

Selectboard Meeting Minutes  
July 28, 2025

**Present:** Pat Harvey, Chad Richardson (absent), and Mike Teetsel

**Guests Present:** Terry Severy, Julie Smith, Susie Smolen, Lori Church, Orca Media, Mary Fratini, Sandy Haas, Dan McKinley, David Curtis, Regina Cahill Poole, Nancy Woolley, Deb Moore, Steve Hoffman, Alvina Risinger-Harvey, Bruce Jones, Jannah Swedick, Tara Murray, Russ Jacquith, Mike Sorgi, Jake and Bonnie Wildwood, Joshua Chaffee, Joshua & Garima Prasai

**Guests Present on Zoom:** Orca, Martha Slater, Orca Media, Richardson, Jeff Gephart, Robert Franks, Larry, Tegan Murray, Eveyln Pruiksma

Pat called the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Pat confirmed the open meeting law conformity.

**Prior Meeting Minutes:**

July 8, 2025 Special meeting minutes: Pat moved to approve with one correction. Mike seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

July 14, 2025 Selectboard meeting minutes: Pat moved to approve, and Mike seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

July 22, 2025 Informational meeting minutes: Pat moved to approve. Mike seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

**Highway Updates:** Bethel Mountain culvert project has been completed

**Utilities Updates:** Mike completed a walk-around with Terry on the water system.

**Energy Coordinator Updates:** Jeff Gephart said he was not able to attend the meeting with Green Mountain Power. He thanked Mike and the folks who did attend from the high school repurpose committee and were able to get the legislatures involved in expanding the substation in Rochester to allow for more renewable energy projects in town.

He asked Green Mountain Power to leave the light they installed in the wrong location at the park and ride to the entrance and to install another light on a different pole. He is waiting to hear back from them.

The resiliency zone is complete with the wiring upgrade through town. GMP has their ACT 248 permits in hand for the solar field. They are struggling with battery design for storage. GMP reassures that installation will happen but have not given any dates for when they plan to begin.

Jeff provided an estimate to the library trustees for the repair to the library north wall. He estimates the project costs at around \$154,700. He said the library is looking for grant funding for that project.

He said the MERP (Municipal Energy Resiliency Plan) financial reports were filed and thanked Kristen for submitting them. The scope of work for the town office is near complete. The scope of work for the town garage will be finalized in early August so he can bring those back to the board for review.

### **Selectboard Updates:**

Pat announced the high school closing date is scheduled for August 4<sup>th</sup>. The only thing left to do prior to closing is to receive a septic tank pumping report. Jamie Kinnarney has agreed to a septic tank pumping for next week prior to closing. She said they are also working on an in person closing.

Since the last meeting, Pat said she has continued to receive complaints from a homeowner in Twitchell Settlement about the conditions of a neighboring property. She said they are trying to get a message to the neighboring property, but they don't seem to be in any violation. She said they are trying to work something out between the landowners

Pat said she received a complaint that someone was plugging their EV car into the school bus plugging in for heat. They were unplugged and left a note to use the EV chargers in town.

Pat said she had been in touch with 3 different fuel companies to get a quote for heating fuel for the high school building. She is hoping to have feedback for the next meeting so the town can lock in at the best rate.

### **New Business:**

**Approve June Treasurer's Report:** Pat moved to approve the June Treasurer's Report. She noted there are still adjustments being made to the end of the fiscal year to give the final numbers.

**Discussion about food to sell in the cookshack-Andrew Fersch:** Andrew approached the board asking for permission for his Penn group of students to reopen the cook shack that is behind the high school. He said they would offer limited prepared food. He said they would be open on the off days of other businesses such as Tuesdays. He would like to have the cookshack open throughout the year. He spoke with the state about what he can and can't make in his kitchen. Pat asked if he was doing it as a nonprofit or as a leader of his program. He said it would be through the Penn program with his students. He is asking for donations. Pat asked what the goal was. Andrew said it was a mix of things the profits would go toward. It's for the students and future students. He said they used the experience for the kids to show how to run a business with the kids and provide a hands-on service for the kids. Andrew explained that the long-term vision is a space for connecting for folks in the school and Valley Hub. This is for high school property. Pat would like to add the decision to the next selectboard meeting.

**Announcement for the VT-Alert Emergency Notification System:** Pat announced that Rob Gardner brought to her attention a way to alert Rochester residents to any alerts for emergencies. The Town now has an account with VT-Alert so Rochester will now be included in the system. She thanked Rob, Mickaela and Kristen for setting it up for up-to-date emergency information alerts.

**Update/Discussion on cell tower proposal:** Pat read 2 letters that were received. One was written by Ben Falk, and he also submitted on Front Porch Forum in opposition of the proposed tower. The second letter read was written by Dean and Connie Medell in favor of the project. The meeting was opened to public discussion with a five-minute time limit. Deb Moore presented to the board 72 signatures on an informal petition. The petition stated “Petitions to the Rochester Planning and Selectboards and landowner Charlie and Julie Martin on the matter of proposed construction of Vortex 140’ tower at 1030 Route 100 south. Whereas the Rochester Town Plan attempts to protect the town’s character. Whereas this proposed edition to the town’s landscape was not requested by the people of the town but is an industry driven endeavor. Whereas this tower is unnecessary for cell phone connectivity, residents of this town and whereas health and environmental risks are real always denied by corporate entities who are stakeholders for profits. We, the undersign residents of Rochester VT, hereby state our opposition to proposed Vortex cell tower at 1030 Route 100 South. This is not consistent with our town plan. It’s a potential risk to our health and well-being, a flood risk and perpetual eye sore. We request that you stop this process immediately by whatever means you have in your disposal.” The discussion was lengthy, allowing folks to speak of their concerns. Both boards have not made a decision currently.

Meeting adjourned at 6:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Julie Smith