

Special Select Board Meeting

Mount Holly Town Office
50 School St
Mount Holly, VT 05758

January 22, 2026

4:00 pm

Attendance: Mark Turco, Jeff Chase, Diana Garrow, Faith Tempest, Dennis Devereux, Stephen Michel, Mary Surething, Lisa Kelley, Francis DeVine, Nancy McKeegan, Dan Quaranto, June Capron, Kathleen Leber, Abe Leber, Ron Unterman, Dottie Finnerty, Michael Chronert, Alissa Chronert, Carol Garrow-Woolley

Via Zoom: Andrew Seward, Gail Beardmore, Robert Beardmore, Carol Devine

1. Call to Order. 4.03pm
2. Consideration of any changes and/or additions to the agenda: none
3. Town Budget finalization: Jeff Chase noted the 11% increase even after factoring in the use of surplus to reduce the tax burden; he proposed reducing the early payment discount to 3% and reducing the increase in some aspects of the highway budget, specifically highway labor and road retreatment which would bring the increase in the municipal portion of taxes down from 11% to 6%. Jeff Chase made a motion to approve a general fund budget of \$452,755, and the highway fund budget of \$584,900 giving a total of \$1,037,655, seconded by Diana Garrow, approved unanimously.
4. Elimination of Town Auditor positions: Carol Garrow-Woolley noted that Town Auditors are putting together the town report and no longer carry out the audit function which is undertaken by a professional audit firm. She suggested removing the position of Town Auditor and appointing a Town Report Committee. Dennis Devereux noted that many small towns do this. Diana Garrow noted that this must be put to the town for a vote which means that the position would not be removed for a year. SB members were not opposed to putting this on the Town Warning. Stephen Michel asked if the auditors get paid, and if the committee would be paid? Mark Turco responded that this could be decided if and when there was a change. Mark Turco moved to put on the Town Warning the proposal to eliminate the position of town auditor, Diana Garrow, seconded, approved unanimously.
5. Creation of Town Report Committee: Mark Turco noted that this will be reviewed once the Town Meeting has taken place and the results of the ballot are available.
6. Signing the Town Meeting Warning: Mark Turco read out the details of the Town Warning. Diana Garrow moved to accept the warning as written, seconded Mark Turco, approved unanimously.
7. Letter from Chair of Planning Commission to Select Board: Mark Turco noted that Jon McCann could not attend the meeting and so this would be a limited discussion. Alissa Chronert read a statement reiterating points she had made in an earlier written submission to the Select Board, and noted that statements by the Planning Commission Chair could negatively affect town residents' perception of her, ultimately damaging the General Store. Ron Unterman gave his overview of events in recent weeks and also reiterated points he had made in a written submission to the Select Board. Mr Unterman, based on a discussion with his lawyer, questioned the position of the Planning Commission Chair that two members of a five member board can discuss or act on an issue; he also questioned the veracity of the

statement by the Planning Commission Chair that the Commission had voted to take actions in relation to the Jurisdictional Opinion on the Belmont General Store, stating that he could find no record of those decisions in meeting minutes. Mr Unterman questioned the ability of the Planning Commission to take decisions which are in the interest of the town's people. Lisa Kelley noted that the work that Ms Chronert has done for the Store will ensure it will last for another 200 years, but these actions should be supported by Town Commissions to ensure that businesses run, and comments and statements about the actions of town residents can be misconstrued by those who do not know them. Kathy Leber noted the time that Ms Chronert has put in to justify her actions when she could have been called to a Planning Commission meeting. Abe Leber noted that Mount Holly is a diverse community and anyone who serves the community needs to acknowledge that. Andrew Seward, a member of the Planning Commission informed the Select Board of his resignation from the Commission. Mark Turco reiterated that Mount Holly is one community and tabled further discussion since the Chair of the Planning Commission was not present to respond. Nancy McKeegan asked if there would be any action by the Select Board. Mark Turco responded that the Board would discuss the issue in executive session at the next Select Board meeting.

8. Jeff Chase reminded participants of the public discussion of the Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan on 27th January at 6pm.
9. Mark Turco adjourned the meeting at 5.13 pm.

These minutes are in draft form until approved at the next regular meeting of the Select Board.