APPROVED

Town of Grantham
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
December 10, 2025

The regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 5:00 PM on Wednesday, December 10, 2025, by Chair Warren Kimball. The Board met in the Grantham Town Building, Jerry Whitney Memorial Conference Room, 300 Route 10 South, Grantham, NH.

Present: Chair Warren Kimball; Selectman Peter Garland; Selectman Jeremy Walla; Town Administrator Emily Owens; Police Chief John Parsons; Fire Chief Justin Hastings; Trustee of the Trust Funds Tom Shemanske; Tod Lloyd; and others

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, a moment of silence was observed for beloved resident, C. Peter James, who passed away earlier today. Peter was a friend to the Town and served on many Boards and Committees. He will be missed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Selectman Garland made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of 11/14/2025 and 11/24/2025; seconded by Selectman Walla. ***Unanimously approved.***

CONSENT CALENDAR (public comment not accepted)

1. Cemetery Deed
2. DRA Sales Ratio Study
3. Building Permits:
   a. M/L 225-057-000; 112 Greensward Drive – Generator
   b. M/L 226-003-000; 326 New Aldrich Road – Hot Water Heat Pump
4. Abatements :
   a. M/L 221-049-000; 784 Route 10 North
   b. M/L 236-063-000 ; Barton Road
5. Correspondence:
   a. Mary Ann Crandall
   b. Peter James

Selectman Walla made a motion to approve the Consent Calendar; seconded by Selectman Garland. ***Unanimously approved.***

Arthur Murphy: Arthur Murphy gave an update on the work he is doing with the Town. On October 28, he went live on the Town's website with an AI chatbot. That will allow citizens to ask questions related to website content and if the information is there, it provides them with an exact

answer. If it's not, it provides with the necessary information to contact the right person to gain that information. Forty four days into it, he reported that there have been a total of 530 messages across 145 different conversations. A lot of people who have asked it questions continue to come back to it and ask more. On average there are 12 messages per day. He entered with Grantham on a three month pilot program which will be ending on January 28, 2026. Grantham can choose to extend this partnership if they would like.

Murphy wanted to hear from citizens and employees about any comments, suggestions or concerns they might have about it. Fire Chief Justin Hastings said he used it earlier to ask if the Selectmen's meeting was cancelled because of the snow. The Chatbot said it did not have the answer but here is who to call if you need that. He thought it was a great tool for the community to use to get quick answers without having to search the website which can be difficult to figure out. He thought we should keep it. Tom Shemanske said he has used it quite a bit and commented that it can be difficult to find documents on the website. He asked Murphy how often he scrapes the website because it seems that some documents got moved and the links that were returned were dead. Murphy said he does go through the chatbots to make sure that every link works, and he has run into a couple of those where the link has gotten moved. He does his best to find the new location of the link. He said he scrapes the website on average every two days and explained his scraping process. He commented that Grantham has a lot of pages on its website, so it would be helpful for him to know if a new page gets added and of any changes like that.

Town Administrator Emily Owens stated that Murphy is finding things that she didn't even know were on our website, like there might be something in three different places with conflicting information, so, when she finds out, she can either remove it or make sure it's updated.

Selectman Walla asked Murphy if he has received any direct feedback from users. Murphy said that it's not direct, but there are some enthusiastic citizens, and some say thank you to the chatbot. He did send the chat logs over.

Murphy thanked everyone for their feedback.

Chair Kimball asked to revisit correspondence from Mary Ann Crandall. Owens stated that Crandall is retiring and was gracious enough to get us through the holidays. Her last day is January 2, 2026. Chair Kimball asked Owens if she has had any response to the ad for that position. Owens said she has received several responses.

Chair Kimball said the second item of correspondence was from C. Peter James, our friend who passed earlier today. Chair Kimball noted that Peter made sure to send a letter resigning from the Zoning Board of Adjustment before he passed away. Once again, he will be missed.

Owens told the Board that Alternate ZBA Member, David Bruno, has agreed to become a full Member of the Zoning Board and Chair Shemanske also agreed.

A motion to appoint David Bruno as a full voting member of the Zoning Board of Adjustment was made by Selectman Walla; seconded by Selectman Garland. ***Unanimously approved.***

OLD BUSINESS

Class VI Highway Ordinance(s): No new information

a. Rescind the 1997 and 2000 Ordinances to close Class VI Highways:
b. Adopt Ordinance regulating weights on Town Highways

NEW BUSINESS

Fire-EMS Activity Report 11/09/2025 – 11/22/2025: The report was reviewed.

Fire Chief Hastings stated that they are cleaning out the ambulance of expired supplies and reassessing what they have for storage. They are restocking since this ambulance is being used a lot more. It is responding to the majority of calls, both EMS and Fire. That is a big improvement on the EMS side. Selectman Walla asked Hastings how the ambulance gets around different parts of town in the winter. Hastings said they have studded snow tires on the ambulance, and they assess before it leaves the building. If, for some reason, they don't feel it's the right vehicle, they will put the stuff on the utility vehicle since they have four wheel drive on that.

Lebanon Ambulance Report – November 2025: The report was reviewed

Trustees of the Trust Funds Report through November 2025: The report was reviewed.

Town Administrator: Town Administrator Emily Owens reported that she attended the Conservation meeting and Planning Board meeting, and they both support the warrant article to turn the Sawyer Brook Headwaters properties into conservation land. Also, Ausbon Sargent asked them to do the same with the Byron Barton properties.

Two quotes were received in response to the RFP for the upcoming revaluation in 2027. One was from Vision Government Solutions, which is the software we are currently using. The other was from MRI, who is currently doing the Town's assessing. Owens told the Board that both offices went through a demo of Avatar software. It is more user friendly than what we use now and the tax collector, town clerk, building permit and assessing parts would all be on one software. It is server based now but they are looking to make it cloud based in about two years. Owens said it has a lot of functions that we don't currently have. Selectman Walla asked if there is any public interface to it besides just looking at properties. Owens said yes, they integrated paying bills. She explained how our current software works which includes a lot of individual journal entry in several different software systems and then reconciling everything, which takes a lot of time. Selectman Walla asked Owens when we need to make the switch to new software. Owens said that it's best to do it when we have the revaluation and there will be a cost savings. So, the timeline would be end of 2026 or beginning of 2027, however, we need to make a decision about the RFP and if we change software, Vision will probably withdraw their quote. Owens explained that we don't have firm numbers yet, but between the budget and the RFP, we should have enough to cover switching software and the revaluation. Selectman Garland suggested getting a spreadsheet before the meeting on January 14, with Plan A and Plan B and how much Avatar may cost, time savings for staff, and chance of error with the process we have now with so much data entry. Selectman Walla asked Owens to show them the spreadsheet she has for the different systems too.

Owens provided the Board with the cost of what the town currently charges haulers who use the Transfer Station. She recently informed the haulers up front that the cost is going to go up so they are not surprised. She suggested switching from calendar year to fiscal year. She reviewed the current prices and suggested charging $500.00 to a commercial refuse hauler and $150.00 for each additional. Selectman Walla asked Owens if she knew what other towns charge. Owens said a lot of towns are not accepting commercial refuse haulers. She explained that the smaller towns don't accept them and the larger towns have a scale, so they are setting a different rate, and they set enough so that they make money. Owens said her goal is not to make money, but to break even. Fire Chief Hastings commented that the haulers are making money because Casella is charging the town to dispose of the trash. Owens explained that if a hauler from Grantham brings the trash directly to Casella, the town gets billed for it. Selectman Walla added that there is a minimum charge, so if it's not a full load, we pay full price. Owens stated that, effective January 1, there is going to be a surcharge of $3.50 on every ton of trash, however, you can request a reimbursement every quarter. Selectman Walla said he likes the idea of changing this process and finding a way to address when a hauler goes directly to Casella because we don't have a way to deal with that now. Owens commented that our commercial hauler rates have not increased in years. We have one commercial hauler now and she informed him that the rates would go up and that she would give plenty of notice. She suggested the new rates take effect in 2027. She also thought that we should use yellow stickers to indicate general businesses, hauling contractors, and commercial refuse haulers.

A motion to authorize Town Administrator, Emily Owens, to make the changes to the three business related haulers Transfer Station sticker subcategories not to exceed $500.00 was made by Selectman Walla; seconded by Selectman Garland. ***Unanimously approved.***

Owens said they need to pick a date for the budget hearing, and she liked Selectman Walla's idea of having it later in the evening in hopes that more people will attend. She asked Chair Kimball and Selectman Garland how they felt about that. Chair Kimbal thought it was worth a try. Selectman Walla suggested having the regular Selectmen's meeting first followed by the Budget Hearing. After discussion, the Budget Hearing will be held on Wednesday, January 28, 2026 at 6:00 PM in Town Hall. Tod Lloyd asked if there is a way to get it out in the Eastman News. Owens said she will contact Lorie McClory.

A thank you to the Fire Department was received from Dave and Deb for their rapid response to a propane smell in their home. They gave a $100.00 donation to the Fire Department. A motion to accept the gift of $100.00 on behalf of the Fire Department as unanticipated revenue was made by Selectman Garland; seconded by Selectman Walla. ***Unanimously approved.***

The Board signed two rebates that were previously approved. They also signed the DRA Sales Ratio Study. The assessors determined, based on real values, that Grantham is at 73%.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

APPROVED

NON-PUBLIC

Session 1: In accordance with RSA 91-A:3 section II-c, a motion was made by Selectman Walla and seconded by Selectman Garland to enter into a Non-Public session at 6:00 PM. Present: Chair Warren Kimball; Selectman Peter Garland; Selectman Jeremy Walla; Chief John Parsons; and Town Administrator Emily Owens

Roll Call vote to enter non-public session: Chair Warren Kimball - Yes; Selectman Peter Garland - Yes; Selectman Jeremy Walla – Yes

A motion was made by Selectman Walla to leave the Non-Public session and return to Public Session at 6:14 PM, seconded by Selectman Garland**.** ***Unanimously approved.***

A motion was made by Selectman Walla and seconded by Selectman Garland to seal this Non-Public session because it was determined that divulgence of this information likely would adversely affect the reputation of any person other than a member of this board**.** ***Unanimously approved.***

Session 2: In accordance with RSA 91-A:3 section II-c, a motion was made by Selectman Walla and seconded by Selectman Garland to enter into a Non-Public session at 6:15 PM. Present: Chair Warren Kimball; Selectman Peter Garland; Selectman Jeremy Walla; and Town Administrator Emily Owens

Roll Call vote to enter non-public session: Chair Warren Kimball - Yes; Selectman Peter Garland - Yes; Selectman Jeremy Walla – Yes

A motion was made by Selectman Garland to leave the Non-Public session and return to Public Session at 6:32 PM, seconded by Selectman Walla**.** ***Unanimously approved.***

A motion was made by Selectman Walla and seconded by Selectman Garland to seal this Non-Public session because it was determined that divulgence of this information likely would adversely affect the reputation of any person other than a member of this board**.** ***Unanimously approved.***

Session 3: In accordance with RSA 91-A:3 section II-l, a motion was made by Selectman Walla and seconded by Selectman Garland to enter into a Non-Public session at 6:33 PM. Present: Chair Warren Kimball; Selectman Peter Garland; Selectman Jeremy Walla; and Town Administrator Emily Owens

Roll Call vote to enter non-public session: Chair Warren Kimball - Yes; Selectman Peter Garland - Yes; Selectman Jeremy Walla – Yes

A motion was made by Selectman Walla to leave the Non-Public session and return to Public Session at 7:04 PM, seconded by Selectman Garland**.** ***Unanimously approved.***

A motion was made by Selectman Garland and seconded by Selectman Walla to seal this Non-Public session because it was determined that divulgence of this information likely would adversely affect the reputation of any person other than a member of this board**.** ***Unanimously approved.***

APPROVED

Session 4: In accordance with RSA 91-A:3 section II-a, a motion was made by Selectman Walla and seconded by Selectman Garland to enter into a Non-Public session at 7:05 PM. Present: Chair Warren Kimball; Selectman Peter Garland; Selectman Jeremy Walla; and Town Administrator Emily Owens

Roll Call vote to enter non-public session: Chair Warren Kimball - Yes; Selectman Peter Garland - Yes; Selectman Jeremy Walla – Yes

A motion was made by Selectman Garland to leave the Non-Public session and return to Public Session at 7:23 PM, seconded by Selectman Walla**.** ***Unanimously approved.***

A motion was made by Selectman Walla and seconded by Selectman Garland to seal this Non-Public session because it was determined that divulgence of this information likely would adversely affect the reputation of any person other than a member of this board**.** ***Unanimously approved.***

Session 5: In accordance with RSA 91-A:3 section II-d, a motion was made by Selectman Garland and seconded by Selectman Walla to enter into a Non-Public session at 7:24 PM. Present: Chair Warren Kimball; Selectman Peter Garland; Selectman Jeremy Walla; and Town Administrator Emily Owens

Roll Call vote to enter non-public session: Chair Warren Kimball - Yes; Selectman Peter Garland - Yes; Selectman Jeremy Walla – Yes

A motion was made by Selectman Walla to leave the Non-Public session and return to Public Session at 8:18 PM, seconded by Selectman Garland**.** ***Unanimously approved.***

A motion was made by Selectman Garland and seconded by Selectman Walla to seal this Non-Public session because it was determined that divulgence of this information likely would adversely affect the reputation of any person other than a member of this board**.** ***Unanimously approved.***

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Selectman Garland moved to adjourn, seconded by Selectman Walla; by unanimous vote, the Board adjourned at 8:30 PM.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be held on **Monday, December 22, 2025, at 5:00 PM**.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Jasper
Administrative Assistant III