SELECTMEN'S OFFICE
TOWN OF GILMANTON
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Board of Selectmen Meeting **Approved**
July 20, 2026 - Academy Building – 6:00 P.M.
AGENDA
CALL TO ORDER – ROLL CALL
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
Audio Link: **https://www.gilmantonnh.org/board-selectmen/pages/meeting-audio**
Minutes created with partial AI

Present: Chairman Meredith Kelley, Vice Chairman Brian Forst, Selectman Parker Hoffacker, Town Administrator Heather Carpenter, Finance Administrator Lauraine Paquin, Administrative Assistance Amanda Davis, Fire Chief Joe Hempel, Police Chief Matthew Currier, Road Agent Isaac Morse, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Elise Smith
Public: Anne Kirby, Ray Daigle, Cathy Bowler, Douglas Bowler, Mark Sisti, Kevin Crowley, Jonathan Field, George Roberts, Claudia Ferber, David Ferber, Tom Smither IV, Joeseph Haas, Colleen Harkey, Richard Harkey, Janet Breton

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- 06-01-2026

Motion: On a motion by Chairman Kelley and second by Vice Chairman Forst, it was voted to approve the Non-Public Minutes from 06-01-2026 (2-0) *Selectman Hoffacker, abstained.*

- 06-15-2026 – The meeting minutes were reviewed. It was noted that Chairman Kelley was absent from that meeting and Vice Chairman Forst conducted the meeting.

Motion: On a motion by Vice Chairman Forst and seconded by Selectman Hoffacker, it was voted to approve the minutes from 06-15-2026 (2-0) *Chairman Kelley, abstained*.

- 07-06-2026

Motion: On a motion by Chairman Kelley and seconded by Vice Chairman Forst, it was voted to approve the minutes from 07-06-2026 (2-0) *Selectman Hoffacker, abstained.*

- 07-10-2026 – This Non-Public meeting was held to review a hire for the Highway Department. It was noted that Chairman Kelley was absent from that meeting and Vice Chairman Forst conducted the meeting.

Motion: On a motion by Vice Chairman Forst and seconded by Selectman Hoffacker, it was voted to approve the minutes from 07-10-2026 (2-0), *Chairman Kelley, abstained*.

Consent Agenda

Oaths of Office

The Board reviewed the following oath of office for ballot clerk and inspector, each for a term of two years:
- Cindy Andrade (2-year term)
- Melissa Beal (2-year term)
- Kathleen Brooks (2-year term)
- Deb Fletcher (2-year term)
- Michelle Heyman (2-year term)
- Edward Kirk (2-year term)
- Ashley Page (2-year term)
- Grace Sisti (2-year term)

Motion: On a motion by Chairman Kelley and seconded by Vice Chairman Forst, a motion was made to accept all listed oaths of office. (3-0)

Community Development

The Board discussed the recommendations concerning credits and exemptions.
Board Consensus: This matter was tabled for return to it at the end of the meeting.

New Business

Community Feedback on Risky Trees and Utility Pole Advertisement

The Board received an update on limited public feedback to the survey concerning risky trees and utility poles. The survey had been posted on social media, and the website and included a QR code and an alternative method of response without using the QR code. Residents were asked to provide specific location for hazardous trees and utility poles, but the survey received limited participation despite multiple social media postings.

It was reported that the utility company had responded and requested more specific locations if further assistance was requested. General references to poles without identifying the road or location were noted as insufficient for follow-up.

Feedback concerning risky trees identified some locations, but additional location information was requested to support planning, budgeting, and potential work by ArborTech or another company. The Board discussed maintaining a more proactive approach to the hazardous tree work.

The Board discussed utility and property-owner responsibilities for trees near utility lines, including a reported dead ash tree near a power line. It was stated that utility response may depend on the risk to utility infrastructure and customer impacts. The town right-of-way and the need for continued hazardous-tree maintenance were also discussed.

The Board agreed to reissue the survey one additional time, and the results were reviewed once more data is collected.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector Fee Proposal

Elise Smith, Town Clerk/Tax Collector, presented proposed fee changes for public hearing consideration.

The proposal included an additional dollar per dog license. It was reported that over 150 calls were made for the civil forfeitures, with 20 dogs still outstanding. It was also reported that an RSA update in July requires a $6.50 puppy fee, including an additional $2 charge.

Also presented was another proposal for Transfer Station stickers. The proposal was not intended to take effect in 2026. The proposed fee would be in 2027 with stickers increasing to $6.25 and would increase to the full $12.50 in 2028. It was reported that $418 was collected for transfer station stickers during the prior year and approximately $1,020 had been collected during the current year. Sticker costs were reported as $1,700 for stickers covering 2026/2027, and new stickers for 2028, at approximately $850 per year.

It was noted that two Transfer Station stickers had been free during Elise's tenure, with additional stickers charged at one dollar. The proposed phased increase was described as an approach to move toward having users pay for the services they use.

Marriage ceremony fees were also included among the items proposed for public hearing consideration.

Motion: On a motion by Chairman Kelley and seconded by Selectman Hoffacker, it was voted to approve the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's proposal to hold a public hearing on fee consideration. (3-0)

Public Comment (6:20 p.m.)

- Cathy Bowler, of 128 Crystal Lake Road and former chair of the CIP committee, requested that the CIP make a presentation.
  Chairman Kelley stated that the Capital Improvement Plan Committee could not present their report for a

presentation at this meeting, because the information had not yet been reviewed or approved by the Selectmen.

Cathy Bowler submitted the report, and the report edits and wanted their receipt noted in the meeting minutes. She stated that the report had been delivered to the town administrator's office the prior Thursday for distribution to Board members.

Cathy Bowler stated that the report was prepared after a year of difficult, unbiased, independent review of capital assets in Gilmanton, New Hampshire, and cited 489 residents voted for the committee and deserve to read the report. She requested the Board review the report without judgement of anyone who served on the committee.

It was stated the report was not an easy read, but it is necessary to have change in Gilmanton, If the Town continued as it is, it would result in unfunded and diminishing assets for services.

Voters approve reserves as demonstrated from warrant articles and are not looking for large tax implications. They would rather steadily fund capital needs for replacements of existing assets.

She reported $13,157,000 in capital needs over the next six years and stated that $2,131,000 in 2027 needs had been identified as priority one by all committee members and discussed with all Board of Selectmen who served on the committee.

Chairman Kelley stated for clarity of the record that not all Board of Selectmen members approved exactly what was presented. Each member of the Selectboard served on the Capital Improvement Plan Committee for small window of time.

Cathy Bowler also referenced grant opportunities, including an example of $110,000 in funding for a cruiser received by another town.

Chairman Kelley reminded Cathy that the report had not been approved by the Board and that they would not discuss the report's specific contents during the public comment period.

- Janet Breton of Geddes Road reported that mail delivery had been discontinued because of conditions near her mailbox. She stated that her mailbox had been in the same location for 36 years and described erosion and drainage conditions near a ditch and a neighboring pond. She requested assistance to restore mail delivery.

  Town Administrator Heather Carpenter reported that the road agent had inspected the location during the prior week and had communicated by email. The road agent will contact the post office to obtain additional information concerning the delivery issue, including whether mailbox height or another condition affected delivery, and to get a first-hand account from the mail carrier.

  Janet Breton stated that the ditch needs to be filled with rip rap, because the road is washing into the neighbor's pond. She explained this has been happening for years, but now it's dangerous for the postal service. She does not have another location to put her mailbox. She stated this is an erosion problem that has been happening for years and never addressed.

  Town Administrator Heather Carpenter discussed highway staffing levels, competing road priorities, the road agent's responsibility to inspect reported issues, and the need to address work based on priority.

- Ann Kirby stated that she had joined the CIP committee near the end of its work and requested that the Board read the report in its entirety even if the information is out of the purview of the committee. She stated that the report contained information relevant to the town and commented on volunteer participation and committee communications.

  Chairman Kelley stated that the report had been distributed promptly by staff and that review had already begun. She reiterated that the CIP committee was given the due date numerous times that there was a deadline the committee didn't follow.

- Heather Carpenter, speaking as herself and not as the Town Administrator, provided public comment regarding the CIP report and the committee's process, including concerns about the report's statements concerning town operations, department heads, and the Board. She agreed that there may be some factual information in the CIP packet presented, but she took offense with how the committee treated her, her staff, the Department Heads, and the Selectboard. TA Carpenter stated that the town has worked to improve transparency. She believes that the committee represented themselves negatively in almost every public meeting and inappropriately talked to each of the Department Heads about what they have not done, what they cannot do, and what they need training on, when no training was offered. No direction was given. There is a CIP that the Town has had since 2013 that just needed updating. She stated that she was an advocate for the committee, but they came in with an agenda and then decided that the Town was the problem. She stated that the Town staff is present every day for the public service of the community, and the committee does not respect the work that the Town does. She noted the committee members had inappropriate dialogue for a public meeting. It was difficult knowing the good nature the committee had intended the report to be, but it read that committee did all the work and the Town does nothing. She stated the committee just needed to work in support of what the Town is already working towards.

- Joe Haas stated that he found out under Article 8, you have to be a current taxpayer. He thought RSA 508:4, that if in three years of the event it is considered current. But according to what he found out it was not. He came in today and paid his taxes, so he is current. He is arguing the local education tax that has downshifted from the DRA unlawfully.

- George Roberts, a representative of the First Congregational Society of Gilmanton, known locally as Smith Meeting House, raised concerns regarding potential utility lines on a Class VI Road. George requested that the Board hold a public hearing concerning the layout of utilities if a request for utility lines is submitted.
  Chairman Kelley stated that it would need to review and research its authority and the applicable rules and regulations concerning utility installation and public hearings.
  George commented on historic planning for connections between state highways. The resident requested that the town consider completing the previously discussed infrastructure work and stated that traffic conditions on Meetinghouse Road should be evaluated.
  Chairman Kelley stated that historical planning information would require research.

- Colleen Harkey, former CIP Vice Chair, stated that CIP committee members had not acted as a DOGE committee. She mentioned that DOGE was mentioned as part of a "flippant" conversation, and it is not true. She referenced documents and communications concerning the collection of the committee's work, including a May 19, 2025, letter from former Chairman Josh Mann and communications concerning information requested from town departments and the school district. She commented that a lot of the statements made in the meetings were false, especially pertaining to the gathering of information, and the comments have been skewed to discredit the committee. If the Selectboard does not decide to use the packet provided by the CIP committee, then it can be a public document and let the resident decide, because the residents want to see it, and the numbers will tell the truth.
  Chairman Kelley stated there is nothing being hidden.
  Colleen stated the rules and procedure voted to approve the rules and procedure for the CIP committee, but it was not approved by the Selectboard, because they disagreed with some things listed in the document.
  Chairman Kelley stated that the CIP members were consistently working outside of their purview.

- Mark Sisti of Geddes Road stated that he was a former CIP committee member, school district moderator, and town moderator. He stated that the report was intended to identify future capital and infrastructure needs, support planning, and reduce abrupt budget impacts. He requested that the Selectboard read the report and consider its information, and it's a lot better to be proactive than reactive.

- Tom Smithers IV of 140 Franklin Road asked about transfer station operations during high-volume periods, the condition of a John Deere backhoe, cardboard handling, and overflow conditions near the compactors.
  Transfer Station Manager, Alex DeCoste reported that recent overflow occurred during high-volume

periods when cardboard was not broken down or was placed in a compactor rather than the single-stream recycling area. The one compactor had been temporarily closed to remove accumulated material and the facility had not closed because of capacity since implementation of the current single-stream process.

He reported that cardboard was no longer being baled because the baler was broken. It was stated that the cost of repair and annual operation was not supported by revenue from the baler, and that a $4,500 knife had been installed shortly before the baler failed.

Alex DeCoste stated that single-stream material was loaded separately and compacted with a skid steer to increase capacity. The John Deere backhoe was reported to be a 2004 machine with more than 7,000 hours and multiple mechanical issues, including hydraulic leaks, seals, hoses, tires, and winter-operating concerns. It was stated that continued repairs were not considered feasible.

It was reported that grant opportunities were being explored for equipment needs.

Sawyer Lake Village District Capital Reserve Fund

David Ferber of 6 Willow Ave, a commissioner of Sawyer Lake Village District, reported that the district had delivered a $30,000 check in mid-April for its dam capital reserve fund and that, to his knowledge, the funds had not yet been deposited. He stated that several efforts had been made to contact the trustees and that the district had lost approximately three months of interest.

The Board stated that the passing of Fred Buchholz had created disruption in access to accounts and had affected multiple projects. The Board stated that it was aware of the matter and that work was proceeding to address the account access issues.

Non-Public Session

Chairman Kelley stated the Selectboard would be moving into Non-Public RSA 91-A:3 (c). *No motion was captured.*

Non-Public RSA 91-A:3(c) -Deeds

RSA 91-A:3, II(c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of this board, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to include any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant.

Chairman Kelley stated the Selectboard came out of Non-Public RSA 91-A:3(c) and are moving into Non-Public RSA 91A:3(l). *No motion was captured.*

Non-Public RSA 91-A:3 (l) – Legal

RSA 91-A:3, II(l) allows a public body to enter non-public session to consider advice received from legal counsel, either orally, in writing, even if legal counsel is not present.

Chairman Kelley stated the Selectboard came out of Non-Public RSA 91-A:3(l). *No motion was captured.*

Chairman Kelley stated the Selectboard came out of Non-Public RSA 91-A:3(l) and the minutes will be sealed. *No motion was captured.*

Consent Agenda (Cont.)

Community Development

Taxing Exemptions and Timber Tax

The Selectboard reviewed an elderly exemption and also reviewed timber tax information.

Motion: On a motion by Chairman Kelley and seconded by Selectman Hoffacker, it was voted to approve 131-069 in the amount of $500. (3-0)

Motion: On a motion by Chairman Kelley and seconded by Selectman Hoffacker, it was voted to deny 413-073 for the elderly exemption. (3-0)

Motion: On a motion by Chairman Kelley and seconded by Selectman Hoffacker, it was voted to approve 423-056 in the amount of $754.43. (3-0)

Motion: On a motion by Chairman Kelley and seconded by Selectman Hoffacker, it was voted to approve 415-033 in the amount of $270.81. (3-0)

Capital Improvement Program Discussion

The Selectboard discussed the role of a CIP advisory group, the relationship between the CIP process and department heads, and the use of capital planning to support budgeting and taxpayers.

It was stated that department heads provide requests and that the CIP process should consider those requests together with other town funding needs, the availability of funds, and the timing of capital needs. Participants discussed whether a proposed expenditure could reasonably be scheduled over multiple years or should be addressed sooner because of an emergency.

The Selectboard discussed prior planning board work on capital planning and the transition to a separate committee. It was stated that earlier work had progressed substantially and that later work involved reviewing actual numbers supplied by departments and considering inflation. They discussed the difficulty in forecasting and adding the cost of inflation.

The Selectboard discussed the effect of inflation and other market conditions on operating budgets, and it was stated that departments should provide their needs and price points and that the process should not replace departmental judgment regarding those needs.

The Selectboard stated that department heads are responsible for operating their departments and that the role of the committee is advisory.

Action Items

- Reissue the risky trees and utility pole survey one additional time and review the resulting feedback.
- Road Agent, Isaac Morse, will contact the post office regarding mail delivery conditions on Geddes Road and obtain information from the mail carrier.
- Review authority and applicable rules concerning utility installation and a potential public hearing for Passage Hill Road.

Motion: On a motion by Chairman Kelley and seconded by Selectman Hoffacker, it was voted to adjourn. (3-0)

Adjournment (8:30 p.m.)

Respectfully Submitted,

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Amanda Davis, Administrative Assistant

Approved by the Board of Selectmen

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Chairman Meredith Kelley Vice Chairman Brian Forst Selectman Parker Hoffacker

ATTENDANCE SIGN-IN

Board of Selectmen Meeting
7/20/24

PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE & DATE
Anne Kirby	Anne Kirby 7/20/26
Ray Doyle	Raymond M Doyle 7/20/26
Cathy Bruker	Catherine M T Barker 7/20/26
Mark Sisti	[illegible] 7-20-26
Colleen Harkey	C H Harkey 7-20-26
Douglas Bowler	Douglas Bowler 7-20-26
Crowley Kevin	[illegible]
Jonathan Field	[illegible]
George Roberts	
CLAUDIA Ferber	C Ferber
DAVID FERBER	David Ferber 7/20/26
Tom Smithers IV	Tom Smithers IV
JosephsHaas@Hotmail.com	Joe Haas