

Town of Danby
Select Board Meeting Minutes
March 13, 2025
Town Office, Danby, VT 7:00pm
<https://www.danbyvt.org/government-information>

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

Public Present –Drea Stoddard, Dan Garceau, Pricilla Davenport, Jennifer Nichols, Hilda Haines, William Payne, Matt Blouin

Virtual Present – Sharon White, Lauren Dever, Bill Richardson, Gary Derr, Chris Hardaway, Doug White, Janice Arnold, Michael Lees, Terry Parker, Renata Aylward, Lizzy Lindenberg, Sarah Wilde

- **Call to order at 7:00pm**
- **Pledge of Allegiance**
- **Roll Call (Haines, Fuller, Abbott, Heaton, Bender)**
 - Present: Haines, Fuller, Heaton, Bender
 - Absent: Abbott (came in after roll call)
- **Procedure for Remote Access and Public Comment Statement**
 - Brad Bender
- **Motion to Set Agenda**
 - Adding the following to original Agenda draft
 - Add Wind River Environmental to Fleet Permits for approval
 - Motion to hire Robert Halligan as F/T Road Crew Worker
 - Under new business Maureen Staples letter asking pay increase for Listers
 - Letter read by Bender which covers her 10 years of experience and low pay they receive by town. She is requesting \$22/hr for her and increase for other listers per experience and education.
 - Motion by Haines, seconded by Fuller
 - Motion passes unanimously
- **Public Comment**
 - Gary Derr
 - Concern over Conflict of Interest policy is not accurate. The documents for review tonight are not a Conflict of Interest policy. It is a Code of Ethics policy and a policy on how to investigate conflict of interest. This should be clear that this is not a Conflict of Interest policy.
 - Fuller took off what was on the VLCT website.
 - Gary stated there is a different document available that should be used as part of the Act 171
 - Gary stated the municipal code is something different and is beyond the Code of Ethics and policy or how to investigate conflict of interest.
 - Heaton stated we need to review our existing (town) Conflict of Interest policy
 - Bender stated we will take this concern into consideration
 - Gary offered his help to the town to draft the policy
 - Lauren Dever had a comment but unfortunately there was technical difficulty on their computer and was unable to hear the board. She was curious why we didn't have video tonight? Later in meeting Bender stated the video is being professionally recorded and video will be posted online.
- **Motion to adopt minutes of Select Board Meeting of February 13, 2025 and March 6, 2025**
 - Motion by Haines, seconded by Abbott
 - Motion passes unanimously

- **Motions to appoint Tree Warden, Fence Viewers, 3 Planning Commission members, RRPC Rep and Alternate, Transportation Council, and Solid Waste Commission.**
 - Appoint Roger Bromley Tree Warden
 - Motion by Fuller, seconded by Heaton
 - Motion passes unanimously
 - Appoint Fence Viewers Ben Bromley and Greg Heaton
 - Motion by Haines and second Abbott
 - Motion passed unanimously
 - Letters provided by the following for Planning Commission (3 seats): Hilda Haines, Donald Keeler, Janice Arnold, and William Payne
 - Fuller Motioned for Hilda Haines, Donald Keeler, and Janice Arnold to be appointed for the (3) seats. Heaton seconded.
 - Steve Haines abstained
 - Fuller, Bender, Abbott, and Heaton voted to pass motion
 - Letter provided for Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC) Rep: Andrea Stoddard
 - Fuller motion to appoint Andrea Stoddard to RRPC Rep and second by Heaton
 - Abbott abstains
 - Fuller, Bender, Haines, and Heaton voted to pass motion
 - No Alternate RRPC appointed
 - Appoint Quint Pearce to Transportation Council
 - Motion by Fuller and seconded by Haines
 - Motion passed unanimous
 - Appoint Steve Haines to Solid Waste Commission with Ken Abbott as the alternate
 - Motion by Fuller and seconded by Heaton
 - Motion passed unanimously
- **Transfer Station Relocation discussion: Set date to meet with Mt. Tabor S B**
 - March 25th at 5PM or April 1st at 5PM proposed by Mt Tabor
 - Heaton asked about meeting on the site
 - Select Board would like to do at site or office on the 25th of March
- **Motion to allocate Silas Griffith funds for CMS playground**
 - Students have been asking for a climbing structure
 - Updates have been made over the years to playground
 - About 10k initially thought required to build and support project
 - 3K can be provided by PCE.
 - Pictures provided by Nichols and Davenport to the Select Board for the design of the structure. Insurance expectations have been met.
 - All dimensions are provided for the climbing structure and wood chips would be required under the structure.
 - Cost of \$8100 for the structure and think total will be \$8500 total investment.
 - Fuller motioned and Haines seconded for \$5500 from the Silas Griffith funds to be allocated.
 - Abbott asked if anything changes if school closed. Jennifer stated this will be a community use regardless if the school no longer exists in the future.
 - Insurance covers year round.
 - Bender stated this would become town property if school closed.
 - Unanimously passed
- **Review and update Public Comment Procedure Statement**
 - Brad asked if any changes requested

- Abbott stated that if person wants to present they should be in-person and not virtually present.
- Heaton agreed.
- Fuller stated system in place if someone can't
- Brad stated can move person back if unhappy circumstance occurs
- Appear in-person unless someone requests and there is a valid reason they can't appear
- Motion by Haines to amend public comment procedure to add "in-person" and seconded by Fuller
- Restated add the following "and appear in person at the meeting. Please contact the board if extenuating circumstances happen."
- Unanimously passed.
- Bender said at the beginning of the meeting people can bring up at public comment if they have concerns.
- Haines motion that new business comes up the floor will be open for public comment only on that item. Fuller seconded.
- Unanimously passed
- **Treasurer's Report: Michelle Bushee**
 - Bushee would like to bring up that she originally was not made aware she was to be here for the (Organizational Select Board) meeting . Bushee is frustrated and she is trying very hard to catch up and keep up. Bushee wants Bender to be forward and tell her what is required of her directly. Difficult to work when team members are not communicating with her.
 - Fuller asked if she was on Agenda to be present. Bushee said she was not and would have liked to be there to discuss the concerns.
 - Bushee would like Bender to come to her and include her in discussions. Bender said they resolved the problem. Bushee wants to be accountable, but can't if she is not involved.
 - Fuller brought up the retirement was not paid and Bushee apologized for that and owns the mistake. If there are financial implications for that mistake she will cover it personally.
 - Bender stated we have employees who are not happy with the retirement company the town is using. Bushee agrees that Mission Square is difficult to work with.
 - Bender and Bushee agree that if employees do not like the current retirement company (Mission Square) then they need to write to board with suggestions on other company(s) to use.
 - Haines brought up that Bushee continued to pull funds (as automatically pulled) on the retirement funds. That was all that was brought up at (last week's) meeting.
 - Bushee is looking forward to the next few months to continue to learn
 - Bender stated that the amount that was paid by employees was pulled and not deposited into employees retirement accounts.
 - Bushee stated it came out of their paychecks and now it is all corrected and deposits made to accounts (at Mission Square).
- **Report on Ethics policy, training, etc.: T. Fuller, Jr.**
 - Fuller stated there is a checklist and suggested the board go through it to ensure everyone on the same page.
 - Fuller stated we should likely have an alternate too and not just one person.

- Fuller motion Haines to be alternate for state ethics liaison and Heaton seconded
 - Passed unanimously
 - Fuller stated next on checklist is to post Copy of Ethics on the website
 - Fuller is suggesting we post entire Act 171 Municipal Code of Ethics (along with complaint form and checklist) along with investigation document.
 - Fuller thinks town ethics we currently have would be invalidated and new Act 171 would replace it.
 - Abbott asked if we adopt Act 171 along with investigation document?
 - Floor open for Gary Derr to speak. Code of Ethics Investigation and Enforcement Ordinance from state is something different. It still needs to be adopted, but is different than Code of Conduct.
 - Fuller agreed, but that too also has to be adopted.
 - Discussion to table, but Fuller wanted to go through rest of checklist.
 - Motion by Fuller to adopt Code of Ethics Investigation and Enforcement Ordinance.
 - Bender stated we can table it until next month.
 - Haines motioned to table Code of Ethics Investigation and Enforcement Ordinance to until next month (April) and Fuller seconded.
 - Passed unanimously.
 - Training requirements stated by Fuller
 - Fuller took training and it took 45 minutes to complete. All Select Board members need to take training as well.
 - Fuller stated when Act 171 is adopted that the current Danby code of ethics would be revoked.
 - Bender will look for clarity from town attorney (Barlow).
- **Motion to revoke old and adopt new Conflict of Interest Policy Bender stated we will table this for now.**
- **Road Commissioner's Report:**
 - Fuller stated at near 100% on sand and salt budget.
 - Fuller stated the maintenance budget for the town is over budget. For example put 22K into truck #2 so some high expenditures.
 - Haines stated truck 2 had new tires put on this year, oil pan, starter, sander was rebuilt, new brakes. Truck 3 also had lots of maintenance too. Haines stated when trucks get this old, they need to anticipate 10K per year.
 - Haines stated 4 culverts absolutely have to be done this summer. Ahead of closures will run traffic lights for a couple weeks to prepare ditches and such.
- **Approve Fleet Permits for: RK Miles, Markowski Excavating, Proctor Gas, Belden Construction, Wind River Environmental**
 - Haines for fleet approvals motion permits and seconded by Fuller
 - Motion passes unanimously.
- **Executive Session at 8:28PM**
- **Back from executive session at 8:42PM**
 - Fuller motion to hire Robert Halligan is tabled until April meeting, seconded by Haines
 - Motion passes unanimously.

- Blouin commented on some attendees who are attending virtually questioning lack of real-time video. Bender commented PEGTV recording will be posted online.
- **Old Business: None**
- **New Business:**
 - Bender to discuss Maureen letter for \$22/hr (increase from \$16/hr) whereas all other listers get \$15/hr
 - Bender stated this should have been asked prior to budget being set for this fiscal year and should have been asked back in the fall
 - Fuller commented that if Auditors are getting an increase to \$18 - was that also budgeted in? For Listers budgeted 15k (annually) and have \$9,200 left now.
 - Bender commented that now until July 1st is busy time for Listers.
 - Fuller stated we can give Maureen raise.
 - Bender stated all 3 Listers should be here at the same time to do the work.
 - Bender stated Maureen was a realtor and has been doing job for 10 years and he supports her.
 - Haines thinks there is money available to move.
 - Bender is concerned cost for signs is unknown and other expenses in town.
 - Fuller stated we should bring her up to same pay as the Auditors.
 - Bender doesn't think we can go over \$18.
 - Haines doesn't see union getting involved as the Lister is an elected official.
 - Bender is comfortable for \$18 for chair of listers and \$16 for others
 - Abbot motion for \$18 for Lister Chair and \$16 for other 2 Listers, seconded by Heaton
 - Motion passed unanimously.
- **Motion to Adjourn 8:55PM by Haines , seconded by Heaton**
 - **Motion passes unanimously**

Respectfully Submitted by:
Matt Blouin
Meeting Facilitator