

MINUTES OF AUGUST 11, 2025

SELECTBOARD

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

Others Present: Seth Hopkins, Bill Moore, Brent Buehler, Gerad Lowell, Steven Jupiter, Faith Daya. By Zoom: Keith Whitcomb, Bruce Jenson.

- 1 Chair Doug Bailey called the meeting to order at 7PM. All selectboard members were seated.
Motion by Haylon/Ethier to adopt the posted agenda.
Bailey proposed a revision to agenda: add item 3d Consider purchase order #12501 to Florence Crushed Stone in the amount of \$19,374.65 for 84 loads of winter sand (1,584 tons)
Revised agenda voted 5-0.
 - 2 Selectboard Members' Remarks: Bailey and Haylon offered hope for a positive meeting.
 - 3 Recurring Matters: The following were moved by Haylon/Reniche-Smith as a consent agenda. Voted 5-0.
 - a Minutes of combined boards — July 28, 2025
 - b FY26 Check Warrant / Orders on the Treasurer: \$1,481,519.30
 - c Approve special event liquor permits issued by Town Clerk
 - i #63186 – BABBs LLC., Fran Bull Studio, 685 Arnold District Rd, Wedding Aug 9, 2025 4PM — 10PM
 - ii #63584 – Common Ground Restaurant & Pub LLC, National Bank of Middlebury, 6 Park St, Brandon Chamber of Commerce Mixer, Aug 5, 2025, 4PM — 5:30PM
 - d Purchase order #12501 to Florence Crushed Stone for winter sand: \$19,374.65
 - 4 Reports and updates to the selectboard from the town management team (town manager Seth Hopkins and deputy town manager and community development director Bill Moore) were accepted with some public comment regarding the tax sale, a couple of the checks on the warrant, and about the proposed pickleball fee structure.
 - 5 Bill Moore presented his recommendation for reconstruction of the tennis courts into multi-use courts at Estabrook Park. There was considerable board and public conversation, and Mr Moore announced an anonymous donor had offered \$5,000 toward this project. Resulting action:
 - a Coolidge/Reniche-Smith moved to waive the requirement for a third bid for this work. Voted 5-0.
 - b Bailey/Reniche-Smith moved to accept the Vermont Roadworks Bid and authorize \$11,800 from the 1% fund, to be returned to the 1% fund upon receipt of the forthcoming bequest from the Penny Estabrook estate. This was amended by Bailey/Haylon to authorize up to \$15,000 from the 1% fund. Amendment voted 5-0. Main motion as amended voted 5-0.
 - 6 Public comment furthered discussion on the multi-use courts, site challenges, surfacing suitability, etc.
- The board went into recess at 7:44PM.
The board returned from recess at 7:48PM.
- 7 Motion by Haylon/Coolidge to enter executive session on a staff member matter per 1 VSA § 313 (a) (3) to include the town management team. Voted 5-0. Entered executive session 7:48PM.
Motion by Haylon/Reniche-Smith to exit executive session at 7:55PM. Voted 5-0.
Motion by Reniche-Smith/Haylon to offer a letter of support of Tricia Welch's nomination of Sue Gage for the Municipal Service Award in the 2025 Champions of Local Government program. Voted 5-0.
 - 8 Motion by Coolidge/Haylon to adjourn. Not debatable. Voted 5-0. 7:55PM.

Respectfully submitted,



TOWN MANAGER'S UPDATES — MONDAY 25 AUGUST

PUBLIC WORKS MISSION

- Wilk Paving was in town today to grind pavement at the Town Farm Road bridge #24 and the Newton Road intersection in preparation for shimming and paving the paved section of Town Farm Road, perhaps later this week or next. The road will not need to be closed, but please obey flaggers around the work site and drive carefully on Town Farm Road. This is the summer 2025 paving authorized by the Selectboard 100% funded by our local option tax and not the property tax.
- The oil tank was removed from the Town Hall today. Oil has been pumped out by our fuel supplier and its value will be credited to the Town.

PUBLIC SAFETY MISSION

- One outstanding staff item will be brought to the board in executive session tonight
- Tim Kingston has resigned as animal control officer. We will follow policy and post for an internal candidate before any external posting.

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT	New amounts 8/21/25
FY25 operating budget projected surplus	\$148,993
Unrestricted / unassigned Fund Balance	\$631,036
1% (Local Option) tax fund unobligated	\$456,777
Known grant matches not yet designated	Union Street (~\$200,000)
Delinquent property taxes	\$600,811 (was \$614,512)
Delinquent wastewater ([over 120 days'])	\$205,610 (was \$208,923)

Respectfully submitted,



Seth M. Hopkins, Town Manager

The nature of discussion at this meeting is provided below as captured and digested by artificial intelligence. If further detail is required, the Zoom recording of the meeting is posted on the Town website. Notes on Combined Board (Selectboard and [as needed] Liquor Control, Cannabis Control, Sewer Commission, and Board of Health) Meetings

Notes on Selectboard Meeting

Created on August 25, 2025 at 6:59 PM by Minutes AI

1 Meeting Start

- Meeting called to order at 7 o'clock.
- Agenda adopted with one addition under 3D: a purchase order for \$19,374.65 for winter sand from Florence Crushed Stone.
- The purchase order is above Seth's spending limit but within the budgeted amount.

2 Select Board Remarks

- "Small crowd. So let's just have a good meeting."

3 Minutes, Warrants, Alcohol, and Purchase Order

- Items 3A, B, C, and D were moved to a consent agenda.
- Question about a double entry on the warrant for a dance class refund for Jordan Anderson for \$69 with the same check number (3344).
 - It was clarified that there were two different students, so one check to the parent combined two refunds.
- Question about a clothing allowance for \$600, which is a yearly amount.

4 Select Board Reports - Town Manager's Report

- Wilk Paving is grinding pavement on Town Farm Road bridge and at the Newton Road intersection.
 - They will be shimming and paving the paved section of Town Farm Road, possibly starting as early as Wednesday.
 - The road won't be closed, but flaggers will be present.
 - This paving is funded by the local option tax.
- The oil tank was removed from the town hall basement boiler room.
 - The oil's value will be credited to the town.
 - The tank might be kept as a backup for highway diesel.
- Tim Kingston resigned as animal control officer.
 - The town will post for an internal candidate first.
- Jackie provided numbers for the report:
 - Operating budget surplus around \$148,000.
 - Unrestricted fund balance around \$631,000.
 - Local option tax figure is \$456,777.
 - Delinquent property taxes and wastewater have decreased slightly due to payments.
- Question from the public about foreclosures for less than \$1,500 owed.
 - It's a statutory change, not the town's determination.
 - The cost is the lawyer's hourly rate for deed research and notifying lien holders, capped at 5% of the taxes to be recovered.
 - The number of properties for tax sale is under 20.

Community Development Report

- Youth programming starting this week includes soccer (grades 3-6) and football (grades 3-8).
- Pre-K through 2nd grade offerings will begin on September 6.
- Pee Wee cheer will be offered for the fall season starting September 7.
- Youth cross country is back for grades 3-6, starting October 3.
- Family kickball at the Brandon Rec baseball field in Nashville is starting in October.
- The silent movie "Spies" showing has been moved to Friday, September 12th at 7pm.
 - Free admission, donations accepted.
 - Proceeds will fund the 2026 series.

Town Hall Rentals and Pickleball Update

- Town hall is seeing an uptick in rentals from private organizations.
 - Funds from rentals will support renovations and upkeep.
- New paid registration for indoor pickleball is being implemented.
 - There has been some feedback, but the town is committed to recouping funds for future costs and projects.

Questions for Mr. Moore

- Rental costs for the town hall range from \$150 to \$400, depending on the organization (in-town, out-of-town, for-profit, non-profit).
 - There are potentially six different rates, with discounts for new residents.
- Faith Daya did not receive the email about pickleball costs and wants to know about future costs.

Future Costs for Pickleball

- The Select Board is considering a bid to update the courts at Estabrook, which has been in planning for 3-4 years.
 - The new courts will be blacktop with painted lines for at least three pickleball courts.
- Funds will support future programming, including buying more nets, providing balls, painting lines, and managing court time.

Pickleball Fee Structure

- \$50 for Brandon residents for six months of indoor play.
- \$65 for out-of-town residents for six months of indoor play (reduced from \$79).

- Youth sports pay for indoor court time through their fee structure.

Concerns About Pickleball Funds

- Faith Daya questions whether the funds will go to the upkeep of current pickleball courts.
 - Mr. Moore clarifies that the funds will create a pickleball fund for upkeep, improvements, and potential costs from the school.
- Faith Daya expresses concern about paying for future use of outdoor pickleball courts that don't exist yet.
 - Mr. Moore states that the town has already spent money on nets without recouping any funds.
 - He also states that indoor pickleball is always paid for.
- Faith Daya believes there should be accountability for how the money is used and that players will expect it to be used for the current facility.

Estabrook Court Reconstruction Update

- Dual tennis courts at Estabrook, built around 1984, need a major reconstruction.
 - The initial siting has been problematic (wet), evidenced by cracking and failed net poles.
- In September 2023, the Select Board allocated ARPA funding for resurfacing and converting the courts into a multi-use court.
 - \$30,000 was reserved for this purpose.
 - The plan includes removing net poles, installing new asphalt, painting lines for tennis and pickleball, and allowing for modular skateboarding features.
- The town is having trouble getting a third quote for the project and requests waiving the requirement.
 - A skate park is an exorbitant amount of money to create on its own.

Blacktop Only Option

- The blacktop only option based upon the bids received at \$46,800 and \$48,800 eclipses the amount of ARPA funding that was set aside.
- The board is asked to consider using 1% money to make up the shortfall.
 - There is an imminent bequest from Penny Estabrook's estate to support Estabrook Park, for which the town will be receiving funds that could be used to offset the 1% fund if they choose to use it.
- The multi-use court approach allows the town to investigate the potential support and use of a skateboard park.
 - The cost of a dedicated skate park is so great that having this essentially free visibility study will help inform future REC priorities.
- Someone wished to remain anonymous and wanted to donate \$5,000 towards this effort which would help also with that shortfall.

Motion to Waive Policy

- Motion to waive the policy of getting three bids.
- Question about Wilk's bid being lower since they are doing other work there (Wilk Paving is doing Town Farm Road).
 - It is clarified that Wilk Sealing and Wilk Paving are two different companies.
 - "Wilk Sealing is like parking lots and sidewalks and stuff. And Wilk Paving is roads."

Motion to Accept Bid

- Motion to accept a bid from Vermont Roadworks and authorize \$11,800 of 1% money to be used and for that to be repaid when the bequest from Penny Estabrook is received.
- Discussion on the two bids:
 - Wilk is going to do the final grade and compaction and drainage, and Roadworks expects the town crew to do that.
 - Town highway saved money doing some of the demo work and they talked about helping to compact that and make it happen.
- Vermont Roadworks have experience doing tennis courts.

Amendment to Motion

- Motion amended to authorize the town manager to use 1% money up to or less than \$15,000.
- Discussion on the amendment:
 - Vermont Works has the proviso that if any additional excavation needs to be done to adhere to the specs of the corpse, what I would assume would also include drainage, it would be built additionally.
- Question about how usable asphalt is for pickleball and tennis.
 - It's definitely usable, but not ideal.
- The multi-use court idea is a way to test run the idea of a skate park.
 - The town is not paying for the construction of all the skate stuff.
 - People are willing to build some of these things and fundraise to make, you know, to build a little half pipe.

- Motion to use 1% money up to \$15,000 with the agreement that it is returned after we get the decreased is passed.

Concerns about Tennis Court Maintenance Costs (Faith Daya)

- The speaker is a fan but wants the town and select board to consider the ongoing cost of maintaining a tennis court.
- The speaker points out that the existing tennis court has gone to "tatters" since 1984, with no maintenance proposed.
- The speaker suggests that the town consider the costs of resurfacing (every 4-8 years), repainting lines, fence replacement, and lighting.
- The speaker suggests contacting Shoreham, where an association maintains the courts at no cost to the town by collecting fees from tennis players.

Asphalt as a Tennis Court Material (Faith Daya)

- Asphalt is not a preferred tennis court material.
- A multi-use court including skateboarders or rollerbladers is not ideal and will destroy the court for tennis and pickleball players.
- The speaker thinks that spending money to test the usability of the court seems wasteful.

Rationale for Multi-Use Court (Bill Moore)

- The speaker says that the move towards a multi-use court has been building since 2012.
- The goal is to provide a space that multiple groups can use, even if it's not ideal for any one group.
- A double court re-asphalted for \$46,000 is a good number compared to \$100,000 to rebuild a tennis court.
- The asphalt surface will be durable and able to withstand various activities.

Concerns about Multi-Use Court (Faith Daya)

- The speaker reiterates that tennis players may not play on a court that's not suitable.
- The speaker expresses concern about the court's condition after a few years of use by different activities.
- The speaker notes that weather conditions in Vermont will affect the asphalt's durability.

Additional Points (Bill Moore)

- The idea of a "friends of the court" association is a phenomenal idea.
- The current plan is a compromise to do the most good for the most number of people.
- \$30,000 is from ARPA, \$5,000 is a donation, and \$15,000 is from local option tax.
- The Estabrook Fund could potentially be used for maintenance in the future.
- The speaker says that this is an opportunity for the community to use the space and decide what's important to them.
- The speaker says that REC is about facilitating the dreams of other people.

Questions about the Site (Brent Buehler)

- If the site has been problematic, how will it not be problematic in the future?
- What is the Estabrook Fund?

Answers (Bill Moore)

- Penny Estabrook left money to help fund Estabrook Park in the future.
- Engineers have looked at the site to figure out how to improve it.

Tennis Court Mitigation (Bill Moore & Selectboard Members)

- Mitigation efforts were discussed with Wilk, Vermont Road Works, and the road crew.
 - The court will be crowned better.
 - Movable tennis poles will be used.
- There are no guarantees that future problems will be solved.
- Rebuilding the tennis court in a different location would have been more expensive.
 - There were numerous complaints about the court not being fixed.
 - The goal was to find the most fiscally conservative solution due to the rules around Estabrook Park.
- The location is desirable because of the restrooms and ball fields.
 - Public feedback indicated a desire to have a usable tennis court in that location.
 - The speaker believes this is a good use of money.
- The court can be used for pickup tennis, learning, and other activities like skateboarding.

Public Comment (Faith Daya & Bill Moore)

- Clay courts were considered but would not fit the multi-use purpose.