TOWN OF MARLBORO, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
September 24, 2026

Meeting	Marlboro Select Board – Regular Meeting
Date / Time	Thursday, September 24, 2026, 6:06 PM
Location	Marlboro Community Center and via Zoom
Select Board Present	Molly Welch (Chair), Jeff Skramstad (Vice Chair), Kate Kirkwood
Staff Present	Nick Morgan (Town Administrator), Andrew Richardson (Road Supervisor)
Others Present	Tamara Stenn (Energy Committee, via Zoom), Chris Serkin (Board Chair, Marlboro Music), Gussie and Annie Bartlett (via Zoom)

1. Call to Order

Chair Molly Welch called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM.

2. Administrative Items

2.1 Monthly Signing of Guidelines

The monthly signing of guidelines was handled at the previous meeting.

2.2 Unscheduled Open Public Comment

There was no unscheduled public comment.

2.3 Approval of Minutes – September 15, 2026

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the September 15, 2026 meeting. Moved by Welch, seconded by Skramstad. ***Passed unanimously.***

2.4 Pay Orders

Pay orders were reviewed and signed.

3. Marlboro Volunteer Fire Company – Potential Transition to Town-Run Fire Company

Kate Kirkwood reported on her phone conversations with MVFC Board Chair Carol Ann Lobo Johnson about next steps in a potential transition of the Marlboro Volunteer Fire Company (MVFC) from a private non-profit to a Town-run fire company. The discussion centered on timing, with the goal of presenting the proposal to voters at Town Meeting 2027, and on the urgency of the MVFC's situation.

BEGIN ZOOM RECORDING

Audio of the meeting is available on the Town of Marlboro SoundCloud page. Due to a Zoom error, approximately the first 10 minutes of the meeting, including the beginning of this item, were not recorded or transcribed.

3.1 Report from Kate Kirkwood

- Ms. Lobo Johnson stated that the MVFC's small group of volunteers is exhausted and stretched thin by medical and family issues, and that no one else has stepped

Note: These minutes are generated with the assistance of ZOOM generated transcript and the CLAUDE.AI. Minutes are reviewed for accuracy and completeness.

forward. She indicated the current board can continue until Town Meeting 2027 but not beyond, and that she would likely step down if the transition is not presented to voters then.

- The MVFC has prepared a proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and considers the next step to rest with the Town.
- The MVFC confirmed it will pay attorney Bob Fisher to review the MOU. Ms. Lobo Johnson had not yet heard back from Mr. Fisher, and Nick Morgan followed up with him by email.

3.2 Financial Considerations

- As understood from the MVFC, existing operations are funded through donations, grants, and existing MVFC funds, which are expected to continue.
- The primary new cost to the Town would be approximately $30,000 per year for two part-time paid positions (an administrator and an assistant) currently filled by volunteers. This amount would need to be included in the Town budget and voted on.
- The MVFC would like to know whether it could discontinue its ongoing fundraising if the transition proceeds.
- Andrew Richardson asked whether anyone had estimated what it would cost for neighboring departments to cover the Town through mutual aid if the fire company were dissolved. The Board agreed this would be worth looking into.

3.3 Other Discussion

- Board members noted they had not yet seen the MOU and requested it be provided before any further meeting.
- The Board discussed who would handle administrative functions (paying bills, ordering supplies, etc.) under a Town-run model. It was noted that the Town already handles some financial functions, while other administrative duties are currently handled within the fire company.
- Suggestions included contacting PACIF regarding potential effects on Town and homeowner insurance rates, and requesting that PACIF inspect the fire station and provide prioritized (high/moderate/low) safety recommendations to help inform a budget.

3.4 Next Steps

Nick Morgan will email Ms. Lobo Johnson to propose the October 22 meeting (subject to Mr. Fisher's availability) and request that the MOU be sent in advance so the Board can review it. The October 8 agenda is already full with health insurance and the recycling center relocation. Board members may send Nick Morgan any additional items they would like the MVFC to address.

4. Highway Department

4.1 Recycling Center Relocation

The recycling center relocation discussion was tabled to the October 8 meeting because the necessary participants were unable to attend.

Note: These minutes are generated with the assistance of ZOOM generated transcript and the CLAUDE.AI. Minutes are reviewed for accuracy and completeness.

4.2 General Updates

There were no general updates. Andrew Richardson reported ongoing problems with drivers failing to slow down or wait at highway work sites, including during stump removal that day, despite warning signage and equipment in the road. The Board discussed the safety concerns.

5. Public Comment

Gussie and Annie Bartlett stated they had joined to listen to the recycling and fire department discussions. Chair Welch explained that the recycling center item was moved to October 8 and that the Board is evaluating whether a safer location exists than the highway garage campus, due to concerns about heavy equipment, driving behavior, and children on site. She also explained that the all-volunteer non-profit fire company model is becoming untenable for a small town and that the Board is exploring alternatives, with a fuller discussion tentatively planned for October 22.

6. Windham County Regional Policing

- The Board reviewed the proposed bylaws of the Windham County Law Enforcement Governance Council, which consists of one representative from each participating town. Officers have been elected, and the Council will meet quarterly, though it has been meeting weekly during start-up.
- The Council's initial work includes adopting bylaws, defining service levels and expectations, and developing performance measures for the Windham County Sheriff's Office. Sheriff Mark Anderson is leading the effort for now and will eventually step back and have the Council negotiate services with the Sheriff's Office.
- A PowerPoint presentation from the Council was forwarded to Nick Morgan for distribution to the Board.
- Andrew Richardson asked whether the Town's contracted Sheriff's hours (approximately 17 hours per month) could include more patrols on main roads such as Higley Hill, Ames Hill, Augur Hole, and Town Hill Road. Nick Morgan will write to Sheriff Anderson with the request.

7. Conversation with Chris Serkin, Marlboro Music

Chris Serkin, Board Chair of Marlboro Music and a lifelong Marlboro resident, attended to introduce himself, describe Marlboro Music's plans for the campus, and answer questions. Key points:

- Marlboro Music, founded by his grandfather Rudolf Serkin, runs a seven-week summer program centered on multi-generational collaboration among musicians. Public concert revenue is only about 4–6% of operating revenue.
- Marlboro Music acquired the former Marlboro College campus defensively after Democracy Builders failed, not as part of a strategic plan. Its long-term lease on the property was kept intact on legal advice to protect against potential creditor claims. That risk has now largely passed.
- Potash Hill was created as a separate entity so the campus could take on ventures without risking Marlboro Music's mission. Efforts to attract anchor tenants, including regional colleges, were unsuccessful, in part because the campus is unavailable during the summer.

Note: These minutes are generated with the assistance of ZOOM generated transcript and the CLAUDE.AI. Minutes are reviewed for accuracy and completeness.

- Campus operating costs are approximately $1.7 million per year, while net rental income was estimated at no more than $300,000–$500,000.
- About a year and a half ago, the campus was rebranded as "the Campus at Marlboro Music." Potash Hill remains its own legal entity with its own board. The current strategy is to host high-quality events (music, lectures, dance residencies) that benefit the community and help build donor relationships over the long term.
- Marlboro Music currently runs a structural deficit on the campus but has sufficient reserves that it is not a short-term threat.
- Former Marlboro College maintenance staff continue to maintain the property. Beyond the three new houses recently built, there are no plans to change the campus footprint.
- Events are listed on the Marlboro Music website calendar. Mr. Serkin, who is in town through December, invited the Board and community to contact him with questions or ideas.

Board members suggested ideas including a Bread Loaf-style residency model, winter intensives, retreats for advanced amateur musicians, and local performing arts groups. Mr. Serkin noted that staff capacity is limited and that even paying renters often generate little net revenue once heating, plowing, and staffing are covered, but that Marlboro Music tries to accommodate groups that can cover their costs.

8. Energy Committee – Community Workshop

Tamara Stenn of the Energy Committee described an upcoming community workshop, "What Could Marlboro Do with Energy?", to be held Saturday, October 24, from 2:00 to 4:00 PM at the Marlboro Community Center. The workshop is funded through Energy Committee grant funds and will be facilitated by Ms. Stenn and economist Nick Shrefkin. It will be the first community-wide development visioning effort since 2010.

- The workshop will use a World Café format with topic stations, a gallery walk, and sticker voting, with ideas tied to action steps and volunteers. Results will remain on display at the Community Center for about three weeks for additional input, followed by a written report.
- BCTV, SeVEDS, BDCC, and Jacob Smith of the Marlboro Music campus are expected to be involved. Participation is open to ages 12 and up, with story time offered for younger children.
- Ms. Stenn requested the Board's help in getting the word out. Suggestions included presenting at the Select Board's informational meeting that Saturday; posting on the Marlboro Community Facebook page, the Town Facebook page, and Front Porch Forum; using the Town's sign; posting flyers at the co-op, local bakeries, and restaurants; contacting Green Mountain Power, DVFiber, and other organizations; and reaching families at school bus pick-up.
- Chris Serkin noted that expanding solar on the campus is currently limited by the lack of three-phase power.

9. Informational Meeting – Saturday

The Board discussed plans for its first informational meeting of the season on Saturday at 2:00 PM at the Marlboro Community Center, followed by a public hearing on a subdivision. The Board will explain how residents can petition to place articles on the Town Meeting warning and outline the budget schedule: the Town budget at a Saturday meeting in

Note: These minutes are generated with the assistance of ZOOM generated transcript and the CLAUDE.AI. Minutes are reviewed for accuracy and completeness.

November, the road budget at the regular Thursday meeting in December, no meeting in January unless needed, and the standard informational meeting at the end of February.

10. Executive Session

No executive session was held.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Nick Morgan, Town Administrator 9/29/26

Minutes recorded by: Nicholas Morgan - Town Administrator Date: 09/17/2026.

Approved by Select Board at _____ meeting

DRAFT

Note: These minutes are generated with the assistance of ZOOM generated transcript and the CLAUDE.AI. Minutes are reviewed for accuracy and completeness.