TOWN OF MARLBORO, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
October 22, 2026

Meeting	Marlboro Select Board – Regular Meeting
Date / Time	Thursday, October 22, 2026, 5:05 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), Rebecca Sevigny (Treasurer), Andrew Richardson (Road Supervisor, via Zoom)
Others Present	Carol Ann Lobo Johnson (President, MVFC Board), Michael Schneider (Treasurer, MVFC Board), Dan Macarthur (School Board), Ty Gibbons(Recycling Volunteer Head), Mike Purcell (Hogback Preservation Commission), Laura Sibilia (BDCC)

1. Call to Order

Chair Molly Welch called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM. Board members had already signed the Guidelines of Conduct for the month. Modifications to the agenda were noted in italics. There was no unscheduled public comment.

BEGIN ZOOM RECORDING

Audio of the meeting is available on the Town of Marlboro SoundCloud page.

2. Administrative Items

2.1 Approval of Minutes

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the October 8, 2026 meeting. Moved and seconded. ***Passed.***

2.2 Pay Orders

Pay orders were in process during the meeting.

2.3 Regular Meeting Start Time

The Board discussed returning to a 5:00 PM start time for regular meetings, as before COVID, so meetings would generally end by 7:00 PM. Road Supervisor Andrew Richardson said he could attend at 5:00 PM.

MOTION: To move the regular Select Board meeting start time from 6:00 PM to 5:00 PM. Moved and seconded. ***Passed.***

2.4 Bridge Letter

A Board member asked why the bridge letter listed a 33-ton gross weight limit while the sign shown on the back read 43 tons. Andrew Richardson explained that the sign was only an example, and that the tonnage stated in the letter is what the bridge is rated for. The Board signed the letter. Nick Morgan will email it and copy Mr. Richardson.

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

Carol Ann Lobo Johnson (President) and Michael Schneider (Treasurer) of the Marlboro Volunteer Fire Company (MVFC) board joined the Board. Fire Chief Danny was unable to attend.

3.1 Memorandum of Understanding

- Ms. Lobo Johnson presented the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which outlines the transition in four phases. Phase 1 (assessment, feasibility, and initial outreach) is complete.
- Phase 2 is under way: formalizing the MOU, gathering the Board's input, holding a formal vote of the volunteers (who have given verbal support), preparing a budget, and educating the town.
- Phase 3 is the Town Meeting vote in March. It would be followed by dissolution of the non-profit and transfer of ownership and assets, roughly March through October.
- Phase 4 is stabilization the following fall.
- The MVFC will pay for Town attorney Bob Fisher's review of the MOU. Nick Morgan reported that Mr. Fisher asked to receive the MOU and a detailed list of questions in advance, so he can prepare a written memo before meeting with the Board. Workers' compensation was noted as already covered, since fire company members are covered under the Town's policy.
- Board members said their concerns are mainly financial, and that the Town needs to do its due diligence before committing. Ms. Lobo Johnson said the MVFC board is burned out but wants the transition done properly to protect the progress the fire company has made.
- It was noted that Berlin, Vermont made a similar transition. Berlin's experience suggests that strong project management and bringing long-time volunteers on board are the keys to success. Ms. Lobo Johnson reported that the MVFC's longest-serving members have raised questions but support the change.

3.2 Staffing

- The MVFC already has two paid part-time assistants at $20 per hour: an assistant to the board and an assistant to the fire chief.
- Many of the board's current administrative duties could shift to these assistants, while the fire chief would take on responsibilities such as budgeting. The MVFC plans a workflow meeting to assign responsibilities.
- The fire chief would receive a stipend, set midway between what area departments pay (for example, Dover at the high end and Whitingham at the low end). The stipend is the only new cost beyond current operating expenses. Board members noted that tax treatment of the stipend may need review, and that the chief could eventually be paid like other Town employees, which would cost more.
- The Board discussed whether a Town committee, similar to other Town commissions, could oversee the fire department so the Select Board is not overloaded. Finding volunteers to serve was noted as a challenge.

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3.3 Proposed Budget

- The MVFC presented its current budget, revised current-year figures, and a recommended budget for the first year under Town operation. It was noted that the MVFC budget is on a fiscal year and should be converted to a calendar year to match the Town's.
- The MVFC proposes asking the Town for $10,000 less in capital funds and $10,000 more in operating funds ($58,000, up from $48,000). The combined request is the same as last year. The total operating budget is about $65,000.
- Because of the transition, the MVFC expects only about $8,000 from its annual appeal this year, compared with over $31,000 last year. No appeal is expected after a Town takeover. The MVFC plans to set up a fire company auxiliary, ideally under the Marlboro Alliance (meeting with the Alliance board on December 7), to receive donations. It was noted that Vermont towns may accept charitable donations.
- Other items: about $20,000 for building repairs (siding, flooring, electrical, plumbing); breathing apparatus (SCBA) spending reduced to $16,000 next year thanks to turnout gear donated by the Waltham, Massachusetts fire department; and $6,200 for bookkeeping and the IRS 990 filing, which would largely go away under Town operation.
- Andrew Richardson noted that turnout gear has a limited service life under NFPA standards (about 10 years) whether or not it is used, and asked that the Town be aware of these ongoing replacement costs. Ms. Lobo Johnson said equipment replacement is planned for in the capital budget and that the MVFC keeps cash reserves for unexpected costs.
- It was confirmed that PACIF insures the fire company's buildings and equipment and that the MVFC reimburses the Town. VLCT recently inspected the firehouse and recommended grounding outlets, inspecting the oil burner, and labeling extinguishers. Those items are being addressed.
- Mr. Richardson suggested the MVFC make clear to voters that the Town already funds most of the fire company's budget, so the change should not significantly affect taxes.

3.4 Public Outreach and Timeline

- The MVFC will present at the Board's informational meetings on November 14 (2:00–5:00 PM), December 10 (5:00–7:00 PM), and the statutory informational meeting on February 27. Proposed warning articles would cover the operating budget, the capital budget, and whether the Town should take over the fire company.
- The MVFC plans to mail a letter explaining the transition in place of its annual appeal. The Board recommended sending it to Marlboro residents and voters only, adding the informational meeting dates, and clarifying that no change in cost is expected in the first year. Copies will also be available at the Community Center and posted on Facebook, Front Porch Forum, and the new Town website. The Town Clerk has not allowed the electronic sign to be used for this type of message.
- Kate Kirkwood will gather information from Putney, Vernon, and Rockingham on their fire department studies and on how the Windham County Law Enforcement Governance Council's work may affect emergency dispatch, and will report back.

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- Chair Welch read into the record a message from Andrew Richardson thanking the MVFC board for its long and difficult work rebuilding the fire company.

Next steps: the MVFC will send the MOU to Mr. Fisher. The Board, and copy Nick Morgan. Board members will review the MOU. Nick Morgan will ask Mr. Fisher to attend the November 12 meeting, or a special meeting later in November if needed.

4. Recycling Center

Dan MacArthur and Ty Gibbons joined the discussion.

- Chair Welch summarized that PACIF found safety concerns with residents driving among highway equipment at the recycling center. Moving it to the school was considered but set aside, partly because the Town's long-term ownership of the school is uncertain and concerns over safety issues with school bus loading near this site.
- Temporary solution: the recycling center will be closed while the highway crew is working. It will be open from 3:00 PM to 7:00 AM on weekdays and all weekend. Andrew Richardson said VLCT has approved this as a temporary measure, provided the Town finds a permanent location. Signs have been ordered, and the change will take effect November 9, 2026. Mr. Richardson will start with signs and possibly cones, adding chains only if needed. Nick Morgan will post the change on Front Porch Forum and Facebook and repost it regularly.
- Permanent solution: the Town Hill site near the former animal control building, at an estimated cost of $15,000 to $20,000 for a 50-by-50-foot pad set back 20 to 30 feet from Town Hill Road, using fill from Town ditching. Work could be done in spring (about April or May). The adjacent wetland is at most Class 2, requiring a 50-foot buffer, and is not Class 1. The old animal control building is in poor condition and could be removed for safety. Funding would go through the budget or a ballot article.
- Ty noted that bins in a more isolated location may see more dumping, and suggested fencing to keep blowing trash being blown around into the surrounding arer. Solar-powered trail cameras were suggested as a deterrent. It was noted that four warning letters were recently sent to residents whose mail was found in dumped trash.
- Keeping two bins rather than one was favored, since dumping decreased after the switch to two bins.

5. Stark Road – Response Letter

The Board reviewed a letter to Stark Road residents explaining its decision to keep the no-winter-maintenance designation. The letter notes that no one lives on the roughly one-mile section between Fox Road and the Brattleboro line, that Brattleboro does not provide winter maintenance on its portion, and that extending the private plow contract to the Marlboro section would cost $5,000 or more per year, exact amount to be determined. The Board suggests residents ask Brattleboro to help extend that contract.

MOTION: To approve and send the letter regarding winter maintenance on Stark Road to Brattleboro residents on the Brattleboro side and landowners on the Marlboro side. Moved and seconded. ***Passed.***

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6. Highway Department Updates

Andrew Richardson had no general updates. The guardrail at the top of Higley Hill was repaired after a crash at a cost of about $2,500. The Town may seek reimbursement.

7. Policies and Procedures

7.1 Complaint Procedure

In response to Town employees being confronted by residents, the Board reviewed a statement directing all complaints to the Select Board by email, by a complaint form (designed by Rebecca Sevigny, available at the Town Office and on the website documents page), or at open public comment, rather than to employees on the job. Nick Morgan will post a notice on Front Porch Forum and the new website, and will prepare business cards that highway crew and other staff can hand out. Adding the notice to the Town Meeting ballot mailing was considered but would roughly double mailing costs. The statement will be added to the Town's policy documents.

7.2 Financial Procedures for Commissions and Committees

The Board reviewed a letter to Town commissions and committees setting out financial procedures: budgets must be submitted by a set deadline or the commission or committee will receive the minimum $500; Select Board permission is required before contacting the Town attorney; and outside contractors (such as minute takers) may not be hired without approval.

MOTION: To include the letter to commissions and committees in the Town's general policy documents. Moved and seconded. ***Passed.***

8. Hogback Preservation Commission – Budget and Benedict Cottage

Mike Purcell of the Hogback Preservation Commission (HPC) met with the Board.

- Benedict Cottage on Route 9 needs to be demolished, as it remains an attractive nuisance. The materials inspection found asbestos tiles (about $1,200 to remove), and the current quote for demolition totals about $29,000. Because the cost exceeds $25,000, two additional bids are needed (a documented no-bid counts). The plan is to put the demolition on the March ballot. If voters decline, the HPC will budget for it in smaller amounts over several years.
- Mr. Purcell asked whether some of the cell tower lease revenue could be dedicated to the HPC. The Board advised that the lease revenue goes to the general fund, and that the HPC should instead submit a budget request for what it actually needs.
- Insurance: HPC-organized volunteer activities, such as trail maintenance, are covered by PACIF and do not need a facility use agreement. Contractors the HPC hires must carry their own insurance. Rebecca Sevigny will confirm with PACIF.
- The HPC will submit a written request for $1,000 for operations and $1,000 for a capital account for future building needs. Budget requests are due by November 14 if possible, and no later than December 1.

9. Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC)

Laura Sibilia of BDCC gave the annual presentation on BDCC's programs and services. Key points:

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- BDCC is the region's development corporation. SeVEDS develops the five-year regional economic development strategy (CEDS), which BDCC uses to shape programs for communities, businesses, and the workforce.
- Programs include business incubator space, technical assistance and financing for new businesses, workforce development (including LNA and CDL training), career programs for regional high schools, newcomer events, employee ownership and succession planning, and the Southern Vermont Economy Project's municipal programs (including a "Get on Board" program for new board members).
- BDCC is also convening towns with vacant school buildings and offered facilitation help for town planning efforts, such as the upcoming community visioning event.
- BDCC's funding request is level-funded and will remain a separate warning article. BDCC will attend the February 27 statutory informational meeting at 2:00 PM.
- For business financing, residents may contact Danny Delaney or Tim O'Neill at BDCC.

10. Town Administrator Report

- Chair Welch will not be at the November 12 meeting. Vice Chair Jeff Skramstad will run it.
- A wastewater problem on Route 9 within the right-of-way has been resolved.
- The Road Standards will be released and noticed, effective November 2, 2026 pending verification from town attorney.
- The corrected Subdivision Regulations will be sent to the Planning Commission. If accepted, the Board will hold a public hearing and then adopt them. If the process extends into January, the regulations may go on the ballot instead.
- Several subdivisions are expected, including a simple one to convey land to a conservancy.

11. Executive Session

MOTION: Finding that premature general public knowledge would be detrimental, to enter executive session to discuss personnel issues under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(A) at 7:15 PM. Moved and seconded. ***Passed.***

MOTION: To exit executive session at 7:28 PM. Moved and seconded. ***Passed.***

No action was taken as a result of the executive session.

12. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 7:29 PM. Moved and seconded. ***Passed.***

Respectfully submitted,
Nick Morgan, Town Administrator
10/26/26

Approved by Select Board at ___ meeting

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