

SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, March 24, 2026, 6:00 P.M.

Those attending in person: Jenn Miner, Mike Hogan, Fred Ducharme, Skip Bothfeld, Amy Monahan, Jeanne Johnson, Brittany Butler, Lori Augustinak, Beth Herrick, Trish Cox, Sid Griggs, Frank Kampf

Those attending via zoom: Kris Schmitt, Gary Gulka, Ruth Goodrich, Stephen Hogan, Alisson Hogan, Cathleen Besch, Aaron Celley

1. Call Meeting to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm by Jenn Miner.
2. Approve Agenda - Fred made the motion, Mike 2nd motion carried.
3. Public Comment -none in the room Mike read comment from Rory Thibault Jen read public comment from Dean Deasy. Jenn commented, the EMD role has always come from the floor. Mike commented that title 24 allows the selectboard to appoint and unappoint as needed. Ruth Goodrich commends Jenn in Mentoring our new EMD, Doug Cooke, there is no better person to train him. Skip agrees that a mentor is needed. Possible agenda item on EMD for next meeting.
4. Approve Minutes of March 10, 2026 – a motion was made by Mike 2nd by Skip, no discussion, all were in favor
5. Appointment by selectboard for the Chair of CCIF: There have been no appointments from the school, and there are no candidates in mind from the board. Jenn is going to reach out to Chris Tormey and we will appoint next meeting.
6. CCA Grant resiliency hub (action): Lori talked about the role that the selectboard would take on, which would be that of a support role. Peg makes the motion to Join and support the Resilience Hub, Fred 2nd, motion carried.
7. Flood Mitigation Project Updates, Gary Gulka: Community development Block Grant, North Tributary: Trying to get all the paperwork in order to begin, June for historic preservation, we will need to talk with several landowners on easements. For now, we need informal memorandums with those landowners. Mike wants to know do we work with town attorney on those easements and is that covered by the grant. Gary says easements are not needed currently, but they are funded through the grant. Working also on drafting an RFP, should be ready in about 2 weeks' time. Landowners affected are Millers, Rec field, Warner, Morrison, Curriers.

Cabot Garage Relocation: Funded by VT emergency management, Dubois and King are working on site feasibility for the 2 properties; Willey Building and Whittier Hill. Looking closely at parking on the willey building site, if parking is lost the town would not be in favor of that site.
Other funding: The BRIC program was talked about, it had funding then it didn't, it is still not being funded. Waiting on updates from VT emergency management.
8. John Cookson- Recycle Center- Not present, put on agenda for next meeting.
9. Listers- acceptance of redetermination of Coefficient of Dispersion motion by mike and Peggy 2nd all were in favor. All accept the redetermination of the COD by the state of VT. Signed by the Chair.
10. Highway Update #5
 - a. Updates-Fenoff has started on Lovely Road bridge project; all the trees have come down that needed to and the precast has started to be made. Timeline of 3 weeks. Quotes on replacing the 6-wheeler, new emission laws drive price up 15-40,000. Village sweeping will be done by us with a rented machine. Locked

in lot lines to paint cross walks and lines, for May-June. Gravel is going up, .50 a yard at least. Prices on sand for next season. Grants in aid, application has been started. Aprons, Mack MTN, Ducharme and Sawmill. Whittier has been talked about, but it is a larger project than we want to do today. Ditching has a long list but we won't get to it all. Mike wonders about reusing culverts, Sid says they do when they can. Sid has another page of roads that they need to cut brush on. Hauled gravel to Mack Mountain and the bottom of Danville hill, 6 loads only (So far). He wants to put some base on Old RT 2 if the budget allows as they have not had to touch it since they ground the asphalt.

b. Other Business- by end of 2027 we have to have a redetermination of hydrologically connected road segments. Mike made a comment about speeding through the village and lower village. A letter to the Creamery stating the speed limits, it is the haulers not the box or whey trucks. (put on next agenda: creamery speeding) Speed indicators, none are working

11. Water and Wastewater

- a. Update historically been the town Clerk but with Betty leaving and all of Brittany's positions that amy would like to be the rep. Mike agrees. Amy needs more communication when it comes to bills and what is being spent. Quick books is going away and after April 3rd we can't bill water and wastewater until the meters are in.
- b. Approval for hookup to municipal wastewater. Jenkins/Chase and Chase-Elm St
- c. Other business

12. Treasurer

a. Current Budget Review and discussion: Highway; accidents at 215 south, since the police didn't come out the town didn't get insurance information on the vehicles and the town has to replace the guard rail (4000). Town insurance doesn't cover liability; it could but it doesn't. Accident on South Walden Road a few years ago the town had the driver's name, and they were responsible for replacing the guard rails. The Fire Department should have the ability to get insurance information if town property is affected. Jen wonders if the fire department would be in violation of HIPPA if they shared information on those 3 accidents. What would coverage cost the town, asked Mike. Amy does not think it would be that expensive, she will investigate it. Jenn Thinks the best way to go is insurance because the legalities of the fire department getting that information.

Last winter a Dry hydrant on RT 2 near Mack Mountain was hit, we never got documentation for the accident and now we need to figure out how we get that fixed. The hydrant is not usable. Amy is going to submit the claim.

b. Discussion and approval of cash management agreements- new changes that have been made, closed water, wastewater and cemetery account. This is making it easier to track in one system instead of going into multiple accounts. The bank has had to make some changes that require signatures and she is letting the board know.

MERP grant: Amy cc'd on all financial aspects as well as weekly meetings? The board agrees, weekly meetings as needed.

Current fiscal year's budget: FD asked Amy to look at the budget. 30,000 to a sinking fund as well as an additional 10,000. This money will be put into a CD or something of that nature. The other thing was 10,000 for the fast squad, they want to reallocate that money, Amy asks, do they need approval from the SB. Mike says general fund line items are generally not things that are done, but in this case that would be allowable for what they want to use it for (gear).

With the new overtime laws in place we will/are over budget for custodial/assistant we are over budget, to no fault of that employee but just the way that payroll must be done.

13. Town Clerk's Office

- a. Orders
- b. Lawn Maintenance bids-discussion and action- discussion and motion to approve DR was made by mike and 2nd by Jenn all in favor. When writing up the contract, make sure there is something about liability for damages to trees etc.
- c. Other Business

14. Other Business -Letter from the town to landowner on Thistle hill. Some changes were made said Mike Hogan. Another complaint came in about garbage on a residence on South Walden Road.
15. Motion to Adjourn made by Fred, 2nd Mike, motion carried adjourned at 8:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brittany Butler
Town Clerk

Meeting summary

Quick recap

The Cabot Select Board meeting focused on various town operations and projects. The board discussed public comments regarding the recently appointed Emergency Management Director, with concerns raised about his qualifications. Sid provided updates on highway projects, including tree removal on Lovely Road and progress on the precast project scheduled for July. The board approved joining the CCA Grant Resiliency Hub and discussed flood mitigation projects, including the North Tributary Bridge and Cabot Garage relocation studies. Gary reported on potential funding opportunities through the BRIC program. The board addressed the Listers' acceptance of the redetermination of the Coefficient of Dispersion (COD) and discussed water and wastewater administration responsibilities, with Amy and Fred being appointed as administrators. Financial matters were reviewed, including concerns about guardrail repairs following accidents on Route 215 and the need for better communication regarding water meter installations. The conversation ended with discussions about grant management responsibilities and budget considerations, particularly regarding custodial costs and overtime payments.

Summary

Emergency Management Director Appointment Discussion

The meeting began with technical difficulties as participants struggled with connecting an Owl device due to a faulty cord. After resolving the technical issues, the Select Board discussed public comments regarding the recent appointment of an Emergency Management Director (EMD). Two letters were read expressing concerns about the appointment process and the qualifications of the appointed individual. Jen clarified that historically, the EMD position had not been advertised but rather selected from the floor, and announced a planned meeting with the appointed EMD to discuss emergency management plans and address any questions. The Select Board acknowledged the importance of the EMD role following recent flood events and discussed the need for a more formal vetting process for future appointments.

Infrastructure and Road Project Updates

The meeting covered several key updates and discussions. Jennifer is mentoring the new emergency management director, with concerns addressed about her being able to balance this role with select board chair duties. The minutes from the March 10th meeting were approved as submitted. Sid provided updates on road projects, including tree removal on Lovely Road, precast construction scheduled for July, and equipment replacement needs due to new emission standards driving up prices. The discussion also covered various infrastructure projects including road repairs, culvert replacements, and potential grant funding for improvements to Sawmill Road and West Hill Pond areas.

Road Maintenance and Safety Updates

The meeting covered several key topics including road maintenance updates and public safety concerns. Sid reported positive progress on road work, noting that Old Route 2 is holding up well with only minor issues, and discussed plans to focus on hydrologically connected segments this summer in preparation for a reassessment scheduled for May 2024. The group addressed a significant public safety issue regarding excessive speeding by commercial trucks, particularly milk haulers and Cabot trucks, with speeds reaching 80-90+ mph on Route 2 during peak hours. The board agreed to consider adding this as an agenda item for future discussion to address the safety concern. The conversation ended with the select board's official motion to join the CCA Resiliency Hub grant, with the role being defined as participating in town-wide forums and supporting energy conservation efforts.

Flood Mitigation Projects Updates

Gary provided updates on two flood mitigation projects. For the North Tributary Bridge project, he reported that environmental and archaeological reviews are due by May 15th, with potential grant signing targeted for June 1st.

The project requires informal memoranda of understanding from affected property owners, including Peggy and others, though legal easements are not currently needed. For the Cabot Garage Relocation project, Du Bois and King are working on site grading plans for two potential locations, with a meeting planned this week to discuss building requirements with the garage owner and architect. The ARPA funding for this project will expire soon, limiting the scope to engineering studies rather than including buyout funding.

Flood Mitigation Funding Opportunities

The group discussed various funding opportunities for flood mitigation projects, including EPA water and wastewater infrastructure funding and FEMA pre-disaster mitigation grants, though Amy noted the short turnaround time made these unlikely to succeed. Gary provided an update on the BRIC (Building Resilient Infrastructure in Communities) program, explaining that while FEMA had canceled the program in 2025, a court ruling has now required FEMA to issue FY 2024 funding, potentially accessing the \$5 billion fund over the next few years. The discussion concluded with Gary emphasizing that any flood mitigation project cannot proceed without addressing the Cabot Garage relocation issue, as engineers confirmed the project requires moving the garage.

COD Redetermination Appeal Discussion

The Select Board discussed the Lister's appeal of the 2025 Coefficient of Dispersion (COD) redetermination, where only two out of seven challenged sales were accepted, resulting in a slight increase in the COD from 21.50 to 21.67. After determining the appeal process would require significant effort with no guaranteed outcome, the board voted to accept the redetermination results rather than proceed with an April 29 hearing. The meeting also addressed water and wastewater administration, with Betty suggesting that she and Fred should take on the administrator roles instead of the Town clerk, and expressing concerns about lack of communication regarding membrane system costs and payment implications.

Financial and Water Infrastructure Updates

The meeting focused on financial communication issues and water meter installations. Amy expressed concerns about lack of communication regarding financial matters and contract amendments, emphasizing the need for better financial transparency. The group discussed water meter installations, with Betty noting that meters had been sitting in boxes since July-August due to poor planning and communication. It was confirmed that Amy and Fred would serve as administrators for financial matters, and the group learned that water meters would be installed starting Friday and Saturday on Elm Street and Danville Hill. The meeting also covered approval of a wastewater connection for Diego's property, which received state approval with an easement from a neighbor.

Guardrail Liability and Insurance Collection

The meeting discussed a \$4,000 liability issue regarding guardrail accidents on 215 where no insurance information was collected from drivers, leaving the town responsible for repairs. Betty expressed concern about the town's financial burden and suggested exploring options to collect insurance information during incidents, potentially through fire department reporting systems. The group discussed the possibility of obtaining specific coverage for guardrails and noted that without insurance information, the town's insurer cannot provide assistance.

Financial and Operational Updates Meeting

The meeting focused on several financial and operational matters. Amy discussed the need to address insurance information collection at accident scenes, noting liability concerns with taking license plate photos. She also addressed a damaged dry hydrant on Route 2 that needs repair once the snow clears. Outlined changes to cash management agreements including the closure of department-specific operating accounts. The discussion concluded with concerns about grant management, particularly the Merp grant, where Amy emphasized the need for better oversight and regular communication between Betty, the treasurer, and other relevant parties to ensure proper financial handling of the grant.

Town Financial Management and Responsibilities

The meeting focused on financial matters and responsibilities related to town funds and grants. Amy explained the fiduciary responsibility of the treasurer and discussed the need for better tracking of grant disbursements, suggesting regular meetings with Amy to review progress. They also addressed unallocated funds from the fire department's budget, including \$40,000 owed to the fire department and \$10,000 originally allocated for FASBA, which will now be reallocated for necessary gear. Finally, Amy highlighted an issue with custodial costs exceeding the budget due to an employee working over 40 hours weekly, requiring overtime pay.

Lawn Maintenance Bid

They reviewed two lawn maintenance bids, with DR Property Maintenance being selected over S&C Lawn Services due to cost considerations and previous positive experience. The board also addressed a complaint about trash at Michael Malone's property on South Walden Road, with plans to follow up after snow melts and potentially involve the Board of Health if necessary.