

Town of Durham
Board of Selectmen
Monday, October 20, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.
Cafeteria, Community Center, and Remote via Zoom
Meeting Minutes

Meeting Recording
Passcode: 2\$.Ep3rb

1. Call to Order
First Selectman Rea called the Board of Selectmen meeting of Monday, October 20, 2025 to order at 6:30 p.m. Also present: Selectman Chadd and Selectman Hennick.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
First Selectman Rea led with the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Approval of Agenda
MOTION BY FIRST SELECTMAN REA, SECONDED BY SELECTMAN HENNICK TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. VOTE: ALL AYE
4. Public Comment (open to agenda items only)
None.
5. Accept nominations and vote to fill the following vacancies (per Charter Sec. 2.6):
 - a. Building Code of Appeals
None.
 - b. Ethics Commission, Regular, 2028
None.
 - c. Ethics Commission, Alternate, 2028
None.
 - d. Fire Company Trustees, D, 2026
None.
 - e. Sustainable Durham, Alternate, 2027
None.
6. Bid Award: Boiler Replacement at Fire Department
Kristen Kleeman, Chair of Fire Company Trustees, was present to discuss the Boiler Replacement at the Fire Department. The town went out to bid and received eight responses.

1. Tucker Mechanical	\$51,470.00
2. Perfectemp Inc.	\$49,413.00
3. Southport Contracting, Inc.	\$73,000.00
4. SAV-MOR Cooling and Heating Inc.	\$57,500.00
5. SK Mechanical, LLC	\$44,670.00
6. Advanced Mechanical Services	\$59,531.00
7. ActionAir Systems Inc	\$69,500.00
8. Connecticut Boiler Repair	\$60,965.00

The trustees reviewed the bid documents and found that SK Mechanical, LLC provided a complete bid package, was within the \$50,000 budget for capital project and recommended the board award the bid. The board thanked K. Kleeman and the trustees.

MOTION BY SELECTMAN CHADD, SECONDED BY SELECTMAN HENNICK, TO AWARD THE FIRE DEPARTMENT BOILER REPLACEMENT BID TO SK MECHANICAL, LLC IN THE AMOUNT OF \$44,670.00 AS RECOMMENDED BY THE FIRE COMPANY TRUSTEES. VOTE: ALL AYE
7. Shunpike Road Discontinuance: Next Steps
First Selectman Rea noted the town needs to give the abutters 30 days-notice before a vote. This will be back on the December 3rd agenda.
8. Discuss and take action to grant permission for the First Selectman to enter into a contract with the CT State Department of Transportation Agreement No. 8.18-08(25) for the Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant conditions for Shady Lane Project No. 0037-0105 and to approve a Municipal Certification of Resolution for STEAP 2025
MOTION BY SELECTMAN HENNICK, SECONDED BY FIRST SELECTMAN REA TO GRANT PERMISSION FOR THE FIRST SELECTMAN TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE CT STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AGREEMENT NO. 8.18-08(25) FOR THE SMALL TOWN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (STEAP) GRANT CONDITIONS FOR SHADY LANE PROJECT NO. 0037-0105 AND TO APPROVE A MUNICIPAL CERTIFICATION OF RESOLUTION FOR STEAP 2025. VOTE: ALL AYE
9. Discuss and take action to grant permission for the First Selectman to enter into a contract with Community Renewal Team (CRT) for operations and procedures of the Energy Assistance Program for 2025-2026
MOTION BY SELECTMAN CHADD, SECONDED BY FIRST SELECTMAN REA TO GRANT PERMISSION FOR THE FIRST SELECTMAN TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH COMMUNITY RENEWAL TEAM (CRT) FOR OPERATIONS AND PROCEDURES OF THE ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR 2025-2026. VOTE: ALL AYE
10. Approval of 2026 Holidays
MOTION BY FIRST SELECTMAN REA, SECONDED BY SELECTMAN HENNICK, TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING 2026 HOLIDAYS:

Thursday, January 1, 2026	New Years Day
Monday, January 19, 2026	Martin Luther King Jr Day

Monday, February 16, 2026	Presidents Day
Friday, April 3, 2026	Good Friday
Monday, May 25, 2026	Memorial Day
Friday, June 19, 2026	Juneteenth
Friday, July 3, 2026	4th of July Observed
Monday, September 7, 2026	Labor Day
Friday, September 25, 2026	Durham Fair Friday
Monday, October 12, 2026	Columbus Day
Wednesday, November 11, 2026	Veteran's Day
Thursday, November 26, 2026	Thanksgiving
Friday, November 27, 2026	Day after Thanksgiving
Thursday, December 24, 2026	½ Day Christmas Eve
Friday, December 25, 2026	Christmas Day
Thursday, December 31, 2026	½ Day New Years Eve

VOTE: ALL AYE

11. Approval of Meeting Minutes: October 6, 2025

MOTION BY SELECTMAN HENNICK, SECONDED BY FIRST SELECTMAN REA TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 6, 2025 MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED: VOTE: 2 AYE (B. REA, T. HENNICK) 1 ABSTAIN (R. CHADD/ABSENT). MOTION PASSED.

12. Approval of Tax Refunds

Tabled until the next meeting.

13. Old/New Business

First Selectman Rea spoke about the following Old/New Business:

- a. Facilities Update:
 1. The LED lighting project is underway at the Community Center
 2. The generator install at the Community Center is wrapping up/in the wiring stage
 3. Library stair project finished and the walk thru with staff to review punch list will be this week
- b. Conservation Commission/White Farms: First Selectman Rea attended the 10/14/25 meeting
- c. Trunk or Treat: will take place Saturday, October 25th at the Community Center. More information can be found on the town website.
- d. Local Traffic Authority: First Selectman Rea will be attending a 2-day training on Local Traffic Authority

14. Selectmen Comments

None.

15. Public Comment (open to non-agenda items)

Stevan Akerley: spoke about his concerns with Whites Farm Open Space and asked that his comments be submitted into the record (attached). The Board of Selectmen responded they have received a lot of communication regarding the Open Space at Whites Farm and noted the Conservation Commission is the authority/steward of the property. The board will continue to work with them and anything that comes into the First Selectman's Office as a request to use Public Works, this correspondence will be taken into consideration.

Kristen Kleeman: thanked the board for their support and award for the boiler bid. First Selectman Rea confirmed his office will handle paperwork with the Fire Trustees copied.

Rick Parmelee: felt Whites Farm access should not be restricted, Social Services Office and other staff should not be working remote, lack of volunteers, disagreed with Board of Selectmen meetings at 8:30 a.m., and noted hearing access for some meetings is not adequate.

16. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jaclyn Lehet

Stevan Akerley Comments:

10-14-2025 Conservation Committee Meeting

Minutes from Conservation Commission Meeting 10/14, 2025, were not available yet on 10/19/2025.

But, what I understood from that meeting, was that a preliminary plan was presented for building a barrier (fence ?) around the Whites Farm Open Spaces South Field (South of the East-West Access Road). This fence is intended to halt vandalism that has occurred in that field. The Flying Field has also experienced vandalism over the years, and we have repaired it at our own expense and effort. We the Black Sheep Squadron Club (BSS) appreciate the effort to try to prevent vandalism, as expensive it may be. The picture below shows what I believe I heard and saw (Subject to revision pending further information).



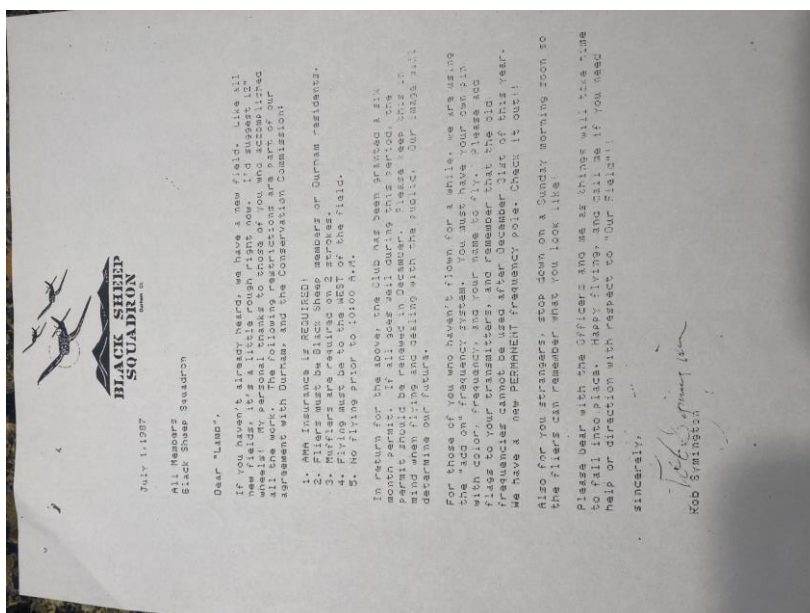
A more detailed description of the design details, and what the budget is for this construction project are required.

Every effort must be made to protect the current Conservation Committee Budget from extra expense, since it is required for maintenance of the Whites Farm Open Space Recreational Area.

The current barriers that are around some of the parking areas should be incorporated into the proposed design, as there are walking paths that exist for hikers and walkers that use the area at the end of the East West Access Road. There are also unscheduled activities that use the flying field at the west end of the parking area. It is after all an open access area for citizens to use.

A part of the proposal includes moving the BSS Flying Field from its current position to the 'Wild' field at the North side of the Road (See yellow line in picture above). When discussing this proposal with the BSS Flying Club Members this last weekend (10/18-19/2025). There were several concerns and questions raised as follows;

1. The current flying field was moved to its current location by recommendation/agreement of the town in 1987. (See letter Below)
2. The current location has been maintained, improved, and shared for the last 38 years by the flying club at their own expense. (e.g. the club paid for some brush hogging last year - \$300). The field has been used by dog walkers, hikers, birders, various training, and sports activities).
3. The flying clubs have been using the Whites Farm Open Area since its creation (Flying Aces, SAM7, BSS) in 1966 approximately).
4. The question was raised, "Why does the field need to be moved ? We have coexisted in the current location, without any problems for 38 years ?
5. Moving the flying field to the new location will require considerable expense and effort, since the proposed new field has been allowed to go wild. Does the town have the ability to help with such a move ?



Updated OWFOSA 10/20/2025

Observations of Whites Farm Open Spaces Area

The following observations are from many conversations with Town of Durham, CT, Citizens, and others that use the Whites Farm Open Spaces Area, for recreational purposes.

1. Reference - email from Pam Hogarth (Citizen), August 17, 2025, in Minutes of Conservation Commission 9/9/2025. Title; ***“Whites Farm Maintenance”***.
2. Reference - email from Randy Mclean (Chair Durham Agriculture Commission), August 20, in Minutes of Conservation Commission 9/9/2025. Subject; ***“... management priority to preserve the land’s agricultural function and ecological integrity.”***
3. Multiple Field Walkers (reference casual conversations with Durham Citizens and others) are actively maintaining trails around the perimeter of the fields, using their own (Donations) money to maintain walking trails, that the Conservation Commission should be maintaining. Letting the fields go wild is not conservation.
4. Multiple Birders (reference Connecticut Bobolink and Wildlife Festival in Durham, July 12, 2025). Have observed Bobolinks only in the field south of the Access Road, and in areas where there is “Emergent Grass Land”.
5. Blue Birds, and Swallows have been observed catching flying insects in the air space above the grasslands and mowed fields. Butterflies have been observed in the Southern areas of the grassland fields. The wildlife need grass lands and fields.
6. Multiple conversations with people with farming experience have observed that 2 of the larger fields (West and North) have been allowed to go wild, and are no longer useful as fields for harvesting hay. They need to be brush hogged so that they can revert back to “Emergent Grass Land” that pasture birds like. (Bobolinks, Meadow Larks, etc.). Given the current condition of the fields this may actually take several years.
7. In order for Hay to be of value it must be harvested at the right time period, when it is at its peak nutritional value, usually in May to June time period. The arbitrary time period of after July 15, is way too late and the harvested “Hay” is of little value, except to use as STRAW. Not as much demand/value.
8. The past practice of trying to use haying to maintain the fields as grass land has not worked for several years in a row. Thus the fields have gone wild into scrub brush land, and are no longer suitable for haying.
9. Successful haying was apparently done at Howd Road/Johnson for an income of \$500. The date and location of this haying activity is not clear, yet, but may have been in Fiscal Year 2022-23. Haying (Straw ?) harvest activity has been observed at the fields adjacent to Deerfield Farm at the intersection of Pent Road, Tri Mountain Road, Parmelee Hill Rd. in the late Summer of 2025.(Durham Open Spaces, Curtis Woodlands, and Pent Road).
10. The information in the following 2 items (11-12) comes from a Freedom Of Information (FOI) Request for cost and income for the Conservation Committee, in order to understand the actual costs and income from activities.

11. The Budget Reports for the Deerfield Farm Lease shows an income as follows;
 - a. FY23/24 \$ 6,213.48
 - b. FY 24/25 \$ 6338.88
 - c. FY 25/26 \$1,600.56 (as of 10/17)
 - d. But, All These Funds are reserved for maintenance and repair of the barn.
12. The Budget for the Conservation Commission Shows that there is a surplus of funds each year that could have been used for Whites Farm Open Spaces Area Maintenance, as follows;
 - a. FY 2022/23 Original Approp. \$ 21,550.00, Available \$ 13,830.15
 - b. FY 2023/24 Original Approp. \$10,825.00, Available \$ 3,601.48.
 - c. FY 2024/25 Original Approp. \$ 10,825.00, Spent \$ 4,747.56
 - d. FY 2025/26 Original Approp. \$ 10,800.00, Available \$ 9,710.71
13. It would seem that ***IF*** the Conservation Commission really cared about the “Endangered Grass Land Birds” (mentioned above), they should brush hog the West and North fields this Fall, so they can become Emergent Grass Lands next Spring. Thus expanding and fostering the habitat for the endangered birds that they claim to care so much about. Also see Pam Hogarth’s, and Randy McLean email letters in the CC minutes for last month (9/9/25).
14. Recommended The Conservation Commission Create an **Action Plan immediately**, to include;
 - a. Brush hogging of the West and North fields this fall (2025), so they can revert to “Emergent Grass Lands” next spring (2026), in support of the observations of Pam Hogarth, and recommendation by Randy Mclean (in 1 and 2 above). Also, in support of the “Birders”, and the annual Bobolink Festival.
 - b. Any field that has not been hayed (harvested), should be brush hogged in the fall, every year, to quote; “...***preserve the land’s agricultural function and ecological integrity.***”. (See 2 above).
 - c. It is observed that the Field South of the Access Road has been brush hogged by the Durham Fair Association, and has not been hayed, this has been done for several years.
 - d. The “Walking Paths” of Whites Farm should be named and maintained by the Conservation Commission as a part of their regular duties of maintenance. These paths should be identified in Open Spaces Maps as a regular part of the Conservation Commission duties.
 - e. An Annual Accounting of the Conservation Commission Budget (\$10,800 this year) should be detailed and reported on at the first meeting of the Conservation Commission in the following fiscal year (May/June), with courtesy copy to the Board of Selectmen, Commission Members and Interested citizens, without having to request via FOI.
 - f. Make a motion, second, discuss, vote **Required** to show that Conservation Commission really cares about Maintaining Whites Farm Open Spaces Area.
 - g. The wild uncut brush in the North Field also poses a fire hazard and is a potential liability for the town and citizen safety.