

Town of Ferrisburgh  
Selectboard Minutes – Approved  
February 4, 2020

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

**Town officials present:** Chris Campbell, delinquent tax collector; Laurie Curler, assistant town clerk/treasurer.

**Visitors present:** Vaughn Collins, Doug Fletcher, Daniel Hofman, Jean Richardson, Bessie Sessions.

**1. 6:36 p.m. Regular meeting — call to order.**

Rick Ebel called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**2. Approve minutes — January 14, 2020, special meeting; January 21, 2020 regular meeting.**

Jim Benoit made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2020, special meeting, as submitted. Jessica James seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

Jim Benoit made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2020, regular meeting, as submitted. Jessica James seconded. During discussion, Rick Ebel said a correction needed to be made to Selectboard Old Business 4. (a) VTrans — US 7 intersection with Old Hollow Road and Stage Road. The year 2022 should be 2021. Jim Benoit, Rick Ebel, and Jessica James voted in favor. Clark Hinsdale and Red Muir abstained. MOTION PASSED.

**3. Selectboard new business**

**(a) Appoint John Bull to Building Maintenance Committee.** Red Muir said he had spoken with Carl Cole earlier in the day and he believes John Bull was appointed several months ago. For clarification, Red Muir made a motion to appoint John Bull to the Building Maintenance Committee. Jim Benoit seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

**(b) Vergennes City Manager Daniel Hofman and Chief Merkel — proposal for law enforcement services.** Rick Ebel said Chief Merkel was unable to attend. Addressing Daniel Hofman, Rick stated that tonight is not a decision-making opportunity; the town is under contract with the Addison County Sheriff’s Department (ACSD) and is generally happy with the service provided. Referring to a handout he gave to board members, Daniel Hofman said Vergennes is in the natural center to serve Ferrisburgh and can tailor patrol options because there are two officers on duty about 90% of the time. As part of his presentation, he compared the upfront cost of the Vergennes Police Department (VPD) with ACSD, stating that since the sheriff’s department is in Middlebury, 30 minutes away, the town is charged \$51.70 (time and distance), but there is no upfront cost with the VPD. Rick corrected Daniel saying ACSD costs start when they cross the Ferrisburgh line. Daniel continued by saying the relationship with Ferrisburgh could turn into an emergency preparedness plan. He stated the contract would be easy to exit and that VPD is just asking for the opportunity to submit a bid. Discussion ensued regarding other issues when Clark Hinsdale said the school district consolidation controversy has precipitated communities taking a second look at how they operate. He stated when you start managing a five-town area you are talking about community planning, which does fall on the board of alderman and the administration. He would like to see a dialogue started by taking a look at all of the things Vergennes and Ferrisburgh already do together, and look at the other areas where there are possibilities to do things together or not. Clark mentioned one area: an updated sewer plant suggested by a retiring

alderman at an exit interview. Daniel confirmed that Vergennes needs a \$6 million new treatment plant and a \$10 million storm water separation system based on an engineering study; he added his budget cannot absorb that. Clark said having a direction to move in together would be important. He spoke about what would be needed to grow Ferrisburgh and identifying how rightsizing the school district would impact fire and rescue and sewer and water. Daniel said with tight budgets shared services is the way to go.

#### **4. Selectboard old business**

**(a) Approve and sign amended Rental Agreement and Facility Use Policy.** Following discussion, Red Muir made a motion to adopt the new Community Meeting Space and Community Center Room Policy (formerly known as the Rental Agreement and Facility Use Policy. Jim Benoit seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

**(b) Further discussion of revised language to Article 10 of town Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy.** Discussion ensued when Rick Ebel asked Jean Silveira, office clerk, to explain the editing of the revised article. She said the rewrite is taking into consideration board comments from the January 7, 2020, meeting. Rick asked that a final version be presented to the board at the next regular selectboard meeting on February 18, 2020.

**(c) Addison Northwest School District — re: possible Ferrisburgh Central School closure discussion.** Jessica James said the school board has been working on the budget. She shared information she received from Chris Kayhart, which included the following from the meeting minutes of the Addison Northwest School District Board of Directors' January 13 and 22, 2020, meetings: This proposed budget sets District expenses at \$21,842,594, 1.36% LESS than fiscal year 2020. Due to the decline in equalized pupils and reduction of Act 46 consolidation incentive, that decreased expense budget is estimated to result in a union tax rate increase of 2.17% (\$.04). Major factors that impact expenditures for fiscal year 2021 include Hannaford Career Center tuition increase of 23.45% (\$120,000). She also said Addison Northwest School District Board of Directors voted and approved the use of capital improvement funds, up to the amount of \$20,000, for engineering designs to mitigate Ferrisburgh Central School drainage problems.

#### **(d) Building maintenance updates**

**i. Union Meeting Hall update.** Red Muir said Miles Jenness of Vermont Heavy Timber has finished securing the building. He commented that Jean Richardson obtained a grant for renovating the building so it will be handicap accessible, and she is applying for more grants as well. He also said the Friends of the Union Meeting Hall had their second meeting last week. Jean talked about her meeting with Historic Preservation; it agrees that it is a good idea to have the Friends as the applicant for grants with a memorandum of understanding stating there is a cooperative partnership between the Friends and the town.

**ii. Town offices building — roof.** Red Muir said he spoke with Carl Cole regarding communications with Breadloaf, which are not going in the direction the committee would like. He added there may be a need to have an executive session to discuss this matter. He said the committee will be meeting on February 5, 2020, at 4:00 p.m. At that meeting they may come up with a recommendation for the selectboard.

**(e) Vorsteveld tree cutting in ROW update.** Rick Ebel said there has been another communication from the town attorney who is pushing to get court dates set. The issue holding that back is the lack of a definition of a public shade tree that both parties can agree with.

## 5. Selectboard general business

There was no general business.

## 6. Public comment

There was no public comment.

## 7. Other business

There was no other business.

## 8. Correspondence

**(a) Vermont Adult Learning — gratitude to town for support.** By mail, the town received a certificate of appreciation for its generous support of programming.

**(b) Vermont Department of Taxes — 2019 Equalization Study Results and Common Level of Appraisal Redetermination of Values.** By letter, Vermont Department of Taxes acknowledged the town's petition for a redetermination of values.

## 9. Selectboard to approve or sign

**(a) #311 Ferrisburgh Jolley — 2020 Liquor License Renewal Application.** After review, Jessica James made a motion to approve the 2020 liquor license renewal application for #311 Ferrisburgh Jolley. Jim Benoit seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

**(b) Jiffy Mart #461 — 2020 Liquor License Renewal Application.** After review, Jessica James made a motion to approve the 2020 liquor license renewal application for Jiffy Mart #461. Jim Benoit seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

**(c) Dakin Farm — 2020 Liquor License Renewal Application.** After review, Jessica James made a motion to approve the 2020 liquor license renewal application for Dakin Farm. Jim Benoit seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

**(b) Selectboard warrant.** After review, Red Muir made a motion to approve the selectboard warrant, which details town expenditures, for a total of \$87,928.86. Jim Benoit seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

## 10. Adjourn

Red Muir made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. Jim Benoit seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Silveira