



# 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, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023 7:00 PM

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

Others present: Town Manager Bryan Gazda, Town Clerk/Treasurer Tracy Borst, Department of Public Works (DPW) Foreman Dale Lewis, Listers Barbara Harrington and Sean Boyce,

Participating community members: Dale Lewis, Hannah Payson, Carolyn Hack, Garrett Hack, D.R. Mani, Lakshmi Kaja

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

### 1. Agenda Review

Sharon said by accident the agenda item for public comment ended up as #11 and she would like to move it to after the Town Manager comments. Sharon said that she would like to add in an Executive Session after minutes and warrants as she received information this afternoon that should be discussed.

### 2. Notes from the Selectboard Chair

Sharon said that there will be an agenda item for the May 1<sup>st</sup> meeting about “No Mow May”. The Agency of Agriculture is pushing the movement and there have been requests for Thetford to participate.

Sharon said the Selectboard had Town Manager candidate interviews on Saturday which went really well.

### 3. Town Manager Report – Bryan Gazda

Bryan said he found out on Friday from the NH DOT that the Thetford-Lyme bridge is scheduled to close on April 27<sup>th</sup>.

There will be a Public Tax Sale on Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM at Town Hall for 2 delinquent properties.

Bryan attended a meeting with West Fairlee Selectboard chair regarding the Route 113 culvert replacement project at the West Fairlee and Thetford town lines. As of now, that section of the road is scheduled to be closed on the weekend of June 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, and there are plans for a public informational meeting.

Bryan said the town has joined the Vermont 457 Retirement Plan, which is an employee only retirement plan. There is no cost to the residents.

Bryan has received the general release forms from people who reported tire damage. There is approximately \$3,300.00 in damages.

All of the HVAC units have been installed, as well as the condensers, and head units. The new furnace and the air recovery system will not be installed until sometime in July when the units come in. Town Hall will be without power on Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>. There are concerns about



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snowfall from the roof with some of the exterior units and Bryan will be discussing this on Friday. Selectboard member David Goodrich will join him for that meeting. Bryan asked DPW foreman Dale Lewis to give an update on the town roads. Dale Lewis said that right now the south end of town has been graded, with a little left to do on Mud Pond Road. They are working in the Route 132 area right now. They should be done grading once around the first or second week of May, assuming there is not a lot of rainfall. Mud season has been good, and they may pull the weight limit posters in the south end of town sometime this week.

Sharon asked about the driver feedback signs.

Dale said two signs with the solar panels have been put up, and the rest will be installed by the summer. Bryan said the budget allowed for 4 signs, which have been ordered.

#### 4. Public Comment

Dale Lewis commented that it has been a pleasure working with Bryan.

#### 5. Presentation on Gender Pay Equity

Bryan Gazda, Mary Bryant and resident Hannah Payson worked on this project and Bryan asked Hannah to start the discussion with the compact strategy. Hannah explained that a group called Community Action Thetford (CAT), formed to support the town in best practices, and they thought it would be helpful to look at gender pay gaps. They utilized the LEAP toolkit from the state of Vermont, which is a free audit tool. Hannah said if the Selectboard decided to go forward with this, they should commit to the equal pay compact. One next step would be to decide what the pay philosophy is, such as rewarding for performance, loyalty and seniority.

Bryan reviewed information by showing a slide presentation.

Hannah pointed out that the higher paid positions in Thetford just happen to be held by men; the higher pay is because of the position, not the gender of the person holding the position.

Sharon noted that this is for salaries only and does not include benefits.

#### 6. Potential Hiring of a Company to Assist with the Town-Wide Reappraisal

The Selectboard discussed two bids received by the Listers with Sean Boyce and Barbara Harrington.

**Motion** by David Goodrich to accept the bid from Appraisal Resource Group in the amount of \$41,700.00 to do a town wide reappraisal. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0), **motion passed**.

#### 7. Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) – Due by May 1

**Motion** by Sharon Harkay to accept the 2023 Local Emergency Management Plan as amended. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0), **motion passed**.

**Motion** by Sharon Harkay to authorize Bryan Gazda, and David Goodrich as Selectboard representative, to sign the plan. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0), **motion passed**.

#### 8. Appointment of Thetford Health Officer – Mariah Whitcomb

**Motion** by Sharon Harkay to reappoint Mariah Whitcomb to continue to be our town health officer for 3 years ending in 2026. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0), **motion passed**.



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## 9. Jackson Brook Road Findings and Resulting Action

Sharon said they received the memorandum from town attorney Brian Monaghan and attorney Kristen Shamis which concluded that “it is not clear who presently owns the portion of Jackson Brook Road past the turnaround” and “while the entirety of Jackson Brook Road appears to have been discontinued in 1858, the Selectboard may now consider the lower portion to be a Town Road through the process of dedication and acceptance.” The conclusion also recommended that “the Selectboard rescind its November 7, 2022, vote, because the portion of Jackson Brook Road previously considered to be Class 4 is likely no longer a Town road.”

**Motion** by Sharon Harkay that the Selectboard rescind their permission to upgrade and improve the Class 4 portion of the road that had been put in place on November 7, 2022, because they didn’t have the right to give that permission. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0), **motion passed**.

Sharon said the town is now out of this situation and this shouldn’t have any impact on the Manis right to use that road or improve it because of state statute 19 V.S.A. § 717(c) and cited court cases. Any other agreement going forward in terms of how that road is utilized is up to the three sets of property owners.

Sharon referred to a study conducted by Dartmouth students that supports no one can claim ownership.

D.R. Mani said he understands what has been decided.

Carolyn Hack handed out a statement to the Selectboard, and Garrett Hack read the statement which said they were willing to work with the Manis to ensure access and stated the actions they need from the Selectboard. These included rescinding the November 7, 2022 vote, removing the Class 4 portion of the road and notifying VTrans of this change. The statement included a quote from the Hertenberg heir and noted that they will not accept that there was ever a town highway through the property without a survey, acceptance and discontinuance. The statement said they will sit down with the Manis and Watts to work out access.

Carolyn Hack added that Sharon didn’t provide the information about the Dartmouth study prior to the meeting and that the town has not provided proper documentation to support claims of a legal town highway.

D. R. Mani said it is unfortunate that it has come to this. When they purchased the property, the town said they would have access, but now it looks like that access is being constrained. Now the Town is out of it so we will figure out how to proceed.

## 10. VTrans Municipal Roads Grants-In-Aid Program

**Motion** by Li Shen that Thetford participate in the VTrans Municipal Roads Grants-In-Aid Program. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0), **motion passed**.

**Motion** by Li Shen to authorize Brian Gazda and Tracy Borst as Town Clerk to sign. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0), **motion passed**.

## 11. Possible Approval of Proclamation for Older Americans Month

**Motion** by Steve Tofel to approve the Proclamation for Older Americans Month 2023. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0), **motion passed**.

~~12. Public Comment~~ (Moved to #4)



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## 13. Warrants and Minutes

#7.2 \$44,263.35  
#7.3 \$61,682.80  
#7.4 \$21,552.42  
#13.1 \$26,062.81  
#14.1 \$19,770.32  
#15.1 \$37,301.73  
#16.1 \$14,003.08

**Motion** by Li Shen to accept warrants as presented. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0), **motion passed**.

**Motion** by Mary Bryant to accept the Selectboard meeting minutes of April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, and April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, as presented. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0), **motion passed**.

## 14. Executive Session – Added Agenda Item

**Motion** by Sharon Harkay to enter Executive Session at 9:15 PM to discuss personnel matters per 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) and invite Bryan Gazda to attend the first part of the session. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0), **motion passed**.

**Motion** by Sharon Harkay at 9:45 PM to exit executive session. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0), **motion passed**.

No action taken.

## 15. Adjourn

**Motion** by Steve Tofel at 9:46 PM to adjourn the Selectboard meeting. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0), **motion passed**.