

Town of Ferrisburgh
Selectboard Minutes
May 6, 2014

Members present: Jim Benoit, Steve Gutowski, Loretta Lawrence, Sally Torrey, Jim Warden

Town officials present: Gloria Warden, town clerk; Garrit Smits, town treasurer

Visitors present: Carolyn Blaise, Chris Blaise, Tyler Billingsley, Gail Blasius, Carl Cole, Kurt Haigis, Craig Heindel, Clark Hinsdale III, Andy Kirkaldy, Bob McNary, Mike Muir, Karen Pettersen, Charlie Pughe, Bessie Sessions, Bill Sullivan, Monica Tupper and Tim Vincent

1. Call to order

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

2. Approve minutes

Steve Gutowski asked that the minutes of the April 15 meeting be amended. He said that a sentence about “septic overshadowing” from the Mailloux subdivision reads that a well could not be drilled on the area in question; it should read that a well drilled in the designated area would “need to meet state specifications.”

Jim Warden made a motion to approve the minutes with Steve’s correction. Steve seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

3. General Business

(a) Tyler Billingsley and Charlie Pughe from Vermont Gas Systems gave a slide presentation about a Vermont Gas project that will involve construction of a gate station and a pipeline to deliver gas to Vergennes. The pipeline will run along Plank Road to Route 7, and then into Vergennes. Most of the line will be on the south side of Plank Road, in New Haven, with some of the line in Ferrisburgh and Waltham. Pughe said the project schedule called for completing the gate station and running the main line to Route 7 this year; the pipeline would be run into Vergennes during the next construction season.

Pughe said the main line would be a 6-inch steel pipe, coated with epoxy. Homeowners and businesses along the route would also be allowed to get gas service via 3/4-inch plastic lines off the main. Vermont Gas would hook up potential customers within 100 feet of the line for free; those further away could receive service by paying the cost to run a line beyond 100 feet.

Pughe said the main line is buried about three feet deep, and would parallel the roadway. In sections that are ditched, the pipeline would be alongside but not actually in the ditch, so that the line would be protected from damage when ditch maintenance was required. The line is buried with an eye to minimizing the footprint, and particularly damage to trees. In some places, traditional excavation equipment is used, while in others a horizontal directed drilling machine or a smaller ditch witch” can do the job.

In response to questions from the selectboard and the public, Pughe said:

- work on the project is scheduled to begin in June;
- a complete set of engineering and environmental plans will be provided to the town for public inspection in the town office;
- Vermont Gas uses triangular yellow signs to mark all its pipelines; all of the plastic lines incorporate wire tracers so that they can be located by Dig Safe;
- excavators and homeowners are required to check with Dig Safe before digging anywhere near a right-of-way or a utility line;
- mandatory horizontal drilling would be used where the path of the pipeline passes through a wetland, just east of the railroad tracks, so the pipe could run under the area in question;
- Vermont Gas has “an enviable safety record,” and surveys lines regularly to check for problems; and
- Vermont Gas X-rays all of the welds in their pipelines.

(b) Gail Blasius and Tim Vincent of the Ferrisburgh Historical Society (FHS) proposed that the town office and the selectboard take ownership of the “Ferrisburgh Day” celebration. She said there had historically been a “Good Neighbor Day” in town, and one suggestion is to hold a town-wide picnic at one of the state parks, open to all residents, perhaps with live music provided by local musicians. The FHS feels that having a central location where everyone could meet would be important, while emphasizing that the Rokeby Museum, the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum and other local attractions would still be approached about opening their doors to residents on the big day.

She pointed out that many neighboring towns have similar events, including Charlotte and Shelburne. Town clerk Gloria Warden, who previously worked in the Charlotte town office, described the Charlotte event as very successful. Gail suggested a date after Labor Day, when parks are not as busy, and not as many people are away on vacations.

It was suggested that a group could be put together to brainstorm about the event, and that the recreation committee might also be a source of help in organizing.

Jim Warden made a motion that Ferrisburgh start an annual town-wide event and call it Good Neighbor Day. Steve Gutowski seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

(c) Carl Cole reported on bids he received for work on the Union Meeting Hall. Painting and electrical work would total about \$7,600, with further work required on the front steps, both to repair the steps and provide handicap access.

(d) Carl also reported on a bid he received for a sound system that could be used by the town, at town meeting, and for other events at the town hall and elsewhere. The total bid was \$10,122, including both portable equipment and equipment that would be installed in the town hall. Since the Friends of the Grange Hall has just \$2,300 earmarked for a sound system, and the town does not have money budgeted, it was suggested that fundraising for the project should be considered. Others suggested that this would be a good investment in the future of the building.

(e) Clark Hinsdale III said he wanted to offer the town a chance to purchase a 2.2-acre parcel that he owns, which abuts town land and the Ferrisburgh Central School property. The 2.2 acres

is part of a larger 4.24-acre parcel that he is currently in the process of subdividing. He said the asking price for the parcel is \$40,000, but he might be willing to consider a lower price if the town agreed to put a plaque on the property recognizing his grandfather, Earl Collins, part of an old Ferrisburgh family that had lived in the town from the 1780s to the 1960s. Selectboard members and other town residents at the meeting suggested that it made sense for the town to consider purchasing property around the town hall and the school when it became available for a reasonable price, if only because it's impossible to predict what the needs of the town will be in the future. It was also mentioned that this might make it possible to provide more parking for the town hall.

Steve Gutkowski made a motion that the town pursue discussions of the purchase of this lot with Clark Hinsdale, with the stipulation that a public meeting be held to give townspeople a chance to make their views known. Jim Benoit seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

4. Selectboard Old Business

(a) Garrit Smits, town treasurer, submitted a draft plan for an undesignated fund balance policy for the town. The town's auditors have suggested that the town have 60 days of operating expenses kept on hand. The selectboard asked Garrit to have the auditors look over the proposed policy, and put this on the agenda for the next meeting of the selectboard.

(b) Steve Gutowski presented a draft traffic ordinance for the town, mostly concerning parking on town roadways and abandoned vehicles on town property. The draft also included a section on speed limits for the town. Jim Warden praised Steve's draft ordinance, but said the town had existing rules on speed limits so that this section would not be necessary. He also said the town might want to consider having tickets printed up to use on illegally parked vehicles. Steve agreed to make changes to his draft and present it at a future meeting.

5. Selectboard New Business: Correspondence

(a) Vermont CARES is asking the town for permission to use town roads in its annual Champ Ride, on June 14. In light of this and other requests to use town roads for cycling events, Sally Torrey wrote a form letter to be sent to organizers, listing the town's requests of the organizers and riders.

Jim Warden made a motion to approve the letter. Jim Benoit seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

Steve Gutowski made a motion to approve the Vermont CARES request, with the stipulation that they receive a copy of Sally's letter and a copy of Vermont Bicycling Laws, as compiled by the Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition. Jim Benoit seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

(b) Another group asking to use town roads for a cycling event, Sparta Synergy, will be asked to attend a future selectboard meeting to provide more information on their event, the Vermont and New Hampshire States Time Trial Championships on July 19.

(c) Carl Cole shared paperwork with the selectboard about septic overshadowing involving land he owns on Sand Road, which would affect town property near the Ferrisburgh Town Beach.

(d) The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources shared with the town information about projects that will take place in fiscal year 2015, involving dam and culvert work in the Little Otter Creek

Wildlife Management Area, and a commercial timber sale in a stand of pines in the Lower Otter Creek Wildlife Management Area.

(e) The town was notified of a Municipal Dog Control Workshop offered on May 29 in Montpelier by the Vermont League of Cities & Towns. Jaimeelynn Gaboriault, animal control officer, hopes to attend.

(f) The town received an invoice from the Vergennes Fire Department for responding to two fires at the Bernard Dam property in West Ferrisburgh. The first was a burn pile fire on April 23, for which no permit was issued. The town was billed \$144 for that fire. The second was a grass fire on April 28, for which a permit was issued. The town was billed \$160 for that fire.

Sally Torrey made a motion that Bernard Dam be charged \$144 for the fire on April 23 for which there was no permit. Steve Gutowski seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

6. Public comment

Kurt Haigis, chair of the Vergennes Union High School board, attended the meeting to remind residents and the selectboard that the revote on the Ferrisburgh Central School and Vergennes Union High School budgets would be held on Tuesday, May 13. A budget informational meeting will be held Monday, May 12, at the FCS. Jim Warden said he would be in touch with the Addison County Sheriff's Department about providing traffic control during the voting on May 13 at the FCS.

Carl Cole said that he had circulated an e-mail to the selectboard about the continuing issue of parking and fishing on the "slang bridge" on Hawkins Road over Little Otter Creek. Narrowing of the bridge to one lane when cars are parked along most of its length can create problems for both cars and cyclists. There are "no parking" signs at both ends of the bridge. In the hope that a few warnings might help matters, Jim Warden said he would bring up the matter with the county sheriff's office when he calls them about the school board revote.

7. Selectboard to approve or sign

(a) Gloria Warden said that the upper level of the town hall is the destination for the Ferrisburgh Central School should they need a safe place to go in case of an emergency evacuation. If the town offices were closed, there would be no way for school personnel to get into the building. So Gloria asked if the principal could be provided with a key to the upstairs front door.

Jim Warden made a motion that the principal of the Ferrisburgh Central School be provided with a key to the upstairs front door of the town hall. Steve Gutowski seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

(b) Sally Torrey made a motion that the town sign a special event permit for Go America Go Beverages d/b/a Whistle Pig Whiskey during the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum Golf Tournament at Basin Harbor Club on May 31. Steve Gutowski seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

(c) Sally Torrey made a motion that the town sign a catering license for Park Place Tavern & Grill at Kingsland Bay State Park on May 31. Jim Benoit seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

(d) Sally Torrey made a motion to approve warrants for the total amount of \$29,312.55. Steve Gutowski seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

(e) The town received notice from Vermont Superior Court, Environmental Division, that the awarding of a subdivision permit for the Jacqueline Couture property on Locust Lane is being appealed by a neighboring property owner, Barry Estabrook.

8. Other business

(a) Selectboard members reported they had made a site visit on May 3 to the Bernard Dam property on Button Bay Road, along with road foreman John Bull. Following the selectboard's report, there was discussion about who or what was responsible for flooding in one of Bernard Dam's fields. Because the town and Bernard Dam are currently involved in litigation, selectboard members were reluctant to discuss the issue in detail.

(b) Jim Warden said he had visited some of the town's cemeteries and reported that some clean-up work may need to be done to allow the cemeteries to be mowed safely this summer.

(c) Steve Gutowski reported he would be meeting with the Addison County Solid Waste District about removal of the burned-out building on Route 7. He also said he heard complaints about the gravel used on Fuller Mountain Road, and after inspecting the road agrees that the gravel is not performing well. Jim Benoit agreed.

(d) Monica Tupper asked that the selectboard set a date for doing evaluations/reviews of town employees. Loretta Lawrence said the board had been working on this, and a date would be set in the near future.

(e) Bob McNary questioned the compensation levels for the town clerk, the town treasurer and a newly-hired minute taker for the selectboard.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Etchells