

Town of Ferrisburgh  
Selectboard Minutes – Approved  
March 3, 2020

**Members present:** Jim Benoit, Rick Ebel, Clark Hinsdale, Jessica James, Michael “Red” Muir.

**Town officials present:** Chris Campbell, delinquent tax collector

**Visitors present:** Brian Goodyear, Jeanne Kelly, Ashley LaFlam, Bessie Sessions.

**1. 6:00 p.m. Regular meeting — call to order.**

Rick Ebel called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**2. Approve minutes — February 18, 2020, regular meeting.**

Red Muir made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 18, 2020, regular meeting, as submitted. Jessica James seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

**3. Selectboard new business**

There was no new business.

**4. Selectboard old business**

**(a) Addison Northwest School District — re: possible Ferrisburgh Central School closure discussion.** Jessica James said per pupil equalization is changing.

**(b) Building maintenance updates.** Red Muir said two companies are coming tomorrow to look at the roof at the Sisters property and give estimates to repair the leak.

**i. Union Meeting Hall (UMH) update.** Discussion began when Jim Benoit spoke about the vote at Town Meeting to double the amount in the warned article for building maintenance to \$40,000; he said he was the only board member to oppose the vote. He encouraged the building maintenance committee to review the plans for the UMH because he feels the scope of the work has gone way beyond maintenance and is a restoration project. He stated he does not think the town will ever be able to fund the maintenance of the building because historic materials cost a lot and do not last. He suggested a bond vote, so everyone would get to decide. He said allowing the selectboard to decide how to spend the money is not transparent enough. He expressed concern that the word “lease” keeps being mentioned without absolute clarification of what that means. Ashley LaFlam, a member of the Friends of the UMH, explained what the group has done so far. Stating the goal is to raise as much money as possible, she said they will continue to seek grants and come before the selectboard if a matching grant needs town funds. Following further discussion, Jim reiterated that he wants a restoration bond vote for UMH and to use the building maintenance fund as it was intended.

Red said the building maintenance committee would be meeting on March 11, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. to review bids.

**ii. Town offices building.** Red Muir said that on April 13, 2020, he would have an estimate for painting the town hall building.

**(c) Vorsteveld tree cutting in ROW update.** Rick Ebel said there is no communication at this time.

**(d) Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy — approve final version.** Jim Benoit made a motion to adopt the revised Ethics Committee Policy. Jessica James seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

**(e) Appoint temporary chair until March 17, 2020, reorganizational meeting.** Jim Benoit made a motion to appoint Jessica James as temporary board chair, until the March 17, 2020, reorganizational meeting. Red Muir seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

## 5. Selectboard general business

Rick Ebel said as this is his last meeting, he would like board members to follow up on issues brought to his attention at Town Meeting. After Monique Thurston spoke with Diane Lanpher and Matt Birong during the meeting, she spoke to Rick about the pace of a bill about climate change that is moving quickly through the legislature. She said she is concerned about the hardship it will cause the residents of Ferrisburgh. After discussion, Jessica James agreed to invite Diane Lanpher and Matt Birong to a selectboard meeting.

Rick Ebel spoke about the safety concerns from cars driving too fast voiced by Steven Shores, who lives near Pea Ridge Road, about the widening of Clark Woods Road. Rick said he has spoken to Pam Cousino, town clerk, about the issue. After discussion, Jim Benoit agreed to contact Steven to follow up.

Rick Ebel said Grace Pierson, who lives on Sand Road, wants a “Welcome to Ferrisburgh” sign on McDonough Drive. After discussion, Clark Hinsdale agreed to talk to John Bull about this and follow up with Grace.

Rick Ebel said Walter Reed told him a tree was cut down in the town right-of-way across the street from his house. He added that Cliff Mix, tree warden, and John Bull, road foreman, are working on this. After discussion, Clark Hinsdale agreed to contact Walter.

Clark Hinsdale recalled that a woman at Town Meeting had asked if the town has a plan for the coronavirus. Rick Ebel had addressed this at the meeting saying the town would be following the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). He said prior to the meeting he emailed Pam Cousino, town clerk, and Jaimeelyn Gaboriault, health officer, about this. He said the town is following the advice and direction of the state. Jessica James said you can go to [healthvermont.gov](http://healthvermont.gov) and follow links for what communities can do. Rick said he would ask Jamieelyn to follow up with the board about this.

Red Muir asked about the progress of new email addresses for selectboard members, stating this is a priority. Brian Goodyear said he was waiting until the reorganizational meeting on March 17, 2020.

Rick Ebel asked Brian Goodyear, a member of the Vergenes Area Rescue Squad, what the town can do about the coronavirus. Brian said the focus for businesses is to create contingency plans for employees: possibly working remotely, creating protocols for cleaning the office, and barriers to protect employees.

## 6. Public comment

There was no public comment.

## 7. Other business

Jim Benoit spoke about the Addison County Regional Planning Commission's capital improvement plan submitted at the last selectboard meeting. He said both he and John Bull do not agree that an additional \$113,500 needs to be added annually to the equipment budget. He said he spoke to John about the financial obligation to have replacement value insurance on the trucks. John will follow up with Addison County Regional Planning Commission.

Red Muir commented that with Chris Campbell coming on the selectboard the town would need a new delinquent tax collector. The board agreed it would be an agenda item at the next regular selectboard meeting on March 17, 2020. Chris said he has a potential replacement, who could be available in the summer. He said the accounts are in a better position now so maybe the town could wait until then to hire someone.

## 8. Correspondence

**(a) State of Vermont Department of Taxes — Notice of Tentative Redetermination of Equalized Education Property Value and Coefficient of Dispersion.** Brian Goodyear explained to the board that the listers had requested a redetermination of the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) from the state of Vermont. That request was granted, which increased the town CLA from 99.52% to 100.71%; that change will result in a reduction of approximately \$100,000 in taxes for the town.

## 9. Selectboard to approve or sign

**(a) Gilfeather's Fine Foods — 2020 Liquor License Renewal Application.** Jim Benoit made a motion to approve the 2020 liquor license renewal application for Gilfeather's Fine Foods. Jessica James seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

**(b) Starry Night Café— 2020 Liquor License Renewal Applications.** Jim Benoit made a motion to approve the 2020 liquor license renewal application for Starry Night Café, #8310-001-1RST-001. Jessica James seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

Jim Benoit made a motion to approve the 2020 liquor license renewal application for Starry Night Café, #8310-001-3RST-001. Jessica James seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

Jim Benoit made a motion to approve the 2020 liquor license renewal application for Starry Night Café, #8310-001-OUTC-001. Jessica James 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 \$1,526,575.81. Jessica James seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

## 10. Adjourn

Jim Benoit made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:06 p.m. Jessica James seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Silveira