Town of Panton Chartered 1761

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Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 12th, 2026

In attendance:, Selectboard Chair Zach Weaver, Selectboard Member Reece Jaring, Selectboard Member Kirsten De La Cruz, Selectboard Member Robert DeGraaf, Clerk/Treasurer Kyle Rowe, Road Foreman Rick Cloutier, Sharon Ashcraft, Kathy Kennett, Chuck Kennett, Richard Jackson, Jeanne Jackson, Armando Martinez, Armando Martinez Jr.

Via Zoom: None

1. Reece called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
2. Added approval of the May 13th, 2026 Minutes to the minutes approval agenda item.
3. Public Comment;
    a. Sharon Ashcraft stated that the minutes from the 7-8-2026 meeting needed to be amended. She noted that the minutes reflected her comments as "Sharon Ashcraft thought" the SB should declare a swimming area at Arnold Bay, when it was intended to be that "Sharon Ashcraft stated that in her opinion, state statute required…"
        i. The SB added that clarification to the minutes from that meeting.
    b. Armando Martinez provided a written statement that he asked the SB to include in the record (See Appendix A to these minutes). He read the statement, which asked the SB to provide a process and official response to his misconduct allegations against the Town AO, now that litigation has concluded on his zoning dispute. He also asked that it be included on the agenda at the next SB meeting.
        i. Zach stated that they would provide this information to the Teresa (who was absent) and would ask the C/T to provide the SB materials for consideration at their next meeting.
4. The SB began consideration of the minutes from May 13th, and July 8th;
    a. Reece made a motion to approve the minutes on May 13th with the change noted by Sharon Ashcraft, and the July 8th minutes as presented, Kirsten seconded- **VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**

5. Road Foreman Rick Cloutier gave the Road Foreman's Report;
    a. The Town had replaced 9 culverts over the past 2 months, and there are 2 more to finish on Adam's Ferry Rd, however those will be covered by Grants in Aid.
    b. Paving preparation should start Thursday or Friday. D & F Paving will start with paving over the culverts, and then proceed to pave Jersey St from where they left off in 2025 (approximately Spaulding Road) to a point as far as funding will allow.
    c. He added that he would like to see the finishing of the culverts by the Highway Project Reserve fund. The SB said they would take it under consideration when the invoice was available.
    d. He noted that because we are scheduling with Addison, we are getting a better rate per ton than if the Town had scheduled it separately.
    e. He noted that the cost for plow blades had increased significantly this year, and that solutions were being worked on to try and find a lower cost alternative.
    f. He presented 3 quotes for a roadside mower to replace the current 3 point hitch roadside mower. The lowest cost mower is being used by Middlebury and Salisbury, and while significantly cheaper, is working well for those towns. He expected to need to replace the existing mower in the spring, and will be asking for its purchase from the Highway Equipment Reserve Fund.
        i. Richard Jackson stated that the Town's tractor needs to be able to handle it.
    g. There was a general discussion of Arnold Bay, with it noted that traffic has been tight, but overall the beach has been clean, and users utilizing the trash and recycling barrels.
6. The C/T gave his report;
    a. The transition to the new website was proceeding, and still on track for September.
    b. The C/T was appointed the Vice Chair of the VLCT policy committee, which is helping determine a plan for municipal advocacy at the legislature for the upcoming biennium. The C/T will most likely assist by providing testimony and guidance as well, all to assist funding and positive legislative changes for cities and towns.
    c. The C/T stated that work was proceeding on the FY26 audit, and that the 60 day period of chargebacks was almost over.
    d. The C/T provided an update on the Arnold Bay Project, noting that the Town has submitted a Shoreland Permit Application, and could potentially still finish the project this year, if the permit was received in time.
    e. The C/T was contacted by the Addison Independent, which was asking if communities were interested in buying an ad in the paper to support firefighters in their upcoming special addition. It was noted that there is room in the budget for a

small ad, and that it would be a good gesture for the Vergennes Fire Department and all the surrounding departments that provide coverage to Panton.
    i. The SB agreed, and told the C/T to proceed.
7. The C/T provided a review of the primary election;
    a. The Town had a 25% turnout, which was reasonably good for an August Primary.
    b. The C/T review the results of individual elections, noting the winners.
8. The SB began discussion of the Financial Management and Oversight report;
    a. The C/T provided the yearly update to the Financial Management and Oversight report, noting no significant changes to the internal controls the Town has in place for financial management. The only update was the change to the "New Employees" question, which was changed from "yes" to "no".
    b. This document will be available on the website, and provided to the auditors. \
9. The SB began determination of the 2026-2027 Tax Rate;
    a. The C/T provided a copy of the Town's 411 Report, detailing the 2026 Grand List.
    b. A discussion occurred over the various definitions and information available.
    c. The C/T noted that the Grand List had increased again this year, and the municipal budget, divided by the municipal Grand List was $972,888.65/$1,839,436.00 which would provide a tax rate of $0.5289.
    d. The C/T noted that this year, and going forward, the Town had a veterens exemption, and that the Town had voted to increase the exemption to the maximum many years ago, meaning $40,000. This would reduce the assessed value for a home by $40,000 for the purposes of taxation. To pay for this, the Town had a $0.0002 Local Exemption Tax as well, bring the total tax rate to $0.5291.
    e. The C/T discussed the education tax rates, which the Town has no authority over, and noted that a homestead taxpayer in Panton will pay a rate of $1.7248 this tax year, a decrease of $0.0030 from the previous tax year.
        i. Robert made a motion to set the municipal tax rate at $.5291, Reece seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**
10. The SB began discussion of the Homeward Bound Contract;
    a. The C/T presented the letter from Homeward Bound. Reece, also the Dog Warden noting that last year, the SB took no action in signing the contract, as the Town had not utilized Homeward Bound for stray/lost dogs.
    b. It was noted that the Town provides Homeward Bound with a community Service appropriation each year as well.
    c. The SB did not sign the contract.
11. The SB began consideration of the DRB/PC nominations and board size;
    a. The C/T noted that some time in the near past, the PC had gone from 5 to 7 members, and that though the PC sought to reduce the size back to 5, the previous

SB's had not voted on it. It was also noted that the size of the DRB is determined by the voters, not the SB.

b. The C/T noted that a member of the DRB/PC had resigned, leaving one available spot, and that the size of the PC was 7 members, meaning an additional two spots available.
c. Sharon Ashcraft and Kathy Kennett had both volunteered for the PC, and Ken Sullivan had volunteered for the DRB and PC.
d. There was a discussion around making sure the candidates would be able to serve in these roles, with it generally agreed upon that a willingness to serve their community and a love of Panton were the most important factors.
e. Reece made a motion to nominate Sharon Ashcraft and Kathy Kennett to the Planning Commission, and Ken Sullivan to the Development Review Board and Planning Commission, Robert seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**

12. The C/T provided an update on the Joint Survey Committee;
    a. The 4 Towns and various EMS agencies had all agreed on delegates, and a meeting will be held on Monday, August 24th. The general nature of the first meeting was discussed, which will be mostly organizational.
13. The SB began consideration of the Park and Ride Grant Application;
    a. The C/T discussed the Park and Ride Grant, which the Town utilized in 2022 to improve the Park and Ride across from the Town Hall. The goal of the potential grant was to investigate a canopy solar system, which would offset the cost of electricity at the Town Hall. However, the initial quotes for such a system weren't promising, and the grant would require a 20% match.
    b. The SB generally agreed to allow the C/T to continue the writing of the grant and investigation, but wanted to provide final approval at their September meeting.
14. The SB began consideration of the Town Building Maintenance Fund expenditure;
    a. The C/T described the improvements that had to be made over the past month to the internet infrastructure at the Town Hall. These included a new wifi router, and significant improvements to the wiring of the network devices. Additional work will need to happen to replace the public hotspot mounted on the face of the building, as it had failed.
    b. The C/T asked the SB to approve $1000 from the Reserve Fund to cover the work that had already been done, and the future improvements.
    c. Zach made a motion to approve $1000 from the Town Building Maintenance Reserve Fund, Kirsten seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**
15. The SB began the FY27 Budget and Balance Sheet Review;
    a. The C/T noted that the budget was on target thus far, in the second period of the fiscal year. However, cash on hand was lower than expected, due to a choice by the C/T to pay off a high interest loan early to avoid further accrual of interest, and pre-buy heating fuel to secure a cheaper rate. The overall fund balance

surplus and available cash made this the better financial decision, and thus far, the Town has not had to utilize the TAN to cover expenses.

16. The SB began consideration of the AP/Payroll Warrants;
    a. General Discussion was held during the review of these warrants, which included discussion of Arnold Bay traffic, and questions about certain invoices.
    b. Reece made a motion to accept the AP/Payroll Warrants as presented, Robert seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**
17. Zach made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss contracts with neighboring municipalities, inviting the C/T, Reece seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**
    a. The SB entered Executive Session at 6:59 p.m.
    b. The SB came out of Executive Session at 7:23 p.m.
    c. **NO ACTION WAS TAKEN**
18. Reece made a motion to adjourn at 7:23 p.m., Robert seconded-**VOTE-ALL IN FAVOR**