



Town of Thetford Vermont

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Selectboard Regular Meeting Minutes Thetford Town Offices (w/Virtual Attendance Option) Monday, September 18, 2023 7:00 PM

Selectboard members present: Chair Sharon Harkay, Vice-Chair David Goodrich, David Forbes, Li Shen, Steve Tofel

Others present: Town Manager Brian Story, Town Clerk/Treasurer Tracy Borst, Selectboard Assistant Martie Betts

Sharon Harkay called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.
Introduction of current members.

1. Swearing in of David Forbes as a Selectboard Member

Town Clerk Tracy Borst swore David Forbes in as a Selectboard member.

2. Agenda Review

No changes to the agenda.

3. Notes from the Selectboard Chair

Sharon reminded everyone that the first week the Selectboard discussed the 2 candidates, the Selectboard vote ended up in a tie. They decided to continue the discussion at the next meeting, and at that point decided on a compromise. The Selectboard received emails from citizens concerned that there would be a conflict of office with David Forbes, as he is currently chair of the Planning Commission. Legal advice from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns was obtained and while the attorney agreed that there was no law or policy that prohibits someone on another committee or commission to be on the Selectboard, the danger would be real or perceived conflict of interest. David readily agreed to recuse himself on any votes that deal with the Planning Commission or Zoning.

4. Town Manager Report – Brian Story

Brian directed attention to Tracy Borst, who announced that her assistant, Martie Betts achieved Certified Clerk status at the Vermont Clerk's and Treasurer's Association Conference.

Brian said he will not be attending the Town Manager's National Conference but does plan on attending the state conference near the end of October.

5. Public Comment

No public comment.

6. Community Form on the Potential Part-Time Position of Town Social Worker

The community forum began at 7:11 PM.

Sharon outlined how the discussion would take place.

Brian Story talked about research he had done on salary for social worker positions in Vermont, and how adding that position to the town would impact property taxes. Some community members attending the meeting expressed support for a town social worker, commenting that it was a progressive and innovative idea. There was some discussion around what the expectations of the position would be, their job description and how to handle off-hour situations. The suggestion of a benefits coordinator instead of a social worker was made. The question was asked about who would be managing this person and how would they be evaluated or held accountable. There was discussion about the various social agencies that receive an appropriation from the town and what services they offer. There was discussion about the needs of the elderly in Thetford. There was discussion about the current police department force and how this position would interact with that department. There was a suggestion that there may be grants that would cover the initial funding of the position. Sharon thanked everyone for participating and the discussion ended at 8:34 PM.

7. Discuss Message to be Sent to Vermont Legislature via Survey on Potential Bike Corridor Along US Route 5

Sharon said that she had not received any more details about this survey, but the Selectboard should talk about the idea to see how any survey might be answered. The Selectboard was in favor of the idea and agreed that whoever gets the survey will bring it to everyone's attention.

8. Status of Claflin Property and Proposal for Quit Claim Deed

Brian said he has not received word on whether a Quit Claim Deed would be sufficient for the transfer of a Route 5 Property to the town. The property is very steep and narrow and of very little utility. The property owners have stopped paying taxes on it with the intent that the town would take it over. The property did go to tax sale, but it was not purchased. Several possibilities for the use of the land were discussed.

Li Shen cited an example of a previous, similar situation which that Selectboard rejected. Li is not in favor of accepting the property.

David Goodrich said he was opposed to accepting the property and that everyone else in town is expected to pay their taxes.

Steve also voiced his opposition to the Quit Claim Deed.

Brian will investigate other possibilities.

9. Warrants and Minutes

#17.4 \$23,359.93

#34.1 \$31.25

#18.3 \$387,457.80

#35.1 \$28,691.48

Motion by David Forbes to accept the warrants as presented. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0).

Motion carried.

Motion by David Goodrich to accept the Selectboard meeting minutes of September 11th, 2023, as amended. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0). **Motion carried.**

10. Adjourn

Motion by Steve Tofel to adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 9:15 PM. VOTE: All in favor (5-0-0). **Motion carried.**