

Accepted as Written: \_\_\_\_\_  
Accepted as Corrected: \_\_\_\_\_

Vernon Selectboard Meeting  
September 15, 2020

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Chris Parker – Chair  
Sandra Harris – Vice-Chair  
Jean Carr – Clerk  
Jeffrey Dunklee  
Michael Root

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Maggie Tuck-Sauer – Town Administrator  
David Emery  
Katherine Baldwin  
Austin Rice – BCTV  
Gordon Christiansen – via ZOOM  
Don Rosinski  
Marylynn Scherlin – via ZOOM  
Aaron Hurst – via ZOOM  
Jane Lazorchak – via ZOOM  
Todd Capen (approx. 7:15)  
Sara Coffey – House Rep – via ZOOM

Chairman Parker called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. welcoming those present in person and via ZOOM and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

**SANDRA HARRIS MADE THE MOTION TO ADD DISCUSSION ON OPENING OF THE TOWN OFFICES AND WHETHER OR NOT TO REQUIRE VNH TO OBTAIN A PETITION FOR REQUESTING FUNDING FROM THE TOWN AT TOWN MEETING.** Michael Root seconded the motion. **THE MOTION CARRIED.**

**CHAIRS REMARKS**

Chairman Parker noted that Austin Rice, from BCTV, had missed our last meeting because he was getting married. Austin was congratulated and welcomed back.

**OPEN PUBLIC COMMENTS – there were none.**

**GORDON CHRISTIANSEN – EDWARD JONES**

Mr. Christiansen thanked the Board and noted he had met with Treasurer Cindy Turnley regarding the \$100,000.00 bond that matured two weeks ago. Treasurer Turnley informed him she did not need the funds at this time and it would be good to reinvest. Gordon explained the Federal Agency Bond the funds would be invested with. It has a 3.46% return, matures January 27, 2033, is a double A plus rated bond and is non-callable. **SANDRA HARRIS MADE THE MOTION TO REINVEST THE BOND AS DESCRIBED.** Michael Root seconded the motion. **THE MOTION CARRIED.**

Gordon also gave a brief update on other funds that he manages for the Town which included, but was not limited to the following:

- The South Cemetery Fund which is up 5%
- The Tyler Cemetery Fund is up 8.4%
- The North Cemetery Fund is up 4.2%
- The Marsh Fund is up 7.45%
- The Scot Noyes Fund is up 16.5% and
- The A.J. Brooks Fund is up 16.1%

### **COVID UPDATE – DAVID EMERY AND MARK SNOW**

David Emery gave his update on COVID as of today which included but was not limited to:

- 1702 cases in Vermont
- 7 new cases today
- Windham Country ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in the State with 123 cases
- No new cases in two weeks
- Deaths remain at 58 with
- 2 in the hospital as of today
- School is doing well, opening last week with hybrid system
- Vernon Green is holding steady
- There are pop-up sites still around
- Your physician is the key
- Same messages since March: Social distancing, washing hands, wearing face masks
- State of Emergency extended to October 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Mandatory mask requirement
- Dr. Fauci was part of the conference with the Governor and stated, “Vermont should be the model for the country.”

Mark Snow agreed with what had been presented and thanked everyone for their cooperation.

Chairman Parker thanked both gentlemen for their work and keeping the Board informed during this pandemic.

**BOARD OF CIVIL AUTHORITY REQUEST FOR LEGAL REPRESENTATION  
SANDRA HARRIS MADE THE MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE LISTERS TO  
OBTAIN LEGAL REPRESENTATION FROM DONAHUE, TUCKER &  
CIANDELLA FOR TWO UPCOMING COURT CASES.** Jean Carr seconded the  
motion. With no question or discussion **THE MOTION CARRIED.**

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

### SEPTEMBER 1, 2020

Jean Carr noted under “Additions to the Agenda” in should be Jean Carr not Jean Harris; on page 3 under “A” the motion, Jean had recused herself, not abstained; and the spelling of Katherine Baldwin’s name had been misspelled. **SANDRA HARRIS MADE THE MOTION TO ACCEPT THE SEPTEMBER 1, 2020 SELECTBOARD MINUTES AS CORRECTED.** Jean Carr seconded the motion. **THE MOTION CARRIED.**

## **BILLS AND WARRANTS**

**JEAN CARR MADE THE MOTION TO APPROVE PAYMENT OF THE FOLLOWING BILLS AND WARRANT:**

- **#6T – ACCOUNTS PAYABLE FOR \$53,468.47**
- **#35S – PAYROLL FOR \$7,421.08 and**
- **#36S – PAYROLL FOR \$6,541.62**

Sandra Harris seconded the motion. **THE MOTION CARRIED.**

## **TOWN OFFICE OPENING**

Chairman Parker referenced some of the residents’ questions that have been raised about the Town Office: why it was still closed; when it would re-open; if this was really necessary. An email was sent to the employees with three departments stating they were agreeable to opening provided the protocols set and agreed upon were followed. One department is not comfortable with opening at this time, and the Library would not be included as they function under a different Board who will make their determination. The Town Clerk is presently meeting people outside the building and is allowing title searchers by appointment. Discussion followed. Departments will be asked to have a written policy for opening their offices which will be discussed at the October 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## **VERNON FIRE DEPARTMENT SERVICE REIMBURSEMENT ORDINANCE**

The proposed Ordinance was presented and discussion followed with corrections proposed as follows:

- Page 1, C; “reimbursement of incurred” a figure needs to be inserted
- Page 2, “Emergency Incident” “fir” should be “fire”
- Under Article II, Definitions, there is no definition listed for the Article II’s “I. Technical Rescue Events”
- Page 7 #3 “Treasure” should be “Treasurer”, and “31” should be “31<sup>st</sup>”
- Page 10 J the word “hut” should be “but”

The document will be forwarded to the Town Treasurer and the subject revisited October 6th.

## **VERNON PUBLIC LAND PURCHASE**

Jane Lazorchak, Public Land Section Chief for the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department (VFWD) and Aaron Hurst, State Land Forester for this district met with the Board and made their presentation regarding the proposed State's acquisition of three properties in the Roaring Brook WMA area totaling just under 450 acres. This project was started many years ago with the Weinstein property which is home to many unique species including the northern long eared bats, which has realized a critical demise recently. The Skibinowsky property is on the west side of Lily Pond, a Natural Heritage Registry Site (and Outwash Plain – the only one in the State); and the Peterman property is a landlocked piece near the Town Forest. With Federal and State funding this purchase could be finalized by the end of this year In response to tax issues raised:

- PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) has recently changed
- New acquisitions will pay the same municipal tax as currently being paid by the private owners.
- They will not be paying educational taxes

Aaron Hurst met with the Planning Commission and reiterated the update he had given them noting that as managing forester of the Roaring Brook and potentially this property there are things in this area of the State of Vermont that are not in other areas and they deserve to be protected.

- Snowmobile trails will continue to be able to be utilized, and the closure of the Town's gas station will not impact that
- Hunters and other recreational uses will still be allowed
- There will not be motorized access to other properties

Discussion followed with support being offered for this project by Don Rosinski, President of the Snowmobile Club, and House Rep Sara Coffey.

**JEAN CARR MADE THE MOTION THAT THE BOARD OFFER THEIR SUPPORT TO THE VFWD ACQUISITION OF THE WEINSTEIN, SKIBNIOWSKY, AND PETERMAN PROPERTIES AT THE ROARING BROOK WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA, IT IS CONSISTENT WITH THE TOWN PLAN AND OUR RURAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR THE TOWN.** Sandra Harris seconded the motion. **THE MOTION CARRIED.**

## **DIRECTIVE TO ALL TOWN OF VERNON COMMITTEES: MISSION & OBJECTIVES**

With some committees having had changes and growth it was suggested each committee should submit to the Selectboard what they feel their duties and goals are to avoid any misconceptions. The Cemetery Committee is the only one that has a mission statement at this time.

**JEAN CARR MADE THE MOTION TO TASK ALL COMMITTEES BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS TO OUTLINE THEIR MISSIONS AND OBJECTIVES TO**

**BE COMPLETED BY JANUARY 31, 2021.** Sandra Harris seconded the motion.  
**THE MOTION CARRIED.**

#### **VNH – TOWN MEETING FUNDING**

VNH has submitted a letter to allow them to be on the Town Meeting Warning without requiring a petition due to COVID. **SANDRA HARRIS MADE THE MOTION TO WAIVE THE PETITION REQUIREMENT FOR VNH FOR TOWN MEETING FUNDING.** Jean Carr seconded the motion. **THE MOTION CARRIED.**

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

##### **SOLID WASTE COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES & EXPECTATIONS**

Covered in the directive above.

##### **TOWN OF VERNON COMMITTEE AND BOARD TRANSPARENCY**

Previously discussed was the benefit of the recordings of meetings so residents can log in and participate or at least see what is taking place.

- Maggie has done research on storage of these recordings and noted it is quite easy to download and keep them.
- Concerns about hacking and misuse of recordings have been expressed
- An official Town website will store the information for five years, such as
  - Minutes
  - Agendas
  - Recordings
- Hard copies of the minutes will continue to be stored in the Town Clerk's vault forever
- It will allow residents to see what is happening without having to leave their homes
- Many businesses and large corporations are choosing to not open their offices in the future but continue working through technology.

The Town Clerk has received the grant he applied for which forces the Town to have an official Town website, but also provides the funding for the same.

Jeff Dunklee noted we wouldn't be discussing this tonight if it wasn't for the pandemic and queried what would happen after Covid, agreeing with the Selectboard being video-taped but has reservations for having volunteers tasked with being recorded as well.

Much discussion followed.

A Hybrid Meeting Policy will be addressed on October 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.

##### **TOWN OFFICIAL WEBSITE – RFQ'S COMPARISON**

Town Administrator Maggie Tuck-Sauer presented three companies' offers for setting up and maintaining an official website and reviewed what each offered. She also provided the benefits to the Town of having this official website. Maggie recommended a website committee be set up to include:

- Chad Baldwin – Lister

- Tim Arsenault – Town Clerk
- Maggie Tuck-Sauer – Town Administrator
- Seth Deyo - Recreation
- Jean Carr – Library
- Town citizen

Discussion followed. **MICHAEL ROOT MADE THE MOTION TO ORGANIZE A DISCOVERY COMMITTEE FOR TOWN OFFICIAL WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT TO CONSIST OF DEPARTMENT HEADS THAT WOULD BE DIRECTLY RELATED TO THAT AND FURTHER TO PUT OUT A REQUEST FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS THAT WOULD BE INTERESTED IN SERVING ON THAT COMMITTEE.** Sandra Harris seconded the motion. **THE MOTION CARRIED.**

#### **TRAFFIC STUDY AND VTRANS GRANT AND PLAN**

A traffic study was received that covered Pond Road and Tyler Hill Road.

The Pond Road study showed the speed wasn't as bad as was anticipated. There's still some questionable speed in areas, but in front of the Rec Area people are doing between 32 and 38.

- Pond Rd, South of Central Pk – Avg speed 40
- Pond Rd, Rec Area – Avg speed 32
- Between Huckle Hill & Silver Ln – Avg speed 35
- Tyler Hill – East of Franklin Rd – Avg speed 39
- Tyler Hill – West of Franklin Rd – Avg speed 39

The Sheriff's Department will also be putting their radar cart in Town which also has the capability of capturing the speed.

The maximum amount that can be applied for in the Vtrans grant is \$25,000.00 and Maggie was asking what projects the Board would be requesting funding for.

Suggestions forthcoming included:

- Flashing lights at crosswalks in town
- Repainting of the crosswalks
- Flashing lights as approaching the Recreation Center

**CHRIS PARKER MADE THE MOTION TO PUT IN THE GRANT FOR FLASHING LIGHTS AT THE TWO CROSSWALKS IN TOWN AS WELL AS TWO FLASHING LIGHTS AS YOU APPROACH THE RECREATION AREA AND TO INVOLVE MR. WALKER TO MAKE SURE THESE WORK FOR HIM.** Sandra Harris seconded the motion. **THE MOTION CARRIED.**

#### **FIRE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL UPDATE**

Fire Chief Todd Capen reported he didn't have a lot to report. Discussion included:

- The Chief reported things were going okay
- Firefighter I training in October will see four attending. The training will take place in Wilmington
- Some members had quit. One quit, un-quit, after meeting last night the matter was resolved and the member was back on the Department
- Officer appointments – he was going to re-open the Lieutenant spot as he felt it was the only one that needed to be addressed
- The process for redoing the officer hiring will include a board of three, possibly four with two individuals having fire experience and one citizen
- The Assistant Chief has taken a six-month leave of absence but the Chief, when queried, stated his people he has in place could cover
- Chairman Parker stated he felt, in all fairness, all the positions should be opened.
- Acknowledging the manpower will do all they can, concern was expressed about the absence of an Assistant Chief
- Todd noted between seven and thirteen respond to calls that come in
- With the upcoming absence of the Halls for EMS calls Todd stated JJ and Zach are “pretty available” and he is not worried
- Concern was also expressed regarding the perceived morale problem within the Department that is being seen by residents and the Board is being contacted about

#### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Marylynn Scherlin noted because the building is closed she did not get the display up this year, but this is POW/MIA week, culminating with Friday the Official POW/MIA day. She presented the figures from World War I: 179,909 POW/MIA's with 5 of the unaccounted being Vermont service members. She was thanked for reminding people of this.

Katherine Baldwin wanted the Board to remember to include people with disabilities that are unable to wear a mask or doing some of the other precautions that are standard when people are writing their plans for opening up the building. Chairman Parker requested inclusion of hearing impaired as well.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Town Administrator Maggie Tuck-Sauer reported three resignations from the Vernon Solid Waste Committee had been received:

- Carol Campbell
- Sandra Rulewich
- Munson Hicks

Also received was the aforementioned six-month leave of absence for Assistant Fire Chief Keith Franklin.

## **ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

### **PARKS AND RECREATION GRANT**

The Parks and Recreation Grant has been completed by Maggie and Seth Deyo and mailed in today: Hopefully we will have a disc golf course in the Town of Vernon.

### **BUDGET MEETING REMINDER**

Budget Meeting tomorrow night with:

- Listers
- Cemetery Committee
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Vernon Town Treasurer
- Planning Commission
- Seniors
- Town Clerk
- Historians

### **BOILER RFQ'S/ HVAC SERVICE**

RFQ's are going to be put out for maintaining the boiler in the building this winter and maintaining the air conditioners in the summer.

### **LAWN SERVICE RFQ'S**

The present lawn care person will not be doing it next year.

**CHRIS PARKER MADE THE MOTION TO ALLOW MAGGIE TO SEEK QUOTES FOR SERVICES ON THE HVAC SYSTEM AS WELL AS THE LAWN CARE SERVICES FOR THE GAZEBO AND THE TOWN OFFICE BUILDING AND THE BOILER.** Sandra Harris seconded the motion. **THE MOTION CARRIED.**

### **UPCOMING MEETING SCHEDULE**

Wednesday, September 16, 2020 6:30 P.M. Special Budget Meeting

Wednesday September 30, 2020 6:30 P.M. Special Budget Meeting

Tuesday, October 6, 2020 6:30 P.M.

Wednesday, October 7, 2020 6:30 P.M. Special Budget Meeting

Tuesday, October 20, 2020 6:30 P.M.

Wednesday, October 21, 2020 6:30 P.M. Special Budget Meeting

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**MICHAEL ROOT MADE THE MOTION TO ADJOURN.** Sandra Harris seconded the motion. **THE MOTION CARRIED.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 P.M.

Sandra Harris