

**TOWN OF LUDLOW, VT**

**SELECT BOARD**

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 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

Nick Miele

Ulla Cook

Diane Knight

Penny Wu

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Eric Alden

John Murphy

Bruce Schmidt

Eric Lubinsky

**AGENDA**

**I. 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

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

- A. Brendan McNamara said that no changes are needed

- A. Select Board to Review & Approve Minutes - November 3, 2025 and November 12, 2025

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- A. George Tucker, Jr. advised for the November 3, 2025 minute, Item 14 should read, “MOTION by George Tucker, Jr. and seconded by Noah Schmidt to move the MOOVER from a voted article to a budgetary line item. Motion passed unanimously.”
  - B. **MOTION by George Tucker, Jr. and seconded by Noah Schmidt to accept the minutes from November 3, 2025 as corrected and the minutes from November 12, 2025 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.**

### III. FY2027 Budget

- A. Brendan McNamara that the board has a new draft of the FY2027 budget. He has made some changes in the Expense lines to the Ambulance, Fire, Transfer Station and Planning/Zoning budgets.
- B. Parks and Recreation
  - 1. Brendan McNamara credited Diane Knight with lowering the Utilities costs by changing the internet service at the Community Center. He said that this draft is showing a 31.5% increase in expenses for Recreation
  - 2. Noah Schmidt said it does not make sense. Are the grants included
  - 3. Brendan McNamara said large part, ARPA funds.
  - 4. Justin Hyjek asked about Fields (Fletcher, Little League, Dorsey.) Actual 2025 was \$20,500, Budget 2026 is \$10,000 and budget 2026 \$7,500.
  - 5. Nick Miele said they spent \$3,000 on paint and \$6,000 for Pullinen and Dorsey. They paid \$13,000 for labor and material to aerate, and overseed. We don't have to continue doing this but it's like changing the oil in your car. If you don't do it, you will have engine problems. He said that Dorsey already has an irrigation system. He said we host the Josh Cole Invitational Soccer Tournament and we paid \$1,000 for paint
  - 6. Justin Hyjek asked if Ludlow has a team
  - 7. Nick Miele said Green Mountain is the host and has Ludlow students on its team.
  - 8. George Tucker, Jr. said the Little League and Fletcher Fields are not used and he thought the actuals would be less
  - 9. Nick Miele said if the Select Board continues the process at Dorsey, we hire contractors because we don't have staff or machines.
  - 10. Noah Schmidt said it is great to host the Josh Cole event, but we have to light it for a week.
  - 11. Nick Miele said at Pullinen and Dorsey, the lights are \$50/hour.
  - 12. Brett Sanderson said that is a significant number. We should approach the other towns. They don't contribute.
  - 13. Nick Miele said that Rutland has a resident fee of \$35 and non-resident fee of \$85 for youth programs. We charge non-residents \$5 more than residents and they do come to use the Recreation department in Ludlow.
  - 14. Brett Sanderson said Ludlow can't keep funding it.
  - 15. Noah Schmidt said we should get help covering the costs.
  - 16. Justin Hyjek asked about concessions
  - 17. Nick Miele said the Green Mountain Booster club takes care of that
  - 18. Justin Hyjek said we should tier residential and non-residential usage of the Community Center
  - 19. Nick Miele said that Andover residents pay Chester for the use of Chester's pool.
  - 20. Justin Hyjek asked if we are going to have ice skating at West Hill this winter

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21. Nick Miele said it is not in the budget
  22. Brendan McNamara said we have discussed using ARPA funds for that
  23. Justin Hyjek asked where the Playground Grant is listed
  24. Brendan McNamara said page 23.
  25. Justin Hyjek asked about Support Staff
  26. Nick Miele said we have one part time person who works up to 30 hours per week
  27. Justin Hyjek asked about Fields
  28. Nick Miele said they are mowed by Buildings and Grounds and we do the lining. We use support staff for the baseball league and 4th of July. They also monitor the Community Center when there are events there. He said that the Community Center is intertwined with Parks and Recreation.
  29. Brett Sanderson said we offset the costs to Buildings and Grounds, there is some balance there
  30. Nick Miele said visitors want to use the Community Center and they ask if there is a fee. There isn't.
  31. Brett Sanderson said we can do some changes there
  32. Nick Miele said they come to play pickle ball, shoot hoops. We could leverage this to get donations from other towns.
  33. Brett Sanderson said there should be a rate to use the facilities and offset staff wages
  34. Bruce Schmidt asked what percentage of use is by other towns.
  35. Brendan McNamara said that he coaches a team of 10-year-olds and there are 12 kids, 9 from Cavendish.
  36. Nick Miele said that the basketball league has 31 kids from Ludlow, 45 from Mount Holly and 21 from Cavendish
  37. Bruce Schmidt said this board has to be careful; we need a balance so as not to lose the kids. They may go to other places. The fee should not be more than \$5.
  38. George Tucker, Jr. asked if they are anticipating a small increase
  39. Nick Miele said yes
  40. Noah Schmidt said we should go to the other towns and ask for a stipend from the Towns, not the kids.
  41. Brendan McNamara said that he is a parent and Cavendish resident. Cavendish has a recreation program, but not enough kids. We merge into Ludlow's program. Cavendish funds \$50,000 - \$60,000. How do we bring everyone in, we will have an excess of teams. Cavendish probably does not have enough kids to field a team. We should start to communicate with Cavendish and Mount Holly early and maybe get donations of about \$7,000.
  42. Justin Hyjek asked Brendan McNamara if he has had conversations with the other towns.
  43. Brendan McNamara said not yet. It is awkward with me working here but being a Cavendish resident. He said that once he leaves, as a resident of Cavendish, he will help facilitate that conversation.
  44. Penny Wu agreed. It should continue to be affordable for the kids, and we should not price ourselves out of the market. She will work with Nick Miele and the other towns to merge our recreation programs.
  45. Justin Hyjek said Ludlow has the infrastructure.
  46. Nick Miele said that he is starting to plan for the 4th of July fireworks. It will be our 250th anniversary. He has received the contract and the price has nearly doubled.
  47. Brett Sanderson asked if we can get donations to offset the costs
  48. Nick Miele said that he is also working with the contractor for the 2027 and 2028 events, hoping to keep future costs down. The 4th of July event is a big thing for us.
  49. Bruce Schmidt said it is important to start working on sponsorships.
  50. Brett Sanderson said we have to plan way in advance for food vendors

51. Noah Schmidt asked about bids for the press box. He asked if there are ways to drive more revenue.
52. Brett Sanderson said that Ludlow Electric will be installing the AMI meter soon and we will be able to monitor electrical usage at the fields.

C. Community Center Operations

1. Justin Hyjek asked about Staff Labor
2. Brendan McNamara said there are 2 separate positions. He said that they moved \$15,900 from Buildings and Grounds to Community Center Operations. He said that he struggled with this. We want it to be used for community events on weekends. We don't charge. There is a substantial basketball league from all over Southern Vermont and New Hampshire.
3. Brett Sanderson asked if there are any contributions
4. Brendan McNamara said minimal. We staff it. We are not charging a membership fee for the facility.
5. Brett Sanderson said we need to look at that
6. Nick Miele said we charge \$500 for basketball and staff it 4 hours per day for 4 days.
7. Noah Schmidt said we shouldn't be losing money
8. Justin Hyjek said we should update the fees, but still be competitive. He asked about program fees.
9. Nick Miele said the fitness center. He said he doesn't deal with that, Buildings and Grounds does
10. Justin Hyjek said people could get passes online from our website
11. Brendan McNamara said we have a form that works well
12. Justin Hyjek asked if someone is staying in Ludlow and wants to shoot hoops.
13. Nick Miele said there is no fee
14. Brendan McNamara said to have someone there full time, we would have to pay them. During the day, Nick Miele is there. If he isn't there, the building is still open. What if we charged fees and no one was there
15. Justin Hyjek suggested a card scanner
16. John Murphy said the gym is a great addition to the Community Center, but needs some attention for expansion. He suggested moving the cardio equipment from the gym to the Red Room. Currently if someone is using the cardio equipment and listening to music. It gets very busy there with 2 - 3 people plus others working out, grabbing dumbbells. They need more space. If there are 6 people there, it is almost impossible. It is too tight. If you move the cardio equipment to the Red Room, then you could spread the other equipment out and more people would use it if there were more room.
17. Nick Miele said it is a small area and would be beneficial to expand. He can get some costs to move the equipment and put rubber flooring. He asked how they want to use the Center for meeting
18. Scott Baitz said that a lot of people have discussed that the Red Room could be divided up. What would be the costs of rubber flooring.
19. Nick Miele said we are busy in the winter from 7:00 to 11:00 a.m., but the Red Room is not busy.
20. Scott Baitz said that the Rod and Gun Club meets there and they could use the other room.
21. Brett Sanderson said more people would use it if there were more space
22. John Murphy said they had nice folding doors there. You could revisit that idea, and use one half for cardio equipment.
23. Brett Sanderson said the cardio equipment needs a sound proof room
24. John Murphy said as soon as someone uses the basketball room, it's too loud in that room
25. Brett Sanderson asked Nick Miele to come back with some ideas and costs.

26. Brendan McNamara said they are not allowed to play basketball in the high school gym - the costs are astronomical. We did ask TRSU about it. The gym in the Community Center is too small for the High School varsity team.
27. Justin Hyjek asked if the town has talked to TRSU.
28. Brendan McNamara said communicating with the superintendent was unsuccessful. They wanted \$6,000 to \$8,000 and would not negotiate.
29. Nick Miele said this year his biggest goal is to make sure the playground is taken care of and funding is there for the future to maintain the facilities.

D. Buildings & Grounds

1. Brendan McNamara said they moved part of the Supervisor labor and insurance costs to the Community Center. This created a negative 1.9% change
2. Justin Hyjek noted the increase in rents for the Senior Center.
3. Brendan McNamara said that the VERMONT JOURNAL, NE Municipal, and Lori Wright rent space there, in addition to the Senior Center.
4. Noah Schmidt asked about utilities
5. Brendan McNamara said the town pays. He added that we have been doing a better job of our ownership: we replaced the windows. He said we repaired the leaking roof at the Museum.
6. George Tucker, Jr. referred to Senior Center Operations/Utilities: 2025 - Budget \$14,000/Actual \$27,120; 2026 - Budget \$14,000 and 2027 Budget \$15,000. He said, basically, the rent covers the utilities
7. Brett Sanderson said we should look at these rates
8. Justin Hyjek said that Facilities Repairs/Maintenance numbers are way off
9. George Tucker, Jr. said we need to adjust the funds we set aside for repairs
10. Brendan McNamara said a Capital Needs Assessment. He said the Community Center is in good shape. He said the oil tanks are shot.
11. Justin Hyjek said the Buildings and Grounds supervisor costs are way over
12. Brendan McNamara said they are in line for an hourly position. Most supervisors are salaries. This puts him more in line with other department heads.
13. George Tucker, Jr. said it is actually a small increase.
14. Brendan McNamara said that his pay is allocated toward what he is actually doing.
15. George Tucker, Jr. said the Village does not contribute
16. Justin Hyjek asked if we have data for salaries and associated costs. He said there was a \$753,946 increase from last year to this year. He said if we add \$1,000,000 to the budget, what is the increase in assessed value per \$100,000
17. Ulla Cook said this is new structure and it may not increase that much. The Grand List is #1.5 billion
18. Justin Hyjek said the CLA is 66, last year it was in the 80's. We need to reappraise. Taxes will go up
19. George Tucker, Jr. said but the rate will go down.
20. Justin Hyjek asked what a 9.1% budget increase will do to the tax rate. What would it do if the Grand List did not increase
21. George Tucker, Jr. asked what the actual total of salary and benefits is
22. Noah Schmidt said \$286,000
23. George Tucker, Jr. said \$500,000
24. Noah Schmidt said the biggest is Ambulance. They are trying to true up their budget
25. Justin Hyjek said that previous boards gave a cost-of-living increase. This past year we did 3.5% to 5%, other towns 15%. This is relative adjustments.

26. Noah Schmidt said the budget is \$5,100,000 for FY2027
27. George Tucker, Jr. said that  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the budget is personnel related
28. Noah Schmidt said the biggest thing and we have no control over it. We should look at insurance closely - we need a clear understanding of our options. We could charge new employees a percentage of the health insurance costs.
29. Diane Knight said the increase in insurance is 5%
30. Justin Hyjek suggested restructuring hiring new employees
31. Brett Sanderson said there are differences in rates for single vs. family
32. Noah Schmidt said we don't have control over that.

E. Capital

1. George Tucker, Jr. said he is not a fan of using the options tax for capital items. He said when we sold this to the voters, we said it was for large items like the fire truck and dams. The trackless should be a capital item. He asked why the Ambulance stretcher was overlooked and not put in the budget.
2. Noah Schmidt said the third ambulance does not have staff, why does it have a stretcher.
3. Brendan McNamara said the trackless will be moved to the budget.
4. George Tucker, Jr. asked about the Ash Borer allocation. The spillways were voted down. Where should we put the Ash Borer allocation. It will need money. He said that Brendan McNamara and Phil Carter talked to Ron Tarbell. We should put some money into the budget, but it should not be highway.
5. Diane Knight said the money in Highway is for highway use only - brush clean up.
6. Brett Sanderson said it needs its own line item
7. George Tucker, Jr. said that Phil Carter budgeted \$150,000
8. Brett Sanderson suggested a town voted article at \$75,000.
9. George Tucker, Jr. said that Phil Carter started the inventory. What if he marks a tree as dangerous and it falls and hits someone.
10. Justin Hyjek said it should be a voted article and there are presentations to the voters. Phil Carter is the Tree Warden and should make the presentation.
11. George Tucker, Jr. said that Phil Carter estimated an average tree removal cost of \$2,200 and suggested 50 trees. We should allocate some money towards it. He said that Green Mountain Power refused to remove a bad tree.
12. Noah Schmidt asked why not put it as a voted article
13. Justin Hyjek said so it would not be discussed
14. George Tucker, Jr. said people are asking why we are marking and taking pictures of trees.
15. Bruce Schmidt said if the Select Board feels strongly, put it in the budget, so it doesn't get jerked around on the floor and run the risk of being denied. If the budget is over 5%, people will push back and look for ways to save. If this is that important, put it in the budget. Also, what you do one year, may happen every year.
16. Justin Hyjek said we should put it as a voted article. This is the first time people are hearing about it. Maybe, eventually move it to the budget. We need to educate the public.
17. George Tucker, Jr. said that we should have the tree board talk to the public. He said that other towns have been forced to spend \$500,000 and remove every tree. Phil Carter will only remove the trees that must be done right away. George Tucker, Jr. suggested putting in \$110,000.
18. Noah Schmidt said that is a big number. Should we fund an ambulance or trees if we can't find a place in the budget.
19. Brett Sanderson suggested putting it in as a separate line item under Highway.
20. Brendan McNamara said that with moving the trackless, the increase is 11.9%

21. Noah Schmidt said that Chief Warfle budgeted for getting new rifles for each officer.
22. Justin Hyjek said that could be a voted article
23. Brendan McNamara said he has been through the budget quite a bit. He asked if the Chief's rifles can wait, it's only a \$10,000 increase. Where do we go from here.
24. George Tucker, Jr. asked about the debt management fire truck note.
25. Brett Sanderson said it's something we own.
26. Justin Hyjek said we should leave the local options tax funds alone. He said the town voted articles usually have a resounding result. He said that he thinks if it is a Voted Article, it will pass if the numbers are justifiable. But, if we put it in the budget, the rate will go from 9% to 11% increase.
27. Noah Schmidt said that people are paying attention.
28. Diane Knight said that some of the Appropriations are larger and the board can look at them. She mentioned BRACC.
29. Justin Hyjek said all of the Appropriations have submitted letters
30. George Tucker, Jr. asked how much was left of the Dam Spill funds
31. Brendan McNamara said it hasn't all been spent. We did get funding and it was set aside 2 years ago
32. George Tucker, Jr. suggested instead of putting \$125,000 into that, put it into trees
33. Brendan McNamara said we had to fund the repairs and got 100%.
34. Justin Hyjek said that in 2021 they put \$165,000 into Dam Spillway Repairs as a Voted Article, then in 2025 and 2026 we put in \$125,000 each. It is in FY2027 again. Can we move that.
35. George Tucker, Jr. said there are also emergency repairs.
36. Noah Schmidt said what if we stopped putting money in there and in 30 years we needed to repair them.
37. Diane Knight the only things out of the Local Options tax is the trackless and the stretcher.
38. George Tucker, Jr. said if we leave it, we will get a kitty of money and it will gain interest.
39. **MOTION by Justin Hyjek and seconded by George Tucker, Jr. to put \$110,000 for Ash Borer Tree work in as s Voted Article. Motion passed unanimously.**

F. Appropriations

1. Brendan McNamara said BRACC is a question. They did submit a letter
2. Justin Hyjek asked about the Museum being a line item as well as an appropriation
3. Brendan McNamara said the appropriation is for their operating cost
4. Brett Sanderson said the other is building maintenance.
5. Noah Schmidt said he would like to bump Okemo Valley TV up to \$5,000. They do a lot for the town
6. Justin Hyjek agreed
7. Brendan McNamara said they do help out a lot
8. Justin Hyjek asked about the MOOVER and where it stops.
9. Bruce Schmidt said by the Fire Station, Clock Tower, Jackson Gore, park
10. Justin Hyjek said it would be nice to have a stop in the Village downtown
11. Brendan McNamara said that can be discussed. He is on the board and when he leaves, Erin Ladd will take his place on the board. He said they do a lot
12. Brett Sanderson said they do private transfers too
13. Justin Hyjek said it will be nice to have a stop in town. We need to form better relations with the BUS and MOOVER.
14. Brendan McNamara said it had been a voted article.
15. Justin Hyjek asked about the After School Program and who is there

16. Noah Schmidt said it is connected to TRSU
17. Justin Hyjek asked about Okemo Valley Tech Rescue
18. Brendan McNamara said that was added from the floor last year
19. Justin Hyjek said Chester has Teck Squad
20. George Tucker, Jr. said Chester has boats
21. Justin Hyjek asked if that is the goal for this
22. Brendan McNamara said they work with the Rotary. They provided technical rescue in 2023. Chester has a highly technically trained group that services this region.
23. George Tucker, Jr. said a boat got stuck in Ludlow.
24. Bruce Schmidt made a Point of Order. The agenda does not say possibly act on the budget and the board cannot vote on it.
25. Brendan McNamara said we can add items and approve them later. We will circle back.
26. Justin Hyjek said this budget is in line with reality. We need to try to reconcile the numbers. We are trying to do what's best for the town
27. Noah Schmidt said we are getting things on track for salaries and personnel items. A big part is the Ambulance. We may need more realignment in another year.
28. Brendan McNamara said maybe a little. Ludlow offers support and a very high level of services across the board: office, highway, ambulance, police, and fire. People know that and will appreciate transparency. We have made a lot of changes. Some changes had to be made. We are taking a step in the right direction. He doesn't think he sees anything substantial
29. Noah Schmidt said we should look for an option for insurance, capital needs, the high school building and set aside funds for EMS.
30. Justin Hyjek said they need to form a committee to explore the future of the high school building.

IV. Other Business

- A. There was no other business

V. Adjourn

- A. **MOTION by Justin Hyjek and seconded by George Tucker Jr. to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 7:52 findreplacereplace 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