

1 **SELECTBOARD MEETING**

2 January 17, 2024

3 Attending the meeting; Merrily Lovell, Maggie Gordon, Mike Loner, Dennis Place, Paul Lamberson, Joy  
4 Dubin Grossman, Todd Odit, Pricilla Kim Reidinger, Robert Mell, Janet Francis, John and Sally Mead,  
5 Cathy Ryan, Tim Parent, Linda Parent, Clayton Clark.

6 Attending remotely; Jeff Parent, Ken Hurd, Laua Wisniewski, Jim and Kathy Rohe, Phil Pouech, Gary  
7 Donaldson, Lou Cosasanti, Margaret McNurlan, Annemarie Cioffari, Carl Bohlen, Erin and Kevin Dente,  
8 Judy Cardinal, Andrea Morgante.

9 Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m. via zoom.

10 Agenda Additions or Deletions

11 none

12 Public Comment

13 none

14 Approve Minutes of 1/3/2024

15 Paul moved to approve the minutes of 1/3/24 as amended. Seconded by Maggie and approved with 4 yes  
16 votes and Mike abstaining.

17 Selectboard Forum

18 Paul said Andrea Morgante gave him a hydrologic tour of the Village. He was not aware that the Fire  
19 Department was no longer using the canal. He also noted the culvert under Rt116 by Kinney Drugs is very  
20 small. Mike said he also has informed the Fire Department there is a large beaver dam blocking up the  
21 canal behind his property.

22 GMTA Budget Presentation

23 Clayton Clark, general manager of GMT, gave an overview of their budget. He said GMT is a municipality  
24 that is governed by a Board of Commissioners. Phil Pouech, of Hinesburg, is one of the commissioners.  
25 The Rt116 commuter is the primary service for Hinesburg which runs 4 time a day round trip. Last years  
26 ridership was just over 3,000 which was a 72% increase over the previous year. Hinesburg's annual  
27 assessment for this year is \$52,980.00 which is an increase of 3.9%. They will start charging fares again as  
28 of March 6 but the 116 commuter will not have a fare charge. Clayton said he understands Hinesburg is  
29 considering if it makes sense to stay a member of GMT. He is happy to work with Hinesburg to see if  
30 service could be better for the community. Merrily said the Selectboard has no issue with the service but  
31 that surrounding towns don't pay and Hinesburg pays a steep price. Clayton said this was discussed today  
32 at the Legislature that there is no consistency across municipalities throughout the State. Not only in GMT  
33 service area but in others some municipalities don't have to pay because fund raising provides the required  
34 match. The GMT charter does not give them a way to spread the cost equitably.

35 Phil Pouech said today they got the report the Legislature asked for to look at Statewide funding  
36 opportunities for public transit systems, not just for urban and GMT but also the other 5 transit systems.

Approved 2/7/2024

37 This was asked for because there is an understanding that it's not fair and public transit is running into  
38 financial issues. The Legislature sees the need to get more funds. The report noted municipalities that  
39 are paying now are tapped out.

40 Mike noted it is great to see the ridership going up. He asked if it is possible to track how many of those  
41 originate in Hinesburg. Clayton said the information is not specific but he will check. Mike mentioned  
42 other municipal districts, like the solid waste, where if you were not a member town you did not get  
43 service. He feels GMT and the State need to look at those towns who are not members and they need to  
44 start paying for services. Clayton said he agrees with Mike and noted the need for statutory changes  
45 needed to GMP.

46 Maggie agrees there is a need for it to be equitable. She noted that today 5 people got off the bus. 4 of  
47 them then drove off, it may have been to homes in Hinesburg but just as well may have been another  
48 town.

49 Cathy Ryan said when she is riding the bus from Burlington to Hinesburg people are getting on and off the  
50 bus at different stops along the route to Hinesburg.

51 Dennis asked what the date is that Hinesburg needs to decide about membership. Todd said a decision  
52 before July 1 to leave would take effect in FT 26.

53 Carl Bohlen said he supports the budget and asked how we could increase ridership, and what needs to  
54 change either in the charter or by the State to change the payment system like what Mike said. That if you  
55 are getting service you have to pay.

56 Merrily said this can be included in the planned future discussion.

57 Request for Additional Drinking Water Testing re: Landfill

58 Janet Francis, representing the neighbors who live in properties near the landfill, addressed the Board with  
59 their concerns. They strongly disagree that the properties around the landfill water testing be  
60 discontinued. They are requesting continued testing that will include the properties that originally were  
61 included in the 1990 landfill closure plan, that will include all properties listed and tested in 2023, as well  
62 as any property that is adjacent to a property that is found to exceed the ground water drinking standard.

63 Janet shared documents and maps regarding the testing. She noted for 18 years there were no problems  
64 and then the leaching of contaminants spread. She referred to properties listed on the map that are  
65 affected as well as those that have not been tested. They are asking for immediate testing of all properties  
66 on the map with a hash-mark which will provide information on the where the perimeter is.

67 Merrily said what Janet is stating is very convincing and she totally empathizes and if she were in this  
68 situation, she would probably be doing the same thing. The Selectboards position is that they are relying  
69 on the best professionals who are looking at this situation. Science is not exact and finite but changes.  
70 The Board is aware of that but have to rely on the experts. They know this is a pressing issue and getting  
71 the revolving loan is an example of the Board taking action. If things change, they will get further testing  
72 done.

73 Janet asked how will they know things have changed and the water has moved from any source to other  
74 properties without a baseline.

75 Todd said we are regulated by the State, the testing is reviewed by the State and it is up to them if they  
76 agreed with the Town's consultant. He feels it would be beneficial for the residents to take their case to  
77 the State noting their disagreement.

78 Dennis asked about testing the wells before the State makes a decision. Todd said we can but who decides  
79 that and what guardrails do we have to control this. Dennis said he understands but if the Town tests the  
80 well noted in blue on the map we would get answers. He added we need to take care of our residents.

81 Paul asked Todd if he has any idea when we can expect to hear from the State. Joy said she expects we  
82 will get information in February. Todd added the next scheduled round of sampling is in May.

83 Mike said he completely sees where the concern is by the residents. The Town has hired experts and  
84 engineers that are supposed to be listening to them with the States guidance. He wonders where a  
85 compromise might lie. Janet said the compromise starts by finding out how far this problem goes starting  
86 right up next to the landfill. Mike said a compromise tends to go both ways. Janet replied they are asking  
87 to find out the extent of the problem.

88 Todd said the question is who pays for this testing. Janet said the Town should pay as the Town caused  
89 the problem and it is the Town's responsibility to find out how far the contamination goes in order to figure  
90 out the best solution.

91 Janet said a compromise is to change the required semi-annual testing to annual on homes that have been  
92 tested several times and found acceptable.

93 Maggie said if this were a geographic issue, she agrees we could just draw a circle around the area. But  
94 this is a geological, they have created layers of testing. That report is reviewed by a second engineering  
95 firm which is then sent to the State for their review. This is not something that can be figured out by  
96 looking at a map.

97 Tim Parent asked if Board members saw the responses to the residents' questions to Stone. He did not  
98 think they were acceptable and none of the questions were really answered. If you are not testing, how  
99 do you know what is happening.

100 Todd noted there is more money included in the landfill budget for further testing.

101 Laura Wisniewski read from the report by Stone noting the migration of contaminated ground water. This  
102 is a life-threatening health risk.

103 Phil Pouech said he believes we should expand the testing. He suggests going to Stone and saying we want  
104 to do more testing than recommended and ask they which wells they recommend be tested to give them  
105 the most information to increase their knowledge base. Merrily said she thought they did that. Joy said  
106 to some level they did.

107 Lou Cosasanti said the science in this is not very scientific. The reality is Laura asked the Stone  
108 representative if they can give a probability that the wells will not be contaminated to which he answered  
109 no. He added the statistical analysis recommended is specifically meant to monitor things that are slow,  
110 steady, and continuous. We know that does not describe the contamination problem.

111 Annemarie Cioffari said so much of the science depends on the question. If the question is have we done  
112 enough that is different from what should we be doing to know what the perimeter is and how fast it is

113 moving. She feels the Town has some responsibility to remedy the problem. They have a POET system  
114 for their well, the contamination has increased statistically significant and the POET system is taking care  
115 of that right now, but you don't stop monitoring it.

116 Ken Hurd talked about the direction of water in his shallow well, the water is moving and to not test the  
117 surrounding wells is not acceptable.

118 Carl Bohlen said he is not impacted but if he was, he would be making the same arguments as Janet and  
119 the other residents. He feels the Town has a responsibility and obligation to make sure everyone who is  
120 potentially at risk can know their water is safe. No expert can guarantee something underground is not  
121 going to change. He feels the budget and Town Report should state how many tests can be done for the  
122 dollars budgeted. He also asked if there might be insurance coverage the Town has that could help cover  
123 some of these costs.

124 Paul said he has an open mind on the concerns of the residents. The dilemma is if we cannot trust the  
125 scientists who do we trust. If we test the homes in the blue on the map, how often do we test to feel safe.

126 John Mead said the map is incorrect as his well is not indicated in the correct spot.

127 Kim Reidinger said the Turner property POET system will need to be enlarged, possibly located outside the  
128 residence, because of the increased contaminants in their water.

129 Laura Wisniewski asked when this will be addressed again. Merrily said it is not scheduled yet, probably  
130 after we hear from the State.

#### 131 Selectboard Discussion on Draft FY 25 Operating and Capital Budgets

132 Merrily said after thinking more on the request from the Conservation Commission for more funds for land  
133 conservation she has changed her mind and agrees to the \$7,500 currently in the budget and does not  
134 want to make it a separate article. Mike said he watched the meeting and agrees to keep the amount at  
135 \$7,500. He would like to avoid putting money in the budget when we do not know what it will be spent  
136 on. If a really fantastic project comes up, he would hope we could find the money.

137 Paul asked if the true cost is reflected in the budget. Todd said it is not, in trying to keep the budget as  
138 low as possible. An example is the landfill, we put in a significant increase but it is unknown what amount  
139 of testing might be done.

140 The Board will meet next Thursday to approve the draft budget and sign the warning.

#### 141 Receipt of Draft Public Safety Strategic Plan

142 The plan will be put on the Town web site tomorrow. It will be on the agenda for a public hearing on  
143 February 7.

#### 144 Town Manager Report

- 145 • Todd and Joy met with someone from the Howard Center to talk about the cost to the Town given  
146 the low utilization. Todd said it would be worthwhile this Spring to evaluate services and cost.
- 147 • Staffing. Two employees have changed departments, Joe is now with the Highway Department  
148 and Mark is now with the W&WW.

149       • Joy said that she, Todd, and the consultant for DEIB and department heads all met today had the  
150       first kick off meeting.

151    Approve Warrants

152    Mike moved to approve the warrants signed by Merrily and Maggie, including payroll, as submitted by the  
153    Town Treasurer. Seconded by Maggie and approved with 5 yes votes.

154    Adjourn

155    Paul moved to adjourn at 8:04 p.m. Seconded by Maggie and approved with 5 yes votes.

156    Respectfully submitted,

157    Valerie Spadaccini, clerk of the Board