

**Town of Ferrisburgh  
Selectboard Minutes  
December 15, 2020**

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

**Town officials present:** Laurie Curler, Assistant Town Clerk, John Bull, Highway Department Foreman.  
All town officials participated electronically using Zoom.

**Visitors present:** Jean Richardson, Gerry Racette, Steve Huffaker, Mary Neffinger, and Brian Goodyear

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

Jessica James called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

**2. Approve Minutes – Regular meeting, December 1, 2020, budget work session, December 1, 2020**

Jessica James asked for approval of the minutes. Chris Campbell moved to approve the budget work session minutes of December 1, 2020 as submitted. Jim Benoit seconded the motion. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

Jim Benoit moved to approve the regular meeting minutes of December 1, 2020 as submitted. Red Muir seconded the motion. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

**3. Selectboard New Business**

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

Roadside mowing is ongoing along with pushing back brush. They are also servicing the equipment. Two crew members are back from quarantine. John Bull is in quarantine and hopes to return to work on Friday. Two of the crew tested negative but need to be retested due to exposure. The new truck has arrived and they are calibrating equipment. The town received a grant of \$6,000 for a roller to put on the grader and he is researching options. The state will pay \$4,000. They are spraying trucks to prevent them from rusting. Clark Hinsdale asked if it would make sense to pre-buy diesel fuel. John responded that they pre-buy the heating fuel but diesel is not available for pre-buy. Jim Benoit added that the bio-diesel does not store well.

**(b) Set date for remote informational meeting Saturday, February 27, 2021 at 10:00am**

The informational meeting will be held in place of town meeting since voting will be done by Australian ballot. Jim Benoit moved to set the date of the remote informational meeting to Saturday, February 27, 2021 at 10:00 am. Clark Hinsdale seconded the motion. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED

**(c) Maple Broadband Report discussion – Steven Huffaker, Ferrisburgh delegate**

Steve Huffaker was present to discuss Maple Broadband. The original name was the Addison County Communications Union District and has been changed to Maple Broadband. The group has been in operation for about 10 weeks. The primary objective in the first few months was to get the organization started with tasks like retaining a lawyer, identifying a marketing agency to help develop a website, and get communications out into the community. They’ve engaged Fred Kenney from Addison County Economic Development to help look for funds which will be their focus in 2021. They have been working with the Cares ACT funding and have to complete all of their work and submit it to the State of Vermont by December 20, 2020 for reimbursement. They are moving into funding and identifying an operating partner. Their high level objective is to build a fiber network to serve all the residents of Addison County.

They won't be using Ferrisburgh money for this project but will raise the money and will need to make a profit to pay back the investors. Another part of the Cares ACT is helping residents contend with the pandemic. They are days away from issuing an outreach tool consisting of a website of tools to help with things like working from home and telemedicine. A postcard will be sent to all of Addison County informing them of the website and tools. Steve mentioned they are printing up some WIFI hot spot signs. Ten new hot spots have been installed this year. In Ferrisburgh there is one at the Ferrisburgh Central School and the Town Office. Steve will meet with someone at each location to get approval for putting up the signs. The town of Middlebury has Community Development block grant funds that will be used for a feasibility study for the Printers Alley Project and there will be about \$70,000 left over. A recommendation has been made that it go toward the broadband development project and Steve will meet with Middlebury to propose the remaining funds be invested in this project. Red Muir mentioned he has tried to use the town office hot spot but was not able to connect. Jessica James will check into it.

**(d) Appoint two fence viewers**

Sherry Arroyo and Art Cohn have indicated they would be available until March to serve as fence viewers. Red Muir moved to appoint Sherry Arroyo and Art Cohn as fence viewers. Jim Benoit seconded the motion. Jessica James, Red Muir, Chris Campbell and Jim Benoit voted to approve. Clark Hinsdale opposed. MOTION PASSED

**4. Selectboard Old Business**

**a) Building Committee Update**

**i. Union Meeting Hall**

Red Muir said the power meter socket has been installed. The plan for outside power has changed location resulting in a reduced cost. The outside power will be installed when the emergency lights are. The remaining item for occupancy is the handicapped bathroom and they are waiting for clarity on the ADA requirements. A construction bid proposal is nearing completion for the tower. Mary Neffinger provided that the Friends of the Union Meeting Hall have received their first major donation of \$15,000 and there is a grant coming up that is specifically for fixing structural problems with roofs in historic buildings. They plan to use this first donation to get the money to repair the roof. Chris Campbell asked if the donation was tied to the grant and Mary replied it is not but the donor was happy to have them use it to assist with them obtaining grants.

**ii. Town Office Building – Breadloaf re: roof**

Red Muir said five UV lights have been installed in the air handlers as well as the MERV 13 filters. Mountain Air checked the amp draw on the fan motors and the new filters had little impact. HTC did an air flow and particle analysis as well as fresh air intake. The building now exceeds the quality standards for COVID-19. They will return in the future to balance the air system. Information from Silver Maple has been sent to the board. Red Muir asked that the Silver Maple information be discussed along with the letter received from Breadloaf at a later date in executive session. Jessica James agreed with Red and it will be discussed at a future meeting. Red Muir has reached out to Magic Brush who did the original painting and they will be providing a quote. A few others have expressed interest and will also be providing quotes.

Red Muir spoke with Marcel Brunet regarding the Sisters property. Marcel will check to determine if the patch on the roof is sound for the winter. The committee will be setting up a site visit for this property to view the problems and the Selectboard will be invited.

**b) Vergennes-Ferrisburgh Study Committee Update**

Jessica James will be scheduling a meeting.

**c) Vorsteveld tree cutting in ROW update**

Jessica James has sent out emails. Mediation is scheduled for February 19, 2021. The judge has not responded to the latest filing. Cliff Mix is working on a tree ordinance.

**5. Selectboard General Business**

**a) COVID-19 updates**

Jessica James learned at the last Emergency Responders and Municipal Leaders meeting that town road crews would be included in Phase 2 for the COVID-19 vaccine along with first responders and delivery people. She also learned of the Farmers to Family Food Box program. If families need help with food they can visit <https://humanresources.vermont.gov/food-help> or call 802-476-0316 to sign up for assistance.

**6. Public Comment**

No public comment

**7. Other Business**

Red Muir announced he will be stepping away as Chair of the Building Maintenance Committee. However, he will be available to help with the mechanical/HVAC items. He does plan to run for another term on the Selectboard.

Jim Benoit indicated he also plans to run for another term on the Selectboard.

**8. Correspondence**

**a) Vermont League of Cities & Towns – no floor meeting required as all town meeting articles will be voted by Australian ballot**

Pam Cousino will be attending a webinar on Thursday, December 17 for more information.

**b) Roger Marum – request to waive interest for late property tax payments during pandemic**

Roger Marum submitted a letter of complaint regarding a statement issued for interest due on a late property tax payment. He expressed his belief that it was unconscionable to assess penalties during the pandemic. Clark Hinsdale shared that he would have appreciated if Roger Marum had joined the meeting so the board could discuss this with him. Clark did not feel it was appropriate to address the letter to the town office where employees might feel bad about it. There is a procedure in place for this type of complaint and the procedure could be expedited if needed.

**c) Vermont Green Energy Systems – Ralph Shepard – Certification of Public Good for Installation of a wind turbine at 288 Sand Road**

The town has received a Certificate of Public Good for installation of a wind turbine at 288 Sand Road.

Jessica James mentioned she inquired about the wind turbine at the school but did not have any information. Bonnie Barnes is checking with the state. Mary Neffinger had officially made a complaint about the turbine at the Ferrisburgh Central School because it is not generating any electricity and has not had any maintenance performed. Chris Campbell asked if the school district should be maintaining that and Jessica replied yes. Red Muir expressed concern that due to no maintenance records the turbine could be dangerous and someone could get hurt.

**9. Selectboard to approve or Sign**

**a) Two listers corrections**

**i. Oakley Smith, Parcel ID# 14/02/072SLR2, Walker Road**

Jessica James asked for a motion to approve the Listers correction for Oakley Smith, Walker Road. Discussion followed regarding how commercial solar properties are assessed. Clark Hinsdale suggested that Justus DeVries attend a future meeting to explain the methodology. Clark Hinsdale moved to approve the Listers correction for Oakley Smith, Parcel ID# 14/02/072SLR2, Walker Road from the original value of \$52,000 to a corrected value of \$0. Jim Benoit seconded the motion. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED

**ii. Clifford & Sandra Harris, Parcel ID # 05/01/91SLR2LS, Greenbush Road**

Jessica James asked for a motion to approve the Listers corrections for Clifford & Sandra Harris, Greenbush Road. Red Muir moved to approve the Listers correction for Clifford & Sandra Harris, Parcel ID #05/01/91SLR2LS, Greenbush Road from the original value of \$509,100 to a corrected value of \$0. Jim Benoit seconded the motion. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED

**b) 2021 Tax Mapping Contract**

Jessica James indicated there are no changes to the contract for 2021. Jim Benoit moved to sign the tax mapping contract for 2021. Red Muir seconded the motion. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED

**c) Selectboard warrant**

Jessica James asked for a motion to approve the warrants. Clark Hinsdale made a motion to approve the selectboard warrants in the amount of \$1,626,692.86. Jim Benoit seconded the motion. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED

**10. Adjourn**

Jessica James asked for a motion to adjourn. Red Muir moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:51. Chris Campbell seconded the motion. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Allen