TOWN OF MARLBORO, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD INFORMATIONAL MEETING MINUTES
November 14, 2026

Meeting	Marlboro Select Board – Informational Meeting #2
Date / Time	Saturday, November 14, 2026, 2:00 PM
Location	Marlboro Community Center and via Zoom
Select Board Present	Molly Welch (Chair), Jeff Skramstad (Vice Chair), Kate Kirkwood
Staff / Town Officials Present	Nick Morgan (Town Administrator), Rebecca Sevigny (Treasurer), Lynn Scheuermann (Assistant Treasurer), Forrest Holzapfel (Town Clerk), Evan Wyse (Delinquent Tax Collector / Lister), Andrew Richardson (Road Foreman, via Zoom)
Others Present	Carol Ann Lobo Johnson (President, MVFC Board), members of the public (see list at end), BCTV

1. Call to Order

Chair Molly Welch called Informational Meeting #2 to order at 2:00 PM and encouraged participants to ask questions. Handouts and a sign-in sheet were available.

BEGIN ZOOM RECORDING

Audio of the meeting is available on the Town of Marlboro SoundCloud page. The meeting was also recorded by BCTV.

2. Select Board Update

- Chair Welch explained that these informational meetings are meant to give residents the chance to weigh in, as they used to at Town Meeting, and encouraged attendees to raise concerns and bring issues to regular Select Board meetings.
- Next informational meeting: December 10, 2026, in the evening at the Community Center (start time of 5:00 or 6:00 PM to be confirmed). The agenda will include the draft Town Meeting warning, the final public hearing on the Subdivision Regulations, and the Road Foreman's draft road budget.
- The Road Standards have been completed. After public feedback, they were changed from an ordinance to standards, which serve as guidelines for the road crew and allow more flexibility.
- The Board sent a letter to Town commissions and committees asking them not to hire outside contractors, to get approval before contacting the Town attorney, and to submit budget requests on time.
- Because of incidents in which residents confronted and interfered with road crew and Town workers, the Board adopted a policy and complaint form. Complaints should be submitted at the Town Office and go directly to the Select Board.
- Residents who wish to place an article on the Town Meeting warning should start a petition soon. Petitioned articles are due January 14, 2027. The draft warning will be posted for review, and residents were encouraged to comment on any budget item.

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3. Marlboro Volunteer Fire Company (MVFC) – Proposal to Merge into the Municipality

Chair Welch introduced the item, noting the MVFC board's excellent work and that the proposal is still in process and not final. Carol Ann Lobo Johnson, President of the MVFC Board, presented, with Nick Morgan sharing the slides.

3.1 Presentation

- Goal: protect the fire company's 75-year legacy while building a sustainable future.
- The current board has accomplished a great deal since about 2022, nearly all by volunteers with no paid staff or office until recently. Accomplishments include 501(c)(3) status, a bookkeeper, grants, two trucks purchased under budget, online giving and capital funds, bylaws and governance, stronger communication with the Town, firehouse upgrades, onboarding two chiefs, formal volunteer onboarding, incident reporting systems, community education, and new paid positions to support the fire chief.
- Last fiscal year, volunteers answered 175 calls, compared with a typical 116 to 122. The company is in a strong financial position, and new young volunteers are taking training such as Firefighter I. Donated turnout gear was recently received from the City of Waltham, Massachusetts.
- Challenges: fewer volunteers but more calls nationally; new reporting requirements; new laws, including Act 162 (fire chiefs must also serve as fire wardens), coordination with zoning permits, and Act 104 (regional policing); turnout gear and other equipment expiring more quickly due to code upgrades; and the reality of insurance issues.
- A municipal structure would make the fire company eligible for more grants. It is critical that townspeople understand these points before deciding whether the fire company should become part of municipal government.
- Proposal: the fire company's volunteers and mission stay the same; its governance and funding change. Funding would become part of the Town budget, and accounting would be handled by the Town, saving about $6,000 a year in bookkeeping. Treasurer Rebecca Sevigny has served on the MVFC board and understands its finances. Insurance is already provided through the Town (PACIF).
- Proposed timeline: another community meeting on December 10, then a March 2, 2027 vote on three articles (operating budget, capital budget, and whether the fire company should become part of the Town), plus formal votes by the MVFC board and members.
- Budget: the request to the Town stays the same with or without the transition: $98,000 ($58,000 operating, $40,000 capital). Total planned spending is about $101,120, with the difference covered by reserves, donations, and grants. Capital funds are held for large equipment so apparatus can be bought without borrowing.

3.2 Questions and Comments

- Jim Herrick asked whether the fire company could recover costs from insurance companies for its first-responder work, including traffic control on Route 9 with no backup from the State Police. Ms. Lobo Johnson said the MVFC had explored this but could not find a workable process. Raising it with VLCT was suggested.
- Gail MacArthur asked about donations. The annual appeal raised about $31,000 last year (about 25–30% of revenue). This year's appeal letter focuses on the transition,

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and only $8,000 is budgeted. Donations are not counted in the $98,000 request. Ms. Lobo Johnson will meet with the Marlboro Alliance on December 7 about a vehicle for future donations and will report on December 10.

- Michael Schneider said municipal status should make additional grants available, citing a recent grant for about $36,000 in equipment. It is legal for the Town to solicit donations for a fire department.
- Tim Segar asked how the transition would affect the Select Board's workload. The fire chief will receive a stipend for paid hours, and the MVFC's current paid administrative staff will continue to oversee day-to-day operations and communicate with the Select Board. Ms. Lobo Johnson is preparing lists of who does what. Board members said they are cautious about the Town's increased financial responsibility and unforeseen expenses and need time to learn, including from Berlin and Williston. A possible oversight commission, similar to the Hogback Preservation Commission, was mentioned.
- Gail MacArthur asked about the transition period. The MVFC board would remain until a new team is in place, likely through summer 2027, with the hope of finishing by fall 2027.
- Nick Katrick, a firefighter, EMT, and longtime resident, voiced support for the transition and its timeline, saying its speed is not a reason to balk at the change.
- Kate Kirkwood spoke about Act 104 regional policing and whether efficiencies could be found. She supports the idea but is hesitant to proceed without more knowledge, and will share more in December.
- Chair Welch said the election on March 2 is not the only way to make the change. The Town attorney has advised that a town vote may not be required, so the transition could take effect when the process is complete, and the Board would at least consider a non-binding article. Ms. Lobo Johnson reported different advice from the attorney. This will need to be clarified.
- Andrew Richardson spoke about municipal fire departments in other towns. The Select Board does not do the actual work, but the Treasurer's workload will increase, and a fire company board or committee is still needed to oversee the administrative side no matter what. More recruits will be needed.
- Peggy Tiffany (via Zoom) asked what it would mean for the fire company if the Town did not take it over. Chair Welch said the Board's goal is a thoughtful transition, not a decision against it. There are more pros than cons, but the change should be made without large mistakes. Ms. Lobo Johnson said three paid people are already in place to do the administrative work, and this is in the MVFC budget.
- Dianna Noyes saluted the MVFC board and volunteers, echoed by Catharine Rhodes. Harold Smith, a current MVFC board member and former Halifax selectman, said the Town's municipal structure is in good health and should not have trouble with this transition. Jonathan Morse hopes more volunteers, including younger residents, will come forward. It was noted that young residents are joining the fire company.
- The PowerPoint and MVFC information will be posted on the website for more public visibility. Residents were asked to email questions or suggestions to townadministrator@marlborovt.gov before December 10.

Chair Welch thanked everyone for their input. The topic will be discussed again on December 10.

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4. Draft 2027 Town Budget

Treasurer Rebecca Sevigny presented the draft 2027 municipal budget, introduced Assistant Treasurer Lynn Scheuermann, and welcomed questions. Chair Welch emphasized that it is a draft and can still change.

4.1 Overview

- The proposed 2027 total is a little over $1 million, compared with about $996,000 in 2026, a bottom-line increase of about 2.9%. Town operating expenditures decrease about 1.36%, capital fund requests increase about 44.75%, and appropriations decrease about 2.9% ($4,530).
- Challenges in 2026 are leading to changes in 2027. Technical problems with Town Office computer and network equipment nearly doubled IT costs and are reflected in the 2027 budget. Other overages included the accounting system, reappraisal mailings, the Humane Society contract, seasonal mowing and plowing, required picnic tables at the Town Park, and a new QuickBooks fee.
- Health insurance costs rose about 17–18%, but a surplus refund from the prior year brings the actual increase to about 9%.
- The Energy Committee's MERP grant is being closed out, including two infrared cameras residents will be able to borrow.
- Legal funding stays at $4,000 in the Select Board budget because of a possible Potash Hill appeal. Delinquent Tax Collector Evan Wyse will undertake tax sales on three estates in the coming year. In response to Peter Mauss, it was explained that the Town can recover only unpaid taxes and costs through a tax sale, not market value.
- Cemetery maintenance for two cemeteries will use their existing funds.
- The new Town website is marlborovt.gov, and Town email has moved to .gov. The site cost about $7,500 to launch and is ADA compliant.
- No fuel oil pre-buy was available this year, which makes that cost uncertain. Jim Herrick raised heat loss from the post office window and doors that do not seal. The Town Office air lock also does not seal well. The Town will look into it.
- Retirement (VMERS) contribution rates are set by the State of Vermont.

4.2 Capital Reserves and VMERS Recovery

- The Capital Building Fund will rise from $15,000 to $20,000 to save for maintenance of municipal buildings.
- Unspent appropriations go into the operational reserve fund, which buffers against large unexpected expenses (for example, $57,000 this year for a failed highway truck engine) without spikes in the tax rate.
- VMERS recovery: the Town had been required for decades to enroll employees working 24 or more hours a week in VMERS but had not done so, and had to make a catch-up payment of about $260,000, which was borrowed. Each year the budget repays a portion: $70,000 for 2027, up from about $56,000 last year, to pay it down as soon as possible. In response to Staley McDermet, it was noted this appears as a special line at the bottom of the budget.
- Hogback: $2,000 for a new Hogback Preservation Commission reserve, and about $30,000 to remove Benedict Cottage, which contains asbestos tile, increasing the cost. Total capital savings for 2027 are about $122,000.

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4.3 Department Highlights and Questions

- Town officers have spent under budget (about 80–85% with six weeks remaining). The Listers are at 119% because of the reappraisal. The Delinquent Tax Collector and Zoning Administrator have spent only about 30–33% of their budgets. Zoning savings reflect Chair Welch serving as acting Zoning Administrator for far fewer hours than budgeted. In response to a question, Chair Welch said the Town attorney confirmed it is permissible for a Select Board member to be a paid Town employee.
- The new website costs more but has strong local support.
- Peter Mauss asked about the alternative ways to pay taxes and how cash flow has been. About 40–50% of taxpayers paid their full taxes at once, but many were grateful for the split payment. Roughly 15 to 20 taxpayers use monthly or automatic payments, which helps the Town's month-to-month cash flow. It was suggested the Town promote monthly payments.
- Staley McDermet noted there was no reminder for the second payment. Ms. Sevigny will continue reminders on Front Porch Forum, Facebook, the Marlboro Mixer, and the electronic sign, and notice of the second payment will go into the ballots mailed to all voters. Nancy Anderson suggested local newspaper reminders, and Catharine Rhodes suggested the Community Center newsletter. Nick Morgan is looking into an email and text alert service, mainly for emergency alerts, which could also send payment reminders.

5. Other Business

- Recycling center: Jim Herrick was concerned that recycling should be as simple as possible and that the new hours (closed 7:00 AM–3:00 PM on weekdays) make it less convenient. He asked about returning it to the school. Chair Welch explained the safety and insurance risks at the town yard. The school (MES) has already been ruled out, and a new site may be developed at the former Town Pound if needed. Gail MacArthur, Catharine Rhodes, and another attendee supported the new hours.
- Year-end bonus: In response to Staley McDermet, it was explained that the year-end bonus is $325 per employee for 11 Town Office and highway employees, included in wages.
- Agendas: An attendee suggested posting full agendas, not just links, on Front Porch Forum to increase participation. The Board agreed.
- Non-binding resolutions: Francie Marbury asked the Board to make more space for non-binding resolutions, such as one on universal health care, as a way to discuss issues and inform public opinion. Jonathan Morse said such articles were routinely included in the 1990s. Board members acknowledged communication around last year's petitions was poor. Forrest Holzapfel noted the Board has discretion over petitioned articles and encouraged petitioners to talk with the Board early. Andrew Richardson supported the Board's past decisions, saying such resolutions can alienate residents. Molly Welch and Kate Kirkwood promoted Select Board meetings as the forum for these discussions. The December 10 meeting will include time to discuss potential non-binding articles, for better communication between all sides. Petitioned articles are due January 14, 2027.

6. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 4:20 PM. Moved and seconded. ***Passed.***

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Members of the Public in Attendance

In person: Michelle Holzapfel, Barbara Giard, Steven Giard, Julie Sweethill, Jim Herrick, Lucy Gratwick, Michael Schneider, Nancy Tognan, Louis Tognan, Nick Katrick, Harold Smith, Staley McDermet, Allison Turner, Dianna Noyes, Karla Bills, Marcia Hamilton, Timothy Segar, Nancy Anderson, Phyllis Odessey, Francie Marbury, Peter Mauss, Gail MacArthur, Jonathan Morse, Julia von Ranson, Don Fuhrman, Gussie Bartlett, David Radel

Via Zoom: Woody Bernhard, Susan Kundhardt, Lindy Corman, Allan McLane, Catharine Rhodes, Peggy Tiffany, Carol Hendrickson

Respectfully submitted,
Nick Morgan, Town Administrator

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