

## Selectboard Special Meeting Minutes

*Monday, March 29, 2021 at 7 pm via Zoom conference call*

**Present:** Denise Wheeler (Chair), Sharon Winn Fannon (Vice Chair), Clif Emmons (Member), Rick Kehne (Member), ORCA Media, Katie Lane-Karnas (Recording Secretary), Jim Barlow (Town Attorney), Judy Fitch Robert (Town Clerk), Barbara Butler (Asst. Town Clerk), Gail Graham, Betsy Parah

**Absent:** John Brabant (Member)

1. Call to Order: Denise Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.
2. Public Comment: None.
3. Review, Additions/Changes to Agenda: None.
4. Office Staffing: The Town Clerk announced her retirement. Her letter of resignation includes a proposed schedule for filling the position, which was reviewed by the Secretary of State's Office (effective resignation date April 12; appointment of Judy to temporary town clerk capacity; and special election for the town to elect a new Town Clerk date June 30). She explained that her resignation is out of sequence with her terms as a result of family changes that makes this timing necessary. The Chair noted the Board's sadness to see her leave, and appreciated her help making the transition smooth.

The Town Attorney advised that there does not need to be a public informational meeting for a special election. The Town Clerk must resign so that there can be a vacancy. When the vacancy takes effect, the Board is obligated to appoint a person in the interim; there is no prohibition against appointing someone who has resigned. By statute, the Selectboard has ten days to post notice of the vacancy. Given the nature of the resignation and upcoming election, the Town Attorney advised posting more than once in Front Porch Forum and additional advertising of the vacancy to catch the attention of potential candidates.

The Town Clerk will draft a public announcement and share with the Board. The Town Attorney advised against posting candidate information to the website in a way that may set a precedent for candidates to expect a website presence as a forum. Rather, candidates could make a statement with their introduction and credentials on Front Porch Forum. The Town Clerk offered to speak with people about the position.

The Town Attorney commented that the Board should approve on April 12 the warning for the June 30 special town meeting (the Town Clerk will create the first draft), and post notice of the vacancy on April 13; do not post notice of the special town meeting until May 22. The Town Clerk will spearhead the communication of steps, deadlines, job description, follow up procedure, etc. for potential candidates (information will be posted on the website). There is the potential that a petitioned article from the voters could be received.

5. Rules of Procedure: The Board returned to the discussion on adoption of rules of procedures that they have been working on the last few weeks and reviewed the draft based on the VLCT model that Sharon Winn Fannon revised. They reviewed last week's efforts on agenda item sequence and discussed the goal to hold meetings from 7-9 pm *as a general matter*, allowing the flexibility to start meetings earlier/continue later. Votes are by roll-call during virtual video meetings. Public comments will be invited after chair and final board comments and before a motion. The Chair noted that we serve the public and wants to make sure we continue to allow an opportunity for the public to be heard. She has heard from the community that they appreciate how open the Board is in inviting public participation. The Board discussed having a specific practice for a discussion and motion and ownership of the motion (by the person with ownership of the item). They discussed the idea of public comments that require a significant amount of time being scheduled as a future agenda item and defining length of time for public comment for items not on the agenda. The Board will review once again and when the full Board meets once again, they can agree on moving forward as they see fit.
6. Review and approve minutes: Clif Emmons moved and Denise Wheeler seconded to approve the minutes of the 2/20/2021 informational meeting, with the changes as noted; the motion passed 4-0.
7. Other Business/Old Business/New Business: Clif Emmons made a motion for the Board to authorize the Chair to send the East Montpelier Selectboard and East Montpelier Fire Department written notice of non-renewal of the current emergency services contract. Sharon Winn Fannon seconded the motion which was voted and passed unanimously.

The Board agreed that barring any unforeseen circumstances, the next regular meeting will occur on April 12, 2021.

8. Adjournment: Clif Emmons made a motion to adjourn at 8:26 pm. Sharon Winn Fannon seconded the motion which was voted on and carried 4-0.

Date: 3/30/2021 Respectfully Submitted, Katie Lane-Karnas, Recording Secretary  
*Approved by the Selectboard at the 5/10/2021 meeting*

*Click on the link below to view documents associated with this agenda:*  
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Ct146FrK4xDpra6KKjVIWlBfkmkx3Z1D?usp=sharing>