

MINUTES SELECTBOARD MEETING
Grafton Town Hall Upstairs In Person/Live
With accommodation for persons unable to attend in person via interactive Zoom

Monday, September 15, 2025, 6:00 pm

Present at the meeting in the Town Hall:

Selectboard: Chair Cathy Siano-Goodwin, Vice Chair Anna Keegan, John Gregory, Steve Sargent, and Buzz Fisher

Also: Morgan Wilbur, David Rogers, Eric Stevens, Kim Record, Patsy Ellis, Wendy Martin, Suzanne Welch, Mary Howard Hall, David Hall, Liisa Kissel, Suzanne Welch, Patrick Cooperman, Sam Battaglino, Joe Neal, and Laura Sibia

Present online: John Patterson, Cheryl Kaufman, Amber Stevens, Nancy Merrill, FactTV, Charlie Bonin, and Lester Schwalb

Call to order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. Adopt Agenda: Suzanne Welch asked the Selectboard to elaborate why they are choosing to enter into an Executive Session.

It was moved by Anna Keegan, seconded by John Gregory to adopt the agenda, as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Approve Minutes of the September 2, 2025, meeting: It was moved by Buzz Fisher, seconded by Anna Keegan, to approve the minutes of the September 2, 2025, meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Approve Minutes of the September 8, 2026, emergency meeting: It was moved by Steve Sargent, seconded by Buzz Fisher, to approve the minutes of the September 8, 2026, emergency meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Highway Report:

Truck #3 Bid Discussion: Cathy Siano-Goodwin said the board had discussed the Truck #3 bid that was received at the recent Emergency Meeting. The Selectboard did not feel the one bid was sufficient. Morgan Wilbur said she met with David Rogers and they amended the specifications to include a later delivery date, a 2025 or newer model year, remove the need for a sander, and specify that the truck should be a single cab.

It was moved by Anna Keegan, seconded by John Gregory, to reject the bid submitted by One Nation Distribution LLC. Motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Anna Keegan, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, to advertise the amended 2025 or newer 3500 Heavy-Duty Flatbed Truck specifications. Motion passed unanimously.

Buzz Fisher asked why the sander was not necessary. David Rogers said the other trucks can sand the route for that truck; he mentioned there isn't a strong need to purchase a sander for a few short dirt roads when another truck can handle it. Anna Keegan mentioned that the delivery date was pushed back to January 1, 2026 and wondered if that would be sufficient. Rogers felt that since the crew was down a member, that should be fine and they would keep the current truck until the new one is delivered.

Other: Cathy Siano-Goodwin asked for a general highway update from David Rogers. Rogers said the crew had continued to perform the grant work on Hall Ranch Road and mentioned they were working hard to get that completed before the end of September, which is when the grant expires. Siano-Goodwin asked if chloride would be put down at some point. Rogers said as soon as the grant work is complete, they would do what they can to chloride.

Additional 2025 Paving Bids Discussion: Morgan Wilbur explained that one of the companies that had submitted bids was unable to do the paving until spring/early summer of 2026, which did not follow the specification. She mentioned that the other company was significantly more expensive. She received guidance from VTrans and was told to either award Springfield Paving, the more expensive company, or to decline both bids and re-bid in the spring. After some discussion, John Gregory thought it would be best to decline both bids and then re-evaluate the budget.

It was moved by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, seconded by John Gregory, to reject the bids submitted by Bazin Brothers Trucking, Inc. and Springfield Paving for the Additional 2025 Paving project. Motion passed unanimously.

David Rogers asked if the Town will be responsible for cleaning up the small pile of asphalt near the Beck Bridge, or if Bazin Brothers could return to remove that. Morgan Wilbur said she would ask Bazin Brothers to take care of it.

6. BDCC/SeVEDS Annual Report/Discussion: Laura Sibia was not present yet. The Selectboard chose to move forward and would come back to this discussion when she was ready.

7. Recommendation from Planning Commission & Water Committee on Water Testing RFQs: Cathy Siano-Goodwin explained that the Planning Commission (PC) held a special meeting at 4:00 p.m. that afternoon, jointly with the Water Committee. She said that they received proposals from consultants for water testing that day and felt there was not adequate time to review them. PC members Buzz Fisher, Matt Siano, and Eric Stevens will draft some language to send to the consultants to refine exactly what they were looking for. Fisher said the idea of the project is to establish a baseline for water tests in the Village, not necessarily to identify and correct a problem. He noted that the project would be funded using a \$200,000 grant, some of which would be used by the Windham Regional Commission to update the Septic Pumping Ordinance. They expected to have a recommendation to the Selectboard before their next regular meeting.

BDCC/SeVEDS Annual Report/Discussion continued: Laura Sibia introduced herself and explained what BDCC and SeVEDS primary goals are. She said they do a great deal of community and workforce development. She also referenced a survey for the Selectboard to complete. They build programs based on the feedback that they receive. Sibia mentioned that the funding requested from the region towns is used to build programs and create capacity throughout. She said that they request \$3 per person, based on the most recent census. She explained that some towns fund the full requested amount while others vote to reduce the appropriation. Wendy Martin asked if any other towns have voted down or not funded the request. Sibia said that not every town supports them, but approximately 85% of Windham County does. Kim Record asked if they plan to submit a petition to be included in the Town warning. Sibia said they are requesting that their request be voted on as a separate article and if they needed a petition, they would try, but was hoping the Selectboard could add their request to the warning. Sibia asked the Selectboard what they felt were the biggest opportunities or challenges within the Town. Cathy Siano-Goodwin said there are clear concerns about the longevity of the Grafton Elementary School. She also mentioned concerns regarding the lack of housing and mentioned that Short-Term Rentals are forcing young families out which impact the school systems. Siano-Goodwin also mentioned the Highway Department works hard to maintain the roads and infrastructure but projects are often delayed because of lack of funding opportunities. Mary Howard Hall mentioned that the cell phone reception is a challenge in Grafton, as opposed to larger towns such as Brattleboro. Record asked if the

other small towns directly benefit from the BDCC/SeVEDS programs. Sibilia said they have programs at Leland and Gray and Bellows Falls Union High School. She elaborated on one of the programs stating that students are given a set budget and they are to then build a hypothetical life (choosing what car they want, job, housing, etc.). Another program they offer is for practical skills such as tying a tie, how to change a tire, etc. She mentioned that even if the Town of Grafton doesn't support their funding request, the programs would continue. Lastly, Sibilia mentioned Redi funding, which is a grant program through the Vermont Housing Conservation for grant writers. Siano-Goodwin mentioned that she recently attending a training/workshop and it was an excellent discussion.

8. Clerk/Treasurer:

Budget Date Proposals: Kim Record proposed two dates for the Selectboard to meet to begin looking at the next fiscal year budget. She explained that typically there is one meeting to discuss the highway budget, one for the general fund, and another to discuss any other requests from third parties such as the Fire and Rescue, Library, etc. Buzz Fisher said that afternoons work best for him. After a brief discussion, it was decided that the first budget discussion meeting would be on Monday, September 29th at 4:00 p.m. to focus on the highway budget.

Quarterly Reports: Kim Record said she had sent the Selectboard the quarterly reports. She noted that the quarter is closer to October but wanted to give the reports before any budget meetings. She mentioned that some accounts have been spent almost entirely and that is likely due to annual payments. Morgan Wilbur stated that some accounts are offset by grant funding, such as some of the road and bridge work.

9. Committee Reports:

Cemetery Committee: Cathy Siano-Goodwin said she went to the Village Cemetery, and the inside of the fence is broken. She then went to the Houghtonville Cemetery and one fence post was down. She said there had been a severe lack of rain and it appeared the weeds have taken over in the Middletown Cemetery. David Rogers said there was a limb hanging into the cemetery as well. Kim Record reported that Austin Powers said 7 stones needed repair. She planned to contact Fenton & Hennessey to give her a quote on fixing the stones. Buzz Fisher suggested having money set aside in the budget for repairs such as stones. He also mentioned that some other towns have community efforts where people volunteer to help take care of the cemeteries. Record said there are issues with liability around volunteers doing any work on Town property, especially handling the large stones.

Parks Committee: There was no report.

Highway Committee: There was no report.

Personnel Committee: Job Posting for Road Foreman: Cathy Siano-Goodwin said there was a need to hire a Highway Foreman, see minutes from the Emergency Meeting held on September 8, 2025. Anna Keegan said the Job Description describes the position as Road Foreman but the ad to be posted says Highway Supervisor. Morgan Wilbur explained that Supervisor is more inclusive, but it can be changed for consistency. Siano-Goodwin noted the board needed to decide on an advertised hourly pay range as well as when applications would be due. Keegan suggested having a wide range with language that says based on experience. After some discussion, Buzz Fisher suggested the range to be \$22-\$35 per hour based on experience.

It was moved by Buzz Fisher, seconded by John Gregory, to advertise for a Road Foreman with the hourly range being \$22-\$35 per hour based on experience and for the applications to be due by October 1st.

Suzanne Welch asked the Selectboard to think about the overall management of the Highway Department and how the Selectboard itself manages the department. She wondered if the vacancy offered an opportunity for the Selectboard to think about the bigger picture and think through benchmarking with other towns. John Gregory

felt there was nothing wrong with the management of the department and that they do the best they can. He didn't feel this was time to evaluate, given winter is approaching. Anna Keegan mentioned that the job description was well written and very clear about what the expectations are. She continued by saying she felt the Selectboard takes this very seriously but unfortunately, time is of the essence. David Rogers, as the Interim Foreman, said that if someone doesn't fill the role soon, someone may resign. Cathy Siano-Goodwin said, on behalf of the Personnel Committee, she felt they had done their best to effectively manage the department while not micro-managing. She did say there had been a recent situation that was new to the board but they did their best to handle it appropriately. Welch said the job description is not clear who the Foreman is to report to, but it should be clear they are to report directly to the Selectboard. Welch referenced the minutes from the Emergency Meeting on September 8th that the Town Administrator was directed to tell the former Foreman, Colby Record that the Selectboard accepted his resignation. Gregory said that instance was under special circumstances, but each board member did speak directly with him as well. Welch also mentioned that the job description calls for very specific job requirements and suggested that the application should have specific questions regarding those requirements. David Rogers said those are handled within the interview process.

The Selectboard Chair called for a vote on the motion. Morgan Wilbur re-read the motion on the floor. Motion passed unanimously.

July 2023 Flood Update: Morgan Wilbur mentioned that the Hinkley Brook Road culvert is complete and waiting on final inspection from VTrans. She also mentioned that the engineers are working with the Wetland Department on the Eastman Road retaining wall project to obtain proper permitting.

10. Other Business: There was no Other Business.

11. Public Comment: Eric Stevens said he had not read the job description but wondered if the Highway Foreman would be responsible for planning, budgeting, etc. for projects related to the Highway Department. John Gregory said it is a combination of the Selectboard, Foreman, and general planning with state officials. Anna Keegan also explained that there is language in the job description that requires the Foreman to oversee the budget and future planning for infrastructure. Gregory said funding drives a lot of any future planning. Morgan Wilbur said the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan also highlights infrastructure projects that are on a priority list.

12. Next regular meeting: Monday, October 6, 2025, at 6 pm.

13. Executive Session: Cathy Siano-Goodwin said the reason to enter into an executive session was to discuss having a temporary/interim Road Foreman.

At 7:28 p.m., it was moved by Anna Keegan, seconded by John Gregory, to enter Executive Session to discuss "labor relations agreements with employee" per 1 V.S.A. § 313 (1)(B) and to invite David Rogers into the session. Motion passed unanimously.

At 7:38, it was moved by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, seconded by Buzz Fisher, to exit Executive Session. Motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Anna Keegan, seconded by John Gregory, to approve David Rogers as Interim Road Foreman at \$34 per hour, retroactive to September 9, 2025, until the Road Foreman position is filled. Motion passed unanimously.

14. Adjourn. It was moved by Buzz Fisher, seconded by Steve Sargent, to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 pm. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Morgan Wilbur
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