



Special Selectboard Meeting Minutes - Public Informational Meeting
March 2, 2026

Present: Bill Vines, Chairman
Jay Hickory, Vice Chairman
Ricky Bowen
Jim Haff

Patrick Cushing, Town Manager

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Board of Liquor Control
4. State Representative - Val Taylor
5. Ballot Articles
6. Adjourn

1. Call to Order

The Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

2. Approval of the Agenda

- SB Haff made a motion to approve the Agenda for the March 3rd Special Selectboard Meeting as may be amended. The motion was unanimously passed.

3. Board of Liquor Control

- Peggy Neisner, Town Clerk, presented Killington Restaurants, Inc's application for an outside consumption renewal at the Killington Base Lodge. SB Haff made a motion for the Town Clerk to move forward with Killington Restaurants' request for an outside consumption renewal at the Killington Base Lodge. CH Vines seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.
- Neisner, Town Clerk, presented Free Hub LLC's application for 2nd class liquor license renewal at Basecamp Bike and Ski. SB Haff made a motion for the Town Clerk to move forward with FreeHub LLC's request for a 2nd class liquor license renewal at Basecamp Bike and Ski.. CH Vines seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.
- Neisner, Town Clerk, presented G&T Ventures, LLC's application for 1st and 3rd class liquor license and outside consumption permit renewal at Choices. SB Haff made a motion for the Town Clerk to move forward with G&T Ventures, Inc's request for a 1st and 3rd class liquor license and outside consumption permit renewal at Choices. CH Vines seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.
- Neisner, Town Clerk, presented Casey's-G, Inc's application for 1st class liquor license and outside consumption permit renewal at Casey's. SB Haff made a motion for the Town Clerk to move forward with Casey's-G, Inc's request for a 1st class liquor license and outside consumption permit renewal at Casey's. CH Vines seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.
- Neisner, Town Clerk, presented The Garlic's-G, Inc's application for 1st and 3rd class liquor license renewal at The Garlic. SB Haff made a motion for the Town Clerk to move forward with The Garlic's-G, Inc's, request for a 1st and 3rd class liquor license renewal at the Garlic. CH Vines seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. State Representative - Val Taylor

- SB Haff made a motion to allow Val Taylor, an outside citizen of the Town, to speak. The Selectboard and the Town Residents in attendance at the Meeting approved the motion.
- Val Taylor introduced herself to Selectboard and Town Residents. Taylor spoke about several key topics being discussed at the State House. Taylor focused on affordability, the education financing reform, and the general fund budget. Taylor

spoke on the aging retirement community that was not being balanced by enough of a workforce population, property tax increases, healthcare costs, and limited housing stock.

- George Brant, Town Resident, asked Taylor if the number of school district supervisors would remain as 52 or if this would be cut. Taylor stated that the plan is constantly evolving and did not have a concrete answer.
- Melissa Sherman, Town Resident, asked if Taylor would hold Meet and Greets to get to know her better. Taylor stated she would like to and that she had business cards available with her contact information for people to reach out.
- Foster Chandler, Town Resident, asked about the redefining of homesteads into different categories in the school consolidation process. Taylor stated she was not aware of this process. Chandler stated he believed it would be a Trojan Horse to increase property taxes. Taylor stated she would reach out to understand whether the homestead definition would be redefined. SB Haff stated that the homestead definition would change in order to make homestead taxes lower. Non-homestead properties would be split into two categories. Non-homestead land and commercial business properties would be taxed at a higher rate than homestead properties but at a lower rate than non-homestead short-term rental properties.

5. Ballot Articles

- SB Haff made a motion for Chuck Hughes to replace Paul Buehler, who was elected last year, as Moderator for the Public Informational Meeting. CH Vines seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously passed.
- Before starting, Hughes asked for a moment of silence for Barry Lee, Pat Meyer, Bob Montgomery, John McCallery, Steve Finneran, and David Atherton. A moment of silence was held.
- Hughes read out the following articles to be voted on during the upcoming Town Meeting Day on Tuesday, March 3rd, 2026. A discussion was held for each article.
 - i. Article 1: To elect the following town officers:
 1. A moderator for a term of one year;
 2. A selectboard member for a term of two years;
 3. A selectboard member for a term of three years;
 4. A selectboard member for the remainder of three-year term - two (2) years;
 5. A town clerk for a term of three years;
 6. A lister for a term of three years;
 7. A cemetery commissioner for a term of three years;
 8. A cemetery commissioner for the remainder of three-year term - one (1) year
 9. A cemetery commissioner for the remainder of three-year term - two (2) years)
 10. A library trustee for a term of five years;

- ii. Article 2: Shall property taxes be paid in three installments: the first due August 15, 2026, and the overdue subject to interest after August 25, 2026; the second due November 15, 2026, and overdue subject to interest after November 25, 2026; and the final payment due February 15, 2027, with the total tax delinquent after February 25, 2027?
 - iii. Article 3: Shall the voters approve total general fund expenditures of \$8,235,500 of which an estimated \$6,118,500 shall be raised by property taxes, and \$2,117,000 in estimated non-property tax revenue for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026?
 - iv. Article 4: Shall the voters authorize and fund an independent, third-party forensic audit of the Town's financial records for the three (3) most recently completed fiscal years (FY 2023 - FY 2025)? Said audit shall be conducted by an external, certified forensic accounting firm with no prior contractual or financial relationship with the Town. The scope of the audit shall include, but not be limited to, review of general fund activity, personnel and payroll policies, capital expenditures, departmental budgets, compliance with reporting requirements for grants and bonded projects, and internal financial controls over receipts and disbursements. Upon completion, the full audit report shall be made publicly available.
 - v. Article 5: Shall the voters authorize and fund, at an estimated cost of Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$200,000) an independent, third-party forensic audit of the Town's financial records for the three (3) most recently completed fiscal years (FY 2023 - FY 2025)? Said audit shall be conducted by an external, certified forensic accounting firm with no prior contractual or financial relationship with the Town. The scope of the audit shall include, but not be limited to, review of general fund activity, personnel and payroll policies, capital expenditures, departmental budgets, compliance with reporting requirements for grants and bonded projects, and internal financial controls over receipts and disbursements. Upon completion, the full audit report shall be made publicly available.
- o Ken Porter, Town Resident, asked what happens if both Article 4 and Article 5 passed as they ask the voter the same question, with the exception of a budgetary limit on Article 5. TM Cushing stated that if both articles passed, then the estimated cost of \$200,000 dollars would be voted in. TM Cushing stated Article 4 was an advisory article while Article 5 was a binding article as it was complete with the price estimate. George Brant, Town Resident, stated that he did not believe that was true and stated if Article 4 and Article 5 were both approved by the voters, Article 4 would take precedence over Article 5. Brant also claimed that the \$200,000 dollar price estimate was made up by the Town. TM Cushing stated that the Town sent out 4 RFIs (Request for Information) to multiple audit firms and received 4 responses back ranging from \$120,000 to \$300,000 dollars. SB Haff clarified that the responses to the RFIs were not received until after Brant had submitted his Article 4 and was unable to change afterwards. Wally Mazdow, Town Resident, asked what would happen if Article 4

passes and Article 5 doesn't. TM Cushing stated then an audit would likely happen but there would be no funding mechanism in place. The Town would either pull the funding from the General Fund, consider it a deficit for the current fiscal year, or pass along the cost to the next fiscal year. SB Haff stated he believed if Article 4 passed and Article 5 didn't, the Selectboard would need to investigate the real cost of the audit before bringing it back to the voters for consideration.

- Vito Rasenas, Town Resident, asked if Article 5 should be rephrased to "Shall the voters authorize and fund, **up to** an estimated cost...". SB Haff agreed but stated that voters would understand the indication. Rasenas stated this could be an issue as audit firms may bid \$200,000 dollars immediately for the project, knowing the Town could be prepared to pay as much. Brant, Town Resident, stated that in a previous Selectboard Meeting, the Town and Selectboard stated it would cost the Town further to prosecute anyone who may get in trouble. Brant stated this was not correct as this case would go to the attorney general, as it would be a forensic audit.
- TM Cushing reviewed the FY 2027 Budget to provide Town Residents with a stronger understanding of Article 3. TM Cushing stated FY 2027 would not be a growth year but instead a stabilization year. TM Cushing highlighted revenue adjustments such as fee updates in Zoning and Solid Waste, traffic ticket revenue that was aligned with actual police data, and completed housing land repayments. TM Cushing then discussed structural and transparency improvements which included a new "Global/Share" category to centralize shared costs, the reclassification of the Rutland County Tax as a tax instead of an appropriation, the realignment of administrative roles for a clearer staffing structure, and a shift in multiple line items to reflect true cost centers. TM Cushing also discussed staffing and organizational changes including the refunded Assistant Treasurer and Assistant Clerk positions, the elimination of the Staff Accountant position, the return of Zoning to a part-time Administrator model, the addition of another Police Officer mid-year, and the restructuring of the Fire Department to 5 FT firefighters on a 24/48 FLSA schedule. TM Cushing stated operational realignments for FY 2027 included aligning insurance, utilities, fleet, and facilities costs with historical data, a reassessment of costs, adjustments for equipment and fleet costs for aging infrastructure, and the recalibration of capital projects to ease tax burdens. TM Cushing reviewed the FY 2025 budget and presented its budget shortfall of \$488,000 dollars. Ken Porter, Town Resident, asked how the Town would pay off the \$488,000 shortfall. TM Cushing stated that FY 2026 has a projected shortfall of about \$400,000 dollars as items previously counted as revenue should not have been revenue but rather repayment. CH Vines, SB Hickory, and SB Bowen voiced their support for the presented FY 2027 budget. SB Haff voiced his support against the presented FY 2027 budget.
- Lucretia Wonsor, Town Resident, asked TM Cushing when tax sales were scheduled for. TM Cushing stated that the Town has an engagement letter with

their attorney that needs a few final adjustments. The Selectboard will discuss tax sales during the March 9th Selectboard Meeting. Wonsor asked if the tax sale would go up before June which TM Cushing stated he hoped so but it may be tight. The amount of delinquent tax that will be requested through the Town's attorney either through tax sale or paid before will be over \$4000,000 dollars. Wonsor stated she hoped that voters would approve the FY 2027 budget in Article 3. Rob Kovalesky, Town Resident, stated that it felt as if the Town and Selectboard had put together the FY 2027 budget in approximately 8 to 10 weeks. Kovalesky stated there was 8 weeks until the tax bill had to go out leaving enough time for revisions. Kovalesky stated he believed re-examining the FY 2027 budget would help bring down the severity of a 13% increase. SB Bowen asked TM Cushing if any progress was made towards Town property sales. TM Cushing stated the Town was looking to sell multiple pieces of property as well as selling off some assets.

- Andrew Gieda, Town Resident, asked how much money was set aside to fix Killington Road from Anthony Way to Casey Caboose. TM Cushing stated the Town was waiting on a reimbursement from FEMA for \$200,000 dollars. This reimbursement will not be provided until the roads are painted. The Town set aside \$200,000 dollars in the FY 2027 budget for the material resurfacing reserve fund.
- Hughes invited any candidates running under Article 1 to provide a quick speech. SB Hickory, SB Bowen, Jon Wysocki, Andrew Gieda, and Vito Rasenas spoke about their candidacies for the Selectboard position.
- SB Hickory stated Ronald Kish was running as a write-in candidate for the Cemetery Commission.
- Whit Montgomery, Police Chief, introduced the Police Department's newest Corporal, Mark Busier.
- Hughes ended the Public Informational Meeting and handed the Meeting back to the Selectboard.

6. Adjourn

The Meeting was adjourned at 8:52 pm.