

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

October 27, 2025

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

Guests Present: Kristen LaPell, Julie Smith, Melody Balczon, Terry Severy, John Champion, Nancy Woolley, Vic Ribaud, Asia Kennett, Orca Media

Guests Via TEAMS: Brenda Downs, Orca Media, Jeff Gephart, Troy LaPell, Martha Slater, Deb

Pat opened the meeting at 5:00 p.m. and confirmed that the meeting was duly warned in compliance with the Open Meeting Law.

Prior Meeting Minutes: Pat moved to accept October 13, 2025 minutes with one correction. Mike seconded. All in favor. So, approved

Library Updates: Melody Balczon, new library trustee attended the meeting to share that the Library's major project is repair of the North wall on the Library building. The recent grant application was unsuccessful, but the Trustees plan to apply for future funding opportunities. Reports and estimates were received from Jeff Gephart, and the Trustees suggest forming a committee to guide the next steps in budgeting and getting the project underway.

The Library recently hosted Teeny Halloweeny, which had an excellent turnout. The Library will be closed on Halloween night.

Pat welcomed Melody to future meetings and thanked her for her report.

Nancy Woolley added that on Sunday, November 9, at 2:00 p.m. the Library, Historical Society, and Pierce Hall will co-sponsor a showing of Jay Craven's film Lost Nation at Pierce Hall.

Highway Updates: John Champion reported that the salt shed roof has been repaired and the sand is stockpiled for winter. The crew has been switching over tires for the season. The board will review quotes from several manufacturers for a new highway truck purchase.

Utilities Updates: Terry Severy reported that all systems are running well.

Energy Coordinator Updates: Jeff Gephart reported that work continues on the MERP project. He is coordinating a site visit with the MERP representatives and moving toward contractor selection. The challenge will be completing the work while keeping the Town Office functional.

He also announced that, in partnership with the Library and the Valley Energy & Climate Action Committee, the "Button Up Vermont" event will be held November 19, 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Efficiency Vermont Staff will attend, and attendees can pick up energy efficiency materials and information.

Mike asked about the MERP representative meeting; Jeff will follow up to confirm timing.

Grant Updates: Kristen LaPell shared that the Town received \$15,000 in reimbursement from the State of Vermont's Grant-In-Aid program for work completed on West Hill.

VHI Management Updates: Asia Kennett reported several activities at the Community Hub. The Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission recently hosted a well-attended Mountain Towns Gathering, and new art classes have begun. A major Homecoming Event is planned for November, open to all alumni. A licensed and insured caterer will provide beer and wine sales, and a DJ will provide entertainment.

Asia added that the heating system has been serviced, and the building is ready for winter. The RSUD has been using the space for art and music classes and recently joined with the PTO, Outdoor education classes and several teachers to clean out Kate's Garden, a memorial garden set up for Kate Dougherty, which is outside the music room. The garden sadly had overgrown so with help from community chlding they all cleaned it out and found it very meaningful learning about Kate through the process.

Vic Ribauda added that the VHI Budget for the upcoming fiscal year is in progress, and they will meet with eh Budget & Finance Committee on November 2.

Selectboard Updates: Pat Harvey reported that she has been working with Rita Seto of TRORC on two grant opportunities:

- A Better Roads Grant, submitted earlier that day
- A Better Connections Grant, due by Friday, focuses on improving mountain bike trail access around the village and enhancing pedestrian safety through sidewalk additions.

Pat noted the possibility of including an engineering study for the Bethel Mountain Road sidewalks if funding allows.

She also shared highlights from the Mountain Towns Gathering event held on October 23, which was well attended by Rochester residents and provided valuable regional insights for TRORC.

Pat has followed up with a resident complaint regarding multiple junk vehicles on a property and reported that the homeowner appears cooperative.

She also checked on the cell tower application status, confirming that no formal submission has yet been filed.

September Treasurer's Report: Pat moved to approve the September Treasurer's Report. Mike seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

WRVA Jan-Jun Report-Kristen: Kristen LaPell presented the White River Valley Ambulance report from January 2025-June 2025, noting:

- 886 total calls: 418 transport, 139 inter-hospital transfers, 272 no transport, and 41 blood draws.
- 69 certifications issued through American Heart Association training.
- 56 active First Responders serve Bethel, Rochester, Stockbridge, and Pittsfield under WRV's affiliation.
- Financials are stable, and WRVA will attend Wednesday's Budget and Finance Committee meeting to discuss the new budget, with no significant increases expected.

Pat commended the start of Rochester's First Response team, officially active as of last Wednesday, and expressed gratitude for those volunteering in these vital roles.

Sign Class 2 Bethel Mountain Grant Request for Reimbursement: Pat signed the request for reimbursement on the \$172,000 Class 2 Bethel Mountain Road Grant.

McPhetres Tree: Discussion was held regarding a dead tree on Kirby Drive. Chad Richardson reported that the tree lies partially within the right-of-way but involves private power lines, making removal complex. Multiple tree services declined due to the hazard. The board concluded that the tree remains the landowner's responsibility and the landowner should reach out to have the power line relocated.

Town Office/Town Garage Phone/Internet provider decision: Julie Smith presented quotes from EC Fiber and Spectrum VoIP. Both were within \$10 in cost, but Spectrum's proposal included new phones, additional features (department set up mailboxes, options for Voice mailbox messages), and strong customer service. The VoIP contract is a 5-year contract. The board approved Spectrum for both locations.

Meeting adjourned at 5:34 pm

Next meeting will be Monday, November 10, 2025 at 5:00p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Smith