



Town of Thetford Vermont

3910 Vermont Route 113 • P.O. Box 126 • Thetford Center, VT 05075
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Selectboard Special Meeting Minutes Thetford Town Offices (w/Virtual Attendance Option) Monday, July 10th, 2023 7:00 PM

Selectboard members present: Sharon Harkay – Chair, David Goodrich – Vice-Chair, Steve Tofel, Li Shen (7:05), Mary Bryant (7:19)

Others present: Jennifer Michelle of GreenTown Consulting, Town Manager Brian Story, Town Clerk/Treasurer Tracy Borst, Selectboard assistant Martie Betts

Contributing community members: Dale Gephart and Doug Tiff, both members of the Treasure Island Committee

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

With three selectboard members present in person, there is a quorum. Mary and Li should be attending via Zoom.

1. Agenda Review

No change to the agenda.

2. Notes from the Selectboard Chair

Sharon said she delivered the gift of a hand-painted plate to Stuart Rogers, commemorating his years of service with Thetford. This has been a tradition for people who retire or leave and have worked 10 or more years at Thetford.

Sharon has received 2 letters of resignation; one from Sue Tallman, resigning from the Conservation Commission, The Selectboard will need to appoint someone to complete her term which ends in March of 2025.

The letter that wasn't expected was from Mary Bryant who will resign from the Selectboard on August 7th. The Selectboard will need to appoint someone to finish her term, also ending in March of 2025. If the Selectboard can't agree on someone to replace her in the interim, then they would have to have a special election. People who are interested should submit a letter of interest to the Selectboard.

David Goodrich said that according to the Selectboard handbook, they are required to post the opening within 10 days.

3. Town Manager Report – Brian Story

Brian said there are road closures in town, but it is a changing situation. We know New Boston Road is closed, one section of Gove Hill and Route 132 between Tucker Hill Road and Strafford. There is an emergency center open at the Fire Department. The road crew and EMS are coming in tonight. Vershire is experiencing flooding, so we are keeping an eye on Post Mills and the western side of Thetford.

All residents should carefully watch the conditions tonight.

1. Draft Updated Zoning Administrator Job Description

The draft is in the packet, and Brian welcomes any feedback. Sharon said she has minor edits that she will share later. Zoning Administrator Angela Jones has submitted her resignation and



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her last day was Wednesday. Brian said Angela was a dedicated employee and will be missed. He is expecting to have some interim assistance from Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission, plus members from the Development Review Board, and the Planning Commission. Brian is hoping the Planning Commission will make a recommendation to the Selectboard by the next Selectboard meeting.

2. Capacity Study Request for Proposals Published

Brian said a Request for Proposal has been sent out and posted. Sharon thanked Brian for doing this quickly and that it is very comprehensive. There was a discussion about the company Dubois and King.

4. **Public Comment**

No public comment.

5. **Presentation by Jennifer Michelle of GreenTown Consulting, Pollinator-Friendly Communities**

Sharon introduced Jennifer Michelle. Jennifer explained her background and said she started her consulting business last year and it helps municipalities put green practices in place.

Jennifer presented “Going Beyond Pollinator Gardens”.

Sharon thanked Jennifer for the presentation and said the town of Thetford was interested in creating more pollinator spaces. Dale Gephart, member of the Treasure Island Committee, said there were some good ideas presented and he would bring them back to the Treasure Island Committee.

6. **Solicitation of Nominations to Attend the 4th Vermont Community Leadership Summit, August 15th at Vermont Technical College in Randolph VT**

Sharon said this person doesn't have to be a Selectboard member, so any committee or commission member or member of the public can submit a letter of interest. David Goodrich attended last year and said it was very interesting, informative, and worth attending.

Brian agreed, stating there are usually a wide range of topics covered.

7. **Discuss Highlights of Lisa Niccolai's Stewardship Plan for Treasure Island**

Sharon reminded everyone that the Treasure Island Committee had suggested having a stewardship plan developed for Treasure Island. Sharon asked for comments from the Selectboard about the plan.

Li Shen said she felt that Lisa very thoroughly covered the natural resources, particularly in the north section of the property. There is good text about the riparian forest habitat, and the need to protect the north section and the wetlands. There is also good emphasis on the need to remove invasive plants everywhere. Li said she liked the tables, which summarize the management units with high, medium, and low priorities, and noted what was written about there being no ground vegetation on the island at all and how that could be improved.

Mary Bryant felt it was comprehensive and the evaluations are very well lined out. She is impressed with the report, and it will be a very good guideline going forward.

Sharon found the report to be extremely well organized and the suggestions are concrete, doable, and helpful. Sharon said Lisa did a good job of explaining why she was making the suggestions



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and, in many cases, gave us low or no cost ways to accomplish these things. Sharon said there are three things she would like to encourage the Treasure Island Committee to do with the document. Those things are who is going to do each of the action items, where are the funds going to come from and to check which, if any, of these items are going to need a permit because of the lake shore process and the wetlands. Sharon also wanted to make note that there was a bit of a controversy a year ago because the committee was thinking of creating a trail at the northern end of the property. Both in the original Lake Shore Assessment and in this plan, it is indicated that we need to get rid of the current path, sooner rather than later so people don't keep walking on it. Li pointed out that it is really the town manager who puts these plans into effect, although the committee can make recommendations to the town manager.

Sharon said this relates to the next agenda item about being crystal clear on what the committee's charge is. Sharon believes that what the Selectboard has asked the committee to do is put that action plan together. She agrees with Li that they don't go out and do these things but puts thoughts together for the town manager and Selectboard.

Dale Gephart, who is on the TIC, was glad to hear the Selectboard affirmation that this could be an action plan. The challenge is to prioritize and where to start. They would like to know the line of communication and Dale suggested that Brian pay a visit to the committee and walk the land so he knows who the committee is and the various subcommittees that will be working on different parts of the plan.

Sharon said that the committee does not need to worry about getting the work done, just to make the recommendations to Brian and he will take care of it.

Doug Tiffit said the committee is very action oriented, and it's important to them.

Sharon suggested that if the committee focuses on those three items; what needs to be done, who might do it and how it could be funded, the process might be easier to manage.

Mary said that because the committee has done so much work, and knows the area and its possibilities, a collaboration between the committee and Brian to come up with that overall plan would be a good thing.

After more discussion a suggestion was made for the committee to create a list of some concrete things that they really want to get done, share that list with Brian and see what he says about moving forward with it.

Dale said a concern of the committee is that they work on this plan, and it gets put on a shelf with little hope of anything getting done.

Doug said this plan is too good to be put on a shelf and wondered how more people in the town could learn about it.

Doug said that the committee is going to be meeting on the island itself this coming Saturday to walk the land to see Lisa's point of view, and Selectboard is welcome to join them.

8. Clarify and Possibly Revise the Charge for the Treasure Island Committee

Sharon said she wanted to double check with Selectboard members to make sure she hasn't been telling the committee something that the Selectboard didn't agree on. Sharon thought the Selectboard wanted this committee to come up with a master action plan to determine what needs to be done, who is going to do it, and how is it going to be funded. Are we in agreement that we want the committee to come up with this master plan, because the charge that we ended up agreeing on was not clear.



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Li said she believed those were the three things that the committee was charged with, financial, sustainability and good recreation.

David Goodrich agreed.

Steve also agreed but wanted to make sure that the committee understands it.

Doug Tiffit said they are not objecting to it, but they can't seem to get their heads around it.

Lisa's model is something they could build on.

Dale said he liked the previous suggestion that they get a consultant to come in and help with a brainstorming meeting.

Li remembered that it was discussed before, and the idea was rejected. Li wondered if it should be revisited. Mary agreed, saying perhaps some ARPA money could be used for it. Sharon asked Brian to consider this when he puts his thoughts together for use of the ARPA funds.

Sharon ended the discussion by asking Dale and Doug to go back to the committee and tell them that the Selectboard is looking for this master action plan, and they can work with Brian or Amy, the recreation director, to come up with action items that can be done while they are working on the plan. Sharon will get Brian up to speed on some previous discussions.

9. Consider the Joint Thetford Energy Committee's Request for Changes in the Committee Name and Their Charge

Sharon said with no member of the energy committee present, she would like to table the discussion until someone from the committee could attend.

Motion by Sharon Harkay that we table the discussion to next week, at which time we will have committee representatives. VOTE by roll call; Li Shen – in favor, David Goodrich – in favor, Steve Tofel – in favor, Mary Bryant – in favor, Sharon Harkay – in favor. **Motion carried.**

10. Warrants and Minutes

#13.4 \$22,051.02

#25.1 \$24,999.78

#13.3 \$408.50

#27.1 \$68,213.70

#26.1 \$3,805.43

#15.2 \$14,438.62

Motion by Steve Tofel to accept the warrants as presented. VOTE by roll call; David Goodrich – in favor, Steve Tofel – in favor, Sharon Harkay – in favor, Li Shen – in favor, Mary Bryant – in favor. **Motion carried.**

Motion by David Goodrich to accept the Selectboard meeting minutes of June 19th, 2023, as edited. 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 carried.**

11. Anticipated Executive Session to Discuss a Personnel Matter per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3)

Motion by Sharon Harkay to enter Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3), and to invite Town Manager Brian Story to the session. VOTE by roll call; Li Shen – in favor, Mary Bryant – in favor, David Goodrich – in favor, Steve Tofel – in favor, Sharon Harkay – in favor. **Motion carried.**

The Selectboard exited Executive Session at 9:22 PM.



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No action taken.

12. Adjourn

Motion by Steve Tofel to adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 9:23 PM. VOTE by roll call; Li Shen - in favor, Mary Bryant - in favor, David Goodrich - in favor, Steve Tofel - in favor, Sharon Harkay - in favor. **Motion carried.**