

NOTICE
Town of Lowell
EMERGENCY SELECT BOARD MEETING
THE LOWELL SELECTBOARD WILL MEET ON
Wednesday, January 21, 2026, AT 5:30 P.M.
AT THE TOWN OFFICE BUILDING.

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AGENDA:

- **Truck Discussion**
- **Warning Article**

Selectboard:
Jennifer Blay-Chm
Darren Pion
Wayne Richardson

MINUTES
EMERGENCY SELECTBOARD MEETING
TOWN OF LOWELL
Meeting held on January 21, 2026

Board members present:

Jennifer Blay-Chm, Darren Pion, Wayne Richardson

Christy M. Pion -Town Clerk/Selectboard Clerk/Ass't Treasurer

Marie A. Busch-Town Treasurer/Ass't Clerk

***Note: All meetings are recorded on a handheld recording device. ***

Meeting called to order at 5:37 p.m.

Guest:

- Janet Lee (Grant Writer)
- Alex Sicotte (Road Crew Member)
- Matthew Wilson (The Chronicle)
- Katherine Pion (Library Trustee/Resident)
- Audra Pitts (Newport Daily Express)
- Gordon Spencer (JP/Auditor/Zoning Admin/Resident)
- William Herrarra (JP/Resident)
- Brian Richardson (Resident)
- Dottie Spoerl (Auditor/Resident)
- Brenda Wesolow (Zoning Board/Resident)

Truck Discussion

- **Truck Purchases:** The Select Board can make purchases of trucks and equipment without a town vote if the financing or lease is for five years or less. They discussed the possibility of borrowing private vehicles or equipment from other towns temporarily.
- **Damaged Town Garage:** The town garage was destroyed by fire. Investigations into the cause are ongoing, with the truck being a potential source, but no definitive cause has been determined. The building was out of code, and rebuilding will require bringing it up to current standards, including potential sprinkler systems and firewalls, which significantly increases costs.
- **Insurance and Funding:** Insurance will cover some costs for the building, with a guaranteed replacement value potentially up to \$700,000 for the footprint and blueprint of the old building, and up to \$1 million for code upgrades. However, this is not enough to cover the full cost of a new, up-to-code building. The town is exploring

grants (municipal planning grants, federal grants) and potentially congressionally directed spending to help fund the new garage.

- Temporary Solutions: The town is facing challenges with sand freezing in trucks due to the lack of covered storage and salt. They are exploring temporary solutions like using private garages or sheds for storage and work, but insurance and cost implications are a concern.
- Truck Acquisition: The immediate need is to replace damaged trucks. Several options were discussed, including:
 - A. A 2019 Freightliner HX620 with 55,000 miles for \$105,000.
 - B. A 2023 Freightliner (price not fully clear, but significantly more expensive).
 - C. A 2021 Chevy CV (8500 series) for \$85,000.
 - D. Older, potentially cheaper trucks were also mentioned but deemed less desirable due to condition and potential maintenance issues.
 - E. Charlie Bois is willing to rent, lease, or finance their 2019 truck.
- Financing and Budget: The town has approximately \$175,000 freed up in the budget from paid-off loans. The discussion revolved around financing new trucks, with a preference for shorter-term financing (2-3 years) to pay them off quickly, especially with the potential for insurance money to be applied. The cost of new trucks is estimated to be around \$300,000-\$340,000.
- Mutual Aid Agreement: A sample mutual aid agreement for sharing municipal resources with other towns was discussed, which could help in emergency situations and potentially with insurance.

Warning Article:

- It was decided that a new article was unnecessary during this time of crisis and emergency.

**** Overall Conclusions: ****

- * ****Urgent Need for Trucks: **** The town has an immediate and critical need for replacement trucks due to loosing 2 trucks in the garage fire. The Select Board is leaning towards purchasing the 2019 Freightliner HX620 from Charlie Boys for \$105,000, or potentially the 2021 Chevy CV for \$85,000, with a vote to proceed pending further inspection and negotiation.
- * ****Long-Term Building Project: **** Rebuilding the town garage is a significant, long-term project with substantial costs. The town is actively pursuing grants and other funding sources, but the process will take time (estimated 1-2 years for planning and funding).
- * ****Financial Planning: **** The town needs to carefully manage its budget, balancing the immediate need for trucks with the long-term financial implications of rebuilding the garage. The freed-up \$175,000 is a crucial resource for truck acquisition.
- * ****Temporary Storage Solutions: **** Finding temporary, covered storage for the trucks during extreme cold is a priority to prevent further damage and ensure operability. This will likely involve exploring options with private individuals and potentially using temporary funds for insurance or rental.
- * ****Information Gathering:**** The Select Board needs to gather more specific information on truck conditions, financing options, and grant application timelines to make informed decisions.

The meeting highlighted the complex challenges the town faces due to the fire, requiring immediate action on trucks while simultaneously planning for a major infrastructure rebuild.

* **Note: Full discussion details of the minutes are available in the Clerk’s office.** *
Meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.
Respectfully submitted by: Christy M. Pion
Next regular meeting date: January 26, 2026, at the Town Office Building.

Jennifer Blay – Chair

Christy M. Pion–Selectboard Clerk

Darren Pion-Select Person

Wayne Richardson-Select Person