

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

August 11, 2025

Present: Pat Harvey, Chad Richardson, and Mike Teetsel

Guests Present: Kristen LaPell, Julie Smith, Orca Media, Walter Wells, Nancy Woolley, Vic Ribaud, John Champion, Water Golub

Guests Present on Zoom: Orca, Martha Slater, Troy LaPell, Marth, Robert, Orca, Mickaela Richardson

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

Pat confirmed the open meeting law conformity.

Prior Meeting Minutes: Pat moved to approve July 28, 2025, meeting minutes with one clerical correction. Mike seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

Highway Updates: The paving on Bethel Mountain Road has been completed. The ditching project on West Hill has also been completed. The pickup truck is in the shop to get a new frame put on. The International dump truck is also being serviced in another shop.

Grant Updates: Kristen mentioned there was one final FEMA grant that was given an extension at the end of October to work on a culvert up on North Hollow near Mike Bowen's. She said after a lot of engineering work and studies with the state, we have decided to withdraw from that grant and return the \$42,000.00 back to FEMA. The funding wouldn't cover all the costs and at this time the project is not a huge concern or problem at this time.

Repurposing High School Committee Updates: Vic made comments on three areas Program, Facility Diagnostics and Repair and Administrative. He said there were quite a few activities in the building this summer. The Suzuki Week earlier in the summer, then Summer Music Program for kids and White River Valley Players had Theater Camp for one week. The Big Town Gallery had 2 film showings and a 3rd one coming up at the end of the month. Under facilities they had an analysis done on things that needed repair such as a roof leak in the theater wing of the building. An electrician has been in to look at the exit lights and such. A plumber has been looked at and spoke with Terry Severy about the septic system. Looking at the door control system to put on its own system apart from the elementary. Under administrative issues, Vic has been working with VHI attorney and Asia to draft a proposed draft management agreement. They are reviewing lease templates. They have been working with Two Rivers and other grant funding consultant Peder Rude and Julie and Kristen for coordination of what it is going to take to administer the grant and payments are requested and paid properly. They are working to a point where the two major granting agencies Northern Borders and USDA will be able to give us a Notice to Proceed to allow us to go out to bid. The VHI board spoke on when they would like to give another public update and thought that early October was a good time during budgeting season. Pat asked who the first tenant would be moving into the building. Vic said that would be

RSUD, moving into the theater wing of the building. Pat announced the VHI management agreement is currently with the town attorney under review and giving feedback.

Selectboard Updates: Pat said the septic tank at the high school was pumped prior to the closing and there were no problems with the tank. There were risers installed to bring it to the surface. She said the board met with Harper Environmental to discuss and inspect the underground oil tank. She said this tank is registered with the state and with a sale of the property they are involved in. The school has promised to be responsible for the removal of the tank when the time comes within 5 years of sale.

Pat said the town has received many letters of support and opposition pertaining to the cell tower project. She said as of today, there has not been an application filed. She said they have a letter file and will not proceed with anything to the PUC at this time since an application has not been filed.

She said she had a conversation back and forth with Robert Franks about a water test that took place at the elementary school. She said the test had some elevated levels of lead. She said he had questions about the town's involvement with the results. The town tests it well on water which has no evidence of lead. The school is mandated by the state to test its water coming from the fixtures such as drinking water fountains. This is a school issue, and nothing is on the town. Mike wanted to reiterate that this is a school issue and not a town issue. He said multiple fixtures were tested in the school and only one of the fixtures had a problem. He said this has nothing to do with the town water.

New Business:

Approval of selling precooked food at the cookshack-Andrew Fersch: This discussion was tabled until a future meeting.

WRVA Quarterly updates and talking points-Kristen: Kristen spoke on behalf of WRVA (White River Valley Ambulance) giving some quarterly updates. She said there were 600 calls, 258-911 transports, no transports of 223, some advanced life support intercepts and 6 of those responses. Kristen said WRVA had their VFER course on Sunday. It's a level above a CPR course for Fire Departments who want to pursue additional training. Kristen shared WRVA will host their Open House on September 20 with hopes that Black Hawk will be available to attend. She said they are happy with their budget and spending is right where it should be. She said Bethel Fire Department started their own first response under the umbrella of WRVA. Their current staffing right now includes 15 full-time and 10 per diem. They are down a couple full timers and looking to fill those positions. They wanted to let selectboards know they welcome any feedback from them or any community members. Pat thanked Kristen for that report. She said she wanted to thank Matt Parrish and Sally Roberts.

Approval of the Driveway Permit for Quarry Hill Road: This is at the base of Quarry Hill Road. Pat said we receive the driveway permit, and it is reviewed and sent along to John Champion, road foreman to review for culvert size. This permit has notes added from the

foreman is recommending a 15" culvert. Pat moved to approve. Mike seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

Signage Discussion in the Village- Walt Wells: Walt referred to an occurrence that happened a few weeks prior. He said he parks on Route 100 at the Park, when he comes to town and walks to do his errands from there. He said when using the crosswalk at Bethel Mountain Road, he was nearly run over. He said on his return from the Post office he had to wait for traffic coming down the mountain and at that time the Sheriff's deputy was parked at the Library. He said he took the time to speak with the sheriff and watched the cars that were rolling through the stop sign across from the Post Office. They spoke and the Sheriff's deputy said it was his understanding that the priorities are speed in the village. Walt was concerned that the pedestrians are very vulnerable. He said with all the signs up, they are not being enforced. He made his case to the board about how hazardous it is to cross within many areas in the village. Discussion ensued. Pat shared next year will be the first of the sidewalk sections for the Safe Routes to School will be installed. She thought perhaps of reaching out to Rita from Two Rivers to see if VTrans would be willing to install flashing light signs at crosswalks as a preventative measure. Pat will check with the Safe Routes to School program to get some suggestions for future projects as well as the Sheriff to make sure our priorities are not just speed within the village.

Discussion and approval of additional amount added to mowing contract, if contractor agrees to include the weed eating around pump track: Mike will reach out to Ridgeline to see if they would be willing to maintain the pump track for now while things are worked out.

Meeting adjourned at 6:05pm

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Smith