

SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES DRAFT

Tuesday September 15, 2026, 6:00P.M.

Jenn Miner, Mike Hogan, Fred Ducharme, Skip Bothfeld, Peggy Miller, Jeanne Johnson, Brittany Butler, Frank Kampf, Pat Molton, Doug Cooke, Maria Acchione, Betty Ritter, Paul Ruta, Nate Smith, Karen Larson, Will Ameden, Dean Deasy, Morgan Churchill, Ruth Goodrich, Kris Schmitt, Elizabeth Wilkel, Mark Johnson, Lewis Porter, Susan Alexander, Jennifer Churchill, Michael Miller, Alison Hogan, “t,” “private citizen,” T. Leugemors, CVRPC-Sam Lash

1. Call Meeting to Order Jenn called the meeting to order at 6pm
2. Approve Agenda-Mike, Fred 2nd motion carried
3. Approve Minutes from September 1, 2026 motion by Skip and 2nd by Peggy. Motion carried Fred abstained
4. Public Comment:

Maria says everyone is familiar with the area next to the school and the church. She went off while backing up and was saved by some good Samaritans, can we put a fence there? Fred is going to look into it.

Doug had an update for the Emergency Action Plan. He was able to get hold of Bob Burke and they will be meeting in the near future. He has been working on trying to get at the generators at the sawmill. He has also been talking with Lori about the resilience hub.

Jen read a letter from Jack Daniels commending the road crew on the work on Cabot Plains Road.

5. Washington Electric-Lewis Porter general manager and Susan Alexander. They are here to introduce themselves and reintroduce Washington Electric. Discussed their mission and some changes that have been happening over the last few years. Asks: help foster a resilience of communities and neighbors supporting each other. They rely on all of us to look out for everyone. The 2nd ask is contractors are not taking into account powerlines and outages when it comes to their work. Those costs need to be taken into account. The low bid may not touch on the cost of shutting the power off or work on the power lines. Call anytime you have any questions.

Susan says that there is a grant for the community located on their website.

6. Volunteer Fire Department discussion/possible action

See attached sheet with a layout of the options.

Jenn wanted to share this to be transparent and let the community know what the options are. Pat and Mark Johnson are going to say a few words. The one-story building is not a new request and there have been many people/entities that have been leery of the current design for a community the size of Cabot.

Mark Johnson-recovery section chief at Vermont emergency management, Jenn did a great job outlining the options that we have. Once the comment period closes we will be closer to building the

new permanent structure. The federal cost share went above the norm from 75% to a 90% cost share. He believes that the opportunity to build a new fire station is a unique opportunity costing 6.2 million of which only 2.2% (approx. 132,000) will have to be paid by taxpayers. We will have to decide what and how to deal with the Temporary Fire station or to retrofit with no help from FEMA or USDA.

Pat Moulton- Flood recovery officer- the restrictions on the temp building are federal in their nature. It could only be for outdoor recreation. She has been working with the town to make sure that we are doing the procurement process correctly so that we can receive the money that we want/need.

Mike: option 3, it was built as a temporary station with no decontamination, no sprinklers, NFPA standards. The building has served us for its intended purpose.

7. Wastewater gate at reservoir/action-waiting on one more bid.
8. Election: Mail to all voters for JP or only when requested: discussion/action motion by Mike for no mailing of the JP, 2nd Skip, motion carried.
9. Municipal Energy Resilience Plan solar panel bids-Action – Fred went over the 3 bids that we got for solar panels on the WW plant. Savings per year. Sam says that we have done a tremendous job, we have completed the building envelope and electric energy improvements, we now have this money, large amount, that can be used for solar to lower our electricity costs. Not all money is coming from MERP there would be 12,000 that the town would have to cover, but the benefit outweighs the cost. Betty says that everyone that she spoke to really liked sun-common. All the towns have found significant price savings on these projects. Sun Common does all the permitting, the permitting takes the longest amount of time.

Fred wants to praise the contractors that are down at the WW plant, “they are doing a fantastic job” The last things that we want to complete is to disconnect and move a tank that is in the back that collects snow in the winter and remove some blacktop so the doors can open and close better in the winter.

Doug asks who owns the batteries and panels? GMP owns the batteries and town owns the panels. What is the life span? 20-25 years. The money saved will be put into a sinking fund.

Dean and Skip spoke about how the batteries should be contained.

Paul Ruta asked if we were putting battery storage in the Willey Building and if so why because we never lose power. Fred said yes and listed reasons why. Nate asks if we can move them a little bit away from the building? Mike makes motion to approve sun-common for the solar panels skip 2nd, motion carried. Mike abstained

10. Grant anticipation loan for Lovely Road. Action was approved previously. This is only a portion of the project.
11. Water and wastewater
 - a. Hook up on 215 south- discussion WW Hook up- Paul-Sewer allocation from Chase and Chase, design into the WW_5-8403-2 2 bedroom 420gpd.

- b. Other business-red talked about digging up the line at the school, recommends digging it up and putting blueboard around it because it is only 4 ft deep. Morgan agrees, he was impressed with the size of the holes in the cast iron pipe. He also believes that something needs to be done at the curb stops. In the winter we won't be able to shut it off if needed. He wants to be proactive about the water and wastewater. Mike says lets talk about it at the budget meetings.

12. Town Clerk's Office

- a. Orders
- b. Department of Liquor: 3 permits for Cheese and Culture festival/action mike moved to approve skip 2nd all in favor. Motion carried
- c. Other Business -beaver update- 4 beaver were removed from behind the fire station and then he put a hole in the dam to drain it. As of the other day the water was still draining. On Brickett's crossing hunter was going to pull the dam but found out he was on the Walden side. He is now on the Cabot side, and the first 2 beavers will be free as he sent an invoice for the ones in Walden.

13. Other Business-bids for dry hydrant-planning a special meeting next Monday or Tuesday to open bids.

14. Motion to Adjourn Fred, Peggy 2nd all in favor. At 7:23

These are the points and options that Jenn read at the meeting:

Cabot Fire Department: Discussion Points

Temp Station site location issues:

- There can be NO residential and commercial permanent structure, our current use or public use does not violate the deed itself. Even if the temporary building remains there if it is for PUBLIC USE, there is no violation or reason for the Perry heirs to have issue with the property use
- Deed restriction from the Forest Parks and Recreation Grant: the land can only be used for outdoor recreational activities under a grant the Town received in 1986 — the temp fire station is currently in violation of that deed
- To resolve the deed violation with Forest Parks and Rec, the Town would need to do one of the following (each has a cost):
 - Purchase replacement land to substitute for the land the temp station was built on, or
 - Tear down the temp building and return the site to its prior (recreational) status, or
 - Convert the building to exclusively outdoor-recreation use
- Near a flood zone
- Further geological study is needed, to ensure that this land is stable enough to build what is proposed on the site.
- Can be cut off from town by flooding at 2 major crossings
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Option 1: Withdraw current \$6M Cat E Permanent Work project and rebuild permanent FD at the temp site

Pros

- Potentially saves federal/state/local taxpayer dollars (90% / 8.8% / 2.2% cost share)
- Easiest "political path"

Cons

- Changing the FEMA approach could jeopardize previously reimbursed temporary building costs
 - Would trigger a full EHP (Environmental and Historic Preservation) review
 - Raises ANR grant implications
 - Costs to correct code/site violations are likely not FEMA-eligible
- Withdrawal of the current Cat E Permanent Work project
 - EHP review, nearly complete on the current project, would have to restart from scratch at the temp site — any new concerns found must be corrected
 - A scope to alter the temp FD building into a code-compliant permanent FD would need to be developed — feasibility is unknown; the Town has no engineer's opinion on whether it's even possible
 - Could end up being just as costly as building new
- FEMA Period of Performance
 - Restarting the process this late could jeopardize the Cat E funding entirely
 - VEM (Vermont Emergency Management) cannot guarantee FEMA will accept the change in approach at this stage
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Option 2: Build a single-story permanent FD building at the 2466 site (already purchased for this purpose)

Pros

- Site was purchased specifically for this purpose
- Current building design can be downsized to one story using a "design-build" RFP approach
- Town can reuse plans it has already paid for as a starting point
- Accessible to the village during floods
- Preserves and uses the existing FEMA funding
- USDA congressionally directed funding is available as backup if FEMA funding falls short
- No bonding or new indebtedness for the Town

Cons

- If USDA congressionally directed funding is used, USDA is questioning the square-footage costs and why a two-story building is being built for a volunteer fire department
- Town would bear the cost of maintaining two buildings — the temp station and the new permanent one
- Town still must separately resolve the Temp Station's site/deed issues (see below)

Option 3: Decline FEMA and USDA funding for a fire station

Pros

- Town could continue using the Connor building
- No federal procurement requirements apply, unless the Town chooses to follow them anyway

Cons

- Town would have to bond for the full ~\$6M cost of a new fire station
- Taxes will increase
- Town procurement policy still must be followed regardless
- Town still must separately resolve the Temp Station's site/deed issues (see below)

Respectfully Submitted,

Brittany Butler- *Town Clerk*

9/17/2026