

TOWN OF STODDARD

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Monday, August 24, 2026

Present: Select Board members, Terri LaRoche, Dean Dorman & Jason Kovarik; Fire Chief, Steve Rockwell; Compliance Officer, Harry Power; Town Clerk/Tax Collector, Nancy McNeal; Transfer Station Committee, Franz Haase, Joe Traniello & Pix Durand; Ray Durand, Sam Lamphier.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board noted an agenda item regarding a planning board appearance was listed in error; the matter (Juniper Hill Road grant/safety inquiry) has been clarified via email and does not require a presentation to the Board. The Board's ex officio member will follow up at the next Planning Board meeting.

APPOINTMENTS

The Board reviewed current committee membership. The Conservation Commission has one opening following a member's decision not to renew (quorum of six remains). The Zoning Board of Appeals is fully seated with an alternate. The Planning Board is fully seated. No active recruitment is underway for the Conservation Commission vacancy at this time.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Station Equipment & Repairs

The Chief presented plumbing quotes for the extractor/dryer installation: approximately \$3,000 from a Manchester-area contractor, and an hourly-rate (not-to-exceed estimate to be obtained) quote from a local plumber previously used for the well repair. The Board directed the Chief to obtain an hourly estimate from the local plumber for comparison before proceeding. An electrician is still needed for required GFI outlet work; the Chief is soliciting quotes.

The Chief reported the fire truck required front brake, drum, and seal replacement (approx. \$6,000), paid via personal credit card due to lack of a vendor account; reimbursement to be processed. Rear brake work is still needed. The Board raised concern that equipment-repair spending is trending well over the annual budget and asked the Chief to confirm year-to-date totals and appropriate budget-line coding (equipment repair vs. NFPA compliance) with the bookkeeper.

Building Maintenance

The Chief is obtaining quotes for replacement of two non-fire-rated metal exterior doors (Hamshaw's and Home Depot) and lumber for a code-required permanent stairway to the mezzanine storage area (replacing a non-compliant stepladder, per a Department of Labor inspection).

The Board authorized the Chief to purchase stairway materials at Home Depot up to \$400 without further approval.

Staffing & Apparatus

One EMT candidate has passed certification; two more are in testing and two continuing study. A new paramedic responded to their first call this week.

Retired Police Cruiser

The Fire Department Association inquired about acquiring the Town's unused police cruiser to convert into an association support vehicle. The Board is open to the concept pending further information on intended use and cost, and asked the Chief to report back.

Hazard Mitigation / Emergency Shelter

Terri LaRoche flagged that hazard-mitigation action items assigned to the Fire Department include finalizing procedures for use of the school as an emergency shelter; coordination with the Emergency Management Director is needed.

Conservation Commission Coordination

Jason Kovarik advised of increased wildfire risk from dead ash trees affecting access to Pierce, Stoddard Rocks, and Pioneer Lake properties. Two access hazards were identified (a washout and a beaver-dam crossing); the Commission is evaluating

remediation options, potentially using forestry trust funds. The Fire Department confirmed it holds a key to the gate and can access the area with a brush truck up to, but not past, the washout.

AED / WiFi / Communications

AEDs are now mounted and operational at the fire station and library. Guest WiFi is available (no password) at the fire station, library, and Town Hall; the Board asked that this be publicized via the Town website/email notification, along with a reminder of known local cell-service coverage areas.

Drainage/Culvert Issue Near Fire Station

The Board discussed a long-standing drainage pit near the fire station driveway (disputed jurisdiction between the Town and State) that requires culvert cleaning and, ideally, replacement/fill. The Board directed staff to request the road contractor clear the culvert outlet and provide a cost estimate for a permanent repair.

Municipal Building Maintenance — General Discussion

The Board discussed establishing a proactive, scheduled maintenance approach for all Town-owned buildings rather than reacting to individual requests. Building surveys are nearly complete (all buildings surveyed except the fire station, scheduled next); a summary report and prioritized list will be brought back to the Board. Minor repairs/purchases up to \$500 may be approved administratively; larger expenditures require Board approval.

TOWN CLERK / TAX COLLECTOR

Dog Licensing Enforcement

Several dog owners remain delinquent on licensing fees and associated civil forfeitures despite notice, follow-up visits, and voicemails; a subset has failed to claim certified mail.

Motion: The Board directed the Town Administrator to pursue delinquent accounts through the courts (approximately four cases) and to ask the Town Attorney whether personal appearance is required or if filings may be handled administratively.

Tax Software Conversion (Avitar Associates)

A revised contract with Avatar Associates for tax collection software (replacing the current system, go-live November 9) removes a previously required assessing-software change. The purchase remains within the previously budgeted \$20,000; an annual software-support fee (~\$3,100) will begin in January and was not previously anticipated. The Town Clerk/Tax Collector will proceed with implementation.

Motion: The Board voted to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the Avatar Associates software agreement for a November 9 installation. Motion carried.

Tax Deed / Payment Arrangement

Regarding a property nearing tax deeding, the Board directed the Town Administrator to write a letter from the board requesting that the Town Clerk/Tax collector hold deed action pending an opportunity for a face-to-face meeting and possible payment agreement, including consideration of a hardship abatement of accrued interest (not principal). The property owner has made recent payments totaling approximately \$1,796 this fiscal year. A status update is expected at the first September meeting.

Certification / Training

The Town Clerk/Tax Collector reported completion of the Town Clerk/Tax Collector certification program. Election training was also completed.

Budget Status

The Board reviewed the Town Clerk/Tax Collector budget; most lines are tracking normally, though payroll and mileage were flagged for monitoring. The Board requested that department/committee chairs and the Fire Chief/Deputy be given view-only access to budget-tracking software to proactively monitor their own lines.

6. Compliance Officer

- Approved: addition/porch/sunroom permit; septic already covered under an existing state approval — no further state approval required.
- Approved: 8.26 kW rooftop solar installation (19 panels, no battery), 184 North Shore Road; permit fee to be reviewed as part of the upcoming fee schedule update.
- Granite Lake (Loop Road) project — cottage/garage reconstruction requiring ZBA variance and special exception (wetlands setback): the Board granted conditional approval contingent on ZBA approval, to avoid delay pending the Board's next meeting date.

The Board asked staff to work with the Town Administrator to streamline routine, non-controversial permit approvals (pre-reviewed by the Compliance Officer) to reduce meeting time, reserving Board discussion for permits raising questions.

7. Public Comment

- A resident inquired about a rumored sidewalk project; the Board clarified that no sidewalk has been discussed, but the Planning Board has discussed a possible shoulder-widening/footpath concept along Route 123 for pedestrian safety.
- A resident raised a complaint that a property owner along South Forest Road (a Class VI/public road) has been telling walkers the road is private beyond a certain point. The Board confirmed the road remains open to the public and invited the affected resident to file a formal complaint if the issue continues.

8. FEMA Flood Map Appeal

The Conservation Commission representative reported continuing technical discrepancies in FEMA's preliminary flood maps (Highland Lake and downstream areas not properly reflected), and concern that the agency may be pressuring the Town to fund its own engineering study to correct the error ahead of the September 30 comment deadline.

Motion: *The Board voted to send an official response, drafted with the Conservation Commission's technical comments, requesting remediation of the Highland Lake and downstream flood-panel discrepancies within two weeks and offering to coordinate with the Town's technical resources. Motion carried.*

9. Old Business

Waste Management Contract

The Board declined a proposed one-year contract extension offered by the current hauler, choosing instead to proceed with the Request for Proposals (RFP) process already underway. The Town Administrator will notify the vendor and remain open to their participation in the RFP.

Transfer Station Improvement Committee

The Committee (Franz Haase, reporting) presented a revised site layout and recommended changes to the pending RFP container specifications, including: retaining four 30-yard open containers for construction/demolition debris; replacing the single 15-yard cardboard container with two 30-yard covered cardboard containers; replacing the single 20-yard recycling container with two 30-yard covered commingled-recycling containers; adding a covered/shipping container for tire storage (required by state regulation) and confirming the existing electronics container meets covered-storage requirements; relocating the demolition containers for better attendant sightlines; and constructing a small attendant shack adjacent to the compactor. The Committee also recommended the Town inquire whether the current hauler would sell the existing 2-yard compactor (estimated market value \$2,500–\$4,000) to allow a smooth transition while the Town separately budgets for a new 4-yard compactor.

The Committee recommended a gradual, phased wind-down of current transfer-station operations (tapering acceptance of tires, metal, and demolition debris) ahead of any operational transition, to minimize disruption.

Motion: *The Board agreed to issue an RFP addendum reflecting the revised container list (to be quoted both with and without provision of a 4-yard compactor) and to inquire about purchasing the existing compactor as part of the Town's response to the hauler regarding infrastructure changes.*

Proposals are due September 24; the Board agreed a decision must be reached before November 1 to ensure uninterrupted service, and that off-cycle meetings may be needed to stay on schedule. The Committee representative will sit with the Board during proposal review. Initial staffing was discussed at two attendants at start-up, subject to committee recommendation on longer-term staffing. Electrical service type (single- vs. three-phase) for the compactor and attendant certification status will be confirmed before scheduling a transition date.

Town Hall Office Parking

The Board agreed to defer further discussion of this project until spring given competing priorities, particularly the transfer station transition.

Well Repair Update

The well pump has been repaired and relocated; the wellhead requires a metal cover plate before backfilling. The issue was traced to the water treatment system (now bypassed) rather than the well itself. A water treatment service visit is still needed to complete repairs.

10. New Business

- Approved a request for a political candidate to campaign outside the transfer station gate, consistent with past practice for all candidates.

Motion: *The Board voted to award the King's Highway paving project (approx. 1,500 linear feet) to Arlington Paving in the amount of \$55,000, funded from the Road Improvement account. Motion carried. Staff will also ask the Road Agent to address a settled culvert dip near Turtle Rock Road as part of the project and to consider centerline striping as part of future road work.*

Motion: *The Board voted to accept the sole quote received for replacement of the Shed Hill Bridge railings and walkway decking, pending confirmation the quote covers all three railing sections. Funding source to be confirmed (Highway Miscellaneous or Culverts & Bridges). Motion carried; Terri LaRoche abstained due to a family relationship with the contractor and did not participate in the discussion or vote on cost.*

11. Correspondence, Signatures & Budget Review

The Board signed accounts payable manifests, a building permit extension, a pistol permit, and a tax exemption denial. Draft minutes of the August 10 meeting were reviewed, corrected for minor typographical errors, and approved for signature pending those corrections.

The Board reviewed year-to-date budget summaries and flagged several lines for follow-up verification by staff, including: Office Data/Equipment (elevated due to a budgeted server purchase); Assessing payroll (trending over; being addressed through internal allocation adjustments); Town Beautification/Flowers (unexplained overage, to be investigated); Community Kitchen and Home Healthcare Services (fixed annual amounts showing as over budget, likely miscoded); and a duplicate budget line for the Bridge & Road Expendable Trust to be corrected administratively.

12. Non-Public Session

Motion: *The Board voted to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II(b). Motion carried.*

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle L. Pong

Approved:

Terri LaRoche

Dean Dorman

Jason Kovarik