

## Minutes of the Selectmen's Meeting February 3, 2026

Members Present: Lynn Sweet, Chair; Brian Monahan, Steve Leighton

Other Present: Ellen White, Town Administrator; Sonja Smith, Minutes Keeper

In Attendance: Matt Messenger and Greg Messenger, Road Agents; Jay Schaeffer, Phil Auger, Charlie Moreno, Forrest Stickney, Randy Young

The meeting came to order at 5:36PM. The Selectmen met with Matt Messenger and Greg Messenger to discuss the 2026 Road and Highway budget and to get clarifications on their plan for capital improvements in 2026. While in attendance, the Board consulted with the Road Agent on a petition article brought forth by a resident to open and maintain a portion of Whig Hill and the cost of that project provided to the resident. Upon consultation with the Town Attorney, it was determined the section would need to be brought up to Class V road regulations, necessitating culvert work and a wetland permit which would raise the cost significantly on the article's estimated price. Matt and Greg were in agreement that the project would be quite costly. The owner of the petition article is to be contacted and given the option to either amend the article's cost with a corrected figure, contact each petitioner to withdraw the petition or pull the article completely. The Board's desire is that the article be pulled.

The Board approved the payment of bills and payroll. The minutes of the January 20, 2026 meeting were approved. Two intents to cut were reviewed and approved. Miscellaneous correspondence was read and briefly discussed.

Three abatement recommendations from the Assessor were reviewed and discussed. These abatements were filed under a constitutional basis, citing the recent acknowledgement from the NH Secretary of State regarding a constitutional wording error. According to RSA 76:16, abatements must be based on assessment errors, disproportionality, or factual mistakes. Therefore, the Selectmen agreed with the Assessor's recommendation to deny the abatements. The following explanation will be posted on the Town website: The recent acknowledgment by the Secretary of State about a wording error in some printed versions of the New Hampshire Constitution does not affect the validity of state tax laws or local property tax assessments. Under RSA 76:16, abatements can only be granted for issues such as disproportionality, factual errors in the assessment, or hardship. Constitutional arguments, including those related to the wording error, are outside the authority of municipalities to decide. Residents are welcome to file an abatement request, but it must be based on the statutory criteria.

The Board introduced themselves to Jay Schaeffer who was in attendance. Jay has recently been working with the Library Committee and has advised them to focus on the needs and scope before fixating on the location.

Phil Auger and Charlie Moreno met with the Board as citizens to discuss a piece of land that was surveyed, voicing their concerns that the Town is going to lose out on the opportunity to purchase it; requesting the Selectmen step in and push things along. It was communicated to Mr. Auger and Mr. Moreno that, after meeting with the Library several weeks ago, the Board felt the seller lacked a clear plan and seemed indecisive on the acreage being sold.

Mr. Auger asked if it came to the Planning Board would the Selectmen support the purchase. The Board was in agreement that there was no plan to even support. The property owners have to bring forth a plan. The Board added that the Library has stepped back from the land and have been refocused on the space needed and then will look for appropriate land. Selectmen Leighton is not convinced that the land Mr. Auger and Mr. Moreno are pushing for is very good land for the Town's needs. Mr. Auger asked permission to speak with the

property owners. The Board concurred that unless the sellers can provide a clear plot of acreage and plan, other land opportunities should be considered.

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

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

The Board entered non-public session at 6:21PM.

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 6:45PM.

No votes were taken or decisions were made during the non-public session.

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

After review of legal advice, the Board was in agreement not to designate Fire Road 29 an emergency lane.

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

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

The Board entered non-public session at 6:56PM.

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 7:56PM.

No votes were taken or decisions were made during the non-public session.

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

The warrant and budget continue to be tweaked in preparation for the budget hearing next week.

With no other business to discuss, a motion was made, seconded and voted on to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:02PM.