

**Town of Ferrisburgh
Selectboard Minutes
May 19, 2015**

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

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

Visitors present: Dennis Armell, Deb Healy, Bob McNary, Bessie Sessions, Bill Sullivan.

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

Steve Gutowski, chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

He asked for a motion to amend the agenda, adding:

12. Hinsdale property purchase and sales agreement – probable executive session.

Adjournment would become item No. 13. Loretta Lawrence made a motion to amend the agenda as described. Jim Warden seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

2. Approve minutes – May 5, 2015.

Jim Warden made a motion to approve the minutes of May 5, 2015, as submitted. Loretta Lawrence seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

3. Selectboard new business

(a) John Bull – road foreman’s report. Steve Gutowski said mowing and other clean-up work on town properties and cemeteries, taken on this year by the road crew, appeared to be going well. John Bull said the crew had done a lot of good work, and had also developed a long to-do list for the various properties. He suggested a 6-foot by 12-foot open trailer might be the only additional piece of equipment needed for this part of the road crew’s job. He said the cemeteries would be mowed again in advance of Memorial Day.

He also reported that Webster Road in West Ferrisburgh had been badly damaged this spring, in part from farmers spreading manure when the frost was coming out, and that they would need to rebuild at least a half a mile of the road. He said the new highway department building was about 90 percent complete, and coming in very close to the budgeted cost. He said the town would be looking at bids for removal of the old building.

In response to a question from the board, Bull said he had not had a chance to review documents from the Vermont Agency of Transportation on the bicycle and pedestrian program, or the AOT’s bridge inspection summary reports, both of which were on the evening’s agenda for the selectboard. He said he would look them over and discuss any issues with the board at a future meeting.

(b) 2015 Agency of Transportation (AOT) Bicycle and Pedestrian Program – soliciting applications for projects. Steve Gutowski read a letter from Jon Kaplan, bicycle and pedestrian program manager for the municipal assistance bureau in the Agency of Transportation’s highway division. The letter invites applications for grants to support town projects such as bicycle lanes, pedestrian crossings and sidewalks. The board took no action but will discuss the letter with John Bull at a future meeting.

(c) Charlie Paolantonio – venting crawl space at Union Meeting Hall. Charlie Paolantonio was not able to attend the meeting, but sent a letter to the board identifying a venting problem in the crawl space of the Union Meeting Hall. Vents in the foundation walls were removed during work on the stone foundation a few years back, and that may be contributing to a moisture problem in the building. Bob McNary, chair of the town’s Energy Committee, suggested that an energy audit should be done on the building to identify all issues related to venting and air movement before any work is done. He said he could arrange for an audit and report back to the board at its next meeting. Board members agreed and took no action pending McNary’s report.

(d) Sheriff’s summer schedule. Loretta Lawrence made a motion to maintain the Addison County Sheriff’s Department patrol schedule on town roads at the current level. Jim Warden seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

(e) Garrit Smits – review of audit proposals. Garrit Smits, town treasurer, reported that he had sent out a request for proposals on auditing services to about 25 firms, and had received five bids. Deb Healey, one of the town’s elected auditors, was at the meeting and said she and the other auditors would look over the proposals, and also wanted to hear from Smits and Pam Cousino, assistant town treasurer, about their experience working with the current auditing firm. Board members said they would also look over the proposals and take up the issue at their next meeting.

4. Selectboard old business

(a) Garaventa Lift – weight test and maintenance. Steve Gutowski said he had looked into finding other vendors to bid on the work needed for the lift in the town hall but after a frustrating search, he had not found a viable alternative to the current vendor. He asked for a motion to authorize him to sign an agreement to pay Garaventa Lift \$1,070 to conduct a required weight test and check the operation of the lower door, with the expectation that there may be additional costs for parts and labor. Loretta Lawrence made the motion. Red Muir seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED. Gutowski said he hoped to be on hand when the company arrived to do the work.

5. Selectboard general business

(a) Vermont Breakfast on the Farm – Nea-Tocht Farm – August 22, 2015, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The board received a flyer from Nea-Tocht Farm describing their “Vermont Breakfast on the Farm” event. The farm is anticipating 900 people for the free event, and will begin distributing tickets in July.

6. Public comment

Gloria Warden, town clerk, told the board that Misha Cetner, an analyst with the Department of Environmental Conservation’s Lakes & Ponds Management and Protection Program, would be attending the Planning Commission meeting on May 20, 2015. Cetner will talk from 7-7:30 p.m. on the Shoreland Protection Act and lakeshore development.

7. Other business

Steve Gutowski said the town had received a letter from LandWorks, the consulting firm in Middlebury that has been hired by the state to develop a master plan for the land in and around the former Weeks School. Part of the property is home to the Northland Job Corps. He said the letter mentions that some of the land is in Ferrisburgh, and the Vergennes/Ferrisburgh border is just west of the Job Corps site. The study is part of a larger Strong Connections, Better Communities (SCBC) project, called the Vergennes Downtown-Basin Master Plan, which is being overseen by the Addison County Regional Planning Commission. Gutowski hoped to find out more by attending a kick-off meeting for the project in late May.

Steve Gutowski asked Red Muir where things stood on negotiations with the school board over a proposed land swap involving the town and the school. Muir said he needed to get in touch with his counterpart on the school board and would report back soon.

8. Correspondence

(a) Aegis Renewable Energy – Solar Project – southeast corner of Route 7 and Monkton Road.

The town received notice about this 480 kilowatt solar project planned for the Dollar General property on the south side of Monkton Road, just east of the intersection with Route 7. Developers Aegis Renewable Energy wrote to the Planning Commission and the selectboard about their intention to apply for a certificate of public good with Vermont's Public Service Board. Bob McNary, Energy Committee chair, said his committee had spent time discussing this latest proposal. This is the fourth new solar project now being proposed in the vicinity of the Monkton Road/Route 7 intersection, which is already home to the 1-megawatt Ferrisburgh Solar Farm on the west side of Route 7. McNary said this would mean nine acres of solar panels in a relatively small area. The Energy Committee fears that this will be detrimental to the town, and suggested that the selectboard file comments with the Public Service Board about the cumulative effect of all these projects. Board members said they were worried about the aesthetics and the effects on tourism, and also had questions about tax implications. Steve Gutowski said the board would respond to the Public Service Board.

(b) AOT Highway Division – 2014 Bridge Inspection Summary Reports. The state provided reports on 10 bridges in town, based on inspections done in August 2014. The reports recommend repair work on some of the bridges. Road foreman John Bull said he would look over the reports and get back to the selectboard at a future meeting.

(c) AOT Project Status Reports (3). The state provided status reports on three projects in Ferrisburgh, the largest being the installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Little Chicago Road and Route 7. That project, which will be completely paid for with federal dollars, is expected to go out for bids in January 2016. Steve Gutowski said he would be in touch again with the AOT about the town's request, denied by the state in the past, to have the project be expanded slightly to include a left-turn lane on Route 7 northbound at the site of the town hall.

(d) Vermont Tech – Water Quality Conference – May 29, 2015. The town received notice of this day-long conference taking place at Vermont Tech in Randolph, Vt.

9. Selectboard to approve or sign

(a) Selectboard warrant. Loretta Lawrence made a motion to approve the warrant, which details town expenses, for a total of \$506,361.26. Red Muir seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

10. Mile Point – cannon noise issue -- probable executive session. Red Muir made a motion at 8:40 p.m. to go into executive session to discuss confidential attorney-client communications on the Mile Point noise issue. Jim Warden seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

– End of minutes from before executive session. –

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Etchells

– Minutes from after the executive session follow. –

Jim Warden made a motion to leave executive session at 8:50 p.m. Red Muir seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED. No action taken.

11. Hawkins – court telephone conference – probable executive session. Red Muir made a motion to go back into executive session at 8:55 p.m. to discuss attorney/client correspondence regarding a zoning violation by Paul (Pete) Hawkins, owner of the burned-out building on the west side of Route 7. Seconded by Jim Warden. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

Loretta Lawrence made a motion to leave executive session at 9:10 p.m. Jim Warden seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED. No action taken.

12. Hinsdale property purchase and sales agreement – probable executive session. Loretta Lawrence made a motion to approve the draft purchase and sales agreement for the Hinsdale property and have the chair notify the town attorney. Red Muir seconded. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

13. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Loretta Lawrence, board clerk