

Selectboard Meeting - July 6, 2026 at 6:00 pm

Attendance: Joe Nolan, Linda Schmidt, Jessica Pendleton, Rob Viglas, John Phelps.

Also in attendance: Phyllis Skidmore, Bill Mitchell, Julie Robertson, Sheila Kearns, Jessica Lewis.

Minute taker: Jessica Lewis

Citizen Concerns

John mentions that a white Chevy pick-up is driving dangerously on Sandgate Road - they are going too fast and also passing people on the double yellow. Sheila has also observed the same pick-up driving recklessly. Joe states this has been an issue with another vehicle in the past and the state police were contacted who did come to Sandgate to address the issue. John states he may contact the state police.

Julie Robertson states the problem with litter is picking up again, and inquires if the Selectboard has made any progress securing road signs. Julie also states that a local hunter was hunting in Beartown and he stated there was a problem with litter in the woods around the Crown Maple sap lines. Joe states cleaning this up would be hard for the Selectboard to enforce because it is on private property. Joe says it should be brought to the attention of Mike Shiveron who is in charge of the Crown Maple operation.

Linda states the idea of a second Green-Up Day is still on the table and Julie says she is looking forward to it.

Tax Abatement

Phyllis follows up to questions left after the Board of Abatement meeting on 6/29 and explains that a tax bill for property owned by The Archeological Conservancy was mistakenly billed to Vermont Housing. When they received a delinquent tax notice for 2025, they called to report it was not their responsibility. According to Terri Guildersleeve, district advisor, the Town can no longer bill for this property because the period for errors and omissions has passed. Sheila asks to clarify whether the error was on the Grand List or just on the tax bill and Phyllis confirms both, although it has now been corrected. Julie states that in the future something clerical like this can be handled by the Selectboard, and the attorney has said we should be able to bill the appropriate party. Julie states that based on what she has read in case studies in the abatement handbook, there appears to not be a deadline for this type of situation. Sheila suggests bringing the statute provided by Terri to the attorney to make a final determination on the legality of whether or not we can now bill The Archeological Conservancy for that bill and the Board agrees on this. The Selectboard authorizes Julie to call the town attorney for a final decision, and pending that decision Jessica L. will proceed with billing the Archeological Conservancy.

July 6, 2026

Phyllis explains that there is another issue on the delinquent tax list with a now-defunct parcel with a small balance of taxes owed from 2021. The property was combined with a neighboring parcel when the owner died, and the Town has in the Land Records a court order stating all of debts and taxes of the property owner are paid, thereby rendering this entry on the delinquent tax list in need of abatement. If this is abated, the penalties and interest will also be waived. Linda motions to abate the taxes; Jessica P. seconds; all in favor.

Ongoing Business

- **MERP Grant Update**

Linda has gone back through emails regarding the bids for the garage boiler to clarify the timeline: Bids were due on April 29, and at the May 4 meeting the one bid we received was opened. The Board reviewed the bid and discussed whether the water heater should be included. On May 18 the Board decided to remove the water heater and ask for a new bid from the original bidder, and request more bids as only one had been received. On May 22 Tom was in touch with Don Latif. The bid from Don Latif and the new bid from Roy were discussed in the June 1 meeting. Sheila asks if anyone else on the bidder's list was notified that the bid was extended. Joe points out that Roy bid on this job twice because the second bid was different without the water boiler. Sheila points out that when purchases are made over a certain dollar amount, the purchasing policy requires a minimum of three bids. This helps clarify how and why the timeline for accepting bids was reopened.

No other updates on the boiler or windows.

Sheila states that anyone who evaluates insulation in this Town Hall building must work to preserve the wiring, and recommends this be an explicit instruction to anyone working in the Town Hall. Linda states she will keep this in mind and also notify Tom Yadow.

- **Short-Term-Rental Ordinance**

Linda merged the ordinances that were most applicable to Sandgate and added additions and queries before passing it along to Rob. As it currently stands, the draft is likely longer than what Sandgate requires.

Sheila states the excluded uses are all uses defined in the Zoning By-laws. In regards to registration, there should be a single annual deadline for those who have already registered. Sheila also notes that Sandgate does not currently have a policy regarding rental properties.

Jessica L. mentions that in the definition of a short-term rental in the draft, it states less than 30 days and more than 14 days. The Board agrees this would need to be amended, and perhaps just be changed to “less than 30 days.” Bill Mitchell points out that there could be issues with those that have been operating Airbnbs in town, and also states there would be value for emergency workers to have Airbnbs registered with the Town.

Sheila states as far as limiting occupants, the limits should be placed on designated sleeping areas as opposed to the dwelling itself. Sheila and the Board agree that the point regarding not occupying space in more than two structures on a parcel is a sound point and could be applicable here.

Bill Mitchell states that he doesn’t agree with putting regulations on short-term-rentals. If a property owner has a large piece of property and would like to choose to use it for rentals, they should be able to. Rob states that allowing people to freely build up their property with rental structures infringes on the rights of residents living in town who do not want the increased construction and traffic in the town. Sheila states that a property could be required to file for change of use to a business with the Zoning Board if a transition is made from dwelling to short-term rental property.

Regarding fees, an annual registration may be required which would be collected in order to pay someone to manage the program. Jessica P. suggests talking to Sunderland to find out how they manage and administer their ordinance, and she states she will reach out.

Road Report

Gravel has been going down on Rupert Road following the heavy rainstorm, and mowing is ongoing. The old International truck is going to be sold at auction. Joe brings up the issue of the Road Crew raises that have been requested. Jay has pointed out there is ample room in the Highway budget to allow for this raise without exceeding the voted total budget. Sheila suggests if another line item is going to be reappropriated toward payroll, an explanation of how this will not affect the overall budget is a good idea. Jessica L. will discuss this with Jay and put the proposal on paper.

Climate Catalyst Grant

We had \$770 left, and \$699 has been spent on a refrigerator, microwave, electric kettle, and bottled water.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

John motions to approve June 1 minutes with revision; Linda seconds; all in favor.

June 15 minutes cannot be approved until a revision is made indicating when the Board moved into Executive Session and what was or was not resolved. Jessica L. will listen to the meeting and record this information.

Orders Signed

Joe motions to adjourn, John seconds; all in favor. **Meeting adjourned 7:16 pm.**

Respectfully submitted by Jessica Lewis