

**SELECTBOARD MEETING
AUGUST 28 2025
Draft Minutes**

Present: Pat Haller
Julia Andrews
Deb Jorschick

Greg Barrows
Tommy O'Connor
Callie Hamdy
Sean Cushing

Guests: see attached.

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

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Adding Excess Weight Permit Authority for Tommy, Appoint a New Administrator to the Retirement Plans contact.

Skip Lisle requested to be moved earlier in the meeting due to a conflict with another commitment

WELCOME TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

P. Haller welcomed Tommy O'Connor as the new Town Administrator

PUBLIC COMMENT

Barb Peck was present and thanked Julia Andrews as well as the CCCUD in their efforts in assisting her with getting fiber run near her house, which was an underserved area.

BEAVER DECEIVER

Skip Lisle of Beaver Deceivers International was present. **Bev Soychak**, Co-founder and President of the Vermont Beaver Association (VBA) was also present.

The board had a few questions for Skip such as the maintenance and cost. **S. Lisle** gave a short biography of his work with beavers and the invention of the beaver deceivers. He described the ecological benefits of beavers as well as the cost efficiency of the deceivers in terms of culvert maintenance. **P. Haller** had talked to the road foreman in Monkton about their experience with beaver deceivers. Monkton has installed two that have been there for about two years. The foreman saw no reason not to do it and recommended trying them out. He used to have to clean the culverts regularly, every other month, now he does not. But he does not clean the deceivers either because he told the board he would not be responsible for that. They are cleaned by volunteers every year. There have been no problems. There is an older model on private property that has been there five years, and it is also good. The board also had correspondence from the Westford Conservation Commission (WCC) that said they would be willing to pitch in \$500 towards the cost. They also originally had an offer from Protect Our Wildlife (POW) to be \$4000 towards the cost, but after reading some of POW's restrictions they were a bit concerned. **Carol Winfield** had communicated these concerns to POW, and they had produced a new proposal that addressed the board's concerns while still putting \$4000 towards the project.

D. Jorschick did not want to put another item on the road crews list of responsibilities if they could help it. They are down one employee and have their hands full. If they can get a full road crew that would be different. She would like to see a different solution for maintenance. **S. Cushing** agreed. **Lori Johnson** and **C. Winfield** volunteered to keep the deceiver cleaned out.

J. Andrews motioned towards installing the beaver deceiver on Schultz Pond as a test and providing we can come to agreement that is amendable to both parties. **P. Haller** seconded. Motioned passed 3-0. **P. Haller** motioned to accept the WCC's offer of \$500 towards the payment. **D. Jorschick** seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

MINUTES

D. Jorschick motioned to table minutes until next week with a greater quorum. **J. Andrews** seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

CCRPC UPDATE

Ben Bornstein, CCRPC Representative, was present. He is on the Long Range Planning sub-committee. They had a meeting this week and it was brought to his attention that the future land use map that the Planning Commission and Board had voted on was not what was currently appearing. What was appearing was an area substantially larger. CCRPC had been grateful for Ben catching the error. They were completing the preliminary map soon. He also updated the board on MERP,

ROAD SCHEDULE

S. Cushing, Road Foreman, was present and went over the Road Schedule from August 15, 2025 to August 28, 2025.

FY'25 HIGHWAY BUDGET STATUS REPORT

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

EXCESS WEIGHT PERMIT SIGNATURE AUTHORITY

P. Haller motioned to give Tom O'Connor authority to sign Excess Weight Permits. **D. Jorschick** seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

APPOINT NEW ADMINISTRATOR FOR RETIREMENT PLAN ACCOUNTS

P. Haller motioned for Tom O'Connor to be the point of contact for the town's retirement plan. **J. Andrews** seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

VETERAN BANNERS

Lenny Couture was present. He wanted the town to adopt a process where local veterans can purchase banners that would be displayed under the American flags on the town's lamp posts. There was no cost to the town, the veteran would cover it if they wanted a banner. He had already talked to the power company about it and was volunteering to put up the banners.

P. Haller wondered if we are thinking this would be geographically centered around the Common? What if somebody wants something on a specific pole? He thought we should avoid that. **J. Andrews** was worried having a regular citizen installing and wondered if they got hurt

if the town would be liable. She is sure there is a way to make this work because so many towns do. **P. Haller** wanted to talk to the town attorney as well as Fairfax.

UPDATE ON TANKER TIME OF COMPLETION/BOND SHOP FOR BANK

Garrett Bartlett, Fire Chief, was present. There has not been too much progress. Garrett talked to the sales rep. Our build date got pushed out to March meaning we would not see the truck until May.

SUBDIVISION FEE WAIVER REQUEST

Lee Hendler of Swansong Take Two LLC was present to request a fee waiver for a repeat Developmental Review Board (DRB) hearing for the Swansong Take Two subdivision final plot plan at 2105 VT Route 128. The plot plan was approved last fall and the mylar was completed and submitted earlier this year. However, they had missed their final filing deadline of August 18, 2025 for the other required documents. Although the documents were submitted on August 18th reflecting all changes required by the town lawyer, their submission still requires final sign-off and thus they were not in compliance with the deadline.

J. Andrews motioned to waive the fees for Swanson Take Two LLC. **D. Jorschick** seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

BROWS RIVER COVERED BRIDGE

Elisabeth Brown, an intern with the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, was interested in drafting a State Register of Historic Places nomination for the Browns River Covered Bridge in town.

J. Andrews had some concerns. She understands that if you have a home and you put it on the Historic Register it creates a scenario where if you want to do improvements to the home you have basically signed away your rights to do what you want and can only make the improvements that are aligned with the historic nature of the building. It may not be the case with this, but she does not want to put the town in a position where we have our hands tied about how we care for the bridge in a way that might drive additional cost.

E. Brown gave a short introduction of herself. She explained that the Historic Register is only an honor classification, it would not restrict the way we care for the bridge. As part of the grant process we have already gone through, the bridge had to be evaluate to see if it was eligible for listing on the state register of historic places. Our bridge is eligible. There would be no difference in regulation. **P. Haller** motioned for Elisabeth to work towards getting the Browns River Covered Bridge on the State Historic Register. **D. Jorschick** seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pat Haller
Selectboard Vice-Chair

Callie Hamdy
Minute Clerk

GUEST LIST

Carol Winfield
Lori Johnson
Bev Soychak
Dave Gauthier
Ben Bornstein
Barb Peck
Lenny Couture
Lynn Gauthier
Dick Lavallee
Will Paden
Skip Lisle
Harmony Cism
Garrett Bartlett
Elisabeth Brown