



Town of Thetford Vermont

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Selectboard Regular Meeting Minutes Thetford Town Offices (w/Virtual Attendance Option) Monday, April 20th, 2026 7:00 PM

Selectboard members present: Chair Sharon Harkay, Vice-Chair David Goodrich, David Forbes, Li Shen, Steve Tofel

Others present: Town Manager Brian Story, Dan Mallach

Participating community members: Ted Helms, Stuart Blood, Cynthia Shelton, Cathee Clement, Tim Taylor, Susan Brochniak-Helms

Sharon Harkay called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

1. Agenda Review

No changes to the agenda.

2. Notes from the Selectboard Chair

Sharon said she was still trying to recruit a new Town Health Officer and is learning more about the position. If needed, Sharon would take the position in the interim.

3. Town Manager Report

- **Green Up day** – Brian said that sign-ups are going well and that a dumpster has been arranged to be at the Town Garage.
- Brian reminded the board that last year there was a discussion about the use of leaf-blowers and the decision was made to minimize their use, but not to eliminate their use completely. He noted that the town's leaf blower is used for tasks such as cleaning out ditches.

4. Committee and Commission Reports

Li Shen reported that the Conservation Commission had 12 returning volunteers and 8 new volunteers for the Amphibian Road Crossing in late March and early April. On Godfrey Road they found the rare 4-toed salamander which was first reported in 2025. The Conservation Commission also approved the proposal from biologist Jesse Mohr to perform an inventory of Thetford's natural communities as part of the Phase 2 Natural Inventory of Thetford. This inventory will not start until 2027.

Li reported that there was some vandalism on the Hughes Forest property at a former log landing. Li will report it to the Police Department.

Steve Tofel said the Thetford Elder Network will be having a senior luncheon on Thursday at New Sun's Community Center in North Thetford. Sharon mentioned that she heard there was a tool library there.

David Goodrich said Upper Valley Ambulance just received a new ambulance that just went into service. It is a replacement for an ambulance they had retired.

5. Public Comment

No public comment.

6. Capacity Study results with Dubois & King, Inc. and the Capacity Study Steering Committee

Dan Mallach, from Dubois & King, was at the meeting to discuss the capacity study. He began by giving an overview of the project and then addressing questions and concerns previously submitted to Brian. Dan said there were two purposes for the study: to support informal conversations with private property owners about the potential for residential opportunities on their properties and to potentially advance toward further engineering assessment of water capacity in the town. There were 3 main study areas in Post Mills, East Thetford and on Godfrey Road and Quail John Road. Dan explained the criteria used for the study.

Ted Helms, who has a home on Academy Road, wondered how 2 properties in the historic district of Thetford Hill were designated as Level A. Dan said these ranks were at the confluence of environmental features as well as proximity to destinations and existing zonings to achieve capacity and that this is an example of parcels that someone recognizes locally that should be removed from the study.

There was discussion about designated historic districts, scenic views and the 2013 Town Plan.

Stuart Blood discussed the landfill in Post Mills and the contamination of the ground water. Stuart also suggested that there should be a recommendation regarding a community water system since the current private water system is at capacity. The last comment from Stuart was addressed to the Selectboard and Town Manager about the absence of studies done on the landfill in the town archives. Stuart believes it's important that the official planning documents highlight this issue as they continue to work on a solution for it.

Dan Mallach responded to Stuart by confirming what he understood Stuart's concerns and recommendations to be and will talk with the Town Manager about the changes.

Sharon asked if transportation to and from Post Mills was taken into consideration as it's further from potential jobs. Dan responded that transportation matters would be a great addition to the study.

Ted Helms asked why people have not been given a chance to respond to the bylaw changes and why is this being recommended now, and why the zoning would have to change. David Forbes explained that the state is asking towns to make changes based on recommendations from new legislation. Dan added that both the Home Act of 2023 and the Act 250 modifications from Act 181 are encouraging these kinds of considerations.

Cynthia Shelton commented that she felt that the pressure is growing for individual landowners to make things happen and that a possible future mandate shouldn't be discounted.

Dan responded that he would defer to the Capacity Study Steering Committee, but he thought it would be more on the level of peer to peer and neighbor to neighbor.

Cathee Clement, who is on the Capacity Study Steering Committee, said her understanding of the next step is to not only engage the landowners that are referenced in the study, but to also reach out to large landowners with this conversation. David Forbes said the community should be asked about their vision of Thetford. If they could share their 10-to-50-year plan it would be helpful.

The Planning Commission and Housing Commission have been involved in discussions about this and will continue to work together. David spoke about Hanover, Lebanon and other areas who will outgrow their space and people will start to move out towards Thetford, and that housing needs to be considered. David said this is not about eminent domain but will be about conversations with landowners.

Cynthia Shelton commented that the study was put together using old floodplain information and wondered if it would be updated with new information. David Forbes confirmed that the maps are being updated at the state level and he can get that information to Dan.

Susan Brochniak-Helms wanted to know if the property owners were asked before their properties were publicized as possible development areas. The answer was no.

Susan also wanted to know how middle housing was defined and how can they ensure that owners who do develop their property adhere to the definition of middle housing.

Tim Taylor explained the overall vision of pocket neighborhoods in Thetford, and the different areas in town that were defined in the study. David Forbes said middle housing is basically affordable housing, somewhere around \$300,000.

There was continued discussion about the infrastructure of Thetford and how much the population could increase.

7. Invasive plants and timing of roadside mowing

Sharon noted that Don Downey put together the information on best management practices that was in the Selectboard packet. Don talked about how the information was pulled together, and that it was meant to increase awareness in order to be more proactive with the roadside mowing services. There was discussion about community involvement and creating a master database of invasive species. There was discussion about treatment with herbicides.

Don will go back to the Conservation Commission with a report on this discussion and figure out how to put the wheels in motion.

8. Updated version of the addendum to the Town purchasing policy regarding consideration of human rights

Brian went through the changes made to the purchasing policy.

Motion by Sharon Harkay to adopt the Human Rights Equipment Procurement Policy's latest draft, with the addition of the sentence that we just discussed. We can sign it when Brian puts in that one sentence. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Warrants

#10.2 \$16,919.63

#9.2 \$60,605.32

#15.1 \$25,576.30

#8.3 \$1,790.78

#8.4 \$32,146.82

Motion by David Forbes that we accept the warrants as presented to the Selectboard on April 20th, 2026. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Minutes

Motion by David Goodrich that we accept the minutes of Monday, April 6th, 2026, as edited. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Adjourn

Motion by Steve Tofel to adjourn as of 9:10 PM. The motion passed unanimously.