

Minutes of the Selectmen's Meeting April 14, 2026

Members Present: Lynn Sweet, Chair; R. Stephen Leighton

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

In Attendance: Members of the Green Committee- Hammond Brown, Rick and Lynda Cecchetti, Jay Schaeffer, Kim McGlinchey; Don Clifford

The meeting was called to order at 5:30PM. The Selectmen discussed and approved the payment of bills and payroll. The minutes of the March 31st Selectmen's meeting were read and approved. A gravel tax warrant as well as a timber tax warrant were signed and approved. An intent to excavate was also approved. Miscellaneous correspondence was read.

The assessing software conversion will take place in the coming weeks. The Assessor is in the process of updating the current software with land changes and conversion will take place once those are completed.

A policy was adopted pertaining to certificates of insurance requirements based on information provided by the insurance carrier to mitigate risk.

The Board discussed recent complaint of a sign on a tractor trailer. Code of Enforcement will reach out to request the home owner paint over it.

The Green Committee members met with the Board to discuss several items.

Mr. Brown discussed the recent change in the C-PACER program in NH. He stated the recent change would allow for better funding for owners of large residential complexes and businesses to borrow money for green initiatives. The Selectmen acknowledged the recent legislature noting Strafford has few businesses and no apartment complexes.

While acknowledging the Board's wisdom in not signing up for community electric the Green Committee had pushed for, the Committee proposed that the Board sign into a group net metering solar program. This contract would be a 20-year contract with payments being made to the Town from other town's solar array projects. Currently Belmont and Bow are involved in these solar arrays that, if contracted with, Strafford would receive payments with no change to power supply. The Board questioned payment mechanisms, obligations, contingencies, and its relation to renewable energy credits. The Board will review the information and consult legal counsel before consideration.

The Committee questioned on the possibility of roof mounted solar panels at the Town Hall and other municipal buildings. The Board was in agreement that panels would not be permitted on the roof of any municipal building. Solar panels would be considered only on stanchions. The Board added that solar installation was once researched and it was not viable. The Committee requested that they interview contractors to get recommendations. A question of financing was asked and the Board was again in agreement that no funding would be given. The matter of grants was also brought up and the Board relayed word that Strafford would most likely not be considered for a grant because the Federal and State governments consider Strafford too rich a community.

Continuing on the solar topic, the Green Committee asked that the Town consider putting on the warrant for property owners that have solar panels be given a monetary credit on their taxes. The Selectmen informed the Committee that solar is currently not part of the assessed value of houses and cautioned not to move forward on pursuing the exemption.

Clean diesel program was briefly discussed since the Town has no vehicles that qualify for the program.

Lynda Cecchetti would like to see a safe pathway from the School to the Library via private property easements. The Board supports her efforts and directed her to propose this to the School Board and then writing letters to the property owners that would be affected.

Don Clifford met with the Board to present information on a project and request the Town's permission/approval on an application for the Strafford Swamp Stompers for the purpose of repairing a bridge that is on Town Forest land. It was noted that the bridge had to be rebuilt "in kind". The materials to build the bridge were discussed. Mr. Clifford presented the Board with the permission form. Lynn Sweet made a motion; Steve Leighton seconded to approve and sign the Landowner Project Permission Form on behalf of the Town in order that the Strafford Swamp Stompers move forward with applying for grant money to replace a crossing in the Town Forest.

The contract for the annual updating of the tax maps with changes was signed.

At this time a motion was made by Steve Leighton and seconded by Lynn Sweet 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

The Board entered non-public session at 7:02PM.

A motion was made by Lynn Sweet 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

Public session reconvened at 7:18PM.

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

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

Lynn Sweet - Aye, Steve Leighton - Aye

Upcoming appointments were discussed. The Selectmen's Meeting on April 28th was cancelled.

With no further business to discuss, a motion was made, seconded and voted on to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:24PM.