



**SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
OF DECEMBER 16, 2024**

Members: Don McDowell, Christopher Palermo, Laura Streets, Richard Craig, George Cormier

Absent:

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Brent Raymond, Town Manager; Judi Alberi, Executive Assistant; Sara Haskins, Town Clerk/Treasurer; Mitzi Fleming, Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer; Jordan St. Onge, Highway Superintendent; Tina Sweet, Finance Director; Abbie Griggs, Finance Assistant; Elz Townsend, HR Director;

PARTICIPANTS/GUESTS: Jamie Jaret, Joie Marshall, Laura Green, Ruth Brown, Mary Lou Nichols, George Merrill, Leah Hollenberger, Uwanna Perras, Yon Perras, Jerry & Evelyn Throne, Bob Bortree, Tom Cloutier, Skip Ward, Maria Ward, Jeff Elbaum, Sheila Tarbox, Tony Cote, Connie Demars, Cari Varner, Julie Pickett, Ronald Stancliff, Donald Blake, Pat Michelson, Steph Hoffman, Rep. Dave Yacavone

**participating via Zoom*

5:30PM - CALL SELECTBOARD MEETING TO ORDER

Don McDowell called the Selectboard Meeting to order at 5:30 PM at the Tegu Building.

5:31PM - AGENDA CHANGES/ADDITIONS

None

5:32PM - OTHER BUSINESS

1. Executive Session - Personnel

Motion made by Chris Palermo to go into Executive Session because I find that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body, or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (5/0).

Motion made by Chris Palermo to go into Executive Session to discuss the evaluation of a public officer or employee subject to T1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(3). To include Town Manager, Brent Raymond, Executive Assistant, Judi Alberi; Finance Director, Tina Sweet; Town Clerk/Treasurer, Sara Haskins; Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer, Mitzi Fleming; Chair Pleasant View Cemetery, Joie Marshall. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (5/0).

Motion made by Chris Palermo to come out of Executive Session. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (5/0).

Motion made by Chris Palermo to go into Executive Session because I find that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body, or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (5/0).

Motion made by Chris Palermo to go into Executive Session to discuss the evaluation of a public officer or employee subject to T1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(3). To include Town Manager, Brent Raymond, Executive Assistant, Judi Alberi; Finance Director, Tina Sweet; Town Clerk/Treasurer, Sara Haskins; Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer, Mitzi Fleming; Chair Pleasant View Cemetery, Joie Marshall, Secretary/Treasurer Pleasant View Cemetery, Connie Demars. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (5/0).

Motion made by Chris Palermo to come out of Executive Session and rejoin the Selectboard meeting at 6:37 PM. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (5/0).

6:30PM - APPROVE MINUTES

1. Approve minutes of 12-2-24

Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve the minutes of 12/2/2024. Motion seconded by George Cormier. Motion carried. (4/0/1) Don McDowell abstained.

2. Approve minutes of 12-4-24

Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve the minutes of 12/4/2024. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried. (5/0)

3. Approve minutes of 12-9-24

Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve the minutes of 12/9/2024. Motion seconded by George Cormier. Motion carried. (5/0)

6:35PM - NEW BUSINESS

1. Acknowledge Parker E Hodgdon - 99 y/o

Don McDowell called the Selectboard to acknowledge and honor Parker E. Hodgdon, 99 years old, for his service as a World War II veteran. He presented his family, in his stead, a certificate of honor signed by the Selectboard. A picture of the Selectboard members and the town manager with his certificate was taken to memorialize this event.

2. Appointment of Kevin Petrochko as E911 Coordinator

Motion made by Chris Palermo to appoint Kevin Petrochko as E911 Coordinator. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (5/0).

3. Consideration to appoint Brent Raymond as the Ethics Liaison to the State Ethics Commission.

Motion made by Chris Palermo to appoint Brent Raymond as the Ethics Liaison to the State Ethics Commission. Motion seconded by George Cormier. Motion carried (5/0).

4. Representative David Yacovone

Representative David Yacovone attended the Selectboard meeting to introduce himself and invited the committee to open a dialogue between him and the town during the legislative session. He noted there are many important issues to be addressed. Property taxes, housing, health care systems, clean energy, and the dramatic impact of addictions on families all influence rising costs and cause global budget concerns. With the influence of the Kotch Brothers, Vermont has a flood of misinformation regarding clean energy. Vermonters need to hear the facts. A report on climate change will be released on January 15, 2025. David thanked the committee for giving him their time. Don thanked him and noted that this was the first time a representative had attended a Selectboard meeting since he had been on the board. He invited Representative Yacovone to return in March with an update. Chris agreed that there are many hot-button issues of interest.

5. Discussion on mailing annual meeting ballot

The discussion regarding mailing annual meeting ballots to all town residents was back for consideration this year. It has been documented that mailed ballots result in an increased response.

When the school ballots and the annual meeting ballots are mailed out together, the cost of this effort can be shared between the two parties. As there is no traditional town meeting, the Selectboard agreed to mail out ballots. Sara Haskins asked that voters bring their mailed ballots when voting in person.

Motion made by Chris Palermo to mail out the annual meeting ballots. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (5/0).

6. Budget discussion - Paving & Sidewalks, Jordan St. Onge - Highway Superintendent

Jordan St. Onge, Highway Superintendent, presented the highway department budget on the condition of paved roads and sidewalks, and the cost of repairs. There are 36.76 miles of paved roads in Morristown and 52.8% are in poor and very poor condition due to years of neglect. There are 8.8 miles of sidewalks in Morristown. 36.2 % of our sidewalks are in poor to very poor condition. 58.1% of our sidewalks need work. As road and sidewalk conditions worsen, the cost of repair increases. Jordan plans to use the department's employees to assist with jobs as a cost-efficient measure. He has identified the department's work plan for 2025. Don thanked Jordan for his comprehensive and detailed report and acknowledged the substantial cost of repairing Morristown's roads and sidewalks. The board suggested investigating grant funds and agreed on the urgency of addressing this long-standing town problem.

7. Library budget presentation and discussion - Steph Hoffman

Steph Hoffman, treasurer of the library's trustees, addressed the Selectboard with a presentation explaining the library's activities, usage, and finances. A gift was made to the library totaling \$300,000, part of it was used for some expenses instead of pulling from the endowment. The board asked the library to use some of the gift to manage their expenses. Chris asked for further information on the library's finances. It was suggested that the library look at ways to do things differently. A fee for services differentiating residents/non-residents was suggested. Steph explained that payroll is their greatest expense. Chris noted that the library is autonomous, the Selectboard does not have a say in how to run the library's operations, days open, or staffing.

8:05PM - OLD BUSINESS

None

8:06PM - APPROVE WARRANTS

Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve the warrants. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried. (4/0/1) Laura Streets abstained.

8:08PM - COMMUNITY COMMENTS

The need to get the roads repaired was affirmed. One person noted that the police station building was inadequate for the department.

Two people complimented Brent for the job he did on the budget. Brent responded that budgeting is hard, and requested everyone be kind and civil as we are a community. One person thanked Don and George for attending the discussion at the Wing Center. Evelyn Throne thinks that there are not enough activities in Morristown for children. Jerry Throne asked about the status of the local option tax.

8:20PM - SCHEDULE

- 1. Saturday, January 4, 2025 - SB Community Meeting Day - PIE FOR BREAKFAST - PA Gym 8:00AM -**

Noon

Monday, January 6, 2025 - SB Meeting - 5:30PM

Monday, January 13, 2025 - SB Special Meeting - 5:30PM

Tuesday, January 21, 2025 - SB Meeting - 5:30PM

Monday, January 27, 2025 - SB Special Meeting - 5:30PM

8:25PM - ADJOURN

Motion made by Chris Palmero to adjourn. Motion seconded by George Cormier. Motion carried. (5/0)

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm

Submitted and filed this 12/16/2024.

Bonnie McDermott, Scribe

Please note all minutes are in Draft form and are subject to approval at the next Selectboard meeting.