

2025-11-03 Board of Selectmen Minutes

Town of Canterbury, NH
Board of Selectmen
Date: 2025 November 3
Location: Meeting House

Selectmen: Scott Doherty (Chair), Beth Blair, Calvin Todd

Town Administrator: Ken Folsom

Budget Committee: Tyson Miller, Jan Stout, Cheryl Gordon, Bob Steenson, Randi Johnson, Kelly Short, Bob Scarponi (via Zoom)

Others Present: Kal McKay (Admin Assistant), Edgar Rivera (Libertad Press NE), David Day, Kent Ruesswick, Rich Marcou

1. Call to Order
 - a. The meeting was called to order at 5:01 p.m.
2. Public Hearing to Accept Funds
 - a. Scott moved to open a public hearing per RSA 31:95-b to accept grant funds from FEMA in the amount of \$10,363.19. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried. The public hearing was opened at 5:01 p.m.
 - b. Ken explained this is grant money being used to buy equipment to outfit the fire engine that is being delivered in May 2026.
 - c. The hearing was left open to allow time for comments.
3. Public Hearing to Change Speed Limit
 - a. See Selectboard minutes 10/20/25 section 3.a.iii. for previous discussion.
 - b. Scott moved to open a public hearing regarding the proposal to set the speed limit to 25 mph on Old Boyce Road beginning about 50 yards south of the southernmost curve in the road (Node 18 on the 2024 NH DOT Node Map), the entirety of Riverland Road, the entirety of Oxbow Pond Road, and the entirety of Lois Lane. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried. The public hearing was opened at 5:02 p.m.
 - c. David Day of Oxbow Pond Road
 - i. Mr. Day asked how the Selectboard arrived at the idea of lowering the speed limit.
 - ii. Scott explained that a family who lives on Old Boyce Road came to the Selectboard and discussed their concerns about speed and safety for walkers on the road. The Selectboard members each drove the road multiple times and decided that reducing the speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph would be appropriate.
 - iii. Mr. Day spoke about how he has not seen any speed enforcement being done on the road. He has seen a noticeable uptick in traffic during the summer with people going to the beach. He was doubtful that changing the speed limit would be effective and urged increasing police presence instead.
 - iv. Scott explained that the Police Dept. is understaffed and spread thin across a number of roads experiencing speeding issues. The police did a speed survey on Old Boyce Road and found that besides one car going 52 mph, there was very little speeding on that road.
 - v. Mr. Day explained that his security cameras showed that the police used to patrol the area 40-50 per year, but in the last 3-4 years, there have been essentially no patrols.
 - vi. Scott said he will bring up the patrolling issue with Police Chief Crotty.
 - vii. There was discussion about how despite there not being any real speeding problems, the road still doesn't feel safe for walkers, especially around the two sharp corners. The

Selectboard previously decided to add signage and chevrons to highlight how tight the corner is for motorists.

- viii. Mr. Day reported that a house on one of the corners has added a mobile home to the property and they are using the grass on the corner as a driveway for two cars. He has almost hit them when they back out onto the road.

- d. The hearing was left open to allow time for more comments.

4. Administration

- a. The Selectboard signed:

- i. Scott made a motion to sign the Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$540,842.94. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
- ii. Scott made a motion to sign the Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$52,888.48. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
- iii. Interfund transfer from TDBank Operating A/C to Lucia Elkins SW Poor in the amount of \$25. This is to refund the trust unspent money for a burial from earlier in the year.
- iv. Application for Veteran's Tax Credit Map 259 Lot 15 in the amount of \$500.
- v. Yield Tax Levy in the amount of \$2,811.29 for Map 229 Lots 1 and 1-1 and \$421.77 for Map 229 Lot 2.

- b. Previous Minutes Approval

- i. Beth suggested to change line 312 from "to see how effective it has been" to "get their opinions on whether signage like this is effective."
- ii. Scott made a motion to approve the public minutes as amended for the Selectboard meeting on October 20, 2025. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried. Calvin abstained since he wasn't at the meeting in question.

5. Public Hearing to Accept Funds continued

- a. Scott moved to accept the grant funds from FEMA in the amount of \$10,363.19. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
- b. Scott moved to close the public hearing at 5:22 p.m. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.

6. Public Hearing to Change Speed Limit continued

- a. Beth said she still thinks lowering the speed limit is a good idea, especially with the additional signage that will be put up on the corners. Calvin agreed.
- b. Beth moved to set the speed limit to 25 mph on Old Boyce Road beginning about 50 yards south of the southernmost curve in the road (Node 18 on the 2024 NH DOT Node Map), the entirety of Riverland Road, the entirety of Oxbow Pond Road, and the entirety of Lois Lane. Scott seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
- c. Beth moved to close the public hearing. Scott seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.

7. Applying for Local Emergency Operations Plan Update Grant

- a. See Selectboard minutes 10/20/25 section 3.b.x. for previous discussion.
- b. Ken and Fire Chief Gamache met today. They have finished drafting the application for the grant and are just waiting on a form from Homeland Security.

8. Streetlights

- a. See Selectboard minutes 10/20/25 section 5.c. for previous discussion.
- b. Unutil informed Ken that they are willing to switch four of our streetlights to LED for no charge. We would just have to provide police officers for traffic control on Center Road and Southwest Road.
- c. Ken went out and found all of the streetlights in town: Southwest Road about 150 ft south of intersection with Kimball Pond Road, in the Center by the cemetery, Hackleboro Road in front of the Sam Lake House, Old Tilton Road at the corner with Center Road, West Road at the I-93 North on/off ramp (but not at the South on/off ramp).

- d. There is no requirement to switch to LED. We don't have an estimate on the electrical cost savings, but switching to LED would presumably result in some amount of savings. The Town gets one bill for all outdoor lighting, so we don't know the exact cost per pole.
 - e. There was discussion about the necessity for some of these streetlights. No one present was sure why there was a light on Southwest Road or West Road or why the Town would pay the bill since those are State roads. Everyone agreed the lights in the Center were needed, but there doesn't appear to be any reason currently for the other two.
 - f. There was discussion about the lighting changes that LED will cause. Bob Steenson suggested warning homeowners before the switch since LED lighting is noticeably brighter.
 - g. Ken will tell Unutil to proceed with changing the lights in the center, but will hold off on the other two until he gets more information about their necessity and ownership.
9. Budget Committee
- a. Several documents were provided to the Budget Committee and attendees including Budget v Actual 10/30/25, 2026 Draft Budget 11/3/25, CIP Draft, Aries Engineering Report Summary, and 2026 Potential Capital Projects.
 - b. Healthcare
 - i. Ken summarized the issues the Town has faced with healthcare this year. From 2024 to 2025 the Town switched from HealthTrust to NH Interlocal Trust because it had better prices. In May 2025, NHIT announced they were closing and all of their customers needed to switch to new providers starting July 1st. Canterbury switched to SchoolCare because they offered the exact same plan with Harvard Pilgrim and that consistency would ease the transition for employees.
 - ii. Ken and Kal attended the SchoolCare annual meeting this morning. Their 2026 rates are not out yet, but they are anticipating an 8-35% increase depending on the experience (claims history) of the group.
 - iii. Ken and Kal also met with HealthTrust and their 2026 rates are about 13% higher than what we have right now.
 - iv. Ken is waiting to hear back from SchoolCare and CGI. We should have solid numbers to present at the next meeting.
 - c. Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)
 - i. The office staff, Planning Board, and CNHRPC have been working on a new CIP. The latest copy was distributed.
 - ii. Ken reviewed potential capital improvement costs and debt payments for 2026.
 - 1. The Highway Dept. needs to replace the broken water truck with a slide in water tank. It would cost \$18K and the money could come from the Highway Equipment CRF.
 - 2. T1 is a 2011 International truck that needs to be replaced. It would cost \$250K. If we order it in March/April, we won't receive it until January 2027. \$150K could come from the Highway Trucks CRF, most of the remainder could come from the Highway Equipment CRF, and whatever is left would have to be raised through taxes.
 - 3. A waste oil burner for the Highway Dept. would be \$20K and need to be raised through taxes. The Town has had a hard time finding companies to take the waste oil that is collected at the Transfer Station. Currently a local car repair shop is taking it, but there is no contract and they have refused to take it in the past. The cost to dispose of the oil with Clean Harbors is exorbitant; we have had to do that when the oil became contaminated. This project would install an oil burner at the Municipal Complex in the Highway bay area. The doors open and close a lot in that room during the winter, so this would help save on heating costs.
 - 4. The Fire Dept. needs to replace Rescue 1. The new engine that will be delivered in May will be able to hold all of the heavy rescue equipment, so Rescue 1 would only be

- needed for medical calls. Chief Gamache would like to use the current Command Car for Rescue 1 and then get a new pickup truck for the Command Car. There is \$178K in the Rescue Truck CRF, which would be enough to buy a new pickup and outfit the Command Car as Rescue 1. This plan is significantly cheaper than buying a new rescue truck.
5. The Police Dept. would like to replace one of the 2018 cruisers for \$67K.
 6. The last bond payment for the Morrill Road Bridge/Command Car/Police Cruisers will be in 2026 in the amount of \$52,550.
 7. The \$490K bond for the fire engine to be delivered in May will be purchased in January. This will cost about \$50K annually for the next 10 years.
- iii. There was discussion about the waste oil burner.
1. The oil will need to be transported from the Transfer Station to the Highway Garage. The plan is to get a plastic tank with a metal cage that could be placed in the back of a truck and use an electric pump to transfer the oil into/out of the tank. This would minimize the chances of a spill.
 2. We could also put the burner at the Transfer Station, but the heat would be wasted.
 3. The vendor for the burner is confident that any contaminants would be filtered out and not damage the burner. The burner is Underwriters Laboratory and EPA approved.
- iv. Bob Steenson asked if the Highway truck replacement was needed. Ken explained that it is needed for snow plowing. We could get by with 4 vehicles, but the optimum is 5 trucks for the 5 routes.
- v. There was discussion about the proposal for new police cruisers.
1. Bob Steenson and Scarponi both recalled the fight there was to get a 2nd police car.
 2. Ken explained that for recruitment and retention purposes, the Town is offering take home cruisers for officers who live within a 30 mile radius. All neighboring towns offer this. The Police Dept. currently has 4 cruisers and the Chief's car.
 3. Steenson suggested having 3 cruisers and a regular car for commuting.
 4. The two 2018 cruisers were lease to own. The two 2021 cruisers were part of the bond that will be paid off next year.
 5. The Dept. planned to replace the 2018 cruisers in 5 years; it has now been 7 years.
 6. The waiting period for a cruiser to be delivered and equipped is ~9 months.
 7. Two of the cruisers are hybrids. Between that and the vacancy, the fuel budget for this department is only half spent.
- vi. There was discussion about a calculation error on the CIP. Ken will fix it.
- vii. There was discussion about saving for the next fire engine.
1. The CIP shows depositing \$50K into the Fire Engine CRF beginning in 2026.
 2. Engines that are bought today are \$1.2-1.3 million, have a 5-year delivery delay, and the contracts have a clause that allows them to pass on any cost increases to the town.
 3. There is a federal investigation underway about price fixing in this industry to address those problems.
 4. If we wanted to replace the 2015 engine in 2030, we would have needed to order it this year. The 2015 engine is still working well, but it is the next in line for replacement.
 5. Ideally the town would have enough saved up to pay half in cash and half with a bond. To meet that goal, we may need to increase the annual contribution to the CRF.
- viii. The loader at the Highway Department needs \$15K of repairs. Road Agent John O'Connor thinks that these repairs would allow the life of the vehicle to be extended two more years. A new loader has been put in the CIP for 2027.
- d. 2026 Independence Day Fireworks

- i. In 2026 the 4th of July will be on Saturday. The company we have do our fireworks show let us know that it would cost \$25K to do the show on July 4th, but only \$10K to do it the weekend before or after.
- ii. There was discussion about if the fireworks should happen on 7/4, the weekend before, or not at all. The general consensus was to do them the weekend before.
- e. Aries Engineering Report on the Transfer Station
 - i. Ken pointed out that there are a couple of mistakes. On the list printed tonight options 4 and 6 are the same.
 - ii. Ken read through the options presented by Aries (skipping the duplicate).
 - 0. Do nothing.
 - 1. Replace the packer truck. New are \$215K, used are \$139K.
 - 2. Buy a standalone compactor and build a shelter for it (\$275K).
 - 3. Buy a rear-feed compactor and place it where the packer currently sits (\$356K). Would need to raise the floor and do some concrete work.
 - 4. Subcontract the running of our Transfer Station to a private company. Aries asked Casella and Winwaste, but they refused to bid. When Ken started in 2014, Casella put a bid in and it was twice the cost.
 - 5. Purchase land and construct a new Transfer Station (\$1.3M).
 - 6. Contract with Casella to provide curbside pickup of waste and recycling. It would cost \$269K for pickup and another \$108K per year for disposal.
 - 7. Contract with Casella to provide curbside pickup of just waste and run the Transfer Station for just recycling. It would cost \$369K for pickup, another \$108K per year for disposal, and \$100K to continue operating the Transfer Station.
 - iii. Ken explained that the current packer truck is 26 years old. So far in 2025 we have spent \$10K on repairs. If we switched to an electric compactor, we would need to contract with someone to haul the compactor containers to the incinerator or we would need to buy a roll-off truck ourselves. New is \$225K, used is \$145K.
 - iv. Bob Steenson advocated for Option 0. As long as we are able to tip at Wheelabrator, we are putting very few miles on the vehicle. The contract with Wheelabrator requires giving the Town two years of notice if they intend to shutdown and that would be enough time to arrange for an electric compactor and pickup.
 - v. There was discussion about the other options provided in the report about rearranging the site, fixing storage issues, and adding septic and well to allow for bathrooms.
 - vi. The salt shed could only be moved to the Municipal Complex if it was put out front along the road or if additional land behind the buildings were purchased. Since the property is in the Historic District, putting it out front was not seriously considered. There is room on the Transfer Station site to build a new shed and leave the old one available for recyclables.
 - vii. We could also replace the old trailer bodies with containers and use those for recyclable storage.
 - viii. Ken asked for a decision on the long-term plan so that we could begin funding a CRF.
 - ix. There was discussion about the letter from Assessor Mandy Irving regarding the valuation changes for the town. The improvements Eversource made to the transmission lines increased the value of the town by \$28M. Between that and the revaluation scheduled for 2026, the tax rate for the town should improve.
 - x. Bob Scarponi suggested keeping the packer truck but doing something to improve conditions for employees.
 - xi. There was debate about if a bathroom should be installed. The current employees are not asking for one and very nice portable restrooms are available. Since it would see very little

usage, a tight tank could be installed instead of a septic. Office trailers are also available, but they have fallen victim to private equity consolidation and are expensive.

xii. There was no consensus on which option to go with, but conversation leaned towards the least expensive options.

f. There was discussion about the 2026 proposed wages.

ii. Ken explained that the Police Dept. is proposing a step system for wages.

iii. The Library presented their budget with significant wages increases and a corresponding increase in offset from the Library's trust funds.

iii. Libraries in New Hampshire create their own budgets. Their proposal could be voted down at Town Meeting. Whatever is approved at Town Meeting is a bottom line budget. The Library will be allowed to spend up to a certain amount of money, but they get to decide what things to spend that money on.

iv. Some expressed concern that the wage increases were raises that would continue to affect the budget year after year and the Library Trustees aren't guaranteed to provide the same offset every year. Later in the conversation Calvin said that when he spoke with Rachel, she said the Trustees were going to cover the wage increase indefinitely.

v. Some expressed concern that raising the wages for the Library would mean raising the wages for all departments.

vi. Jan suggested going back to having separate finances from the Library. Others disagreed because having two parallel accounting and payroll systems is more expensive than one, and all wages are public information, so it wouldn't prevent employees in other departments from knowing if the Library employees are getting higher raises.

vii. Ken hasn't finished putting the wage survey together, so we don't yet know what other towns are paying. The Library provided their own wage survey with data from all of the other libraries in the state.

viii. Beth pointed out that the balances of the Library's trust funds are not in the Town Report. The Library's trusts are managed by the Library Trustees not the Trustees of the Trust Funds and they are governed by different investment rules.

ix. Bob Steenson pointed out that the Library composes about 8% of the Town's total budget, so cutting their wages wouldn't solve the tax problem.

x. The CPI was about 3.5% in September. Ken usually tries to align the COLA raises with that.

xi. The vacancy in the Police Dept. has been open for about a year. The new wage scale is in response to that.

xii. There are 3 vacancies in the Highway Dept. The Town offered CDL training as an incentive for hiring and retention, but the two people who just quit left despite that.

xiii. The wage survey will help determine if these wages should be raised. It is never apples to apples but Ken tries to find towns with similar populations and operating budgets.

g. The tax rate should be available in the next 2-3 weeks.

h. The Selectboard met with the School Board. The School District was hit by a significant healthcare assessment from SchoolCare.

i. There was further discussion about the future of the Transfer Station. This will need to be examined further.

j. The Budget Committee will next meet with the Selectboard at the 12/1 meeting at 5:30 p.m.

10. HB 639

f. The Conservation Commission has asked the Planning Board and Selectboard to consider signing a letter against HB 639 which would ban municipalities from preventing crypto-mining data centers through zoning ordinances.

g. These centers have huge energy and water demands, so are not eco-friendly.

h. The Selectboard agreed to sign the example letter at their next meeting.

11. Highway Dept. and Transfer Station Vacancies

- f. As of Thursday, Road Agent John O'Conner will be the only person in the Highway Dept.
- g. A new employee for the Highway Dept. was interviewed today and is a promising candidate.
- h. Andres Romero announced his retirement at the end of the year, so that will leave the Transfer Station with just the Transfer Station Manager David Bowles.
- i. The Highway Dept. should have the Road Agent, 3 full-time employees, and 1 seasonal person to help with snow plowing.
- j. The Transfer Station is legally required to have a minimum of 2 people, but to be fully staffed, we need the Transfer Station Manager and 2 others. Historically, when the Transfer Station is understaffed, Highway Dept. employees will fill in, but that is not an option at this time.
- k. Primex allows the Town to hire people under the age of 18, but they have many suggestions on what they can/can't do for liability reasons. Transfer Station equipment might not be safe enough, but emptying cars could be feasible.
- l. There was discussion about other options such as trying to recruit people who work at transfer stations in other towns with different schedules, increasing wages, switching to trash pick-up, and hiring someone to do recruiting.
- m. Ken will talk to David to see if he works with anyone in Deerfield who would want to work here too and if teenage helpers would be useful.

12. Executive Session

- f. Scott made a motion at 7:09 p.m. to enter into Non-Public session as per RSA 91-A:3 II (a) to discuss a personnel matter. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
- g. Scott made a motion at 7:42 p.m. to exit the Non-Public session. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
- h. Scott made a motion to seal the minutes. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.

13. Other Business

- f. Beth asked if she could remove the unusable soap dispensers from the Meeting House and Town Hall bathroom walls. No one objected.
- g. Calvin provided an update on his research on the discontinued roads (see 8/4/25 section 4.b.). There was discussion on if the Town should ask for our records be returned from the State when the file room at the Sam Lake House Garage is completed. This would give us better access, but put the onus on the Town to know what is in those files for Right to Know purposes. Kal has begun scanning the archived files and could prioritize finishing that project to make cataloguing possible.
- h. The Selectboard will hold a work session on the budget to try and come up with a proposal for the Transfer Station that could be brought the Budget Committee on 12/1.
- i. Calvin is working with Mandy on a warrant article to address the veterans tax credit issue discussed at the 9/8/25 meeting.

14. Adjournment

- f. Beth made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:51 p.m. Scott seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.

Next Meeting: 2025 November 17, 5:00 p.m. at the Meeting House

Minutes submitted by Kal McKay, Administrative Assistant