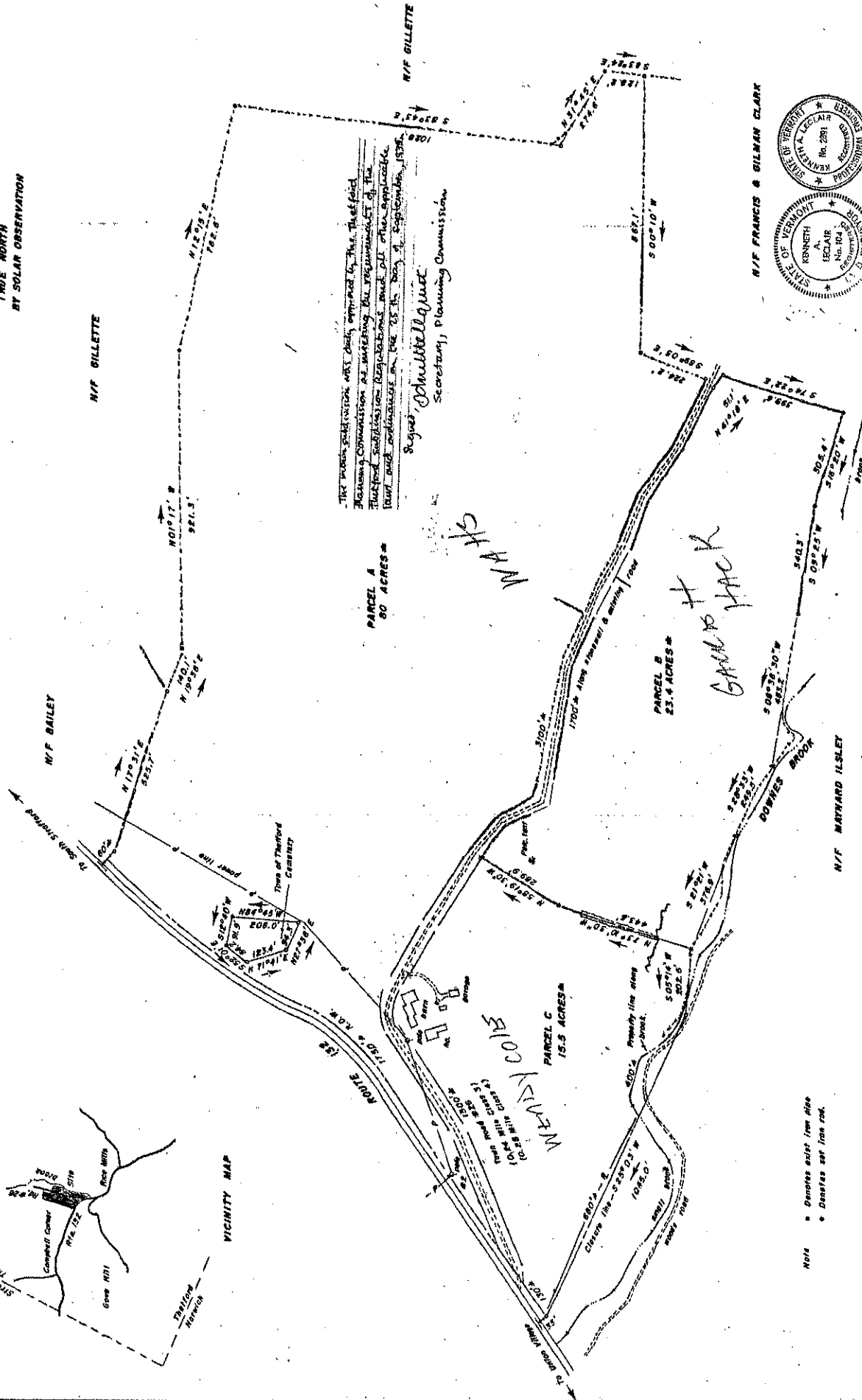
300 WLF = .587 mile



TRUE NORTH
BY SOLAR OBSERVATION

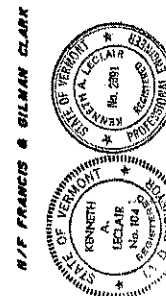


VICINITY MAP



THE PURCHASER'S attention is hereby directed to the fact that the Planning Commission of the State of Vermont has approved the plan of the Thetford Subdivision and has issued its approval. The plan and subdivision is subject to the approval of the State of Vermont on the 25th day of September, 1979.

Signed: *Janice Herzenberg*
Secretary, Planning Commission



JANICE HERZENBERG
ROUTE 132 THETFORD, VT
Scale 1" = 200' Date AUG. 29, 1979
Proj. No 47766-79
K.A. LECLAIR ASSOC., Inc. Engineers
HANOVER, N.H.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I HAVE MADE A SURVEY OF THE TRACT SHOWN HEREON AND THAT THIS PLAN IS MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FIELD NOTES OF SAID SURVEY.



Note
• Denotes exit iron pipe
• Denotes set iron rod.

E.O. Peltier

117A

Info from
Lister's files!

#4



TOWN OF THETFORD

TRAFFIC ORDINANCE

Pursuant to the provisions of Title 23, Vermont Statutes Annotated, Sections 1007 and 1008, and Title 24, Vermont Statutes Annotated Sections 1971 and 2291 (I), (4), and (5); and such other enactments as may be material hereto, it is hereby ordained by the Selectboard of the Town of Thetford that the following Traffic Ordinance is adopted for the Town of Thetford.

ARTICLE I DEFINITIONS

The definitions in Title 23, Vermont Statutes Annotated, Section 4 are incorporated by reference.

ARTICLE II SCOPE

This Ordinance establishes special traffic regulations on public highways within the Town of Thetford.

ARTICLE III TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES

Section 1: It shall be unlawful for any person to disobey the direction of a traffic control device except in response to the direction of a law enforcement officer.

Section 2: It shall be unlawful for any person to intentionally remove, injure, obstruct, deface, alter, or tamper with any traffic control device.

Section 3: It shall be unlawful for any person to install any device which may resemble or be mistaken for an official traffic control device without prior approval of Town of Thetford ~~Selectmen~~ Selectboard.

ARTICLE IV SPEED REGULATIONS

On the basis of traffic and engineering surveys, the following maximum speed limits are hereby established:

Academy Road	25 mph beginning at VT Route 113 extending southerly .4 miles to just south of 399 Academy Road .8 miles to just north of 875 Academy Road; then, 35 mph southerly for approximately 2 1.6 miles to the entrance to Hillcrest Cemetery; then, 25 mph from Hillcrest Cemetery southerly to the Union Village Covered Bridge
Amasa Bond Road	25 mph the entire length from Academy Road, back to Academy Road
Apple Tree Road	25 mph the entire length from Garey Road to the end
Asa Burton Road	25 mph the entire length from VT Route 113 to the end
Barker Road	35 mph entire length from VT Route 113 to Sawnee Bean Road
Berger Road	25 mph the entire length from VT Route 113 to the end
Bragg Road	25 mph the entire length from Robinson Hill Road to the Class 4 section
Bridge Road	25 mph the entire length from US Route 5 to the River Access
Burnham Road	25 mph the entire length from Academy Road to Godfrey Road
Buzzell Bridge Road	25 mph the entire length from VT Route 113 to the Union Village Dam gate
Cadwell Road	25 mph the entire length from VT Route 113 to Sanborn Road
Campbell Flats Road	25 mph the entire length from Academy Road to the Thetford/Norwich town line
Cider Mill Road	25 mph the entire length from US Route 5 to the Class 4 section
Clay Road	25 mph the entire length from Schoolhouse Hill Road to US Route 5
Cobble Hill Road	25 mph the entire length from Asa Burton Road to the end
Colby Road-North	25 mph the entire length from Sawnee Bean Road to the Class 4 section
Colby Road- South	25 mph the entire length from Sawnee Bean Road to the Class 4 section
Cranberry Hill Road	25 mph the entire length from Godfrey Road to the end
Cream Street	25 mph the entire length from Route 132 to the end
Cross Street	25 mph the entire length from VT Route 244 to West Fairlee Road
Ely Road	25 mph the entire length from the Thetford/Fairlee town line to the end
Evans Road	25 mph the entire length from VT Route 113 to the end
Five Comers Road	30 mph the entire length from VT Route 113 to the intersection of Turnpike Road-North
Garey Road	25 mph the entire length from VT Route 113 to the end
Godfrey Road	35 mph the entire length from VT Route 113 to the Thetford/Norwich town line
Gove Hill Road	35 mph the entire length from Route 132 to New Boston Road
Hauger Road	25 mph the entire length from Academy Road to the end
Houghton Hill Road	25 mph the entire length from VT Route 113 to Turnpike Road
Ilsley Road	25 mph the entire length from Gove Hill Road to the end
Jackson Brook Road	25 mph the entire length from Route 132 to the end
Judd Road	25 mph the entire length from New Boston Road to the end
Lakeshore Road	25 mph the entire length from VT Route 244 to Robinson Hill Road
Latham Road	35 mph the entire length from VT Route 113 to US Route 5
Library Road	25 mph the entire length from VT Route 113 to Academy Road
Lower Bailey Road	25 mph the entire length from Gove Hill Road to the end
Lower Cream Street	25 mph the entire length from Route 132 to the end
Main Street, Union Village	25 mph the entire length from Academy Road/Union Village Bridge to the Thetford/Norwich town line
Miller Pond Road	35 mph the entire length from Route 132 to the Thetford/Strafford town line.
Mud Pond Road	25 mph the entire length from VT Route 113 to the Class 4 section

New Boston Road	25 mph the entire length from the Thetford/Strafford town line to the Thetford/Norwich town line
Norford Lake Road	25 mph the entire length from Stowell Road, Thetford/Norwich town line to the end
Old Stone Road	25 mph the entire length from Godfrey Road to Quail John Road
Old Strong Road	25 mph the entire length from Academy Road to the Class 4 section
Pavilion Road	30 mph the entire length to US Route 5 at each end
Pero Hill Road	25 mph the entire length from Colby Road - South to the end
Phelps Road	25 mph the entire length from Barker Road to the end
Picknell Road	25 mph the entire length from Gove Hill Road to the end
Poor Farm Road-South	25 mph the entire length from Tucker Hill Road to the Class 4 section
Potato Hill Road - North	25 mph the entire length from the Five Comers intersection to the Class 4 section
Potato Hill Road - South	25 mph the entire length from Turnpike Road - South to the Class 4 section
Quail John Road	25 mph the entire length from Godfrey Road to US Route 5
Quinibeck Road	35 mph from the Five Comers intersection northerly to the Thetford/Fairlee town line
Rabbit Road	25 mph the entire length from US Route 5 to Stevens Road
Robinson Hill Road	30 mph the entire length from the intersection with VT Route 244 to the intersection with Quinibeck, Potato and Turnpike Roads.
Route 132	35 mph from the Thetford/Strafford town line, easterly to the Gove Hill Road intersection; then, 40 mph from Gove Hill Road southerly to the Thetford/Norwich town line.
Sanborn Road	25 mph the entire length from Latham Road to US Route 5
Sawnee Bean Road	35 mph the entire length from VT Route 113 to the Thetford/Strafford town line
Schoolhouse Hill Road	25 mph the entire length from Latham Road to Turnpike Road South
Stevens Road	30 mph the entire length from Quail John Road to the Thetford/Norwich town line
Stowell Road	25 mph the entire length from Route 132 to the Thetford/Norwich town line
Teft Road	25 mph the entire length from Gove Hill Road to the end
Trussell Road	25 mph the entire length from VT Route 113 to the end
Tucker Hill Road	25 mph beginning at Route 113 extending southerly .5 miles to the Sayre's covered bridge and continuing another .2 miles to approximately 459 Tucker Hill Road; then, 35 mph continuing southerly to Route 132.
Turnpike Road - North	25 mph the entire length from the Five Comers intersection to the Class 4 section
Ulman Road	25 mph the entire length from Route 132 to the end
Upper Bailey Road	25 mph the entire length from Gove Hill Road to the end
US Route 5	50 mph from the Thetford/Norwich town line, northerly for 2.6 miles to 2685 US Route 5; then, 40 mph northerly approximately 700 feet from 2685 US Route 5 to the intersection of Church Ln; then, 30 mph from Church Lane northerly for approximately 2000 feet through the village of East Thetford to approximately 100 feet north of 3183 US Route 5; then, 40 mph northerly approximately 800 feet to the East Thetford Cemetery; then, 50 mph northerly for approximately 1.4 miles to 4804 US Route 5; then, 40 mph northerly for approximately 2000 feet to Cider Mill Road; then,

	35 mph northerly through the village of North Thetford for .4 miles to 5590 US Route 5; then, 40 mph northerly for approximately .2 miles to 5734 US Route 5; then, 50 mph northerly to the Thetford/Fairlee town line
Van Norden Road	25 mph the entire length from Turnpike Road - South to the end
Vaughan Farms Road	25 mph the entire length from US Route 5 to the end

VT Route 113	40 mph from the New Hampshire state line, westerly to US Route 5; then 40 mph from US Route 5 westerly to Berger Road; then 50 mph westerly to 2166 VT Route 113; then 40 mph westerly approximately 100 feet; then, 30 mph through Thetford Hill village westerly for approximately 2,500 feet; then, 40 mph westerly for approximately 4000 feet; then 35 mph westerly through Thetford Center Village for approximately 3,000 feet; then 40 mph westerly to 4397 VT Route 113; then, 50 mph westerly for 2.75 miles to Post Mills Village; then 40 mph westerly for 2,000 feet; then, 35 mph westerly through Post Mills Village for .5 miles; then, 50 mph westerly to the Thetford/West Fairlee town line
Wells Fargo Road	25 mph the entire length from Miller Pond Road to the Thetford/Strafford town line
West Fairlee Road	35 mph from VT Route 113 to the Thetford/West Fairlee town line on the south end; and, 35 mph from VT Route 244 to the Thetford/West Fairlee town line on the north end
Whippoorwill Road	25 mph the entire length from Tucker Hill Road to the Class 4 section
Wilson Road	25 mph the entire length from VT Route 113 to the end

**ARTICLE V
STOP AND YIELD INTERSECTIONS**

Section 1: The following intersections shall be designated as "STOP" intersections and will be signed as such.

Road	At the Intersection With:
Academy Road	VT Route 113
Academy Road	Union Village Covered Bridge
Amasa Bond Road	Academy Road
Apple Tree Road	Garey Road
Asa Burton Road	VT Route 113
Barker Road	VT Route 113
Barker Road	Sawnee Bean Road
Berger Road	VT Route 113
Bragg Road	Quinibeck Road
Bridge Road	US Route 5
Burnham Road	VT Route 113
Buzzell Bridge Road	VT Route 113

Cadwell Road	VT Route 113
Cadwell Road	Sanborn Road
Campbell Flats Road	Academy Road
Cider Mill Road	US Route 5
Clay Road	US Route 5
Clay Road	Schoolhouse Hill Road
Cobble Hill Road	Asa Burton Road
Colby Road - North	YIELD
Colby Road - South	Sawnee Bean Road
Cranberry Hill Road	Godfrey Road
Cream Street	Route 132
Cross Street	VT Route 244
Cross Street	West Fairlee Road
Evans Road	VT Route 113
Five Corners Road	VT Route 113
Five Corners Road	Turnpike Road- North
Garey Road	VT Route 113
Godfrey Road	VT Route 113
Gove Hill Road	Route 132
Gove Hill Road	New Boston Road
Hauger Road	Academy Road
Houghton Hill Road	VT Route 113
Ilsley Road	Gove Hill Road
Jackson Brook Road	Route 132
Judd Road	New Boston Road
Lakeshore Road	VT Route 244
Lakeshore Road	Robinson Hill Road
Latham Road	VT Route 113
Latham Road	US Route 5
Library Road	Academy Road
Lower Bailey Road	Gove Hill Road
Lower Cream Street	Route 132
Main Street, Union Village	Union Village Covered Bridge
Miller Pond Road	Route 132
Mud Pond Road	VT Route 113
Old Stone Road	Godfrey Road
Old Stone Road	Quail John Road
Old Strong Road	Academy Road
Pavilion Road	US Route 5 (north end)
Pavilion Road	US Route 5 (south end)
Pero Hill Road	Colby Road - South
Phelps Road	Barker Road
Poor Farm Road- South	Tucker Hill Road
Potato Hill Road - South	Turnpike Road - South

Quail John Road	Godfrey Road
Quail John Road	US Route 5
Quinibeck Road	Robinson Hill Road
Rabbit Road	US Route 5
Rabbit Road	Stevens Road
Robinson Hill Road	VT Route 244
Robinson Hill Road	Quinibeck Road
Sanborn Road	US Route 5
Sanborn Road	Latham Road
Sawnee Bean Road	VT Route 113
Schoolhouse Hill Road	Latham Road
Schoolhouse Hill Road	Turnpike Road - South
Stowell Road	Route 132
Tefft Road	Gove Hill Road
Trussell Road	VT Route 113
Tucker Hill Road	VT Route 113
Tucker Hill Road	Route 132
Tucker Hill Road	Sayre's Covered Bridge South bound
Tucker Hill Road	Sayre's Covered Bridge North bound
Ulman Road	Route 132
Upper Bailey Road	Gove Hill Road
Vaughan Farms Road	US Route 5
VT Route 113 (East bound)	US Route 5
VT Route 113 (West bound)	US Route 5
Wells Fargo Road	Miller Pond Road
West Fairlee Road	VT Route 113
West Fairlee Road	VT Route 244
Whippoowill Road	Tucker Hill Road

Section 2: The following intersections shall be designated as "YIELD" intersections and will be signed as such.

Road	At the Intersection With:
Colby Road-North	Sawnee Bean Road
Picknell Road	Gove Hill Road
Quail John Road (East bound)	Stevens Road

**ARTICLE VI
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

Section 1: Each violation of this ordinance shall be deemed a separate offense.

Section 2: The provisions of this ordinance are declared severable, and if any provision hereof be judged invalid, such judgement shall not affect the validity of any other provision.

Section 3: This Ordinance refers to highway designations shown on the "General Highway Map of the Town of Thetford" prepared by the Agency of Transportation dated ~~2005~~ 2022.

**ARTICLE VII
ADOPTION**

Adopted by the Town of Thetford Selectboard, dated this 7th day of November 2022.

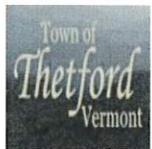
Sharon Harkay, Selectboard Chair

Li Shen, Selectboard Vice Chair

Mary Bryan, Selectboard

David Goodrich, Selectboard

Steve Tofel, Selectboard



Academy Road - 25MPH Zone

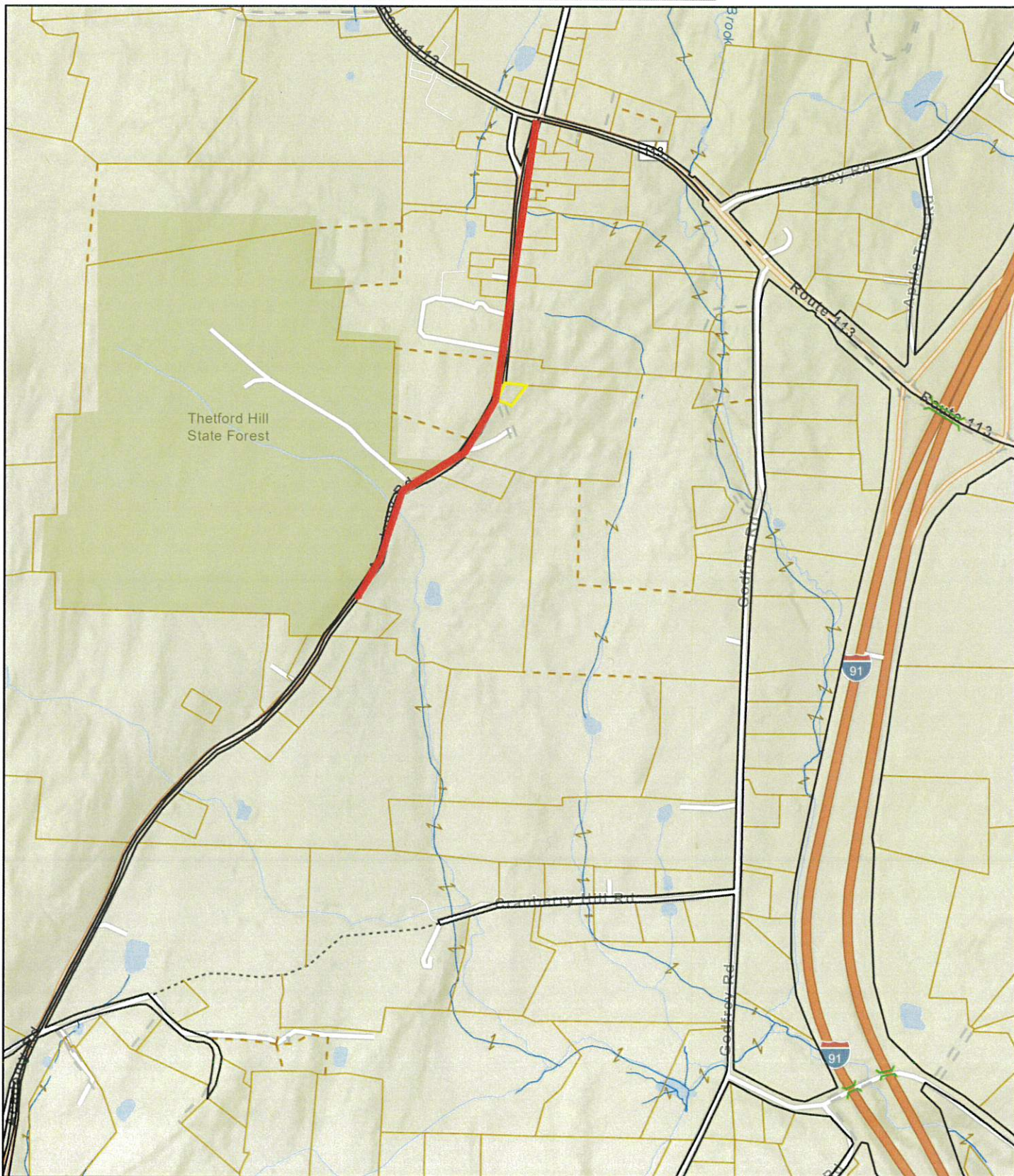
Town of Thetford, VT

1 inch = 1504 Feet



www.cai-tech.com

November 3, 2022



Data shown on this map is provided for planning and informational purposes only. The municipality and CAI Technologies are not responsible for any use for other purposes or misuse or misrepresentation of this map.

DRAFT Revision 1

Agricultural Tax Stabilization Procedures: Farmland Taxpayers

1. Operation Procedures:^[1]_[SEP] 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."

^[1]_[SEP] 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.

DRAFT Revision 3

Agricultural Tax Stabilization Procedures: Farmland Taxpayers

1. Operation Procedures:

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.

b) The selectboard shall evaluate each application. Preference may be given to start-up operations and those seeking to expand and increase opportunities for employment of workers. The Current Use status of the operation will also be taken into consideration, with the understanding that facilities in Current Use already enjoy tax relief. *

(consulted with Tim Taylor on this; Mike Snow not available.)*

c) Each contract so agreed upon will use the following criteria: The farm has to demonstrate that tax stabilization would help mitigate what would otherwise be a shortfall in operational or production capacity. (For example: A reduction in taxes would allow the farmer to hire a helper for the season, buy or lease equipment, etc, without which production potential would not be realized.)

d) Each contract shall specify the maximum value to be stabilized. [Suggestion: Up to two-thirds of taxes shall be forgiven or deferred.] The contract shall specify the individual years of contract coverage, not to exceed five years.

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."

b) The land, buildings, and owner-occupied dwelling are set for municipal tax assessment and appraisal purposes at no less than 33% (per suggestion in 1d) 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 dependent 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 that the farmer acquires additional agricultural lands qualifying for Thetford's tax stabilization program under the eligibility requirements set forth above, Thetford and the farmer may enter into an amendment to the contract by adding thereto such agricultural lands. The addition of any agricultural lands shall not extend the term of this Agreement as set forth in Section 1.

f) Each year during the term of this Contract, the difference between the taxes due on the lands covered by this Agreement and the taxes that would have been owed without this Agreement shall be considered as "deferred" taxes.

g) In the event that this Contract shall become of no further force or effect, as specified below in (i), (j), the following penalties shall apply, except as noted in Section 3:[1] ~~if the taxes are deferred (rather than forgiven)~~, as defined above, they shall become due for the year of dissolution of this Contract; plus [2] the deferred taxes for the three (3) preceding years under this Agreement; together with [3] a penalty of five percent (5%) of the Fair Market Value of the land, at the time of the dissolution of this Contract as specified below (i), (j). The Fair Market Value of the land is the value set by the Town through its tax assessment process. This tax and penalty shall be paid to the Town within thirty (30) days of dissolution of this Contract, except that in the event of sale of

the property, the whole amount due to the Town shall be paid before or on the date of the transfer of title.

h) If the penalty and deferred tax are not paid within the specified time, there will be interest of one and one-half percent (1.5%) added monthly to the amount owed. This Contract shall constitute a lien in favor of the Town against the property subject to this Contract. This lien will be referenced in the general index of the Town of Thetford and filed in the Town Clerk's Office. The farmer will pay any filing fees.

i) The penalty and deferred tax shall become due upon the conversion of the agricultural lands described, from agricultural use to another use, or the occurrence of any other event which renders the farmer ineligible under the requirements as set forth in Section 2, a) and c).

j) The provisions of this Section shall apply only to that portion of the farmer's lands which become disqualified from inclusion in this Contract.

k) In the event that the farmer is leasing 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.

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

3) EXCEPTIONS TO THE PENALTY: This agreement shall terminate but penalties and repayment of deferred taxes (as provided for in the previous section) shall be waived under the following conditions:

a) If the farmer becomes permanently disabled or is prevented by natural disaster from farming and the disposition of the property results in a change in use, then the farmer or farmer's representative may apply to the Selectboard for a waiver of penalties and to the Board of Abatement for the abatement of deferred taxes.

b) If the farmer trades a portion of his/her land for another, as long as the new land qualifies for this contract

and the traded land continues to qualify for this Contract under the terms of Exhibit B. In this case, and amendment shall be made to Exhibit A to show the loss or gain and state the new number of acres included in the Agreement.

c) If the farmer builds a dwelling for himself/herself or for an employee of the farm operation, then the dwelling and the two (2) surrounding acres shall be excluded from receiving the benefits provided by this Agreement, but no penalties or deferred taxes shall be due.

d) When land is condemned as a result of eminent domain, or when a sale agreement is made in anticipation of these condemnation proceedings, to achieve the same public purposes.

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

Agriculture (and Forestry) Tax Stabilization – Payment Schedules and Current Use Information

Definition of Incremental

relating to or denoting an increase or addition, especially one of a series on a fixed scale.

Samples of Incremental Payment Schedules

From Berlin, VT

Agreements new construction or improvement projects may be structured as follows:

3 year tax stabilization agreement for projects under \$1M based solely on the increase in assessed valuation due to the project:

- Year 1: 25%,
- Year 2: 50%,
- Year 3: 75%,
- Year 4: 100%

5 year tax stabilization agreement for projects at or above \$1M based solely on the increase in assessed valuation due to the project:

- Year 1: 10%,
- Year 2: 20%,
- Year 3: 40%,
- Year 4: 60%,
- Year 5: 80%,
- Year 6: 100%

From Westminster, VT

The following formula will be used:

- First year : 50% of Fair Market Value
- Second year : 60% of Fair Market Value
- Third year : 70% of Fair Market Value
- Fourth year : 80% of Fair Market Value
- Fifth year : 90% of Fair Market Value

What if the business/farm folds?

From Westminster

A rollback clause shall be included in the contract, providing for repayment of all taxes, with 18% interest per annum, exempt by contract. This clause shall become effective in the event of the closing of the business, by transfer of the business to a new owner, forced closing of the business, or bankruptcy. In the event of this clause becoming operative, the real property may not be sold, and the personal property may not be sold or removed from the premises until all tax obligations have been paid.

Current Use Program – Some Basic Facts

- The CU program encourages undeveloped property while not discouraging farming or forestry.
- Must have at least 25 acres that qualify.
- Must have an approved agroforestry plan.
- Can combine forestry and agricultural acres to reach the 25 acres.
- To qualify as a farmer, must earn at least 50% of your income from agriculture.
- Farm related buildings can be included if you qualify as a farmer.
- Can have land in current use even if it's not "productive" as long as it's not being developed.
- Removing property from current use to develop it leads to a financial penalty. This sits as a lean on the property until it's developed. Therefore, if the development doesn't happen, owners of the property could put it back into CU and not pay the property.

More information on the Current Use program can be found on the VT Dept. of Taxes website.

Some CU Numbers in Thetford

Total taxable properties in Thetford	1407
Total parcels in CU	156
# parcels just agricultural	14
# parcels just forestry	64
# parcels combination of the two	78

Some people/businesses own more than one parcel. e.g. Vaughan Farms LLC—4 parcels
The Upper Valley Land Trust holds 3 parcels.

Email from:

Kail Romanoff

Staff Attorney, Municipal Assistance Center

Vermont League of Cities & Towns

89 Main St. Suite 4, Montpelier, VT 05602

802-229-9111

kromanoff@vlct.org

Pronouns: he, him, his

VLCT.ORG

I was unable to respond to you before noon as you indicated, but I wanted to get you some information prior to the weekend. If this doesn't answer your questions, please feel free to respond to this email or call me at (802) 262-1915 on Monday. Ultimately, the selectboard will need the town attorney's assistance on finalizing a tax stabilization agreement. It is a legal document and follows a vote on the same topic and property, so an attorney will be necessary to ensure the applicable legal provisions are complied with, the town's best interest is maintained throughout, etc.

Regarding your question about whether the "deferred" money will need to be "paid back" or is it "forgiveness." The simple answer is that tax stabilization is effectively forgiveness of the municipal tax rate and in some instances the education tax as well. By agreeing to a tax stabilization, you are fixing the rate for a period of time and for that parcel the full tax rate is inapplicable so there is no deferred money to be paid back – that rate was never applied.

A selectboard vote will be necessary, but depending on what "article" approved by the voters you are referring to in your voicemail, it may have already been accomplished. For example, if you were referencing that the voters approved an article granting the selectboard full authority (discretion) to enter into tax stabilization agreements, then you will need a selectboard vote to approve the specific agreement. However, if the voters approved an article granting the selectboard limited authority to enter into tax stabilization agreements, each tax stabilization agreement negotiated by the selectboard will then need to be sent to the voters for approval. In that case, you would need to approve the agreement prior to it being put the voters, and if you are referencing that the voters approved the article on this specific tax stabilization agreement, then it likely needs no further selectboard approval – it is most likely effective on passage, but you should confirm with the language of the article because it may merely authorize the selectboard to enter into the agreement in which case a vote would be necessary. Let me reiterate though, we strongly recommend you consult an attorney before moving too far along in this process.

Please see the following canned information on tax stabilization agreements that may be helpful for the selectboard's purposes.

Tax stabilization allows municipalities to enter into agreements for example commercial or industrial properties to fix the valuation of a property or its tax rate in order to foster

the development of certain resources for the community. Here's the law on tax stabilization agreements [24 V.S.A. § 2741]: <http://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/24/075/02741>. State law allows towns to vote at annual or special town meetings to:

- (1) provide general authority to its Selectboard to enter into tax stabilization agreements as application is made; OR
- (2) provide limited authority to its selectboard to negotiate tax stabilization agreements, which shall be effective upon ratification by a majority of those present and voting at an annual or special meeting warned for that purpose.

So, the selectboard may ask the voters at town meeting (via an article) to grant them general authority to enter into such agreements as described in 24 V.S.A. § 2741, or ask voters to grant them authority to negotiate such agreements with the caveat that such negotiated agreements wouldn't be approved until voters ratify each specific agreement by vote at town meeting.

The Legislature has given municipalities the authority, accomplished through a vote at an annual or special town meeting, to enter into tax stabilization agreements in order to encourage the following public interests (24 V.S.A. § 2741):

- economic development;
- alternative energy development;
- agriculture and forestry; and
- preservation of open land.

In addition to the authority granted under 24 V.S.A. § 2741, there are other, more specific statutes that deal with tax stabilization for the following types of properties. They are as follows with emphasis added to the hotels use, which has restrictions and parameters for this exemption:

- Factories, quarries and mines, 32 V.S.A. § 3834;
 - Private homes and dwellings, 32 V.S.A. § 3836;
 - Airports, 32 V.S.A. § 3837;
 - Hotels, 32 V.S.A. § 3838
- at <https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/32/125/03838>;
- Low income housing, 32 V.S.A. §§ 3843, 3844, 5404a((a)(3));
 - Public utilities and railroads, 24 V.S.A. § 2743;
 - Alternate-energy sources, 32 V.S.A. § 3845;
 - Farmland, 32 V.S.A. § 3846;
 - Tax stabilization in gores and unorganized towns, 32 V.S.A. § 4985;
 - Non-profit fire and ambulance companies, 32 V.S.A. § 5404a(a)(4);
 - Certain municipally owned property; and
 - Tax exemptions generally, 32 V.S.A. Chapter 125.

Tax stabilization may be accomplished in one of three ways: fixing the valuation of a property, fixing the tax rate or amount of tax on the property, or by fixing the tax as a percentage of the total, annual property tax. 24 V.S.A. § 2741(a). The first step in tax stabilization is for the voters to approve it by a two-thirds majority in the case of

commercial or industrial property or by a simple majority vote in the case of other types of property. The voters may give the selectboard authority to enter into stabilization contracts or it may allow it to negotiate a contract that must then be ratified by the voters. The term of such contracts may not exceed ten years and, in the case of alternative energy plants, may not exceed the term of any licenses or permits needed by the plant. 24 V.S.A. § 2741 (b)(c).

If the town moves forward on any tax stabilization process and the town votes to give authority to the selectboard to enter into these agreements, the selectboard should also create a policy for making decisions about circumstances in which to offer and the benefits (which may vary according to e.g. number of jobs created or other factors). A tax stabilization policy is merely a statement of how and when the selectboard will exercise its legal authority to enter into tax stabilization agreements. It would make sense for the selectboard to be working on its tax stabilization policy while it is in the process of seeking legal authority. This way the voters can get a sense of why the selectboard is seeking the authority and the kinds of circumstances in which the board will use the authority (e.g. when a project will create X number of jobs or will preserve X amount of acres open space, etc.). I must mention one caveat: Vermont's Equal Educational Opportunity Act created a system under which some tax stabilization agreements and other tax exemptions affect only the town's property tax grand list and not the education property tax grand list. This is spelled out in 32 V.S.A. § 5404a. <https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/32/135/05404a>.

I hope this helps.

Best,

Kail

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Susan Senning** <ssenning@vlct.org>
Date: Tue, Oct 25, 2022 at 2:52 PM
Subject: RE: Agricultural Tax Stabilization
To: David Goodrich <dgoodrich@thetfordvt.gov>

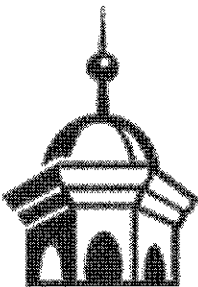
Hi David,

First and foremost, I would caution the selectboard from getting too far into the weeds on this question. When a property owner enrolls in the Current Use Program, it is their responsibility to understand the consequences of any actions they take with respect to their land. The town should look at tax stabilization requests in a vacuum, in my opinion, to see whether it is in the town's best interest to grant it. This should be informed by the town attorney. I also recommend steering clear of offering too much guidance to owners on these questions about resulting impacts of such a decision, in case the owner relies on mistaken understanding, etc.

Current Use is a complicated and complex program, so we are not the best source of information about implications of tax stabilization on Current Use Program; I would refer you (and preferably the property owner directly) to the tax department for information instead. They understand both the impacts of tax stabilization in more depth as well as the Current Use Program better than we do, as generalists of municipal law, so they are more knowledgeable and competent to answer your question. I suggest beginning with the Division of Property Valuation and Review (PVR); the Current Use webpage is online at <https://tax.vermont.gov/property/current-use>.

I hope this helps,

Sincerely,
Susan



Susan E. Senning, Esq./M.E.L.P.
Staff Attorney II, Municipal Assistance Center
Vermont League of Cities & Towns
89 Main St. Suite 4, Montpelier, VT 05602
802-229-9111
ssenning@vlct.org
Pronouns: she/her/hers
VLCT.ORG

Draft ARPA Survey for Sept 19th SB Meeting

The Town of Thetford's Selectboard is asking residents and business owners to take the time to answer the questions on this survey to help determine how the Town's American Rescue Plan Act funding should be allocated. Thank you for taking the time to complete this vitally important survey.

Are you a Thetford resident or a Thetford business owner?

- Full-time resident
- Part-time resident
- Business owner
- Other (please specify)

To what degree were your personal finances negatively affected by COVID-19? *(Take out.)*

- Severely affected
- Moderately affected
- Minimally affected
- Not significantly affected

To what degree were your business finances negatively affected by COVID-19?

- Severely affected
- Moderately affected
- Minimally affected
- Not significantly affected

Would you support using ARPA funds to install a new HVAC system in Town hall to create better heating, cooling, and ventilation and to move the building off the use of fossil fuels?

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly Oppose
- Unsure

Would you support using ARPA funds to install EV charging stations by Town hall or other locations in Town?

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly Oppose
- Unsure

Would you support using ARPA funds to help mitigate the moisture problem in the Timothy Frost crawl space that houses the heating system and/or to put in an ADA compliant restroom with an eye to getting the building ready to be used again?

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly Oppose
- Unsure

Would you support using ARPA funds to repair and make improvements to the Town Garage and/or Transfer Station?

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly Oppose
- Unsure

Would you support using ARPA funds to make physical improvements at Treasure Island such as building a new and improved restroom/changing facility?

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly Oppose
- Unsure

Would you support using ARPA funds to help pay for a road or bridge project in Thetford?

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly Oppose
- Unsure

Would you support using ARPA funds to increase the balance in various Town capital equipment funds?
(Rewrite with appropriate wording.)

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly Oppose
- Unsure

Would you support using ARPA funds to help increase bike and pedestrian safety?

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly Oppose
- Unsure

Would you support using ARPA funds to assist child care centers with specific physical projects such as installing a second bathroom, adding an infant room, or constructing a new fence?

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly Oppose
- Unsure

Would you support using ARPA funds to assist other local businesses with specific one-time projects?

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly Oppose
- Unsure

Would you support using ARPA funds to help expand broadband coverage to unserved households?

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly Oppose
- Unsure

Would you support using ARPA funds to help develop affordable, workforce, and senior housing?

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly Oppose
- Unsure

Would you support using ARPA funds to help Thetford's Elder Network provide monthly lunches to seniors who wish to participate? *(Probably take out.)*

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly Oppose
- Unsure

Would you support using ARPA funds to help community organizations pay for specific repairs to buildings used by the community? These could include the Rice's Mills Community Association, the Thetford Center Community Association, or even the Parish Players.

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly Oppose
- Unsure

What do you think are the top three (3) categories that Thetford's ARPA funds should be used for? *(Consider having people say low, medium, or high priority for each category as well.)*

- Improving water and sewer in the five villages
- Repairing roads and bridges
- Rehabilitating the existing DPW and/or Transfer Station or building a new complex
- Capital improvements to municipal buildings (ventilation and energy efficiency, ADA accessibility, fire protection, general code upgrades, etc.)
- Moving Thetford's buildings and vehicles off fossil fuels
- Increasing cybersecurity, IT upgrades, hybrid meeting equipment at Town Hall
- Capital equipment purchases for police and DPW departments
- Making the Timothy Frost building usable for community gatherings/events/meetings
- Improving recreational facilities and offerings
- Expanding broadband to unserved households
- Seeding positions to help advance local priorities and projects
- Helping create new affordable, workforce, and senior housing
- Safe streets
- Installing public EV charging stations
- Assisting child care providers expand and stay in business
- Assistance for local businesses other than child care
- Support for local non-profits and social service agencies
- Other (Please specify.) _____

Additional Comments:



Town of Thetford Vermont

#9

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Selectboard Regular Meeting *Draft* Minutes
Thetford Town Offices
(w/Virtual Attendance Option)
Monday, October 17, 2022 7:00 PM

Selectboard members present: Sharon Harkay (Chair), Mary Bryant, David Goodrich, [Steve Tofel](#)

Selectboard members absent: Li Shen (Vice-Chair)

Others present: Town Manager Bryan Gazda, Town Clerk/Treasurer Tracy Borst, Listers Sean Boyce, Susan Howard and Barbara Harrington, DPW Foreman Dale Lewis, Bryan Ruoff with Stantec

Participating Community Members: David Forbes, Rebecca Holcombe, Tara Bamford, Liz Ryan Cole

Sharon Harkay called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

1. Agenda Review

Sharon suggested moving item #10 to right after the Listers because Bryan Ruoff is at the meeting. All agreed.

2. Town Manager Report – Bryan Gazda

1. Thetford Volunteer Fire Department Board of Trustees Meeting Update

Bryan attended the TVFD Board of Trustees meeting on Wednesday night. He said it was a good discussion and he is very confident that the fire department has the capability to serve the community. There are currently 14 volunteers on the roster; 2 are EMS [certified only](#) and the rest are [Fire and EMS certified](#). While there was not much discussion about mutual aid, there are 42 organizations involved.

Other

Bryan wanted to recognize Suzanne Simon, Recycling Coordinator, for her efforts in coordinating the cleanup at Montague Dam in Post Mills. Suzanne and some of the employees helped to remove 700 pounds of tires and over 1000 pounds of trash.

In regard to the Quail John Road cell tower, there was only a 30-day comment period, which expired today. Bryan understood it to be a 60-day period, but that was incorrect.

Bryan forwarded the agreement for the Treasure Island plan to Lisa Niccolai. He also heard back from Grace Flynn, who said the [2022](#) proposal for the wetland’s delineation with a cost of \$3150.00 will be honored ~~this year~~ [in 2023](#).

Bryan said he took ~~to~~ [the](#) window frames back to Window Dressers for finishing. Sharon mentioned that she and David Goodrich painted them over the weekend.

3. Public Comment



1 No public comment

2

3 **4. Selectboard Chair – Announcement of Virtual Only Meeting on November 7th, 2022**

4 Sharon announced that the next Selectboard meeting on November 7th will be virtual only. This
5 is necessary because the meeting room needs to be set up for Election Day, which is the next
6 day.

7

8 **5. Listers Update, including Preliminary Thoughts on Town Wide Reassessment**

9 The Listers introduced themselves, Sean Boyce, Susan Howard and Barb Harrington.

10 Sean explained that it is likely the state will be informing them that a townwide assessment will
11 need to be done. Sean said he is anticipating that it will be a state-wide appraisal because of the
12 market during the past few years. The Listers are creating a Request for Proposal (RFP) to
13 contract with reappraisal contractors.

14 Sean explained the documents in the packet.

15 Sharon said she was surprised about how involved the work is for the contractor. She asked if the
16 RFP was a boiler plate or if they put this together. Sean said they did look at other RFP's but as it
17 will involve the computer software it will need to be compatible with the contractor.

18 Sharon asked about the cost.

19 Sean said there is a fund you should be aware of where the state helps to mitigate the costs. It
20 seems adequate to cover the costs. It is a two-year process and Sean said they are aiming for
21 **completion by (I thought they were saying they wanted to start in 2025?) 2025.**

22 David Forbes asked if Thetford has used an outside contractor before. Sean said an appraisal in
23 2012 was done by the Vermont Appraisal Company. In 2002 one was done by Rust Bedouin, a
24 representative for Proval (software company). David said according to news articles there has
25 been a mixed experience with outside contractors in terms of value, and the other concern is the
26 inflated home values during the pandemic. Outside contractors that don't have a direct
27 connection with the town they are appraising can be a potent combination for an increase in
28 taxes. A 17% increase in education tax just went through the legislature. David said his concern
29 is making sure we don't have just an out of site **sight** reappraisal set of estimates.

30 Sean said in Vermont most contractors are state approved, and they can't go to any unapproved
31 contractor. Sean pointed out that with a town-wide assessment, everyone's value is affected. If
32 property values go up then the tax rate should go down. The impact is not going to be neutral
33 because of the 17% education tax increase. There is also a grievance process as well as a
34 question-and-answer process.

35 Sean said the cost tables that they used for David when his house was built were tables from
36 2012. Everyone has been valued from the same tables and now we need to set the tables for 2022
37 or 2023 to get everyone on the same page.

38 Steve Tofel asked if an assessment came through that was going to raise peoples taxes, does the
39 Selectboard have the option of setting a lower tax rate? Sean confirmed. If the budgets don't
40 change your tax rate will be lower.

41 Mary Bryant pointed out if identical houses were built in 2005 and 2021, the cost of the 2021
42 house will be higher because of construction costs. Will this in the end equalize the value?

43 Barbara Harrington said the depreciation will be different and that all of the towns in the state are



1 grappling with this. Sean noted that some towns just got an appraisal in 2019 and the market
2 inflated 20% in two years. Hopefully we are past that right now.
3 Sharon said she was impressed by the work the Listers have done. Once the bids have come
4 back, the Selectboard will have another discussion.
5

6 **6. ~~Social Services Policy Update Discussion~~ Replaced with Agenda Item #10**
7 **Consideration to Award a Contract for the Stowell Bridge Repair with Bryan Ruoff of**
8 **Stantec**

9 Bryan Ruoff said the information he sent to the Selectboard was incorrect and reviewed the
10 correct information. Two bids were received. Northwoods not only had the lower price, but they
11 have also done between 8-11 projects in town and their schedule would allow them to do the
12 work this year. Based on this, Bryan said he would recommend Northwoods.

13 **Motion** by Sharon Harkay to award the contract to Northwoods in the amount of \$167,800.00
14 for the Stowell Bridge Repair project and authorize Town Manager Bryan Gazda to sign any
15 documents. VOTE by Roll Call; Mary Bryant – in favor, Steve Tofel – in favor, David Goodrich
16 – in favor, Sharon Harkay – in favor. **Motion passed.**
17

18 **7. Social Services Policy Update**

19 Steve Tofel explained what he would like to have changed in the current policy. The changes
20 pertain to the process of what information is required and how the social service agencies should
21 submit it to the town. Instead of the current 3-year petition cycle, agencies would be required to
22 complete a specific form and submit it for review yearly. The Selectboard will either approve the
23 request to be put on the warning, or deny it, which would then require the agency to submit a
24 petition.

25 There was discussion about the agency reports that are currently submitted and whether they
26 should be put in their entirety in the Town Report. Currently the reports are on the website.
27 The Selectboard reviewed and made edits.

28 Tracy Borst pointed out that the timelines and management of the paper flow has been handled
29 by the Selectboard Assistant and wondered who would be handling this under the new policy.

30 **Motion** by Mary Bryant that we accept the new Social Services Policy and Form as amended.
31 VOTE by Roll Call: Mary Bryant – in favor, Steve Tofel – in favor, David Goodrich – in favor,
32 Sharon Harkay – in favor. **Motion passed.**
33

34 **8. Lyme-Thetford Bridge Discussion**

35 Bryan said there have been back and forth emails regarding the upcoming closure of the bridge.
36 State elected officials have been involved in the discussions.

37 Sharon pointed out that the Selectboard and Bryan have reached out to state and federal people
38 about this concern. Funding for business losses and a temporary bridge in North Thetford are
39 ideas that have been talked about.

40 Bryan has been in contact with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (DOT) and
41 Lyme Town Administrator Dina Cutting. Bryan said he feels a key strategy and place to focus
42 our energy on would be on marketing. How do you market that you're open?

43 Sharon said she wanted people to know that they are trying to come up with possibilities and
44 solutions.



Town of Thetford Vermont

#9

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- 1 Rebecca Holcombe said she was really just at the meeting to listen, but she did speak to the Fire
- 2 Chief in Lyme in the context of mutual aid. There is a fair amount of traffic across the bridge.
- 3 The delegation is ready to listen, but they would need a concrete proposal.
- 4 Tara Bamford said she is glad to hear the Selectboard is looking at this constructively and not
- 5 just thinking how we can stop it. Tara gave some history on the plans to do the bridge work,
- 6 which started in 2013 when the bridge was put on the red list. Public meetings were held in 2014
- 7 and 2015. Pedestrian access and a temporary bridge were both explored at that time and found
- 8 not to be feasible. DOT had engineers looked at the bridge and found trusses wouldn't support
- 9 the pedestrian access. When the bridge was placed on the National Register of Historic Places,
- 10 federal money for replacement was not feasible. Both towns were satisfied enough with plans at
- 11 that time and asked that the timeline be moved up. Tara said it would be wrong for the town to
- 12 fight against something they asked for and could result in the bridge being closed for an even
- 13 longer period of time. The footings and structure are crumbling. Tara encouraged the Selectboard
- 14 to support the project as planned.
- 15 Liz Ryan Cole said she spoke with Jennifer, from NH DOT today. Liz pointed out 2 problems;
- 16 the short-term problem of closure and the financial damage it will cause, and second, do we
- 17 really want to build a bridge that is just as dangerous as the bridge we're replacing. Liz expressed
- 18 frustration with the lack of communication. Is it too late to stop it or would the Federal DOT be
- 19 willing to look at this and adjust? Liz said the Lyme Selectboard did vote to send a letter of
- 20 concern.
- 21 Sharon said the closure will affect her personally, as she travels over that bridge many times a
- 22 week. In her mind, the safety of all of us and people that come to visit our state is of paramount
- 23 importance. The bridge is terribly unsafe and if the the project doesn't go through at this point it
- 24 may be many more months that the bridge is closed. Sharon likes the approach that Bryan and
- 25 Dina have concerning marketing and creative solutions for teachers and students.
- 26 Sharon said Jim Masland was going to find out whether we could pursue a bridge in North
- 27 Thetford.
- 28 Mary Bryant agreed that safety is a concern, and she does not want to put the project off any
- 29 longer. Too much ~~that~~ has happened to stop this project now. Mary said the closure will impact
- 30 her as well, but it must happen. She felt putting a bridge in North Thetford would be hundreds of
- 31 thousands of dollars.
- 32 Bryan agreed and said the question is who is going to pay for it.
- 33 Liz Ryan Cole said there is also a private landowner on the New Hampshire side and there are
- 34 title issues.
- 35 Sharon said the goal of tonight was to have this discussion, and she doesn't hear that any of us
- 36 are going to be quick to write a letter. We just need to figure out how to deal with it, so it gets
- 37 repaired.
- 38 Liz said she is seeking signatures for a letter. Steve Tofel will connect with Liz.
- 39 Bryan said he is still hoping for a public meeting with the NH DOT
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Town of Thetford Vermont

#9

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9. Agricultural Tax Stabilization – Graduated Repayment of Taxes vs. Deferment

Sharon said she realized the policy was not yet in a state to send to the town attorney for review, as they haven't determined what kind of deferment, payback plan or incremental plan people would have. Sharon said she had spoken with someone who has an agricultural business in Thetford, and they were of the opinion that this is not needed because of the current use program. Mary Bryant pointed out that was just one person's opinion. Mary would like to create something that would encourage agricultural business to develop in Thetford. These businesses could help address food shortages and other community needs. The amount of money that we may lose is a drop in the bucket compared to the municipal taxes that we raise. Why give a deferment that they will then have to pay back.

Sharon said the attorney at Vermont League of Cities and Towns did not recommend deferring taxes, but rather establish a table of repayment or forgive them.

David Goodrich wanted to know how many properties there were in town or what the cost might be.

Sharon said there are currently very few.

David said there is a finite amount of property in town that could sustain farming. The first thing to understand is what the potential tax loss might be, and he is not sure of a good way to establish that.

Sharon said she would like to see a table put together that would apply to everybody.

Steve said reading the article that the town voted on gave the Selectboard authority, but it doesn't mean we have to use the authority. If we can come up with a valid reason for doing it than by all means, we should do it.

The Selectboard will gather more information for a future discussion.

10. Possible Acceptance of Hazard Mitigation Grant

Bryan explained that he was notified that the plan needs to be updated, so this grant is to help with that. The first step is to accept the grant for \$10,000.00 and the town has a 25% match.

Motion by David Goodrich to accept the Hazard Mitigation Grant with 25% matching funds from the town and to authorize Town Manager Bryan Gazda to sign any and all necessary forms.

VOTE by Roll Call: Mary Bryant – in favor, Steve Tofel – in favor, David Goodrich – in favor, Sharon Harkay – in favor. **Motion passed.**

~~11. Consideration to Award a Contract for the Stowell Bridge Repair Moved ahead~~

12. Warrants and Minutes

39.1	\$115,506.74
40.1	\$161,344.00
19.2	\$8,232.88
34.3	\$19,113.82
35.3	\$205,001.32
36.3	\$1,639.27
37.3	\$11,808.01



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#9

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38.3	338,009.21
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Steve asked about the \$205,000.00 payoff of the FEMA note.
Tracy said that is the balance due with Community National Bank NA. No decision has been made on how that is going to be covered.
Bryan said he wants to see how we end up with Latham Road and Stowell Bridge. He's not sure he wants to use bond proceeds yet. He will go through the budgeting process and figure it out. They may have to put a little bit into next year.

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

Motion by Sharon Harkay to accept the Selectboard meeting minutes of October 3rd, 2022, as amended. VOTE (3-0-1) David Goodrich abstained – he was not present at that meeting. **Motion passed.**

13. Adjourn

Motion by Steve Tofel that we adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 9:16 pm. All in favor (4-0-0)
Motion passed.