

SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2026, 6:00 P.M.

Those attending in person: Mike Hogan, Jenn Miner, Fred Ducharme, Peggy Miller, Jeanne Johnson, Betty Ritter, Frank Kampf, Maria Acchione, Dean Deasy, Steve Cox, Tricia Cox, Gary Gulka; via zoom: Kris Schmitt, Brittany Butler

1. Call Meeting to Order – the meeting was called to order by Mike Hogan at 6:03 p.m.
2. Approve Agenda – a motion was made by Fred seconded by Peggy. Mike wanted to add information about SB responsibility for appointing an elected office if no one runs. Jeanne would like to add some information at Personal Property tax, and the CLD and COD information. Motion carried with the changes.
3. Public Comment – Tricia Cox was checking about the drawings for the new fire department. It was suggested to post it online. Dean stated they cannot post do this online. It will be posted in office and on bulletin board.
4. Approve Minutes of January 6, 2026 Meeting – A motion was made by Jenn with a second by Fred, motion carried.
5. Highway Update
 - a. Other Business – they have the grader out and pushing back snow. Salt has been an issue. Maria wanted to know about State taking over 215. We are trying to get an appointment. State takes care of Groton Road so we should be able to discuss this with the state. Dean stated that if he must call Sid at 3:00 a.m. he always comes out. Dean wanted to check about a road sign for Rolls Knolls Way. Mike will check with Sid on this.
6. Gary Gulka
 - a. Review and approve Dubois & King contract for flood mitigation work related to Cabot Garage relocation – We have a contract with them, but we will need to amend contract and select 2 sites. They are still working on the contract. He stated that there are two sites: Whittier Hill owned by Cabot Creamery and Elm Street (Town owned property). This will not be any cost to town but ask that Mike could sign the contract that will be here within a day or so. He did not want to wait for the next SB meeting. The Board agreed that Mike would be able to sign the contract when it comes in.
 - b. Town Forest – Update on sign removal. Gary is speaking on behalf of the Trails Committee. This is regarding the sign placed in late October and was removed by Shaun Brooks. The SB asked that Gary and Brittany meet with Shaun. He felt that it was too large and blocked the view accessing South Walden Road, which Gary agrees. But we should have Town Forest Access Road. There was an existing sign by the boy scouts years ago. We put the same name as they had. Some on the Trails Committee suggested that Shuan pay for the sign that he destroyed. We have not complied with the deed. We can make a sign and road names – should be called Brooks Road. Straight up the access to his house. On South Walden Road on Route 215 and E911 access. We are hoping to resolve this with Town Forest Road and Brooks Access. We should have contacted Shaun and we didn't do this. We can resolve this issue. The road should be what the deed says. The access should be done correctly to help being a neighbor. We should confer with him and then make the best change. Brooks Road to Shaun's house. Slim Payne's Road remains the same. Steve stated that good communication is the best.
 - c. Review and approve contracts for Environmental Review and Archeological Assessment for north tributary bridge replacement project: there are two prerequisites – one to do an environmental review and an archeological assessment must be in place. The two contracts would be around \$7,500. He would like to get an environmental review ASAP and have Mike sign for this. We front the money and will be reimbursed. The archeological assessment can wait until the next SB meeting. This would be a desktop review. May have to have an amendment if there are any problems. Mike will sign this one with the support of the Board. Deadlines are at the end of March.
7. Review and Sign Warrant – The Board took a few minutes to read the Warrant. Mike would like to check on Article 11, but we will move that this be approved that it will be non-binding and the rest of the warning is approved with a motion by Mike with a second by Jenn. Motion carried.

8. Update on West Hill Pond Emergency Action Plan Meeting – Jenn reviewed the meeting we had on Thursday. During the meeting potential solutions got the dam. Currently the property owners are in dispute because they are the owner. It may be related to changes in law. A sleuth gate will not be accepted by State unless there is a future. Fred brought up to siphon water off the dam itself. Dean and Jenn had a conversation and there might be some problems with this. We must be careful where the water is going so it does not go on the road or infrastructure. Some conversations were discussed about a “slinky” to be on top of the dam which will divert the water. She has talked with the State, and they will approve it if they have approval from Erickson’s who own the house next to the dam. She discussed this with the Ericksons, and they are willing to have some conversations. They would like to meet with Jenn and Dean to understand the entire process. We then could have an agreement stating the situation. Dean stated the dry hydrant is located higher and is impractical because of road being higher. We would use an upside-down pipe (slinky) which drops down on the downhill side of the brook. It can pump 500 gallons a minute and have a shut off valve on it to control the water output. We could put one or two and engineers should decide. Possibly a shutoff valve. It is not that expensive, around \$2,000. This can’t stay over the winter. It is an option. Steve asked: is there a specific level for the dam. Mike, we do not have that, what we want to do is take the pressure off of the dam.

Jenn, this was encouraging and there is not a lot of state funding, willing for the state and owners to have time to go through this. Mike is meeting with USDA on Friday, and they possibly money for work on the dam.

Maria wanted to know if Jenn did take overseeing the WHPD. Jenn explained that anything regarding the WHPD will come to the Emergency Management Director and if needed with involve the incident commander.

9. Discuss cell phone coverage in area – Mike was stating the problem regarding the coverage we have had lately. It is referenced in the Town Plan – challenges and needs we are facing and the need for cell phone coverage needs to be updated regularly. He gave everyone a handout regarding cell service. The State put in a plan for cell coverage. They could cover the lack of cell coverage for entire state at a cost of 23-24 million to cover. We need to think about areas that need coverage. We have two towers at ATT on Bothfeld Road and Bolton Road. Betty will put the handout on our website.

Dean stated that cars that come to a sudden stop, automatically on impact place a call to 911. It is called crash alert. It is extremely important. FD uses 911 to get on board and they continue to receive the messages, but if people can’t call out there is a problem.

Mike asked if there was any chance of a tower on Cabot Creamery. Would this affect their ACT 250. Brittany said that would. Even if we put something on Cabot Creamery, it would not reach Route 2. It will take everyone involved to work to get this through. Silos – AT&T – 140’ \$150,000. 50’ tower is just as effective.

Peggy – was it was on Klinger property. People are concerned about being on their property.

10. Water and Wastewater

a. Update –

1. membranes – we need to order these in order to operate but they also need to find the problem of why we keep having problems.
2. Dean wanted to check about the hydrants. There is problem with other towns hydrants freezing up and wanted a monthly report. Betty said she would check into this.
3. We are checking our monitoring system. Consolidated lines to WW have been down and we have no alert for WW for problems or fire. Dean suggested we check the Church’s alarm system and the cost.

11. Town Clerk's Office

a. Orders – were signed

b. Other Business – There has been a glitch on the website (further up on an error by Seth’s provider and it was repaired later today. It is required that we put all meetings on the website, but because of this glitch (well beyond Seth’s control and ours it was not posted. However, it was posted on FPD, CC and 3 places in town.

c. We are working to get the defibrillator installed.

12. Other Business –

- a. Should there be any vacancies that are not filled the statute allows the vacancies to be filled by the SB until the next election. Questions were asked about qualifications. Betty has done a job description, and it does involve lots of detail and customer service. This will all be taken into consideration for an interview. Also, write-in does remain on the ballot even if no one petitioned to sign.
- b. Business personal property – 1999 town meeting – to not tax below \$5K – passed. Listers agree and it is time to raise the value – move up to \$25,000. There are many businesses that fall under this. It would help to support small businesses or bring coming into town.
- c. We had a full appraisal in 2020 and a statistical appraisal in 2024. The state is now saying that the town is not required to do an appraisal in 2026. Given the number of towns that are required to do an appraisal, this will not happen this year. We have not heard anything from the State about this, so we will wait to hear from the State.

13. Motion to Adjourn – a motion was made by Fred and a second by Jenn, motion carried and we adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Ritter

Meeting summary

Quick recap

The Cabin Select Board meeting covered various operational and administrative matters, including updates on highway operations, signage issues, and contract approvals for infrastructure projects. The board discussed cell phone coverage concerns and explored potential solutions for improving telecommunications in the area. They also addressed town planning matters, including business tax exemptions and the upcoming town report, while noting the need for continued community involvement and coordination with property owners.

Next steps

- [Gary: Follow up with Dubois and King to receive and review the draft contract for further evaluation of two garage relocation sites, and request board authorization to sign prior to next meeting if received.](#)
- [Gary: Go out to bid and, once approved, proceed with contracting for the environmental review for the North Tributary bridge replacement, with goal to complete by end of March.](#)
- [Gary: Wait to bring the archaeological assessment contract for the North Tributary bridge to the next select board meeting for approval.](#)
- [Gary: Talk to property owner Sean Brooks to confirm agreement on road naming \(Brooks Road\) and signage for the town forest access, and report back to the board.](#)
- [Betty \(or designated board member\): Post the wireless plans publicly, including online and physical copies as discussed, and ensure copies are available downstairs, in the conference area, and on the public board outside.](#)
- [Dean and Betty: Meet with the Erickson property owners \(Red House\) via Zoom/Teams to discuss placement and terms of the "slinky" siphon device for West Pond Dam, including legal agreement details for installation, inspection, and maintenance.](#)
- [Gary: Bring up the possibility of USDA EWP program funding for West Pond Dam work at the upcoming Friday meeting with USDA.](#)
- [Fred: Review the proposal for cellular communicator for the wastewater plant fire alarm system, compare costs with other references \(e.g., church system\), and report back to board before proceeding.](#)
- [Fred: Ensure H2O provides a monthly report to the fire department on hydrant maintenance and freeze status.](#)
- [Fred: Send reminder to all relevant parties about the Town Highway 47 inspection on January 29th at 3:00 PM, and ensure Sid or a highway crew member attends.](#)
- [Betty: Complete and distribute the Town Report by January 29th for review and feedback, with final version ready for Winooski by February 1.](#)
- [Listers \(Jeanne\): Continue analysis of COD/CLA reappraisal triggers and update the board if/when a state reappraisal letter is received.](#)
- [Board: If necessary, post notice/request for candidates to fill any upcoming town clerk or other vacancies, and prepare to interview/appoint as needed per statute.](#)

- [Listers \(Jeanne\): Begin drafting article and public meeting process for potential increase of business personal property tax exemption \(from \\$5,000 to \\$25,000\) for future town meeting consideration.](#)

Summary

Cabin Select Board Operations Update

The Cabin Select Board meeting began with Mike discussing technical issues before proceeding with the agenda. The board approved the agenda and discussed public information regarding wireless plans, deciding to post them in both digital and physical formats. They reviewed the minutes from the January 6th meeting and received an update on highway operations, noting that the road crew was performing well despite some challenges with salt delivery. The board also discussed the possibility of the state taking over maintenance of Route 215, with Greg, Bert, and another member working to arrange a meeting with the Secretary of Transportation. Lastly, they addressed the need for a street sign for Rose Knoll Way, which was approved by the Select Board.

Project Approvals and Environmental Reviews

Mike discussed two main topics with the select board. First, she requested authorization to sign a contract amendment for the Cabot garage relocation project, which involves selecting two sites for further evaluation. The board agreed to this request. Second, Gary sought approval to proceed with environmental and archaeological reviews for the North Tributary bridge replacement project, which are prerequisites for receiving community development funding. The board agreed to authorize Betty to sign contracts for the environmental review, with the archaeological assessment to be discussed at the next meeting. Betty also mentioned a request from the Trails Committee regarding a sign at the town forest entrance on South Walden Road.

Town Forest Signage Dispute Resolution

Betty reported on a meeting with Sean Brooks regarding signage issues at a town forest access point. Brooks took issue with the size of the sign blocking sight lines and claimed the town had not complied with road naming and signage requirements from 2016 deed. The committee discussed potential solutions, including naming the access road "Brooks Road" as per the deed and adding private property respect signs. Betty offered to speak with Brooks about the road naming change, pending his agreement. The board also briefly discussed warrant articles for an upcoming town meeting.

Town Meeting and Dam Solutions

The board approved the wording for the 26th town meeting, with Article 11 adjusted to include "non-binding." Betty discussed the West Pond Emergency Action Plan, highlighting ongoing legal review by property owners regarding dam ownership and potential solutions. The state approved a "slinky" device to reduce dam pressure, pending property owner cooperation. Betty reported positive progress with the Ericksons, who agreed to discuss the device's placement via video conference.

Water Management and Infrastructure Updates

Dean discussed a potential water management solution involving a siphon system with a 6-inch pipe, which could handle 500 gallons per minute and approximately 760 million gallons per day, though engineers would need to determine if one or two systems were required. She noted that while the state previously opposed changing sluice gate positions, they are now open to further discussions, and property owners are also willing to work on a solution. Betty also raised concerns about inadequate cell phone coverage in the area, referencing town plan sections that highlight the need for updated telecommunications regulations and better emergency services coverage, particularly along Route 2.

Cell Service Improvement Discussion

The town discussed cell coverage issues, with Betty highlighting complaints about poor service and its importance for emergency calls and daily communication. Dean shared experiences of accidents where cell service was crucial, while Betty suggested exploring tower placement options, including the Creamery property, and noted that smaller towers could be effective and cost-effective. The group also discussed updating the town plan to address cell service, with Betty emphasizing the need for community involvement and coordination with landowners and the select board. Additionally, they reviewed a proposal to install a cellular communicator for the wastewater plant's fire monitoring system, which would replace the current Consolidated phone line service, though the cost was questioned.

Operational Challenges and Compliance Updates

The meeting discussed several operational issues, including problems with phone lines affecting an alarm system and the wastewater plant, with Betty expressing concerns about the town's relationship with Consolidated. Kris mentioned a mandatory VOSHA inspection for the wastewater plant's crane, which she had to sign off on. The group also addressed the need for monthly reports on hydrant checks to the fire department, as highlighted by Brett following a recent incident of frozen hydrants in Swan. Additionally, the town report was progressing well, with Jeannie and Shirley contributing to its completion, and a reminder was given about an upcoming inspection for Town Highway 47 on the 29th.

Town Updates and Tax Reforms

Betty provided updates on several town matters, including the installation of a defibrillator and improvements to the auditorium lighting. She discussed the town report's progress and mentioned Betty's potential retirement in March, noting that if a new town clerk is not appointed, Betty is willing to stay on to train the successor. Betty also addressed the issue of business personal property tax exemptions, recommending an increase in the exemption limit from \$5,000 to \$25,000 to alleviate the tax burden on small businesses. Lastly, she highlighted the town's upcoming reappraisal due to a high Coalition of Distribution (COD) rate, expressing concern about the inherent unfairness in current tax categories and the need for further investigation.