



# Town of Thetford Vermont

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

**Selectboard Special Meeting Minutes**  
**Candidate Forum and Pre-Town Meeting Informational Hearing**  
**Thetford Town Offices**  
**(w/Virtual Attendance Option)**  
Monday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023 6:30 PM

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

Sharon Harkay called the meeting to order at 6:30.

## 1. Agenda Review

No changes to the agenda.

## 2. Notes from the Selectboard Chair

Sharon Harkay recognized the passing of Roberta Howard, a previous, long-time Town Clerk and Treasurer, former Town Service Officer, and dedicated public servant. Sharon extended condolences to the family.

## 3. Town Manager Report

Brian said the Union Village Bridge was hit again this past Friday morning, resulting in extensive damage. Daniel's Construction will be coming out Tuesday morning to do emergency repairs. Chief Scruggs does have some video of the truck. A claim has been submitted and this will not impact our insurance premiums as we are part of a consortium of towns.

## 4. Public Comment

No public comment.

## 5. Anticipated Adoption of the Interim Municipal Bylaw Amendments

**Motion** by Li Shen that the Selectboard adopt the amendment to Section 5 of the Zoning bylaw, which deals with accessory dwelling units. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0). **Motion passed.**

## 6. Posting of Roads – Town Highway Road List for Weight Limits Effective March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, through May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Motion** by David Goodrich to accept the listing of the 2023 Posting of Roads, requesting that the DPW Foreman check into posting Tucker Hill Road. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0). **Motion passed.**

## 7. Warrants and Minutes

#7.1 \$307.84  
#3.3 \$275.00  
#3.4 \$23,262.59



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#4.2 \$10,728.07  
#4.4 \$22,419.39  
#6.1 \$20,551.33  
#8.1 \$3,692.83

**Motion** by Mary Bryant that we accept the warrants as presented. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0).  
**Motion passed.**

**Motion** by Sharon Harkay to accept the Selectboard meeting minutes of February 6<sup>th</sup>, February 13<sup>th</sup>, and February 20<sup>th</sup>, as edited. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0). **Motion passed.**

## 8. Adjourn the Special Selectboard Meeting

**Motion** by Steve Tofel to adjourn the special Selectboard meeting at 6:50 PM. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0). **Motion passed.**

## 7:00 PM – Call to Order of Candidate Forum and Pre-Town Meeting Informational Hearing

Sharon Harkay called the forum and informational hearing to order at 7:00 PM and turned the meeting over to Town Moderator Deecie Denison.

Deecie gave opening remarks that echoed her musings about duty and responsibility in the Town Report.

Mary Chin, school board candidate, was the first candidate to speak, giving an overview of her experience as an educator.

Mary Bryant asked Mary Chin what her best and worst experiences were during that time.

Mary Chin described a school in New Jersey that did not offer vocational training as a worst experience, and her time at Oxbow with a really good principal as a positive experience.

Deecie reminded those present that the candidates will not be speaking at Town Meeting, so this was the opportunity to ask questions.

Current Lister Barb Harrington is on the ballot to complete the last 2 years of a 3 year term. Barb described her work over the past year, including the process of earning a level 2 assessor's certification. Barb said she appreciates the importance of having a good working relationship with her team and the other town employees, and she also enjoys the technical aspect of the work. She is committed to growing in this role and hopes people will vote for her.

Barb read a statement from Sue Howard, also a current Lister who is running for a 3-year term. Sue has lived in town for 35-years, built a home and raised a child here and finds it very satisfying to serve the town. Sue is dedicated to serving the town to the best of her abilities.

Sharon Harkay noted that this will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> time she is running for election, this time for the 3-year term. Sharon said the current board has a good working relationship, even though they don't always agree. Having gone through the process of finding and hiring a town manager, Sharon thinks it is important to help find the next person. Sharon believes that it is important to listen to what residents are saying and what they are asking of us.

Curtis Richardson asked Sharon what she thought were her biggest success and her biggest frustration.

Sharon said her frustration is sometimes the slow pace of moving projects forward. She thinks her biggest success was working to bring Bryan in as town manager.



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Steve Tofel, who is running for the 2-year Selectboard seat, said he is interested in helping the town determine the use of the ARPA money. He believes the money should be used for one-time projects. He is also interested in making the Treasure Island Exploratory Committee a permanent committee. Asked the same question by Curtis Richardson, Steve shared the frustration that Sharon has about how long it takes to get things done. He is also frustrated with the Open Meeting Law, stating that while it is good in theory, it creates inefficiencies in moving things forward. As for his greatest success, Steve agreed with Sharon again, saying it was the hiring of Bryan as the town manager.

Tracy Borst said she has just wrapped up her 20<sup>th</sup> year as Town Clerk, noting that it has become quite a career for her. She enjoys opportunities to support the town and her profession across not only the state, but also New England and across the country.

Deecie Denison thinks being the moderator has been a great way for her to serve the town, and she would encourage people to run in the future.

Pril Hall is up for reelection for the Trustees of Trust Funds. There are 3 trustees who administer the Farm Trust, which was established in the middle of last century. The trust has a substantial amount of money and is designed to help residents of Thetford in short term financial need. They also oversee the Library Trust, which awards scholarships to high school students, and the Cemetery Trust which helps the town maintain their cemeteries. Pril said she hopes that people will give her their vote.

## **7:30 PM – Pre-Town Meeting Informational Hearing**

Deecie reminded people that Saturday's meeting is an in-person only Town Meeting. It will begin with the School Board portion at 9:00 AM.

Deecie read each article.

Bryan shared information about the budget using a slide show presentation.

Curtis Richardson asked why Senior Solutions, in Article 11, was a 100% increase over last year. Steve Tofel explained that they were losing a lot of federal funding.

Joe Tofel asked Deecie if she would entertain an amendment to combine Articles 8 through 20 into one article. Deecie said she would entertain that motion during the meeting on Saturday.

Curtis Richardson asked Steve Tofel for specifics on the one-time projects for ARPA funds.

Steve said he did not want the money to fund something that would then require ongoing funding. Sharon Harkay gave an example of upgrades to the Town Garage or essential maintenance of Timothy Frost building.

Deecie noted that there will not be coffee or food at Town Meeting this year.

**Motion** by Steve Tofel to adjourn the Candidate's Forum and Pre-Town Meeting Informational Hearing at 8:06 PM. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0). **Motion passed**. Meeting adjourned.