

11-17-2025 Selectboard Meeting

Meeting minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Jeff Parizo called the Grand Isle Selectboard meeting to order at 6:00 PM on Monday, November 17, 2025.

Board Members Present: Aimee Cochran, Ronnie Bushway, Ellen Howrigan, Jennifer Morway, Jeff Parizo

Community Members Present: Emily Clark, Susan Willard, Steve More, Sue Lawrence, Melissa Boutin, and Carrie San Angelo

Community Members via Zoom: Colleen Bushway, Lynda Morgan Gardiner, Lucille Campbell, Esther Blow,

Amend Agenda for Matters NOT Listed

Jeff Parizo asked if there were any amendments to the agenda. Ellen Howrigan requested to add the Homeland Security Grant, suggesting it be discussed under the Highway Department section. Jeff agreed to place it there.

Jennifer Morway raised a question about whether the zoning administrator application decision should be made during this meeting. After discussion about whether this could be addressed in executive session as a personnel matter versus a contract matter, the board agreed to move the zoning administrator application discussion to executive session.

Public Comment

Jeff Parizo opened the floor for public comment. Hearing none, he moved on to the next agenda item.

Review and Approve Minutes

November 3, 2025

Jennifer Morway motioned to approve the minutes from November 3, 2025 with corrections. Ellen Howrigan seconded. No discussion was held. All voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Guests

No guests were specifically introduced during this portion of the meeting.

Review and Sign Warrants

The board reviewed warrants for payment. Ellen Howrigan discovered an invoice that was coded to the wrong company - it was listed as Fairbank Scales when it should have been Fastenal, both for \$61.

Several other coding corrections were identified, including items that should be charged to the planning commission rather than IT. The board members divided up the invoices to review, with Ellen, Ronnie, and others each taking stacks to verify.

Discussion arose about the library's new building and future utility costs. Jeff Parizo stated, "I think to be fair, once we sign because the library is gonna have to sign an MOU with the Selectboard... we take over those 3

items." He clarified the town would pay for water, electricity, and fuel for the library building, similar to the arrangement with the fire station.

Financials

Melissa Boutin provided several financial updates:

- The CD successfully rolled over at 3.6% for 12 months
- Everything has been through underwriting at M&T Bank for ACH payments to be set up for tax payments. Approval is expected by the end of the week. Melissa is working on a form for people to sign up for ACH payments at the counter. The board discussed making the ACH signup available electronically on the website

Highway Department Update

Steve More provided the highway department update, beginning with the recent snowstorm on Tuesday. "I ran the 1 ton and Austin plowed. He plowed some the night before and he also plowed the next day. I did all the intersections and he did just plowing the roads and it went pretty well until we started encountering trees down."

Steve described having to cut up trees at 4 AM, noting, "So the first one was on East Shore North past... So, anyways, that was interesting, cutting trees up at 4 in the morning."

Additional updates included:

- They hauled sand for the new library, with 4 more loads scheduled for the next day
- The one-ton truck had a 4-wheel drive issue that turned out to be a wiring problem between the switch and transfer case
- Don Hughes would be off for the week, with Ron Waller covering and Steve helping Kevin Gardiner on Thursday night and Saturday
- The department is getting low on baling wire and ordered more, though Steve noted, "that stuff is very expensive... half of it is wired, half of it is getting it here"
- When asked about supply duration, Steve estimated they'd have about a 2-year supply depending on business volume

Jennifer Morway then introduced a Homeland Security Grant opportunity, explaining, "I believe there's a possibility that we could, under this grant, get solar for a highway with backup batteries." This led to extensive discussion about the potential for solar panels and backup batteries at the highway garage.

Steve questioned, "If we got a generator, do we need backup batteries?" Jennifer suggested having a conversation with Vermont Solar about the options. The discussion evolved to include the current \$334 monthly electric bill at the highway garage and the potential for a 20% match grant.

Ellen Howrigan asked about the possibility of the grid pulling from backup batteries during high demand periods and whether the town would be compensated. Jennifer wasn't certain about current compensation practices but agreed to find out.

The board discussed payback periods, with Jennifer noting, "The payback on the match would be maybe 5 years. Right. Possibly. So it may be quicker." She explained the grant would be due December 5th and she would need to get quotes from Mark Lamphier of Vermont Solar, who has been handling solar projects in the islands.

Jeff Parizo expressed support: "I think it's worth it. Everybody else? Yeah. Yeah. I mean, we're not making a we're not making a decision to spend any money right now. You're just doing the legwork."

Buildings Facilities Manager Update

Steve More continued with the buildings update:

- The boiler at the fire station was repaired with a new fan motor replacement, which was "very expensive. " They initially thought it was a control board issue and ordered one, but it turned out to be the fan motor. Since electricity had been run to the control board, it couldn't be returned, so they now have a spare board
- Shutters have been installed on the log cabin, preparing it for winter
- The fire department will conduct roof training on Wednesday night using the back of the town office building for ladder practice

New Business

Budgets

Listers

Sue Lawrence and Linda Gardiner (via Zoom) presented the Listers' budget. Jeff Parizo asked about the CAMA program costs. Sue explained, "We have a program. It's called CAMA, which is the data collection part of the program. And when Catalyst comes on, it's gonna be their... CAMA."

Discussion centered on where to budget for Catalyst system maintenance costs post-reappraisal. Linda Gardiner explained via Zoom that previous bills were line-itemed even without a specific budget, creating "a wash" as money came from reappraisal funds.

The board discussed revenue lines, with Sue noting that lister cards are now online and mostly free, though "There is some people that come in once in a while, and we charge for them getting the paper."

Sue explained the State of Vermont reappraisal study payment: "State of Vermont gives the towns... it's 8 dollars and 50 cents. A dollar of that is supposed to go for the grand list maintenance, and the 7.50 is for a town wide reappraisal."

Jeff Parizo moved to approve the Listers' budget for FY27 for \$7,750. The motion was seconded by Jennifer Morway. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Library

Karen Allen presented the library budget, explaining their unique approach for FY27: "Some of them are determined based on final fiscal year 25 numbers... but for like the telephone and the courier... we're paying now for each weekly pickup and also with information about what the rate will go to in September of 26."

She detailed how they split estimates between the first 6 months (in current building) and second 6 months (in new building):

- Circulation items and programming: First 6 months used half of FY26 budget, second 6 months multiplied by 150%
- Cleaning: Current cleaners maintaining same rate for first 6 months, rough estimate obtained for new building
- Utilities: Used comparisons from town garage and fire station

Karen expressed surprise about water costs: "I was a little taken aback that the water at the library is about the same bill as the water bill for the fire department." Jeff explained it was due to minimum charges rather than usage.

The board extensively discussed IT support needs for the new library. Jennifer Morway expressed concern: "No. You're right. If we have to have somebody come in and set them all up, this is probably not gonna be enough."

After calculating potential costs for Thrive IT services and Microsoft licenses, Jennifer suggested, "I think you should have about 500 a month... versus my number." This led to adding \$6,000 to the technology and computer support line item.

Discussion also covered future utility responsibilities, with Jeff Parizo stating the town should pay utilities for the library building similar to the fire station arrangement. The timing of this transition was debated, with consideration of whether to wait until FY28 for cleaner budgeting.

Jeff Parizo moved to approve the Grand Isle Free Library budget for FY27 for \$86,541. The motion was seconded by Jennifer Morway. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Cost of Living Adjustment

Jeff Parizo moved to approve a 3% cost of living increase. Ronnie Bushway seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Brookfield Generator Maintenance for Fire Department

The board reviewed two preventive maintenance plan options for the fire department generator. After learning the generator was 8 years old, Jeff noted, "being 8 years old, that's the only reason I'm saying maybe we do major and minor, not just major."

Jeff Parizo moved to go with plan number 2 for the preventive maintenance agreement for 2026 for the fire department for \$991. The motion was seconded by Ronnie Bushway. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Zoning Administrator Applicant Recommendation

This item was moved to executive session as previously discussed.

Audit RFP

Ellen Howrigan presented the audit RFP, asking about timeline and scope. The board agreed to maintain the 5-year audit period as previous. Ellen asked, "When do you wanna have it submitted by?"

After discussion about giving auditors adequate time through the holidays, the board settled on January 16th as the submission deadline for review at their January 19th meeting. Ellen noted Martin Luther King Day falls on January 19th.

Discussion included reviewing policies and procedures, with Jennifer acknowledging, "we're all guilty of writing this stuff. And then... It's getting hard to remember that we actually wrote it, and it's in place."

Jennifer Morway moved to approve the RFP for municipal audit services with corrections. Jeff Parizo seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Selectboard Administrator Job Description

Jennifer Morway raised a question she'd heard from community members: "do we really feel that it is a requirement for a select board administrator to be in person for everyone of our meetings, or could they be by Zoom?"

She explained, "specifically winter, specifically, there's a lot of people even in Grand Isle that don't really like driving in the dark... They... some people don't it might broaden our" candidate pool.

Ellen Howrigan supported flexibility: "If we're looking for a wider yeah. If we're looking for a broader, like, mileage, though, if you're looking for someone who'd be almost completely remote, that would be that would exclude them."

The board discussed practical considerations, with Carrie noting she currently prints and posts agendas on Saturdays, requiring local presence. However, board members generally supported allowing remote attendance for meetings.

Jennifer emphasized, "this position might be very well suited for somebody that's retired or semi retired... again, because Carrie's done in December... We're halfway through November. Right. We gotta get somebody in here."

Jennifer moved to amend the Selectboard administrator job description to allow virtual attendance. The motion was seconded by Ellen Howrigan. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Planning Commissioner Vacancy

Carrie confirmed there would be a vacancy as she would be leaving at year's end. She confirmed the Planning Commission was already recruiting for her replacement. Jeff thanked her: "Thank you, Carrie, for everything you've done."

Old Business

Website Development Project

Carrie provided an update on her meeting with Adam Lavigne the previous Friday. "Most of it's stuff that you guys have already discussed, but there are some more technical things. I wanted to get ahead of that before I left to make sure that there was at least a meeting of the minds there."

She emphasized the importance of cleaning up archives: "the biggest really, truly, the biggest part of it was cleaning up the archives and making it so that you could search through and find them and that they were pinned to like, right now, the archives are just 1 page of archives."

Carrie expressed concern about the upcoming transition: "I just don't wanna leave y'all in the lurch about the website or about, like, town meeting day or the town charter. Like, just I see in my brain all these things coming up in January."

This led to discussion about scheduling the town charter public hearings. Carrie explained the requirements: "It needs the deadline for that is January 20 second. That's the absolute latest. You can do it anytime before then."

After discussion about proper warning periods and the need for two public hearings, the board decided:

- First public hearing: December 15th at 6:00 PM (just before the regular meeting)
- Second public hearing: First meeting in January

Apparel Impact

Aimee provided an update on her meeting with the Apparel Impact owner, explaining the program was more complex than expected: "It's not like they just pop a box at our transfer station, and then they empty it out every now and then. They're, like, building these whole... like, these little centers almost."

Key concerns raised:

- They need 1,200 square feet of space
- The transfer station's limited hours would prevent regular emptying
- Site work required for proper angles and underneath access
- They want permanent locations on town land rather than temporary commercial sites

Aimee expressed surprise: "I asked him. I was like, 1200 square feet? Like and he said, yes." She also noted they sort everything and work with schools to distribute usable coats to children in need.

The board requested more information about permits required, infrastructure needs, contract terms, and any potential charges for contamination removal. Jeff Parizo stated firmly, "We're not I'm not gonna be building a 1200 square foot building, and neither of them on our land, that's not really appropriate."

Junk Ordinance

Jeff reported he was waiting for the town attorney to provide recommendations on other towns' ordinances and contacts. The matter remained tabled to December 1, 2025.

Executive Session

Jeff Parizo moved to go into executive session to discuss contracts pending per 1 VSA state statute 313(a)(2), that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or person involved at substantial disadvantage, and inviting Emily Clark in for the first section. Ellen Howrigan seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

The board entered executive session at 7:15 PM.

Jeff Parizo moved to come out of executive session at 7:38 PM with motions. The motion was seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Upon returning to public session:

Ellen Howrigan moved to extend the job offer to Kaitlyn Carney for the zoning administrator position for the terms discussed in executive session. Jeff Parizo seconded. Jennifer Morway recused herself. Vote: Approved (with one recusal).

Ellen Howrigan moved to amend the zoning budget as presented to include the ZAO salary of \$36,400, FICA of \$3,000, mapping services \$1,000, legal fees \$1,000, professional education \$100, mileage \$50 for a total of \$43,550. Jeff Parizo seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Jeff Parizo moved for Blue Tagger integration for new cameras at the Town Garage for \$3,796.47 to come out of the Town Garage reserve fund. Ronnie Bushway seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

A motion was made to adjourn at 7:40 PM. The motion was seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.