

Minutes of the Waterbury Select Board
Monday, June 2, 2025 | 6:30 p.m.
28 N. Main Street and via Zoom

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

Public attendance: Sandy Sabin, Chris Viens, ORCA Media, Skip Flanders, Lisa Walton, Billy Vigdor, Valerie Rogers, Dan McKibbin, Joe Camaratta, Mike Hedges, Evan Karl Hoffman, Harry Shepard

Zoom attendance: ORCA Media, Tori Taravella, Amy Marshall-Carney, Anne Imhoff

CALL TO ORDER, 6:33 p.m. by A. Johnson

Agenda

[[included](#) in meeting docs]

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

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

Consent agenda

[listed in [agenda](#)]

R. Clapp and T. Taravella requested items (b) and (j) be separated out from the consent agenda.

Motion by K. Sweeney to approve the consent agenda minus items (b) and (j); seconded by T. Taravella.

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

Motion by R. Clapp to approve special events permit for NQID parade road closure; seconded by KS

No further discussion; **motion passed 3-0 with 1 (T. Taravella) abstaining.**

Motion by K. Sweeney to approve special events permit for Turn Music in Jack's Alley; seconded by T. Taravella.

No further discussion; **motion passed 3-0 with 1 (R. Clapp) abstaining.**

Public comment

L. Walton asked why certain portions of the definition of conflict of interest in the state law (24 V.S.A. § 1991) isn't included in the town's policy. T. Leitz said that the town's policy section E(1) aligns with the state definition.

V. Rogers reminded the select board to include the LOT policy on the agenda so that the public can participate in the discussion about how the funds should be used.

M. Hedges expressed his appreciation that the voters approved the purchase of a roadside mowing machine, and he encouraged the town to get out there before the [invasive wild chervil](#) goes to seed and spreads to adjacent yards.

Update on Stowe St. bridge project

T. Leitz said he made arrangements with a taxi service to assist people in need of transportation around the construction zone. Information will be widely shared and people can call to schedule the taxi. General

updates about the project from VTrans are available via the QR code that will be posted on the town website. The project is slated to begin June 16.

Resolution on the 200th Anniversary of General Lafayette's visit to Waterbury

[[resolution](#) included in meeting docs]

C. Casey read the resolution into the record.

S. Flanders explained the significance of General Lafayette's visit to town.

- Ezra Butler, the second settler of Waterbury and soon-to-be governor, was chair of the House Appropriations Committee and Governor Van Ness needed money to fund Lafayette's tour of the state.
- Butler's house is still standing and the owner, Chris Noyes, has given permission for the event; additionally, he is working with the historical society to preserve the house as best as possible.
- The historical society held a similar event for the town's 250th in 2013.
- This event will include a brief reenactment of the encounter, along with \era-appropriate refreshments, lawn games, and a toast. The signed resolution will be added to the Waterbury land records. J. Camaratta will play Ezra Butler and C. Casey will play Fanny Butler.

Motion by R. Clapp to approve the resolution as read by C. Casey; seconded by K. Sweeney.

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

Housing Task Force recommendations on allowable uses for the housing trust fund

[see [proposal](#) in meeting docs]

J. Camaratta reviewed the document submitted to the select board as context.

Discussion

- V. Rogers said that affordable housing is not in the charter pertaining to the implementation of the LOT, and the document further should say the select board set a long-term housing goal, not the Town.
- A. Johnson and R. Clapp asked about median household income in Waterbury. J. Camaratta reported it is between \$100,000 and \$110,000.
- S. Sabin asked whether any money not used by the end of the year would carry over or need to be reallocated. In her understanding, only the voters can create a reserve fund and reallocate money to that fund every year at town meeting. T. Leitz said it would carry over because the select board has the authority to create such a reserve fund for money not otherwise allocated.
- J. Camaratta noted that the phrase in all caps on page two should simply say, "Administrative costs should not exceed 10% of the total budget."
- H. Shepard asked if the \$100,000 appropriation was a one-time allocation. A. Johnson said the allocation was appropriated by the select board from the unexpected 2024 LOT funds, which had not originally been expected and accounted for in the budget. For 2025, voters approved an allocation of \$75,000. Future contributions to this fund will be decided annually at town meeting.
- K. Sweeney asked if there was a leaning one way or another among housing task force members toward small-scale development programs or large-scale projects. J. Camaratta said the task force believes both are necessary to address the housing problem, and the "bang for the buck" depends on the project. Small-scale development does tend to be more expensive.
- V. Rogers asked if the plan was to include loans, not just grants. A. Johnson said the current recommendation is for a grant program, but the allowable uses document should stay broad enough to account for future considerations. The Allowable Uses is the guidance document, while the next agenda item addresses the current recommendation for use from the task force.
- S. Sabin reiterated her concern that the reserve fund can be carried over when that fund has not been approved by the voters.

Motion by K. Sweeney to adopted the allowable uses as outlined; seconded by R. Clapp

R. Clapp recommended that clarity be officially sought regarding S. Sabin's concerns.

No further discussion; **motion passed 3-0 with 1 (A. Johnson) abstention.**

Housing Task Force revised recommendation #3 for Waterbury Housing Improvement Program

[[slide presentation](#) included in meeting docs]

J. Camaratta summarized that he was revisiting the issue of tenant eligibility in the task force's third recommendation for use of the housing trust fund for the Waterbury Housing Improvement Program. (See slide 3 for initial recommendation and slide 11 for revised recommendation.)

- Per T. Taravella's request, the task force looked at teacher's salaries and the salaries of workers at "Main Street businesses" (retail, restaurant service, construction, etc.). The annual incomes per individual ranged from about \$35k - \$55k.
- The task force then rewrote the eligibility and compliance for tenants (see slide 8).
- Downstreet's role would be to administer the program, conducting the application acceptance process, doing onsite inspections, disbursing funds, and checking for compliance in spending, thereby protecting the town's investment.

Discussion

- R. Clapp asked how tenant eligibility is affected by the number of bedrooms in a unit. J. Camaratta said not on the tenant eligibility side, but rental eligibility would be affected.
- K. Sweeney said although he feels satisfied that the task force addressed his critiques of the recommendation, R. Clapp made some good points. J. Camaratta clarified that the state VHIP program doesn't make a distinction by number of bedrooms for tenant eligibility. The status of VHIP funding in the legislature isn't yet confirmed, but there is a lot of support.
- B. Vigdor asked if "best chance of completion" is the only criterion that Downstreet will consider. S. Sabin clarified that the project must be completed within 18 months to be eligible, so that timeline is the most important factor in Downstreet's decisions. B. Vigdor recommended Downstreet also take into account which projects would deliver the best bang for the buck, where the funding would actually make a difference. J. Camaratta and S. Sabin said the funding makes a difference with the contingency that the unit must be used for long-term housing.
- A. Johnson said the \$30k is not an insignificant amount of money from the LOT, but it also doesn't cover much by way of construction expenses in a lot of cases. This program is about expanding supply, but she's worried that there won't be many people taking the town up on this offer because of the cost of construction and the tax implications of grants. She thinks using the trust fund to directly subsidize rent is another viable plan, but when all is taken into account, the housing improvement program was the best win-win for the town; nevertheless, there are potential challenges to achieving the goal of expanding middle housing.
- K. Sweeney said this plan is better than he thought we would have at this point and the task force has done a lot of work to get us here. He's willing to adopt the recommendation because stalling isn't going to do any good.

Motion by K. Sweeney to adopt the revised recommendation #3; seconded by R. Clapp.

Additional comments

- R. Clapp acknowledged he shared A. Johnson's concern about the potential uptake, but it's well worth the try and we'll see what we get.
- J. Camaratta said this program is easier for the landlord to rent the property, which will hopefully offset some of the construction cost concerns.
- C. Viens asked if there was some kind of sunset clause if this money wasn't used. A. Johnson said that if the money isn't used within a certain amount of time, the select board will reevaluate whether the funds should fund a different housing program or project. R. Clapp noted that the select board would continue to work with the task force to check in on the program. K. Sweeney also confirmed he will be watching the program very closely, as someone who has been pressing for affordable housing for some time.
- V. Rogers asked why W-2 or 1099 verification isn't subject to annual renewal. J. Camaratta said the task force didn't want tenants to suddenly lose housing if they earn a promotion or some other additional income.

- V. Rogers asked that Downstreet be encouraged to use local inspectors in order to keep as much of the LOT money in Waterbury as possible.
- H. Shepard asked if the program will prove its success before any more money is allocated to it. A. Johnson said if we have any uptake at all, we will see success because that automatically means new units will be coming online.
- T. Leitz asked whether we still owe Downstreet the processing fees if none of the applications are accepted. J. Camaratta will confirm with Downstreet that the processing fees are due when funding is approved.
- K. Sweeney said for the record that the Waterbury's program has a better acronym than the state (WHIP).

No further discussion; **motion passed 3-0 with 1 (A. Johnson) abstaining.**

Ethics investigation and enforcement ordinance

[[ordinance](#) included in meeting docs]

Motion by K. Sweeney to adopt the code of ethics and investigation ordinance for the Town of Waterbury; seconded by R. Clapp.

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

Local emergency management plan - readoption

[[plan](#) included in meeting docs]

Discussion

- T. Leitz learned that there is also a short form to be adopted at a future meeting, while the long form is up for readoption at this meeting.
- A. Johnson said it makes sense to readopt the plan to ensure we're up to date for grants, but we should use the short form as an opportunity to review the plan for updates.
- T. Leitz gave some edits pertaining to names and contact information of relevant people and places. There is no change in the substance of the plan from the previous year.

Motion by R. Clapp to readopt the plan; seconded by K. Sweeney with the friendly amendment that the plan will be readopted with the edits just reviewed. R. Clapp agreed to the friendly amendment.

No further discussion; **motion passed 3-0 with 1 (A. Johnson) abstention.**

Select board and Manager updates

- R. Clapp: Community Volunteer Fair was successful; the panel discussion was delayed until this Thursday evening at RW and online. The Rec Committee continues to look at plans for a proposed field house and recreational pathway development in and around Waterbury (biking and hiking).
- K. Sweeney: The Natural Disaster Preparedness Coordinator is scheduling volunteer training, tentatively June 25 at 6pm at the Dac Rowe Pavilion. He also sent T. Leitz the research he completed on policing.
- A Johnson: She went to the tree planting for Steve Lotspiech; it was a lovely event and a nice example of a community memorial. She and T. Leitz will be meeting with the Conservation Commission on Thursday morning.
- T. Leitz:
 - The coating was put in the shallow end of the pool, which will be opening as per the normal schedule.
 - Kneeland Flats will be paved June 17-19, weather permitting.
 - He's continuing to work on the hazard mitigation grant; the budget has grown to \$3.85 million to include repaving of the roads that will necessarily be damaged by the work happening in the cornfield. The good news is that the State plans to pay for our 25% match. There will likely be some town costs because of inflation; such projects usually start two or three years down the road.

- Celia has all the training about invasive species and he will speak to her about the mowing schedule. Some of the schedule comes down to having the staff to cover all the mowing. C. Viens advised that the best time to whack down the wild chervil is just as it's about to go to seed, which is soon; cut it too soon, and you're chasing it all summer.
- He hasn't yet had a chance to advertise for the ethics complaint officer.

Next meeting agenda

LOT policy on the agenda or in the parking lot
 Washington County Sheriff and VSP contract statistics
 Short form of local emergency management plan
 PH International proposal
 Parade and event permits
 Capital Plan
 Construction update
 Stanley/Wasson and Woody Avenue updates

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by K. Sweeney to find that premature knowledge of labor relations agreements, attorney client privilege, real estate, and personnel would put the Town of Waterbury at a substantial disadvantage; seconded by R. Clapp.

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

Motion by K. Sweeney to move to executive session and invite the municipal manager; seconded by T. Taravella

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

Select board entered executive session at 8:18 p.m.

Select board exited executive session at 9:19 p.m. **No action taken**

Motion by K. Sweeney to adjourn the regular meeting; seconded by R. Clapp.

Motion passed 3-0 with T. Taravella absent.

ADJOURNMENT, 9:19 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cheryl Casey.