

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES MARCH 19, 2025

Present: Greg Manning, Jeanne Gervais, Heather McElroy, Mike Testut, Billy Hawkins, Doug Brent, Nick Bingham, Jamie Budrewicz, John Manning, and Teresa DeBonville.

Attending virtually: Mike Strait, Joel Cope, Bruce Webster, Mercy Manning, and Jennifer Rodseth.

Chairperson, Greg Manning, called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all in attendance.

Updates to the Agenda: Fence request on Derby Street by the ballfield, Wiffle ball tournament request, Recreation request, Email from Beth Rodondi, Waterboard decision on Cross Street damage claim request, and NEKCA office.

Fence Request on Derby Street: Jennifer Rodseth was present to ask the select board on the decision made about putting up a “netted fence” between her property on Derby Street and the baseball field so that balls do not go onto her property. At this time, the board has decided to leave it with the decision that was made in December to defer it as it is; and as the situation occurs, the town will reach out to the insurance company and file a claim for any damage done to the property. The reason for this decision is that the board has searched out several quotes, and it is very expensive to put up a “netted fence”. Within the next two meetings the board will have a definitive answer to Ms. Rodseth’s request.

Wiffle ball tournament request: The board received a request to hold the annual Tyler Pepin Wiffle Ball Tournament at the baseball field on July 19, 2025. A motion was made by Heather McElroy to approve the request, with the stipulation that they follow all the rules of the field set forth. Jeanne Gervais seconds the motion, all in favor, so carried.

Recreation request: Heather McElroy, on behalf of the recreation committee mentioned to the board that the playground needs a soft wash to protect the equipment, and the mulch put in place needs a fluff and topping. The cost to do this maintenance to the equipment and mulch is \$600.00 for the soft wash and the mulch is \$38.00 per yard with the estimate of around 30 to 50 yards needed. Heather requested from the board that the funds come from the Lakeside Park Account. A motion was made by Jeanne Gervais to approve the request for no more than \$2,700.00 to come from the Lakeside Park account to pay for this maintenance to the playground. Billy Hawkins seconds the motion, all in favor, so carried.

Heather also mentioned to the board that she is currently working with New England Courts about the resurfacing of the tennis courts. At the moment Heather is in discussion with NEC about volunteering their time and supplies to do this.

Email from Beth Rodondi: Greg Manning addressed an email from Beth Rodondi on her concerns about his actions at the Town Hall with Rebecca Balint on Monday, March 17, 2025. Greg read Ms. Rodondi's email, which is now a public record, and read his response to her concerns, which is also now a public record. Mr. Manning addressed that his actions were misunderstood and responded as such.

Waterboard decision on damage claim on Cross Street Leak: The board was informed that the Water and Sewer Board had decided at their meeting to pay 50% of the total cost of the damage claim presented to the town by Brittany Frizzell. The Water and Sewer Board will pay a total of \$594.16. A motion was made by Jeanne Gervais to accept the Water and Sewer Board's offer. Billy Hawkins seconds the motion, all in favor, so carried.

NEKCA Office request: Billy Hawkins brought to the board's attention that during Monday's Town Hall event, NEKCA had a food delivery, and the parking lot was full, so the delivery driver had to walk all deliveries a distance to the NEKCA office. Billy asked the board if part of the back lot could be blocked off for deliveries. The board agreed that this doesn't happen often, but when the town knows of an event that is happening, that NEKCA can block off part of the back lot for deliveries.

Public comment: None.

Recreation Committee Recognition: Greg Manning wanted to formally thank the Recreation Committee for all of their work and dedication to the Tri-County Fishing Tournament.

Road Department update: Nick has been keeping track of rising water around town and has been trying to keep up with the muddy roads and potholes.

Heather McElroy mentioned to Nick about potentially moving the radar signs to a different spot on Pleasant Street. Right now, the sign is in a shaded area, and if the sign is moved to a sunny spot the potential of the solar panel charging the battery is greater. Nick will look into this.

Nick wanted to thank the Water and Sewer company for allowing Zach Letourneau to help him out until the new crew is officially hired.

Jamie Budrewicz asked about the status of the bridge replacement on the Ten Mile Square Road. This repair is at least two years out.

Grant report update: Mike and Joel updated the board on the grants that they are working on. These include:

1. USDA and RBDG Grants for event funding.
2. ANR Greeter Program Grant
3. Hazard Mitigation Grant

4. FEMA December 2023 Flooding Grant.
5. Wastewater Treatment Facility grant reimbursements from ARPA
6. Bond Bank grant for the reservoir repairs.
7. MERP Grant for the town hall and railroad depot for boiler replacement.

Mike informed the board that he has been working on the cost estimates for the July 2024 flooding. The damage inventory is not complete, and Mike asked the board if they had any objections to him reaching out to Andy Martin, as he was the road foreman at the time, to see if he would be willing to assist Mike with this. The board had no objections to this.

Municipal Planning Grant Resolution: Jeanne Gervais motions to adopt the Fiscal Year 2025 Resolution for a Municipal Planning Grant and authorize Joel Cope and/or Mike Strait to execute all documents necessary to secure the funds and to administer the grant under the required terms. Heather McElroy seconds the motion, all in favor, so carried. Mike informed the board that the Kickoff Public Meeting is scheduled for April 23, 2025.

NEKCV CUD BEAD Support Letter: Heather McElroy motions that the board sign the letter to the Vermont Community Broadband Board supporting the NEKCV Communications Union District's application to the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) grant. Jeanne Gervais seconds the motion, all in favor, so carried.

Town Hall Sewer Line Update: Mike has talked to Bucky on this matter, and it is on hold until spring when the ground thaws so that Bucky can start digging.

Union Contract Interim Manager appointment/Town Manager search: Heather gave the board information on an Interim Manager/Town Manager to look over and outside companies that could potentially be hired to do the job. The board agrees that after looking over the paperwork to hire an outside company it would be too expensive for the town to do. Without a town manager, the Union contract interim manager defaults to the select board chair, but the board, after seeking legal council agrees that they need to hire an interim Town Manager until a full-time Manager is hired. The board will discuss this in the Executive session.

Doug Brent has notified the board that if the board decides to have a search committee in the hiring process of the Town Manager, he would be willing to sit on the committee.

Overweight Permits: A motion was made by Heather McElroy to allow the select board chair to approve and sign the overweight permits. Jeanne Gervais seconds the motion, all in favor, so carried.

Pay orders: The board reviewed and signed the pay orders for the road department account and the general account.

Approve the minutes of the previous meeting: The board reviewed the minutes of March 5, 2025, re-organizational meeting. A motion was made by Jeanne Gervais to approve the minutes as printed. Billy Hawkins seconds the motion, all in favor, so carried.

Other business: Tabled.

Greg Manning motions to go into Executive Session with members of the select board only to discuss potential interim town manager staffing under the provisions of Title 1, Section 313 of the Vermont Statutes finding that premature public knowledge would substantially disadvantage the town. Heather McElroy seconds the motion, all in favor, so carried. The board enters Executive session at 7:30 PM.

Greg Manning announced that a motion was made by Jeanne Gervais to exit Executive Session at 7:59 PM. Heather McElroy seconds the motion, all in favor, so carried.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mike Testut. Jeanne Gervais seconds the motion, all in favor so carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.