

Town of Fairfield Selectboard Minutes

December 8, 2025

In Attendance: Tom Howrigan, Gavin Ryan, Ron Bocash, Brian Dubie (via Zoom)

Roads: Absent

Town Clerk: Linda Hodet

Town Administrator: Cathy Ainsworth

Secretary: Melissa Manson

Visitors: Charlie Machia, Sarah Allerton, Susan CasavantMagnan, Larry Edelson, Kelly Shepherd, NWATV

1. Kelly Shepherd came to talk to SB about the late payment fee on her taxes. The meter strip from her office said 11/7 but the post office's stamped postmark was 11/8. Kelly asked why the Town doesn't recognize the date on the meter strip, she shared her research and discussed her obstacles to paying earlier. The Selectboard stated that the post office's postmark stamp is what has always been accepted, they do not plan on changing this process, and they denied her request to eliminate the late payment fee and penalties.
2. Sarah Allerton, Larry Edelson and Susan Casavant Magnan came to discuss the proposed budget for Bent Northrop Memorial Library. Small increases in budget primarily for computers, staff pay and hours, landscaping and healthcare. There was no taxpayer request increase 2024 to 2025. This year, the taxpayer increase is 3% (\$3841.). The budget now shows the entire expected amount of revenue from the Friends group, but this revenue is completely expended in the Friends Expense budget line. Changing the way they account for these funds makes the budget increase look like 13% but it is really not. The Selectboard encourages the library to make this in-and-out budgeting very clear to the voters. In 2026, the library expects to utilize about \$10,600 above the 2025 earnings from the endowment for mortgage and other expenses. 2027 is the final mortgage payment and after that, they plan to draw down the running three-year avg. each year. The library has developed a comprehensive 5-year list of anticipated building repairs. Currently, the library asks the town for 64% of it's budget as compared to the 81-85% average of other VT municipal libraries.
3. Charlie Machia, new president of the Fairfield Historical Society since August of 2025. Charlie recapped what he's been working on and his priorities for the near future. He's creating a virtual tour of the downstairs collection, establishing a new website, and would like to have open hours. He said he is scanning historical documents and mapping family histories to Ireland. Susan Casavant Magnan suggested Charlie reach out to the middle school classes at Fairfield Center School who coordinated a Project Sweet Talk unit. The Selectboard agreed to make a key to the building for Charlie and discussed building security. Cathy will look into what it would take to put a lockable door at the bottom of the stairs and make the key.

Tom made a motion to approve the minutes of 11.24.2025. Gavin seconded. All in favor.

4. Brian gave a Hazard Mitigation Plan update. He reviewed the Summary of Hazards included in the previous plan and asked the selectboard and community for feedback/ suggestions. The Selectboard had no additions to the list at this time. Brian says the summary looks good but needs an update of the estimated potential losses in dollars. SB agrees with this strategy for updating the town's assessed vulnerabilities in this section.

These minutes exist in draft form until approved by the Selectboard.

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5. Cathy gave a 2025 budget update in advance of the budget planning session scheduled for next week, Wednesday December 17th. Cathy and SB did a line-by-line review of the current balance sheet. We are on track for year end.
6. PUC oral arguments happened last week. No final decision yet.
7. AP expenses include new laptops, which have arrived, and the first payment of 2026 Blue Cross Blue Shield health insurance, with new rates.

Ron made a motion to approve the warrants. Tom seconded. All in favor.

Tom made a motion to enter executive session for a personnel matter. Gavin seconded. All in favor. Ron made a motion to exit executive session. Tom seconded. All in favor. Information only. No decisions.

Tom made a motion to adjourn. Gavin seconded. Motion carried.