

Town of Danville  
Selectboard Minutes  
September 5, 2024  
Danville Town Hall (6:00 pm)

**Board Members Present:** Janice Ouellette, Glenn Herrin, Alison Low, Peter Griffin and Eric Bach (6:04)

**Others Present:** Audrey DeProspero, Keith Gadapee, Dani Cochran, Dana Gray, Rob Balivet and Greg Prior

**Public Hearing for Town Plan Readoption called to order** by Chair Janice Ouellette at 6:00 pm.

Rob Balivet discussed glancing at plan in 2012 which he thought lacked direction. Solar arrays cropped up and the plan said that we preserve the beautiful views but there were no teeth in the plan so he got involved. The plan now has action and is coordinated and is now a very good plan.

Alison Low noted it was written to receive substantial deference.

Glenn Herrin noted when plan is taken up in Selectboard meeting it can be adopted if there are no changes. A portion of the plan speaks of renewing designated Village Centers however the language is no longer needed as it was changed at state level.

*Motion by Glenn Herrin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Eric Bach to close the Public Hearing at 6:05 pm.  
Vote 5-0-0. Motion carries.*

**Meeting called to order** by Chair Janice Ouellette at 6:05 pm.

**1. Additions to the agenda:**

- Steve Larrabee – meeting room usage (Visitor)
- FEMA Team in Area (Issues & Information)

**2. Approve minutes:**

*Motion by Alison Low, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Glenn Herrin to recognize the **Regular** August 15, 2024 minutes as accurately reflecting the agenda. Vote 5-0-0. Motion carries.*

*Motion by Alison Low, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Glenn Herrin to recognize the **Special** August 14, 2024 minutes as accurately reflecting the agenda. Vote 5-0-0. Motion carries.*

*Motion by Glenn Herrin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Eric Bach to recognize the **Special** August 20, 2024 minutes as Accurately reflecting the agenda. Vote 5-0-0. Motion carries.*

**3. Visitors**

- **Roland Heath, Jr., Volunteer Fire Fighter – North Danville Fire Station** – absent

Dani Cochran noted her conversation with Roland Heath was that the forefront of the building was in need of renovation for a new truck which is part of the Capital Plan.

Eric Bach noted the building as it is will not accept a new truck or any current one. North Danville's insurance rates are high and would be higher if there was no station there because of its rural nature. He inquired if there were people working on a dimensional plan for the building.

Dani Cochran noted they could talk about it at their next meeting on Tuesday.

Janice Ouellette wondered if it would be helpful to have a Selectboard member attend their meeting.

Eric Bach volunteered to attend the Volunteer Fire Department meeting.

Alison Low wondered if there were any potential sites that had been looked at.

Dani Cochran noted no.

Lot across from North Danville Community Building discussed which is Town owned.

Glenn Herrin noted the Planning Commission looked into current building which is not historic.

- **Steve Larrabee – Meeting Room Use** – absent

**4. Town Clerk** (Michelle Leclerc) – absent; Audey DeProspero spoke on Michelle Leclerc's behalf

- Special Events Outdoor Permit for Autumn on the Green for Shelburne Vinyard LLC.

*Motion by Glenn Herrin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Alison Low to approve the Special Events Outdoor Permit for Shelburne Vinyard LLC for Autumn on the Green. Vote 4-0-1. Eric Bach abstained. Motion carries.*

- Special Events Outdoor Permit for Autumn on the Green for Eden Ice Cider Company.

*Motion by Glenn Herrin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Peter Griffin to approve the Special Events Outdoor Permit for Eden Ice Cider Company for Autumn on the Green. Vote 4-0-1. Eric Bach abstained. Motion carries*

- Special Events Outdoor Permit for Autumn on the Green for Red Barn Brewing LLC.

*Motion by Glenn Herrin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Peter Griffin to approve the Special Events Outdoor Permit for Red Barn Brewing LLC for Autumn on the Green. Vote 4-0-1. Eric Bach abstained. Motion carries*

**5. Highway Foreman** (Keith Gadapee)

- He and Michelle Leclerc registered Danville for FEMA. There are 4 sites for the July storm: Roy Road, Joes Brook Road, Water Andric and Town Wide Gravel reimbursement which requires yardages of gravel used and will require him to do more paperwork.
- If there are concerns for why the roads are not being mowed, it is because of the repair of the tractor however roadside mowing will be done soon.
- Paving Update: Parker Road and Bruce Badger are done.
- Radar Feedback Signs purchased for West Danville Village can be installed for a small fee which will come out of the Highway Department. He has spoken with a contractor doing work on Route 2 and they can install them.
- Next Meeting will have opening of proposals for ledge projects on Bruce Badger, Water Andric and 2 sites on North Danville Road. He has reached out to contractors and has applied for streams permit.
- Sewer Plant Road (ROW) Culvert - LVRT folks reached out to him because of a culvert failure which goes to the water treatment facility. LVRT will not pay because the access is off the rail trail and needs to be maintained by owner. He does not feel that the funds should come from the Highway budget so he is asking if there are any funds in the WW Treatment plant. Water goes across the road because the culvert is not working to its capacity. If sublet out the cost would be \$4-5,000 however if the Highway Department does the work, it would only be a couple thousand dollars for material.

Alison Low inquired if it could be done in house and if Highway had the time to do.

Keith Gadapee noted he is under the direction of the Selectboard and Highway could fit it in.

*Motion by Alison Low, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Glenn Herrin to approve Highway Department to do work and expend funds not to exceed \$3,000 from WW Reserve Fund to cover materials only to cover drive to WW Treatment facility. Vote 5-0-0. Motion carries.*

- New Hire/Pay Scale Adjustment – interviewed 4 candidates. Starting pay is not competitive, that is why we are not retaining persons. Recommends to alter pay scale: raise low end and not high end which will be competitive. We have not been competitive the last two times in the hiring process. Both employees moved on to other jobs in other towns who paid more at the beginning.

Pay options, adjustments, how they get there discussed.

Glenn Herrin suggested 3 options: stick with what we do, adjust scale, or look at chart which has various pay scales. This change would be for the Highway Department only. A decision would be needed for how they do reward: years of service and skill increases or do we reward equally or earlier or later (demonstrating skills).

Keith Gadapee noted how he discusses offering number and benefit package at interviews however at 20-40 years cash is the driving point but at 50+ benefits is the driving factor.

Glenn Herrin wondered if they were open to change, do they want to stick with current max high level or do they want to lower.

Peter Griffin favors breaking it off which impacts lower end quickly.

Janice Ouellette discussed broadening grades.

Keith Gadapee discussed broadening pathways.

Alison Low concerned with reverberations.

Keigh Gadapee suggested up quicker at beginning but as they age slow it down (deceleration number).

Working chart reviewed and discussed.

Keith Gadapee noted that this change means everyone on crew gets raise probably Monday.

*Motion by Glenn Herrin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Eric Bach to adopt Highway Working Chart as the Highway Pay Chart. Vote 5-0-0. Motion carries.*

- Offer 2 Positions – has 4 candidates, he seeks to offer and place them on the chart. Their offer is pending drug test and driving record.

*Consensus is that it is okay for Keith Gadapee to offer position based on Highway Working Chart.*

Greg Prior inquired about the process for how to proceed with poison parsnip, what is CC process, is there a request or what is state's approach.

Glenn Herrin noted monitoring is by Conservation Commission as they tasked this to themselves and it is noted in the Town Plan.

## 6. Issues and Information (All)

- (a) **Town Plan Readoption** – Glenn Herrin noted if approved, the plan would be effective immediately.

*Motion by Glenn Herrin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Alison Low to adopt the Town Plan as presented and discussed during Hearing. Vote 5-0-0. Motion carries.*

- (b) **Discontinuance of ROW TH35/Partridge Lane** – Janice Ouellette noted Selectboard had site visit and they were in agreement that they do not want to discontinue because the person making the request can access land and has permission to cut trees.

Keith Gadapee discussed history: given in 1935, sate map in 1950 however he has not looked in land records to see if it is referenced in deed.

Eric Bach noted it would be useful information for future.

*Motion by Glenn Herrin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Eric Bach to start the process of throwing up (discontinuance) of north end of Partridge Lane. Vote 0-5-0. Motion failed. Motion does not carry.*

- (c) **Veterans Exemption List from Listers** – Janice Ouellette read Listers' letter: The Listers have been advised of an error in the Danville Veterans Exemptions List made by the State of Vermont. A Danville property owner was inadvertently not included on the list. The error will change the Town Grand List that was lodged with the Town Clerk on August 5, 2024. Selectboard approval is needed to correct this error. Parcel ID#TH039-003.001 Ryan and Melissa Trahan. The \$10,000 Veterans Exemption reduces the Trahan's Taxable Grand List Value \$100.00. (\$4,349.00 to \$4,249.00).

*Motion by Alison Low, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Glenn Herrin to approve the correction for the error for Parcel ID# TH039-003.001 (Ryan and Melissa Trahan owners) on the Grand List. Vote 5-0-0. Motion carries.*

- (d) **Marty's 1<sup>st</sup> Stop Capacity to Serve Letter for State WW Permit** – information from H20 indicates available capacity.

*Consensus is for Audrey DeProspero to send email to Tyler Mumley that capacity is available.*

- (e) **Support for Newly Appointed Fire Chief** – Janice Ouellette noted that at the last Selectboard meeting the Selectboard voted to accept the unanimous nomination by the Fire Department to appoint Dani Cochran as the new Fire Chief. The Selectboard received emails expressing concern prior to their meeting which were reviewed and addressed by Eric Bach, liaison to FD who did his due diligence on the concerns which were found not to rise to a level for concern. Selectboard issued a statement published in the Caledonian Record which is below:

Danville Selectboard Statement on Fire Chief Appointment

On April 29, 2024, the Selectboard received a letter from Johnathan Austin-Short officially notifying us of his resignation effective April 1, 2024. The letter stated that Roland Heath, Assistant Fire Chief and long-time member of the department would handle operational affairs until they elected a new Chief. Prior to the fire department's April business meeting, Selectboard officials met with Assistant Chief Heath and past long-term chief Troy Cochran to discuss planning for the department's future leadership. Troy Cochran was willing to take the role of Chief temporarily, with the caveat that Dani Cochran be his Administrative Assistant and take the lead in the administrative role of the Chief. Both Heath and Cochran agreed Dani Cochran would be a good candidate for Chief but needed to be brought up to speed with some of the specific details of the role and expressed their willingness to support her in the training process. Tactical or ICS command was discussed as an area where Dani would need support as she was not a senior member of the department, however, both Cochran and Heath agreed internal and external supports were in place to support this aspect of the learning process as is customary for anyone who enters the role. Since this discussion, Dani Cochran has been the point person for all administrative functions for the Danville Fire Department and has worked closely with the Selectboard.

On July 31, Danville Fire Chief Troy Cochran announced that he would resign as chief and retire from the volunteer department as of August 14. Two weeks later, on August 13, at the weekly Fire Department meeting/training the attending members voted unanimously to nominate the executive officer, Dani Cochran, as the new Chief.

On August 14th, after the Fire Department's unanimous vote to recommend Dani Cochran to be appointed Fire Chief, a letter of concern was received from a member of the Danville Fire Department. Within 24 hours, an additional letter of concern was received from a firefighter in Barnet. Both letters were reviewed to assess whether concerns rose to the level of not accepting the Fire Department's recommendation for Chief. In addition, board officials reached out to Peacham and Walden Fire Chiefs to discuss the matter. Both Peacham and Walden Fire Departments work closely with Danville and are mutual aid partners on many of the major responses for Danville Fire Department. Both Peacham and Walden's Chiefs, and Danville's Assistant Chief Heath were committed to supporting Dani Cochran as she continued to gain more incident command experience. All three cited their own support systems as they started in their leadership roles and became senior members of their departments.

On August 15, at the regularly scheduled and warned Selectboard meeting, the Danville Selectboard accepted the recommendation of the department and appointed Dani as the new Fire Chief. Following the meeting's adjournment, an additional letter was received citing similar concerns; concerns already reviewed before the board's decision to appoint Dani Cochran as Chief.

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the United States established a National Incident Management System (NIMS), which Vermont adopted in 2012 and Danville in turn adopted in 2015. The Incident Command System (ICS) is the NIMS standardized approach to emergency management, that calls for a flexible, modular organization when responding to incidents of all types, including fires large and small. One of the five key functional areas of ICS is Command, with two underlying rules: command transfers to more qualified leaders for more complex incidents and there is no correlation between the administrative structure of responding agencies and the response organization for an incident. In Vermont, fires frequently involve responders from several different agencies. In other words – the local Fire Chief is not necessarily the person in charge at a fire scene.

A Fire Chief manages the day-to-day work of the fire department – it is a "peacetime" or "blue-sky" role. The Chief of the Danville Fire Department needs three qualifications - he or she must:

- be able to manage the administrative work for the buildings, equipment, training, and personnel
- have the support of volunteers in the department
- be willing to do the job.

Across Vermont, many fire chiefs also have 20,30,40 years or more of firefighting training and experience, but some of them got that experience by becoming a chief at a relatively young age. Senior firefighters are often very happy to fight fires but are not interested in running a department. A volunteer fire company is a group of the willing, not an up-or-out hierarchy. Being a great firefighter doesn't necessarily make someone a good fire chief, and vice versa.

Dani Cochran is fully qualified to be chief. As the executive officer, she was already performing the administrative duties that the previous Chief delegated to her. Knowing that Troy Cochran was retiring, the Fire Department members showed their support by nominating her to be their new Chief; Dani stepped up and volunteered to do the job. The Danville Selectboard has every confidence in Dani Cochran as the town's Fire Chief.

Glenn Herrin noted he came to the last meeting prepared to defend the Chief choice however there was no one in attendance to speak against the appointment.

Peter Griffin noted no one came to the meeting when the Chief was appointed and he finds this discussion to be counterproductive. They made a decision and if persons wanted to discuss with the Selectboard they should have attended.

- (f) **Draft Capital Plan** – Glenn Herrin noted the actual numbers are not accurate, he took the big-ticket items, listed them, added cost, and how long it should take. This is a tool and not binding. It will be helpful during budget season. It lists what is coming up for the next five years.

Sheet detail discussed.

Will work with persons who have numbers and put information on sheet and by November we will have information for budget process. The plan will be updated yearly.

*Consensus is favorable for Draft Capital Plan.*

Alison Low discussed Chapter 117 Capital Budget Plan noting it is not binding but they should formally adopt.

Glenn Herrin noted it was not a formal document but would look into Chapter 117.

- (g) **Selectboard Representative for Train Station Non-Profit Organization** – Janice Ouellette noted Michael Hogue was looking for Selectboard member to be on their board.

Alison Low suggested they get a description, responsibility list and mission statement.

Eric Bach noted the person would be a non-voting member as Selectboard could not be a voting member on another group.

Alison Low discussed long term lease on station would be conflicting.

Janice Ouellette to reach out to Michael Hogue for more details.

- (h) **Procurement Policy** – Janice Ouellette discussed draft noting she was not looking for it to be adopted tonight. There is a consult call next Wednesday and the draft would be sent to them. She wondered if anyone had concerns, questions or modifications.

Alison Low noted federal programs are not the only programs that have procurement requirements. She spoke of a blanket statement.

Janice Ouellette noted she reached out to VLCT for feedback.

Keith Gadapee spoke of advertisement and reaching out publicly as FEMA wants that done but he did not see it in the policy.

Janice Ouellette to review policy.

- (i) **Access Mobility Preventative Maintenance Contract** – Audrey DeProspero discussed follow up to last meeting's questions: Cat5 was last done on 6/3/21. Cost would be \$905 (\$585 for Cat5, \$195 Labor, and \$125 Labor Assistant). This would be due in 2026 so it could be added to the budget process.

*Motion by Alison Low, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Peter Griffin to authorize Janice Ouellette Chair to sign Access Mobility agreement. Vote 5-0-0. Motion carries.*

- (j) **MERP Update** – Janice Ouellette noted only towns with higher or highest would be eligible to apply. Danville was only a moderate town so it takes Danville out of the running. Grants will be looked into to see if there are others for qualifications.
- (k) **Dog Park (2 Design Scenarios)** – Alison Low discussed site visit, access to site and finding an alternate access. She discussed gates, linear area and wood chips. Once the formal site plan is done it will be brought back to Selectboard to review scenarios.
- (l) **Major Town Structure Procedure** – Eric Bach reached out to Diane Langmaid and Patty Conley. This procedure was brought upon because of the fence removed from the Pope Cemetery. The document created would be very simple and its intent would be used before Selectboard make changes to building or structures. If the item has any concern, it would be brought to Historical Society to help determine if there is historical value, sentimental value or if it is just old. It would help to prevent uneducated removal of Town property.
- (m) **FEMA** – Glenn Herrin noted a Disaster Survivor Teams will contact people who have contacted 211 or FEMA directly. They will be present in Town. Anyone from FEMA will carry IDs.

**7. Financials: Orders to review and sign**

Chair Janice Ouellette to review and sign the Financial Orders on behalf of the Selectboard.

**8. Adjourn – Motion by Alison Low to adjourn at 8:10 pm.**

Minutes taken by Audrey DeProspero submitted September 6, 2024 at 11:45 am.