

TOWN OF ELMORE, VT

Meeting of the Select Board

Meeting Minutes – prepared by C. DeVore
Status: APPROVED

Meeting Date: February 7, 2017

Start Time: 5:34 pm **Adjourn:** 8:44 pm

Meeting Attendees: Robert Burley – ESB Chairman, Caroline DeVore – ESB, Robb Wills – ESB, Mike Smith – Resident, Debra Bruner – Resident, Glenn Schwartz - Resident

Meeting called to order at 5:34pm. Note: standard SB meeting SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) that limit the time spent per topic were suspended for this meeting. In an effort to allow for full transparency and to allow for all questions to be raised, no limits on number of questions or length of discussion were placed on any party.

A. SPECIAL TOPICS:

1. **DISCUSSION:** VT Open Meeting Law with regard to SB training and specific to the budget training and warning review session held on January 17, 2018. Action: Relay information received from VLCT on 2/1/18 regarding warning of training sessions and preparation for annual Town Meeting. Discuss complaint(s) of unwarned SB meeting.

Notes: C. DeVore began with a review of the VT Open Meeting Law and her discussion of same with a staff lawyer at VLCT. Learning that the session on 1/17/18 was an inadvertent meeting violation, the board is taking steps to immediately cure the violation.

VLCT outlined steps that could be taken including calling a Special Meeting to address the inadvertent violation and actions to ensure such errors would not reoccur.

Steps taken to cure:

- 1) SB Special Meeting: This Special Meeting on 2/7/18 to discuss the inadvertent violation and answer questions on same. The purpose of this Special Meeting is to make the error commonly known and provide full transparency.
- 2) Minutes: Minutes have been captured to fully disclose topics covered on 1/17/18 (draft provided). Minutes ensure transparency of the topics discussed.
- 3) Training: VLCT has been contacted to arrange for training of SB members and other town board members. The training would ensure no similar errors would be made by this team.

Note: VLCT referred to a VT Open Meeting Law [FAQ](#) to help answer questions about the VT Open Meeting Law.

Draft minutes were given to SB members for review and approval. Once approved those minutes will be included with minutes from the 2/7/18 meeting and posted to the town website. VT Open Meeting Law training session information was shared with the board. Two training opportunities were noted. (1) Select Board institute (See item #A.2.) and (2) Onsite training. An email from VLCT was shared outlining the opportunity to have an on-site training session that all town board members could attend. An on-site meeting would cost \$415.

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Discussion: B. Burley recommended an ROI analysis prior to the scheduling of on-site training. C. DeVore took the action to research and confirm sufficient attendance.

Action: C DeVore to reach out to all town boards to assess whether 7 attendees can be confirmed. C DeVore to coordinate the onsite training and in lieu of the on-site meeting, attend the SB Institute in Montpelier on March 24, 2018 (see item #A.2).

Discussion: M. Smith: Questioned why board members at the 1/17/18 meeting pursued training from the Town Clerk vs. B. Burley.

Mr. Smith expressed concern that there was additional training needed by board members on the town budget and that B. Burley was not the first line of training. Note: any future training will need to be warned.

Discussion: Meeting attendees discussed the background of the outreach to local experts and to the Clerk. A lengthy discussion on this topic continued for ~45 minutes with coverage of each party's recollection and understanding of events leading to the scheduling of the training session. Board members acknowledged that the training session should have been warned and that there was an inadvertent error. They outlined all steps being taken to gain a better understanding of town policies and procedures, including expert consultation. All steps outlined in the actions to cure are underway and will be completed by March 25, 2018 (if training session on 3/24 is needed to replace onsite training as noted).

Discussion: Work/project accounting. Mr. Smith asked about project distribution among the board members and the processes to assign and manage work.

Discussion: The Board noted that an action item list is maintained with a notation of primary owners. A lengthy discussion about project responsibilities, skills and knowledge of each action was had by all attendees. The board acknowledged that B. Burley manages the majority of actions representing the majority (over 70%) of ongoing and day-to-day administrative tasks.

Discussion: Mr. Smith expressed concern that B. Burley's absence from the board would create too much work for any single individual to pickup unless remaining board members could do more work to fill the void and achieve a better overall distribution of the workload. Board members agreed that B. Burley is irreplaceable.

Meeting attendees discussed ways to potentially close workload gaps in time and knowledge to reduce shortfalls. A lengthy discussion included various ideas to explore pros and cons for the town (e.g., expanding board to more members, hiring specific skills, contracting for specific expertise, reducing the SB's involvement in non-essential projects, support of key advisors, etc.). No specific decisions were taken on this topic but the agenda calls for transition of key tasks and review of actions.

Discussion: Mr. Schwartz suggested that a town resource in an advisory role could bridge resource gaps and asked B. Burley if he'd consider staying on in an advisory role. A discussion pursued. Mr. Schwartz and Mr. Smith expressed interest in supporting for

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running for a seat on the board. Each stated their concerns for and against participating with the board.

Mr. Smith reiterated his concern about B. Burley's departure and about the remaining board member's decision-making, knowledge, and skills. R. Wills noted the board would have three members and those three would have to explore ways to get the work of the town done and that would be a topic of conversation at each board meeting as projects are evaluated / taken on and the board worked to identify paths to address.

B. Burley noted that his decision to not seek re-election was multifaceted. Breakdowns in meeting protocol and stylistic differences were discussed. A lengthy discussion detailed both decision-making processes on the board, how the board managed differences of opinion and where communication improvement would be beneficial. A specific lengthy discussion on protocol, recollections of meeting exchanges and board member roles completed this section of the meeting. Mr. Smith again expressed his concern about the remaining board members, the decision-making processes and how the work of the town would be completed without B. Burley.

2. **UPDATE:** [SelectBoard Institute Training](#). Date: Saturday, March 24, 2018, 8am-4pm. Course signup recommended for all town board members.

A brief review of the meeting time and date was discussed. If there is not enough interest in an on-site meeting, this meeting will be attended by the SB members as a cure for the inadvertent meeting violation.

3. **UPDATE:** Budget review. In preparation for the Town Meeting. B. Burley reviewed the questions from the draft minutes of the 1/17/18 inadvertent meeting and answered them.
4. **ACTION:** Review of SB action item list. Objective: Ensure the smooth transition of any program or ongoing activity where the DRI may change given the notification that SB Chairman will not seek re-election.

The board discussed all open and continuing action items.

5. **ACTION:** Review SB Chairman's compilation of items including: list of the recurring and intermittent administrative, operational, financial, issues and functions as well as the local, regional and state representation that are critical to smooth board operation through membership transition either current or future.

B. Burley provided copies of SOPs and reviewed all documents on administrative and operational issues.

6. **DISCUSSION:** Discuss SB role in making public aware of open board position and soliciting interested parties to learn more.

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The board will take no additional action.

B. CONTINUING ITEMS:

1. **DISCUSSION:** Begin to identify likely Town Meeting “hot topics” for ESB preparation. Continuing item from December SB meeting.

No discussion.

2. **UPDATE:** DRB staffing update. Including appointment and on-boarding of new board members. DRB nomination of Jay Kennedy to their board needs to be approved by the SB.

Mr. Kennedy confirmed to the DRB.

Meeting Adjourned.