

Town of Grand Isle
02-02-2026 Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Regular Meeting

February 2, 2026 at 6:00 PM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84688023101?pwd=MAGASgQ2Hf7hCUa1JAP0ZsfabPEZcM.1>

Meeting ID: 846 8802 3101 passcode: 105628

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

- a. Board Members Present: Jeff Parizo, Jennifer Morway, Ellen Howrigan, Aimee Cochran, and Ron Bushway
- b. Board Members via Zoom: None
- c. Community Members Present: Colleen Bushway, Steve More, Highway Department, Desiree More, Melissa Boutin, Sara Santor
- d. Community Members via Zoom: David Leake, Lynda Morgan Gardiner, Ben Doyle, Preservation Trust of Vermont, Denise D'Abramo, Preservation Trust of Vermont, Lucille Campbell. Jess Neubelt from Evernorth and Esther Blow joined after the meeting had been called to order.

II. Amend Agenda for Matters NOT Listed:

Chair Parizo asked if anyone had items to add to the agenda. Aimee Cochran responded "No." Ron Bushway said "Nothing. I got nothing. No." Ellen Howrigan added "Nope." No amendments were added to the agenda.

III. Public Comment:

No public comments were offered.

IV. Review and Approve Minutes:

Minutes from the January 19 and January 23, 2026 meetings were presented for approval.

Motion by Ellen Howrigan: "I make a motion. We approve the minutes for 1/19 and 1/23 2026 with corrections." Seconded by Aimee Cochran Discussion: None Vote: Motion passed. Jennifer Morway abstained from voting on the January 23 minutes as she was not present at that meeting.

V. Guests:

a. Denise D'Abramo, Preservation Trust of VT - review and approve historic landmark sign for GI Lake House

Denise D'Abramo introduced herself and explained she had emailed with some board members about the roadside historic marker application for the Grand Isle Lake House. She was joined by Ben Doyle, President of Preservation Trust.

Ben Doyle began by complimenting the board: "First of all, I just wanna say, like, I'm on the Montpelier City Council, and you guys run a tight meeting. I like it. You should come down here and teach us how to do it." He expressed appreciation for the town's partnership over the years in stewarding the Grand Isle Lake House, calling it "a treasure to Vermont."

Doyle explained that the State of Vermont runs a historic marker program with 335 existing markers throughout the state. He noted that "a lot of people travel around to, you know, who care about Vermont's history and visit the markers. It's kind of like a 251 club." The Preservation Trust had applied to the state for a historic marker and was seeking the Select Board's feedback and approval as part of the process. They hoped to install the marker in spring if approved.

Chair Parizo asked if anyone had questions. Aimee Cochran said "No. But I did learn things when I was reading the marker. That was fun." Ron Bushway had nothing to add. Ellen Howrigan stated "I think it's great." Jennifer Morway agreed "Me too."

When asked what they needed from the Select Board, Denise D'Abramo said they needed "perhaps something in writing, a short, email." Ben Doyle interjected: "I mean, honestly, Denise, it might be best if we just if you folks are up for it, just a quick vote saying, you know, demonstrating your approval, and then the minutes would probably be sufficient."

Ellen Howrigan raised a concern about placement: "Do you need to talk with Ronnie about placement? Out of right away. Out of right away when it's placed. Out of the road right away. That's it."

Motion by Chair Parizo: "I'll make that motion. We approve the preservation's trust roadside marker for the historical marker for the Grand Isle Lake house." Seconded by Ellen Howrigan Discussion: None Vote: Unanimous approval

Ben Doyle thanked the board: "Great. Thanks so much, everybody. That's really super efficient. Appreciate your time, and, we'll see you soon."

b. David Leake, GI Rescue, update on Narcan distribution box

David Leake began by thanking the Select Board for providing funds to move forward with the Narcan distribution project. He showed the board various items that would be included in the distribution box, including boxes containing two doses of Narcan, fentanyl test strips, xylazine test strips, instructions for overdose response and calling 911, and information about Vermont help links for alcohol or drug abuse assistance.

Leake explained that the rescue carries red "leave behind" bags that are given to families after responding to overdose calls, containing additional Narcan and instructions. He emphasized the importance of calling 911 when Narcan is used, whether for the patient themselves or "their child who's gotten to the drugs."

He then discussed the distribution box itself, which Sara displayed on screen. The box stands 40 inches tall, about a foot and a half wide and deep, and can hold up to 50 boxes of Narcan. Leake explained he had difficulties with the original manufacturer who was "very excited to sell, you know, 150 boxes to municipalities and get them out there and get lots of money" but "not very interested in us getting 1 box," so he switched to a different vendor.

The original intent was to place the box at the library along with an AED box and 911 call box. However, since the library isn't built yet, Leake proposed installing it temporarily at the town office. He had measured spaces to the right and left of the town office stairs and believed there was adequate room without interfering with vehicle traffic.

Regarding location concerns, Leake explained his reasoning: "We talked before about not having it in front of Emmons, for example, just because people are gonna be too reluctant to go and pick it up if they thought somebody's gonna see them in a public area. And when the town office is closed, then there's less of a problem with people. They're not gonna feel as guilty as guilty about going and getting this medication."

When asked about temperature concerns, Leake assured the board that Narcan tolerates both cold and heat well. If frozen, it thaws in about 5 minutes and remains usable. He noted that while a 911 call box would be ideal, it wasn't feasible to drill into the town office building, so that feature would wait until the library installation.

Chair Parizo clarified the location: "So just so I'm clear, you're talking about going from the curb to the deck in that little space there?" Leake confirmed, and Parizo verified no power or heat was needed for the Narcan box.

The board reviewed the opioid fund balance, showing \$2,161.57 remaining as of December 30, 2025. Leake indicated this would be sufficient for the AED installation and other planned uses.

Jennifer Morway asked about coordinating with the library contractor, suggesting it would be easier to connect Leake directly with them. She requested an email detailing

what each installation would require, particularly regarding the concrete pad that would be needed.

David Leake agreed to send specifications for the AED box and noted he would need to know the library's phone system provider for the 911 call box. The board confirmed it would be Consolidated Communications.

After discussion about potential locations, including possibly placing it in the curve of the handicap ramp, the board agreed to allow installation at Leake's preferred location beside the town office steps. No formal motion was required.

VI. Review and Sign Warrants:

During warrant review, several questions arose about payroll transfers and tax payments. There was confusion about Vermont Department of Taxes payroll transfers showing amounts of \$606.63 and \$626.99. After discussion with Melissa Boutin, it was clarified that these amounts, when combined with the Child Care Contribution (CCC), equaled the total tax payment.

Ellen Howrigan questioned why there were two Comcast bills for the transfer station instead of one. It was determined the warrant showed charges for two months and needed correction.

Motion by Jennifer: "I motion that you sign and approve the warrants." Seconded by Aimee. Discussion: None Vote: Unanimous approval

VII. Financials:

Chair Parizo acknowledged receipt of Melissa's financial summary email, noting "I haven't had a chance to look at it, but thank you for that." Other board members indicated they also needed to review it more thoroughly.

VIII. Highway Department Update:

Steve More presented the highway department update and 10-year plan. He began by noting the new truck needs to go in Friday for suspension issues, specifically problems with U-bolts loosening and the rear end moving. When asked if it could wait until after winter, the dealer said they needed to see it sooner.

More reported they finished the ash tree removal work and were moving on to brush cutting. They had about three days of overhead work using the bucket truck on Reynolds Road before moving to lower vegetation.

He then presented three quotes for the heated apron installation:

- Chuck's: Did not include electrical work
- Bernie Gage: \$13,850 (included \$2,000 electrical allowance)

- Benore: Included electrical

Ron Bushway noted that Benore no longer wants to service the heating equipment as "they don't have anybody that can do it" and suggested they should be eliminated from consideration. After discussion about Bernie Gage having installed the original apron and currently working on the library, the board decided to proceed with his quote.

Motion by Chair Parizo: "I'll make a motion that we go with Bernie to install the heat apron hot water boiler system for \$13,850." Seconded by Ellen. Discussion: Confirmed funding would come from highway reserve account Vote: Unanimous approval

Steve More then reviewed the 10-year plan highlights:

Current Year: Library project and grant work on the hill by Marycrest, which would involve ditching on the north side and stone lining due to the slope. He estimated about a week's work and suggested closing the road except for access to the Lake House.

3-Year Plan: The road by Pomykala Farm, which More called "probably one of the worst roads we have in town right now." The 1,500-foot section would require test pits in spring to determine the base condition. Depending on results, options ranged from full regrind (grinding up to 18 inches) to complete reconstruction with 2 feet of new stone at an estimated \$100,000. Jennifer suggested this could qualify for a structures grant.

Tree and Encroachment Work: Extensive discussion ensued about removing trees within road right-of-ways. Steve More asked: "Are we just saying anything within the easement is going? I'm asking is anything within, you know, the road right away, is that coming out no matter what around all the roads in town, or are we just talking about the bad areas?"

Ron Bushway responded: "I think I'd rather just look at the bad areas first." The discussion evolved to focus on trees that interfere with ditching or pose safety hazards. Ellen emphasized: "I think given all the ash trees that are going anyway, I think we need to be a little bit selective about what we cut and what we don't cut. If they're in an area that needs ditching and that needs to be cleaned out, I don't think we have a choice. But if there's not an issue with drainage or whatever or visibility, I think we need to be a little less harsh."

Jennifer suggested marking trees slated for removal to give property owners time to review. Steve More explained he would work with the Zoning Administrator to create a map with photos of problem areas that could be posted on the town website.

Lynda Morgan Gardiner commented via Zoom about cedar trees: "I totally understand those maple trees and oak trees, and I wouldn't wanna cut them down either unless they were a problem. But, I think what you're gonna see a lot of is the cedar trees that

are so close to the road. And I would hate to have that just because of who owns those trees. I would hate to not see them cut down. I think they need to go, and I think the town needs to make a decision on that because those cedar trees are what's causing a lot of problems."

Chair Parizo agreed, noting the cedars' growth pattern creates visibility issues. He also recalled the 1998 ice storm: "A lot of that was predicated because the trees were never pushed out of the right of ways. The trees were just left to do their thing. And so when we went to clean up the roads, there was just limbs and trees everywhere."

5-Year Plan: Major culvert replacements at railroad tracks on Hyde Road and Pearl Street. The board noted these would be good candidates for structures grants.

10-Year Plan: Lovers Lane improvements, complicated by unknown right-of-way boundaries and water lines. Steve noted difficulties with plowing due to rough conditions and water running down the road.

Additional items discussed included:

- Changing the culvert on Hyde Road from the pond across from the old town garage
- Pouring a concrete pad for the transfer station dumpster with 12-inch wide wall
- Eventually paving the road to the transfer station
- Planning for the grader's eventual retirement without replacement

IX. Buildings Facilities Manager Update:

Ron Bushway provided a brief update:

- Fire panels at the garage and annex are due for inspection Wednesday morning with Jamie Bushey
- Monitoring heating oil levels, with the annex having the lowest tank but still above a quarter full
- A weak breaker (#9) in the town office basement affects one side of the building
- A bad breaker at the annex also needs attention
- Plans to have Hegeman Electric address both breakers in one visit

X. IT Update:

Discussion centered on the new town website development. Jeff enthusiastically commented: "I saw you guys are working on I love that website. I love that page. It was like, wow. Look at this." Jennifer noted that current complaints often relate to people being unable to find information on the existing website: "Just cannot wait for that to be It's gonna be so much better."

Regarding Jeff Parizo's transition off the Select Board, Jennifer proposed: "For the library project, I think we should continue having you keep your town email until this project is done." This would maintain town records for the library project through completion, possibly extending beyond January depending on project timeline. The board agreed to remove him from Select Board group emails while maintaining his individual town email access.

The board also discussed IT budget matters, noting the billing structure was changing from annual to monthly payments, which Jennifer characterized as "gonna be kind of annoying, to be honest with you." They observed there would likely be money remaining in IT accounts.

XI. New Business:

a. Approving the Appointing Representative to the Northwest Communications Union District Legislative Body

The board discussed the need to advertise for a new representative after Peter Southwick resigned from the position. Board members noted his dissatisfaction with the role, with Chair Parizo paraphrasing: "He was really unhappy that it wasn't accomplishing anything." The position includes both primary and alternate spots. Despite skepticism about finding interested candidates, the board agreed to advertise the positions.

b. Library Electric Bill

The board addressed a \$280.52 charge for connecting the library's solar panels to the meter, which was not covered by the grant.

Chair Parizo asked for a motion: "So it's a town building. I feel the town should pay that \$280 and 52 cents." Ron Bushway made the motion. Seconded by Jennifer Morway. Discussion: Clarified payment would go directly to the electric company
Vote: Unanimous approval

XII. Old Business:

a. Library GC Contract

This marked a significant milestone as the board prepared to sign the construction contract for the library project. Chair Parizo announced: "This is the contract agreement between us and the contractor for the library, and I would like somebody to make a motion to allow me to sign this thing."

Motion by Ellen Howrigan: "So moved." Seconded by Aimee Cochran. Discussion: Chair Parizo commented "This is it. We're finally signing the contract." Vote: Unanimous approval

After signing with notarization by Melissa, discussion turned to next steps. Jennifer explained the contractor would obtain the performance bond (paid for by the town through the grant), and work could potentially begin within two weeks "if not sooner," depending on insurance processing and contractor availability.

The board discussed planning a ceremonial groundbreaking for the first or second week of April, with a Monday preferred to accommodate legislative schedules. Jennifer suggested a \$250 budget from the "formerly known as ARPA" funds. The April 13th date was tentatively selected, with plans to invite the governor, state representatives, library commissioner, and grant administrators. The ceremony would be purely ceremonial as construction will have already begun.

XIII. Executive Session:

No executive session was held.

XIV. Administrative Check-In:

No administrative matters were discussed.

XV. Adjournment:

Ron Bushway made a motion to adjourn at 6:57. Ellen Howrigan seconded. All in favor.