TOWN OF
TUNBRIDGE
VERMONT

Selectboard Regular Meeting Minutes

The Tunbridge Selectboard held a regular meeting on November 10, 2026 at the Tunbridge Town Office and over Zoom.

Present in person: Gary Mullen (Chair), Mike McPhetres (Vice Chair), John O'Brien (Clerk), Aileen Lem (Assistant), Becky Hoyt, Maryann Caron, Aquene Sausville; **Present on Zoom**: Michael Miller, Chris Battcock

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

Agenda additions, changes
Selectboard Assistant Aileen Lem asked to add the Fuel Committee's Standing Order Amendment to the agenda. The Selectboard accepted the change and chose to address immediately.

Fuel Committee Standing Order Amendment – action (new item)
The Heating Fuel Assistance Committee requested to increase the maximum amount they can provide per assistance request from $500 to $775 for qualifying residents' fuel bills.

Vice Chair Mike McPhetres made a motion to approve the Heating Fuel Assistance Committee's request. Clerk John O'Brien seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Public comments and announcements
There were no public comments or announcements.

Road report – possible action
Work on the Flint Covered Bridge started on November 4 as planned. Road Foreman Rodney Hoyt and Aileen L. are meeting Contractor Randy Hoyt and the state engineer at the bridge on Tuesday, November 17 to review progress and answer the state's questions about the purlins/nailers. The bridge is scheduled to be closed for six weeks from November 4. Work may continue after the six-week period, but the plan is that the bridge would be open.

Tunbridge resident Sheila Mitchinson was in touch with Gary M. about a maple tree on Spring Rd. that might be the Town's responsibility to remove. The Selectboard determined the tree was not the Town's responsibility. Gary M. will let Sheila Mitchinson know and may offer assistance on his own time.

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Aileen L. mentioned the road closures on Whitney Hill Rd on November 3 for electrical line maintenance and on Gilley Rd on November 10 for a culvert replacement. Both closures lasted a few hours and the work was completed.

Grant updates, special projects fund (Maryann C.) – possible action
Grants Manager Maryann Caron is waiting for the contract granting the Town a 1-year extension for the MERP grant. Since the Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Planning Commission (TRORC) is managing the MERP grant projects, the Selectboard signed a 1-year extension with TRORC. No additional money was committed. The hope is to finish the remaining projects (Town Office lighting upgrade, Town Office HVAC upgrade, and Town Hall HVAC upgrade) before the end of the year, but the extra time will help.

The Selectboard approved paying Tunbridge resident Devin Cilley $150 to cut brush behind the Town Hall this week in preparation for the Town Hall HVAC project. Property owner Alan Wight gave Aileen L. permission over the phone.

Final permissions came through to begin the grant-funded ledge removal work and Rodney H. is aware.

Maryann C. is working with Emergency Management Director Brenda Field and Emergency Management Coordinator James McGuire on a homeland security grant due Sunday, Nov 15. The grant requires three quotes for every piece of equipment over $100 whereas other grants only require one quote and for equipment over $1,000. The Town still gets to determine what quote to accepted. Maryann C. asked the Selectboard to provide conditional approval of the grant submission, listed below, as she's still waiting for information from Brenda F. and James M. before finalizing:

- Vehicle barricades;
- Radios with UHF (Ultra High Frequency) and VHF (Very High Frequency) bands to allow people to communicate with the Town and the police on the same radio;
- An emergency operations center trailer custom fit with internet, radios, generators, and other equipment to support emergency management.

Items considered but not included: Metal detectors, generator for the Tunbridge school.

Once Maryann C. receives equipment quotes from James M. and Brenda F., the final dollar amount will go on the signature page of the grant submission.

Maryann C. estimated that the grant will be awarded around March, and the town would have until 2029 to spend the funds. Given what the Town is asking for is relatively easy to stand up, and the Town will already have three quotes for each piece of equipment to pull from, Maryann C. anticipates a short implementation timeline.

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Mike M. made a motion authorizing Gary to sign the grant application for the Homeland Security SHSP grant pending the final figures from Maryann C. John O. seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

The Selectboard discussed possible projects for the Special projects funds, formerly ARPA funds. Originally, the Selectboard had $398,761.31 of which they allocated $394,316 to certain projects. Maryann C. was able to find grants and funds from the state to cover four of the projects the Selectboard allocated funds for resulting in an actual spend of $174,373.89 leaving the Town with around $224,393 (actual calculation = $224,387.42).

The Selectboard and Maryann C. revisited the original list of projects discussed when the MERP grant application was submitted but not awarded:

- Building a new Town Garage
- The Orange County Parent Child Center (OCPCC) requested funding for installing solar panels.
- Michael Sacca and the Recreation Committee requested funding for a land purchase, but someone else purchased the land.
- Michael Sacca suggested an idea around agrotourism, but the proposal wasn't fully fleshed-out.
- Michael Sacca requested $10,500 for a Drew Lot Forest trail, and the Selectboard recommended he explore a grant through the Agency of Natural Resources.
- The Recreation Committee requested funding for lights, but that request was tabled after the Selectboard talked through the Committee's other funding options.
- Fred Pond asked for $12,000 for a timber-frame pavilion at the Town Forest, which has already been done at this point.
- Michael Sacca, Todd Tyson, and the Energy Committee requested funding for level 2 EV charging stations, but there wasn't agreement on a location.
- Betsy Gaiser for funds to support a right-of-way survey on Old Mountain Rd.
- Izzy Provoncha and the Tunbridge Historical Society requested $52,500 for the North Tunbridge Baptist Church repair, which is ongoing.
- Town Hall electrical upgrade at $40,000, the Selectboard decided not to fund with ARPA funds and instead considered funding through the Capital Improvement Fund.

Other possible projects mentioned in the previous Selectboard meeting and in general:

- Cybersecurity audit through Vermont Information Center
- Town Office
    - Better storage for technology
    - Fire alarm system
    - Replacement windows
    - Repaint the roof
- Generator for the Tunbridge school
- Town Hall
    - Replacement roof

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- Replacement windows
- Electrical upgrade

Follow up on projects for the Special project fund:

- Aileen L. will contact Chris Pratt, who is handling replacing the windows at the Baptist Church and has experience with other historical buildings, to do a walkthrough of the Town Hall and Town Office to discuss replacing windows.
- Aileen L. will follow up on estimates previously received from Iron Horse Roofing and Black Ox Roofing to replace the Town Hall roof. For a third quote, Aileen L. will reach out to Twin State Roofing.
- Aileen L. will follow up with Todd Tyson on a quote for painting the Town Office roof – Gary M. previously asked Todd Tyson for a quote.
- Aileen L. will follow up with James M. on his suggestion for a cybersecurity audit through Vermont Information Center.
- Aileen L. will follow up rbTech when they are onsite on Monday on the wires between the Listers' desks.
- Aileen L. will contact Mid State Electric Supply and Bradford Low Voltage to get recommendations and quotes for wiring at the Town Hall, in particular the stage wiring.
- Generator for the Tunbridge school – no next steps identified.

Maryann C. offered to look into the Mascoma Bank grant program that prioritizes supporting employee comfort and safety once a specific need is identified, for example, replacing windows in the Town Office.

Other funds discussed: Treasurer Becky Hoyt confirmed the Capital Improvement Fund has about 99,319.69 and for specific projects, like improving the Transfer Station, there is funding available through the Trustees of Public Funds.

Transfer Station check in – possible action

Aileen L. shared the office copy of the Transfer Station Resources binder. The Selectboard formalized the list of numbers to call when Transfer Station Attendant Aquene Sausville needs coverage.

The Selectboard, Aquene S., and Aileen L. went through a checklist of Transfer Station-related tasks:

- Gary M. will be in touch with David Royce to confirm the heater has been fixed.
- Gary M. will visit Aquene S. when the Transfer Station is open to show her how to use the heater.
- Gary M. will check on filling in a hole in the floor of the shed with insulation.
- Aileen L. will contact Luke Barnaby and ask if he can fix the fence in the spring.
- Aileen L. will check with Impact Apparel to see if they would like us to call when their bin is full rather than coming weekly.

- Aileen L. will look into weatherproof storage for keys.
- Aileen L. will coordinate with Aquene S. on magnetic signs for bins and compactors.
- Aileen L. will confirm the acceptance of Construction and Debris.
- Aileen L. will look into putting a sign at the start of Recreation Rd to indicate if the Transfer Station is opened or closed – this could be helpful when the Transfer Station closes for cold temperatures.

Aquene S. mentioned setting up a reuse space in the shed. The Selectboard discussed having the space inside the Transfer Station area to avoid it being used as a way to drop of trash. They mentioned wanting Aquene S. to vet the items that get put in the shed and to go through them once in a while and get rid of things, so it doesn't get too unwieldy. The Royalton Transfer Station had a similar space, but got rid of it, Aileen L. offered to get Aquene S. in touch with the Royalton Transfer Station Attendant.

The Selectboard and Aquene S. discussed feedback from Tunbridge residents on the winter hours and decided on adjusting the regular hours starting next week:

Open Wednesdays 3-7pm
Open Fridays 3-7pm
Open the 1st Saturday of each month 1-4pm

Open the day after Thanksgiving
Closed Christmas Day
Closed New Year's Day (but open the first Saturday in January – Jan 2)

Aileen L. will post the updated hours on the website, Front Porch Forum, and the Tunbridge Discuss Listserv. There was discussion about the use of Facebook and personal accounts. Aileen L. recommended that the Selectboard be deliberate about having a Facebook presence, including determining who monitors the account, and if/how to respond to comments. The Selectboard decided to table, for now, both opening a Town Facebook account and asking Town staff to post on Facebook as official business.

Aquene S. would like to support convenient disposal of hazardous waste, e-waste, etc. Aileen L. will schedule a time for a representative from the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District to tour the Transfer Station and talk with Aquene S. and whoever else wants to attend to work out suggestions and messaging.

John O. will be in touch with Tunbridge resident Rodney Fiske on his claim of being exempt from paying at the Transfer Station given his service in the Attendant role.

Snow removal for Town properties
Aileen L. went over a list of areas for the Selectboard to consider for snow removal.

- Town Office: Shoveling the front steps, path, and ramp to the back door of the building by 7:30am Monday through Friday.
- Tunbridge Library: Shoveling the back door, paths to each door, and the parking spot behind the Library. Coordinate with the Library Director on open hours.
- Town Hall: Shoveling side door, front steps, and ramp, emergency exit for the town hall. Coordinate with the Town Hall Manager.
- Add shoveling a path for oil delivery where applicable.

In general, it would be good to have these areas shoveled when there is 2 inches or more of snow. The Transfer Station should be taken care of by the Road crew plowing with the Transfer Station Attendant doing some light shoveling.

For ice, Judy Howe typically puts down ice melt that's non-toxic and okay for dogs' feet. Aileen L. will send the list to Devin Cilley for a quote.

FY27-28 budget discussion

Aileen L. reported that PumpTech recommended we contact a contractor to replace the orangeburg septic pipe with schedule 40 pipe for the Town Hall. The pipe in the building is cast iron and meets the orangeburg pipe somewhere outside of the Town Hall, possibly under the granite foundation. The pipe is about 5 feet underground, so it would need to be dug and pulled through the foundation to be replaced. It is not an emergency to fix, but we will continue to have problems as the orangeburg is deformed into an oval shape and breaking down from the inside.

The Selectboard looked over printouts of the General Fund prepared by Becky H. The preliminary discussion focused on ensuring snow removal and ground maintenance were accounted for. They agreed to replace one Town computer this fiscal year (FY26-27), and two each fiscal year following until caught up. The Town may be able to reduce the number of computers needed. Tech costs will likely continue to go up in general. Becky H. accounted for a 3.6% COLA adjustment for staff. The Selectboard confirmed adding the stipends for the Fire Warden ($800), Deputy Fire Warden ($600), Emergency Management Director ($800), and Emergency Management Coordinator ($800) for this fiscal year and going forward.

The Selectboard would like to discuss the Administrative Assistant position at the next meeting. Lister wages also needs to be discussed, and Aileen L. will prepare information.

The Selectboard agreed they would like clarification on Town Nurse Judi Hoyt's hours and her responsibilities. Gary M. said he would be in touch with Jodi H. and bring the information back to the Selectboard.

Becky H. will verify a few numbers that looked off and the Selectboard will review again along with the Highway Fund in the next meeting.

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Other business
Aileen L. passed on to the Selectboard a resource from Rethink Local (Tunbridge resident Alex Torpey): Improving your civic ecosystem by building better municipal boards, committees, and volunteer pathways at the request of Betsy Gaiser.

Becky H. let the Selectboard know that the list of appropriation requests in last year's Town Report left out an organization, but the amount they requested was included in the total and approved by the Town. The Selectboard will need to decide to pay the appropriation.

Gary M. approved a liquor license for Brocklebank Brewing LLC for December 19, 2026.

The Selectboard confirmed Town Clerk Bonnie McCrillis should contact the Windsor County Sheriff's office about the report of needles found on Ward Hill Rd. Aileen L. will pass the information along.

John O. will be in touch with Planning Commission Chair Amy Frost on a proposal he heard about where if five members of the TRORC Board of Commissioners sign they are able to ask questions of the TRORC leadership. Aileen L. has Planning Commission member and TRORC Tunbridge representative Janet Wells on the agenda for the next meeting to recommend appointing an alternate.

Approve warrants, approve October 27 regular meeting minutes - action
The Selectboard reviewed and approved warrants provided by Treasurer Becky Hoyt. After minor edits, the Selectboard approved the October 27 regular meeting minutes.

Adjourn
Mike M. moved to adjourn the meeting. Gary M. seconded. Meeting adjourned at 9:14pm (unanimous).

Submitted by Aileen Lem

Approved _____, 2026 by:

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Gary Mullen, Chair

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Mike McPhetres, Vice Chair

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John O'Brien, Clerk

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