

TOWN OF LUDLOW, VT

SELECT BOARD

SPECIAL MEETING

MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2025

6:00 P.M.

HOWARD BARTON CONFERENCE ROOM

[Select Board Special Meeting –ZOOM LINK](#)

Meeting ID: 437 305 4865

Passcode: 041703

SELECT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Brett Sanderson, Chair

Justin Hyjek

George Tucker, Jr.

Scott Baitz

Noah Schmidt

STAFF:

Brendan McNamara

Lisha Klaiber

Erin Ladd

Ulla Cook

Diane Knight

Penny Wu

Chief Warfle

Chief Whalen

Ryan Silvestri

OTHERS PRESENT:

Eric Alden

Steve Meyers

AGENDA

I. Call to Order

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

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

1. Brett Sanderson said that the board would enter into Executive Session after Item #4. Minutes are recorded in order of Agenda Item numbers.

III. Select Board to Review & Approve Minutes - December 1, 2025

1. **MOTION by Scott Baitz and seconded by George Tucker, Jr. to accept the minutes from December 1, 2025 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.**

IV. Possible Approval of Requests/Licenses/Permits

1. Big Pop' Sandwich Shop
 - a) Penny Wu said this is for a 1st Class liquor license and has been approved by Chief Warfle
2. The Hub, LLC
 - a) Penny Wu said this is for 1st and 3rd class liquor licenses and has been approved by Chief Warfle
3. **MOTION by Scott Baitz and seconded by Noah Schmidt to approve Liquor Licenses for Big Pop's and The Hub as presented. Motion passed unanimously.**

V. Review, Adjust & Possibly Approve FY2027 Town Budget

1. Penny Wu said that this is an accurate budget for the Town for FY2027. There have been changes from the budget seen at the board's last meeting. This budget has changes in payroll and new equipment. She has met with all department heads and this is an accurate representation of operations
2. Justin Hyjek said that he would like the budget sent out to all. It is important for people to know the actual numbers
3. Noah Schmidt said that in the future, he would like to an additional column showing what the numbers were on the previous meeting's draft.
4. Justin Hyjek noted that the FY2025 Budget actual expenditures was \$9.3 million, while the budget was \$6.8 million
5. Noah Schmidt said that the FY2026 budget is \$7.2 million and asked what the actual is and are we close.
6. Diane Knight said that we will be over for the actual FY2026 due to changes that affect this year and next year in Payroll.
7. Justin Hyjek said that the budget for the amount to be raised in taxes for FY 2026 is \$4.9 million and are we close. He asked about the Ambulance Revenue actual for FY2025.
8. Chief Whalen said that they have raised the fee schedule to be more in line with the average based on Comstar Billing.
9. George Tucker, Jr. asked if this would include Critical Care
10. Chief Whalen said no. If we do the Critical Care, it will drive the revenue in the future
11. Noah Schmidt asked if we send bills in for collection
12. Chief Whalen said the past practice was to wait 4 years and that seems too far out. With Comstar, we only get a percentage of the amounts. He said that private insurance companies usually pay what is billed.
13. Steve Meyers asked the percentage of Okemo and Town calls
14. Chief Whalen said he would be able to figure it out. He said that so far this ski season, we have only had 2 or 3 calls to Okemo

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15. Justin Hyjek asked about the 16% increase in Planning Assistant payroll and if this is salaried or hourly
 16. Erin Ladd said hourly. She said they eliminated the part time position and the increase is to compensate for overtime attendance at meetings when she is not available.
 17. Justin Hyjek said the FY2026 Zoning Fees budget revenue is \$40,000 and asked if we are on track
 18. Erin Ladd said about that amount
 19. Justin Hyjek asked if she expects that to grow
 20. Erin Ladd said everything is on-track based on the numbers
 21. George Tucker, Jr. said that we have also discussed fee increases
 22. Erin Ladd said eventually, we hope that Planning will be self-sustaining, but that will require outreach
 23. George Tucker, Jr. noted that Act250 fees are much higher and we are underpriced.
 24. Penny Wu said that at a previous meeting, this board asked Brendan McNamara to look at adjusting fees across the board throughout the town. We did start meeting with the Department heads and will do outreach.
 25. Noah Schmidt said we should reach out to the department heads to look at their budget actuals and figure out how far off we are. We want them to be more realistic.
 26. Penny Wu said that this may take a year or 2. We are tracking the budget and will spend time at staff meetings, line by line, determining if the actual numbers are over and why.
 27. Justin Hyjek asked Chief Warfle about the Miscellaneous New Vehicle Cameras/Rifles line
 28. Chief Warfle said he it by half for this year and will try to raise funds for them
 29. Penny Wu said we can't have officers share rifles. Some people are right-handed, some left-handed and some are taller than others
 30. Chief Warfle said that rifles are more accurate when they are fitted to the person it belongs to.
 31. Chief Whalen noted that in 2025, there were 73 calls to Okemo, 8% of the total calls.
 32. Noah Schmidt commented that those are the people who pay.
 33. Justin Hyjek said he is not prepared to approve the budget as presented.
 34. George Tucker, Jr. asked about Reappraisal and Grant Match funds in Voted Articles
 35. Penny Wu said we are competitive in grants and there is usually a cash match. We must prove that we have the cash on our books for the matches.
 36. Justin Hyjek said he wants to make sure that the departments are equitable with access to grants
 37. Noah Schmidt asked if the Select Board approves grant applications
 38. Brett Sanderson said if there is a match required.
 39. Noah Schmidt asked if we are running a risk if the article is not approved
 40. Ryan Silvestri said that currently, the Legislature requires towns do full reappraisals every 6 years, but they have not increased the per parcel funds to the towns since 2005, it is currently only \$8.50 per parcel. The Legislature is talking about combining towns into County-wide governments. Funding will be discussed at the legislative session. Ludlow is doing a statistical reappraisal this year, so will be doing a full, town-wide reappraisal in 2032. We are putting funds away for the cost of the reappraisal. The State may take over the reappraisal process, but there will be flak from the municipalities.
 41. Justin Hyjek asked if those funds should go into Capital
 42. Ryan Silvestri asked what if towns decide on 8 years. There are a lot of unknowns. The CLA can't be adjusted because it is based on the value of the properties sold. Every parcel will change with the reappraisal. The State can, but never has withheld reappraisal funds. He said that some towns have not done a reappraisal in 20 – 30 years. They have no zoning, and there are no clear titles. The State is trying to group communities together for reappraisals. This session, the State will be forced to make some decisions.

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43. Diane Knight said that if this were put into voted Reappraisal Fund, it can be carried over year to year, if not used. If it is just an article, and not used, you could lose it.
 44. Eric Alden said that this town should be doing a Capital Needs Assessment and asked if they are doing any real long-range planning
 45. Brett Sanderson said it has been discussed, but they have no hard plans.
 46. Justin Hyjek said with the new Town Manager and grant coordinator, things are looking better
 47. Eric Alden said you don't have years.
 48. Justin Hyjek said that Mr. Alden's comments have been duly noted and there are steps being taken.
 49. Noah Schmidt said this is a significant increase and asked how close we are to other ski towns' tax rates. We have tried to be thrifty and now are trying to be more realistic. Are we coming closer to where we should be
 50. Penny Wu said the first step is that we have sat down with the Department Heads and asked how accurate is their budget. She said that, operationally, we need to do things differently. She said that her goal is to have an accurate picture of the town's operating costs. Next, once the Select Board approves this budget, we will start to work on the Trustees' budget and look at the expenditures for 2026.
 51. Noah Schmidt asked where have we not thought out of the box. He noted that Planning is looking at software for permits. He said there will be savings with the merger of the Town and Village.
 52. Penny Wu said we will also look at the buildings we manage and the costs. We need time to review all of the expenditures and revenues.
 53. George Tucker, Jr. asked when this must go to the printer
 54. Diane Knight said it should be in the office by the 3rd week in December, giving them to compile all of the information. It must go to the printer by the beginning of January.
 55. George Tucker, Jr. said that gives us 9 days.
 56. Ryan Silvestri said we need to take advantage of town revenue streams and make sure the budget is clean. We have opportunities for strong revenue streams. We could be a "hub" community. He said we are in-between towns that do not have a fire chief, or EMS. We could be a regional hub. He said that Cavendish, Mount Holly and Weston do not have ambulance or police. They are also struggling. We have those services.
 57. Chief Warfle said we get what we pay for.
 58. Noah Schmidt said referred to the Okemo Local Act 250 question response, noting that their project does not bring new people into the community. He said that the School budget e needs to cut \$700,000. How do we bring money to the Grand List and Town. It is good to have a realistic budget
 59. Justin Hyjek said the Select Board will probably stand behind this budget.

VI. Municipal Manager Updates

1. Penny Wu said that John Murphy provided copies of the local snowmobile trails. She said that signs have gone up on the trails, noting private property. She has been meeting with him
2. Penny Wu said that Phil Carter has provided budget information for the Ash Tree removal and has an application that the State provided for inventory process for removal of dying or dead trees and approximate costs. She said the budget does not reflect this.
3. George Tucker, Jr. said we did put some money in Voted Articles

VII. Other Business

1. Eric Alden noted that the agenda for this meeting did not include Citizen Comments and it should be at the beginning of each meeting

VIII. Possible Items for Next Meeting

1. Next meeting Monday, December 22, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.
2. Justin Hyjek said this will just be for the budget
3. Erin Ladd asked if Department Heads should be there
4. Justin Hyjek said he doesn't have any more questions for Planning.
5. Noah Schmidt said that if we are making big changes, they should be there
6. Scott Baitz said they should be at every meeting
7. Justin Hyjek noted that there are no itemized OT numbers for the Transfer station
8. Penny Wu said she has asked to have it tracked

IX. Sign Warrant Orders

1. Warrant orders have been signed

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

1. Brett Sanderson said that an Executive Session is needed for Personnel/Contracts Issues
2. **Motion by George Tucker, Jr. and seconded by Noah Schmidt to enter into Executive Session for Personnel/Contracts Issues. Motion passed unanimously**
3. Board entered into Executive Session at 6:02 pm
4. **Motion by Justin Hyjek and seconded by George Tucker, Jr. to exit Executive Session. Motion passed unanimously.**
5. Board exited Executive Session at 6:30 p.m. No action taken

XI. Adjourn

1. **MOTION by Justin Hyjek and seconded by George Tucker Jr. to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.**
2. Meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Lisha Klaiber

Brett Sanderson, Chairman

Noah Schmidt

Scott Baitz

George Tucker, Jr.

Justin Hyjek