

**TOWN OF RUTLAND SELECTBOARD OPEN MEETING
RUTLAND TOWN MUNICIPAL TOWN HALL
181 BUSINESS ROUTE 4, CENTER RUTLAND, VT 05736
NOVEMBER 4th, 2025**

- The meeting opened at 6:00 P.M. with the pledge of allegiance.
- Board members present Mary Ashcroft, Joe Denardo, Sharon Russell, and Kurt Hathaway
- Members of the public present Rebekah Stephens, Chris Howe, Emily Howe, Robyn Sweet, Keith Whitcomb, Jimmy Plakas, and Shelley Dumas

Approval of Selectboard Minutes for October 21st:

Selectman Hathaway moved to approve the minutes. Selectman Denardo seconded the motion. There were some clerical changes made. The motion passed 3 – 0. Selectwoman Russell abstained.

Approval of Orders

Selectman Hathaway moved to approve the orders. Selectman Denardo seconded the motion. The motion carried 4 – 0.

Update from the Selectboard Chair

Articles for the next edition of The Circle are due by November 15th.

Board to meet with the Town auditor to review and discuss audit results

The auditors need verbal approval for the audit reports.

The management representation letter needs to be approved and signed by the Board Chair and the Town Clerk. Selectman Hathaway moved to approve the letter and to authorize the Chair to sign on behalf of the Board. Selectman Denardo seconded the motion. The motion carried 4 – 0.

Reviewed the governance letter.

Reviewed the management comment letter and discussed some of the recommendations.

Reviewed the audit report. The Town was given an unmodified or clean opinion, the same as last year. Reviewed fund balances across the various funds and accounts. Discussed adding bond payment obligations to the budget sheets. Discussed the recommendation to have separate accounts for governmental funds and enterprise funds. This is not currently being done.

There are enough restricted funds to over bond payments for FY 26, but there will not be enough to cover payments beyond that.

Data needed from the State was able to be sourced so the reporting could be completed.

Selectman Denardo moved to approve the audit reports and to authorize the Chair to sign the required documents once prepared. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion carried 4 – 0.

Reviewed balances in the Cortina settlement fund, Capital improvement accounts, and the \$1M cash to open funds. These balances are as of June 30th, 2025. The Police Service fund balance (Cortina settlement funds) is \$231,049. Reviewed the sweep over process.

Board to meet with representative from Habitat for Humanity

Rebekah Stephens, the Rutland Habitat for Humanity Executive Director was present to discuss with the Board an announcement from their organization. They are moving into Town soon. They are purchasing 3290 Cold River Road.

They will have a retail store, and a production facility to produce panels for small home construction.

An invitation will be extended to the Town to come visit their facility when its up and running.

Ed Dumas Rutland Town Police Chief and Ted Washburn Deputy Police Chief

1. Recent calls for service were provided.
2. Perimeter fencing is going up around the Diamond Run Mall. Contacted homeless people in the area and told them they need to leave the area.
3. Discussed a recent stop made by the K9 Officer Plakas, which will ultimately result in seized funds being given to the Town via a forfeiture process.
4. Housing vouchers for the cold weather months should start in December. A list of eligible locations in the Town is not known currently.
5. The Board discussed what cost of living increase they would like to give to town staff. The social security amount is 2.8% this year. A 3% raise was given last year. Selectman Denardo moved to add 3% again this year. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion carried 4 – 0.
6. Chief Dumas informed the full Board of his intention to retire in 2026. His last day will be late March or early April. Chief Dumas said he supports and recommends the Board promoting deputy Chief Washburn to the rank of Chief.
7. Discussed starting soon to hire an additional officer to keep the department staffed. Chief Dumas has recommended in his budget to increase the 3 officers to the same \$34 per hour rate.
8. Discussed looking down the road at succession planning for the admin role as well.

Selectman Getty joined the meeting at 7:00 PM.

9. Discussed the request from the Police Chief at the recent Police Committee meeting to allow Town employees to receive a buyout amount if they opt to not take Town health insurance and choose to be covered by another policy. Discussed using language adopted by other municipalities.
 - o Selectman Hathaway moved to move forward with a policy to allow a buyout of health insurance at 50% of the town premium rate. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion.
 - There was extensive discussion about what should be part of the process.
 - Employees who do not have Town insurance currently because they are covered under another policy would be eligible for the buyout.
 - Discussed the payment process. The preference would be a separate check.
 - Selectman Getty offered an amendment to the motion to state employees would be required to show they obtained other insurance and the buyout payment would be

divided over pay periods during the course of the year. The buy-out would not be required.

- The motion carried 5 – 0.
10. Discussed adding a non-binding question to the March ballot asking voters if they would support a study on the feasibility and cost of 24-hour, 7 day a week police coverage. The board is initially in favor of it.
 11. The new handguns are in and have all been changed over.

Mike Rowe Rutland Town Recreation Director

1. The rec committee met before the Board meeting and the budget is largely done.
2. The new doors were installed at Dewey field and are secure.
3. Thanked JP for walking on the trails at Northwood keeping an eye on dog walkers.
4. Basketball has started.
5. The ice rink is in.
6. The next senior luncheon is November 18th at the Center Rutland Fire Station. This is the Thanksgiving meal and will be catered by Kamudas. The December event will be at the Town School.

Representatives for the Walmart project will be meeting with department heads soon to discuss any impacts they anticipate due to this project. Police and fire are likely to have the largest impacts.

David Sears Rutland Town Road Commissioner:

1. Work at the salt shed to make more room is done.
2. Some beavers had to be relocated that were affecting a culvert on Post Road.
3. Quarterline Road and Boardman Hill have been graded.
4. The work on the south end sewer project is going very well. Most of the work on the west side of the road is complete. Paving is next week. Work on the east side is progressing and is on schedule.
5. Discussed the new section of sidewalk on Post Road by the school. Cars continue to park on it blocking the sidewalk. Discussed various ways to prevent this. The reimbursement request for the grant is due by the end of the year. We are not eligible unless several changes are made which would cost more that would be received back. An attempt to appeal this decision and request the reimbursement without further changes will be made.
6. A committee meeting will be warned for Monday the 10th to review the proposed budget.

Chris Clark Rutland Town Fire Chief:

1. Pump testing was completed recently. There were no repairs needed.
2. Members have attended several events recently. There is one more at the school.
3. The Fire Chiefs are meeting with Walmart reps on Monday.
4. There has been some vandalism in sprinkler rooms at the Green Mountain Plaza.
5. Discussed the formation of the Town Fire Department. There was a vote by town residents to form the department in 1966. The department began operating in October 1967.

Barbara Pulling Rutland Town Planning Commission Chair:

1. Reviewed information from Green Mountain Power regarding their recreational obligations at the pocket park site.
2. The Commission has completed the review of the new draft bylaw regulations. There are questions they are asking the Regional PC to clarification on some sections.

Marcia Chioffi Rutland Town Head Lister

1. Provided an errors and omission statement for the Board to approve. Discussed the reason for this change, which was necessary due to changes in State processes. After discussion Selectman Denardo moved to accept the errors and omission statement as presented by the Listers. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 – 0.

Kari Clark Rutland Town Clerk and Treasurer:

1. Discussed a request for a donation to the 8th grade class for their help at Town Wide Celebration. Selectman Hathaway moved to donate \$500 to the class with funds to come from the Town Wide Celebration line. Selectman Denardo seconded the motion. The motion carried 4 – 0. Selectman Getty abstained.
2. Reminder of deadlines for the March ballot.
 - a. Appropriation requests need to be submitted by January 15th. A petition is required if this is a new request with 5% of Town registered voters signing it. This is about 160 signatures.
 - b. Residents seeking to be elected need to have petitions and signature pages in by Monday January 26th.
3. Discussed an issue found with a reimbursement request from the Constables for vehicle hours. The FEMA rate was adjusted lower starting July of 2025. The rate being requested is higher than the current rate. This higher rate was what was used for budgeting purposes. The Board did not take any action to change the rate.

Bill Sweet Town Administrator:

1. The Regional Emergency Management Committee appointments need to be renewed. Currently it is Marty Wasserman and Bill Sweet. Both are ok with being reappointed. Selectman Denardo moved to approve the reappointments and to authorize the Chair to sign the form on behalf of the Board. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 – 0.
2. Provided a quote for updated equipment for the Board room. This was approved by 3 Board members last week due to preferred pricing expiring. Selectman Hathaway moved to ratify the approval of the Building Committee and the Chair. Selectman Denardo seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 – 0. The funds will come from the Capital improvement fund.
3. Provided the next reimbursement request being made to the State for \$6050.56 for the shared use path project. Selectman Denardo moved to approve the request and to authorize the Chair to sign on behalf of the Board. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 – 0 .
4. The renewal process for VLCT is underway. There are only a few things left and it will be done and submitted.

5. Discussed what to do with the as built plans for the Public Safety Building. After discussion, a space will be set aside in the downstairs vault at Town Hall for town building plans.
6. Departments included in the general budget have been given their sections to complete.
7. Reviewed a grant opportunity from T-Mobile which could provide up to \$50,000 for local projects. Our Pocket Park seems to fit the criteria. Mike Rowe, Barbara Pulling and Chair Ashcroft will help with the grant process.
8. Discussed the process of developing a disaster recovery plan. It is a progressive project which will involve each department head.
9. Reviewed an issue with E-911 addresses on Carmel Place. A new building was assigned an incorrect address. An audit was done and all but 1 building were numbered incorrectly. We will work with the developers and residents on a timeline that makes sense for corrections.

Selectman Denardo discussed setting aside some of the additional local option tax revenue the town will receive from the State to start building a reserve fund for the purpose of completing the renovations downstairs at Town Hall. Discussed how funds could be allocated within capital improvements for this and other purposes.

Selectman Hathaway moved to adjourn. Selectman Denardo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Bill Sweet, Town Administrator.

Mary Ashcroft, Chair

Joseph Denardo, Clerk

Sharon Russell

Kurt Hathaway

Matt Getty

Center Rutland, VT.