

**Town of Stratford
Board of Selectboard Meeting
Fuller Town Hall @ 3:30 PM
December 15, 2025**

Call to Order: 3:30PM by Harry Juergens

Selectmen present: Harry Juergens and Ron Scott, Jr, Charlie Goulet

Others present: Suzanne Goulet, Vanessa Toner, Maryann Lister, Brian Hays, Dawn Hall, Chuck Stinson

Maryann: Town Clerk clarified changes in payroll structure, aiming for greater transparency. Election expenses discussed, particularly the mandated use of handicap-accessible voting tablets, despite rare utilization; compliance is legally required. Election budget reflects three elections for 2026; Town clerk office is to monitor tablet billing. Policy for dog licensing and tax collection clarified; lack of enforcement resources noted. Continue public communication regarding dog licensing deadlines and enforcement limitations. Election-related expenses (more elections in 2026), and rising mail/postage costs. Board approved budget 3-0.

Dawn: Library budget increased slightly, mostly due to a schedule Library to proceed with planned upgrades (Story Walk installation, park receptacles). Salary increases for the librarian; grants have offset equipment and furniture costs in recent years. Board approved budget 3-0.

Charles: Recycling budget slightly up due to landfill tipping fees and wage adjustments; ongoing challenges with plastics recycling and staffing. Recycling staff members to be reminded and supported to complete required certification; raises are tied to completion of all training and advancement in positions. Continue coordination on hazardous property cleanup; confirm with the fire marshal before demolition.

Brian: Discussed federal/state mandates to replace galvanized and lead water service lines by 2034; town responsible for facilitating and possibly financing replacements. Town is in compliance with current requirements; six known households with galvanized lines, several unknowns to be investigated. Discussed potential for loans and payment plans to help homeowners with replacement costs. Updates on well flow-meter project: significant cost savings by procuring materials independently; installation process described. Sewer budget decreased due to organizational changes (moving from contractor to employee model); anticipated savings from reduced benefits costs. Plan to earmark revenue from sewer pump use toward eventual removal of the town lagoon (anticipated 8-10 years out). Approved water and sewer budgets with noted decreases. Water/sewer manager to continue property owner outreach and update records on service lines. Plan to acquire a spare effluent pump for sewer operations; consider rebuilding the old pump for extra backup. Steer tires on septic truck to be replaced (included in budget). Continue collaboration with backup staff (Chester) and maintain open lines for emergencies. Discussed amendments to water/sewer ordinances to allow abatements for water used in pool filling (not entering sewer system); watering lawns/gardens excluded from abatements. The town will continue to allow pool abatements but not for other outdoor water uses. Approved (3-0) addition to water/sewer ordinance for pool usage.

Chuck: Department is struggling with recruitment and retention. Fire department critically low on volunteers; concern over insurance implications if department shrinks further (7-mile service radius is-

sue). Discussion of training, onboarding, and the need for more community involvement across boards. Ongoing issues with maintenance staff: adherence to policies (smoking prohibitions), use of town property, and work priorities. Discussion of fire hydrant maintenance and marking; coordination between water and fire departments emphasized. Ensure hydrant status is up-to-date and properly marked for fire response. Encourage public outreach to increase volunteerism—especially for the fire department. Approved (3-0) to use funds from sale of extra vehicles to use towards new fire truck.

Suzanne: Budgets approved as written for most departments. Review of hazardous property (Stone's property): posted with no trespassing signs; pending legal and environmental (asbestos) review before demolition. Maintain and enforce clear policies on building use and employee conduct. Proceed with planned community events and facility upgrades as scheduled. Consideration of community events (Christmas party, Story Walk, skating rink) and related facility's needs. New wage schedule based on regional data (Massachusetts, NH, Rhode Island) adopted for town employees; wage adjustments applied accordingly. Approved plan to encumber funds for unfinished road project (Bog Road) to preserve allocated money.

Select Board:

Juergens: Nothing at this time

Scott: Nothing at this time

Goulet: Nothing at this time

Manifest: C. Goulet / R. Scott, Jr. approved 2/0 to sign for 11/17/2025 and 12/08/2025.

Signed Documents: Motion to approve: Minutes, SM 12/1, Signed ambulance contract, Coos County Budget. Email addressed to selectboard was discussed

Old Business: N/A

New Business: N/A

Reminders: N/A

Public Input: N/A

Non- Public:

Meeting Adjourned: 5:30PM

Minutes prepared by: V. Toner