

Franklin Selectboard & Public Budget Meeting
January 21st, 2026 @ 6:00 p.m.
Town Hall/Zoom hybrid

Members Present: Dave Bennion, Brooks Sturtevant, Michael Grant, Jay Hartman (Joined late), Justin Rainville (Joined late-virtual), Lisa Larivee-Town Clerk, Jordan Bushey- Asst Town Clerk

Guest:, Tim Magant, Chad Spooner, Jean Richard, Patti Whittemore, Jeff & Deb Grennon, Josh Worman, Anthony Bessette, Carole Richard,

Virtual: Polly Gadbois, Michelle Guilmette, Lynn Paradis, Allison Franklin,

Call to order:

At 6:03 pm Dave Bennion called the meeting. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Agenda Amendments: None

Public comment period: None

Public Budget review/input-

- This year there is a new column on the budget that shows the budgets increase or decrease from last year.
- The tax rate was .48 last year, and is estimated to be .4936.
- One article is being added this year; \$60,000 to be repaid over 3 years for repairs to the Fire Dept 2003 pumper truck.
- This year's proposed budget is \$1,168,131 plus articles which is an increase of about 8% from last year.
- General building maintenance increased by \$47,900- this is for repointing the bricks for the chimney and front steps for the Haston Library of \$52,000. This price reflects 50% of the project, with the expectation that there will be a grant to match. The increase is also for gutters and facia at the Town Hall for \$5,900.
- Tim Magnant- The 2003 pumper needs to be revamped. If the FFD was to purchase a brand new truck, it could cost anywhere between \$800,000-1 million, with a 2 year arrival time. If they fix up the current truck, it would cost \$60,000. The truck is in excellent condition for its age, and the FFD wants to keep it as long as possible.
- When is the reappraisal going to be done? There are very few companies that can do the reappraisals. 150ish towns in Vermont were ordered to reappraise in 2022, so those companies booked up very quickly. Franklin's reappraisal will be starting in July 2026, and will reflect on the grand list for 2028. The current Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) for Franklin is 59%.

- *"The CLA is an adjustment factor applied to the education property tax rates in Vermont. It is designed to equalize the property tax burden among towns by accounting for differences between a town's assessed property values and the current fair market values. The CLA is calculated as the total education property value (listed value) divided by the equalized education property value, with the goal of ensuring that all properties are assessed at 100% of their fair market value." -Vermont.gov*
- **Salary increases-** These new salaries reflect the State average, (Franklin has been below average) and to retain current employees. When the town was hiring for the Highway Dept, a good candidate was lost due to there not being competitive pay/benefits. Even neighboring towns were hiring significantly higher. Lisa started to look at the state average, and showed that all the employees were below average.
- **Sheriff patrol-** Their hourly rate went up, and the town upped the hours from 80 to 100. The office and SB members get complaints often about speeding, especially on dirt roads. Can radar speed signs be put up? The town has asked for some, but there is a limited amount from the sheriff's for use.

Town Meeting Warning read/adoption/signing- Dave read aloud.

- **Tim M-** Can the names of the individuals with terms ending be listed? Lisa doesn't think that can be included in the warning, but she will give those names to Tim for while he is moderating Town Meeting. This will let residents know whose terms are ending, and help them decide whether they want to reelect or nominate someone else.

Jay joined the Meeting

- **Brooks/Mike** made a motion to adopt the town meeting warning. All members voted in favor; motion passed 4-0. Members signed.

Approve minutes from January 7th- Brooks/Mike made a motion to approve the January 7th minutes. All members voted in favor; motion passed 4-0

Highway Dept-

- **Community Sand usage-** The town allows Franklin residents to take one or two 5 gallon buckets to sand their driveways/walks. Jeremy has cameras at the garage, and noticed an individual abusing this policy. They were taking tractor bucket loads, and were using it for business/profit purposes. Board members and some residents present are not in favor of this. After being spoken to, they offered to pay for the sand they took, and asked to purchase a bulk amount in the future to keep at the town garage. Others have asked about this in the past and were told no. Whatever supply is at the garage in the winter is all we can get until summer, is for town use only. The sand that we get is trucked in during the summer, because the pits are closed (frozen) in the winter. The policy of one or two 5 gallon buckets will remain in effect.

- **Highway truck sale discussion-** Truck has not been posted yet. The Town of Lowell recently lost their Town garage and everything in it to a fire, and Jeremy suggested reaching out to them to see if they wanted to purchase our truck. Jay suggested leasing it for now, but should be careful with leasing, and the liability it comes with. Jeremy has not heard back from Lowell, so he will have pictures ready by the end of the week to post for sale.
- **Certificate of highway mileage approval-** Since last year, there have been no changes. Brooks/Mike made a motion to approve the certificate of highway mileage. Little Pond road was figured out with the turn-around, no change to mileage. All members voted in favor; motion passed 4-0.

Old Business-

- **Alum/DWSRF loan update-** There was some shifting with the grant/loan funding sources at the State. This is called a loan, but it will be completely forgiven by the State. Brooks/Mike made a motion to approve the loan amendment in the amount of \$2,685,693. All members voted in favor; motion passed 4-0. Members signed.
- **Grant anticipation loan-** none needed.

Town Clerk concerns-

- **Luce occupancy/rental plan and repairs-**
 - Members have been donating their time to doing repairs and painting, and a cleaner is scheduled for next week. The appliances will be able to stay after a deep clean.
 - Dave found a gas stove for downstairs apartment at Habitat for Humanity for \$50. Board approves of purchase to replace one currently there, oven doesn't work.
 - The final report that Dave has been waiting for, came in today. Now that all the reports are in, plans can start to move forward.
 - Brian Rainville was going to reach out to the State about extending the porch grant, as it has to be done by the end of 2026.
 - A-1 flooring gave a quote of \$1,243 to purchase and install new carpets in bedrooms upstairs, which will be done next week.
 - The upstairs is almost ready to advertise for rent, and would possibly rent out the main floor to a different person. This would need to be a short term rental, for 1 or 6 month leases at a time. Need to be thoughtful and careful with getting the right renters, when the need comes to move out.
- **Equalization study PVR-** Discussed more in "public budget review/input." The CLA is 59.12%. When a town's CLA falls under 85%, that triggers the reappraisal. Will start July 2026, and reflect on the 2028 grand list.

New Business-

- **ZA report-** Wendy submitted her quarterly zoning administrator report to the board. 3 Subdivisions; 9 Admin opinions; 15 Building permits. No action is needed from the board; this is just informational.

Review bills for approval of warrants: Board reviewed bills and signed warrants.

Treasurers Report/budget review- Discussed in “public budget review/input.”

Member concerns/Other business: None

Adjournment:

- Brooks/Mike made a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:22pm.

The next meeting will be on February 18th, 2026 @ 6:00 pm at the Town Clerk's Office and virtual.

Respectfully submitted,
Jordan Bushey, Assistant Town Clerk
January 22nd, 2026

These minutes are not official until approved at the next regular Selectboard meeting.

These minutes were approved at the regular meeting of the Selectboard on February 18, 2026.