Town of Panton Chartered 1761

3176 Jersey Street • Panton, VT 05491-9331
Ph: 802.475.2333 • Fax: 802.475.2785

www.pantonvt.us

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 11th, 2025

In attendance: Selectboard Vice Chairperson Teresa Boucher, Selectboard Member Reece Jaring, Selectboard Member Robert T. DeGraaf, Selectboard Member Kirsten De La Cruz, Town Clerk/Treasurer Kyle Rowe, Jeanne Jackson, Richard Jackson, Kathy Kennett, Chuck Kennett, Ric Plaisance, Steve Weber, M'Lissa Dayton

Via Zoom: Mary Rudd

1. Teresa called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.
2. There were no additions or changes to the agenda
3. The Selectboard began the discussion on the Selectboard Rules of Procedure;
    a. The T/C discussed the various drafts that had been presented to the T/C during the week for discussion at the SB meeting. The areas of concern seemed to revolve around the number of SB meetings, and how Public Comment should be done.
    b. Teresa asked the board to begin discussion on the when and timing of meetings.
        i. The SB noted that Wednesdays work, and that there was general agreement to make the meetings occur once a month, the last Wednesday of each month.
    c. Kathy Kennett asked why the meetings were going to once a month?
        i. It was noted generally that with 5 members, there is a broader scope of opinion, and there usually aren't so many pressing issues to warrant a twice monthly meeting. There would be special meetings as needed for budget discussion, Town Meeting, Emergencies, etc.
        ii. Reece noted that a single person could be nominated under the SB rules to sign the weekly AP/Payroll Warrants, which would be presented to the full board at each monthly meeting, having been reviewed by the designated SB member week by week.
    d. The SB began discussion on when and how Public Comment should be handled;

i. It was noted that with a once monthly meeting, public comment was important, and there should be multiple opportunities to comment.
ii. Reece stated his support for including Public Comment after every agenda item, before a vote is taken.
iii. It was generally noted that moving the Public Comment Agenda Item to the beginning of the agenda would be helpful for those folks who wanted to address issues not handled by specific agenda items.

e. Teresa made a motion to adopt the Rules of Procedure as updated, Robert seconded-**VOTE-4 In Favor, 0 Opposed**

4. The Selectboard began discussion of the adoption of the minutes from the 5/28/25 SB Meeting.
    a. Kathy Kennett raised some issues
        i. She wanted to know why some of the votes were 4 to 0, and some were 5 to 0.
            1. Reece stated he didn't vote on every item as he was attending remotely and didn't vote on very item.
        ii. The language specifying the $500 for Homeward Bound isn't clear if that's the annual donation or an additional amount.
            1. Reece responded that it's a separate amount, and that he is trying to work with them to get a better understanding/contract for the Town.
        iii. Teresa motioned to accept the minutes, Robert seconded-**VOTE-4 In Favor, 0 Opposed.**
5. The C/T provided updates;
    a. The Grand List has been lodged. It is a relatively small adjustment upwards, from approximately $177 million to $180 million in taxable Grand List. It provides a bigger denominator for the tax rate calculation and will be helpful to lower the tax rate.
        i. The change in utilities parcel valuation will help Panton, as the value has increased here as opposed to many other communities.
    b. The FEMA Grant was obligated to the state on May 22nd, 6 to 8 weeks for delivery.
    c. The Chart of Accounts needs an update, the T/C has been working with the auditors, the town's Fee Accountant, M'Lissa Dayton, and others to revamp it, will present an update at the June 25th SB meeting.
    d. The Town has received the check from the PACIF for the grant, the drill press guard has been installed, and the cameras will be installed soon.
    e. The Ash Tree Removal is tentatively scheduled for the 18th of July, we are awaiting official confirmation from Vallencourt, Ric Plaisance, the Tree Warden, has been really on top of this process.

f. Thanks to the residents for clearing the tree off Jersey St, neighbors and Vorstevelds.
g. Preparations for the Fiscal Year end are continuing, and the Town Offices will be closed June 26th for preparations.
h. The Open Meeting section of the Town website has been spruced up, there is an FAQ, a grievance form, and a link to a different section of the state law pertaining to open meeting law. The state has also made several changes to the law, some of which are;
    i. Audio/Visual recording only need to be posted for 30 days.
    ii. Executive Session is now allowed for cyber security, and discussion of interest rates
    iii. Expands the definitions of disorderly conduct during a meeting.
i. The Town has received $500 from the Ben and Jerry's foundation for the park on the side of Jersey St, ideally to install erosion mitigation.
j. Kathy Kennett asked if the audit report has come through yet.
    i. The C/T said no, but we are receiving our adjusting journal entries, and will be able to prepare for the Fiscal Year End. Many towns are in this position, and we are hoping it comes through before the end of the year.
k. Richard Jackson asked how much delinquent taxes there are?
    i. The C/T responded approximately $30,000, and that they are coming in.

6. The Selectboard began discussion on the Reserve Fund Planning Committee:
    a. The C/T stated he met with Steve Weber to discuss this, and the idea is that residents, the C/T, and a SB member or two would meet on a semi regular basis to develop a plan for Reserve fund expenditures, and also prepare guidelines and definitions for the funds to be voted on at Town Meeting in 2026.
    b. Steve Weber added that the Town needs a plan to prevent significant change to the tax rate, and that there should be a variety of options. The premise would be a discussion with the principal of each fund to determine "wants", distill those down to "needs", and plan for future expenditures. He added that the SB needs to be on board for this.
    c. Teresa would be interested in participating in this group, and would hopefully aim for once or twice a month until there was a set plan.
    d. Steve Weber noted that the Citizen's Budget committee had several suggestions already in place as to fund allocation and planning.
    e. Reece motioned to authorize the creation of a Reserve Fund Planning Committee, Robert seconded-**VOTE-4 In Favor, 0 Opposed**
7. There was no Other Business
8. The Selectboard proceeded into Public Comment
    a. Kathy Kennett asked when the culvert project will start.

i. The C/T noted that July 8th is the tentative date. Electronic signage will be posted ideally two weeks prior. Rick is handling the notifications to the parties concerned.
ii. Kathy Kennett asked if there was any update on the Town boundaries?
1. The C/T stated not at this time.

b. M'Lissa Dayton asked what about financial reporting?
i. The C/T said he was waiting for the bank reconciliation to finish before having the most accurate data, but will be ready to present a year end summary at the June 25th SB meeting.

c. M'Lissa Dayton asked each member of the board how they feel about staying on budget?
i. Teresa said that crafting a good budget is difficult. Moving forward, she wants more information to be able make better decisions and keep better track. She is committed to writing a good budget, and staying in that budget.
ii. Reece seconded that concept, and would like to be as close as possible to what the target is.
iii. Robert added that we need to stay within our budget, and need reserve funds to help cover unforeseen situations.
iv. Kirsten added that being on budget is very important, but recognized it wasn't always possible.

d. Kathy Kennett asked about changing health plans for town employees, and changing contributions for employees.

9. The Selectboard began reviewing the AP/Payroll Warrants;
a. It was noted during the review that the Town has received the Better Back Raods grant from the State for approximately $15k to cover some work on West Rd.
b. It was noted that the Jackman's Heating bill seemed very high.
i. The T/C said they are aware and are looking into it.
c. Teresa motioned to approve the AP/Payroll Warrants, Reece seconded-**VOTE-4 In Favor, 0 Opposed**
10. Teresa motioned to go into Executive Session at 6:35 p.m. to discuss HR and employee matters, inviting the T/C, Road Foreman, and Road Crew, Reece seconded-**VOTE-4 In Favor, 0 Opposed**
11. Teresa made a motion to come out of executive session at 7:04 p.m., Reece seconded-**VOTE-4 In Favor, 0 Opposed**
12. Teresa made a motion to prepare a re-write of the Town Personnel Manual, for discussion at the next SB meeting, Reece seconded-**VOTE-4 In Favor, 0 Opposed**
13. Teresa made a motion at 7:05 p.m. to adjourn, Reece seconded-**VOTE-4 In Favor, 0 Opposed. The SB adjourned at 7:05 p.m.**