

**SELECTBOARD MEETING
July 10, 2025
Draft Minutes**

Present: Casey Mathieu
Pat Haller
Deb Jorschick
Julia Andrews
Nick Nichols

Greg Barrows
Holly Delisle
Callie Hamdy

Guests: see page 5.

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m. The meeting was held in person and via Zoom.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Added Scheduling a time for a sendoff for Holly to Discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lori Johnson noted that there had been a viscous dog hearing, and the conclusion was that the dog should be euthanized. She was wondering if that had occurred. Holly explained that the dog owners are appealing the Selectboard's decision and we are working with the town attorney.

MINUTES

D. Jorschick motioned to approve the June 26, 2025 minutes as amended. **J. Andrews** Seconded. Motion passed 4-0. 1 abstention.

P. Haller motioned to approve the July 2, 2025 minutes as amended. **N. Nichols** Seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

CCRPC UPDATE

Ben Bornstein, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) Representative shared that there were two intensive meetings of the long-range planning sub-committee. They reviewed 18 of the 19 future land use plans as part of the regional land use planning map. He is preparing a draft summary of the meetings for the board. There had been talks of including disenfranchised groups in the discussion regarding zoning and land use.

ROAD SCHEDULE

S. Cushing, Road Foreman, was not present. **C. Mathieu** went over the Road Schedule from June 27, 2025 to July 10, 2025.

ACCESS PERMIT REQUEST

The Pigeons on Old #11 Road applied for an access permit for an existing garage that will be turned into a residence. Sean looked at the site and recommended the board approve it. **P. Haller** motioned to approve the access permit for Lot 2 of Old #11 Road. **N. Nichols** seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

FY'25 HIGHWAY BUDGET STATUS REPORT

G. Barrows, Treasurer, went over the FY'25 Budget Status Report.

1705 UPDATE

P. Haller shared that the Preservation Trust of Vermont (PTV) had an individual that could assess the condition of the 1705 structures. The assessment would cost \$750 and the PTV

would cover half of that. The assessment should be done by the end of August. Pat recommended a motion to work with the consultant recommended by the Preservation Trust of Vermont and to authorize the use of \$375 cost share for the assessment at 1705. **J. Andrews** motioned to approve. **C. Mathieu** seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

CSWD FEE INCREASE

H. Delisle explained that Chittenden Solid Waste District (CSWD) increased their tipping fees this year. Westford is one of the only towns that pays for a hauler for our residents, and CSWD warned that the hauler may want to increase fees in kind. **Joe Sinagra** from Myers, the town's trash hauler, summarized Myers services to Westford. Under the town's contract, Myers can charge residents for solid waste exceeding 64 gallon per week. Myers finds that only around 15% of billed residents pay. Myers expects almost \$1,500 per month in extra tipping fees to CSWD on Westford's behalf starting on July 1st. Joe stated that Myers cannot absorb that extra cost. **C. Mathieu** asked if Myers could measure the extra waste. **J. Sinagra** did not think so; most of the extra is due to bulky items like furniture. **D. Jorschick** requested to share information about what Myers will and will not pick up and recommend alternatives for extra waste or bulky items. If Westford pays more, it would be an unbudgeted expense.

Dave Lavallee suggested an option for people to pre-pay Myers for extra waste to cover the overage cost. **C. Mathieu** thought that could be logistically difficult. **J. Sinagra** noted that if Myers did not pick up the extra trash, animals would get into it. **H. Delisle** asked about splitting the cost for the first year because it was an unforeseen expense for the town. **J. Sinagra** was willing to do this because of the strong relationship Myers has with Westford. A 50/50 split would require the Town to pay an additional \$0.80 per household per month. **H. Delisle** will draft an interim amendment. Even with the increase Westford gets a good deal compared to if each household had to pay individually. **J. Andrews** motioned that Westford approve an \$0.80 per household increase to our Myers contract and authorize Holly to draft and sign an amendment for one year. **P. Haller** seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

BOUNCY HOUSE ON THE COMMON

P. Haller explained that residents over the years have wanted to use the Common for events including bouncy houses. Currently we do not allow them. During July 4th planning there was a request to place a privately owned bouncy house. **P. Haller** contacted a few companies that rent bouncy houses. He would like Westford to hear more information and possibly allow for the use of a bouncy house on the Common. There had been liability concerns from the Town's standpoint. There were also concerns about damaging the drainage system under the Common. He believes there are solutions to both problems. One of the bouncy house companies is coincidentally owned by **Joe Sinagra** who was already present, and he was able to explain how other towns handle this issue.

J. Andrews thought that at some point in the future they should discuss the Common Drainage system possibly getting damaged. She would like to understand more clearly what sort of things can damage it.

J. Sinagra owns Bounce Around Vermont. They are the largest bouncy house company in the state of Vermont. They can accommodate spaces that do not have vehicle access. Most municipalities require individuals and companies to have insurance certificates. Most larger municipalities will ask to be added as an additional insurer. There are some places where securing the houses with stakes does not work, so in those instances they use large sand or water bags to hold the bouncy house in place. **J. Sinagra** opined that many privately available

non-commercial grade units were not safe and did not have a good way to secure them. Commercial grade units use commercial strength vinyl which makes them much safer. He noted that injuries from bouncy houses are usually more severe such as a broken bone. In 20 years in business, he has never had an insurance claim. He believed that the companies that do things the right way in Vermont carry the correct insurance. **P. Haller** asked Joe to describe the due diligence required from the operator the day of the event. **J. Sinagra** described the safety protocols for the board.

C. Mathieu suggested a procedure which requires the town to be listed as an additional insured party. **H. Delisle** noted that a Common Use policy exists that outlines that bouncy houses are not allowed, so that document could be updated to allow them and lay out the requirements. **J. Sinagra** was happy to share with the town what other communities do.

J. Andrews felt it would be better to restrict bouncy house use to town entities or one of the non-profits. **Lori Johnson**, from the Common Committee, agreed it was good to limit it to town-wide organizations and events. It could be added to the Common Use Policy, and she thought it made sense to add it as an appendix. She would like to specify the use of sandbags and not stakes. **P. Haller** heard Julia's concerns but felt it should be open to residents. **J. Andrews** felt that if a resident wanted a bouncy house for a private party, they should do it on their own property. **D. Jorschick** agreed to making some concessions but disagreed with opening it up to the public. She felt the liability was too great. **P. Haller** wondered if we could ask the Common Committee to make edits to the Common Use Policy and present their thinking to the board. **L. Johnson** agreed but suggested getting any changes reviewed by the lawyer due to the liability issues involved. **J. Sinagra** noted that the term "bouncy house" is often used to describe all inflatable structures, but he suggested using the term "inflatable structures" to be more exact.

TRAFFIC CONCERNS ON ROUTE 128

There had been complaints about extreme speeding/aggressive driving on Route 128. Route 128 is a state road so there is also state patrol there. The recent complaints happened overnight and close to evening hours including erratic behavior such as driving and passing without lights on in the dark or flashing people while tailgating. **H. Delisle** suggested more law enforcement presence to deter people from this behavior. **D. Jorschick** recounted a recent instance. A driver came from Cambridge Road around 8pm without stopping at the stop sign. The driver was going at such a high speed that they almost missed the corner heading out of the Common area on 128. Deb's daughter was able to identify the driver. She recalled that this winter people had driven across the Common multiple times. **D. Jorschick** believed that people thought they could get away with such scary/dangerous behavior because we have limited patrols and are rural. **C. Mathieu** recalled bringing this to the Sheriff's attention previously. They had received several other recent complaints.

D. Gauthier noted that he encountered 3 pickup trucks that frequently try to catch and pass each other the whole way towards Essex on 128. **B. Peck** was present. She agreed with Dave's assessment. She had gotten partial plate numbers. She thought drivers were more aggressive than normal in that stretch and felt the speeds have increased beyond 80mph. She appreciated law enforcement efforts.

Brian Welch, Deputy Sheriff, had a conversation at a household regarding the complaints. **Corey Lozier**, from the State Police, said that the new pavement probably does not help with speeds, but he thinks people are going to speed no matter what. He has put out

communications to his barracks to increase presence in Westford for the evenings. They both reiterated the importance of sharing as much information as possible about vehicles and drivers to both the Sheriff and the State Troopers when incidents happen. The board thanked both officers.

DRB FEE WAIVER REQUEST FOR WESTFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Westford Conservation Commission (WCC) requested the Selectboard waive the Development Review Board (DRB) fees associated with their application to put a bridge on the Misty Meadows trails. It was in the Water Resource Overlay, and they needed to go through the DRB process. **Kirstin Tyler** requested a fee waiver process for town boards, so it doesn't have to come before the Selectboard. **H. Delisle** will investigate that. **P. Haller** motioned to waive the DRB fees for the WCC. **J. Andrews** seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

STOP SIGN REQUEST FOR WOODS HOLLOW ROAD

The board received emails regarding the intersections of Woods Hollow with Phelps Road and Maple Tree Lane, both of which have poor sight lines. CCRPC can do a study on stop signs for the suggested locations for no cost. **N. Nichols** asked if there was a 2023 assessment done and if any of the recommendations from previous studies had been implemented. **H. Delisle** noted we had implemented three recommendations from the 2023 study. She has also applied for a grant from the sheriff's department for fixed radar signs for those areas. We will find out if we have been granted the funds in October. **J. Andrews** wondered if the Road Crew could clear the tall brush from those areas in between the twice a year roadside mowings. **N. Nichols** motioned to request a stop sign analysis for Woods Hollow Road/Phelps & Maple Tree Lane intersections. **D. Jorschick** seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

SENDOFF FOR HOLLY

The board discussed an open house to give Holly appreciation before she leaves for Canada.

REVIEW FY'25 GENERAL FUND BUDGET STATUS REPORT

G. Barrows, Treasurer, went over the FY'25 General Fund Budget Status Report.

SET MUNICIPAL TAX RATE

H. Delisle explained how the tax rate is set. **N. Nichols** motioned to set the municipal tax rate at 0.4388 to offset the town's budget for the 2025-26 tax year. **P. Haller** seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

FY'25 AUDIT CONTRACT REVIEW

D. Jorschick motioned to approve the FY25 audit contract as presented. **C. Mathieu** seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

REVIEW AND APPROVE ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND PAYROLL WARRANTS

G. Barrows, Treasurer, went over the Accounts Payable & Payroll Warrants.

CORRESPONDENCE

UVM Internship Offer

H. Delisle noted that this helps a student learn and gives the town something for free. The policy binder was put together this spring by a UVM intern. Holly found that process easy.

FEMA Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Map Changes

C. Mathieu asked if this should be an agenda down the road. **H. Delisle** recommended keeping track of it and adding it to a future agenda. **Harmony Cism** explained the last time the

flood rate map was updated was 2017. We are currently doing everything we should be to protect our waterways.

Received information from ACT 250 Review from Rovers North, emails from Barb Peck and Carol Winfield, Potential 4th Road Crew Member.

COMMUNICATION

Update on Vicious Dog was discussed. Board members understood that people want to know, but they were hesitant because the decision has been appealed. Holly will consult with the Town attorney for guidance. The Town Clerk will make a communication about Trash overage.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Casey Mathieu
Selectboard Chair

Callie Hamdy
Minute Clerk

GUEST LIST

Dave Gauthier
Ben Bornstein
Lori Johnson
Lynn Gauthier
Kim Guidry
Brian Welch

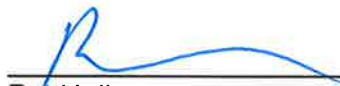
Ira Allen
Dick Lavallee
Harmony Cism
Barb Peck
Kirstin Tyler
Corey Lozier

Joe Sinagra
Dave Lavallee
Sheila Franz
Katie Freerick
Sarah Reeves (CSWD)


ADOPTED THIS 24 TH DAY OF July 2025.

WESTFORD SELECTBOARD


Casey Mathieu, Chair



Pat Haller



Deb Sawyer Jorschick



Julia Andrews



William "Nick" Nichols