

Town of Sunderland Selectboard Meeting
Thursday June 18, 2026, at 7:00 PM
104 Mountain View Road Sunderland, VT

<u>Members in Attendance:</u> Todd Lawrence Anthony Thompson Rick Timmerman Marty Nadler	<u>Others in Attendance:</u> David Kiernan Rob Zeif
--	---

The Sunderland Selectboard will hold a special meeting in conjunction with a public informational session presented by the School Working Advisory Group.

The session will address the offer from the Taconic and Green Regional School District to sell the Sunderland Elementary School property to the Town of Sunderland, as well as the due diligence review conducted by the Working Group.

1. Call to order at 7:00 PM
2. Introduction of Board Members
3. Public information presentation regarding the Sunderland Elementary School property proposal and due diligence review
 - a. The private drive has no visibility of the road, designed for 36 parking spaces, includes basketball court, playground area, and a lower athletic field
 - b. Known issues: the building's oil and heat system needs attention, the electrical needs updating, water marks on the tiles of the all purpose room, cracks along the foundation, the whole building has a crawl space under it rather than a solid foundation
4. Public questions and comments
 - a. What is the condition of the building?
 - i. Window issues, door issues; it is a functioning building as a school
 - ii. Taconic and Green did their own survey: structural engineering - the crawlspace is in poor condition, a significant amount of corrosion to the steel beam. Mechanicals - no ventilation on first floor, no air conditioning system, indoor oil tank and boilers should be replaced, control systems are inefficient, plumbing needs more accessibility in the boys and girls rooms. Electrical - equipment is nearly 50 years old therefore it may be difficult to get certain replacements, fire alarm system does not meet state standards, water system requires a class two operator. Major parts of the athletic field are wetlands.

- b. What would the Town do with a building like this?
 - i. Make it into something useful
 - ii. Hold it (\$50,000-\$60,000/yr) until they sell it to someone else; will still have the zoning issue
 - iii. Taking it down: this would cost at least \$150,000
- c. Will the owner have to have the materials under the building assessed?
 - i. Yes
- d. The building's location and transportation routes makes it more difficult for selling; limited staffing complicates its possible uses
- e. The Vermont Historic Preservation Trust has a case study booklet of schools that have closed within the last ten years, it covers the causes, money and people involved, and other logistics surrounding the situations
- f. Could Taconic & Green place another school or unwanted service there?
 - i. Yes, but the Town still has control as far as zoning and what is allowed to be established in the Town
- g. Is the limited commercial use a possibility for the building?
 - i. This would have to be approved by the Planning Commission, limited commercial use is undefined so it's hard to know what would be permitted
 - ii. It should be within what the Town has stated as permissible, keeping in character with the general Sunderland culture
- h. Would any of the housing organizations, such as Cornerstone housing, offer any resources to the Town for the benefit of the community; possibly to help with making living situations more affordable for those who grew up in Sunderland
 - i. We have not been approached by any of the organizations; working with an organization would be a good idea since there are staff already established, however, this takes lots of time, requires a town sponsorship, administrative work
 - ii. costly and requires commitment which could fall through (liability; everything falls on the Town, having to find a replacement)
- i. How much would it cost to level the building?
 - i. \$120,000-\$150,000 for the building alone
 - ii. Could the Town work something out with the Arlington fire department?
 - 1. This would be something to bring to Taconic & Green, may disturb the neighbors, permits
- j. Could the Town buy it and then sell portions to the people of the Town?

- i. It is a beautiful piece of property, but it doesn't make sense to buy it from the Town's stand point (looking at fiscal responsibility, liability; cons outweigh the pros here)
 - ii. There are other ideas for use of the property, such as having a community garden and putting a Town garage there, but the building's condition poses a big problem and may make buying the property not worth it
- k. Could a park be developed?
 - i. Costly, insurance-approved materials, risky location (secluded), may not be heavily populated because of possible competition with Arlington park
- l. Where will the Town hold their meetings if the building is not purchased by the Town?
 - i. May have to rent a facility, venues, highschool gym
- m. Could the playground be moved?
 - i. Will have to look further into the logistics, locate where to move it
 - ii. Could it be moved onto wetlands?
 - 1. There are different classifications of wetlands (restrictions depending on severity of wetlands), would have to receive okay from the state
 - 2. Further research is needed
 - iii. What would the liability cost be if the Town assumed responsibility of moving the playground?
 - 1. The liability cost would be defective (nothing), but it would only cost if we wanted to ensure for the value of the property
- 5. Further discussion among the Board and future final decision regarding the purchase of the Sunderland Elementary school and property will occur at the next meeting. The next regular business meeting for the Sunderland Selectboard will be Monday June 22, 2026 at 7:00pm.
- 6. Adjourn
 - Motion to adjourn at 8:14pm
 - Mover: Anthony
 - Second: Rick
 - Passed**