

Stowe Selectboard Liquor Commission & Water/Sewer Commission Meeting

Wednesday, May 27, 2026

5:30pm

Stowe Town Hall – Akeley Soldiers Memorial Building

67 Main Street

Stowe, Vermont



Selectboard Members: Ethan Carlson, Beth Gadbois, Paco Aumand, Jo Sabel Courtney, Nick Donza

Staff: Town Manager Charles Safford, Assistant Town Manager Will Fricke, Public Works Director Harry Shepard

Public: Heather Snyder, Paul Sakash, Rachel Moore, Jimmy Goldsmith, Rob Vidile, Shayne Bertrand, Billy Greer, Kim Kaufman, Sarah Winch, Mila Lonetto, Sophie Brecher-West, Deb Drinkwater, Barb Puddicombe (13)

Zoom: Courtney Percy, Damon Lee, Lisa Hagerty, Alison Leschen, Tif Donza, Pete Kelly, Ali Mahra, Jonathan Radford, Karen Cleaves, Missy Merrell Burgess, Pauline Jennings, Peter Winch, Edmond (last unk.), 13)

Call to Order

Chair Ethan Carlson called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

Approval of the Agenda

Ms. Sabel Courtney moved to approve the agenda. Ms. Gadbois seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

Consent Agenda (Items A-1 through A-5)

1. Selectboard Minutes – May 13, 2026
2. Stowe Electric / Union Bank Loan Allonge Agreement
3. Bid Award – Parker Barn
4. FY27 Audit Contract
5. Liquor Licenses

Ms. Gadbois moved to approve the consent agenda. Ms. Sabel Courtney seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

Town Plan Adoption Process & Schedule (Item B-1)

Mr. Safford said the purpose of this agenda item is to officially receive the town plan draft and schedule the first hearing which must be held between June 26 and September 4.

Ms. Sabel Courtney moved to accept receipt of the proposed municipal plan from the Planning Commission and direct the Town Manager to schedule a Town Plan work session on Thursday, July 16 at 5:30 PM. Ms. Gadbois seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

Exposed Exhibit 2026 (Item B-2)

Rachel Moore, The Current ED, presented the 2026 Exposed exhibits.

Ms. Gadbois moved to approve the 2026 Exposed exhibit as enclosed, subject to The Current obtaining all necessary permits, and upon approval for safety from the Public Works Director. Mr. Donza seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

Retail Cannabis Discussion (Item B-3)

Mr. Safford noted that the Selectboard has heard a similar request In December 2024, and that Mr. Goldsmith had asked for it to be considered again. He added that the Selectboard can place it on the ballot themselves, or it can get on the ballot via a petition. Finally, he noted that the Selectboard had requested that the requestor utilize a petition to get the article on the ballot, rather than the Selectboard adding it on their own.

Mr. Goldsmith discussed his request, which was for the Selectboard to place an article on the next Town Meeting ballot which, if approved, would authorize retail cannabis establishments in Stowe. Mr. Safford added that, if approved, it would not only apply to Mr. Goldsmith's business, but to any business, subject to zoning and permitting.

Mr. Aumand said that process is important, and the last time this was requested, the Selectboard wanted them to complete a petition. Mr. Carlson said he is not for or against it, but if there is community support a petition should not be too difficult. Ms. Sabel Courtney thanked Mr. Goldsmith for his community buy-in. She asked where he was planning to put the retail cannabis business, if approved. Mr. Goldsmith said that, without being specific, he has a commercial tenant that does not pay rent and they prefer to have their own businesses in the buildings they own.

Ms. Gadbois said the last petition failed to get enough signatures, and there are a lot of people in Town that object to this, and therefore it is not a topic she feels comfortable making the decision for on behalf of the community. The community should have a say on whether it gets on the ballot. Mr. Aumand concurred.

Mr. Donza said he doesn't feel it is a good fit for the Town, though it is not a personal objection.

Mr. Safford noted that 5% of registered voters must sign the petition and they can confer with the Town Clerk together on the specific process and timing.

No action was taken.

Manager's Report (Item C-1)

Mr. Safford said the Town will be commencing with gravel pit operations, and are at the point where they need to clear some of the hillside west of the lower pit entrance. Staff anticipate approximately 200'+/- this year. This will be noticeable from the road, and staff propose to ameliorate this visual impact by constructing a berm with overburden materials along the Town Highway Rights of Way that will be subsequently planted with evergreen trees to further enhance the visual buffer. Gravel operations have reached a point where it can no longer "hide behind the hillside". This will likely be required annually as bank run material extraction extends west towards the former Hansen property purchased by the Town in 2018 for this purpose.

Mr. Safford said there will be a Mayo Farm 101 event on Monday, June 8 at 5:30 pm at Town Hall.

Mr. Safford said the traditional Memorial Day Ceremony will be held at 10 AM on Saturday, May 30 at Town Hall.

Mr. Safford provided Act 250 notices and minutes.

Mr. Safford said the 2% LOT charter amendment passed the House, but was voted down in the Senate Government Operations Committee. Mr. Carlson said the last few weeks were a rollercoaster, they had good engagement in house and community put forward support from 30+ businesses and some testimony, and passed it 7-4 from House Government Operations as proposed. House Ways and Means amended it to

be 50% to the Town from 75%, which ended up passing the House, noting that outcome was not desirable. Their goal was to use the time in the Senate to revert it back to 75%. He added that they had support from Senator Perchlick but there was not time for the Senate to move it forward. Mr. Carlson added that they are hopeful to testify on it next year in front of Senate Government Operations. Ms. Sabel Courtney said signals were getting crossed.

Mr. Donza asked if it had passed as amended, would the Town be forced to accept it. Mr. Safford said it was still up to the Selectboard to authorize, but the language was changed to be worded in a way where not authorizing second 1% might have invalidated the first 1%. Legislative Counsel was of a different opinion, but the Town needed surety that that wouldn't happen. If it goes further they would want the language cleaned up. Regarding the 50/50 split, it was always at risk of amendment once it got to legislature.

Mr. Carlson said there were some good relationships built in the House in the process and the process can continue to play out. Ms. Sabel Courtney noted House Government Operations was happy and respectful with regard to Mr. Carlson's presentation. Mr. Donza said everyone did a good job and that would hope the language is changed back if it goes further, and he would not be in favor of a 50/50 split. Mr. Safford noted that Senator Rebecca White from Hartford was the lone vote in favor of it on Senate Gov Ops.

Mr. Safford said the Selectboard should warn a special meeting to adopt the FY27 tax rate.

Mr. Donza moved to schedule a special meeting for July 2, 2026 at 7:30 AM to set the FY27 tax rate. Ms. Gadbois seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

Public to be Heard - Non-Binding (Item C-2)

Danielle Nichols asked for special approval to put a sign out on Main Street to direct foot traffic to her business while Union Bank is under construction. Mr. Safford said that state law does not allow for off site advertising and it shouldn't reference a specific business, but a sign could say "businesses and library open during construction" or something to that affect. The Selectboard discussed the issue and directed staff to work with Ms. Nichols to figure out the sign and try to make something work within the boundaries of state sign law.

Executive Session

Mr. Donza moved to enter executive session to discuss contracts and personnel. Ms. Sabel Courtney seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

The Selectboard entered executive session at 6:45pm and left at 7:30pm.

No action was taken.

Adjournment

The Selectboard adjourned at 7:30pm.

Notes

Minutes submitted by Will Fricke.

The Selectboard of the Town of Stowe meets on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 5:30pm.

A recording of this public meeting is available at: <https://www.stowevt.gov/Government/Selectboard>