

# Greensboro Selectboard

October 28, 2025

## INFORMATIONAL MEETING FOR AUSTRALIAN BALLOT VOTE

### Minutes

**MEETING LOCATION:** Fellowship Hall, GUCC. Remote option available but not interactive.

**SELECTBOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** MacNeil, Mike Metcalf, Judy Carpenter, Tim Brennan

**SELECTBOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Ellen Celnik

**OTHERS PRESENT in person:** Davis Barnett, Chief Dave Brochu, John Moffatt, Melissa Moffatt, Tim Nisbet, Bobbie Nisbet, Warren Hill Jr., Nan Perron, Janet Johnston, Mary Metcalf, Janet Long, Wayne Young, Mary Young, Jennifer Lucas, Erika Karp, Beth Meachem, Janice Dinsdale, John Mackin, Elsa Shultz, Rick Ely, Gary Circosta, Tom Guare, Liz Steel, Jan Terweisch, JoAnn Hanowski, Jim Fredericks, Ken Johnston, Renee Circosta, Dede Stabler, Christine Armstrong, Peter Romans, Andrew Casavant, Maria Amador, Kim Greaves, Josh Karp, Elissa Mackin, Emma Palumbo, Julie Brochu, Jeff Frankel

**CALLED TO ORDER: 6:30 PM**

#### **ARTICLE 1. Borrow money to purchase a fire truck**

Chief Brochu: We're proposing to replace the 1985 rescue truck and 2006 pumper with one new truck. The 1985 can't be used as a frontline truck due to its age, the 2006 is unreliable and unsafe due to unresolved electrical issues. We were initially looking at a custom truck, but as this was discussed over a number of months the price increased from \$540k to \$650k. We then found a 2025 stock pumper from a broker in Alabama for \$495k, and Andrew and Doug Casavant went down to inspect it.

Andrew: We inspected the truck and it all checks out. It has a crew cab that allows us to arrive on scene with a full crew. The engine and pump are serviceable in-state, this is important.

Chief Brochu: We'll need to add a pump heater, which will be paid for out of the GFD budget. The cab needs to be painted to match our existing trucks, this will be paid for using donated funds. This new truck will be helpful for everyone's insurance, since insurance rates are affected by the quality of our fleet.

Tim Brennan: The selectboard approved the purchase of the new truck, signed a purchase agreement and the town paid a \$25,000 non-refundable deposit. There are not enough reserves in the Capital Budget to pay cash for the truck, so the voters must approve borrowing the funds. The VT Bond Bank has a lower interest rate than commercial lenders but only issue funds twice a year, so the town will need to take out a short-term bond anticipation note. Statute requires that the voters approve bonding via Australian Ballot.

We're looking at a ten-year note with about \$56k in annual payments. Payments for this truck are scheduled in the Capital Budget starting in FY28, because the custom truck that was originally considered was not going to be delivered until then. This means that payments will be starting a year earlier than anticipated, in FY27. We don't expect this truck purchase to impact the tax rate.

Gary: This purchase is definitely going to affect the tax rate. Why aren't we using ARPA or FEMA funds?

**ARTICLE 2. Abate municipal taxes for the Caspian Beach property, owned by the town of Hardwick**

MacNeil: Greensboro has never sent Hardwick a tax bill for the Caspian Beach property. In 2015, the legislature passed a law exempting the Caspian Beach property and a property in Fairlee from state education taxes. The town thought this law also exempted the municipal tax, we learned this was not the case.

Kim: The state's new grand list management software flagged the Caspian Beach property as lacking a voter-approved municipal tax exemption. This could be approved by voters at Town Meeting, but because taxes are due next week we are trying to take care of this now. Tax exemptions can last for up to five years and then must be re-approved.

Liz: How much is the municipal tax bill for the Caspian Beach property?

MacNeil: \$4300.

Jennifer Ranz: Are we going to have a revenue shortfall of this amount, and the municipal tax rate will increase proportionally?

Kim: Yes, with the exemption we will raise that much less in property taxes.

Renee: Why not charge Hardwick the taxes? Don't we pay taxes on our Glover gravel pit? What are the negative ramifications of charging them?

Judy: We have shared this beach with Hardwick for 100 years, as neighbors.

Warren: We are already getting tax money from Hardwick Electric for their power lines in Greensboro.

Gary: When I was on the selectboard in 2020, Hardwick didn't think twice about overcharging Greensboro for policing services. If we charge them the \$4k, they are a decent-sized town with a big grand list.

**ARTICLE 3. Enact a 1% Local Option Tax on rooms, meals and served alcohol**

MacNeil: The selectboard approved a local option tax (LOT) on rooms, meals and served alcohol, and the next step is voter approval. This 1% tax would be added to the 9% currently collected by the state for these categories, and the amount raised from the LOT would be sent back to the town less a 25% fee. It is estimated that the town would net \$7,500 to \$10,000 from the LOT.

Davis: This is a tax on the community, when people have the option to rent in Greensboro or another town that may not have the tax, would this make Greensboro less attractive?

Tim Brennan: Most people won't notice the additional 1%.

Elsa: Would the LOT income be set aside for special projects?

Judy: No, this would be general revenue to the town and would be used to lower the tax rate.

Tim Brennan: If this passes, we could ask the voters at town meeting what to do with this money. The town could use it to fund any number of appropriations such as the food shelf, or fund the funky fourth.

Jennifer Ranz: There may be a lot more support for this if you had a specific thing these funds were going towards. I have an event business that will be affected and I'm not in favor.

Elsa: Why are we not including a 1% sales tax as well, it's unfair that this is off the table.

Peter: When this was first suggested years ago, we felt that with a LOT on rooms, meals and alcohol, most of this additional tax would be collected from visitors and have a minimal effect on locals, while a 1% sales tax would affect everyone.

MacNeil: The board is responding to requests from the community on this issue, the LOT was discussed at multiple selectboard meetings and there was never a proposal for a 1% sales tax.

Warren: If the LOT gets enacted, how long will it be before you approve a general sales tax increase?

Judy: It's not our intention to do that.

Tim Brennan: That would be up to the voters.

Businesses affected by the proposed LOT include the Highland Lodge, Wilson Herb Farm, Smith's Store, Willey's Store, Hill Farmstead and the Highland Center.

John Mackin: I don't think the selectboard has done enough research on this. Would Circus Smirkus be affected?

Peter: If Smirkus isn't currently paying rooms tax as a non-profit, they won't be liable for this additional tax.

Elsa: With this tax, you are taking money from people who work for gratuities.

Peter: I'm not sure this would take money out of a server's pocket, you spend \$100 on a meal, plus tip, your bill will go up \$1, most people aren't going to notice this. The VT Short-Term Rental Alliance estimates that statewide, taxes received from short-term rentals (STRs) increased 20% from 2023 to 2025. There are 31 towns around the state that have enacted the LOT and it's been really successful, if they were having all these problems wouldn't they reconsider?

Janet: This is not a major issue, I eat out quite a bit and me or my friends wouldn't notice a 1% difference. Many of them are already paying tips on the after-tax total.

Elsa: what is the town doing to regulate STRs?

Peter: The original concept was that a registry would be created, leading to more registered STRs. The town's LOT revenue would increase and there would be a level playing field. People want to come to VT and they spend a fortune to come here. I do agree that we should aggressively find out who is skirting the STR tax requirement, they're breaking the law, we could ask the selectboard or a committee to work on this issue before the LOT is enacted.

MacNeil: A rental registry has been discussed but we haven't taken any action. Anyone who offers rental property should be complying with state regulations.

Jennifer Lucas: Those with unregistered STRs are evading the tax and this is unfair to those who rent above board. The state requires a one-page form that shows STRs meet basic safety requirements, the town really needs to enforce this, create the registry, and have a penalty if you don't register. You are mistaken if you think locals aren't going to pay the tax, it would include a muffin at Willey's.

Ken: why isn't the state enforcing this?

MacNeil: I believe they don't have the capacity.

Christine: A STR registry has been on the table for many years. The planning commission's original idea is to require registration to ensure that basic fire code requirements are met, and use the revenue from the LOT to set up and administer the registry.

John Mackin: You'll have to hire someone who is qualified to do these inspections, this will cost more than the \$7500 per year that may be brought in.

Wayne: How much will this LOT income affect the tax rate?

Peter: It doesn't sound like a lot of money, but when you see the selectboard arguing over a few hundred dollars during budgeting, this could be a help. LOT revenue could increase if we regulate STRs.

Elsa: Lumping the LOT categories together is misleading, can we vote on one item and not the other?

Kim: No, they must be voted on as a package. As with any Australian Ballot vote, absentee ballots can be requested and can be brought to the office anytime up through election day. For voting in person on November 13, the polls will be open as usual from 10AM to 7PM.

Gary: I don't believe we can use Australian Ballot for Articles 2 and 3. Before the RuralEdge Australian Ballot vote, voters first had to agree to vote on that question using the Australian Ballot method. It's possible this could also affect the legitimacy of Article 1.

MacNeil: The board will investigate these questions.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:40 PM.

*Respectfully Submitted: Josh Karp, Selectboard Clerk*