



February 2nd, 2026

Members Present: Tom Deck (President), Anthony MacLaurin, Scott Swinarton, Jim Lewis, Scott Swinarton

Members Absent: Nina Mooney

Others Present: Donald Brodie (Village Clerk), Curan VanDerWielen (Village Manager), Terry Findeisen (Zoning Administrator), Simon Mais, Tajlei Levis

Call to Order: 4:33 PM by Deck.

1. Approval of the Agenda

Motion: To approve the agenda, as posted.

Motion made by MacLaurin. Motion seconded by Deck.

Motion approved, unanimously.

2. Approval of the Draft Minutes

Motion: To approved of the draft minutes for the regular January meeting, as submitted.

Motion made by Deck. Motion seconded by Lewis.

Motion approved, unanimously.

3. Monthly Reports

a. Road Commissioner

Lewis reported that winter maintenance, while more intensive than usual due to the weather, was proceeding normally. Lewis also noted that despite the heavy snow the area had experienced over the past month that road salt purchases still remained within budget for the season, so far. This was a result of the use of some sand in plowing sidewalks and roads. Swinarton asked if overtime pay was overbudget for the year. Lewis and Deck confirmed that it was, although the amount of work required was necessary. Lewis also reported that Dan Marchegiani, Road Specialist, would be out with a medical issue for several weeks of recovery.

Lewis then introduced the need to purchase a new skid steer for general use, but especially for sidewalk plowing. VanDerWielen added that while the capital equipment budget adopted last year normally would put the replacement of the existing skid steer out two more years, he was aware that the engine had been damaged on the machine and that immediate replacement was fiscally feasible. Deck recalled a recent meeting between himself, Lewis, VanDerWielen, and Alan Mowrey, Road Foreman, on the matter and explained both the issue and the proposed replacement. Swinarton acknowledged Mowrey's preference for a CAT machine, but added that he was familiar



with competitive pricing and quality from Kubota which he encouraged Mowrey to explore. A short discussion on the matter ensued, with it agreed that the Board would re-engage on the matter once Mowrey had submitted a model and pricing for review.

b. Tree Warden

Lewis announced that due to escalating winter maintenance costs, it had been decided to defer all remaining tree cutting to the next fiscal year, as a means to re-coup cost. Lewis added that he believed it was still feasible to engage in the planting of both a permanent holiday tree and replacement trees outside the Equinox Junior Shops, probably a type of dogwood.

c. Village Manager

VanDerWielen provided updates on work conducted by administration over the past month. This included submitting this year's grants and certificates to the VT Agency for Transportation, finishing all the accounting close-out and tax reporting for the end of 2025, continuing work on records digitization, and continued work on improving the Village website and digital newsletter. VanDerWielen also noted that he had performed much work on an early version of a draft budget for the next fiscal year and had finished an early version of a 5-year capital improvement plant for the Village, which he would present later in the meeting.

d. Zoning Administrator

Findeisen reported on recent work in the Zoning Office. Findeisen started with a report on a recent permit to demolish a home on West Fields Road. A short discussion on the condition of the home and future plans for the property ensued. Findeisen also reported on a new storage shed the Ekwanok Country Club had been permitted for. Deck asked about the nature of the shed. Findeisen described the permitted shed.

Findeisen then updated the Board on the status of a permit review through the Public Utility Commission (PUC) regarding a telecommunications utility cabinet and apparatus originally proposed to be placed on a light-pole in front of 3749 Main Street. The Planning Commission had challenged the proposed location in the PUC review and was currently communicating with the applicant and the PUC on finding an alternative location for the proposal. Findeisen also noted that the same property was being considered for re-development by a local construction company, but that a question about the legality in zoning regarding the proposal still needed to be resolved.

VanDerWielen explained the question being considered, which concerned specifically what the Vermont HOME Act of 2023 did and did not allow for in terms of residential density on undersized parcels serviced by water/sewer utilities.

e. Treasurer & Tax Collector

VanDerWielen provided an update on Village finances and tax collection. VanDerWielen presented the chart of accounts, noting that financially the Village was about a month ahead of schedule in terms of outflow given the large volume of recent overtime wage



payments and road salt purchases. In order to flatten the curve, VanDerWielen noted that he had initiated a lag on select purchases and payments until road maintenance returned to a more predictable rhythm. MacLaurin warned against making late payments. VanDerWielen noted that it was not his intent to pay any bills late, but instead to hold invoices for longer within their terms and to delay less time-sensitive purchases.

VanDerWielen then presented the balance sheet and revenue report. VanDerWielen noted that the Village had collected close to 99% of its project tax revenue for the year and that all other revenue categories were on track, although zoning fees particularly could be unpredictable. VanDerWielen then presented the expenditures report, noting an overage in highways overtime pay and a likely increase in that overage through the end of the fiscal year. Road salt purchases, although heavy over the past month, were still within budget. VanDerWielen also noted a correction needed in how highways health insurance payments were being recorded. Swinarton asked about the difference in cost between road salt and sand purchases. VanDerWielen and Lewis responded that Village was not currently purchasing sand, and thus were unsure of an accurate figure. Lewis added that the Village had much sand already stockpiled but that it was rarely used. VanDerWielen added that he expected overages on two other budget categories at the end of the year, including accounting fees and legal fees.

f. Clerk

Brodie noted no updates with regard to the Clerk's office, and deferred the introduction of the liquor license review to the Assistant Clerk.

4. Review of Annual Special Events Permit Applications

- a. The Wilburton Inn, 257 Wilburton Drive, Calendar Year 2026**
- b. The Wilburton Inn, 2106 River Road, Calendar Year 2026**

Deck introduced the topic of discussion, and opened the floor to discussion. MacLaurin stated that he was impressed with the lack of noise complaints received this year regarding the Inn's activities. Levis noted that she believed the Inn had found a set of infrastructural improvements and a system for events which worked well to control noise. Swinarton asked if the Village had received any complaints. VanDerWielen responded that he had received one that he was aware of, during the summer. Deck added that he would like follow-through on conducting a sound study on the property, this year. VanDerWielen apologized to the Board for not having completed such a study this past year, and noted that it could be done this year. A short discussion ensued regarding the type of events being held at the Inn, this year.

Motion: To approve both applications, as submitted, on condition that a sound study be conducted by Village officials within the calendar year.

Motion made by Deck. Motion seconded by MacLaurin.

Motion approved, unanimously.



5. Review of Liquor License Permit Applications
a. Equinox Resort, 1st and 2nd Class Licenses

Deck introduced the topic of discussion and opened the floor to VanDerWielen to introduce. VanDerWielen explained the process for review and approval of the licenses. VanDerWielen noted that all applications were complete, but that while he had received the municipal license fees for the Equinox, he had not for the Ekwanok as of yet. VanDerWielen noted that three (3) first class licenses and one second class license was up for review with the Equinox Resort. MacLaurin asked about any complaints or violations regarding the Equinox. VanDerWielen noted that there were none on record for this past year. Deck asked about the differences between licenses. VanDerWielen explained the categories of licenses, and added that Village may consider collecting license fees for 3rd class licenses in future years. Deck stated that he believed it was worth discussing. VanDerWielen noted that he would provide further information to the Board in their next meeting.

Motion: To approve all submitted applications for the Equinox Resort, as submitted.

Motion made by MacLaurin. Motion seconded by Swinarton.

Motion approved, unanimously.

b. Ekwanok Country Club, 1st and 2nd Class Licenses

VanDerWielen noted a similar condition of the Ekwanok applications, but that receipt of their license fees was pending. He recommended approving the applications on condition that license fees be received before issuance. Deck asked about conflicts of interest regarding several Trustees' membership with the Ekwanok. A short discussion ensued on the matter. It was resolved that while a true conflict of interest was unlikely, the Trustees with membership would not make the motion.

Motion: To approve both applications, as submitted, on condition that municipal license fees be received.

Motion made by Lewis. Motion seconded by Swinarton.

Motion approved, unanimously.

A short discussion ensued between the Trustees and Mais about the Equinox's new management, and welcoming Mais and his staff to the area. Mais stated that they anticipated announcing a new general manager soon, and that he would introduce them to the Trustees when onboarded, with the intent to work more closely with the community.



6. Discussion on Budget Priorities and Strategy for Fiscal Year 2026-2027

Deck introduced the topic of discussion and the work VanDerWielen had performed on the draft, adding that it was intended to start the review process earlier than usual to map out long term strategy items. MacLaurin asked if there would be further meetings on the budget, or if the Trustees were expected to vote on the budget at this meeting. VanDerWielen clarified that there would likely be several budget meetings over the following months, and that it would not be finalized until adopted at the annual meeting, in July. The only intermediate action he expected the Board to take would be towards the end of the fiscal year, to approve a draft to appear in the annual report. VanDerWielen added that the draft presented here was a response to a request at the January meeting to provide a very early draft for discussion on priorities for the upcoming year, and that it was not complete, still requiring some itemization and an accompanying 5-year capital improvement plan.

MacLaurin expressed his liking of the narrative VanDerWielen had provided with the draft budget. VanDerWielen thanked MacLaurin and noted that the draft in front of the Board was not meant for a line-by-line review, but to discuss general direction. VanDerWielen then presented the draft, stating that the draft had not been organized around small adjustments from the previous year on a line-by-line basis, but had instead been built around a fiscal target. In this case, that target was maintaining a relatively stable tax rate ($\leq 0.1\%$ increase or decrease) to last year's. This would need to be achieved while still accounting for several projects which had been flagged to him in recent staff conversations.

VanDerWielen then explained all the major priorities provided to him by staff, starting with prioritizing a large sidewalks budget and the purchase of a new skid steer for the highways department, the later requiring a re-configuration of the capital equipment budget. Swinarton asked about financing the equipment, rather than purchasing it outright. A short conversation on the matter ensued. It was resolved to explore such an option. The next priorities VanDerWielen identified for highways were re-painting the highways garage, conducting a street tree inventory, finishing installing new welcome signs on the roads, and installing protection around a historic mile marker. VanDerWielen then noted several priorities in administration, including purchasing a set of new office computers and continuing investment in records digitization and archival storage improvements. VanDerWielen added that several items discussed in previous meetings had been de-prioritized in the draft, including firehouse restoration work and extending improvements to the River Road stone wall, but noted that it was ultimately the Trustees' decision on what to fund.

VanDerWielen then explained some of the unknowns which would likely impact the feasibility of the draft, including the size of the general fund balance "rollover" used to reduce expenses, which he expected to be slightly less than the previous year. He added that that would be clarified toward the end of the fiscal year. In addition, other grants could be added to the budget and reduce expenses further. MacLaurin asked about when an update to the National Historic District would be pursued. VanDerWielen noted that he had not accounted for it in this next



fiscal year, but that even if the Village engaged in that process that week, it would likely be a year before any work could even begin due to the limited availability of specialists.

Deck encouraged the Board to review the draft further and to communicate their priorities to VanDerWielen throughout the review process so that everything could be accounted for clearly. VanDerWielen then introduced a second sheet which calculated the impact of projected tax rates on individuals' local taxes, showing that the projected rate in the draft would, on average, increase actual taxes charged by \$0.78, with the largest taxpayers paying closer to \$5.92 more than the previous year. This was developed to demonstrate the real impact of an abstracted tax rate.

Donald raised the idea of creating a new reserve for solving contingency issues, such as the weight of increased winter maintenance costs. Deck noted that he supported the idea and asked VanDerWielen to explore the idea. Swinarton asked about what kinds of reserves could be created. A short discussion ensued on the matter. It was resolved to explore the matter. Lewis and Swinarton thanked VanDerWielen for preparing the draft budget. VanDerWielen noted that he was finalizing the capital improvement plan, and would distribute a draft within the week.

7. Public Comments

No public comments were raised.

Old Business:

Deck noted the ongoing conversation regarding etching the marble rock outside the Equinox Junior Shops. Specifically, Deck recalled a recent conversation he had with Mowrey in which Mowrey indicated that he believed the cut of the rock made it impractical to etch, as the surface would likely chip and crack. Deck suggested placing a different marble plaque near or on the rock, instead. MacLaurin asked if Mooney was still exploring possibilities and pricing on the matter. Lewis suggested smoothing the face of the rock to allow for etching. It was resolved to wait for further updates from an expert on both feasibility and pricing.

New Business:

Lewis requested that the Board move into an executive session to discuss a personnel matter.

Motion: To enter executive session to discuss a personnel matter.

Motion made by Lewis. Motion seconded by Deck.

Motion approved, unanimously.

The Board entered executive session at 5:23pm. The Board discussed a personnel matter. No action was taken. The Board exited executive session at 5:37pm.

Motion: To exit executive session.

Motion made by Deck. Motion seconded by Lewis.



Motion approved, unanimously.

Adjournment: 5:38 PM.

Motion: To adjourn.

Motion made by MacLaurin. Motion seconded by Lewis.

Motion approved, unanimously.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held at 4:30 PM on Monday, March 2nd, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Curan VanDerWielen, Village Manager