

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

February 9, 2026

Present: Pat Harvey, Chad Richardson, and Mike Teetsel

Guests Present: Julie Smith, Kristen LaPell, Orca Media, Nancy Woolley, Dan McKinley

Guests Present on Microsoft Teams: Orca, Martha Slater, Troy LaPell, Asia Kennett, Melody Balczon, Deb Moore

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

Pat confirmed the meeting conformed to the Vermont Open Meeting Law requirements.

Library Updates: Melody Balczon shared that the library is progressing with its HUD grant application and hopes to submit it in early March. She also reported that many events have recently been held at the Library, with additional events planned. Residents are encouraged to watch for upcoming flyers.

VHI Management Updates: Asia Kennett reported that Winterfest was successfully held over the weekend. She also stated that the building boilers are functioning well.

Selectboard Updates: Pat Harvey reported that both the Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) and the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) are currently underway and due soon. Chad Richardson is working on the LEMP. The LHMP is expected to be completed this spring, with the assistance from Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission.

Pat also shared that the RUSD School Board recently had a special meeting regarding scholarships for graduating seniors. Residents with graduating seniors are encouraged to reach out for more information.

Pat noted that there is an upcoming FEBA document that she will need to complete.

Two Rivers -Ottauquechee Regional Commission-Tier1B Designation Discussion: Kevin Geiger, planner from Two Rivers presented information regarding Tier1A and Tier 1B designation as part of the Regional Plan. He explained that the Commission is asking towns to consider designating eligible areas, primarily village centers, as Tier 1B

Kevin shared a map (attached) showing eligible areas. The shaded purple area represents the Village Center, and the shaded pink area represents the Village Area. He explained that these new Tier designations are part of changes implemented through the State Land Use Review Board.

To qualify, towns must have zoning and Subdivision regulations, designated land use areas, and an established village area. The designation cannot be split; the town must accept or decline entire areas, although adjustments to the map can be requested.

Kevin explained that the Tier1B designation provides an exemption from Act 250 review for housing developments of 10 to 50 units on parcels under 10 acres. Local zoning and subdivision regulations would still apply. He noted that the designation is intended to support housing development and economic growth while maintaining local control through municipal regulations.

Mike Teetsel asked whether the program's purpose was to promote development without requiring Act 250 review. Kevin confirmed that this was a primary objective.

Library HUD Grant Collaboration-Exterior Improvements for the building: Pat Harvey signed a letter of support for the Library's upcoming HUD grant submission.

Pierce Hall Community Center User Term and Agreement & Daily Rental Contract: Pat Harvey moved to approve the Pierce Hall Community Center User Terms and Agreement and Daily Rental Contract with the understanding that it applies to Town functions only. Mike Teetsel seconded the motion. All in favor. So, approved.

Adopt 2026 Town Road and Bridge Standard: Pat moved to approve the 2026 Town Road and Bridge Standard as provided by VTrans. Mike seconded the motion. All in favor, so approved.

Sign Annual Financial Plan: Pat moved to approve and sign the VTrans annual financial plan to allow the Town to seek state funding for highway projects. Mike seconded the motion. All in favor. So, approved.

Sign Completion of Compliance for Town Road and Bridge Standards and Network Inventory: Pat moved to approve and sign the Certificate of Compliance for the Town Road and Bridge Standards and Network Inventory. Mike seconded the motion. All in favor. So, approved and signed.

Private Road Name-Buttles Road (off end of Oak Lodge Road): This item was tabled until the next meeting.

VHI Management Agreement-Public review: Mike Teetsel shared his comments regarding the VHI Management Agreement (attached). The agreement will be available to the public to review at the Town Office.

Public Comment: Tara Murray asked whether the Town would be submitting an updated response regarding Verizon's cell tower filing. Pat stated that the latest filing on the Public Utility Commission (PUC) website indicated that non-parties need to submit jointly as one intervenor. Pat noted that the Selectboard has already made a statement and does not intend to submit additional comments unless a hearing is scheduled.

Executive Session:

The Board entered executive session at 5:50 with legal counsel Cindy Hill, Town advisor to Vermont Public Utility Commission (VTPUC), to discuss the cell tower matter.

The Board exited executive session at 7:37. No action was taken.

Adjournment:

Pat Harvey adjourned the regular meeting at 5:57 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Smith

Why do we need an agreement between VHI and the Town?

VHI is managing the redevelopment of a Town-owned building but they are an independent organization, not a department of the Town. The agreement is therefore needed for a number of reasons. There are important provisions in it to protect the Town. Here's just a couple examples:

- VHI is required to maintain insurance.
- Funds raised by VHI for the Hub project become Town funds that will be managed consistent with all other Town funds.

However, VHI also needs the agreement to continue advancing the project. Some donors and grant makers need to know that VHI is contractually authorized to do the work and the agreement accomplishes that.

How has the agreement been developed?

We've been working on it for several months as mentioned several times in past SB meetings. We did not expect it would take this long but it's been an excellent thought exercise for how VHI and the Town will work together. Both parties now have a much clearer understanding of our respective rights and responsibilities. Several drafts have been developed, each of which has been reviewed by Jim Barlow, our Town attorney. Jim's #1 objective was to ensure the Town is legally protected and all of our rights are preserved. We believe this process has produced a solid foundation for the work ahead and will serve the Town well.

What happens next?

Quite honestly, not much is going to change relative to the project. A primary purpose of the agreement is simply to allow the work to continue. VHI will continue raising money and generally advancing the project. The SB will continue to support VHI.

The SB wishes to be open and honest about the Hub project. To that end, we are announcing that the management agreement has been finalized and is available for public review. A copy will be available at the Town office, or by other means upon request. Comments from the public are welcome.

While we sincerely want your input, please understand we cannot invite the population of Rochester to a seat at the negotiating table. I think you'll agree that's impractical and we can't conduct Town business that way. We recognize there are folks who are against this project – we also know there are many who are in favor. As a board, we are entrusted with selecting the path forward and this board is unanimous in its support for the project.

Therefore, at this time, we consider the management agreement to be final and intend to sign it at our next meeting on February 23rd. However, should the public comments reveal something important that we may have missed, we have the ability to amend the agreement and will consider doing so. If there are folks who want to speak publicly we will be happy to hear them on the 23rd.

Specific reason to sign on the 23rd – needed for grant app due in early March.



DRAFT Regional Future Land Use

<https://trorc.org/regional-chapters-draft/>
comments:
regionalplan@trorc.org

**For use when projects trigger Act 250;
Does not change zoning.**

Downtown/Village Center- 1% of Region

Dense centers with a mix of residential, business, and civic uses. Will become Designated Center under State Designation and eligible for locally-requested Act 250 exemption (Tier 1A/B)

Village Area- 0.5% of Region

Existing neighborhoods adjacent to Centers with planning and zoning that support residential and mixed-use. Will become Designated Neighborhood under State Designation and eligible for locally-requested Act 250 exemption (Tier 1A/B)

Planned Growth Area- 0.3% of Region

Existing mixed-use neighborhoods and undeveloped lands near Centers that have planning, zoning, subdivision bylaws and infrastructure to support substantial growth. Will become Designated Neighborhood under State Designation and eligible for locally-requested Act 250 exemption (Tier 1A/B)

Transition Area- 0.3% of Region

Areas that are planned for growth but don't qualify for other FLU areas due to lack of infrastructure and/or local planning

Rural General Area- 15% of Region

Low-density rural residential and commercial (not retail) areas

Rural Agriculture & Forestry Area- 48% of Region

Predominantly working forests & farmland, along with scattered residential and commercial (not retail) development

Rural Conservation Area- 35% of Region

Areas of significant natural resources including connectivity/interior forest habitat blocks and wetlands. May include existing small residential, recreation, farming or working forest areas (NOT TIER 3 as LURB sets that area)



