

1 **SELECTBOARD MEETING**

2 March 3, 2022

3 Attending the meeting in person; Merrily Lovell, Maggie Gordon, Dennis Place, Mike Loner, Todd Odit,  
4 Joy Dubin Grossman.

5 Attending the meeting remotely; Phil Pouech, Jennifer Decker, Carl Bohlen, Kathy Newton, Amy  
6 Cambridge, Kate Littlefield ,Tony St. Hilaire, Enrique Peredo.

7 Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. via zoom.

8 Selectboard Reorganization

9 Phil nominated Merrily Lovell as Chair of the Selectboard for the coming year. Seconded by Mike and  
10 approved with 5 yes votes.

11 Merrily nominated Maggie Gordon as Vice Chair of the Selectboard for the coming year. Seconded by  
12 Mike and approved with 5 yes votes.

13 Agenda Additions or Deletions

14 None

15 Public Comment

16 Jennifer Decker had a communication related request. She asked people at the meeting say their name  
17 before speaking as it can be hard to know who is speaking when attending via zoom. She was heartened  
18 by the number of people who voted no on the Police budget in support of the humanity of the police.  
19 She strongly feels we have a real opportunity as a community to come together and come up with ways  
20 to change the direction and way we create peace and security in our community.

21 Selectboard Forum

22 Maggie wanted to recognize the fact that six times as many people voted by Australian ballot than at the  
23 last in person Town Meeting.

24 Maggie proposed for future discussion reviving the Police Advisory Committee, she feels the vote  
25 indicates a need for public discussion.

26 Dennis brought up impact fees. He would like this on a future agenda. He would like to explore  
27 expanding what the impact fees are used for.

28 Merrily apologized to Todd and to Nick Baker for not standing behind them right of way when they were  
29 attacked on FPF regarding the ambulance issue. This was a SB decision not Todd and Nick who made  
30 the decision.

31 Merrily read the following statement drafted by Mike.

32 "The Hinesburg Selectboard would like to reemphasize our town's commitment to inclusion,  
33 racial equity and our intolerance for discrimination of any kind. While we appreciate and  
34 encourage discourse and value a wide array of viewpoints, we oppose any statements or actions

that are discriminatory in nature. This includes the intentional othering of individuals as "different from us" or "not from here."

At this time, we would like to highlight our Value Statement that was approved by the Selectboard on June 10, 2020:

The Town of Hinesburg welcomes people of all races, ethnicities and sexual preferences and does not tolerate discrimination of any kind. We, as a town, are committed to social justice. After further discussion it was agreed to include the statement on FPF as a message from the Selectboard.

Phil said he had a discussion with someone from AARP. They are willing to come to Hinesburg and do a formal safety audit of sidewalks and crosswalks. He is willing to work on this with them.

Phil referred to his comment at the last meeting about forming a committee to work on the future of the Town Hall building. He is willing to be a part of that committee.

Joy received an email from Phil that was a "hack", he reminded everyone not to open any link from an unrecognized email.

Phil is willing to coordinate Green Up Day again.

Phil referred to an article in 7 Days about the Town of Bethel creating a town manual to distribute to residents. He will get a copy to take a look at it and evaluate if this can be done for Hinesburg.

#### Approve Minutes of 2/16/22

Phil moved to approve the minutes of 2/16/22 with any agreed upon changes. Seconded by Maggie and approved with 5 yes votes.

#### Approve Regular Meeting Schedule

Merrily moved the Board adopt a regular meeting schedule of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of each month at 7:00 P.M. Seconded by Maggie. Phil noted that occasionally the Board will have other meetings which will be appropriately warned. Motion voted and approved with 5 votes.

#### Approve Physical Posting Locations

Merrily moved the Board approve the Post Office and Carpenter-Carse Library as the physical posting locations. Seconded by Maggie and approved with 5 yes votes.

#### Authorize a Designated Selectboard Person to Sign Orders

Merrily moved the Board designate the Chair and Vice Chair to sign orders. Seconded by Maggie. Phil noted the fact that all Board members can review the orders. Motion voted and approved with 5 yes votes.

#### Approve a Newspaper of Record

Merrily moved the Board designate The Citizen as the newspaper of record for any notices that are required to be published. Seconded by Maggie and approved with 5 yes votes.

#### Approve Public Officials Bond

73 Merrily moved the Board recognize Employment Theft and Faithful Performance coverage of \$500,000  
74 per occurrence as provided by the Vermont League of Cities and Town's Property and Casualty  
75 Intermunicipal Fund, as the bonding instrument required by 24 V.S.A. § 832(b). Seconded by Maggie and  
76 approved with 5 yes votes.

77 Approve Various Committee Re-appointments

78 Merrily moved the Board appoint Paul Wieczoreck as the Tree Warden for a one year term. Seconded  
79 by Maggie and approved with 5 yes votes.

80 Merrily moved the Board appoint Mitch Cypes as E-911 Coordinator for a one year term. Seconded by  
81 Maggie and approved with 5 yes votes.

82 As the Selectboard is not required to appoint fence viewers, service officer, grand juror, inspectors of  
83 lumber, shingles and wood or weighers of coal they decided not to make any of those appointments.

84

85 Merrily moved that the Selectboard approve the re-appointments of:

86 **Agency Request Review Committee** – Michelle Stidsen (1 Year Term)

87 **Development Review Board** – Dennis Place & Jonathan Slason (3 Year Term)

88 **Town Forest Committee** - Brent Francis, Chris Haviland & Pat Mainer (3 Year Term)

89 **Recreation Commission** - Frank Twarog (3 Year Term)

90 Seconded by Maggie. The motion passed 4-0-1 (Dennis Place abstained)

91 Approve Extension of Un-Expired Terms

92 Maggie moved that the Selectboard extend the terms of all un-expired terms to April 1 of the year in  
93 which their term expires. The motion passed 5-0.

94 Discuss Results of Town Meeting

95 Merrily said the two big issues to discuss are the Police Department budget which did not pass and the  
96 Ambulance Service which did pass but people are upset as there will be no Town ambulance at this  
97 point.

98 Police Budget.

99 Todd submitted to the Board a sample of what the budgetary impacts would be to cut two full time  
100 officers. This is not a recommendation from him but to be used as a point of discussion.

101 If there is no approved budget by July 1 we would be operating under the previous budget. Ideally, we  
102 would have a budget before July 1. Todd recommends to allow time for a third vote in case the second  
103 vote fails.

104 Phil commented that we are tied up in the Grant which we do have to continue and fund that position  
105 for an additional year. He heard comments of people unhappy with the cost / questioning why the need  
106 for additional officers / concern about what officers do (do we need armed police). He also heard

107 people expressing that they like community policing. He feels we need to get back to having good data  
108 on calls. Even if we cut one position, while it will not have a big cost impact, for those who feel the  
109 department is too big they might be satisfied.

110 Mike said he heard the social justice aspect. He also thinks people are looking at the overall budget  
111 which keeps growing. He thinks it may be at a tipping point where residents are saying we never  
112 wanted the department to get this big. He thinks some want to see better allocation of dollars for other  
113 services. He does think the Police Department is supported but concerned why the Police budget is the  
114 largest in the Town.

115 Dennis agreed with Mike's take away on reallocating funds to other services.

116 Maggie said there have been a number of conversations on this. The question she feels comes up most  
117 is if the Police Department is at the right size for Hinesburg. The Board now needs to figure this out and  
118 she feels it is important to establish a committee to address all the questions and work with the Police  
119 Department to get accurate data.

120 Merrily said she like the way Phil worded the concern. Since the time when the COPS Grant was  
121 approved people have voiced their opinion that they did not like adding another officer. She asked  
122 about the budget impact if we reduced to 5 full time officers? Todd said reducing from 6 to 5 would  
123 reduce expenditures by \$90,000 to \$100,00. The tax savings would not be that much because of the  
124 Grant savings this year but in future years it would be that amount. Todd added that cutting part time  
125 hours does not save a lot as those officers do not receive benefits.

126 Mike again addressed regionalization. If Hinesburg were to work with Charlotte or some how partner  
127 with Richmond that would mean savings from bringing in other sources of revenue.

128 Merrily addressed the point of working with other towns noting that when she talked with Charlotte  
129 about ambulance service, they were clear they wanted to serve only Charlotte residents and were fine  
130 with the cost to do so. It is not that Hinesburg is against regionalization, she knows Phil, Todd and  
131 Anthony have reached out to other towns. It takes time to cultivate the relationship even if towns are  
132 willing to do so.

133 Todd said the first small step is to continue as we are and expand contracts with other towns.

134 Phil suggested to have Todd and Anthony develop a budget with one less officer and see what that looks  
135 like and what the implications are.

136 Todd suggested looking at cutting one of the full time officers. As mentioned before he is pretty  
137 confident we can terminate the grant and not have to pay back any money. The case for doing so is  
138 made even greater by the fact that the budget was voted down. This might mean the end of call outs  
139 from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m.

140 Phil suggested to present a different budget to the voters and mention the Board heard other concerns  
141 and present some actions that will be done over next year to help understand all concerns.

142 Mike suggested holding a public meeting in a relatively short time. Mike said the City of St. Albans just  
143 voted to bring on a Crisis Intervention position in their police department. He wonders if we keep the  
144 same budget but change the focus on the additional position it might be more acceptable.

145 Todd said we need to do something short term. Reduce staff and then take the time to figure out where  
146 we go from there.

147 Phil commented that our Police Department is well respected. The Board heard comments about what  
148 a great community policing job they do. We are not talking about possibly eliminating a position, all the  
149 people he has met that are a part of the Police Department are highly dedicated and concerned for  
150 Hinesburg. We need to realize we are impacting these individuals and possibly their jobs.

151 Ambulance Service.

152 Merrily noted when considering ambulance service originally outside experts questioned if the low call  
153 volume would be able to support the service. It is her understanding that this information has proved to  
154 be correct and our call volume will not support the service. If Haystack gets completed that may  
155 change.

156 Phil said we should explain the numbers stating that to get a license we would need more staff which  
157 would result in an even higher budget.

158 Todd said during the 5 year contract time with Richmond we can re-evaluate having our own ambulance  
159 service

160 Discussion on the ambulance will be scheduled for the 3/16 meeting.

161 Consider Waitsfield Champlain Valley Telecom Broadband Funding Request

162 The request is for \$58,645.80 by the Vermont Community Broadband.

163 Phil said this seems like a lot of money to hook up just 30 homes.

164 Mike feels it is premature to use any ARPA funds as the Board has not discussed how the Town would  
165 best use these funds.

166 Town Manager Report

- 167       • Todd said he and Joy will likely be requesting the Board to set aside some of the ARPA funds for  
168       the unexpected landfill expenses  
169       • Police cruiser bids were not in line with the value of the vehicle. The Board decided to re-bid.

170 Approve Warrants and Payroll

171 Phil moved to approve the warrants signed by Merrily and Maggie, including payroll, as submitted by  
172 the Town Treasurer. Seconded by Maggie and approved with 5 yes votes.

173 Adjourn

174 Mike moved to adjourn at 9:20 p.m.. Seconded by Maggie and approved with 5 yes votes.

175 Respectfully submitted,

176 Valerie Spadaccini, clerk of the Board

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