

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TOWN OF MADISON
December 23, 2025
MINUTES**

Selectmen Present – Adam Price; Joy Gray; Jim Eldridge; Jake Boewe; Nicole Nordlund

Others Present – Town Administrator Linda Shackford; Admin Asst/Land Use Admin Kate Young; Chief Jim Hayford; Librarian Sloane Jarell; Videographers Evan Woss and Theo Gray

Where and When Posted – Town Hall upper & lower bulletin boards and Madison & Silver Lake Post Offices on December 16, 2024.

Meeting Called to Order – By Price at 4:30 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance - Price led those in attendance in reciting the Pledge.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by Price seconded by Gray to postpone the approval if the minutes of December 9, 2025 to the January 6, 2026 meeting to have time to review Gray’s proposed edits. The motion passed **5-0**.

APPROVAL OF MANIFESTS: Price read aloud the Manifest totals of December 22-29, 2025 in the amount of \$509,445.92 The manifest breakdown is as follows: \$42,784.49 for payroll; \$13,105.30 for payroll liabilities; \$107,706.52 for accounts payable; \$20,849.64 for NHRS; and \$325,000 for Madison School District.

Motion by Eldridge, seconded by Gray to approve the manifest. The motion passed **5-0**.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Donna Veilleux inquired about the approval process for minutes, noting the unusual nature of receiving written edits during the meeting. Price explained they are usually small edits and offered as verbal amendments. Veilleux also asked about the legal counsel review of the personnel policy, which was confirmed to be scheduled for the January 6th agenda.

DISCUSSION ITEMS/NEW BUSINESS:

2025 Encumbrances:

The Board reviewed a request to encumber \$2,000 from the 2025 budget for Hartford Communications to cover the purchase a prisoner transport partition for the 2021 Tahoe police vehicle. It was noted that the previous Chief did not have a petition installed in this vehicle.

Motion by Eldridge, seconded by Gray, to approve the encumbrance of \$2,000 for the prisoner transport partition. The motion passed **5-0**.

2026 Household Hazardous Waste Day Commitment:

The Board discussed the annual commitment letter for Household Hazardous Waste Day. The previous year's expenditure was \$2,542, close to the budgeted amount of \$2,500. After reviewing historical data which showed varying participation, the Board agreed to maintain the \$2,500 commitment level for 2026.

Motion by Gray, seconded by Boewe, to commit \$2,500 for the 2026 Household Hazardous Waste Day. The motion passed **5-0**.

Sale of State Owned Land - Map 204 Lot 011:

The Board reviewed an offer from the State of New Hampshire to sell a 1.15-acre parcel to the Town. The property, located on Tasker Hill Road, was identified as part of what was once intended to be a bypass corridor. The parcel has an easement for a proposed rail trail running through it. After discussion, the Board determined that the asking price of over \$80,000 did not represent good value for the Town.

Motion by Eldridge, seconded by Gray to inform the State that the Town is not interested in purchasing the property. The motion passed **5-0**.

Voluntary Change of Address: 42 Bern Dr to 5 Sarnen Rd:

The Board reviewed a request to change the address of a property in Eidelweiss from 42 Bern Drive to 5 Sarnen Road. It was explained that the property was originally numbered off Bern Drive, but driveway access is actually from Sarnen Road. E-911 has approved the change, and the Eidelweiss District was involved in the process and assigned the number.

Motion by Gray, seconded by Eldridge to approve the voluntary change of address. The motion passed **5-0**.

2026 Preliminary Budget:

The Board conducted a detailed review of the proposed 2026 budget, going line by line through each department with significant discussion noted. Discussion points included Price finding it tough to cut in places. Price suggested removing the \$12,000 office assistant line in the executive budget. Gray noted the desire of the Code Officer to have help that could come from keeping that \$12,000.

- The ambulance line increased from \$120,104 to \$134,442 which is based upon the contract.
- Assessing is a new one-year contract with Avitar instead of a five-year contract. The contract will be put out to bid in 2026.
- Building inspection showed a 2.2% increase, for wage increase and code books.
- Conservation Commission requested an increase for animal presentations during Old Home Week.
- DPW Administration proposed adding \$26,000 for part-time transfer station staffing and hourly employee rate increases.

Gray noted that the Selectboard and ABC have both spoke to capping raises at 2.25% COLA and it appears that raises in this line are above that. Price would like to see staying in line with a 2.8% COLA if there is going to be a cap. This percentage will be looked at again in January.

Nordlund wants more information about how the Transfer Station is staffed before supporting the part-time addition. Boewe explained the need expressed by Arruda to ensure fee collection. Nordlund would prefer to have a rotation of the DPW employees.

Gray, in regards to over-time, would like to see employees not be expected to be out plowing nights and report early the next day. Price explained that is already the case. Gray questioned why part-timers would be making over-time in June and what tasks are they performing. Shackford explained employees working at the Transfer Station on holidays are paid from the over-time line.

- Direct Assistance increased at the request of the Welfare Director in anticipation of services that will not be available in 2026 due to federal cuts.
- Election line increase is due to three elections in 2026 versus one in 2025.
- Emergency Management needed additional funds for generator service.
- Executive fees line increase included an explanation by Shackford of them.
- Financial increases were from postage, wage and software costs.
- Fire Department has no increase over 2025.

Gray said this would be the fourth year that the department comes in \$50,000 under budget. She suggests placing \$1 in lines as place holders. Price sees this as something to discuss with the Chief.

- Library has a proposed increase of 2.2%.
- Notes due brought up a suggestion by Price to look into using UFB to make a lease payment for the grader. DRA and Town Counsel still need to be contacted for guidance.
- Planning Board and ZBA budgets increased significantly due to legal costs associated with cell tower cases.
- Police have a proposed increase of 2.2%.
- Rec Department proposed a \$7,000 which would support increases in bus fees, software and field trips.
- Zoning Board's legal line significant increase of \$25,000 for anticipated legal cell tower issues.
- The total proposed budget was \$3,811,188, representing an 8.2% increase over 2025.

OLD BUSINESS:

Mack Truck Spec and Performance Details: The Board reviewed a detailed 12-page specification document for the previously approved truck purchase. The DPW Director and Foreman had reviewed and approved the specifications.

Motion by Eldridge, seconded by Boewe to approve and initial the truck specifications. The motion passed **3-0-2** with Gray and Nordlund abstaining, citing concerns about the warranty and lack of sufficient information.

SELECTMEN LISTS:

Selectman Nordlund presented several items:

- Proposed using bear-proof containers, costing approximately \$1,200 as an alternative to a dumpster at the garage;
- Reported on conversations with a resident regarding Avitar assessment issues and requested permission to contact Avitar about their policies on measuring living space and using real estate comparable. And, stated she felt it was not appropriate that the resident was not given a place on the agenda to discuss the issue with the Board. Price remembered that resident coming to a Board meeting and Price went to the resident's house with the assessor for remeasuring;

- Requested that we get as many bids as possible as related to the upcoming assessing contract bid citing assessing company names;
- Would like to see if it is worth the purchase of the module in iWorq that would break out the information for cost per road mile figure.
- Having done road inspections, she has found areas around Town that are not being maintained such as shouldering, pavement missing in Carved in Bark, 12” drop near her neighbor and the need for ditching. Having gone out with a resident that builds roads, she feels the grader and excavator should both be out being used for 40 hours/week. She wants to see a switch from the DPW summary report of the previous two weeks to a projection of work to be done over the coming two weeks. The Board was in agreement with this change and asked Shackford to inform the DPW Director.

Selectman Gray reported on:

- The Capital Improvement Plan committee progress, including developing and amending policy and procedure documents.
- The receipt of approximately 25 emails from residents regarding the Town of Madison property policy, which is scheduled for the January 6th meeting.
- Work on the purchasing policy will be reviewed at the January 6th meeting.

Selectman Eldridge reported that the Master Plan work will begin again in January.

Selectman Price had nothing to report.

Selectman Boewe mentioned:

- Had a discussion with Dave Swift about the dumpster replacement proposal and his concerns about volume of summer usage from the ball field and Rec department.
- ABC wants to see efforts of a decrease in next year’s budget numbers.
- Boewe plans to reach out to Heather Sherwood regarding the Alpha Building Company plan. Gray suggested including VDOE in the process.

Administrator List – Shackford had nothing to report.

DEPARTMENT HEAD'S LISTS:

Chief Hayford reported:

- The pole-mounted radar sign has been received and will be deployed when warmer weather arrives.
- A reminder was offered to residents not to park on roads during winter as there had been another crash involving a Town truck and a vehicle parked on the road.

Librarian Jarell reported:

- The ADA accessible doors have been installed and that the second grant covered the overage, so no money would be needed from the article approved in March of 2025.

SIGNATURE ITEMS:

- Manifests
- Payroll & Accounts Payable Checks

Request for Payment: Leaping Lizards Adventure - Rec Revolving \$350.00
Purchase Requisition: 2025-POLI-001 Hartford Communications \$2,000.00

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Marcia McKenna inquired about water quality monitoring in Silver Lake, concerned that if the state wasn't conducting testing, SLAM might need to expand their testing to maintain consistent data year by year.
- Donna Veilleux thanked the Board for their work this year and wished them happy holidays.

Motion by Gray, seconded by Eldridge to adjourn. The motion passed **5-0**.

The meeting adjourned at 6:06 pm.

NEXT SELECTMEN'S MEETING – The next Selectmen's meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 6, 2026 commencing at 4:30 pm at Town Hall.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Shackford,
Town Administrator