

TOWN OF
TUNBRIDGE
VERMONT

Selectboard Regular Meeting Minutes

The Tunbridge Selectboard held a Regular meeting on July 14, 2026 at the Tunbridge Town Office and over Zoom.

Present: Gary Mullen (Chair), Mike McPhetres (Vice Chair), John O'Brien (Clerk), Aileen Lem (Assistant), Rodney Hoyt, Claude Weyant, Michael Miller, Becky Hoyt, Simon Bradford, Peter Hayden, Laura Hayden, Fred Pond, Dave Kimball, Scott Beavers, rudi Ruddell, Matthew Lerch, Cody Thurston

A note from the preparer (Aileen L.): Recording for the meeting did not start until after the Board Appointments agenda item. I apologize for the error!

Call to order

Gary called the meeting to order at 6:08pm.

Agenda additions, changes

There were no additions or changes to the agenda.

Public comments and announcements

There were no public comments or announcements.

Road Foreman report – Rodney H.

Rodney H., Road Foreman, needs to contact the Overhead Door Company of Rutland to perform maintenance on the Town Garage's rolling doors. A few weeks ago, the Selectboard received a Planned Maintenance Program service agreement from the Overhead Door Company. The Town doesn't typically need work done to the doors on an annual basis. Rodney H. and the Selectboard agreed it was best for Rodney H. to reach out to schedule a one-time visit when maintenance was needed.

Rodney H. contacted Lafayette Highway Specialties and Vermont Recreational Surfacing & Fencing, Inc. to get a quote for guardrails for the Kibling Hill culvert project and received a quote back from Lafayette. Mike M. made a motion to authorize Rodney to engage Lafayette in installing guardrails for the Kibling Hill culvert project for less than \$12,000 and paid for through the grant. John O. seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

The diesel tank needs a new whistle. The person filling the tank said they couldn't hear it. A culvert needed to be replaced by Whalen Rd today. Rodney H. and Gary M. reported disruptions were minimal. The mower is not starting and needs a pickup pump, which is attached to the filter system for the diesel fuel. It costs \$500 to get the pump and Rodney and team will install. The slow-moving valve installed on the ton truck has a leak in the

cylinder in the same place as before. This may be covered under warranty – Rodney H. will verify. The truck can still be used.

For next week if all goes well with the storm tonight, Rodney H. and team will work on ditching and mowing and grade some rough spots. Material from Barre is continuing to come in, and Rodney H. is using it when the conditions are appropriate.

Simon B., Fire Chief of the Tunbridge Volunteer Fire Department, confirmed that he and Aileen L. were in touch about washing the covered bridges, and it's on Simon B.'s list.

Aileen L. confirmed Highway Department are working on a process for facilitating communications of road closures to the Fire department. Rodney H. explained that road closures are often last minute, and they do their best to notify people as soon as possible. Simon B. agreed. Aileen L. will stay in touch with Simon B. and Rodney H. as the process is developed.

Discussion with Claude Weyant, Acting Windsor County Sheriff

Acting Sheriff Claude W. thanked the Town for agreeing to partner with the Windsor County Sheriff's department for FY2026-2027. Claude W. was a Captain under former Sheriff Ryan Palmer and attended some Selectboard meetings with Ryan Palmer. Claude W. recounted how he was mostly retired when on January 27, 2026, he was asked to take over the Windsor County Sheriff's Department. At the time, Claude W. was doing all the scheduling, which he continues to do.

Claude W. explained that taking over in January was difficult at first; the Sheriff's Department was underwater financially. However, Claude W. and the Department restructured and started putting money aside for things like health insurance, retirement, and vehicle payments and maintenance. Things are going much better now, and although a few people left or were let go by Ryan Palmer, they have a good team. All Towns who were contracting with the Department have re-signed their contracts, except Weathersfield and Reading. Weathersfield plans to stand-up their own police department and Reading has agreed to contract with Weathersfield.

Gary M. asked about the future and Claude W. mentioned he and two other people are running for Windsor County Sheriff. He's been with the Windsor County Sheriff's Department for 26 years and has a handle on it and is feeling good about it. He encouraged the Selectboard to let him know if they need anything. He wished the Orange County Sheriff's Department luck rebuilding and said he was happy to help cover the gaps. He said he's working with John Bicknell on security for the Tunbridge Fair and is confident that it will come together. He confirmed the Town will still get monthly reports.

Board appointments

David K. reported that South Royalton Rescue's building has a foundation, and they are pouring concrete; there is lumber on site. Contractors Estes and Gallup have been great. They expect to be finished in December of this year.

David K. and John D. requested that the Selectboard appoint Maureen Moriarty to a one-year term to the South Royalton Rescue Advisory Board to replace Bob Sponable. Aileen L. recognized they had in the agenda a two-year term in error. Terms are usually three years. Mike M. moved to appoint Maureen Moriarty. John O. seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Aileen L. requested that the Selectboard appoint Jame McGuire as the Tunbridge representative to the East Central Vermont Telecommunications District (ECVTD - ECFiber) Governing Board. Henry Swayze has offered to stay on as first alternate. The Town is still looking for another alternate. Mike M. moved to appoint James McGuire as the Town's primary representative with Henry Swayze as alternate. John O. seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Recess and return

The Selectboard took a quick recess to go across the street for the Annual Ice Cream Social.

Recording started

John O. moved to come out of recess and Gary seconded.

Determine next steps for letter to the State on Town Forest Fire Warden changes

Vermont Forest, Parks and Recreation (FPR) sent out FAQs today to clarify that, under Act 162, municipalities can appoint their own Forest Fire Warden in place of the Fire Chief. The Selectboard decided they would wait and see on sending the letter to the Governor.

John D., Brenda F., Simon B., and the Selectboard agreed the Town still needs clarification from Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) on liability - for example, if there's a lawsuit, if the Town Forest Fire Warden is injured on a site visit, if a burn gets out of control. The new burn permits are authorized by the Town and not the State. Aileen L. has been in touch with VLCT on this issue and will clarify the Town's liability questions and report back.

Other relevant points discussed were that the State no longer provides a stipend but may cover costs in some specific cases as laid out in Act 162 and the FPR FAQs. The State hasn't finished setting up their data collecting system but aims to for 2027. Town Forest Fire Wardens can input their data into the national database and the State can access those records as they deem necessary.

It was agreed that the Selectboard, in partnership with the Fire Chief, should appoint a Town Forest Fire Warden leaving the appointment open-ended for now.

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Brenda F. offered she would be okay stepping into the Town Forest Fire Warden role again for a limited period of time while we look for a replacement. The Town Forest Fire Wardens can get 3-4 calls a day during the summer.

John O. asked Aileen L. to keep a running list of changes we'd like to see for the next legislative session. Aileen L. agreed to and mentioned that Orange County State Senator, John Benson, had reached out to Towns with five points he shared with the chair of the Senate Committee on Government Operations. John Benson asked Towns for feedback and Aileen L. shared some they had received.

Brenda F. mentioned that people in Town who are trying navigate getting a burn permit are discouraged. It was suggested that Aileen L. write a message updating the community on progress and post on the website, Front Porch Forum, and the Tunbridge listserv. Simon B. said he would also share a message on the Fire Department Facebook page and link to the website. Aileen L. will run language by Brenda F., Simon B., and John D.

Public comment

Matthew L. suggested the Town install "Slow for Children" signs to encourage people to slow down when approaching the intersection with Potash Rd, Kibling Hill Rd, and Town Farm Rd. Aileen L. will look into the process and regulations for creating advisory signs, talk with Rodney H., and report back.

Transfer Station position approval and updates

Aileen L. requested that the Selectboard approve the Transfer Station Attendant position. Becky H., Treasurer, created the position description and Mike Barnaby reviewed with no edits. We have one person who asked about the position but has not officially applied. Aileen L. will continue to post reminders about the interim hours and the open position and will add the position description to the website once approved. Mike M. moved to approve position description as written. John O. seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

This position was posted at \$20 per hour per the June 23 meeting. Aileen L. shared that Anissa Morrison suggested the Selectboard consider increasing the pay for the position to more like \$25 per hour given that it's part-time with no benefits and the person is outside in all weather. The Selectboard said they would keep the posting at \$20 per hour but would be open to increasing based on experience and given room in the budget.

Gary M. reported that the gate was up and working well. No trash was left at the Transfer Station the first Saturday it was closed. Aileen L. will follow up on the bulletin board.

Gary M. suggested we have a container built to secure compost from the bears who tip the bins over and spread the food scraps out. Gary M. will call Mike Howe to work up an estimate. Aileen L. reminded John O. he was going to schedule training for him, Gary M.,

and First Constable Roger Clark with Mike Barnaby, so they can sub for the Attendant as needed. Aileen L. will put fixing the fence on a future agenda.

Lister update

Listers Aileen L. and rudi R. shared Chris Battcock's resignation letter with the Selectboard and confirmed that the Board of Listers now has one vacancy to fill.

Aileen L. and rudi R. presented the Board of Civil Authority (BCA) appeal stipulation agreements for the Communications properties in Tunbridge. For this year, the way Communications properties are valued in the State of Vermont changed, and the State assigned value to the Communications properties in each Town. Since the State assigned the values, the State asked the Listers to deny any Communications companies' grievances and asked the BCAs to deny any Communications companies' appeals. To save the BCA from convening and doing site visits, the State created an appeal stipulation agreement that, when signed by the appellant and the chair of the Town Selectboard, serves as a de facto decision by the BCA (a denial) without having to spend resources doing through the BCA process. The goal is to allow the Communications companies to appeal directly to the Department of Property Valuation and Review or to Superior Court. Mike M. made a motion to sign the appeal stipulation agreements for Topsham Communications and Vermont Telephone Company. John O. seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Review and approve contract and payments

rbTechnologies sent a revised contract that includes services we have been adding ad hoc, including cloud storage. Becky H. and rudi R. are comfortable with the changes. rudi R. added that it's helpful to have rbTech as partners keeping up with the rapid changes to security technologies. They also work with other Towns and are familiar with Town needs. Mike M. moved to approve and sign the rbTechnologies agreement. John O. seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Becky H. mentioned that the New England Municipal Resource Center (NEMRC) programs are moving to cloud-based and subscription-based, so we will have prepare for that expense in our budget.

Aileen L. presented the Two Rivers-Ottawquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) Board dues of \$2,313 for FY2026-2027 to the Selectboard as an FYI.

Other business

Becky H. asked the Selectboard to confirm the list of Town salaries and stipends raised by the Town in Town Meeting 2026. Becky H. also asked the Selectboard to sign the audit agreement with Sullivan, Powers & Co. P.C. The Selectboard confirmed and signed both.

Becky H. shared a book she created showing the service and maintenance history of the Town trucks. She didn't have warranty information and would need to find that separately. She plans to go back at least one more year, so the Selectboard has a comparison.

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The Selectboard was in favor of agreeing on holiday closures and other times the Town would be closed on an annual basis. Becky H. offered to add to the Continuity of Operations efforts.

Aileen L. confirmed that the new resident welcome packet is coordinated by the Tunbridge Welcoming Committee. Betsy Gaiser offered to drop off a sample packet. The Selectboard commented, if it's not already included, it would be nice to include numbers and hours for the Town Office, updated Transfer Station prices, the previous year's Town report, information on disposing of hazardous waste, etc. Aileen L. will follow up with Betsy Gaiser.

The Selectboard approved a liquor license for WI Foster LLC for an event at Landgoes Farm on August 15, 2026.

Mike M. moved to approve Brenda Field, Emergency Management Director, and James McGuire, Emergency Management Coordinator to use funds to attend the VT Emergency Management Conference: Two rooms for one night each at \$110 per night plus tax. John O. seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Cody Thurston shared a forester report that was created to value the trees cut down near the Meeting Hours cemetery in summer 2025. The Selectboard will review the report. Cody Thurston confirmed he could join the August 11 meeting to discuss. Aileen L. will follow up. The Selectboard asked Aileen L. to pull up maps for summer 2025 and contact Baxter Doty.

Review and approve June 23 and July 3 minutes

After a few minor corrections, the Selectboard approved and signed the June 23 and July 3 minutes.

Adjourn

Mike M. moved to adjourn the meeting. John O. seconded. Meeting adjourned (unanimous).

Submitted by Aileen Lem

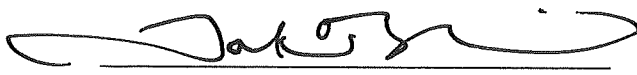
Approved July 28, 2026 by:



Gary Mullen, Chair



Mike McPhetres, Vice Chair



John O'Brien, Clerk