

Town of Mendon

Selectboard

July 14, 2025

Members of Selectboard present: Megan Smith, Seth Bridge, Sarah Buxton

Town Officers and employees present: Sara Tully, Town Administrator

Rutland County Sheriff Deputy is present.

Visitors present: Fred Bagley, Patti Lancaster, Carol Gates, Brian Gates, Richard Howe

S. Bridge, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM at the Town Office. The Chair, Megan Smith is participating online this evening.

The Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda: Motion by S. Buxton to add the former Snow Angel property to the agenda as item J. Motion seconded by M. Smith. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

B. Gates repeatedly interrupted the Selectboard stating his wife Carol Gates cannot hear anything online. S. Bridge warned B. Gates not to interrupt the meeting. The Selectboard responded that C. Gates is both online and dialed in on a call. M. Smith stated both she and S. Tully are participating online without a problem. There are no other issues with other participants online. C. Gates confirmed she can hear the meeting.

Administrative Matters

The orders were reviewed. Motion by S. Bridge to approve orders for 6/23/25 for \$51,342.91, 6/30/25 for \$171,125.00, 6/30/25 for \$21,862.11 and 7/10/25 for \$12,347.36 and payroll for 6/24/25 for \$14,488.52 and 7/8/25 for \$13,664.43. Motion seconded by S. Buxton. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

Motion by S. Bridge to approve the minutes for 6/9/25. Motion seconded by S. Buxton. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

Year-End Financials S. Tully explained a recap of the anticipated FY25 year-end financials submitted by Jesse Bridge. The current estimate shows a \$21K deficit. This is not attributed to any one item of the budget rather than a cumulative reduction in revenue and unanticipated expenses. The Selectboard will review the budget status before the next meeting and submit any questions to Jesse Bridge.

Review FY26 Tax Rate S. Tully presented the FY26 budget as approved at Town Meeting with an estimated tax rate of \$2.0676 Homestead and \$2.1116 Non-residential. The tax rate will be officially set at the next Selectboard Meeting on July 28th. The tax bills will be mailed by the

end of July. S. Buxton asked for an explanation about the Local Agreement Tax. S. Tully responded that qualified disabled veterans receive a discount on the assessed value of their homestead. State statute allows for a \$10,000 discount of assessed value. Mendon has previously voted to increase the discount to \$40,000 of assessed value. The Local Option Tax is charged to all properties to make up for these discounts.

Announcements: None

Public Comment: F. Bagley stated that a neighbor on Woodward Road is having issues with his insurance company and questioned the status of the dry hydrant on Woodward Road. S. Tully reported that the Journeys End and Woodward Road dry hydrants are going to be replaced. Dry hydrants are tested annually by the Rutland City Fire Department with their gallon per minute rate.

B. Gates complained that permits are not being issued in town. There is a driveway on Park Lane that does not have a driveway permit, and the driveway isn't even on his own property. B. Gates stated the guardrail for Park Lane is 135' long, but the property is only 113' along Park Lane. Mr. Gates also complained about an unpermitted sand pit on S. Bridge's property and that he has a half-built house with a hole in the ground that is dangerous. M. Smith responded that this is a zoning issue and that Mr. Gates has received correspondence from the Zoning Administrator. B. Gates continued to complain about permits not being posted as required. M. Smith stated Mr. Gates' 2 minutes of public comment were up.

C. Gates complained about the same arguments as Mr. Gates addressed in his public comment claiming S. Bridge did not obtain permits and called him "disgusting". She stated that she has no idea why anyone would want to slow down the speed limit on Route 4 when there is so much blight while yelling at Mr. Gates to not interrupt her. She continued stating that coming from Rutland you can no longer see the Mendon sign thanking God because people won't realize they are in Mendon. She further complained about the former Churchill's property being renovated and that there is a huge dumpster outside on the property with mattresses in it and why they are not being violated. She called the Selectboard incompetent and said that they had no idea how to run a town. Mrs. Gates stated the Selectboard "just approved \$284,830.33 and for what we have no idea? So, 3 weeks of payroll costs \$75,000 in payroll in this town. We have nothing, no services. Rutland Town used ARPA Funds, Sara, for a new building for their fire department, police, everything. What do we have, nothing." M. Smith indicated C. Gates' 2 minutes for public comment were up. Mr. Gates yelled that Mrs. Gates only had 1 minute and 40 seconds and to start over. C. Gates continued yelling that individual members of the Selectboard were "disgusting" and doing everything "illegal". M. Smith requested that C. Gates be muted online. Mr. Gates continued to yell at the Selectboard that Mrs. Gates did not have her 2 minutes. Vice-Chair, S. Bridge called Mr. Gates out of order and requested the Rutland County Sheriff remove him from the meeting while C. Gates unmuted herself yelling at the Selectboard "You all suck", multiple times.

Business:

Structures Grant Award – Notch Road Culvert Replacement Project S. Tully reported that C. Baird worked with diligently with VTRANS District 3 on a Structures application to replace a culvert on Notch Road that was damaged in the flooding event in August 2023. S. Tully

recapped the timeline to include going out to bid this construction season which will include construction for next season as well. This grant award along with grants in aid and a Better Roads Program Grant for Wheelerville culvert replacements total approximately \$157,000 in grant funds successfully awarded this year. The Town was not awarded the Class 2 Roadway Grant for resurfacing the Notch Road. C. Baird will be reworking the Highway Improvement Schedule to accommodate this project for next year's construction season and will complete some ditch line work to stabilize the road until next year. S. Buxton clarified that this would allow the Town to do culvert replacements prior to resurfacing. S. Tully confirmed the road will be reclaimed and resurfaced next season hopefully with funding from the Class 2 Roadway Grant.

VT-Alerts Adoption and designation of authorized posting personnel S. Tully explained that VT-alerts will go out as texts to individuals in Rutland County that sign up to receive VT-Alerts. Motion by S. Buxton to authorize the use of VT-Alerts from the Town of Mendon and designate Lema Carter, Chris Baird, Jesse Bridge and Sara Tully as personnel that can post information on behalf of the Town. Motion seconded by M. Smith. The motion passed unanimously.

Letters soliciting support from Rte. 4 property owners for speed reduction on Route 4 F. Bagley submitted draft letters to businesses and property owners along Route 4 to garner support for a speed reduction request to VTRANS. It was discussed whether the letters be sent from the Mendon on the Move Route 4 Safety Implementation Committee (not a town appointed committee) or by the Selectboard. S. Buxton suggested authorizing a Selectboard member to sign off on the final wording of the letter. M. Smith volunteered to be that Selectboard designee. S. Buxton moved to send letters to businesses and homeowners along Route 4 to gain support for lowering the speed limit before the Vermont Traffic Committee and authorize M. Smith to approve final content of the letter. Motion seconded by S. Bridge. The motion passed unanimously.

Mendon Historical Society request for Tree planting and plaque for 250-year celebration F. Bagley requested approval for the Mendon Historical Society to plant Hemlock trees behind the informational signs at the Town Office. F. Bagley discussed the 250-year celebrating plaque to be installed on the boulder by the bench and requested a member of the Selectboard work with the Mendon Historical Society on the wording of the plaque. Motion by S. Buxton to authorize the Mendon Historical Society to plant trees and authorize M. Smith to work with the Mendon Historical Society on the text of the 250-year celebration plaque. Motion seconded by M. Smith. The motion passed unanimously.

Town Attorney S. Buxton recommended retaining a town attorney to handle a variety of legal questions that may arise while conducting the business of the town. The recent training on the Open Meeting Law and Public Records recommended designating a municipal law attorney. The current need for legal assistance is to provide the Planning Commission with some direction regarding the Zoning Rewrite. S. Buxton recommended the Selectboard authorize S. Tully to solicit letters of interest from law firms to provide municipal law services to the Town. Motion by M. Smith to authorize S. Tully to solicit letters of interest to provide municipal law services to the town. Motion seconded by S. Bridge. The motion passed unanimously.

Payment Policy Review and Adoption J. Bridge, Treasurer, submitted a payment policy to regulate payments received by the town. The policy would limit cash transactions to \$200. S. Bridge moved to adopt the Payment Policy limiting cash payments to \$200. Motion seconded by S. Buxton. The motion passed unanimously.

Cott System Inc. Annual Contract Cott is the software used for land record recording. S. Tully reported the annual contract submitted by Cott included a rate increase of 35%. J. Bridge, Treasurer, recommends the Selectboard submit a letter to negotiate this rate increase. S. Buxton spoke in favor of the letter and support for the State of Vermont to finance land record recording. Motion by S. Buxton to submit a letter to Cott Systems opposing the rate increase. Motion seconded by M. Smith. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

911 Street Naming: Cascade Lane (off Heather Lane in Mendon) J. Bridge, 911 Coordinator submitted a recommendation for the Selectboard to name a town right of way off from Heather Lane. The property owners were consulted, and Cascade Lane is the recommendation to name the road. Motion by M. Smith to name Cascade Lane. Motion seconded by S. Buxton. The motion passed unanimously.

Evaluations M. Smith submitted a new employee evaluation form provided to her by VLCT. All employees will be evaluated by September.

Former Snow Angel Property M. Smith reported speaking with the owner of the former Snow Angel property regarding plans to improve the property.

S. Bridge moved to adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 6:25 PM. Motion seconded by S. Buxton. The motion passed unanimously.

Date Approved _____

Megan Smith

Sara Tully - Clerk of the Board

Seth Bridge

Sarah Buxton