Town of Panton Chartered 1761

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Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 8th, 2026

In attendance:, Selectboard Vice Chair Teresa Boucher, Selectboard Member Reece Jaring, Selectboard Member Kirsten De La Cruz, Selectboard Member Robert DeGraaf, Clerk/Treasurer Kyle Rowe, Sharon Ashcraft

Via Zoom: Ipad

1. Teresa called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
2. An item discussing the Town website, and possible action was added as Item 14.1,
3. There was no Public Comment during this agenda item.
4. The SB began consideration of approval of the minutes from the June 10th Regular Meeting and June 25th special meeting;
    a. Reece made a motion to approve both sets of minutes as presented, Robert seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**
5. The Road Foreman was unable to be present, the C/T provided several updates;
    a. The final Jersey Street culvert was scheduled to be replaced on Tuesday, July 14th, the road would be closed, and detours via Pease Rd and Spaulding Rd.
    b. Two more culvert replacements on Lake St would be scheduled afterwards.
    c. Roadside mowing was proceeding, as well as crack sealing.
    d. The new truck was scheduled for December delivery.
6. The C/T gave his report;
    a. The Fiscal Year End went well, there would be more discussion during the Budget review
    b. The July 4th reading of the Declaration went well, there were 25 attendees, and future events are being discussed prior to upcoming elections.
    c. The Town Office is busy in FY27 preparations and change over.
    d. The C/T gave a brief overview of open grants;
        i. The LCBP grant for Arnold's Bay improvements was ongoing, and relatively on schedule.

ii. There is still $500 in a Ben and Jerry's Grant to utilize for the Town Park across from the old general store.

iii. The Municipal Planning Grant was ongoing, and reimbursement was expected soon.

e. The C/T provided updates on the Joint Survey Committee;

i. Vergennes and Addison have both accepted the invitation, and nominated members. Ferrisburgh Selectboard declined to participate. Waltham was scheduled for the following week. The Addison Volunteer Fire Department and Vergennes Fire Department are participating, and VARS is interested in hearing the discussion.

f. The C/T added that the SB may have to submit an Errors and Omissions to the Grand List, due to some late data from the state on telecommunications. Overall, the Grand List is 1.26% higher than last year, even give the various changes that have been made due to the GIS vs GL project undertaken over the last several months.

7. The SB asked if Sharon Ashcraft had any Public Comment;
    a. She stated that the swim platform at Arnold's Bay wasn't where the plans said it would be.
    b. She added that she thinks the Town should designate it as a designated swim area, and place buoys and a rope. Also, rules for the use of the Town Beach.
    c. She also added that more/additional information should be provided on cyanobacteria outbreaks.
    d. Various methods on how to accomplish that were discussed, and the SB and C/T would discuss possible solutions.
8. The Panton SB began consideration of the settlement between MSFE and the Town of Panton;
    a. The C/T stated that the settlement had been agreed to, and was ready for a decision by the SB in open session.
    b. The terms of the settlement were read into the record;
        i. The basketball court shall remain in its current location.
        ii. All pending litigation, appeals, and related proceedings concerning the basketball court shall be dismissed with prejudice.
        iii. Martinez/MSFE makes a settlement payment of $18,000 to the Town of Panton.
        iv. The basketball court shall not be illuminated after dark.
        v. A qualified professional acceptable to the Town shall provide an opinion that the existing basketball court does not adversely affect the operation or performance of the permitted wastewater system and whether runoff from the court requires stormwater management to avoid soil erosion or hazardous conditions on adjacent properties on Staton Drive. If

stormwater management measures are determined to be necessary, Martinez/MSFE will be responsible for their implementation.

c. The C/T stated that all conditions have thus far been met, including the settlement payment, and the letter from Steve Ravell of Lincoln Applied Geology opining on the wastewater system, and stating that there are no issues or expected issued.
d. Robert made a motion to accept the settlement with MSFE, Reece seconded-**VOTE-3 IN FAVOR, 1 OPPOSSED**

9. The SB began consideration of the COTTS Property Check system;
    a. The C/T provided the quote from COTTS for the Property Check system. It would be a $700 start up fee, and additional $20 per month. The system would provide information for people who signed up when documents regarding their property were recorded by the Town.
    b. Teresa stated that is seemed like a minimal expense to provide a service to residents in the Town.
    c. The C/T added that usually by the time documents were ready for recording, it may be too late, but it would be a starting point for residents.
    d. There was general agreement on the benefit for this, and the minimal expense was noted as manageable for the FY. The C/T added that half of the initial start up fee could be paid for out of the Restoration and Preservation Fund, and that there is most likely room in the budget for the remaining one time expense.
    e. Reece made a motion to accept the Property Check Service, with half the funding to be provided by the Restoration Fund, Robert seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**
10. The Panton Selectboard considered nominations for the Joint Survey Committee;
    a. The C/T noted that while the Panton Selectboard had called for the formation of the JSC, they had yet to nominate two members. It was noted that the members need not necessarily be members of the legislative body, but it would be helpful for at least one of the members to be.
    b. It was also noted that the JSC would generate their own rules of procedure and governance, which would hopefully allow the participation from the non-municipal body members (e.g. the fire departments)
    c. The SB discussed the positive reception the committee has had in most of the surrounding communities, and the prospective meeting schedule.
    d. Robert nominated Zach Weaver to serve as the delegate, and Teresa Boucher to serve as the alternate, with it noted that any other member of the Selectboard could fill in if needed for the discussions, Reece seconded the motion-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**
11. The SB began discussion on the Fire Warden statute change and appointment;
    a. The C/T stated that the law surrounding Fire Wardens had changed in the 2026 Legislative Session. The default Fire Warden for each municipality was their Fire

Chief, which in Panton's case would be Vergennes Fire Chief Dave DiBiase. Dave has indicated that Vergennes Fire Department Captain and current Panton Fire Warden Matt Fraley would continue on as Deputy fire Warden for Panton.

b. It was noted that this would result in business as usual, but Dave would be able to weigh in on permits and Fire Warden issues as well, as needed.
c. Teresa made a motion to support the new statute, with Dave DiBiase as the Panton Fire Warden and Matt Fraley as Deputy Fire Warden, Robert seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**

12. The SB began discussion on the Ghost House special permit application;
    a. The C/T stated that this permit application came in a little to late to be acted on by the AP/Payroll weekly signer, and that it was easier to put it on the SB agenda.
    b. It was the same as prior applications.
    c. Reece made a motion to approve the Ghost House Special Event permit, Teresa seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**
13. The SB began discussion on the request from Charter House Coalition;
    a. The C/T provided the message from the Charter House on their request for inclusion on the Community Service Appropriations for the 2027 Town Meeting.
    b. It was noted that change over in the staff had led to them missing the cut off from the 2026 Town Meeting.
    c. The C/T reiterated the Panton Policy, which asked for organizations that had missed the cut off, were new, or were asking for more funding to provide a petition for inclusion. It was noted that Charter House is asking for the same funding as in prior years. It was also noted that upon submission of a petition, they would be voted on a separate item on the ballot for the first year, and upon approval, be included in the general disbursement.
    d. The SB affirmed the policy, and asked the C/T to provide that information to Charter House.
14. The SB began discussion on the Vermont Rural Coalition request for participation;
    a. The C/T provided correspondence from the Vermont Rural Coalition, asking for a representative from Panton to participate at the Coalition meeting in September. It was noted that it could be any member of the community.
    b. The SB asked the C/T to ask the DRB/PC to make the nomination, as they would be better suited to deal with issues surrounding land use.
15. The SB began discussion on the FY26 Budget;
    a. The C/T noted that the fiscal year end saw Panton in a great position. The budget line items were reviewed, as well as the General Fund Balance sheet. The overall budget was underspent by approximately 4%, and non-tax revenues were significantly higher than projected, leading to an overall General Fund Balance of $186k.

b. The C/T added that while this was not a “surplus” in the cash sense of the word, it was an accounting concept that would be extremely helpful at providing the Town with a significant budget stabilization authority.
c. It was noted that after the audit, when any corrections to that Fund Balance were noted, the C/T would ask the SB to consider the creation of a committed or assigned fund called the Budget Stabilization Fund, to allow a positive fund balance to carry over on the balance sheet, to prevent the need for more Tax Anticipation Notes.
d. It was also noted that the cash position of the Town at Fiscal Year end was extremely positive, with more than $120k in cash or cash equivalents available for use in lieu of having to borrow money to pay expenses in the inter-tax period.
e. In a discussion in some of the other year end fund balances, the C/T noted there was a $500 grant available for the Town Park at Panton Four Corners. Various ideas were discussed for its use, including cutting back poison parsnip, adding a porta-potty, and working with the land owner to make sure the parks use continued.

16. The SB began discussing the added agenda item, the website transition;
    a. The C/T stated that while the Town had benefitted from the Cyber Security grant to help with the .gov transition, he was unimpressed by the program thus far.
    b. The goal had always been to move to the Town to a new website, that would be cheaper and better managed, and that the company that had been reviewed, Civally, offered to assist the Town with a .gov transition, and host the .gov domain as part of the yearly maintenance fee, which would be half of what the Town was currently paying. In addition, it would simplify the IT services the Town currently has.
    c. The set up fee of approximately $2000 would be handled in other budget line items, making the effect on the budget even for FY27.
    d. Robert made a motion to allow the C/T to continue the transition to a new website, Reece seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**
17. The Panton SB began review of the AP/Payroll Warrants;
    a. General discussion was held during the review of the warrants, including the need for even more signage at Arnold Bay, and the thorough review by Panton’s PACIF insurance adjustor.
    b. Reece made a motion to approve the AP/Payroll Warrants as presented, Robert seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**
18. Reece made a motion to adjourn at 7:01 p.m., Teresa seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**