

**TOWN OF LUDLOW, VT**

**SELECT BOARD**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2025**

**6:00 P.M.**

**HEALD AUDITORIUM**

**Select Board Meeting – October 6, 2025 ZOOM LINK**

Meeting ID: 963 5236 4337

Passcode: 411479

One tap mobile

+13126266799,96352364337#,,,,\*411479# US (Chicago)

+16469313860,96352364337#,,,,\*411479# US

**Dial by your location**

<https://zoom.us/j/96352364337>

**SELECT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Brett Sanderson, Chair  
Scott Baitz

Justin Hyjek  
Noah Schmidt

George Tucker, Jr.

**STAFF:**

Brendan McNamara  
Jarrod Jowdy

Lisha Klaiber  
Erin Ladd

Chief Jeff Warfle  
Chief Whalen (Zoom)

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Eric Alden  
Joanna Bombadil  
Phil Carter

Faiq Hashmi  
Jason Rasmussen  
Bruce Schmidt

Cindy West  
Vincent West

**AGENDA**

1. Call to Order

- A. Brett Sanderson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. All members present. He led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Consideration of any Changes, Additions or Removals to the Agenda

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- A. Brendan McNamara said that no changes are needed

3. Approve Minutes of Previous Meetings

- A. August 4, 2025  
B. September 1, 2025 – meeting cancelled  
1. **MOTION by Justin Hyjek and seconded by Noah Schmidt to approve the minutes from August 4, 2025 and September 1, 2025 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.**

4. Comments from Citizens

- A. There were none

5. Department Head Reports

- A. August 2025  
1. Noah Schmidt thanked Chief Whalen for his kind words in his Report dated August 28, 2025.  
“Every day our emergency personnel are exposed to trauma. Not trauma like an injury from a car accident or fall, but the mental trauma of continuously living through someone’s worst moments. This could be a car accident, drowning, machinery accident, suicide, death. These incidents happen with infants, children, adults and the elderly. The trauma our personnel experience lives in them and will be embedded in their memories and imprinted with them. It will affect them at work, at home, and through their lives. The stigma in emergencies services has been that we are tough and not to show emotions. We as leaders and members of this team need to make sure everyone knows **its okay to not be okay**. As we move forward as a town we **shall** do better to help our first responders work through these traumas so they can continue living their lives while remaining compassionate civil servants who protect our community and those around us.”

6. Tree Warden – Phil Carter Update

- A. Phil Carter said that the Tree Committee is up and running and reports and information can be found on the Town website. They have been present at the Farmers’ Market and are starting to get information out to the public about the tree borer and other tree issues. They have set up a separate email address. They recently attended a class from the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program. They showed us mapping using GPS. Along with the committee members arborists and

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community members. He said that he tested the system on a tree at Dorset Park and it worked. He said that the Emerald Ash Borer has been seen in Ludlow in the Forest and by Buttermilk Falls. He said that there are companies that do inoculate trees. In the spring, they will start marking trees and he will go door to door to the houses where there are affected trees and pass out lists of the companies that work on it. He said once it starts to spread, it goes quickly. He said that they will need to have a budget for Ash Tree mitigation. Maybe \$100,000. They will look at the trees that are of the most danger to the general public. The infected trees will die. He estimates the cost to remove a tree to be about \$2,400. He said that the Highway department may be able to take down some of the trees. If a tree is leaning into the woods, they will not take it down. If a branch is leaning over the road, they will remove the branch. If an infected tree is not on the town ROW, it is the property owners' responsibility.

- B. Brendan McNamara said this is an evolving process.
- C. Scott Baitz asked about the price for treated trees.
- D. Phil Carter said about \$10 - \$15 per inch of diameter and trees should be inoculated once every 2 years.
- E. Scott Baitz asked where Phil Carter came up with the \$100,000?
- F. Phil Carter said he just threw it out there. He said that there are some trees out there that are dangerous and will have to come down.
- G. Noah Schmidt asked about using the wood for lumber
- H. Phil Carter said if it is a big sale and the wood is not infected, it could sell
- I. Noah Schmidt asked if this would ever be something that won't cost the town money?
- J. Phil Carter said if there were volume in one big sale, maybe, but if the trees are scattered, it would not be efficient for the logger. If the trees are infected, the property owner may want the tree off their property. The infection spreads by movement - people moving firewood. We need to start somewhere.
- K. Scott Baitz said that \$100,000 would be 40 trees.
- L. Phil Carter said the more he drives around, the more he sees. He said that his #1 priority tree to remove is on West Hill.
- M. Noah Schmidt asked if there are any trees worth inoculating.
- N. Phil Carter said he has not seen any in the Village other than a couple at Dorsey Park. He said there is one on Buttermilk Falls Road that is not infected. He added that there are some large trees on Smith Street on the bank of the river and they are pulling the street down to the river. They need to be cut down to the stump, but leave the roots to help keep the bank intact. They should come down and we will need to get a crane in there to get them. They are huge oak trees and should be replaced with smaller, native trees. He said that looking to the future, there are grants. He said that an orchard has been mentioned for the Timber Inn property. The committee is working with Streetscapes, the Mill and Chamber for work in front of the Mill.
- O. Noah Schmidt asked if they have a realistic budget
- P. Phil Carter said he will put together some numbers and get them to Brendan McNamara. He said the good news is that there are some that are disease resistant.
- Q. Justin Hyjek said that Cherry Nicoll is pursuing grants. He asked if money were to be added to the budget, where would they put it.
- R. Brendan McNamara said into the Highway budget

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7. Municipal Public Safety Building Outlook

- A. Brendan McNamara said that they have been talking about relocating the Public Safety building – Fire/Police and Ambulance into a more state of the art building. He said that the Police and Ambulance are located on West Hill and have outgrown the building. He said the location of the Fire Department needs upgrades, but also sits on the bank and has had flood issues. They need a new Public Safety Building. Question is – where would it be located. He recommends putting together a public safety steering committee consisting of the police and fire chiefs, the municipal manager, 2 or 3 Select Board members, 2 members of the public. He said that John Neal and Mike O’Neil have volunteered to be the members of the public. IF the Select Board is willing to, he suggests starting with the committee. This is a 3-to-5-year outlook.
- B. Scott Baitz, Brett Sanderson and George Tucker, Jr. volunteered to be members of the committee.
- C. Brendan McNamara said he will set up the first meeting as soon as possible.

8. Select Board to Review and Possibly Approve Appropriations – FY27 Budget

- ARC – Rutland Area - Request - \$800.
- Black River Academy Museum Request - \$25,000
- Black River Area Community Coalition Request - \$10,000
- Black River Good Neighbor Services Request - \$4,000
- Black River Valley Senior Center Request - Senior Center - \$25,000 (minus fuel oil). And Request – Meals on Wheels - \$15,000
- Fletcher Memorial Library - Request - \$35,000
- FOLA - Request - \$2,000
- RSVP - Request - \$500
- ARC – Rutland Area Request - \$800.
- HCRS - Request - \$2,537
- Green UP Vermont -Request - \$50
- Streetscapes Request - \$2,000
- Okemo Valley Tech Rescue - Request - \$2,500
- Okemo Valley TV - Request - \$4,000
- Senior Solutions Request - \$1,100
- SEVCA - Request - \$2,440
- Ludlow After-School Program - Request - \$10,000
- Vermont Center for Independent Living - Request - \$360
- Dartmouth Health – Visiting Nurse - Request - \$18,600
- Windsor County Mentors - Request - \$500
- Women’s Freedom Center - Request - \$800
- Prevent Child Abuse – Request \$1,000

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- A. Brendan McNamara said that the Select Board would be voting not on approval of the request, but on approving the requests for consideration at town meeting.
  - B. **MOTION by Noah Schmidt and seconded by Justin Hyjek to approve for consideration the above appropriation requests. Motion passed unanimously.**

9. Select Board to Discuss and Possibly Set FY27 Budget Workshop Dates

- A. Brendan McNamara said that all of the Department heads' budgets have been submitted. He suggests starting the first round of budget workshops either the week of October 20<sup>th</sup> or October 27<sup>th</sup>.
- B. Board decided by consensus to have the 1<sup>st</sup> budget workshop on Monday, October 20, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.
- C. Brett Sanderson said the board may also be able to work on the budget at the first meeting in November.
- D. Brendan McNamara said he will provide Master budget drafts to board members.

10. Consideration of Approval of Elevation Project Funding for 62 Red Bridge Road

- A. Brendan McNamara said that the board has approved one other elevation on Meadow Street. The town received \$500,000 from FEMA and allocated \$250,000 to this property. This second property has finally made it to the final stages. He recommends that board allocate the remaining \$250,000.
- B. **MOTION by Justin Hyjek and seconded by Scott Baitz to allocate \$250,000 to 62 Red Bridge Road Elevation funding. Motion passed unanimously.**

11. Select Board to Review and Discuss Housing Study by MARC – Tier 1B Exemptions

- A. Brendan McNamara introduced Erin Ladd, Ludlow's new Director of Planning and Zoning.
- B. Erin Ladd said that with funds from a Municipal Planning Grant, they did a Housing Study for the town. It was presented to the Planning Commission in August. Erin Ladd said that Mount Ascutney Regional Planning Commission (MARC) did a housing study for Ludlow and she will go over the key points relevant to today's housing market. She noted that 68% of Ludlow housing is seasonal/vacation. The State number is 15% and Windsor County is 22%, She added that 43% of renters and 36% of owners are housing cost burdened. She went on to Core Challenges
  - 1. Affordability gap for year-round workers
  - 2. Vacant neighborhoods in the off-season
  - 3. Essential services (schools, EMS, healthcare) face staffing instability
  - 4. Residents are priced out by competition from second homes and STRs

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Erin Ladd said that the State has passed the CHIP program. (CHIP could bring up to \$2 billion in public investment that supports housing over the next decade. Towns would be allowed to borrow money to build public infrastructure and pay the debt down over a twenty-year period from future tax money raised from the new homes and businesses built by CHIP.) Other towns have done a land inventory of town owned land and feasibility studies for the use of those lands. Chester, West Windsor, and Springfield have formed housing commissions.

- C. Justin Hyjek asked didn't the State restructure zoning
- D. Erin Ladd said yes, for year-round housing
- E. Justin Hyjek asked about parking in the Village
- F. Erin Ladd said that Logan Nicoll is working on that. She said if the property is on water/sewer, 1 – 1 ½ parking space per unit.
- G. Justin Hyjek read the following from the report and asked where they got that conclusion from: “The rise of short-term vacation rentals (STRs) – fueled by platforms like AirBnB and VRBO – has sharply reduced the availability of long-term rental units. Many units that once housed year-round tenants have been converted to high-yield, short-stay rentals. As a result, essential workers, - especially in hospitality, education and healthcare – struggle to find stable housing within town limits.”
- H. Erin Ladd said it was pretty evident.
- I. Jason Rasmussen said that parking has to meet state requirements. He asked if Shaw's uses all of its parking at all times. He went on to Act 181 and explaining that Act 181, passed in 2024 reforms the state's land use planning and regulatory framework to create a tiered, location-based jurisdiction for Act 250, support designated growth centers, and shift local zoning to allow more housing. In Vermont, there is no official approval rate for Tier 1B projects because they are generally exempt from the Act 250 land use review process. The tier system, established by Act 181 in 2024, was specifically designed to speed up housing development in village centers and other designated growth areas by removing the need for a permit for certain projects.
  - What the Tier 1B exemption covers
    - **Automatic exemption:** A project with 50 or fewer housing units in a designated Tier 1B village center is exempt from Act 250 review until at least July 1, 2027.
    - **Location criteria:** The Tier 1B areas include village centers and surrounding areas within a quarter-mile radius. They must be consistent with the Future Land Use maps adopted by Regional Planning Commissions and the new Land Use Review Board.
    - **Infrastructure requirements:** To qualify for the exemption, the development must have access to public water and sewer services or have adequate soils for wastewater disposal.
- He said that Ludlow may have to shift some boundaries of the Village Center to form a Planned Growth Area around it. He said that Regional Planning Commission is updating its plan and hopes to have the application into the State for review by February. He said they are updating the maps and showed links to the maps.
- J. Justin Hyjek said that Tier 1B is for 50 units or less on 10 acres or less.
- K. George Tucker, Jr. said a PUD is currently 10 acres or more, but the state changed it of 10 acres or less.

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- L. Jason Rasmussen said there may be a few lots less than 10 acres. He said that with Tier 1B, it will make it easier for developers to get their projects done.
  - M. George Tucker, Jr. asked if it might include some flood areas.
  - N. Noah Schmidt asked what if they built 20 luxury homes for 2nd home owners
  - O. Erin Ladd said this is for year-round mixed income housing.
  - P. George Tucker, Jr. said it would have to go to the DRB
  - Q. Jason Rasmussen said that Tier 1A offers full ACT250 exemption. The problem is zoning, building forms and capacity. It is complicated. He said that Tier 1B is a better option for Ludlow. He said the rest of the towns are Tier 2 and Tier 3 is being worked on. He asked the board if Tier 1B sounds right for Ludlow?
  - R. George Tucker, Jr. said yes.
  - S. Noah Schmidt asked if there is any reason why not?
  - T. Jason Rasmussen said no. He recommended going for Tier 1B.
  - U. Scott Baitz said that would be a good start.
  - V. Eric Alden encouraged the town to start this process and to think about what is needed - housing or parking. Do you want housing or parking. He said that one of the main hindrances to housing in Ludlow is the parking requirements. He said that density is also a problem. He said that at the Planning Commission meetings, character of the town is mentioned. Too much density will ruin the character of the town. As you fight to keep the character, you are losing population. You need density in the Village and areas around the Village. You can control housing.

12. Review and Discuss Stearns Pit Lease with Okemo

- A. Brendan McNamara said that board members have copies of the MOU between Ludlow and Okemo for the 2025 ski season, December 1, 2025 through March 31, 2026. It includes a 3% increase over last year, for a total of \$88,920.42.
- B. Noah Schmidt asked if Ron Tarbell has an idea of the cost for plowing?
- C. Brendan McNamara said he may have a ball park estimate.
- D. Scott Baitz asked if Okemo has plans to charge for parking in that lot?
- E. Bruce Schmidt said they do not charge for parking except for by the Spring House. They have no plans for paid parking at this point.
- F. Justin Hyjek asked about set-up and year down and if December 1st is good.
- G. Bruce Schmidt said we do some set up. We need to be responsible if it snows and we need to get rid of it. We are willing to start on December 1st if there is an early snow.
- H. Noah Schmidt said the town has the right to move gravel and sand.
- I. Bruce Schmidt said it is important to Okemo to be informed about possible other uses for that land. They have heard the conversations about the Public Services' Building. Okemo is asking for time to get ready. Okemo appreciates the relationship we have with the Town. We plow and maintain the road up.
- J. Scott Baitz said it is a significant amount of money for the town.
- K. Justin Hyjek asked if Okemo is happy without mile markers and the dates

- L. Bruce Schmidt said that Okemo pays for traffic control at the bottom of the Access Road and by Depot Street. He said that Vail is happy with the agreement and the relationship it has with the town. Vail tries to be a good neighbor.
- M. **MOTION by Justin Hyjek and seconded by Scott Baitz to approve the MOU between the Town of Ludlow and Okemo. Motion passed unanimously.**

13. Review and Possibly Approve Liquor/Tobacco Licenses

- A. 119 Main Street – CAJT Restaurant LLC – Outside Consumption
  - 1. Brendan McNamara said this is a change of ownership and he recommends approval of licenses.
  - 2. **MOTION by Justin Hyjek and seconded by Scott Baitz to approve the liquor license for 119 Main Street. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. 143 Main Street – VT Mart LLC – 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Liquor/Tobacco License
  - 1. Faiq Hashmi said he is the owner of the property and knows that it does not resonate with the character of the town. The glass and doors have been damaged. Work has started on the repairs and should be complete by the end of the week. He said they need approval of their licenses before they can open.
  - 2. Brendan McNamara said that they have received all of the outstanding balances. He recommends approval of the licenses contingent upon inspection of the premises by himself and Chief Warfle.
  - 3. Faiq Hashmi said he will text Brendan McNamara as soon as the work is done.
  - 4. **MOTION by Justin Hyjek and seconded by Scott Baitz to approve the licenses for 143 Main, contingent upon inspection of the premises by the Municipal Manager and Chief of Police. Motion passed unanimously.**
  - 5. Eric Alden said there is a bigger issue with 143 Main - the number of management changes over the last 10 years. The owner of the property is the issue. The owner was asked to donate to the town, remove broken glass and trash and did not respond. The building has a negligent, absentee owner who doesn't care.

14. Municipal Manager Updates

- A. Action Regarding Municipal Manager's Letter of Resignation
  - 1. Brendan McNamara thanked the boards and town for their help and support. This is effective December 5, 2025.
  - 2. Board thanked Brendan McNamara for his service to the town
- B. Paving
  - 1. East Hill Road is almost complete including the train crossing
  - 2. Main Street has a few punch list items, curbs cleans
- C. Dams

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1. They were drilling at Site #3 today. For Sites 1 and 2, the engineering is about 70% complete. We are in a dark spot with USDA funding shutdown.
  - D. Winter - sand is ready to go. They have finished mowing the dams and had issues with the trackless. They are working toward the merger of the town and village. When that happens, there will be a Board of Water/Waste-water Commissioners.
  - E. Wastewater Plant
    1. We are gaining speed toward relocation of the plant. We have been talking with the Vermont Recovery Office as well as engineers. There is a chance to relocate behind Jeld-Wen. It will take tremendous effort on behalf of staff and town. \$12,000,000. Last Friday there was a meeting with Springfield Development Corp as well as the Chamber. We have a grant for \$15,000 for a professional grant writer who does federal grants. We need to contact our state and federal representatives. We have plans and land. This would be a "Poster Child" for flood recovery. He will keep the board updated.
    2. Noah Schmidt asked if relocated, could the plant be expanded if needed.
    3. Brendan McNamara said it would be part of the Economic Development and have the capacity to expand and will be more efficient. Could be level 4 operations.

15. Other Business

- A. Noah Schmidt asked about Upper Crossroad.
- B. Brendan McNamara said they will be back on October 12th.
- C. Justin Hyjek asked about the High School building. Should they form a committee to address use of the building.
- D. Brendan McNamara said we signed a 3-year lease with them last year.
- E. Justin Hyjek said that initially, there was a 5-year plan.
- F. Bruce Schmidt said he encourages the board to work with the Tree Committee. He agreed that they need to form a committee for use of the high school. He said the board should look at stipends for appointed board commissions. He suggested that the DRB may need to expand to 2 meetings per month. He also suggested looking into electric car charging stations. He added that they should also look into the town computer system and ask: does it fit town needs, is it the right equipment, can it be hacked. He also asked how AI will fit into the town and is a policy for it needed. He added that the sidewalks look great.

16. Possible Items for Next Meeting: November 3, 2025

- A. Brendan McNamara said possible budget

17. Sign Warrant Orders

- B. Brendan McNamara said they have been signed

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18. Possible Executive Session/Personnel/Contracts/Legal Issues

- A. Brendan McNamara said an Executive Session for personnel is needed.
- B. **MOTION by Justin Hyjek and seconded by Scott Baitz to enter into Executive Session for personnel. Motion passed unanimously.**
- C. The Board entered into Executive Session at 7:24 p.m.
- D. **MOTION by Justin Hyjek and seconded by Noah Schmidt to exit Executive Session. Motion passed unanimously.**
- E. No action taken
- F. Board exited Executive Session at 8:54 p.m.

19. Adjourn

- A. **MOTION by Justin Hyjek and seconded by Noah Schmidt to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Lisha Klaiber

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Brett Sanderson, Chairman

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Noah Schmidt

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Scott Baitz

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George Tucker, Jr.

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Justin Hyjek