

APPROVED MINUTES
SELECTBOARD MEETING
TOWN OF BENSON, VT
NOVEMBER 24th, 2025, 5:00pm

Selectboard Present:

Brad Barrett, Jim Pritchard, Daric Brown, Guy Charlton

Selectboard Absent:

Daryl Burlett

Others Present:

Carrie LaFond (Selectboard Assistant), Heidi Chandler (Town Clerk/Treasurer)

Public Present: Paul LaFond, Robin Wilson, Norman Cohen, Diane Drake, Lisa Chalidze, Laura Nelson, Nancy Elkington, Jean McKeever, Marsha Cassel, Banita Baldwin, Leah Csiszar, Christa Capozzola, Jack Helm, Cara Cassino, John Hill, Jon Dodd

Call to Order:

Brad Barrett (Chair) called the meeting to order at 5:00pm

Approve Agenda:

Motion to approve the agenda as amended was made by Guy Charlton second by Jim Pritchard, motion passed unanimously.

Amendments to the Agenda:

Moved Declaration of Inclusion before Public Comment

Devon Neary - Benson Beautification

- Dubois and King have completed 30% of the design
- RRPC is willing to work on trying to acquire grant funding for construction
- Devon recommended doing projects in phases
- Funding for paving and parking improvements is not likely at this point

Public Comment Reminder:

- Reminder, the previous Selectboard has set limits of 2 minutes for public comment per topic, and residents are encouraged to have a spokesperson if there for a specific topic.

Norman Cohen - Vermont Declaration of Inclusion:

- Norm Cohen present to answer any questions about the Declaration of Inclusion

Motion by Guy Charlton to bring forward the Declaration of Inclusion and vote to sign, second by Jim Pritchard.

Discussion:

- Public present gave many reasons the board should sign the Declaration of Inclusion
- A Portion of the Selectboard felt it should be brought to the residents at Town Meeting
- Jean McKeever considered that if the Board does not sign the Declaration of Inclusion the town may miss out on grant opportunities

- Robin Wilson questioned why the Board would not want to sign
- Lisa Chalidze gave examples of how she personally has experienced discrimination
- Diane Drake spoke of the disabled population in town

Motion Vote- Poll of Board Brad Barrett-Yes, Guy Charlton- yes, Daric Brown-No, Jim Pritchard- No, Motion failed, to be re-voted at the next meeting on December 8th, 2025

Motion by Brad Barrett, second by Guy Charlton to table the Declaration of Inclusion until the December 8th selectboard meeting, motion carried.

Public Comment:

- Jon Dodd handed out a flyer on training for open meeting laws and encouraged the Board to attend and encouraged the board to wait and make any decisions on Selectboard rules and procedures until after the training.

Approve Selectboard Minutes:

Motion to approve November 11th, 2025, minutes as amended by Guy Charlton, second by Jim Pritchard to include the motion to pay MERP Grant expenses in the amount of 602.51, motion carried.

Pay Bills:

Motion by Guy Charlton to pay Regular Payroll in the amount of \$5,478.42 second by Jim Pritchard, motion carried.

Motion by Guy Charlton to pay Highway Payroll in the amount of \$5,198.58 second by Jim Pritchard, motion carried, Brad Barrett abstained.

Amended Motion by Guy Charlton to pay Regular Bills in the amount of \$110,805.42 second by Jim Pritchard, motion carried.

Highway Department:

Road Foreman Report

- Continue to get ready for winter
- Still hauling in gravel
- Continuing working on roadside mowing

Road Commissioner

- Town garage is having an issue with the building sweating; Efficiency VT is going to do an analysis for an air handler system.
- The PACIFIC grant will be used to purchase back up cameras for the town equipment for safety.
- Mr. Landon will be doing the electrical work for the pressure washer and the generator.

Transfer Station:

- All the metal including culverts have been cleaned up and everything is running smoothly.

Treasurer Report:

- Supplied to the board with current Profit and Loss Statement

Town Clerk Report:

Motion by Guy Charlton, second by Jim Pritchard to renew the CD for the reappraisal fund, motion carried.

Old Business:

MERP Grant Discussion- Tabled until 12/8/25

New Business:

Impact Questionnaire Outright VT: Tabled for Board review

Tree Removal by Town Office: Tabled until 12/8/25

Hayride:

- A Resident in town would like to take over coordinating the Haunted Hayride as a scholarship fundraiser
- Selectboard Assistant will look at how it needs to be set up so the insurance will cover it

New Wall in Town Office:

- Cost would be approximately \$11,434.50 out of Building Maintenance
- Windows would be the same looking for historical purposes
- Tabled until 12/8/25

Correspondence:

Email State VT- 22a Update-

- The State is putting the project on hold for funding
- John Hill stated the Governor should be brought into the discussion and made aware of how dangerous the road is.

Email Otter Creek Communications District Annual Report- Copy in Selectboard Minutes file (November)

Added Discussion-

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn by Jim Pritchard at 6:15 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Carrie LaFond
Selectboard Assistant

Documents referenced in these minutes can be found at the Benson Town Office.