Town of Panton Chartered 1761

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Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 8th, 2025

In attendance: Selectboard Chairperson Zach Weaver, Selectboard Member Reece Jaring, Selectboard Member Robert T. DeGraaf, Selectboard Member Kirsten De La Cruz, Town Clerk/Treasurer Kyle Rowe, Road Foreman Rick Cloutier, Richard Jackson, Jeanne Jackson, Kathy Kennett, Chuck Kennett, Steve Weber, Debbie Brace, Jamie Dayton, M'Lissa Dayton, Sheriff Michael Ellmore

Via Zoom: None

1. Zach called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m
2. Two Items were added to the Agenda
    a. Discussion and Approval of the Municipal Planning Grant, and discussion and action on a motion and letter of support for Board member Kirsten De La Cruz
3. Public Comment
    a. Steve Weber stated that Item 13 on the Agenda, dealing with the use of the Emergency Reserve Fund for Loader repairs doesn't qualify as a proper use of the fund in his opinion. He stated it doesn't meet the state goals of the fund, and that its use represents poor planning. He added that the Selectboard should take out a loan or reduce expenditures in other categories in lieu of utilizing the Emergency Fund.
    b. Debbie Brace asked if Waltham would be contributing for the repairs, as they use the loader.
4. Road Foreman's Report
    a. Rick stated that the steering pin on the loader was the repair that was needed, and while the initial quotes exceeded the budget line item, it may come out cheaper after additional input was sought.
    b. He added that a similar fix was being implemented for the battery box on the backhoe, which would utilize a custom repair instead of buying a new cab.

c. He stated that both vehicles are constantly in salt in the winter, and both are older machines, in need of higher maintenance costs.
d. The culvert project on Panton Road went very well, and paving and guardrails will be installed in the coming days and weeks, with the guardrails perhaps as early as the current week.
e. Money was saved on the culvert project in a few areas.
f. There is a culvert on Adams Ferry Road that needs to be replaced, and the crew will hopefully get to it before the weather turns.
g. Hopkins Road has a new layer of gravel, and will be graded and chloride on Thursday. Other towns assisted in completing this project quickly.
h. The C/T added that the costs of the loader repair seem like they will come in lower than expected, and the allocation of additional repair funds can be tabled till the next meeting.
i. Rick added that snow equipment will be going on the trucks next week, as most of the major projects are completed for the season.
j. M'Lissa Dayton asked the Selectboard if they would formally ask for mileage logs for the highway department trucks.
    i. Zach responded the SB will look into it, and hopefully have that information by budgeting time.
k. M'Lissa asked when the guardrail on Hopkins Road will be replaced
    i. The C/T stated that the reimbursement agreement finally came in from the state, and that we hope to have it repaired soon.

5. Letter and affirmation of support for Kirsten De La Cruz
    a. Zach stated that the Board responded unanimously and swiftly to issue a letter of support for Kirsten after her husband was asked to an in person check in with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. He stated that they wanted to affirm their decision in open session, and continue to offer support to Kirsten and her family.
    b. Kirsten stated that it was clear the letter was looked at, and that is helped. Her husband was not detained, and will continue in his asylum hearing process.
    c. Reece made a motion for the submission of the Letter of Support for Kirsten and her family, Robert seconded-**ALL IN FAVOR**
6. Municipal Planning Grant
    a. The C/T stated that the Town was seeking to submit a new application for the Municipal Planning Grant, in preparation for the update to the Town Plan, due in 2027. This grant would support the work done by the Clerk's Office, the PC, and ACRPC. It would be approximately $17k, of which the town would be responsible for $1.7k. This is slightly lower than the initial application this calendar year of $19k.
    b. Zach made a motion to approve the application, Kirsten seconded-**ALL IN FAVOR**

7. Addison County Sherriff
    a. Sherriff Michael Ellmore addressed the SB with updates to the Sheriff's Department FY27 budget and plans for the future.
    b. He stated that the department was looking to raise the contract hourly rate in order to offer better benefits and hire more deputies.
    c. The rate increase would increase from $51 per hour to $64 per hour
    d. Mileage would be included in the new rate.
    e. A number of different options for the contract were presented, and a general discussion on the work and services offered was had.
    f. Kathy Kennett asked why there were deputies on 22A?
        i. The Sherriff responded they have a contract with the state, so the deputies patrol on state roads in compliance with that agreement.
        ii. Debbie Brace asked what the hours of the department were?
            1. The Sherriff responded 6am to 6pm 6 days a week, but increased staffing would mean an increase in hours to 6am to 10pm, 7 days a week.
    g. The SB thanked the Sherriff for his presentation, and will take up the issue at the upcoming budget meetings.
8. Approval of the minutes from the 9/10 SB meeting
    a. Zach motioned to approve the minutes, Robert seconded-**ALL IN FAVOR**
9. Clerk-Treasurer Updates
    a. The C/T provided the quote from Cornerstone Solutions , given to Panton by Waltham for the repairs to the Salt Shed, as per the MOU between the two towns. Waltham has selected Rick to be the Designated Rep on the project, which means the works will be completed to the standards we are looking for.
    b. The C/T stated that Municipay was implemented, and the Clerk's Office was working on getting it set up for a number of payables to the town.
    c. The In-person audit is in its second day, and seems to be going very well. The auditors are happy with the high level of work we have put into improving the town's books.
    d. Taxes are coming in ahead of the November 1st due date. Since November 1st is a Saturday, taxes will be accepted "on time" up to 5pm on November 3rd.
    e. The Clerk's office is continuing to implement new procedures to improve recording, and other filing. Significant progress continues to be made.
    f. A historical re-enactor inquired about Arnold Bay for an event he'd like to schedule in October of 2026 in honor of the 250th anniversary of the scuttling of the fleet. The C/T asked for a fleshed out plan, but was positive about the idea.
    g. M'Lissa Dayton thanked the C/T for the work he has been doing, general praise was noted. The C/T stated he hopes to be continue worthy of the town's praise.

h. The C/T added that the Tree Planting Project to finish out the ash Tree grant will be on the 18th of October, and all are invited to volunteer and help plant 20 trees. The town is looking to find 5 spots for trees to plant in the town ROW.
i. The Tree Warden and C/T will be helping to plant trees in the Town ROW on October 18th, and is still looking for some planting sites, as well as some volunteers.

10. Vergennes Fire Contract
    a. The C/T stated that he was preparing information on the fire contract with Vergennes, and has been working to make updates for FY27. He asked the SB to be allowed to negotiate on Panton's behalf with Vergennes and surrounding towns on the Fire Contract. It was noted that this would be for FY27, with hopes that plans can be made for the future development of better agreements and perhaps shared services more broadly. It was noted that any agreement negotiated would have to be presented before the SB for approval after negotiations.
    b. Zach made a motion to allow the C/T to negotiate on Panton's behalf with Vergennes and the surrounding towns for the fire contract, Reece seconded-**ALL IN FAVOR**
11. Town of Panton Glebe Land
    a. The C/T had provided the SB with a copy of the email from Deppman Law and the relevant deeds, detailing the stake that the Town of Panton had retained in a parcel on West Road. He briefly described glebe land, why it was retained, and the options for the future. Deppman law would draws up the quitclaim deed, and the town would cede its rights to the glebe. It was noted that this is potentially the last glebe parcel in Panton.
    b. Zach made a motion to approve ceding the interest the Town of Panton held on the parcel, and designate himself as signed on any future quitclaim deeds regarding this parcel. Reece seconded-**ALL IN FAVOR**
12. Zoning Fees Adjustment
    a. The C/T and ZA have been working on a new schedule of fees for the town for various zoning permits and documents. The fees were last updated in 2023. The C/T stated that these were not viewed as revenue opportunities for the town, but would allow us the town to better compensate the ZA for his time in fulfilling his duties. The adjustment to the fees would be in line with other surrounding towns, and add some additional line items to compensate the Town for having to post ads in the newspaper and alert abutting landowners of parcel changes and hearings.
    b. Zach motioned to accept the new fee schedule, Reece seconded-**ALL IN FAVOR**
13. Credit Card Authorization
    a. The C/T stated that his CC had been hacked, but was caught before any charges were made. However, the process of getting a new card revealed that previous SB Chair Howard Hall was still the authorized rep with Citizen's Bank, the holder of

the CC account. The C/T asked for a new authorization form to be signed by himself, and one member of the SB, and will make sure it stays current in the future.

b. Zach agreed to sign the document with the C/T-**Thus signed**.

14. FY26 Budget to Actual and Financial Update
    a. The C/T gave the SB an update on the Town's finances, utilizing the Budget to Actual Report, Balance Sheet, Cash Position Report, and a review of the Reserve Funds.
    b. The C/T stated that the year was proceeding normally. Several items were at or around budgeted amounts, and would be continued to be monitored closely.
    c. It was noted that the Town now has the Reserve Funds fully capitalized, but the establishment of a Reserve Fund Bank Account will wait until November.
    d. The TAN liability stands at approximately $78k
    e. The tracking of grant revenue and expenditures is working, and proceeding according to expectations.
    f. The Town is a good cash and financial position at the moment, with expenditures accruing normally.
    g. It was noted that several older highway vehicles and equipment are meeting or slightly exceeding their budgeted amounts of maintenance.
15. Loader Repairs from the Emergency Reserve Fund
    a. It was generally agreed to table this issue until the next meeting.
16. Computer upgrades from Digitization/IT Reserve Fund
    a. The C/T stated that in October 2025, Windows will stop supporting Windows 10, and move exclusively to Windows 11. Unfortunately, the Assistant Clerk's computer will not be able to be upgraded. Because of the high workload, and sensitive data on the town computers, we need to stay compliant with the latest software.
    b. Additionally, the C/T wants to purchase an external hard drive to save data on the computers scheduled for removal from the managed IT plan, as well as plan for future storage of digital land records.
    c. Also, the Town Clerk's computer needs updated RAM to stay functional and prevent the need to purchase one in the future.
    d. The estimate provided from Blue Mantis, the Town's IT provider is approximately $1600, and the C/T requested the SB to authorize that expenditure from the IT Reserve Fund.
    e. Zach motioned to approve the expenditure for the new computer, RAM upgrades, and external hard drive from the Reserve Fund, Reece seconded-**ALL IN FAVOR**
17. AP/Payroll Warrants
    a. The SB reviewed and signed the AP/Payroll Warrants

b. Zach motioned to approve the AP/Payroll Warrants, Robert seconded-**ALL IN FAVOR**

18. Executive session
    a. Zach motioned that a finding was made that premature general public knowledge would place the public body at a disadvantage, Kirsten seconded-**ALL IN FAVOR**
    b. Having made such a finding, Zach motioned to go into Executive Session at 7:10pm, inviting the C/T, to discuss privileged attorney communications and contracts, Reece seconded-**ALL IN FAVOR**
    c. At 7:40pm, Zach motioned to come out of Executive Session, Robert seconded-**ALL IN FAVOR**
    d. No action was taken in or after Executive Session.
19. Reece made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:40pm, Zach seconded-**ALL IN FAVOR**