

- Draft only, not yet approved by the Selectboard -

Greensboro Selectboard

October 9, 2024 – Minutes

[This was a hybrid meeting held at the Greensboro Free Library, with some participants joining remotely]

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: MacNeil, David Kelley, Eric Hanson, Bobbie Nisbet, Ellen Celnik (joined remotely)

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT in person: John Mackin, Erika Karp, BJ Gray, Alan Wilson, Davis Barnett, Tim Nisbet, Gary Circosta, Renee Circosta, Tom Camarra, Isa Oehry, Beth Meachem, Judy Carpenter, Stephanie Cravedi, Meaghan Meachem, DeDe Stabler, Rick Walsh, Officer Locke, Naomi Ranz-Schleifer, Kent Hansen, Elissa Mackin, Raymonda Parchment, Linda Ramsdell, Rick Morrill, Gwen Mann, Tod Mann, Josh Karp, Brett Stanciu, Kim Greaves, Nancy Riege, Peggy Lipscomb, Gretchen Baker

OTHERS PRESENT remote: Chad Sims, Janet Long, Jerilyn Virden, Mary Parker, Michael Porrazzo, Lise Armstrong, Nancy Hill, Audra Pitts, Kristen Leahy, Michelle Mackin, Diane Irish, Tony Acheson, Aileen Gebbie, Rod Kerr, Elaine Cole Kerr, Rick Lovett, Jane Hoffman, Melanie Clarke, Lindsay Beer, Iola Benedict, Elizabeth Sartorius, Jennifer Lucas, Ila Hunt, Vince Cubbage, Meghan Wayland, Mary Young, Wayne Young

CALLED TO ORDER: 6:30 PM

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

MINUTES

Minutes from 9/18 regular meeting unanimously approved as written.

Minutes from 9/25 and 10/2 budget meetings unanimously approved as written.

CIVIL DISCOURSE & PUBLIC CONCERNS

Eric read a statement about civil discourse at selectboard meetings. He said no one is happy about how meetings have gone, and both the board and public can do better. Board members need to listen, and all need to use a civil tone when speaking. While there is a place at selectboard meetings for public comment, these meetings are not meant to be forums for unlimited discussion and comment. Everyone needs to be more considerate of others, there's no reason we can't have effective meetings.

Bobbie said the selectboard wants to do better, and proposed the board adopt specific parliamentary procedures. She asked those present, until the procedures are adopted tonight, and some public comment is heard on it, once it becomes adopted, please don't engage with the board or audience, future meetings will be run using these guidelines when adopted. VLCT copies, of guidance for the public. Encouraged those to look at it.

Bobbie read the procedures. Eric said he's not sure about such formal procedures right now unless things get worse. I don't know how many rules and regulations we need?

Bobbie said there needs to be an understanding of the expectations at these meetings.

MacNeil agreed, that it's reasonable to have clear guidelines.

Discussion of allowing two warnings if an audience member is disruptive, prior to asking them to leave.

Bobbie said any town official can call a point of order. The chair will rule. This goes for the public as well, they have a right to speak without being interrupted, we could call a point of order for them as well.

If the meeting gets out of hand, any selectboard member can request that the meeting be either adjourned or recessed.

No personal or accusatory comments, if this rule is broken we may ask them to leave the meeting immediately.

Eric wondered if this was legal. It was agreed that a warning would be issued first.

Bobbie read from VLCT model rules.

The board agreed on a two-minute time limit per speaker, this can be extended by the chair.

Eric said people should sign in to speak. The board may not answer all public comments, but you will still have time to voice your opinion. We'll hold public comment before we vote on some items.

Eric: Burlington has public comment at the beginning of their meetings, people can say whatever they want, but the board doesn't respond. Then the meeting continues and no more public comment, unless the board specifically solicits. What about taking this approach?

Ellen: public comments should be germane to what is on the agenda and what the SB is discussing at the time, not just general comments. She added public comment does not mean making accusations against members of the board or public.

Bobbie: you're both right. People should be free to make comments about the business of the town, maybe we shouldn't limit them to items on the agenda.

Ellen: wouldn't more random comments be under other business?

Bobbie: public comment would be time for weighing in on anything that relates to town business.

Ellen: one problem we get into is being distracted from the agenda at hand. Because we have a lot of things to do. David made the following motion:

The board adopts the following parliamentary procedures for selectboard meetings: 1) a two minute limit on public comment, 2) two warnings for interruptions, 3) one warning for personal attacks or accusatory comments.

MacNeil seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Members of the public began signing in for public comment.

Peggy said it used to be that for something that wasn't on the agenda, you asked to put it on the agenda ahead of time. What's wrong with this system? Also we could we ask public to stand when speaking, if they are able.

Kim said last minute additions to the agenda have become more common.

Davis said the signing in process for comments may slow down the progress of the meeting.

Renee: A letter to submit to the Selectboard from the GHS, re Town Hall history. Board agreed to post letter on Website.

Gary asked the board if there were any unwarned planning meetings in the past month. He also noted there were approx. 11 meetings of various types, he can't find recordings of them all on the website, and many sets of minutes have been late being posted.

David made the following motion:

The board adopts the VLCT Model Rules for Public Participation at Municipal Meetings.

MacNeil seconded the motion which carried unanimously. This document will be posted on website.

Meghan Meachem said she is confused what the board just adopted, the public needs to be clear what the rules are. She felt general public comment is separate from contributing to a discussion on a specific agenda item.

David Barnett questioned the rationale for moving back to one regular meeting a month, when there is so much town business to attend to.

ORLEANS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT.

1. The Board reviewed the September OCSD report.
2. **Patrols in Greensboro Bend.** Bobbie said it appears there is minimal patrolling in the bend, and she would like to discuss this with Sheriff Harlow.

GREENSBORO FIRE DEPT. – Chief Dave Brochu, Jr.

The board reviewed Chief Brochu's GFD report.

ROADS & DRIVEWAYS

1. **Road Foreman's report – Tom Camarra.** Tom reported that all roads have been resurfaced, with lots of help from local contractors. The road crew is currently putting up winter sand, also with help from contractors. Mark Colburn is finishing up the last round of the flood repair work for this season.
2. **Leasing equipment.** Tom introduced Gretchen Baker from United Construction and Forestry, to discuss leasing equipment. While this could take pressure off the town budget in the short term, current interest rates are 7.45% for \$150k or less in equipment value, or 6.45% for equipment values above \$150k. Gretchen said these leases are structured with annual payments and unlimited equipment hours. The town would be responsible for basic maintenance such as oil changes and wear items such as tires.
Re: skid steer, with snowplower and material spreader. Wrote him up two machines in stock and broke down by lease payments per year.
Gretchen said in terms of breakdowns, United typically quotes a warranty that covers the length of the lease, but this would be an extra cost.
Gretchen said if the town wants to purchase the equipment after a seven year lease, the payout would be \$1.
Tom the Trackless sidewalk clearing machine is 13 years old and has proven to be expensive to maintain. It's also a single use piece of equipment, while a skid steer could be used year round for a wide variety of tasks.
3. **Nursing Home – reimburse for damaged pipe.** David made the following motion:
The town will reimburse the Nursing Home \$312 for the repairs of a pipe damaged during ditching work on Cemetery Ridge Rd.
MacNeil seconded the motion which carried unanimously.
4. **Town truck trade in.** There are no interested parties for the old town truck. David made the following motion:
The town will trade in the old Mack truck for \$45k.
Bobbie seconded the motion which carried unanimously.
5. **Paving contract.** Josh said one of the paving contractors is in the area, and perhaps the board should shorten the bid window. After discussion, the Board decided to not change the bid window.

TOWN CLERK – Kim Greaves

1. **Upcoming election.** Kim said the Secretary of State put out a very useful voter guide, with bios and information about most candidates. The drop box will still be available, it remains at the lower entrance to the town offices. Kim said is checked daily and can be used for both tax payments and ballot drop offs. It is checked daily. Kim added taxes are also due on Thursday Nov. 7.
2. **Dying maple on Village Green** Old maple needs to be taken down. Chuck said he could take down just the dead limbs for now, for safety reasons. The board agreed to ask Chuck to give a quote.

3. **Unifirst Contract.** Kim said Unifirst isn't raising their rates for next year. David made the following motion:

The board approves the new Unifirst contract.

MacNeil seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

TREASURER – Brett Stanciu

1. The Board reviewed the treasurer's monthly report, the FY25 budget report, and the September check warrant reports. Brett is working to finish up last year's audit, and has been very busy with DRB work.
2. **FY2026 budgeting.** Brett thanked Jennifer Lucas for help with the town budget. Brett said she's hoping to have a rough draft of the budget completed by the end of October, followed by a period of review and cutting, and a more refined draft completed by Thanksgiving. This year, likely in December, public comment will be solicited on the draft budget.
3. Kim said an additional selectboard member is needed to sign warrants. The Board agreed that Bobbie can do this.

RURAL EDGE UPDATE

Ellen said a draft of the Purchase and Sales Agreement (P&S) is being reviewed by the town attorney.

Elissa asked if the town could publicize a list of the issues being negotiated in the P&S so the public can have knowledge of this.

Renee asked who drafted the P&S, and whether any members of the community were involved this drafting, as was discussed at a prior selectboard meeting.

David said MacNeil has stepped back from working on the RuralEdge (RE) project. David will take his place, and join Ellen with negotiating the P&S.

Discussion about appraisals of the town hall, done by both RuralEdge and by a commercial appraisal firm hired by the town. These appraisals are posted on the town website.

Ellen said her understanding is that when there are two different appraisal numbers, there is an independent review process that happens.

The commercial appraiser doesn't take into account all the mitigation costs.

Mary Parker: to Ellen: RE can offer less due to the mitigation. The independent appraiser said this is what the market value is with the problems. So the person who buys it has to fix the problems. Any buyer would know this, warts and all.

Eric: the price is also negotiated in the P&S agreement process.

Nancy: RE is still interested in the building?

David said they very much are.

Vince Cabbage asked about any guarantees that RuralEdge can actually complete the project, financially or otherwise. He asked if the town is still prepared to sell the building if there is no guarantee that the project can be brought to completion.

Eric said this question will be part of the P&S negotiation process.

COMMUNITY WASTEWATER

MacNeil said Hoyle Tanner, on behalf of RuralEdge, did wastewater testing in front of Town hall. They released a letter on Oct. 4 saying it's unlikely the town hall green would be a suitable site for handling wastewater.

At the same time, as part of Hoyle Tanner's interest in pursuing a community wastewater system, their engineer also identified a site on the Perron farm where such a system might be located. They did initial testing of that area and are interested in continuing to test that area.

Eric asked MacNeil to comment on his relationship with this matter, and whether he would recuse himself from decisions related to this site. MacNeil said he would obviously recuse himself if there is any movement forward with this property.

Eric: Hoyle Tanner asked Stone Environmental to look at the triangle. They did not do any drilling or extensive testing, but concluded that it was highly unlikely the site could handle the 6000 gal/day required by RuralEdge. Stone looked at land around the town hall and concluded that a site on the Perron Farm might have promise. Eric said this site was not identified prior by anyone, including selectboard members or Hoyle Tanner.

Ellen said Hoyle Tanner's role is for the town wastewater system, and any areas they identify are connected to providing a wastewater system for the village, not the town hall housing project specifically. RuralEdge will have to determine what they are going to do for a wastewater system moving forward. She said the way the community wastewater grants are written, the funding is for a community wastewater project, not for a specific housing project. In order for grant funding to continue to be available, Hoyle Tanner has to identify a specific site for a wastewater project.

Naomi said if this new site has nothing to do with the RuralEdge/Town Hall project, how is this project moving forward?

Davis asked for clarification about a recent article in The Chronicle, where it was said the project may be moved to that site. He wanted to clarify whether this was talking about the village wastewater, wastewater for the town hall project, or structures being moved to that site.

Dave said he may not have not been clear in that article, as this is all new information about an additional option.

John Mackin asked whether Hoyle Tanner is looking for a town-wide septic system, that would include the nursing home, or just a 6000 gpd site for the RuralEdge project.

Kent asked if the funds for a community wastewater system expire at the end of 2024, and also if multiple smaller projects can be built instead of one large one. Eric replied that he didn't know.

Josh commented that it was odd, that after Hoyle Tanner looked at sites all over town over the past number of years, that a promising new site appeared out of the blue.

Vince asked whether the wastewater committee is an official town committee, and said he'd like more information this committee.

Eric there is some posted information on the town website and we'll check whether there is more information to post.

ONGOING BUSINESS

1. Bend speed limit. Discussion of how to move forward, since the speed study completed by the OCSD showed that speeding wasn't a big problem on Main St. But, traffic patterns have shifted since Hardwick's bridge on E. Main St. was damaged during the July 2023 flooding. Josh will pass along to Bobbie notes he took from a call with a traffic engineer from VTrans regarding speeding on Main St.

Discussion of the dangerous intersection where Bend Rd. hits Rt. 16. Josh will ask the District 9 state guys to check this out, including a missing 40 mph sign coming from the North.

2. Glover property – encroachment issue. David checked out the property, and it appears the encroachment has been happening for a long as 40 or 50 years. He said these few acres are not valuable to the town. David asked, how can we allow them to continue to use the land but the town continue to own it?

Discussion of agreeing to a long-term easement. John Mackin said the town wouldn't have control over the land with an easement, and it would likely be easier in the long run to sell the land.

MacNeil suggested that a property line adjustment could be made for their garage, which is partially located on town property, and an easement could be drawn up for access to their spring, which currently is on the town parcel.

David: let's find out what the land is worth, I'll tell them we need to get some sense from a real estate broker. And get a sense from the road crew about future.

- 3. Signs on town property.** Bobbie said she's spent many hours with VLCT and the Secretary of State on this issue, and is leaning towards "no signs can be posted on town property". I would propose we continue with this for now, after talking with our town attorney, and revisit this issue in the spring when activity picks up. Unfortunately this would affect everyone, excepting that municipal signs could still be put out. David made the following motion:

The board adopts Bobbie's recommendation of no signs on public property. This will be revisited next spring after consultation with our town attorney.

MacN seconded the motion. Further discussion.

Gary asked for clarification on what is town property, and who will enforce this policy?

Renee suggested leaving things as the status quo, with any signs allowed.

Naomi suggested the board talk to business owners about the need for signs. She said she finds them useful. Meaghen: I would encourage you to create a public conversation about signs. Talk to local businesses. The positives and negatives.

Josh said he wasn't involved with the Save Town Hall Coalition, yet the signs didn't bother him. He asked why people feel signs like these need to be regulated.

David said he will discuss this with Kevin Kite over the winter.

The motion was not voted on.

- 4. Wilson St. Stormwater project.** Chad asked for an update. Eric said the engineering is expected to be completed in December.

GREENSBORO PLANNING COMMISSION – ZONING BYLAW PROPOSALS

- 1. Misc. Changes.** Kent said after the last meeting, the planning commission (PC) discussed the selectboard's concerns and sent a letter to the board proposing ways to move forward with approving the Misc. Changes. Kent said MacNeil's particular comment came up after the selectboard's public hearing, meaning if this was changed now, new public hearings would need to be scheduled on the Misc. Changes.

Eric made the following motion:

The board approves the Misc. Changes, with the stipulation that at the next Select Board Public Hearing dealing with Zoning Bylaws, Section 1.3D of the Bylaws be revised as discussed.

David seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

- 2. Shoreland Protection District (SPD) amendments.** Kent said the PC put together proposed revisions to the SPD. The selectboard came up with a bunch of questions, which were reviewed by the PC. Some things were changed, others were left as they were.

David asked about lake access paths. Kent said the PC eliminated the language about footpaths in the ROW, and that no permit is required for an additional footpath. Kent said he'd like a response from the selectboard: are there further issues, or can the SPD proposals move along in the process?

Eric said this is a consequential revision to the SPD, and with the new flood maps coming out next year, he'd like to see this proposal go back to the PC, add in the flood maps when they're ready, and have another round of public hearings.

Kent said perhaps the PC held on to the SPD proposal for too long, but also the selectboard had them for a time and didn't act. He said to further table this proposal is a waste of energy.

MacNeil agreed that the selectboard wasn't able to give the proposal a proper review, but that this was due in large part to more flooding this past July, and the RuralEdge/Town Hall issue. He said he's not ready to send it along, the selectboard needs more time. The selectboard asked questions of the PC, the PC provided many answers, and now the board needs to discuss these answers. He agreed with Eric, that the SPD update should be tabled until the new flood maps are available.

David said we owe it to PC to discuss the SPD proposals. Bobbie thanked the PC for all their work on these bylaw revisions. She asked how much time the board needs to review the bylaw.

David said the SPD proposals take the zoning bylaw to a new level of restrictiveness that may not be justified. He said he's gotten some input from lake residents, but more input is needed.

OTHER BUSINESS

- 1. Headwaters Community Land Trust.** Linda Ramsdell introduced a newly formed community land trust called the Headwaters Community Trust (HCT). Linda said the group is excited to try to find ways to add more housing in our area. Excited about the community land trust model, which they have been exploring for about a year. They are beginning the community engagement process. Naomi, who is involved with this new organization, said this model is geared towards affordable housing development on community owned land, and is not to be confused with preservation or conservation of land. The group is focusing on the housing needs in Albany, Craftsbury, Glover and Greensboro, as they recognize that this is an issue that affect all our towns.

Land on which the housing is build could be municipal owned land, but doesn't have to be, it's a flexible model. But, if a municipality had land that they wanted housing to be built on, they could work with the HCT to make this happen.

The community land trust ends up holding the land in trust. There are 250 CLTs around the US, 600 around the world, this is a model that has been replicated repeatedly.

The group is still getting organized and currently having their bylaws reviewed by an attorney. They are getting assistance from a number of organizations, including the Preservation Trust of VT and NVDA Naomi said the bylaws call for having community leaders on the group's board, and these could include different types of municipal leaders.

Naomi said the HCT is not set up yet but would like to begin conversations about parcels that have potential. She said the group's new website is headwatersNEK.org.

Mary asked if this is correct: the HCT will be a 501(c)(3) organization, and you're hoping people will donate money and/or land, and you'll be able to use the land for housing. Naomi said this is pretty much correct.

- 2. Caspian Arts** is asking for permission to use the grange again next summer. Isa said 30 artists from area towns have showed their work this season. She thanked the selectboard for allowing the group to use the grange as an exhibit space. It's a great addition to the attractions in Greensboro. About 300 visitors came to look. All run by volunteers. I would request that we can use it again next year, from July through September. David made the following motion:

The board approves Caspian Arts using the Grange from July through September 2025.

MacNeil seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Eric congratulated Caspian Arts on a great exhibit, and on the way they've utilized the space.

Isa said the water system in the grange is not being used, due to unknowns about the septic system.

3. Greensboro Conservation Commission - appoint new member. The conservation commission recommended Liza Keisler be appointed. Bobbie made the following motion:

The board appoints Lize Keisler to the Greensboro Conservation Commission.

MacNeil seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

4. Lakeview Union School - update. Bobbie said the Lakeview School has been in jeopardy of closing for a number of years. The school board has been meeting with the community about the school's future and have committed to keeping it open at this time. The board understands how the community feels about the building. The school is now housing preschool up through third grade. Grades four, five and six are now attending Hardwick or Woodbury elementary schools.

Erika noted that the preschool program is open to anyone in the area, regardless of what town they're from – so it is becoming a different thing than the typical town school.

The board will keep an eye on everything over the next two years and may decide to turn the building into a dedicated preschool.

Some school board members still want the town to be able to use the multipurpose room, and would like to see the town continue to be involved in the building's future.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Dave made the following motion:

The board will enter executive session at 9:30 PM to discuss personnel, with Josh, Kim and Brett present.

MacNeil seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

The board left executive session at 9:48 PM. MacNeil made the following motion:

The board approves hiring Lily McMurtrie as assistant town clerk.

Bobbie seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

David made the following motion:

The board approves proportional time off for all part-time employees, including paid holidays for days they are scheduled to work.

MacNeil seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Bobbie made the following motion:

The board will enter executive session for a legal matter at 9:50 PM.

David seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

The board left executive session at 9:55 PM and took no action.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:58 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Josh Karp, Selectboard Clerk