

06-29-2026 Selectboard Meeting (Special)

Meeting Minutes

June 29, 2026, 6:00 PM

DRAFT

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the Grand Isle Selectboard Special Meeting to order on Monday, June 29, 2026, at 6:00 PM at 9 Hyde Rd, Grand Isle, VT.

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

Board Members via Zoom: None

Community Members Present: Collen Bushway, Sue Lawrence, Lucille Campbell, Jeanne Baker Prouty, Adam White, Michael Frett, Melissa Boutin, Sara Santor

Community Members via Zoom: Lynda Morgan-Gardner

II. Amend Agenda for Matters NOT Listed

The Chair invited board members to identify any items not currently on the agenda. Select Board Member Cochran requested to add a website update and Chair Morway added a cash register computer item, both to be addressed under IT Update. There were no objections, and those two items were added accordingly.

III. Public Comment

No public comments were offered.

IV. Review and Approve Minutes

a. 06/15/26 Minutes

Board Member Parizo moved to approve the minutes from the June 15, 2026 meeting with corrections. The motion was seconded by Board member Howrigan, and no discussion followed.

Motion to approve the minutes of June 15, 2026 with corrections was made by Board Member Parizo and seconded by Board member Howrigan. The motion carried unanimously.

V. Guests

VI. Review and Sign Warrants

Board Member Parizo moved that the Chair sign the warrants. The motion was seconded with no discussion.

Motion that the Chair sign the warrants was made by Board Member Parizo and seconded by Vice Chair Cochran. The motion carried unanimously.

VII. Financials

The Chair opened discussion on the financials and noted there was one matter requiring particular attention: a notably high amount of delinquent taxes. She acknowledged that the board had anticipated this situation might arise and described it as something all members of the board and Town Treasurer Boutin would be monitoring closely, and discussing in public meeting, likely on a monthly basis going forward.

The Chair explained the structural challenge: Treasurer Boutin is responsible for collecting both the town's property tax and the school tax on behalf of the state. Even when residents have not yet paid the school portion of their property tax to the Town of Grand Isle, the Treasurer is still obligated to remit the full school tax amount to the state. She stressed that while this situation is worth acknowledging publicly, the Town of Grand Isle is not in a precarious financial position — it has a solid fund balance from prior years and does not need to borrow any money.

In response to a question from the public about the specific dollar amount, Town Treasurer Boutin confirmed the total delinquent balance was approximately \$265,000 across the last eleven years. She clarified that the current year's delinquent taxes — approximately \$194,000 — represent the primary concern. She also noted that a significant number of delinquent accounts individually fall under \$1,500, and under a recently enacted state statute, the town is not permitted to pursue tax sale proceedings against those properties until the balance exceeds that threshold.

The Chair noted that the balance had already been declining over the previous two weeks, attributing this in part to Treasurer Boutin's active outreach and success in working with residents on payment plans. She expressed appreciation that town residents were paying attention and calling with questions, and the board affirmed it would continue to monitor the situation.

VIII. Highway Department Update

a. Execute Documents for Grant # GA1027 – Grants in Aid – FY 26 – Clean Water Funds – \$11,500 with 20% Match

Chair Morway introduced the grant execution item, explaining that Grant No. GA1027 is a Grants in Aid document for Fiscal Year 2026 Clean Water Funds in the amount of \$11,500 with a 20% match. She clarified that this grant had already been accepted and the associated work had been completed — the Marycrest grant project — and that Highway Foreman Steve More was now simply seeking the required signatures in order to submit for reimbursement. The item was received positively by the board.

Board member Parizo made a motion to approve and execute Grant No. GA1027 for reimbursement under the FY26 Clean Water Funds Grants in Aid program and was seconded by Board member Howrigan. The motion carried unanimously.

Board Member Bushway then provided the board with a summary of recent highway department activity as reported by Highway Foreman Steve. During the prior week, the department hauled a construction dumpster from the transfer station, worked with a tree service for one day on East Shore South, and removed a large tree at the log cabin on Route 2. Paving on East Shore North was completed and noted to look very nice. Crew members Andy and Austin spent most of the week mowing roadsides in preparation for the Fourth of July holiday. Additional work included cleaning up wood from earlier clearing operations, greasing mowing machines and changing blades on the large mower, returning the dumpster to the new library construction site, and cleaning up the dirt pile behind the historical building. Select Board Member

Bushway noted that work on driveway entrances along the newly paved sections, as well as at the town beach parking area, would take another couple of weeks. Looking ahead, Foreman Steve was planning to work at the library site during the current week to tie in the septic line and complete stone work, mount the pump station, and backfill.

Board Member Bushway also flagged that the town's newest truck has a recall and is scheduled to go in for service the following week, adding that he was glad the older truck had been retained. He relayed a conversation Foreman Steve had with a salesman — the specific company was not confirmed — who strongly suggested the town hold off on ordering a new truck due to anticipated changes related to DEF (Diesel Exhaust Fluid) requirements. The salesman indicated it could take time for manufacturers to work through the implications of those changes. Board Member Bushway recommended the board keep this in mind and defer any truck procurement decision for the time being.

IX. Buildings Facilities Manager Update

Board Member Bushway reported on buildings and facilities. He noted that he had begun scraping work at the annex entrance the prior day and that Alan Landry had been contacted for an estimate, though Melissa confirmed none had been received yet.

Regarding the annex restrooms, Board Member Bushway reported that Carol Eagan had notified him of what appeared to be rot behind one of the toilets. Upon inspection, he found one rusty bolt in the area behind the toilet but determined the floor itself did not feel soft, and a check of the basement below confirmed it was completely dry. He clarified that this issue was separate from an earlier toilet clog problem at the annex, which had previously been resolved. He also noted that the grapevines had been removed from the annex fence.

A brief discussion arose regarding a tree on Pearl Street that had been brought to the board's attention. Board Member Bushway reported that Steve believed the tree was likely within the state right-of-way, though it could also be borderline with the town's right-of-way. A tape measure had not been brought at the time of evaluation. The board discussed the appropriate course of action. It was determined that because the tree appears to be on private property owned by an individual, the town should not take unilateral action to remove it. The board agreed that if a limb or the tree itself falls into the roadway, the highway crew would push it off the road. It was further agreed that Foreman Steve would reach out to the property owner directly to have a conversation and then report back to the board before any formal letter is considered.

X. Library Update

Board Member Parizo reported no new updates on the library. General comments were made that the new library site is looking nice.

XI. IT Update

Board Member Cochran reported that a draft of the new town website had been received from the developer and that it looks very nice overall. However, upon reviewing the individual pages, she identified inconsistencies in formatting and presentation across various sections — a lack of continuity she had been hoping to avoid. She stated that she was compiling notes and would be sending them to the developer before the scheduled training session. She indicated she would coordinate with the developer about whether the training should proceed as planned or be postponed until after the revisions are addressed.

Regarding the cash register computer, Chair Morway noted that this item had been discussed at prior meetings. The current machine is at the end of its useful life and cannot be upgraded to a current version of Windows. As it is the machine used exclusively to process cash register transactions and operates via a cloud-based system, it does not require a high-performance replacement — only a functional tower.

Treasurer Boutin confirmed that a replacement tower should be available for under \$1,000, with an estimated cost closer to \$400. The board agreed that because budget funds remain available for this fiscal year, it was an appropriate time to proceed with the purchase.

Motion to approve the purchase of a replacement tower for the cash register computer, up to \$1,000, from the FY26 budget was made by Board member Howrigan and seconded by Vice Chair Cochran. The motion carried unanimously.

XII. New Business

a. Town Forest Fire Warden Designation (Act 162 changes the method by which town forest fire wardens are designated and is effective 07.01.2026)

Grand Isle Volunteer Fire Chief Adam White addressed the board on the subject of Act 162, recently signed into law by the Governor and effective July 1, 2026. Chief White explained that under the previous framework, forest fire wardens were appointed by the selectboard. Act 162 — which was introduced in the House as H935 — changes that model so that the fire chief of each municipality automatically becomes the town forest fire warden, effective July 1st.

Chief White described significant confusion surrounding the law's implementation. He noted that the Commissioner of the Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation had indicated their department reached out to selectboards, fire wardens, deputy wardens, and fire chiefs back in December to gather feedback. However, neither the Chief nor the board had received any such communication. He confirmed this by reviewing his own records and those of the town office — no notification had been received. The Governor signed the bill on June 24th, leaving only days before the July 1st effective date, which Chief White and the board characterized as an extremely poor timeline for implementation.

Chief White noted that he had been tracking the bill since it was still H935 and had proactively alerted neighboring fire chiefs in Grand Isle County. Most of those departments were caught off guard. He also noted the additional complexity: the Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation recently informed the Vermont Fire Academy that it would no longer be offering wildfire training to local fire departments due to resource constraints, as the department is increasingly occupied with large-scale forest fire suppression efforts.

The Chair expressed significant frustration with the state's communication practices, drawing a parallel to a separate matter — an email received that same day from VTrans informing the town that updated town road and bridge standards had been in effect since January 2026 and asking the town to adopt them going forward, with the message acknowledging the information "may not have been properly distributed earlier this year." She stated that while that item was not on the agenda and would not be acted upon that evening, the board should not feel obligated to hold an emergency meeting to address a lapse entirely attributable to the state's failure to properly notify municipalities.

Board Member Bushway noted that a letter from the Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation had arrived in the mail that morning, formally notifying him that as of July 1st he was no longer the fire warden. He remarked dryly that the position had previously paid \$35 per year.

Chief White outlined the immediate path forward: Act 162 does allow the fire chief to deputize individuals, which provides some flexibility. He indicated he intended to contact former Fire Warden Bushway the following day to discuss the transition and work through the logistics over the coming weeks. Regarding public communication, Chief White said the fire department would post information on Front Porch Forum and coordinate with the town to get something on the website so that residents know how and with whom to obtain a burn permit going forward.

The Chair noted that the next Selectboard meeting is not until July 20th, and given the July 1st effective date, she did not want to delay public communication. Chief White and the board agreed to coordinate through the week and get information out as quickly as possible. Selectboard administrator Santor was mentioned as a resource for getting information posted to the town's website.

Chief White also raised an incident that had occurred that day in South Hero, in which a structure was burned. The owners had obtained what they believed to be a burn permit from the town office — when in fact they had only been given permission for a brush pile fire — and proceeded to burn an entire structure without the required environmental review, asbestos testing, or state notifications. Chief White highlighted this as an example of the need for clearer public education about what burn permits cover and do not cover, and indicated he would be working to improve that communication.

The board extended appreciation to Chief White for his thorough briefing and his proactive attention to the matter. Board Member Parizo suggested that the board bring these communication failures to the attention of VLCT (Vermont League of Cities and Towns) at the fall roundtable, specifically to advocate for better state-to-municipality communication practices. Chair Morway agreed, and noted that their local legislative representatives should also be informed, though acknowledged the timing was complicated by the upcoming election season.

b. Symquest Copier Lease Renewal Options for Town Office

Melissa reported that the current leases on both office copiers — the one in the main office and the one in the Listers office — are expiring on July 20th. She had previously forwarded a proposal from Symquest, and noted that a revised quote had been received that same day reflecting a reduction of \$42.94 per month. She also shared that she had begun exploring the option of purchasing the machines outright, noting that comparable new units had been found online for approximately \$4,000–\$5,000.

Melissa explained that the current copier used for land records work handles non-standard paper sizes and includes specialized capabilities such as email scanning, fax via a fax board, multiple paper drawers, and a side door. These features are important to preserve in any replacement or continuation arrangement. Under the new lease proposal, the billing structure would shift from a tiered per-page model with overage charges — separately rated for black-and-white and color — to a single flat monthly rate covering all copies regardless of volume, color, or type, with service, parts, labor, and supplies included. The first proposal had been approximately \$315.30 per month; the revised proposal brought that down to \$272.36 per month.

The board discussed the potential merits of outright purchase versus continued leasing, including considerations around service contracts, toner costs, and warranty coverage if purchasing new. The IT vendor Thrive was mentioned as a resource for assessing service needs. Melissa indicated she wanted more time to gather additional information, including toner costs and repair frequency data, before making a recommendation.

Because the lease does not expire until July 20th — the date of the next meeting — the board agreed to allow Melissa to continue her research and present a formal recommendation prior to or at the next meeting.

XIII. Old Business

a. Lister Update on Townwide Reappraisal – Inspections to Begin

07.06.2026

Lister Sue Lawrence provided an update on the townwide reappraisal, noting that the two data collectors — Jason and a colleague — had come to the town office that day for their introductory visit. Lister Lynda Morgan-Gardner accompanied them on a driving tour of Grand Isle to familiarize them with the town's geography, including the proximity of homes to the lakeshore, the location of the trailer park, and the varied character of neighborhoods near the ferry dock.

Sue explained that during the data migration into the contractor's AP5 system, not all of the town's historical records transferred cleanly. The listers have been manually entering sketch data from the old property cards to fill in the gaps, with additional help from Kaitlyn Carney, the Lister Clerk. The data collectors were expected to begin field work during the current week, starting with photographs and

measurements of town-owned buildings and commercial properties before moving into residential areas on or around July 6th.

Regarding interior access, Sue and Lynda noted that the listers had already submitted a notice to the Islander newspaper and a posting on Front Porch Forum explaining the reappraisal and requesting residents' cooperation in scheduling interior inspections. They emphasized that the goal is fairness and equity across all properties — particularly important given that the last townwide reappraisal was in 2008, and many properties have seen undocumented improvements such as finished basements, additional bathrooms, or new decks. The contractors would be reaching out by phone and letter to schedule appointments in advance; no unannounced entry would occur.

They also noted that the data collectors would have the town's lister magnets on their vehicles to help identify them as authorized personnel, and that they had coordinated with the Grand Isle County Sheriff's Department in anticipation of residents calling in about unfamiliar vehicles taking photographs.

Lister Lynda Morgan-Gardner, participating via Zoom, offered additional color on the day's orientation. She noted that the data collectors typically only gain interior access to approximately 30% of homes, relying heavily on historical records for the rest. During the morning tour, she had already encountered one resident who stopped her vehicle in the middle of the road to question what she was doing — a reminder of how important community communication would be. She acknowledged that she had forgotten her lister identification magnet that morning, which contributed to the interaction. She confirmed she had posted on Front Porch Forum that evening and listed the lister office's email and phone number for any questions from residents.

Lister Lawrence expressed confidence that the town could exceed the typical 30% interior access rate, noting that during the last reappraisal, former lister Doug had been quite successful gaining entry. The board generally agreed that a more proactive approach to outreach would be beneficial. The board asked that the informational blurb prepared for Front Porch Forum also be sent to Board Administrator Santor for posting on the town website, and that it be included in the next Islander as well. It was noted that the Facebook page is still being developed and would be a future resource for this type of announcement.

b. CD Renewals

The board reviewed three certificates of deposit (CDs) that were coming due. Discussion centered on the capital equipment CD (No. 0260), the preservation CD (No. 2078), and the reappraisal CD (No. 2086), all held at Northfield Savings Bank.

The capital equipment CD, carrying a balance of approximately \$51,000 at 3.9% interest and maturing on July 11, 2026, required special attention. Chair Morway clarified that the town needed to withdraw \$32,000 from this CD to reimburse the highway fund's general fund checking account for prior capital purchases — specifically, the excavator and the trailer. The remaining balance of approximately \$19,000, plus the annual FY27 capital contribution of \$50,000 coming in July 1st, would remain available to support future purchases including the tractor. It was confirmed that sufficient funds exist in the highway reserve fund balance to cover the tractor purchase without disturbing the CDs.

After discussion, the board agreed that all three CDs — with the capital CD adjusted for the \$32,000 withdrawal — should be reinvested at Northfield Savings Bank at approx. 4% for nine months, as this represented the best available rate for the relevant timeframe. Treasurer Boutin also confirmed that annual transfers due for the preservation of records account would be added to the reappraisal CD and preservation CD upon reinvestment.

Motion to authorize Treasurer Melissa to withdraw \$32,000 from capital equipment CD No. 0260 for highway fund reimbursement and to reinvest the remaining balance of that CD, along with the preservation CD No. 2078 (approximately \$7,261) and the reappraisal CD No. 2086 (approximately \$10,290), at Northfield Savings Bank at approximately 4% for 9 months was made by Board member Howrigan and seconded by Board member Parizo. The motion carried unanimously.

c. Update and Execute Procurement Policy and Uniform Grant Guidance Documents

Chair Morway explained that the primary update to the Procurement Policy was an increase to the incidental purchase threshold to \$3,500 — meaning purchases up to that amount no longer require prior select board approval. Purchases between \$3,500 and \$7,500 would be classified as minor purchases requiring select board approval, and anything over \$7,500 would be a major purchase. This represented an increase from the previous threshold of \$2,500. The board signed the updated policy.

With respect to the Uniform Grant Guidance document, Select Board Member Morway explained that this document consolidates all policies and procedures relevant to federal grant compliance into a single reference. Any time a component policy is updated — such as the procurement policy just amended — the Uniform Grant Guidance document must be revised to reflect the change. The board moved to formally adopt the update.

Motion to update the Uniform Grant Guidance policy document to incorporate the newly updated Purchasing and Procurement Policy was made by Board Member Howrigan and seconded by Vice Chair Cochran . The motion carried unanimously.

d. Update and Execute Internal Controls Document Effective 07.01.2026

Chair Morway explained that the Internal Controls document had undergone substantial revisions stemming from a fraud risk assessment process conducted with input from both the cemetery commission and the library, as well as from discussions with Clerk/Treasurer Melissa Boutin and Asst. Clerk/Asst. Treasurer Terri White. The revisions were in part responsive to deficiencies identified in the most recent audit related to how revenues and expenditures were being handled for those affiliated boards.

Chair Morway noted that the updated document establishes July 1, 2026 as the effective date, meaning that going forward, financial transactions for the library and cemetery — rather than being handled through a check issued to those entities — would be processed directly through the town. However, she acknowledged that the library board, which had a separate meeting that same evening, had not yet had the opportunity to review the full document with the whole board. Chair Morway confirmed that they had been in contact with the library treasurer, who appeared to be supportive of the changes and understood the rationale.

The board discussed the practical reality that the library and cemetery boards would need some time to develop their own supporting documentation — such as revenue and expense procedures and, for the library, potentially a procurement policy and investment policy — before being in full internal compliance. The chair noted that this was analogous to the transfer station, where similar procedures were not fully in place until September or October even though discussions had begun in July. The board agreed to formally adopt the updated internal controls with an understanding that an appropriate grace period would be afforded to the affiliated boards.

Chair Morway further clarified that both the boards have the option of simply adopting the Town of Grand Isle's existing policies by reference, or adapting them with modifications, rather than creating new documents from scratch. The auditor would be the appropriate contact to confirm whether such a simplified approach met the required standard.

Motion to adopt the updated Internal Controls document for the Town of Grand Isle, effective June 29, 2026, was made by Board member Howrigan and seconded by Vice Chair Cochran. The motion carried unanimously.

The document was then signed by all board members present.

e. Town Report – Continued Discussion on Creation and Distribution

The Chair opened by reporting on a conversation Town Clerk Boutin had with VLCT (Vermont League of Cities and Towns). VLCT confirmed that the town report is not a statutory obligation for either the select board or the town clerk. What is statutorily required, when a town does not have elected auditors and instead uses an independent firm, is that the select board distribute the annual audit report within ten

days of town meeting. The town report — a broader document incorporating the audit, budget, and other information — is a tradition maintained by nearly all Vermont municipalities but not legally mandated.

The Chair noted that in past years, the town report had been prepared by Town Clerk Melissa Boutin and Assistant Clerk Terri White, with a stipend allocated in the budget. In FY27, the budget includes \$500 under "town report preparation" (within the town clerk/treasurer line) and \$1,500 for production/printing costs — a total of \$2,000. Discussion turned to the question of whether stipends owed for prior fiscal years — specifically FY25 and FY26 — should be paid retroactively.

Vice Chair Cochran argued in favor of paying both years' amounts (\$500 each, totaling \$1,000), characterizing the preparation work as a service rendered above and beyond normal salary obligations, comparable to an outside vendor invoice. The Chair and Board Member Parizo expressed reservations about paying for FY25, noting that the unspent budgeted amount had already lapsed into unassigned funds at the end of that fiscal year.

A motion was made to pay both years retroactively from unassigned funds. That motion resulted in a 2–2 split and did not carry.

A subsequent motion was made to pay the FY26 stipend of \$500 to Clerk Melissa Boutin and Asst. Clerk Terri White as town report preparers, from the FY26 budget. This motion carried with one dissenting vote.

Motion to approve payment of \$500 from the FY26 budget to Melissa Boutin and Terri White as town report preparers for Fiscal Year 2026 was made by Board Member Howrigan and seconded by Board Member Parizo. The motion carried unanimously.

The board then turned to the question of who should be formally responsible for the town report going forward. Board Member Parizo read a passage from a 2006 VLCT handbook and a November 2022 guidance document, both of which indicated that when a town has no elected auditors, the town report is the responsibility of the Selectboard, though the Selectboard may form an understanding with another elected official or designated employee to handle the preparation. The board agreed that this arrangement had been operating informally for some time and needed to be formalized.

After considerable discussion — including debate about whether the Selectboard or Town Clerk should hold primary responsibility, and how the stipend structure should be defined — the board agreed that a motion clarifying the going-forward arrangement was needed. Melissa indicated a willingness to continue preparing the report for FY26 under the existing budget allocation.

Motion that the budgeted \$500 stipend for town report preparation be paid to Town Clerk Melissa Boutin and whomever she chooses to assist her with that preparation, for the current fiscal year (FY26 and ongoing as budgeted), was made by Board Member Howrigan and seconded by Board Member Busway. The motion carried unanimously.

It was noted that this arrangement would be revisited during FY28 budget discussions, and that if Melissa were to become unavailable or unwilling to continue, the task would need to be re-evaluated and the applicable budget line adjusted accordingly.

f. Resident Survey on Town Charter and Use of Old Library Space

Vice Chair Cochran introduced the resident survey she had prepared, which was designed to gather public input on two main subjects: potential changes to the town charter regarding elected versus appointed positions, and ideas for future use of the old library building. The survey was built in Google Forms and was described as thorough, with informational context provided alongside each question to help residents understand what each proposed change would mean in practice.

Vice Chair Cochran explained that the survey covers all current elected positions — noting that the board's intent is not to advocate for converting any specific position but rather to hear from residents — as well as questions about potential local option taxes such as a rooms and meals tax. She noted that each tax option is broken out separately so respondents can express their view on each individually.

Vice Chair Cochran noted that while the Google Form does not require a Google account to complete, it does require respondents to enter their name and a Grand Isle address, to help ensure that only actual

residents are providing input. Some discussion followed among board members and community members about privacy concerns and reluctance to put one's name on a form. Vice Chair Cochran clarified that the names and addresses would remain confidential — the data would be used only to compile and analyze results, not published. She offered to adjust the required field so that a general address (e.g., "Route 2, Grand Isle") would be acceptable.

Paper copies of the survey would also be made available at the town office for residents who prefer that format. It was agreed that paper copies should be returned to the drop box at the town office no later than July 15th. The online form would remain open through July 18th, giving Vice Chair Cochran time to compile all results before the July 20th meeting.

Lister Lynda Morgan-Gardner, via Zoom, offered a practical suggestion that the board should prioritize getting straightforward, bullet-pointed information out to the public before the survey closes — specifically addressing what a town charter would mean in concrete terms: what it does, what it doesn't do, and why it matters for the town's future. She emphasized that many residents are currently forming their opinions based on word-of-mouth, and that clear, accessible information would help ensure that survey responses are informed rather than reactive.

Board Member Howrigan elaborated on specific examples of why the charter discussion matters: the challenge of finding candidates with appropriate qualifications for elected positions like town treasurer and lister, particularly as those roles become increasingly complex due to state mandates; the possibility of a rooms and meals tax that could reduce property tax burdens; and the general need to set Grand Isle up for continued success as the town grows. She noted that nothing in the current discussions threatens anyone in a current position — it is entirely about planning for the future.

The board agreed that the survey informational language prepared by Vice Chair Cochran should be shared in the Islander and, once available, on the town's Facebook page and website. It was also agreed that front porch forum reminders would be posted approximately every four days while the survey is open.

XIV. Executive Session

No executive session was held.

XV. Administrative Check-In

XVI. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Board Member Parizo and seconded by Board Member Howrigan. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 PM.