

## MINUTES OF JUNE 23, 2025

## SELECTBOARD

Commissioners Present: Doug Bailey, Cecil Reniche-Smith, Ralph Ethier, Brian Coolidge, Jeff Haylon

Others Present: Seth Hopkins, Bill Moore, Tim Kingston, Ian Buckley, Steven Jupiter, Brent Buehler, Gerad Lowell, Karen Rhodes. By Zoom: Vicki Disorda, Bruce Jenson, Neil Silins,

- 1 Chair Doug Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM.  
Motion by Reniche-Smith/Haylon to amend the posted agenda to authorize payment of the extension to the West Seminary Street sidewalk as item #3c. Amended agenda voted 5-0.
- 2 Selectboard members offered no initial remarks tonight.
- 3 Motion by Coolidge/Ethier to approve the minutes of May 26, 2025. Corrections/clarifications:  
In #7, Bailey, not Reniche-Smith, made the statement about the financial management document  
In #3, clarification that the trustees appointed serve through March 2026 Town Meeting, at which point all three three-year seats are up for election, one for a three-year term, one for two years remaining of a three-year term, and one for one year remaining of a three-year term. Amended minutes voted 5-0.

Motion by Reniche-Smith/Haylon to approve the FY25 warrant of \$196,041.30, noting that \$129,225 was Town Hall slate work. Bailey questioned \$11,210 payment to NEMRC; Hopkins advised this was five months of professional assessor's service (non-employee / contracted work). Warrant voted 5-0.

Motion by Reniche-Smith/Haylon to approve the additional FY25 warrant of \$74,000 for sidewalk repair on West Seminary Street. The town manager was asked to explain the funding involved: The select board had allocated \$175,000 from the ARPA award for sidewalk work in Brandon. This 2024 project came in under budget at \$131,498. The board elected to "do more" with the surplus. Additional work was agreed on West Seminary Street, from the Neshobe House down to where the concrete sidewalk starts, using the remaining ARPA funds. Vermont Roadworks completed this last week; an additional 500ft of sidewalk from Neshobe House up the hill to between #50 and #52 was identified and agreed, and will be funded from the 1% fund, which will have \$300,000 in it after this project. Because the Town Farm Road paving bid [see later this meeting] came in lower than anticipated, the additional amount required from the 1% fund will be \$10,445.50. The additional warrant was voted 5-0.

- 4 The town manager gave highlights of his posted report (full report published in the meeting packet). Vacancies on the energy committee and development review board were noted; roof work on the Town Hall is progressing well; a chronic drainage issue near the Carver Street pump station has been addressed by the Town staff; Bob LaPorte has begun work with the Highway Department and Mikayla Fontana as an officer of the Police Department. The Town received a grant of \$29,000 to bring stormwater drainage up to standard on hydrologically-connected road segments.

Bill Moore spoke about the Union Street sidewalk project. This has been complex. The current focus is on acquiring temporary right-of-way easements from property owners. Completion of this phase is achievable by the end of summer assuming donations of temporary easements by property owners.

Cecil Reniche-Smith encouraged all Brandon residents with concerns to contact the selectboard or town management team directly with questions rather than relying on well-intended but potentially less-informed responses that might appear on Front Porch Forum.

Seth Hopkins has published reports on groundwater monitoring and landfill conditions to the website. Conditions at the closed landfill are stable.

Bill Moore has completed and submitted a triennial open space inventory report to Vermont Emergency Management. Seven successful buyout properties were documented. Bill is organizing the demolition of the buyout at 317 North St (conducted mandatory pre-bid meeting with interested bidders this past Friday) and has another Newton Rd property in progress.

Jeff Haylon and Seth Hopkins attended the Rutland Regional Emergency Management session last Wednesday and will attend the exercise at Chittenden Grange this coming Wednesday.

Seth Hopkins forecast the Town budget to end with a modest surplus but cautioned that the upfitting of the replacement cruiser will come out of that, and there will be more FY25 bills coming during July.

5 Bill Moore gave his community development report (also published). A round of applause was given for all Brandon children having free swimming lessons available to them this summer thanks to the generosity of sponsorship of the swimming lesson program by Nifty Thrifty and Bob Foley of Foley Brothers Brewing. Bill highlighted the new pickleball structure of \$50 season fee for Brandon residents and \$79 for non-residents, for which the board chair expressed thanks. Bill highlighted the Unified Cheer experience for athletes in grades 3-8 to work on cheering basics and social-emotional skills.

Doug Bailey spoke about the 25 Rossiter Street property which has been a topic of conversation recently. He stated the Town did not run the former Boys & Girls Club, and the Town typically would not desire to supplant a potential private enterprise such as a laundromat by operating one as a Town service. Vicki Disorda offered information that Rep. Todd Nielsen is seeking funding to support the purchase of this property to include the laundromat purpose. Karen Rhodes spoke of the burden borne by residents who do not have their own washers and dryers having to trek to Middlebury or Rutland to do their laundry.

6 Public comment: Vicki Disorda asked for clarification on renewing appointments, as she did not see positions posted as available. Seth Hopkins had confirmed with the town office staff that it has been the Town's practice of many years' standing to foster continuity in boards by generally repainting incumbents when they are interested and when the board in question is functioning well. He restated the two openings that were announced earlier in the meeting. Vicki offered that some people have had the opportunity to serve on multiple boards while some have applied multiple times and asked the board to revisit the policy and to post these positions in the future.

7 Renewal of Appointments: Motion by Coolidge/Reniche-Smith to renew appointments of those listed on the memo from Elaine Smith:

- John Peterson and Jack Schneider to the Development Review Board through June 30, 2028
- Neil Silins on the planning commission through June 30, 2026
- Jack Schneider and Natalie Steen on the planing commission through June 30, 2028
- Stephanie Jerome and Karen Lynch on the revolving loan fund through June 30, 2028
- Judy Bunde as alternate on the revolving loan fund through June 30, 2026

Voted 5-0.

8 Award Paving Bid for Town Farm Road: Bid opening result was reported in the meeting packet. The low bid (Wilk) was only \$100.50 less than the next-lowest (Pike). Motion by Coolidge/Reniche-Smith to award the work to Wilk Paving at a cost not to exceed \$148,103.50. Voted 5-0.

9 Select FY26 Fuel Suppliers: Seth Hopkins reported current suppliers have been the low bidders for the past two or more years. FY26 quotes are all lower than FY25 pricing. Motion by Reniche-Smith/Coolidge to purchase on-road Diesel from Champlain Valley Fuels at 35¢ over rack; #2 heating oil from Champlain Valley Fuels at 35¢ over rack, capped at \$2.55 a gallon; propane from Suburban at State of Vermont contract pricing (45¢ over rack; on day of quote, this was \$1.489). Voted 5-0.

Board chair Bailey called a recess at 7:51. The board returned from recess at 7:59.

10 Motion by Reniche-Smith/Coolidge to enter executive session per 1 VSA §313(a)(3) for the town manager's annual review, to include Seth Hopkins. Voted 5-0. Board entered executive session at 8PM. Motion by Reniche-Smith/Coolidge to exit executive session at 8:18PM. Voted 5-0. No action required.

11 Motion by Coolidge/Ethier to adjourn. Not debatable. Voted 5-0.

8:19PM.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Seth M Hopkins, Town Manager