

Town of Otis
Selectboard/ Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
Gymnasium
Tuesday, August 26, 2025, at 6:30 PM

This meeting will be held in person at the location provided on this notice. Members of the public are welcome to attend. A remote option is offered via zoom with the link provided below.

Please note that while an option for remote participation is being provided as a courtesy, the meeting will not be suspended or terminated if technological problems interrupt the virtual broadcast, unless otherwise required by law.

Anyone with interest in any specific item should plan in person attendance.

Topic: Select Board

Time: Aug 26, 2025 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89972883894?pwd=83UZGQ2udfVdjMxGCSL97Y3JyRhG0K.1>

Meeting ID: 899 7288 3894

Passcode: 967689

Attendance: Gary Thomas-Chair, Larry Southard, Terry Gould, Brandi Page, Adam Thibeault, Michael Scott, Whit Iglehart, Janice Hawley, Stacey Schultze, Larry Gould, Diane Dyer, Susan Brofman, Sue Ebitz, Tony Rigilo, Deb Fogel, Diane Saunders, Eve Kummel, V. Crowe, C. Gangloff, B.J. O'Brien, Patty Strauch, Robert Rich, Donna Rich, Denise Hardie, Katelyn Chaffee, Stephanie Skinner, George Roy, Beth Roy, Rose Crittendon, Jeanne Randorf, Joanne Weir, Kathleen Casey, Sharon DeLevie, Cathy Bezozo, Carole Burke, Tom Burke, Kay Koloski, Lisa D'Orazio, Laretta Harris, Hilary Harley, Barbara Linden, Bob Gentile, Jackie Gentile, John & Nancy Hansen, Debby Bobsen, Bobbe Klegmer, Margie Klein. **Zoom:** Irosenthal, Chase, S Barry, Iphone 23, Diane Provenz and Mary Kay.

Call to Order: 6:30 PM.

Approval of Minutes: Terry made a motion to approve the Aug 12, 2025 minutes as written, Gary seconded and the motion passed, vote 3-0.

North Blandford Road Paving: The bid opening for the North Blandford Road paving was today at 2:00 pm. The Board reviewed the submissions. Gary made a motion to award the work to Palmer Paving for \$278,903.05 as the lowest responsive and responsible bidder contingent upon final approval from Mass DOT prequal. Larry seconded and the motion passed, vote 3-0.

Library Project: Adam Thibeault from Downes welcomed everyone. He gave a summary of the goal this evening and handed things over to Whit Iglehart from TSKP. Whit recapped the previous information on the sites through each of the three slides. He then discussed the heat map they had

put together giving each of the sites a “score”. Sue Brofman spoke to say that the official recommendation from the Library Building Committee was the Erbe site. She hoped the Select Board would consider the same information. Adam spoke to say that Downes reviewed the information as well and endorsed the Erbe site. They felt it lent itself to the goal of revitalizing the down town and was a tax savings because we didn’t need to purchase this property. Gary spoke to ask about the cash flow issue the Town would experience during the project. Adam replied it is something we will need to plan for possibly through fundraising efforts. Stephanie stated the MBLC is aware this will be an issue and will work toward turning around reimbursement requests as quickly as they can. Larry Southard took this opportunity to speak. He has given this all a lot of thought and commends everyone for their hard work so far. First off he wanted to express that he is very disappointed a renovation/ expansion of the current library/site was not considered for this project. Second, he was disappointed that the Erbe site was the focal point of the group for over three years despite concerns over the well and parking. Other sites should have been seriously considered. In response to our concerns about water the designers worked with their engineers to examine a solution. They had presented the scenario with a well being sited on Town Hall property at the rear of the playground which is then connected to the new library. Larry noted this solution of drilling a well in the rear of the playground overlaps with the immediate zones of other water supplies and a septic. A new library on the Erbe site leaves no room for expansion for the Library or Town Hall in the future. He talked about what Otis was like in the 70’s and the changes we have seen through the years. He personally feels East Otis has grown and we know it represents a greater density of our population. Some businesses have shifted up Rte. 23 to East Otis and he sees travelers stopping for these destinations. These reasons have made him further consider the East Otis site. It abuts the Knox Trail and has room for expansion. He feels we should emphasize this being a “modern” library and really paint a picture the type of asset it can be to our community. Public comments expressed wanting the Erbe site to attract people to stop again in the Town Center. Patty Strauch asked how we were planning to move forward with the Annex if there is an issue with water. Larry Gould clarified that the planned use of the Annex was expansion of already existing town staff/ services. Initial conversations with DEP were favorable that we could remain using our existing well. We were not planning to increase the draw from our existing well we were simply spreading out what we already have happening at Town Hall. A new Library on the Erbe site means adding a new use to the property. It would require a new well and could not utilize our existing one. Residents spoke to say we shouldn’t separate East Otis and Otis. We are all one. Libraries bring people together and stem isolation. Terry spoke about her thoughts on the site. She felt the West Center Road site was only 1.5 miles from the center and could more than accommodate a beautiful library. She felt the East Otis site would anchor that area and had great possibilities for expansion. She hesitates to support the Erbe site which has no room for expansion and the well concerns. She also felt we should have explored the current library/site including considering Harmony Hall. Sue Brofman spoke to say the group talked about that early on and made the decision not to pursue the grant in that way. They felt it was not possible and wanted a stand-alone new building. There were comments and clarification on allowable costs. Stacey Schultze thanked the Board for taking the time to consider everything. She saw great potential for all three of the sites. She felt the Erbe site offered economic benefit for the downtown. Donna Rich worried about the additional costs. People don’t want to spend more money purchasing a site. After the final comments supporting our current

library and its future the Select Board voted. Larry made a motion to select the East Otis site. Terry seconded the motion. Gary stated that the well situation concerns him. He also would be in favor of the East Otis site. Terry believes that all said and done the cost for each site will end up being comparable. The vote was unanimous and passed.

Recent and Upcoming Events: The recent Steak Roast by the Fire Department was very nice and well attended.

Review & Approval of Warrants: Payroll and vendor warrants are on the table for signature.

Not Anticipated by the Board: Brandi asked the Board about their availability for upcoming interviews.

Adjourn: 8:04 PM.