

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

Attendance: Kane Sweeney, Tori Taravella, Cheryl Casey, Alyssa Johnson, Mike Bard, Roger Clapp

Public attendance: ORCA Media, Chris Viens, Harry Shepard, Valerie Rogers, Lisa Scagliotti, Evan Karl Hoffman, Lisa Walton, David Frothingham, Jess Neubelt

Zoom attendance: ORCA Media, Anne Imhoff, Alex Tolstoi, Sandy Sabin, Annemarie Fortune, Brooks Fortune, Amy Marshall-Carney, Martha Staskus, John Zimmerman, Joe Camaratta

CALL TO ORDER by A. Johnson at 6:32 p.m.

AGENDA

Motion by T. Taravella to approve the agenda, seconded by K. Sweeney.

Motion by K. Sweeney to separate out items (f) and (i) from the consent agenda. No further discussion; **motion approved unanimously.**

Motion by M. Bard to add Blush Hill permit item to consent agenda, seconded by R. Clapp. No further discussion; **motion approved unanimously.**

No further discussion; **motion to accept the agenda approved unanimously.**

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by R. Clapp to approve the consent agenda as amended; seconded by K. Sweeney.

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

Consent agenda items (f) and (i)

Motion to approve by T. Taravella; seconded by M. Bard.

No further discussion; **motion approved 4-0 with 1 (K. Sweeney) abstaining.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

V. Rogers expressed concerns about potential conflicts of interest for select board members:

- R. Clapp regarding the Housing Task Force and his role as executive director of Revitalizing Waterbury
- A. Johnson's role on the Housing Task Force if she is a voting member.
- K. Sweeney regarding his role running the local platform for affordable housing.

She requested that anyone who is serving on the Housing Task Force and is also an elected member of the select board recuse themselves from decision-making in task force-related voting.

K. Sweeney clarified that the Housing Task Force is answerable to the select board and functions only as an advisory body.

A. Johnson said she will ask the municipal manager to look into the issue.

M. Bard added that select board members on committees should not be voting members.

T. Taravella said according to the policy, the conflict of interest only comes up if someone is an officer of the committee; personal views on an issue also do not count towards conflicts of interest.

C. Viens reported that in his view, T. Taravella's recent remarks to the school board advocating for Pam Eaton to be appointed to one of the vacant Waterbury positions is a considerable conflict of interest; further, she did not disclose for the record that she is both a select board member and a former member of the school board. Elizabeth Brown should have been among the first two in line as one of the select board's formal recommendations and T. Taravella's behavior was an egregious overstep. He is calling for an ethics investigation.

L. Walton asked that the attorneys consulted about the housing task force conflict of interest be made a matter of public record.

A. Johnson acknowledged L. Scagliotti as Waterbury's Green-Up Day coordinator and announced the details available on the town website. Also, the Planning Commission is having its final visioning day on April 29.

BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

A. Johnson addressed process:

- Current board/commission members whose terms are up were contacted for their interest in continuing to serve.
- A call for nomination packets went out to the public
- Motions to appoint a candidate must clearly state the term length and board/commission.
- Due to a miscommunication, not all of the packets have been submitted from continuing members of the Conservation Committee, so she proposed that these reappointments be addressed at a later date.

M. Bard suggested that people interested in renewing their terms should not be required to attend the select board meeting because we have their materials and the select board liaisons should know already if there might be a problem with reappointing someone.

R. Clapp proposed that the board move through the candidates one board/commission at a time.

Planning Commission

Dana Allen and Robert Adler have submitted their interest in remaining on the commission.

Motion by R. Clapp to appoint both Dana Allen and Robert Adler to three-year terms on the Planning Commission; seconded by K. Sweeney.

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

Development Review Board

Three three-year terms and a two-year alternate term are available; B. Fortune and current members H. Shepard, A. Tolstoi, and George Lester (not in attendance) submitted applications for appointment.

Discussion

T. Taravella asked if any of the returning members would prefer the three- or two-year terms, and both H. Shepard and A. Tolstoi indicated they preferred three-year terms.

R. Clapp asked the candidates why they wanted to serve or continue serving.

- H. Shepard said his purpose is to do community service and this board aligns with his expertise.
- A. Tolstoi said Waterbury is in a transition moment and the DRB is a great spot to oversee that change; he would like to continue this work.
- B. Fortune would like to serve his community and has made time on his schedule to engage in service. His professional skills are appropriate to this role because he has represented architects, general contractors and engineers.
 - K. Sweeney inquired about his preferences between DRB, Conservation, and Recreation; B. Fortune replied that he just wants to serve the community, but his wife has applied for the Conservation Commission and one of them needs to watch the kids. He narrowed his preferences to DRB and Recreation, or wherever the select board needs someone.
 - M. Bard clarified the expectations for the two-year alternate term: alternates always show up to meetings as full participants but do not vote unless a regular member is not in attendance. Confirmed by DRB Chair D. Frothingham.
 - L. Walton expressed concern about B. Fortune's ability to serve; B. Fortune disagreed.

Motion by M. Bard to appoint H. Shepard, A. Tolstoi, and G. Lester to three-year terms ending in 2028 and B. Fortune to the two-year alternate term ending in 2027 on the Development Review Board; seconded by R. Clapp.

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

Conservation Commission

Three four-year terms available; A. Fortune and current members Meg Baldor and Rachel Campbell (not in attendance) submitted applications for appointment.

Discussion

A. Fortune finds the mission exciting and something she feels passionate about. She works for an environmental consulting firm, where she engages with projects through a regulatory lens. She would like to use those skills to help support her own community and learn more about how our local government works.

- M. Bard asked if she or her firm has ever done any environmental work with the Town of Waterbury. She has not worked on a project in Waterbury and knows her firm is not involved in the current flood resiliency work.

Motion by T. Taravella to appoint A. Fortune, M. Baldor, and R. Campbell to four-year terms on the Conservation Commission ending in 2029; seconded by M. Bard.

K. Sweeney said he doesn't feel comfortable voting for the latter two without their materials.

- M. Bard voiced his support for both of them as active members of the commission.
- K. Sweeney withdrew his concern.

D. Frothingham asked if commission members are required to be residents.

- A. Johnson answered it is not a formal requirement although in practice, most people are residents.
- C. Viens cautioned against having people from out of town on our boards/commissions.
- R. Clapp said the commission works primarily as an advisory body, so they aren't making a lot of decisions.

No further discussion; **motion approved 4-0 with 1 (A. Johnson) abstaining.**

Recreation Committee

Three three-year terms and one one-year-remaining term available; current members Emma Lenchner and Phoebe Pelkey (neither in attendance) submitted applications for appointment.

Motion by T. Taravella to P. Pelkey, E. Lenchner, and B. Fortune for three-year terms ending 2028 on the Recreation Committee; seconded by M. Bard.

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

One one-year term remains open.

Natural Disaster Preparedness Committee

One three-year term and one two-year term available; Emily Gilde and current member John Malter (neither in attendance) submitted applications for appointment.

Discussion

K. Sweeney registered support for J. Malter's reappointment to the committee.

R. Clapp inquired about the anticipated committee work in the coming year. K. Sweeney said they will act as an advisory board for the natural disaster coordinator.

M. Bard asked if there was a movement to change the number of meetings the committee will have over the course of time. K. Sweeney said that change probably won't happen soon but with a coordinator on board the structure of those meetings are likely to change.

Motion by R. Clapp to appoint J. Malter to a three year term ending in 2028 and Emily Gilde to a two-year term ending in 2027 on the Natural Disaster Preparedness Committee; seconded by T. Taravella.

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

Tree Board

Two three-year terms and one two-years-remaining term are available; current member Barbara Blauvelt (not in attendance) submitted an application for appointment and current member Nita Hulstrom (term expiring) has not replied to outreach.

Motion by T. Taravella to appoint B. Blauvelt to a three-year term ending in 2028 on the Tree Board; seconded by K. Sweeney.

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

T. Taravella invited N. Hulstrom to circle back with the select board about her expiring term and continued interest.

HOUSING TASK FORCE

Task force composition and terms

A. Johnson proposed specific terms of one, two, and three years (description in meeting docs) because the original description that was approved by the select board did not include this detail.

- K. Sweeney what happens if the RW representative to the task force leaves their employment with RW; A. Johnson and R. Clapp replied that a replacement from RW would be appointed.

There is one position reserved for representatives from each: select board, EFUD, Planning Commission, and RW.

- M. Bard clarified with R. Clapp that the RW representative to the task force is Owen Sette-Ducati and not, in fact, R. Clapp, as mentioned during the public comment period.

K. Sweeney suggested that the select board, planning commission, and EFUD each put forth their representatives as they wish, but that the RW representative be vetted by the select board. Nothing about the written purpose needs to change, and it's only the ways in which members are appointed that needs to be figured out.

Motion by K. Sweeney that the composition of the housing task force be comprised of two volunteer three-year terms, two volunteer two-year terms, two volunteer one-year terms, one representative each from the select board, EFUD, and Planning Commission, and one staff member of RW to be appointed by the select board; seconded by M. Bard.

T. Taravella offered an amendment to clarify that the RW staff member be subject to the approval of the select board while the other three representatives serve for the duration of their terms on their respective boards. K. Sweeney and M. Bard accepted the amendments to the original motion.

Discussion

E. Hoffman asked if the one and two year terms would stay as such or become staggered three-year terms;

A. Johnson said the intent of her proposal was to have staggered three-year terms.

No further discussion; **amended motion approved 3-0 with 2 (R. Clapp and A. Johnson) abstaining.**

Motion by T. Taravella that the two- and one-year terms just approved become staggered three-year terms at the end of their initial term; the task force includes one member from EFUD, one member from the Planning Commission, one member of the select board, and one staff member from RW who is approved by the selectboard; and these members will serve on the task force for the duration of their terms on their respective boards; seconded by K. Sweeney.

No further discussion; **motion failed with 2 (K. Sweeney, T. Taravella) in favor, 1 against (M. Bard) and 2 (R. Clapp, A. Johnson) abstaining.**

Candidates for appointment to the Housing Task Force

Current members Chris Balzano, Eliza Novak-Smith, Skip Flanders, Owen Sette-Ducati (none in attendance) and J. Camaratta submitted applications for appointment; J. Neubelt also submitted an application for consideration to be added to the task force.

Per the approved motion, current members representing the Planning Commission and EFUD do not require a select board vote to continue their service on the task force, as those groups select their own representatives.

Discussion

J. Camaratta remarked he has had a wonderful experience serving on the task force.

J. Neubelt works in affordable housing and has been impressed with what this task force has done in a short time period; she would like to help it do more and agreed to any term length that is open.

Motion by K. Sweeney to appoint J. Neubelt to the housing task force for a 3-year term ending in 2028; seconded by T. Taravella.

No further discussion; **motion approved 3-0 with 2 (R. Clapp, A. Johnson) abstaining.**

Motion by K. Sweeney to reappoint J. Camaratta to the housing task force for a two-year term, ending in 2027; seconded by M. Bard.

No further discussion; **motion approved 3-0 with 2 (R. Clapp, A. Johnson) abstaining.**

Motion by K. Sweeney to reappoint Eliza Novak-Smith to the housing task force for a two-year term ending in 2027; seconded by T. Taravella.

No further discussion; **motion approved 3-0 with 2 (R. Clapp, A. Johnson) abstaining.**

Motion by T. Taravella to reappoint C. Balzano to the housing task force for a three-year term ending 2028; seconded by K. Sweeney.

No further discussion; **motion approved 3-0 with 2 (R. Clapp, A. Johnson) abstaining.**

Motion by T. Taravella to appoint O. Sette-Ducati as the representative from RW; seconded by K. Sweeney.

No further discussion; **motion approved 3-0 with 2 (R. Clapp, A. Johnson) abstaining.**

Motion by K. Sweeney to reappoint A. Johnson as the select board representative to the housing task force; seconded by T. Taravella.

No further discussion; **motion approved 3-0 with 2 (R. Clapp, A. Johnson) abstaining.**

The select board thanked A. Johnson for her work on the task force.

HAZARD MITIGATION PROGRAM - ADVANCED ASSISTANCE APPLICATION

(See memo from T. Leitz in meeting docs; presented by A. Johnson.)

Vermont Emergency Management has recommended that Waterbury apply for this advanced assistance program to continue the project originally proposed under the BRIC grant application; the BRIC (Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities) program was discontinued by the federal government. T. Leitz is asking for a select board resolution to allow him to pursue this opportunity and submit an application.

K. Sweeney expressed disappointment that the government chose to eliminate the BRIC program.

Motion by T. Taravella to approve the Hazard Mitigation Program Advanced Assistance application by resolution; seconded by K. Sweeney.

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

SELECT BOARD REPORTS

- M. Bard went to the Conservation Commission meeting, where A. Marshall-Carney was re-appointed as chair. He expects good things from that commission. DRB has had a few cancelled meetings because they don't meet if there aren't any applications on their agenda.
- K. Sweeney reported he is digging into the history of policing in Waterbury in an attempt to find a solution to our woes.
- R. Clapp reported the Recreation Committee is meeting April 22.

- R. Clapp said the result of the downtown transportation grant (repaving, sidewalks, lampposts on Bidwell) will be announced May 2.
- A. Johnson reported that the Housing Task Force meeting focused primarily on the criteria for the home improvement program, based on select board meeting feedback.
- T. Leitz sent a report to A. Johnson in his absence:
 - 2024 FEMA reimbursement funds are actually on their way. A. Johnson does not have the information on what percentage of the costs this funding covers.
 - Communications Assistant position for the municipal newsletter is advertised on the website and in the *Roundabout*
 - 2024 delinquent tax notices have been sent.
- M. Bard added that he spoke to T. Leitz about the RV that had been parked all winter near the Route 100/I-89 interchange and the vehicle is now gone; he's unsure how the situation was resolved.

NEXT MEETING AGENDA

Monday May 5 at 6:30 p.m. at the Fire Station

- Presentation by VTRANS.
- The Conservation Commission would like UVM students to present their project evaluating the Randall Meadow site. R. Clapp said this might be a good time to hear about the development of the Stanley Wasson site.
- K. Sweeney will make sure that VSP is once again invited.
- Local option tax money allocated to planning and conservation

Motion by K. Sweeney to adjourn this regular meeting of the Waterbury Select Board; seconded by T. Taravella.

Motion approved unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cheryl Casey.