

**SELECTBOARD MEETING
NOVEMBER 13, 2025
Minutes**

Present:	Casey Mathieu Julia Andrews Deb Jorschick Nick Nichols Pat Haller	Greg Barrows Tommy O'Connor Callie Hamdy Sean Cushing
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Guests: see attached.

The meeting was called to order at 6:25 p.m. The meeting was held in person and via Zoom.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Added Access Permit and Trailer Quotes to Highway Department. Added VT Trails and Greenways Council, GBIC, and TRIPLE H (Home Health Hospice) to Budget Requests under Discussion. Added Recreation Update to Correspondences, Letter to the School Redistricting Task Force to Discussion. Added Executive Session.

J. Andrews motioned to approve changes. **N. Nichols** seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lori Johnson read some details from the 2025 Groundwater Monitoring report in regards to 1705 to the meeting. The contamination from the underground tank has greatly reduced and the trend is expected to continue.

MINUTES

J. Andrews motioned to bump the October 23, 2025 minutes to the next meeting which will be December 4th. **P. Haller** seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

CCRPC UPDATE

Ben Bornstein, CCRPC Representative, was present. The CCRPC dues were increased by 4% because there is a requirement for the federal government to provide funding that 20% of all the funds comes from nonfederal sources. It is Ben's understanding that December 10th is the date for the legislative breakfast. **P. Haller** had attended the October CCRPC event for Selectboards and City Council members as a groups discussion. His thoughts were that clearly the towns of Burlington, South Burlington, Winooski are dealing a lot with crime and housing issues. **P. Haller** thinks we are lucky that when we were going around talking about what is more trying for the town both Jericho and Westford joked we have goats in our roads. With perspective we are in good shape. Richmond was nervous about future federal grants if they were to flood again.

ROAD SCHEDULE

S. Cushing, Road Foreman, was present and went over the Road Schedule from October 24, 2025 to November 13, 2025.

REVIEW FY'26 HIGHWAY BUDGET STATUS REPORT

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

ACCESS PERMIT

Tony and Jessica Pouliot were requesting an Access Permit off Osgood Hill Road. Sean had looked at the proposed access and had no issues with it. **P. Haller** motioned to approve the access permit. **N. Nichols** seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

TRAILER QUOTES

Sean had provided three quotes for a trailer to the board. It is in the capital budget for replacement this year. The quotes were Perfection Trailer Sales: \$16,500. Rainy Jay Fournier \$20,000 and North Country Repair \$22,686. Sean was looking for the one from Perfection. **P. Haller** asked when the trailer was needed by? Before mud season.

MAILBOX CONCERN – SANCTUARY ROAD

This had been spoken on previously in the year. The Homeowners Association on Sanctuary Road had put up mailboxes 10-12 mailboxes along Plains Road. Ditching was done behind them, and the mailboxes are now leaning. The water from the culvert hits the remaining dirt that the mailboxes are set in and has been deteriorating them. The HOA's concern with fixing the mailboxes is they cannot pull it upright because of the solid dirt, they are going to have to dirt down and put it upright. After that there will be a lot of space behind them. They are not going to be able to stabilize them. They had spoken to USPS wanting an alternative location to put the boxes, but this was vetoed by USPS. The members of the HOA would like the culvert behind the boxes extended another 7-8 feet. They would also like drainage stone put behind the boxes. The HOA felt the lean degree was 10-15 degrees. When it rains water gets in the mailboxes. They feel it will only get worse over time and are worried about USPS deeming the boxes unsuitable for delivery.

C. Mathieu asked if the mailbox structure was put in for the development? That was correct. **D. Jorschick** had driven by the boxes and concurred the material behind the boxes is deteriorating. **C. Mathieu** wanted to touch base with Sean over the boxes on Monday. **P. Haller** agreed, but he wanted to be careful that we are not setting a precedent. The road crew is working in good faith to do the work to keep the roads open and safe. Mailboxes do tip occasionally. He does not want this to be the beginning that every time the road crew does some work that somebody comes to the town wanting work done on their mailboxes. He feels this is very specific to the way the road is shifting. He does not want the road crew fixing mailboxes. **P. Haller** thinks that we might get storms upon storms, and we do not know what the weather will do. We can hope to fix it after discussion with Sean, but the HOA should be prepared that it might not happen quickly as road crew priorities shift with weather.

BUDGET REQUESTS

Age Well

Last year's allocation was \$1,500. They are requesting \$1,800 this year.

COTS

Request of \$250.

Howard Center

Requested \$2,000.

Steps to End DV

Requesting \$300. Represents 50 Cents per resident in town.

VT Family Network

Requesting \$250.

VT Trails and Greenways Council

Requesting \$250.

Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation (GBIC)

Requesting \$200.

TRIPLE H (Home Health Hospice)

Requesting \$6,500.

Winterfest

Carol Winfield was present. Winterfest is requesting an increased donation of \$1500. She would like to hire more artists/performers with that money. Currently it is a lot of volunteer work, so they are not in Winterfest budget right now. **P. Haller** asked if there is a Winterfest budget. There is not one. It usually costs about \$4,000 to run. Key elements include the horses and music.

CCRPC

B. Bornstein was present. 4% increase. \$377 more from last year.

Fairfax Rescue

Fairfax Rescue had provided their annual report and are requesting level funding.

Fire Department

Garrett Bartlett, Fire Chief, was present. They are asking for a 3.46% increase from last year. Most of the increase was equipment for personal safety and maintenance. They are trying to be more proactive with gear washing and their memberships. During the course of a house fire, they are exposed to all sorts of chemical and PFAs etc. The cost is to have a company come in from NH and professionally wash and get the chemicals out of their gear. The reason they have had to go with a company is that we are unable to put those PFAs etc. into our limited wastewater system. With a company it is disposed of properly. **P. Haller** noted the state is progressing towards having regional wastewater plants being destroyers of PFAs. In the future those plants might be able to take the collective water from our own system but that's years away.

B. Bornstein was present. He had looked into other funding for this and believes that to date a lot of the cleaning of the gear was done with Essex Junction. Is that option no longer available? **G. Bartlett** explained they have a gear extractor hooked into their municipal system that ships it to their sewer system. They have been more generous letting us borrow it in the past, but he is not sure what they would do in regards to charging for a service.

Recreation Committee

Nobody was present from the rec committee, but they are requesting level funding. **T. O'Connor** noted that it is mostly stipends for event managers and a rink manager.

Center for Independence Living

Request of \$100.

Planning & Zoning Department

Harmony Cism, Zoning Administrator and Planning Coordinator was present. She is requesting a modest cost of living increase, decrease for travel and estimated overtime. More importantly she is hoping they will budget for a Town Planner and start the hiring process for a Town Planner. She has been filling in that position for the past two years but there are more projects on the horizon, a town plan update, and 1705. This is all going to require a lot of planning and she does not have the education or experience to do that. It is not the job the town hired Harmony to do. **C. Mathieu** asks how much of Harmony's current time would be freed up by a Planner. It would help staff the Planning Commission, which currently meets once a month, but not a lot. She spends a total of 10-12 hours of her week preparing for meetings, but she is just doing the bare minimum. A planner would be doing a lot more than what she is doing.

Town Clerk

C. Hamdy, Town Clerk, was present. She is requesting a modest increase. She explained that the Town Clerk and Board of Civil Authority requests are a little different than other departments because of the fluctuating nature of elections which is why the increase might look larger than expected. This is because during FY'27 There will be 4 elections run. The salaries were a cost of living adjustment.

Treasurer

G. Barrows, Treasurer, was present. He was requesting a cost of living increase but did not yet add in the additional hours in he does each year to accommodate the auditors.

Library

They are maintaining the salary of the former library director for the new library director as the new librarian is highly qualified. The trustees felt it was beholden to the candidate to maintain the same salary level. **J. Andrews** asked if they still have the trustee fund and how much it is offsetting the town's contribution. The trustees noted there were three very hard years with the budget and they used the trustee fund for operational expenses during that time, but that is not its intended use. It comes about from fundraising and donations, and it should not be looked at as a fund for such.

TOWN COMMON USE REQUESTS

There were requests to use the Common for a Wedding and for Winterfest. Normally the requests are for simple things and 90% can be approved by the Town Administrator/Common Committee chair. There are certain considerations when it needs to be a Selectboard decision, especially if alcohol and/or food is involved. The alcohol vendors carry their own insurance.

C. Mathieu does not recall a wedding ever being held on the Common. He understands the bar has their liability license. What about if somebody not drinking at the bar trips and falls? **D. Jorschick** noted that they can ask the person holding the event to have an insurance rider for that. **P. Haller** was conflicted because part of their hope is the civic buildings have the ability to have their events paid for as ways to sustain those buildings. **J. Andrews** appreciated Pat's thoughts but had a different conflict. 75 people on the Common for 6-8 hours? She has concerns on how the neighbors are going to feel about that, the residents that live directly on the Common. We do not get to decide or control the behaviors of the group. 8 hours plus alcohol in what is essentially people's front yards, it could go very well, but it could not. **Lori Johnson** noted that they had reserved the Common Hall as a weather fallback. **L. Johnson** also pointed out that as part of the Common use it cannot go past dark and they do need to respect the residents. They would have to be off the Common by 8pm. She mentioned there are a lot of other events/private gatherings that the Common is used for, but it is much smaller and less time than this wedding. **C. Mathieu** asked if there is a DJ involved. They had not mentioned anything about music. The board agreed there needed to be more guardrails around this event before approval. **J. Andrews** also wanted them to pay for a porta let clean out. Lori will communicate with them. **D. Jorschick** asked if out of courtesy should we post on FPF this is happening? She does not want the neighbors to be taken by surprise. **G. Bartlett** asked where they are going to park 75 vehicles. We do not want them to hinder an emergency response in the surrounding area. **L. Johnson** had already suggested that they park at the school and organize a shuttle system. **T. O'Connor** asked if the alcohol would conflict with the school's no alcohol zone.

P. Haller motioned to approve the Winterfest use of the Common. **J. Andrews** seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

WINTERFEST PARKING

They wanted permission to put up the no parking signs on Brookside for the safety of traffic and the horses. **J. Andrews** moved to allow this. **N. Nichols** seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

ADD TOWN ADMIN TO CEMETERY BANK ACCOUNTS

J. Andrews moved to add Tommy O'Connor to the Cemetery Commission Bank account. **P. Haller** seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

HOLIDAY TREE

The Westford Conservation Commission (WCC) is suggesting they would love to take over the Westford Christmas Tree on the Common. Previously this was a tree in the gazebo, but the WCC would like to plant a tree with the intention of using it as a Christmas tree each year. **D. Jorschick**, her family, and another family had been doing the tree the last couple of years. She is in favor of planting a tree, but she thinks the Common Committee needs to be involved in the conversation. Secondly it is too late in the season to plant a tree, so she would like to see us get a tree from the woman that had donated the tree last year but to do something in conjunction and get a plan in place for planting. **Kirsten Tyler** from the WCC agreed. When they suggested the planting it would be the beginning stages of planning as the tree would not be planted until next fall at earliest. If we do the WCC would be happy to lead the project. As far as the tree for this year they are also happy to take over the duties to make sure it happens, and they also suggested that other town entities help out in future years.

LETTER TO THE SCHOOL REDISTRICTING TASK FORCE

K. Tyler and **J. Andrews** had met and drafted a letter to send to the task force based on the discussion from the previous meeting. It tries to ride the line between asking the task force to be considerate to rural communities and dives a bit into Westford specific details around our cost per pupil which has increased significantly since the loss of the middle schoolers and that whole situation of which we had no control over.

J. Andrews noted that they specifically wanted the signature to not just be the chair, but all selectboard members because she felt this lands different than just the chair alone. **K. Tyler** added that the last meeting of the task force is on November 20th and they will have their last discussions and provide the legislature with their recommendations on December 1st. She urged the board be prudent. Other districts, towns, and the public have already sent in information. Most recently the task force has rejected the county-based map, which is the one in which we would be in a district with over 20,000 students. On Monday they decided to reject/stop focusing on the CTE based map and instead focus on another one where we would be in a massive district, and they have talked about the fact that they are leaning towards/interested in more of an incentive plan where districts are incentivized to merge with a focus on regional high schools, but we should keep pushing them.

P. Haller motioned that we take the letter drafted by Julia and Kirsten for the redistricting task force verbatim to be sent to the task force with all the selectboard member's signatures. **N. Nichols** seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

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

Bridge Update

After the request for the attorney to reach out we finally made contact and said all the material is in for the smaller repairs and they are awaiting a certain type of oak for the larger repairs. That is why there has been limited communication. We are looking to see if there is any restriction on the grant time wise.

Update from Rec Committee

At their last meeting they had a new person join the committee, Bayley Greer. They are stretched thin without a coordinator; the old coordinator still has all the coordinator supplies.

COMMUNICATION

A dog in need in Westford was recently in need, and a groomer in St. Albans had groomed the dog for free, Allie's Comfort Clips in St. Albans.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

C. Mathieu made a motion that premature public knowledge of a letter from a lawyer would put the town at significant disadvantage. **J. Andrews** seconded. Motion passed 5-0. **C. Mathieu** moved to enter executive session, inviting Tommy. **P. Haller** seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 9:25PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Casey Mathieu
Selectboard Chair

Callie Hamdy
Minute Clerk

GUEST LIST

Dave Gauthier
Garrett Barlett
Kim Guidry
Ira Allen
Harmony Cism
Lori Johnson
Dave Lavallee
Ben Bornstein
Dick Lavallee
Keith Simpson
Jennifer Simpson
Carol Winfield
Lee McClenny
Lynn Gauthier
Kirsten Tyler
Erin Ramsey
John Quinn
Elizabeth Wermuth Nichols
Thayer Nichols
Marge Hamrell
Bree Drapa
Maryann Bassford
Kelsey Cross