

Minutes of the Waterbury Select Board
Monday, July 21, 2025 | 6:30 p.m.
28 N. Main Street and via Zoom

Attendance: Tom Leitz, Alyssa Johnson, Cheryl Casey, Roger Clapp, Mike Bard, Kane Sweeney

Public attendance: ORCA Media, Chris Viens, Cheryl Gloor, Kevin Boldwin, Nick Caputo, Valerie Rogers, Sarah Alberghini Winters, Mal Culbertson, Evan Karl Hoffman, Dana Allen

Zoom attendance: ORCA Media, Kenneth Ryan, Alyssa Johnson, Elisabeth, Tessa Yip, Ben Stickart, Amy Marshall-Carney, Martha Staskus, Anne Imhoff, Billy Vigdor, Pegeen Mulhern, Rebecca Mead

CALL TO ORDER by A. Johnson, 6:30 p.m.

Agendas

Motion by K. Sweeney to approve the agenda with the amendment of correcting the date of the minutes to be approved on the consent agenda, from June 30 to July 7; seconded by M. Bard.
No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously.**

Consent agenda

Motion by K. Sweeney to approve the consent agenda as amended; seconded by M. Bard.
No further discussion, **motion passed unanimously.**

Public comment

C. Viens requested a select board discussion on the issue of invasive species and the town policy for preventing their spread. Chervil, poisonous parsnip, knotweed, and phragmites are among the identified invasives in town. Even the roadside mowing drags these plants along to new locations. M. Bard suggested the Conservation Commission be tasked with this issue; K. Sweeney agreed.

Initial Special Event Permit review: Jam for the Parks

[application]

K. Boldwin explained the concert event to be held in Waterbury Center State Park as a fundraiser for Vermont State Parks. They are expecting about 300 attendees at any given time, based on last year's numbers.

Discussion

T. Leitz suggested the predicted attendance seems low based on the lineup and food/beverage offerings.

- K. Boldwin explained that the bands are local and the numbers are based on a similarly-scheduled event last year.
- He has spoken to the Fire Chief about the kinds of coverage that would be needed at different levels of attendance.
- He clarified attendance at 300 at any given time. Parking is the biggest question if attendance reaches the cap. Ticket presales will help refine the permitting information.

T. Leitz confirmed there is no zoning permit issue for this event.

K. Sweeney said his biggest concern is the safety of getting guests from where they need to park to the event itself. Anything along or crossing Rt. 100 poses safety concerns.

- K. Baldwin confirmed that 75-100 guests can park in the park itself.
- Zenbarn has offered parking and the festival will provide a shuttle van. He is working to avoid having anybody walk on Rt. 100.

M. Bard asked about State permissions and what will happen to the usual regular activities.

- N. Caputo, parks regional director, confirmed the State is willing to host the event, and since it is a fundraiser for the parks specifically, the decision was made to make room for this event.
- Once Stowe Cider gets the official okay, he will work on drafting the permit language.
- Swimming will be permitted.

R. Clapp asked about people drinking alcohol while so close to the water or swimming.

- N. Caputo responded there is always a concern when people are drinking, but there will be extra staff and volunteers on hand to safeguard.

M. Bard asked about motorized craft.

- N. Caputo said no motorized crafts will be allowed to depart from the park.

K. Sweeney asked about security measures and whether the sheriff's departments and Stowe PD have responded to the requests for coverage.

- K. Baldwin said private security (Chocolate Thunder) will handle tasks like checking ID, and he is waiting for the sheriff and Stowe PD to get back to him.

A. Johnson queried the select board on next steps, given the number of gaps still in the event info and planning.

K. Sweeney said he would like to see law enforcement confirmed and more defined methods of keeping pedestrians off Rt. 100.

R. Clapp said someone in authority is going to need to be at the park entrance to direct people to offsite parking and direct traffic more generally. This seems fairly complicated once the park fills up.

M. Bard asked about admission price and food and alcohol revenue.

- K. Baldwin said proceeds from sales of the special cider go to benefit the parks; tickets are \$25.
- He can also submit the new poster, which hadn't been ready when the application was submitted.

K. Baldwin asked the select board if he was permitted to use signage on the roadside, such as sandwich boards for "Lot Full." The Selectboard agreed.

Motion by R. Clapp to provisionally approve the permit with the condition the applicants return with security plans in greater detail on Aug. 4; seconded by M. Bard.

No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously.**

C. Gloor cautioned that Zenbarn has already had problems in the past with people parking along Guptil Road. She also reminded that there is a neighborhood on the ridge next to the park and they should be notified of the event.

Quarterly budget update

[[Expenses](#) and [revenues](#) as of 6-30-2025]

T. Leitz reviewed expenses, providing additional comments on some line items, and took questions from the selectboard.

- M. Bard asked why legal services (line 21) are over 50% to date. T. Leitz responded that labor relations, discussions with the state about the former Stanley Wasson site, and setting up the housing trust fund have required more than the usual amount of legal consultation.
- M. Bard asked why computer services (line 17) are so high at mid-year. T. Leitz said that persistent and consistent network issues necessitated additional troubleshooting; we seem to be coming to the end of it. We don't use a full-service consultant firm because they charge monthly just for network monitoring. Since most of the information on our network is public, and we don't operate 24/7, it doesn't make sense to pay for that service. Currently, we pay a fraction of that cost for as-needed services.
- K. Sweeney asked for details about Fire Department spending on vehicle maintenance. T. Leitz said he will have to check.
- R. Clapp asked about where pool maintenance costs are listed. T. Leitz said the big maintenance projects are in the capital fund; EFUD water department does a lot to help open the pool, and that cost is worked into the formula for what the Town pays EFUD. The big cost to price out this year is a new filter system. A new system can come with an automated chlorine system, which is desirable.
- R. Clapp asked how much the summer rec program figures into the budget. T. Leitz pointed out lines 40 and 43 on the revenue spreadsheet, noting that we are over budget on the good side.
- K. Sweeney asked why tennis court maintenance (line 271) is over budget. T. Leitz said the challenge with the courts is that they get an odd film on them that needs to be cleaned off. The theory is that the nearby interstate emissions settle on the courts.
- Questions from the public:
 - V. Rogers inquired if line 82, tree maintenance, seems high. T. Leitz said one large ash tree in S. Main St. was entwined in the power lines and proved to be a tricky removal; but the cost did strike him as high as well. Two big maples in Hope Cemetery will need to be removed and will be costly. Those will go in the cemetery budget.
 - C. Gloor asked if the tree work was bid out. T. Leitz said no, the contractors are priced comparably and sometimes it comes down to who is available.

T. Leitz reviewed revenues, providing additional comments on some line items, and took questions from the selectboard.

- M. Bard asked T. Leitz to find out how many properties are represented in the tax penalties line.
- Question from the public:
 - C. Gloor asked whether the town maintains Ring Rd. T. Leitz said the turnaround partway up is the end of the town's responsibility.
 - She additionally asked for postage and office supplies to be kept in check. T. Leitz acknowledged that the postage for rental registry mailing postcards was a one-time cost that drove it over budget.

T. Leitz said at the next update, he will hopefully have final paving numbers for Kneeland Flats. There has also been conversation about temporary speed bumps and he is increasingly convinced that they might solve a number of our speeding problems. R. Clapp encouraged T. Leitz to look at purchasing these speed bumps.

Update on Hazard Mitigation Grant application, FEMA buyouts and other flood resiliency projects

T. Leitz referred to [the spreadsheet](#) of all projects the State is tracking for FEMA money.

- We are competing with a small amount of funds with a lot of other folks for money.
- Our Randall Meadow project is the single most expensive project, and the fourth highest project in cost-benefit analysis.
- Since the state is prioritizing buyouts, he's hoping we'll just get a good amount of the needed money for that project.

T. Leitz gave updates on the FEMA buyouts in town.

- Nine buyouts have been submitted. Five have been approved and reached the appraisal stage.
- Internal FEMA changes have made it more difficult to predict when the remaining 4 will be addressed. There's no sense from the state or FEMA on the timeline.
- The two properties on N. Main St. have been appraised and there are environmental concerns that need to be addressed before the buyout can actually happen. He is trying to move the environmental studies along, but FEMA money for it won't be coming any time soon.
- Dana Allen is working with him to look at alternatives for funding sources but we are likely working towards a bond vote to fund the cornfield project in full.

Discussion

M. Bard observed that in the State's spreadsheet, the Waterbury project might be the most expensive, but by municipality, other towns' projects are more expensive in total.

R. Clapp confirmed that the original study of the cornfield targeted just the outer 3rd, so funding the project in stages might be the plan to pursue.

- V. Rogers asked for clarification about how the cornfield project cost of \$4 million was figured.
 - T. Leitz said that was the cost estimate provided by the engineering consulting firm.
 - D. Allen said a lot of the cost is the fill, which is a significant amount to acquire.
 - T. Leitz added most of the cost is in trucking.

C. Viens asked about where the material would be put once removed and what is involved in maintaining that level in the event of future floods depositing more sediment.

- T. Leitz said the hope is that in re-wilding the area, the sediment can be minimized. Sediment from minor events is going to be a maintenance project, but removing the sediment after a major flood event is a FEMA-level project.
- D. Allen said floodplains typically have a sediment budget and they establish equilibrium over time. This project will train both water and sediment as part of the design for easier trapping and maintaining of sediment levels.

Request for Proposals for services related to housing development at former Stanley Wasson site: draft review and discussion

[Examples from [Barre](#), [Bellows Falls](#), and [Dorset](#) provided for reference and comparison.]

T. Leitz summarized his [first draft of the RFQ](#) and compared it to the three other examples, noting that Dorset's is the most like Waterbury's situation.

Discussion

K. Sweeney said the open-endedness of the RFQ for now is appropriate because we don't want to turn off developers right from the start.

- He has no objections to the RFQ as written.
- M. Bard and R. Clapp agreed.
- R. Clapp added that this RFQ still gives us some time to continue engaging the public.

A. Johnson suggested that the site history and recent conditions sections should mention that it is located in the floodplain. The selectboard should determine a timeline and next steps.

M. Bard asked how the RFQ will be distributed.

- T. Leitz says he uses VLCT for everything because it is free.
- There is also a listserv for the Vermont development community. There are a few trade publications that he will send it to.

EH asked about the “construct, own and operate” description, and if that means the developer would own the site indefinitely, managing and renting out as they wish.

- T. Leitz said that is the typical model, and this approach would rule out single family homes.

C. Gloor asked if she could submit some recommendations to T. Leitz for revisions.

- She suggested the scope, complexity, and size of the project could use more specificity.
- Additionally, depending on how many proposals are received, there should be criteria specified for down-selecting.

M. Staskus said the qualification requirements start with the construction step, but should really back up to the design and permitting capabilities.

- Smaller firms will contract out, so how they are going to build their team specifically should be described.
- There should also be an option for proposing alternative financing models.
 - T. Leitz wondered if financing models should be a later phase or upfront information.
 - M. Staskus said asking for nitty gritty details isn't appropriate for the first round, but general frameworks are useful.

C. Viens suggested being explicit about the unique design needs in a floodplain plus historic district height restrictions. He also asked if the State might come down on the sale price to ensure a good project for Waterbury can happen.

- T. Leitz said he has already asked several times; the price of \$400k seems pretty set. State rationale is that they should receive market rate because the sale shouldn't just benefit Waterbury but all residents of the State.

B. Vigdor asked for clarification on whether the property is zoned as mixed use. Additionally, he recommends clarifying that the developer can own, lease, or sell units.

- M. Staskus confirmed the zoning is mixed use.

T. Leitz will incorporate suggestions and bring another draft to the next meeting.

Better Connections: Updates and additional steering committee appointments

[Request](#) from T. Leitz, Katie Gallegher, and Duncan McDougall to enlarge the steering committee to 15 to include several state project partners and another local resident.

Discussion

M. Bard noted the committee is now pretty large. T. Leitz said the size was strongly encouraged by the State.

Motion by R. Clapp to appoint the four additional members to the Better Connections steering committee; seconded by K. Sweeney.

No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously.**

T. Leitz added that Santec was just selected as the consulting firm for the project. The contract still needs to be worked out, and then a kick-off meeting will be scheduled.

Update on Selectboard input needed for Town Plan Aspiration, Goals and Strategies drafting

M. Staskus explained that the community survey and visioning sessions have been completed and the data has been analyzed.

- She showed the [Montpelier city plan](#) as the goal for a web-based, user-friendly, and accessible town plan. A printed plan will still exist on the shelf.
- She said that Neal Leitner has sent A. Johnson the results from data collection and a survey for the select board to complete and return to the planning commission by August 10.
- She then described the timeline of constant iteration and narrowing down over the coming months on the different chapters.

A. Johnson said she will crowdsource feedback from selectboard members and finalize their responses at the Aug. 4 meeting.

- She noted how many organizations in town are being consulted to help refine the data around each chapter/section; the effort is far-reaching.
- M. Staskus explained the approach of finding synergies rather than buckets in the data.
- B. Vigdor said the commission has collected more than 3,000 data points.

Selectboard and municipal manager updates

A. Johnson: Housing Task Force spent their recent meeting completing the planning commission's survey as it pertains to housing. It took time, so the selectboard should be prepared to spend a special meeting completing its feedback. She also thanked the planning commission for the intense work on this town plan process.

R. Clapp: Rec committee meets tomorrow and he should have something to report next time.

M. Bard: Nothing to report but glad to hear the DRB will post meeting cancellations from now on.

T. Leitz:

- Met today with Bill Woodruff and Ned Houston about the Chilia Russell property conserved by the Waterbury Land Initiative and building a small parking lot on site. He said it sounds like a good 2026 project but it still requires a conversation with the neighbors, zoning permit, and assurance the land is open to the public (no trails exist yet). Future topic.
- There is leftover grant money from a 2017 project that included sidewalks on Rt. 100. The original grant was for \$242k and we've only spent \$25k so far. With the Stowe Street bridge project nearing completion and some sidewalks already incorporated as part of that project, we can work towards repurposing the grant funds to add sidewalks on both sides of Rt. 100 to the gas stations.

Review next meeting agenda, August 4

Capital Plan review

RFQ revised draft

Selectboard input for town plan aspiration, goals, and strategies

Parade and event permit

Vermont 250 Waterbury Committee - Waterbury Historical Society

Invasive species

R. Clapp said he will reach out to Susan Clark about her availability for subsequent meetings.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by K. Sweeney to find that premature public knowledge of labor negotiations and town personnel would place the town of Waterbury at a substantial disadvantage; seconded by M. Bard.
No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously.**

Motion by K. Sweeney to move to executive session; seconded by M. Bard.
No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously.**

Selectboard entered executive session at 8:58 p.m.

Selectboard exited executive session 9:53 p.m.

Motion by K. Sweeney to re-enter into an employment contract with the municipal manager for three years; seconded by R. Clapp.
No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously.**

A. Johnson noted that the new contract would be effective August 1.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by K. Sweeney to adjourn; seconded by R. Clapp.
Motion passed unanimously.

Selectboard adjourned at 9:54 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cheryl Casey.