

Town of Mendon

Selectboard

July 28, 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, David Brooks, Carol Gates, Brian Gates, Rep. Jim Harrison, Justin Lindholm, Greg Smith and B. Yates

M. Smith, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM at the Town Office.

The Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda: The Selectboard approved the agenda as written.

Administrative Matters

The orders were reviewed. Motion by M. Smith to approve orders for 7/24/25 for \$28,593.16 and payroll for 7/22/25 for \$14,578.04. Motion seconded by S. Bridge. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

Motion by M. Smith to approve the minutes for 7/14/25. Motion seconded by S. Buxton. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

Announcements: None

Public Comment: D. Brooks discussed the safety of the bus stop at the Old Turnpike Road and Route 4 intersection. Mr. Brooks requested a streetlight be installed for visibility and also requested one at Medway Road. F. Bagley commented that in his experience with the Route 4 Steering Committee that there is not a light at the intersection of Old Turnpike Road due to the location of the Green Mountain Power poles being too far away.

G. Smith read a statement he prepared:

"When I listen to the Selectboard meeting recordings and read the meeting minutes, I mostly hear criticism about what you do and how you do it. I think it's time you hear from residents who view your work and efforts differently."

My takeaway from your meetings is you are an interested and organized group that executes your duties with a desire to serve Mendon residents, and to do your work according to statutes and rules that govern the work. This is in stark contrast to many comments provided regularly that prove to be unverified and unwarranted, and mostly appear to be just negative opinions.

I am confident this group can hear all comments, listening for any kernels of input that you can actually use to improve your efforts. I also hope you are able to block out the inaccurate and negative content so that it does not interfere with your motivation to serve the town. In my opinion the voters overwhelmingly selected the three of you and it seems like their choices were spot on.

All too often criticism and complaints are shouted louder and more frequently than praise. You are not supposed to ignore criticism and complaints when it is well articulated and supported. We all wish people would approach us and say "I don't understand this, can you explain it to me?" I don't recall hearing that on any of your meeting recordings. Maybe one day.

Just like in any work environment, people need to hear feedback on how they are performing, and praise for doing good work. I am giving you that now. Keep up the good work on handling our expenses, our services, and our future planning."

C. Gates commented that she wanted everyone to be aware there was a deficit this year. Historically the town has had a surplus of \$60K per year and now we have a deficit of \$21K. She doesn't believe the Selectboard is doing well at all for the town. She claimed the Sheriff is only present for her husband.

Representative Jim Harrison provided a legislative review. The legislative session was extended by two weeks to get an education reform bill passed. It is a road map not a be all end all. There is plenty in the bill for people to take issue with. Doing nothing was not an option. Property taxes went up over 20% in Mendon and Chittenden last year. We are spending a lot and something has to change. Education Tax rate did not go up significantly because we used surplus funds to lower the rates. M. Smith asked if it was education surplus or general fund surplus? J. Harrison responded that it was both. Next session there is a task force that will draw new district maps with 4K-8K students. There will be 15-20 districts. There will be a lot of pressure to do something. Barstow with Mendon and Chittenden is not going to fly. School choice is also being limited. It will not be an easy conversation. M. Smith asked why they don't go by counties. J. Harrison responded it is part of the discussion.

83 bills were passed and 5 were vetoed. A more balanced legislature allows for more bipartisan support. The Budget bill will include a \$100M surplus and that money is being set aside not knowing what financial support is coming from the federal budget. Washington sends VT 1.5B per year for Medicaid. Housing is an issue and there is a new financing program for new developments.

The health care bills granted new authority to the Green Mountain Care Board to regulate drug pricing.

Transportation is always a concern for local towns. State police were funded out of the transportation budget. This was limited this year with \$20M went back in the general fund. In spite of that, transportation is expected to be \$30M short. Major transportation project costs are going up. S. Buxton explained the difficulty of receiving Better Road Grant Funds that are

required to be spent in the current fiscal year. It puts a strain on going out to bid for projects and obtaining the best prices. She added that maybe Better Road Grants could be like the capital fund in 2 year cycles which would allow more flexibility for small towns to get projects done.

The Selectboard thanked J. Harrison for coming and serving the town. J. Harrison repeated the sentiment and thanked the Selectboard for serving the town.

Business:

Review and set the FY26 Tax Rate S. Tully explained the tax rate and the minor changes made from the last meeting. Motion by M. Smith to set the FY26 Municipal Tax Rate at \$.5165, the Total Homestead Rate at \$2.0687 and the Total Non-Residential Tax Rate at \$2.1127. Motion seconded by S. Bridge. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion. M. Smith stated the Tax Bills will be mailed in the next few days.

2025/2026 Tax Rate:

Homestead = \$2.0687
 (\$.5165+\$1.5510+\$.0012)

Non-Residential = \$2.1127
 (\$.5165+\$1.5950+\$.0012)

Municipal Tax Rate: \$.5165

2025-2026 Amount to be raised by taxes

\$1,259,250 (cash deficit- \$23,254)

2025-2026 Municipal Grand List

\$2,438,434

Education Tax Rate:

Homestead = \$1.5510

Non-Residential = \$1.5950

Local Agreement Tax: \$.0012

2025-2026 Summary:

Municipal Tax Rate= \$.0844 increase or 19.5%

Education Tax Rate:

Homestead = \$.07821 increase or 5.3% increase

Non-Residential = \$.0455 increase or 3% increase

Total Homestead = \$.1627 increase or 8.5% increase

Total Non-Residential = \$.1293 increase or 6.5% increase

Cott Annual Contract S. Tully recapped at the last meeting the Selectboard agreed to send a letter to Cott Systems to disagree with the three-year contract renewal submitted with a 35% increase this year with a 5% increase in the subsequent two years. Jesse Bridge, Town Clerk received an updated contract renewal that amended the cost of the three-year contract to a 25% increase without an incremental increase for the additional years. The Selectboard agreed this is still an excessive increase. The letter from the Selectboard to Cott System was reviewed and signed by the Chair.

Appropriation Request Procedure for FY27 S. Tully discussed the options of requesting Appropriations for the FY27 budget. Last year, the Selectboard required a petition signed by 5% of the voters. M. Smith moved to implement the procedure for requesting appropriation funds for FY27 will require a petition signed by 5% of the voters submitted to the Town Clerk. Motion seconded by S. Bridge. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

Text My Gov Launch The Selectboard announced that Text My Gov launched today. Residents and non-residents can obtain important information and reminders from the town. You can find more information on Text My Gov on the town website and there will be information with the tax bill mailing.

Route 4 Speed Study F. Bagley looking for the speed study. The town budgeted for two radar feedback signs. This project also requires the speed study. F. Bagley also discussed the T1111 permit to be submitted to the state to perform work in the right of way. M. Smith offered to contact the traffic engineer, Ian DeGutis, to get an update on the speed study.

M. Smith moved to adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 6:17 PM. Motion seconded by S. Buxton. The motion passed unanimously.

Date Approved _____

Megan Smith

Sara Tully - Clerk of the Board

Seth Bridge

Sarah Buxton