

# Memorandum

**To:** Selectboard  
**Cc:**  
**From:** Greg Duggan, Town Manager; Karen Adams, Deputy Manager  
**Re:** Discussion about Selectboard work items for fiscal year 2026 (60 minutes)  
**Date:** 6/6/2025

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## Issue

The issue is whether the Selectboard will identify work items for fiscal year 2025.

## Discussion

Once the Selectboard has affirmed core values and long-term goals, the board can discuss what specific work items it would like to pursue toward those goals and values in fiscal year 2026.

A list of suggestions based on suggestions the Board or staff has received, in addition to revisiting goals from FY25:

- Penalties/fees for illegal signage
- Fund Balance, Computer Use, Facility Rental Policies updates
- Water Advisory Board (from Annie Cooper via email and at 6/2/25 SB meeting)
- Take on joint capital planning with Essex Junction related to the Tree Farm
- Further explore alternatives to GMT membership
- Guide the development of an implementation plan for Upper Main Street

Additionally, Selectboard member submitted some ideas for consideration. Those ideas are attached.

## Cost

n/a

## Recommendation

This memo is for discussion.

## Attachments:

1.	email re Strategic Planning Thoughts (from Andy Watts) 20250601
2.	FY26 - Selectboard work plan

## Greg Duggan

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**From:** Andy Watts  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 1, 2025 4:16 PM  
**To:** Greg Duggan; Karen Adams  
**Cc:** Tracey Delphia  
**Subject:** Strategic Planning Thoughts

Hi Greg and Karen,

In preparation for our strategic planning meeting next week, I've been rereading the Town Plan and also considering other things I'd like to see happen or have more information on. Previously, the SB has been provided with Department work plans and maybe some of these items are already planned or have already been addressed. I did note that on page 8 of the Town Plan, it is clearly stated that the Plan is aspirational and that approval by voters does not imply commitment of any of the actions so that needs to be kept in mind.

Having said that, though, I do see that the Plan recommends ongoing support for GMT. There is also a recommendation that we update our Public Works Specifications. I have heard this mentioned in the past but don't know its status.

On p.14, there is a recommendation to conduct a comprehensive review of housing to prepare a "gaps analysis" and also a suggestion to explore a housing trust fund. I'd like to know more about these.

On p.17, there is a "policy" statement that says commercial scale solar can only go in commercial and industrial zoned areas. How does this gibe with the proposal to install solar near Indian Brook? There is also a large array on Col Page Rd. Did that predate the Town Plan? Or are these not big enough to be considered "commercial?"

P. 18 says establishing a tree nursery is a medium term plan. Perhaps other priorities should be considered first.

P.26 recommends the development of a new stormwater ordinance. Do we have anything going on there?

P. 41 recommends bicycle/pedestrian impact fees? Will this come after our active transportation plan update?

P. 72 suggests the need for a comprehensive wetlands assessment. Is this something that we should look at regarding flood resilience? Or would this be a planning commission work item?

P. 81 mentions 86 historic sites in Essex. Do/should we highlight them anywhere or do we rely on the Essex Community Historical Society to do that?

P. 83 mentions the need for updating the Essex Town Center design regulations. This is probably a PC work item though so maybe should not be on the SB work list.

P. 88 encourages renewable energy development in AR zoned areas. Is this in conflict with "policy" stated on page 17 which says commercial renewable energy can only be in commercial/industrial?

P.104 recommends a Sand Hill pool master plan. I know that working a large EPR project in parallel with a new Town Center may be challenging but I'd hate to see us have to close the pool because we weren't paying enough attention.

P. 106 mentions that we own land on the Browns River that could potentially be used for a boat launch. Should we be focusing there rather than on the Winooski? I don't know how navigable the Browns River is.

P. 111 suggests that we buy a minivan for Senior Bus backup. I don't recall seeing this in our capital plan. I wonder if this makes sense. Not sure I would prioritize at this point but maybe more information would be helpful considering we may leave GMT.

P. 112 mentions a Fire Department "Bureau of Life." I have never heard of this. Lorraine has been raising questions about fire safety lately (in consideration of whether a ladder truck is needed). Is there more about this Bureau that should be shared?

Other miscellaneous things:

Sewer capacity MOU with Colchester

Indian Brook Dam plan

EWSD properties; Saxon Hill, Town School District Forest, should we try to buy them? I was once told that the Town School District Forest was kept quiet because the State raised trout in the reservoir there.

Sewer capacity study

Stormwater utility, should we do this?

Should we establish a strategy/mechanism for encouraging donations toward Town Center or Pool projects?

Would we put someone's name on our Library, Community Center, or Pool Complex? Janet, as the Chair of the Library Trustees, plans to investigate what was done in SoBu for fundraising for their new library. South Hero Library also has done some capital fundraising in the past. Perhaps some ladder truck fundraising could be considered as well.

*Best regards,*

*Andy Watts*

*Essex Town Selectboard*

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