

TOWN OF LUDLOW, VT

SELECT BOARD

SPECIAL MEETING

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 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

Chief Jeff Warfle

Diane Knight

Erin Ladd

Chief Whalen (Zoom)

Patty Potter

Ron Tarbell

Ryan Silevestri

Mary Mancino

OTHERS PRESENT:

Eric Alden

AGENDA

I. Call to Order

- A. Brett Sanderson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. All members present.

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

- A. Brendan McNamara said that no changes are needed

III. Review Proposal for 5K Jingle Jog

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- A. Brendan McNamara advised that the elementary school has requested to sponsor a 5K Jingle Jog run for the benefit of the Dana Farber Cancer Center. They would like to hold this event on December 6, 2025, starting at the Community Center at 9:00 a.m. They will do the same loop as the Fire Department 5K.
 - B. **MOTION by George Tucker Jr. and seconded by Scott Baitz to approve the request from the elementary school for the 5K Jingle Jog on December 6, 2025. Motion passed unanimously.**

IV. Consider Town and Village Plan of Merger Document

- A. Brendan McNamara advised that the document is the same on that they have reviewed, but because of the delay in scheduling, they need to restart the process.
- B. **MOTION by George Tucker Jr. and seconded by Scott Baitz to approve the previous Town and Village Plan of Merger document as presented. Motion passed unanimously.**

V. FY2027 Budget

- A. Brendan McNamara said this is the first budget meeting and board members have the first draft. It will give board members an idea of the projections that were forwarded from the Department heads to Brendan McNamara and he is giving them to the board members. He said that the last page of the draft is a new section - Federal and State Grants. The numbers need to be tracked. This budget is a 21.3% increase over last year. There are some ways to cut the budget and the Local Options tax will help fund some of the items. He noted that Chief Warfle and Whalen had been called from the meeting for an accident.
- B. SOLID WASTE
 1. Brendan McNamara said that the trend is the increase in wages and insurance. We do try to keep wages in check and supplies.
 2. Patti Potter said that this is the 4th month that we have been renting a dumpster. A new one would run about \$10,000 and the rental fee is \$140 per month. We only have one dumpster that is under 20 years old. We have the money in Bottles and Cans to buy a 30-yard dumpster. We have a new recycling vendor and they charge \$100 per haul.
 3. Justin Hyjek noted that the insurance budget is \$47,000 while the actual is \$64,000.
 4. Brendan McNamara said he thinks it will be more toward the \$64,000
 5. Justin Hyjek asked about Attendants - noting that actual 2025 was \$151,000 and the budget is \$110,000
 6. Patti Potter said she has 3 full time and 1 part time staff. She said they make under \$20.00 per hour and we need to bring them up. She added that one will be out for 6 weeks, starting in December.
 7. George Tucker Jr. asked if \$110,000 will be enough.
 8. Justin Hyjek asked what is included in Labor
 9. Patti Potter said that number should be merged into Attendants.
 10. Justin Hyjek asked about the logo bags. He noted that the cost of the bags is budgeted at \$30,000, while the revenue is only \$6,000. He said that other towns do things differently.
 11. Patti Potter said we take large items from people who don't have permits

12. Brett Sanderson suggested charging different rates
13. George Tucker Jr. said it is costing us to use the bags.
14. Patti Potter said she charges \$15 for mattresses, and Springfield charges \$20.00
15. Brendan McNamara said that Casella charges \$40 per mattress
16. Justin Hyjek suggested that we start looking into different ways to fund this. Possibly in taxes.
17. Patti Potter said that we are charging \$25 and \$10 for permits
18. Diane Knight advised that the funds for bags, shown in the revenue line is for people who just come in and buy bags only. The permit sales include 2 rolls of bags.
19. Patti Potter said that some people come in and buy bags for commercial haulers. We don't make any money on zero sort.
20. Noah Schmidt asked if there is an easier way to sell permits
21. Patti Potter said that there is something going on at the Mountain, we are now getting stoves and didn't in the past.
22. Justin Hyjek said that the town website was recently updated. Possibly, people could apply for permits online - that may help.
23. Brett Sanderson said if people don't have a permit, there should be different rates.

C. HIGHWAY

1. Brendan McNamara said it is pretty much self-explanatory. Again, the push is salaries and insurance. We included \$10,000 for retreatment. He said the actual for vehicle maintenance was also higher last year - that is a "guessing game."
2. Brett Sanderson said the Highway is a bigger thing and we rely on it. It has the lowest percentage of increase. He asked how that is so low and others are not.
3. Brendan McNamara said that Salt/Sand increased this year, but the budget line is higher than the actual. He said they are trying to keep the numbers relative. He said that Vehicle Repairs increase to \$61,000.
4. George Tucker Jr. asked why Retreatment was so high - almost \$439,000.
5. Brendan McNamara said that was part of the Class 2 pavement grant.
6. Noah Schmidt asked why insurance is down 14%
7. Brendan McNamara said that people changed plans.
8. Justin Hyjek asked about making one line for all cellphones on the budget/
9. Brendan McNamara said that we have telephone in the shops, then cellphone and pagers
10. Justin Hyjek asked if we have an inventory of all of them
11. Brendan McNamara said no, but he can get one.
12. Noah Schmidt suggested that maybe we should look into consolidating them all.
13. Justin Hyjek said that in 2021 the actual was \$1,000 and it jumped to \$5,000 in 2023. This budget is \$5,600
14. Justin Hyjek asked about Crushing Gravel.
15. Ron Tarbell explained that we crush the concrete to gravel every 3 years. We use it on the back roads. It should have happened this year, but didn't.
16. Brendan McNamara said that Insurance is down because we lost one employee who was on a family plan.
17. George Tucker Jr. asked about salaries and if they are on par. We just hired someone. What is the best guess?
18. Ron Tarbell said the numbers are his best guess. He is comfortable with them.
19. Justin Hyjek asked about Overtime and asked if Ron Tarbell watches it.
20. Ron Tarbell said that he does watch it, but it is what it is
21. Brendan McNamara said that 2 years ago, there was a lot of rain and freezing all winter.
22. George Tucker, Jr. said we normally do well with salt and sand.

23. Ron Tarbell said the numbers should be ok.
24. George Tucker Jr. asked about the Ash Tree moneys that we discussed putting under Highway budget.
25. Brendan McNamara said we put in \$7,000 under Trees/Brush.
26. Ron Tarbell said that the overtime is dependent on storms.

D. PLANNING

1. Brendan McNamara said that all the reviews that he has heard say that Erin Ladd is doing a good job. He said that this budget is also driven by wages and insurance. He said that we are looking into possibly instituting new software and digitizing the Planning Office records. The software cost is about \$13,000. We have also discussed increasing Zoning fees.
2. George Tucker Jr. said that the cost for the Fire Marshall's permit is \$30,000 and our permit fee is \$300. He asked about the Part Time position
3. Brendan McNamara said the 2 are working well - leave it in as an option. He added that this is not his budget to sell to the tax payers and he hesitates to make the decisions. He wants to give the boards and department heads their say.
4. Noah Schmidt asked if filing for permits online would help
5. Erin Ladd said it will streamline the process. All information would be accessible online, in one place. This would be instead of making multiple copies. That now takes 20% of her time.
6. Noah Schmidt asked about legal fees.
7. Erin Ladd said we may be able to lessen them. She said that she took the 2025 numbers and added a 3% to 5% increase. She said that we will be fully staffed all year and may be able to cut legal fees, using Chris Callahan less.
8. Justin Hyjek asked about the increase in advertising
9. Erin Ladd said that Jarrod Jowdy handles that. She will ask him
10. George Tucker Jr. said that we are legally required to advertise hearings and meetings. He said that more warnings are now needed.
11. Brendan McNamara said it may also be a projection of where we are year to date.
12. Erin Ladd said we have a huge opportunity to increase our revenue.
13. Noah Schmidt asked if the Planning and Zoning Office can be self-sufficient
14. Erin Ladd said it may be possible
15. Brendan McNamara said there is a fine balance
16. George Tucker Jr. said it also depends on the type and size of projects.
17. Justin Hyjek asked about a plan for zoning fees
18. Erin Ladd said she put in a standard 5% increase. She has been here for one month and has been researching software programs. Then she will be working with VLTC on zoning fees.
19. Brendan McNamara said that our zoning fees are significantly lower than other towns.
20. Justin Hyjek said he would like to hear the outcome
21. Erin Ladd said that things will be significantly more streamlined after the merger. Now, we have to divvy up charges between the Town and Village.

E. LISTERS

1. Brendan McNamara said they have included \$25,000 for reappraisal and there is an increase in License fees for software.
2. Ryan Silvestri advised that the State now requires a full appraisal every 6 years. The State has a set rate of \$8.50 per parcel they give to towns to cover the cost of the reappraisal. This rate has

not been increased since 1979. The reappraisal will be billed in 2027. Then you have 6 years to rebuild the reappraisal fund. This year we will be doing a statistical reappraisal. The cost is about \$180,000. IN 2031, we will need to do the full reappraisal for about \$380,000 to \$400,000.

3. George Tucker Jr. said that would be about \$90,000 per year if we fund it ourselves.
4. Ryan Silvestri said if the State did change its funding with the new legislation - it could be \$16 - \$18 per parcel.
5. Justin Hyjek asked about the CAI map
6. Ryan Silvestri said that is a one-time fee, it covers camera software ad cloud services. The \$1,800 is one time. They do charge \$25.00 per change. We have been adding \$26,000,000 to the Grand List annually.
7. Justin Hyjek noted that salaries are up 9%
8. Brendan McNamara said that is to match the actuals
9. Ryan Silvestri said the licensing fee is annual and there is a 3-year contract.

F. AMBULANCE

1. Brendan McNamara said Drivers' wages are up. That is a difficult position to fill. He said that insurance increased. They put in \$12,000 for Critical Care costs. They will adjust in Call revenue.
2. Noah Schmidt asked if there is a driver on-call
3. Chief Whalen said there are numbers for 2025 actual and 2024 had no budget. He said he hopes that will dwindle with him being on shift. Drivers have to be employees of the Town - we can transition that to Part time pay.
4. Justin Hyjek said that staffing costs are high, \$885,000 including insurance. We need this service. He asked how many people are there on staff and if the Chief is comfortable with the numbers.
5. Chief Whalen said that in the past, this department was continuously over budget in costs and under budget on revenue. They were inaccurate budgets. He is comfortable with this budget and the salaries are solid - especially with the Full-time people. He said that it took 20 minutes to get mutual aid tonight. We had an ambulance out and had to get mutual aid.
6. Justin Hyjek said he appreciates the real numbers
7. Chief Whalen said he is confident with the Full time pay. He added a Part time person into this budget. He is working on the transport concept and if we are able to do it, it would pay for itself. There is no fluff in the revenue line. He said the numbers for FY2025 were way off. He said that he budgeted for \$500,000 revenue - worst case. He said if we must call in mutual aid, we have to pay them and they collect the revenue. He said the Mountain increases our calls in the winter - we have to double staff on holidays. That will drive up the revenue and it will pay for itself. He said the Critical Care is not to create tons of revenue. We have a CCP license, but he is not ready to not have our ambulance available. Maybe more people on shift during the daytime.
8. Justin Hyjek said it needs to be more comprehensive than in the past. He noted that insurance 2025 actual was \$186,000, but 2027 budget is \$136,000
9. Brendan McNamara said changes in plan from family to single
10. Justin Hyjek noted that the Billing Services budget is up 13%
11. Chief Whalen said they take a percentage, but he predicts more calls in the future.
12. Justin Hyjek asked about the \$65,000 for the new ambulance not being on the 2027 budget
13. Brendan McNamara said it was budgeted last year, but it will come out of the Local Options tax.

14. Justin Hyjek asked when we make the first payment and where does he see the loan on the ambulance
15. Brendan McNamara said he needs to talk to Ulla Cook, it is a non-budgetary item. It may be separate
16. Justin Hyjek asked Brendan McNamara to talk to Ulla Cook about that. He asked about the new line item for Dispatch.
17. Brendan McNamara said it is a flat lined item.
18. Chief Whalen said he tried to budget more diesel fuel based on more call and transports. We will get mileage reimbursement for transport services. Springfield to Dartmouth is \$40.00 per loaded mile.
19. Justin Hyjek asked about the Plymouth and Mount Holly contracts.
20. Chief Whalen said Cavendish is up in July 2027, Plymouth in 2028 and Mount Holly end of calendar year 2026. He said he will stay on top of these. He is trying to increase coverage to Plymouth. He wants to make sure the algorithm is valid.
21. Justin Hyjek asked when Okemo Winter Coverage expires.
22. Brendan McNamara said there are no terms for that.
23. Noah Schmidt asked if the second crew will impact OT
24. Chief Whalen said it depends on staffing. Part time employees have to work less than a specific number of hours per week. We are not creating overtime just to bring in more people on the full staff. He added that the some of the Ski Patrol people are part time staff. It has been successful. We brought on 3 para and 2 ALS who want to work hours. He said that people who work over 40 hours get OT. They work 24/hour shifts, 48 hours /week. He said that other towns are doing pretty much the same. It is an industry standard. He said that we're 11% increase over actual going into 2027. The budgets have not been accurate and he is trying to be as accurate as possible. If we get the transport going, and do 20 transports per year, that is \$100,000 in revenue. He budgeted \$520,000 in calls, and would like to see it get to \$700,000, but he low-balled it as far as possible. He said the service should never be expected to be for-profit.

G. FIRE

1. Justin Hyjek asked about Insurance and the Chief
2. Chief Whalen said that he is split between the Fire and EMS. He said that Utilities are up over 100%. That is split between the fire and ambulance departments.
3. Justin Hyjek asked about increase in Equipment
4. Chief Whalen said that includes hoses. Nozzles, Cameras – non-capital items. He said that a 50' length of hose runs \$400
5. Brett Sanderson added that there are 1,500 feet per truck
6. Chief Whalen said 5" hose is \$1,300 per length and there are 10 per truck. We should get 20 years for them. He said it includes the Thermal Imaging Camera and forceful entry equipment. He hopes not to spend that amount every year.
7. Justin Hyjek noted \$117,000 in truck maintenance.
8. Chief Whalen said that some maintenance had not been done for year – mentioning Engine 3 and Tower. He said that preventive maintenance, oil changes, inspections.
9. Justin Hyjek asked about Health Evaluations

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10. Chief Whalen said that is per NFPA 1580. There must be medical evaluations for all Fire personnel: pulmonary function tests, cancer screening. This had been dropped and he brought it back
 11. Justin Hyjek asked about the showers in the building.
 12. Chief Whalen said that would be included in building maintenance. They are doing baby steps. He will be holding the first meeting of the Building Committee and it is important. They are trying to get a mop sink in the bays to clean masks etc. and wash off carcinogens.
 13. George Tucker Jr. asked about grant expense
 14. Chief Whalen said there is a new line item for Fire and EMS.
 15. Brendan McNamara said those were pending.
 16. George Tucker Jr. asked if it is best to lump them together or separate them per department
 17. Chief Whalen said that in Chester, they had a fund for grant matches.
 18. George Tucker Jr. said it may be better to lump them
 19. Brett Sanderson said to make it smaller. He said they could work more on the grant section.
 20. Chief Whalen said there are big numbers. We need to educate and communicate with the community
 21. Noah Schmidt asked if the health evaluations are to see if someone is fit to do the job or check a baseline
 22. Chief Whalen said to meet the regulations to be a firefighter per NFPA 1580 – for medical and physical. We are doing it to meet the medical and to determine who can be A, B or C level
 23. Noah Schmidt asked about Community Risk Reduction and Dispatch
 24. Chief Whalen said Community Risk Reduction is for fire/safety education. He said that when he was a Fire Marshal, he kept smoke detectors in his vehicle. If someone had an unsafe condition and needed one, he would give it to them. He does not want to be supplying smoke detectors.

H. CEMETERY

1. Brendan McNamara said that the Cemetery Commissioners approve their budget then send it to the Select Board. IF the Select Board does not agree with it, they send it back to the Cemetery Commission.

I. ADMINISTRATION

1. Justin Hyjek asked why there is a double digit increase the salary for the new Town Manager – 26.9%
2. Brendan McNamara said he was not in on that decision
3. Noah Schmidt said they were within the posted range -by \$15,000.
4. Justin Hyjek asked if this is for the town or town and village
5. Brett Sanderson said \$135,000 total
6. Justin Hyjek said they used to do a Cost-of-Living increase of 3%. We did 5%. He asked about the increase in health care costs – about 80%
7. Noah Schmidt said it is not consistent through the departments
8. Brett Sanderson said it depends on which health plan the employee has: single, family or none.

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9. Justin Hyjek asked what is the toleration level for insurance and salaries increases
 10. George Tucker Jr. said people are cycled. If a person leaves and can reapply, the salary would be more. It is hard to acquire talent. But we can't forget the people who have been here for a long time.
 11. Noah Schmidt asked if they can offer different levels of plans to different levels of employment
 12. Brendan McNamara said we can't differentiate per person. We are in a tough spot now. Some people will take a lower wage because our insurance plan is so high
 13. Diane Knight said that the cost for the insurance plan for a single person is \$1,203 per month, a two-person plan is \$2,400 per month and family plan is \$3,000 per month.
 14. George Tucker Jr. said it would be hard to back down from the health insurance we have been giving.
 15. Justin Hyjek said that we offer the platinum plan. We could offer less money per hour wages
 16. George Tucker Jr. said the health care cannot change
 17. Noah Schmidt said a new hire may be looking for a competitive hourly wage and may not appreciate the value of the insurance plan.
 18. Scott Baitz said he thinks that new hires do understand
 19. George Tucker Jr. asked if someone chooses not to take the insurance, would they get a higher wage
 20. Diane Knight said if someone has their own insurance, we do give an insurance carve out – 50% for a single person.
 21. Noah Schmidt said there needs to be a discussion about this and we will need to sell the budget.
 22. George Tucker Jr. asked about voted articles, the Ash Tree funds and a compactor.
 23. Noah Schmidt said if the total revenue includes some FEMA funds
 24. Brendan McNamara said some, but not all. The actual for 2026 will have a spike in revenue from the FEMA funds. He said that the Police, Recreation, Buildings and Grounds, Community Center, Town Clerk and Treasurer and appropriations still remain to be done. He recommended that the board meet again next week.
 25. Noah Schmidt asked if we are going to try to cut the increase
 26. Brendan McNamara said that he doesn't want this to be rushed. It is an important budget. He said that his last day is November 26th, but he will come to the budget meetings and will work with Penny Wu. We are in a spot – all towns are struggling with what looks good, but what is actual.
 27. Brett Sanderson said we need to look at fees at the Transfer Station, Ambulance Transport. We need to show that we are trying to drive down the increase.
 28. Justin Hyjek said we can't trim the fat unless we look at labor and insurance
 29. George Tucker Jr. said that if we expect to increase revenue, we need to have the expenses closer to the actual numbers. He said that the Ambulance has been in the red for years.
 30. Justin Hyjek said it is a 21.3% increase
 31. Brendan McNamara said the actual is closer to 19%.
 32. George Tucker, Jr. asked Brendan McNamara to come up with a list of possible cuts for their next meeting or increases in revenue
 33. Brendan McNamara said he will have a look and send a draft to board members of what cuts he thinks may be possible.

J. POLICE

1. Brendan McNamara said that the police payroll is per a union contract which was recently re-negotiated.
2. Justin Hyjek asked about Okemo Traffic Control
3. Chief Warfle said we upped it 60%
4. Justin Hyjek asked about Traffic Control – General.
5. George Tucker Jr. said that Okemo pays \$40,000
6. Brett Sanderson said that general traffic control should be gone, leaving only Okemo
7. Justin Hyjek asked about Dispatch
8. Brett Sanderson said it is all in Ambulance and Fire
9. Chief Warfle said Fire does not pay. He said that he included a Miscellaneous New Vehicle Cameras/Rifles line. He wants to upgrade the patrol rifles, with every having their own patrol rifle.
10. Justin Hyjek said that this is the Chief’s first year and he would like to see where the budget goes this first year.
11. Noah Schmidt asked about Dispatch OT.
12. Chief Warfle said that the dispatchers have vacation time and we need 24/7 coverage. The only time there is no coverage is on Sunday mornings from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.
13. Noah Schmidt asked about the new Special Officer category.
14. Chief Warfle said that we hired a part time officer and got a grant to cover it. We are talking to the Homeland Task Force for a federal agent for asset forfeiture. We can get back up to 80% of the costs. We would partner wit the federal agents. Our cost about \$10,000. We don’t need the part time position anymore. The Federal government would pay up to \$17,000 per year
15. Noah Schmidt asked about the new line item – Professional Services.
16. Chief Warfle said he thought that was not in his budget
17. Brendan McNamara said it is spread between the 3 departments.
18. George Tucker Jr. said that Chief Warfle did a good job getting the grant. He is also seeing more money back in fines
19. Brendan McNamara said the grant is found under revenue.

VI. Other Business

- A. Next budget meeting will be Wednesday, November 19, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.
- B. Agenda will include clarification regarding THE MOOVER in the minutes of the November meeting regular meeting
- C. Noah Schmidt said he would like to see the total increase – across the board for staff payroll and insurance

VII. Adjourn

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- A. **MOTION by Justin Hyjek and seconded by George Tucker Jr. to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.**
 - B. Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Lisha Klaiber

Brett Sanderson, Chairman

Noah Schmidt

Scott Baitz

George Tucker, Jr.

Justin Hyjek