

**Select Board Meeting
Mount Holly Town Office
July 14th, 2026
6:00 pm**

Attendance: Mark Turco, Jeff Chase, Diana Garrow, Faith Tempest, Marc Miller, Clinton Woolley, Carol Garrow Woolley, James Seward, Christine Pratt, Zena Gates, Dennis Devereux, Stephen Michel, June Capron, Mary Surething, Ron Unterman, Kevin Winter.

Via zoom: Steve and Barbara Hazleton, Michael Miller

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Consideration of any changes and/or additions to the agenda: The Chair added to new business: Cider Day Road closures, Cemetery Commission cost of plots, renewal of Cota and Cota propane contract, and to old business a junk complaint
4. Approval of June 9th Minutes: Diana Garrow moved to approve the minutes, second Jeff Chase, approved unanimously
5. Reports
 - a. Highway and Transfer Station Update - Clinton Woolley: Work is ongoing to obtain grants through the Better Back Roads program. Mowing and dealing with downed trees is ongoing. Mr Woolley had sought quotes for winter sand, with Casella being the cheapest. Diana Garrow moved to purchase winter sand from Casella, second Mark Turco, Jeff Chase recused himself, motion approved. Mr Woolley reported that he had found trash in the metal container at the Transfer Station, possibly due to only one attendant on duty on the 4th of July; he asked to discuss this in executive session. Regarding removal of the metal and C&D containers, Diana Garrow noted the Town has a contract until October which may mean that the open top containers need to be maintained. Jeff Chase responded that the Town can ask Casella for them to be removed. Carol Garrow Woolley asked what will happen to items not taken from the swap shed which are then placed in the metal or C&D containers. Jeff Chase moved to close the swap shed as of Sept 1st due to concerns about disposal of items, second Mark Turco, approved unanimously. Mr Chase noted other options to donate items including Good Will, Black River Good Neighbors, the newsflash and social media. Diana Garrow asked about transfer station staff having to work on public holidays. Mark Turco moved to ensure Transfer Station staff do not have to work on holidays which fall on their workdays, seconded Jeff Chase, approved unanimously.
 - i. Electronics recycling agreement: Mark Turco moved to renew the agreement as written second Diana Garrow, approved unanimously.
 - ii. Casella Contract Expires: see item 5a.
 - b. Listers' Report - Mary Surething: all grievances have been heard and there are three appeals with a Board of Civil Authority hearing set to hear one appeal, and the two appeals from utilities being lodged with the State.
 - i. Grand List Errors and Omissions: one error arose when a property was sold as one parcel when it was in fact two; this is being corrected.
 - ii. Waiving Homestead Penalty: Ms Surething asked the Board to waive the late homestead declaration penalty. Mark Turco moved to waive the late homestead penalty, second Diana Garrow, approved unanimously.
 - c. Town Treasurer Update - Marc Miller
 - i. Monthly Income and Expenses Report: Mr Miller reported that all revenue for the last fiscal year has been recorded, and although reconciliation is ongoing, expenditures were \$15,000 over budget for the year.
 - ii. FY27 Tax Rate: Mr Miller asked the Select Board to approve the proposed tax rate of 0.4569, being a 5% reduction over FY 26. State Education taxes, both Homestead and non-Homestead, increase by 7.8% and 8.8% respectively. Jeff Chase asked about the funds for the next year, querying why the municipal rate would be lower when it was expected to be marginally higher; he expressed concern that if the rate goes down, then it will be

difficult to raise next year and proposed keeping it at the same rate as 2026 (0.4816). Mr Miller clarified that the only factor that could be changed is the surplus to be carried forward or applied to reduce the cost to taxpayers. Diana Garrow moved to set the municipal tax rate for FY26-27 at 0.4816 cents per \$100, the same rate as last year, raising \$1,416, 464, second Jeff Chase, approved unanimously.

- d. Conservation Commission Update - Phil Crane: Weed pulling has taken place at the Star Lake swimming area, and Mr Crane asked for the Road crew assistance to haul the weeds away to Brigid Sullivan's property; Ron Unterman also volunteered his land. The Commission is working with Senator Terry Williams to get the wetlands permit for further weed harvesting at a reasonable cost. Jean Fitzgerald has planted shrubs, most of which are thriving. There have been 300 inoculations of approximately 30 ash trees and this will continue until mid-August. The Commission is also looking at further trail work, and working with Shrewsbury Conservation Commission on dealing with invasives.

6. New Business

- a. Appointment of Board of Adjustment member/ alternates: Two letters of interest were received for the three year term, from James Seward and Donald Patch. Mark Turco made a motion to reappoint James Seward to the Board of Adjustment for a three year term, second Diana Garrow, approved unanimously. For the two alternate positions, Julie Parsells and Dennis Devereux have expressed interest in continuing as alternates. Mark Turco moved to reappoint them, Diana Garrow second, approved unanimously.
- b. Act 162 Forest Fire Wardens: Mark Turco outlined the details of the new law which appoints the Fire Chief as the Fire Warden but allows the designation of a deputy. Fire Chief Billy Austin has proposed that Jim Seward be appointed as deputy and in that role issues permits. Diana Garrow asked about the stipend paid to Mr Seward as Fire Warden. Mr Seward noted that the State may not give any additional stipend, but the warden does use a lot of fuel. Mark Turco stated that he was happy to continue as proposed. Jeff Chase noted that this is simply a change in management and Mr Seward would continue to do the work and get the stipend.
- c. Road closures for Cider Days: Linda Miller stated that MHCA was concerned about parking and traffic for Cider Days and would like to propose closing of Maple Hill Road (as in previous years) but also to close Belmont Road in front of the Belmont General Store and to limit parking to one side on Church Street, Healdville and Tarbellville Roads. Clinton Woolley stated he does not want to see Belmont Road closed because it is the main road to Tarbellville Road; emergency vehicles would not be able to turn from Lake Street onto Church Street and continue from there to Tarbellville Road; he suggested that if additional space is required this could be done by extending further up Maple Hill Road. Mark Turco confirmed that Church Street and Belmont Road would need to remain open, Lake Street would also remain open. Ms Miller noted she will discuss further with the MHCA Board and revert. She asked if there was a preferred side of the road for parking? Mr Woolley expressed a preference for the museum side of Tarbellville Road and the right hand side of Healdville Road coming out of the village center.
- d. Cemetery Commission: Dennis Devereux reported that in 2009 the Select Board set a price of \$500 per plot for the Mount Holly Cemetery; now the Packer Cemetery is a town cemetery he would like the Select Board to revise its resolution to include Packer Cemetery. He also asked about mowing help and if the money that came to the Town with the adoption of Packer Cemetery to pay more for mowing and for tree management. Mr Devereux noted that the tree removal at Carlton Cemetery was not fully completed and asked Mr Woolley what could be done. Mr Woolley responded that the work was completed to the extent possible in a safe manner; any additional work would likely cost approximately \$20,000. Mark Turco moved to raise the rates at Packer Cemetery to be equivalent to Mount Holly cemetery starting Sept 1st, second Jeff Chase, approved unanimously.
- e. Cota and Cota contract: Steve Michel asked if this should be a bid; Mark Turco responded that it is not, with Diana Garrow noting that changing suppliers would require changing tanks and finding an alternative for service. Diana Garrow moved to renew the contract with Cota & Cota at the capped price option, second Jeff Chase, approved unanimously.

7. Old Business

- a. Review bids for Paving Hortonville Road: Jeff Chase opened bids from Pike Industries: \$188,779.50, Wilk Paving \$194,796.50, Springfield Paving \$189,875.00, Fuller Sand and Gravel \$166,577.50. Mark Turco moved to accept the Fuller contract for \$166,577.50 second Jeff Chase, approved unanimously. Jeff Chase suggested adding the \$18,000 road retreatment funds available from last year to extend the paving; Mark Turco proposed keeping that back for road patching.
- b. Dog Licensing Census update: Carol Garrow-Woolley noted 16 dogs (13 owners) remain unregistered. Mark Turco agreed that details could be sent to the Rutland County Sheriff for their follow-up. Jeff Chase noted this is 16 dogs which may not have rabies shots, meaning anyone bitten would also need to have rabies shots.
- c. August Wedding Fireworks: Faith Tempest noted that the permit requires the organizers to contact the Fire Chief one month in advance. Jim Seward confirmed he had heard nothing. Mark Turco asked Ms Tempest to follow up with the Fire Chief and the organizers, with Jeff Chase asking her to ensure they are aware that the Select Board wants the event to be concluded by 10pm.
- d. Bowlsville Bridge replacement update: The State has sent final plans for comment, and confirmed the costs to the Town of \$44,530. Work is expected to start in Spring 2027. Jeff Chase noted this is very cost effective for the Town; Mark Turco thanked property owners for their support to this.
- e. Junk ordinance: A Junk Ordinance Complaint regarding a property at 189 Station Road was submitted by Patricia Labella and Susan Kilsheimer. Mark Turco confirmed that there has been some work recently to clear the property and the owner, Mr Hyjek, has committed to clearing it. Mr Turco confirmed that a letter will be sent to ensure there is further progress. He also noted that there had been an earlier anonymous complaint about the property, but anonymous complaints cannot be actioned.

8. Citizen Comments: Mark Turco read out the inscription on the plaque to be placed in honor of David H Johnson.

9. Announcements: August Select Board Meeting Date Change. Due to the primary elections, the Select Board agreed to change the date of the next regular meeting to August 12th at 6pm

10. Review & Sign Orders

11. Executive Session: Title 1 V.S.A. S 313(a)(3) – personnel (if needed). Mark Turco moved to go into executive session, second Diana Garrow, approved unanimously.

12. Adjourn

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

A video recording of this meeting is available at: <https://okemovalley.tv/mount-holly-selectboard-714>