

Town of Danville  
**APPROVED** Selectboard Minutes  
Special Selectboard Meeting, January 6, 2025  
Danville Town Hall (5:00 pm)

**Board Members Present:** Janice Ouellette, Glenn Herrin, Eric Bach, Alison Low and Matt Choate

**Board Members Present Using Teams:** None

**Board Members Absent:** None

**Others Present Using Teams:** None

**Others Present:** Michelle Leclerc, Keith Gadapee

**Meeting called to order** by Chair Janice Ouellette at 5:00 pm.

1. **Additions to the agenda:** None
2. **Visitors/Public Comment:** None
3. **Review Staffing Options and Priorities:** Jan and Eric met to discuss staffing options, and using Michelle's feedback, they drafted two options – One was a Selectboard Assistant at 20 hours a week, and the other was a Town Administrator, which would cover everything that Audrey was doing and more, including grant administration, procurement. There was a question about the level of interface with the public. How many calls have been coming in? Michelle reported that there were a few that were forwarded to her, including the North Danville fuel levels and Vermont Construction who were going to repair the roof.

The Town Administrator would also have the Highway Supervisor reporting to the him or her. We would hire a Highway Supervisor to make sure that highway staff was adequately covered, and the Town Administrator role could be advanced from the Keith's role. Right now, Keith fields the calls but also deals with the details. This role delineated could provide depth of coverage, giving us to opportunity to hire in a different level.

Glenn noted that he wanted to make sure that it's the right job and fit. Matt noted the EOE requirements and that it would have to be posted. Keith stated that he was interested in the position, noting that he's currently splitting his time between the field and the office, and the office (administrative, such as MRGP and culverts) take second place. Hiring a day-to-day supervisor would be an easier job to fill than the Town Administrator position, so he wants to make sure that it's an attractive job to fill in the future when he's not here.

The job would also include a capital planning piece and public utilities and buildings and grounds.

Eric explained that we wanted to stay away from appointing a Town Manager, and felt that this was a more appropriately-scaled solution for Danville.

Jan explained to Keith that he would be the top administrative officer and liaison between elected and appointed officials, and all the departments of the town. There would be budget preparation where necessary, and he would act as Public Safety Officer and support capital planning and execution of projects. This person would also serve as clerk of the Selectboard and as the Building and Grounds Administrator.

Alison noted that our region has a couple of Town Administrators, and that on one level they can be hard to fill, but only in that each person has a distinct background that can't be readily replicated. In reality, each Town Administrator position builds on the strengths of the individual's background. Jan replied that this is what we are doing by looking at the existing talent pool and creating a position to leverage those strengths.

Matt asked Keith if there is someone on staff who could step into the Highway Supervisor role. Keith said maybe, but the Per Diem position also offers some flexibility if that's a challenge.

Jan asked the members of the board to consider what has been presented today and present further refinements on the job description in the next regular meeting. Alison noted that in other communities, the Town Administrator has been known to fill in vacancies, such as the planning commission or the ZA. Jan

noted that the Town Administrator job description could be revised to act as liaison to boards and fill in gaps.

It was noted that there would be some guessing about how the expense would be distributed between general and highway budgets. The first time we will be guessing anyway, so maybe 50/50 or 60/40 general/highway. Of course, it was also noted that if we had one big budget, it would be easier.

There was a question about how we'd do this with payroll, since Michelle noted that we also have a separate budget for sewer. Our auditor could probably answer this question as to how to classify expenses. Michelle suggested having it all come out of the general fund, and then allocate expenses at the end of the year.

If everything is one big budget, and it fails, then the whole budget fails. However, we should probably know where we can adjust. It was also noted that the General Budget is really lean. Matt was leaning toward putting it all in the General budget because it's cleaner. Alison suggested that segregating expenses might lead to whittling away specific responsibilities, depending on what the voters approve.

Keith noted that the budgets used to be together. It was a change in statute that required towns to segregate budgets, but that statutory provision has gone away. Glenn noted that our charter still requires us to do so, but it looks like the legislature is going to make it go away. However, Alison noted that the legislature would not repeal the charter in time for this Town Meeting Day.

Keith did note that the position was based on 40 hours a week, but his current job is based on much more than that. Jan looked at what we were paying Audrey and she also looked at what various jobs were paying. Michelle referred to the VLCT guide, but it is only based on those who fill out the survey, and it doesn't cover benefits.

Glenn expressed interest in this, and how it addresses the recommendations of the Town Services Committee. He is wondering how it impacts the budget, however. He is guessing about \$50,000. Replacing Audrey's salary would have accounted for about \$41,000. There will be realignment of different pots of money to replace others positions as well, so Eric did not anticipate a big bump in payroll. But it's dropping highway from 7 positions to 6, so it's not likely to impact by \$50,000. Matt is thinking it's more in the neighborhood of \$20,000 to \$30,000. That said, it was noted that for a Town the size of Danville, our staffing is pretty lean, and this expense felt justified.

Michelle suggested putting the Town Administrator in the General fund, and the Highway Supervisor in the Highway fund, since that mostly lines up with the replacement of Audrey's position. There was also a question about whether this position would cover shortages in highway coverage, like clearing the sidewalks? The position can be written so that if qualified, this person could provide coverage. If so, that expense should be attributed to the Highway fund. Matt pointed out that he supervises 15 departments, and his salary is not parsed out among those different departments.

There was a question about the Fire Department Administrator position to support the Fire Chief, which is a recommendation of the Town Services Committee and is currently proposed as an article. However, that role could be incorporated into this position.

Glenn wondered if this job could become an article? Jan didn't think so. Actually, we are just changing an existing job description. Definitely if we went with a Town Manager, we would have to do that. Alison pointed out that if we did an article for this position under consideration, we would establish a precedent for seeking town approval every time we realign job descriptions and salaries. We didn't, for example, go to the voters when we established the pay scales.

The board discussed different scenarios and how it might be played out in the budget. It was decided that we would review this again on Thursday. We came up with a line item of about \$71,000. Keith pointed out that his current job was based on overtime, so he might be paid less, but he would be working less. Eric pointed out that a salaried position was appropriate, since the workload would involve irregular hours. Jan looked at the Town of Georgia Town Administrator, which ranges from \$70,000 to \$79,000. But why would we expect Keith to be paid less when there is more responsibility, asked members of the board? That issue will have to worked out, because accepting less money doesn't seem right and it does not account for years of experience. And, some overtime is inevitable. Evening meetings tend to skew the hours and it's not like you can just take time off to make up for that. And there are times of emergencies when the job will have a greater demand in hours. Overtime is unpredictable and may vary from year to the next.

**General Budget:** The balances as of 12/31/25 were presented. Not much was changed. Monies for the Safety Officer were pulled out. At the bottom, Michelle added appropriations so that everyone can see the accurate amount and the percentage affecting the rate. Why the increase on the revenues side by 13%? That's the property tax, to cover the gap from last year to this year. There is \$20K more for the Sheriff contract, IT is up by \$5,000, and there are increases for the furnaces for the Town Hall and the North Danville School. It was noted that there was a combination of rebates and grants for the furnaces that were not accounted for in the quote for the Town Garage. It was also noted that electricity for the Train Station went up, something that we did not even budget for last year. Alison noted that the Dog Park needs a fence, and it's going to be about \$50,000, but we won't spend it unless we receive a grant or donation. No expenses noted, because we won't make a major expense unless we receive funds for it. It was noted that we cannot include delinquent taxes because we budgeted for it last year. It was noted that the Municipal Planning Grant will be drawn down in 2026, but it will go into the infrastructure fund, so it doesn't show up here. Regarding the fireworks expense at Joe's Pond, it was suggested that they run the expense through the Chamber rather than the Town's books. Jan felt that these expenses didn't belong in the Town funds, including the milfoil because we are accepting money that is not ours to spend. Michelle pointed out the Town is giving money to whatever entity that they are owed. The fireworks appear to be the sticking point. Eric can talk to the Gary Karns and run it through the Chamber. Eric pointed out that the milfoil money is better coming through the Town and we are likely to get more money.

Jan asked the board to consider an article that would authorize the Town to transfer an audited surplus to the Capital Projects Reserve Fund. It just keeps us from having to increase taxes in the future. We have the parking lot and other projects lined up behind it. We are trying to stabilize taxes in the future.

**Highway Budget:** We increased set aside for capital equipment to \$217,000. There was a question about what we were not funding to keep the budget this low. Is it gravel? Sand and salt have been very expensive for November and December, so they might not be accurate. We're not buying a truck. Jan noted that last year we intended to use a carry forward to keep taxes down, but we haven't recorded it in Actual. Michelle said that there is a call into the auditor about that. Keith noted that that Highway budget definitely is "bare bones." He's okay with going one more year on the excavator (\$165K), and the trucks are taking two years to be delivered anyhow. He had wanted to get the trucks on a 10-year schedule for replacement, but this leaves us with a gap year. He mentioned that Will Seegers called him to ask why McDowell Road is not in the budget. He explained that we will apply for the grant this year, and we'll do it next year. The other big project is the slide on Bruce Badger Highway. We are not doing a paving grant, but we are going to pave. Alison wanted to know if Ann approached him about the paving on Joe's Brook. Glenn noted that we don't have a reserve for landslides or culverts. Keith said it was usually tied to a FEMA event, except that the slide is not. Also, the standards for rebuilding are growing. Alison noted that some towns are thinking about setting capital funds just because FEMA assistance is not guaranteed. Even if we wanted to apply for a grant, there would still be some engineering required. Keith noted that state grants are not keeping up either; however, he said that we would get some mixed feedback from voters who might not want to put money aside. Jan said we should do that when the flood memories are fresh. Eric suggested that maybe we offset the negative difference by setting aside for it by setting some funds aside, just to keep the budget neutral. Glenn said that maybe this isn't the year to do this. The discussion of the furnaces came up as mentioned in the letter. It was pointed out that the letter was on the agenda for Thursday. The bottom here is that we keep the line items based on the quote for Lyme Green for now.

The board also reviewed the sewer budget which looked good in contrast to last year, when it was running at a deficit. We are on track for getting the system to pay for itself.

**4. Adjourn – Motion by Alison Low, to adjourn at 7:19 pm.**

Minutes taken by Alison Low submitted January 12, at 9:22 p.m.