

**Town of Ferrisburgh  
Selectboard Minutes  
April 20, 2021**

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

**Town officials present:** Pam Cousino, Town Clerk, Deb Healey, Treasurer, John Bull, Highway Department Foreman, and Bonnie Barnes, Zoning Administrator. All town officials participated electronically using Zoom.

**Visitors present:** Jean Richardson, Steve Huffaker, Carolinne Griffin, Gerry Racette, Mary Anne Michaels, Silas Tower, Carl Cole, Dan Cockerline, Sue Hoxie, Craig

**1. 6:30p.m. Call regular meeting to order**

Jessica James called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

**2. Approve Minutes – Regular meeting, April 6, 2021**

Jessica James asked for approval of the minutes for the regular meeting on April 6, 2021. Clark Hinsdale moved to approve the April 6, 2021 regular meeting minutes as submitted. Chris Campbell seconded the motion. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED

**3. Public Comment**

Clark Hinsdale remembered Marty Illick and Terry Dinnan and their contributions to their community and Lewis Creek. He expressed how profoundly grateful he is for the volunteers and staff people who make the community special.

**4. Selectboard New Business**

**a) John Bull – highway operations report**

John Bull reported they made an emergency repair to a bridge on Basin Harbor Road. He will develop a bridge project and apply for a grant to fix it. He is putting paving projects together and the worst road conditions are on Hawkins Road which leads into Sand Road, and Jersey Street. He found the septic tank at the Union Meeting Hall, put a cover on it and installed a frost free hydrant and will install a padlock on the hydrant and the outside main breaker box. He will fill in and seed the area before the food truck event this weekend. They have done some prep work on Walker Road where a steel tank has rotted out and will need to be replaced with 80’ of culvert. Finished 3 culverts on Ashley Road and worked on the shoulders. There are driveway culverts that have failed and need to be replaced on Basin Harbor Road. Plan to do a couple of upgrades on the north end of the Fuller Mountain Road.

**b) Echo Road Trail – John Bull to report**

John Bull reported that about seven years ago, the town went through the unmarked town trails. Echo Road is a trail that was not tossed up. One section of the split off on this trail goes into Monkton. He cited the process for identifying and making changes to trails. All abutting neighbors need to be notified of any proposed changes. Any proposed changes to the Echo Road Trail would require notifying Monkton as well. Basically the process requires notifications to all parties, a site visit where testimony is taken, and a public hearing.

Jessica James and John Bull attended a kick-off meeting on Friday, April 14, 2021 regarding the project at the Route 7 and Old Hollow Road intersection. A work trailer will be set up on site soon. They are still working on the traffic plan. John Bull asked that Jean Richardson notify neighbors of the need to take alternate routes once the project begins. Clark Hinsdale wanted to mention complexities of things brought to the planning commission that probably need 1111 permits. The property on the corner of Hollow Road and Route 7 has submitted for zoning permits to convert the barns to rentable office space. People currently park perpendicular to how you would walk to the crossing for Route 7. He is concerned the efforts to make the Hollow more friendly may stop at the cemetery and there will be little or no shoulder from there to the new crossing on Route 7. Clark asked that John Bull look at the situation.

**c) Review draft letter regarding Bay Road – right-of-way procedures**

John Bull submitted a draft of a letter to the Long Point Corporation for the Selectboard to review. Clark Hinsdale said he appreciates the last draft, approves of the letter, the tone of the letter, and the detail pertaining to rules and regulations. Clark Hinsdale moved to thank the Road Commissioner for his letter to Long Point Corporation and encourage him to send it with the boards support. Jim Benoit seconded the motion. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED

**d) Sue Hoxie – permission to use town roads for Tour de Farms bike ride, September 18, 2021**

Sue Hoxie attended to request permission to use town roads for the Tour de Farms bike ride to be held on September 18, 2021. She has submitted the appropriate forms and documentation including the planned route which is the same as 2018 and 2019. The list of farms is still being finalized and the certificate of insurance is in process. Red Muir inquired about having someone at road crossings. Chris Campbell expressed his understanding that a uniformed officer be present at every Route 7 intersection, even if there is a traffic light, in the event riders don't obey the traffic light. Jessica James confirmed that the town's checklist indicates uniformed officers at any Route 7 intersection and volunteers cannot be used.

Clark Hinsdale moved that the ACORN 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Tour de Farms use of town roads be approved upon confirmation of certificate of insurance and uniformed officers at Route 7 intersections by the end of April 2021. Red Muir seconded the motion. All voted in favor. MOTION APPROVED

**e) Steve Huffaker – Maple Broadband update**

Steve Huffaker presented an update on the Maple Broadband project to provide high speed internet to all Addison County residents. The goal is to provide 100Mbps upload and download speeds. They are prohibited from taxing town residents for funding. Currently 20 towns have signed on to the project. All committee members are volunteers. They received \$130,000 from the CARES Act. Currently 39% of Addison County is unserved by cable or fiber optic and 44% of Ferrisburgh is unserved. In 2021 they will be executing an operating partner agreement, completing a business plan, and the high level design. As well as conducting surveys, performing community outreach, and obtaining financing.

Based on a meeting in Vergennes with Peter Welch, the American Rescue Plan funds will come in two phases. The first phase is expected to occur in 2 or 3 months and would be about half of the funds. He believes Ferrisburgh's share of these funds, based on a per capita basis, would be about \$800,000. He is asking Ferrisburgh if they could make a minimum commitment of \$250,000 of their American Rescue Plan Funds.

Chris Campbell expressed concerns about unified districts and pooling money together. He asked how the costs would be impacted if a town decided to leave the group. Steve responded that the funds are not coming from the towns. Chris then asked where the funding comes from after the American Rescue Plan funds are depleted. Steve replied that they would move into the municipal bond market. Deb Healey asked how this will interface with current internet service providers. Steve replied that these providers would probably never expand into the more rural areas. There will be an overlap of equipment and services that will compete with them but Maple Broadband will offer more bandwidth than existing service providers.

**f) Dana Bibb – barking dogs at night on Middlebrook Road**

Dana Bibb submitted a complaint to Jessica James and Jaimeelyn Gaboriault regarding barking dogs at night on Middlebrook Road. This has been on the agenda many times. Jessica would like to hold this discussion until Dana and Jaimeelyn can attend the meeting.

**g) Town Beach – Ferrisburgh Central School Artist in Residence Program**

Jessica James introduced Carolinne Griffin to present an idea the Ferrisburgh Central School PTO is working on and they are thinking of including the town. For their next artist in residency they want to work with Thea Alvin, a stone mason and sculptor who works with students. Thea has three types of structures that she works with students to build and they are looking at doing an arch. They would like to do this in the fall as Thea's earliest availability is October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The PTO was considering putting the structure at the town beach. Chris Campbell expressed concern that the town beach does not have eyes on it and it could be vandalized. Carl Cole added his observation is that the beach is used by many non-residents and not patrolled or controlled. He has seen many structures over the years disappear and is concerned about how long a stone structure would last on the beach. Clark Hinsdale suggested that students be involved in researching possible locations as part of the project. Clark suggested that between the school and the town hall might be a good spot and symbolize our belief as a community that those two things are an integral part of a strong community. Red Muir asked if it would be possible to make the arch high enough for adults to enter as well.

**5. Selectboard Old Business**

**a) Motion to authorize Michael Muir, James Benoit, Chris Campbell, and Clark Hinsdale to sign weekly payroll**

Jim Benoit moved to authorize Michael Muir, James Benoit, Chris Campbell and Clark Hinsdale to sign the weekly payroll. Red Muir seconded the motion. All voted in favor. MOTION APPROVED

**b) Town Beach – continued discussion**

Clark Hinsdale provided information on the Champlain Shoreline Stabilization project that has some grant possibilities. Discussion was held previously on the recreation committee expanding their scope to include the town beach. He proposed that the committee move forward with this and table for another meeting. Carl Cole added that if developing the town beach you need a plan to maintain and control it. Jean Richardson mentioned she agrees with Carl and it's often trashed. The Charlotte Town Beach has an attendant and requires a permit on your vehicle.

**c) Building maintenance committee**

Red Muir provided an update for the Building Maintenance Committee.

Sisters' property – the electrician will install three hard-wired smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. GFI's were checked and are ok. The UF wire to the garage was evaluated and they couldn't find the break. RCI will find the end and estimate the cost for repair, a receptacle, and a light switch.

Town Office – The town office sign has PVC in the ground that is pulling out of the lights. Red asked RCI to order LED lights and change them. RCI will also check the vault fluorescent lights and change to LED if possible.

Union Meeting Hall – The bathroom is being worked on. Plumbing will be roughed in by the end of next week. Emergency lights are wired. Red has a quote from Joe Blasius to work on the interior and move a door. The bathroom should be done in a couple of months.

Town Office – Jessica James will request an update from Breadloaf.

Red Muir will set up a schedule with Clark-Wright for all town building septic systems to be pumped.

**6. Selectboard General Business**

**a. COVID-19 update**

There were 18 cases last week. The school went to remote learning for the week.

**7. Other Business**

None

**8. Correspondence**

**a) Doug Fletcher and Kate Brewer – re: tree cutting settlement**

A letter was received from Doug Fletcher and Kate Brewer expressing their appreciation to the Selectboard for enforcing the law.

**b) Nick Patch – black locust trees along Four Winds Road**

Nick Patch submitted an engineer's report regarding some black locust trees on Four Winds Road and his property. John Bull read the engineers report and stated it is not using the Vermont standards. Mary Anne Michaels was interested in what is happening with the trees they saw marked with an orange ribbon. Jessica James said John Bull was doing a tree inventory and those had been looked at but no decisions were made yet. Jim Benoit provided that the tree that Nick referred to is not the one with the ribbon around it. The trees Nick is referring to are the ones on his lawn and at the end of his driveway.

**c) Fort Cassin boat ramp access project by Vermont Fish & Wildlife**

A letter was received from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation regarding the upcoming project at the Fort Cassin boat ramp. The plans were included for review and asking if any municipal permits were needed. Bonnie Barnes indicated that the town does require a conditional use permit for docks in the Shoreland District and if it's required there she believes it should also be required for a dock in the Conservation District. Bonnie will respond to the letter.

**9. Selectboard to approve or Sign**

**a) Steeple Contract for Union Meeting Hall**

Jessica James asked Kevin Kite to draft the steeple repair contract to include the liquidated damages in the event of a delay as discussed at the last meeting. Article 16 was added and the Selectboard has seen the latest draft. Clark Hinsdale moved to approve the contract without Article 16. Red Muir seconded the motion.

Jim Benoit stated he originally mentioned adding the liquidated damages as it is standard language, however, after reviewing with his estimating department he learned it's usually included in the request for a bid. Given it wasn't disclosed to the contractor before the bid, he believes it is not fair to add it now. Start dates, end dates and pre-buy of materials were also discussed. The contract starts on May 1, to allow for pre-buying of materials with an end date of September 1. Red Muir told Dan Cockerline he can store the materials at the Union Meeting Hall. Pam Cousino has the contract and the Selectboard members will need to go into the town office to sign it. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED

**b) Settlement Agreement – re: Application of Peter Davis – fence appeal**

Jessica James explained that there was a fence appeal and a decision and a garage appeal. It's now at the point to settle both of them. Bonnie Barnes explained that it was a dispute between adjoining property owners. A fence was erected without obtaining a permit and then applied to the Planning Commission for site review because of scenic implications. The other property owner had obtained a conditional use permit to erect a one story replacement garage but a two story garage was built. The property owner came back to the Zoning Board and the board would have granted the permit if the original application had contained the correct information. The fence decision was to shorten the fence near the lake. The town attorney saw an opportunity to settle the dispute by putting see through lattice where the fence impedes the view.

Clark Hinsdale moved to approve and sign the Settlement of Appeals as described by Bonnie Barnes. Jim Benoit seconded the motion. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED

Everyone must go into the town office and sign the Settlement Agreement.

**c) Selectboard Warrant**

Jim Benoit moved to approve the warrant in the amount of \$44,720.37. Chris Campbell seconded the motion. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED

**10. Adjourn**

Jessica James asked for a motion to adjourn. Jim Benoit moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:55. Red Muir seconded the motion. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Allen