



# SELECTBOARD REGULAR MEETING

Monday, November 27, 2023 at 6:00 PM

Chris Letourneau Meeting Room and via Zoom

MINUTES

## Zoom Details:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6165843896?pwd=STduU2JzTmпиVmE1MXZSaWZWLzVadz09>

Meeting ID: 616 584 3896 | Passcode: 5243524

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

Approved on 12.11.2023

## 1. CALL TO ORDER

- a. **Selectboard Present:** Devon Thomas Chair, Shannon Jenkins Vice-Chair, Jamie Comstock, Carl Rosenquist, Nicholas Martin
- b. **Staff Present:** Cheryl Letourneau, Dawn Penney, April Edwards, Doug Bergstrom, Bill Hinman
- c. **Public Present:** Marty Jansen, Bette Dunsmore, Heather Dunsmore, Heather Grimm, Fred Grimm, Terry Cleveland, Marc Price, Jason Chagnon, Tony Heinlein
- d. **Public Zoom:** Chris Taylor, Jana Thuesen, Karen Badger, Frank Gore, Kristina Senna

## 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

## 3. CHAIR UPDATE

## 4. ADDITIONS, DELETIONS, OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

- C. Rosenquist makes a motion to have two separate Executive Sessions with one early in the meeting to respect B. Hinman's time, N. Martin seconds. All in favor, motion carried.
- C. Rosenquist makes a motion to have this added to the agenda, N. Martin seconds. All in favor, motion carried.

## 5. SELECTBOARD MINUTES AND WARRANTS

### A. Approval of Selectboard Regular Meeting Minutes for 11.13.2023

- C. Rosenquist makes a motion to approve the minutes from 11.13.2023 with corrections, S. Jenkins seconds.
  - Line 105 is a fragmented sentence.
  - Line 156 corrects the spelling of the word too.
  - J. Comstock makes a motion to have Thomas added to line 58.
- All in favor, motion carried.

### B. Approval of Warrant #30

- S. Jenkins makes a motion to approve Warrant #30 with corrections, J. Comstock seconds.

- 32 • J. Comstock questions the audit, A. Edwards says it is not finished. N. Martin clarifies
- 33 that they are still on budget, A. Edwards confirms they are.
- 34 • J. Comstock questions \$9296 for sand. N. Martin assumes it is the sand for the year.
- 35 • All in favor, motion carried.
- 36 • D. Penney clarified the motion was for corrections and there are no corrections on the
- 37 warrant. D. Thomas confirms.

#### 38 C. 11.22.2023 Executive Personal Committee Meeting Minutes

- 39 • C. Rosenquist makes a motion to accept 11.22.2023 minutes, J. Comstock seconds. All
- 40 in favor, motion carried.

#### 41 6. PUBLIC COMMENT (For items not on agenda)

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

- 44 ▪ B. Dunsmore states that she is fearful of the direction that Georgia is heading. Her opinion
- 45 has nothing to do with anything online as she does not go there.

#### 46 7. CORRESPONDENCE

##### 47 A letter from Terry Cleveland:

48 Dear Selectboard and attendees of the board meeting on November 27<sup>th</sup>,

49  
50 I have read the email some of the DEI committee sent and want to make a statement. I would also like to  
51 ask if EVERY name on the signature line signed on to this letter. I want to be assured that all four signed  
52 members agreed with the email.

53 My statement:

54 I began researching Aaron Kindsvatter once I realized he was suggested as a speaker to address the  
55 possible adverse effects of DEI in our town. All of Devon's bullet points about him are spot on:

56 Kindsvatter's issues are all about racism, anti-racism, whiteness, and white genocide. As far as I can  
57 see, he does not speak about the other marginalized communities in his speeches.

58 You can find a couple of instances of his colleagues' disappointment in him and disagreement with  
59 him as he DOES, in a comment to another student, agree that instances of violence may be necessary.

60 And, it is an incendiary response to the board. It is incendiary because the board and some members  
61 of the DEI committee found two people working to bring DEI to each town to make each Vermonter  
62 feel safe and welcome. Kindsvatter believes that anti-racism is an ideology that makes people think they  
63 are racist if they don't buy into it. He wants you to think that as a white person, he is being discriminated  
64 against, and that doesn't make him feel good. Hmmm. I would ask him to take a moment and reflect on  
65 that statement.

66 The definition of RACISM is prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism by an individual, community, or  
67 institution against a person based on their racial or ethnic group.

68 Several people asked multiple times in the last DEI meeting: isn't Vermont a KIND state? Are you  
69 saying we aren't KIND? Well, people. Let's talk about Saturday's shooting of 3 Palestinian students in  
70 Burlington. Here's your answer. We are not. And we are not in Georgia, either. While I won't use any  
71 attribution regarding this statement, it was asked in a conversation why we need a DEI statement in

72 Georgia. Only three black people are in town, and that's three too many. Are we kind? No, we are not.  
73 And that's just about race.

74 I imagine there would be many instances of targeting here in Georgia if you put out a questionnaire. And  
75 before you argue that people lie and would make up stories, shame on you. Marginalized people have no  
76 reason to lie. They have plenty of true stories to pull from. They only want to live in a community that  
77 accepts them.

78 I have a suggestion for the board: task the DEI committee to find a TOWN OR MUNICIPALITY that  
79 has refused a DEI statement. Ask them why. And ask for specifics on how it harmed their town or how  
80 they thought it would. THEN, you have an equal and similar view against Al Wakefield and Bob  
81 Harnish, who are working tirelessly to bring a feeling of safety and community to our towns. Otherwise,  
82 you only have propaganda.

83 And I'll ask one more time for those who didn't hear me the last five times: WHO WILL IT HARM TO  
84 HAVE A DEI STATEMENT that makes marginalized people feel more welcome in their community?  
85 WHO?!

86

## 87 **8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

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

#### 89 **A. Addition to the agenda**

- 90     ▪ C. Rosenquist makes a motion for Executive Session where prior information may put the  
91       town or people at risk, N. Martin seconds. All in favor motion carried.
- 92     ▪ C. Rosenquist makes a motion to go into Executive Session with the board, C. Letourneau,  
93       and B. Hinman to discuss Greenbacker Contract issues.
- 94     ▪ There were no motions made from Executive Session.

#### 95 **B. Bill Hinman – Errors and Omissions**

- 96     ▪ B. Hinman explains what Errors and Omissions are and how they are mandated by the state.  
97       He requests approval from the board to update: Paya and Lane, Wimble & Sons, Comcast  
98       Broad Band, John Rhodes Revocable Trust, and the Veteran's Exemption list.
- 99     ▪ B. Hinman explains that individuals need to apply directly to the state each year for their  
100       Veteran's Exemption.
- 101    ▪ C. Rosenquist makes a motion to approve the four Errors and Omissions leaving out the  
102       Veterans to deal with later, N. Martin seconds. All in favor, motion carried.

#### 103 **C. Historical Society Request**

- 104    ▪ C. Rosenquist says the request came from the Historical Society at the budget meeting. They  
105       are requesting \$5,227.30. C. Letourneau says she will put it in the next budget meeting.
- 106    ▪ C. Rosenquist says there was a request to have an exchange of dehumidifiers between the  
107       town office and the Historical Society. C. Letourneau confirms there was an agreement  
108       made earlier today.

#### 109 **D. Furnace Quotes**

- 110    ▪ C. Letourneau presented the board with the two quotes that T. Cadieux received and  
111       submitted to her. C. Letourneau says their quotes are not clear and says she has not heard  
112       from T. Cadieux but is waiting in hopes he can help.
- 113    ▪ C. Rosenquist asks if there was a recommendation. C. Letourneau says no.
- 114    ▪ The board asks C. Letourneau to ask T. Cadieux for a breakdown of the quotes via email.

- 115 ❖ C. Rosenquist makes a motion to move items E and F ahead of D for the sake of time efficacy, N.  
 116 Martin seconds. D. Thomas abstains, S. Jenkins, J. Comstock, C. Rosenquist, and N. Martin vote  
 117 yes, motion carried.
- 118 **E. Hidden Woods and Forest Glen – Engineer**
- 119 ▪ C. Letourneau asks the board which part of the Purchasing Policy they would like her to
  - 120 follow.
  - 121 ▪ S. Jenkins says it is good practice to get three bids.
  - 122 ▪ N. Martin asks how long the estimates are good for.
  - 123 ▪ F. Grimm asks if the estimates would have any teeth at all.
  - 124 ▪ C. Letourneau asks if she is asking for bids or estimates. S. Jenkins says estimates.
- 125 **F. Extended Office Hours**
- 126 ▪ D. Thomas asks for thoughts.
  - 127 ▪ N. Martin says it has been tried before saying it did not work. N. Martin says he can see it
  - 128 both ways.
  - 129 ▪ C. Letourneau says she tried it for a couple of months, and no one came. She says the clerk’s
  - 130 office usually is open early and everyone is willing to stay later if anyone needs anything.
  - 131 Discussion was had on the wording of a statement.
  - 132 ▪ B. Dunsmore says maybe the word ‘accommodate’ could be added to the statement.
  - 133 ▪ F. Grimm says you may want to say, ‘may accommodate’.
- 134 **G. DEI invitation to Aaron Kindsvatter**
- 135 ▪ D. Thomas asked the DEI Committee not to invite Kindsvatter to the town of Georgia.
  - 136 ▪ D. Thomas reads aloud a letter to the board from some members of the DEI Committee. He
  - 137 asks if this is a resignation. H. Grimm says it is not.

138 Devon & Selectboard Members,

139  
 140

141 We are writing in response to the request from Devon to put a hold on the invite to Dr. Aaron  
 142 Kindsvatter to speak with the DEI Committee.

143

144 We feel that the board has sent us mixed messages on how we are to operate as a committee. We were  
 145 formed and tasked with looking into what a DEI statement would mean for our community. We were  
 146 also told that as long as it could be tied to the charge that you would allow the committee to decide how  
 147 to approach our research and decisions.

148

149 We knew that the board wanted the founders of the Vermont Declaration on Inclusion to come to the  
 150 committee to make a presentation before the committee was even in place. We decided that we should  
 151 look at all viewpoints on accepting a DEI statement and what the pros and cons would look like. This  
 152 means that we would need to look at multiple viewpoints to be fair in our conclusions.

153

154 Our first attempt at finding a counter claim was an interview by John Stossell of Dr Erec Smith who was  
 155 a former DEI trainer, this was turned down by the board as it was deemed to be from social media  
 156 sources and would not allow a question and answer opportunity from committee members and the  
 157 public. Our argument was that videos are posted to YouTube because it is a platform for videos on the  
 158 internet and it is a platform that our own town uses to post their meeting videos. But we moved on and  
 159 looked for another viewpoint that would allow for a question and answer period.

160

161 Countless hours have been put into researching other speakers and how we could meet the charge and  
 162 find a speaker who could give some time. Dr. Aaron Kindsvatter was found and his presentation “How

163 DEI Fails Children and Families” seemed to fit what we are working on. This presentation is well  
 164 worded and very respectful. Dr. Kindsvatter is a founding member of Free Black Thought and a chapter  
 165 leader for the Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism (FAIR) We decided to move forward and see  
 166 if he would be willing to attend via zoom or if he could meet in person since he is also from Vermont.  
 167 Dr Kindsvatter agreed to meet with us and we set a date of 12/4/2023 at our committee meeting. Some  
 168 of us knew that as soon as a name was put out, there would be community members that would try to  
 169 find a reason to have this shut down as they do not want opposing views to be seen or heard. We were  
 170 shocked to hear that Devon’s plans were to continue with censorship and prohibit us from going forward  
 171 with this guest speaker. We were given the reasons as follows:

- 172
- 173 • “Aaron’s message is more focused on a discussion of racial identity and not the municipal
- 174 impact of a DEI statement.”
- 175 • “I find it concerning that he has a history of using violent language and has even encouraged acts
- 176 of violence against students at UVM”
- 177 • “it seems like an incendiary invitation which is the type of action the Selectboard asked the
- 178 committee to avoid making in pursuing its charge”
- 179

180 We do not agree with these statements, and ask the board to give us more information on how you came  
 181 to these conclusions. We feel that we cannot come to a clear understanding on how this would affect our  
 182 community without being able to explore all viewpoints. Does the select board have any  
 183 recommendations on an acceptable opposing viewpoints or is this just a tactic of smoke and mirrors?  
 184 Due to the divisiveness and backlash to having an opposing view and the personal attacks online and in  
 185 person to our committee members as well as community members, individuals are scared to attend and  
 186 or speak up to say they don’t agree. The insinuation that our committee cannot view information and  
 187 make an informed decision of facts without the influence of the select board is quite offensive. Our  
 188 diverse backgrounds should be respected and allowed to explore the charge as stated by the select board.  
 189 If the select board wanted to lay out a predetermined plan as to how, what, where and why we were to  
 190 investigate this subject, it should have been done in advance with clear guidelines and a list of  
 191 appropriate resources.

192

193 At this time we feel that we cannot move forward as the select board continues to intervene and stop the  
 194 forward action of the committee.

195

196

197 Respectfully submitted,  
 198 Heather Grimm, Martha Jansen, Linda Kirker, Bob Stebbins

- 199
- 200 ▪ S. Jenkins says H. Grimm, M. Jansen, L. Kirker, and B. Stebbins can welcome him
  - 201 personally; she just does not agree with it.
  - 202 ▪ C. Rosenquist makes a motion to enter into discussion about the DEI Committee, N. Martins
  - 203 seconds.
  - 204 ▪ J. Thuesen wants it known that she is not any part of the letter. She goes on to state her
  - 205 reasons.
  - 206 ▪ C. Rosenquist says he went through all of the links that were sent to him and he did not see
  - 207 any mention of the violence that is being referred to.
  - 208 ▪ J. Chagnon says that there are 4,565 signatures calling for the resignation of Kindsvatter.
  - 209 ▪ D. Thomas says the issue is not what he says but what it will do to the town conversation.
  - 210 He says to google his name and read the controversy.

- 211       ▪ C. Rosenquist makes a motion to have the DEI Committee be allowed to invite Kindsvatter
- 212       to present opposing viewpoints, N. Martin seconds.
- 213       ▪ H. Grimm says you have formed an opinion before meeting with the person. She says they
- 214       are shutting down the conversation.
- 215       ▪ J. Chagnon says he would love to hear from him.
- 216       ▪ M. Jansen says it was a temporary agreement and she was waiting to hear from the
- 217       selectboard to see what they were thinking.
- 218       ▪ D. Thomas wants to bring the information to the community.
- 219       ▪ B. Dunsmore clarifies that they were instructed not to look online and now they don't want to
- 220       allow a person to be physically present to answer questions.
- 221       ▪ D. Thomas says the speaker was reported to encourage violence. Discussion continued.
- 222       ▪ J. Comstock says this committee is at the Direction of the Chair so if that is what he wants he
- 223       does not understand why it is this much of a conversation.
- 224       ▪ T. Cleveland asks who it will harm. Her letter to the board is as follows:

225 Dear Selectboard and attendees of the board meeting on November 27<sup>th</sup>,

226  
227 I have read the email some of the DEI committee sent and want to make a statement. I would also  
228 like to ask if EVERY name on the signature line signed on to this letter. I want to be assured that all  
229 four signed members agreed with the email.

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234 can see, he does not speak about the other marginalized communities in his speeches.

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240 Vermonter feel safe and welcome. Kindsvatter believes that anti-racism is an ideology that makes  
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243 a moment and reflect on that statement.

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245 or institution against a person based on their racial or ethnic group.

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247 saying we aren't KIND? Well, people. Let's talk about Saturday's shooting of 3 Palestinian students  
248 in Burlington. Here's your answer. We are not. And we are not in Georgia, either. While I won't use  
249 any attribution regarding this statement, it was asked in a conversation why we need a DEI statement  
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254 have no reason to lie. They have plenty of true stories to pull from. They only want to live in a  
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 260 Otherwise, you only have propaganda.  
 261 And I'll ask one more time for those who didn't hear me the last five times: WHO WILL IT HARM  
 262 TO HAVE A DEI STATEMENT that makes marginalized people feel more welcome in their  
 263 community? WHO?!
- 264 ▪
  - 265 ▪ H. Grimm says they have not decided, they want to hear both sides before they do that.
  - 266 ▪ J. Chagnon says the board was voted in to do this, why don't they just do it. S. Jenkins says  
 267 they wanted to.
  - 268 ▪ D. Thomas says they work on behalf of the board, they work for us.
  - 269 ▪ J. Chagnon says democracy is the board deciding; they could have signed it.
  - 270 ▪ F. Grimm says true democracy is putting it on a ballot. He encourages everyone to be critical  
 271 thinkers and validate sources.
  - 272 ▪ M. Price says it does not make sense to have both sides of an argument, you could invite a  
 273 KKK member.
  - 274 ▪ D. Thomas calls for a vote.
  - 275 ▪ C. Rosenquist votes yes, D. Thomas votes no, S. Jenkins, J. Comstock and N. Martin abstain.  
 276 Motion fails.
  - 277 ▪ N. Martin says he sees both sides. He is not sure that is what the board represents.
  - 278 ▪ M. Jansen says when reviewing the videos, she heard someone talking about a second phase.  
 279 She knows that she is part of the first phase but has not been asked about a second. She says  
 280 she has invested hours and hours into this.
  - 281 ▪ M. Jansen resigns from the DEI Committee.
  - 282 ▪ J. Theusen reads C. Rosenquist's quote from the newspaper. She says 'should there be a  
 283 second phase' is what was said.
  - 284 ▪ B. Dunsmore says the newspaper is not unbiased news.
  - 285 ▪ C. Rosenquist says it is not proper for the selectboard to become political. He says this is  
 286 getting worse.
  - 287 ▪ H. Grimm clarifies that they cannot have Kindsvatter as a speaker. D. Thomas says not as a  
 288 committee. N. Martin says they can collect information. H. Grimm says after the first  
 289 meeting they were told people had to come in to bring information.
  - 290 ▪ D. Thomas says they can reach out and get information on their own.
  - 291 ▪ H. Grimm says it is hard to get people to come and speak. People do not want to be seen as  
 292 racist and put their businesses at risk.
  - 293 ▪ C. Letourneau asks the board if they have a recommendation of a person to come and speak  
 294 with the committee. Nothing is offered.
  - 295 ▪ H. Grimm is being asked to read a statement out loud via her phone from Bob Stebbins (DEI  
 296 Committee), he says he wants to resign as it is not productive.

297 **10. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR, TREASURER AND SELECTBOARD SUB COMMITTEES**  
 298 **REPORTS**

- 299 A. Town Administrator
- 300 B. Treasurer
- 301 C. Buildings
- 302 D. Budget and Finance
- 303 E. Personnel

304           ▪ Personnel Policy will have a planned meeting.

305   **H. Public Works/Grounds/Recreation**

306           ▪ T. Heinlein reports that he got together with T. Cadieux and wants a copy of the survey that  
307           Perrigo had done. He was hoping to have it last week but still has not seen it. He will get  
308           information and meet with T. Cadieux and C. Rosenquist.

309   **G. Committees at the direction of the chair**

310   **11. OTHER**

311           ▪ T. Cleveland asks where the board is with the Conflict-of-Interest Policy. D. Thomas says  
312           they are currently working through to see what positions conflict with each other and what  
313           ones they can double up on. N. Martin says many of these are volunteer positions.

314           ▪ C. Rosenquist says he thought they were going through the recommendations from the  
315           committee versus the recommendations from legal.

316           ▪ D. Thomas says they are going through the process.

317   **12. PLAN NEXT MEETING AGENDA**

318    **A. 12.11.2023 Regular Meeting**

319    **B. 11.29.2023 Budget Meeting**

320   **13. EXECUTIVE SESSION (if needed, pursuant to 1 V.S.A sec 313)**

321           ▪ At **8:17 p.m.** - C. Rosenquist makes motion to move into Executive Session where premature  
322           knowledge may put the town or its members at risk, N. Martin seconds. All in favor, motion  
323           carried.

324           ▪ C. Rosenquist makes a motion to invite C. Letourneau, the board, and D. Bergstrom to  
325           Executive Session to discuss an employee's grievance, N. Martin seconds. All in favor,  
326           motion carried.

327           ▪ At **8:44 p.m.** - C. Rosenquist makes a motion to come out of executive session, N. Martin  
328           seconds. All in favor, motion carried.

329           ▪ N. Martin makes a motion that the board will review and submit a letter on behalf of the  
330           board to a member of the Community, S. Jenkins seconds. All in favor, motion carried.

331   **14. ADJOURN**

332           ▪ At **8:46 p.m.** - C. Rosenquist makes a motion to adjourn the meeting, N. Martin seconds. All  
333           in favor, motion carried.

334    **TABLED ITEMS:**

335

336    **Posted to the Town website, four designated places within the Town of Georgia (Town Clerk's**  
337    **Office, Georgia Public Library, Maplefields & Georgia Market), and e-mailed to the local media.**

338    **Signed: Cheryl Letourneau, Town Administrator**

339                   **Phone: 802-524-3524 | Fax: 802-524-3543 | Website: [townofgeorgia.com](http://townofgeorgia.com)**