

Town of Fairfield Selectboard Minutes

December 22, 2025

In Attendance: Gavin Ryan, Ronald Bocash, David Persons and Brian Dubie

Road Foreman: Maurice Jettie

Town Clerk: Absent

Town Administrator: Cathy Ainsworth

Secretary: Absent

Visitors: Randy Reed, NWATV

Ron made a motion to approve the minutes of December 8th and 17th. David seconded. All in favor.

1. Cathy will get together with Moe to discuss the Local Safety Grant Opportunity for Pond Road - this grant could be used for guardrails, ledge removal or Pond Rd. safety improvements near the beach.
2. Gavin signed the engagement letter for the 2025 audit.
3. Cathy is organizing and reconciling Intrafi CD transactions and journal entries before year end. Cathy will prepare and process one more payroll before year-end.
4. The SB discussed health insurance opt-out information. Cathy shared a report from VLCT about health insurance opt-outs noting that 50% of municipalities offer opt-out reimbursements, with a median amount of \$4K for flat rates. The Town currently offers basic Blue Cross Blue Shield plans up to the value of a two person plan and the opt-out reimbursement is \$1,500.
5. The SB explored funding options for equipment purchases, primarily discussing the Vermont Municipal Equipment Loan Fund and the Vermont Bond Fund. The loan fund offers up to \$110K (75% of total cost) per municipality, per year with applications reviewed twice annually and a competitive priority system favoring shared equipment. The bond option was also mentioned, requiring a town meeting vote and participation in a webinar, though it was noted as a potential future consideration for larger projects,
6. Planning and Zoning terms expiring at the end of the year are Melissa Manson's 3-year term, Aaron Forbes' 2-year term and Don Wells' 2-year term. All want to continue and request reappointment.

Ron made a motion to reappoint the Planning and Zoning members as noted. David seconded. All in favor.

7. Cathy reviewed the budget to date, with the Selectboard. Brian asked questions and made comments re: town clerk salary and associated health insurance change. Possibility exists to reduce heat costs for the Common School if we can relocate the exercise class. Why is retirement going down in some places? Cathy will check. Decision made to increase the Health Insurance opt-out of insurance option, discussed above, to \$2K.

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Brian made a motion to approve a budget of 3.04% increase in tax request. Ron seconded. Vote tabled until after Executive Session.

8. Any board member or individual who wants to submit edits or markups to sections 1-4 of the Hazard Mitigation Plan should forward to Cathy for edit and review. Sections 5-7 have been emailed for review. David has reviewed and feels the edits are good. Brian and David plan to review and edit the hazard mitigation plan draft after the holidays.

David made a motion to enter Executive Session for a personnel matter. Ron seconded. All in favor.

David made a motion to exit the Executive Session. Ron seconded. All in favor.

9. Exiting executive session, the Selectboard requested Cathy update the budget to increase the Town Clerk hours to 32 hours at the legacy rate and replace the health care cost for this position. They also asked her to reduce the paving budget to \$175K.

Brian withdraws his motion for budget approval.

David makes a motion to approve the warrants. Ron seconds. All in favor.

Cathy made the changes to the budget as requested. The board requested increased salaries at a COLA of 3%, excluding new hires. The Selectboard decided that they would revisit and finalize the budget at their January 12th meeting, aiming for a 3% tax request increase. Cathy explained that she will need to know what to enter into the payroll module for the first payroll of 2026.

David made a motion to increase salaries by COLA of 3% except for new employees and the town clerk position. Brian seconded. All in favor.

10. Cathy will verify and update retirement calculations in the budget before the next regular Selectboard meeting and will make sure calculations in the budget are correct.
11. Next meeting is the specially- warned site visit to Sherman Rd on January 5th at 10am.

Brian made a motion to adjourn. Ron seconded. All in favor.

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