

TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER  
SELECTBOARD / SEWER COMMISSIONERS  
MINUTES OF MARCH 25, 2025

Draft

Meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm by Owen Astbury, Chair

Present: Steve Tarleton, Selectboard Member, Nope Martin, Selectboard Member, Melissa Spear, Treasurer, Randy Kennedy, Road Foreman and Nancy Robinson, Clerk

Visitors: Charles Shackleton (Bridgewater Community Center), Michael Caduto, Butch Wardwell, (Bridgewater Planning Commission), Kyle Hansen (TRORC), Bruce Maxham, Josh Maxham, Kaleb McIntire, Ryan Townsend, George Spear, Mike Manning (Barnard Fire Dept.) Brian Bontrager, Kevin McCollister (Catamount Solar) Cindy Ansardy, Robert Brenna and Lynne Bertram.

Visitors via Zoom: Dennis & Joan Wideman, The Martins, Jerry Oppenheimer, Lisa's iPhone and an unknown phone # 802-291-0992.

Additions/changes to agenda: Owen would like to speak about current microphone/sound system at end of meeting. Steve asked about having a preliminary conversation about the town giving him a Right of Way over the Town owned Landfill property on River Road to land that he purchased from the Bridgewater Congregational Church. Will also discuss at end of meeting.

Nope moved to accept the minutes of March 11, 2025 as written. Steve 2<sup>nd</sup>. the motion. Melissa asked to clarify a couple of items in the Treasurer's report: check #'s should be from #2926-2929 (not 2928) and Audit report will be for FY 24 not 25. Zoom attendee's, Martins were listed twice in minutes. Motion to approve with changes carried.

Kyle Hansen (TRORC) and Butch Wardwell were in attendance to re-sign Planning Grant resolution as the board has changed since it was signed last month. Owen will now be listed as the Chief Municipal Officer and Steve an alternate. Kyle will be the grant administrator. Asked if there might be any local business's that would be willing to write letters of support for the grant. Both Charlie Shackleton from the Community Center and Bruce Maxham on behalf of the Bridgewater Volunteer Fire Department agreed to write support letters.

Charlie Shackleton and Michael Caduto came before the board to discuss options for placing solar on either the Fire Station roof or in the field between the Community Center and Fire Station. Community Center has raised funds to install solar as part of their energy resiliency plan. Fire Station roof was engineered to accommodate solar panels. There will not be any batteries on site. Charlies presented a comparison of roof vs ground mount; ground mount will provide about half of kilowatt capacity. No associated costs to Fire Department and taxpayers. Roof mounted array could save the Fire Station and Community Center approx. \$10,000 or so each year in electricity costs. Goal is to get the greatest public use from the system. Life expectancy of the roof and solar array are both expected to last about 20-25 years. Mr. Manning, representative from the Barnard Fire Department spoke about the pro's/con's of the solar array on their station. Nope asked about using Recreation Field to install solar panels. Regulations have changed in the past few months, no longer able to net meter unless buildings are on same site.

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Members of the Bridgewater Fire Department still have reservations about the array being installed on the roof, asked about how the panels will be attached to the roof, who will pay for roof replacement if roof fails after solar installation. Community Center/Catamount Engineer have tried to answer all of the Fire Departments concerns noted above and on attached memo. All parties have been working together on this project for several months.

Charlie/Community Center is willing to pay for performance bond from Catamount Solar. The bond will assure the Town and the Fire Department that the installer will install, service and maintain the panels in good working order during their useful life, properly remove them at the end and make whole the Town and Fire Department for any damage caused by the panels, their installation, faulty maintenance or removal. Charlie/Community Center will also check into getting an addendum to the insurance coverage. The Community Center will pay for any additional costs at this time and will discuss with the Fire Department shared future costs.

Owen moved to proceed with the roof mount on the Fire Station with the performance bond to be provided. Steve 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion and the motion carried unanimously. Bruce Maxham will continue to get additional information regarding solar installation for comparative information.

**Highway Report:** Randy reported that the roads are holding up well and they are patching as needed. Randy has been made aware that the town is at/near the top of the list for a paving grant award. Randy will be working with Chris Bump from VTRANS to apply for a paving grant for the North Bridgewater Road and will be putting together the annual financial plan with Chris. Randy has asked the paving company that is quoting a cost to topcoat around the new fire station for a quote to do the entire Southgate drive. Pump that was installed in the Ford didn't work, had to go back to Earle's, found that the hydraulic hoses were installed backwards. Box culvert for Pearson's Road is expected to be delivered by May 5<sup>th</sup>. Randy is speaking with Scott Jensen, River Management, may be able to get into the stream earlier than expected. Randy and Melissa are getting bid sheets together for other flood projects. Board signed annual Road & Bridge Standards Certificate. Jonathan (highway department) will be on vacation from April 15<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup>. This will be unpaid time off and was part of his hiring package.

**Treasurer's File:** Expense warrant #25-14 (ck #'s 21750-21772 and e-ck #'s 2930-2935) was signed. Melissa reported that a check on the warrant for \$750,000 is being sent to Mascoma Bank to further pay down the FEMA loan, new balance will be \$750,000. Town has received \$5,238,000 in FEMA funds which has been used to pay off/down 3 loans and deficits leaving a balance of \$716,616 to be used for future road & bridge projects. Working with Randy on RFP's for final projects. Discussion of vacancy in Asst. Treasurer position. Melissa asked the board to set a rate of pay for assistant. She would like to start training someone as assistant and to take over when she retires. Looking to hire someone for approx. 16 hours a week for now. Owen moved to set rate of pay between \$20-\$25.00 per hour depending on experience. Nope seconded the motion and motion carried. Melissa will be away on vacation from April 7-17<sup>th</sup>. Office will be closed. Melissa will not be here for the April 8<sup>th</sup> meeting, will have warrant ready for board to sign. Will do payroll the week before.

**Clerk's File:** Excess weight permits were approved for Amerigas, Barrett Trucking, Bazin Brothers, Country Fuels and Miller Construction.

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**Old business:** Nancy presented information on replacing the vault and 3 door locks in/on the Southgate House. One company is no longer installing locks as they don't have a locksmith. One company gave a quote of \$2,000 for the vault door alone and one company gave a quote of \$2,000 for doing the complete job. Owen moved to accept the quote of DJ's Keys for \$2,004.00 Steve 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion and motion carried. Work expected to be done in early April.

**New Business:** Lisa Putnam, Fire Department Auxiliary President, requested permission to use the field between the Fire Station and Community Center for the annual easter egg hunt on April 19<sup>th</sup>. Owen moved and Steve 2<sup>nd</sup> to approve the motion. Motion carried.

Owen reported that Don McNeill has submitted his letter of resignation from the Lister Board as of March 17<sup>th</sup>. Board accepted with thanks for his interest in the position. Nope moved to post vacancy notice until April 7<sup>th</sup>. Steve 2<sup>nd</sup> motion. Notice will include need to fill 2 vacant positions. Motion carried.

Discussion of appointing Professional Assessor to assist Kaleb. It was decided to search for a part-time assessor to work 8-12 hours week and be available on the same days/hours as Kaleb.

Nancy had a list of approved/qualified assessors provided by the VT Dept. of Taxes. Will contact several from the list to seek availability and costs. Will report at next meeting.

Ryan Townsend submitted a note of interest in one of the open Lister positions. Board thanked Ryan and will take interest into consideration.

Public Notice from VT Fish & Wildlife that Bear are waking up, time to take in bird feeders and keep trash picked.

Brief discussion of providing a better microphone/sound video system for meetings. Several town's use the "Owl". Lynne has a microphone that she purchased a few years ago that may work and would donate if it worked so that town wouldn't have to spend money on the "Owl" which costs approx. \$1,000. Lynne will bring her system to the office to try with the computer.

Steve asked the board to consider giving him a Right of Way across the Town owned Landfill property on River Road to the land that he purchased from the Bridgewater Congregational Church. Nope and Owen will look at the property and will discuss further at the next meeting.

**Visitors:** No comments

Being no further business, Owen moved to adjourn at 6:15 pm. Steve seconded the motion and motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

*Nancy Robinson*

Nancy Robinson  
Clerk