

Town of Grand Isle

04-06-2026 Selectboard Meeting

Meeting minutes

DRAFT

Call To Order

Chair Jennifer Morway called the Grand Isle Selectboard meeting to order at 6:00 PM on Monday, April 6, 2026.

Board members present included Jeff Parizo, Ron Bushway, Jennifer Morway, and Aimee Cochran. Board member Ellen Howrigan participated via Zoom.

Community members present were Colleen Bushway, Sue Lawrence, Desiree Moore, Steve Moore, Howard DeMars, Susan Willard, Melissa Boutin, and Sara Santor. Community members participating via Zoom included Emily Clark, Kaitlyn Carney, Lucille Campbell, Karen Allen, and Michael.

Amend Agenda for Matters NOT Listed

There were no amendments to the agenda.

Public Comment

Ron Bushway noted that Kaitlyn's letters regarding the junk ordinance are working out very well and there is a lot of activity happening.

Colleen Bushway requested permission for a time capsule to be buried at the library, stating that Denise Douglass is willing to do the work but needs approval from the board. Jeff Parizo asked where it would be placed, and Colleen clarified it would be buried outside somewhere in the garden area, not in the building. Colleen said Denise plans to contact different organizations for items to include. The board agreed this was doable as long as it doesn't cost any money and asked for more details about what is needed and to check with the library about the location.

Review and Approve Minutes

Jeff Parizo made a motion to approve the March 16, 2026 minutes with corrections. Ron Bushway seconded. All voted in favor.

Guests: Howard DeMars, Library Board Chair

Howard DeMars addressed the board regarding the library's request for a sink in the children's area. He emphasized this was brought to their attention by members of the State Library Association and that it's mentioned in best practices for libraries. He noted that while they were told they would have autonomy on the inside of the building, "we really have had a say in nothing," which he clarified, "I don't think any of us on the library board members are control freaks whatsoever. He stressed they have one request, the sink- which is important to make the library the best it can be. The board indicated they would address this during the library update section of the meeting.

Review and Sign Warrants

Jeff Parizo made a motion that the selectboard chair sign the warrants. Aimee Cochran seconded. Ellen Howrigan abstained, as she was not there to look at them. All others voted in favor.

Financials

4 North Country Federal Credit Union CDs that are maturing in April

Chair Morway reviewed four CDs maturing in April: CD 1004 (Preservation of Records, \$93,296.58, expires April 12), CD 1005 (Reappraisal, \$87,514.59, expires April 12), CD 1006 (Capital Equipment, \$84,964.56, expires April 12), and CD 1009 (Reappraisal #2, \$62,024.93, expires April 22).

The board discussed interest rates, with North Country offering 3.5% for 12 months and 3.65% for 6 months. They determined that three of the CDs should be reinvested but that CD 1005 (the reappraisal fund) needed to remain accessible for the upcoming Catalyst reappraisal work, requiring approximately \$10,000 per month payments over the next year.

Jennifer inquired about M&T Bank's checking account rate (1.35%) and whether it made sense to move the reappraisal money to a more accessible account rather than tying it up in another CD.

Jeff Parizo made a motion to take CD 1004, CD 1006, and CD 1009 and put them into North Country at approximately 3.5% for the 12-month fixed rate. Aimee Cochran seconded. All voted in favor.

Jeff Parizo made a motion to take CD 1005 for the reappraisal (\$87,514.59) and put it into the M&T general fund account at 1.35%. Ron Bushway seconded. All voted in favor.

Highway Department Update

Steve Moore provided an extensive update on highway department activities. The department received their new equipment trailer and ordered a couple of items for it. Due to recent high winds, they've been dealing with several trees down on wires and roads, including incidents on Friday and Sunday morning. The crew pruned all trees at the annex, removing about five large limbs to make mowing easier.

Steve reported they've been fixing signs including speed limit signs and four-way intersection signs that were damaged over the winter. They touched up Lovers Lane, filled potholes, and graded the road.

Steve investigated the culvert at the cemetery and discovered a significant drainage issue. After shooting the culvert, he found there's only about a foot of pitch across 600 feet, creating virtually no slope for water drainage. The water runs toward Fitzgerald's driveway with insufficient grade. He noted they can put in a new culvert, but it won't solve the water problem due to the lack of pitch. The current culvert is galvanized with crushed ends and runs underneath the Route 2 apron.

The board discussed potential solutions, including creating drainage on the north side of the culvert and possibly filling both sides of the driveway, though that would push water toward neighboring properties. Steve suggested they could change the culvert now and address the broader drainage situation later, acknowledging it would require significant fill and time.

Steve reported moving the excavator to the transfer station where they'll be regrading in front of the recycling center to improve drainage and prevent potholes. They plan to remove ash trees and clean up the edge, create a stone pad on top for dumpsters, and build bunkers for leaves and wood chips using snap blocks. This work was planned for the following day but was postponed due to snow.

Steve mentioned working on getting pricing for a structures grant for a culvert project on Hyde Road. Jeff Parizo noted the significant activity at construction sites in South Hero and North Hero, with the North Hero project having over 40 people working and experiencing a change order on the very first day.

FY26 Grant-in-Aid Program

The board reviewed and discussed an agreement for municipal assistance from the Northwest Regional Planning Commission. The agreement would cost up to \$1,500 or 10% of the total award amount (whichever is less) for

grant assistance services. Melissa Boutin confirmed the town paid nothing to Northwest for these services last year, as the town has been handling grant applications internally.

The board noted this agreement would provide backup assistance if needed while allowing them to continue their current practice of self-managing grant applications. The services would include assistance similar to what has been provided previously.

Aimee Cochran made a motion to sign the agreement for municipal assistance to support fiscal year 2026 municipal road grants and construction projects from Northwest Regional Planning Commission. Jeff Parizo seconded. All voted in favor.

Steve also reported ongoing issues with the propane boilers requiring frequent cleaning due to white residue buildup, which is apparently common for high-efficiency boilers. Bernie Gauge had recommended yearly cleaning despite propane being marketed as clean-burning. The boiler service company had to come out because both boilers had shut down, and they cleaned out the white fluid buildup.

Ron Bushway noted they're getting a significant increase in cardboard recycling revenue, with Kevin Gardiner successfully negotiating an increase from \$20 to \$40 per ton, representing a 100% increase in revenue.

Buildings Facilities Manager Update

Ron Bushway reported on several building maintenance issues. During a recent wind event, the west door at the fire station meeting room was damaged when strong south winds bent the hinges. He replaced one hinge but believes the casing may be sprung, causing the door to close improperly. He plans to use a grinder to adjust the door and casing fit, acknowledging it's only a temporary fix and the door may eventually need replacement.

Ron has been working on quotes requested by Jennifer Morway for the MERP grant. Hegeman Electric provided a quote for LED lights at the old library and looked at an emergency shutoff switch for the boiler. While they don't think it's technically required, they suggested it should probably have one for fire inspection compliance. Ron called MEI but they haven't responded to set up an appointment.

Bernie Gage Plumbing examined water heaters at both the old library and fire station and looked into insulating water lines at the old library. He noted there are already aerators in place at both facilities and doesn't recommend additional water-saving measures. For the fire station shower, Adam reported barely any water flow and requested no modifications.

Ron obtained refrigerator quotes for the fire station from Cocoplum and Lowe's. He scheduled Bernie to service the boilers at the garage and arranged for Chuck's to meet at the library and fire department for additional quotes.

Library Update

Sink update

Jeff Parizo reported he spoke with Chris who then consulted with Bernie about the sink installation. The cost would be approximately \$1,500 on the high end, with Bernie providing as-built drawings so they would know where everything is located.

Jeff explained the water line installation wouldn't be difficult since it's pressurized, and the drain would be pitched from the new sink location back to the main drain, similar to the previous drainage setup. They would need a cabinet, sink, and faucet. The cabinet could match the one planned for the circulation desk, with matching countertops and a single-bowl sink.

This would be in addition to keeping the kitchenette, which Jeff noted includes a sink, under-counter refrigerator, and microwave. There had been previous discussions about potentially removing the refrigerator and installing a cabinet for printers, with the option to add a refrigerator later since the plumbing would be capped and ready.

Jennifer emphasized that the kitchenette needs to remain since it's a community space, though she didn't think a stove was necessary. She supported the additional \$1,500 for the children's area sink.

Ron Bushway noted that concrete hasn't been poured yet, so it's not too late to add the sink. He emphasized they received a substantial grant and should keep everyone happy, supporting the sink addition.

Ellen Howrigan expressed her support, noting she had contacted Chris and confirmed it wouldn't disrupt subcontractors' schedules. She felt \$1,500 maximum wasn't significant money and supported both sinks.

Jennifer clarified the process for additional expenses, explaining that once the basic structure is complete, there are allocated amounts for items like cupboards and countertops. The library would handle selection of these items, with any additional costs coming from either library funds or potentially remaining grant money, depending on the final project costs.

Ron Bushway made a motion to allow the sink in the children's area for a maximum of \$1,500. Ellen Howrigan seconded. All voted in favor.

Jeff also presented a propane tank quote for a 1000-gallon in-ground tank including node bags, regulators, copper lines, miscellaneous parts, methanol, and installation labor, totaling \$8,534.33. After removing sales tax (which shouldn't apply), the actual cost would be \$8,083.81. Steve would dig the hole and prepare the ditch for the line installation.

Jeff Parizo made a motion to approve the propane quote for the thousand-gallon in-ground tank for \$8,083.81. Ron Bushway seconded. All voted in favor.

IT Update

Sue Lawrence reported that Catalyst suggested obtaining G3 licenses for more efficient remote support. The main issue involves accessing old files that weren't fully transferred to the cloud, requiring workarounds that sometimes work and sometimes don't. The problem appears to be shortcuts rather than the files themselves.

Jennifer noted the Town is using G1 licenses specifically because everything stores automatically in the cloud, which is important for data security, particularly for the listers. She suggested waiting until Catalyst visits to determine if G3 licenses are actually required, as the upgrade is simple if needed.

Sue confirmed Catalyst is scheduled to visit soon and that equipment is arriving this week.

New Business

Act 181 discussion/draft letter

Ellen Howrigan strongly advocated for signing and sending a letter to legislators requesting repeal or modification of Act 181, which she said "really hits rural communities hard" and was enacted without public awareness. She had drafted a letter and wanted it sent to various legislators including natural resources committees, environmental committees, the speaker of the house, and others.

The board discussed expanding the recipient list to include the governor, lieutenant governor's office, and house environmental committee. Ellen offered to provide the complete email address list.

Jeff Parizo noted that Castleton had recently sent a similar letter and mentioned that he believes Act 250 should also be considered for repeal. Jennifer Morway suggested focusing on Act 181.

The board planned to have Sara update the letter with corrections, get all members' signatures, and email it out promptly while also sending physical copies by mail.

Jeff Parizo made a motion to approve signing the Act 181 draft letter with corrections. Ron Bushway seconded. All voted in favor, including Ellen Howrigan.

Old Business

Appointments: Northwest Communications Union District (Fiberworkx)

Jennifer Morway noted that Michael Inners had agreed to accept reappointment, though they still have a second vacant position with no other applicants.

Jennifer Morway made a motion to appoint Michael Inners to the Northwest Communications Union District. Aimee Cochran seconded. All voted in favor.

Review draft RFP for town legal services

The board reviewed a draft template for an RFP for legal services. Upon review, Jeff Parizo identified several areas that needed updating so a careful proofreading will need to be done before sending out.

The board discussed the timeline, settling on a June 1st deadline for responses to allow review at their first June meeting. This would enable starting with new legal services at the beginning of the next fiscal year.

They decided responses should go to Sara rather than the selectboard, and agreed to post the RFP on the website and Vermont bids site rather than in the Islander newspaper.

Jeff Parizo made a motion to send out the proposal for legal services with corrections, with responses due for the first meeting in June. Ron Bushway seconded. All voted in favor.

Opioid Settlement – allocation update

The board noted several new emails about redistribution but hadn't seen additional money yet. They discussed potential uses beyond the rescue squad, including AEDs (which are already installed in every building) and Narcan availability.

Ellen Howrigan offered to contact the schools about potential after-school programming needs, similar to previous opioid fund allocations. The board decided to table the discussion until next month to see if additional funds arrive and to explore school district needs.

Lister Clerk position / Assessor discussion

Sue Lawrence reported receiving 5-6 applications for the lister clerk position, with most applicants seeking only temporary work. She and Linda reviewed applications and selected Kaitlyn, who already works for the town as ZAO, making it economically sensible.

Sue explained their long-term vision includes Kaitlyn training toward becoming an assessor, noting that Linda doesn't want full-time work and Sue plans to retire eventually. She referenced Chester, Vermont, which combined CAO and assessor roles into one full-time position, and noted other Vermont towns have done similar reorganizations.

Jennifer emphasized this discussion doesn't commit the board to hiring an assessor, as that would require voter approval and significant future planning. Jeff Parizo agreed it makes sense long-term, noting the potential to use current lister payroll to offset assessor costs, especially with increasing education funding pressures.

Sue noted extensive current training requirements for listers, with multiple full-day sessions, and emphasized the value of education for staying current with changing regulations.

The position was advertised at \$20 per hour. Sue requested approval through the end of June, with plans to return in June with specific hour requirements and budget information for the following fiscal year. She noted they have unused wages from Diane's vacant position that could potentially be rolled into fiscal year 2027 for wage increases.

The board agreed to wait for Sue to provide complete details including hours and duration for formal approval at the next meeting, since Kaitlyn is already on payroll and doesn't need to give notice elsewhere.

Service awards

The board discussed multiple years of missing service awards. Jeff Parizo suggested Meritt Vantine, Ron Bushway mentioned Raymond Blow, and they also identified Janice Arnold and Jane Pomykala as deserving recognition.

They debated whether to backdate awards by year or group them all in fiscal year 2026. Jeff suggested backdating.

Jeff Parizo made a motion for service awards for Merritt Vantine, Raymond Blow, Janice Arnold, and Jane Pomykala, with Melissa determining the chronological order for the board display. Jennifer Morway seconded. All voted in favor.

Executive Session

No executive session was needed.

Administrative Check-In

No administrative items were discussed.

Adjournment

Jeff Parizo made a motion to adjourn at 7:15 PM. Jennifer Morway seconded. All voted in favor.
The meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.

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