

05-04-2026 Grand Isle Selectboard Meeting

Meeting Minutes

May 4, 2026, 6:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Grand Isle Selectboard Meeting was called to order on Monday, May 4, 2026, at 6:00 PM at 9 Hyde Rd, Grand Isle, VT, and via Zoom.

Board Members Present: Jeff Parizo, Ron Bushway, Jennifer Morway, Aimee Cochran, Ellen Howrigan

Staff/Community Members Present: Colleen Bushway, Steve More, Desiree More, Melissa Boutin, Sara Santor, Wendy Rosica

Community Members via Zoom: Lucille Campbell

II. Amend Agenda for Matters NOT Listed

The Chair called for any amendments to the agenda for matters not listed. A question was raised as to whether the health officer matter could be addressed that evening; it was determined that, because it had not been posted on the agenda, no formal motion could be made and it would be included in the next meeting's agenda. No other amendments were offered.

III. Public Comment

No public comment was recorded.

IV. Review and Approve Minutes

a. 4/20/26 minutes

A motion to approve the 4/20 minutes with corrections was made by Aimee Cochran and seconded by Ellen Howrigan. The motion carried unanimously.

V. Guests

No guests were formally presented.

VI. Review and Sign Warrants

Jeff Parizo made a motion to have the Chair sign the warrants with corrections. Ron Bushway seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

VII. Financials

Jeff Parizo led the review of the financial reports. The following items were highlighted from the general fund report:

Computers: The budget of \$5,000 had seen an actual expenditure of only \$1,431 to date. It was discussed that the listers' and zoning administrator's computer had recently been addressed, and that the public-use computer in the office had been replaced with a laptop from the COVID-era stock. It was noted, however, that the computer used for cash receipts and tax registration is the oldest unit in the office, and consideration was given to whether it should be replaced before year end. A broader discussion arose about the possibility of transitioning board members to paperless operations using available laptops, given the improved digital document distribution now in place. A suggestion was made to consider establishing a reserve fund for computers rather than allowing unspent budget to revert to the general fund, given past experiences of needing to spend a significant sum to catch up on aging equipment.

Law Enforcement: The budget was \$193,000, with \$144,000 expended. It was confirmed that law enforcement payments are made monthly, with approximately three installments remaining.

Municipal Legal Fees: The budget was \$15,000, with only approximately \$4,700 expended. Melissa Boutin noted an intention to begin the property tax sale process but expressed some hesitation given that a Request for Proposals (RFP) for legal services was still pending; it was agreed it would be preferable to wait until the attorney relationship was confirmed before initiating that process.

Office Supplies: Approximately half of the budget had been expended.

Repairs and Maintenance: The budget was \$15,000, with \$8,489 expended, leaving available funds.

Lister Salary: Approximately half of the budget had been expended. Discussion arose as to whether unspent lister salary funds should be moved into an earmarked reserve, particularly in the context of potential future conversations about hiring a town assessor. It was agreed this decision did not need to be made until closer to the end of the fiscal year, around the end of June or beginning of July. Jennifer Morway noted that an email response from the town attorney regarding assessor-related questions had recently arrived after approximately one month, and that the assessor question would need to be placed back on a future agenda for further discussion.

Highway — Excavator: Jeff flagged that the excavator purchase of \$59,500 was showing on the expense side without a corresponding entry on the revenue side, making it appear as though the highway department was overspent by approximately \$60,000. Melissa clarified that the funds would be transferred from the capital reserve, and that the revenue-side transfer had not yet been recorded. It was agreed that a fund transfer entry should be made to properly reflect the source of funds and avoid the appearance of an overrun.

Bylaw Grant / Planning Commission: It was briefly noted that Jennifer and Melissa are working on the bylaw grant reimbursement with the planning commission. No payments had yet been received recorded on that front, but work is ongoing.

VIII. Highway Department Update

a. Paving quotes

Steve More, the Highway Department Foreman, presented three paving quotes that had been solicited for the upcoming paving project. Hungerford was identified as the recommended vendor, coming in approximately \$5,600 more expensive than the lowest bidder. The foreman noted that he had reached out to Hungerford to see whether they could match the competing quote; Hungerford indicated that their price was as low as they could go. The foreman expressed confidence in Hungerford, having worked with them for the past three years with consistently good results, describing them as professional and good with the public. He noted he had not had experience with the other bidders during his tenure. Ron Bushway also expressed satisfaction with Hungerford's past performance, noting that their work quality

does not require constant oversight. It was acknowledged that all three bidders had indicated that the quoted prices could be subject to minor adjustments depending on fuel prices, but that given the June project timeline, significant changes were not anticipated; any decrease in fuel costs would benefit the town, while any increase would result in a modest additional charge.

The available paving budget was reviewed. State aid of \$77,000 (representing the fourth quarter payment received in April, not yet reflected in the budget report) plus \$60,000 in state blacktop funds, plus approximately \$40,000 for retreatment, yielded an approximate total of \$177,000 available for paving work.

Ron Bushway made a motion to award the paving contract to Hungerford in the amount of \$167,425, subject to potential adjustment based on fuel prices, and seconded by Jeff Parizo. The motion carried unanimously.

The foreman provided additional departmental updates:

- A section of paving near Route 2 will be skipped this cycle, as water infrastructure work is anticipated in that area.
- Brush cutting at the log cabin property has been completed, with approximately two dumpster loads removed over a couple of days of work.
- The sanders have been removed from the two sanding trucks, the frames have been touched up, and that work is complete.
- Three dumpsters were hauled from the transfer station during the week.
- The John Deere tractor (a 1993 model used for roadside mowing with a boom mower attachment) was identified as being in poor mechanical condition. Specifically, third gear is non-functional, and operators must carry a screwdriver to manually shift gears. The foreman noted that a prior quote for transmission repair had been approximately \$20,000, and that the tractor would need to be split apart to complete the repair — a cost that is not economical given the tractor's overall value. The mower attachment itself, purchased in 2001, and the pump (which had been rebuilt) were noted to still be functional and could potentially be transferred to a replacement tractor. The foreman indicated that a hydraulic leak on the three-point arms is also being addressed. The board encouraged the foreman to begin researching replacement tractor options, noting that various brands — including Kubota, Kioti, and others — are available and that the tractor does not need to be the same brand as the current unit. It was noted that the current boom mower requires approximately 80 horsepower and does not necessarily require a four-wheel-drive tractor or a front bucket.
- The foreman noted that all other equipment is in good shape. The excavator is in use, with work planned for the following day.
- Transfer station road maintenance projects are largely wrapped up.
- Regarding the library/town hall dumpster: the foreman indicated he would pack it down with the excavator before Memorial Day, as he had communicated to the Contractor.

Viking Truck / Plow Equipment List: The foreman raised the matter of Viking Equipment in Williston. He noted that Viking is currently three years out on orders and recommended that the town get on their waiting list — a non-binding arrangement — in case a new truck is needed within the next few years. The only other comparable vendor, Tenco, is located out of state. The board asked whether the town would need to seek multiple quotes before signing any agreement with Viking. It was clarified that the non-binding list arrangement itself is just to hold a spot, but that any actual truck purchase would require quotes and would likely exceed the formal bidding threshold. The board requested that a copy of Viking's contract or agreement language be obtained and reviewed by the town attorney before any commitment is made.

Free-Metal Dump Day: The free metal dump day event, previously communicated as scheduled for May 23rd, has been moved to May 30th. Residents and highway staff have been informed of the change.

Hazardous Waste Collection: The hazardous waste collection event is scheduled for the coming Saturday, which falls on Mother's Day weekend.

IX. Buildings Facilities Manager Update

Ron Bushway, the Buildings and Facilities Manager reported the following:

- Shutters have been removed from the block schoolhouse and the log cabin.
- Water was turned on at the log cabin that morning; however, the drain valve used for winterizing the pipes is leaking significantly, and the handle is disintegrating. A plumber (Howard DeMars) is scheduled to come the following day to assess and likely replace the valve.

Regarding the furnace at the old library building, it was noted that a quote for repair or replacement has not yet been received. Discussion briefly touched on the nature of the needed repair — it appears to be a burner issue rather than a full furnace replacement — and it was noted that a burner is not an expensive component. The question of whether it makes more sense to repair or replace the furnace was briefly revisited, with the understanding that Howard would be assessing it.

X. Library Update

a. Rooftop solar proposals

Jeff Parizo provided an update on the new library construction progress:

- The stone foundation work is complete, and insulation board is being installed to prepare for the slab pour. The slab pour is anticipated within the next several days following completion of the insulation board.
- Metal roofing materials have been ordered and are expected to arrive imminently, with installation potentially beginning within the coming week.
- Windows have been delivered to the site. Chris (the general contractor) intends to install windows after the roof is on, which could also occur within the next two weeks.
- Doors will remain as temporary plywood until after the project is substantially complete to protect the door glass.
- Siding/fill work details have been decided and ordered.

Wendy Rosica, of the Library Board, raised several questions regarding interior specifications and design coordination, specifically noting that the Library Board does not yet have detailed information on interior trim finishes, window elevations, or flooring specifications. She noted that they are hoping to coordinate shelving, furniture, and donor-funded elements with the contractor's planned interior finishes, to ensure everything is cohesive. She also raised a concern that the window dimensions and design have changed since the original plans.

Jennifer and Jeff indicated that they would review the contract documents and the contractor's specifications and share relevant details with the Library Board. They noted that lighting fixtures for the building have already been selected and ordered through the MEI specifications, and that the color for paint has not yet been chosen — that decision is left to the Library Board. A flooring allowance is included in the contract, covering both labor and materials up to a set amount; any upgrade above that allowance would be at additional cost the library board would need to raise funds for.

Wendy expressed interest in incorporating a different flooring treatment in the foyer/entry area (a more "moppable" hard surface) while using carpet tile in the main library spaces, and potentially coordinating those two different flooring types. She indicated that LVP (luxury vinyl plank) in the entry might actually be less expensive than carpet tile, and that this could come in within or below the existing flooring allowance.

A question was raised about bathroom configuration. Wendy noted that, based on her reading of the drawings, it appeared one bathroom might be configured with a urinal and one without, suggesting a gendered layout. Select Board Member Parizo and others indicated the intent was for both bathrooms to be unisex. It was agreed that the plans would be reviewed to confirm, and if a urinal is present in one bathroom, the change to a standard toilet would be a simple and inexpensive modification. Wendy also noted that changing tables should be included in both bathrooms.

Regarding the overall project timeline, Select Board Member Morway emphasized that the December 15th deadline for the building to be open and all final invoices submitted (per grant requirements) is firm, and that the interior construction sequence is tight — sub-contractors follow one another in close succession, and there is little margin for delay. She encouraged the Library Board to focus near-term donor and fundraising conversations on items such as computers, books, and equipment rather than construction finish elements, as those built-in finish decisions will become clearer once framing is up and the Library Board can walk through the building — likely in approximately one month. She suggested that items such as additional lighting fixtures or decorative elements could be addressed after the building opens in January or February if needed.

Wendy acknowledged the timeline constraints and noted that using some existing bookcases in an interim capacity, if new stacks are not yet available upon opening, would likely satisfy the grant requirement that the library be operational and able to check out books by the December 15th deadline.

Rooftop Solar Proposals

Select Board Member Morway presented three solar proposals from Vermont Solar for the new library building, explaining the background. The original solar estimate included in the MERP grant budget was \$113,288, developed before finalized roof drawings were available. Upon receipt of revised construction documents, Vermont Solar provided an updated base quote of \$79,098.32 for a 39-kilowatt system — the smallest configuration — which the vendor believed would be sufficient to cover the library's annual consumption.

Vermont Solar also provided two additional proposals at the board's request:

- Mid-range proposal (approximately 40% larger system): \$111,789, which the vendor stated would confidently cover 100% of the library's annual energy consumption and likely generate some excess to be shared with other town buildings.
- Maximum capacity proposal (filling all feasible roof space, excluding the entrance overhang): \$149,403, which the vendor stated would produce approximately double the base proposal's output, fully offsetting the library and potentially covering one or two additional town properties such as the highway garage.

The vendor noted that the entrance overhang roof was intentionally excluded from the solar layout to prevent snow from sliding off panels onto people entering and exiting the building.

Select Board Member Parizo observed that the vendor's payback calculations are based on current electricity prices, and that electricity costs are expected to continue rising, which makes a larger system increasingly advantageous over time. He also noted that the 30% federal tax credit — listed as a "direct incentive" on each proposal — is a one-time benefit that may not be available indefinitely, making this an opportune moment to maximize the installation. The cost savings and payback period improve relative to a larger upfront credit with more panels.

The board discussed the feasibility of funding the maximum proposal within the existing MERP grant budget. It was noted that the original MERP grant budget included \$113,288 for solar, and that overall construction costs have been coming in under budget across multiple line items, resulting in an estimated surplus of approximately \$50,000 remaining in the grant after accounting for all current expenditures (\$447,981 out of \$500,000 awarded). The maximum solar proposal of \$149,403 would fit within the grant budget, as it replaces the original \$113,288 solar allocation with only a modest overage, and the accumulated savings in other line items are expected to cover the difference. The board did not anticipate needing to draw from the formerly known as ARPA funds. The question of a battery backup system was briefly discussed; the solar vendor had not recommended battery storage at this time, citing insufficient storage capacity relative to cost and the current state of battery technology. A propane-

powered generator was identified as a more practical backup option, as the building will already have propane service and the generator could be tied into that supply. The board noted that a generator quote had been requested but not yet obtained. The generator could also potentially be covered under the grant.

A motion to approve the maximum capacity rooftop solar proposal for the new library building from Vermont Solar in the amount of \$149,403, to be funded through the MERP grant, was made by Jeff Parizo and seconded by Ron Bushway. The motion carried unanimously.

It was further noted that Vermont Solar will require a 50% deposit (\$74,701.50) to lock in pricing before work begins. Select Board Member Morway indicated she would contact Vermont Solar the following day to obtain the contract, circulate it to board members for review, and bring it back for formal approval at the next meeting. The second payment of 50% would be due upon completion. Cash flow considerations around the grant reimbursement cycle were briefly discussed, with the understanding that MERP grant reimbursements are typically processed within approximately two weeks.

XI. IT Update

a. Approval to add necessary programs to Lister Clerk computer

Jennifer explained that a software program called "Catalyst" needs to be added to the new Lister Clerk computer. This program is used to update parcel data and is considered necessary for the listers' work. Because the expenditure involves a cost — estimated at well under \$500, depending on installation time — board approval was required. It was noted that the town's IT provider, Thrive, may need to remote into the system due to firewall configurations in order to complete the installation.

A motion to approve adding the necessary Catalyst program to the Lister Clerk computer was made by Jeff Parizo and seconded by Aimee Cochran. The motion carried unanimously.

XII. New Business

No new business was brought forward.

XIII. Old Business

a. Safety Team event

Ellen Howrigan presented a proposal for a women's self-defense seminar hosted by the Safety Team organization. The event would be a two-hour seminar running from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM, proposed for the evening of June 23rd at the Grand Isle Fire Station. The Safety Team would handle all advertising for the event. The cost is \$65 per participant, with scholarships available for those who cannot afford the fee, and no town funds would be required. A minimum of 12 participants is needed for the event to proceed, though the presenting member expressed confidence that attendance would exceed that threshold. The Safety Team was described as presenting substantive statistics on personal safety risks alongside practical self-defense techniques. It was suggested that, if the first event goes well, additional sessions could be scheduled in subsequent months. A board member suggested also notifying the Recreation Committee chair about the event.

A motion to approve the Safety Team women's self-defense event on June 23, 2026, from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM at the Grand Isle Fire Station was made by Jennifer Morway and seconded by Jeff Parizo. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Opioid Settlement Funds

The board briefly revisited the question of how to disperse opioid settlement funds received by the town. It was noted that a small additional payment of approximately \$156 had recently been received. Ellen had reached out to a contact at the school regarding potential use of the funds, but had not yet received a response. It was noted that the board had previously discussed directing funds toward the sheriff's department or rescue services, but those proposals had not been accepted. The board agreed to table the matter again until the first meeting in June, at which point they would revisit any feedback received from the school and other potential recipients. It was acknowledged that while the funds are intended to be disbursed and not simply held, the town is not considered to be in violation of any distribution requirements.

XIV. Executive Session

A motion to enter into executive session to discuss contracts pending, citing 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(2), on the grounds that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage, was made by Ellen Howrigan at 7:08 p.m. and seconded by Jeff Parizo. The motion carried unanimously.

The board entered executive session. No decision was reached during executive session.

A motion to exit executive session without a decision at 8:16 PM was made by Jennifer Morway and seconded by Ellen Howrigan. The motion carried unanimously.

XV. Administrative Check-In

XVI. Adjournment

Aimee Cochran motioned to adjourn and was seconded by Ellen Howrigan. The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 PM.