

# SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - JANUARY 6, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, Charlie Pike, Linda Schmidt, Karen Tendrup. Also present: Jack Blandford, Jeanne Blandford, Elizabeth Daut, Shelley Finn, Jim Henderson, Sheila Kearns. Minute taker: Sandy Reidy.

**CURRENT PROJECTS WITH BENNINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL COMMISSION:** Jim Henderson says Janet Hurley is leaving the BCRC to take a job with the state. Jim will take over Janet's responsibilities in implementing Sandgate's **Municipal Technical Assistance grant**, currently looking at the condition of the well at Town Hall. Joe Nolan will contact two well drillers for their advice. The grant deadline has been extended to June. Jim will also assume Janet's role in working with the Cemetery Commission on a possible **Municipal Planning Grant**, to develop a management plan for the Town's cemeteries.

**CITIZEN CONCERNS:** Elizabeth Daut asks about potential **listers** to fill the seats that will become vacant in March, and suggests the vacancies be posted on Front Porch Forum. Sheila Kearns suggests that any positions open for election this year be posted through the Sandgate account on Front Porch Forum. Sandy Reidy will look into this. Elizabeth says the Sandgate Community Table has now had nearly 100 residents attend at least one monthly event. She says the SCT wants to compile a **local phone book**, so residents who give their permission can share contact information. She asks if this can be brought up at Town Meeting. Sheila, who will be the moderator at Town Meeting, says this can be raised in the "Other Business" portion of Town Meeting. Joe suggests using Front Porch Forum for this as well. Charlie Pike and Joe ask how the phone book would be funded; Elizabeth explains that the SCT would pay for this out of its grant budget. It is not a Town expense.

**ROAD REPORT:** Joe says **Jay Wilson broke his ankle** while at work and is scheduled for surgery tomorrow. Sandy is filing the necessary workers-compensation paperwork. Karen Tendrup asks who will help Skipper while Jay is recovering, and Joe says he will help and that the Arlington and Rupert Road crews have offered to help as well. Joe wants the Town to know there could be delays in plowing and other road work while the Road Crew is short-staffed. Jim says Tom Santelli has often offered to help in the past. Jim applied for a **Better Road Grant** for ditching and other work to be done next summer on Woodcock Road. Jeanne Blandford says the **Road Crew** is doing a great job, and she and others thank them. Joe says the Arlington and Sandgate Road Crews are helping each other in many ways: for example, Arlington helped install the box culvert on West Sandgate Road recently, and in return Sandgate is plowing Arlington's portion of Sandgate Road, from the yellow farmhouse to 313.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Charlie asks about the **Sandgate school bus**. Joe says the Sandgate and West Arlington bus routes are now combined. Sandy was contacted recently by the Arlington School District about the purchase of an electric bus. All agree that more details are needed on both issues, and that the Sandgate School Board should report to the Selectboard. Joe will contact Allan Tschorn for information. Linda Schmidt says the former **dry hydrant** that was removed when the box culvert was installed on West Sandgate Road must be replaced. She has spoken with the Arlington Fire Department about a new location for the hydrant and has also contacted Troy Dare, of Rural Fire Protection, who would design and oversee any substantial work on dry hydrants. Work will resume this spring. Preliminary paperwork has already been filed for a grant for this work. The hydrant at Zoppels' pond must also be repaired, and the hydrant on Sandgate Road at Southeast Corners Road must be cleared of silt. Elizabeth asks what water source was used to fight the fire at the Grogan house; Joe says water was pumped from the brook. The dry hydrant there was not used because, per the fire department, the water is contaminated. Karen says she contacted Dee Myrvang of the Department of Health about setting up a **CPR/AED class** for the Town. Linda says she is already scheduling a class in January with Dee, for which nearly 30 people have signed up through the Sandgate Community Table. There will be a separate class at a later date for **Stop the Bleed** and **Narcan training**. Town Hall recently received a supply of Narcan.

**SIGN ORDERS.**

**BUDGET REVIEW:** The Treasurer and the Board do a preliminary review of the current and upcoming budgets. This review will be continued at a future meeting.

**REVIEW OF DECEMBER 16 MINUTES:** Joe points out one error in the Road Report, where "excavator" should be changed to "backhoe." Revised minutes will be brought to the next meeting for approval.

**ADJOURN:** Joe motions to adjourn; Charlie seconds; all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:01.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY JANUARY 20 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy and Linda Schmidt.

*A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.*

# SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - JANUARY 20, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps, Charlie Pike, Linda Schmidt;  
Minute taker: Sandy Reidy.

**CITIZEN CONCERNS:** None raised.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** John Phelps asks about Arlington's upcoming purchase of an **electric school bus**, which was mentioned in the January 6 Selectboard meeting. The Selectboard needs information on this from the Sandgate School Board. Linda Schmidt asks if the Board is ready to sign the memo of agreement authorizing the BCRC to do the state-mandated **Road Erosion Inventory** that is due to be completed by the end of 2026. Joe Nolan says the Road Crew is considering doing this work itself. Linda says she was invited to attend the Arlington Fire Department's January 7 internal review of its response to the January 1 **Chunks Brook Road fire**. At this meeting, the fire department went through the event in great detail. Linda thanked the department on behalf of the Selectboard and the Town. Brian Hawley, the Arlington Fire Chief, told the department it was strongly commended as follows by the Vermont Division of Fire Safety and by Urban Search and Rescue, whose investigators worked at the scene: "These folks will have my undying gratitude for going above and beyond the call of duty. This group of men and women are the finest as exhibited by their actions during this event. To say I am proud to have been able to assist them doesn't even begin to describe the respect I have for all of them. They are professionals personified, and I only wish there is some way they can be acknowledged for what they have done for their community."

**ROAD REPORT:** Joe says the **truck the Town uses for plowing** was not originally equipped to carry a plow, and its frame has been modified three times already to support the plow itself. The frame is breaking now and cannot be repaired again. The Board will discuss what should be done about this and when. The Road Crew will gather quotes for a replacement truck. This subject will be addressed as well at Town Meeting.

**SIGN ORDERS.**

**REVIEW OF DEC. 16 AND JAN. 6 MINUTES:** Joe motions to approve; Linda seconds; all in favor.

**ADJOURN:** Charlie Pike motions to adjourn; John seconds; all in favor.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy and Linda Schmidt.

*A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.*

# SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - FEBRUARY 3, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps (by phone), Charlie Pike, Linda Schmidt, Karen Tendrup (by phone). Also present: Lucas Pike. Minute taker: Sandy Reidy.

**CITIZEN CONCERNS:** Lucas Pike says the **Class IV section of Chunks Brook Road** that the Town has agreed to plow has not been plowed. Joe Nolan says he will remind the Road Crew to plow. Charlie Pike says Lucas can also call the Town Garage directly and leave a message when this happens.

**ROAD REPORT:** Joe says Jay Wilson is recovering but can't yet put any weight on his ankle. Skipper Wilson continues to fill in.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Linda Schmidt asks if there is any news on the **plow truck** with the deteriorating plow frame. Jay and Joe are looking at options for the truck and its components. Linda says Troy Dare of Rural Fire Protection will come to Sandgate one day in April to assess those **dry hydrants** that need work. Brian Hawley (Arlington Fire Chief) and Jay will meet with him. Linda will update the Board as soon as a date is agreed upon. Linda says the State has returned its delayed feedback on the Town's **Hazard Mitigation Plan**; as soon as Dara Zink of the BCRC has reviewed the feedback, it will be brought to the Board. Because of the State's delay, the deadline for adoption of the plan has been postponed from the end of last year to September of this year. Linda says there will be **Stop the Bleed and Narcan training** at Town Hall on Saturday February 8 at 10:00, and that on Saturday February 22, Richard Phelan, **Londonderry's Emergency Management Director**, will join the Community Table to talk about his experience during the recent flooding there. Karen Tendrup says she will not be at the **next Board meeting**, the last of her term. She wants to remain on the Green-Up Day Committee.

**REVIEW OF JANUARY 20 MINUTES:** Joe motions to approve; Linda seconds; all in favor.

**SIGN ORDERS.**

**ADJOURN:** Linda motions to adjourn; Charlie seconds; all in favor.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY FEBRUARY 17 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy and Linda Schmidt.

*A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.*

February 3, 2025

# SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - FEBRUARY 17, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps, Charlie Pike, Linda Schmidt (by phone). Also present: John Grover, Jessica Hill, Margaret Phelps, Rob Viglas. Minute taker: Sandy Reidy.

**CITIZEN CONCERNS:** Jessica Hill says she wants to know what is going on with plowing. She called each member of the Board this past week to say that Woodcock Road had not been plowed or treated. She does not feel the roads are being maintained this winter as they should be, and she wanted to know the plan for the storm that was to follow this past weekend. Joe Nolan says that while Jay Wilson is recovering from his injury and Skipper Wilson is alone on the Road Crew, the Arlington road crew and several private contractors have volunteered their time and plowed in Sandgate. The Rupert Road crew has also offered to help. Jessica says in three weeks she has seen a Town plow on Woodcock Road three times. Joe says both he and Skipper have plowed or sanded Woodcock more than once in the past day. There is discussion of the number of trips made. Jessica says the Town should hire temporary help for times like this when the Road Crew is short-staffed, and says using volunteer private help raises insurance concerns. Joe says that one day last week when the temperature rose and there was melting, they briefly held off treating the roads to prevent more ice forming when the temperature dropped again later. John Grover says he has been told by the State of Vermont that he can obtain a record of all citizen concerns raised with the Board in the past two years; he wants to know how many have been resolved. John Phelps says the Board must stress with Jay and Skipper that Woodcock Road must be maintained regularly. Linda Schmidt says that so far this winter no one else has raised road maintenance concerns with her. She agrees the Board should stress again with the Road Crew that Woodcock Road needs attention. She will ask the Vermont League of Cities and Towns for advice on insurance coverage when the Road Crew needs extra help. She asks if it is known yet when Jay will be back at work. Joe says it will be at least two or three weeks. He will speak to the Road Crew about maintenance on Woodcock. Jessica asks if the Town would pretreat the roads with calcium chloride, to supplement later use of rock salt. Joe says he will talk with Jay about this.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Linda says Troy Dare of Rural Fire Protection will be in Town on April 8 to tour dry hydrants with Jay and with Brian Hawley, the Arlington Fire Chief, and determine which hydrants will need work this spring and summer. Linda says there are three or four hydrants of concern, given that all others were flushed and tested successfully last summer.

**February 17, 2025**

Linda says that on Saturday February 22, Richard Phelan, Londonderry's Emergency Management Director, will speak at the Community Table on last summer's repeated flooding in Londonderry and how the town prepared for and dealt with it.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** The Board reviews the report.

**SIGN ORDERS.**

**REVIEW OF FEBRUARY 3 MINUTES:** John Phelps says he should be added to the attendance list, as having attended by phone. The minutes will be revised and brought to the next meeting for approval.

**ADJOURN:** Charlie Pike motions to adjourn; Joe seconds; all in favor.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON WEDNESDAY MARCH 5 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy and Linda Schmidt.

*A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.*

**February 17, 2025**

# SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - MARCH 5, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps, Linda Schmidt, Rob Viglas.  
Also present: Jim Henderson, Sheila Kearns. Minute taker: Sandy Reidy.

**ORGANIZATION OF SELECTBOARD:** Sandy Reidy is appointed Board Secretary.  
Joe Nolan is appointed Board Chair.

## **APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS:**

**Conservation Commission:** Jim Henderson (Chair), Jack Blandford, Jean Eisenhart, Harry Rich, Dottie Sundquist, Rob Viglas

**Planning Commission:** Richard Zoppel (Chair), James Aschmann, Rob Viglas. Alternates: Jean Eisenhart, Brad Kessler. (**NOTE:** two permanent seats are vacant. Interested applicants should contact Town office.)

**Emergency Management Coordinator:** Joe suggests Jay and/or Skipper Wilson might be interested this position. There is discussion about the skills needed by an Emergency Management Director and Emergency Management Coordinator: firefighting, law enforcement, and military experience are especially helpful. The Board will discuss this with Jay and Skipper.

**BCSWA/ISWAP Representative:** Linda Schmidt

**Green Up Day Coordinators:** Jean Eisenhart, Sandy Reidy, Linda Schmidt, Karen Tendrup

All other appointed Town Officers remain as indicated in the 2024 Town Report.

Newly elected Board members sign their oaths of office.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Sheila Kearns asks that a **discussion of vacancies in the following positions** be listed on the agenda for the March 17 Selectboard meeting, to encourage anyone interested to attend: Listers, Planning Commissioners, Emergency Management Director/Coordinator.

March 5, 2025

Sheila volunteers to compile information for the Board on how the Town can combine the elected **Lister positions** with someone hired to do the necessary administrative work. This would relieve the burden on elected Listers. Sandy will gather information on the people who supplied technical help during the recent reappraisal.

Sheila asks that the agenda for the April 7 Selectboard meeting include a **discussion of auditing** Town financial information, to follow up on suggestions made in the Auditors' Report in the Town Report.

Linda mentions two issues raised in Town Meeting that the Board should keep in mind when **preparing for the next Town Meeting**: the possibility of raising annual appropriations for community organizations whose appropriations are small and have not been adjusted for some time; and the inclusion of Articles allowing for discussion of the reports of the Town Officers and for general discussion on topics raised by citizens.

Linda says that in compiling the Selectboard Comments for the Town Report, she made a list of several items brought to the Board over the past year that should be revisited. At the March 17 Selectboard meeting, she will raise these and suggest adding an Old Business section to the **standard meeting agenda**.

Linda says the visit by Troy Dare of Rural Fire Protection to inspect the Town's **dry hydrants** has been moved from April 8 to April 15.

John Phelps, followed by the entire Board, thanks Sheila for being an excellent Moderator at Town Meeting, and Linda for keeping track of many details for the Board over the past year.

Sandy asks that our **State Representatives** be given a time limit for their presentations at Town Meeting. Sheila suggests asking them for their handouts well in advance of Town Meeting.

Jim says Jack Blandford has volunteered to be on the **Conservation Commission**.

Sandy tells the Board that Clayton Hayes passed away. Joe says the **Arlington Rescue Squad** has responded to calls in Sandgate four times this year. Our Road Crew has arrived quickly each time to help with access.

**ADJOURN:** Linda motions to adjourn; John seconds; all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:15.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY MARCH 17 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy and Linda Schmidt.

*A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.*

March 5, 2025

# SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - MARCH 17, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps, Linda Schmidt, Rob Viglas. Also present: Elizabeth Daut, Adam Hess, Bill Jones, Sheila Kearns, Bill Mitchell, Phyllis Skidmore, Jay Wilson, Skipper Wilson. Minute taker: Sandy Reidy.

**NEW REGIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR FOR BENNINGTON COUNTY: Bill Jones** introduces himself. He is a lifelong Vermont resident and veteran of the fire service in Poultney. He is now responsible for helping towns in Bennington County get the support they need from the state in the event of an emergency. He is the contact for revisions to this year's Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP). Joe Nolan says the Town does not have an Emergency Management Director (EMD) and asks Bill what is involved in that. Bill explains that full certification in this role entails about 75 hours of training, some online and some in person. Linda Schmidt says she asked Dara Zink of the BCRC what the minimum training for the role would be; Dara advises five core classes totaling about 22 hours of training. John Phelps asks what the responsibilities of the EMD are. Bill says that in the event of a disaster, the Sandgate EMD would manage the Town's response, including requesting access to the shelter in Arlington. Elizabeth Daut asks if the Town EMD must be fully certified to fill the role. After attaining the basic level of training, the EMD could choose to complete more training, or not. Bill Mitchell says that, as a firefighter, he has completed many of the required courses and that they are very helpful, especially for helping fire companies from different towns and states coordinate their shared work on individual fires. Sandy Reidy asks if the EMD position is compensated in other towns. Bill says that in his town the EMD is the town manager, salaried by the town. Bill has created a draft of the LEMP that is due June 1 and will send it to Joe for updating.

**FILLING VACANT LISTER POSITIONS: Phyllis Skidmore and Adam Hess** are interested in this role. John asks if they are aware of the work involved. Linda says training is available, and Sheila Kearns says the most significant things to learn are the use of NEMRC and VT-PIE, the two digital systems in which data is recorded. Linda asks about the volume and timing of work. Sheila says the main deadlines are for the updating of the Grand List and Current Use data, and the grievance process. She says more complete property details and updated mapping should also be added to the Town's data. Linda says Phyllis and Adam should talk with Jeanne Zoppel to learn exactly what is needed in the role. Linda will arrange a meeting. Sheila has provided the Board with information on assessor consultants who can be hired as needed.

March 17, 2025

**ROAD REPORT:** Jay Wilson says he and Skipper are grading and hauling stone, trying to keep ahead of the mud, working most recently on Wuerslin Road. There is work to be done now in Beartown. Sheila asks if Crown Maple has been asked about contributing to the cost of Town road maintenance. Joe spoke with them a few weeks ago, and Crown Maple plans to discuss this in their upcoming budget meeting. Sheila asks if an annual amount can be agreed on and planned for in the annual Town budget. Joe will propose this to the company and ask again about a contribution for this year.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Joe says there are still two **open slots on the Planning Commission**. Linda asks about the plan for the damaged **plow truck**. Jay says a mechanic has been found who might be able to repair the plow frame; he will look at the truck this week. Linda asks about **Charlie Pike's resignation from the Selectboard**. Joe says that, in this situation in the past, the Board has appointed an alternate to serve. Sheila asks if the results of the recent election should be considered. Joe says this was discussed in a similar situation several years ago, but the decision was made to appoint an alternate instead. Linda says the state statute she read does not refer specifically to this situation, where the resignation occurs shortly after an election. Sheila says an appointment would be valid until the next election, which would fill the vacant seat. She asks if the Board feels four people are enough to do the work needed. Bill Mitchell asks if four people are sufficient to represent the voters when five members are called for. Rob Viglas asks if choosing the person with the next most votes would negate the votes of those who voted for Charlie. Linda asks if Sandgate has ever held a special election; Sandy says there was one several years ago, concerning a specific article regarding use of funds. Linda says she thinks the Board needs a fifth person to complete its work. Linda has compiled a list of items left over from last year and items to be dealt with in the coming year and will bring it to the April 7 Board meeting, so everyone sees what there is to do.

Jay says he received an email from **FEMA** saying two more road projects—including the recent ditching and stone lining on Lincoln Lane—were approved for payment. He is waiting for a third approval of payment for administrative time. He says Rupert plans to trade in its **pay loader**, and he suggests Sandgate buy it. Joe says a portion of the incoming FEMA reimbursement can cover this cost. Joe says incoming grant money should be recorded in Town accounting as a separate line item, so residents can easily see those numbers. Sheila reminds the Board that the Auditors will attend the April 7 Board meeting, and this can be brought up then. Elizabeth asks what a pay loader would be used for, and Joe says it will be used to clean stone-lined ditches, which it can do more efficiently than the excavator currently being used. Cleaning ditches in this way means the stone can be reused rather than replaced. Elizabeth asks if the FEMA funding is still definitely expected; Jay and Sandy say the money is already with the State and is expected to be sent to the Town within the next couple weeks.

Linda asks if a recent **discrepancy in payments** toward Jay's and Skipper's retirement accounts has been fixed, and Sandy says it has. Sheila asks if a discrepancy in payments to Dead River, noticed by the Auditors, has been settled, and Sandy says she will contact Dead River.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** The Board reviews the report.

**SIGN ORDERS.**

**REVIEW OF FEBRUARY 3 AND MARCH 5 MINUTES:** Linda motions to approve; Joe seconds; all in favor.

**ADJOURN:** John motions to adjourn; Joe seconds; all in favor.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY APRIL 7 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy and Linda Schmidt.

*A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.*

## **SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - MARCH 31, 2025**

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps, Linda Schmidt.

Also present: Bill Mitchell, Phyllis Skidmore and minute taker: Sandy Reidy.

**APPOINTMENT OF LISTERS:** Linda Schmidt motions to appoint Phyllis Skidmore as a Lister; John Phelps seconds; all in favor. Linda motions to appoint Adam Hess as a Lister; John seconds; all in favor. Linda says Phyllis and Adam met with Jeanne Zoppel on March 22 to begin learning about their new role. Valerie DePeyster has presented her resignation letter to the Board. Linda will contact Rebecca Bushee, who was written in on the recent ballot as a lister, to see if she is interested in filling the third position. The Board will ask Jeanne about her availability to help train the new Listers.

**APPOINTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR:** Linda motions to appoint Bill Mitchell as the Town's Emergency Management Director; John seconds; all in favor. Bill has presented his extensive credentials as an EMT and firefighter to the Board. He will contact Bill Jones, Vermont Emergency Management's Regional Coordinator for Bennington County, to get started in this new role.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** The Board signs the annual **Highway Mileage Certificate** for the Town. Joe Nolan says the Road Crew has dismantled the **plow on the Town truck**, to prepare for the mechanic who will come this week to repair it.

**SIGN ORDERS.**

**ADJOURN:** Linda motions to adjourn; Joe seconds; all in favor.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY APRIL 7 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy and Linda Schmidt.

*A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.*

# SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - APRIL 7, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps, Linda Schmidt, Rob Viglas.  
Also present: Jack Blandford, Jeanne Blandford, Elizabeth Daut, Jim Henderson, Sheila Kearns, Margaretha Pero, Phyllis Skidmore. Minute taker: Sandy Reidy.

**APPOINTMENT TO PLANNING COMMISSION:** Linda Schmidt motions to appoint Jack Blandford to the Planning Commission; John Phelps seconds; all in favor.

**REVIEW OF SELECTBOARD PROJECTS AND ROUTINE WORK:** Linda says she has reviewed the past year's meeting minutes and made a list of all significant tasks, large and small, before the Board for the coming term. She says that, for each larger project, the Board should choose one member to be the main contact for that project, someone who can field questions, answer email, make necessary phone calls, etc., especially between Board meetings. She gives copies of the list to the Board and Town Clerk.

The special projects and other work listed are:

**Improved access to West Side Cemetery:** Mike Perra asked the Board about this last year. Linda spoke with Julie Robertson, who will invite Mike to the April 14 Cemetery Commission meeting to discuss.

**Dwindling storage space in the Town vault:** Sandy Reidy raised this concern last year. She estimates there is space in the record-book storage racks for just a few more month's worth of records. She will look into the cost of additional racks and the logistics of ordering them.

**Repair of Town message boards:** Joe Nolan will work on this on Green Up Day (May 3), and John offers to help.

**Meeting minutes:** After each Board meeting, Linda writes these minutes by listening to the meeting recording, with Sandy's draft notes, taken in the meeting, as backup. Linda says writing the minutes typically takes two hours.

**Review of dry hydrants:** Linda is the point person for this. Troy Dare, of the Vermont Association of Conservation Districts' Rural Fire Protection unit, will visit Sandgate on April 15 to review hydrants with Jay Wilson, Brian Hawley (Arlington Fire Chief), and Linda.

**Municipal Technical Assistance Program (MTAP):** An MTAP grant will fund the outfitting of Town Hall as a temporary emergency shelter, including making its water potable. Joe has contacted Gould Well Drilling, who drilled the well, but has gotten no response. He will also contact Frost Well and Pumps. Jim Henderson suggests first testing the water again, as contamination might have cleared since the septic pipe was repaired, and the Board agrees to this. He will contact Advanced Water Works in Sunderland to re-run the tests. Linda will continue as the point person on the Board for this project.

**Compliance with new Vermont Open Meeting Law:** There is a discussion of how the Town can comply with this law. Linda says Katie Kenny has drafted a landing page for the Town website to allow online access to audio recordings of meetings. Sheila Kearns says storage space for this data is a concern. Research and more discussion are needed to determine the best approach for the Town. **This will appear on the agenda for the April 21st Board meeting, so citizens can raise questions.** The State now requires an online training for the Board Chair.

**Compliance with new Vermont State Code of Ethics:** The State now requires a 45-minute online training for all Board members, and the appointment of an Ethics Liaison. Joe suggests the Board call a special meeting to do the training as a group. Rob Viglas volunteers to be the Ethics Liaison. John motions to appoint Rob to this role; Linda seconds; all in favor.

**Hazard Mitigation Plan:** The Town's updated plan, written last year, has been approved by the State. Dara Zink will attend the April 21 Board meeting to review the plan for adoption by the Board. Responsibility for implementation of the plan will be shared by the Board members, as the plan includes a varied list of mitigation actions.

**Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance (BCSWA / ISWAP) representation:** Linda has been the Town's representative for the past two years and would like to hand it off. It requires attending quarterly Zoom meetings. Sheila asks if someone other than a Board member can fill this role. Jim offers to ask Scott Grimm-Lyon, program manager for the BCSWA, if that is a possibility.

**Emergency planning:** Linda sent contact information for Bill Jones, the new Regional Coordinator for Vermont Emergency Management, to Bill Mitchell, the new Emergency Management Director for Sandgate. Linda says Bill Jones will fill Bill Mitchell in on attending the quarterly Regional Emergency Management Committee meetings, but VEM requires two representatives from each town for voting. Linda has been attending these meetings but asks if someone else can take on

this role. Joe advises letting Bill Mitchell suggest a person. Bill will also be involved in updating the Town's Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP), due June 1.

**Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP):** Last year the Town was awarded a \$112K grant to make energy-related upgrades to Town Hall and the Town Garage. Included in the grant is the cost of a project manager (Clerk of the Works) to handle day-to-day logistics of planning and working with contractors. BCRC has put that job out for bid and has received a proposal from Project Consulting Inc. John asks if anyone has experience working with PCI. Linda says one Board member should be appointed liaison with the project manager. She has been attending preliminary meetings with Sheila and PCI but is not qualified to be the point person for this project. Joe suggests asking PCI what they would want from a Board liaison. Sheila leaves the PCI proposal for the Board to review.

**VACANCY ON THE SELECTBOARD:** Linda says that, especially given all the work listed above, the Board needs the requisite fifth member. Joe says this should be handled as it was the last time the Board was down a member: a new member should be appointed by the Board. In the previous instance, the Board appointed John to the vacant position instead of appointing the person who received the next most votes in the most recent election. Joe says it would not be fair to use election results in this instance if they were not used last time. John asks if, regardless of the past approach, the election results should be used now. Margaretha Pero asks what other towns do in this situation. Linda recently asked this of Tom Wilson, of the Rupert Selectboard, who said sometimes a vacant position on the Rupert board has been filled by appointment and sometimes not, depending on how much time will pass before the next election. Sheila suggests the Selectboard decide on criteria for appointing a fifth member and, alternatively, asks about the possibility of a special election. John says the Board needs time to consider options. Jim advocates for a special election. **The issue of the vacant seat will be on the agenda for the April 21 Board meeting.**

**REVISION TO THE STANDARD SELECTBOARD MEETING AGENDA:** Linda says the list above should be incorporated into the standard agenda for these meetings as an "Old Business" section. This will make it easier for the Board and the public to monitor ongoing work. Sandy will send Linda the agenda template, and Linda will add the above list.

**CITIZEN CONCERNS:** Linda was approached by a resident of Littman Lane, who asked why the **stop sign at the end of Campbell Road**, at the intersection with West Sandgate Road, is gone. Joe says it was taken down to make room for the tractor trailer used for work at Erthein. Linda says she left a message recently for Rebecca Bushee, who was written into the recent ballot as a **Lister candidate**, to see if Rebecca is interested in filling the third (vacant) Lister position. Jim says snowmobiles, ATVs, trailers, and other **vehicles parking in the turnout on Sandgate Road near**

**Southeast Corners Road prevent fire department access to the dry hydrant** there. This hydrant is currently blocked with silt but should be cleared soon. Linda will mention this issue when dry hydrants are reviewed with Brian Hawley on April 15. A “No Parking” sign was suggested.

**SIGN ORDERS.**

**REVIEW OF FEBRUARY 17 AND MARCH 17 MINUTES:** Linda motions to approve; John seconds; all in favor.

**ADJOURN:** John motions to adjourn; Joe seconds; all in favor.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY APRIL 21 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy and Linda Schmidt.

*A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.*

## SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - APRIL 21, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps, Linda Schmidt. Also present: Elizabeth Daut, Jean Eisenhart, Sheila Kearns, Peter Markalunas, Bill Mitchell, Julie Robertson, Dara Zink. Minute taker: Sandy Reidy.

**CITIZEN CONCERNS:** Jean Eisenhart asks when the broken fence at the **West Side Cemetery** will be fixed. Julie Robertson says the Cemetery Commission is working on this. The Board received a complaint about **ATVs** on Southeast Corners Road. Sheila Kearns says they have been racing on Sandgate Road as well, sometimes very late at night. Joe Nolan will look into this but suggests also that people call the State Police when this happens.

**ADOPTION OF REVISED HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN:** Dara Zink (Bennington County Regional Commission) says the Town's revised Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) has been approved by the State and by FEMA and is ready for final review and adoption by the Board. Linda Schmidt says that compared to the old plan, the new version is simpler, more specific to Sandgate, and more achievable. An updated HMP is required to make the Town eligible for maximum reimbursement by FEMA and the State in the event of an emergency. Going forward the Board will review the plan each December, to assess progress on the mitigation actions and to budget for mitigation work as needed. The finished plan will be posted on the Town website and BCRC website. Linda motions to approve the plan; John Phelps seconds; all in favor. The Board signs the adoption form and returns it to Dara. The rewriting of the plan was funded by a BRIC grant. Dara stresses that, with federal support of this kind in flux, the Town should apply for its reimbursement as quickly as possible.

**UPDATE FROM THE TOWN AUDITORS:** Sheila Kearns and Peter Markalunas refer to the Auditors Report that appears in the 2024 Town Report, which recommends hiring a professional consultant to review the Town's finances and the workflow surrounding them. Sheila and Peter present the following letter to the Board:

*The last professional audit performed for Sandgate, Vt. was conducted in 2010, Prior to that, outside audits were done 2002,1992, and 1982. Sandgate is overdue for an outside audit. For reference, Arlington, Vt. has an outside audit every 5 years and Shaftsbury, Vt. has an outside audit every year. For Sunderland, Vt. the last audit was in 2017.*

April 21, 2025

*Sandgate's elected auditors are not professional accountants. An outside audit is much more extensive in scope and is performed by individuals trained in government auditing standards.*

*It is estimated that an outside audit would cost Sandgate approximately \$10,000. For reference, Arlington's audit in 2024 cost \$18,000.*

*The prudent thing to do from a financial perspective is for the town to have an outside audit on a regular schedule similar to Arlington and Shaftsbury.*

*Sandgate Elected Auditors*

*April 2025*

Joe asks if the Auditors have a professional auditor in mind. Peter has contacted one firm and will contact others; bids from at least three would be required per the Town's Procurement Policy. Going forward, budgeting for this work would need to be examined and might require an article at the next Town Meeting. Sheila says about \$6,000 is currently available. Linda asks where additional money would come from. Sandy Reidy suggests other budget line items that could be used. Sheila will contact Arlington Town Hall for a copy of the Request for Proposal (RFP) they used to solicit firms for their last audit. Sandgate can use that as an example. The Board agrees that Sheila and Peter should pursue an audit.

**SELECTBOARD VACANCY:** Joe says the Board is considering how to fill the vacant position. He says the current Board members work well together and that this is an opportunity for the Board to appoint someone who would work well with the other four members. Linda stresses that we need to fill the fifth slot; Jean agrees. Sheila asks if there has been an outreach to the Town for candidates, and Julie says the Board should spread the word about the vacancy. Bill Mitchell says he would like to be considered. The issue will appear again on the May 5 meeting agenda, and Linda will see about posting a notice on the Town website. **[In the meantime, anyone interested in the position should contact Town Hall or a Selectboard member and should plan to attend the May 5 meeting.]**

**COMPLIANCE WITH STATE OPEN MEETING LAW:** Vermont Open Meeting Law 1 VSA 310-314 concerns making meetings of public bodies such as the Selectboard easily accessible to the public, including by electronic means in real time and/or after the fact, through publicly available audio and/or video recordings. Towns have leeway to determine the best approach for them, and Sandgate must decide how to comply. **This issue will appear again on the agenda for the May 5 Selectboard meeting, and the Board is interested in hearing from citizens about it.**

**DRY HYDRANTS:** Linda says that on April 15 she joined Troy Dare of Rural Fire Protection; Brian Hawley, Arlington Fire Chief; and Road Foreman Jay Wilson to visit three of the four nonworking dry hydrant sites in Town. The hydrant that was at Erthein Road will not be replaced, as Troy and

Brian determined the best approach now is for the FD to draft water directly from the stream when it is needed. Bill (who is Assistant Chief of the Salem Fire Department) points out that fire companies are moving away in general from dry hydrants because they tend to become clogged. Troy and Brian determined the dry hydrant at Southeast Corners Road could also be replaced with drafting, although they will explore a bridge-mounted hydrant on the bridge on Southeast Corners Road as well. The broken hydrant near the Zoppels' pond at Tate Hill Road is in the process of being fixed. The hydrant on Chunks Brook Road will be reviewed at a later date due to water contamination. All other hydrants in Town have been tested and approved by the FD.

**MUNICIPAL ENERGY RESILIENCE PROGRAM:** Sheila asks if the Board has reviewed the proposal from project-management firm PCI to serve as Clerk of the Works for energy-related work on Town Hall and the Town Garage. Joe later signs the agreement with PCI.

**MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM:** Bill asks if the problem of nonpotable water at Town Hall has been addressed. Joe says the water will be retested, now that the septic pipe has been repaired. Bill suggests shocking the well before it is tested. Linda says Jim Henderson is contacting Advanced Water Works about retesting. For replacement of the broken expansion tank, Joe will contact a plumber directly.

**ROAD REPORT:** Joe says the Road Crew has been grading throughout Town. The Road Crew will throw a party for the Town at the Town Garage on the afternoon of Green Up Day, May 3, starting at noon.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** The Treasurer distributes the report to the Board.

**SIGN ORDERS.**

**REVIEW OF MARCH 31 AND APRIL 7 MINUTES:** John motions to approve the April 7 minutes; Linda seconds; all in favor. Linda motions to approve the March 31 minutes; John seconds; all in favor.

**ADJOURN:** Linda motions to adjourn; Joe seconds; all in favor.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY MAY 5 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy and Linda Schmidt.

*A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.*

April 21, 2025

# SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - MAY 5, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps, Linda Schmidt, Rob Viglas. Also present: Elizabeth Daut, Jim Henderson, Bill Mitchell, Dan Reap. Minute taker: Sandy Reidy.

**CITIZEN CONCERNS:** Elizabeth Daut thanks everyone for their participation in Green Up Day.

**ROAD REPORT:** Joe Nolan says the plow truck has been fixed. He says the Green Up Day party was a big success. The Road Crew is hauling gravel again this week.

**GRANT IN AID FOR 2026:** Jim Henderson asks if the letter of intent (with VTrans, for hydrologically related road work) has been signed. The Board signs the letter.

**APPOINTMENT OF LISTER:** Linda Schmidt motions to appoint Jeanne Zoppel to a one-year term as a lister; John Phelps seconds; all in favor.

## **APPOINTMENTS TO GOVERNING BOARD OF SOUTHERN VERMONT COMMUNICATIONS**

**UNION DISTRICT:** Linda motions to appoint Sheila Kearns and Logan Wuerslin as Sandgate's representatives to this board; Joe seconds; all in favor.

**MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MTAP):** Jim says he met with Advanced Water Works about a next step for the well at Town Hall. Water testing last year found coliform, e. coli, and an abnormal level of arsenic in the water. AWW has suggested a filtration system that would cost \$12K+, in conjunction with a maintenance agreement for regular filter replacement and testing. In addition, the pressure tank is not working and must be replaced to spare the well pump. John asks what a maintenance agreement would cost. Jim says he was not quoted an amount but will ask AWW. There is discussion about shocking the well, which could address the coliform and e. coli but not the arsenic. Joe says we will need quotes from two other vendors. Jim will find out how much money is left in the grant to cover these costs, and will look for two other vendors to give quotes.

**COMPLIANCE WITH STATE OPEN MEETING LAW:** This has been discussed at previous meetings, and no concerns have been raised by the public. Linda motions—due to lack of technical equipment and expertise, and lack of interest in a real-time solution on the part of the public—to simply make audio recordings of Selectboard meetings available on the Town website after each meeting, rather than provide live public participation by video. John seconds; all in favor.

**UPDATE ON TOWN AUDIT:** Linda says Town Auditor Peter Markalunas has contacted four accounting firms about a professional audit. Two have responded so far, and both recommend—given that the last audit was done 15 years ago—an interim consultancy, before a full audit, to bring data into order and make a full audit easier and possibly less expensive. John asks the purpose of the interim consultancy. Linda says the Auditors will attend a future Board meeting to explain further, once they have responses from the other firms.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Linda says that at the end of May Brian Hawley, Arlington Fire Chief, will bring a consultant to the dry hydrant at Southeast Corners Road to see if a bridge-mounted hydrant is feasible. Joe says he has spoken to the people who park trailers and other vehicles in front of the current hydrant and pointed out that this blocks hydrant access.

**SELECTBOARD VACANCY:** Joe says the Board will now go into Executive Session to discuss this. When the Board returns, Joe says they have decided not to appoint a fifth member and to continue as a four-person Board until more help is needed. Joe and Linda say the largest and most complex project before the Board this year is the Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) work. As part of this grant-funded work, a project manager has been hired. Before the Board decides who the main contact will be for this project manager, he will be invited to a Board meeting to explain what is needed.

**SIGN ORDERS.**

**ADJOURN:** Rob Viglas motions to adjourn; Linda seconds; all in favor.  
The meeting is adjourned at 7:28.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY MAY 19 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy and Linda Schmidt.

*A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.*

May 5, 2025

# SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - MAY 19, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps, Linda Schmidt, Rob Viglas. Also present: Patricia Hall, Jim Henderson, Sheila Kearns, Bill Mitchell, Lalla Pero, Julie Robertson. Minute taker: Sandy Reidy.

**MUNICIPAL ENERGY RESILIENCE PROGRAM (MERP):** Tom Yandow and Nathaniel Jamison-Root, both of Project Consulting Inc. (PCI), and Callie Fishburn of the Bennington County Regional Commission join the meeting via Zoom. PCI is the firm hired to be project manager for MERP. Tom asks if the Board has questions about how the project will move forward. Joe Nolan asks if PCI would like one or more designated contacts on the Board or elsewhere in Town to communicate with on an ongoing basis. Tom says PCI would like one main contact for the work at Town Hall and one for the Town Garage. The process for handling contractor invoices is discussed. Linda Schmidt asks if PCI uses any type of shared tracking tool that allows the company and its client to see where the elements of the project are at any given time. Tom says PCI will keep the Board updated and that he has begun looking for additional sources of state funding for the project. He says PCI will need the Town Hall and Garage contacts to (1) facilitate bid and invoice handling, and (2) give access to Town Hall and the Garage (for contractors and others) as needed. PCI understands that the Board meets only twice per month to make decisions; PCI will incorporate that timing into its work with contractors and others. PCI will let Linda know when they need to be included on any given Board Meeting agenda. Nathaniel Jamison-Root says a Gantt chart will be shared with the Board to show overall progress.

**LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN (LEMP):** Linda says the annual revision to this plan is due to Vermont Emergency Management on June 1. She has made updates and shows them to the other Board members, who agree with the changes. Rob Viglas volunteers to replace Karen Tendrup as one of three contacts on the Board. Linda will submit the updated document to Bill Jones at the BCRC, who will send it to VEM.

**MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM:** Bill Mitchell says he has reviewed the Town's existing emergency plans and that the lack of potable water and cooking facilities in Town Hall should be addressed. He asks if the kitchen in the church could be used in an emergency. Jim Henderson presents to the Board a Request for Proposal, which, with the Board's approval, he will send to at least three vendors who can install the filtration system and expansion tank needed to fix the water system. All agree, however, that first the water should be re-tested. Joe asks if the water at the church can be tested under the MTAP grant. Jim will look into this, and the Board of Trustees of the church will be contacted.

May 19, 2025

**CLIMATE CATALYST GRANT:** Jim asks about **first-aid supplies for Town Hall**. Linda says this \$1,500 grant was awarded last year; she has a list of basic supplies and is setting up a tax-exempt account for the Town with Rescue Essentials to place an order. This week Linda was informed of a program through the Bennington Rescue Squad to make certified refurbished AEDs available to communities at a low cost, and she asks the Board for approval to obtain an **AED for the Town Garage** and pay for it through this grant; approval is given, and Linda will contact Bennington Rescue.

**ROAD REPORT:** Joe says the Road Crew has been hauling gravel and fixing washouts from the recent rain. They spent some time in Arlington last week, helping its road crew replace a culvert (to return the favor for Arlington's help with the box culvert at Erthein Road last fall). Lalla Pero says part of **West Road** is in very bad shape. Joe and Jim say this has been discussed with Jay Wilson and is a priority for the next few days. Jim is in touch with Jay about the timing of projects covered by Grant in Aid for this year and next, including work on West Road.

**CITIZEN CONCERNS:** Patricia Hall reads a statement she has prepared about the handling of two cardboard boxes that she asked a friend to leave for her at Town Hall for pickup after **Green Up Day**, and that were rejected by the Road Crew. She gives details of the incident, and she believes the Road Crew overreacted in response by contacting the Cambridge Police [her statement and a list of questions for the Board are now with the Town Clerk]. She asks for an apology from the Road Crew for her and for her friend. She says Sandgate has always had a liberal policy surrounding Green Up Day, one that allows household items to be left at Town Hall for pickup. She asks if this policy has changed and has been documented anywhere. She acknowledges that someone took advantage of the Town's liberality this year by leaving a large number of tires (which the Town must pay to dispose of). There is general discussion about what is allowable and not, and general agreement that rules must be established and clearly communicated to residents for next year. Jim mentions the Bennington County Hazardous Waste Facility, available for dropping off paint and other hazardous materials. Sandy Reidy, Green Up Day Director, says she is already planning how to communicate rules for next year; Patricia offers to help with this. Julie Robertson says the State rules surrounding Green Up Day are clear—the cleanup is intended for roadside trash, and household garbage is not permitted—and she is unaware of a more permissive approach in Sandgate. Jim says this issue should be raised at the next Town Meeting. Lalla points out the small number of Green Up bags at Town Hall relative to household trash and raises the larger issue of littering in general in Town. She asks for anti-littering signage to be set up and fines set and enforced. Patricia reiterates that she wants to help with Green Up Day communication next year. Jim says Patricia has made this a positive situation, and the Board thanks her for raising the issue.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Sandy says Karen Tendrup's term as **health officer** is up at the end of May. Responsibility for this office defaults to the Board Chair; alternatives are discussed. A form is signed for extension of the **Grand List deadline**. John Phelps asks the Board to consider giving Linda a raise for the large volume of work she does for the Board; Sandy points out there is a budget line item for a **Board Secretary**. Linda thanks John for the mention; she says her biggest Board workload concern this year is communication surrounding the complex MERP project, which she does not have time to handle. John offers to be the Town Hall contact for this project.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** The treasurer distributes the report to the Board.

**SIGN ORDERS.**

**REVIEW OF APRIL 21 AND MAY 5 MINUTES:** Rob motions to approve both sets of minutes; John seconds; all in favor.

**ADJOURN:** Linda motions to adjourn; Joe seconds; all in favor.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY JUNE 2 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy and Linda Schmidt.

*A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.*

## SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - JUNE 2, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps, Linda Schmidt.  
Also present: Sheila Kearns. Minute taker: Sandy Reidy.

**CITIZEN CONCERNS:** None raised.

**ROAD REPORT:** Sheila Kearns asks if an agreement has been reached with Crown Maple regarding their contribution to the cost of road maintenance. She says she has seen a great deal of material being hauled up Sandgate Road, and she asks how much of it is going into Beartown to address wear and tear by Crown's trucks. Joe Nolan says he has spoken with Crown Maple but has not received an answer; he will contact the company again. He also points out that this is agricultural use. Sheila suggests the company be asked to join a Selectboard meeting. Sheila then asks about a street sign for Walsh Road; Joe says it has been stolen repeatedly. Joe says the Road Crew has been hauling gravel for the past couple weeks.

**REVIEW OF MAY 19 MINUTES:** Joe motions to approve; John Phelps seconds; all in favor.

**OLD / OTHER BUSINESS:** Linda Schmidt then gives several updates. Per a discussion at the May 19 Board meeting, she revised the **Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP)** last week, submitted it to the State, and the plan has been accepted. Last weekend Linda met Brian Hawley, Arlington Fire Chief, and Mark Davis, a dry-hydrant engineer with GBW Associates, at the bridge on Southeast Corners Road near Sandgate Road; Mark determined that a **bridge-mounted dry hydrant** can be installed there. He will send an estimate for the work; a grant has already been applied for to cover the cost. Linda has been in touch with the Bennington Rescue Squad to take advantage of its current program to make certified refurbished **AEDs (defibrillators)** available at low cost. One of these will be purchased for the Town Garage. Linda says the Town has now received a quote from Rescue Essentials for **first-aid supplies for Town Hall**. She will meet with Sandy Reidy this week to arrange payment for this order using the Climate Catalyst grant the Town received last year. Linda heard from Jim Henderson this week that the **water-filtration system for Town Hall** discussed as part of the Municipal Technical Assistance Program (MTAP) grant would in fact not be covered by that grant. Jim will join a future Board meeting to discuss. Linda says one central contact for the upcoming **Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP)** work at Town Hall is needed; Sheila says she no longer wants to be that contact. Joe says he will ask Jay Wilson if he can take this on. Jay is already the contact at the Town Garage for the same project. Sheila says someone is needed, in particular, to traffic invoices and reimbursements.

**SIGN ORDERS.**

**ADJOURN:** Joe motions to adjourn; Linda seconds; all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:38.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY JUNE 16 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy and Linda Schmidt.

*A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.*

# SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - JUNE 16, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps, Linda Schmidt, Rob Viglas.

Also present: Jim Henderson, Paula Kamperman, Sheila Kearns, Bill Mitchell, Phyllis Skidmore.

**UPDATE OF BENNINGTON COUNTY SOLID WASTE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (SWIP):** Paula Kamperman, Outreach Program Manager for the Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance, presents the draft updated plan to the Board for signature. The plan is updated every five years. The most significant update this year is the addition of planning for collection areas in each town or area for debris that would accumulate after a major storm or other catastrophic event. The Board signs the adoption form.

**MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MTAP):** Jim Henderson says he is filing a grant amendment that will allow for water testing at the Town Garage and the church, as well as retesting at Town Hall. A testing date for all three properties will be scheduled. Jim has learned that the water-filtration system and expansion tank proposed earlier to address contamination and other water issues at Town Hall would in fact not be covered under this grant, which cannot be used for capital improvements. The Board says the expansion tank will be replaced using existing Town funds.

**ROAD REPORT:** Joe Nolan says the Road Crew has been moving and hauling gravel for the past several days.

**OLD / OTHER BUSINESS:** Sheila Kearns asks Joe if he has spoken with Jay Wilson about being the Town Hall (as well as the Town Garage) contact for **Municipal Energy Resilience (MERP)** work on both buildings. Joe says Jay has accepted and needs more information about what is involved. Sheila says she is stepping back from her role with this project and will turn all communications over to Jay. Among the current items to be addressed are an invoice, a quarterly report, and an application for advance funds to cover immediate costs. Linda Schmidt says an estimate for a bridge-mounted **dry hydrant on Southeast Corners Road** has been received, and she asks the Board if this work should move forward; the Board agrees. The cost will be \$6,150, 75% of which will be covered by a grant from Rural Fire Protection. Linda says invoices are included in the current set of orders for both a **defibrillator for the Town Garage** and **first-aid supplies for Town Hall**. These items should arrive soon. Phyllis Skidmore says the next **Town-wide tax reappraisal** is scheduled for 2028.

**REVIEW OF JUNE 2 MINUTES:** John Phelps motions to approve; Joe seconds; all in favor.

**SIGN ORDERS.**

**ADJOURN:** Joe motions to adjourn; John seconds; all in favor.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY JULY 7 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Linda Schmidt.

June 16, 2025

# SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - JULY 7, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps, Linda Schmidt, Rob Viglas.  
Also present: Jim Henderson, Adam Hess, Sheila Kearns, Bill Mitchell, Phyllis Skidmore, Tom Yandow (PCI). Minute taker: Sandy Reidy.

**MUNICIPAL ENERGY RESILIENCE PROGRAM (MERP) UPDATE:** Tom Yandow of PCI, the project management firm hired to oversee this work, says he has read the assessments of work to be done at Town Hall and the Town Garage. He asks about the solar installations mentioned in the assessments, and Sheila Kearns points out that solar installation is not part of the final plan. She redirects Tom to the agreed-upon scope of work. He will review this and return to the next Board meeting. For the Town Garage, Tom recommends a propane-fueled boiler, a point-of-use hot water heater, and LED lighting. Joe Nolan says the power washer at the Garage creates its own hot water. For Town Hall, Tom recommends a point-of-use hot water heater, LED lighting, adding an A coil to the furnace to run air conditioning, and repairing insulation in the crawl space. Sheila says new windows were included in the original scope of work and are a priority. Temperature control in the vault is also a concern.

**REPORT FROM TOWN AUDITORS:** Sheila presents an example of a report that will now be given to the Board monthly with each Treasurer's Report, showing any bookkeeping discrepancies the Auditors find in their review of Town expenses. These include errors of notation and individual expenses paid from statements rather than invoices.

**APPOINTMENT TO ZONING BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION / PLANNING COMMISSION:** Sheila says Dan Reap has expressed an interest in joining the ZBA/PC, which will bring it back to full participation. Linda Schmidt motions to appoint Dan to the ZBA/PC; Joe seconds; all in favor.

**MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MTAP) UPDATE:** Jim Henderson says he has amended and received approval for this grant to include water testing at the Town Garage and the Church, and he will schedule these along with retesting at Town Hall. Phyllis Skidmore offers to meet Jim and let the water testers in. To take full advantage of this large grant—which can be used only for assessment, analysis, and planning, not for capital improvements—Jim suggests assessing the former Town Firehouse, next to Town Hall, for potential uses. Bill Mitchell points out the need for basic kitchen facilities, especially in case of emergency. Phyllis says there is already discussion about upgrading the kitchen at the Church. Joe raises the need for more vault space. Jim suggests a brainstorming session once water test results arrive.

**TAX ABATEMENT FOR GROGAN PROPERTY:** This abatement must be calculated to take fire damage into account, thereby reducing the amount of back taxes owed on the property. The value of the house itself has been reduced, but not the value of other components of the property (foundation, outbuildings, land). The Listers will calculate an abatement amount and bring it to the next Board meeting for approval.

**CITIZEN CONCERNS:** Linda says Julie Robertson has raised a concern about ongoing **littering** in Town. It is particularly bad in the Notch and on West Sandgate Road. Linda asks about a possible ordinance and signage. Joe says the difficulty is enforcement. Linda says this should be brought up at Town Meeting, along with Green Up Day plans for next year. Bill asks about an issue brought up at the last meeting by Paula Kamperman, of the BCSWA, concerning establishment of a **debris-drop location for emergencies**. Bill asks if the Casella drop-off in Sunderland could be used for this. Linda will ask Paula if this is a possibility. John Phelps asks what more (in addition to treating water) should be done in Town Hall to make it usable as a **temporary emergency shelter**; he asks if cots, for example, are needed. Linda says Arlington Middle School is the official shelter for Sandgate and has kitchen facilities, cots, and other items needed for longer-term emergency shelter. She says the original plan for using MTAP included potable water (in progress), first-aid supplies (now received), and kitchen facilities for Town Hall. All agree that assessment of the former Firehouse next to Town Hall, through MTAP, will help the Town determine options for both kitchen and vault space. Linda says she just learned that the **defibrillator for the Town Garage** has arrived at the Bennington Rescue Squad, and she will arrange for pickup or delivery. John says he attended the **Sandgate Community Table** on June 28 and enjoyed the talk. He asks Linda if it is appropriate to mention Selectboard work (on dry hydrants, for example) at these events, or if that discourages residents from attending Selectboard meetings. Linda says that at SCT events she actively encourages attendance at Selectboard meetings and calls out developments with emergency planning specifically because there has been so much interest in that subject.

**ROAD REPORT:** Joe says grading and cutting of poisonous parsnip are ongoing. Rob Viglas asks how the Road Crew decides where to use the roller. Joe says it often depends on weather, and that they now roll an entire road, not just portions of a road, as was done previously.

**APPROVAL OF GRAND LIST:** The Listers present the Grand List to the Board for approval. The Board approves the List. A meeting will be scheduled for calculation of the municipal tax rate.

**REVIEW OF JUNE 16 MINUTES:** John motions to approve; Rob seconds; all in favor.

**SIGN ORDERS.**

**ADJOURN:** Linda motions to adjourn; Joe seconds; all in favor.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY JULY 14 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy and Linda Schmidt.

*A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.*

July 7, 2025

# **SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - July 14, 2025**

## **CALL TO ORDER: 6:00**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board Members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps, Linda Schmidt, Rob Viglas. Also present: Jay Wilson, Phyllis Skidmore; Minute Taker, Sandy Reidy, and Tom Yandow on the phone.

**MERP Update:** Tom Yandow speaks with the Board about some other possibilities for the use of the MERP award. Tom will set up a spread sheet to present at another meeting.

**CITIZENS CONCERNS:** John Phelps brings up a concern about the one-way bridge on West Sandgate Road, has no sign to warn of this fact. The Selectmen will look into where they can obtain this sign.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** The defibrillator for the garage will be delivered on Monday.

**ROAD REPORT:** The new Loader will be delivered to Springfield and then the Town will purchase their used Loader.

**ERRORS AND OMISSIONS:** Phyllis Skidmore first speaks on the reduction to the previous tax years reduction for the abated property due to house fire. The board decides and votes to reduce only the municipal rate for the dates January 1, 2025 through June 30,2025. Phyllis shows the difference in the deduction for the house site value for the same property for FY 25/26 the current tax year. The Selectmen agree with the Listers calculation for this reduction.

**SET THE TAX RATE:** Sandy presents the calculated tax rate for fiscal year 2025/2026. Linda makes a motion to set the tax rate as is. Joe Seconds. All in favor.

**SIGN ORDERS:** The Selectmen sign the orders.

**ADJOURN:** Joe Nolan makes a motion to adjourn. Rob Viglas seconds. Meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL ON MONDAY AUGUST 4, 2025 AT 6:00 AT THE SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy.

A complete recording of these minutes is available upon request.

July 14, 2025

# SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - AUGUST 18, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps, Linda Schmidt, Rob Viglas.  
Also present: Brian Hawley, Keagan Hawley, Eric Marko (Arlington Fire Department);  
Jim Henderson, Mike Miller. Minute taker: Sandy Reidy.

**RECAP OF AUGUST 10 EMERGENCY DRILL IN THE NOTCH:** Brian Hawley, Arlington Fire Chief, summarizes the drill and says it was a success. Three fire crews, the Arlington Rescue Squad, and 20 victim volunteers participated. Brian thanks the Town for allowing the temporary closure of the road and the use of Town equipment. John Phelps says the Town thanks the Fire Department as well, and he asks about response times. Brian says they were good and that the focus of the drill was not just on timing but on accomplishing certain tasks. These goals were met, and the exercise was an important learning opportunity for all involved. The FD determined they need an additional digital radio. Jim Henderson says the official helicopter landing zone in Town is the field at Sandgate Road and Route 313 and asks if another official landing zone is needed. Brian says that landing zone and another at Exit 3 on Route 7 are sufficient for the area, as both are on the route to Bennington Hospital.

**OTHER UPDATES FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT:** Brian says the installation of the bridge-mounted **dry hydrant** on Southeast Corners Road is scheduled for September 7 or 8. The old hydrant below the bridge might then be cut out. Shortly after installation, the Fire Department will test the new hydrant and the repaired hydrant at the intersection of West Sandgate Road and Tate Hill Road. **The Fire Chief asks that all residents of Sandgate clearly and prominently number their houses,** to help emergency personnel locate them when necessary.

**CITIZEN CONCERNS:** Mike Miller, who lives in Salem near the end of Beattie Hollow Road, asks whom to call if there is a problem on the Conservation Fund's **Egg Mountain property**. Jim says the application made to the federal Forest Legacy Program by the Vermont Department of Forests and Recreation to purchase the Egg Mountain property has likely been rejected for this year, but the State will reapply next year. In the meantime, the property is still owned by the Conservation Fund and leased to the Beattie Hollow Sportsman Club.

**MUNICIPAL ENERGY RESILIENCE PROGRAM (MERP):** Tom Yandow of PCI, project manager for the work at Town Hall and the Town Garage, updates the Board on his recommendations. For Town Hall, the decision is made to focus on replacing windows, as a first step to making a later decision on heating/cooling of the building. Replacement of light fixtures is mentioned in the proposal, but Tom says this is not necessary: Town Hall should just purchase LED bulbs and charge them to the

grant. He says a new water heater is not needed, as the units in the two bathrooms are sufficient. He will solicit bids from electricians for work on the electric heater in the vault. For the Town Garage, Tom suggests installation of a high-efficiency boiler vented through the side wall. Lighting in the Garage must also be improved, and Tom will solicit bids for these. The air compressor needs repair, and Tom will investigate.

**GRANT-IN-AID UPDATE:** Jim Henderson says the 2025 grant is for culvert replacement and ditching to be done this fall on **West Road**. The 2026 grant will be scoped by the Road Crew and Jim next spring.

**MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MTAP):** Jim reiterates that this grant can be used for assessing and scoping work but not for capital improvements. He discusses the possibility of assessing the firehouse next to Town Hall for new uses. The Board agrees that Jim should look into hiring a structural engineer to do this assessment through the grant.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Linda Schmidt says Bill Mitchell asked at a recent meeting if the Casella transfer station in Sunderland can be used as the state-mandated **debris-drop-off point in case of emergency**. Linda checked with Paula Kamperman of the Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance, who responded that this emergency location must be on municipally owned property, so the Casella location would not be allowed. Linda says Sheila Kearns thanks the Town for erecting a **25 mph speed-limit sign** on the dirt portion of Sandgate Road. Linda says the recently purchased refurbished **defibrillator** has been delivered to the Town Garage. Sandy Reidy objects to the Town's **use of poison to kill weeds around guardrails** and offers again to weed whack. There is discussion about how common this poison use is in neighboring towns, and the difficulty of finding people to do the work of cutting the weeds.

**ROAD REPORT:** Joe Nolan says West Sandgate Road is due to be graded, but the Road Crew must wait for rain.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** The Treasurer presents the report to the Board.

**SIGN ORDERS.**

**REVIEW OF JULY 7 AND 14 MINUTES:** Linda motions to approve the July 7 minutes; Joe seconds; all in favor. The July 14 minutes need correction and will be brought to the next meeting for approval.

**ADJOURN:** Linda motions to adjourn; John seconds; all in favor.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY SEPTEMBER 1 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy and Linda Schmidt.

*A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.*

# SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - SEPTEMBER 1, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:09 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps, Linda Schmidt, Rob Viglas.  
Also present: Jay Wilson, Skipper Wilson. Minute taker: Sandy Reidy.

**POTENTIAL PURCHASE OF NEW TRUCK FOR PLOWING AND OTHER WORK:** Jay and Skipper Wilson say they were told by Frankie Zwack that he will not remount a plow on the Town's tandem truck, because the assembly would just break again. Frankie advised that, now that the tandem truck has been repaired to its original state, it would be best to sell it to a contractor and get the Town's money from it. Jay learned that ATG in Westminster has a used single-axle Western Star truck available that is suited to carry the plow and would be more maneuverable on Town roads. Viking would install the box, plow, and wing. The Town will continue to use the two plows it already has. If the Town purchased the truck, the tandem would be sold. The cost of the single-axle truck—with box, plow, and wing mounted—is approximately \$229K. The Board asks the Treasurer how much money is in the Town's Rainy Day Fund, and Sandy Reidy responds \$393K. Joe Nolan says that paying for the truck out of the Rainy Day Fund would mean neither the Highway Department budget nor Town taxes would be affected. John Phelps asks if the Board would be comfortable with what would then remain in the Rainy Day Fund. Joe and Jay say the balance in the account will grow again as early as this fall, as money owed the Town from road grants comes in. The money from the sale of the tandem truck would also go into the Rainy Day Fund. John motions to purchase the used truck; Linda Schmidt and Rob Viglas second; all in favor. Jay will find the best option for selling the tandem truck.

**CITIZEN CONCERNS:** None raised.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Linda asks if the Board wants to explore whether the Town of Arlington's **health officer** could also serve as Sandgate's health officer, as has been the case in the past. Linda will call the Arlington health officer to see if this is a possibility. Skipper thanks Linda for arranging the purchase of the **defibrillator** for the Town Garage through a grant organized by the Bennington Rescue Squad. Linda reminds the Board that Town Officials are required by the State to take a 45-minute online ethics class, mandated by the **State ethics law** enacted in June 2024. Deadline for taking the class is September 25. Linda will share the link with the Board.

**SIGN ORDERS.**

**REVIEW OF JULY 14 AND AUGUST 18 MINUTES:** Linda motions to approve the July 14 minutes; John seconds; all in favor. Linda motions to approve the August 18 minutes; John seconds; all in favor.

**ADJOURN:** John motions to adjourn; Linda seconds; all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY SEPTEMBER 15 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy and Linda Schmidt.

*A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.*

# SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - SEPTEMBER 15, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:12 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, Linda Schmidt, Rob Viglas. Also present: Lewis Hebert (Advanced Water Works), Jim Henderson, Sheila Kearns, Bill Mitchell, Phyllis Skidmore, Jeanne Zoppel, Richard Zoppel.

**WATER TESTING AT TOWN HALL, TOWN GARAGE, CHURCH:** Lewis Hebert of Advanced Water Works discusses results of the recent water tests. The water at Town Hall again tested positive for e. coli, coliform, lead, and arsenic. Water at the Town Garage contains e. coli and coliform. Water at the church contains coliform; the church is the easiest of the three locations to remedy. Lewis recommends treatment systems for all three buildings. Phyllis Skidmore mentions the work being planned for the church, which should make it easier to address water quality there. There is a discussion of shocking the well at Town Hall, which would address bacteria in the short term but might not work long-term and would not address lead contamination. Joe Nolan asks what the fee is for retesting the water once it is shocked, and Lewis responds \$90. Richard Zoppel says old pipes in Town Hall are probably a source of lead. Bill Mitchell suggests replacing the pipes to see if lead levels are reduced. Lewis describes a two-stage lead test that can determine if lead is coming from pipes or elsewhere. Joe says the well should be shocked, then the dual lead tests should be conducted. Joe will contact a well driller to schedule well-shocking. Linda Schmidt asks about payment for these services; Jim Henderson says the Municipal Technical Assistance Program (MTAP) will pay for shocking and testing but not for replacing pipes or installing a filtration system. Linda asks about replacement of the failed expansion tank, which was pointed out after last year's water testing; Joe has already contacted John Bushee about this.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Linda says Sandy has again stated the need for more **record-storage space in the vault**. Sheila Kearns has found a potential solution and shared information with Linda and Sandy. Linda says the new bridge-mounted **dry hydrant** has been installed on Southeast Corners Road. The installation could not be tested by the fire department because the river is too low, but once this test is conducted, the Town will receive 75% reimbursement of the \$6,150 installation cost through a grant from the Rural Water Supply Program. Richard thanks the Road Crew for rebuilding the dry hydrant at the corner of West Sandgate Road and Tate Hill Road. Linda will ask the Arlington Fire Department if that hydrant has been tested. Linda left a message last week for Daniel Harvey, the Arlington **Health Officer**, to ask if he would consider also serving as Health Officer for Sandgate, but she has not heard back. Richard says he has heard recently about towns **digitizing records** then destroying the paper originals. He says paper records should not be destroyed.

September 15, 2025

**LISTER ERRORS AND OMISSIONS:** Phyllis was contacted by the LBJ Hunting Club, whose property was inadvertently listed as inactive. Phyllis presents the error/omission form to the Board for signatures, and a tax bill will be issued.

**CITIZEN CONCERNS:** Bill says the State has just raised its **drought-emergency level**. Sheila says the note about **burning** on the Town website specifies April and May and should be updated. Sheila asks about creation of a request for proposal (RFP) for a **professional audit of Town finances**. She has shared with the other Auditors an RFP from Arlington; that will be used as a basis for a Sandgate RFP that will be submitted to the Board.

**ROAD REPORT:** Joe says the Road Crew has been working on West Road. They would like to address washboarding throughout Town but cannot grade until it rains. The new Town plow truck arrived this week and has been sent to Maine for installation of the plow, box, and wing.

**REVIEW OF SEPTEMBER 1 MINUTES:** Linda says the minutes need one correction: The recently purchased Town plow truck is new not used. A revised version of the minutes will be brought to the next meeting for approval.

**ADJOURN:** Rob Viglas motions to adjourn; Linda seconds; all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:54.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY OCTOBER 6 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Linda Schmidt.

*A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.*

# **SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - OCTOBER 6, 2025**

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps, Linda Schmidt, Rob Viglas and  
Minute taker: Sandy Reidy.

**CITIZEN CONCERNS:** Linda Schmidt says Jeff Schonberg asked if the Road Crew would look at the spot near the end of Hamilton Hollow Road where someone has put a cone on the right as you go east away from Sandgate Road. He says the road seems to be deteriorating in that spot. Joe Nolan says Mike Merrow asked recently about water runoff, and the Road Crew met with him next day and fixed ditches.

**ROAD REPORT:** Joe says the Road Crew finished work on West Road and is now working on Woodcock Road, grading and ditching.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Linda says Dan Harvey from Arlington returned her call about serving as Sandgate's **Health Officer**; he is moving away and will not be able to serve. John Phelps asks about **water treatment at Town Hall**. Joe says Frost is coming October 13 to shock the well. Joe asks if there is any progress on the **Town financial audit**. Linda says the next step is a Request for Proposal, to be drawn up by the Auditors and sent to potential auditing firms. Joe asks about **vault storage**, and Sandy Reidy says she has looked at an option Sheila sent to her recently; Sandy thinks it will work, and Joe says she should order it.

**SIGN ORDERS.**

**REVIEW OF SEPTEMBER 1 AND SEPTEMBER 15 MINUTES:** Joe motions to approve the September 1 minutes; John seconds; all in favor. Joe motions to approve the September 15 minutes; Rob Viglas seconds; all in favor.

**ADJOURN:** Joe motions to adjourn; John seconds; all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:34.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY OCTOBER 20 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy and Linda Schmidt.

*A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.*

October 6, 2025

## SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - OCTOBER 20, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps, Linda Schmidt, Rob Viglas. Also present: Phyllis Skidmore. Minute taker: Sandy Reidy.

**LISTERS' ERROR:** Phyllis Skidmore says Tanya Davis asked why her assessment had gone up. The Listers then discovered that square footage of a shed was incorrectly recorded. The Board signs the form amending the error.

**CLIMATE CATALYST GRANT:** Linda Schmidt says this \$1,500 grant, meant to help the Town prepare for an emergency, has been used so far to buy the defibrillator for the Town Garage and first-aid supplies for Town Hall. There are \$776.13 remaining in the grant to be spent by the end of 2025. Joe Nolan asks if that can be used to defray costs related to additional testing and repair of the well at Town Hall. Linda says she will look into the guidelines for the grant.

**WELL AT TOWN HALL:** Joe says Frost Wells and Pumps came to check the well and noted the well cap was cracked and was a probable source of contamination. Frost replaced the cap and shocked the well, and the water will be retested.

**ROAD REPORT:** Joe says the Road Crew changed a culvert on Southeast Corners Road. A flat tire on the payloador was repaired.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Phyllis asks where the boundary is between **Tate Hill Road and Chunks Brook Road**. She says the Kimball family has asked the Listers about subdividing their property that has frontage on that road. Phyllis and the Board look at the parcel map and determine the Kimballs' frontage is on Tate Hill Road. Joe asks about **Old Business**: Linda asks Sandy Reidy if she plans to order the **vault shelving** pointed out recently by Sheila Kearns; Sandy says she will order it. Linda says she will contact Tom Yandow of PCI for an update on the **Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP)** grant. Linda says she spoke with Jay Wilson about the cone and deteriorating area on **Hamilton Hollow Road**, queried earlier by Jeff Schonberg. Jay said this is already on the Road Crew's list for repair. Joe says Kathy Wagner asked about **repair of the culvert** near her house, and that is also slated for repair.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** The Treasurer distributes the report, which is reviewed by the Board.

**SIGN ORDERS.**

**REVIEW OF OCTOBER 6 MINUTES:** Joe motions to approve; Rob Viglas seconds; all in favor.

**ADJOURN:** Joe motions to adjourn; Rob seconds; all in favor. Meeting is adjourned at 6:46.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY NOVEMBER 3 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy and Linda Schmidt.

*A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.*

# SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - NOVEMBER 3, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps, Linda Schmidt, Rob Viglas. Also present: Jim Henderson, Jeremy Illsley, Roy McDermott, Bill Mitchell, Tom Yandow. Minute taker: Sandy Reidy.

**MUNICIPAL ENERGY RESILIENCE PROGRAM (MERP) UPDATE:** Tom Yandow of PCI, project manager, joins the meeting by phone. He presents the estimate received from R.K. Miles for windows to be installed at Town Hall. Two choices are presented—one involving a full tear-out of all windows, and the other involving inserts—and pros and cons are discussed, including differences in labor needed for installation. The Board decides to choose inserts. Tom will compose a request for proposal (RFP) and present it to the Board at the next meeting. The RFP will then be sent to contractors so bids can be gathered. For cooling in Town Hall, Tom suggests heat pumps in the large meeting room only. He asks if light bulbs have been changed yet in the meeting room; they have not but will be as the old bulbs burn out. Tom is also researching a propane boiler for the Town Garage; he spoke with John Phelps earlier about propane suppliers. John points out that their discussion was strictly limited to a simple list of suppliers. Tom asks the Board for a list of local contractors to be approached going forward for all work to be done.

**MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MTAP):** Jim Henderson confirms that Joe Nolan flushed the water system at Town Hall after the well was shocked. Joe says the well is flushed and ready to be tested again. Jim will schedule another test with Advanced Water Works. Joe says the water should be tested at the pressure tank as well as in the bathroom. Jim says invoices for testing and shocking should be sent to the State (to be paid through the MTAP grant), not to Town Hall, and he will provide contact information to be passed along to Frost Wells and Pumps. He will tell Advanced Water Works to reimburse the Town for one invoice that was paid by both the Town and the State. Jim says the MTAP grant expires at the end of the year and asks if the Board would still like him to contact a structural engineer to assess uses for the firehouse beside Town Hall. The Board tells Jim to move ahead with this.

**CITIZEN CONCERNS:** Jeremy Illsley of Braintree, Vermont, says he is looking at property in Sandgate and is attending the meeting to meet residents. He has **questions related to zoning**, and the Board gives him contact information for the Zoning Board. John asks about Pat Hall's effort to find relief for the **Gorski family** in the wake of their house fire. Joe says he has spoken with Pat, and she is organizing this. Rob Viglas says Michael Merrow asked him how the Town collects **fines for littering**. Michael has images of offenders from his security cameras. Joe says

these should be shown to the State Police, and the Board should be informed. Rob says Katie suggested the Town post signs alerting drivers to the possibility of **encountering animals on our roads**; Joe says he will pass this suggestion to Jay Wilson.

**ROAD REPORT:** Joe says the Road Crew has been working on culverts and ditching in Beartown and will start grading around Town now that we have had rain.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Linda Schmidt says she has been keeping a list of suggestions that have come up over the past year to be included in **Town Meeting** and the **Town Report**, and she will bring this list to the first Board meeting in December to help us prepare for next year.

**SIGN ORDERS.**

**REVIEW OF OCTOBER 20 MINUTES:** John motions to approve; Linda seconds; all in favor.

**ADJOURN:** Rob motions to adjourn; Joe seconds; all in favor.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY NOVEMBER 17 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy and Linda Schmidt.

*A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.*

# SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - NOVEMBER 17, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps, Linda Schmidt, Rob Viglas. Also present: Pat Hall, Sheila Kearns, Tom Yandow. Minute taker: Linda Schmidt.

**CITIZEN CONCERNS:** Pat Hall reads a statement suggesting the **establishment of an emergency fund** in Sandgate that could be used by residents when they experience a sudden setback like the recent house fire on Sandgate Road. She suggests a \$5 addition to property taxes and asks for the Board's advice. Joe Nolan thanks Pat for her concern and effort but objects to the idea of adding to tax bills. Pat asks if this idea could be put on a ballot, for the voters to decide. Rob Viglas asks how second-home owners would be affected. Sheila Kearns says there are appropriations for several community social and charitable organizations in the Town budget already, so this kind of expenditure is not unprecedented. She says Pat could circulate a petition on the idea that, with enough resident signatures, could be brought to the Selectboard. Linda Schmidt suggests the idea be brought up at Town Meeting to gather opinions from more residents. Pat says there was a similar fund in Sandgate at one time. Joe and Rob suggest a committee that could decide the best way to help in specific situations—for example, with GoFundMe or with spaghetti dinners or silent auctions. Rob says events like that would also build community. John Phelps suggests other outlets for spreading information, including Front Porch Forum, and he also objects to mandating participation by adding to tax bills. Pat thanks the Board for the suggestions, and she will consider these options.

**MUNICIPAL ENERGY RESILIENCE PROGRAM (MERP) UPDATE:** Tom Yandow of PCI, project manager, joins the meeting by phone. He presents for the Board's review two draft requests for proposal (RFPs)—one for replacing the windows in Town Hall, and one for replacing the boiler and hot water tank in the Town Garage. Tom will disseminate the finished RFPs publicly, including through the Vermont Business Registry and Bid System, Front Porch Forum, and local newspapers, per the Town's procurement guidelines, so bids can be submitted by contractors. He says the Board can also give him names of specific local contractors to ensure they see the RFPs. He asks what insurance coverage the Town requires of contractors and will talk with the Town Clerk about this. Tom will also arrange work on the lighting in Town Hall and heating in the vault. Timing of all projects is discussed.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** John says he will be unable to attend several **Selectboard meetings throughout winter**, but he will call in when he cannot attend in person. Sheila reminds the Board of imminent **deadlines leading up to Town Meeting and creation of the Town Report**. In the warning for Town Meeting, one article is needed allowing for reports from the Town Officers, and another article allowing for topics of citizen concern to be brought up, after other articles are voted on. She suggests giving State Representatives guidelines (time limits, for example) for their participation in the meeting. Sheila reminds the Board the public must be notified, through meeting agendas, when articles and the Town budget will be discussed leading up to Town Meeting and the Town Report. She says a list of open offices must be also shared with the Town in December, so anyone who wants to fill those positions can submit petitions and otherwise prepare.

**SIGN ORDERS.**

**REVIEW OF NOVEMBER 3 MINUTES:** Joe motions to approve; Rob seconds; all in favor.

**ADJOURN:** Joe motions to adjourn; Rob seconds; all in favor.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY DECEMBER 1 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy and Linda Schmidt.

*A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.*

## **SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - DECEMBER 8, 2025**

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, Linda Schmidt, Rob Viglas. Also present: Elizabeth Daut, Jim Henderson, Sheila Kearns, Tom Yandow. Minute taker: Sandy Reidy.

**CITIZEN CONCERNS:** Elizabeth Daut asks about Pat Hall's recent suggestion regarding establishment of a Town **emergency fund**. Sheila Kearns and Linda Schmidt say the Board's advice to Pat in the November Board meeting was to bring the idea to Town Meeting for wider discussion.

**MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MTAP) UPDATE:** Jim Henderson says results of the most recent water test at Town Hall are negative for coliform but still positive for E. coli. Detailed results are to come from Advanced Water Works, and Elizabeth suggests looking at the level of E. coli contamination, as it might at least have dropped. Joe Nolan says the technician from Frost Wells told him the broken well cap, which has now been replaced, was a likely source of contamination. Joe will contact Frost to ask for further advice. The well may be shocked and flushed again, and the water retested. He will also ask how deep the well is. Jim reminds the Board that money from the MTAP grant must be spent by the end of this year, and that bills for well shocking and water testing should be sent to him so they can be paid through the grant. Linda asks if we know now that the pressure tank is working, given that Advanced Water Works initially said it was not, and Joe confirms that it is working. Jim attempted to submit an amendment to the grant to extend it into next year, in order to hire a structural engineer to assess potential uses for the firehouse next to Town Hall, but was told the deadline for amendments has passed.

**BETTER BACK ROADS GRANT:** Jim received a call from the grant administrator saying he has received no invoices from Sandgate for a 2023 project on the lowest portion of West Road. Jim will confer with Jay Wilson. Elizabeth asks if Jim knows if grant levels for next year are changing. Jim says a grant for 2026 is already in place, and that a letter of intent will come to the Board soon for a 2027 grant. Work on both projects could take place this summer.

**MUNICIPAL ENERGY RESILIENCE PROGRAM (MERP) UPDATE:** Tom Yandow of PCI, project manager, joins the meeting by phone and presents a request for proposal (RFP) for replacement of the windows in Town Hall. The Board reviews and approves the RFP, and Tom will distribute it via Vermont Bids, the *Bennington Banner*, the *Manchester Journal*, and elsewhere, and will send it to Sandy Reidy for posting on Front Porch Forum, so bids can be submitted. He discusses requirements for insurance coverage with the Board: \$1M per occurrence will be required.

December 8, 2025

**PREPARATION FOR 2026 TOWN MEETING AND ELECTION:** Linda says the Board should review upcoming deadlines. Sheila has drafted a list of open offices, and she discusses it with Sandy and the Board. Sandy will post the final list on the Town website. **Citizens interested in running for office in the March election should visit Town Hall to set out a petition and obtain signatures.** Fully signed petitions are due January 26. Linda says the Board should now schedule a public discussion of the 2026-27 budget and of the articles to be voted on in Town Meeting. Discussion of both will take place in the December 15 Board meeting. Voting on budget and articles will take place in the January 5 Board meeting. February 1 is the last day to warn Town Meeting.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Linda asks if the check for reimbursement to the Town for installation of the **dry hydrant** on Southeast Corners Road has been deposited, and Sandy confirms it was deposited last week. Rob Viglas asks about **plowing in the recent storm**, and Linda says Mike Hill called to ask about the delays in plowing. Sandy says she received several calls at Town Hall about this as well. All Board members agree vacation coverage and alternate help for the Road Crew must be reviewed. This will be discussed as part of the December 15 budget discussion. Linda says she will also bring up the need for **bookkeeping help** at Town Hall. Rob asks if **parking on Town roads** is allowed, as he has seen cars parked on West Sandgate Road after the recent storm. Joe says it is not allowed.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** The Treasurer distributes the report, and the Board reviews it.

**SIGN ORDERS.**

**REVIEW OF NOVEMBER 17 MINUTES:** Joe motions to approve; Rob seconds; all in favor.

**ADJOURN:** Joe motions to adjourn; Rob seconds; all in favor. Meeting is adjourned at 7:27.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY DECEMBER 15 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy and Linda Schmidt.

*A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.*

# SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - DECEMBER 15, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps, Linda Schmidt, Rob Viglas. Also present: Sheila Kearns, Margaret Phelps, Julie Robertson. Minute taker: Sandy Reidy.

**CITIZEN CONCERNS:** Julie Robertson says her **mailbox** was hit by the Town plow. Joe Nolan says she should call the Town Garage, and the Road Crew will fix it. Joe says they probably do not realize the box was hit, and that anyone with this problem should call the Garage.

**DISCUSSION OF ARTICLES FOR 2026 TOWN MEETING:** Sandy Reidy distributes articles from the past two years for comparison. Sheila Kearns says an article must be drafted to allow for reports from the Town Officers, and a final article must be added to allow citizens to bring up additional topics for discussion after other articles are voted upon. Language for these two articles is then drafted. **The final list of articles will be presented and voted upon by the Selectboard in the January 5 Board meeting.** Linda Schmidt says Green Up Day plans for 2026 and feedback on the 2025 event will be discussed in Town Meeting. Sheila, as Town Moderator, will notify state representatives they will be allowed 15 minutes for their presentation at Town Meeting.

**DISCUSSION OF 2026-27 TOWN BUDGET:** Julie asks that the **Cemetery Commission budget** be raised from \$8K to \$10K for work to be done on the cemeteries next year, and the Board agrees. Annual **appropriations to the Town from outside agencies** are discussed. Margaret Phelps asks if annual reports from the agencies can be printed in the Town Report. Sheila says they are available on the Town website and were handed out separately at the last Town Meeting. Margaret asks that the agencies report to the Town specifically on numbers of Sandgate residents helped through the Town's appropriations. It is decided that, for next year, a notice will be sent from the Town to the agencies, notifying them of a deadline and of requirements for their reporting. Sheila suggests looking at the similar communication used by the Town of Arlington. Sandy distributes a **draft budget** to the Board for discussion. The Town budgets (General and Highway) are expected to remain stable except where mentioned below. Sheila specifies the need for money next year for an **independent audit of Town finances** and says the line item for this should be rolled over each year so funds accumulate for this periodic larger expense. **Town salaries** will increase by the standard 3%, and the **Listers' hourly rate** will be raised from \$14 to \$20, increasing the total budget for their hours from \$4,240 to \$6,000. Linda suggests money be budgeted for a few hours per week of additional **clerical help for Town Hall**. The Board and Clerk discuss how this time would be used, and Linda says a list of tasks should be drawn up to include, for example, basic bookkeeping and reporting, and possibly help for the Road Foreman with grant

**DECEMBER 15, 2025**

paperwork. A job description will be written by the Clerk and the Board, and a \$7,000 line item added to the budget. Joe has discussed the **highway budget** with Jay Wilson, and they agree it will stay largely unchanged for 2026-27. **The 2026-27 budgets will be presented and voted upon by the Selectboard in the January 5 Board meeting.**

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Sheila asks if the draft list of **open Town offices** she drew up recently seems accurate. The final list will be posted on the Town site and elsewhere. **Citizens interested in running for office in the March election should visit Town Hall now to set out a petition and obtain signatures.** Linda asks what can be done for **additional coverage for plowing** when it is needed and says she was called about plowing recently by Mike Hill and Hasso Wuerslin. The Board acknowledges that Jay Wilson’s absence during a recent storm delayed road clearing by several hours. Joe says the Town typically receives additional coverage when needed from Arlington and Rupert, and that Sandgate returns that favor when those towns need help. Hasso asked if Wuerslin Road could be a priority for plowing since it presents a particular danger. Margaret says this year’s **Town Christmas party** was the most successful ever. She asks that the spruce tree cut down at the yellow farmhouse—the tree used for the party and later moved to the church—be photographed for the **cover of the Town Report**. Linda will talk with Katie Kenny about this. Margaret asks that residents again **save Christmas cards** to be used for next year’s party. Linda refers to Rob Viglas’s question in the December 8 Board meeting, concerning **parking on Town roads**. Linda says there is an ordinance against this, and all agree illegal parking is a particular hindrance and danger during winter storms.

**SIGN ORDERS.**

**REVIEW OF DECEMBER 8 MINUTES:** Rob motions to approve; John Phelps seconds; all in favor.

**ADJOURN:** Joe motions to adjourn; Rob seconds; all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:35.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY JANUARY 5 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.**

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy and Linda Schmidt.

*A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.*

**DECEMBER 15, 2025**