



SELECT BOARD Minutes

December 10, 2024

6:00pm – Regular Meeting

At Broadcast Studio &
Via Zoom & on YouTube

Resolution: We, the Raymond Select Board, recognize our individual and collective responsibilities as leaders and representatives of our community. To this end, we pledge to conduct ourselves in a manner befitting these roles and duties. We pledge and encourage others to "Be the Influence" and to recognize that decisions matter.

Select Board members in attendance: Rolf Olsen (Chair), Teresa Sadak (Vice Chair), Samuel Gifford, Denis Morse, Derek Ray

Select Board members absent: none

Town Staff in attendance:

Joseph Crocker (Parks & Recreation Director); Richard Dowe (Library Director); Melanie Fernald (Town Clerk); Brenda Fox-Howard (Finance Director); Cathy Gosselin (Human Resources Officer); Wayne Jones (Fire inspector); Curt Lebel (Assessor); Sue Look (Town Manager); Bruce Tupper (Fire Chief)

1) **Called regular meeting to order** at 6:00pm by Chair Olsen with a quorum present.

2) **Minutes of previous meetings**

a) October 15, 2024

Motion to approve as presented by Ms. Sadak. Seconded by Mr. Ray.
Unanimously approved

b) November 7, 2024

Motion to approve as presented by Ms. Sadak. Seconded by Mr. Ray.
Unanimously approved

3) **New Business**

a) ~~Question & Answer with the Office of Cannabis Policy – Vern Malloch, Deputy Director of Operations~~

- ~~● Follow up of questions raised about caregivers and outside grows at the October 15, 2024, Select Board meeting in the Public Comment segment. What options does the Town of Raymond have?~~

(Mr. Malloch was unable to attend, this item will be moved to the next meeting)

b) Consideration of Municipal Fiber Contract – Andrew Davis, Sebago Fiber

- Sebago Fiber will be ready to begin in January of 2025.

Andrew Davis presented the details of locations of equipment: solar panels, generators, battery backups,

Sebago Fiber will own the network equipment, other companies or town can use it.

Mr. Morse asked for confirmation that this equipment would be enough to support the tie ins for neighborhood and resident usage. This is sized to support Raymond, Casco and a portion to the south; about a 12-mile radius.

Motion to authorize the Town Manager to finalize and sign contract, including attorney review by Mr. Morse. Seconded by Mr. Ray.

Unanimously approved

c) Consideration and Issuance of Tax Abatement(s) – Curt Lebel, Contract Assessor

Elavon Inc – 251PP - \$6.88 abatement

The company has reported to the Town that the property in question was disposed of before the cut off date. The assessment was made on old information and needs to be corrected.

Motion to approve as presented by Ms. Sadak. Seconded by Mr. Ray.

Unanimously approved

Orbit Properties LLC – 055-062 - \$10,380.20 abatement

This is the property on Rt. 302 - muffler/brake shop, Tire Warehouse, and one residential home.

A mistake was made on town's records when a portion was sold, the town's records show that the entire property was sold, so this needs to be corrected. Flanagan Properties divided the lot and separated the residential home from the commercial properties by conveying it to Orbit, LLC.

Motion to approve as presented by Ms. Sadak. Seconded by Mr. Morse.

Unanimously approved

d) Consideration and Issuance of Supplemental Tax Assessment(s) – Curt Lebel, Contract Assessor

The issuance of these supplemental tax assessments will correct the town's records and will accurately reflect the proper amounts of taxes for each property.

Flanagan Properties – 1215 Roosevelt Trl - \$8,677.40 supplemental bill

Motion to approve as presented by Ms. Sadak. Seconded by Mr. Morse.

Unanimously approved

Orbit Properties LLC – 1200 Roosevelt Trl - \$1,859.32 supplemental bill

Motion to approve as presented by Ms. Sadak. Seconded by Mr. Morse.

Unanimously approved

e) Update on 2026 Revaluation Project – Curt Lebel, Contract Assessor

- KRT Appraisal is ready to begin the data collection portion of the revaluation project.

Steady and slow through the winter, will likely pick up in pace with more staffing in the spring.

Postcards will be sent to property owners; the first pass will just be an unscheduled visit. There are too many properties to schedule appointments with all owners. Measurements will be taken, the interior will be evaluated when possible, letters will be sent to the owners who may need to be reviewed by appointment.

We will try to get the word out as much as possible, so homeowners are aware that they'll be around and visiting properties.

The whole process will take approximately 18 months. Preliminary values will be mailed out in June of 2026. Informal hearings will be held before commitments, to help clean up the information gathered before the tax bills are processed.

Values are coming in at 45% of actual market value. The apportionment will need to be shuffled to adjust the numbers.

Shawn McKillop, Main Street - asked what type of details are collected with the interior inspections. Bedroom and Bathroom counts, heating type and flooring type, etc.

Peter Leavitt, Leavitt Road - said last time evaluated, the interior inspection was optional. Asked if that was going to be the case this time.

Assessor Lebel noted that while it is optional, the most accurate assessment will be done if an interior inspection is allowed. An assessment needs to be made, and they'll have to estimate. An owner can refuse, but an interior inspection will be needed if the values that are assessed are appealed.

f) Consideration of Parks & Recreation Renting the Raymond Village Community Church – Joseph Crocker, Parks & Recreation Director

- This will allow Parks & Recreation to have office space, as well as space for indoor programs.

Joe Crocker explained that this is a request to rent office and activity room space for the Recreation Department & Age Friendly programs at the Raymond Village Community Church.

The initial assessment of the space showed some compliance needs. As a church, the building is exempt from ADA requirements, but if ownership changes hands, that would need to be addressed.

Church is looking to merge with one in North Windham, so more will be known in the next couple of months about their longer-term intentions for the building.

The Recreation Department has already used the space for All-ages BINGO, and could use the space for upcoming programming during the winter. The timeline the department is hoping for is to have a longstanding Memorandum of Understanding with the Church by February, to be fully moved in and operational by March – ahead of their busy season this spring and summer. There is a space for a playground equipment.

The proposed budget for this, is currently a full list of ideas, not necessarily what is

needed right away – costs associated with moving into this location: add Wi-Fi for offices, computers & phones, office equipment, painting walls, slight renovations, tables and chairs (if needed), heating, some supplies for Age Friendly to help share the space.

Annual operating costs, \$1500/month – utilities and rent

\$100K is allocated with Public Works approved budget for District 1 upgrades, sharing space with Public Works isn't feasible. A portion of that money can be reallocated for use at Raymond Village Community Church for upgrades and preparing the space for Recreation Department use as a community center.

Mr. Morse asked how this came about.

The Pastor at the church reached out. The Recreation Department was looking for a space to hold an all-ages BINGO night, had used Jordan Bay Avesta apartments before, but the space is too small. They looked for another location, Pastor reached out, while they were there, they noticed that the space could be good for offices and activities. They've used the space for BINGO nights twice already, and it is much more comfortable.

Deb from Age Friendly Raymond is pairing with elementary school classes for activities. The church space could be used for pairing older residents programming with younger children for multi age programming.

Quotes noted in this request are for all the supplies and all the possibilities, not all are necessary, and not all are immediate proposals; wanted to show the full picture up front.

Initial needs would be paint to refresh the space and office equipment – which would be ours to own regardless of location and any future moves, and a fair agreement on rent.

Mr. Morse expressed his opposition to spending larger amounts of money on renovations and significant upgrades on a building that we are just renting/using, without an agreement to own it in the future.

Shawn McKillop, Main Street – asked about the non-profit vs for profit changes if the church begins to charge rent for our use.

Assessor Curt Lebel clarified that a Church is tax exempt under a specific statute as a house of religious worship, once that use stops, it becomes a taxable property. Further clarified that the tax exemption isn't based on for-profit vs. non-profit, it is based on being a house of religious worship.

The town's liability insurance policy would cover the use of the space under the rental policy.

Grace Leavitt, Leavitt Road – asked that everyone think carefully in planning when the Jordan-Small Middle School is coming into town ownership in a couple years, the need for more space may be resolved with the use of JSMS, so a community center space elsewhere would not be needed long-term. There will be significant costs to renovate JSMS for our needs.

Peter Leavitt, Leavitt Road - has seen Joe's office, it's tiny. The department's programming is good. Be careful about spending money on a building that we may not need in a few years, since we'll be getting Jordan-Smal Middle School.

Karen Lockwood - asked for clarification on what is meant by "short term lease".

Chair Olsen clarified that, generally, a short term lease means anywhere from 3 to 12 months.

Motion to allow a soft run/short-term lease, and to allocate some funds previously approved for a facility upgrade towards rent, paint and office equipment, up to \$15,000 by Ms. Sadak, seconded by Mr. Gifford.

Unanimously approved

g) Consideration of Updating the Personnel Policy – Sue Look, Town Manager

- This has been in the works for 2 years. Many of the changes are at the request of our attorney.

Mr. Morse asked to go section by section to explain why changes were made.

[See video for exact specifics]

Some changes made include: adding language for the new Maine Paid Leave Act, a definitions section, removal of “at will” wording, clarification of “full time” employees as being 32 hours/week, updating payroll to bi-weekly and the use of electronic timesheets, compensatory time was clarified as time worked beyond 40 hours/week, added a more complete explanation about observing Sunday holidays on Monday, Juneteenth needs to be added to the list of holidays, working on a holiday equals time and a half payrate, vacation time will be allotted instead of accrued.

Vacation time carried over from one calendar year to the next will be capped at 2 weeks (of the employee’s usual weekly hours), time in excess of this 2 weeks will be paid out to the employees this year at 50%.

Mr. Morse asked how many employees will be affected by being paid out 50% of their time? Town Manager Look said 9 employees will be affected by this change, with the highest number being 380 hours. Mr. Morse asked if there is some compromise so people who worked instead of taking vacation time aren’t losing time. Is there a creative way to make those employees use that time up? He recalls that an employee was paid out fully for excessive vacation time in the past, why is it 50% now? Can we give them a year to use their time and have this apply as of January next year?

Finance Director Fox-Howard noted that keeping this excessive time on the books is actually a liability financially. We need to add a budget line item to cover payouts if someone leaves. Another idea is to pay out excess time incrementally, until the time is where we need it to be. Reiterated that the longer that time is held on the books, the more it’s worth.

Mr. Morse asked if this can be worked through some more and brought back with a better solution. Also noted that a cap is being suggested on sick time accrual, which seems like a lot of changes all at once.

Ms. Sadak suggested that the excessive time is paid out in allotments so it can be cleared off the books, budget for it. No one loses vacation time. Town Manager asked if the board was thinking about covering the cost in the next budget year. Some suggested taking 2 budget years to pay it out.

Mr. Ray asked how much the dollar amount would be that it might take 2 budget years. It was suggested that a new budget line could be created to cover the cost.

Town Manager Look stated that a full payout of the excessive time would be about \$42,000. Board Members noted that it should be paid in full, since that's a reasonable number. Ms. Sadak asked the other board members if they could consider using the Select Board's contingency line to cover the cost – acknowledging that the budget line is only supposed to be used for emergency expenses. Chair Olsen noted that it would be more appropriate to overspend the salary budget line, then at the close of the books at the end of the fiscal year, the surplus line would likely cover those costs.

Discussion moved to the allotment of vacation time, specifically for the first year of employment. The board agreed that the earning of vacation time for the first year should be prorated according to hire date. The rest of the schedule for the allotment of vacation time has sped up how quickly an employee earns vacation time.

In future years, an employee will be able to carry 2 weeks of vacation time into the next calendar year and can cash out 1 week additional. Any time above that will be forfeited.

Sick time will be capped at 480 hours; once an employee accrues 480 hours of sick time, they will not earn more – until they fall below 480 hours again. Any employee already above 480 hours will be grandfathered to keep that amount. The use of sick time can be in smaller increments than the current half-day – local medical appointments often take much shorter than a half-day.

Fire Chief Tupper asked that there be some clarification for the use of bereavement time for Fire and Rescue staff, where they have such a different schedule. Their bargaining agreement notes to follow the personnel policy in this section.

Clarification on Jury Duty pay, military service pay, retirement plans; leave in the section that allows employees to put money into the 457k plan without the town's match if they elect to use Maine PERS, and bring in a financial advisor to help teach employees about better options for their investments. Short-term disability to be self-funded; removed specific dollar amounts for the buyout of health insurance and instead note 50% of the value; added a policy about training.

Motion to approve the Personnel Policy with noted changes by Ms. Sadak.
Seconded by Mr. Morse.

Unanimously approved

h) Discussion of Traffic Issues in Raymond – Select Board

- This item was requested at the November 2024 meeting in Public Comment.

Signs will collect minimum speed, maximum speed, mean speed, and number of vehicles for each hour. A preliminary collection of data was done on Egypt Road, Plains Road and Main Street.

Ms. Sadak and Mr. Morse have noticed more deputies since this discussion started.

Motion to buy a second data collecting sign by Mr. Morse. Seconded by Ms. Sadak. Peter Leavitt, Leavitt Road, referred to a Lakes Region Weekly article he sent to Select Board members regarding other neighboring towns plans for traffic issues He notes that post-mounted speed signs are \$6k. Collecting data through these signs

are one step in the process. Comprehensive Plan Committee's survey from summer of 2023 noted multiple participants are concerned about traffic & speeding.

Mr. Morse acknowledged Peter's concerns and the information he's collected with his own research about different sign types and costs.

Peter Leavitt suggested there be a committee formed to study the traffic and speeding concerns to make a recommendation to the Select Board for action.

Mr. Morse asked to withdraw his motion, the group discussed how to proceed with withdrawing the current motion to allow for another motion to be made. The original motion will be voted on as is, if the motion fails, then another motion can be made.

Motion fails unanimously

Consensus of the Board was to direct the Town Manager to conduct an investigation into the needs of the Town and to bring any requests for equipment to the Select Board's attention through the budget process.

i) Discussion on the Formulation of a Visioning Committee – Select Board

- To look at potential uses for the Jordan Small Middle School when we receive it back from the RSU.

Advertise for people to join the committee. This committee would brainstorm conceptual ideas for the use of the building, a separate committee would look over financial aspect and schematics and details. The Visioning Committee should be made up of stakeholders – including department heads and personnel

Shawn McKillop said the Comprehensive Plan Committee has already collected ideas for the future use of the building, asks the Select Board get the process moving forward faster. Feels that having two committees is redundant of data collection already done.

Chair Olsen noted that not all stakeholders were included in the survey that Comprehensive Plan Committee had collected.

Grace Leavitt, Leavitt Road – could you broaden the purpose of the committee to include more of the specifics. Has noticed several New England towns of all sizes that have Community Centers, most are former schools.

Recreation Director Joe Crocker spoke about other communities that have community centers that were former schools. Noted some communities have included middle or high school students in their visionary and development planning committees.

Consensus of the board was that vacancies for a Visioning Committee should be advertised as soon as possible.

j) Consideration of Voting Method of the Town Meeting Warrant – Select Board

- Via secret ballot or at open Town Meeting

Make a decision on how to hold the vote on the Annual Town Warrant.

Grace Leavitt, Leavitt Road – strongly encourages that we go back to open town meeting, we used secret ballot during COVID, thinks we should go back. Open Town Meeting allows for discussion, helps build a sense of community.

Ms. Sadak – notes that there is a much higher turnout with a secret ballot election.

Jennifer Danzig, Pulpit Rock Road – one open meeting held at the Public Safety

Building was standing room only. While collecting signatures, many people noted they didn't know what they were voting for. People want information, but they're busy.

Mr. Ray is there a way to do hybrid? The required Public Hearings held ahead of the election day do make it relatively hybrid.

Mr. Morse – suggested that there be a warrant item to decide how to vote on this in the future.

Peter Leavitt – suggested to offer childcare, provide transportation, separate the topics into regularly scheduled special town meetings, increase communications. Also noted that controversial issues bring out voters.

Town Manager Look shared statistics on past meetings and elections. 237 people (5.5% of the population) came to vote the last time there was a Saturday Open Town Meeting, held in 2003. The last Open Town Meeting was held in 2019 and 77 people came out to vote, which is less than 2% of the registered voters at that time. The year prior in 2018, 50 voters came out. In 2017, 60 voters came out. In 2016, 72 voters came out. In 2016, it was held on a Wednesday night and there were 63 voters. In June of 2024, with a secret ballot vote on the Annual Town Meeting, there were 799 ballots cast. At the beginning of that ballot there were 32 blanks, by the time you get to the ordinance change questions, there were 122 blanks. Even with that factored in, there were 500 voters giving input on the questions. Acknowledged that there are merits to both sides of this argument.

Mr. Ray – pointed out that voters need to be informed, it's their responsibility to do the research and know what they're voting on. When the voter turnout is 10 times larger with a secret ballot election, it's hard to argue the matter.

Ms. Sadak – secret ballot brings more people out. Open Town Meetings take a lot of time and make it harder to attend for busy families.

Chair Olsen – asked a rhetorical question of Peter Leavitt: will you be satisfied if 20 people show up and vote down the Comprehensive Plan?

Peter Leavitt - hasn't been satisfied with turnout through the whole Comprehensive Plan Committee's process. However, those who turn out are involved, engaged, and informed.

Chair Olsen – if we go open town meeting, decisions are necessary about what day to do the meeting?

Motion to hold the Annual Town Meeting by Referendum vote on a secret ballot by Ms. Sadak. Seconded by Mr. Ray.

Motion failed. (vote 2-2-1; Ayes: Sadak, Ray; Nays: Olsen, Morse; absent: Gifford)

Motion to hold the vote for the Annual Town Meeting by Open Town Meeting forum by Mr. Morse, seconded by Mr. Olsen.

Motion failed. (vote 2-2-1; Ayes: Olsen, Morse; Nays: Sadak, Ray; absent: Gifford)
Both motions failed; the decision will need to be moved to the next meeting's agenda.

k) Update from Finance Director of Accounts Status – Brenda Fox-Howard, Finance Director

- The audit continues with occasional questions. We have hired a temporary person to help catch up the bank statements. A new fund 15 was set up for only

l) Consideration of Budget Goals and Schedule – Sue Look, Town Manager

Schedule in packet, dates were changed from last year, but the general schedule is the same.

Chair Olsen asked if the board had any scheduling conflicts with the dates proposed. Asked that the proposed schedule be shared with the Budget-Finance Committee at their meeting next week for their input.

m) Biennial Appointment of Voter Registrar – Sue Look, Town Manager

- Pursuant to 21-A MRSA §101, the Voter Registrar must be appointed by January 1st of each odd-numbered year.

Motion to appoint Melanie Fernald as Registrar of Voters as presented by Ms. Sadak. Seconded by Mr. Ray.

Unanimously approved

4) Public Comment

Chair Olsen opened the floor for Public Comment, the following individuals spoke:

Fire Chief Tupper – has a couple of vacancies for paramedic/firefighters, because of a retirement & a better opportunity in a neighboring community. Two very qualified employees who will be hard to replace.

Engine 31 has been out of service it will now need considerable ladder work, 22 year old truck, showing it's age. Naples has loaned us a truck, which does not fully meet our needs, but does keep us working.

Grace Leavitt – Windham/Raymond adult education catalog is forthcoming, wide variety of classes. Encouraged people to attend School Board meetings, the RSU #14 website has more info on dates

Peter Leavitt – Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) is funding traffic studies, encourages a discussion on Raymond rejoining GPCOG to benefit from the town's membership. Most surrounding communities are members.

5) Selectman Comment

Chair Olsen opened the floor for Selectman Comment; the following Select Board Members spoke:

Mr. Morse – Firefighter/Paramedic Bobby Orr was the first Portland Firefighter first to take paramedics course, he's retiring after 15 years with Raymond. Grateful for his service. It was a pleasure to hire him and a pleasure to know that Raymond was where he will retire from after 15 years with us.

6) Town Manager's Report and Communications

a) Confirm Dates for Upcoming Regular Meetings

- January 14, 2025

- February 11, 2025

b) Upcoming Holiday Closings

- Thursday, December 19 – Town Office Christmas Party, closing at noon
- Tuesday, December 24 – Town Office closing at 1pm for Christmas Holiday

Thank you to the Public Works crews for their long, late nights dealing with storms.

7) **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn at 9:43pm by Ms. Sadak. Seconded by Mr. Morse.

Unanimously approved

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Fernald, Town Clerk