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MORRISTOWN

SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
OF DECEMBER 1, 2025

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

Absent:

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Brent Raymond, Town Manager; Judi Alberi, Executive Assistant; Jordan St.Onge, Highway Superintendent; Kevin Petrochko, Assistant Assessor; Tyler Machia*, Zoning Administrator

PARTICIPANTS/GUESTS:Jack Haagensen, Jamie Jaret, Wallace Reece, Hilary Warner, Thea Alvin, Jerry Throne, Martin Green, Pam Stanyon, John Meyer, Ed Loewenton, Martha Battle, Etienne Hancock*, Josh Goldstein*, Dan McLaughlin, Kristin Fogdall,

**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

5:33PM - COMMUNITY COMMENTS
Chair, Don McDowell emphasized the importance of respectful and focused public comments, reminding attendees to adhere to the 2-minute speaking limit. Comments focused on Route 100 MSI development and the Act 250 air quality samples required by MSI.

5:47PM - APPROVE MINUTES

1. **Approve minutes of 11-17-25**
   Motion made by Richard Craig to approve the minutes of 11/17/25. Motion seconded by Laura Streets. Motion carried. (5/0)

5:50PM - NEW BUSINESS

1. **Presentation - UVM Intern Jack Haagensen, Zoning/Planning Department**
   Jack Haagensen, a junior at the University of Vermont (UVM) studying Community Center Design, recently completed his internship working in the Morristown Zoning and Planning office. His work culminated in a memo—prepared with Consultant Ron Rodjenski and Tyler Machia (Zoning/Planning)—that outlined improvements for permitting software and the necessary timeline for updating the town plan.

   Software and Permitting Improvements Jack recommended the town implement the Civic Plus permitting and planning/zoning modules. He noted that Civic Plus is specifically designed for smaller towns and uses a flat-rate fee structure. This system would fundamentally shift the town's administrative work away from time-intensive paper submissions and filings toward a more efficient digital, online system. Key benefits of the software include tracking permit history, offering online public access to permit data, creating customized submission workflows, and automating the generation of hearing notices for abutting properties.

Town Plan Update Jack reminded the Selectboard that the current Morristown/Morrisville Town Plan is set to expire on May 2030. He stressed the need to begin the update process immediately in December 2025 due to state statutes that require specific mandatory warning times and meetings at each stage of the process.

His proposed timeline includes developing a robust public outreach strategy by March 2026, with the goal of engaging 100% of residents through multiple avenues, as required by state statutes. The plan also incorporates grant submission preparation for Fiscal Year 2027 and the development of Future Land Use Map (FLUM) maps, which are required under Act 250 regulations.

Town Manager Brent Raymond and Zoning Administrator Tyler Machia thanked Jack for his efforts, acknowledging the complexity of the timeline presented. Raymond stated that Jack was a “model intern” who set a high standard for future participants, while Tyler praised Jack for rising to the challenge presented by the large volume of work.

2. **Approve private road name - Coopers Landing**

   Motion made by Richard Craig to approve the new private road name of Coopers Landing and authorize Chair Don McDowell to sign. Motion seconded by Leah Hollenberger. Motion (5/0).

3. **Approve and Sign Errors and Omissions Certificate**

   Motion made by Richard Craig to approve and sign the Errors and Omissions Certificate as presented. Motion seconded by Laura Streets. Motion carried (5/0).

4. **Consideration to appoint Lisa Zinn to MCC**

   Jerry Throne, Chair of the Morristown Conservation Commission (MCC), endorsed the application of Lisa Zinn. Ms. Zinn is an associate professor of natural science at Vermont State University (Johnson), specializing in Environmental Science and Wildlife and Forest Conservation, and holds a doctoral degree in Natural Resources. She is interested in increasing public educational events (e.g., at the town forest) and connecting college students with conservation projects.

   Motion made by Richard Craig to appoint Lisa Zinn to the MCC for the remainder of the 4-year term. Motion seconded by Laura Streets. Motion carried (5/0).

5. **Approve and sign Notice of Lien on Real Property - 13 First Street - Wells**

   The item concerned placing a lien on the real estate of Ashley Wells located at 13 First Street (Pinerest Mobile Home Park). The landowner (Ship Sevin II, LLC) is planning abandonment action on the mobile home and the town should protect its interests regarding back taxes.

   Motion made by Richard Craig to approve and sign the Notice of Lien on Real Property against the real estate of Ashley Wells located at 13 First Street for delinquent property taxes totaling $607.69 plus interest, penalties, costs, and collection fees for the tax years 2022-2025. Motion seconded by George Cormier. Motion carried (5/0).

6. **Bridge & Infrastructure Fund presentation - Jordan St.Onge**

   Jordan St. Onge, Highway Superintendent, presented a detailed breakdown of the bridge and infrastructure fund requirements for year 2 of a five-year plan to address deferred road maintenance. It was noted that Morristown has the most miles of roads in Lamoille County. Jordan stressed the importance of preventative maintenance over the "worst-first approach". Jordan provided an update on road maintenance, explaining that weather and natural conditions dictate the schedule for fixing dirt roads. His report included a $286,000 grant for painting the Favreau Bridge and potential costs for 2026 paving projects. Jerry Throne provided technical insights on the deterioration of the Favreau Bridge, including the most cost-effective maintenance. The board discussed the need for approximately $700,000 in the bridge and infrastructure fund to address these projects, with a 5.5-cent tax increase needed to raise this amount. Jordan emphasized that earlier bidding (January/February) due to having reserve funds would yield lower, more competitive prices, as contractors are locking in bids for work during this time frame. The board also addressed concerns about sidewalk maintenance and responsibility, with Jordan agreeing to provide a comprehensive sidewalk map for further discussion. The Board thanked Jerry Throne and Jordan St. Onge and recognized that during the one year that Jordan has been on the job, the town roads have improved.

7. **Update on the Town of Elmore EMS**

Town Manager Brent Raymond reported that the Town of Elmore, which Morristown had asked to provide information in October regarding continued service, has yet to make a formal presentation. Their EMS advisory committee is still gathering data and developing pricing scenarios. Given the uncertainty and the upcoming budget process, Brent will conservatively put a zero for potential EMS revenue in the proposed budget.

8. **Discuss Local Option Sales tax**

The Selectboard reviewed data showing a 1% Local Option Sales Tax would generate $1 million annually for the town (75% share, 2024 data). Combined LOT taxes (sales, meals, alcohol) totaled $1.189 million, equal to 10.25 cents on the property tax rate.
Discussion centered on placing sales tax and other LOT items (rooms, meals, alcohol) on the Town Meeting Day ballot, with funds earmarked for purposes like infrastructure. A straw poll showed George, Leah, Richard, and Don supported all four options. Laura opposed sales, meals, and alcohol due to middle-class burdens and business recovery concerns, but favored rooms. On December 15th, the board will continue discussion on LOT focusing on meals/alcohol, and discuss Local Option Tax going to the voters for consideration in March 2026.

9. **Recreation & Budget**

Town Manager Brent Raymond sought clear direction on how to present recreation funding in the upcoming budget, acknowledging the contentious nature of the topic. Most board members expressed support for a robust, year-round, all-ages recreation/wellness program that promotes community connections and health, but had different opinions on how to fund it. George Cormier favored putting Recreation funding as a separate article on the March ballot to allow the community to vote specifically on it, thereby preventing potential failure of the general town budget. Leah Hollenberger, Richard Craig, and Don McDowell supported having a nominal dollar amount or line item in the budget (not necessarily a staff position) to demonstrate town commitment, support a volunteer committee, and act as seed money or a grant match. Laura Streets opposed allocating money now, suggesting getting a committee/commission started first to define the program and break the perception that recreation is just a seven-week summer program. Don McDowell would like to see a commitment to recreation and wellness and is unsure how best to fund and define it. A few citizens advocated for establishing a formal mission statement, strategy plan, and a commission/committee first before committing funds or hiring staff.

The Selectboard directed Brent Raymond to research the recreation model utilized by the Town of

Johnson, which employs a half-time staff person, approximately 22 hours per week, and does not run a summer camp.

7:10PM - OLD BUSINESS

None

7:12PM - APPROVE WARRANTS

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

7:15PM - SCHEDULE

1. **Monday, December 8, 2025 - SB Special Meeting - 5:30PM**
   Monday, December 15, 2025 - SB Meeting - 5:30PM
   Monday, December 29, 2025 - SB Special Meeting - 5:30PM
   Monday, January 5, 2026 - SB Meeting - 5:30PM
   Saturday, January 10, 2026 — Community Meeting Day/Pie for Breakfast at VFW - 8am - noon
   Judi Alberi, Executive Assistant, noted the Pie for Breakfast, Community Meeting Day, will be held at the VFW on January 10th and would need help setting up the room. VFW will let staff in after 2:30 Friday January 9th to set up chairs and tables and was looking for volunteers to help out.

7:20PM - OTHER BUSINESS

None

7:22PM - ADJOURN

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:11 pm
Submitted and filed this 12/3/25.
Bonnie McDermott, Scribe

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