

## North Central VT Clerks and Treasurers Group Meeting Minutes

### Morristown Office, Morrisville

5:30 pm October 24, 2019

Attendees: Carol Dawes, Barre City; Sara Haskins, Mitzi Fleming, Morristown; Allison Bigelow, Linda Martin, Wolcott; Donna Kelty, Barre Town; Anne Mullings, Johnson; Kim Moulton, Hyde Park; Miki Fleming, Morristown; Rosemary Audibert, Johnson; Susan Tinker, Johnson; Diana Peduzzi, Woodbury; Charlene Walker, Stowe; Lisa Walker, Stowe; Elizabeth Chase, Morristown; Candy Vear, Donna Whitcomb, Dawn Whitcomb, Eden; Dawn M. Slayton, Hyde Park; Mark Schilling, Dana Warren, Sally Reynolds, Cambridge; Maureen Harvey, Duxbury; Sam Haskins, Morristown; Cathy Mander-Adams, Belvidere, Judy Robert, Calais (recording secretary)

“Open Discussion”

#### Topics of discussion (informal)

- VT Tax Department conflating city/village entities creating problems for municipal treasurers.
- Resignation of Wolcott road crew members.
- Unionized road crews.
- Health insurance coverage.
- Retirement benefits and process.

Carol Dawes welcomed attendees while pizza and refreshments were enjoyed. Carol thanked Sara Haskins and Mitzi Fleming and staff for hosting the meeting.

As an Open Discussion meeting, topics were raised by attendees for discussion.

**Controversy regarding photos of land records and fees:** Carol Dawes promoted payment for photos of land records and said this needs to be addressed more clearly. The issue was brought to the public by a lawsuit regarding access to police video.

**Name of Clerks and Treasurers group:** The group has included other counties in the past. Carol asked if the group needs another name, suggesting “North Central Clerks and Treasurers Group”. There was agreement.

**Group Officers:** Officers of the group were voted August 2017. It will be put on the agenda for the January meeting to vote in officers of chair, vice chair and program coordinator, secretary, and treasurer. Those holding office should consider whether they want to continue in the role. Carol said the role of Chair will be open.

Treasurer Bobbie Brimblecomb will bring list of members and a fund update to the January meeting. **Next meeting will be January 23, 2020.**

**Foreclosures:** A review of the foreclosure process was discussed. "Complaint" is the first document received by the clerk. Then "Assignments" to other mortgage companies. Foreclosures often take years. Buildings often go to decay in this process, as the property falls off the radar of mortgage companies. Sometimes a "dismissal" arrives. Sometimes mortgage companies pay taxes, but the property remain vacant.

**Delinquent taxes, tax sales and process:** Mobile homes are a different category than traditional properties, depending on if the mobile home is landed. Mobile home laws need to be overhauled. Attorneys who process tax sales and suggestions of attorneys to hire for tax sales were discussed.

**Vital records:** The new process as of July 2019 was discussed noting that marriages only require logging into VRIMS system to record the certified paper number. Cover letters and emails from Dept of Health Vital Records generally explain what to do. Confusion about corrected records was discussed and strategies for working with Vital Records office. There are issues with people under Department of Correction who often don't have documents needed to obtain birth certificates. Carol suggested registering the person to vote in order to create a document. Approved list of ID documents creates problems in many situations. There needs to be an expansion of who is entitled to access vital records.

**How does a town become governed by a mayor?** This requires a town charter change. The charter process was discussed, and when it is needed.

**Survey maps versus tax maps was explained.** The importance and purpose of updating tax parcel maps was discussed.

**Cemetery Commissions:** Mapping and modernizing cemetery records was discussed and the legal issues arising from lack of clear records and maps. Burial rights deed procedures were discussed. Investing for perpetual care was recommended, with interest going toward maintaining the cemeteries. Municipalities assuming abandoned cemeteries was discussed. Patrick Healey, Montpelier's sexton and chair of the VT Cemetery Association, is a resource. Sara recommended the Annual Cemetery meeting for the State, and said it was helpful for clerks and treasurers.

**Referring people to lawyers:** A question related to quitclaim deeds led to the advice of referring people to lawyers rather than answering legal questions. A person needs to go to probate court and open an estate if the person feels he/she deserves or is owed money from a tax sale of a dead relative. One can petition a judge to become the executor of an estate.

**Retention schedules for Records:** The disposition and retention of records schedule was discussed and resources, with references to Marshfield's schedule as model. VMCTA has models on the website. Carol gave an update on the process.

**Liquor licenses:** Third Class licenses now need to be approved by towns, but there is no fee structure for payment to towns. The fee is being worked on. All licenses will be unified into one

license form in the future. In 2021 liquor licenses will be online and clerks will get notification and it will be a paperless process. The annual process may become a rotating schedule to reduce overload once a year.

**Fireworks permits:** It is illegal to shoot off fireworks without a permit. Multi-approval procedure in urban areas.

**Next meeting will be January 23, 2020.**

Adjournment 8:15

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Robert, Secretary