



Town of Thetford Vermont

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

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

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

Participating community members: Melissa Krzal

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

1. Agenda Review

There were no changes to the agenda.

2. Notes from the Selectboard Chair

There were no notes from the Selectboard Chair.

3. Town Manager Report –

Brian gave an update on the current conditions of the roads because of the heavy rains. Brian noted that the meeting might be interrupted by the fire alarm which is malfunctioning due to a phone line problem between the town and Hanover dispatch.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. Review of Driveway Permit

Motion by Steve Tofel to approve the driveway permit. Sharon didn't think the motion was detailed enough. Steve withdrew his motion.

Motion by David Goodrich to approve the driveway permit submitted by Laurie Burnham at 1392 Robinson Hill Road with a mailing address of Fairlee, VT.

VOTE by roll call: Steve Tofel – in favor, Li Shen – in favor, David Forbes – in favor, Sharon Harkay – in favor, David Goodrich – in favor (5-0-0). **Motion carried.**

6. Discuss Cost Estimates for the Timothy Frost Building and Potential for Using ARPA Funding.

Brian reviewed the summary of costs for the Phase One Renovation of the Timothy Frost Building that was proposed by Smith & Vansant Architects. Brian said the amount could be brought down a bit as there is a large contingency built in and there may not be a need to include the bathroom in the first phase.

There was a discussion about the current heating system. David Goodrich and David Forbes expressed interest in seeing the entire scope of work vs. the summary. Brian said this work would allow for the building to be open and used, but the limit of occupancy would be 50 people. Li asked if this estimate included a door at the far end that would be used as an egress. Melissa Krzal expressed opposition to spending the amount of money it would take considering the other things in town that needed attention, such as the town garage. Sharon and Li talked about the culture importance of the building as well as the structural appearance to the village of Thetford Center. Li also pointed out that if that piece of property were sold there would be no place for an expansion of the Town Hall. There was discussion about finding grants for some of the work. Sharon said a decision can't be made based on one estimate, and they need to know more about possible grants. Tracy Borst said she was curious about where the Selectboard was going with this discussion at this meeting, as the agenda item said it was to discuss the cost estimate. She asked if the Selectboard was considering putting something on the town meeting warning to see what the voters thought. Brian suggested having someone from Smith & Vansant attend a meeting in order to answer the Selectboard questions.

7. Discuss Whether or not to Create a Reserve Fund for the ARPA Funds.

Motion by Sharon Harkay to authorize Brian Story to take the remaining ARPA funds and put them into the 2024 budget under General Fund as revenue. VOTE by roll call: Steve Tofel – in favor, Li Shen – in favor, David Forbes – in favor, David Goodrich – in favor, Sharon Harkay – in favor (5-0-0). **Motion carried.**

8. Continuing Discussion about Potentially Offering Voting Rights on Local Issues to Eligible Non-Citizens Whose Primary Residence is in Thetford.

Sharon said there was a lot of new information in the packet. Li said she wasn't sure why they were considering this as there are no barriers to becoming a citizen and she's not sure how many residents would be impacted. If exceptions started, then part time residents are going to want to vote too. This could open a lot of issues that are unforeseen. Sharon said they would have to make it clear that this is for the people whose primary resident is in Thetford. Steve talked about giving all people who live in Thetford the right to vote in Thetford. David Goodrich said it should be a state-wide decision, not a town-by-town decision. The process of getting a town charter to make this happen seemed like more than David felt the Selectboard should be taking on at this time. Tracy wondered how this would affect our town and what the ramifications could be from having another voter check list and the process of how we manage that.

Motion by Steve Tofel that we put an article on the town meeting warning asking the voters if they wish to petition the legislature for a single government charter for legal non-residents to vote. VOTE by roll call: Steve Tofel – in favor, Li Shen – opposed, David Forbes – opposed, David Goodrich – opposed, Sharon Harkay – opposed (1-4-0) **Motion failed.**

9. Go Over Final Budget Revisions.

The final budget revisions were not available and will be discussed on January 8th.

10. Warrants and Minutes

#46.1 \$150.00
#26.3 \$712.80
#48.1 \$1,772.41
#47.1 \$4,143.59
#25.4 \$23,023.02
#25.3 \$19,007.16

Motion by Li Shen to accept the warrants as presented. VOTE by roll call: Steve Tofel – abstained, Li Shen – in favor, David Forbes – in favor, David Goodrich – in favor, Sharon Harkay – in favor (4-0-1). **Motion Carried.**

Motion by David Forbes to accept as revised the Selectboard meeting minutes from December 4th, 2023, December 6th, 2023, and December 13th, 2023. VOTE by roll call: Steve Tofel – in favor, Li Shen – in favor, David Forbes – in favor, David Goodrich – in favor, Sharon Harkay – in favor (5-0-0). **Motion carried.**

11. Adjourn

Motion by Steve Tofel to adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 8:46 PM. VOTE by roll call: Steve Tofel – in favor, Li Shen – in favor, David Forbes – in favor, David Goodrich – in favor, Sharon Harkay – in favor (5-0-0). **Motion carried.**