



SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 10, 2026

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

Absent:

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Shap Smith, Moderator, Brent Raymond, Town Manager; Judi Alberi, Executive Assistant; Tina Sweet, Finance Director; Sara Haskins, Town Clerk/Treasurer

PARTICIPANTS/GUESTS: Approx 50 residents including Findlay Wilkins, Kelly Dolan, Summer Capiga, Shannon Carchidi, Susan Drew, Erica Scott, Kathy Demars, Carol Lang-Godin, Becky Gonyeau, Heather Hobart, Robin Pierce, Jonah Rabinowitz, Alison Calderara, Kim Lipinski, Tom Cloutier, Dennis & Lorinda Smith, Martin Green, Jerry & Evelyn Throne, Nancy Banks, Chris Yates, Cara Hansy, Gary Nolan, Maggie Cleary, Shelley Nolan, Carol Lauber, Joie Marshall.

**participating via Zoom*

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

1. Moderator, Shap Smith, will review the rules of procedure

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by Moderator Shap Smith. The Moderator introduced town officials, including Town Manager Brent Raymond, Finance Director Tina Sweet, the Selectboard, Don, Richard, Laura, George and Leah. He reviewed the rules of procedure, noting the meeting followed Robert's Rules of Order, with speakers limited to two minutes per turn and two turns per topic. The meeting was recorded by GMATV.

Pie was served by the Morristown Soccer Club Euro Trip team to raise funds for their 2026 trip to Spain.

Shap reminded residents that all town and school officials are now elected by Australian ballot, with a petition deadline of January 26, 2026.

Shap also reminded folks of the Town Report dedication and a raffle for the 2026 Morristown dog tag number one would be held at the conclusion of the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Review Budget Summary and Town Financials

Town Manager Brent Raymond provided an overview of the proposed \$10.38 million operating base budget for the 2026–2027 fiscal year. He noted that the operating base budget represents a 0.54% increase over the previous year, while anticipated revenues are expected to decrease by over \$290,000. A key factor contributing to this budgetary pressure is the absence of the ability to use \$500,000 from the unallocated fund balance to offset taxes this year. In addition, the state's current use reimbursement is projected to decline by approximately \$140,000. Departmental highlights

included a significant increase in costs for the Police Department's body camera and taser contracts, now totaling \$39,000 annually; a small increase in the Fire Department budget; and a decrease in Highway Department personnel costs primarily due to the transition from Blue Cross Blue Shield to MVP for health insurance coverage. The Recreation Department budget again does not include funding for a full-time recreation employee, though the Manager acknowledged ongoing community interest in expanded recreation services. The budget also addresses deferred maintenance needs for roads, bridges, and sidewalks; however, Raymond warned that current infrastructure funding levels are not sustainable.

2. Community Comments

Residents expressed a range of opinions and concerns regarding the proposed budget. Tom Cloutier questioned the long-term sustainability of allocating \$5–6 million toward salaries and benefits for town employees. Martin Green and Jerry Throne spoke in favor of honoring existing employee agreements and maintaining fair compensation to help retain experienced staff. Nancy Banks and Jerry Throne also voiced support for the proposed Local Option Tax (LOT), which is projected to generate approximately \$1.2 million in its first full year if approved. In contrast, Chris Yates and Cara Hansy expressed emotional opposition to the continued lack of funding for recreation programs, emphasizing their importance for families and children in the community. Gary Nolan suggested that the Town explore additional revenue opportunities through the airport and by supporting industrial development.

3. Presentation by Social Service Agencies

Several agencies highlighted their impact on Morristown residents and expressed the need for appropriations to be passed again this year.

4. Announce the Town Report 2025 Dedication Recipient

Don McDowell announced that the 2025 Annual Town Report will be dedicated to Lorinda and Dennis Smith. Lifelong residents, the Smiths were honored for their extensive civic service, particularly their decades of leadership with the Morristown Cemetery Association. Dennis also served 20 years with the Fire Department, while Lorinda served on the Firefighters' Auxiliary and spent 21 years with Lamoille Home Health and Hospice.

5. Announce the #1 dog tag

The #1 Dog Tag for 2026 goes to "Clover" owner Lisa Zinn.

ADJOURN

Moderator Shap Smith in closing, noted that next year's event is scheduled for January 9, 2027.

Meeting adjourned at 11am

Submitted and filed this January 15, 2026.

Judi Alberi, Scribe

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