



GEORGIA VERMONT

Selectboard Regular Meeting

Wednesday, September 11, 2024, at 6:00 PM

Chris Letourneau Meeting Room and via Zoom

Minutes

Zoom Details:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6165843896?pwd=STduU2JzTmpiVmE1MXZSaWZWVadz09>

Meeting ID: 616 584 3896 | Passcode: 5243524

Dial by your Location: 1 929 205 6099 (New York)

1. CALL TO ORDER

CALL TO ORDER at 6:00 p.m. by Carl Rosenquist, Chair

PRESENT

Brian Dunsmore

Paul Jansen

Carl Rosenquist

Kristina Senna

ABSENT

Devon Thomas

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. CHAIR UPDATE

4. ADDITIONS, DELETIONS, OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Move Ethics Policy to September 23 meeting.

Add correspondence from J. Hathaway.

Motion to accept changes to the agenda by K. Senna, Seconded by B. Dunsmore. All in favor.

5. SELECTBOARD MINUTES AND WARRANTS

A. Approval of Selectboard Regular Meeting Minutes for 8/29/2024

Motion to approve minutes with corrections by K. Senna, seconded by B. Dunsmore. All in favor.

B. Approval of Warrants # 27

Motion to approve Warrant #27 by K. Senna, Seconded by B. Dunsmore. All in favor.

35 Motion to add Warrant #28 for \$2125.00 by B. Dunsmore, seconded by P. Jansen. All in Favor

36 **6. PUBLIC COMMENT (For items not on agenda)**

37 All participants must clearly state their names. Appropriate actions will be considered once the
38 Selectboard has reviewed the information provided and necessary subsequent research.

39 H. Grimm had concerns with the accuracy of the survey of the western side of the beach property.
40 P. Jansen recommended she send an email to the administrator requesting to speak with Button
41 Surveying regarding their findings.

42

43 **7. CORRESPONDENCE**

44 J. Hathaway emailed the administrator referencing the dog bite issue at the last meeting and said it
45 could have been an open meeting discussion. He also wanted to mention the verbiage before
46 entering executive session. C. Letourneau responded to his email.

47 **8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

48 A. Personnel Policy-

49 Nothing new to report

50 B. Sherwood Forest 3-Acre Rule - Public meeting on September 30th.

51 C. Town Electronic Sign

52 D. Fire Dept. Kiosk

53 E. American Tower - As of 9/5 no response to Attorney.

54 F. Hazard Communication Policy

55 G. Bridge #10

56 H. Old Stage Rd - Culvert

57 I. Beach Policy

58 J. General Maintenance Agreement -

59 **9. BOARD BUSINESS (Public comment on agenda items limited to 5 minutes)**

60 A. Conservation update - Silver Lake Woods by Velco.

61 Summary of VELCO plans for power line activity at Silver Lake Woods, 2024-2025

62

63 In April 2024, rough usage by large ATVs on the Silver Lake Class 4 road and walking
64 trails was noted. The tracks continued to the VELCO power line right of way, where
65 evidence of activity by VELCO was observed. When VELCO was alerted to this, they
66 apologized for the disturbance, and noted there would certainly be more activity on
67 their power line in the near future, as they are about to change out a number of the
68 poles on the Silver Lake Woods property. The specific wording from Allyson Brown,
69 VELCO Real Estate and Right-of-Way Lead, is as follows:

70

71 "Thanks for reaching out and my apologies if our crews accessing the ROW
72 caused any issues. The poles along that line are starting to show their age and
73 we had a crew looking at these poles to determine the scope and timing for the
74 various pole's replacement. The crew took two UTVs [Utility Task Vehicles] in to
75 access the poles, so I suspect this would have been related to that. I will ask
76 them that in the future they will not drive directly on foot bridges if avoidable and

77 to avoid the water bars, if possible, as well. VELCO is encountering more and
78 more challenges with accessing our ROWs from our historical access routes as
79 land changes hands, subdivides and changes land use, including the access
80 routes being converted to public walking trails.

81
82 The poles will need to be replaced sometime in the next year or two and we will
83 be in touch with more information about that as things develop and timelines
84 are refined. There are many variables, including environmental constraints,
85 which go into those project plans, and we will request that we meet on site at
86 some point to review our plans and see how we can best collaborate. It is also
87 likely that we need to perform grounding remediation (add lightning strike
88 grounding protection) at many if not all of the poles in that stretch later this
89 summer to get us through until we can replace aged poles. We will be in touch
90 as soon as we can with more information.”

91
92 We responded that we would appreciate the suggested opportunity for a site visit with
93 them, and also asked whether VELCO could document their legal access through
94 Silver Lake Woods to get to their power line ROW. They responded to this request by
95 emailing two easements which they had acquired from previous owners Wylie and
96 Moseley. These documents are filed in our GCC drive, at:

97
98
99 These two legal documents show that VELCO does have easements across our
100 property as deeded by former owners Moseley and Wylie. These easements allow
101 access to their ROW across any part of the property. Those easements also state that
102 VELCO must reimburse the property owner for any damage done to their equipment.

103
104 VELCO also would like to have their easement revised to create a preferred route
105 through the property. In a nutshell, while their various easements in Vermont (including
106 that to SLW) allow them to cross private land, they are running into significant
107 obstacles as new development and other land use changes abutting power corridors
108 seriously limits their access points. Therefore, they are working to permanently secure
109 their preferred routes. In our case, this is our Class 4 Silver Lake Road to the town
110 property, and then our west loop (Purmort, aka Purmont) walking trail. Note that
111 establishing a defined permanent access route would not eliminate their easement
112 rights via any other routes through the property. See partial property map, below.

113
114 On Wednesday morning, June 19, Alysia Catalfamo and Tom Hargy of Georgia
115 Conservation Commission met with three VELCO staff members, Marina Vitagliano,
116 Allyson Brown, and Jacob Watrous, to hear about their upcoming pole replacement
117 activities at the power line through SLW, and to discuss means of minimizing any
118 damage to our Class 4 road and trails while their crews move equipment to the power
119 corridor.

120
121 On August 27, these VELCO representatives met us again at Silver Lake Woods,
122 along with Charlie Hancock, State Forester for Franklin County (and author of the
123 2018 Silver Lake Forest Management Plan), and Tucker Malone of Vermont Land
124 Trust (the organization holding the Conservation Easement for the property).

125
126 During these site visits, they indicated the following:

Preparation for pole replacement will occur in Fall to early winter of 2024. This includes bringing materials to the site, as well as road and trail improvement - see discussion below.

Replacing the existing wooden poles with new metal poles (they will still have two poles per location). This would occur in the coming winter (beginning sometime between December 2024 and Feb 2025) and would be expected to take several weeks to a month.

Mulching and seeding would occur in Spring 2025.

They stated they were willing to significantly improve the class 4 road and west loop trail to the power line, by adding 12" of porous stone where needed, and including water bars to deflect runoff from the paths. This would mostly be necessary on the Class 4 road.

Following the major work, they would mulch and seed the walkway. This activity would require trimming some overhead trees along the way, but would not involve cutting many trees, if any.

Our lower, main bridge, just above the trailhead, would need to be temporarily moved out of its present location during their pole replacement activity. They would install a temporary bridge at that location during pole replacement.

All SLW trails would be closed during pole replacement but could be open during preparation stages. Either the main or west loop trail would need to be closed when grounding wire work is underway in the vicinity.

During pole replacement, they would need to move equipment across the Silver Lake stream where it crosses the power line (in the valley between the two trail crossings) and would use 16-ft wide mats to do so.

Ongoing access to the power line for vegetation removal and pole grounding activity would continue to be along our main (Blake) trail, rather than their preferred access trail on the west loop. This would involve ATV traffic. GCC voiced concern about damage to the trail and the stream crossing near our small bridge, as seen during activities this April. They could only assure us they would be careful and try to minimize damage.

Existing cross arms from the present pairs of poles would be removed. They offered to leave four of them so that we could construct a wider bridge at the confluence of Silver Lake stream and the beaver pond stream. These are 29 feet long and are roughly 8"x 8" beams. The wider bridge would allow them to occasionally access the corridor for annual inspections and less frequent vegetation clearing. This might be a mixed blessing, as we already have a bridge in place for pedestrians, and it would be our responsibility to make the new, wider one to protect the stream from future damage by their equipment. We would be responsible for all costs, such as labor and lumber, for this structure. Charlie Hancock has indicated he may be able to assist us in finding grant funds for this.

This information regarding VELCO's plans came to the Conservation Commission just as we were in the preliminary stage of considering forest management activities at Silver Lake Woods, so as to improve the forest and comply with our Forest Management Plan. We have walked the forest with the county forester and Vermont Land Trust with this in mind. One obstacle we had anticipated was that bringing equipment into the property would require beefing up the Class 4 road. If VELCO accomplishes this task for us, we would have a clearer path forward, so that there

would be lower upfront costs, improving the financial outlook of a timber project which already appears to promise a positive return.
We are beginning to put together information to present to the Selectboard in the near future regarding this forest management project, and we would be happy to discuss this and the VELCO activity at any time. We also offer to walk the trails with you at your convenience.

B. Homestead penalty - Action to access fee or waive.

Homestead penalty - Action to access fee or waive. The Selectboard will continue to follow the policy that was put in place on August 22, 2011, which states, Following 32 V.S.A Section 5410(g), the Town of Georgia henceforth will charge a 3% penalty for the late filing of Homestead Declarations, which also applies to situations in which a property owner incorrectly files a Homestead Declaration for a property that is not a homestead or fails to declare a property that is a homestead.

C. Paving budget - Discuss

L. Hobart explained the paving budget is not overspent. When the budget was created it did not account for a \$75,600 grant that was approved. Moving forward with budgets, the Selectboard would like to see all grants that have been awarded for that budget year, included for each department, to show transparency.

D. Capital Budget - Discuss

L. Hobart sent all department heads an excel workbook with instructions on how to fill out the forms being requested to build the capital budget. L. Hobart would like to have the information back by September 23rd for the Selectboard to review. P. Jansen would like to have the time to review them before the board meets with each department head.

C. Letourneau will get a timeline for budgets and posting notices for the Town Meeting.

E. Bond Resolution - Action to sign

Motion to sign validation resolution by P. Jansen seconded by B. Dunsmore. All in favor.

F. Hazard Mitigation Grant - Next steps

C. Letourneau informed the selectboard the grant for Bridge #28 (Mill River) had been applied for by M. McCarthy. C. Letourneau will speak with Sean from Northwest Regional Planning to see if we should continue with the process.

G. Animal Ordinance - Review and Discuss

After reviewing the ordinance, it was suggested it be brought back to the next board meeting with corrections. C. Letourneau will add this to the agenda for September 23rd.

H. Horse dropping on Georgia Shore Rd. - Discuss What can be done regarding cleaning up after your horse on Georgia Shore Rd.

There is nothing the board can do regarding horse droppings on the road.

I. Ethics Policy -Review and Discussion

This was rescheduled for the September 23rd meeting at the request of D. Thomas.

J. Vermont 250th Resolution - Action to accept and sign.

218 C. Letourneau said the GCEC (Georgia Community Events Committee) discussed the
219 resolution and said they could do one year, and they will reach out to the library and historical
220 society to see if they would like to participate, and each take a year.

221 Motion to accept the Vermont 250th Resolution by K. Senna and seconded by B. Dunsmore

222 K. Human Resources - Discussion

223 C. Letourneau has received three proposals for HR services, and she is waiting on a couple
224 more. C. Letourneau will present all the proposals at the September 23rd meeting. C.
225 Letourneau will also reach out to Sean Adkin regarding the possibility of Job Sharing.

226 L. Selectboard Clerk - Action to post position.

227 C. Letourneau will post the Selectboard Clerk position with a starting rate of \$20.00 per hour.

228 M. Rd Sign on Pattee Hill and Mirror on Skunk Hill- Approve request from L. Handy and A. Tatro

229 We have two requests for Mirror and signs to be installed for blind spots. The applicants will
230 fill out the sign request forms and present them on September 23rd.

231 **10. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR, TREASURER AND SELECTBOARD SUB COMMITTEES'**
232 **REPORTS**

233 A. Town Administrator

234 Fall Fest- Fall Fest will continue as scheduled.

235 FCSD Report - FCSD reported all activity for August.

236 Roadside Mowing 9/8-9/16 - Our highway crew will be busy mowing the roadsides from 9/8 to
237 9/16.

238 B. Treasurer

239 C. Buildings

240 D. Budget and Finance

241 E. Personnel

242 F. Public Works/Grounds/Recreation

243 G. Committees at the direction of the chair

244 **11. PLAN NEXT MEETING AGENDA**

245 A. 09/23/2024

246 B. Library Repairs - Discuss

247 C. Copier Contract

248 D. Gilles Rainville Sr. - Corral

249 E. Hope Cemetery price increase

250 F. Fire Dept. Tanks and Well

251 **12. Executive Session**

252 I would entertain a motion to enter executive session to discuss _TA evaluation and personnel,
253 which premature disclosure or discussion may be detrimental to the board and/or individuals
254 involved.

255 Motion by B. Dunsmore, seconded by K. Senna. All in Favor

256 I move that we enter executive session to discuss personnel with Town Administrator C.
257 Letourneau under the provisions of Title 1, Section 313(a)(1)(A) of the Vermont Statutes at 7:35
258 p.m.

259 Motion by B. Dunsmore, seconded by K. Senna. All in Favor

260 8:00 p.m. C. Letourneau exits executive session.

261 9:06 Motion to exit executive session by K. Senna, seconded by B. Dunsmore. All in favor.

262 Motion out of executive session: Motion to have the Road Foreman/Public Works Director submit a
263 written report to the Selectboard on issues regarding repairs and purchases for the town. by P.
264 Jansen, seconded by B. Dunsmore. All in Favor.

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