



SELECTBOARD MINUTES
Wednesday, August 12, 2026, 6:00 PM
Hartford Town Hall, 171 Bridge Street
White River Junction, VT 05001

This meeting was conducted in person at Town Hall and live streamed on Youtube
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWDn4Ar550s>)

Present - Chair, Ida Griesemer, Vice Chair, Erik Krauss, Clerk, Ashley Andreas, Tim Fariel, Mike Eigenbrode; Town staff: Director of Planning and Development Lori Hirshfield, Housing and Development Specialist Alexis Webster; Energy Commission Chair Jesse Pollard, Resilient Hartford Chair Kyle Katz and member Tad Montgomery, Housing and Homelessness Committee Chair John Haffner and members Maggie Burnett, Jennifer Kravitz and Nancy Trottier, Planning Commission Chair John Reid and Vice Chair Bruce Riddle; Public: Sara Ferguson, John Clerkin, Jacob Ross, Gwen Tuson, Beth Mallow, Robert Deane, Jonathan Rugg, Kim Souza

Absent - Mary Erdei, Miranda Dupré

- I. The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm by Chair Ida Griesemer.
- II. Order of Agenda: there were no changes
- III. Selectboard
 1. Public Comment:

Beth Mallow, a resident of Quechee and facilitator for Braver Angels announced the Skills for Disagreeing Better workshop planned for August 25, 2026 at Town Hall.
 2. Board Report, Motions & Ordinances
 1. Discussion of initiatives to address affordability in Hartford
 - a. Introductions - workshop participants introduced themselves and shared brief introductory comments
 - b. Workshop process overview - Ashley Andreas explained the proposed 3-round process for the workshop
 - c. Review of Survey Responses - Erik Krauss provided a brief overview of responses to the survey seeking input on affordability from the public.
 - d. Round One -

Jesse Pollard summarized ideas from the **Energy Commission**

 - Car Share

- Bike rack installation in WRJ
- Window Dressers
- Plug in solar technology
- Economic Development Committee

Kyle Katz summarized ideas from **Resilient Hartford**

- Food forest
- Tool lending library
- Community time bank
- Skill sharing workshops, knowledge sharing forums

John Haffner summarized ideas from **Housing and Homelessness Committee**

- Homeshare Vermont
- Resident owned communities for manufactured homes (protect homeowners from predatory investors)
- Big little build
- Rent or tax stabilization
- Rental registry?
- Town sponsored bulk fuel purchasing
- VSHA - Move-In VT program

e. Round Two

Committee/Commission members discussed opportunities and next steps for cross-pollination & collaboration.

Following is a list of comments and suggestions from participants:

Fuel & Energy

- Fuel bulk purchasing: Town-coordinated bulk purchase/RFPs for fuel, with a Town-backed minimum purchase
- Fuel assistance via SEVCA: Could the Town partner with SEVCA to administer fuel assistance funding for Hartford residents? This would reduce administrative burden on the Town
- Organize a weatherization and energy fair, similar to Waterbury's LEAP fair

Bulk Purchasing & Cost Savings

- Aside from fuel, are there other materials the Town purchases in bulk that residents could access at the same pricing?

- Can property taxes be reduced by limiting government services to only those things the public cannot do for themselves (e.g., plowing, paving, law enforcement)? ← Ties in with community building comments below.

Resource Access & Coordination

- Resource mapping: help residents navigate available resources and share information to reduce duplication of effort
- Are there other sources of discounted or free groceries/food besides the Haven and Listen? Is there a need for more?
- Quick win: add an affordability feedback button to the Town website

Regional Coordination

- If other Upper Valley towns are bringing homeless individuals and people in need of services to Hartford, how should the Town address this? Who is meeting with leadership from other towns, and how often?

Community Building

- How can the Town promote community and neighborhood-level connections and build social capital? (e.g., neighborhood captains; coordinating with Planning & Development's economic development efforts at the village level)

Private Sector

- Identify and work to reduce or eliminate limitations, disincentives, and barriers facing the private sector in Hartford

f. Round Three

Round Three shortlisting was deferred. The expectation was that committees and commissions will continue to discuss initiatives and develop a shortlist for discussion at a future joint meeting with the Selectboard.

IV. Adjourn the Meeting

Erik Krauss moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 PM. Tim Fariel seconded the motion. The motion carried with 5 in favor and none opposed.

Ashley Andreas, Clerk