

NOTICE
Town of Lowell
SELECT BOARD MEETING
THE LOWELL SELECTBOARD WILL MEET ON
Monday, March 23, 2026, AT 5:30 P.M.
AT THE TOWN OFFICE BUILDING.

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AGENDA:

- **Additions & Deletions**
- **Sign Orders**
- **Board Response to GMP's Petition filed with the VT PUC re pole removal and replacement in Lowell, VT for a VTrans bridge replacement project - PUC Case No. 26-0178-PET**
- **Review Minutes from March 9, 2026**
- **Road Commissioner updates**
- **Other Business**
- **Public comment (Hand Raised)**

Selectboard:
Jennifer Blay-Chm
Darren Pion
Wayne Richardson

MINUTES
SELECTBOARD MEETING
TOWN OF LOWELL
Meeting held on March 23, 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
Levi Booska-Road Commissioner

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

Meeting called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Guest:

- **Gordon Spencer-Auditor/JP/Zoning Administrator/Resident**
- **William Herrera-JP/Resident**
- **Dottie Spoerl- Auditor/Resident**
- **Brenda Wesolow-Zoning Member/Resident**
- **Brad Shangraw-Resident**
- **Kimberly Hart-Resident**
- **Steve Orvis**

Additions and Deletions: See additions and deletions below.

Steve Orvis, Kimberly Hart, and Brad Shangraw joined the meeting with some concerns of a bad culvert that is way overdue for a change on Newton Rd.

Culvert and Power Line Issue:

- **A significant portion of the meeting was dedicated to a problematic culvert with a power line running over it.**
- **The culvert is old, corroded, and has holes, leading to sinkholes in the road.**
- **The power line was placed over the culvert improperly, and there's concern about liability if it's damaged during repairs.**

- There's a history of the town being reluctant to address the culvert issue, and residents have been complaining for years with little resolution.
- Temporary fixes like filling holes have been done, but they don't solve the underlying problem.
- The proper depth of cover for the power line over the culvert is a concern, with estimates suggesting it's insufficient.
- The power company's involvement and potential need to relocate the line are key considerations.

Solar Case Updates:

- A lawyer's bill for work on the solar case was discussed, with a significant portion of the donated funds already used.
- An aesthetics expert was hired and paid for through a donation.
- The case is progressing through discovery, described as a "long ping pong game" with back-and-forth paperwork.
- There's a concern about media coverage and ensuring information is not misrepresented, with a specific mention of a reporter from out of town being potentially biased.

Board Response to GMP's Petition filed with the VT PUC re pole removal and replacement in Lowell, VT for a VTrans bridge replacement project - PUC Case No. 26-0178-PET:

- A GMP petition for replacing transmission poles on Vermont Route 100 in Lowell was approved.

Sign Orders:

- Financials for the Treasurer were approved and signed by the Board.

Minutes from March 9, 2026:

- Minutes from March 9, 2026, were approved and signed by the Board unanimously.

Road Commissioner Updates (Darren Pion & Levi Booska):

Road and Vehicle Maintenance:

- Several roads have issues with plugged or damaged culverts, requiring repair or replacement.
- The condition of the town's vehicles, particularly the 10-wheeler, is a concern, with ongoing repairs before the next storm
- Discussions about insurance claims for damaged vehicles and equipment, including how to value stock and portable equipment, are ongoing.
- The lack of a town building for vehicle maintenance is a recurring problem.
- Various road maintenance tasks, including clearing trees and debris, were reported.

Other Business:

Permits:

- Truck weight permits were approved and signed for the following: **Wind River Environmental, LLC., CAMP Precast Concrete Products, Inc., Oil Supply Corp., S.D. Ireland Concrete Construction Corp., Barrett Trucking Company, Inc., AmeriGas Propane, LP., Blanchard Oil Company, Inc.**

Building Project Discussions:

- The need for a new town building (garage) is a major topic, with discussions about size, location, and cost.
- There's a desire to rebuild on the current location but with a larger, more functional design.
- The process of obtaining bids for the building is delayed due to the need for an environmental report to determine if the debris is hazardous.
- The possibility of using grants, including congressionally directed spending, is being explored for funding.

Other Issues:

- A PUC petition regarding Verizon Wireless adding to a mobile system behind the fire station was approved.
- Discussions about recycling costs and the efficiency of dumpsters versus compactors.
- Concerns about Act 250 regulations, particularly regarding driveway length and potential impact on property use.
- The need for proper Selectboard email accounts for official communication was discussed. Marie will put a call in to the Town computer tech to have him set them up.

**** Overall Conclusions: ****

- * ****Urgent Need for Culvert Repair:**** The culvert issue is a significant safety hazard and requires immediate attention. The complexity of the power line issue necessitates careful planning and coordination with the power company.
- * ****Solar Case Progress and Caution:**** The solar case is moving forward, but there's a need for careful communication and a strategic approach to media interactions.
- * ****Vehicle and Infrastructure Investment:**** The town's vehicles and road infrastructure are showing signs of wear and tear, requiring ongoing maintenance and potential investment in new equipment and repairs. The lack of a proper building is a significant impediment to efficient maintenance.
- * ****Building Project Planning is Crucial:**** The town garage project is a priority, but progress is stalled by the need for environmental clearance for debris removal. Decisions about size, location, and funding need to be made to move forward.
- * ****Grant Opportunities and Challenges:**** The town is actively exploring grant opportunities, but navigating the application processes and meeting deadlines (like the congressionally directed spending) is challenging.
- * ****Act 250 Regulations are a Hurdle:**** Act 250 regulations are creating difficulties for property owners, particularly regarding access and development.
- * ****Communication and Record-Keeping are Key:**** The importance of official communication channels (town emails) and proper record-keeping for grants and projects is highlighted.

In essence, the meeting revealed ongoing challenges related to infrastructure, vehicle maintenance, and legal/regulatory processes, alongside efforts to secure funding and plan for future projects. The culvert issue and the town building project appear to be the most pressing concerns requiring immediate and strategic action.

Board Warrants:

➤ General Order # 6	\$	30,933.40
➤ Payroll Order # 6	\$	<u>10,740.61</u>

Signed for the Treasurer to draw checks totaling - **\$ 41,674.01**

* **Note:** Full discussion details of the minutes are available in the Clerk's office. *

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Christy M. Pion

Next meeting date: April 6, 2026, at the Town Office Building.

Jennifer Blay – Chair

Christy M. Pion–Selectboard Clerk

Darren Pion-Select Person

Wayne Richardson-Select Person