



Minutes of the Waterbury Select Board Regular Meeting
Tuesday, July 7, 2026 | 6:30 p.m.
28 S. Main St. and on Zoom

[[Zoom recording](#) / Passcode: *1?1gV3B]

Select Board attendance: Martha Staskus, Sandy Sabin, Roger Clapp, Don Schneider, Evan Karl Hoffman

Staff attendance: Bill Woodruff, Cheryl Casey

Public attendance: ORCA Media, Beth Jones, Dan Sweet, Valerie Rogers, Marie Gervais, Wes Pollock, Joe Camaratta, Lisa Scagliotti, Bob Butler, Liz Schlegel, Dana Allen, Bill Shepeluk, Tucker Speer

Public on Zoom: ORCA Media, Linda Gilpin, Anne Imhoff, Gary Dillon, Doug Greason

CALL TO ORDER, 6:32 p.m. by M. Staskus

AGENDA

Review and approve [meeting agenda](#)

Motion by R. Clapp to approve the agenda as presented; seconded by D. Schneider

No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

PUBLIC COMMENT

M. Staskus thanked the Waterbury Rotary for the amazing NQID event.

APPROVALS

→ **Minutes of June 16, 17, 18, and 24**

Motion by S. Sabin to approve the minutes as written; seconded by R. Clapp.

No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

→ **Consent agenda items ([as listed on the meeting agenda](#))**

E. Hoffman asked if the applications included description of the outdoor consumption space.

- Town Clerk W. Pollock said the application for Stone's Throw does describe the space and the dimensions, but not the Zenbarn application.

R. Clapp gave the summary of the Stone's Throw application for two small tables on the sidewalk, each seating a maximum of two people, for food service. Per requirements from the zoning administrator, there may be no more than two people per table, and the width of the table

seating may not exceed the width of the benches situated in similar places in front of other businesses. The sidewalk traffic must not be impeded by these tables. Consumption of alcohol in this sidewalk space is determined via the state.

Motion by E. Hoffman to approve the consent agenda with the conditions that the first and second items (Zenbarn and Stone's Throw) include the conditions of roped-off consumption spaces; seconded by S. Sabin.

No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

PERMITS

→ [Go Skate Day](#)

T. Speer explained the event was rescheduled due to inclement weather.

D. Schneider recommended the event planners let the adjacent neighbors know that the event is sanctioned and there will be music playing.

R. Clapp asked about event hours and attendance.

- Tucker said the event will take place between 12pm and 4pm, with no more than 80 people throughout the day. He doesn't have parking concerns because of the two lots and the skate park lot.
- C. Casey added that the grassy area for the skate park lot was part of the approved plans.

D. Schneider asked about vendors.

- Tucker said there are no sales of anything. Volunteers are donating pizzas and other refreshments.

Motion by R. Clapp to reapprove the event for July 11 with a rain date of July 12; seconded by E. Hoffman.

No further discussion; **motion approved unanimously (5-0).**

TOWN BOARDS/COMMITTEES REPORTS

→ **Listers & Assessor**

Listers B. Jones and B. Butler and Assessor D. Sweet introduced themselves to the Select Board and summarized their recent work.

D. Sweet explained the history of these roles and their purpose.

- The Assessor, who is hired as part of town staff, keeps the grand list current and the Listers, who are elected, hear grievances and serve as a consulting board for the assessor.

B. Butler said it is usually quiet for grievances, and B. Jones is new as of the most recent Town Meeting and still learning the ropes.

D. Sweet acknowledged there haven't been many grievances in the last few years. What is expected for the reappraisal, which is currently underway, is:

- We want to bring our [CLA \(common level of appraisal\)](#) up to 100% (currently at about 50%)

- Property values will double across the board while property taxes themselves will stay just about where they are.

Discussion:

M. Staskus asked about the timeline and the procedure for handling the reappraisal.

- D. Sweet said the goal is to complete the reappraisal by April 1 2027. The longer we take, the more out-of-date the assessments become. The state will then review his report.
- He sends letters to everyone in town to make an appointment for him to visit and assess inside and out. If people choose to avoid a visit, he will need to make a best-guess estimate.

E. Hoffman asked how new construction is appraised.

- D. Sweet explained that the appraisal is based on cost tables.

M. Staskus asked if reappraisal was required every certain period of time.

- D. Sweet replied that reappraisals are triggered when the CLA drops below a certain percentage (85% in Vermont).

M. Staskus asked if the state gives any grant money to support the reappraisal process.

- D. Sweet said every year the town gets a per parcel payment (about \$9/parcel) from the state, which goes into a fund that helps pay for reappraisal efforts.
- B. Woodruff clarified that the fund is distinct from the assessor's salary.
- D. Sweet added that the state has expressed interest in taking over the reappraisal process, but is taking time to undertake a study first.

R. Clapp asked about what recourse people have once the values are set.

- D. Sweet said the grievance process is the same as what we do annually for the grand list and property taxes.

M. Staskus asked about communicating with the public about the reappraisal.

- D. Sweet said he put together information on the website.
- C. Casey said the reappraisal has also been featured in two issues of the [*Municipal Dispatch*](#).

→ Board of Civil Authority

L. Schlegel described the board's role in [hearing and deciding tax assessment appeals](#) if property owners are dissatisfied with decisions rendered by the Listers.

- The BCA is a quasi-judicial board in the process.
- There are specific deadlines that must be met and procedures that must be followed, per state statute.
- A site visit is required by the members; the property owner is not allowed to bar anyone from any part of the property. Three members make the site visit, but only the members who attend the initial hearing can make a decision. According to new quorum rules, whoever is present makes the quorum (more than two).
- Ex-partite communication between board members is not permitted.

- Conflicts of interest that aren't revealed by board members can send an appeal back to the start.
- L. Schlegel then described the board's role in conducting elections.
- Setting up voting booths
 - Hand-counting ballots at the end of the night
 - Publicize where and when to vote
 - Making sure election law is followed
 - Election volunteers are always welcome, and those interested should reach out to her or the town clerk.
- L. Schlegel said the third role of the BCA is abatement of taxes.
- There are allowed reasons for abatement laid out in statute – generally some hardship causing an inability to pay, a mistake was made in preparing the tax bill.
- R. Clapp said the Secretary of State's office is initiating a [civic engagement](#) project about getting people involved in elections and other civic activities.

→ **Historical Society**

C. Casey, gave a [presentation about what the historical society does](#) and some recent achievements, adding the following points:

- The museum space underwent a total transformation in 2026 thanks to the extraordinary efforts of its volunteers to reimagine the space and highlight more of the artifacts that had been in storage. The History Center went from having 9 exhibits to 16 themed exhibits and displays.
- Visitors have included the Green Mountain Civil War Roundtable and Vermont Historical Society. The History Center has been opening on holiday weekends during the summer/fall to bring in visitors who might not be able to make it during municipal hours.

Discussion

D. Schneider said just earlier in the evening he observed out-of-state visitors looking at the plaque outside the building about Dr. Janes, but it was after hours.

- C. Casey replied that the history center does keep a guest book and people from all over the world, including eastern Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and around the United States, as well as all around Vermont, have come to see the exhibits.
- A number of descendants from families like the Dillinghams, Bidwells, Demeritts, and Prides have come to view artifacts in our collections for research purposes, too.

MUNICIPAL MANAGER ITEMS

→ **Randall Meadow update**

B. Woodruff said proposals for the environmental assessment (EA) work have been submitted from two firms and will be reviewed by the committee.

D. Allen clarified the budgeting for the grant and the environmental review stage. He said we can also send an RFP for design work; however, the cost will be out-of-pocket until the environmental review is complete.

Discussion

M. Staskus asked if we could wait to engage the design consultant.

- D. Allen said that is an option. We can also begin design work to a certain point while the (EA) is taking place so that when the EA is complete, we can move immediately to the next step.

M. Staskus asked about the timeline.

- B. Woodruff said the cornfield is still active for this growing/harvesting season.
- D. Allen said they hope to have the environmental review done by the end of the year, but we don't really know how long that will take. Some design work can be done in the meantime. We have 6 years to complete design and implementation, starting this past March when the grant was awarded.

M. Staskus recommended D. Allen returns to the Select Board to continue this conversation once the environmental review consultant is selected.

R. Clapp said the NPS consulting group is proposing to do a design charrette for our public green and recreational spaces, including Randall Meadow, and wondered how that exercise would merge with this project.

- D. Allen said the pertinent results of the charrette could be integrated into the Randall Meadow design considerations.

→ FEMA buyouts & demolition updates

B. Woodruff said demolition work on 40 and 36 Union Streets is expected to begin this week. The July 4th holiday might create delays in scheduling the work.

→ Woody Avenue update

The holiday and summer vacations have pushed schedules out a little bit, but WLA has begun work and expects to send a contract to us next week. They would like to schedule a meet-and-greet on site in a few weeks.

B. Woodruff asked the Select Board to sign the agreement assigning him and Town Planner Neal Leitner as the contacts for the grant.

→ Waterbury Reservoir parking on Blush Hill Rd.

There have been complaints about people parking along the road.

M. Staskus said enforcement would be challenging because the signs are inconsistent or missing.

- State Police and Sheriffs have been up there and have seen the parking, but they are reluctant to issue either tickets or towing.

S. Sabin said she researched some history about the problem and found that B. Shepeluk wanted to amend the parking ordinance to ban parking along that stretch of road.

- The recommendation was brought to the board in 2020 and approved, but there was never any follow-up to include the new language in the ordinance itself and warn the waiting period for public input.
- The language approved by the Select Board in 2020 was as follows:
 - “No parking on the west side of Blush Hill from the intersection of Michigan Avenue for two-tenths of a mile to the entrance of the cul-de-sac adjacent to the reservoir.”
 - There was also a motion approved to put additional pressure on the State to create parking on the property they own” to help alleviate the problem.
- M. Staskus noted that the traffic ordinance (9.10) gives the town authority to regulate and control parking on any town roads.

Discussion

D. Schneider said he doesn’t agree with the suggestion that the signage is confusing, inconsistent, or missing.

- No one parks on the left (west) side so that it is still feasible for traffic to get through.
- Tickets can easily be given based on the signage.

B. Woodruff said it sounds like the intent of the 2020 decision has been working.

Motion by R. Clapp to introduce the previously-approved language about no parking on the west side of Blush Hill and add it to the traffic ordinance; seconded by S. Sabin.

R. Clapp said that the sign erected by State Parks is on the town road and is not permitted.

No further discussion; **motion approved unanimously (5-0).**

Staffing

B. Woodruff said that Wes Pollock hired an assistant town clerk, Myria McNally, who started last Thursday. Beth Jones can start transitioning into retirement.

- Everyone thanked and applauded Beth Jones for postponing her retirement and dedicating herself to the town for this additional period of time.

SELECT BOARD MATTERS

→ Municipal Manager position

D. Schneider announced that Graci Zeiger has been hired as the new Municipal Manager. She is expected to start August 24.

- Two former supervisors, two colleagues, and one client gave feedback when asked for recommendations. Some of their remarks included:
 - Ability to develop strong relationships with people
 - Collaborative and natural leader
 - Ability to handle lots of work. Asked great questions. Willingness to accept feedback, even critical, and make necessary adjustments immediately.

Supervisors felt very comfortable letting her run programs without much guidance from them.

- Strong financial skills.
- Ethics and professionalism were considered top notch.

M. Staskus said it was a very successful process

Discussion

L. Scagliotti asked more about Graci's background and where she is from.

- D. Schneider said she is from Indianola, Iowa. Of the three finalists, one person was in a first-time town manager position and the other two had not worked as town managers before. Graci has extensive experience in the public sector and a master's of public administration.
- M. Staskus said the Select Board will be sending a press release after the meeting.

→ **Makersphere lease**

D. Schneider recused himself from the discussion because he is a member of the Makersphere board.

S. Sabin said the insurance hasn't been updated to reflect the change of use for the building and Makersphere's obligation to take on the insurance wasn't included in the final lease.

- Not only is the building not being used for what it is insured for, but the town is still paying for the insurance.
- We are past the actual renewal date for their lease, which is now month-to-month.
- She suggested the topic be tabled until all of the details about the insurance and the lease are understood and properly addressed.

Motion by E. Hoffman to allow MakerSphere to continue operating in the building on a month-to-month basis at the same rate of \$500/month; seconded by R. Clapp.

No further discussion; **motion approved (4-0-1, D. Schneider abstaining).**

→ **Memo from the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) about Act 162 and statute changes for fire prevention**

G. Dillon reported that under new legislation, local fire chiefs are now also designated as the local fire wardens. He sent a [letter to the agency commissioner](#) responding to the new requirements.

- Consequently, the local fire wardens must now be appointed as deputy fire wardens.
- The new rules also exclude firepits of a diameter approximately the size of state parks firepits and smaller from requiring burn permits.
- This statute adds cost and reporting burdens to municipalities; there is no financial backing to these new rules.
- He finds the new requirements extremely frustrating because the workload and the available resources do not align.

- G. Dillon feels strongly that deputy fire wardens should be compensated, and there is room in the fire department budget to provide a stipend to the deputies under his purview.
- He summarized that in his opinion, ANR did away with something that was their problem and left it to the municipalities without providing any support for the new circumstances.

Discussion

M. Staskus thanked G. Dillon for writing a letter of complaint to the commissioner of ANR. She clarified that the prior fire wardens for Waterbury and Duxbury are continuing to serve as deputy fire wardens.

D. Schneider noted that these new rules shift liability from the state to the towns. This can be very expensive.

M. Staskus said she would be interested to hear what fire departments across the state have to say about these changes.

- G. Dillon said he copied our state representatives and senators in his email to the commissioner.
- Rep. Theresa Wood and Sen. Ann Cummings were under the impression that fire chiefs were looped into the process earlier, and G. Dillon confirmed to them that was not the case. No fire chiefs in Capital Fire Mutual Aid had heard about these new rules before the July 1 letter from ANR.

M. Staskus said the board should discuss compensating the deputy fire wardens.

D. Schneider said he would like to have a conversation with our state representatives about the implications of these new rules.

- M. Staskus said Rep. Theresa Wood is scheduled to attend a Select Board meeting in August.

Motion by R. Clapp to authorize G. Dillon to research the process for providing compensation for deputy fire wardens; seconded by S. Sabin.

No further discussion; **motion approved unanimously (5-0).**

→ Tax Rate

W. Pollock reviewed the approved budget numbers, grand list size, and amount to be raised by taxes.

Motion by R. Clapp to set the general fund tax rate at 0.5504, the voter-approved tax exemption rate of 0.0048, for a total municipal tax rate of 0.5552.

No further discussion; **motion approved unanimously (5-0).**

Motion by E. Hoffman to adopt a 2% fee for late filing of the homestead declaration; seconded by R. Clapp.

No further discussion; **motion approved unanimously (5-0).**

→ [Letter from Planning Commission to CVRCP](#)

D. Allen, chair of the planning commission (PC), said CVRCP is making recommendations about downtown centers and planned growth areas in [their maps](#), and the PC is focusing on these land use mapping recommendations because they will have an effect on mapping done by the Land Use Board and how certain areas are given tier designations.

- There are areas in Waterbury that the planning commission and housing task force would like to see designated as part of these recommended growth areas, specifically in and adjacent to the utility district, but CVRCP did not include much of those areas when the recommendations were recently released.
- The letter advocates for having as much of EFUD included in the identified growth areas as possible.

J. Camaratta, chair of the Housing Task Force, noted that these land use maps play a significant role in setting and achieving housing targets.

- CVRCP is recommending areas that aren't in our plans as growth areas, so we aren't just asking for areas to be added, but for some areas to be subtracted.
- Some of the areas included are areas where building is technically feasible, but aren't actually available to us; for example, property owned by the state is designated as a growth area, but that's not our property to work with.
- Housing targets also increase if the land area for growth is increased.

M. Staskus said the request is to gain Select Board support for this letter.

Discussion

M. Staskus asked why we would want the areas in Waterbury Center removed from the growth area designation.

- J. Camaratta said these maps don't need to be a pipe dream of EFUD, nor do they necessarily represent where we want growth to occur, as opposed to where growth can occur.
- D. Allen said the logic for designating Waterbury Center as a future growth area doesn't currently hold up.
 - Areas with water and sewer infrastructure were left out of the CVRCP recommendations and areas without that infrastructure already in place were included.
 - The PC made this problematic reasoning clear to CVRCP.

D. Greason, our representative to CVRCP, clarified that housing targets are set according to the number of acres eligible for Tier 1 designation.

- He doesn't have a good sense of the economic development side of the discussion.
- He does think the housing targets are going to change in the next year or two because of flawed methodology.

M. Staskus noted that this letter might actually go nowhere, but it is worth making the request.

Motion by R. Clapp to authorize the Planning Commission to adjust the letter to ensure greater agreement between the Planning Commission and the Housing Task Force, and the Select Board chair will then add her signature; seconded by E. Hoffman.

No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

NEXT MEETING AGENDA

Makersphere lease renewal

State Police

Budget update from Bill Shepeluk

Recreation Committee

Better Connections update

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by D. Schneider to enter executive session for discussion of employment and invite the municipal manager for the first half; seconded by R. Clapp.

No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

The Select Board entered executive session at 9:07 p.m.

The Select Board exited executive session at 9:22 p.m.

Motion by R. Clapp to recognize a positive performance review of Wes Pollock in his probationary period as Town Clerk; seconded by E. Hoffman.

No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

Motion by R. Clapp for the Select Board to approve a 3-year employment contract with Charity “Graci” Zeiger for municipal manager for the Town of Waterbury with a start date of August 24, 2026; seconded by S. Sabin.

No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by E. Hoffman to adjourn; seconded by R. Clapp.

Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Meeting adjourned at 9:24 p.m.

Next meeting of the Waterbury Select Board: **July 21 @ 6:30 p.m.**
Steele Community Room
28 N. Main St. and on Zoom.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cheryl Casey.