



SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 20, 2025

Members: Don McDowell, Richard Craig, Laura Streets, George Cormier, Leah Hollenberger

Absent:

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Brent Raymond, Town Manager; Judi Alberi, Executive Assistant

PARTICIPANTS/GUESTS: Tom Cloutier, Jamie Jaret, Tasha Walis, Martin Green, Laura Green, Chris & Melissa Leblanc, Jerry & Evelyn Throne, Ed Loewenton, Robin Pierce*, Maggie Cleary*

**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

There is a change to the agenda; add as #4 under new business: Discuss the letter from Lamoille County Sheriff's department and under other business add executive session, legal.

5:33PM - COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Mr. Cloutier and Mr. and Mrs. LeBlanc complained about the length of time the permit process is taking. Ms. Cleary would like to know the status of the summer recreation program and the budget for next year.

5:47PM - APPROVE MINUTES

1. Approve minutes 10-6-25

Motion made by Richard Craig to approve the minutes of 10/6/25. Motion seconded by Leah Hollenberger. Motion carried. (5/0)

2. Approve minutes 10-7-25

Motion made by Richard Craig to approve the minutes of 10/7/25. Motion seconded by George Cormier. Motion carried. (5/0)

5:50PM - NEW BUSINESS

1. Discuss Future Land Use Maps - Tasha Wallis

The board heard from Tasha Wallis of the Lamoille County Planning Commission, who presented updates to Morristown's Future Land Use Maps in accordance with Act 181 (the 2024 Act 250 reform bill), which mandates standardized state colors and definitions. The updated map incorporates local planning commission revisions and reflects the town's planning goals, not regulatory authority. Two new village center designations—Cadys Falls and Morristown Corners—were added to make those areas eligible for business and multi-unit housing tax credits. Board members discussed school land labeled as planned growth and raised concerns about "enterprise areas" that group industrial and extraction uses; Tasha clarified those colors are state-defined and not related to extraction regulation. Tasha also introduced Tier 1B, an opt-in Act 250 exemption for housing projects under 50 units on less

than 10 acres, applicable only where towns have adopted plans and zoning; further discussion was postponed until Morristown's downtown designation hearing. Tasha noted that she would support the town's application for Downtown Designation during the hearing.

Motion made by Richard Craig to accept the maps as presented by Tasha Wallis. Motion seconded by George Cormier. Motion carried (5/0).

2. Habitat for Humanity Proposal - Robin Pierce

Robin Pierce of Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity presented a proposal to convey a 4,356-square-foot, town-owned lot next to the library (appraised at \$72,000) for construction of a single-family home in partnership with students from the Green Mountain Tech Center. Habitat homes are sold, not rented, and added to the tax roll. Pierce offered \$50,000 for the lot to maintain affordability. Town Manager Brent Raymond outlined two legal options for conveyance—Selectboard action with a 30-day public notice or a direct town vote—and recommended a public vote to ensure transparency. The board has been in discussions for two years regarding this property and continued to discuss the proposal's benefits, including affordable, energy-efficient housing, and George Cormier suggested a \$50,000 sale price with the remaining \$22,000 considered in-kind work by Habitat. Leah Hollenberger expressed concern that waiting until the March town meeting could delay the project and jeopardize the Tech Center's involvement. Brent Raymond will work with Robin Pierce in the next two weeks for more specifics and will draft a motion. This will be on the November 3, 2025, agenda for Selectboard approval.

3. Sign resolution for Municipal Planning Grant

Brent Raymond requested approval to apply for a Municipal Planning Grant (MPG) in partnership with Johnson to increase the potential award from \$30,000 to \$45,000 and enhance competitiveness. The grant would fund a consultant to develop a comprehensive capital inventory plan, a requirement for Morristown to access lower-interest financing through the Vermont Muni Bond Bank (approximately 2.5% versus 5.4% commercial rates).

Motion made by Richard Craig to approve the FY26 Municipal Resolution for Municipal Planning Grant, affirming the commitment to match funds, and designating Brent Raymond as the Municipal/Authorizing Official, Don McDowell as the Alternate Authorizing Official, and Adele Taplin as the Grant Administrator, to execute the Grant Agreement and necessary documents. Motion seconded by George Cormier. Motion carried (5/0).

4. Discuss letter dated 10/8/25 from Lamoille County Sheriff's office

The board reviewed a letter from the Lamoille County Sheriff's Department, dated October 8, 2025, announcing an upcoming meeting of the Lamoille County Sheriff's Communications Advisory Board on October 30 to discuss the 2026–2027 budget and future governance structure. Richard Craig volunteered to serve as the Selectboard's representative.

Motion made by George Cormier to appoint Richard Craig as a board member to the Lamoille County Sheriff's Communications Advisory Board as representative of Morristown. Motion seconded by Leah Hollenberger. Motion carried (5/0).

6:20PM - OLD BUSINESS

1. Continue discussion on potential tax sources including consideration of a short-term rental registry, vacancy tax and local option tax.

The board agreed to address potential new revenue sources separately due to the complexity of the topics.

Vacancy Tax: After reviewing research showing that such taxes are highly controversial, difficult to implement, and costly to enforce, the board agreed this might not be worth pursuing at this time.

Short-Term Rental (STR) Registry: Discussion was postponed until after some board members attend an STR workshop on November 8th. The Laura Streets noted that a registry could provide a predictable, flat-fee revenue stream rather than a usage-based tax.

Local Option Tax (LOT): The board agreed to hold a series of focused public meetings to discuss each of the four LOT components separately in order to improve public understanding and reduce concerns.

Scheduled Discussion Dates:

November 3 – LOT Rooms

November 17 – Short-Term Rental Registry

December 1 – LOT Sales

December 15 – LOT Meals and Alcohol (combined discussion)

Public comment emphasized the importance of educating residents that the LOT is a consumption or luxury tax, with essential items such as groceries, food, and medicine exempt. Jerry Throne referenced economist Jeff Carr's projections that retail sales alone could generate over \$1 million in net annual revenue by FY2027–2028. Ed Loewenton stated he would support the LOT only if it could be shown that most revenue would come from non-residents, suggesting the town wait until Morristown becomes more of a “go-to” destination.

6:40PM - APPROVE WARRANTS

Motion made by Richard Craig to approve the warrants. Motion seconded by George Cormier. Motion carried. (5/0)

6:45PM - SCHEDULE

1. **Monday, November 3, 2025 - SB Meeting - 5:30PM**
Monday, November 17, 2025 - SB Meeting - 5:30PM

6:50PM - OTHER BUSINESS

1. **Executive Session - Discuss legal matter**

Motion made by Richard Craig: I move that the Selectboard enter into Executive Session and find that premature general public knowledge regarding legal matters would clearly place the town at a substantial disadvantage by disclosing information related to probable litigation. Motion seconded by George Cormier. Motion carried (5/0).

Motion made by Richard Craig to move that the Selectboard enter into executive session to discuss legal matters under the provisions of Title 1, Section 313(a)(1)(E) of the Vermont Statutes. Motion seconded by George Cormier. Motion carried (5/0).

Motion made by Richard Craig to come out of executive session with no action taken. Motion seconded by George Cormier. Motion carried. (5/0)

6:55PM - ADJOURN

Motion made by Richard Craig to adjourn. Motion seconded by George Cormier. Motion carried. (5/0)

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm

Submitted and filed this 10/21/25.

Bonnie McDermott, Scribe

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