# SELECTBOARD MEETING
## MINUTES
## October 26, 2026

**I. OPEN MEETING –** Chairman Begin called the October 26, 2026, meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. Those present included Dillon Begin, Alfred Buckley, Alan Leigh, April Busfield, and Zachary Brown. Members of the public included Mike Miller and NEK News, who attended via Zoom. No members of the public attended in person.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES –** October 12 and October 23, 2026, Meeting Minutes – The October 12 and October 23, 2026, meeting minutes were distributed and reviewed by board members before and at the meeting. Al made a motion to approve the October 12 and October 23, 2026, meeting minutes as written, and Alan seconded. Chairman Begin asked if there was further discussion; seeing none, he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative.

**III. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA –** Zach added updates concerning a proposed Border Patrol fiber-optic cable project along River Road and Hall Stream and a security system for the Town Office. He removed the MERP Grant Amendment and Title VI Coordinator updates because the necessary information had not yet been received. All board members agreed to the additions and deletions. No additional additions or deletions were made to the agenda.

**IV. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT –** No public comments were offered.

V. REPORT FROM HIGHWAY –

a. Determination for Hudson Road Work and Plowing Request – The board revisited the requests from Melody Houle regarding road maintenance and winter plowing on Hudson Road. Members discussed the possibility of obtaining grant funding to assist with future road improvements, including through the Better Back Roads program. Zach explained that although funding might become available for roadway improvements, it would not address the immediate request for winter plowing. The board discussed the difficulty of providing additional plowing services given the Town's current staffing and the road's classification. April and Zach indicated that they would continue exploring potential funding opportunities and other available options to assist with road maintenance. No additional winter plowing commitment was made at this time.

b. Grant Updates – Zach reported that the outstanding Grants-in-Aid reimbursement paperwork had been resubmitted and payment was expected soon. Approximately $8,000 in previously awarded project funding remained available for a future project, as the originally proposed Judd Road work had been completed under another grant. April suggested using the funding to address drainage concerns on the upper portion of Canaan Hill Road, near the transition to Class IV highway, where roadside vegetation and insufficient drainage were creating maintenance concerns. The Town would also pursue a new Grants-in-Aid application and explore Better Back Roads funding for Hudson Road. Zach and April would work on the applications and submit the necessary documentation for reimbursement of the Fund Road project.

c. Highway Personnel Updates – The board received a brief update concerning the Highway Department's ongoing recruitment efforts. Interviews had been scheduled, and the Town was continuing to evaluate applicants for available highway positions. Further personnel discussion was deferred to executive session.

d. Equipment Repairs and Updates – April and Zach reported that the grader had been shipped on Friday for repairs and that the new backhoe tires had been installed. The Town's highway trucks had been outfitted with plows, a sander, and a wing in preparation for winter operations. Zach noted that once grading was completed, the rock rake would be removed to allow for the remaining winter preparations. Members discussed the importance of having the equipment ready for the approaching winter season.

e. Grading Updates – April and Zach reported that grading work was progressing well and that positive comments had been received regarding the condition of recently graded roads. Work had been completed or was underway in areas including Jackson Lodge Road, Penn Road, Canaan Hill

Road, and the school area, with Reservoir Road also identified for attention. April reported that Danny had been performing the rock-raking work and had stepped in to assist when the contractor was unavailable. The possibility of Danny taking on additional grading-related work when the contractor could not work during the regular Monday-through-Friday schedule was discussed. Members expressed appreciation for his willingness to assist and the progress being made before winter.

f. Fund Road/Canaan Hill Road Intersection Culvert Project – Zach reminded the board that the culvert replacement project at the intersection of Fund Road and Canaan Hill Road had been deferred until the following construction season, although project funding remained available. The estimated project cost was approximately $191,000, with an anticipated 10% municipal match of approximately $19,100. Zach recommended preparing the project for bidding during the winter to allow contractors sufficient time to incorporate the work into their summer schedules. The board agreed that Zach should coordinate with the engineer to prepare the bid documents for review at the next regular meeting, with bidding to follow during the winter. Members also discussed the repeated washouts at the intersection and the importance of completing the improvements to prevent further flood damage and future FEMA-related repairs.

**VI. REPORT FROM WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT –** April reported that there were no additional wastewater treatment plant updates following the recent Joint Sewer Commissioners meeting.

VII. REPORT FROM SOLID WASTE –

a. Recycling Updates – Refrigerators and Propane Tanks – Zach reported that Dennis had been proactive in arranging the removal of refrigerators and propane tanks from the Transfer Station. Robert Mathieu had agreed to collect propane tanks and refrigerators once the refrigerant had been removed. April had assisted with coordinating the arrangements. Members discussed the benefit of removing these items separately, as refrigerators occupied considerable space in the scrap metal collection area and frequently required additional hauling. The new arrangement would help reduce congestion and improve the handling of these materials.

b. Coös County Recycling Center Updates – Zach presented two preliminary budget proposals for the Coös County Recycling Center for 2027. The first proposal totaled $552,396 and would increase Canaan's annual contribution from $12,282 to $63,705, an increase of $51,423. The second proposal totaled $352,496 and would increase Canaan's contribution to $40,652, an increase of $28,370. The proposals reflected differing approaches to financing proposed facility improvements and equipment purchases. Members discussed the significant increases and the possibility of pursuing a lower-cost, shorter-term arrangement, allowing participating municipalities to determine their own financing options if necessary. Dillon expressed concern about committing additional municipal funds without a more secure contractual arrangement concerning the property used by the Recycling Center. Although the participating towns maintained service agreements, questions remained about the long-term security of the property and the municipalities' investments in improvements. Members agreed that a more formal agreement would be desirable before substantial additional expenditures were undertaken. One additional budget subcommittee meeting was expected before the proposals were presented to the full board. No formal action was taken.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS –

a. 2026 Town Appointments – No additional appointments were presented for consideration.

b. Border Patrol Fiber-Optic Cable Project – Zach reported that he had met with representatives concerning a proposed Border Patrol fiber-optic cable installation extending from the Beecher Falls Port of Entry along Vermont Route 253, River Road, and Hall Stream toward the international border. The project would require portions of the cable to be buried within Town highway rights-of-way, with an anticipated depth of approximately two feet. The final alignment, including the crossing of the river and the placement of cable along Hall Stream, remained under development. Zach explained that the Town would receive the project plans for review before granting permission for work within municipal roadways. The Town would also require appropriate insurance documentation and a written agreement ensuring that affected roadways were restored to their original condition. April noted the importance of locating existing water infrastructure and avoiding conflicts with municipal utilities.

Members discussed the need for coordination during installation, particularly where water lines and other infrastructure were present. No formal approval was granted pending receipt and review of the project plans.

c. Town Office Security System – Zach presented a proposal from DS Security Solutions for the installation of a security and alarm system at the Town Office. The proposal included door and window contacts, motion detectors, supplemental smoke and heat detectors, and video surveillance cameras, along with monitoring and notification services. Zach explained that he had secured a $5,000 Civic Life Elections Security Grant and that the board had previously appropriated an additional $2,000 from the Building Capital Reserve Fund to supplement the project. The proposed system would improve protection of Town records, equipment, and facilities while providing additional fire and burglary detection capabilities. Members discussed the camera locations, monitoring services, and the ability to expand the system in the future. Zach indicated that DS Security Solutions had been responsive throughout the planning process and that the system could accommodate additional equipment as needed. Alan made a motion to approve the DS Security Solutions proposal for the installation of the security, fire detection, burglary alarm, and camera system at a cost of $6,849, and Al seconded. Chairman Begin asked if there was further discussion; seeing none, he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative.

d. Municipal Ethics Complaints – Five Pending – Dillon noted that five municipal ethics complaints remained pending. The matters continued to be under review. No action was taken.

e. Alice Ward Library Carriage House Renovations – Zach reported that he had met with representatives of the State and the Library Trustees concerning reimbursement procedures for the ongoing Carriage House renovation project. The State had provided additional flexibility in processing reimbursement requests, allowing invoices and copies of issued checks to be submitted before the checks had cleared, provided that proof of cleared payment was subsequently furnished. Zach explained that this adjustment would significantly reduce reimbursement delays and assist the Town in meeting project deadlines. The board briefly discussed the project schedule, and Zach indicated that work remained on track for completion.

f. Delinquent Tax Update – Robert Kimball – Zach presented a request from Robert Kimball concerning delinquent property taxes. Mr. Kimball maintained that he had personally delivered cashier's checks for his tax payments in late August, but the Town had no record of receiving the payments, no receipts had been issued, and the checks had not cleared the bank. Zach explained the procedures used to receive, record, and secure tax payments and stated that he had also reviewed his office records and recycling materials without locating the checks. The board discussed the circumstances, including Mr. Kimball's reported delivery date of August 29, which fell on a Saturday, and the lack of documentation confirming payment. Zach explained that the delinquent accounts were subject to the standard 8% penalty and 1% interest and that any recommendation regarding the penalty would ultimately involve the Delinquent Tax Collector. Members expressed concern about making an exception without supporting evidence and the precedent that could establish for other taxpayers. The board agreed that the Town should maintain its existing delinquent tax procedures and penalties. No formal motion was necessary, as no changes were made.

g. Economic Development Committee Updates – Dillon presented a draft nonbinding letter of intent concerning the potential acquisition of approximately 22.5 acres of property in Ethan Allen Park from Ethan Allen. The property had previously been subdivided into approximately 22 individual lots and was being considered for possible future economic development opportunities. Members discussed potential uses of the property, including residential development and housing opportunities, and expressed support for continuing preliminary discussions. Zach recommended clarifying responsibility for surveying, boundary verification, and other potential acquisition expenses before any binding agreement was executed. The board acknowledged that a future purchase would remain contingent upon further negotiations, due diligence, and any required Town approvals, including voter authorization. Al made a motion to proceed with the nonbinding letter of intent expressing the Town's interest in the potential purchase of the approximately 22.5-acre parcel in Ethan Allen Park, and Alan

seconded. Chairman Begin asked if there was further discussion; seeing none, he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative.

h. River Road and Leach Stream Erosion Work – Zach presented correspondence and supporting photographs concerning ongoing erosion along River Road and Leach Stream. Diana had been working with Molly Dockter of the Northeastern Vermont Development Association and representatives of Vermont Emergency Management to identify possible funding opportunities for a feasibility or scoping study. The correspondence suggested that the River Road erosion concerns might qualify for an upcoming FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant opportunity, provided the proposed project demonstrated protection of public infrastructure rather than solely private property. Zach reviewed the existing bank armoring and areas of continued erosion, noting that previous stabilization work dated back several decades and that continued bank deterioration could eventually threaten River Road. Members discussed the complexity of FEMA mitigation grants and the significant administrative responsibilities associated with such projects. Zach and April expressed concern that current staffing and workloads would not allow them to independently manage another large FEMA-funded project. Diana had offered to continue researching the opportunity and assist with an application, provided additional support could be identified. The board agreed that Diana should continue exploring available funding and investigate the possible cost of hiring professional assistance to manage the application and project requirements. The matter would be reconsidered as additional information became available. No formal grant application was authorized.

i. FY2027 Budgeting Schedule/Preliminary Discussion – Zach advised the board that preparations for the Town's 2027 budget would begin in November, including upcoming budget meetings for the fire districts. He explained that decisions concerning employee raises, benefits, and related personnel costs should be considered early enough to allow those departments to incorporate the information into their proposed budgets. Members discussed the need to schedule additional budget meetings outside regular Selectboard sessions, including potentially beginning departmental budget reviews at 5:00 P.M. before regular meetings. The General Fund budget would require additional time because of the number of departments and services involved.

i. VLCT Dues FY2027 – Zach reported that the Town's upcoming Vermont League of Cities and Towns membership dues would be $2,558, representing an increase of $59. The increase was attributed primarily to an adjustment in the per-capita membership rate.

ii. BCBS of Vermont Plan Rate Increase FY2027 – Zach reviewed preliminary 2027 health insurance renewal figures from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont. The employee-only monthly premium was projected at $1,201.61, an increase of $3.42, while the family premium was projected at $3,376.52, an increase of $9.61 per month. Based on current enrollment, the Town's estimated total monthly premium beginning January 1, 2027, would be $4,578.13. Zach noted that the figures were preliminary but were not expected to change substantially before renewal.

iii. VMERS Rate Increases – Zach reviewed the scheduled Vermont Municipal Employees' Retirement System contribution increases. For the Town's Group B retirement plan, the employee contribution rate was scheduled to increase to 7.125%, and the employer contribution rate to 7.75%, effective July 1, 2027. These changes would need to be incorporated into the Town's future personnel budgets.

j. Traffic Safety Concerns –

i. VT Route 114 in Wallace – Zach presented correspondence from Martha Barksdale concerning speeding and pedestrian safety along Vermont Route 114 in the Wallace Pond area. The correspondence followed a recent hit-and-run incident involving a pedestrian and requested consideration of a traffic engineering study, a reduction in the posted speed limit from 40 MPH to 30 MPH, additional speed enforcement, traffic calming measures, and improved pedestrian safety signage. The board discussed the concerns and acknowledged that the existing speed limit presented challenges within a residential area. Members noted that Vermont Route 114 is a State highway and that the Town has limited authority to alter speed limits or impose traffic control

measures. The possibility of submitting a letter of support to the Vermont Agency of Transportation was discussed. Members also noted that the Town's planned radar speed feedback signs would provide an additional means of encouraging motorists to reduce their speed. No formal action was taken.

ii. VT Route 253 and ATVs – Zach reviewed correspondence from Jasmine Boucher objecting to the potential expansion of ATV travel along Vermont Route 253. The resident expressed concerns about dust, noise, traffic safety, and the possibility of ATV traffic using both the roadway and nearby recreational trails. Zach explained that the Town had submitted a request to the Vermont Agency of Transportation concerning additional ATV access and that any such authorization remained subject to State approval. Members discussed the intent of the proposed route, which was to provide an alternative to the existing railbed trail through Beecher Falls and reduce dust-related concerns for residents. The board also discussed the role of the local ATV club in determining the use of the existing trail, which extends into New Hampshire. Members agreed to await the State's determination before considering any additional action.

k. VT PACIF Update – Zach presented correspondence from the Board of Directors of the Property and Casualty Intermunicipal Fund (PACIF) concerning its ongoing administrative relationship with the Vermont League of Cities and Towns. The correspondence explained that PACIF is an independent, member-owned organization and that negotiations were underway regarding its arrangement for administrative services provided by VLCT. An independent accounting analysis had identified approximately $1.2 million annually in payments exceeding the estimated cost of administrative services received by PACIF. The correspondence also raised concerns regarding governance and oversight of personnel responsible for managing the Fund. Zach reported that PACIF was evaluating changes to its administrative structure but had assured members that insurance coverage, claims handling, and member services would continue without interruption. Members were advised of the upcoming PACIF annual meeting on November 18 in Montpelier. No action was taken.

l. Essex County Sheriff's Hours and Bill – 3rd Quarter – Zach presented the Essex County Sheriff's Department invoice for patrol services provided between July 1 and September 30, 2026. The invoice reflected 179.5 hours of regular patrol at $58 per hour, totaling $10,411, and 38.75 hours of overtime patrol at $45 per hour, totaling $1,743.75. The total invoice was $12,154.75 for 218.25 hours of patrol services, or approximately 18.19 hours per week. Zach explained that the increased hours during the quarter were partly attributable to additional coverage associated with local tournaments. Detailed activity reports had not yet been received but were expected to be provided for review at a future meeting.

IX. OLD BUSINESS –

a. FEMA Flood Maps – Zach reminded the board that the updated FEMA flood maps had been distributed at the previous meeting for review. He noted that the maps contained substantial changes from earlier versions, reflecting developments and flooding that had occurred over several decades. Members indicated that they had no additional questions or concerns at this time. No action was taken.

b. 3rd Quarter Budget Review – Zach reminded members that the third-quarter financial reports had been distributed at the previous meeting and asked whether there were any questions concerning the Town's expenditures or revenues. No additional questions or concerns were raised. The board would continue reviewing expenditures through its regular warrant approval process.

c. Speed Radar Signs – Zach reported that the Town had received a preliminary permit from the Vermont Agency of Transportation for the installation of four vehicle speed feedback signs along Vermont Routes 102 and 114. Three signs were proposed for Route 114 and one for Route 102. The permit required a preconstruction meeting with State representatives to confirm that the proposed installations complied with applicable requirements before work could begin. The Town would also need to coordinate utility locations and complete any required Dig Safe notifications before installation. Members expressed satisfaction that the project had received preliminary approval following the lengthy permitting process.

d. General Election Reminder – November 3, 2026 – Zach reminded the board that the General Election would be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2026. He requested assistance from board members with ballot counting following the close of polls at 7:00 P.M. and advised that he would also be contacting Justices of the Peace regarding their availability. Zach indicated that Dillon would likely assist with certification of the election results, as several Justices of the Peace were themselves candidates on the ballot. Preparations for the election were continuing.

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION –

a. Resignation and Exit Plan Discussion – 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) – Before entering executive session, Zach formally announced that he had submitted his resignation from the elected office of Town Clerk, effective December 11, 2026, and intended to step away from his current full-time responsibilities as Town Treasurer. He explained that the decision followed several years of increasing responsibilities and an unsustainable workload, including regularly working 55 to 60 hours per week and significantly longer hours during election and Town Meeting periods. Zach expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to serve Canaan and explained that he had been offered another position. Members acknowledged the announcement and asked whether there were circumstances under which he might consider remaining with the Town. Further discussion was reserved for executive session. Alan made a motion to enter executive session to discuss resignation and transition planning, highway personnel updates, and raises, bonuses, and stipends under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3), and Al seconded. Chairman Begin asked if there was further discussion; seeing none, he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. The board entered executive session at 6:52 P.M.

b. Highway Personnel Updates – 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) – Discussed during executive session.

c. Raises, Bonuses, and Stipends – 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) – Discussed during executive session. Alan made a motion to exit executive session at 7:42 P.M., and Al seconded. Chairman Begin asked if there was further discussion; seeing none, he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. No action was taken in executive session.

**XI. SORT MAIL/SIGN WARRANT –** Warrant 22-26 – $91,395.18 – The warrant was presented to the board for review and signature. The board reviewed and signed the warrant.

**XII. ADJOURN MEETING –** Alan made a motion to adjourn, and Al seconded. Chairman Begin asked if there was further discussion; seeing none, he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. The meeting adjourned at 7:43 P.M.