

**Town of Ferrisburgh
Selectboard Minutes
January 20, 2015**

Members present: Jim Benoit, Steve Gutowski, Loretta Lawrence, Sally Torrey, Jim Warden.

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

Visitors present: Carl Cole, Janet Hall-Mazza, Bob McNary, Red Muir, Bessie Sessions.

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

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

2. Approve minutes — December 16, 2014; December 30, 2014

Jim Benoit made a motion to approve the minutes of the selectboard meeting on January 6, 2015, as submitted. Sally Torrey seconded. Jim Benoit, Steve Gutowski, Loretta Lawrence and Sally Torrey voted in favor. Jim Warden abstained. MOTION PASSED.

Sally Torrey made a motion to approve the minutes of the selectboard budget meeting on January 13, 2015, as submitted. Jim Warden seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

3. New business

(a) John Bull — road foreman's report. John Bull told the board that Cameron Construction would be moving equipment on to the site of the new town highway garage this week, and hoped to begin erecting the building next week.

He said that there are a lot of icy driveways and roadside ditches in town, and that during the recent warmer weather water had been running in the ditches, and the road crew had to thaw out some frozen culverts. He said these problems were cropping up earlier than usual, which may not bode well for the rest of the winter.

Bull reported that the town had received a letter asking when the wooden markers would be removed from the town property at the junction of Routes 7 and 22A. He said the road crew would take care of it soon.

He described issues surrounding the town's decision to cancel a vendor contract for uniform services and also asked about the need for a no-smoking policy covering town buildings like the new garage. Board members said that there is a state law prohibiting smoking in public buildings, but thought some language about smoking might be helpful to include in the town's personnel policy. Board members also suggested making sure that there is proper signage about smoking in the new building.

Jim Warden said he thought the road crew had done a good job dealing with signage issues at the junction of Old Hollow Road and Route 7. Bull said that the crew would add a "stop sign ahead" sign at the intersection in the spring.

(b) Town office cleaning — Janet Hall-Mazza. Janet Hall-Mazza attended the meeting to talk with the board about taking on the cleaning job at the town offices. She suggested working three hours a week for a flat fee of \$75. She said she would bring her own vacuum and asked to have the town provide cleaning supplies. She also suggested a more thorough cleaning twice a year, spring and fall. Board members said they would take up her offer during the “Other business” portion of the meeting.

4. Public comment

Bob McNary said that, a few days after his comments at the January 6 meeting about people taking responsibility for their pets, he had seen a pit bull in his backyard. He said that they had tried to contact the town’s animal control officer but had not heard back yet. He said that the stakes were higher when dogs were running loose near Route 7, for the animals and for motorists. He also wondered whether the animal control officer should make an annual report to the town, to be included in the town report. Board members said they would look into the possibility.

Bob McNary suggested that the board appoint a marketing committee to meet with the real estate agent who is helping the town try to sell the property at the junction of Routes 7 and 22A. Tom Denecker recently decided not to pursue a purchase of the property, where he had hoped to consolidate his local GM dealership. McNary said the committee could help the town dig deeper into the issues involving the property, identifying the problems and the strong points.

Carl Cole said it was premature to talk about further plans for the property until the town learned more about the future of criterion 9L, a new part of the state’s development control law, Act 250. The new criterion was cited by state and regional planners when they began considering the proposed Denecker development. Red Muir said he understood that Vermont Rep. Diane Lanpher, who represents Ferrisburgh, had said there was going to be a hearing at the State House on these issues. Steve Gutowski and Carl Cole both said they planned to attend the hearing.

Bob McNary said he agreed with an idea floated at an earlier meeting to take the property off the market. He said that the current town hall was not working as town offices, for voting, or as a site for town meeting, and suggested selling it or renting it out and using the proceeds to build a new municipal building at the 7 & 22A site.

Jim Warden said he was concerned by posts on Front Porch Forum and elsewhere suggesting that the town can pick and choose what businesses it wants to see in the town. He said that if a business meets zoning requirements for a proposed location, the town does not have an option to prohibit the project.

5. Selectboard to approve or sign

(a) 3245 U.S. Route & (Sisters property) — capital note to refinance property. The board reviewed some possible refinancing options of the Sisters property adjacent to the town hall. The board is hoping to capitalize on low interest rates and avoid a large balloon payment on the property due in December 2016. Jim Benoit said he was all for getting a lower interest rate, but didn’t like the idea of having a larger annual payment at a time when the town is trying to hold the line on spending. Reducing the annual payment would require a longer term on the loan than originally approved by townspeople, and thus another vote at a future town meeting. Board members said the question required further study, and plan to discuss it again at a future meeting.

(b) Dakin Farm — liquor license renewal. Jim Warden made a motion to approve an application for a liquor license renewal from Dakin Farm Inc. Steve Gutowski seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

(c) Gage Cemetery Association — meeting room rental, May 3, 2015. Jim Benoit made a motion to rent the downstairs meeting room at the town hall to the Gage Cemetery Association for its annual meeting on May 3, 2015, and waive the rental fee for the Ferrisburgh non-profit. Steve Gutowski seconded. Jim Benoit, Steve Gutowski, Loretta Lawrence and Jim Warden voted in favor. Sally Torrey abstained. MOTION PASSED.

(d) Vermont Land Trust — support project on portions of Husk and Brace properties. In a letter to the board, the Vermont Land Trust said that it was working to protect from development portions of properties in Ferrisburgh owned by Elson and Anna Husk and Alex and Michelle Brace. VLT requested a letter from the board to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board supporting the purchase of development rights on these properties. The letter is required for the projects to move forward. Sally Torrey made a motion that the board send a letter to VHCB in support of the two projects. Jim Warden seconded. Steve Gutowski, Loretta Lawrence, Sally Torrey and Jim Warden voted in favor. Jim Benoit voted against. MOTION PASSED. Jim Benoit said he was generally opposed to protecting land by purchasing development rights. He said he does support farmers, but feels this process slices another piece of land off the tax base, since the land can never be used for housing or businesses. He also objected to using money that Vermonters pay in state taxes to purchase development rights.

(b) Selectboard warrant. Sally Torrey made a motion to approve the selectboard warrant, which details town expenditures, for a total of \$40,554.16. Steve Gutowski seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

6. Other business

Sally Torrey made a motion to hire Janet Hall-Mazza to work three hours per week for \$75 each week to clean the town offices. She will be reimbursed for cleaning supplies. Steve Gutowski seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

Jim Benoit made a motion to purchase a door for the listers office in the town hall and have it installed for a total of \$2,675, which was the lowest of three bids, plus the cost of three hinges, estimated at less than \$75. Sally Torrey seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED. Loretta Lawrence said the money should come out of the town hall building fund.

Gloria Warden, town clerk, said that in the process of installing new locks in the town hall doors, George Gardner had discovered that one of the outside doors on the building needs to be controlled so that it does not swing open too far when caught by the wind. Following a brief discussion, board members decided a door stop might be the best solution.

Gloria Warden said the town office was short one phone. She said she has generally been unhappy with the phone system, and wanted to have the vendor come in to trouble-shoot the system before purchasing a new phone. Board members agreed that this was the best way to proceed.

Carl Cole asked where the town stood on the purchase of a 2.1-acre lot that abuts town property. Loretta Lawrence said that the town was drafting an article to be voted on during town meeting, authorizing the town to purchase the lot for an amount up to \$40,000. If townspeople approve the expenditure, town officials will then pursue an agreement with the owners.

Carl Cole also asked about the status of the selectboard's discussions with the school board about a swap of property. Loretta Lawrence said the two boards had another meeting planned in the near future.

7. Correspondence

(a) Suzanne Fay to Vermont Public Service Board — re: application of Beach Properties Inc. The board received a copy of a letter to the Public Service Board from Suzanne Fay, whose family owns a cottage on Mile Point Road, one of about 10 properties in that neighborhood listed on the Vermont State Historic Register. Her letter suggests the solar array will conflict with the historic nature of the community. She also notes that Basin Harbor Club appears to be going ahead with installation of its solar array, which the PSB granted a certificate of public good in late 2014. Area residents have filed a motion for reconsideration with the PSB, and Fay's letter asks that the PSB stop the club from proceeding until the board has ruled on that motion.

(b) RHR Smith & Co. — year ending June 2014 audit letter. The board received a letter from R.H.R. Smith & Co., reporting on its audit of the town's financial statements for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2014.

8. Personnel — wages (probable executive session)

Jim Warden made a motion to go into executive session at 8:08 p.m. to discuss personnel issues. Steve Gutowski seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

— *End of minutes for public session. Minutes for executive session appear below.* —

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Etchells

— *Minutes for executive session.* —

Jim Benoit made a motion to leave executive session at 8:40 p.m. Steve Gutowski seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED. No action taken.

9. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally Torrey, board clerk