

Minutes of the Selectmen's Meeting January 20, 2026

Members Present: Lynn Sweet, Chair; R. Stephen Leighton, Brian Monahan
Others Present: Ellen White, Town Administrator; Sonja Smith, Minutes Keeper
In Attendance: John McCutchen and Phil Auger, Brown Pasture Road Association

The meeting was called to order at 5:30PM, reviewing and approving payroll and the payment of bills. The minutes of the January 6, 2026 meeting were read and approved. A pay rate for a new member of the Fire Department was approved and miscellaneous correspondence was read.

The Board was given an update on a right to know request that came in over the weekend. The Town's insurance company was notified, requesting the information that was asked for. In speaking with the insurance company, the Town was told that several other towns had the same request.

Members of the Brown Pasture Road Association, John McCutchen and Phil Auger, met with the Board to discuss Fire Road 29. Mr. Auger asserted the Association's position that the road should be designated as an emergency lane and the Town assume responsibility for winter maintenance. He noted that public use of the road has increased, with several year-round residents now living in the area, and that winter upkeep has become increasingly costly for the Association. He also raised the possibility of submitting a petition article.

The Board noted in previous years the Association's request for maintaining the road. After reviewing the matter, the Board explained while citizens can petition for roads to be adopted as emergency lanes, that authority rests solely with the Selectmen under RSA 231:59-a and cannot be usurped at Town Meeting by a petition article should such an article be submitted; if submitted, it would be treated as advisory and not create an obligation to do so. Furthermore, if the Board should make an emergency lane, the intent would be to ensure access for emergency vehicles and not to provide access for the general public.

The Board will consult with legal counsel for further guidance and clarifications and will follow up with the Association once additional information is obtained.

At this time a motion was made by Lynn Sweet and seconded by Steve Leighton to enter into a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (d). Roll call was taken as follows:

Lynn Sweet - Aye, Steve Leighton - Aye, Brian Monahan - Aye

The Board entered non-public session at 6:27PM.

A motion was made by Brian Monahan to leave non-public session and seconded by Steve Leighton to return to public session. Roll call was taken as follows:

Lynn Sweet - Aye, Steve Leighton - Aye, Brian Monahan - Aye

Public session reconvened at 6:43PM.

A motion was made by Lynn Sweet and seconded by Brian Monahan to seal the minutes of the non-public session. Roll call was taken as follows:

Lynn Sweet - Aye, Steve Leighton - Aye, Brian Monahan – Aye

Specific budget items were looked over for roads and transfer station/recycling center.

The schedule for the next meeting was agreed upon with several appointments on the docket.

Information regarding HB 488 that is before the State Senate was read. This bill disallows the same person to hold the position of Tax Collector and Town Clerk. Combining this office in Strafford has save the Town thousands of dollars and has streamlined both windows to accommodate more people efficiently. It has not been scheduled to be voted on in the Senate as of today.

With no further business to discuss, a motion was made, seconded and voted on to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:17PM.