

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

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

Public attendance: Harry Shepard, Dani Kehlmann, Chris Viens, ORCA Media, Cheryl Gloor, Peter Plagge, Sandy Sabin, Evan Karl Hoffman, Gary Dillon, Lisa Scagliotti

Zoom Attendance: ORCA Media, Kate R., Wayne Quillan, Amy Marshall-Carney, Mal Culbertson, Pegeen Mulhern

CALL TO ORDER by A. Johnson at 6:31 p.m.

Agendas

[[Meeting agenda and consent agenda](#) posted in meeting docs.]

Motion by K. Sweeney to approve the agenda with the addition of a special events permit for Cold Springs Spirits for Waterbury Arts Fest, to be considered after the 7:50 agenda item; seconded by T. Taravella

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

Motion by T. Taravella to approve the consent agenda; seconded by M. Bard.

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

Public comment

S. Sabin asked for the select board to put an article on the town meeting agenda to create the housing trust fund so that it is legitimate. The select board established the housing trust fund, not the town. The current documentation should reflect that fact and it should eventually be voted on by the town.

P. Plagge said he felt compelled to bring up the speeding problem on Winooski Street. He collected 53 signatures from residents on a petition to address this problem. There is also a letter from a resident included with the petition.

C. Gloor asked for safety issues, including vandalism, graffiti, and litter around town, to be put on a soon-coming agenda. The water that accumulates on Stowe St. when it rains poses a risk of hydroplaning. Sidewalks and paving out of the parking lot and put something else on the back burner temporarily.

C. Viens had some questions about the conversation with the sheriff that took place at the last meeting, specifically: If the town contracts with the sheriff, will that be in addition to the contract with VSP or in place of that contract; and, is the exploration of contracting with the sheriff a result of VSP not meeting their contractual obligations to Waterbury.

- T. Leitz responded that no decision has been made about increasing or decreasing any coverage from either force.
- Additionally, staffing issues for the VSP, not any perception of VSP shirking their duties, have motivated the conversations to seek a variety of solutions to ensure public safety.

M. Bard applauded the Rotary and everyone involved with the NQID events over the weekend. The weather cooperated with the parade theme of “Vermont Weather.”

- H. Shepard added that the fireworks were also terrific, thanks to the Town’s efforts.
- A. Johnson acknowledged the many wonderful events in town over the weekend and thanked everyone involved.

Natural Disaster Preparedness updates

D. Kehlmann reported on the kick-off volunteer event on June 25 at the Dac Rowe pavilion.

- The event yielded about 25 interested volunteers.
- They talked about the different kinds of roles available for volunteers.
- The committee will start holding one or two training sessions per year for the different teams of volunteers and there will be a corps of people who are leading each of those teams.

D. Kehlmann said she is also working on a landing page for the Town website, to communicate resources, event information, key dates, and ways to sign up for things.

The committee is working on:

- inventory and a recommendation for supplies to be purchased for flood response;
- streamlining processes;
- refining forms; and
- updating the manual.

The committee meetings on the 4th Monday of the month.

Discussion:

R. Clapp asked about preparedness for July 10.

- D. Kehlmann said they feel more prepared than last year, but not where she wants to be. There are people ready to step up, but a joint effort with CReW will still be important.
- She asked that the Select Board spread the word so that people know what the committee is doing and can volunteer if interested.

R. Clapp and K. Sweeney thanked D. Kehlmann for the work she is doing with the committee.

Other updates - Flood resilience and mitigation projects

T. Leitz reported that the final application to the state for the Randall Meadow project has been submitted.

- The grant is for 3.8 million, with no cost to the town.
- The cost benefit analysis according to the hydrologist is 5:1 for this project.
- We do not know when we will hear if we received the grant; however, the money is fully appropriated by Congress and signed into law by the president.

Discussion

R. Clapp asked about the transfer of ownership from the State to the Town.

- T. Leitz said it has not happened yet because the parcel is part of the state complex and new property lines need to be set.

- He added that the National Parks study approved by the Select Board will kick off a little later this summer.

H. Shepard said that from a resiliency perspective, we should be advocating with the state to upgrade the culvert by Farr's Field. A lot of debris that has been allowed to accumulate on that property as a result of a seriously inadequate culvert and perhaps even an inadequate roadway. There are also thousands of tires in the gravel bar now visible because the river is low.

- M. Bard asked what the state's responsibility is on this issue.
- T. Leitz said we asked the state for some money to study the problem and we were denied. We likely have to keep pushing with the state and explore the option of raising the road.
- He added that raising the cornfield (Randall Meadow) is going to make a difference and would be phase 1 in long-term resilience efforts; Route 2 culverts and raising the road would be part of phase 2.
- R. Clapp said that road crews have been clearing out culverts and asked if T. Leitz can make sure the culvert referred to by H. Shepard is on that list.

Stowe Street Bridge reconstruction project

[[latest report](#) included with meeting docs]

T. Leitz said the existing bridge has been demolished.

- After the holiday weekend, crews will begin channel excavation and slope work in preparation for the coffer dams.
- Additionally, a couple of people have requested the taxi service.
- So far, everything looks good and on schedule.

R. Clapp asked if Lincoln St. will still be closed at some point. T. Leitz said not immediately; likely not until August.

Capital Plan review: Fire Department

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

T. Leitz said capital plans for all of the departments will be scheduled for the next several meetings. At the end, T. Leitz will present a final report on the plan overall and how he sees paying for the various initiatives and projects.

G. Dillon explained that the department had been getting trucks on a fairly regular basis but the actual purchases have been drawn out to facilitate an even flow.

- Fire engines can take 3+ years to receive after ordering; our department has been planning well in advance so that the new trucks arrive when they are actually needed.
- The next new truck is the second tank truck, which is currently in rough shape. They will need to put more money into it soon enough. The department wants the next tank truck to be as similar in functions as possible to the current truck. There is one available now that we can get for next year if approved; the move would save us \$40k.
- The truck approved last year and delivered this year has been a nice truck so far but they haven't yet worked it at a fire; it has the ability to pump more than the previous truck.

G. Dillon summarized other planning considerations:

- The command truck (an F-350) has an awful turning radius, making it less useful when needing to navigate tight spaces

- The infrastructure at the Main St. station needs upgrading, especially the boiler;
- Having no gutters on the Maple St. station is taking its toll on the lower boards on one side of the building

Discussion

K. Sweeney inquired how much longer the current truck can be made to last if the voters don't approve another new truck. G. Dillon responded that the truck can be limped along, but money will have to be put into it.

K. Sweeney asked what would happen to the current command truck if we replaced it.

- T. Leitz said backcountry rescue is ready to replace its truck; alternatively, it can be repurposed for the town or EFUD.
- G. Dillon said the turning radius might pose similar problems for backcountry rescue.

K. Sweeney asked how much it would cost to replace all of these things in the next fiscal year.

- G. Dillon said he would have to look into specific costs of things like the boiler and paint.
- G. Dillon clarified that as long as the truck purchase is warned and approved, the vehicle itself is ours, so the wait time is also drastically reduced. Additionally, the old mini-pumper is up for sale and one out-of-state department has expressed serious interest. It is posted for \$80k.

M. Bard asked if a construction company would want the command truck.

- T. Leitz said it won't be hard to sell that truck but we're still keeping it until a new truck is purchased.

R. Clapp clarified whether the command truck is also purchased from the same source as the tankers.

- G. Dillon said no; the command truck is the same as any car purchase.

Update on rental registry

T. Leitz reported that about 200 respondents have submitted information.

- He noted this number is not the same as the number of rental units, which still needs to be parsed out. Then the housing task force can work with data and compare it to their research.
- We also need to discern our compliance ratio and make a strategic decision from there. The point is to have sufficient data to make strategy decisions.
- The ordinance has a penalty for non-compliance; no one wants to go there, but it is possible.

R. Clapp asked if the Waterbury registry is comparable to other towns' experiences.

- T. Leitz said no because other towns have approached this initiative differently.
- Stowe, for example, has a big budget to engage a consulting firm. Other towns are generally just going after short-term rentals.

H. Shepard wondered what the town was expecting from the registry.

- T. Leitz said they didn't know what to expect and the housing task force is continuing its research to fill out the data picture.

Housing development update for former Stanley Wasson site

T. Leitz submitted some pre-application materials for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG); these grants are at their core HUD funds.

- There are national objectives that have to be met with HUD funds, including around natural disaster preparedness.
- Waterbury's application can tie housing development to supporting community members who don't have the ability to do all of the flood-proofing resilience work but want to continue living in

town; in other words, they will have an affordable option to move to if they sell their property in the flood plain or take a FEMA buyout.

- We can select a partner to move forward with on development through a bid process; he's making that RFP a priority to complete in the next few weeks.

T. Leitz additionally acknowledged a new piece of legislation, CHIP (Community Housing Infrastructure Program), which is a smaller version of TIFF, a program that has worked for years in Vermont for larger districts; CHIP is the single-site version.

- The program is in the rule-making stage and anticipates roll-out by the end of the year.
- Other items in the program that weren't part of TIFF: The developer can act as the CHIP lead; and a community partner can do the same (a regional planning commission, for example).

T. Leitz confirmed that both CDBG and CHIP are in play with respect to the Stanley Wasson site. Either program would be manageable for us and open up possibilities, which is exciting.

Discussion

C. Gloor asked about the RFP process for a developer and whether the voters will have a say on what happens to the property.

- T. Leitz clarified we don't own the property yet but have the option to purchase it for \$400k.
- The RFP will be for a partner to assist the town in the pre-development phase. It will be reviewed by the select board before it goes out. Once the town has site control, we can have some say about what is developed there.

C. Viens asked for clarification on how the CHIP program is different from TIFF.

- T. Leitz said payments on the development are paid through the tax revenue generated by the site.
- Residents of Randall St. have mostly expressed interest in staying in Waterbury; the problem isn't the buyout, but finding a new place to live.

R. Clapp asked if the storage unit and sewer line rebuilds on the Woody Ave. site would qualify for the CHIP program.

- T. Leitz said yes, that is exactly the type of project the CHIP program is intended to support; we could develop these two sites as separate CHIP projects.

H. Shepard emphasized the great opportunities that are opened up by the CHIP program. He also supported the step of partnering with a developer and bringing that voice into the conversation sooner rather than later, although the RFP should not be rushed.

Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) short form

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

A. Johnson reminded everyone that the long form has already been approved.

Motion by M. Bard to approve the short form of the LEMP; seconded by R. Clapp.

Discussion

R. Clapp asked M. Bard if he would continue to serve as the select board coordinator in an emergency. M. Bard consented.

R. Clapp also noted that "Thatcher Brook Primary School" should be changed to "Brookside Primary School" throughout the document. M. Bard agreed to these changes as part of his motion.

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

Municipal Tax Rates

[[Rate calculations](#) included in meeting docs]

T. Leitz said the grand list grew more than anticipated, but we also still have properties vacant from past floods that aren't fully resolved. He additionally noted that the Hunger Mountain Exemption was approved by the voters to pay the education taxes for Hunger Mountain.

Discussion

M. Bard asked how the governor's new education bill will affect education taxes.

- T. Leitz replied that we don't have a handle on how the bill will be implemented but hopefully clarity will emerge by this time next year.

T. Leitz also pointed out the 2% late filing fee for the homestead declaration.

R. Clapp asked how the LOT revenue figures into the tax rate.

- T. Leitz explained it doesn't calculate directly into the tax rate, but we're using the LOT revenue for a lot of different things; without that revenue paying for various expenses, the tax rate would be higher and many things would not have been purchased.
- The first quarter of 2025 was strong; we might take in even more at the end of this year than anticipated, but the issue of Canadian tourism presents some concern.

Motion by M. Bard to adopt a 2025 tax rate at .5550 for the town budget, plus a rate of .0025 for the Veterans Exemption, plus a rate of .0021 for the Hunger Mountain Exemption, plus a 2% late fee on filing homestead declarations; seconded by K. Sweeney.

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

Lease of former Waterbury Ambulance building with Waterbury Area MakerSphere

[[Lease form](#) included in meeting docs]

T. Leitz said that rent would begin in September at \$500/month until the end of the lease term in June 2026; however, the lease eases some burden for MakerSphere by allowing them to move in next month. He recommended to the Select Board that they approve the lease and allow for minor administrative changes if deemed necessary.

Motion by R. Clapp moved to approve the proposed lease with minor administrative tweaks as necessary; seconded by K. Sweeney.

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

Event permit for Vermont Antique & Classic Car Show

[[permit application](#) included in meeting docs]

Motion by T. Taravella to approve the special event permit for the Vermont Antique and Classic Car Meet; seconded by K. Sweeney.

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

Motion by M. Bard to approve the closure of Stowe Street for the street dance and the closure of the Park Row circuit for the parade; seconded by K. Sweeney.

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

Additional liquor permits

Motion by K. Sweeney to approve the three liquor permits; seconded by T. Taravella.

No further discussion; **motion passed 4-0 with 1 (R. Clapp) absention.**

Select board and municipal manager updates

K. Sweeney: Very pleased with the Natural Disaster Preparedness volunteer event.

T. Taravella: Tree Board is meeting to do some mulching.

R. Clapp:

- Rec Dept. is serving 120 kids in the summer rec program.
- The pool is working well.
- The Rec Committee continues to look at the feasibility of a new field house and explore connecting non-motorized pathways and trails around town.

A. Johnson: At the last housing task force meeting, the group began looking at early data from the rental registry.

T. Leitz:

- It's great to see so many kids having fun at summer rec and to see the pool full.
- The skate park project is nearly ready to go.
- He's glad Park Row could be addressed; its falling apart was unanticipated.
- Better Connections grant now has a steering committee and advisory committee to propose to the select board for approval at the next meeting. The RFP responses will be reviewed this week.
- Hope Davey disc golf course - first hole needs to be moved because of wetlands.

Next meeting agenda:

Follow-up on Washington County Sheriff

Better Connections steering committee appointments.

Capital Plan: Public Works (Equipment)

Traffic patrol and temporary speed bumps - adding Winooski St to list of concerns

Schedule of pothole repairs

Draft of RFP for developer

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by K. Sweeney to find that premature public knowledge of ongoing labor negotiations would place the town at a substantial disadvantage; seconded by T. Taravella.

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

Motion by K. Sweeney to enter executive session; seconded by T. Taravella.

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

Executive session entered at 8:19 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cheryl Casey.