

Town of Fairfield Selectboard Minutes

May 11, 2026

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

Roads: Maurice Jettie

Town Clerk: Demetrius Bolduc

Town Administrator: Cathy Ainsworth

Secretary: Melissa Manson

Visitors: Greta Brunswick (NRPC), Julie Wolcott, Jeanne Hopkins, Sorel Chaput, Michael (no last name or announcement of presence/ removed from Zoom), David Davio (Pike Industries), Hubert Spaulding, Kim Spaulding, NWATV

Meeting Called to order at 7:01pm

Brian made a motion to amend the agenda to include Paving Bids Opening toward the beginning of the meeting, change the order to have Common School at 8pm, and add an executive Session for personnel under other business. Ron seconded. All in favor.

1. Demetrius has a request for a liquor license for Frost Beerworks at the DeToor Bike Race. Do they need to delineate an area where alcohol can be consumed? Discussion followed and decision to approve contingent on Frost Beerworks delineating, during the event, an area for alcohol consumption. Ron asks to make sure they have liability insurance.
2. Demetrius says he will need a BCA meeting to update current election activity for the upcoming election. Selectboard (SB) asks that he schedule BCA for just before an SB meeting. He also said there are some upcoming trainings for BCA members if they choose to participate.
3. Cathy reviewed the paving bid requirements, as detailed on the posted *Invitation to Bid*. David Davio attended via Zoom to answer any questions for Pike Industries. David began opening and reviewing the bids.

Ron made a motion to approve the minutes of 4/27. David seconded. All in favor.

4. Cathy updated the Selectboard on the McKenzie Rd easement process.
5. The Town's Paving Grant will be approved for \$191,496, to be completed this summer, and the Structures Grant for the North Rd. culvert replacement will be approved for \$200K, to be completed by December 2027, with a project cost estimated at \$575K. She says even after using capital fund money for this project expense, there may be over \$100K that would need to be secured. Engineering for the project is complete. Cathy asks whether she should sign to accept the grant when paperwork is provided. Discussion followed.

Tom made a motion to authorize Cathy to sign the VTRANS grant agreements. David seconded. All in favor.

6. Milton Cat serviced the generator and while servicing, the battery blew up. Milton Cat says the generator is nearing the end of its service life. Reviewed the report on the generator. New one may be more than \$50K. Grants may be available for replacement as the office is the emergency shelter for the Town.

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7. Cathy says Moe followed up on a streetlight out- checked them at night, and none are out. Two poles do not have lights. Current electric bill for street lights is \$500/month even this time of year. SB says the Town is not planning to add new lights.
8. David announced paving bid opening results, focusing on Project Option 2, which includes the paving funded by grant:

Whitcomb	\$313,305.72 (\$88.28/ton, 3549 tons)
SD Ireland	\$332,010.00 (\$93/ton, 3570 tons)
Hungerford	\$325,956.00 (\$92/ton, 3543 tons)
Pike	\$320,916.60 (\$88.70/ton, 3618 tons)
AllStates	\$393,955.50 (\$109.25/ton, 3606 tons)

Bids have not yet been fully reviewed but all appear to be within 100 ton of one another. Whitcomb appears to be the low bidder. David Davio, Pike Industries reminds the SB that Pike warranties their work for one year. Bids will be fully reviewed, and award will be made at the next SB meeting.

9. Maurice reports that the 2021 truck is back at International, dealing with the same DEF problem that it was in for recently. Not sure they will cover it under warranty, but since they just worked on it for the same problem, Moe feels they should.
10. Maurice says they have begun grading and will continue to do so. Chloride will start this week.
11. Maurice asks if the SB has decided on the mowing tractor bid? No decision at this time- tabled.
12. Insulation project was completed by Chris Panko Insulation, at the garage and Moe reports that they did a great job.

Ron made a motion to enter executive session to discuss a legal issue regarding an easement, to include Hubert and Kim Spaulding. Tom seconded. All in favor.

David made a motion to exit executive session Damian seconded. All in favor. Discussion only. No decisions.

13. Cathy reviewed updated sections 1-3 of the Hazard Mitigation Plan page by page. She explained cross checks with census and other frameworks to secure accurate information. Brian says it's awesome work and to proceed to next sections. Please share 1-3 with Maurice and planning partners and community members supporting this effort.
14. Overweight permits signed.
15. Porta Pottys have been delivered to the Fairfield Pond Beach and the Community Center. Thanks extended to Ron for cleaning the beach. Also regarding the beach, Cathy reminds the SB that Friends of Lake Champlain (FNLC) were approved and are awaiting the paperwork to sign for a grant that will include, amongst their other projects supported by their grant, addressing an issue at the boat launch and on the beach, identified through their Fairfield Pond Watershed study. This was a grant the Town supported. The SB requests FNLC talk about the specifics of the beach and boat launch projects with them.
16. Brian reports that Fairfield was the first Town to write a letter with concerns about Act 181. 20 other towns followed suit. The VT House Representatives amended the Bill, including the elimination of the Road Rule and Tier 3. Now it is with the VT Senate.

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

17. Greta, Julie, Jeanne, and Sorel provided an update on the Common School Working Group. The open house (April 1) generated new people and interest in the group. There are still questions about what purpose is best for potential for income generation. In the architect design, based on community input and committee discussions, the first floor is intended for multipurpose use, including after school programs. The basement will be mostly recreational use. The second floor is where potential exists for income generation for either office or residential space. Amongst others, Tim Smith, ED of Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation (FDIDC), Jim Cameron, and Rep. James Gregoire have been in attendance at the open house /at meetings to contribute to the discussion. Greta acknowledged that there is not currently an entity in place that could assume responsibility of managing a residential space, and parking for school/ recreation events may cause problems for this. In the other direction, using floor 3 for office space, what demand is there for more office space in this area. Tom asks how interested the Community Center is in using the first floor and Julie says they are 100% behind using the first floor for after school programs, explaining that the architect designs include everything necessary for licensing. Next steps are: to contract for septic testing for use capacity; continue the survey being distributed; research rental management options; research funding opportunities and provide cost estimates to the SB; consider phasing of the restoration as a strategy for incurring costs over time instead of all at once.
18. GVV's final invoice exceeded the Town's contracted "do not exceed" amount for architectural planning services. Discussion followed on whether we want to stick with the contract price, pay the full invoice of real work done or split it with GVV. The planning group attests that the quality of GVV's work, effort and engagement has been great. Unfortunately, GVV appears to have disregarded the contracted price, with no discussion with the town about the overage prior invoicing. SB says stick with the contracted price, as they are obligated to taxpayers.
19. Discussion followed about the Common School septic testing. There is \$3K in the grant to do test pits to define what the possible uses are based on soils. Quote from Barnard & Gervais is \$1K plus extra for an excavator. David asks that the committee to ensure the company has the right level of engineering qualifications/ capabilities so any septic work done now can be used for future analysis and design efforts, if we get that point. David says starting with the wrong septic design engineering qualifications could result in limitations later on.

Brian makes a motion to accept the low estimate for soil analysis/capacity with a firm with engineering qualifications for analysis and design for potential future use. Damian seconds. All in favor.

20. Regarding Common School funding, the Village Trust Initiative is coming up again. Greta says we need to be invited. There is support from FCIDC, who she says has already qualified the Common School as a priority project, which can open up economic development funding. Northern Borders grant may be an option. Greta stresses that there will not be one source and this process will also need a capital campaign for donations, etc.

Ron made a motion to enter executive session to discuss a personnel matter. David seconded. All in favor.

Ron made a motion to exit executive session. David seconded. All in favor. Discussion only.

Tom made a motion to adjourn. Damian seconded. All in favor.

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