SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
OF DECEMBER 8, 2025

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

Absent:

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Brent Raymond, Town Manager; Judi Alberi, Executive Assistant; Tina Sweet, Finance Director; Chief Jason Luneau, Police; Chief Corey Boisvert, EMS; Chief Dennis Digregorio, Fire; Cyndi Wiltshire, HR Director

PARTICIPANTS/GUESTS: Dawn Angney-Kress, George Kress, Jamie Jaret, Glenn Schwartz, Skip & Maria Ward, Charlie Burnham, Tom Cloutier, Carol Lauber, Laura & Martin Green, Evelyn & Jerry Throne, Martha Battle, 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
None

5:33PM - COMMUNITY COMMENTS
None

5:40PM - NEW BUSINESS

1. **Town of Elmore Proposal for Continued Morristown EMS Services**
   The subject of EMS services for the town of Elmore returned to the Selectboard after having been discussed earlier in the year. George Kress, representing the Town of Elmore, presented a proposal for Morristown to provide EMS services to Elmore with a pricing methodology based on a two-part structure: a service component and a capital plan component. The proposal estimated a total cost of $42,500 for fiscal year 26-27, with $27,000 for the service component and $15,295 for the capital component. The proposal also included naming an Elmore EMS liaison to facilitate communications and collect data. Mr. Kress stated that Elmore wanted to maintain a partnership with Morristown.

   Don McDowell expressed concerns about the disparity in cost of readiness, noting that Morristown taxpayers currently contribute approximately $154 per person for EMS services, while Elmore's proposed payment of $42,000 falls significantly below that level. Other Selectboard members shared similar concerns, stressing the need for a fair and equitable partnership that better accounts for the ongoing expense of maintaining 24/7 readiness and staffing. The Board requested that Elmore develop a revised proposal that more accurately reflects the true cost of service. Members also expressed frustration that the proposal was received on December 8, roughly two months after the requested information was due, leaving little time to negotiate before municipal budget deadlines. The Morristown Selectboard agreed to review the proposal internally and will communicate its position through Town Administration. They also asked that Elmore's Selectboard reconvene to prepare a more realistic proposal that does not place the financial burden of EMS readiness on Morristown's residents.

2. **Presentation of Manager's proposed budget to Selectboard for consideration**

Overall Budget Status

Brent Raymond, Town Manager, presented the proposed budget, describing it as "draconian" due to ongoing financial pressures and reduced revenues. Despite aggressive cost containment measures, the proposed budget reflects a 9.0% total warned increase.

Cost Control Successes

The Town's operating base budget increased by only 0.46% year-over-year, representing less than half a percent. Substantial savings were achieved by switching the Town's health insurance provider to MVP, resulting in an 8.2% savings in health insurance costs compared to current rates (or 10.3% savings based on 2026 Blue Cross Blue Shield rates). The Highway Department budget decreased by 3% due to improved efficiencies.

Major Budget Pressures

Deferred Maintenance: The Town faces a 15-year backlog of deferred maintenance on roads, bridges, and municipal buildings. A minimum five-year plan for road improvements was discussed last year, with approximately $641,000 needed next year for roads and sidewalks to maintain progress that has been made.

Cost Increases: Insurance premiums are projected to rise by 20% (a $98,000 increase), and the Lamoille County tax is expected to increase by 13%.

Police Department: The Police Department budget reflects a 5.67% increase, driven by union wage adjustments and the required replacement of equipment, including Axon body cameras cloud storage, under a new five-year contract.

Major Revenue Reductions

A total of $759,000 of the warned budget increase is attributable to reduced revenues. The budget also removes the prior year's $500,000 use of the unassigned fund balance. Additionally, Current Use "Hold Harmless" reimbursement from the state is projected to decrease by 36% (a $140,000 reduction) due to changes in the municipal tax rate following the 2023 reappraisal.

Service Appropriations and Special Items

Morristown Centennial Library: The Town Manager recommended a 2.8% appropriation increase based on the Consumer Price Index, significantly lower than the 16% increase requested by the library.

Recreation: The Manager reluctantly recommended no funding for the Summer Recreation Program, resulting in a $147,000 reduction in budgeted costs.

Bridge & Highway Infrastructure Fund (2¢): The budget allocates $233,500 to this fund; however, the Town Manager noted that this amount is insufficient to maintain the target levels outlined in the five-year maintenance plan.

The Selectboard members thanked the Manager and the department heads for their detailed work in keeping the operating costs low, emphasizing that the 9% increase stems from lost revenues and addressing decades of deferred maintenance. The Chair, Don McDowell, emphasized the need for a new revenue source such as a Local Option Tax, which the board is currently discussing in their regularly scheduled board meetings.

8:00PM - ADJOURN

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:09pm
Submitted and filed this December 10, 2025.
Judi Alberi, Scribe

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