

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TOWN OF MADISON
January 6, 2026
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; Town Clerk/Tax Collector/Fire Chief Michael Brooks; Rec Director O'Donnell; DPW crew members Josh Shackford, Justin Chick, Bill Chick, Dave Swift, Dylan Eldridge, Bill Cherry; Videographers Aysia Wellinghurst and Theo Gray

Where and When Posted – Town Hall upper & lower bulletin boards and Madison & Silver Lake Post Offices on December 16, 2025.

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 Gray seconded by Eldridge to approve the minutes of December 9, 2025 with Gray's edits the were presented December 23, 2025. The motion passed **5-0**.

Motion by Gray seconded by Eldridge to approve the minutes of December 23, 2025 as written. The motion passed **5-0**.

Motion by Boewe seconded by Eldridge to approve the non-public minutes made public of December 23, 2025 as written. The motion passed **5-0**.

APPROVAL OF MANIFESTS: Price read aloud the Manifest totals of December 30, 2025 in the amount of \$41,478.98 for accounts payable.

Motion by Boewe, seconded by Eldridge to approve the manifest. The motion passed **4-1**.

APPROVAL OF MANIFESTS: Price read aloud the Manifest totals of January 5–12, 2026 in the amount of \$872,587.51 The manifest breakdown is as follows: \$36,473.16 for payroll; \$11,337.74 for payroll liabilities; \$37,986.61 for accounts payable; \$461,790.00 for VDOE; and \$325,000 for Madison School District.

Motion by Boewe, seconded by Eldridge to approve the manifest. The motion passed **3-2**.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Price opened the public hearing at 4:34 pm regarding a new fee for the Recreation Program, specifically a proposed \$35 per day, per student fee for School Vacation Camp. Notification of the hearing was made in the Conway Daily Sun on December 16, 2025 and post on December 11, 2025 at Town Hall, the Madison Post Office and the Silver Lake Post Office.

It was explained that the program would provide a place for parents to send their children during school breaks that include winter, February, April, and Christmas breaks. The hours would be 9 AM to 4 PM equaling 7 hours, which works out to \$5 per hour. Price noted that this rate was comparable to local daycares in the valley, which charge \$35-40 per day.

O'Donnell reported that December break attendance was lower than expected due to illness and weather with some parents not wanting to travel during the storm. They had 16-17 kids registered originally.

Chair Price asked for public input, receiving none. Gray mentioned that she would like to revisit the summer camp fees at a later date.

Motion by Gray, seconded by Boewe to implement the \$35 per day, per student fee for School Vacation Camp. The motion passed **5-0**.

Price closed the public hearing at 4:37pm.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Donna Veilleux asked whether public comments would be allowed during the discussion on the use of Town of Madison property. Price agreed to allow it for this meeting but noted he would try to keep it contained and short.

DISCUSSION ITEMS/NEW BUSINESS:

Discussion of Personnel Policy: Town of Madison Property:

Price initiated the discussion by reading the current policy regarding the use of Town of Madison property. The policy states that town property of any type or value should not be used or removed from town premises without written authorization from the department head and notification to the Board of Selectmen. Following this, a draft addition to the policy was presented which proposed the following statement: "There will be no personal use of town property."

Extensive discussion unfolded, focusing on potential exceptions to this rule. Gray proposed incorporating language about "incidental use," which would account for minor allowances, such as stopping to buy groceries on the way home from official duties. The necessity of an exemption for emergency personnel was also debated, given that they are required to be "always at the ready." Concerns were raised by the DPW staff regarding the practicality of taking town vehicles home before expected weather events, suggesting this might be occasionally necessary.

Public comments on the matter were heard from several residents, including Donna Veilleux, Doug McAllister, Tino Fernandes and Sharon Schilling who supported the proposed changes. One resident emphasized the importance of ensuring town property is used solely for its intended public purposes and not for personal gain.

Following the public and Board discussion, the Board of Selectmen reached a preliminary consensus on the draft policy. It was agreed that the language would be sent to Town Counsel for proper wording and further legal review. The Board's intent included a few key points:

- Personal use of town property should be strictly prohibited.

- Incidental use might be permissible at the discretion of the Board, providing a safeguard against potential loopholes or misinterpretations.
- Proper and precise language was needed to ensure the policy's integrity and enforceability.
- The discussion further encompassed the disciplinary measures applicable to breaches of this policy. The Board deliberated over whether violations should lead to immediate dismissal, bypassing the existing standard four-stage disciplinary process. Agreement on this disciplinary approach was not finalized.

To move the process forward, the Board tasked Shackford with the responsibility of sending the draft policy to Town Counsel. The guidance sought would ensure that the policy was robust and enforceable while accommodating the necessary operational flexibilities required by town departments.

Sharon Schilling asked to continue the discussion referencing an issue that came up earlier in December that there has already been personal use of town property and as a tax payer she wants her money back. Price stated this is a personnel issue being looked into and there will be results once done. Schilling wanted to know that meant; is there an investigation ongoing?

David Scarborough asked for the Board to commit to a date when they will have information. Price was hesitant to commit to a date, but expected to have information in a month. Scarborough expects to have an answer to a cost and how this became an unwritten policy that is technically illegal and put taxpayers at a risk liability wise.

Discussion of DRAFT Purchasing Policy Changes:

The Board reviewed proposed changes to the town's purchasing policy presented by the CI Committee, including:

- Changing the dollar threshold for requiring three estimates from \$10,000 to \$5,000.
- Adding a requirement for three written estimates for purchases between \$1,000-\$5,000.
- Removing the phrase "whenever possible" when referring to obtaining three vendor proposals.

The Board heard concerns from DPW staff about potential issues with the policy changes, particularly regarding:

- Emergency vehicle repairs where obtaining multiple quotes would be impractical.
- The need for timely purchases of materials such as sand, salt, or gravel.
- Situations where there are fewer than three vendors available.
- The relationship damage from requesting quotes with no intention to use certain vendors.

After extensive discussion, the Board agreed to suggest modification back to the CI Committee to the draft policy to include:

- Exceptions for maintenance/repair items.
- Exceptions for items needing action prior to the next Board meeting.
- Exceptions when items are purchased through the state bid process.
- Maintaining the phrase "whenever possible" when requiring three vendor proposals.
- Requirements for documentation when fewer than three vendors are available.

A clean, unmarked version of the policy with changes will be made for review at a future meeting.

DPW Director Shackford asked to excused himself and crew to prepare to plow tonight but before leaving stated he has invited instructors from UNH T2 to do a presentation on Madison's roads that would be open for the Boards and public. The Board was interested in the presentation and Price asked Shackford to schedule it and they'd do their best to attend.

6:00 pm Joint Meeting with School Board:

The Board recessed their regular meeting to meet with School Board members Jim Curran, Jeremy Cox, Deb Parsons and Superintendent Mike Whaland.

Discussion included:

- A draft MOU for a shared storage space at the school for the Recreation Department. This space would allow for office space for the Director along with storage of Rec supplies. Access would be set so no access to other parts of the school would be allowed. Nordlund suggested a 30-day notice if there is going to be a change to this agreement with Whaland offering to make that clear in a revision.
- Curran asked if there are any issues that may be impeding the DPW plow efforts at the building. Price was not aware of any but would touch base with Director Shackford.
- Set a date of March 3 for a candidates' night to be scheduled for 6:00pm after a 4:00pm Selectboard meeting.
- Price is thrilled with the school's flooring calling it a dream for the basketball players.
- A home has been found for the folding chairs that were replaced because they cannot be used on the new gym floor.
- Gray asked about the Alpha Company with Curran explaining that Sherwood at the SAU is working on it, Gray also suggested that, if necessary, VDOE could be invited to participate.
- Curran mentioned that the idea of a new generator at the school for \$150,000 was abandoned when it was found that a \$10,000 connection to the current generator would suffice.
- Congratulations were offered to Superintendent Whaland for being recognized as Superintendent of the Year.
- The next joint meeting is scheduled for July 7th at the regular Selectboard meeting.

The meeting with the School Board members adjourned at 6:26pm.

2026 DRAFT Budget:

The Board discussed the 2026 draft budget. Price presented two budget drafts: one showing an 8.2% increase and another showing a 1.5% increase that would move all notes due to a warrant article from unreserved fund balance.

The Board discussed:

- Using a portion of the unreserved fund balance which is currently at \$1,033,000 to pay for 2026 lease payments.
- The risks associated with creating a warrant article for debt payments is if the article fails, the town could default.
- Nordlund suggested to pay off high-interest leases entirely rather than just covering this year's payments.
- After discussion, the Board directed Shackford to adjust the budget to show the removal of two high-interest leases, the police cruiser and trash truck, through separate warrant

articles, which would save taxpayers money on interest while mitigating the risk of default. This idea will also be presented to Town Counsel by Shackford.

- Discussion is still to be had by the Board regarding 2.25% COLA increases for employees.
- Gray sees possible decreases to the Fire Dept budget as they consistently turn funds back a significant amount at the end of the year.
- Nordlund is not confident in the need for an extra employee at the transfer station. If there were two employees that could meet the job description requirements to be able to lift 75lbs, the need for another would be not be there. Arruda will be invited to the next meeting to discuss the additional personnel.
- Gray sees the Office Assistant position would allow for more information to get out to the public citing that the calendar on the website could be updated more regularly. The Board voted 4-1 to remove the proposed \$12,000 for an office assistant position from the budget.

The Board agreed to revisit the budget at their next meeting with the requested changes along with each member bringing their suggested edits.

2026 DRAFT Warrant:

The Board reviewed draft warrant articles for the upcoming town meeting, including:

- \$363,563 for a truck purchase with \$255,000 to come from the Granite State Clean Fleet Grant and the remainder from unassigned fund balance.
- \$134,000 for chip sealing of Town roads, \$260,700 for paving and \$25,500 in crack sealing which Nordlund is not in favor of without a CI road plan in place after reviewing the roads with Mr. Wehmeyer.
- Expendable trust fund contributions were made to the Highway Heavy Equipment, Assessing, Silver Lake Dam and Master Plan. Shackford will check with Brooks about the funds for the Groundwater ETF.
- A veterans totally disabled tax credit increase from \$2,000 to \$2,500 due to changes in the law.
- The Board decided to remove a proposed \$5,500 warrant article for painting a double center yellow line on East Madison Road, suggesting that interested citizen should petition for it if desired.
- For charitable organizations, the Board noted they typically approve around \$27,000 total in warrant articles based on recommendations from the Budget Committee.
- An additional warrant articles for \$18,800 was added for software migration costs for the police department with the Carroll County Dispatch and \$10,000 to create a police cruiser ETF.

The Board will continue reviewing the warrant articles at their next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS: There was none.

SELECTMEN LISTS:

Selectman Nordlund reported on several issues:

- The Conservation Commission will meet Thursday.
- A concern about a resident being denied a place on an agenda stating she does not think it is legal to do so.

- A complaint about snow plowing on Jones Hill Road between #48 and #52. The complaint will be forwarded to Shackford to give to DPW.

Selectman Gray asked:

- How residents should contact the DPW, especially for emergency situations on weekends. It was clarified by Chief Hayford that residents should call the police department's non-emergency number for urgent road issues, which gets forwarded to the sheriff's office who can then contact police or DPW.
- Gray asked for the Snow Removal procedures to be added to the website.

Selectman Eldridge has no items.

Selectmen Price mentioned two items on behalf of Town Clerk Tax Collector Brooks:

- 2025 Tax bill collections are on par with previous years.
- The State of NH has increased fees for car registrations as of January 1st, the increase only benefits the state, not the town.

Selectman Boewe had no items.

Administrator Shackford has no items.

Chief Hayford had no items.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:49 pm.

NEXT SELECTMEN'S MEETING – The next Selectmen's meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 23, 2026 commencing at 4:30 pm at Town Hall.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Shackford,
Town Administrator