



**SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
OF DECEMBER 30, 2025**

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

Absent:

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

PARTICIPANTS/GUESTS: John Buttolph, Jamie Jaret, Rachel Duffy, Martin Green, Nate Beyer, Julie Pickett, Jerry Throne

**participating via Zoom*

5:30PM - CALL SELECTBOARD MEETING TO ORDER

Don McDowell called the Selectboard Meeting to order at 5:31 PM at the Tegu Building.

5:31PM - AGENDA CHANGES/ADDITIONS

None

5:33PM - COMMUNITY COMMENTS

None

5:50PM - NEW BUSINESS

1. Recreation Follow-up

Adele Taplin reported on her activities exploring recreation possibilities for Morristown's children. Johnson has a municipal program with no day camp. Stowe has limited options for those who do not live in Stowe. Unbound and Apple Tree are two programs that currently have summer programs in Morristown. Unbound has grades 5–8 with limitations due to a grant that was received. Apple Tree is a private after-school program for grades 1–4. There are only 27 spots, with priority given to returning children. Expanding their program will require more space and staffing. They supplement their staff with college-age students. Adele will follow up with them in mid-January. Brent added that Hyde Park and Wolcott do not have recreation programs. Don thanked Adele and Brent for their work.

2. Draft of Local Option Tax Articles for the warning

The board reviewed three separate draft articles for the Town Meeting warning regarding a 1% tax on sales, meals/alcohol, and rooms with the revenue being dedicated to capital infrastructure expenditures, debt reduction, reserve funds, emergency needs, economic development, or municipal property tax reduction. Leah highlighted the town's 15 years of deferred maintenance on roads, town buildings, and the police station. She proposed adding language stating that any expenditure of LOT funds must be approved and voted on at a warned public meeting. Board members George and Richard argued against a "sunset" (expiration) clause, noting that the funds are needed for long-term 20-year municipal bonds. Laura expressed concerns regarding the vagueness of "community development" and the potential for LOT to be an "open-ended fund". Feedback was heard and Brent

will continue to work on the wording and have legal counsel review it.

3. Continuation of Manager's proposed budget discussions

Brent explained that a budget is not a static entity, and the federal government has a great influence on local planning. He and Tina Sweet explained that there was an increase in EMS billing rates, but the reimbursement rates did not increase. Therefore, the anticipated income will not be realized. The majority of people using EMS services are insured under Medicare and Medicaid, which results in a 48% write-off of expenses. However, the agreement with Elmore for payment of EMS services will bring in some revenue. Brent informed the board that some grants have been applied for that would bring in funding, and that they require matching funds. Don commented that the budget expenses are diligent; however, the town revenue has diminished. He was concerned that with a 9.6% increase in this year's budget, the town would not pass it. He suggested that all special articles for the departments be put on hold this year, which would reduce the figure from 9.6% to approximately 4.2%. Concern was expressed that the progress of the highway department's plan to correct the past years of neglect would be derailed. George thanked Brent and Tina for their clarity in explaining the wider influences on budget planning. Chair Don McDowell proposed cutting special warning items like paving and capital equipment funds to reduce the increase to 4.2%. The board expressed concerns over not funding any of the equipment funds and the work that has been done in year 1 of a 5 year highway plan. Tina suggested a "Middle Road" alternative of 1 cent for bridge infrastructure, 0.5 cent for fire, and 0.5 cent for highway capital, yielding a 6.9% increase. No final decisions were reached, and the board plans to review these scenarios in upcoming meetings. People were encouraged to talk to their legislators at the upcoming events.

7:00PM - ADJOURN

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm
Submitted and filed this 12/31/25.
Bonnie McDermott, Scribe

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