Special Selectboard Meeting Minutes DRAFT
January 5, 2026

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

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Citizen Comments/Concerns
4. Budget Draft Reviews
    a. Garage/Highway
    b. Fire Department
    c. Planning & Zoning
    d. GMNGC
    e. Facilities/Maintenance
5. Selectboard Members' Comments/Concerns
6. Adjourn

1. **Call to Order**
   The Meeting was called to order at 5:33 pm.

2. **Approval of the Agenda**
   - SB Haff made a motion to approve the Agenda for the January 5th Special Selectboard Meeting as may be amended. SB Haff and SB Vines requested to remove Art. 5 (Executive Session) and replace it with Selectboard Members' Comments/Concern. The motion was unanimously passed.
   - Before continuing with the Agenda, SB Haff recognized former Selectboard Member Steve Finneron who passed away in December 2025. SB Haff asked GMNGC to look into renaming the golf course restaurant to Finneron's from Gracie's. Gracie was the name of the previous landowner's dog. The Selectboard also held a moment of silence for Steve Finneron.

3. **Citizen Comments/Concerns**
   - George Brant, Town Resident, asked why the Town had not proceeded with a forensic audit yet. CH Cushing stated the Town was moving forward with its yearly audit, but not a forensic audit. Brant presented a petition to the Selectboard requesting a forensic audit. Brant's petition would need a certain number of signatures before it would be put up for vote. The Selectboard read out Brant's petition. SB Vines stated he respected Brant for putting out the petition but the Town was informed by their auditor that before a forensic audit could be completed, a detailed audit was first needed. SB Vines stated the Town is currently conducting a detailed audit. SB Vines also stated that the Town is complying with the majority of the petition except, they are not conducting a forensic audit and they are not using a third-party auditor that the Town has not worked with before. CH Cushing agreed with SB Vines and stated a forensic audit would include an increased cost with little necessary reason to do so. SB Haff stated he did not understand why SB Hickory and SB Bowen would vote against a forensic audit as he stated both Selectboard Members ran on holding a forensic audit and against alleged lies. CH Cushing stated SB Hickory clarified he used the term forensic audit incorrectly. SB Bowen stated he never ran on holding a forensic audit. SB Haff made a motion to move forward with the petition and put a forensic audit up to a Town vote. CH Cushing seconded the motion. SB Haff voted in favor of the motion. CH Cushing, SB Vines, SB Hickory, and SB Bowen voted against the motion. SB Vines made a motion that the Town would include an article in the upcoming vote about whether or not to move forward with a forensic audit if it cost Town residents 'x' amount of dollars. The Selectboard would come back with the cost of the forensic audit. SB Haff seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously passed.
   - Brant, Town Resident, requested CH Cushing remove a video he recorded off of Facebook showing him going through a stop sign as it is a liability to the Town.

- Art Malatzky, Town Resident, congratulated CH Cushing for being appointed as Town Manager effective January 12, 2026. Malatzky suggested that the Selectboard go through how they avoided conflict of interests in the process. SB Vines stated that following the death of former TM Dave Atherton, CH Cushing stepped in to help assume some of the responsibilities before a replacement was secured. SB Vines stated that CH Cushing expressed interest in the position during an Executive Session but he was informed by the Selectboard that a Selectboard Member could not act as a Town Manager and the Selectboard had not yet put together a hiring process for a new Town Manager as, at that time, it had only been a few days since Atheron's passing. SB Vines stated the Selectboard informed CH Cushing that he had to file an application and be treated like a candidate. From that point, CH Cushing was excluded from any discussions related to the Town Manager hiring process. SB Haff asked whether the Selectboard should be talking about conversations held in Executive Sessions as this has been a point of contention. CH Cushing stated that a decision had already been made in the process and the decision was public. SB Haff stated he did not agree with how SB Vines and CH Cushing described what happened during the hiring process and said he would wait for legal counsel before responding to Malatzky's question. SB Haff made a motion for the Selectboard to be able to discuss what happened during the Executive Session SB Vines mentioned. This motion was not seconded or voted on. CH Cushing stated that he was kept out of the hiring process for the Town Manager. CH Cushing stated he had received some applications prior to the Town Manager job position being published with the correct location to submit applications. CH Cushing stated those applications were forwarded to interim Town Manager Horner and he did not receive any applications after the job was posted.
- Malatzky, Town Resident, voiced his support for the 1% option tax, by vote of the Town residents, that was previously discussed in a Town Meeting. CH Cushing stated that either a Selectboard Member would need to make a vote or Town residents would need to put forth a petition to put the 1% option tax up to vote. Rob Kovalesky, Town Resident, asked if more Town residents would be willing to vote for the 1% options tax if the total revenue from the tax went to lower property taxes instead of going to a general fund.

4. **Budget Draft Reviews**
   - **Garage/Highway**
     i. CH Cushing presented the Garage/Highway Department's budget for FY27.
     ii. CH Cushing stated the total expenses for the Highway Department's budget was $905,484 dollars. The total expenses for the Town Garage's FY26 budget was $73,000 dollars. The total expenses for the Vehicles' FY27 budget was $255,000 dollars.
     iii. SB Haff stated the Public Works Director's salary should not come only from the Garage/Highway Department as this position is also responsible

for work in other departments. CH Cushing stated the salary would be split up between different departments but the salary listed in the Garage/Highway Department would be the offered salary.

iv. The Selectboard spoke about a potential typo under the Town Garage's budget as the Electricity line item was listed as $20,000 dollars for FY27. In FY26, the Town Garage's Electricity line item was listed as $3,000 dollars.

v. The Selectboard discussed the Facilities and Maintenance budget including salaries, subscriptions, and holiday decorations.

vi. SB Haff made a motion for the Garage/Highway Department to reduce their FY27 budget increase to 5-6% and coordinate with Kirsten Hathaway, Finance Director.

- **Fire Department**
  i. Billy Austin, Acting Fire Chief, presented the Fire Department's budget.
  ii. Austin stated the total expenses for the Fire Department's budget for FY27 was $744,880.80 dollars. This is a 9.58% increase from FY26.
  iii. The Selectboard discussed the voter-approved switch in 2022 from a volunteer fire department to a paid municipal fire department following the Sherburne Volunteer Fire Department's letter to the Selectboard stating they could no longer service the Town.
  iv. SB Haff made a motion for the Fire Department to reduce their FY27 budget increase to a 5-6% increase and to coordinate with Kirsten Hathaway, Finance Director. The motion was unanimously passed.
- **Planning & Zoning**
  i. Lisa Davis-Lewis, Town Planner, presented the Planning & Zoning budget.
  ii. Davis-Lewis stated the total expenses for the Planning Commission and the Development Review Board for FY27 was budgeted at $12,800 dollars.
  iii. Davis-Lewis stated the total expenses for the Town Planner and ZOning Administration for FY27 was budgeted at $289,168 dollars.
- **GMNGC**
  i. Justin Stezin presented GMNGC's budget to the Selectboard. Stezin stated GMNGC budgeted $1,597,000 dollars for the upcoming fiscal year. This is an increase of 10% from the following fiscal year as GMNGC has seen a steady increase in income.
  ii. CH Cushing asked GMNGC and Kirsten Hathway, Finance Director, to determine whether there is money from GMNGC needed to transfer to the Town to cover past fees and to ensure the admin line is reflected as the same in both budgets.

5. Selectboard Members' Comments/Concerns

- CH Cushing stated that the Town's auditor informed him the Town should not spend a lot during FY27 as there will be deficits from previous years that will be

realized in FY27. SB Haff stated that the Town's Grand List has not yet been updated including new subdivisions, certificates of occupancies, new buildings, and more. The Selectboard held a larger conversation on the Grand List.

- SB Vines spoke to Jim Barlow about the vacancy in the Selectboard following CH Cushing's appointment to Town Manager. SB Vines stated that, while the Town is not in violation of the VSAs, Barlow informed him that the seat should be filled forthwith which he interpreted as finding a replacement, even if it is only for a single meeting before the election. The Selectboard will move forward with a process to find a temporary Selectboard Member; however, the process will not begin officially until CH Cushing has resigned. SB Haff made a motion to put a notice in the Mountain Times requesting applications by January 23rd for a temporary Selectboard Member to be chosen by the Selectboard. SB Vines seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously passed.

6. Adjourn

The Meeting was adjourned at 9:09 pm.

DRAFT