

**Town of Ferrisburgh
Selectboard Minutes
January 17, 2017**

Members present: Jim Benoit, Steve Gutowski, Loretta Lawrence, Michael “Red” Muir, Jim Warden.

Town officials present: Gloria Warden, town clerk.

Visitors present: Deb Healey, Luke Husk, Julie Laplume, Andy O’Brien, Denise O’Brien, Karen Olivieri, Walter Reed II, Bessie Sessions, Ron Smith, Sally Torrey, Monica Tupper, Pam VanDeWeert.

1. 6:30 p.m. Regular meeting — call to order.

Loretta Lawrence, chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Approve minutes — January 3, 2017 (regular meeting); January 10, 2017, budget work session.

Red Muir made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 3, 2017, regular meeting, as presented. Steve Gutowski seconded. Steve Gutowski, Loretta Lawrence, Red Muir, and Jim Warden voted in favor. Jim Benoit abstained. MOTION PASSED.

Jim Benoit made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2017, budget work session, as presented. Steve Gutowski seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

3. Selectboard new business

(a) RHR Smith & Company — annual audit review. Ron Smith, managing principal of RHR Smith & Company, CPA, began his comments by stating that the town was in better financial condition than last year; the carryover balance is about \$216,000 versus \$124,000 last year. This was a result of the board being frugal and having some favorable revenue projections.

A lengthy dialogue ensued involving Ron, the selectboard, several townspeople at the meeting, and town auditors Deb Healey and Walter Reed II. Ron remarked that the concerns this year were not financial, but more about policies and procedures. He noted that things he saw during the audit had not happened before: unreconciled bank accounts, held deposits, late fee penalties from the IRS, late reports. He estimated that 100 hours are needed per week to run the office. When the treasurer is absent, the burden of his work falls on other people. Ron commended Assistant Treasurer Pam Cousino, stating that although she had many struggles, she did an admirable job. Steve Gutowski stressed that if Pam were not here, the town would be in a much worse situation.

Ron spoke about the selectboard’s fiduciary responsibility to the town. As such, the board can set policies and procedures that both appointed and elected officials must follow. He commented that many towns are switching from elected to appointed treasurers in order to control functions performed and hours worked. Then he began to brainstorm ideas such as tying compensation to performance, paying a hourly wage instead of an annual salary, using a wage contingency, setting a salary each year, and creating a position that is a combination of elected and appointed.

With this audit, Ron feels that the board can now review which procedures are not being done and make changes to avoid this same type of audit next year.

As the town’s outside auditor, Ron volunteered to attend this year’s Town Meeting Day to speak about the findings of his company’s financial audit for fiscal year June 30, 2015–July 1, 2016.

[Note: Due to inclement weather delaying Ron Smith, this agenda item was discussed after **5 (c) Draft letter to Ferrisburgh School Board re: snow removal.**]

(b) John Bull — highway operations report. Loretta Lawrence announced that John Bull was unable to attend the meeting because he and his crew were dealing with the ice and snow on the roads.

(c) Request from Sally Torrey, delinquent tax collector. Sally Torrey asked the board to consider putting before the voters a revised tax collection policy. She stated that a large number of taxpayers simply forget to pay their taxes on June 1. Sally suggested charging 4% if taxes are not paid by June 1, with a subsequent 4% due if taxes are not paid by July 1. She has already spoken to Pam Cousino, assistant treasurer, who assured Sally this new policy could be handled in the accounting area of taxes.

4. Selectboard old business

a) Final draft of revised Credit Card Policy. Loretta Lawrence suggested that the name of the company issuing the credit card be deleted as that information may change in the future. After discussion, Steve Gutowski made a motion to accept the Credit Card Policy with the noted change and include signing of the card by the cardholder. Jim Warden seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

(b) Denise and Andy O'Brien re: Villaris of Ferrisburgh. Discussion ensued regarding the rental fee charged by the town in the eight years the O'Briens have rented the upstairs community hall for youth and adult self-defense classes. There have been no issues with the O'Brien's use of the space; they have been very accommodating when other individuals or groups have requested to rent that space. The board decided that the rental fee will remain at \$50 per Saturday.

5. Selectboard general business

(a) Vermont Green Line (VGL) Committee update. Jim Warden, a member of the town's VGL Committee, informed the board that a representative of the selectboard would need to sign the legal document that adds \$20,000 to the escrow account and extends the term of the agreement to the end of 2017. Red Muir made a motion to authorize Loretta Lawrence to sign the First Amended and Restated Escrow Agreement. Vermont Green Line Devco, LLC will deposit the additional \$20,000 for 2017 into the account established by the escrow agent in accordance with the escrow agreement executed April 19, 2016. Jim Benoit seconded. Jim Benoit, Loretta Lawrence, Red Muir, and Jim Warden voted in favor. Steve Gutowski abstained. MOTION PASSED.

Jim submitted two invoices approved by the VGL Committee to the selectboard. After discussion, Red Muir made a motion to approve payment to the firm of Carroll, Boe & Pell in the amount of \$898.85 from the VGL escrow account. Jim Benoit seconded. Jim Benoit, Loretta Lawrence, Red Muir, and Jim Warden voted in favor. Steve Gutowski abstained. MOTION PASSED.

Red Muir made a motion to approve payment to Benjamin Marks, attorney, in the amount of \$4,000 from the VGL escrow account. Jim Warden seconded. Jim Benoit, Loretta Lawrence, Red Muir, and Jim Warden voted in favor. Steve Gutowski abstained. MOTION PASSED.

The VGL escrow account is fully funded by Vermont Green Line Devco, LLC, not by the town.

(b) Union Meeting Hall — request for rental. Luke Husk and Pam VanDeWeert addressed the board regarding their desire for a summer 2017 wedding in the hall. After discussion of numerous details, it was decided that Pam would visit the hall again to see if this is a feasible option. She will contact the board if she would like to move forward with the event.

(c) Draft letter to Ferrisburgh School Board re: snow removal. Loretta Lawrence read a draft of a letter addressed to JoAn Canning, superintendent of schools, notifying her that as of July 1, 2017, the town will no longer provide snowplowing services to the Ferrisburgh Central School.

6. Public comment

Monica Tupper asked if a new treasurer is voted in and the budget begins on July 1, will the person be paid the salary of last year's budget. After discussion, Loretta Lawrence replied that since this is the first election after the positions of town clerk and treasurer were split, the salary will be negotiated as an hourly wage.

7. Other business

Loretta Lawrence informed the board that she attended a meeting of the Atkins Farm Association on January 16, 2017. She will email the meeting minutes to all board members.

Red Muir asked Loretta Lawrence to check with the VTRANS Traffic Safety Division to see if the speed cart has been moved to Plank Road.

8. Correspondence

(a) Paula Moore, Bixby Board of Trustees — response to concerns and questions. By letter, Paula Moore, president of the Bixby Board of Trustees, followed up on the statistics provided by Trustees Gail Blasius and Silas Towler at the regular selectboard meeting held on December 20, 2016.

(b) Nick Patch email — traffic study. Nick Patch emailed Loretta Lawrence asking for the selectboard's stand on installing a traffic light at the intersection of US Route 7, Old Hollow Road, and Old Stage Road. She responded updating Nick about past efforts to have a traffic study at this intersection, and provided information regarding all planned road construction through summer 2018 along US Route 7, between Middlebury and Charlotte. Loretta said she would contact the VTRANS Traffic Safety Division regarding conducting a traffic study at that intersection.

(c) Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) Town Meeting workshops. The town received notice of the 2017 VLCT annual Town Meeting workshops to be held on February 8, 2017, at the Capitol Hotel and Conference Center in Montpelier, Vermont.

9. Selectboard to approve or sign

(a) Villaris of Ferrisburgh — hall rental agreement for 2017. Steve Gutowski made a motion to continue renting the upstairs community hall to Villaris for youth and adult self-defense classes on Saturdays from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. for the rental fee of \$50 per Saturday, with the required \$500 deposit and proof of insurance. Jim Benoit seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED

(b) Certificate of Highway Mileage year ending February 10, 2017. Jim Warden made a motion to sign the Certificate of Highway Mileage. Steve Gutowski seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

(c) Selectboard warrant. After review, Red Muir made a motion to approve the selectboard warrant, which details town expenditures, for a total of \$42,574.23. Jim Benoit seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

10. Adjourn

Jim Benoit made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. Steve Gutowski seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Silveira