Town of Florida Selectmen Meeting

Florida Town Hall

379 Mohawk Trail

Drury, MA 01343

September 24, 2025

6:00 pm meeting called to order by Neil Oleson

Selectmen members present: Neil Oleson, Mike Bedini, Tim Zelazo

Selectmen members absent: None

Others present: Joan Lewis, Jim White, Diana Worth, Melanie Medon, James Brosnan, Gary Rivers, Heidi Dugal, Alan Horbal, Stephanie Pare, Doug Miller

Selectmen:

* Tim Zelazo made a motion to approve the minutes of September 10, 2025. Mike Bedini seconded the motion. Unanimous.
* James Brosnan discussed with the board the repairs being proposed for McCann through the MA School Building Authority (MSBA). The project is designed to replace the 28-year-old roof, the original leaking, all single pane, windows and make the building handicap accessible. This project will extend the life of the facility for another 50 years, save energy costs and create a safe and accessible learning environment. The estimated cost is $16,779,269.00. MSBA has approved to pay 64% of the grant eligible costs, leaving an estimated borrowing total of $7,409,281.00. The District Agreement determines the process and the percentage each community must contribute to capital expenses. The town of Florida’s share of the repairs that are being completed will be approximately $290,888.00. Heidi Dugal and Stephanie Pare questioned if the town could pay their full share in the beginning without borrowing, versus borrowing and owing interest. James was unsure of that answer and will consult with counsel. The board has 60 days to respond. If no response is received, then it is an automatic agreement to proceed with the borrowing. The selectboard will review the information and get back to James with a decision before the 60-day time has passed. The board instructed Joan to put the information on the website for this to be discussed during the next selectboard meeting.
* Alan Horbal attended the meeting to discuss the American Flag Project. Fran Bedini contacted him several years ago regarding flags for Florida. Alan believes the biggest issue to displaying the flags in town is the insurance requirement by National Grid and Verizon as they require a $2 million bond. Alan has been working with the National Grid Standards Department to develop a new system to hang the flags. He is proposing Florida, Clarksburg, Williamstown and the city of North Adams all work together and this should cut down on the insurance costs. Estimated costs are $21 per flag, which incudes the flag, strapping to hang it and insurance. Alan suggested donations from various sources to help fund the costs. The board asked Alan to update them once he knew if the other towns are interested in the collaboration. The discussion is tabled until Joan hears back from Alan. The board instructed her to add the discussion to the next selectboard meeting agenda.
* Highway department hiring discussion to be added to the next meeting agenda.
* Bid Openings:
  + Bolens Tractor – Michael Fairneny $777; Ernie Perry $750; Judson Peppas $402.

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Selectmen (continued):

* Bid Openings:
  + Backhoe - Paul Conboy $5252; David Brooks $4600; Joe Gwozdz $3750; Tim Larson $3501; Nickolas Keating $3152; Brian Teschka $3000; Christoper Fielding $2001; David Kelly Whitney $2000; Hilltown Demolition LLC $1800; Ernie Perry $1650.
  + The highest bidders will be notified.

Jim White, Highway Department Supervisor:

* Talked with Dwayne Mundy who has a 92 straight blade boss he is selling for $2600.00. Jim would like to purchase it. The board agrees.
* Working on Whitcomb Hill catch basins.
* Mowing cemeteries and roadsides.
* Speed Limit signs are put up on Tilda Hill Road from route 2 to Blackstone Road.
* The solar speed limit sign on Tilda Hill is not working. The sign company will be up next week to look at it.
* Crack sealed River Road, Monroe Road, Whitcomb Hill Road.
* Replaced stove pipping from outside to the stove.

Joan Lewis, Town Administrator:

* Commented a correction on meeting notes that she had taken 7 days off, not 2 weeks as written.
* Chris Sahady’s review will take place at the next meeting. Board instructed Joan to send him a letter notifying him of this.
* Joan, Tim and Neil went to a class for town.
* Waiting on the bridge.
* Three proposals’ submitted by McLain Electric.
  + Upgrade wall receptacle, Labor and materials for copy machine. $1025.00.
  + Rear wall receptable, existing one gang receptacle $1325.00.
  + Emergency light replacement, Exit light replacement, Bathroom Exhaust Fan repair, Entry receptacle repair. $1385.00.
  + Tim Zelazo made a motion to accept all three proposals from McLain Electric; one is $1025.00, $1325.00 and $1385.00. Mike Bedini seconded. Unanimous.
* Postponed personnel policy discussion to next meeting.
* Hazard litigation has been completed yet.

Public Comment:

* Heidi Dugal questioned if any information has become available from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission for the housing repairs. The board has not heard any information back yet. She has offered to help people fill out applications should they need it.

Mike Bedini made a motion to adjourn at 7:51 pm. Tim Zelazo second. Unanimous.