

SELECTMEN'S MEETING– April 20, 2026

Present: Chris Ellms, Richard Bielefield, Rusty Talbot
Jennifer Gaudette

Guests: Kathy Jablonski, Larry & Judy Sawyer, Philip Magnuson, Robert Quindone, Jonah Hanowitz

MR. TALBOT made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of April 13, 2026, seconded by MR. BIELEFIELD. The motion passed unanimously.

Correspondence was read and acted upon.

The Select board will not meet on Monday April 27, 2026.

STEVE CHARDON contacted the town to confirm he was still the representative to the Mt. Washington Airport Commission. He is and it's the second year of a three-year term.

The town was notified by the Town of Bath that they would be having a public hearing on Tuesday April 28th at the Bath Village School concerning a request by Vertex Tower LLC for a variance to construct a telecommunications facility at 148 Pettyboro Road.

Notification was received from NHEC regarding Vegetation Control Services on property on the Streeter Pond area. Larry Sawyer from SHCC was going to follow up with some questions about this process.

Summary of Coffin Pond Meeting:

On Monday April 20th, the Town Administrator, Select Board Chair and members of the Sugar Hill Conservation Commission met with six members from the NHDES/Dam Bureau, two representatives from NH Fish & Game and a representative from Horizons Engineering to discuss the future of Coffin Pond.

The talk started with DES Chief Engineer Cory Clark who explained the removal process and how best to move forward. The group toured the inlet as well as the where the dam was previously located. The group discussed installing a new spillway type dam that could be done in house by the town highway department.

There are two points moving forward:

1. All in attendance agreed that the transfer of the property from the State of NH to the Town of Sugar Hill was a priority and would allow the Town to then put a new dam in place. This is a very time-consuming process. The transfer has to go through several committees including one that meets just twice a year for land acquisition. This process has been started. If the pond and land is left in State ownership, they will not do anything to it. They have no funding in place and they monitor 275 dams in the State that currently require 414 million dollars to upgrade. They have 64 high hazard dams whose failure could endanger thousands of lives downstream.

2. Permitting needs to be done through NHDES as soon as possible and a plan will need to be developed (Horizons Engineering) and then presented to both NHDES Wetlands, US Corps of Engineers, and the Dam bureau. Specifics on height that would allow the dam to be a non-menace (lowest scale) would also require a waiver. It was felt a waiver would not be a problem as there is conservation land on both sides down the river. Once installed it will not require any fees or inspections by the dam bureau.

In conclusion, it is the hope of town officials to obtain the land as soon as possible and to replace the dam. You may see the town highway and fire departments repairing the dry hydrant in the next couple of weeks as the lowering of the water damaged the hydrant. We will keep you informed as the process moves forward.

Members of the audience asked questions and Mr. Ellms noted that we need to temper expectations on how fast it can be corrected. What we will have will be better. Looking at different groups moving forward including Audubon as the pond could also be a bird sanctuary after the dam is rebuilt. The material that the state removed is going to be stored on Cliff Hughes property in hopes of being reused. There would also be a potential for a bike path. Mr. Magnuson presented the board with a picture showing how the Gale River originally flowed in front of the pond. Several questions in regard to dredging and that would be a difficult process and permitting project. The Highway and Fire Department will be repairing the dry hydrant that was damaged by the ice dropping when the pond was drained. There was concern that there should be a couple of Trail Ends signs put up due to the opening of the dam area. The board will continue to look for ways to raise the water for the dry hydrant as it is a major fire protection element for the SHFD and area towns. People are welcome to contact Representatives and State Senator Rochefort so that they are aware of the town's need to have the property transfer so that a new dam can be put in place.

With no more public business before the Board, MR. TALBOT made a motion to adjourn, seconded by MR. ELLMS the meeting was adjourned at 6:07 PM. The next regular scheduled meeting is Monday May 4, 2026, at 5:00 pm at the Crapo Building.

Respectfully submitted:

Jennifer Gaudette
Town Administrator