



SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 31, 2026

Members: Don McDowell, Richard Craig, George Cormier, Leah Hollenberger, Rose Belanger

Absent:

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Brent Raymond, Town Manager; Judi Alberi, Executive Assistant; Tyler Machia, Zoning/Planning Administrator

PARTICIPANTS/GUESTS: Leslie Oplinger, Ayla Bousquet, Jodie Legacy, Jon Butler*, Erik Fryland, Peter Bourne, Nancy Banks, Duane Wheeler*, Dave Durant, Martin Green, Kristen Fogdall, Thea Alvin*, Jerry Throne*, Ed Loewenton*, Laura Streets*, Nancy Dunavan*, Nick Manosh, Mitch Diamond, Briellen Wolchik, Kathy Stokes

**participating via Zoom*

5:30PM - CALL SELECTBOARD MEETING TO ORDER

Don McDowell called the Selectboard Special Meeting to order at 5:30 PM at the Tegu Building.

5:31PM - AGENDA CHANGES/ADDITIONS

Don added interviewee David Durand under new business item #1.

5:33PM - COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Don announced a community conversation & free dinner on 11/5/26 at 5:30 P.M. put on by the Civic Project group. The event will begin with a free meal, then various community conversations with the support of a grant by Vermont Humanities Vermont 250th.

5:40PM - NEW BUSINESS

1. Conduct interviews for possible appointment to the Trails Committee

- 1. L Oplinger**
- 2. N Godau**
- 3. A Gousquet**
- 4. J Legacy**
- 5. J Butler**
- 6. E Fryland**
- 7. P Bourne**
- 8. N Banks**
- 9. D Wheeler**
- 10. D Durand**

The Selectboard evaluated the strategic goal of establishing a dedicated Trails Committee to manage Morristown's diverse recreational assets, including snow machine, ski, biking, hiking, and running corridors, under a unified administrative umbrella. The objective is to professionalize stewardship and ensure these connective corridors remain a sustainable public resource.

The Board conducted nine individual interviews, noting that the candidates' collective expertise would

strengthen Morristown's recreational infrastructure, promote economic vitality through tourism, and improve the quality of life for residents. Interviews were conducted with the following candidates: Leslie Oplinger, Jonathan Butler, Ayla Bousquet, Jodie Legacy, Eric Fryland, Peter Bourne, Nancy Banks, Duane Wheeler, and David Durand (Note: Nicholas Godau did not attend). The Board deferred final appointments until after an executive session.

2. Schedule a possible Special Meeting for a Selectboard Retreat September 24, 2026 4pm - 8pm

The Board discussed the strategic importance of "working sessions" for deep-dive analysis of complex municipal issues, such as housing and infrastructure, which require dedicated focus outside the constraints of standard meetings.

Motion made by Richard Craig to move that the Selectboard schedule a Special Meeting for a Selectboard Retreat on Thursday, September 24, 2026, from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the Tegu Community Room, 43 Portland Street, Morrisville, Vermont. Motion seconded by Rose Belanger. Motion carried. (5/0).

7:30PM - CONTINUE PUBLIC HEARING INTERIM BYLAWS

1. Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 4415, the Morristown Selectboard will continue the public hearing from August 24, 2026 to hear from all persons interested and receive public comment on the proposed Interim Zoning Bylaw: Moratorium on Data Centers and High Impact Uses ("Interim Bylaw"). The Selectboard has set this public hearing in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 4442(a).

Don reconvened the public hearing previously held on 8/24/26. He invited comments from the in-house attendees and then online residents. Several residents expressed their opinions. One person declared he saw no reason to have a Data Center moratorium bylaws, as no Data Center would come to Morristown because there is not enough space for one. He also said that the town should attract more businesses. Brent noted that the town is currently moving in that direction. Another person asked if the residents could vote when a Data Center approached the town. Brent explained that zoning and the DRB would then be responsible, not the Selectboard. Tyler raised concerns about the state hazardous waste law, as he needs specific parameters to enforce bylaws. He suggested the interim bylaw not be passed at this time. Some residents thanked the Selectboard for being proactive on these issues and supported the interim bylaws. It was noted that several parcels of land could be combined to form a site large enough for a Data Center. Another person remarked that public health needed to be a top priority. The majority of the participants agreed that the interim bylaw be approved.

Motion made by Richard Craig to close the public hearing on the proposed Interim Zoning Bylaw: Moratorium on Data Centers and High Impact Uses. Motion seconded by Rose Belanger. Motion carried (5/0).

2. Consideration to Adopt & Sign Interim Bylaws

Discussion supporting the motion included Selectboard Member Leah Hollenberger's response to Zoning Administrator Tyler's concerns regarding the statutory hazardous waste definition. The Board discussed the distinction between "Hazardous Materials" and the statutory definition of "Hazardous Waste" under 10 V.S.A. § 6602. Hollenberger read the statutory definition of hazardous waste directly into the record, which defines waste to include any liquid, solid, or gaseous substance that poses a risk to human health, living organisms, or water. While acknowledging the Zoning Administrator's concerns regarding the breadth of this language, the Board determined that Morristown's current bylaws are insufficient to address rapid technological shifts in the data center industry.

In response to Tyler's concern that standard local businesses like restaurants might be blocked under the interim bylaw's high-impact definitions, public participant Jerry Throne noted that the interim bylaw can be amended in the future as the town learns from experience, and asserted that the Zoning Administrator has the authority and discretion to determine whether a restaurant would actually be affected by the bylaw's scope.

Motion made by Richard Craig to adopt and sign the Interim Zoning Bylaw: Moratorium on Data Centers and High Impact Uses, dated August 31, 2026. Motion seconded by Rose Belanger. Motion carried (5/0)

7:50PM - OTHER BUSINESS

1. Executive Session - Appointment of a public officer

Motion made by Richard Craig to enter executive session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) to discuss the appointment of a public officer, and that Town Manager Brent Raymond and Executive Assistant Judi Alberi be permitted to attend. Motion seconded by Leah Hollenberger. Motion carried (5/0).

Motion made by Richard Craig to come out of executive session at 8:38pm. Motion seconded by Leah Hollenberger. Motion carried (5/0)

2. Possible appointment of Trail Committee Members

Motion made by Richard Craig to appoint the following individuals to the Trails Committee for terms beginning with 3,2, and 1 year terms as indicated:

L Oplinger,, for a three-year term ending 3/2029;

N. Banks, for a three-year term ending 3/2029;

D. Durand, for a three-year term ending 3/2029;

J. Legacy, for a two-year term ending 3/2028;

P. Bourne, for a two-year term ending 3/2028;

E Fryland , for a two-year term ending 3/2028

A Bousquet , for a one-year term ending 3/2027

J Butler, for a one-year term ending 3/2027 and

D Wheeler, for a one-year term ending 3/2027.

Motion seconded by Leah Hollenberger. Motion carried (5/0).

Motion made by Richard Craig to further move that Leslie Oplinger be designated as Acting Chair/Facilitator to convene the committee's first meeting and facilitate the election of members.

Motion seconded by Leah Hollenberger. Motion carried (5/0).

3. Authorize SP&F Attorneys to enter an appearance and represent Town of Morristown - 2322 Laporte Rd appeal

Motion made by Richard Craig to authorize Stitzel, Page & Fletcher, P.C. to enter an appearance and represent the Town of Morristown in Vermont Superior Court, Environmental Division Docket No. 26-ENV-00078, concerning the 2322 Laporte Road Land Use Permit appeal. Motion seconded by Rose Belanger. Motion carried (5/0).

8:15PM - ADJOURN

Motion made by Richard Craig to adjourn. Motion seconded by Rose Belanger. Motion carried. (5/0)

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm
Submitted and filed this 9/2/26.

Bonnie McDermott, Scribe

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