

**Town of Sunderland Selectboard Meeting  
Monday February 26, 2024, 7:00 PM**

Members in Attendance:

Alex Bresnick  
Andrew McKeever  
Dixie Zens  
Marty Nadler  
Bruce Mattison

Others in Attendance:

Mia Smith  
Susan Whitney  
Todd Lawrence  
Maria Timmerman  
Kim Knapp

1. Call to Order by Dixie Zens at 7 pm.
2. Introduction of Board Members: Marty Nadler, Alex Bresnick, Andrew McKeever, and Bruce Mattison by Chair Dixie Zens. Town Clerk Susan Whitney, Secretary Mia Smith, Emergency Mgmt Coordinator Todd Lawrence.
3. Approval of the minutes of February 12th, Selectboard Meeting
  - Dixie Zens asks for motion to adopt 2/12/24 minutes:  
  
Mover: Andrew McKeever  
2nd: Alex Bresnick  
Result: Passed
4. Public Comment- none.
5. ***Please Note: Town Meeting is this coming Monday March 4th and Voting Day is Tuesday March 5th.***
  - Representatives Seth Bongardz and Kathleen James will be in attendance to discuss what they are working on in the legislature.
6. Discuss the Sunderland Church possibilities.

- Dixie Zens says that town council, Merrill Bent, has reviewed deed and believes it can be purchased by an entity.
- Town can't purchase with its own funds but perhaps a non profit, with the support of state and federal grants, can fix it up.
- Alex Bresnick asks who it will be purchased from.
- Susan Whitney says that the deed says it would be purchased from the Graves Heirs.
- Alex Bresnick asks follow up questions about who specifically can/cannot purchase property and building. Susan Whitney makes an interpretation of what "exclusion" typically means in old deeds, taking the paragraphs meaning as a whole as opposed to single word.
- Dixie Zens asks if they have determined who the heirs are. Susan Whitney says that by using Ancestry.com, the town office has found a list of heirs, granted not a professional search, but evidence that there are heirs existing.
- Dixie Zens asks since the current group managing the church doesn't have funds, should the town search for the heirs?
- Bruce Mattison asks if grants are 100% funding for restoration and refurb, or if the town would be responsible for some of the funding?
- Marty Nadler says it would make sense for interested parties to make a nonprofit and then to meet with the heirs to see if the building is for sale.
- Maria Zimmerman asks if anyone has been in touch with Vermont Historic Society to see if they are interested in maintaining the building/supporting the restoration.
- Marty Nadler responds that there needs to be an owner/entity to issue grants to, which does not currently exist.
- Maria Zimmerman responds that maybe the Historic Society might be interested in ownership.
- Andrew McKeever asks about what the statement of work they signed through BCRC is being used for?
- Alex Bresnick reminds of the private individual/resident willing to donate funds.
- Bruce Mattison asks the reason for including the church in the town center, was it to open possibilities for grant money that would not otherwise available?
- Andrew McKeever says that maybe the BCRC grant might be better spent in upkeep/maintenance
- Dixie Zens will look into historical society and check back with BCRC.
- Todd Lawrence asks if the grant goes through (eligibility as town, maybe not as nonprofit), then does it make sense to just start the groundwork that could then be handed off to future nonprofit. At what point does the church/lot become reappraised for the value of renovated church/lot.

- Bruce Mattison looks into paperwork stating that funding is contingent on the town's use as a community center, which seems to be impossible with lack of facilities, so that might make the town disqualified for grant.
- Andrew McKeever asks if they should go forward with contacting heirs since the situation is sort of in grid lock. Susan Whitney says anyone is welcome to the list to begin the search.

## 7. Discuss EMAIL rules for Town Officials

- Dixie Zens referenxes Vermont Government Municipal Division of Meeting Laws- reads a section about group emails being allowable for agenda making and preparation before meetings. (resources, videos, and rules available [here](#))
- Decisions, quorums, and discussions are not allowed in group texts/emails, only in meetings.
- Alex Bresnick reads a quote from an email from Dixie Zens, which accompanied a forward message chair between Dixie Zens and Gordon Dossett re: conversation with Hill Farm Inn.
- Susan Whitney says her concern was that the email didn't not reflect some of the discussion that occurred in the days previous. It turned out it was a misunderstanding from not reading updated meeting minutes/decision about when town will be holding the community dinner gathering.
- Susan Whitney brings up sections on use of social media, text messaging, etc that they can reference.
- VLCT selectboard handbook and meeting coming up soon ([Selectboard Essentials workshop](#), March 23rd, 9am)
- Dixie Zens says he strives for transparency, and is open to any feedback or insight if anyone has issue with his leadership.
- Andrew McKeever applauds Dixie Zens for his work in keeping board aware and up to date.

## 8. ARPA Funds

- Group in recess.
- Survey in town office for those who would like it, and it will be made available at town hall during voting on March 5th.
- Bruce Mattison asks why technology improvement is in survey when its already been done, Marty Nadler says it's just an example of fulfilling criteria.

## 9. Road Liaison Report

- Bruce Mattison says because winter has been mild, the crew has been working on cleaning and maintenance in preparation for bike path and summer mowing, etc.
- Kelly Stand Rd signage say proceed at own risk 11/1 to 6/1, point of information for

## 10. Energy Committee

- Weds 28th meeting on zoom. Will include survey asking about priorities for committee to focus on.
- Creation of dashboard/webpage (town of Arlington and [Winhall](#) examples)
- Alex Bresnick asks about grants for solar panels, Andrew McKeever says town is waiting for energy survey of town building.
- Susan Whitney says a few yearly audits have happened. Dixie Zens says they were only walk throughs but not full assessments on this building, only town garage. Town Hall building could use heat pumps, etc.

## 11. BCRC, SWIP

- BCRC working on grants for town (re:church engineering plan, municipal planning, village designation).

## 12. Old Business-

### – 1. Review “Welcome to Sunderland” Signage

- Dixie Zens printed out student concept drawings and will hang them up on the back of eventual signs.
- Pass around new sign ideas that have been submitted in addition.
- Dixie Zens asks about preferences? He plans to pass them onto the planning commission for their input as well.

### – 2. ATV issues for residents with camps on the Kelly Stand Rd.

- Bruce Mattison says that anyone could use the road during the off season in the past.
- Alex Bresnick says that prior discussion made it seem like the board could issue a permit for specific use.

- Bruce Mattison says that he thinks that then other people will want access as well.
- Marty Nadler gives example of how they could write specific permits.
- Susan Whitney says that a representative from the Agency of Transportation will be coming, maybe they will have ideas and opinions.
- Marty Nadler makes a point that they don't want to disallow people from accessing their property.
- Discussion about liability of town if folks use Kelly Stand Rd in the offseason.
- Permit would have to release town from liability and specify use of road only, not surrounding area.
- Alex Bresnick moved to table issue until after the visit by the Agency of Transportation.

Mover: Alex Bresnick

2nd: Marty Nadler

Result: Passed

### – 3. Clarify issues on Community Dinner gathering

- Andrew McKeever reiterated that the community visit has been pushed back to 2025, as originally planned.
- Community Dinner is the opening event of Community Visit by Vermont Council of Rural Development.

### 13. New Business-

- Todd Lawrence, emergency mgmt coordinator, attended spring flood outlook via zoom meeting, diminished risk because of low snow pack (30% of snow pack falls during feb and march)
- Attended Regional Emergency Management Committee, request from BCRC to have two voting members.
- Attended eight-hour coordinator/director training through state.
- Alex Bresnick asks if emergency mgmt coordinator is compatible with a selectboard membership (as Todd Lawrence is a candidate). Todd Lawrence responded that he asked at state training, and the answer is yes, they are compatible.
- Local Emergency mgmt plan submitted in december needs updating after town meeting.

### 14. Review of Correspondence/Signing of Warrants-

15. Executive session entered at 8:10.

Mover: Marty Nadler  
2nd: Alex Bresnick  
Result: Passed

Executive session exited at 8:30.

Mover: Alex Bresnick  
2nd: Andrew McKeever  
Result: Passed

- Dixie Zens makes a motion to contact lawyer in regards to Dog Issue.

Mover: Marty Nadler  
2nd: Bruce Mattison  
Result: Passed

- Motion to have Bruce Mattison sign excessive weight permits for Hunter Excavating.

Mover: Andrew McKeever  
2nd: Marty Nadler  
Result: Passed

16. Next Regular Business Meeting for the Sunderland Selectboard will be March 11, 2024.

17. Adjourn at 8:32 pm.

Mover: Alex Bresnick  
2nd: Marty Nadler  
Result: Passed