

SELECTBOARD MEETING

MINUTES

October 12, 2026

I. OPEN MEETING – Chairman Begin called the October 12, 2026, meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. Those present included Dillon Begin, Alfred Buckley, Alan Leigh, April Busfield, and Zachary Brown. Members of the public included Melody Houle, who attended in person, and Patrick Gorman, Mike Miller, and NEK News, who attended via Zoom.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 28, 2026, Meeting Minutes – The September 28, 2026, meeting minutes were distributed and reviewed by board members before and at the meeting. Al made a motion to approve the September 28, 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 updates on the speed radar signs, the sewer issue on Rouleau Road, and the FEMA flood maps. All board members agreed to the additions. No additional additions or deletions were made to the agenda. The sewer issue was addressed under the wastewater report, and the remaining additions were addressed under new business.

IV. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT –

- a. Hudson Road Conditions – No comments were offered during the initial public comment period. The board returned to public comment during the highway discussion to hear from Melody Houle regarding Hudson Road. Melody reported that logging activity had significantly damaged the road, particularly between Coderre Road and the brook. She described exposed rocks, potholes, washouts, and drainage problems and requested grading, gravel, and ditch improvements. She emphasized that grading was necessary this year, while ditching could wait until next year. She explained that improving drainage would help prevent recurring damage and repeated repairs.
- b. Hudson Road Winter Plowing – Melody requested assistance with winter plowing because her husband, Patrick, would be unable to continue plowing due to health concerns. She explained the importance of dependable access for year-round residents and noted additional development in the area. Possible plowing contacts were discussed. The board acknowledged her concerns and agreed to investigate available options, but explained that the Town was struggling to secure personnel for its existing winter maintenance responsibilities and could not promise additional plowing services at that time. Melody indicated that she would return to the next regular meeting for an update.

V. REPORT FROM HIGHWAY –

- a. Grant Updates – Zach provided an overview of the highway grants and reported that the prior year's Grants-in-Aid reimbursement paperwork had been submitted. April reported that a minor correction was needed and that payment should proceed once the correction was made, with reimbursement expected within approximately one to two weeks. The Better Back Roads final report would be submitted soon for reimbursement. Another grant application for the following year was due by the end of October. April had consulted Jason about potential project locations, and eligibility would be coordinated with the ongoing road-segment review. April and Zach would continue working on the applications and reporting requirements to ensure the Town did not lose available funding.
- b. Highway Personnel Updates – No applications had been received for the full-time highway position. April and Zach reported that they had held an informal discussion with a potential part-time applicant who had experience as a road foreman. He did not want the full-time position at this time and ultimately determined that he could not take the part-time position either. The board

SELECTBOARD MEETING

MINUTES

October 12, 2026

discussed the difficulty of recruiting experienced personnel and the urgency of securing coverage before winter. Al suggested advertising a full-time position with a three-year contract and considering a stipend for an employee who did not take health insurance. These were discussed as possible recruitment approaches; no contract or insurance stipend was approved. Further personnel discussion was deferred to executive session.

c. Equipment Repairs and Updates –

- i. Backhoe Tires – April prepared a comparison of backhoe tire options. The board reviewed estimates for four Firestone tires totaling \$2,640 and four Nokian tires totaling \$6,132. April reported on her discussion with Brian Laperle at Northern Tire, who indicated that the Nokian tires would probably outlast the life of the backhoe. Both April and Zach recommended the Firestone tires as suitable for the Town's needs at the lower cost. Alan made a motion to purchase four Firestone tires for the backhoe for \$2,640, 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.
- ii. Grader Repairs – April prepared a comparison showing estimated grader repair costs of \$7,062.67 for work performed locally and \$8,053.67 for work at the CAT facility, including \$2,800 for transportation. The board discussed the \$991 difference and the possibility of additional costs if further problems were discovered. Members noted that repeated technician trips could quickly exceed the initial savings from performing the work locally. Al made a motion to send the grader to the CAT dealership for repairs and arrange transportation, with repair progress and costs to be monitored, 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. Fall Grading and Solenoid Repair – Following public comment, the board discussed the need to complete fall grading before winter. Canaan Hill Road and other gravel roads had potholes and washboarding requiring attention. Richard Thibeault had indicated that he would be willing to grade if the grader were repaired and estimated approximately three days of work for the major roads. The board considered having CAT replace the solenoid at the Town garage first so Richard could complete grading before the machine was transported for the remaining repairs. Alan made a motion to authorize replacing the solenoid at the Town garage if practical and cost-effective, and Al seconded. Chairman Begin asked if there was further discussion. Members discussed having April and Zach pursue hiring out the grading if the local repair was not a practical option, keeping the cost below \$5,000 so further formal board action would not be required, while keeping the board informed. Chairman Begin then called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. The authorization to send the grader to the dealership for the remaining repairs remained in place. April and Zach would contact Richard and CAT to coordinate the work.
- iv. Truck Tires and Winter Preparation – April reported repeated scheduling delays for installation of the highway trucks' winter tires. Another appointment was scheduled for October 14. If the appointment did not proceed, April and Zach would seek another available provider so the trucks could be prepared for winter.

SELECTBOARD MEETING

MINUTES

October 12, 2026

Other preparations included outfitting trucks, storing lawn equipment, returning the skid steer to the garage, and installing roadside markers. Jason had provided diagrams showing marker locations, and plow-route diagrams were also available. The forest road needed to be added to the existing route information.

VI. REPORT FROM WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT –

- a. Rouleau Road Sewer Issue – April reviewed her written incident report concerning the Rouleau Road sewer blockage addressed October 1–2 and the earlier complaints and inspections documented in the report. She explained that observed water levels and flow indicated that the blockage at the end of the road toward River Road had developed over a relatively short period rather than having remained blocked since July. At the observed rate, she estimated that it would have taken approximately seven to eight days for the blockage to cause backups. Roots were discussed as a possible cause, but the exact cause had not been established. April stated that the incident and response had been thoroughly documented. Board members expressed satisfaction with April's actions and felt that her documentation and explanation placed the Town on firm footing. Zach reported that the insurance deductible for sewer backups was \$10,000. April and Zach discussed following the insurer's guidance when communicating about potential claims. No formal determination of liability or reimbursement was made.
- b. Joint Sewer Commissioners Meeting – October 13, 2026, at 5:30 P.M. – Stewartstown Office – Zach and April reminded the board of the upcoming meeting. Expected topics included inspection updates, the budget, and the operator's report. Reminders had been sent to Stewartstown representatives.

VII. REPORT FROM SOLID WASTE –

- a. Transfer Station Personnel Updates – Zach reported that newly hired Alain had completed two days of training and successfully operated the transfer station from Wednesday through Saturday the previous week. Zach and April had reviewed pricing questions with him, and operational improvements were being considered. Dennis was expected to return.
- b. Transfer Station Hours and Lighting – The board discussed the status of the approved lighting installation. Equipment availability had delayed the work, but an update indicated that replacement equipment was expected to arrive. Al suggested reducing Friday evening hours seasonally by closing at 5:00 P.M. rather than 6:00 P.M. from approximately mid-October through mid-April because few people used the final hour. He suggested telling the contractor not to proceed with the lights if the hours were changed. Zach explained that the Town had both a written and a verbal agreement for the work. Al stated that those agreements could be broken but did not pursue the point further. Zach offered that, even if the extended hours made only a few people happy, it was a worthwhile initiative that should continue given the low cost. Members also discussed the recently purchased signs displaying the current hours. No change in hours or cancellation of the lighting work was approved.
- c. Coos County Recycling Center Updates – The board discussed uncertainty surrounding future recycling center operations, anticipated cost increases, and the potential loss of inmate labor. Additional meetings and budget discussions were pending. Zach had forwarded Dillon information about a grant offering up to \$10,000 for a waste-reduction study and suggested that it might support a county-wide review of alternatives. No grant application or operational change was approved.

SELECTBOARD MEETING

MINUTES

October 12, 2026

VIII. NEW BUSINESS –

- a. FEMA Flood Maps – Zach reported that updated FEMA flood maps had been emailed to the Selectboard and the Zoning and Planning Commission. He asked members to review them for apparent errors or concerns within the stated comment period of 30 days from the preceding Friday. Zach reported that his preliminary review indicated that the wastewater treatment plant was outside the mapped flood zone.
- b. Speed Radar Signs – Zach presented the proposed permit application and installation plan for four solar-powered speed feedback signs along VT Routes 102 and 114. He had worked with Kristen Driscoll to identify mile markers and adjust proposed locations to meet State requirements. The proposed locations were VT Route 114 at approximately mile markers 3.09, 3.85, and 7.81, and VT Route 102 at approximately mile marker 6.54. Zach explained that the original round-post installations had been removed because they did not meet breakaway compliance requirements. The revised plan proposed square steel posts with breakaway bases. Installation would be completed in-house if feasible after State approval, with installation anticipated in the spring. The project had originated with grant funding, and replacement posts were estimated to cost approximately \$500–\$600. Posts would be purchased after approval. Alan made a motion to approve the speed radar signs and the installation plan prepared by Zach, 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.
- c. 2026 Town Appointments –
 - i. Zoning Administrator – Zach reported that Cheryl had requested to withdraw her resignation after Michael Daley had been appointed Zoning Administrator. The board discussed the prior resignation, the time spent recruiting a replacement, and the completed appointment. Members agreed to leave Michael's appointment in place and expressed appreciation for Cheryl's service. No new motion was required or taken. Possible assistance with training and a potential position on the Zoning and Planning Commission were discussed. Zach would follow up with Cheryl.
- d. Municipal Ethics Complaints – Five Pending – The five pending municipal ethics complaints remained under review. No action was taken.
- e. Alice Ward Library Carriage House Renovations – Zach reported that renovations were progressing and presented eight change-order items totaling approximately \$14,900. He explained that the changes allocated contingency funds to specific work and did not increase the stated total project cost of \$954,973. The items included electrical panel work; connector floor, wall, ceiling, foundation, and roof work; lighting changes; and a water-mitigation allowance credit. Alan made a motion to approve the eight change-order items reallocating funds as presented, 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.
- f. Tax Update – Zach reported that the final payment deadline had been October 8 and that unpaid taxes were turned over to Delinquent Tax Collector Dencie Cunningham on October 9. Delinquent taxes totaled \$186,413.42, with \$1,864.16 in initial interest and \$14,913.09 in penalties, for a total of \$203,190.67. Notices had been mailed. Zach explained that Grand List ownership reflected ownership as of April 1, so some accounts remained listed under former owners even though notices were also sent to current owners. Preparations for a tax sale were continuing, with

SELECTBOARD MEETING

MINUTES

October 12, 2026

November or December anticipated. Five properties remained under consideration, with additional accounts potentially requiring review.

- g. 3rd Quarter Budget Review – Third-quarter reports for the Town's funds were provided to the board as part of its regular quarterly budget review. Expenditures are reviewed biweekly through the board's warrant approval process. Zach asked members to review the quarterly reports and bring forward any questions. He reported that some individual line items were over budget, but total appropriated budgets had not been exceeded. Approximately \$1,592,342.99 in current-year tax receipts had been entered to date, excluding some recent receipts and education-related amounts retained and paid directly by the State. The board also discussed the collection of delinquent taxes and the use of tax sales for unresolved accounts.

IX. OLD BUSINESS – No old business was presented.

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION – Personnel Updates and Issues – Alan made a motion to enter executive session to discuss personnel updates and issues under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3), and Al seconded. April and Zach were invited to attend. Chairman Begin asked if there was further discussion; seeing none, he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. The board entered executive session at 7:00 P.M. Alan made a motion to exit executive session at 7:36 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. No action was taken in executive session.

- a. Full-Time Highway Foreman Advertisement – Upon returning to open session, Al made a motion to advertise for a full-time Town of Canaan Highway Foreman at \$30–\$40 per hour, depending on experience, offering long-term employment with benefits, 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.

- b. Winter Plowing and Sanding Bids – Al made a motion to solicit bids for winter plowing and sanding of Canaan roads because of the lack of full-time applicants, 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 21-26 – \$2,007,188.35 – The warrant was presented for review and signature. Zach explained that the amount included a portion of the school tax payment, transfers for Town appropriations and reserve accounts, special appropriations, and refunds of tax overpayments. The remaining school payment was expected to be made by year-end.

XII. ADJOURN MEETING – Prior to adjourning the meeting Chairman Begin announced a special meeting for Wednesday, October 21, 2026, at 3:10 P.M. to consider additional applicants and winter road-maintenance arrangements. Alan made a motion to adjourn, 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 meeting adjourned at 7:40 P.M.