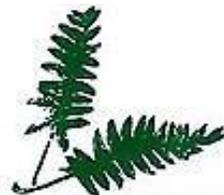


# Town of Dorset, Vermont



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East Dorset, VT 05253

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*Chartered 1761*  
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## Regular Meeting of the Dorset Select Board November 28, 2017

Present: Henry Chandler (Chairman), Megan Thorn, Jack Stannard,  
Tom Smith, Liz Ruffa, R. Gaiotti (Town Manager)

Absent:

Also, present: Austin Chinn, D. Green, Margot Schoffstall (Assessor), Theda  
Farrell (Assessor), Jean Kingston, Ken Gilbert, Bo Thorn,  
Linda Joy Sullivan, Allan Sullivan, Melissa Zecher, Marilyn  
Kinney

H. Chandler, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

### **Approve Minutes of October 17, 2017**

T. Smith moved and M. Thorn seconded to approve the October 17, 2017 minutes  
as presented. Motion carried 4-0.

### **Public Comment**

A. Chinn expressed his disappointment that the SB members backed away from  
approving the noise ordinance last month. He felt that the Board had a lack of  
faith for the reasonableness of the Dorset people. D. Green asked if the Board  
would review the new information they learned from the last meeting and caused  
them to change their minds. H. Chandler responded that there will be discussion  
of options under Agenda item #5.

### **Assessor Update/Reappraisal Draft Plan**

T. Farrell and M. Schoffstall of the Assessor's office were present. T. Smith  
requested that all documents presented be dated in order to track any  
progression of the issue presented. R. Gaiotti noted that the Town has not had  
a full reappraisal since 2003 (house to house) and that a statistical reappraisal  
was done in 2006. The COD based on the 2016 grand list is 17.55 and the State  
will mandate a reappraisal at a COD of 20 or above. A large portion of property  
in Town is either under or over assessed.

T. Farrell stated that the Town is in desperate need of a reappraisal to be fair  
and equitable to everyone. Neighboring houses can differ in assessment by as  
much as \$300,000 due to sale prices and grievances. R. Gaiotti commented that

the State has a different process of reappraisal when it mandates a Town to comply and usually an outside firm would be hired and the Town put on a waiting list. Money has been set aside each budget year for reappraisal expenses. T. Farrell said that the data is obsolete and it is best to do a reappraisal as quick as possible so the data is relevant, but also doing it with a high quality of data collection. Discussion was had about the assessing software to be used and the number of assessors needed to accomplish the job.

J. Stannard moved and M. Thorn seconded to approve proceeding with an in-house reappraisal as outlined by the *Proposal for Reappraisal* document dated 11/28/2017 presented by M. Schoffstall and T. Farrell.

In response to questions:

- it will take approximately one to two years to complete the reappraisal;
- the State will have to approve the completed reappraisal;
- care will be taken so that there will be no conflict of interest for data collectors
- T. Smith requested that the Assessor's Department update the Select Board every 90 days.

Motion carried 4-0.

### **Town Offices ADA Study Update**

A code review of the Dorset Town office building has been completed to try to improve ADA standards, functionality and efficiency. R. Gaiotti explained the basic concepts of the plans mentioning that the idea is to turn the lower, front level of the building into conference room space, add two offices upstairs, widen doorways, add ADA & safety features and install a lift. H. Chandler and T. Smith asked to see lift option specifications. R. Gaiotti noted that this was a start for a discussion for what could be possible to improve office functionality. Improvements would be considered a long-term asset and financed over a number of years. H. Chandler asked the Board members to review the information in order to discuss at the next meeting.

### **Event Permit/Noise Discussion (continued)**

H. Chandler explained that at the last SB meeting the noise ordinance was tabled.

J. Stannard moved to adopt the noise ordinance that was presented at the October 16, 2017 SB meeting. Motion was not carried due to lack of a second.

M. Thorn reviewed Manchester Village Special Event, Itinerant Vendors and Temporary Sales ordinance focusing on the special events section. J. Stannard was adamant that special events were a separate issue from having a noise ordinance and called for the Board pass a noise ordinance.

R. Gaiotti noted that Mr. Scott, Administrative Officer of Manchester Village, had commented in his email that not many applications have been received and there have not been any formal enforcement. T. Smith said that he wanted to be careful that there were not any unforeseen consequences if the Board enacts something similar to an event permit. L. Ruffa expressed that doing a permit process immediately may not be the perfect solution and wanted to be able to research a number of better, long-term options and solutions.

M. Thorn talked to the Town Attorney yesterday regarding the event permit option asking two questions: would the ordinance hold up with restrictions and noise limitations and could the ordinance be directed more specifically at commercial uses rather than individuals. Mr. Barlow thought both could be accomplished. H. Chandler asked if this was a Select Board issue rather than a Planning Commission issue and M. Thorn responded yes, it could be a free-standing ordinance done by the SB. J. Stannard, calling point of order, stated that any questions and/or answers being given by the Town Attorney should be in writing and that M. Thorn was not authorized by the SB members to act on their behalf. M. Thorn responded that the conversation was informal to ask if this was a direction (event permits) the Board could use. She was not acting as a lawyer or giving an "official" opinion. J. Stannard felt there should be one lay-person who communicates with the lawyer. H. Chandler asked the other Board members for their opinion and the consensus was that they did not have a problem with M. Thorn communicating with the Town Attorney. T. Smith and L. Ruffa agreed that if a formal legal opinion is required, it should be in a written document. They also thought that the Board should take advantage of M. Thorn's knowledge as a lawyer, if she is willing to do so.

H. Chandler recommended that the Board review the Manchester application so that it can be discussed at the next meeting. J. Kingston suggested that the Board move forward with regard to a noise ordinance as there might be a change in Select Board membership in March and the process would have to start over again. H. Chandler noted that he would not push or force the issue. Discussion ensued regarding D. Green's question of why Board members changed their minds about adopting a noise ordinance and noise complaints.

### **Route 7 & Mad Tom Update**

R. Gaiotti pointed out the three-month data report from the radar sign included in the Manager's report which showed the number of vehicles, average & highest speeds and number above the speed limit. T. Smith questioned what else could be done to decrease speed on Route 7 as he was not happy with the amount of headway made and requested to see the State study. H. Chandler stated that this is a State highway which limits what the Town can do and R. Gaiotti noted that the State operates by a code book.

## **FY19 Budget Workshop**

R. Gaiotti reviewed his budget workshop items with the Board which covered:

- Law Enforcement
- Town Office
- Highway Department
- Highway Projects
- Route 30 Building Re-construction
- Personnel
- Miscellaneous items
- Revenue
- School Facility Use fee

T. Smith asked for a short executive session to discuss personnel costs. R. Gaiotti noted that a 2-3% increase for the tax rate is likely.

## **Finance Report**

- Delinquent taxes stand at \$294,414 as of November 15, 2017
- F550 and 2009 Tandem trucks needed repairs
- AOT grant payment to be received soon
- Support of Emerald Lake State Park

M. Thorn moved and T. Smith seconded to approve the finance report as presented. Motion carried 4-0.

## **Manager's Report**

R. Gaiotti reviewed the following:

- The Dorset Prudential Committee has site control of the water source
- Tower Road bridge is complete. The bridge will be turned over to the Town after final inspection.
- North Dorset Train Station project has not moved forward.
- The Sheriff met with Long Trail School to review lock down procedures. Dorset Elementary also has lock down procedures in place.
- Professional development conference was attended by R. Gaiotti.
- VYCC trail work coordination
- Manchester bike path meetings

## **Approve Payroll and Accounts Payable for the Week of 11/28/2017**

It was the consensus of the SB to approve the Payroll and Accounts Payable for the week of 11/28/2017 as presented.

**Other Business**

- It was the consensus of the SB members to sign and approve as presented the permit for the Thorn's driveway access on West Road.

M. Thorn moved and T. Smith seconded to move to Executive Session to discuss legal and personnel matters at 9:20 p.m. Motion carried 4-0.

T. Smith moved and M. Thorn seconded to exit Executive Session and to return to the regular SB meeting. Motion carried 4-0. No action was taken.

T. Smith moved and M. Thorn seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m. Motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Aversano

**Select Board**

Date 11/28/17

Regular Meeting

Special Meeting

(Please Print)

Testifying

Name	Mailing Address	Representing	(Yes or No)
AUSTIN CHINA	104 KIRBY HOLLOW RD	SELF	Y
D. GREEN	POB 881	"	?
Marjol Schöffel	EID	Assessors	
Kinda Faull.	POB 815 Dorset	Assessor.	N
Jean Kingston	3320 Rte 30 POB <sup>Dorset</sup> 10	Self	NO
REN GILBERT	597 CANTON ST	"	NO
BO THUAN	599 Dorset WAY RD	"	NO
Linda Joy Sullivan	932 McNamee Rd	Self	NO
Allan Sullivan	932 McNamee Rd	Self	?
Melissa Zecher	190 Havoc Hill	Self	NO
MARILYN KIMBLEY	312 LUSE RD	SELF	NO

11/28/17

## PROPOSAL FOR REAPPRAISAL

Dorset desperately needs a physical reappraisal of all properties. The most recent complete reappraisal was completed in 2003, with a statistical revaluation done in 2006. Since that time, the grand list has steadily decreased, largely as a consequence of hundreds of grievance reductions. This, combined with budget requirements, has caused the tax rate to steadily climb.

There is a clear and drastic inequity in the levels of assessment within the town. The state has determined that our most recently published (based on 2016 grand list) is 17.55. 2017 results will not be available until January. When it is determined that our COD is 20 (or above), a reappraisal will be mandated by the state. This is inevitable. In Dorset, our level of inequity is far above that indicated by the state's equalization study, because the study is based on discrepancies between sale price and assessment, so considers data only from those properties which have sold. The inequity of values within the town spans the entire grand list, not only those properties that have sold. The same data is used in determining the CLA, currently at 105.94.

A reappraisal is only as good as the QUALITY of the data upon which it is based. Because of this, it is the opinion of the assessor's office that the most comprehensive approach would be for a reappraisal to be conducted "in house" as opposed to hiring an outside contractor. Critical to fair assessment is the development of a realistic land schedule, best accomplished by people who have lived in Dorset for a long time and understand value variances between different locations within the town. A competent staff of data collectors with experience in the town lister's office has been assembled to collect necessary data upon which to base assessments. These people have a civic dedication and interest in producing a valid outcome, and are considered to be better equipped than an anonymous reappraisal company who often hire data collectors with no previous experience. This has proven to result in poor and inaccurate data leading to an inaccurate valuation.

### COST:

\$8/parcel/yr has been set aside for the purpose of maintaining the grand list, and is currently in the vicinity of \$200,000.

Software Expense: \$5000

Data Collection: \$132,400

Data Entry: \$36,800

TOTAL Estimated Cost: \$174,200

### TIMELINE:

If data collection can begin immediately, the project should be complete for the 2019 grand list. This will require diligent efforts at data collection, but it should be comfortably accomplished with 1471 parcels.

### STAFF:

Margot Schoffstall, Theda Farrell, Kristian Mayer, Marilyn Kinney, Melissa Zecher, Peter Trifari