

Select Board Meeting
Mount Holly Town Office
January 13, 2026
6:00 pm

Attendance: Mark Turco, Jeff Chase (viz Zoom), Diana Garrow, Faith Tempest, Clinton Woolley, Dennis Devereux, Elizabeth Karle, Mary Surething, Stephen Michel, Carol Garrow-Woolley, June Capron, Christine Pratt, James Seward, Zena Gates, Jon McCann, Ron Unterman, Dottie Finnerty, Carol Devine, Andrea Auld, Francis Devine, Kathleen Leber, Kristen Mailhiot, Lauren Excott, Abe Leber, Nancy McKeegan, Dan Quaranto, Billy Austin, Philippe Crane, via Zoom: Barbara and Steve Hazleton, Sabrina Brown, Michael Sherman, Charlie and Savannah Baker, Maggie O'Brien, Don Patch, Michael Chronert, Ashley Rose, Harrington

1. Chair called the meeting to order at 6.09pm
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Consideration of any changes and/or additions to the agenda: Noting that lengthy documents had been submitted at short notice regarding item 7b, Mark Turco tabled this item for discussion at a Special Meeting to be held on 22nd January.
4. Approval of December 9 2025, Jan 6 2026 Minutes: Diana Garrow moved to accept the minutes, seconded by Mark Turco, approved unanimously.
5. Reports
 - a. Highway and Transfer Station Update - Clinton Woolley: Salt deliveries continue, but given the high costs the crew is trying to use it sparingly to ensure there is enough. There are no issues with the Transfer station. Mr Woolley sought a quote for removing dead trees at Carlton cemetery, Star Lake, the Museum, and one residence, which came in at \$9000 for two days' work.
 - b. Town Treasurer Update - Elizabeth Karle
 - i. Monthly Income and Expenses Report: there has been more progress in delinquent tax collections, the cash balance is holding steady. Winter expenses for highway labor, winter salt and sand are high. The budget is on track in most areas of spending. Grant funds for paving from the State are still to be reimbursed.
 - ii. Finalize and Approve FY27 Budget: The special meeting finalized the budget with a total amount to be raised by property tax of \$1,400,640, an increase of 11.46% over the current year. This will go to vote at the Town meeting. Although this includes a higher utilization of the previous year's surplus to reduce the taxes, there have still been significant increases in costs of materials and labor. Without the buy down, the increase would have been almost 20%. Mark Turco noted that costs have increased due to inflation and tariffs, but also that Town office staff have not taken an increase in pay this year. Mark Turco moved to approve the FY 27 budget, seconded Diana Garrow, approved unanimously.
 - c. Listers' Report - Mary Surething: The Town wide reappraisal will start at the end of this year, to be completed early in 2028. The Listers' office now has a vacancy; interested candidates can petition for this.
 - d. Conservation Commission Update - Phil Crane: The Commission held a useful meeting with Senator Williams regarding harvesting of weeds at Star Lake and will continue that dialogue. Mr Crane reiterated the possibility of injecting ash trees against emerald ash borer and discouraged pre-emptive cutting. The Commission is available to help people who may wish to do this.
6. New Business
 - a. Mount Holly PTG Winter Fest: Andrea Auld asked for feedback on a proposal to host a community event at Star Lake as a fund raiser, including skating on the lake and creating a sledding hill on Lake Street, which could be created if the road crew could help with snow management. The event would be during the day on either 20th or 22nd February. Diana Garrow asked about safety and the need for a barrier to Belmont Road. Ms Auld responded that the PTG is aware of the need for a barrier but has not yet worked out what might be best. A number of people suggested hay bales. Jeff Chase warned of the difficulty of creating a sledding hill. Mark

Turco noted that the Board has no objection and asked PTG to come back to the next meeting with more specific details.

- b. Appointment of Trustee of Public Funds: Dennis Devereux noted that David Johnson was Trustee of Public Funds, and prepared an annual report. Liz Karle has confirmed she can provide the relevant information to Mr Devereux for this year's report. Mr Devereux confirmed that there is now a candidate for the position which will be voted on in March.
 - c. Southeast Region Emergency Preparedness Discussion - Maggie O'Brien RRPC: RRPC is hosting an upcoming exercise between the REMC and Rutland Regional Disaster Cooperative, which focuses on coordination and collaboration between Towns during an emergency. Ms O'Brien asked for Town participation in a meeting on Feb 4th, with other nearby towns. Jeff Chase, Billy Austin, Mark Turco and Clinton Woolley (depending on the weather) confirmed they would attend.
 - d. Sherman/Moes request for fireworks display: Michael Sherman presented his request for a fireworks display at his daughter's wedding, with the display set up on the family's property adjacent to the Lake. A professional fireworks company will stage the 15 minute display starting at 10pm, and proof of insurance was provided. Fire Chief Billy Austin said he was happy, with the only concern being the dry weather/drought which may mean cancellation. Mr Sherman confirmed he understands that if weather is an issue it may need to be cancelled. Sabrina Brown, coordinator of the event confirmed that the company will be in touch the month before and the week before and asked to send a permit to the Select Board. Jeff Chase asked that, as a courtesy, the display could be completed by 10pm rather than starting at 10pm. SB members confirmed they are content with the proposal.
 - e. Warning for Declaration of Inclusion: Faith Tempest confirmed that VLCT guidance gave flexibility on how the Declaration should be warned since it is a non-binding resolution. Mark Turco proposed including the full declaration in the warning, and also circulating this beforehand in the newsflash and Chit Chat. Diana - reason for objecting was that the entity suggests various onerous actions to support the declaration, and it is not easy to do this. Stephen Michel responded that all of the recommendations are voluntary and not binding. Suggested signing off and posting on the website.
 - f. 2026 Mileage Certification Updates: Mark Turco moved to approve the certificate of mileage of 73.578 miles, seconded Diana Garrow, approved unanimously.
7. Old Business
- a. Municipal Planning Grant Housing study - next steps: public comment period, meeting on 27th Jan in Town Office. Jeff asked people to comment if they have thoughts
 - b. Letter from Chair of Planning Commission to Select Board: tabled until the Special Meeting, 22nd January.
8. Citizen Comments: Elaine Martel: Ms Martel wrote regarding illegal firework displays on Alpine Drive. Billy Austin noted the Fire Department has no jurisdiction and Mark Turco confirmed that the Sheriff would be the entity to contact. There is no noise ordinance and so residents are encouraged to call local law enforcement. Kathy Leber asked if this is a rental property, and if so to ensure landlords are aware that this is illegal. Mark Turco asked for information to be put in the Chit Chat and Newsflash and confirmed that the Select Board will be in touch with Ms Martel to identify the property. Dennis Devereux asked about the intersection at Belmont General Store and whether there is a plan to install a 4 way stop. Mark Turco responded that this is still being discussed but cannot be addressed during the winter.
9. Town Meeting Warning: Select Board members agreed to do this on 22nd January, preceded by a special meeting on item 7b. Mark Turco requested that Jon McCann and Ron Unterman attend.
10. Announcements
- a. Dog License Registration Deadline is April 1.
 - b. Town Office Closed on January 19 for MLK Jr. Day.
11. Review & Sign Orders
12. Executive Session: Title 1 V.S.A. S 313(a)(3) - personnel (if needed): Mark Turco moved to go into executive session, seconded Diana Garrow, approved unanimously.
13. Meeting adjourned

These minutes are in draft form until approved by the Select Board at the next regularly scheduled meeting.