

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING  
THE TOWN OF WATERBURY  
HELD ON MARCH 7, 2023**

The inhabitants of the Town of Waterbury who are legal voters in Town Meetings are hereby notified and warned to conduct business to meet in the Brookside Primary School Gym at 47 Stowe Street at 9:00 o'clock in the forenoon on March 7th, 2023 to act on the following matters:

**Article 1:** To elect a Moderator to preside at the meetings of the Town whose term of office shall be for the ensuing year.

Roger Clapp stated it was his pleasure and distinct honor to move to elect Jeff Kilgore to preside at the meetings of the Town whose term of office shall be for the ensuing year. Seconded by L Gravell. There being no other nominations Jeff Kilgore was elected as Moderator for the ensuing year.

The Moderator asked if there were any objection to Municipal Manager T. Lietz speaking during the meeting as he is not a resident of Waterbury – there being none; Leitz will be permitted to speak to questions.

The Moderator recognized Representatives Thomas Stevens and Theresa Wood who were present to give the residents a legislative report. Representative Wood recognize Steve Lotspeich, Zoning & Planning Director for his years of service to the Town as he prepares for retirement. Woods spoke of elderly care and costs. Representative Stevens spoke of the impacts of COVID to local and state government flexibility. He also spoke of affordable housing in the State and changes to the Family Leave Act. Representative Stevens presented the House Resolution that was presented to Bill Shepeluk at the State House last week.

**Article 2:** To elect by Australian ballot the following offices: Clerk for 1-year; Treasurer for 1- year; one Select Board member for 3-year term and two Select Board members for 1-year terms each; Lister for a 3-year term; Library Commissioner for a 5-year term; and Cemetery Commissioner for a 5-year term.

**Article 3:** To elect by Australian ballot for the Harwood Unified Union School District a School Director for a 3-year term.

**Article 4:** To elect by Australian ballot for the Harwood Unified Union School District a School Director for an unexpired 1-year term.

Note: The polls for voting by Australian ballot on Articles 2, 3 and 4 will be open from seven o'clock in the forenoon to seven o'clock in the afternoon at Brookside Primary School at 47 Stowe Street.

**Article 5:** Shall the Town of Waterbury change the term of the Town Clerk from a 1-year term to a 3-year term, effective March 5, 2024.

Michael Bard moved that the term of the Town Clerk be for 3 years, effective March 5, 2024. Bard spoke to the convenience of having the Town Clerk have a three-year term to avoid the need to gain signatures each year. W. Shepeluk stated there is no recall in the State of Vermont to remove a clerk if you are unhappy with performance. The motion was seconded and passed by a voice vote.

**Article 6:** Shall the Town of Waterbury change the term of the Town Treasurer from a 1-year term to a 3-year term, effective March 5, 2024.

Chris Viens moved that the term of the Town Treasurer be for 3 years, effective March 5, 2024 C. Viens thanked everyone for coming to Town Meeting and felt it's an unnecessary use of time for the Clerk to petition on the ballot each year. T. Woods spoke of State Statue provisions for the Clerks position. The motion was seconded and passed by a voice vote.

**Article 7:** To act upon the reports of the several Town Officers with the exception of claims for fees or compensation during 2022.

Alyssa Johnson moved to accept the reports of the several Town Officers as printed in the annual report, with the exception of claims for fees or compensation by Town officers for services rendered during 2022. Cheryl Gloor asked about the budget and having special articles being imbedded in the budget specifically page 18 of the Town Report. Bard stated the Municipal Manager would be speaking on the budget in Article 10. Tom Gloor thanked W. Shepeluk for his service and asked about the possibility of a merger for EFUD and the Town. Manager Leitz stated there has not been a formal conversation about merger in his short time here so far. From the Town's perspective EFUD has some challenges to resolve before the Town should consider merger. The motion was seconded and passed by a voice vote.

**Article 8:** To act with respect to claims of Town Officers for their services during 2022.

Karen Petrovic moved to pay the claims of the Town Officers for their services rendered during 2022, as appears on Page 8 of the Annual report. Select Board Chair, \$1,450, Vice Chair \$1,450, other Select Board members, \$1,200 each; Listers, \$500 each. The motion was seconded and passed by a voice vote.

**Article 9:** To see what action the Town will take with reference to fixing the date of the tax warrant and to set a date or dates when taxes on such property shall become due and payable and to specify the time of acceptable, the method of delivery, and to see whether the same shall be paid with or without discount and to provide for interest and penalty on such taxes as are not paid when due?

Chris Viens moved that the tax warrant on real property be dated July 1, 2023, and the taxes be due in two installments, with the first installment due and payable on August 11, 2023 and the second installment be due and payable on November 3, 2023. That each installment be paid in hand at the Municipal Office by 4:30pm on the due date without discount and that interest be charged at the maximum allowed by statute, not to exceed one and one-half percent per month or portion thereof on each installment and a late penalty of eight percent be charged as allowed by statute on taxes not paid when due. C. Viens spoke of the grievance process surrounding late payments and how taxpayers can appeal fees when they pay late. He encouraged folks to contact the Municipal Office to ensure they know the options how to pay their taxes on time and avoid the uncomfortable dialogue that occurs during abatement hearings. W. Shepeluk confirmed the uncomfortable situation when a tax payer gets upset about late fees and penalties. Brenda Caforia-Weeber asked for information regarding ways to pay taxes. Petrovic clarified options. The motion was seconded and passed by a voice vote

**Article 10:** To vote sums of money for necessary general government, highway, and library expenses, with the same to be expressed either in specific dollar amounts or as a rate or tax on the grand list.

Roger Clapp moved to approve for the Town of Waterbury sums of money for the interest of its inhabitants and for the prosecution and defense of common rights, for laying out and repairing highways and other necessary expenses: for general expenses of \$3,946,387 plus sums approved in Articles 12 through 20 of the warning for this meeting; plus for highway expenses of \$2,532,112; plus for library expenses of \$561,191; plus for expenditures and transfers of designated reserve and special purpose funds, estimated at \$1,154,230 for which no additional taxes are necessary; and that the Selectboard be authorized to issue bills for property taxes with a total municipal tax rate on the Town's Grand List not to exceed \$.545/\$100 of property valuation for calendar year 2023. Seconded by John Malter. Roger Clapp stated this was his first year as a member of the Select Board and recognized B. Shepeluk for his work to have the Town in such a great financial standing. Clapp welcomed T. Leitz to his role as Manager and recognized his ability to create a budget with such a low tax rate in the eyes of inflation.

Manager Leitz stated the Town had roughly 6 meetings totaling 15 hours specific to the Town budget. Manager Leitz highlighted some items in the budget including the local options tax as seen as a pilot payment in the budget, office staff spending and how it remains roughly the same, the Public Safety contract

with the VT State Police which ends in 2024 – he stated he expects the contract to increase in the future, the Ambulance Service has asked for an increased in funding. Over the next 2-3 years Leitz expects the Ambulance budget to increase as the Town loses the credit for the building they currently occupy. Manager Leitz spoke of the specific ARPA funding requests in the budget.

Lastly Manager Leitz stated he works with the best Public Works Director in the State and there has been a struggle to retain Public works employees due to the market and obtaining new employees.

Linda Gravell made a motion to amend, that the Town of Waterbury appropriate \$50,000 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant funds for support of CVFiber to be used exclusively to provide fiber optic service to the underserved and unserved residents of Waterbury in accordance with such review, terms, and conditions as the Select Board may require. Moderator Kilgore clarified Gravell is asking to amend the motion, seconded by John Malter. L. Gravell stated she is the delegate appointed by the Select Board along with Christopher Shank – she provided the public with an update on CVFiber efforts to bring high speed internet to all residence of the State.

Tom Gloor asked if ARPA funding remained available for this service – Manager Leitz stated there is unallocated ARPA funds so a change now would not impact with the budget. Leitz spoke of the use of ARPA funds and how the rules regarding ARPA funds changed after being given to Towns such as Waterbury. The Town of Waterbury chose to not allocate all the APRA money to lost revenue and instead allocate ARPA funds through the budget process. M. Bard spoke of the process that had already been followed having given CVFiber \$50,000 previously and having once already denied a request for additional funding. ARPA funds are limited and with approximately \$300,000 remaining the Select Board would like to see the remaining funds used to support infrastructure as communicated by the survey.

Michael Frank asked CVFiber how many addresses in Waterbury are underserved? Christopher Shank stated there are roughly 167 residences in Waterbury that are unserved or underserved in Waterbury. The purpose of CVFiber is to serve customers that other companies will not serve.

The Select Board was asked if going forward they have a plan how to allocate the additional \$300K in funding? C. Viens spoke to this question to state the Select Board has not had time yet to designate the additional funding. W. Shepeluk stated the Town has until the end of 2024 to appropriate the money and until end of 2026 to spend the money. W. Shepeluk stated he is not sure it is a public service to run high speed internet up .25-mile driveways. He stated the public utilities do not pay to run water or sewer lines up driveways and from his perspective the \$50,000 already gifted is enough. L. Gravell stated broadband is infrastructure using the power line installations as an example. Michael Frank stated there are options such as Starlink for highspeed internet. Bill Vigdor asked if there is an income demographic for underserved. L. Gravell stated there is not, currently this is about serving underserved internet speed. Alyssa Johnson thanked L. Gravell and C Shank for their time serving on the CVFiber board.

C. Sayah called the question. The motion was seconded and passed by a voice vote

Moderator Kilgore reread the amendment to the motion; the motion did not pass.

C. Gloor asked to amend the budget to reduce the ARPA funds allocated in the budget to Downstreet Housing from \$100K to \$50K – motion was seconded from the floor. C. Gloor spoke of keeping the \$50K in the Town budget for use of infrastructure. M. Bard stated one of the needs in the Community is for affordable housing and the Select Board acknowledging that need felt \$100,000 to Downstreet to assist in the construction of 51 South Main Street is an important line item in the budget. MK Monley stated she felt Downstreet is worthy of the \$100,000 because of a lack of affordable housing in the community. L. Schlegel stated affordable housing is one of the biggest problems in the State and is an important issue. M. Staskus asked what percentage of their full budget this \$100,000 will be seeing they have access to federal funding.

Manager Leitz stated the total project cost of roughly 13 million dollars and having been given ARPA funding provides Downstreet leverage to obtain other federal funding. R. Clapp referred to the overwhelming support EFUD had to sell 51 South Main Street to Downstreet to support affordable housing in Waterbury. A. Johnson stated the Town needs to be a steward for other funding Downstreet may have access to. A. Johnson stated the Town has formed a Housing Task Force to assist with the shortage of affordable housing in this community. T. Gloor stated housing is an issue and not everything can be a crisis, he brought to light that EFUD voter's support of selling 51 South Main Street is not the same as Town support because Town residence were not able to vote in the sale of that property. Manager Leitz stated the funding is contingent on other funding and the transfer of the property. L. Walton stated she understand the need for affordable housing in Waterbury, having said that there is no guarantee that housing will be for people that work in Waterbury. A. Johnson stated Downstreet is obligated to find tenants that can pay their rents whether they are working or not they must provide proof of ability to pay. W. Shepeluk spoke of the supply and demand issue and that more housing will "shuffle the deck" for other housing opportunities. Moderator Kilgore repeated the amendment to the motion – the motion did not pass.

Moderator Kilgore asked for any question on the original motion of the budget and relayed the motion to the public. A vote was held – the motion was seconded and passed by a voice vote

**Article 11:** To see if the voters will authorize a sum of money to be expended from the capital funds for capital projects.

Mike Bard moved to authorize the expenditure of \$1,736,105 for purchases of vehicles, capital improvements, building operations and building fund budgets and authorize the Selectboard to borrow an amount not to exceed \$155,000 to finance the expenditures for a period not to exceed 5 years on terms agreeable to the select board. Seconded by John Malter. Mike Bard invited the public to look on page 27 of the Annual Report and distinguished between Capital and Operational expenses. T. Leitz stated he and the PWD Bill Woodruff have driven the roads and could easily bring 1M paving budget to the Town. The Town just this past week took delivery of a truck ordered roughly a year ago. Leitz spoke of the excavator purchase based on rental fees the Town has been paying. G. Dillon spoke of the cascade system used to refill tanks for firefighters. C. Viens spoke of trucking costs increase from \$85-\$110 per hour and how these increases impact improvement budgets. A. Imhoff asked about Town Bridges line, the line item does not include the Stowe Street bridge with our share being 5% expected in 2024 and 2025

Moderator Kilgore repeated the motion calling the question; the motion was seconded and passed by a voice vote.

**Article 12:** To see if the Town will, during 2023, appropriate:

Moderator Kilgore read the article including seventeen individual line items - A. Johnson asked if she must read the entire list as stated by Moderator Kilgore, with voter permission the Article was moved.

\$1,000 for support of the Capstone Community Action  
\$1,250 for support of Central Vermont Council on Aging  
\$1,375 for support of Circle  
\$500 for support of Community Harvest of Central Vermont  
\$1,500 for support of Downstreet Housing and Community Development  
\$500 for support of Everybody Wins! Vermont  
\$1,000 for the support of the Family Center of Washington County  
\$1,000 for support of The Friends of the Waterbury Reservoir  
\$500 for support of Good Beginnings of Central Vermont  
\$200 for support of Mosaic (fka Sexual Assault Crisis Team)

\$250 for support of OUR House of Central Vermont  
\$1,000 for support of the People's Health and Wellness Clinic  
\$1,000 for the support of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (R.S.V.P.)  
\$500 for support of the Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired  
\$600 for support of the Vermont Center for Independent Living  
\$1,500 for support of the Washington County Youth Bureau, Inc.  
\$800 for the support of the Waterbury Community Band

Kilgore asked for comments, having none the motion was reread and the question was called. The motion was seconded and passed by a voice vote.

**Article 13:** Shall the Town of Waterbury vote to appropriate \$2,000 for support of Central Vermont Adult Basic Education?

J. Willard made a motion to appropriate \$2,000 for support of Central Vermont Adult Basic Ed. The motion was seconded and passed by a voice vote.

**Article 14:** Shall the Town of Waterbury vote to appropriate \$4,000 for support of the Early Education Resource Center of Waterbury ("Children's Room")?

S. Lotspeich made a motion to appropriate \$4000 for the support of the Children's Room. The motion was seconded and passed by a voice vote.

**Article 15:** Shall the Town of Waterbury vote to appropriate \$2,383 for support of the Green Mountain Transit Agency?

S. Lotspeich made a motion to appropriate \$2383 for the support of GMT. W. Shepeluk stated the request for funds was reduced by approximately \$5000. The motion was seconded and passed by a voice vote.

**Article 16:** Shall the Town of Waterbury vote to appropriate \$2,500 for support of Waterbury LEAP (Local Energy Action Partnership)?

D. McDougall made a motion to appropriate \$2500 for support of Waterbury LEAP. The motion was seconded and passed by a voice vote.

**Article 17:** Shall the Town of Waterbury vote to appropriate \$6,500 for the Waterbury Area Senior Association in addition to the amount included in the General Fund Budget for such purpose?

Moderator Kilgore asked for permission of Mr. Blackman, a Duxbury resident could speak. There being no objection W. Shepeluk made a motion to appropriate \$6,500 for the Waterbury Area Senior Association in addition to the amount in the General Fund. The motion was seconded and passed by a voice vote.

**Article 18:** Shall the Town of Waterbury vote to appropriate \$2,000 for support of the American Red Cross?

A. Cawley made a motion to appropriate \$2000 for the support of the American Red Cross. The motion was seconded and passed by a voice vote.

**Article 19:** Shall the Town of Waterbury vote to appropriate \$3,000 for the support of Washington County Mental health?

MK Monley made a motion to appropriate \$3000 for support of Washington County Mental Health. The motion was seconded and passed by a voice vote.

**Article 20:** Shall the Town of Waterbury vote to appropriate \$2,500 for the support of the Waterbury Area MakerSphere Cooperative to support the creative community for residents of the Town?

MK Monley made a motion to appropriate \$2500 for the support of Waterbury Area Makershere Cooperative to support the creative community of the residents of the Town. The motion was seconded and passed by a voice vote.

Unnumbered Last Article: Other Business: Discussion of Town Meeting Day format and consideration of alternatives. A. Johnson thanked the public for staying for this discussion as it is non-binding. The previous two years has been solely Australian ballot due to COVID. A. Johnson highlighted that in order to make changes the Town of Waterbury would have to hold another in person Town Meeting.

~J. Malter expressed his concern that the folks that are not here currently are most likely working or otherwise not available to weigh in on the warning.

~D. McDougall stated this has been researched for many years – some studies say that Australian ballot folks are less informed despite having a higher voter turnout.

~C. Sayah stated today we had two folks with amendments that did not pass which Australian ballot would not allow. He would be in support of having the meeting at another time of day for better turn out.

~A. Imhoff stated she believed Town meeting is best because her voice can be heard however she believes a different time of day may be better.

~K. D'Angelo stated this is the first Town Meeting she has been able to attend due to work commitments. She supports a change to allow for greater voter participation.

~M. Abair agreed that two amendments today would not be possible with Australian Ballot. He believes this floor meeting is an important part of the process.

~W. Shepeluk stated he believes this face-to-face interaction is important and might speak to going to a Charter for the Town of Waterbury. W. Shepeluk spoke to some of the facts regarding voter turnout over the last few years. He stated the residence have the opportunity to attend Select Board meetings to be well informed. Suggested the Select Board prepare the budget and present it at a “town meeting” style meeting then votes by Australian Ballot following the meeting later opposed to an informational meeting like what was done in 2020 and 2021

~C. Gloor stated she agreed with Shepeluk’s idea to hold an in-person meeting and then vote by Australian ballot at a later date. She would like to see a synopsis on the Select Board agendas to invoke more participation

~A. Mondalk would also like to see a change in the meeting style based on work schedules and people’s inability to attend on a Tuesday.

~L. Walton thinks Town meeting day is an important day gaining that sense of community. She agrees the folks need to prioritize Town Meeting Day and folks who wish to be here will find a way to be here.

~M. Frank stated he likes the hybrid system that we have. He thinks the dialogue on the floor is important and if there is a topic that is important people will come out. He would like the current style to continue.

~M. Bard spoke for himself and not as a Select Board member. He loves the Vermont style of Town Meeting and allowing the amendments that came to the floor. He agrees perhaps the day or time of day could be impactful in gaining voter participation. He would like it to be more inclusive while still having people be accountable.

L. Ely Pagan thanked Moderator Jeff Kilgore for his years of service to the Town as Moderator.

M. Bard wanted to acknowledge P.H. Flanders for chairing the Town Manager Search.

D. Luce made a motion to adjourn which was seconded and passed unanimously.