

ROAD SCHEDULE

S. Cushing, Road Foreman, was not present. **P. Haller** went over the Road Schedule from February 13, 2026 to February 26, 2026.

REVIEW FY'26 HIGHWAY BUDGET STATUS REPORT

G. Barrows, Treasurer, went over the FY'26 Highway Budget Status Report.

INTERNET PROVIDER & POTENTIAL UPGRADE/PHONE UPGRADE

T. O'Connor explained that we have been in discussions about a phone upgrade due to age of the current equipment. In the most recent round of testing that the phone group did there were issues because these are Wi-Fi backup phones, but we need bare minimum five phones, and our Wi-Fi can only currently handle three. The phone company suggested the town do a fiber upgrade. This will also become relevant for other future tech upgrades.

J. Andrews asked if we needed to have that fiber upgrade, is that the responsibility of the provider or is that the town's responsibility to pay for it? The provider is doing the connection, but they could not yet provide the difference in cost, which would be the town's responsibility.

C. Mathieu asked who the new phone system using? Spectrum Voip would be the new phones, but everything right now is through consolidated communication. We currently have Comcast business internet. Casey thought we should talk to Comcast and see if we can get phone through them.

VTC TECH UPGRADE QUOTE

In talking with Vermont Tech Company (VTC), this upgrade device is not a requirement but it makes things easier on VTC tech's end so they do not have to physically come to the office but can go in remotely more easily. The town had talked about having a different IT provider.

T. O'Connor noted we can either stay as is with VTC tech, if we did not stay with them we would have to pay out the remainder of the contract which would be approximately \$40,000. **J. Andrews** thought until we get the budget under control we should not spend any extra money unless absolutely necessary. **D. Jorschick** thought it was odd to pay for something that VTC needs to work. If they want to do their software work from somewhere else underneath our contract that is on them. **C. Mathieu** wondered if VTC's current request is a breach of contract.

2026 TOWN AND BRIDGE STANDARDS APPROVAL

This was an annual item. It states that when Sean does any work with respect to town maintenance or brings in a contractor we are beholden to state bridge and road standards. The state has not made any changes to the standards since last year and things are very much the same.

CHITTENDEN COUNTY CLERK BUDGET

The selectboard wanted to know as we were budgeting, what the basis of the cost for Westford. **T. O'Connor** had reached out, and the County had provided an answer. The budget is decreasing this year.

UVM CAPSTONE PROJECT

At the last meeting **P. Haller** had suggested he could attend a 1705 site visit on Feb 13th. He, Tommy, Harmony Cim, and Kirsten Tyler, Conservation Commission, met with University of

Vermont (UVM) students. The students are working towards an environmental consulting capstone project. This provided the town with free environmental consulting work. Beyond this semester's work, the professor was interested in developing a relationship with Westford and continue putting forth these kinds of services in the future. They walked the property and Pat did a rundown, describing the existing conditions including the potential for river access. He expressed that they needed the site's septic area for the Library and Town Office and that we are behind since we have limited resources in terms of budget and are lacking a town planner, so it has been hard to find and apply for grants. The professor and students noted that is what they are there for. They can help us with outreach, help us create a master map of the existing conditions, all for free. They can also look into grants for us and as far as the maps, they are well versed on our website from the 1705 information and will be able to look at most if not all documentation related to the site on the town website. They will also help scoping out landscaping depiction of a pathway to the river, especially to shield the public area from the private residences near the covered bridge. They could help us with a public outreach event in late April. Pat was excited about this opportunity.

Vicky Ross was present. She asked if they were licensed engineers or students? They were students, we will not be using their designs for the actual engineering, it would be used as conceptual visuals for public outreach. **J. Andrews** thinks its sounds awesome. Directing a group of students to do work on the behalf of the Selectboard is also work, she does not want people to think that we are absolved of responsibility and time. We should prepare to direct them as needed. **P. Haller** suggested that the board allow him to be the point person for the project. The board agreed and assigned Pat to do this.

K. Tyler wanted to add about the public outreach event the students were interested in. They mentioned something about Earth Day, which is 22nd of April, 2026. She does not know if this is possible. The course is led by a professor at UVM that worked at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) until recently and his job was to map and understand vulnerabilities of communities. He now leads this class in learning how to do those sorts of things, understanding vulnerabilities of towns, how to educate the public on those issues. The mapping comes with it. It is not a solution but is help led by a professional we are getting at no cost.

It occurred to **J. Andrews** that the students aims and dreams for the project and the town's hopes and dreams for 1705 outreach might be different. She wanted to make sure that even if it is not aligned, she just wanted to make sure that is understood. **K. Tyler** explained that the class also works on projects mapping flood risk in town. Those are separate projects. The professor has worked at the EPA mapping vulnerabilities of communities. For VT and Westford, he wanted to focus on flood risk. What the students want to focus with on 1705 is the recreation path and how to bring the community on board on what that would look like and what that would mean for additional educational opportunities.

Dick Lavallee was present. He felt like this was a win for both the students and town.

TOWN MEETING POWERPOINT (BUDGET PRESENTATION)

The Selectboard went over the Town Meeting Day budget PowerPoint.

REVIEW FY'26 GENERAL FUND BUDGET STATUS REPORT

G. Barrows, Treasurer, went over the FY'26 General Fund Budget Status Report.

REVIEW & APPROVE ACCOUNTS PAYABLE & PAYROLL WARRANTS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the accounts payable and payroll warrants.

CORRESPONDENCE

Email from Lori Johnson regarding the budget.

Email from Dick Lavallee asking about the VAST trail.

Email from Pat regarding Tier 1B.

Resident Seth Jensen sent a Tier 1B email also.

J. Andrews had been reflecting by the comments by the library trustees earlier in the meeting. She agrees the board needs to do a better job communicating with the library. She thinks communication goes both ways and she does not think it is fair to place the entire burden on the Selectboard. She appreciates that when employees are in a budget that is a sensitive topic. Unfortunately for the people in that position those salaries are paid with taxpayer dollars, and it is within the Selectboard's jurisdiction to ask questions about that. The library trustees had a request in to the Selectboard to help pay for the remediation and that had been withdrawn.

COMMUNICATION

Town Meeting

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Casey Mathieu
Selectboard Chair

Callie Hamdy
Minute Clerk

GUEST LIST

Becky Roy
Dave Gauthier
Ben Bornstein
Dick Lavallee
Helen Sterling

Lori Johnson
Greg Bemis

Kim Guidry
Ira Allen
Maureen Wilcox

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Dave Lavallee
Harmony Cism
Vicky Ross
Lynn Gauthier

Barb Peck
Max Tyler