

Town Office, 227 Justin Morrill Highway, Strafford Vermont 05072

Selectboard Members in Person: Toni Pippy, Jeff Solsaa, Andrew Duncklee, Kelly Harman,
Mary Linehan

Town Clerk in Attendance: Lisa Braggs

Assistant in attendance: Chris Behr

Participants in Person: None

Participants via Zoom: John Freitag, Sue Coburn, Maureen Riley, Stephen Dycus, Regina
Josler, Judie Englander, Rebecca Seidel, Chrissy Jamison, Shawn Harlow, Micheal
Tarrant, Darren Marcy, Bill & Sharon Risso, Rodirick Maclay, Jason Schumacher

Highway

Equipment

PD Hardy reports that apart from the backhoe, no major repairs are required

Pippy reports that the cost of the repairs so far has been manageable

Linehan moves to allow the Highway Foreman to approve repair expenditures of up to
\$10,000 without Selectboard review

Pippy seconds

All approve

Roads and Projects

Paving will start in the village next week and continue with Brooke rd (grinding first then
paving by mid September)

Freeman bridge has started

Miller pond: the State wants a 5' culvert rather than the 3' culvert that was planned.

Prices and research needed to see how to proceed with the FEMA money that
may not be enough to cover the increased diameter.

Church drainage

The church has hired an engineer to plan the work and address any potential issues
from neighbors

Other

Solsaa moves to approve the Thomas Essex and Suzanna Liepmann Highway Access
Application

Linehan seconds

All approve

Solsaa moves to approve the Northwoods Excavating contract to repair Ward Bridge and Van Dyke culvert.

Pippy seconds

All approve

Ashley Community Forest

Linehan moves to approve the extension of the 2024 Timber sale contract

Harman seconds

All approve

Review and Adoption of Municipal Policies

Pippy reports that since June, Keith Billian has sent over 100 emails to the Selectboard or Town employees. The emails have little or nothing to do with Town business. When the Town followed up on some of them, they were met with insults and alarming emails, which prompted a neighborhood wellness check. Keith Billian subsequently visited the Town office in anger, pounding on the door when the Town employees locked the office fearing for their safety. The episode was repeated 10 minutes later. A call was made to 911.

The Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk both filed with the Orange Unit of the Vermont Supreme Court a Temporary Order Against Stalking order that was approved and in effect.

The Town Clerk has posted a notice that the Town Office schedule has changed and is open only by appointment until further notice. The Selectboard unanimously supports the Town Clerk's notice.

Pippy reports that the deterioration of emails to the Town prompted the drafting of a Digital Civility Policy to state the expected behavior of both Town employees and citizens.

The Town attorney noted that laws for meetings are different from laws for emails. Meetings are an opportunity for citizens to observe their government in action, and comment only on agenda items, in a specific format. Correspondence to the Town such as emails allows citizens to raise any Town business issues, concerns, etc, but does not allow lack of civility. If the emails are vague, insulting, and do not request any follow up, the Town is not obligated to reply. Other towns have experienced lack of citizen civility and attempts to flood the town with grievances or nuisance requests, and so far there is no state legislation to prevent that. The policies suggested at Strafford are acceptable: The Town clerk has the authority to regulate the Town office, and the Selectboard can spell out the expected civil behavior that most people take for granted.

Pippy concludes that the security of the Town employees comes first and that, sadly, the days of an open Town office may be gone. Cameras and new locks will be installed ASAP.

Minutes of July 24 Meeting

Solsaa moves to approve the minutes of the July 24, 2025 regular Selectboard meeting

Pippy seconds

Discussion: Misspelling of Ellen Bagnato (on Agenda, not in Minutes)

All approve

Repeater lease

Solsaa moves to approve the repeater lease agreement, Town of Strafford, VT and Willis and

Lauren Phelps, 161 Alger Brook Rd, Strafford

Linehan Seconds

All approve

Ash tree removal grant and status

In progress

Budget Review

Pippy reports that the July cost and revenue numbers were compiled and there are no issues to report.

Liaison Updates, Other, Correspondence

Nothing to report

At 7:17 pm Solsaa moves to adjourn

Linehan Seconds

All approve