

Town of Mendon

Selectboard

September 8, 2025

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

Town Officers and employees present: Sara Tully, Town Administrator, Nancy Merrill, Delinquent Tax Collector, Jesse Bridge, Town Clerk and Treasurer

Rutland County Sheriff Deputy is present.

Visitors present: Fred Bagley, Brian Gates, Carol Gates, Dick Howe, Dennis Charles, Larry Gold, Wanda Courcelle, Trish and Steve Molloy.

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 with the addition of a catering permit.

Administrative Matters

The orders were reviewed. Motion by M. Smith to approve payroll for 8/18/25 for \$13,975.04 and 9/2/25 for \$ 10,036.54 orders for 8/21/25 for \$10,234.77 and 9/8/25 for \$73,458.61. Motion seconded by S. Bridge. The Selectboard unanimously passed the motion.

Motion by M. Smith to approve the minutes for 8/11/25. Motion seconded by S. Buxton. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

FY25 Audit Engagement letter signed for \$21,000 with Batchelder Associates.

Motion by M. Smith the COTT Contract for \$2210 per year with a 3-year contract which is a 15% increase or \$290 with no additional increase for years 2 and 3. Motion seconded by S. Bridge. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

Announcements:

Text My Gov – sign up for the most up to date information from the Town of Mendon.

Public Comment: Fred Bagley would like to commend the Road Crew on the work completed on Woodward Road to repair swales, ditches, etc.

Wanda Courcelle requested the procedure for appropriations to return to not requiring a petition if the organization was funded last year and there is no increase in the amount requested. This procedure has been in place since COVID and last year the Selectboard required a petition signed by 5% of the voters to be submitted by the organization to get on the ballot. M. Smith

responded that the Board would add to a future agenda for reconsideration of the appropriation request procedure.

Brian Gates asked when the Selectboard is going to address the complaint against you that he submitted and why we are not following the rules. M. Smith responded that it is on the agenda. He asked why your husband [Greg Smith] has not done anything about an appeal he put in a month ago. He asked why the town is discriminating against certain people. He asked why people are put on boards that don't live in town. He told the town in December that Sarah [Buxton] did not live in town. You told me she lives in town. She never lived in Mendon, and you put her on the Planning Commission. She has to be a resident to be on the Planning Commission. Can you answer that, Sarah? You still don't own property in town, but you are making rules for people that do own property in town. M. Smith stated Mr. Gates' 2 minutes were up.

Carol Gates stated they put in an application for appeal of Mr. Bridge's permit. G. Smith issued the permit. She would like to know since her application for the appeal of Mr. Bridges permit didn't get answered. G. Smith issued the permit she didn't know who she would complain to for the ethics violation since J. Kennelly is on the Ethics Commission. She added that she hopes that Sarah Buxton is not on that Commission as well. She doesn't know where to go because the Board investigates themselves. M. Smith responded that it depends on what the complaint is. Carol responded that her complaint is that your husband [Greg Smith], Megan, issued a permit to Seth Bridge fraudulently. He put in the permit a payment that was made more than two years prior. If Seth wanted another permit, he needed to pay again, and he didn't, which means that your husband defrauded over \$1 ,000 from the town. M. Smith referred C. Gates to Teri Corsones, Planning Commission. C. Gates continued to accuse the town of corruption.

Business:

Catering Permit The Selectboard received a copy of a catering permit from the Department of Liquor Control that was issued for an event at a private residence.

Open Meeting Law Complaint M. Smith summarized an Open Meeting Law Complaint submitted by Brian Gates on July 31, 2025 and it got put into the wrong mailbox. Mr. Gates alleged in the complaint, that at the adjournment of the Selectboard meeting, 7-28-25, that I directed the sheriff to have him removed from the town office for no reason. He claimed that the office was still open to public and no one other than he was asked to leave. He further states that a meeting open to the public was still occurring upstairs. He claims that he has not disturbed the select board meeting at any point and that I had no authority to request that he leave. The cure he seeks is for this alleged violation is for M. Smith's resignation. The Boards find that it does not meet the requirements of an Open Meeting Law Complaint because it fails to describe specific violations committed by the public body. The complaint focuses on alleged actions after the adjournment of the Selectboard Meeting since no meeting of the Selectboard was held during the alleged action. This complaint is not properly submitted as an Open Meeting Law Complaint and no further consideration will be taken by this body. Mr. Gates interrupted using profane language. M. Smith warned B. Gates that further interruption will result in removal from the meeting. Mr. Gates left the meeting on his own accord.

M. Smith moved to concur with these findings that there was no violation of the open meeting law that was alleged against the body and therefore no action is required. S. Buxton seconded the motion. The Selectboard unanimously passed the motion.

Recreation Requests T. Malloy requested a new entrance sign and are recommending the vendor Signs of Distinction. The sign will be similar or identical in design as the signs that are on Route 4 at the town borders and Town Office. The company would do the installation. Total cost is \$1 ,600.34. M. Smith inquired whether the Road Crew could install the sign as it is a separate line item on the quote for \$303.80. It was agreed to ask the Road Commissioner Chris Baird if they could install the sign.

M. Smith moved to approve the sign replacement with Signs of Distinction for up to \$1,600.34 with the caveat that we will see what it would cost to have the town road crew install it to save the \$303.80. Motion seconded by S. Buxton. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

T. Molloy requested replacement of the bleachers at the recreation area because the current bleachers were damaged. S. Molloy researched whether the bleachers could be repaired and was advised against repairing them. The replacement bleachers have wider foot treads for increased safety for a total cost of \$2,519.71. Motion by M. Smith to purchase bleachers from The Park for a total of \$2,519.71 from the Recreation Fund. Motion seconded by S. Bridge. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

T. Molloy reported the basketball hoop padding and net will also be replaced out of the recreation budget for about \$300.

Delinquent Taxes N. Merrill provided an update on delinquent tax collection and stated one property will be turned over to the attorney because they have made no effort to pay. The rest we can't move forward until June 2026. N. Merrill stated the total she can ask for is now is \$1,324 total tax owed is \$2,655. One got left out because he paid 24/25 taxes but not 23/24.

Route 4 Safety F. Bagley reported on the relocation of the Appalachian Trail and Long Trail Crossing at Route 4. We are very confident that Green Mountain Club will do their work in the summer of 2025 and for reasons they haven't been clear about the location change will not be completed this year. They have permission from the City of Rutland, which owns the property on both sides, but they have to go through Vtrans to get permission to even access the city property from a right-of-way issue. The crossing is 50 yards further east on the north side of the road. And we also requested that they improve the signage to try to keep people from walking down the shoulder and put more of a barrier on the parking lot. We will discuss with The Bus to make the crossing a bus stop.

Radar Speed Feedback Signs The radar speed device, I suggest we don't submit the T1111 permit to VTrans until we see the outcome of Wednesday's meeting regarding the speed limit. The Selectboard agreed.

Speed Limit Reduction On September 10th the Vermont Traffic Committee will be considering the request from Rutland Town and Mendon to reduce the speed limit from the Home Depot Intersection in Rutland Town to Medway Road in Mendon from 45 mph to 35 or 40 mph. The Committee is a three-person committee which will make the final decision on reducing the speed limit. The Traffic Engineers have conducted a Traffic Study that will be presented at the meeting. The Traffic Study noted the 85% percentile threshold was not reached to recommend a speed reduction. The corrective action recommended increasing police patrols to control speed. Rutland Regional Planning Commission and multiple representatives for Mendon will attend to present historical data.

Town Office Facility Use Agreement Policy (replacing Building Use Policy) M. Smith stated that the sheriff must be present when conducting a public meeting and the agreement will spell out who pays for that expense. S. Tully stated that the draft of the Town Office Facility Use Agreement is the same as the standing Recreation Facility Use Agreement down at the ball field. We had a previous standalone policy that was the Building Use Policy for the town office adopted approximately 2007. It is outdated and the Facility Use Agreement that we're using as a template was provided to us by VLCT. Motion by S.

Buxton to adopt the Town Office Facility Use Agreement Policy. Motion seconded by S. Bridge. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

Phone System Replacement M. Smith recapped that the phone system will be replaced at a cost of \$597 (\$252 monthly plus \$380 training) and paid out of office utilities. This will allow for transfers of call to off site locations providing better customer service.

FY27 Budget Timeline S. Tully provided a FY27 Budget Timeline. The budget process will start in September and be finalized in December.

Legal Counsel Motion by S. Buxton finding that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body, or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage. Motion seconded by M. Smith. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

Motion by S. Buxton to move to enter executive session per 1 VSA §313 (a) (1) (A) to discuss legal counsel contract. Motion seconded by M. Smith. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion at 6:15 PM with the Selectboard J. Bridge and S. Tully present.

Motion by M. Smith to come out of Executive Session at 6:36 PM. S. Bridge seconded the motion. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

S. Buxton moved that the Selectboard authorize Sara Buxton to enter into engagement agreements with the following three law firms to provide general legal services to the town and its staff on an as-needed basis. The three firms are SP &F Attorneys, Facey Goss, & McPhee, and Carroll Boe & Kite. Motion seconded by M. Smith. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

M. Smith moved to adjourn the Selectboard Meeting at 6:37 pm. Motion seconded by S. Bridge. The motion passed unanimously.

Date Approved _____

Megan Smith

Sara Tully - Clerk of the Board

Seth Bridge

Sarah Buxton