

**SELECTBOARD MEETING  
JANUARY 22, 2026  
Minutes**

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

Greg Barrows  
Tommy O'Connor  
Callie Hamdy

Guests: see attached.

The meeting was called to order at 6:16 p.m. The meeting was held in person and via Zoom.

**CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Dave Gauthier**, Historical Society member, mentioned that the WHS needs a portalet near the skating rink as skaters are going behind the historical building.

**Paul Birnholz** was present. He was disturbed about the last meeting, especially regarding VAST. A question that had been raised about who authorized the trail to be placed. He was bothered because the question was asked and he felt there was no answer to it.

**MINUTES**

**P. Haller** moved to approve the January 8, 2026 minutes as amended. **J. Andrews** seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

**CCRPC UPDATE**

**Ben Bornstein**, CCRPC Representative, was present. He complimented Harmony Cism, Zoning Administrator, on her hard work on the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) applications which had been a significant undertaking. Ben has been attending meetings such as long range planning.

**ROAD SCHEDULE**

Sean Cushing, Road Foreman, was not present. **C. Mathieu** went over the Road Schedule from January 9, 2026 to January 22, 2026.

**REVIEW FY'26 HIGHWAY BUDGET STATUS REPORT**

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

**WESTFORD/MILTON ROAD PAVING BIDS**

Five companies had put in a bid to pave Westford Milton Road. They were ECI, Hungerford Milton, J.A. McDonald, Pike Industries, and F.W. Whitcomb.

There had been some confusion in the RFP about engineering. The board had previously spoken with several of the bidders to clarify if they needed it or not.

**C. Mathieu** asked if there was anything the board should be aware of about the road. **T. O'Connor** pointed out that it was his first time going through the bid process as a Town Administrator and he thanked them for their patience.

#### **DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTOR**

Marge McIntosh had retired. The Selectboard can choose a new person for this role. **J. Andrews** moved to appoint Tommy O'Connor the Delinquent Tax Collector. **P. Haller** seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

#### **TOWN ADMIN REPORT**

**T. O'Connor** was present and gave the Town Administrator's Report. We have had several budget prep meetings. Tommy has continued to meet with other Town Administrators in the State.

#### **VAST FOLLOW UP**

The board had received a few emails from the public after the last meeting. **C. Mathieu** asked the other board members what next steps they wanted to take. How do we prevent something like this from happening again?

**N. Nichols** addressed that it sounds like something illegal occurred and we might have some information about that. Do we want to share that with law enforcement? **P. Haller** thinks we have talked about possibly bringing Winterfest and the Town's relationship to the festival up again later in the summer to discuss if they will support it.

**J. Andrews** personally struggles with the idea that the VAST trail is not happening because somebody took inappropriate action to stop it and did not work within the process of discussion and discovery that the board goes through with all their decision making. She would love to go back to VAST and see if they would reconsider because she does not like the way the board's hand was forced. It usurps their authority.

**D. Jorschick** agreed. Regarding Paul's public comment, they did take a vote on the trail as a board, and it was unanimous. The decision was made to work with VAST on this piece and then we had an individual decide they did not like it, and they took it upon themselves to interject and do something unlawful to stop the trail. She agreed we should revisit with VAST to mend the relationship. **J. Andrews** feels sad for Andy, he conducted himself very professionally and she feels regardless if the trail moves forward she wants to mend that relationship because she does not want him to feel that Westford is hostile towards VAST.

The board had already tried apologizing to VAST. In one of the emails that had been received, an involved individual had apologized to the board. **P. Haller** wondered if that person would be willing to work with who took the signs down and make an apology to VAST. Perhaps that will get VAST to change their mind. **C. Mathieu** would be happy to collaborate on a conversation between the parties. **J. Andrews** thinks making amends is preferable to punishment in this instance, so she would prefer to try to get the parties to apologize to VAST before getting the police involved. **D. Gauthier** suggested reaching out to Andy if he would come back after Winterfest is done because it looks like there will be plenty of snow coming.

**Barb Peck** was present. She asked who had authorized the VAST trail. Yes they voted to have the trail go through the Common, but they did not vote on where the trail would be. Who on the Selectboard talked to Tommy to meet with VAST? **C. Mathieu** explained that after the vote, Tommy, who works for the board, was picking up the pieces for the board when Andy came to stake the trail. At no time did the board have objection to this. **B. Peck** asked Tommy if anybody from the Selectboard talked to him after that meeting or did he take it upon himself as the administrator to talk to VAST? **T. O'Connor** noted that from Thursday to Sunday the initial stakes went up and then Tommy talked to Andy on Monday when he had come back. Andy's process was to look at clearance of the groomer. It was a pre-stake, and it was not a set in stone trail at this time, they were trying to stake out the best and safest trail for the groomer and machines. He walked it with Pat and Andy, and they ended up moving some picnic tables out of the way. **B. Peck** repeated her question. **T. O'Connor** noted that the Selectboard had given him directions to work with Andy.

**Rebecca Davanon** was present. She wanted to apologize when she made her public comment last meeting for use of the term "extortion." When she spoke she felt that in her personal sentiment it seemed like the correct word, but that was incorrect for the public discussion. She does not feel she gave the discussion the right tone by doing so. She also was unaware of all the different things that had happened, especially the nuance coming from the emails to the Selectboard. Had she known everything she would have refrained. Going forward she would like if the board could clarify in the event of Winterfest where there is a person who is not a part of town but is organizing and receiving a donation from the town, is that person subject to the Westford Personnel Policy? What could be done to prevent degradation of decorum that has happened in the past and to prevent that from happening in the future? Given some of the communications, is there a way for the town to develop a policy that protects town officials from non-personnel citizen harassment? She suggested that there be a mechanism in place to refund the town when they make a donation to an event if the event does not occur. Do they intend to provide all evidence of the alleged crime to the Saxon Hill Riders? Why is it that a single person or a small group of citizens were able to derail a decision that affects all town residents? **P. Haller** thinks many of these are great questions and would be best served when they talk about this later this year. **T. O'Connor** spoke to the policy around officials and decorum in meetings. This is a popular topic in municipalities but there is no statute that prevents harassment. Only one has made it through litigation to make it to a policy. The difficulty is first amendment rights. **J. Andrews** noted that we are a small community. Even if we had a policy we do not have enforcement ability such as police etc. The board thanked Rebecca for coming to make the public apology and felt it was a model of good behavior.

**Joan Farmer** was present. She is concerned about the precedent being set when they just slap somebody on the wrist for doing something that to her is so egregious. When somebody takes it upon themselves to break the law we are going to let them apologize? She thinks it was important enough to have the consequences. Regarding the question that Paul and Barb brought up, as far as she is aware, Tommy was asked to work for the Town of Westford and was at the meeting where the VAST trails were approved by the board so saying his meeting with them was underhanded or secretive is wrong. He works for the Town. He works for the

Selectboard. The board approved the snowmobiles. He was doing the preliminary work to construct the trails. She does not understand the controversy.

**B. Peck** took issue with the way Joan insinuated that what Tommy did was underhanded. She was under the impression that the Selectboard would be later talking about the route. Tommy is not a Selectboard member. The Selectboard has the power to make anybody an agent for the town to organize an event. If they wanted to control Carol they should make her a town agent, but they have not done that. **C. Hamdy**, Town Clerk, explained that because Winterfest is not a town event Carol could not be made a town agent unless Winterfest was a town sanctioned event. Instead, Winterfest is run independently like many other events in town, despite the Selectboard's monetary donation.

**N. Nichols** praised Casey for his handling of the meeting and how he kept temperatures down. That is one way the board can help contain these conversations and make them more constructive. He has also had conversations with people between meetings.

#### **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 Wendy Doane re: WCH & RBMH support.

The board had also received emails about the VAST discussion.

**B. Peck** had sent a letter asking that the VAST discussion not be on the agenda. She reiterated that she feels that Carol is a resident and does not have any connection to the government of the Town of Westford. So, they have no control over her. If they want control over Winterfest than they need to make her an agent for the town. This is why she did not want the VAST discussion to go any further. She feels it has been blown out of proportion. She thinks the fact that the board might want to pursue any indictment for the pulling of the VAST stakes is too over the top.

The Conservation Commission welcomed a new member, Elizabeth Ploof.

Request from **H. Cism**. UPWP grants are completed. She asked if the board has any comments she can send them on Friday.

Rural School Alliance had sent an update.

Planning Commission Appointments.

#### **COMMUNICATION**

There was no outgoing communications.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**C. Mathieu** moved to find premature public knowledge of matters relating to labor relation and agreements and confidential attorney client communication would place the town at a significant disadvantage. **P. Haller** 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed 5-0. **C. Mathieu** motioned to enter executive session at 8:32 p.m. and invite Tommy O'Connor. **J. Andrews** seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

The selectboard exited executive session at 8:07 PM.

**C. Mathieu** moved that the Town Administrator create a general rubric for use during any bid process and further instructed the Town Administrator to create a blind bid process that can be used at the discretion of the Selectboard. **P. Haller** seconded the motion, the motion carried with a 5-0 vote.

**ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Casey Mathieu  
Selectboard Chair

Callie Hamdy  
Minute Clerk

**GUEST LIST**

Dave Gauthier  
Lynn Gauthier  
Ben Bornstein  
Harmony Cism  
Barb Peck  
Joan Farmer  
J. McNall  
Tyler Whitcomb  
Kim Guidry  
Ira Allen  
Max Tyler  
Rebecca Davanon  
Paul Birnholz  
Greg Bemis  
Dave Davio  
Dick Lavallee  
Becky Roy  
Benjamin Heath  
Dave Lavallee

Maria Barden  
Andre Roy