

# Regular Meeting of the Dorset Select Board

## December 13, 2011 ~ Minutes

Present: Chris Brooks (Chairman), Marge Freed, Mike Connors, Michael Oltedal, Brad Tyler

Absent:

Also, present: R. Gaiotti (Town Manager), Ben Mithoefer, Theo Talcott, Melinda Humphrey (CVPS), David Parsons, Elizabeth P. Karet, Wendy Parsons, Amy V. Palmer, Terry Tyler, Robin Langstaff-French, Richard French, Jennifer Langstaff-French, Sarah Crepeau, Martine Victor, Richard Kahm, Justine Cook, Jim Salsgiver (Dorset Energy Commission), Brian Keefe (CVPS)

C. Brooks, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

### **Approve Minutes of November 15, 2011**

Under Finance Report on page 3, the amount listed as \$5,000 remaining in the recreation fund should read as \$35,000. M. Freed moved and M. Connors seconded to approve the November 15, 2011 minutes as amended. Motion carried 4-0 (B. Tyler abstained).

### **Smart Meter Discussion**

R. Gaiotti introduced the topic of smart meters by noting that B. Keefe and M. Humphrey from CVPS were present to talk about these devices. C. Brooks stated that they have received a number of emails about smart meters which should be incorporated into the minutes.

B. Keefe handed out three papers ~ a story from the Burlington Press regarding research for improving the nation's electrical grid; a paper showing the benefits of smart meters and a paper about radio frequencies and smart meters. B. Keefe outlined the benefits with smart meters:

- Reduced costs through reduced meter readers, trucks, gas and oil usage, cost of operations and more efficient meter reading
- Storm monitoring which now relies on customer call in or crews looking at lines
- Knowledge of customer usage allowing the consumer to react to rate levels by shifting loads to lower rate times to save money
- Delivering power over electric lines will be cost competitive with other fuels sources.

Smart meters have been approved by the Public Service Board. B. Keefe noted that different technologies were looked at, but radio frequency was the chosen method. Transmission of data to Rutland would be once every two hours for approximately two seconds. The

meters/transmissions will be operated under FCC guidelines and send out a low frequency signal which would be a small contributor to the pool of radio frequencies already out there.

M. Oltedal asked if CVPS would work along with customers if interference issues arise with devices such as wireless connections, garage door openers, phones, baby monitors, alarm systems, etc. B. Keefe responded that they would certainly work along with people and explained the different frequency rates. Discussion on rates and charges to customers included Rate 11 versus standard rates and having options for load shifting with smart meters as customers would be more informed about usage. C. Brooks noted that with the information collected, it would be known if someone was home or not creating a security issue. B. Keefe replied that CVPS was very interested in security at all levels and they were hiring a new cyber administrator. C. Brooks asked if it was easier to hack into a wireless meter versus a wired meter and M. Oltedal noted it was easier to hack a wireless connection, but thought that National Grid and CVPS would have to employ a good security system.

J. Cook asked if the standard rate was the most expensive option offered and if people would be penalized if they do not adjust their electric usage behavior to rate options. B. Keefe answered that Rate 11 was the most expensive rate and M. Humphrey noted that time of use rates give the customer an opportunity to save money by using electric at certain times of the day. J. Cook questioned if any study has been done for the total amount of radio frequency from all devices (including the smart meter) and the effect on the body. B. Keefe noted that he believed that the smart meter would be a very small addition to all the other devices (cell phones, TV's, computers, Wi-Fi, etc.) and he did not know of any study. M. Victor stated that there were devices available already to monitor electric usage so this was not a good selling point for smart meters. M. Victor read a news story by R. Tell and noted that smart meters constantly send out signals as they are a mesh network. She felt that choosing to use a cell phone was one thing, but covering the environment with RF frequency was not benign and was concerned about health issues. M. Victor suggested that observing the use and outcome of smart meters in other parts of the country should be done first before making this huge investment as privacy and health are of concern. C. Brooks asked if the Public Service Board has addressed smart meters and if they can affect CVPS's ability to install them. B. Keefe replied yes, on Docket 7307 covering security, privacy and radio frequency and if they find an issue, they can stop the installations. R. Langstaff-French stated that Docket 7307 did not address radio frequency and their response was that they would do a study at the same time as deployment of the smart meters. B. Keefe commented that health issues were not considered at the workshop, but will be at the Docket and the Vermont Department of Health is also looking at this issue.

B. Mithoefer stated that their group had a meeting last night and there are individuals who will speak about the different issues of privacy, cost, health safety, and cyber security. M. Victor expressed concern about the radiation emissions and latency periods as the smart meters give off pulse radiation which is synonymous with brain function. This can be especially bad for children and she felt it was gross negligence to add another layer of emissions with smart meters until

more studies have been conducted. T. Talcott talked about security as wireless transmissions are easy to hack which creates privacy and security issues. He also felt that CVPS should let people know what they will do with the information they collect and store over the years. S. Crepeau compared wireless transmission to a shotgun which scatters everywhere and wired transmission to a rifle which is one shot. She mentioned that there will be an opt-out provision costing \$10 per month extra which is an unfair charge and that schools, medical centers and day cares will not be able to opt out. C. Brooks asked the audience how many have voiced their concerns to the Public Service Board as they are the agency which has the power to oversee CVPS and any decision made by the Select Board would not be binding. R. Dahm commented that the Public Service Board has said that if all the Towns speak up, they would have to listen. M. Oltedal asked if it wasn't too late to change to wired meters as the vendors and contracts are already in place. B. Keefe responded that they have been fully approved and are moving ahead. He also clarified that Docket 7307 did not address health concerns, but the Department of Health have looked at it. Smart meters have to do with the benefits customers can take advantage of and two meters will not sent information at the same time which makes it less intrusive. B. Keefe did not believe that CVPS was being negligent. T. Tyler state that the Select Board meeting was not the forum to address these issues as the Select Board could not change anything. C. Brooks noted that this was an informational discussion only and felt that the information has now been given to the public and concerns expressed. T. Talcott asked if a petition could be created so that the Town could vote to opt out or be last on the roll out list. C. Brooks responded that this could be done by a Dorset citizen.

### **Dorset Energy Commission**

The Vermont Energy Act of 2009 has been refined and improved in 2011 and a new program called PACE has been created to be an attractive source for homeowner financing to institute energy efficiency. The original PACE program created questions and issues which have largely been resolved now. J. Salsgiver noted that if Dorset creates a PACE district, the Town will bear no cost or risk. Energy improvements, such as weatherization, can be a good payback for people, but they may not be able to afford the improvements.

Efficiency Vermont will contract with Towns to handle all documentation and financing of loans to homeowners who meet their criteria and then inform the Town of the amount of money to be added to the property tax bill for payment of the loan. If the loan is not repaid, the Town will not be responsible as reserve funds have been put in place. M. Freed asked if the municipality advanced the funds and J. Salsgiver replied no, that Efficiency Vermont arranges the funding and the Town signs onto an inter-municipal loan which is drawn on Dorset. M. Freed asked if the Town was "signing on the dotted line" for the funds and J. Salsgiver answered that the Town borrows the funds to lend to the resident, but if the resident does not pay the loan back, the Town is not responsible to pay it. Efficiency Vermont would send the funds to the Town and the Town would pay the contractor. B. Tyler asked why the Town has to be involved. J. Salsgiver replied that the loan is paid back through a property tax surcharge which creates a safe loan, there is a lien on the house, gives longer terms for payback, and the loan stays with the house if sold. B.

Tyler asked who enforces whether the loan is paid off or passed on and J. Salsgiver noted that the purchaser would be informed at time of sale. If the house goes to foreclosure, the bank becomes responsible for the loan. M. Oltedal questioned what happens if the efficiency savings are not realized as promised – is the homeowner obligated to pay the loan. J. Salsgiver responded yes, as Efficiency Vermont has to sign off on the project and the Town can set higher standards if they want. M. Oltedal wanted to know if there was any recourse if the efficiency savings are not realized.

M. Freed noted that tax administration was a big part of the Town budget and wanted to know what additional costs would be involved in instituting this program. J. Salsgiver noted that the costs are unknown as the program will not start until 2012 and a PACE district would have to be setup first before any loans could be given. Once the district is setup, the Town can create the parameters they want in place. J. Salsgiver asked if the Select Board would place the necessary language on the ballot for a vote and noted that they had met with the PC who had a positive reaction to the program. D. Pinsonault remarked that the PC had concerns and questions since this would be an additional burden for the taxpayers, but the program sounded interesting and was a benefit for affordability to the homeowner. J. Salsgiver explained that the program would really have to be structured and it would be an opportunity to give advice and direction for energy efficiency. C. Brooks asked who would do this ~ the Planning Commission or the Energy Commission and J. Salsgiver replied that that could be worked out. D. Pinsonault noted that if people can save money and become energy efficient; he didn't see the negative side of it. J. Salsgiver pointed out that out of 40 free home energy audits, only one household followed through as the others could not afford the updates. This program allows the homeowner to tie into property tax for a longer loan payback time with lower risk. J. Salsgiver felt that it would be beneficial to move forward to create the district since the Town would not be obligated to make the loans and would have control over how to put it together. M. Oltedal asked about certification of contractors to be used and J. Salsgiver responded that they would have to be BPI certified. T. Tyler asked how Efficiency Vermont was financed and J. Salsgiver answered through an electric bill fee and that they would be looking to be self-financing. A \$200 application fee would be required upfront and interest would be added to create break-even financing. J. Salsgiver noted that the PC requested that informational meetings be held and the Energy Commission is trying to schedule speakers and get the BCRC involved. R. Gaiotti asked if the SB would review an informational letter for approval. M. Freed asked if the information would be on the Town web site, as she felt that if it was listed on the web site, it would look like an automatic approval by the Board. C. Brooks stated that the Energy Commission could move forward with the letter, but only place a link on the Town website for information. J. Salsgiver commented that they believe in the program and it was smart to do weatherization. M. Freed asked for a list of Towns that have already created a district for PACE.

### **FY2013 Municipal Budget Workshop**

R. Gaiotti explained that there were not many changes from the last version of the budget and the biggest change was the lower costs in health insurance. The following are some of the other

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cc: Listers, Planning, Zoning, Select Board, Town Clerk, Town Clerk, Foreman, and School Board  
Copy Posted: Town Clerk's Office, S-Board Mtg Room, East Dorset & Dorset Post Office

changes:

- Approximately \$1,500 added for a defibrillator for the Town office
- Confirmation of BCA budget numbers
- Increase for Listers' tax mapping (\$1,050)
- Town office maintenance increased by \$1,000
- Public Safety has been increased for flexibility in State Trooper scheduling and traffic calming device. Discussion ensued regarding a portable device versus a permanent unit. C. Brooks asked what happened to the unit the Town helped the Sheriff's Department purchase. R. Gaiotti noted that the main goal was to slow down traffic in high pedestrian areas. M. Freed noted that the signs would only face one way.
- The equipment fund was increased by \$5,000
- The fuel and chloride line items have been increased. C. Brooks asked why chloride was increased and R. Gaiotti explained that the increase would allow an extra full delivery of chloride which is ordered in 4,500 gallon increments.

Discussion followed about increases in the Highway and Roads Maintenance section with R. Gaiotti noting that the overall budget was increased by approximately 1.5%. J. Salsgiver suggested fixed price purchases as it makes it easier from a budgeting perspective. C. Brooks asked R. Gaiotti to check into the VLCT fee and see why it was up 30% in this economic climate.

R. Gaiotti reported that the 2009-2010 budget increased by 1.2%; the 2010-2011 budget increased by 1.8% and the proposed 2011-2012 budget increase should be approximately 1.5%. This increase still makes Dorset one of the top ten lowest tax rates in Vermont.

M. Freed moved and M. Oltedal seconded to move to Executive Session at 9:20 p.m. to discuss personnel and contracts.

J. O'Neill expressed concern over the robberies in Dorset and asked what could be done. R. Gaiotti replied that State Trooper patrols were being increased and M. Freed mentioned having a neighborhood watch meeting.

Motion carried 5-0.

Executive Session ended at 10:20 p.m. C. Brooks announced the following decisions were made in Executive Session:

1. The Town Manager was to receive a 3% increase in salary for this budget year
2. The Town Clerk will not receive an increase in salary, but dental insurance will be provided for this budget year.
3. The line item for the traffic control devices will not be included in this budget.

### **Finance Report**

- Payments have been made for some of the delinquent taxes and the bank auction for a Town property has been cancelled due to bankruptcy restructuring.
- The Emerald Lake State Park bill was \$7,198 for recreation showing that attendance has almost doubled since last year (3,599 visits).
- One of the Town trucks has mechanical issues with an estimated repair cost of \$5,000. The truck is still usable as is. More research into the problem will be done.
- Salt, gravel and salt solution have been delivered and grant money will be used to do some culvert work on Danby Mountain Road.

### **Manager's Report**

R. Gaiotti reported that the Mad Tom Road retaining wall is completed and the crew continues to work on culvert cleaning, vehicle maintenance, and storm cleanup (12/8). A meeting to discuss safety with the Road Crew was held. The Manager's report included information on the PACE program.

### **Approve Payroll and Accounts Payable for the Week of 12/13/11**

It was the consensus of the SB to approve the Payroll and Accounts Payable for the week of 12/13/11 as presented. (M. Oltedal abstained)

### **Other Business**

1. K. Sherras has requested permission to organize a 5K run to be held in Dorset on April 21, 2012 in order to raise funds for the Dorset School. Traffic control and insurance will be provided. C. Brooks asked that R. Gaiotti contact the residents along the route for feedback. This item is to be discussed at the next Select Board meeting.
2. C. Brooks asked why there was a bill for the Town Clerk conference as he thought these bills were paid by the association. R. Gaiotti stated that the bill was for classes at the conference which were not paid by the association.
3. A letter was received from UCS regarding a bike race to be held in Spring 2012 to fundraise for UCS.
4. The initial paperwork for the Pinnacle Lane conveyance has been updated.
5. The Dorset Prudential Committee had a water leak which was not repair for one week as they had trouble finding a vendor to fix it. They have requested that the Town repair any future leaks and the Committee would then pay the Town back for the repair costs incurred. M. Connors asked if the Town had the proper equipment to fix water leaks. R. Gaiotti noted that they should be asked to notify the Town of any repair situations so that it can be discussed. C. Brooks asked that J. Hewes be consulted about what tools would be necessary to take care of this type of repair. M. Connors noted that the water system was very old and needed a lot of updates.
6. M. Freed asked that an updated copy of the budget be emailed to the Board members.

M. Connors moved and B. Tyler seconded to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 p.m. Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Aversano

Town of Dorset ~ Planning Commission

Date 12/13/11  
 Regular Meeting X  
 Special Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

(Please Print)

Name	Address	Representing	Testifying (Yes or No)
Ben Mithoefer	Box 646 Dorset, VT 05251	No Smart Meters	Y
Theo Talcott	70 Box 1022 Manchester VT 05254	stopmeters.org	Y
Melinda Humphrey	3 IRVING HTS, RUTLAND VT 05701	CVPS	Y
DAVID PARSONS	2734 MAD TOM RD	ON THE GRID	NO
Elizabeth P. Kurek	2700 Mad Tom Rd, Dorset	Interested citizen	No
wendy Parsons	2734 Macd Tom Rd Dorset	Interest in GRID	
Amy V Palmer	Po Box 136 Manchester, VT	stopmeters.org!	no
TERRY TYLER	1529 WEST RD.	INFORMATION	?
ROBIN LANGSTAFF-FRENCH	375 Lane Rd	stopmeters.org	
EVHARD FRENCH	375 Lane Rd	stopmeters.org	
Jenni for Langstaff-French	P.O. Box 332 Dorset VT 05251	Stopmeters.org	no
Sarah Crepeau	330 Church St. Dorset	Stopmeters	yes
Martine Victor	PO Box 1267 <sup>Manchester</sup> CTN, VT	Stopmeters	yes
Richard DATHM	3336 Sandgate Rd <sup>Sandgate VT</sup> 05250	SMETERS	yes
Justine Cook	PO Box 536, Dorset, VT	Dorset resident	yes
JIM SALSBERG	293 NICHOLS HILL DORSET	DORSET ENERGY COMM	YES