

Town of Burke
212 School Street
West Burke, VT 05871
802-467-3717
Email:burke@burkevermont.org
Burke Community Building
January 5, 2026 - 5:00 PM Regular Selectboard Meeting

Present: Joe Allard, Jerry Booth, Mark Daigle: Selectboard

Guests: Geoff Boone, John Kascenska

Linda Hackett-Corey: Town Clerk, Cathi Feeley: Town TreasurerMike Harris: Zoning AdministratorJames Sullivan: Town Administrator Valerie Desmarais: Minutes Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 5:00. Mark noted that the meeting is being recorded.

Mark announced an addition to the agenda and introduced John Kascenska. Representative Kascenska presented a high level executive summary: the legislative session commences for the year on 01/06/26. He is on the appropriations committee, transportation and Vermont broadband committees. Broadband is advancing steadily throughout the state. The transportation department had a small shortfall and needed to reduce staff; gas tax revenue is impacting the budget. This also impacts their ability to draw down federal match monies. The Budget Adjustment Act and the state budget are also in play currently. Money is still being set aside to assist with school / property taxes. A couple of issues relating to that, the Education Task Force has submitted their recommendations; this document is available online; Representative Kascenska summarized the positions as promoting more district-to-district collaboration; the work is not done yet. There will be changes to the funding formulas. Mike asked about the possibility of a cap or a flat 12% increase. There are no details on this. Mr. Kascenska stated that everyone at the state is vested in maintaining the quality of education. Cathi asked about considering a new way to fund education costs that is not tied to property values. That is part of the conversation. Mark asked about school taxes staying the same or increasing. There was a surplus at the district level and that is specific to the district. Health care and insurance are also huge cost drivers; the reimbursement rates do not cover the costs, and an ageing demographic is also a factor. Hospitals across the state collectively are reducing their budgets but they can only cut so much. Shared services are being actively pursued between NVRH and North Country in Newport. Insurance is the larger issue; there are a lot of unknowns. He will come before the board soon to update us on progress.

Mark made a motion to approve Selectboard meeting minutes of 12/01/25. Jerry seconded, so moved.

Mark motioned to approve 12/19/25 special Selectboard meeting minutes, Joe seconded, so moved.

Dave Kaufman is out and there is no highway report.

Jim Sullivan presented the Town Administrators report: Jim noted that the FEMA monies that have been denied are in appeal. He is hoping that the state can pitch in to cover the costs associated with the damages from 07/10/25 flooding. Jim has sent data regarding costs to support the appeal process, there is no definitive resolution at this time.

Jim submitted grants for reimbursement for work on Victory Road (upgrade culverts) and Calendar Brook Road (ditching and culverts). All other reimbursements have been received or are in the process of being reimbursed. The bank stabilization project on Brook Road is the final project related to the July 2025 flooding events.

Jim addressed the sidewalk clearing in East Burke Village with the contractor; the V-Trans plow has been pushing snow back onto the cleared sidewalks and they agreed to "plow" the sidewalks again as necessary to keep them clear.

The Planning Commission has finished the draft update of the Town Plan. 01/20/26 at 6:00 is scheduled for a public hearing. The draft plan then goes to the Selectboard and a public hearing, possibly in March.

Mike gave the Zoning Administrator's report:

Permits and subdivisions remain steady. A motion was granted to appoint an administrator for the Bailey estate; this should be in the next 30 days. The Old Post Office is listed and for sale. Mike notes multiple violations at the Koopman property (Beaner's Garage) and Tom Williamson's Church street property and also the RT 5 property. Mike would like to send one more letter to both owners and is asking the board to support and sign off.

West Burke Feasibility Study: Andrea Day (Dufresne Group Engineering) will give a presentation at the February meeting.

Town Garage update: Morton is bringing in additional crews; weather dependent good progress should be made this month. Gosselin Well Drilling is scheduled for the second week in April.

Burke Mountain Academy: a light installed at the crosswalk was too bright and hitting drivers in the eyes; Mike has been working with the school to explore other options to alert the public to the crosswalks and student pedestrians there. BMA is prepared to handle the expense associated with increasing the safety. He shared pictures with the board illustrating the conditions; Mike is proposing an improved cross walk with Hi-Viz cones and signage; this would be slated for spring / summer 2026. In the meantime, he proposes temporary signage that the BMA staff will be responsible for.

Joe asked about a home on Church Street that he feels is a hazard and is concerned that there are children there. Joe also expressed concern about the Rumbinas property on Burke Hollow Road and the house next to the Koopman property (Beaner's Garage) that is in probate. Joe will contact the state for next steps and Mike will be sending letters of violation.

New Business:

Correspondence: letter of Interest from Jennifer Barone to the DRB. Mike verified that there is one opening at the DRB; everyone agrees that she would be a great asset; Joe motioned, Jerry seconded, so moved.

Letter of Interest from Curt Busto to be appointed to the Burke Conservation Committee: upon Mike's recommendation Jerry motioned, Joe seconded, so moved.

Discuss and Review Brook Field Maintenance Agreement; this is for the on-demand power generator. Joe asked if they had been responsive, Linda reports that they have been. Joe noted that as the building is also an emergency shelter it is important to have power when there is an issue. Joe motioned to approve the contract, Jerry seconded, so moved.

Old business: There is none.

Visitor / Public comments: There are none.

Executive Session commenced at 6:08 for a personnel issue. The board came out of executive session with no action taken. Jerry motioned to resume the regular meeting at 6:31. Joe seconded, so moved.

Joe motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:33. Jerry seconded, the meeting adjourned at 6:33.

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie Desmarais
Minutes Clerk