

Town Office, 227 Justin Morrill Highway, Strafford Vermont 05072

Selectboard Members in Person: Toni Pippy, Mary Linehan, Jeff Solsaa

Selectboard Member via Zoom: Kelly Harman

Town Clerk in Attendance: Lisa Bragg

Assistant in attendance: Chris Behr

Participants in Person: David Webb (after executive session only)

Participants via Zoom: John Freitag, Julie Englander

Meeting called to order at 6:00pm

1. Highway

- a) Road sign replacement status - no update
- b) Equipment and Roads update - none
- c) Project update
 - Lisa is documenting the use of the remaining FEMA funds
 - Other than some minor delays projects are moving along
- d) United Church water drainage
 - The church staff has tested the solution to use the nearby pipe and confirmed that it is connected to the drainage system under the commons, and can be used as a solution to the drainage issue
 - Solsaa stated that a town resident is raising an objection to this solution. Solsaa to follow up with an assessment involving the Highway team as needed.

2. Selectboard meeting minutes approval

Solsaa moves to approve the minutes of the regular July 10, 2025 meeting. Linehan seconds.

Discussion: Add the meeting's adjournment time (7:35pm)

Pippy, Linehan, Solsaa approve. Harman abstains.

3. Document signing

- a) *State of Vermont AOT Standard Grant Agreement Municipal Mitigation Better Roads FY26 - BR1352* - Pippy signed
- b) *Internal Financial Controls Checklist for Municipalities – Cities and Towns* - Yearly audit requirement, signed by Pippy
- c) *Town of Strafford Standard Contract for Services with Blue Mountain Trucking & Excavating – FEMA Mitigation* - The bid is approved. All signed,
- d) *Audit Engagement Letter for full audit of 2025* - The quote for 2025 audit (work performed starting in March 2026) is \$4,000 less than for 2024.

Linehan moves to accept the proposal dated July 8 from Sullivan, Powers

- Solsaa seconds and all approve
- e) Grants Management Procedures
- Pippy moves to accept the procedures. Linehan seconds.
- Discussion: Change "Department Supervisor" to "Grant Sponsor" to designate the person championing the grant
- All approve

5. Capital Budget meetings

- There was not a quorum at the July 15 meeting, so the minutes will be considered notes at the next Capital Budget meeting
- The July 29 Capital Budget meeting was cancelled, and the topic will be covered on August 14, from 5pm to 6pm at a Special Selectboard meeting. The regular Selectboard meeting will commence at 6pm.

6. Listers' Error and Omissions Report

- Pippy moves to accept the report
- Solsaa seconds.
- Pippy, Linehan, Solsaa approve. Harman abstains.

7. Liaison Updates

- a) Town office - The architect is discussing the work with contractors and will report back to Stephanie. The work has not gone out to bid yet.
- b) Solsaa mentioned Hartford's selectboard ban on ICE's anonymous operation using masks and unmarked vehicles and the possibility of Strafford introducing such a ban after more research.
- c) The Town House work is moving along.

8. Other

- a) Connor Lewis did community service work as part of his employment at Hyertherm. A big thanks to Connor for his (literally) heavy lifting in the Town Office.
- b) Nordic Trash
 - Harman stated that Nordic trash was out of pocket for the fly infested trash dumped without payment by some unknown freeloading Strafford residents.
 - However, generous town residents offered enough extra payment to cover for the freeloaders while telling Nordic "This is not who we are"
 - The Selectboard reminds Strafford residents that:
 - Nordic is not a municipal service negotiated by the Town, but a company expecting payment that can pull out of Strafford if they choose, leaving the residents with more time consuming and costly trash disposal.

- Dumping trash on Town property underneath the flagpole is littering and wrong in every way.
- c) National opioid Settlement - Strafford qualifies and will pursue its share of the settlement

10. Correspondence

At the request of John Freitag, this issue was addressed before the executive session.

b) Mike Hebb, RE: Stanley property ROW

Solsaa reports that a surveyor will mark the line of the Town property.

9. Executive Session - Kendall Road Appeal

Pippy moved to find that premature general public knowledge regarding the litigation and negotiation strategy related to the appeal to the environmental court of the Town DRB's decision in the appeal of Rachel Kendall's application for a conditional use permit would place the Town at a substantial disadvantage. Linehan seconded.

Pippy moved that we enter into executive session to discuss the appeal of Rachel Kendall's application for a conditional use permit under the provisions of Title 1, Section 313(a)(1)(A) of the Vermont Statutes. Linehan seconded.

All approved and the board moved into executive session at 7:05pm.

At 7:11pm, Pippy moved to exit the executive session. Linehan seconded. All approved.

10. Correspondence (continued)

f) ECFIBER East Central Vermont Telecommunications District, RE: In Response to GWI's Unsigned Open Letter

David Webb arrived at this time and gave an overview of this topic.

- EC Fiber, a non profit organization, contracted with GWI, a for profit organization, to operate the fiber network.
- GWI's contract is up for renewal this December, and EC Fiber has decided to not renew it, and form instead a non profit operating company that is more aligned with EC Fiber's non profit goals.
- GWI disagrees with EC Fiber's action and sent an unsigned letter to the Selectboards of all the towns that they service, which prompted EC Fiber's response.

Solsaa moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:28pm. Linehan seconds and all approve.