

Selectboard Meeting – July 20, 2026 at 6:00 pm

Call to Order: 6:01 pm

Attendance: Joe Nolan, Linda Schmidt, Jessica Pendleton, Rob Viglas, John Phelps. Also in attendance: Phyllis Skidmore, Dan Reap, Margaret Phelps, Sheila Kearns, Jessica Lewis. Minute taker: Jessica Lewis

Citizen Concerns

No concerns raised.

Zoning Application Fee Schedule update

Sheila states the new fee schedule was voted on in a prior meeting of the Planning Commission/Zoning Board which adds to the fee schedule an after-the-fact permit fee update. Rob states this was initiated in an effort to curb residents asking for permits after beginning the building phase of a project, and to have record of when a permit was issued after-the-fact. The additional charge will be 50% of what the permit would cost. There is also language in the new schedule to allow the ZA & Planning Commission to waive the fee in extenuating circumstances.

Sheila officially requests that the Selectboard approve the fee schedule or suggest amendments. Linda motions to approve; Joe seconds.

Listers' Errors and Omissions

Phyllis states there were two properties that sold at the end of 2025 that were not updated on the Grand List draft lodged in June. No changes were needed to the assessments, only the names on the properties. The Listers require signatures of the Selectboard and Town Clerk to approve these changes. The paperwork is signed by all Board members and the Clerk.

Ongoing Business

- **MERP Grant Update**
- **Short-Term-Rental Ordinance**

Jessica P. spoke to Anthony Thompson on the Sunderland Selectboard and he referred us to a consultant they used to create their ordinance. Jessica P. is trying to reach him to possibly come speak with the Selectboard at a future meeting.

John asks to clarify what the purpose of drafting the STR ordinance is for Sandgate, and states that he is concerned the Selectboard is overstepping their reach. Joe states it is meant to curb the speed with which property owners are developing their properties explicitly to be used as rental properties, specifically those with more than one building on their property, and Rob adds that the Board and many residents are concerned with Sandgate maintaining its character.

John asks for further clarification on why we need to define this further with an ordinance as there are already zoning regulations in place.

Sheila states that in the zoning bylaws, there are a set of criteria for what a property owner can develop, and the rules do not affect existing construction. John points out that the Board's efforts are primarily geared toward new construction with the ordinance, and the zoning bylaws would make it difficult to place more than one accessory dwelling unit on any property because it would require a unique septic system, etc. Sheila provides details on how the zoning permit process works and the many checkpoints required for property owners to get permission to build. If someone wanted to put in 5 cabins like a motel with individual cabins, it would need to be considered a business and a business permit would be required therefore further requiring review. What the bylaws do not do is state how many can be in existence on a property - this would be determined by the amount of acreage available; in rural residential, a property owner cannot do new construction without a separate 2 acres that could in theory be sectioned off and sold separately at a later time.

John states his uneasiness is coming from a sense that this STR ordinance may affect more people in town than the Board currently foresees including those that have been using AirBnb to rent their properties for a long time, and does not want the Selectboard to overstep their authority.

Rob points out that putting this in place would allow the town recourse if someone doesn't follow the full zoning approval process and goes ahead and does what they want.

Jessica P. states that this would be a great conversation to have with the Sunderland Selectboard representative/consultant to learn more about what their goals were in creating it, and how implementing it has affected residents.

Rob confirms that even after drafting and proposing the ordinance, there would be an open meeting to allow for residents in town to comment on the proposal, after which it would also need to meet legal standards approved by the town's lawyer.

Margaret Phelps states that it would be helpful to speak to residents in town who already run AirBnb-type businesses to see how they feel about the ordinance and how it would affect them.

Rob points out that this draft was initiated because there was a group of citizens who came before the Planning Commission/Zoning Board asking if something like this could be done, and therefore the Board is attempting to address these concerns.

Joe points out that there are a variety of rental situations in Sandgate, and he and John agree there should be specific wording to distinguish a situation similar to a campground being put in from a resident renting an existing dwelling. John reiterates it is important to make sure the Board is considering residents that already rent their dwellings in Sandgate. Jessica P. points out the Board has agreed throughout the process that grandfathering and protecting existing folks who rent their properties is of primary importance.

Linda states it is also important not to disenfranchise people that are renting their properties to help pay their mortgage or property taxes, and care will need to be taken when writing the ordinance in this regard.

Sheila offers to provide more insight into how the permitting process may look depending on theoretical applicants' circumstances. Rob asks how the process may look if a property owner decides to put proposed accessory rental dwellings on wheels. Sheila states this would fall under the zoning bylaws as travel trailers which are expected to be registered, to be lived in for no more than 30 days in any calendar year.

The STR ordinance discussion will continue at the next meeting.

- **Highway Raises**

Jessica L. presents documentation of the last 3 years of spending in the Road Foreman and Road Worker budget line items that demonstrates that both have come in well under budget each fiscal year, therefore showing sufficient capacity to accommodate a higher cost-of-living wage increase from the budgeted 3% to the 5% requested by the Road Foreman.

John states it would be best to increase the annual cost-of-living percentage to 5% in an ongoing manner as cost-of-living expenses are always rising.

Sheila clarifies that the Board can approve the 5% addition to the base salary now, and in the future this percentage can be discussed at the time of budget creation for the next fiscal year.

John moves to approve the raises; Linda seconds; all in favor.

Jessica L. will issue a separate check as a retroactive payment of the new amounts from July 1-present for both the road crew members.

Treasurer's Report

In looking at the end-of-year Expenditure Report, John states there is still \$6000 leftover in the sheriff's budget and asks if it should remain there, and all Board members agree it should remain.

No other comments or concerns.

Road Report

Joe states work was done across the road from Town Hall and material was dumped there that the Road Crew will use on West Sandgate Road and near the town line to widen the road.

Margaret states widening the road may allow people to go faster, and Sheila points out it is also a safety issue for the Road Crew in their trucks if the road is too narrow. Margaret remarks that it will still change the speed people travel.

Linda states Jay did put up a no-littering sign by the yellow farmhouse and he is ordering another for the west side of town.

Linda and Julie Robertson went to Crown Maple and spoke to some of the men working there and they stated they pick up trash as they can.

Other Business

Linda states the Planning Commission has asked the Selectboard for **permission to present a document to the town lawyer** regarding a violation. Linda motions to allow; Jessica P. seconds.

Regarding the **vacancy in the Listers office**, Linda says BCRC has told her that they are a resource for help with Listers duties and possibly with updating our maps.

Water Testing has not been done yet but the Board will check the kit for expiration dates and timing requirements and make a plan to proceed.

Phyllis states the church congregation should be able to **move back into the church** building after this weekend.

Motion to approve revised minutes from 6/15: Linda motions to approve, Joe seconds; all in favor.

Motion to approve minutes from 7/6: Linda motions to approve, Rob seconds; all in favor.

Orders were Signed

Linda motions to adjourn, Rob seconds.

Meeting adjourned 7:05 pm

Respectfully submitted by Jessica Lewis