

**TOWN OF GRANBY
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
March 17, 2025**

PRESENT: Mark Fiorentino, First Selectman; Mark Neumann, Vice-Chairman; Margaret Chapple, Frederick Moffa, Kelly Rome, and Zainab Zafar, Student Liaison

ABSENT: Ben Lavigne, Student Liaison

ALSO PRESENT: Mike Walsh, Town Manager; Mike Guarco, Board of Finance Chairman

The Regular meeting of the Town of Granby Board of Selectmen was called to order by First Selectman Mark Fiorentino at 7:00 p.m.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. MINUTES

2.1. Approval of Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting Minutes – March 3, 2025

ON A MOTION by K. Rome, seconded by M. Neumann, the Board voted (5-0-0) to approve the minutes of March 3, 2025, as presented.

3. APPOINTMENTS

There were no appointments presented.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

4.1. Barn Door Hills Road – Farming/Herbicide Application Update

Several neighbors along Barn Door Hills contacted the Town and expressed concern about the farmer's operations in the adjacent field during the last growing season. Their concerns were related to trash in the area and proper application and signage related to fertilizers being applied to the fields. Town Manager Mike Walsh worked closely with the residents and the farmer to provide a solution for the immediate concerns and identify longer term items that may be considered in the future. The farmer has committed to 1) cease using the Command herbicide; 2) post notices around the perimeter of the crop area whenever herbicide is applied; 3) provide a complete copy of application records for everything applied during the season; 4) provide and maintain bathroom facilities at the site; 5) provide an eye and hand wash station; 6) install trash receptacles.

In addition to the commitments from the farmer, the Town is also going to install a sign indicating where the farming land ends, and the private property begins to discourage the farm workers from entering adjacent private property. The Town has not heard back from the neighbors regarding the solution.

Longer term, a member of the Conservation Commission has requested the Town include more substantive provisions in the leases regarding these issues especially around the application of chemicals. Since such changes may have potential impacts on all agricultural land in town, the First Selectman has asked the Conservation Commission to work with the Agricultural Commission to draft language for the Board of Selectmen to consider.

5. OLD BUSINESS

5.I. 83 Salmon Brook Street Lease

Over the last six months, the Town has been negotiating the sale or lease of the property at 83 Salmon Brook Street. As part of the process, the Town secured two appraisals of the building and allowed contractors to access the building to identify and estimate repairs.

The interested party provided the Town with three written proposals including various options to lease or buy the property. After careful consideration of all proposals, an offer to sell the building was made by the Town about two weeks ago. The Town expected to hear back from the interested party but has not and therefore, considers the deal rejected.

The Board of Selectmen will not take any further action at this time and will discuss next steps for the property with the Town Manager.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.I. Connecticut Department of Transportation Grant Approval

The Town receives grant funds from the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation for Elderly and Disabled Demand Responsive Transportation. The grant funding is combined with funds from the General Fund budget to employ senior van drivers. The grant amount for FY26-28 is \$29,453 annually and requires a 50% match.

ON A MOTION by M. Neumann, seconded by F. Moffa, the Board voted (5-0-0) to direct Town Manager Mike Walsh to accept the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation grant in the amount of \$29,453, and further, to execute any agreements or documents necessary to facilitate the receipt of this grant.

6.II. Fire Marshal Smoke Detector Grant Request Approval

Grants Administrator Catherine Lanyon has requested approval from the Board of Selectmen to pursue a \$3,000 grant on behalf of Fire Marshal Brian Long from the Granby Greater Together Community Fund, organized by the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. The grant would fund the smoke alarm program which provides free smoke alarms and batteries to Granby residents. The program also includes free smoke alarm inspections by the Fire Marshal. The grant does not require a municipal match.

ON A MOTION by M. Chapple, seconded by K. Rome, the Board voted (5-0-0) to authorize Grants Administrator Catherine Lanyon to compile and file a grant application in the amount of \$3,000 with the Granby Greater Together Community

Fund provided by the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving for the purpose of securing funding for the purchase of smoke detectors.

6.III. Bond Referendum Question Resolution Approval

Town Manager Mike Walsh presented a bond referendum package related to an amending resolution that seeks to include the Doherty Bridge reconstruction as part of the bond authorization approved by the voters in 2019. The bond referendum package, including adoption timelines, was prepared by Marie Phelan of Pullman and Comley, the Town's Bond Counsel.

The Town Manager requests that the Board approve the resolution and forward it to the Board of Finance for consideration. If approved, a Town Meeting will be held on Monday, April 14, 2025, and the referendum will be held on Monday, April 21, 2025.

ON A MOTION by F. Moffa, seconded by M. Neumann, the Board voted (5-0-0) to approve the amended resolution below.

ON A SECOND MOTION by F. Moffa, seconded by M. Neumann, the Board voted (5-0-0) that should the Board of Finance approve the Amendment, a Special Town Meeting is hereby called to be held on April 14, 2025 at 6 p.m. at the Granby Senior Center & Youth Services Building, Community Room, 15C North Granby Road, Granby, CT 06035, to consider the Amendment approved by the Board of Selectmen at its meeting held on March 17, 2025, and the Board of Finance at its meeting to be held on March 24, 2025.

RESOLUTON AMENDING A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN APPROPRIATION AND BOND AUTHORIZATION OF \$13,716,000 FOR VARIOUS BRIDGE PROJECTS TO EXPAND THE SCOPE OF THE PROJECT TO INCLUDE THE DOHERTY ROAD BRIDGE PROJECT

WHEREAS, on June 4, 2019, the Town of Granby, Connecticut (the "Town") approved an appropriation and bond authorization for various bridge projects (the "Bridges Project") in the amount of \$13,716,000 (the "Bridges Resolution"); and

WHEREAS, on March 31, 2021, and on July 28, 2021, the Town issued a total of \$4,050,000 in bonds to fund the Bridges Project (the "Bond Proceeds"); and

WHEREAS, due to unexpected lower costs and grant reimbursements from the State of Connecticut (the "State"), the Town had \$2,580,000 in surplus Bond Proceeds (the "Surplus"); and

WHEREAS the Town authorized \$1,460,000 of the Surplus for the school projects leaving \$1,120,000 remaining in Surplus (the "Remaining Surplus"); and

WHEREAS, the Bridges Resolution did not contemplate or include costs related to the Doherty Road Bridge, but the Town now expects to incur costs to repair Doherty Road Bridge (the "Doherty Road Bridge Project"); and

WHEREAS, the Town desires to fund a portion of the costs of the Doherty Road Bridge Project with the Remaining Surplus and fund the balance of the costs with grant funds from the State and Town funds on hand; and

WHEREAS, accordingly, the Town seeks to expand the scope of the project description in the Bridges Resolution to include costs associated with the Doherty Road Bridge Project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Bridges Resolution is hereby amended to expand the scope of the Bridges Resolution to include costs associated with the Doherty Road Bridge Project (the "Amendment").

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Selectmen hereby recommends to the Board of Finance and to all persons qualified to vote in town meetings of the Town that it approve the Amendment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that should the Board of Finance approve the Amendment, a Special Town Meeting is hereby called to be held on April 14, 2025 at 6 p.m. at the Granby Senior Center & Youth Services Building, Community Room, 15C North Granby Road, Granby, CT 06035 (the "Town Meeting"), to consider the Amendment approved by the Board of Selectmen at its meeting held on March 17, 2025, and the Board of Finance at its meeting to be held on March 24, 2025.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Selectmen, pursuant to Section 7-7 of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended, and the Charter of the Town hereby removes the item described above on the call of the Town Meeting to be held on April 14, 2025 for submission to the voters for vote by voting machine on April 21, 2025 by the voters entitled to vote at the Town Meeting during the hours from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. such referendum to be held at the Granby Town Hall Meeting Room, 15 North Granby Road, Granby, CT 06035 under the following heading:

Shall the Town of Granby amend the resolution authorizing an appropriation and bond authorization of \$13,716,000 for various bridge projects adopted on June 4, 2019, to expand the scope of such resolution to include the planning, design, construction, reconstruction, repair and resurfacing of the bridge located on Doherty Road in the Town of Granby?

The moderator of the Town Meeting shall adjourn such meeting after reasonable discussion of such item and conclusion of such other business as may properly come before the Town Meeting and order such vote by voting machine in accordance with this resolution, Section 7-7 of the Connecticut General Statutes and the Charter.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Selectmen authorizes the Town Clerk, subject to the approval of the municipal attorney, to prepare and print concise explanatory text and other printed materials concerning the question to be submitted to the voters at referendum on April 21, 2025, specifying the intent and purpose of the Amendment in accordance with Section 9-369b of the Connecticut General Statutes.

6.IV. FY26 Board of Selectmen Town Budget Approval – Submission to the Board of Finance

ON A MOTION, by K. Rome, seconded by M. Chapple, the Board voted (5-0-0) to adopt the resolution below to transmit the FY 2025-26 budget as amended to the Board of Finance.

WHEREAS, the Board of Selectmen is required to present a budget to the Board of Finance for the 2025-26 Fiscal Year; and,

WHEREAS, various revenues are included in the budget to offset expenditures including Intergovernmental and Local Revenues; and,

WHEREAS, following a review of the proposed Town Manager's Budget, the 2025-26 Board of Selectmen General Fund Expenditure budget is recommended at \$18,445,571; and,

WHEREAS, the Selectmen's proposed budget is below the guideline budget to reflect a 2.4% increase over the 2024-25 Town Operation Budget of \$13,778,911.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Selectmen forwards a proposed 2025-26 **Revenue Budget** to the Board of Finance consisting of the following items:

GENERAL FUND REVENUES	TOWN MANAGER PROPOSED	BOS ADOPTED
Property Taxes	\$740,000	
Intergovernmental Revenues	7,842,139	
Local Departmental Revenues	1,040,191	
Fund Transfer	2,185,000	
TOTAL	\$11,807,330	

That the Board of Selectmen forwards a proposed 2025-26 **Expenditure Budget** to the Board of Finance consisting of the following items:

GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES	TOWN MANAGER PROPOSED	BOS ADOPTED
Administration	\$5,692,652	\$5,668,372*
Personal & Property Protection	3,577,508	3,601,788*
Public Works & Environment	3,710,631	3,710,631
Libraries, Recreation, & Social Services	1,128,412	1,128,412
Sub-total	14,109,203	14,109,203
Capital Budget	2,605,000	2,605,000
Debt Service	1,731,368	1,731,368
TOTAL	\$18,445,571	\$18,445,571

* Move \$1,600 from the Contribution to the Dog Fund to the Publication line item in the Property Assessment Department; move \$13,306 from the Insurance Department to the PD Overtime line item; and move \$12,574 from the Town Clerk Department to the PD Overtime line item.

That the Board of Selectmen forwards a proposed 2025-26 **Other Funds Budget** to the Board of Finance along with a 2026-2035 **Capital Improvement Program** consisting of the following:

OTHER FUNDS	TOWN MANAGER PROPOSED	BOS ADOPTED
Dog Fund	\$ 24,410	
Recreation Events (P&R and HF)	939,535	
Sewer Utility	385,240	
Capital Equipment/Improvement	3,136,204	
Education Quality & Diversity	969,686	
Solid Waste Fund	165,000	
2026-2035 Capital Improvement Program	(Detail in Budget document)	

In addition to the budget resolution, the following motion was also recommended for the ballot/referendum question:

ON A MOTION by F. Moffa, seconded by M. Neumann, the Board voted (5-0-0) to approve the following annual budget referendum language for the budget vote scheduled for Monday, April 21, 2025, in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 15 North Granby Road, Granby CT 06035 from the hours of 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

ANNUAL BUDGET REFERENDUM APRIL 21, 2025

Shall the Annual Budget Referendum for the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year as recommended by the Board of Finance, including appropriations from the General Fund, Dog Fund, Local Capital Improvement Program Fund, Town Aid Road Fund, Capital Equipment/Improvement Fund, Sewer Utility Fund, Recreation Events Fund, Education Quality and Diversity Fund, Solid Waste Fund, and Other Funds be adopted?

6.V. State Provided Local Option – Assessment of Motor Vehicles

The Connecticut General Assembly changed the method that an Assessor uses to value motor vehicles for the Grand List Year October 1, 2024. The new method of valuation will use the Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price (MSRP) and apply a depreciation schedule beginning at 85% to annually arrive at the assessment used for taxation. For Granby, the change resulted in an overall decline in the value of motor vehicles of \$16 million, or 12.63% costing the Town \$519,000 of tax revenue.

In an attempt to address the budget variability created by these changes, the legislature is providing each city and town with the option to implement a local option whereby the Town can recapture 5% of the lost value, or about 1/3 of lost revenue (estimated to be \$185,000 for Granby). Due to the mill rate cap on motor vehicles, this reduction in motor vehicle value basically translates into an increase in the real estate and personal property mill rate.

The difference in mill rates without adopting the local option (leaving the motor vehicle values at 85%) would raise the non-motor vehicle rate by .69 or 2%. Conversely, by adopting the local option (recapturing 5% of the motor vehicle values) would lower the

non-motor vehicle mill rate by .69 or 2%. Based on this information, the following motion is recommended to decide on the local option for Granby.

ON A MOTION by M. Neumann, seconded by M. Chapple, the Board voted (5-0-0) to elect the local option to apply a modified schedule of depreciation (90%) with respect to motor vehicles based on the manufacturer's suggested retail price of such motor vehicles, provided no motor vehicle shall be assessed at an amount less than five hundred dollars.

7. TOWN MANAGER REPORT – PROJECTS AND FINANCIALS

Town Manager Mike Walsh provided an update of ongoing Town of Granby projects and other noteworthy items. The FY25 year-to-date February budget summary and Phase I and Phase II ARPA report through February 28, 2025, as compiled by Finance Director Kimi Cheng was also included.

- The Radio Communications Project team is meeting weekly with Marcus Communications. The group is still working on a closing date for the radio tower site at 229 Mountain Road.
- The Town continues to pursue an appeal of the CT Siting Council KCE decision and worked with state legislators to institute a statewide BESS moratorium until such time as the state institutes uniform safety and environmental standards.
- The First Selectman and Town Manager continue to work on the disposition of the property at 83 Salmon Brook Street.
- FY26 budget workshops were held, and work on the budget continues.
- A regular meeting cadence was established for the Kearns Senior Housing development project.
- Work continues to add the Doherty Bridge project to be added to the referendum.
- Jen Espinal was hired as the new Town Clerk and sworn in by the First Selectman. She will be introduced to the Board on April 21, 2025.
- The DPW garage is not a viable option for the solar project. A new location will be identified.
- Worked with the BOE on the SRO issue and in the event the position is part of the budget, an agreement will be drafted and presented to the Board of Selectmen.
- Joined WTIC 1080 radio to celebrate "all things Granby".

8. FIRST SELECTMAN REPORT (Mark Fiorentino)

First Selectman Mark Fiorentino provided the following:

- Attended the Men's Breakfast and enjoyed the presentation on making maple syrup.
- Attended the high school production of Legally Blonde and complimented the talented cast and crew for a great show.
- Watched the Granby Grunts Robotics Club compete.
- Held an Open House on Saturday, March 15 which was attended by about 40-50 people. Most of the discussion was about the KCE battery storage facility. The Kearns development project and the status of the property at 83 Salmon Brook Street were also discussed.

9. SELECTMAN REPORTS (Margaret Chapple, Frederick Moffa, Mark Neumann, Kelly Rome, Ben Lavigne and Zainah Zafar, Student Liaisons)

Student Liaison Zainah Zafar provided the following update from the high school:

- The high school production of Legally Blonde was a hit and sold out on Saturday night.
- The Spring formal will be held on Friday, March 21.
- The Empty Bowls fundraiser is scheduled for Friday, March 28.
- Juniors will take the SAT, and the quarter will close on Wednesday, March 26.

Zainah is also a member of the Junior Achievement Entrepreneurial Academy and shared her presentation on the company she and her group created. Everbrite offers innovative, reusable notebooks made from limestone paper.

10. PUBLIC SESSION

Shirley Murtha, 17 Kelley Lane, Granby requested more clarification on the status of the KCE battery storage facility and the appeal.

Maureen Eberly, 37 Silkey Road, North Granby requested (via Zoom) that the public comment be moved to the beginning of the meeting agenda.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

12. ADJOURNMENT

ON A MOTION by M. Neumann, seconded by F. Moffa, the Board voted (5-0-0) to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

The Monday, April 7 meeting of the Town of Granby Board of Selectmen is canceled. The next regular meeting will be held on Monday, April 21 at the Senior Center to allow for voting in the Town Hall Meeting Room.

Respectfully submitted,



Betsy Mazzotta
Recording Secretary