

Town of Danville
APPROVED Selectboard Minutes
January 8, 2026
Danville Town Hall (6:00 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: Deborah Marrier

Others Present: Michelle Leclerc, Keith Gadapee, Walter McNeil, Will Seegers, Alexandra Bliss, Greg Prior, Chelsea Hewitt

Meeting called to order by Chair Janice Ouellette at 6:00 pm.

1. **Additions to the agenda:** Jan to summarize Recycling Report submitted by Clayton Cargill (and the report will be appended to the minutes); Eric to provide an update on the Danville Village Improvement Society; Alison to table discussion of the potential HUD grant for the North Danville Brainerd Library
2. **Approve minutes of December 18, 2025:** Glenn offered a correction to Town Services Committee recommendations to include the Town Clerk and Highway Foreman rather than selectboard in subsequent iterations of the committee. *Motion by Glenn Herrin, 2nd by Eric Bach to recognize the **Regular** December 18, 2025 minutes as accurately reflecting the agenda of the meeting, with the amendment provided by Glenn. Vote 5-0-0. Motion carries.*
3. **Visitors/Public Comment:** Janice Ouelette asked all visitors to introduce themselves.
 - Walter McNeil, attending as a private citizen, not NEKWMD rep, to discuss the culvert on Badger Brook (See issues and information below)
 - Will Seegers, Alexandra Bliss, also to discuss the culvert on Badger Brook
 - Greg Prior, General interest, and selectboard liaison as designated by the Planning Commission
 - Chelsea Hewitt, here to discuss a request to place a porta potty in Hill Street Park for the skate rink

Chelsea discussed the situation at the skate rink, which is receiving a lot of use from kids, as well as adults. She was seeking permission to place a porta potty for rink users. It's difficult for users to quickly access bathrooms, since they have to fumble with snowpants and winter gear. There is no bathroom nearby. She can cover the cost but needs permission (consent from the board) to place a porta potty in Hill Street Park. She will try to place it in an inconspicuous spot as feasible, but it does need to be placed on a level surface -- and it's likely that the most level surface will be behind just behind the gazebo. Nevertheless, placing a porta potty in Hill Street Park was deemed less aesthetically jarring than having people pulling down their pants to relieve themselves behind the bushes. The board agreed. Permission was granted.

4. **Town Clerk (Michelle Leclerc)**
 - **Liquor Licenses** – None
 - **Covered Bridge Society Membership Request:** The Covered Bridge Society is requesting \$100 from the Town of Danville this year. Last year, we gave them \$15. There was a question about the purpose of the Society. According to the web site: It is “dedicated to the promotion and preservation of Vermont’s remaining covered bridges.” There was a question if the money got the Town listed in promotional materials. It was unclear. By consent it was agreed to keep our donation at \$15.
 - **Sullivan and Powers Audit Engagement Letter:** Michelle requested the board to sign the engagement letter with the firm who is performing our audit. She reminded us that we have a five-year contract with them, but we sign the engagement letter every year. All members of the selectboard signed the letter.
5. **Issues and Information –**

- A. **Appoint Personnel to Issue Parking Tickets** – There were some questions about whether discretion could be used, and it was agreed that authorized personnel could issue warnings at their discretion before issuing actual tickets. It was also agreed that the Selectboard could authorize people associated with organized events (e.g. Autumn on the Green, Danville Fair) to issue tickets in the same manner as needed. It was agreed that members of the selectboard could provide backup support as needed, and that the recycling attendant could be authorized as well, since parking can be a sticky situation at the recycling center. (The Sheriff will also be able to issue tickets, and he does not need to be appointed.) *Motion by Eric Bach, 2nd by Alison Low to appoint the Fire Chief, the Road Foreman, members of the Selectboard, and the Recycling Attendant to issue parking tickets, with the discretion to issue warning. Vote 5-0-0. Motion carries.*
- B. **Disruptive Behavior Policy:** Matt was commended for crafting this with such care, and it was noted that such a policy was needed in light of certain events that have occurred around the region, state, and country, affecting how people may behave in municipal locations. This is the second draft, and he is still looking for input on what would constitute disruptive behavior, and what our response would be. He spent quite a bit of time researching sample policies from Vermont and New Hampshire communities, as well as VLCT. There was a question about municipal locations, and it was intentionally focused on municipal service locations, as opposed to public spaces such as the Green. There was a recommendation to delete the section on “telephone and electronic communications” (which needs expanding anyhow) and integrate it into Section 2b on “communication” in general. Regarding fines, it wasn’t clear if we have the authority to do that, or if it would have to be codified in an ordinance, which we are not ready to adopt. If so, it would have to be formatted differently to reference enabling statute. It was noted that the policy aligns with the statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, which we adopted a couple of years ago. Greg noted that the Planning Commission has been using AI to compare policy statements. *Next step is to make small changes and bring back for next meeting.*
- C. **Staffing Options and Job Descriptions:** The Selectboard reviewed the updated job description for the Town Administrator. Glenn had suggested that the job description specifically reference the job duties of the Health Officer, the Public Safety and Emergency Coordinator, and the Fire Administrator (referencing statute as appropriate). All of these roles should be listed on separate lines. It was also noted that the role of the Fire Department Administrator could probably be condensed, since many of these responsibilities were likely to overlap. Correction noted that the job description still listed this position as part-time. It is not. It is full-time. Also added under qualifications was a knowledge of Town Policies.
- D. **Review Articles for Town Meeting Day warning:** It was noted that the first proposed warning to hire a Fire Department administrator was now a moot point, since the selectboard was contemplating hiring a Town Administrator, which incorporates that role.
 The second article was as follows: ***“Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to transfer any audited surplus to the Capital Project Reserve Fund?”*** There was a discussion about how the Selectboard would explain this article in the Information Meetings. For example, what happens if the article doesn’t pass? It doesn’t reduce taxes. It just becomes a carry forward. There was a question of when the surplus would move. It would move at the time of the annual audit.
 The third article concerned the proposed acquisition of the Fire District, which was discussed in the December 18th meeting. As mentioned then, Eric met with the Fire District to gauge their support for this endeavor. They were open to it. The Fire District doesn’t meet until May, but the transfer definitely is in their sights. Management has become more complex over the years, and there is science and engineering involved now, which was not part of the Prudential Committee’s responsibilities when it was formed in the late 1800s. No one on the Fire District was overtly opposed to the transfer. However, the transfer will take some time. The suggested wording for the Article is thus: ***“Shall the voters of the Town of Danville authorize the Selectboard for a period of up to two years, to engage in the acquisition of Danville Fire District #1; to include its land holdings, equipment, profits and debts, should the municipality’s existing prudential board choose to dissolve or sell?”*** The article as written needs some legal review (by VLCT). The acquisition could take time, but we don’t want to keep the “engagement” process active for perpetuity. We need to get the existing bonds and payoff dates to inform this article, as well as average expenses and average income. The system has been well maintained by the Fire District, and the maintenance and operations have been covered by the user fees-- that is not expected to change. There was a comment from Walter, who repeatedly stated that he did not want all taxpayers covering the cost of the water system. Glenn pointed out the recommendation from the Town Services Committee was to “manage the drinking water operations, capital improvements, fees, and bond transfers so that users pay for the system with limited occasional support from the Town as approved.” The occasional support, he pointed out, might be a major upgrade, should one be needed. However, it is not the recommendation of the Town Services Committee to make all the Town’s taxpayers carry the water system. Eric pointed out that to transfer the Fire District and its holdings to a for-profit management company would cost more and therefore raise fees, and that the Town was best suited to assume responsibility. Alison pointed out that the water system “makes the downtown what it is” and supports the myriad businesses and services in the village

core. Eric pointed out that the Selectboard didn't actually need to present this article. They could proceed without a vote. However, the article was being prepared and presented to the voters in the interest of transparency. All members of the selectboard agreed that it was **not** the intent of to make the tax payers assume responsibility for the water system.

There was also an additional article, presented to Michelle, for a NEW appropriation request. New appropriation requests must be addressed through a separate article, apart from the appropriation requests that come to the Town every year. Those requests just about always end up getting voted on en masse. The article shall read as follows: ***“Shall the Town appropriate \$5,000.00 to the St. Johnsbury Nutritional Center, Inc., 1207 Main Street, (PO Box 21) St. Johnsbury, VT 05819 for meeting its operational expenses and feeding the Danville Senior Citizens, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 2691?”***

- E. **Tim Ide's Letter regarding the Town Hall Furnace:** Tim's letter questioned why were just looking at wood for the furnaces (Town Hall, Town Garage, and N Danville School) as opposed to propane. Jan pointed out that the Danville Town Plan (energy section) encourages switching away from fossil fuels. Glenn said that he could put together a spreadsheet that details cost of propane options. (Jan mentioned that she thought that there was some exploration of using fossil fuel condensers, which were identified as cheaper.) That said, the offsets from grants and rebates would not apply to the fossil fuel options, and those should be factored into the sheet. Regarding the storage for the pellets, that could be fashioned in any way to blend in the parking lot. It was not considered by the board to be visually distracting or unattractive.
- F. **Municipal and Highway Budget Discussion:** The budget had been revised to cover the cost of the Town Administrator, with a 60/40 divide in covering salary (60 percent general/40 percent highway). Lots of discussions with changes, which are summarized here:
- Carry forward the unspent balance that the voters authorized for pedestrian safety and speeding.
 - There was a question about the law enforcement expenditure and how it could actually be \$5,500 for 2025. That's the figure that Michelle was told to put in and wrap the rest into 2026.
 - There were some discussions about the costs for the furnaces. It was decided that we should take \$100,000 out of the building fund, with \$70,000 going to the Town Garage and \$30,000 going to North Danville School. There are grants and rebates, and it's possible that the entire cost of the North Danville furnace could be offset by the library grant (due at end of March). But we can't count on that. Furnace for the Town Hall comes out of the Marion fund. This should reduce the tax bill a bit. While it reduces our balance in the Building Fund, that fund is supposed to be used to offset costs (like these). Plus, the Train Station project owes about \$167,000 to go back into this fund.
 - We looked at the payroll with the proposed Town Administrator, Highway Supervisor, and Per Diem, and it needed to be adjusted, since the intent is to promote a Highway Supervisor. In other words, the line item on the payroll should be the anticipated delta for making up that salary with existing staff, not creating a new position entirely.
 - Finally, the line for the Recycling Attendant was reviewed, and it was decided by the Selectboard to raise the pay rate from \$18.00 per hour to \$22.50 per hour.
- G. **McDowell Road Culvert Discussion:** The latest iteration of the budget had removed the McDowell Road culvert project. Will and Alexandra were there to discuss the damage to their property in 2023 and in 2024, with water coming up over the front door. Walter concurred, saying that he used to live in that property, noting the vulnerability to flood damage due to the nearby confluence of stream channels, not to mention an undersized culvert. It was noted that there are other road projects that need flood resilience work, but this project is the one that has a direct impact to property owners. Walter also pointed out that McDowell Road gets a lot of daily traffic. Keith noted that timing is going to be tricky if we try to do this in CY2026. The soonest a grant could be awarded for this project would be July 1, which would probably not allow us to procure a contractor to purchase a culvert and complete the work by October. One possibility is to issue an early RFP to see if a contractor is willing to make a commitment to purchase a culvert in advance of a grant award – which is likely. The other issue is the impact to the budget. Required grant match and excess costs to be assumed by the Town were likely to be \$110,000. (\$310K project with \$200K grant.) This was one instance where the selectboard felt that a loan to cover Town expenses might help to stabilize the budget, similar to the loan that was obtained for the project on the Peacham Road. Advice was to adjust the budget to include the McDowell Road, including the anticipated grant award and assuming a loan for Town expense with a 3-year payback period.
- H. **North Danville Dilapidated Building:** There have been a few individuals who have complained to the Glenn about the condition of a dilapidated building in North Danville. Eric pointed out that once the complaint reaches the Selectboard, the Town Health Officer is obligated to follow through on the complaint and inform the owner that there has been a complaint and that the Health Officer will be on the site with a fire inspector.

- I. **Recycling Report:** Jan read excerpts from the Recycling Report provided by Clayton Cargill. She noted the positive numbers of the bulky bins since we have been providing bins all year rather than just at Bulky Waste Day. The numbers are more than cost neutral – we have brought in \$662 – and the availability of the bins is a major convenience to people. Clayton noted that we have still been unsuccessful in finding an assistant.
- J. **Danville Village Improvement Society Update:** Eric attended the DVIS meeting last night. Originally, when we made the transition to parallel parking, we talked about moving the planters to separate the roadway and parking to create pedestrian buffers. They are working out well. The DVIS wanted to know if there was a third one. Yes, but it's oddly shaped. We'll need to check with Danielle Lewis, who was responsible for the original planters (they were at the Train Station). There is also an issue about snow plowing, which creates a temporary berm, which in turn causes people to revert to angled parking. The Highway Department is aware of this and can get to it as soon as possible. Proactively keeping those areas shovelled clear would be a big help. There is an Open Door meeting coming up, and Jan will mention this.
- K. Glenn mentioned that he intended to present a draft policy that explains the various funds and how they are used. This will be for the next meeting.

Financials: These were already signed

6. Adjourn – Motion by Alison Low, to adjourn at 8:38 pm.

Minutes taken by Alison Low submitted January 12, at 6:29 p.m.