

**Vernon Selectboard  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
01/19/2017  
DRAFT**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Christiane Howe, Chair  
Sandra Harris, Vice Chair  
Stephen Skibniowsky, Clerk  
Josh Unruh  
Emily Vergobbe

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Tim Arsenault, Town Clerk  
Barbara Mosely  
Michelle Pong, Town Administrator  
Carol Hammond, Lister, Recording Sec.  
Lori Skibniowsky                      Danielle Jurkowski  
Samuel Skibniowsky                 David Skibniowsky  
Krisina Walker                        Joseph Martin  
Jessica Freeman                       Chad Hewitt  
Cindy Turnley, Treasurer         Joyce Goodnow  
Kevin Turnley, Maint                Seth Deyo, Rec  
Bronna Zlochiver                     Rita Mudd  
Jean Carr                                Michael Renaud  
Stanley Sage                            Sandy Morrison  
Jerry Morrison                         Jeff Dunklee (7:10)  
Bill Hammond (7:16)

**CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Christiane Howe, followed by the salute to the flag.

A document was signed for Treasurer Cindy Turnley to add Kathy Walker to the town checking account.

**ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:**

**JOSH UNRUH MADE A MOTION TO ADD APPOINTMENTS TO THE LIBRARY BOARD, THIS WOULD COME UNDER OLD BUSINESS.** The motion was seconded and passed.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENTS: Lori Skibniowsky voiced her disagreement with the Board's adoption of the Junk Ordinance without adequate notification to the public and listed numerous reasons why the ordinance was not in the best interest of the Town.

Mrs. Howe thanked Lori for her statement and said that petitions were brought in with more than the required 5% signatures and that an article would be added to the Town Meeting Warning so that everyone could vote on it.

Bronna Zlochiver announced that there were 6 women (including herself) from Vernon who would be taking part in the Women's March in Washington D.C. Bronna also encouraged people to be at the annual Town Meeting to express their opinions and to vote.

**GUESTS: Chad Hewitt from the auditing firm of Sullivan, Powers & Co** gave an overview of the Town Audit and reported that the stated opinion of the auditors is that Vernon has a "clean opinion" which is as good as it gets. Mr. Hewitt stated that by the end of 2017, lacking unforeseen problems, there should be a healthy unassigned reserve which is good for the town. Also, all departments came in under budget.

Internal controls: suggestions for efficiencies

Material weakness: recording of unusual grant activities,

Significant deficiencies: should have someone to review Treasurer's non standard journal entries

Other recommendations include but is not limited to: need for an accounting and procedure manual; create a fraud policy that should be part of Personnel Policy and should be communicated to employees; create a department assessment, how to mitigate potential problems; cash accounts-- gradual elimination to only one ; weekly payroll—norm is payroll every 2 weeks—time saver, efficiency issue; documentation of internal controls to help in times of transition; uninsured cash—making sure the bank is solid; cash receipts module—NEMRC; cemeteries—how much money is available and what has to be kept in perpetuity. Acknowledgement of Personnel Policy by employees; reimbursement of fire fighters—should have been payroll; charging sales tax on things sold to public; netting of grants; eliminate cost of attorney to send out letters for tax sale; reconciliation of budget with town meeting; trash bag sales reconciliation: someone needs to check on treasurer's office accounting for the bags. Question: does the town have to file quarterly for the trash bags or sand and salt?

Answer: No, trash bags are exempt; if sand and salt was to be sold on a regular basis, then the town would have to file with the state.

#### **DEPARTMENT/COMMITTEE REPORT:**

**Seth Deyo: Town Forest**—reclassification to a Class 1 wetland means there will be a mandated 300' buffer zone around the wetland areas and nothing can be added within the 300' buffer without prior State approval. The trails in the Town Forest have been reviewed and a couple more added which will be "grandfathered in". There is a good place for a picnic area with a nice view which would be outside the buffer zone. In 1979, there were 5 picnic areas sited so this would be the second of 5 initially planned. Signs are in place prohibiting fires, barbecues, carrying out what was carried in. There is no expense anticipated for development of the picnic area.

**SANDY HARRIS MADE A MOTION TO AUTHORIZE SETH TO GO AHEAD WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PICNIC AREA.** The motion was seconded and passed.

**Black Gum Swamp**—Recreation Director, Seth Deyo and Town Administrator, Michelle Pong testified in Montpelier about the reclassification and the town was given a two week stay, until January 26<sup>th</sup>, for more research to be done. Seth emphasized that current trails are not affected and they will be cleaning

up existing trails. If the state is going to get involved in this, then liability issues should not fall to the town. The attorneys from the Wetland Program have been consulted for clarification of this issue.

Other areas in the State that have been reclassified have 100' buffer zones and the state has talked with land owners regarding the concerns with sticking to the 100' buffer zones. Jeff Dunklee encouraged a push for the 100' buffer and Josh Unruh stressed that one size doesn't fit all circumstances and not all areas may have the same needs.

**SANDY HARRIS MADE A MOTION THAT WE PUSH FOR A 100' BUFFER ZONE.** The motion was seconded and passed with 4 ayes and 1 nay.

Seth Deyo also stated that there are very stiff fines for not abiding by the law. A permit, which is rarely allowed, to do anything within the buffer zone would cost \$250 plus \$.25 per square foot. A 300' buffer zone calculates to about 25% of the total forest acreage. It was felt that the town should not give more rights away to the State, that it is further erosion of local control.

Seth and Town Administrator, Michelle Pong will compose a letter to the State.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**SANDY HARRIS MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE JANUARY 3, 2017 MINUTES AS WRITTEN.**

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

**STEVE SKIBNIOWSKY MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING WARRANTS:**

17/T	Accounts Payable	\$ 376,577.97
1S	Payroll	11,658.02
2S	Payroll	8,414.32
3S	Payroll	8,464.31

The motion was seconded and passed with 4 ayes and 1 abstention

**NEW BUSINESS**

**JOSH UNRUH MADE A MOTION TO APPOINT SANDY HARRIS TO REPRESENT THE TOWN OF VERNON AT THE VLCT MEETING ON FEBRUARY 15, 2017.**

The motion was seconded and passed.

**SANDY HARRIS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE VT TRANSPORTATION CERTIFICATE OF HIGHWAY MILEAGE OF FEBRUARY 10, 2017.** The motion was seconded and passed.

**JOSH UNRUH MADE A MOTION TO ALLOW THE GIRL SCOUTS TO SELL COOKIES ON VOTING DAY AT THE TOWN OFFICE.** The motion was seconded and passed.

**SANDY HARRIS MADE A MOTION TO ALLOW THE HISTORIANS AND PRESCHOOL TO HOLD THEIR FUNDRAISERS ON VOTING DAY AT THE TOWN OFFICE.** The motion was seconded and passed.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Articles for Annual Report/Town Meeting/Review of Petitions received**

Town Reports will not be mailed out this year. There will be copies available at the Town Office and at Town Meeting. Bill Hammond requested that extra copies of the Junk Ordinance be available at town meeting. He was assured there would be copies available.

Lori Skibniowsky felt that the article as stated for the vote at town meeting is not clear. The Board felt it was clearly stated and will be left as written.

Lori Skibniowsky asked how many signatures were collected for the Junk Ordinance Petition and the answer was 266.

**SANDY HARRIS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE ARTICLES WITH CORRECTIONS.**  
The motion was seconded and passed.

**SANDY HARRIS MADE A MOTION TO APPOINT JULIE BALL TO THE LIBRARY BOARD.**  
The motion was seconded and passed.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION(agenda items only)**

Bronna Zlochiver stated that the maintenance of the Black Gum Swamp remain under local control

Michelle Pong will send the articles to the attorney for vetting.

A question was raised about maintenance costs for cemeteries. Research is ongoing as to how much can be used from the cemetery funds and how much is required to remain in the funds.

## **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:**

Selectboard needs to approve Cusick Scholarship amount every 5 years.

**STEVE SKIBNIOWSKY MADE A MOTION DESIGNATE \$40 THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR THE CUSICK FUND.** Steve withdrew his motion.

Approved as written \_\_\_\_\_

Approved as corrected \_\_\_\_\_

**EMILY VERGOBBE MADE A MOTION THAT WE DO NOT CHANGE ANY OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE JAMES CUSICK SCHOLARSHIP FUND.** The motion was seconded and passed.

A letter was received from the WSWMD with suggestions for several amendments to the solar net metering contract.

**SANDY HARRIS MADE A MOTION TO SEND THE LIST OF CHANGES TO THE TOWN ATTORNEY.** The motion was seconded and passed.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

A letter was received from a lady who had damage done to her car at the gas station and wondered if the town would be liable for payment. Michelle pointed her to the owner of the property.

**JOSH UNRUH MOVED TO ADJOURN.** The motion was seconded and passed.  
The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Hammond  
For Michelle Millerick