

Minutes of the Westmoreland Selectmen's Meeting

Tuesday, September 1, 2026

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mark Terry, John Snowdon and Bill McGahie

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm
2. Approval of Minutes: August 13, 2026 Motion was made by Mark Terry and seconded by John Snowdon to accept the minutes as printed. Motion passed 3-0.
3. Accounts Payable: Motion was made by Mark Terry, seconded by John Snowdon to approve Manifests for: \$290,344.32 Motion passed 3-0.
4. Guest: Bill Patnode - Winter Plowing
 - Due to increased fuel and maintenance costs, Mr. Patnode proposed a 15% increase to the Town's snowplowing contract for the upcoming winter season, which will be his fifth year providing services to the Town. He agreed to a two-year contract at the proposed rate..
 - Motion made by John Snowdon and seconded by Mark Terry to approve the contract with the 15% increase for a two-year term contingent upon passage of the Town budget, noting that the increase was reasonable given current economic conditions. Motion passed 3-0.
5. Old Business
 - A. River Road Bridge
 - The Select Board discussed the River Road Bridge replacement project following an August 25 Teams meeting with NHDOT Project Engineer Julie Avenant, P.E., and Hoyle Tanner Vice President and Bridge Team Lead Joseph Bicja, P.E.
 - An engineering study is scheduled to begin in mid-to-late September, with the project being managed by NHDOT and Hoyle Tanner. The estimated cost of the engineering study has decreased from approximately \$150,000 to \$130,000. NHDOT is expected to fund approximately 80% of eligible costs, with the remaining 20% shared by the Town and County. The Town's anticipated share of the engineering study is approximately \$9,750.
 - The engineering study will evaluate project alternatives and address environmental, historic-preservation, right-of-way, and other requirements. The Board discussed that completion of the engineering study will provide an important build/no-build decision point and allow the Town to select a preferred option with substantially more information.
 - The Board agreed that it would be premature to seek voter approval for a construction bond at the March 2027 Town Meeting based on the current preliminary construction estimate. The preliminary construction cost has increased from approximately \$3.5 million when research began in 2022 to approximately \$5 million currently, and the final cost remains uncertain due to inflation, tariffs, design changes, environmental requirements, and other factors.
 - The Board discussed continuing through the engineering and design process before seeking voter approval for construction funding. The anticipated sequence is engineering study, selection of an option, preliminary design/NEPA, final design, advertisement of the project, contractor bidding, and then consideration of a construction bond by Town Meeting. It will likely be late 2028 before this process is complete and the board has reliable construction costs.
 - Public involvement will be incorporated into the engineering process. Two public meetings are anticipated. The first meeting will happen potentially in November which will focus on local concerns and project scope. A second meeting, anticipated for February 2027, will present potential options and allow for additional public input. Options discussed may include construction of a new bridge or a roadway through the field. It is unlikely the Selectboard would support a temporary bridge since the State will not fund it and could cost the Town as much or more than a permanent solution.

- The historic status of the existing bridge was also discussed. It is not currently expected to prevent the project from proceeding, although some mitigation may be required. Potential approaches include an interpretive panel, historical exhibit, or preservation of portions of the existing bridge to be displayed.
- The preliminary design and engineering costs are currently estimated at approximately \$800,000. Based on the anticipated 80% NHDOT funding, the Town's share would be approximately 20%, or \$160,000.
- The Town received State Bridge Grants in 2022 and 2023 totaling \$137,463, which will cover most of the Town's anticipated share of the preliminary design and engineering costs. The remaining cost of the design and engineering study will be funded from available funds in the Town's Bridge Capital Reserve.
- Selectmen discussed the need to review the amount currently being appropriated annually to the Bridge Capital Reserve and determine whether the annual contribution should be adjusted in anticipation of future bridge-related costs.
- The Board agreed to proceed with the engineering study, defer consideration of a construction bond until more reliable project costs are available, continue public outreach, and reassess the build/no-build decision as the engineering and design process progresses.

B. Revaluation

- Property reevaluation letters have been mailed, and residents must contact the assessor by September 8 to schedule an appointment if they disagree with their assessment.
- Phone appointments will be held on September 9, followed by in-person appointments at the town office on September 10, 11, and 12.
- The board explained that assessments moved from 60% to approximately 100% of market value (currently 98.7%) to meet state standards, which accounts for the high increases seen in letters.
- Residents were cautioned not to calculate their new tax bills using the old rate of \$25.92, as the tax rate is expected to decrease once finalized in November.

6. New Business

Signatures: MS535, Timber Warrant (1)

7. Upcoming:

- September 5, 2026 Primary. Polls open 8am-7pm
- September 15 meeting rescheduled to 22nd at 6pm with Planning Board and Master Plan Committee
- October 15, 2026 Cyber Security Annual Checkup

8. Nonpublic Meeting At 6:58pm., a motion was made by Mark Terry, seconded by John Snowdon, to enter a nonpublic session per RSA 91-A:3, II(c). Roll call vote to enter non-public John Snowdon – Yes; Mark Terry – Yes; Bill McGahie – Yes. Motion passed.

Motion was made by John Snowdon, seconded by Mark Terry, to seal the minutes. Roll call vote to seal minutes: John Snowdon – Yes; Mark Terry – Yes; Bill McGahie – Yes. Motion passed.

At 7:55 am, a motion was made by John Snowdon, seconded by Mark Terry, to exit the nonpublic session. Motion passed 3-0.

9. 7:56 pm motion was made by John Snowdon seconded by Mark Terry to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Jodi Scanlan
Town Administrator

NEXT MEETING TUESDAY TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 22, 2026 6:00PM
MINUTES ARE INITIALLY POSTED AS UNAPPROVED SELECTMEN
SIGNATURES DENOTE APPROVAL

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Mark Terry, Chairman

John Snowdon

William McGahie