

Town of Ferrisburgh  
Selectboard Minutes – DRAFT  
December 3, 2019

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

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

**Visitors present:** Doug Fletcher, Brian Goodyear, Ashley LaFlam, Jean Richardson, Bessie Sessions.

**1. 6:30 p.m. Regular meeting — call to order.**

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

**2. Approve minutes — November 5, 2019, regular meeting; November 19, 2019, regular meeting; November 19, 2019, budget work session.**

Red Muir made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 5, 2019, regular meeting, as submitted. Jessica James seconded. Clark Hinsdale, Jessica James, and Red Muir voted in favor. Jim Benoit and Rick Ebel abstained. MOTION PASSED.

Red Muir made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2019, regular meeting, as submitted. Jessica James seconded. Jim Benoit, Clark Hinsdale, and Jessica James voted in favor. Red Muir abstained. MOTION PASSED.

Red Muir made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2019, budget work session, as submitted. Jessica James seconded. Jim Benoit, Clark Hinsdale, and Jessica James voted in favor. Red Muir abstained. MOTION PASSED.

**3. Selectboard new business**

**(a) Town email accounts — Brian Goodyear.** Discussion began when Rick Ebel said he has had concerns about board members using personal email accounts for town business. He noted that if there is a public records request for any matter board members would be required to turn over their emails. Brian Goodyear spoke about email migration to Office 365, referencing a chart he produced showing town positions and costs for email-only licenses for the remainder of this fiscal year and for the 2020–2021 fiscal year. Following discussion, Rick Ebel asked Pam Cousino, assistant town clerk/town treasurer, to review the remaining 2019–2020 budget to see how many town employees will be able to get new email accounts based on available funds. Red Muir made a motion to have the office staff look into migrating to Office 365. Jessica James seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

**(b) Ferrisburgh Conservation Commission — hall rental agreement — February 4, 2020.** Jim Benoit made a motion to rent the upstairs community hall to the Ferrisburgh Conservation Commission for an educational program about bats on February 4, 2020, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., waiving the rental fee, \$500 deposit, and proof of insurance. Jessica James seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

**(c) Pam Cousino — general discussion.** Addressing the board, Pam Cousino, current assistant town clerk/town treasurer, thanked the board for promoting her to the position of town clerk. She said an advertisement to find her replacement started running on December 2 in the *Addison Independent*. The application deadline is December 13, 2019, which will allow there to be a list of candidates for the board

to review at the next regular selectboard meeting on December 17, 2019. Jim Benoit suggested that the advertisement be placed on Indeed.com, adding his company has had success finding qualified applicants using this website. Pam said she would do that and also post the ad on Front Porch Forum. As part of the discussion, Clark Hinsdale asked Pam if she or her assistant would be able to attend selectboard meetings so the next morning they could follow through on board requests. Pam explained how that could be done without incurring overtime. She also commented that she would keep track of hours spent during the workday for selectboard items. She continued by saying currently the workload can be handled although perhaps at some time in the future the selectboard may need its own clerk.

**(d) Discuss Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) Cannabis Resolution relating to S.54.**

After discussion, Rick Ebel asked board members to spend time reviewing the materials they received for this meeting and be prepared to sign off on the resolution at the next regular selectboard meeting on December 17, 2019. He noted the legislature will not be in session until January, so there is time.

**4. Selectboard old business**

**(a) Addison Northwest School District (ANWSD) — re: possible Ferrisburgh Central School (FCS) closure discussion.** Rick Ebel stated this would continue to be an agenda item for the time being. He said the next school board meeting is December 9, 2019. Jessica James explained the reason for the cut in the ANWSD budget from \$955,000 to \$470,000. She said the reduction is because special education funding was projected to quadruple. Instead it will be level funded by the state. She added the board is cutting five positions: four para-educators and one staff member from the central office. She also said there would be spending freezes (e.g. no new books or new athletic uniforms) and the sign outside the high school may be removed because approximately \$15,000 is still owed. She added the school board is concerned about the years after this because there are two options: close Addison and make it an alternative education school or keep it as a traditional elementary school.

Red Muir said he touched base with Ken Sullivan about the drainage and mold issues, commenting it is his understanding that today a company was doing mold testing in several classrooms.

**(b) Building maintenance updates**

**i. Union Meeting Hall.** Red Muir said Miles Jenness of Vermont Heavy Timber and his crew have begun setting up for shoring up the roof.

**ii. Slate roof — town offices building.** Red Muir said Carl Cole, a member of the building maintenance committee, sent a letter to Paul Wynkoop of Bread Loaf Construction inquiring if he had heard back from the company that provided the slate for the roof. Red said if Bread Loaf does not repair the roof at its own cost the building maintenance committee would like the selectboard to draft a letter to him.

**iii. PACIF insurance claim for rain/wind damage — town offices building.** Red Muir stated he received a letter from PACIF denying the claim because the company considers the leak to be caused by a preexisting condition: faulty construction. This comment led to a discussion led by Clark Hinsdale regarding subrogation: insurance companies suing each other to recover the cost of claims paid to insured parties. He said PACIF should know a claim is coming because the damage was caused by a weather event. He also said PACIF is required to give the town its decision in writing and inform the town how it can appeal the decision. Following discussion, Red said he would email the claims adjuster regarding the roof leak.

Red said the next building maintenance committee meeting would be December 17, 2019, at 5:00 p.m. At that time, the town will have been notified whether or not it has received the restoration grant for the Union Meeting Hall.

**(c) Vorsteveld tree cutting in ROW update.** Rick Ebel said Jim Carroll, the town's attorney, informed Rick there is a hearing scheduled for a discovery status conference on January 9, 2020. Doug Fletcher spoke to the board about the Vorstevelds' tile drains, saying they were not installed per state regulations and are causing water to rush out of the town right-of-way. He said the water took out a section of his driveway. After discussion, Rick Ebel said he would follow up on this issue with John Bull, road foreman.

## **5. Selectboard general business**

**(a) Discuss creation of an Ethics Committee per Article 10 of town Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy.** After discussion, Rick Ebel said he would first contact the Vermont League of Cities & Towns regarding formation of an ethics committee, then Jim Carroll, the town's attorney.

## **6. Public comment**

There was no public comment.

## **7. Other business**

There was no other business.

## **8. Correspondence**

**(a) Assistant Judges of Addison County — proposed 2020–2021 county budget.** By mail, the town received notice that on December 9, 2019, there would be a meeting at 10:00 a.m. at the Judge Frank Mahady Courthouse in Middlebury, Vermont, to discuss the proposed 2020–2021 county budget.

## **9. Selectboard to approve or sign**

**(a) Selectboard warrant.** After review, Jim Benoit made a motion to approve the selectboard warrant, which details town expenditures, for a total of \$1,572,763.01. Jessica James seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

## **10. Adjourn**

Jim Benoit made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 p.m. Jessica James seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Silveira