Town of Panton Chartered 1761

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Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 11th, 2026

In attendance: Selectboard Vice Chair Teresa Boucher, Selectboard Member Robert T. DeGraaf, Selectboard Member Reece Jaring, Town Clerk/Treasurer Kyle Rowe, Zoning Administrative Officer David Martini, Jane Rice, Chuck Kennett, Kathy Kennett, Armando Martinez, Sharon Ashcraft, Matt Mertens

Via Zoom: Selectboard Chairperson Zach Weaver, Chris Wycoff, Lorraine Kayser

1. Teresa called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
2. Additions and Deletions to the Agenda
    a. The Road Foreman was out tending to the roads, and would not be available for the Road Foreman Report.
    b. Jennifer Pearson from the Bixby had to re-schedule to a later SB meeting.
3. Public Comment;
    a. There was no public comment.
4. Reece motioned to accept the minutes from the 1-27-26 meeting as written, Robert seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**
5. The SB began reviewing the Zoning Administrator's Report;
    a. David Martini presented the Zoning Administrator's Report to the Selectboard, and noted that the report is also in the Town Report. He noted that it had been a relatively quiet year for building permits.
    b. The C/T and the ZA discussed some of the changes to the zoning regulations, including the addition of a section allowing for greater enforcement powers by the ZA/AO, and that the noise ordinance was not put forward for consideration at this time by the Planning Commission.
    c. The increase in fees approved by the SB in 2025 was also mentioned.
    d. It was also noted that the number of Certificate's of Occupancy and Compliance were interesting, as they reflected some of the turnover of housing in the Town.
    e. The Selectboard thanked David for his work with Zoning. \

f. After the ZA had presented, Armando Martinez asked to comment. He was asked to come forward by the Selectboard.
g. Armando presented a document he wanted to include in the record. He then read from the document.
h. He detailed the nature of his issue with the ZA and the Town's Attorney, reiterating what he had stated at the previous SB meeting. He again asked the SB to rescind the NOV against him, remove the ZA and the Town Attorney, as in his opinion, they were compromised. He again stated that he feels he is being selectively enforced against, and that in his opinion, the facts stand for themselves.
i. Matt Mertens was recognized by the SB;
    i. He stated he was Armando's neighbor, and is his opinion, should be given discretion in this case. He stated that in his opinion, Armando was being treated unfairly, and the SB needs to step back and evaluate this.
    ii. He stated that he thought the SB should do what in his opinion is the right thing, and give Armando a permit.
j. The SB thanks both of them for their comments.

6. The C/T gave his report:
    a. Election preparation is continuing. All documents are posted, and ballots are available for request from the Clerk's Office. If you can pick one up in person, please do so. They will be mailed if you request.
    b. The Town Report is also available at the Town Hall, on the Town website, and will be at Town Meeting as well.
    c. The C/T met with a state archivist to review records storage and retention, and we received several compliments on how we had organized the vault.
    d. There are several items and policies for the SB's consideration at their first organizational meeting after Town Meeting, and will be brought forward then.
7. The SB began to consider the Special Event Permit for Ghost House Distilleries;
    a. The C/T stated that this company requests these permits semi regularly for one of events at Agricola Farm, and that the SB has approved several. This particular one was for Valentine's Day.
    b. Teresa made a motion to issue the permit, Reece seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**
8. The SB began to consider the appointment of a representative to the Vergennes Ad Hoc Fire Station Committee;
    a. The C/T stated that he was asked by the City Manager of Vergennes to serve on a committee that would help examine the current Fire Station, and propose a plan for the Vergennes City Council. He added that the surrounding towns were also represented, along with engineers, and Vergennes's residents. He noted that he has

been working with Vergennes and the surrounding towns on the Fire Contract, and has a good working understanding of the finances and budget.

b. Teresa made a motion to appoint Kyle Rowe, the Town Clerk/Treasurer as the representative to the Vergennes Fire Station Committee, Robert seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**

9. The SB began to consider the Highway Reports and Certificates;
    a. The C/T discussed the several reports that were submitted annually to the Agency of Transportation. These included the Financial Plan, the Certificate of Compliance, and the Highway Mileage Certificate.
    b. The Financial Plan was a breakdown between summer, winter, and project costs, and that winter costs tend to be higher than summer, due to materials and overtime.
    c. The Certificate of Compliance certifies that the Town abides by the Road and Bridge Standards, and maintains a Road Network Inventory. The C/T noted that the Road Network Inventory was much improved from last year.
    d. The Highway Mileage Certificate documents the mileage of roads in Panton by different classes, and while it was approved by the SB at a previous meeting, the additional documentation for the West Road reclassification required some additional signatures.
    e. The SB signed each of the documents, and Reece motioned to accept the FY27 Highway Reports and Certificates as presented, Teresa seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**
10. The SB began to discuss the FY25 audit;
    a. The C/T noted that the audit was issued with an unmodified opinion, indicated it was a true and factual rendition of the financial statements of the town, with no significant misstatements. He stated overall this was a good audit, and drew the SB's attention to several pages;
        i. Statement C-Balance Sheet of All Government Funds. It was noted that the Highway Capital Equipment Fund moved to a non-major fund, but otherwise there were no major changes.
            1. The General Fund assets, liabilities, non-spendable, and fund balance was discussed, noting the overall fund balance was small, but could be used by the SB as needed.
        ii. Budgetary Highlights
            1. The budget exceeded both revenues and expenses. For expenses, this was due to the July flooding, for revenues, due to grants, and other non-tax revenues.
    b. The C/T noted that some editing was done prior to the finalization of the financial statement, and some errors corrected.
11. The SB began discussing the FY26 audit;

a. The C/T noted that the engagement letter from RHR Smith came in to the office in early February, after the SB had set the budget and the articles for Town Meeting. Their price increased, due in large part to their changing quality management standards. The FY27 budget had included a $17k line item for the audit, and the actual cost would be more like $22k.
b. The C/T proposed the use of fund balance to offset the expenditure, with the creation of an assigned fund on our balance sheet to offset that particular expenditure in FY27. The goal would be to utilize the accounting services budget in FY26, which is projected to be a significantly underspent line item, to offset the costs in FY27.
c. Reece stated that it seemed difficult to find a good auditor, and that the use of this budget seems to make sense.
d. The SB discussed it generally. Kathy Kennett asked how it would show.
    i. The C/T noted that it would be seen on the balance sheet.
e. Teresa made a motion to move $5000 from accounting services budget to an assigned fund balance for the FY27 audit, Reece seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**

12. The SB began discussion on the FY26 Stipends;
    a. The C/T noted that the SB stipend for FY26 was $2400. When the stipend was budgeted, it was unknown that the SB would grow to 5 members. The SB needed to discuss whether to divide that equally, or go over budget to give the traditional $800.
    b. The C/T also noted that as he was the Town's EMC, he would respectfully, and gladly accept that stipend.
        i. Sharon Ashcraft noted that in her opinion, the situation was improper. She added that the previous EMC had done exceptional work, and the same is not true now. She added that no one should be accepting a stipend for the work being done now. She added that the C/T had a big opinion of himself and was potentially diverting residents from applying for this position. She further noted that budget decreased over time as well.
        ii. The C/T detailed the work he had performed as the EMC;
            1. FEMA Reporting
            2. Interfacing with VEMA and the Regional Emergency Management Coordinator on updates to the Local Emergency Management Plan
            3. Participating in drills with the state
            4. Opening the Town Hall as a cooling center during the heat of the summer
            5. Acting as a point of contact for VEMA and FEMA

c. Reece stated that he had a hard time going over the budget to provide additional stipends to the SB. Zach said it would be good to keep it consistent, and make sure it was appropriate budgeted in FY27.
d. Teresa made a motion to split the $2400 stipend 5 ways, Reece seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**
e. It was noted that the LEMP needed to be updated on the Town's Website. The C/T said he would do that.
f. Teresa made a motion to provide the EMC stipend to the C/T-Reece seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**

13. The SB began discussion of the FY26 Budget to Actual Report through January
    a. The C/T noted that there is not a significant amount of change thus far in the budget, normal accumulations of salaries, benefits, and expenses.
    b. The SB noted that everything seemed to be proceeding normally.
    c. The C/T again noted the hard work by the Highway Department to minimize overtime, and bring in grant revenue.
    d. The C/T noted that several new accounts have been created to document the HRA and expenses.
    e. The C/T discussed the balance sheet and noted that the cash accounts are in a healthy position, as well as normal liabilities.
    f. The SB discussed fund balance and potential usage. It was noted that it was a modest amount, and keeping it unassigned rather than using it to bring down the tax rate would have the greatest potential for helpful usage.
14. The SB began to review AP and Payroll
    a. General discussion was held during the review on topics including voter checklists, and various invoices.
    b. Reece motioned to approve the AP/Payroll warrants, Teresa seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**
15. Robert made a motion to add an executive session to the meeting to discuss pending civil litigation, inviting Kyle and Armando, and subsequently to enter executive session at 7:07 p.m., Teresa seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**
16. Teresa made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 8:15, Reece seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**
    a. **It was noted that no decisions were made during executive session**
17. Reece made a motion to adjourn at 8:15 p.m., Teresa seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**