

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

Members Present: Lynn Sweet, Chair; Brian Monahan; R. Stephen Leighton  
Others Present: Ellen White, Town Administrator; Sonja Smith, Minutes Keeper  
In Attendance: Eric Rowe; Fire Chief Steve Johnson via phone

The business portion of the meeting was called to order at 5:30PM. The Selectmen reviewed and authorized payment of the bills and payroll. Two timber tax warrants were reviewed and approved. The minutes of the February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting were read and approved. The Board read and agreed with the Assessor's recommendation to deny another abatement filed under a constitutional error basis. A letter from Comcast was read regarding providing cable to Strafford. Other miscellaneous correspondence was read.

The Board engaged in a brief discussion of a recent news story concerning the circumstances facing several New Hampshire towns that have joined Community Power. Property owners of these towns are now being faced with rates over 30% of Eversource rates. Several months ago, the Board was presented a contract to join Community Power in order to reduce electric rates. At that time, the Board agreed not to move forward with participation due to insufficient information and a lack of historical data.

The Board discussed the recent fire on Payne Road, which was reported to have resulted in a total loss of the structure involved.

During this discussion, the Selectmen emphasized the importance of clear and visible hydrant markers, particularly for use by mutual aid and responding departments that may be unfamiliar with the area. The Board suggested that the Fire Department review the placement and visibility of all hydrant markers throughout Town to ensure they can be readily identified and accessed in emergency situations, especially during periods of reduced visibility such as nighttime or winter conditions.

Matters pertaining to staffing at Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) and the Town's future with SRPC were reviewed. Further discussion will take place at a future meeting once additional information is obtained.

Fire Chief Steve Johnson met with the Board via telephone. Chief Johnson updated the Board on an application for a grant that, if awarded, would partially fund a new fire station. The funding is from direct governmental spending for their fiscal year 2027. The Town Administrator was asked to compose a letter of the Board's support which may help in the application process. This letter is to be included with the application.

Eric Rowe appeared before the Board to express concerns regarding a potential violation of the Town's sign ordinance involving a tractor trailer. The matter has been referred to the Town Attorney for advisement. Mr. Rowe previously notified the Board several months prior, at which time the Board determined no violation had occurred. The Code Enforcement Officer recently has been in contact with the property owner for additional information. Mr. Rowe requested that the property owner be

required to appear before the Planning Board. The Board reiterated that it is awaiting guidance from the Town Attorney. Mr. Rowe expressed his appreciation for the Board's further review of the matter.

As an update to the Town's revaluation, the utility contract was sent to the State and is currently awaiting the State's approval.

With no other business to discuss, a motion was made, seconded and voted on to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:06PM.