

# Town of Fairfax



## **BOARD OF CIVIL AUTHORITY-TO DESIGNATE THE GENERAL ELECTION POLLING PLACE MEETING MINUTES – September 30, 2020**

The meeting was called to order by Peter Fitzgerald, Chair, at 4:05 p.m. which was immediately after the Abatement Hearings. It was a Zoom, at 12 Buck Hollow Road, Fairfax, VT 05454 with Peter Fitzgerald; Peggy Gilbert; Gary Gilbert; Sue Mitchell; Randy DeVine; Judy Cleary; Sheri Rainville; Marjorie Ellsworth; Duane Leach; Steven Cormier; Deborah Woodward, Town Clerk and Brad Docheff, Town Manager present.

Peter turned the meeting over to Deborah to explain the options for the General Election polling place on November 3, 2020. She informed the Board that the State of Vermont has sent out an Absentee Ballot to all active voters on our checklist. The Town is sending out Absentee Ballots to all new registered voter that were added to the Fairfax checklist after the State sent ballots. People can mail or insert their ballot into the secure drop box before the election. They can drop their ballots into a secure drop box on election day that will be outside the door on election day. They will also be able to cast their ballot into the tabular.

Deb stated that a place off Town-owned property would introduce an unnecessary liability to the Town, deciding this would not be a good option. A drive through at the Town Garage is not an option due to the weather and safety to the people with the possibility of the Town trucks coming in and out of the site. Some Community Center concerns were the safety of the voters and workers getting in and out of the building and accessing the bathroom. Deb stated that the two options would be the Town Office and the Richard Brown Gymnasium at Bellows Free Academy. The School Board requested that the Board of Civil Authority provide them with a written plan, how we plan on running the voting. They would review on October 13<sup>th</sup>. Deb was a little nervous with that statement. What if the school does not like our written plan and puts mandates on us that are difficult to follow? What if they reject, and not allow us to use the facility? People are already asking where the polling place will be. The notice/warning must be posted by Friday, October 2, 2020 with the polling place listed. We can change the polling place up to 15 days prior the election, due to COVID-19, but Fairfax towns people do not like it when we do not have something in place, and we change our decision. The posting and notice/warning would all need to be adjusted.

A motion was made by Judy Cleary and seconded by Sue Mitchell to utilize the Town Office for the General Election. The Floor was opened for discussion. Some discussion consisted of parking concerns. Deb and Randy stated that they had discussed the parking at the Town Office. There isn't a lot of parking, but they talked about a plan that they believe will work. People are in the habit of voting at the school. We probably will be rejected at the school if COVID-19 hit the school beforehand. The Town Office is an exception to the rule due to Covid-19 and since most everyone will have received an Absentee Ballot through the mail. The safest place would be the Town Office. Brad Docheff stated that the Board would need to present a plan on how the vote would run at the Town Office for the Select Board. A Committee was assigned to put this in place. The Committee members consist of Steve Cormier, Marjorie Ellsworth, Sue Mitchell, Gary Gilbert, Randy DeVine, and Deborah Woodward. Judy motioned that the General Election on November 3, 2020 to be at the Town Office, 12 Buck Hollow Road, Fairfax, VT and seconded by Sue Mitchell. It was passed 8-3 by saying I. Deb informed the Board that due to COVID-19, the State of Vermont is allowing that absentee ballots processing be allowed during regular business hours. She asked for a couple of people to reach out to her to assist in this, once or twice a week before the election. Peter motioned that the meeting be adjourned and seconded by Sheri Rainville and accepted by all. The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.



Sheri Rainville  
Select Board



Attested on October 2, 2020  
Deborah Woodward  
Town Clerk/Treasurer