

Road Crew Regional Recruiting, Hiring & Training – Key Points

Meeting date: September 29, 2026, 8:59 AM (Zoom recording, 63 minutes)

Format: Hybrid. Guilford called it a special Selectboard meeting because three Selectboard members were present.

Chair: Sheila Morse, Guilford Selectboard chair

Note: These points come from an AI-generated transcript of the audio and have been edited to correct names.

Who attended

- **Towns:** Guilford, Brattleboro, Halifax and Putney, plus Marlboro mentioned. Five towns were counted as represented.
- **Guilford:** Sheila Morse (chair), Mike Szostak (Selectboard), Jim Foreman (road crew), Erika Elder (town administrator), Chip Carter, Selectboard
- **Brattleboro Public Works:** Dan Tyler (director) and Darren Pacheco (assistant director)
- **Halifax:** Edee Edwards (Selectboard chair)
- **Putney:** Karen Astley (town manager) Lenny Howard (Highway Superintendent)
- **Partners:** Meg Staloff (BDCC, supporting municipal capacity), Colin Bratton (Windham Regional Commission), Jack Spanierman (BDCC Workforce, joined from the road) and Todd Eaton (VLR training resources)
- **Read.ai notetaker:** An unidentified Read.ai notetaker was moved to the waiting room under the Selectboard's recording policy.

Main conclusions

1. **The focus moved away from creating a new pilot program.** Sheila concluded that it's become apparent that "we don't need to create a pilot program." The group's view was that

the resources already exist, and the next step is to understand them better and share access to that information across towns.

2. **The real gap is candidates, not training tools.** CDL and safety training resources already exist. What's missing is a pool of people who see road crew work as a career.
3. **Getting road foremen on board is a concern.** Jim reported mostly silence when he raised the idea at the road foremen's meeting. Foremen tend to deal with hiring one vacancy at a time. Mike argued the group needs to bring foremen a specific proposal, not an open-ended "what do you want?"
4. **Treat this as two separate problems:**
 - **Pipeline:** getting people interested and ready. This may be better led by workforce partners than by towns.
 - **Outcomes and retention:** what towns need from new hires, especially in the first one to two years on the job.

Key ideas raised

- **Hire people with no experience.** Brattleboro's last six hires had no experience, and all have worked out well. Brattleboro doesn't require a CDL to be hired. New staff do non-CDL work (sidewalk plowing, roadside mowing, other equipment) while they train.
- **Train for the CDL in-house.** Brattleboro registered with the federal motor carrier agency as a trainer and does the behind-the-wheel training itself. Darren offered to share this process with other towns.
- **Free Vermont state training.** Todd described free online training for all municipalities through a VTrans learning management system:
 - About 30–40 hours of CDL theory, which qualifies a person for the CDL exam
 - A new-employee onboarding program of about 30–40 hours covering OSHA/VOSHA safety
 - Setting up in-house behind-the-wheel training saves roughly \$4,000–\$6,000 per person compared with sending them to a driving school.

- **CDL tuition funding.** Jack said the Vermont Department of Labor (federal WIOA workforce funds) and VSAC can pay for CDL licensing training, which costs roughly \$7,000–\$8,000.
- **Registered apprenticeship.** Jack doesn't think it opens up new funding. Wages still have to be paid by an employer or sponsor, and the roles of sponsor, employer and funder get complicated. Sheila noted that road crew work isn't on Vermont's 2025 list of registered apprenticeships.
- **Central screening and a shared training pool (Chip).** Candidates would be screened once for the whole region (license history, willingness to take winter callouts, drug testing, mechanical aptitude). They'd get shared core training (CDL permit prep, CDL Class B, work zone safety, first aid), then learn each town's own way of operating.
- **Shared training load (Meg).** Towns would each teach different pieces, so no single town has to train everyone on everything. Towns would need to commit even in years when they aren't hiring.
- **Pay steps and career paths.** Brattleboro's union contract has 10 steps about 4% apart, plus cost-of-living raises. Brattleboro starts lower than small towns but likely ends higher. The VTrans trainer said younger workers respond well to a visible career path. Northfield shared its step system with Guilford.
- **Explaining benefits.** Brattleboro has found it works to describe to younger candidates the dollar value of their benefits. Guilford has also done work on this.
- **Sharing candidates.** Edee asked whether Brattleboro would refer its extra intern or trainee candidates to towns with openings, such as Marlboro. She also floated a "camp" where trainees rotate among towns.
- **Outreach.** Possible venues include job fairs, tech centers, Leland & Gray, and something like the existing "Start Your Career in Healthcare" event, but for highway work. Smaller towns could have a regional body attend events with a combined list of open positions.
- **Hard parts of the job.** Recruits face being on call year-round and long commutes. Young candidates tend to value the paycheck now over retirement and benefits.

Action items

Item	Owner
Summarize existing resources (training, funding, benefits explanations, pipeline options) and bring them to the road foremen	Meg (offered to do the research and gathering)
Put this topic on the agenda for the next road foremen's meeting, likely in the next couple of months (not yet scheduled)	Colin, Windham Regional Commission
Present Brattleboro's no-CDL hiring and in-house CDL training process at that meeting, with Jack and Todd as backup	Darren, Brattleboro
Send in writing the CDL funding points (Department of Labor / WIOA, VSAC) he made while his audio was breaking up	Jack
Email Sheila your takeaways to help build a regional approach	All attendees
Learn more about the step program and build one into Guilford's own program	Sheila / Guilford (with Kim)
Keep working on the next step if given clear direction, deadlines and small pieces of work	Edee, Halifax

Open questions

- Should the September 25 draft still aim for a pilot program and a legislative or state-agency request, or become a guide to existing resources? Edee said the group needs to regroup on this.
- Who would host and coordinate a regional effort (a state agency, BDCC, Windham Regional Commission or a lead town)?
- Will towns commit to sharing the training load in years they aren't hiring?
- Bring in VTrans' civil rights office to talk about its federally funded transportation summer camp for youth, as a model? (Suggested by Todd)
- Use Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) job description templates when towns write their own job descriptions?

Meeting Recording: <https://youtu.be/JPsbUumH28M>

Approved 10.14.26

Sheila Morse

Sheila Morse

Chip Carter

Chip Carter

Michael Szostak

Michael Szostak