

**Town of Nelson
Selectmen's Meeting
3:00 PM**

January 28, 2026

Executive Board Attending: Brenna Kucinski, Mike Blaudschun, Don Carlisle, Edie Drinkwater, Admin. Assist.

Others attending: Sheriff E. Rivera, J. Filipi, D. Bower, A. Whitney, G. Robinson

Absent:

Brenna called the January 28, 2026 meeting of the Nelson Select Board to order at 3:00 PM.

- Brenna thanked Sheriff Rivera for coming and opened the Board's question and answer session. (The audience was asked to hold questions until the Board had finished.)
Brenna asked if it would be possible for the Sheriff's department to take on Nelson and if so what the cost would be, do they have officers available, are they hiring, would they need to hire to take on Nelson.
- Sheriff Rivera responded that they are hiring but no one is currently on staff. He went on to say that he is very much in favor of a local police department. If that is not possible due to the passage of a warrant article then he could give the town a quote of up to 40 hours but it would be fewer hours in this case. The Sheriff sets the hours once an agreement is met with the town and he would then need to hire someone.
- Brenna asked if specific times in town could be requested.
- He said some requested times could be possible but they try to avoid a pattern of presence in town. He went on to say that all costs are expected to be covered, by the town under contract, as close to 100% as possible. The current rate per hour runs \$70.71 with an increase anticipated in 2027 (\$72.07) and another in 2028 (73.39). A contract would be for 3 years and they try to do 20 hours per week. This would be for service time only, no on-call time. Special events are at a higher rate. (such as Old Home Day)
- Mike asked, if they hire per need, how long does it take to get someone to cover?
- Sheriff Rivera responded that in the beginning he may only have enough staff to cover 5 to 6 hours per week but would then increase as staffing allows. Week to week the hours may be adjusted. In the event of a busy week fewer hours may be covered the next week, keeping the annual allocation on track with the contract. He stated that 20 hours per week is the least amount to be contracted. Currently Richmond is 25 hours, Stoddard is 30 hours, Gilsum & Sullivan approx. 17. The officer typically would visit the school, the town office, and patrol the back roads as well as answer any calls while on duty.
- Sheriff Rivera stated that the Sheriff does have the right to deny a contract.
- Mike said that speeding is a big concern but often missed when it is actually happening. He went on to note that perception of bystanders is not always accurate. Local police response to this concern has not produced anyone actually exceeding the speed limit. Sheriff Rivera agreed regarding the inaccuracy of speed perception.

- Sheriff Rivera notes that the schedule may be random, maybe 4 hours on a Wednesday or Friday and 8 on a weekend. They may cover a call in Nelson if working in a nearby town and Nelson would then be charged. If they are working in town and they take a call then it is theirs to handle. If their shift is ending, or has ended, calls coming in at that time will be turned over to the State Police. Part-time officers are limited to 25 hours per week for retirees and 1300 hours per year.
- A. Whitney asked who decides who goes to what town. Sheriff Rivera explained that the officers are employees of the Sheriff's department, not the town. Assignments are made currently based on 97 available hours per week for 5 officers. A. Whitney ask who is the point of contact for each town. Typically, the point of contact is the town administrator as the voice of the Select Board. Officers alternate with several towns so they get to know each town they work for.
- D. Bower reported that in his conversations with many people they expressed a very positive image of the Sheriff's department.
- Before closing, Sheriff Rivera made it clear that if the Sheriff's department is not on duty and working in Town they will not come out to answer a call.
- Brenna thanked him for coming out and answering everyone's questions.
- Mike made a motion to approve the public and non-public minutes for January 21, 2026 as recorded. Brenna seconded.
The motion carried 3-0.
- Mike made a motion to approve the manifest for January 28, 2026 as presented.
Brenna seconded.
The motion carried 3-0.
- The Board reviewed a request from NH DOT regarding the Bailey Brook Bridge. The State is requesting an action plan from the town regarding their intentions for the bridge given the Board's vote to withdraw from the 80/20 state bridge grant. M. Tarr will be asked to come up with a proposed plan in answer to each of the State's questions.
- J. Filipi briefly came before the Board as they are planning a proposed amendment to the article by petition to return to part-time police. An amendment would be to Extend the current police contract to July 31st which would secure his level of retirement benefits. The Board will work on the amendment.
- Mike would like to see cost comparisons (police department) to the price of a new Fire truck that is parked in the station most of the time.
- Filipi reported that he averages approximately 55 hours per week of service and on-call time for the Town.
- The Board would like cost assessments (per \$100,000 assessment) for all departments.
- Following a request from the Town Clerk/Tax Collector, Brenna made a motion to approve an abatement of interest for J. Sykes due to mail delay.
Don seconded.
The motion carried 3-0.

● Following a review of submitted plans and noting appropriate setbacks, Mike made a motion to approve a Building Permit for B. & B. Lenox for a garage attached under the porch of their existing house.

Brenna seconded.

The motion carried 3-0.

● FYI:

- An abatement application has been submitted by B. & B. Lenox regarding a deck/dock assessment.
- Errors were found in the Library reports and are to be corrected before submission for the Town Report.
- NH DRA and Avitar will be meeting in the Town Office on February 24th at 10:00 AM to review the town's upcoming property "reval" for 2026.

● Brenna made a motion to not recommend the petition article to return the police department to part-time.

Mike seconded.

The motion carried 2-1.

● Mike made a motion to close the Draft Warrant so the caucus books can be printed.

Brenna seconded.

The motion carried 3-0

● The Board voted 3-0 to recommend all other 2026 warrant articles as submitted to date.

● Brenna made a motion to adjourn.

Mike seconded.

The motion carried 3-0.

Meeting Adjourned 4:48 PM

Caucus February 3, 2026 at 7:00 PM

Next regular meeting February 4, 2026 at 3:00 PM

Minutes for January 28, 2026

Brenna Kucinski, Chair

Michael Blaudschun, Selectman

Don Carlisle, Selectman