

# **Town of Fairfield Selectboard Minutes**

January 12, 2026

In Attendance: Tom Howrigan, Ron Bocash, Brian Dubie, David Persons

Roads: Absent

Town Clerk: Linda Hodet

Town Administrator/ Secretary: Cathy Ainsworth

Visitors: Andrew Douglas, NWATV

**Meeting Commenced at 7:00 PM, with Tom, Brian and Ron.**

**Ron made a motion open the Public Hearing on the Discontinuance of Sherman Rd. Brian seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.**

1. Cathy recapped the steps for discontinuance of a road completed so far.
2. The Selectboard discussed the following factors: (A) Adequacy of other property and locations: this is a dead-end road. Other through-roads, such as Rte. 36 are more adequate for use. (B) Quantity/kind and extent of agricultural land being affected: N/A- no ag. land is benefitting from the road. (C) Effect on homestead rights/ convenience of the homeowner of the land: Andrew Douglas, owns both sides of the road and supports the change. (D) Effect of the highway on scenic and recreational values: The road is fairly short, with no vistas. It is a forested dead end, not suitable for a trail. (E) Need to accommodate future utility installations within the corridor: Any power easements to the surrounding properties will remain. No future utility installations are foreseeable. (F) Need to mitigate environmental impacts of highway construction: N/A- construction is not planned. (G) Effect upon town grand lists and revenues: Both properties also have road frontage to Rte. 36, devaluation is not expected. Costs associated with road improvements would prove costly to taxpayers.
3. Andrew Douglas wondered how E911 changes would be made, clarified post-discontinuance property ownership and expressed his continued support for the discontinuance.

**Brian Made a motion to close the Hearing on the discontinuance of Sherman Rd. Ron seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.**

**Brian made a motion to discontinue Sherman Rd., based on findings from the Hearing and Site Inspection. Ron seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.** Cathy recapped next steps.

1. Linda discussed Town Meeting preparations. The Selectboard will sign the Warning at their next meeting so need to decide if they want an article asking whether the Town Clerk position should be appointed. She suggests that the voters should decide so candidates can be vetted prior to assuming the role. Brian agreed that the responsibilities of this position are high enough for this change. Linda said the petitions deadline is January 15<sup>th</sup> and Town Reports are due by the end of next week. Cathy asks the Selectboard if they think that the Administrator and the Selectboard letters should be combined, because there is so much redundancy. The Selectboard agrees and says she should add numbers, etc. prior to it being submitted.

**Brian made a motion to approve the Minutes from December 22, 2025. Ron seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.**

**David Persons joined the meeting.**

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

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2. Cathy reports that she completed year-end and tax requirements to VT, Feds, unemployment, retirement, etc. and is working on the annual census for the Dept. of Commerce regarding local government finances. She summarized her updates to payroll, health stipends, federal overtime pay tax deductions, and preparations for W-4s and I-9s.
3. Cathy asks the Selectboard whether they want her to sign and return the USDA Wildlife Services request so they can collect roadkill to be tested for rabies and, later, possibly trap and vaccinate local vector species. The Selectboard agreed she can sign and return this.
4. Cathy asks whether the Selectboard would like there to be a rabies clinic in Fairfield, as per Franklin County Animal Rescue's letter of request. The Selectboard discussed limitations of resources to help with this. Cathy will respond with "no thank you".
5. Cathy reports that the St. Albans Dispatch services contract is ready was received and is now standardized at an assessed rate of \$15 per capita so the contract only increased 1% to \$28,080 for 2026. David says St. Albans Dispatch is a regional partner so it wouldn't make sense to go with any other service. The Selectboard agrees. Cathy can sign and return the contract.
6. Brian reports that he has worked on writing Section 5 of the Hazard Mitigation plan and will meet with David about next steps. Tom says he has edits regarding Brusco Road and the section about Swanton's use of Fairfield Pond water should be removed as this is no longer happening. Brian reiterates that suggestions can continue to be made.

**Brian made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss personnel. Ron Seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.**

**Brian made a motion to exit Executive Session. Ron seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.**

Out of executive session, Brian announced that the Town Clerk is transitioning from her position. He extended thanks to her, from the Selectboard, for her work on behalf of the Town in this role. The Town Clerk job will become open in the near future. The Selectboard will present the position to the voters to determine if it should become an appointed position. This job is a part-time, salaried position. Linda will help with the transition and continue in her other appointed positions.

7. Cathy presents options for financing the new grader, planned to be received in early February. People's Trust Company quoted rates of 3.25% and Government Capital quoted rates of 5.495% for 3 or 5 year terms. Brian and David noted the good rate from People's Trust Company. The Selectboard considered how much they want to pay from the Equipment Fund and how much to finance.

**David made a motion to use \$100,000 from the equipment account for this purchase and finance the balance of \$164,000 through People's Trust Company at their rate of 3.25%. Tom seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.**

**David made a motion to nominate Melissa Manson for the Town Health Officer position. Ron seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.**

**David made a motion to approve the Accounts Payable warrants. Ron seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.**

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**David made a motion to approve the payroll warrants dated 12/29/2025 and 1/12/2026. Ron seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.**

**Brian made a motion to adjourn the meeting. David seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.**