

Town of Strong, Maine
Select Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 10, 2025

Town Office: 14 S. Main St. Strong, ME 04983

6:00 PM

1. Call to Order and Attendance

- Meeting called to order by Chair Rupert Pratt.
- **Select Board Members Present:** Rupert Pratt, Andrew Bracy, David Catino, Joel Doyon, and Jim Burrell
- **Code Enforcement Officer Present:** Jonathan Arnold

2. Public Announcement

- **Franklin County Sheriff's Department** will conduct a **full-scale training exercise at Day Mountain Middle School on Wednesday, June 26, 2025**. Emergency personnel and equipment will stage from Strong.

3. Approval of Treasurer's Warrant

- **Amount:** \$134,079.71 (Week of June 12, 2025)
- **Motion:** Andrew Bracy
- **Second:** Joel Doyon
- **Vote:** Unanimous approval

4. Code Enforcement Update

Presented by **CEO Jonathan Arnold:**

- **West Freeman Road (Lorraine):** Jonathan attempted in-person visits but was unable to make contact. Will try phone contact before next steps.
- **Camper Violation (Steve Johnson):**
 - Camper on property beyond the 180-day legal limit.
 - Black water is reportedly stored in a plastic tank; gray water drains directly into the ground—non-compliant with wastewater laws.
 - Resident has not followed through with required documentation or regular pumping contract.

- **Unpermitted Junkyard on Church Property:**
 - Estimated **85–100 vehicles** on-site, far exceeding the state’s **limit of 3 unregistered vehicles**.
 - Property is within restricted distance of a church; the location disqualifies it from obtaining a junkyard permit.
 - Vehicles do not meet “antique” standards; no evidence of hobbyist use.
 - Code and Select Board members agree the property is in **clear violation** of state and local ordinances.

- **Next Steps:**
 - Jonathan and the board will contact the **Church of the Nazarene**, which owns the property, and notify them of the violations.
 - Town to issue a new **180-day notice** for removal if cooperative action is initiated immediately.
 - Board is prepared to move forward with legal enforcement, including possible court action, if there is no compliance.

5. Employee Retirement Plan Policy

- Draft policy for a **457(b) deferred compensation plan** reviewed.
- Includes:
 - 3-month probationary period
 - Eligibility after one year for matching contributions
 - Subject to budget approval
- Board members to review and finalize at a future meeting.

6. Grant Updates

- **Conversion Grant:** Awaiting federal review. Timeline unclear due to staffing cuts in D.C.
- **AVCOG Grant:**
 - Town awarded a grant for energy efficiency work.
 - Submitted quote of approx. **\$37,000** to install heat pumps in the fire station.
 - Equipment delivery pending.

- **Recreation Area Improvements (Grant Application):**
 - Current stair structure at Scott Paul Memorial Park is unsafe.
 - Proposed switchback trail with resting benches, possibly retaining a viewing platform.
 - Grant to include additional picnic tables, grills, and accessibility improvements.
 - Snowmobile club may propose trail access improvements.
 - Quotes being gathered to maximize funding use.

7. Public Comment

- Clarification: **Community garden is open to all residents**, not just for the food pantry.
- Residents voiced support for keeping and improving the **Legion Ball Field**.
- Requests for improvements to **basketball courts** and general recreational upkeep.

8. Public Works Update

- Roadside mowing underway.
- Grader repairs completed (steering valve failure).
- Cleanup needed after field maintenance debris reached bleachers during a game. Situation was resolved quickly.

9. DOT Request: Overweight Permit

- **Maine DOT** requested permission to operate overweight equipment for **ADA curb ramp upgrades**.
- Board approved contingent upon a **\$14,000/mile bond** to protect town roads.

10. Events Committee

- Upcoming Events Committee meeting: **Saturday, June 14 at 9:00 AM** to finalize summer activities and coordination with the sheriff's office.

11. Executive Session I – pursuant to MRSA §405(6)(A) Personnel

- **Entered:** 6:57pm / **Exited:** 7:05pm
- **Motion:** Joel Doyon | **Second:** Jim Burrell
- **Outcome:** Hired **Amanda Coolong** as **Town Clerk**

- **Vote:** Unanimous approval

12. Executive Session II – pursuant to MRSA §405(6)(A) Withdrawal Committee Appointments

- **Entered:** 7:06pm / **Exited:** 7:17pm
- **Motion:** Andrew Bracy | **Second:** Joel Doyon
- **Appointments Approved:**
 - **Andrew Bracy** – Select Board Member
 - **Sue Pratt** – Petitioning Resident
 - **Amanda Coolong** – MSAD 58 School Board Member
 - **Phillip Richards** – Community Member
 - **Rebecca Lane** – Community Member
 - **Joel Doyon** – Alternate for Select Board
 - **Phoebe Smith** – Alternate for Community Member
 - **Pending:** Bob Webster (potential 7th member if interested)
- **Vote:** Unanimous approval
- Board to set first committee meeting the week of **June 17–20, 2025**.

13. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned following committee appointments.