Minutes of the Waterbury Select Board Regular Meeting
Tuesday, September 1, 2026 | 6:30 p.m.
28 S. Main St. and on Zoom

[Recording]

Select Board attendance: Martha Staskus, Sandy Sabin, Roger Clapp, Evan Karl Hoffman, Don Schneider
Staff attendance: Cheryl Casey, Bill Woodruff, Graci Zeiger

Public attendance: ORCA Media, Chris Viens, Pam Eaton, Larry Nelson, Claire Pomer, Mike Hedges, Lotta Lampela, Mike Bard, Marie Gervais, Theo Hanna, Amy Marshall-Carney, Jane Brown, Lisa Scagliotti, Billy Vigdor, Dan Snyder, Jill Sackett
Public on Zoom: ORCA Media, Mal Culbertson, Duncan McDougall, Nita Hulstrom, Kati Gallagher, Pete M., Pegeen Mulhern, Peggy Gates, Joe Camaratta, Carrie MacMillan, Em Lamson, Tami, Valerie Rogers, Wesley Pollock

CALL TO ORDER, 6:30 p.m. by M. Staskus

AGENDA

➔ **Review and approve meeting agenda**

S. Sabin asked to get a current status on the MakerSphere lease. M. Staskus said that will likely be part of the Municipal Manager's report later.
E. Hoffman asked about having the sheriff's data posted to the website.

Motion by R. Clapp to approve the agenda as presented; seconded by S. Sabin.
No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

➔ **Introduction of Graci Zeiger, Waterbury Town Manager**

M. Staskus welcomed G. Zeiger and thanked the public for participating in the process.
G. Zeiger introduced herself and talked a little about how she made the decision that moving to Vermont from Iowa was the right thing to do.

- She gave a short summary of her credentials and experience.
- She is focusing quite a bit on the Natural Disaster Preparedness initiatives and learning everything she can from B. Woodruff.
- G. Zeiger also introduced her husband, Scott, and mentioned her son and 4 pyrenees rescue dogs.

PUBLIC COMMENT

M. Bard welcomed G. Zeiger on behalf of the Waterbury Rotary. He also requested the banner stating the declaration of inclusion be rehung outside.

- R. Clapp noted that the banner was sagging and torn, so it was taken down this past winter.

APPROVALS

➔ **Minutes of August 18, 2026**

Discussion

S. Sabin requested the following content regarding the Better Connections project be added to the discussion of the next meeting agenda:

- Martha said the board will decide on five project elements at the September 1st meeting. Members should review notes and prepare their positions.
- Sandy asked when the survey results will be given to the board, so we have time to review.
- Don said he hopes they have it for us before we make a decision.
- Roger said the steering committee meets on August 26th and will send recommendations to the board.
- Woody thought the survey was complete.
- Martha will ask Duncan to distribute the survey results to the board by next week, giving members a week to review them before decisions are made.

Motion by R. Clapp to approve the minutes as amended; seconded by E. Hoffman.
No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

➔ **Consent agenda items (as listed on the meeting agenda)**

Motion by D. Schneider to approve the consent agenda as listed; seconded by E. Hoffman.
No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

TOWN BOARDS/COMMITTEES REPORTS

➔ **Waterbury School Board representatives**

P. Eaton, T. Hanna, and J. Sackett introduced themselves and P. Eaton gave a summary of the tough discussions the school board is having, especially how we can continue to provide high quality education in the face of falling enrollment, budgetary pressures, and an infrastructure needing significant maintenance and repairs.

- T. Hanna said VT has some of the highest health insurance costs in the country and is continuing to rise, and this is one of the key drivers of increased budgets. The legislature has passed a law to lower the per pupil spending cap, which makes doing more with less even more complex while also trying to attract families to move to Vermont.
- P. Eaton added that the school board is looking at how many students are in each school and even more granular to the birth rate in the district's towns. When a town has one child born in a year, a school cannot be sustained.

Discussion

M. Staskus asked if they could share anything about the possible acquisition of the old Cabot building.

- P. Eaton said one possible course of action might be combining the four Valley schools into one at that location; however, the board is still exploring whether this option is even possible.
    - She encouraged people to email the school board with questions and comments and check their website for more information about their considerations to date and upcoming discussions.
    - She highlighted the communications and public outreach committee's work in putting together a presentation that will be shared with community groups in the near future.

R. Clapp asked if there were plans to present the advantages of closing Brookside and moving the kids to Crossett Brook.

- P. Eaton said that information would be part of the presentation but some of that information is also already available on the school board's website. A notable factor is how much urgent repair is needed at Brookside compared to Crossett Brook.
- D. Schneider explained he was principal at Brookside for 13 years and at 5 other schools, and he would be reaching out because he has strong opinions about this topic.
- J. Sackett encouraged all ideas to be shared.

M. Koen asked if the school district website is the same as the school board website. P. Eaton responded that the school board pages are within the district website.

- M. Koen thanked the school board members for stepping up to serve and commented that simply combining schools doesn't automatically save money.

M. Bard asked if purchasing the Cabot building would be an overall cost savings versus closing schools and combining in an existing building.

- The school board reps said that question would be part of their study.

C. Viens said that in his recent conversation with gubernatorial candidate Amanda Janoo, he discussed how VT is bankrupt and someone has to start making some really hard choices before the choices are made for them.

➔ Tree Board

J. Brown, chair, summarized the board's purpose and their coordination with the Cemetery Commission.

- The board has been prioritizing tree pruning and the street tree inventory.
- They have engaged a team of arborists to update the existing database and extract extra value data.

Discussion

M. Staskus asked where the inventory lives and if it is available on their page on the town website.

- J. Brown said the inventory lives within a state database and they are working on preparing information for the website.

→ **Conservation Committee**

[presentation]

A. Marshall-Carney and L. Lampella introduced themselves and their two main topics for presentation: the natural resources inventory and key updates.

A. Marshall-Carney summarized that the natural resources inventory includes identifying property owners who would like to have an inventory done at their properties.

- B. Vigdor asked about the geographic scope of Arrowwood's work. A Marshall-Carney said the whole town.

A. Marshall-Carney next explained that the Conservation Commission was listed as a stakeholder in the Better Connections project but was not consulted or invited to participate in the grant application.

- She requested that the record reflect that the commission didn't play a role in the project to date but would like the commission to play a future role with regards to whatever is within their skillset.
- She added that after conversation with Town Planner Neal Leitner, the commission is presenting a draft stakeholder process proposal for consideration in our policies and procedures.

A. Marshall-Carney said the commission has 2 vacancies and is seeking new members. M. Koen asked how many seats there are on the commission. A. Marshall-Carney responded that there are currently 6 members and the commission can have up to 9.

K. Gallagher asked where the Conservation Commission is listed as a stakeholder, for her information and reference.

- A. Marshall-Carney pointed her to page 2 of the grant application.

J. Brown added the Tree Board has one opening as well.

TOWN MANAGER AND PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR UPDATES

→ **Sheriff's data**

G. Zeiger said the Sheriff has submitted the data and it will be up on the website within the next 24 hours. [See Public Safety page.]

Discussion

D. Schneider inquired if it were really the case that someone was driving 75 mph at two o'clock in the afternoon on Kneeland Flats Rd. Many in the room responded in the affirmative.

R. Clapp asked where the money goes when speeding tickets are paid. B. Woodruff said there is a line item in the budget for receiving such money

→ **State annual financial plan–town highways 19 V.S.A. § 306(j)**

B. Woodruff said this is part of the paperwork the state uses to ensure we're in compliance and makes us eligible for grants. It's routine paperwork for the select board to sign.

→ **Makersphere lease**

B. Woodruff reported that he has been doing some research about rental costs per square foot and is actively in conversation with Makersphere.

➔ **Woody Ave.**

B. Woodruff reported that the project team from Weimann-Lamphere Architects will be meeting weekly.

➔ **FEMA buyouts**

B. Woodruff reported that three more properties are progressing to the appraisal stage: 38 Union St., 42 Union St., and 1634 Route 2.

SELECTBOARD MATTERS

➔ **VTrans correspondence on speed limit reductions along VT Rt 100**

D. Schneider gave the background on discussions about the dangers of the Howard Avenue/Route 100 intersection and the single 50mph stretch in the middle of a 40mph section. VTrans said they will conduct an engineering study and have an answer about the requests to remove the 50mph section and extend the 35mph section.

Discussion

J. Brown advised that more than one person from the town show up to the VTrans meetings when they discuss the matter.

➔ **Update on Steele Room audio/visual systems improvements**

D. Schneider and the company that installed the sound system in the building when it was built came in and reviewed what is already here, as well as what new features can be installed. There is already an audio system with 9 microphones, so we will begin using that system again.
E. Hoffman

➔ **Approval of new private road names**

C. Casey presented the location and proposed name, Lamson Lane, for a new private road at 104 S. Main St. She explained that as the town encouraged housing density downtown, it will become more common for private driveways on lots that are deep enough for development to require a switch to private roadways.

Motion by R. Clapp to approve the new private road Lamson Lane; seconded by E. Hoffman.
No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

C. Casey presented the location and proposed name, Small Hill Rd., for a new private road off of Howard Avenue, near the intersection with Route 100.

- She clarified for the board that this project was originally approved in 2007 as a Planned Unit Development (PUD) but the project stalled.
- The new plan is to adjust a boundary line to reduce the number of lots from 4 to 3 and sell the vacant lots for future development.

- She also said the road name is derived from the geographical features of the location.

Motion by E. Hoffman to approve the new private road Small Hill Rd; seconded by S. Sabin.
Discussion
C. Viens asked about the culvert on the property in relation to the installation of the drive/road.
- B. Woodruff said there is just enough room and the project accounts for the culvert.
- C. Casey confirmed that the municipal curb cut permit and all state approvals re: the wetlands have been obtained.

J. Brown asked about the safety of pulling in and out of a road so close to the intersection with Route 100.
- B. Woodruff and C. Casey noted that the sighting was approved as part of the curb cut permit.

No further discussion; **motion passed (4-1, D. Schneider opposing).**

➔ **Better Connections demonstration project recommendations**
[additional documents: Survey Summary, Qualitative Responses Analysis, Survey Responses Over Time]
K. Gallagher presented the recommendations and M. Staskus confirmed that tonight's task is to decide on what elements of the demonstration project would remain; final recommendations from the larger report and longer-term considerations would be discussed in October.
- R. Clapp agreed and asked for clarification on whether the board was voting on the demonstration project recommendations as a slate or as individual items.

S. Sabin asked if the steering committee was able to access the full survey results, not just the summary of results that was provided.
- D. MacDougall said he provided the summarized results from over three hundred responses for the board's convenience, but he does have the full results.
- L. Scagliotti proposed that the survey responses were public record and can easily be downloaded as a Google spreadsheet for whoever would like to review them, no matter how many responses there were.
- M. Staskus recommended all survey responses be posted on the Better Connections webpage.
    - She also asked if respondents could submit multiple times.
    - D. MacDougall said yes.

S. Sabin said the select board is not in a position to make a decision about the demonstration project tonight because the recommendations and survey report were only provided a few days ago, not a week in advance as agreed.
- Additionally, the survey has nothing to do with the five elements on which the selectboard is being asked to make a decision.
- She does not feel comfortable making a decision about any of it at this time.
- E. Hoffman said he didn't think a final decision was being made tonight.

- R. Clapp said making decisions on the health and welfare of the community shouldn't necessarily be based solely on survey results in which people could submit as many times as they wanted.
    - He feels that after the public hearing last month, a decision can be made about demonstration project elements only.

D. Schneider said he could definitely make a decision on some things to be removed tonight.

- He added that implementing elements of the larger study will allow for us to make further adjustments to any decisions made tonight.

Motion by R. Clapp to vote tonight only on elements of the demonstration project to be removed; seconded by S. Sabin.
Discussion
B. Woodruff noted that the bollards were expected to be removed because they are on loan; additionally, from a public works perspective, they are highly undesirable.

- D. Snyder from the Steering Committee confirmed that they agreed almost unanimously that the bollards should go.
- Further, many of the elements of the demo project have to do with paint on a road that will wash away gradually.

C. Viens said with hiring a sheriff to slow traffic down, he is wondering whether further changes are appropriate.

- What hasn't been talked about is taking part of the right-of-way the Town owns so as not to impinge on the current traffic space.
- Hiring a sheriff is already a change, and making more changes so quickly is troubling.

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

R. Clapp reviewed the recommendations one by one for a vote:

> Location and visibility of stop signs:
Motion by R. Clapp to remove the vegetation around the stop signs; seconded by S. Sabin.
No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

> Parking spaces along the west side of the Triangle:
- B. Woodruff said even removing painted lines will cost money.
- J. Brown asked when that side of the Triangle will be repaved.
    - B. Woodruff said it is scheduled for 2027 or 2028.

It was noted that since the paint will fade somewhat over the winter, there seems no reason to spend the money removing the painted lines now. Although the parking spaces are too wide, all on the board agreed to let them be at this time.

> Tactile warning pads:
Motion by R. Clapp to remove the tactile warning pads at the Maple St. crosswalk; seconded by E. Hoffman.

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

Motion by R. Clapp to remove the tactile pads at the crosswalk from the Grange to the park; seconded by S. Sabin.
No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

> Adjusted yellow lines: The board agreed anything paint-related can be left along for now, for the same reasons as the parking spaces.

> Bollards:
Motion by R. Clapp to remove the bollards; seconded by D. Schneider.
No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

Additional Discussion:
E. Hoffman asked about the Maple Street pedestrian lane, which he thought many people found dangerous.

- D. MacDougall answered that Public Works recommended keeping the crosswalk.
- K. Gallagher said the Steering Committee felt the crosswalks and pedestrian lanes were important safety features.
- B. Woodruff said if we use our right-of-way, which would entail cutting trees, we would have enough room to safely get people across to Hope Davey Park.
- S. Sabin said using the pedestrian lane felt unsafe when walking with traffic along Maple Street because of how narrow the road is.

Motion to remove the Maple Street pedestrian lane at as low a cost as possible; seconded by S. Sabin.
No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

D. Schneider said that the board and the public are now asked to cull through the full data to be provided by D. MacDougall and K. Gallagher for discussion at the October 6 select board meeting.

R. Clapp noted that the Steering Committee inquired about a sidewalk study for Route 100 from the new Stowe Street bridge to the light at Shaw’s.

- M. Hedges asked what stage the feasibility study is in for a sidewalk.
- B. Woodruff said the grant money will only cover extending sidewalks to the other side of Route 100 at Blush Hill, not north to Shaw’s.

NEXT MEETING AGENDA

- September 23, 4-6 p.m. Town Manager Welcome Open House
- Appointed v Elected Town Clerk and Treasurer positions–presentation from E. Hoffman and S. Sabin

- Select Board Rules of Procedure revision re: select board agenda and materials posting
- Natural Disaster Preparedness Committee
- Introductory budget discussion
- NPS Resiliency Project in recreation and flood-prone areas - Waterbury Pathways Steering Committee presentation and scheduling of design charette on October 23.

ADJOURNMENT
Motion by R. Clapp to adjourn; seconded by E. Hoffman.
Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Next meeting of the Waterbury Select Board: **September 15** @ 6:30 p.m.
Steele Community Room
28 N. Main St. and on Zoom.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cheryl Casey.