

Town of Ferrisburgh
Selectboard Minutes –
June 16, 2020

Members present: Chris Campbell, Clark Hinsdale, Jessica James, Michael “Red” Muir, Jim Benoit

Town officials present: Pam Cousino – town clerk, Deb Healey – treasurer, John Bull – road foreman.
All town officials participated electronically using Zoom.

Visitors present: See roll call

1. 6:30 p.m. Call regular meeting to order. Jessica James called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. by requesting a **roll call** attendance of all participants in the meeting: Jessica James, Red Muir, Chris Campbell, Clark Hinsdale, James Benoit, Deb Healey, Pam Cousino, Shane Whaley and Tim Mathewson. John Bull, Peter Newton and Tim Davis joined late.

2. Approve minutes — June 16, 2020, regular meeting.

Clark Hinsdale made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2020, regular meeting, as submitted. Red Muir seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

3. Selectboard new business

(a) John Bull – highway operations report. Tabled as John wasn't present

(b) Request to cut trees in ROW on Clark Woods Road – Steve Shores. This item was tabled until the next meeting as Mr. Shores was unable to attend.

(c) Property tax interest/penalty discussion due to COVID-19. After a brief discussion it was decided that the Board of Abatement would be the process for anyone looking for help paying their taxes.

(d) ACRPC Broadband Innovation Grant application – letter of support request. Jessica James discussed the need for letters of support from people to send to Addison County Regional Planning for the Broadband Innovation Grant to help get connectivity to all corners of Ferrisburgh.

(e) Addison County Sheriff's Department re: contract renewal. After some discussion with Sheriff Peter Newton regarding the need to increase the fees, he then mentioned that the town could extend the contract for one more year, due to Covid-19, and keep the fees the same. Clark Hinsdale made a motion to extend the contract for patrolling the town for one more year, at the same rate as the current contract. Jim Benoit seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED. Jessica James then asked the Sheriff if he could get the speed data from the old hollow road to them. Red Muir asked if the Sheriff could patrol S. Middlebrook Road as well.

(a) John Bull – highway operations report. John got over the internet hurdle and was able to make his report. He mentioned that the new truck should be ready by mid-July – then it will go for the body. There has been a complaint regarding the poor site distances at Greenbush Road and Stage Road. John Bull and Cliff Mix will get together to try to resolve the poor visibility issue from the lilac tree by measuring the R.O.W. and seeing if there can be a resolution.

4. Selectboard old business

(a) Fence in ROW on Hawkins Road – Janice Perry. There was no permit for the fence being to tall and no 1111 permit for it being in the right-of-way. A zoning permit has been applied for and the zoning administrator was unable to issue the permit since it is in the town right-of-way. The permit being applied for is for a 211' by 6' fence, estimated cost of \$15,000 and estimated completion date 2021. Clark mentions that we want the process to be followed by the zoning administrator and the road foreman. If it was appealed, then it would go before the Selectboard. John has also not seen the zoning permit. Jessica requests that John review the zoning permit and have the 1111 permit filed out. He will then make a ruling on it as a representative of the Selectboard. It was suggested that there be a sight visit by the board. John Bull commented that he would confer with the zoning administrator and then get back to the board.

(b) Fence in ROW at intersection of Middlebrook Road and Wing Road – E Jones and M Slack. John Bull commented that some of the fence is in the ROW. There maybe three sections that are 4 or 5 feet in the ROW. The homeowners asked the Zoning Administrator if they needed a permit and were told that they didn't need a zoning permit since it was under the height requirement but did not realize that some of it was in the ROW. The homeowners need to apply for an 1111 permit through John Bull. No action currently needs to be taken by the board. There will be an insert to be sent out in the tax bills to help educate homeowners about when they need an 1111 permit.

(c) Vergennes–Ferrisburgh Study Committee update. Still meeting weekly. Vergennes has put together a boundary committee on their city council and Jessica James recommends that Ferrisburgh do the same. She would like Clark and Chris to be on the boundary committee. It is being called the Gateway Project, which is at the 22A and train station area. The future of the municipal land that Ferrisburgh owns there will be part of what they are looking at for the Gateway Project. In the future there will be a joint grant request for that project.

(d) Vorsteveld tree cutting in ROW update. Jessica James asked the rest of the board if they had reviewed the Vorsteveld documents. She noted that the discovery schedule had been signed. The reply memo is being drafted by the attorney.

5. Selectboard general business

(a) Covid-19 updates. There were no updates.

(b) Education property tax legislation. We are now being told that the state education tax rate will be available July 1, but due to the income tax extension to July 15, some of the homestead declarations will not be available to the town until August 1st. Due to the difficulties with escrow companies, etc. there was a discussion that the tax bills should not go out until early August, which would change the due date of the first installment to September 15, but would not change anything else. Clark Hinsdale moved to extend the first due date to September 15, for this tax year only. Jim Benoit seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

6. Public comment

There was no public comment.

7. Other business

Tim Davis mentioned that he would be willing to be the delinquent tax collector for the town, but not until the issues with the property next door to him are resolved. He forwarded info to the Town Clerk

that will be presented at the next Selectboard meeting regarding a process to deal with dilapidated buildings. Chris Campbell wanted to confirm that he could give Tim the contact information for the property next door because Tim may have a way to solve some of the issues. It was agreed that he could do that.

Clark Hinsdale brought up the lease for the Sister's property next door to the town hall. Red Muir, as chair of the building committee has asked Clark and Jim Benoit to review the lease. Clark has done a market analysis and believe that the lease is below market value through 2026 so he and Jim will look into that further, before the town goes ahead and spends any money on that property for repairs.

8. Correspondence

(a) Make a Wish – Wish Kid Golf classic. No action taken as it has been canceled for 2020.

9. Selectboard to approve or sign

(a) Town highway equipment note. After discussion, Clark Hinsdale made a motion to approve and sign the 2020–2021 equipment note for the replacement truck for a total of \$152,442.00. The loan will be payable in 5 equal annual installments of \$30,488.40. Jim Benoit seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

(c) Selectboard warrant. Red Muir made a motion to approve the selectboard warrant, which details town expenditures, for a total of \$60,594.41. Jim Benoit seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

10. Adjourn

Jim Benoit made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 p.m. Red Muir seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Cousino
Town Clerk