RECEIVED
By Michele Urch at 4:03 pm, Nov 10, 2026

MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF SELECTMEN SPECIAL MEETING
NOVEMBER 5, 2026
7:00 P.M.

83 Mountain Road, Suffield CT
Hybrid Meeting

Selectmen present: Colin Moll, Klaire Bielonko, Kathy Dunai, Pete Hill and Kathleen Harrington

Also in attendance: Kevin Goff – Permanent Building Commission Chairman, Glen Neilson – Permanent Building Commission Vice-Chairman, Matt Dunbar – Superintendent, Maureen Sattan – Chair, BOE, Lee Corbert – Director of Public Works and Kim Fletcher, Barton & Loguidice

First Selectman Moll called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and asked everyone to join him in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

Victoria Copes – 223 Hickory Street

Discussion and approval of the minutes from the October 15, 2026 Special Tri-Board Meeting of the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and Permanent Building Commission

Selectman Harrington MOTIONED to approve the minutes from the October 15, 2026 Special Tri-Board Meeting of the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and Permanent Building Commission as drafted.

Selectman Dunai asked if it would be possible to include the PowerPoint presentation as part of the meeting record so that the information presented would remain available for public reference.

Selectman Harrington accepted Selectman Dunai's friendly amendment. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and approval of the minutes from the October 21, 2026 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Selectman Harrington MOTIONED to approve the minutes from the October 21, 2026 Special Tri-Board Meeting of the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and Permanent Building Commission as drafted,

Vote: 4 in favor (Moll, Harrington, Dunai and Bielonko) and 1 abstain (Hill). Motion passed.

Continued discussion of facility recommendations by the Permanent Building Commission:

a. Middle School

First Selectman Mall reopened discussion of the Permanent Building Commission's (PBC) recommendations for the Suffield Middle School project. At the previous meeting, the Board had

requested additional financial projections incorporating potential cost savings and invited representatives of the Board of Education to discuss opportunities to reduce project costs.

Superintendent Matt Dunbar and Board of Education Chair Maureen Satan joined the discussion, along with PBC Chair Kevin Goff and Vice Chair Glenn Neilson. First Selectman Mall explained that the Board generally supported the direction of the PBC's recommendations but wanted to further explore potential savings, particularly regarding the proposed central office space and gymnasium.

Central Office Relocation Options

Superintendent Dunbar reviewed options for incorporating the central office into the proposed Middle School project, including renovating existing space near the gymnasium. As an alternative, he discussed purchasing an existing medical office building near McAlister Intermediate School, which could potentially reduce costs by approximately half and qualify for state reimbursement on eligible expenses. The property could accommodate the central office or, if the new school project does not proceed, other educational needs. PBC Chair Kevin Goff agreed that the building appeared viable but recommended developing a detailed space plan and evaluating renovation costs. The Board also discussed parking limitations and the timing of a potential purchase.

Middle School Design and Potential Cost Savings

The Board discussed opportunities to reduce the Middle School project's cost without compromising essential educational needs. Superintendent Dunbar explained that current estimates reflected a comprehensive educational program and conservative construction assumptions. Discussion included reducing building square footage, reconsidering the community gymnasium and distinguishing between space eligible for state reimbursement and additional space included to meet anticipated needs. The Board also reviewed the costs of solar and geothermal systems, noting that adding these features after state approval could leave the District responsible for the full expense.

Construction Costs and Financial Projections

Superintendent Dunbar reviewed the cost assumptions, including an anticipated annual construction escalation of 4.5%, and noted that higher escalation could require reconsideration of certain design features and energy systems. The Board also discussed the impact of changes made after state approval on reimbursement eligibility.

First Selectman Moll emphasized the need to evaluate the project within the Town's overall financial capacity. Five financial models had been requested to examine different approaches to managing the Middle School project alongside anticipated operating and capital expenses. The models included potential annual budget growth limits of 2.5% for the Board of Education and 2.25% for the Town. The Board agreed that additional input from the Board of Education and Board of Finance would be necessary to determine whether these targets were realistic and sustainable and to identify potential adjustments to the project.

The Board agreed that additional input from the Board of Education would be important in evaluating the models and identifying potential adjustments to the project.

b. Fire House 1

The discussion on Fire House 1 will be held at the next Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen on Wednesday, November 18, 2026.

Open Public Information Session: State Local Bridge Program (SLBP) grants for Hickory and Copper Hill Culverts

First Selectman Moll opened the Public Information Session at 8:15 p.m. DPW Director Lee Corbert provided background on the Town's efforts to address the deteriorating culverts on Hickory Street, Copper Hill Road, and Suffield Street. He explained that an engineering study identified several culverts throughout Town requiring further evaluation and repairs. The structures on Copper Hill Road and Suffield Street were of particular concern, and temporary measures, including plating, were implemented while the Town worked toward permanent replacements. As conditions continued to deteriorate, the Town ultimately had to close the affected roadways to protect public safety.

Mr. Corbert reported that his review of historical Town records revealed that concerns about the condition of the culverts had been identified as early as 1990. However, the records did not clarify why action had not been taken sooner. He emphasized that the current projects address issues that had developed gradually rather than arising suddenly. He emphasized that the current projects are the result of concerns identified over several years and that the need for repairs developed

Since joining the Town of Suffield as DPW Director, Mr. Corbert has conducted routine inspections of Town roads and infrastructure. He introduced Kim Fletcher of Barton & Loguidice, who has been working with the Town on the culvert projects. Ms. Fletcher provided a detailed presentation, including diagrams and photographs, outlining the proposed work at each of the three locations. She explained the various steps involved in advancing the projects, including evaluating existing conditions, preparing engineered designs, securing funding, obtaining environmental permits, and coordinating construction. The presentation provided context for the time required to move the projects forward and emphasized the Town's efforts to pursue permanent replacements. Board members asked numerous questions throughout the presentation, which Ms. Fletcher addressed.

Close Public Information Session

Selectman Harrington MOTIONED to close the Public Information Session at 8:57 p.m. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

None.

Selectman Updates

Veterans Day Ceremony

A Veterans Day Ceremony will be held at 11:00 a.m. at Veterans Memorial Park on Wednesday, November 11, 2026. All are encouraged to attend.

Phelps Road Paving

The Phelps Road paving project is expected to be completed for the season within the next few days. The road is currently open to two-way traffic.

Christmas Bazaar and Harvest Festival

The 2026 Suffield Christmas Bazaar and The Suffield Fire Department Annual Harvest Craft Fair will be held on Saturday, November 7th from 9:00 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Thank You

Special thanks to DPW Director Lee Corbert for his dedication and hard work in managing the numerous roadwork projects and addressing unexpected roadway issues throughout Town over the past several months.

Adjournment

Selectman Dunai MOTIONED to adjourn at 8:59 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen O. Lambert
Recording Secretary