

Special Select Board Meeting Minutes

Chick Hill Road Paving

October 29, 2025

6:00 PM

CALL ORDER: 6:03 PM

ROLL CALL: Dennis Harvey, Chair, Lee Bryant, John Williams II, & Patricia (Trish) Eldridge.
All Present

Deberah Hodgins, Administrative Assistant. Present

ARTICLE #1: Moderator to preside over meeting, Cristi Trafton. 28/1 Dave Asbury.

ARTICLE #2: Shall the town appropriate from the Town's share of the Pisgah Mountain Tax Increment Financing (TIF) an additional amount of \$130,000 to finalize the Chick Hill Road Capital Road Improvements? The Select Board Recommends \$130,000.

MOTION TO OPEN DISCUSSIONS: D/L

MOTION TO LIMIT SPEAKING TO 3 MINUTES PER SPEAKER: 26/13

SPEAKER: John Williams II, see attached report.

MOTION TO REMOVE 3 MINUTE TIME LIMIT: Jeff Roberts/Linda Graban, approved

SPEAKER: Gray Newell. Need more answers on how we got to this point? Where was the failure in the process? Was the contract not followed? Was there even a contract that the town signed?

ANSWERED: Dennis Harvey to Gray Newell: We have a contract with our vendor who has done the work appropriately. There was a handout with current fund balances.

SPEAKER: Nancy Dumont, If John Williams says we have no money and the town is broke and we overdrawn the Pisgah account, then why at the last select board meeting did John motion to give Clifton Climate Alliance \$25,000, when they were only asking for \$10,000?

SPEAKER: Cindy Grant asked about what was spent and talked about the commitment book the amount that was committed for taxes.

SPEAKER: Deberah Hodgins, I would like to educate a little bit on the appropriated funds.

SPEAKER: John Williams Sr, I went to the budget meetings and all that was told be done is hot top Chick Hill Rd. What happened? Why did he not figure this out? Is there any planning at all? Can anyone answer my questions?

SPEAKER: Lee Bryant, there was not enough material over the culverts. It has been brought up about two and half feet.

SPEAKER: Sam Rice. Resident of Chick Hill Rd. Concerned about no notice of when the road had been started. You (select board) said the road would be paved? What happened?

SPEAKER: Dave Aspury. We cannot keep doing it. We need to be able as citizens be able to see the contract. We need someone to listen to the town people and tell the town people what is going on with Chick Hill and other roads. Concerned about the roads not holding up to the work that been done on them.

Moderator: Article #2: Shall the town appropriate from the Town's share of the Pisgah Mountain Tax Increment Financing (TIF) an additional amount of \$130,000 to finalize the Chick Hill Road Capital Road Improvements? The Select Board Recommends \$130,000.

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Yes – 24

No - 27

Article #2: Not approved - Failed

Meeting adjourned 8:00pm

I hope everyone is well and I hope this meeting can stay as civil as possible. I would also like to remind everyone in the room that there may be some stress on our local food pantries in the coming weeks, so I hope you can keep those organizations and our neighbors in your thoughts, and consider donating if you can.

Anybody that really knows me and has met me knows that I do not like to be the "bad guy." However, I do insist on trying to do things the right way, fairly, and in the best interest of everyone in Town over the longer term. I like to hold people accountable, and correct process so mistakes don't happen again. If that makes me mean so be it, but I always strive to be fair and do things in the best interest of our entire community. I'm sorry if I seem mean here, but I am tired of being ignored and how this Town operates.

I feel really badly for the residents of Chick Hill. I know you're angry, and I hope you can forgive me for not supporting to spend this money now. This project should have been done in one summer, not two, and certainly not three. It is this Board's lack of planning, lack of bidding, and lack of oversight of contractors that has caused it to take this long, but on top of that, I can't recommend spending money that I am not confident we have.

I like to say to folks around Town that you won't always like the decisions I make, but regardless of whether you like me, I will always welcome public comment, be as fair as I can be, and give people the background and the "why" behind my vote. Here's "the why" in this case.

Back in the January/February timeframe when the Select Board was doing the annual budget, we were told that all that was needed to complete the Chick Hill Road was paving, which was estimated by Lee Bryant and Josh Greer at \$135,000. The road had been under construction in 2024, and we paid Lakeside nearly \$300,000 on ditching and roadwork, so I assumed the road was done and took it at face value. This amount was recommended by the Board and approved by the taxpayers to be taken from the Pisgah TIF, but given that that account was overdrawn (more on that later) at that time, work was not to begin until August 2025 when Pisgah's taxes came in.

In August 2025, I was made aware by some residents (not the office or other Board members) that work had started on the McCutcheon Road. The Board had never voted to do work on the McCutcheon road, and it was not budgeted. I was extremely surprised to hear this as the Chick Hill Road was not complete, and I wanted to ensure that all funds were used to complete that road before a new one was started. I stated that we should not have started work on a new road (unbudgeted) when the Chick Hill Road was not complete. In late August / early September I sent 6 emails --- 4 to the Town and 2 to our Chair asking for a start date,

updated budgets/plans and any remaining work for the Chick Hill Road to ensure we were on track. I never received any answers or follow-ups to anything despite asking multiple times.

Fast forward to 10/15/2025 when we received a bill for over \$140,000 in roadwork on the Chick Hill Road, including \$40,000 of gravel and other material. Again, the Board was told that all was left for this road was paving. As a Board member and taxpayer, I feel lied to and I would like some answers. The excuse that we're overbudget because "there are lots of rocks in Clifton and you hit them once you dig" is not acceptable to me, as we were told that the road was prepped last fall and it just needed paving. In my line of work, I find it very hard to do business with people that are not honest and transparent, so who isn't telling the truth here?

Getting to the money piece of it, I am constantly told "we have plenty of money." I am here to tell you that based on reviewing our audited financials, we don't. Money is not free or endless. The Pisgah Mountain TIF account was overdrawn by \$18,000 to start this fiscal year. How that happened is a totally different issue in my mind and is also unacceptable. By my projections, we took in \$211,000 to the Pisgah TIF this year, and Josh's bill is \$141,000 (we appropriated \$135,000). So by my rough math, this account has just over \$50,000 in it. How can we appropriate \$135,000 from a TIF account that, by our audited financials, has just over \$50,000 in it? If we rob from the other two TIF accounts and our road account, we will significantly tighten our Town's finances and I wouldn't recommend it, but at least the money is technically there. I can't support spending money from an account that doesn't have it.

I guess I would leave folks with this: would anyone here try to build a \$500,000 house when they only had \$100,000 dollars in funding? Would you do it with no estimates, no plans and no specs.? That is what Clifton did with this project. Going forward, we should not be starting projects unless we have the money to finish them---better yet---more money than is needed to finish them.

We should not be committing to spend money we don't have.

We should learn from this, **we should** require planning, **we should** require estimates and bids in advance, and **we should** hold people accountable to prevent this from happening again.

Thank you, and be good to one another.

	1/31/2025	Plus: 2025 Taxes	Minus: 2025 Expenses to Date	Est. 10/28/2025	Comment
Pisgah TIF	\$ (18,188.00)	\$ 211,309.56	\$ 141,000.00	\$ 52,121.56	Estimated \$141,000 for 2025 Lakeside Chick Hill payment
Silver Maple TIF	\$ 101,835.00	\$ 47,760.91	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 109,595.91	\$40,000 voted to offset Eddington Fire Contract
Substation TIF	\$ 38,397.00	\$ 12,883.67	\$ -	\$ 51,280.67	