

**Town of Ferrisburgh
Selectboard Minutes
August 16, 2016**

Members present: Jim Benoit, Steve Gutowski, Loretta Lawrence, Red Muir, Jim Warden.

Town officials present: John Bull, road foreman; Gloria Warden, town clerk.

Visitors present: John Eisenhardt, Betsy Etchells, Craig Heindel, Jeanne Kelly, Bob McNary, Walter Reed II, Bessie Sessions, Mike Wood.

1. Regular meeting: Call to order

Loretta Lawrence, chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Approve minutes: July 25, 2016, special meeting, and August 2, 2016, regular meeting

Steve Gutowski made a motion to accept the minutes of the special meeting on July 25, 2016, as submitted. Jim Warden seconded. Steve Gutowski, Red Muir and Jim Warden voted in favor. Jim Benoit and Loretta Lawrence abstained. MOTION PASSED.

Steve Gutowski made a motion to accept the minutes of the regular meeting on August 2, 2016, as submitted. Jim Benoit seconded. Jim Benoit, Steve Gutowski, Loretta Lawrence and Jim Warden voted in favor. Red Muir abstained. MOTION PASSED.

3. New Business

(a) Treasurer's duties: discussion. Loretta Lawrence read a letter she had prepared and sent on behalf of the selectboard to Town Treasurer Garrit Smits about issues brought to the attention of the board by Pam Cousino, assistant town treasurer and assistant town clerk. Cousino told board members that she is concerned about having to take on duties that should be handled by the town treasurer, such as depositing checks in the bank, calculating town tax rates, preparing the warrant for the selectboard, mailing checks to vendors, preparing and sending tax bills, collecting taxes, and answering taxpayer questions.

Among the resulting problems for the town, she said, are checks that are sometimes not deposited for weeks, with taxpayers asking why their checks have not cleared; late payment of invoices; and failure to reconcile bank statements on a monthly basis. Cousino also said she is falling behind on her duties as assistant town clerk because of the need to take on duties that should be handled by the treasurer.

Also at the meeting, Gloria Warden, town clerk, gave selectboard members a memo explaining the amount of work that needed to be done in the town office by the town clerk, the town treasurer and their assistant, and asking for help in resolving the issues created by the situation described by Pam Cousino. She said the issues become particularly acute during the time between mailing of the tax bills and the tax due date, with lots of people calling and coming into the office to pay taxes and/or ask questions about their bills. Both Cousino and Warden are asking the selectboard to help resolve the issues.

Loretta Lawrence said that the board had invited Garrit Smits to the meeting to discuss the issues, but that he had been unable to attend. In the letter, the board asked that he attend the next meeting on September 6, 2016, and be prepared to discuss a remedy for the problems.

Board members said they wanted to talk with Smits before discussing the matter further. Jim Benoit and Steve Gutowski volunteered to set up a meeting with Smits. Jim Benoit made a motion to have two selectboard members meet with Smits as soon as possible. Steve Gutowski seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED. Benoit said he would call Smits on August 17 to set up a meeting.

Resident Jeanne Kelly said she hoped the issue could be resolved soon, because she had experienced problems in communicating with the town about her tax bills. Resident Bob McNary thought it was particularly important that checks sent to the town for payment of taxes be deposited in the bank promptly.

(b) John Bull: Highway Department report. There was a brief discussion of issues with the town hall basement, which has been leaking in some places. John Bull said the footing drains are working, but there is some water that is not getting down to those drains and is finding its way into the basement. Red Muir said the town has asked for estimates on work to repair any leaks around pipes and conduits that pass through the basement walls.

John Bull also said that the highway crew is doing grading, roadside mowing, ditching and culvert work. He said a new employee had started the day before. And he thanked board members for meeting with the road crew recently at the town garage.

(c) Mike Wood: Bay Road - speed control options/suggestions. Mike Wood, representing the Long Point Corporation, attended the meeting to ask about further suggestions for controlling the speed of traffic on Bay Road. He had approached the town previously about the issue, and the town put up signs calling for reduced speed on one portion of the road, and a stop sign where the fishing access road meets Bay Road. While association members think these have helped, Wood said, there continue to be concerns and some close calls with pedestrians. He asked about other ways to slow down traffic during the busy summer months, such as temporary speed bumps, a crosswalk, and/or a sign that tells people how fast they're going. A discussion ensued. John Bull suggested installing a traffic counter to gather information about how many vehicles are using the road and how fast they're going; Jim Warden said he would look into the possibility. Board members wondered about having the sheriff's department do some enforcement work in the area, saying that Wood could ask Gloria Warden, town clerk, to be in touch with the sheriff. The board also suggested informal enforcement by the corporation, figuring out who the offenders are and talking to them.

4. Selectboard Old Business

(a) Basin Harbor Road: trash problem on/in bridge area. The issue of littering near the bridge on Basin Harbor Road came up at a previous meeting. Gloria Warden, town clerk, requested advice from the Vermont League of Cities & Towns. VLCT sent along information about applicable state littering laws, and signage that might help. Steve Gutowski made a motion to have the town obtain up to six "no littering" signs, which also mention the possibility of fines, to be placed on the bridge and the road leading to it. Jim Warden seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

5. Selectboard General Business

(a) Vermont Green Line Committee report. Craig Heindel, who chairs the town's committee on the Vermont Green Line (VGL) project, attended the meeting to update the selectboard. He asked that two

corrections be made in the portion of the minutes devoted to the VGL for the board's meeting of July 19, 2016. First, he asked that in the second paragraph the minutes say, "Craig submitted two invoices and one cost estimate," rather than three invoices; in the fourth paragraph, he asked that the minutes read "... made a motion to approve the second \$5,000 proposal from Civil Engineering Associates for engineering services to be paid from the VGL escrow account ..."

Heindel noted that work was continuing on the host town agreement. The town had suggested changes and had received a partial response from VGL, and said he would get back to the selectboard when the committee received a full response. He asked that the board approve payment of a bill from the town attorney, Jim Carroll, for work on the host town agreement between Ferrisburgh and VGL, using money in the escrow account. Red Muir made a motion to pay the law firm Carroll, Boe & Pell a total of \$847.40 out of the VGL escrow account. Jim Warden seconded. Jim Benoit, Loretta Lawrence, Red Muir and Jim Warden voted in favor. Steve Gutowski abstained. MOTION PASSED.

6. Public Comment

Resident John Eisenhardt asked the town to continue to pay close attention to notifications about sewage overflow events happening in the region, and mentioned spills that had taken place recently in Rutland and Vergennes, which degrade water quality in Vermont's lakes, rivers and streams.

Resident Bob McNary said the basement leaks were another instance of the town's residents continuing to pay for what he called a poor job of constructing the town hall. Board members suggested that the basement leaks were not serious and were not unusual in Vermont's climate.

7) Other Business

The town received an offer to finance the purchase of a new truck for the highway department. The purchase, for up to \$40,000, was approved at the 2016 town meeting. The town is making a \$10,000 down payment from the highway equipment budget and financing the rest of the cost, up to \$30,000. The offer received would provide a loan at 1.91 percent. Jim Warden moved that the town accept the terms and sign the agreement. Steve Gutowski seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

8) Correspondence

(a) Letter to Garrit Smits. The board sent a letter to Garrit Smits, town treasurer, inviting him to attend the August 16, 2016, board meeting. [See 3. (a), above.]

(b) Town Fair 2016. The Vermont League of Cities & Towns holds its Town Fair 2016 event for local officials on October 5 and 6 at the Champlain Valley Exposition Center in Essex Junction. Jim Warden attended for the town last year, and Loretta Lawrence said she hoped to attend this year.

9. Selectboard to Approve or Sign.

(a) Ferrisburgh Local Emergency Operations Plan. The board was asked to approve the annual update of the plan. Loretta Lawrence asked that the plan be amended to include her personal e-mail address, rather than her work address. Red Muir made a motion to approve and sign the Local Emergency Operations Plan. Jim Benoit seconded. All voted in favor.

(b) Certificate of Highway Mileage (ending February 2016). Steve Gutowski made a motion to approve the Certificate of Highway Mileage, which identifies the number of miles of roads in Ferrisburgh in each of several state categories. Jim Benoit seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

(c) Amanda Jerry - Rental Agreement - downstairs - August 21, 2016. Jim Warden made a motion to approve a request from Amanda Jerry to use the downstairs meeting room in the town hall for a bridal shower on August 21, 2016, from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., noting that she had provided a damage deposit and proof of insurance. Use of the downstairs meeting room is free to Ferrisburgh residents. Jim Benoit seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

(d) Selectboard warrant. Steve Gutowski made a motion to approve the selectboard warrant, which details town expenses, for \$12,555.15. Jim Benoit seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

10. Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Etchells