

Town of Fairfield Selectboard Minutes

August 25, 2025- Revised 9.15.2025

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

Roads: Maurice Jettie

Town Clerk: Absent

Town Administrator: Cathy Ainsworth

Secretary: Cathy Ainsworth

Visitors: Molly Mashtare, Julie Wolcott, Kelly Knotek, Zandr Yensan, NWATV

Brian made a motion to enter Executive Session for an interview with Zoning Administrator candidate Molly Mashtare. Ron seconded. All in favor.

Brian made a motion to exit Executive Session. Ron Seconds.

Brian made a motion that, pursuant to Molly Mashtare accepting the job offer, SB appoints Molly Mashtare for the ZA position. Ron seconds. All in favor.

Brian made a motion to amend the agenda to add an Executive Session for personnel after the Hazard Mitigation discussion. Ron seconded. All in favor.

1. Julie Wolcott came in to recommend the Common School Working Group (CSWG)'s preferred bidder for architectural planning services, as per the Town's Municipal Planning Grant (MPG) and the RFP. She provided the scoring criteria the working group used for the bids- all in attendance at the recent CSWG meeting had agreed with ~~scored~~ Guillot Vivian Viehmann Architects, inc (GVV) higher. She recapped reference check conversations. The MPG, received this Spring is for \$18K, with a town match 10%. \$13,500 was budgeted to the architectural services. The goal of the Architectural contract is a full scoping study, with community engagement, to determine associated costs of restoring the Common School. Discussion of the Common School Working Group's process to date. The Selectboard questioned the group's direction for the Common School. Recap of updates to the Selectboard regarding the group's work, the planning grant for common school restoration, and the Community Trust application that was just submitted, which would provide a foundation for fundraising and capital planning. Selectboard members are not certain that restoration is the best idea for the building. Continued discussion is needed about wastewater. Greta will be attending an upcoming meeting regarding a separate matter and may be able to answer more questions. The Historical Society agreed to invest in funding the cost of postcards to work on community awareness.

Brian made a motion to approve the selection of GVV, as recommended by the Common School Working Group, for architectural services. Ron seconded. David abstains. Ron, Brian and Tom in favor. Motion carries.

2. Kelly Knotek and Zander Yensan from PACIF discussed our first year of coverage. The worker's compensation audit has been completed and results can be expected soon. Kelly reviewed some of the anticipated increases in cost and other expectations for 2026. Brian says we can't ask questions because we haven't seen the audit or renewal fees yet. Kelly discussed ways to simplify the process and adhere to State statute. Zander said it's a great accomplishment to have fixed 50% of the compliance issues already and encourages

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Town of Fairfield Selectboard Minutes

continuing on this process. Brian asks Moe to communicate this success to his team. Zander presents a binder of proposed policies and documents that address VOSHA requirements (Lock out-Tag out, PPE and HazCom planning). Zander talked about grant eligible improvements through PACIF, and encouraged the Town to take advantage of training, support and grants through PACIF..

David made a motion to approve the minutes of 8.25.25. Ron seconded. All in favor.

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

3. Moe reports that the truck has arrived. Moe needs to do a review of the chemicals present at the garage so Cathy can get the MSDS sheets. Ron is willing to help with this. 2021 truck needed 6 new tires. It's time for inspection of all the trucks. Getting ditching done. A little rain has allowed some grading to happen. New grader still expected in October.
4. Cathy asks for direction on the insulation at the garage. The potential of an Efficiency VT grant has added additional costs. Does the SB want to pursue? No. Go forward with Bugbee as planned.
5. MM asks if the SB wants to pave the worst 200 feet of Sweet Hollow Road as Swanton is paving a portion that ends at the town line. No money left in Fairfield's paving budget. Moe to call Swanton and see who is paving and ascertain what the cost would be.
6. Cathy reported that she will attend the VLCT Town Fair in October and will be taking off Wednesday through Friday this week.
7. Brian reported that the revision of the Hazard Mitigation plan is a much bigger event than he had originally anticipated. Some neighboring towns have spent over a year and between \$9-\$40K on support to rewrite/revise their plan. It requires a lot of community involvement and interaction with neighboring towns. Brian and David have been working on a plan for the process which was presented along with a draft schedule September 2025 through July 2026. The Selectboard discusses that this process will be long and may extend beyond this schedule.

Brian made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss a personnel issue. Ron seconded. All in favor.

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

8. The SB makes a formal announcement that Cathy Ainsworth, Emergency Management Director, will spearhead the update of the Hazard Mitigation Plan using her expertise and be a point person for planning, drafting and outreach with Brian and David, other community members and NRPC.
9. Cathy reports that the Town's Policy Regarding Conflicts of Interest and Ethical Conduct, signed in 2018 is not in tune with the new state statutes and references rescinded statutes. If the Town rescinds our policy, then we default to the State statute, which includes all of the up-to-date conflict of interest and ethical requirements of municipalities.

Brian made a motion to rescind our current ethics policy. Ron seconds. All in favor.

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Town of Fairfield Selectboard Minutes

Cathy says that the state requires each municipality to develop their own process for investigating and enforcing the Municipal Ethics Policy. Regarding the draft, she requests that the selectboard determine a direction for how investigation requests can be submitted, in addition to the Ethics Liaison. The selectboard says to write in that the Selectboard will receive these. Cathy reads the other update made to the process since the previous meeting, an introduction paragraph:

*“**Purpose:** State law ([24 V.S.A. § 1997](#)) requires municipalities to enact procedures to investigate complaints that allege a municipal officer has violated the [Municipal Code of Ethics](#) and to enforce against substantiated complaints, including developing methods of enforcement and available remedies. Below is the Town of Fairfield’s Process for Investigation and Enforcement of Ethical Violations along with an Ethics Complaint Form and the contact information for the Town’s Ethics liaison and Selectboard.”*

Brian made a motion to adopt the Town of Fairfield’s Process for Investigation and Enforcement of Ethical Violations, as revised. Ron seconds. All in favor.

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