

Town of Danby Select Board Meeting Minutes

DRAFT September 10, 2026

Town Office, Danby, VT – 6:30 PM

<https://www.danbyvt.org/government-information>

ZOOM Meeting ID: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81328511750>

Passcode: YNc5S5

Recording available at www.peg.tv.com

Attendance

Select Board Members Present: Fuller, Abbott, Bender, Heaton, Haines

Select Board Members Absent: None

Public Present: Tracey Porter, Barbara Martin, Annette Smith, David Beam, Rick Porter, Mike Abbott, Tara Goodell, Dana Heleba, Michelle Heleba, Gary Derr, Lynn Bondurant, Susanne Crosby, Walker Cammack, Jessica Redington, Renata Aylward, William Payne, Matthew Blouin

Virtually Present: Christopher Hardaway, Abbey Wallisch, Lizzy Lindenberg, Andrea Stoehr, Lauren Dever,

Call to Order

- Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

- Recited.

Procedure for Remote Access and Public Comment

- The public comment procedures and meeting ground rules were reviewed. Remote participants initially experienced audio and chat difficulties which had been corrected by restarting the meeting ~15 minutes in. Prior to that, written comments were relayed when possible based on chat requests. Apologies as Zoom is temperamental at times!

Motion to Set Agenda

- Motion: Approve the agenda as written, with the addition of Marvin Gates correspondence under Information/Updates.
 - ***Moved by Fuller, seconded by Haines***
 - ***Passed unanimously***

Public Comment

- Several residents asked the Select Board to deny Fuller Sand & Gravel's request for reconsideration of the future land use map designation as Industrial use. Concerns included consistency with the current Town Plan, prior public hearings and petition activity, residential impacts, precedent, public participation, and the timing of a map amendment before the next Town Plan update.

- One resident supported the existing business and stated that the operation provides local employment and had not disrupted her property.
- A remote resident expressed a desire to preserve the peaceful character of the area near her recently purchased home.
- Bender noted that Danby does not have zoning and clarified that the matter concerns a future land use map designation.
- Fuller compared the proposal with a larger regional plan designation change on Dorset Mountain.
- Tara Goodell requested follow-up on erosion and drainage affecting her home and flooding of her basement. The Select Board agreed that Fuller and Haines would meet on site and consider a short-term test measure before fall grading while a longer-term solution is evaluated.
- A resident asked why N Main Street had not been striped. The Board explained that the state stripes qualifying connecting roads and that separate town-funded striping could be considered during budgeting.
- A resident raised concerns about dogs running at large on Scottsville Road after a dog vs fox rabies incident. Heaton reported that licensing and vaccination documentation had been addressed and agreed to follow up with the Sheriff regarding enforcement of dog(s) not under owner's control. Residents were encouraged to document incidents by email. The Board reminded dog owners to keep dogs under control and clean up after them.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

- Motion: Approve the August 13, 2026 Select Board meeting minutes.
 - ***Moved by Bender, seconded by Haines***
 - ***Passed unanimously***

Information and Updates

- Tax Bills: The Board acknowledged the work of town officials in preparing and mailing the tax bills.
- External Audit: The audit contract was received and will be signed and returned so the audit can proceed.
- Union Contract Negotiations: The Board discussed beginning negotiations in early November. Negotiating representatives are expected to be appointed at the October meeting, followed by an executive session to prepare for negotiations.
- Marvin Gates Correspondence: Marvin Gates advised that he does not intend to seek reelection as Lister when his term expires in March 2028 and would consider stepping down earlier if replacements are identified. Residents interested in serving as Lister, Assistant Treasurer, or in other town roles were encouraged to contact the Select Board.

Vermont Council on Rural Development Community Visit Program

- Annette Smith presented the Vermont Council on Rural Development Community Visit Program as a possible tool to increase community participation, identify local priorities,

support Town Plan outreach, and help the community respond to changes such as the uncertain future of the school.

- The program would begin with an informational presentation by program staff. A formal request would later need to come from the Select Board prior to consideration for acceptance into the program.
- Board members expressed interest but requested additional information, including feedback from similarly sized communities that have completed the program. No action was taken.

Earthworm Construction - Raymond Road Closure and Trenching

- Michael Abbott of Earthworm Construction requested permission to close a section of Raymond Road for one workday to replace a deteriorated private water line serving 649 Raymond Road. The tentative work window was late September and subject to weather.
- The contractor will post advance road-closure and no-through-traffic signs at both approaches, maintain local access from the available side, notify the Town and Fire Department before work begins, install the line at approximately six feet of cover, backfill and compact in lifts, restore the road surface, and correct settlement associated with the work.
- The Board indicated support for the one-day closure subject to coordination with the Road Commissioner and the stated restoration and notification requirements.

Fuller Sand & Gravel Letter - Land Use Designation Request

- The Board reviewed a request asking the Planning Commission to reconsider changing approximately 12 acres on the future land use map from Agricultural/Rural Residential to Commercial/Industrial.
- Discussion addressed prior hearings, new blasting and monitoring information, the limited scope of a map designation review, the Planning Commission's independent statutory process, and potential future Act 250 review if a project application is filed.
- Board members also acknowledged public concerns regarding residential effects, the existing Town Plan, prior petition activity, and procedural fairness.
- Motion: Request that the Planning Commission reconsider the land use designation change.
 - ***Moved by Abbott, seconded by Haines***
 - ***Fuller Recused***
 - **Passed by all other Select Board Members**

Smokey House Act 250 Municipal Impact Questionnaire

- Walker Cammack explained that Smokey House Center is proposing an approximately 350-square-foot housing structure as part of ongoing research into sustainable uses of local wood in modern buildings. The municipal impact questionnaire is required before the Act 250 filing can proceed.
- Motion: Authorize completion and signature of the Smokey House Act 250 Municipal Impact Questionnaire.
 - ***Moved by Fuller, seconded by Haines***

- ***Passed unanimously***

Treasurer's Report

- **Taxes are due November 13, 2026.**
- Taxpayers have option to submit the direct-debit authorization included with tax bills. Once established, the authorization remains in effect for future tax payments until revoked. Mail and in-person payment remains an option as well.
- The external audit is underway and supporting information will be gathered for the auditors.
- September office hours will generally be every other day from approximately 8:30 AM to 2:00 PM. The schedule will be posted in advance and will also be added to the Town website when possible. Some alterations may occur, but they are rare.

Community Health Solutions HRA/HSA Proposal

- The Board reviewed an initial proposal from Community Health Solutions as a possible replacement for the current HRA administrator. The company offers HRA and HSA administration, debit-card options, and a dedicated account manager.
- Discussion included dissatisfaction with the current administrator which is Health Equity, differences between HRA and HSA arrangements, administrative cost, responsibility and liability if the Town self-administered reimbursements, timing with open enrollment, and the relationship to union negotiations.
- The Board agreed to invite a company representative to a future meeting, in person or remotely, to explain services, fees, and implementation requirements. No decision was made.

Liquor License Process

- The Select Board discussed the need for a consistent process for regular and special-event liquor license applications, especially applications received too close to an event for consideration at a monthly meeting.
- A possible policy would require submission approximately 30 days before an event, provide public notice and Board review, and be communicated to local businesses and recurring applicants.
- Bender will contact the Vermont League of Cities and Towns for a sample policy. A draft will be considered at a future meeting. No action was taken.

Pike Industries Winter Sand Contract

- The proposed price was \$10.16 per ton, compared with \$9.50 per ton the prior year. Haines will inspect the sand pile for quality before hauling begins.
- Motion: Approve and sign the Pike Industries winter sand contract at \$10.16 per ton.
 - ***Moved by Fuller, seconded by Abbott***
 - ***Passed unanimously***

Highway Department / Road Commissioner Report

- Annual paving was completed on Tinmouth Road. Remaining material was used to correct a bump on Danby Pawlet Road and address several other areas in town.
- A four-foot culvert on Lily Hill is planned next, followed by bridge work on Colvin Hill.
- Additional roadside mowing was requested at the Tift Road and Scottsville Road intersection and near the Route 7 intersection to improve sight distance.
- The State did not stripe the newly paved section. Fuller will contact the appropriate State representative regarding completion of the centerline.

Old Business - 2026 Small Scale Local HSIP Grant

- The Town received grant documents for guardrail replacement work. The award is \$43,890 and is 100 percent refunded, with no local match needed, subject to compliance with federal and State requirements.
- Three quotes are required before award. Two quotes have been obtained and a third is being pursued. Contractors must be advised that federal Davis-Bacon wage requirements apply (as set by state).
- The Town will coordinate removal and replacement so guardrails are not left down over extended time. The grant is reimbursement-based, and the project completion period extends into 2028.
- Motion: Authorize the Select Board Chair to sign the grant documents and continue the project.
 - ***Moved by Haines, seconded by Fuller***
 - ***Passed unanimously***

New Business

- No new business was presented.

Motion to Adjourn

- Motion: Adjourn the meeting.
- Passed unanimously.
- Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Matthew Blouin
Meeting Facilitator