



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, February 6th, 2023 7:00 PM

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

Others present: Town Manager Bryan Gazda, Town Clerk/Treasurer Tracy Borst via Zoom, Selectboard Assistant Martie Betts, Planning Commission Chair David Forbes via Zoom, Development Review Board Chair Tim Taylor via Zoom

Contributing community members; Max Van Pelt

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

1. Agenda Review

No changes to agenda.

2. Notes from the Selectboard Chair

Sharon said they are still gearing up for Town Meeting. The Selectboard will be proofing the Town Report tonight, and it will be mailed to residents in mid-February.

Sharon reminded the Selectboard that their next meeting will be on February 27th, which is in 3 weeks.

There will be a brief Selectboard meeting at 6:30, followed by the Candidates Forum at 7:00, and then the information session at 7:30.

Sharon wanted to note the passing of Claude Thurston Sr., who was our road commissioner for 17 years, and a founding member of the Upper Valley Fish & Game Club. Claude also called square dances at some of the Old Home Day celebrations in Thetford Center. Sharon expressed condolences to his wife, children and their families, and his sisters.

Sharon said that with regret, the Town Manager, Bryan Gazda, has given his notice and will be leaving at the end of April 2023. Bryan will be transitioning to a new job serving as the Director of Public Works in Hartford.

3. Town Manager Report – Bryan Gazda

Bryan started by saying his decision to leave was a tough one, and he will have very fond memories of his time in Thetford.

- **Update on Tire Damage from Gravel Roads**

Eighteen individuals have provided Bryan with information about either repairs or replacement of tires with a total of around \$4500. Bryan will continue to look into the situation.

- **Thetford – Lyme Bridge Construction Update**

Bryan spoke with Jeff Potter and the start date for work on the bridge is April 1st, 2023, at the earliest.

- **Other**

Bryan said there are 2 Requests for Proposal out: one for a consultant for the town-wide reappraisal and one for the Emergency Management Local Update. The amount will not require selectboard approval.

4. Public Comment

No public comment.



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5. Public Hearing for Interim Municipal Bylaw Amendments

David Forbes, Chair for the Planning Commission, reviewed the amendment documents. David said if there are no changes proposed, he would recommend that the Selectboard schedule a vote for their next meeting.

Tracy Borst asked what this will change in a residential neighborhood. She asked if permits will be approved by the Zoning Administrator instead of having a hearing, and will it be limited to no more than 2 structures on a parcel. David confirmed and said the intention is to eliminate a great deal of standards that are outdated. This will allow much greater flexibility for building Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's). David said under the State standards, the maximum number of structures on a single lot is 2, one principle and one accessory or a second unit dwelling.

Max Van Pelt expressed concerns about the section that states an ADU should not exceed 30% or 900 square feet of the main structure, whichever is greater. Max wants to build an ADU on his property first and live in it while building their actual house. An ADU that would be large enough for them to be comfortable would require building a house larger than they want.

Tim Taylor said that Max apparently found the potential weak spot in the amendment, and there is room for improvement. There are two years to make the amendment better.

There was continuing discussion about the language around the size of an ADU.

David Forbes and Tim Taylor will look into the problem.

David Goodrich noted that he did not see the changes discussed previously about allowing a commercial business having an apartment.

David said that was an oversight and he will add it in.

There was confusion about the version of the amendment that the Selectboard had, versus the updated draft David was referring to. David will get the updated draft to the Selectboard for their meeting on the 27th.

Sharon closed the hearing.

6. Approval of Town Report

Motion by Sharon Harkay to approve the Town Report, as edited. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0) **Motion passed.**

7. Plans for Presentation of Articles at Town Meeting

The Selectboard reviewed the articles and determined who would answer questions for each one. If someone from one of the Social Services are at the meeting, that representative will be invited to speak to the questions.

Deecie Dennison, the Town Moderator, will set up a meeting with Martie, Tracy, and Sharon to review the Town Meeting process.

8. Review of and Decision for Civic Pride Award

The Selectboard discussed the nominations, which were numbered for confidentiality. The Selectboard made the decision to offer the award to 2 of the nominees again this year.

9. Approval of 2 Electronic Locations for Posting of Official Notices per H.42

Motion by David Goodrich to have the 2 official electronic posting locations be the Town Website and the local Thetford Listserv. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0) **Motion passed.**



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10. Discussion on Changing the Treasure Island Exploratory Committee from Yearly Appointment to Permanent Committee

Sharon said the committee was set up a few years ago to be a temporary committee to explore certain facets of treasure Island. The committee has been working hard over the last 2 years and would like to be a permanent town committee. The following questions came up; the number of committee members and length of terms, how the terms would be staggered, the charge of the committee, and should non-residents be allowed on the committee.

Sharon will contact VLCT, and the discussion will continue at a future meeting.

11. Continued Discussion of ARPA Funding

Steve Tofel had contacted the state with questions and the Selectboard discussed the responses. Sharon noticed that Sarah Wraight kept stressing that we should use the ARPA money to pay off some of our highway budget, and our general fund which would then create a surplus in those areas. That surplus would then not have restrictions from the federal government.

There was discussion about the idea.

Steve said there are items on the survey that have a tremendous amount of federal and state money available in the form of grants. Can we stretch our ARPA funds further by doing our engineering studies to be ready for the grants.

Bryan said you don't need to get detail specific, as you don't know what those projects will be. You can allocate the funding for potential future projects.

There was discussion about the time limits for allocating the money and spending the money.

David Goodrich said it seems like the option Sarah suggested would give a lot more flexibility and seems like the smart approach to take.

Bryan said this will need to be part of the budget process. Bryan suggested that he follow up with Sarah about the idea.

Tracy Borst agreed that we should double check, but in previous years when there was a surplus, the money went into a fund.

Martie Betts asked why the water co-ops, which are private entities, would be considered for ARPA funds if other private entities aren't, especially if there are state and federal funds available for water projects.

Li Shen and Mary Bryant said water and sewer systems are critical for housing and potential development.

Sharon also had concerns about spending ARPA funds on water and housing because of other funding available for those things.

Bryan will contact Sarah and the discussion will continue.

12. Warrants and Minutes

PR#3 Payroll reviewed.

#2.2 \$14,968.65

#2.4 \$23,409.40

#3.1 \$150.00

#4.1 \$42,429.82

#2.3 \$50,872.54

#5.1 \$4696.03

#3.2 \$14,461.35

Motion by Steve Tofel to accept the warrants as presented. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0) **Motion passed.**

Motion by David Goodrich to accept the Selectboard meeting minutes of January 23, 2023, as edited.

VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0) **Motion passed.**



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13. Anticipated Executive Session Pertaining to Employment or Evaluation of Public Officer or Employee per 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) and to Discuss Contract Negotiations for the Department of Public Works, per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1)

Motion by Sharon Harkay to enter into Executive Session at 9:16 PM per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3) and 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1) and to invite the Town Manager Bryan Gazda to join. VOTE by roll call: Li Shen – in favor, Mary Bryant – in favor, Steve Tofel – in favor, David Goodrich – in favor, Sharon Harkay – in favor. **Motion passed.**

Motion by Sharon Harkay at 10:01 PM to exit Executive Session and resume the Selectboard meeting. VOTE: All in Favor (5-0-0) **Motion passed.**

No action taken.

14. Adjourn

Motion by Steve Tofel at 10:02 PM to adjourn the Selectboard meeting. VOTE: All in Favor (5-0-0) **Motion passed.**