

**Town of Londonderry, Vermont
Selectboard**

Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 20, 2025 – 6:00 PM

139 Middletown Road, South Londonderry, VT 05155

Board members present: Thomas Cavanagh, James Ameden, Jr., and Taylor Prouty.

Board members absent: Martha Dale and Jim Fleming.

Town Officials: Shane O’Keefe, Town Administrator; Tina Labeau, Town Treasurer; Sally Hespe, Selectboard Meeting Note Taker; Nancy Jensen, Londonderry Housing Commission; and Liam Elio, Mountain Towns Recreation Director.

Others in Attendance: Melissa Brown; Kathleen Ramsay, Municipal Operations Specialist, Vermont League of Cities & Towns; Heather Stephenson; and GNAT camera operator Kate LeVine.

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Tom Cavanagh called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

2. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda **[1 VSA 312(d)(3)(A)]**

Taylor Prouty moved to delete from the Town Officials Business section of the agenda the review of the FY2024 Town Audit, which shall be addressed at the next regular meeting, seconded by James Ameden. The motion passed unanimously.

Taylor Prouty moved to delete from the New Business section of the agenda consideration of the annual PFAS groundwater sampling plan for the former septage fields, which shall be addressed after Agency of Natural Resources’ final review of the 2024 plan, seconded by James Ameden. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Minutes Approval – Meetings of 1/6/2025 and 1/13/2025

James Ameden moved to approve the minutes of the Selectboard meetings of January 6, 2025 and January 13, 2025, seconded by Taylor Prouty. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Selectboard Pay Orders

James Ameden moved to approve the pay orders for payroll and accounts payable, seconded by Taylor Prouty. The motion passed unanimously.

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5. Announcements/Correspondence

Town Treasurer Tina Labeau made the following announcement:

- Reminder that dogs should be registered by April 1, 2025.

Town Administrator Shane O’Keefe made the following announcement:

- O’Keefe will be on vacation the 1st week of February but will prepare materials for the February 3rd Board meeting.

O’Keefe noted the following correspondence was included in the meeting packet:

- Notice to Dismiss Act 250 Land Use Permit Application for Blue Flame Gas Company.
- A letter from the attorney for Green Mountain Power regarding the status of the upgrades to the Londonderry Substation in the Town of Londonderry.
- December 2024 Sheriff’s Office report.

6. Visitors and Concerned Citizens

None.

7. Town Officials Business

a. Discuss Town Administrator transition planning with VLCT representative

Kathleen Ramsay, Municipal Operations Specialist with the Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) attended the meeting to speak and answer questions about the pilot project proposal from VLCT for facilitating a successful leadership transition from retiring Town Administrator, Shane O’Keefe to the next Town Administrator. Ramsay served as a manager or administrator in several small- and medium-sized Vermont Town. In her role at VLCT, she provides onboarding, coaching and support for towns hiring during leadership transitions.

Board Chair Tom Cavanagh commented that the pilot program will be useful as it will be hard to find someone with O’Keefe’s experience. Ramsay indicated that she has helped people without any town administrator experience transition to the role. Candidates can have diverse backgrounds, but should have an interest in community. With assistance and guidance, most candidates are successful.

The Board will connect with Ramsay after a candidate is selected to develop a transition plan.

b. Mountain Towns Rec. Director – Agreement for bus services for Nordic ski program

An agreement between Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union (BRSU) and the Town of Londonderry for the transportation of students to and from the Viking Ski Center and Flood Brook School on Mondays, and Wild Wings and Flood Brook School on Fridays, for winter enrichment programming between December 2024 and April 2025 was presented. The service will be provided directly by the Flood Brook facilities department at a cost of \$55 per trip. Insurance coverage would be provided by BRSU.

Resident and parent Heather Stephenson added that this will be an invaluable service to families.

James Ameden moved to accept the Transportation Service Agreement between the Town and the Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union related to transportation of students for recreational Nordic skiing and authorize the Mountain Towns Recreation Director to sign the agreement on behalf of the Town, seconded by Taylor Prouty. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Mountain Towns Rec. Director – Changes to job descriptions

The job description for Town of Londonderry Parks Maintenance Employee will be changed as follows (with proposed changes underlined):

- Work involves significant physical labor, use and maintenance of tools, and maintaining a reliable vehicle and valid driver's license.
- Maintenance tasks include but are not limited to: Lawn Mowing, weed whacking, landscaping, etc.

The job description for Town of Londonderry Mountain Towns Recreation Director will be changed as follows (with proposed changes underlined):

- Personnel Management: Develops and maintains a volunteer workforce committed to promoting local recreation. Establishes and maintains an environment conducive to positive morale, quality services, and innovation. Provides for the training in, promotion of, and accountability for safe volunteer practices and working conditions. With regard to parks and recreational activities only, is authorized to hire and dismiss referees, event monitors, umpires and other temporary and/or seasonal employees at compensation rates approved by the Selectboard and in keeping with the Town's Personnel Policy, and shall report any such authorized activities to the Selectboard at its next regular meeting.

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The Mountain Towns Recreation Director will submit hiring rates for approval at the next Board meeting on February 3, 2025.

Taylor Prouty moved to accept the changes and amendments as discussed to the job descriptions for the Parks Maintenance Employee and Mountain Towns Recreation Director, the latter being given limited authority to hire and dismiss certain temporary and/or seasonal employees, seconded by James Ameden. The motion passed unanimously.

d. Local Cannabis Control Commission – Consider VT Cannabis Control Board permit S000011054, for a retail cannabis establishment renewal on parcel #1002007.000.

This permit renewal is for the retail store on Main Street. There have been no violations or issues to date.

James Ameden moved to grant a local control license renewal to Kellie D’Elia Laskin to operate a Retail cannabis operation on property located at parcel #102007.000, subject to compliance with and adherence to all Town of Londonderry ordinances, regulations and bylaws at all times, seconded by Taylor Prouty. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Transfer Station/Solid Waste Management

a. Updates

The new transfer station punch card vending machine is not yet operational. Punch cards are available at the town office, online, and at other town offices.

9. Roads and Bridges

a. Updates

- Discussion on signage on Brophy Lane will be deferred to next meeting when Josh Dryden, Road Foreman, is present.
- Dryden is getting pricing on new truck and will be asking for sole source pricing by Allegiance Trucks.
- The Board requested that O’Keefe advertise the open road crew position in the newspaper for another 2 weeks.

b. Annual VTrans Certificate of Highway Mileage [19 VSA 305(b)]

Taylor Prouty moved to approve the annual VTrans certificate of highway mileage indicating no changes from the previous year, and authorize the Selectboard Chair to execute it on behalf of the Board per 24 V.S.A. Section 1141, seconded by James Ameden. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Discuss special weight limits for highways and bridges [23 VSA 1400b & 1400c]

The Board is authorized to set special limits for highways and bridges on a yearly basis. Taylor Prouty indicated that having the overweight permits applied for and recorded annually covers the bases without posting.

d. Spring Hill Road Culvert Project – Consider engineering contract amendment

The TAP funding from VTrans of \$350,000 for the Spring Hill Rd. culvert project has numerous State-mandated engineering requirements which have delayed the project. The delays have increased costs, which are reflected in the contract amendment. The soft costs will be covered by a VTrans Structure Grant, but money will need to be borrowed at a future point. The project will now likely begin in the 2026 construction season due to the delays, but VTrans is amenable to extending the grant period.

O’Keefe recommends authorizing the 2nd contract amendment.

Taylor Prouty moved to approve amendment #2 of the September 21, 2022 contract with Hoyle, Tanner & Associates, Inc. related to permanent replacement of culvert #12 on Spring Hill Road at Eddy brook, and to authorize the Town Administrator to execute any documents necessary for the contractor to continue to provide the necessary services. The original contract for this project was authorized by the Selectboard on September 12, 2023, and amendment #1 was authorized on August 21, 2023, seconded by James Ameden. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Old Business

a. Review and approve Annual Town Meeting Warning

The group discussed proposed Annual Town Meeting Warning Article 15 to decide what percentage of the local options tax should go into the Community Economic Improvement Reserve Fund. The Housing

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Commission, in a letter from Chair Patty Eisenhower, recommends 50% of the local options taxes be deposited into the Reserve Fund. Currently, all local options taxes go into the general fund as revenue to offset property taxes.

Heather Stephenson asked how much has been received so far from the local options tax. Town Treasurer Tina Labeau said that about \$10,000 has been received to date, but this only represents one fiscal quarter of tax receipts. Labeau projects the Town will receive \$50,000 for the year, which is a penny on the tax rate. She also acknowledged that the estimate is uncertain with so little history available from the State.

Nancy Jensen from the Housing Commission responded to an earlier request from the Board for examples on how monies in the Reserve Fund might be spent. She indicated that funding requests wouldn't be exclusively for housing builds, but might be used as matching funds for an accessory unit or as incentives to start a home share. The Housing Commission will be prepared to discuss various options on Town Meeting Day.

The Board and community members present debated whether to ask the Town to vote on a percentage of the local options tax going to the Reserve Fund or placing a fixed amount from the budget into the Reserve Fund. Liam Elios commented that because the total yearly intake from the options tax is still unknown, this makes the percentage available for housing also unknown. Melissa Brown commented that putting a defined amount into the Reserve Fund would offer greater flexibility for usage.

Melissa Brown asked the Board if they agreed with funding the Community Economic Improvement Reserve Fund directly instead of using a percentage of the options use tax. The Board decided to request the addition of housing usage into the Reserve Fund purpose and ask for a specific dollar amount to be added to the fund. All agreed that if this process doesn't work, it can be revised at a later date.

The Board agreed to keep Article 13 of the draft Town Meeting Warning, remove Articles 14 and 15, and amend Article 16 to read, "Shall the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000 to be deposited in the Fund."

*Taylor Prouty **moved to approve and sign the Warning for the Annual Town Meeting, scheduled for March 4, 2025**, seconded by James Ameden. The **motion passed** unanimously.*

b. Review and approve proposed FY2026 Budget

The Board briefly reviewed and discussed the proposed budget for FY2026.

James Ameden moved to approve the proposed Fiscal Year 2026 expense budget in the amount of \$3,150,324, seconded by Taylor Prouty. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Consider resignations from public bodies

James Ameden and Martha Dale completed all interviews except one and will report on findings at a future meeting. Ameden thanked all who participated in the interview process and provided thoughtful opinions.

d. Discuss Village Wastewater Committee

Board Chair Tom Cavanagh reported that the Village Wastewater Committee has missed multiple dates to submit meeting minutes, which is a violation of Vermont Open Meeting Law. Board members suggested reaching out to meet with the Committee, and Shane O'Keefe indicated the Committee was meeting the next day to discuss the matter and how to fill one long-outstanding member vacancy.

The Board is accountable for this Committee and needs to find a way to help. Heather Stephenson raised the possibility of using Zoom for meetings with AI Assistant for note-taking. This would also be beneficial for other committees and increase resident accessibility and interaction. She pointed out that the Town is circumnavigating the Vermont Open Meeting Law by not providing virtual access. Cavanagh replied that virtual options would require an additional employee to set up and monitor Zoom meetings.

Melissa Brown suggested that all Town Committee members are trained and oriented in committee member responsibilities and procedures. Prouty said training options are available, but recognized that there is an opportunity for mentoring new committee members.

11. New Business

a. Town Office Project – Determine bond repayment terms

Town Treasurer Tina Labeau indicated that bond interest payments would be due in FY2025 and FY2026. Payment options are based on 20 vs. 30-year terms. Her recommendation is to opt for the 20-year bond term to save over \$436,000 in interest.

Taylor Prouty moved to seek a bond payment term of 20 years from the Vermont Bond Bank relative to the \$1.3 million bond for the Town

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Office Renovations, seconded by James Ameden. The **motion passed** unanimously.

b. Executive Session(s) – The appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee per 1 V.S.A. 313 (a)(3)

James Ameden moved to enter executive session to consider the employment of a public employee, pursuant to Title 1 V.S.A. Section 313(a)(3), and invite Town Administrator Shane O’Keefe to attend the executive session, seconded by Taylor Prouty. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board and O’Keefe entered the executive session at 7:41 PM, and came out of executive session at 7:55 PM.

Taylor Prouty moved to authorize the chair to execute a contract beyond current employment for part-time employment with Shane O’Keefe as Assistant Town Administrator and Project Coordinator, through June 30, 2025, seconded by James Ameden. The motion passed unanimously.

12. Adjourn

James Ameden moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Taylor Prouty. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 PM. The next regular meeting of the Selectboard is scheduled for 2/3/2025.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sally Hespe
Town Minute Taker

Approved February 3, 2025

LONDONDERRY SELECTBOARD

Thomas Cavanagh, Chair