

SELECTBOARD MEETING

MINUTES

September 14, 2026

- I. OPEN MEETING – Chairman Begin called the September 14, 2026, meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. Those present included Dillon Begin, Alfred Buckley, Alan Leigh, April Busfield, Jason Busfield, and Zachary Brown. Mike Miller joined via Zoom. Larry Ruggles of Ruggco Inc., Construction Management Services, attended for the scheduled MERP contract discussion.
- II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 31, 2026, Meeting Minutes – Al made a motion to approve the August 31, 2026, meeting minutes as written, and Alan seconded. Chairman Begin asked if there was further discussion; seeing none, he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative.
- III. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA – Zach added a reminder regarding the Coos County Recycling Center meeting under Solid Waste and an Alice Hunt Cemetery deed under New Business. The board also took the MERP grant contract discussion out of order so Larry could present the contract. The Economic Development Committee discussion was taken before the remaining Solid Waste and New Business items.
- IV. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT – No public comment was offered in person or via Zoom. Larry Ruggles addressed the board under the scheduled MERP agenda item.
- V. REPORT FROM HIGHWAY –
 - a. Grant Updates – Jason reported that the grant projects were mostly complete. Hydroseeding remained to be done once the shared hydroseeder stored in Brighton became available. Maidstone was using the equipment, and Jason planned to follow up the next day to arrange pickup and finish the ditches.
 - b. Part-Time Highway Assistant – Jason reported that two applications had been received and recommended that the board review them. Further personnel discussion was deferred to executive session.
 - c. Equipment Repairs and Updates – A lengthy discussion was held on the grader and the repairs needed before winter. Jason reminded the board that he had been bringing these needed repairs to their attention for most of the year. Jason reported that the differential lock issue involved a solenoid and that he was waiting for the replacement part. He reviewed the additional work needed, including shims in the circle and moldboard, oil changes in the drive components, and a possible block heater. Al had prepared written information on the needed work. Jason felt the grader still had useful life and recommended having CAT go through it at their shop. The board discussed the cost of trucking the grader to the shop compared with having mechanics perform the work locally. Members asked for estimates showing parts, hourly rates, anticipated labor, and transportation costs, including quotes from local haulers. Zach explained that funds were available within the highway budget. The board emphasized that the work should proceed promptly while controlling costs and keeping members informed. The most efficient option should be selected, which would not necessarily be the lowest-priced option. Alan made a motion to obtain bids and proceed with CAT on the grader repairs in the most efficient and economical manner possible, and Al seconded. Chairman Begin asked if there was further discussion; seeing none, he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. Jason reported that he had placed the backhoe tire replacement on hold to prioritize the grader. He believed the existing tires could last another season and had located a new spare in the garage. Jason also discussed using commercial-style tires when replacement becomes necessary.
 - d. Sand Delivery – Jason reported that 1,000 yards of sand had been delivered and piled in the yard. Salt had been mixed into the sand, and the pile would be covered with plastic later when it was less windy.
 - e. General Road Repairs and Maintenance – Jason reported that routine road work had been limited while he completed the grant projects. Some sections needed grading, but the roads were generally holding up well. He had traveled the roads that day to remove trees brought down by the wind and check for obstructions. Zach reported that he had received multiple compliments for Jason on the condition of the roads.
 - f. Driveway Completed – Pending Approval – Zach reported that Barrup Properties LLC had notified him that its driveway on Canaan Hill Road was complete. He asked Jason to check the installation, including

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the culvert. Jason stated that he had seen the driveway that day, had worked with the applicant, and felt the approach looked good.

VI. REPORT FROM WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT –

- a. State Inspection – Pending – April reported that a state inspection was scheduled for September 24, 2026. The inspection was expected to take most of the day and would include the budget, staffing, administration, and plant operations. Zach would need to participate.
- b. Update on Assistant Operator – April reported that Rodney Rumrill had started the previous week and had been a great employee thus far. She was looking forward to continuing to work with him. He had assisted with water system repairs, including replacing an injection coil while the line remained in service. April anticipated having him begin rounds while she caught up on paperwork.
- c. Fire District Personnel Responsibilities – Zach relayed concerns expressed by the Fire District No. 1 Clerk/Treasurer regarding the district's involvement in hiring. A lengthy discussion followed concerning responsibility for hiring, firing, raises, and other personnel matters for Town employees working for the fire districts. Zach explained that the Town handles payroll and employer taxes, with the districts reimbursing costs based on hours worked. He had not located a formal agreement defining shared personnel authority with the fire districts. The board also discussed the separate agreement with Stewartstown. The board agreed that the relationship should be clarified in writing and that both fire districts should be invited to the September 28, 2026, Selectboard meeting to discuss their concerns and personnel responsibilities. No formal change to personnel authority was adopted at this meeting.

VII. REPORT FROM SOLID WASTE –

- a. Commercial Hauler/Curbside Pick Up of Solid Waste – No discussion was held on this item.
- b. Improvements to the Transfer Station – See General Updates below.
- c. HHW Events – Updates – April reported very low participation in the collection events, with approximately one-quarter pallet of paint and one drum of used oil collected between the two events. Zach anticipated that grant funds would cover much of the disposal cost. The board discussed reducing the number of collection days, improving scheduling, and training another employee to assist. Zach reviewed the collection requirements during the meeting and reported that two events, one in the spring and one in the fall, could each operate for a minimum of four hours. Al made a motion to amend the Solid Waste Implementation Plan to provide household hazardous waste collection events on the first Saturday in June for the spring event and the second Saturday in September for the fall event, each lasting four to five hours, and Alan seconded. Chairman Begin asked if there was further discussion; seeing none, he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. Zach will update the plan and submit it to the State for approval.
- d. General Updates – April reported that Marc Dion had provided advice on the compactor repairs and identified insufficient lubrication of the ram. She noted that the equipment was not being overgreased as the board had suggested. After lubrication, the equipment was operating better. Zach reported that Dennis had built a ramp for the cardboard area following a tripping incident and that it was working well. April noted that Danny and Dennis were doing well. Other transfer station operations were going well.
- e. Coos County Recycling Center Meeting – Zach reminded the board of the Coos County Recycling Center meeting at 5:00 P.M.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS –

- a. 2026 Town Appointments –
 - i. Rec Park Commission Updates and New Member Appointment – Zach reported that Zackery Wallace had agreed to serve on the Recreation Park Commission, filling the vacancy left by Vernon Crawford. Alan made a motion to appoint Zackery Wallace to the Recreation Park Commission for

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the remainder of the term ending in March 2028, and Al seconded. Chairman Begin asked if there was further discussion; seeing none, he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. Zach also reported that Paul Lyons was the new chair.

- b. Zoning Administrator – The board discussed the Zoning Administrator vacancy. Zach reported that Mike Daley had expressed willingness to take over from Cheryl, but the advertisement had not yet appeared in the newspaper. The board agreed to advertise the position in the newspaper before making an appointment.
- c. Municipal Ethics Complaints – Five Pending – The board noted that five ethics complaints remained pending.
- d. Alice Ward Library Carriage House Renovations – Zach reported that construction was well underway and that the first bill, approximately \$230,000, had been received. He planned to request funds from the line of credit, make payment to the contractor, and submit for reimbursement. Zach also presented the library's request that the Town cover approximately \$300 paid to Yvan Belleville for removing trees and moving cinder blocks near the carriage house basement entrance. The board discussed the Town's routine lawn maintenance and the highway department's limited availability while completing grant work. The board explained that the Town would perform this type of work when it could be accomplished in house. When Town staff could not complete the work and an outside contractor was needed, the requesting department would bear the expense, as with requests from the Recreation Park, Community Forest, school, and other departments. By consensus, the board declined to assume this expense, leaving the cost with the library.
- e. MERP Grant Bids and Updates – This item was initially taken out of order following General Public Comment. Larry Ruggles presented the contract from Ruggco Inc., Construction Management Services, which incorporated the proposed work and a contingency for unforeseen conditions. He reviewed the anticipated work, including ceiling removal and air sealing, replacement windows, and consideration of mechanical improvements. The board discussed coordinating the work to maintain Town Office operations. Zach explained that advance grant funds would be available and that he expected to manage subsequent payments and reimbursements without a separate line of credit for this project. Board members reviewed the contract. Alan made a motion to approve the MERP project contract with Ruggco Inc., Construction Management Services, and Al seconded. Chairman Begin asked if there was further discussion; seeing none, he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. The contract was signed during the meeting. Later in the meeting, Zach reported that the project timeline had been extended to July 1, 2027. Work was expected to begin in 2027, with some interior work possible during the winter. Zach told the board that he would work around the construction and ensure that the Town Office remained available as much as possible. He noted that he only needed access to a computer and the vault and could use the office's two sections as work progressed.
- f. Economic Committee Updates – This item was taken out of order after the hazardous waste discussion. April presented the committee's recommendation to offer \$40,000 for Ethan Allen Park, contingent upon Selectboard approval. A lengthy discussion followed regarding the steps needed before pursuing a purchase. Zach referred the board to guidance prepared with the Town's attorney concerning property purchases and sales. He recommended obtaining professional advice and a feasibility study addressing property value, development costs, water and sewer connections, road access, potential tax revenue, and long-term costs to the Town. Members discussed possible housing, trails, and additional space for municipal operations, as well as the need to understand property boundaries and erosion. Zach and April agreed to explore feasibility study grants, with Zach noting that they would pursue this as their existing grant and office work allowed. Zach urged the board not to move forward with substantive purchase discussions or offers without this information. Limited preliminary inquiries could be made, but they must not give Ethan Allen any reason to infer that the Town had committed to purchasing the Ethan

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Allen Park property. The discussion concluded with the need for a feasibility study and further information before proceeding. No motion was made to submit an offer or purchase the property.

- g. Cunningham Full Service Station Revolving Loan Updates – Zach reported that the loan had been finalized and the check delivered. He anticipated another Revolving Loan Fund Committee meeting to review the program. He was still awaiting a response from the State concerning the possible transfer of remaining control to the Town.
- h. Tax Update – Zach reported that tax receipts were coming in well and that late homestead declarations were continuing to arrive. The board briefly discussed homestead and nonhomestead classifications, tax rates, state tax payments, and penalties associated with late declarations. Zach also noted that septage receipts were coming in more slowly.
- i. Alice Hunt Cemetery Deed – Zach presented the purchase of single lot number 8 in the new section of Alice Hunt Cemetery by Betty Ellis. The \$225 purchase price had been paid. Alan made a motion to approve the sale of single lot number 8 to Betty Ellis, and Al seconded. Chairman Begin asked if there was further discussion; seeing none, he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. The cemetery deed was presented for the board's signatures.

IX. OLD BUSINESS – No separate old business was discussed. The board returned to the highway staffing matter in executive session.

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION – Personnel –

- a. First Executive Session – Personnel – 1 V.S.A. § 313(3) – Following the highway report, Alan made a motion to enter executive session to discuss personnel at 6:32 P.M., and Al seconded. Chairman Begin asked if there was further discussion; seeing none, he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. April, Jason, and Zach were invited to remain. Al made a motion to exit executive session at 6:55 P.M., and Alan seconded. Chairman Begin asked if there was further discussion; seeing none, he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. No action was taken in executive session. Outside executive session, Al made a motion to accept Jason Busfield's resignation effective September 30, 2026, and Alan seconded. Chairman Begin asked if there was further discussion; seeing none, he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. A copy of Jason's resignation letter is attached.
- b. Second Executive Session – Personnel – 1 V.S.A. § 313(3) – Alan made a motion to enter executive session to discuss highway personnel at 7:28 P.M., and Al seconded. Chairman Begin asked if there was further discussion; seeing none, he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. Zach was invited to remain. Al made a motion to exit executive session at 8:15 P.M., and Alan seconded. Chairman Begin asked if there was further discussion; seeing none, he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. No action was taken in executive session. Outside executive session, Al made a motion to advertise in the newspaper and on Facebook for a full-time Town road agent/foreperson at \$24 to \$28 per hour, negotiable depending on experience, with applications due by September 28, 2026, and Alan seconded. Chairman Begin asked if there was further discussion; seeing none, he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative.

XI. SORT MAIL/SIGN WARRANT – Warrant 19-26 for \$53,719.42 was presented for signing.

XII. ADJOURN MEETING – Alan made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Al seconded. Chairman Begin asked if there was further discussion; seeing none, he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. Chairman Begin adjourned the September 14, 2026, meeting at 8:17 P.M.