

Minutes of the Waterbury Select Board
Monday, June 16, 2025 | 6:30 p.m.
28 N. Main Street and via Zoom

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

Public attendance: ORCA Media, Valerie Rogers, Evan Karl Hoffman, Mal Culbertson, Marc Poulin, Brett Meyer

Zoom attendance: ORCA Media, Amy Marshall-Carney, Anne Imhoff, Tessa Yip, Dani Kehlmann, Joe Camaratta, Harry Shepard, Sandy Sabin

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

Agenda

[[included](#) in meeting docs]

Motion by T. Taravella to approve the agenda as presented; seconded by K. Sweeney.

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

Consent agenda

[listed in [agenda](#)]

Motion by K. Sweeney to approve the consent agenda as presented; seconded by T. Taravella.

A. Johnson confirmed that there are no zoning issues with respect to the permit applications.

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

Public comment

V. Rogers asked for statistics about Waterbury Ambulance calls to be made available to the public. .

D. Kehlmann announced:

- a CREW event at the public pool on June 19 for pump training related to flood responsiveness;
- And the Natural Disaster Preparedness Committee is looking for volunteers and they are having an outreach/informational event on June 25 at 6:30p.m..
- Interested people who can't make either event can email either Mike Dacey at CREW or herself. All information is on the town website.

Update on Stowe Street Bridge Project

T. Leitz said a few people have contacted the state regarding the rides the Town is offering to provide around the closure, for those who typically walk from that neighborhood. He clarified that these are not rides to Burlington or the broader region.

A. Johnson reminded that the bridge is anticipated to be closed on Thursday, June 19, and that the state is paying for almost all of this project.

T. Leitz also said the road crew put some good material on Perry Hill, anticipating heavy usage during the detour, but efforts will now focus on Kneeland Flats and Guptil Road for the rest of the summer.

- The schedule for finishing the paving just got delayed a little bit. Most of Kneeland Flats has a one-inch overlay now and is for the most part driveable.
- Park Row was busted up this spring by weather conditions, so that will have to be shuffled close to the top of the deck for paving priorities.

[Details about the park and ride relocation available [HERE](#).]

Washington County Sheriff

The select board welcomed Sheriff M. Poulin and Captain B. Meyer, patrol division supervisor.

T. Leitz requested information about the sheriff department's capability and size, and what it would look like to expand services to Waterbury.

- M. Poulin said the department is partially taxpayer funded and partially funded by small businesses. Officers transport prisoners and civil processes, which accounts for the taxpayer dollars. Everything else is done on contract. They are "cops for hire."
- The department has 16 sworn officers, of which half are full-time and half are very part-time. He is hoping to grow the department, but like other industries, law enforcement across the state is struggling to hire enough staff.
- A contract with Waterbury would strengthen the case for adding another officer.

B. Meyer said that the contracts are typically for motor vehicle enforcement and first responder coverage, including vehicular accidents and domestic calls—what he called "quality of life" coverage.

- The largest growth in their services has been in the Waitsfield/Warren area.
- The department charges by the hour, plus mileage.
- Their service is meant to be different from the crime-related work that the state police do; it's more community focused and working collaboratively with

M. Poulin clarified that their contract model is based on approximating the desired number of hours per year or per week, with a lot of flex built in to accommodate high tourist season, particular times of day, or other conditions that affect their areas of service.

- B. Meyer gave the example of Kneeland Flats paving, where speeding is already an increasing problem as the road is smoothed out.
- M. Poulin clarified that the arrangement with the town usually comprises one contact person at the town who aggregates the complaints from citizens and passes along the information to their department.
- B. Meyer encouraged using speed tapes to help them target areas for enforcement.

M. Poulin concluded that the department will do whatever they can to help Waterbury, and build toward more if that is something the town would like.

Discussion

K. Sweeney asked about how the sheriff uses the speed tapes.

- B. Meyer responded that the town will provide the tapes data to the department and he will review how that data shows locations and times of day that might require more targeted motor vehicle enforcement. Then they assign patrols accordingly.
- K. Sweeney followed up asking if high visibility patrols can be correlated to fewer petty crimes. M. Poulin said foot patrol is their bread and butter. B. Meyer said having a presence always makes a difference.

R. Clapp asked how the Buckle Up highway safety program works.

- B. Meyer said he goes through data to carve up territory during the two-week period of that program.
- M. Poulin said they also do enforcement under various grants for highway safety.
- He added that ticket fines go to either the state or the municipality, depending on the violation; the sheriff's office doesn't receive any of that money. B. Meyer said they don't make money based on how many tickets they write.

T. Leitz asked if the town should be looking for any grants that might help pay for such services.

- M. Poulin replied that law enforcement grants are shrinking, mostly for municipalities that have their own police departments.
- B. Meyer said most of the available grants are for speed signs.

T. Leitz asked how billing works.

- M. Poulin said they only bill for the hours actually worked, on a monthly or biweekly basis. The approximations in the contract are primarily for planning purposes.
- B. Meyer said that an officer's travel time here and back from other patrol zones would be billed, plus the hours actually worked at the contracted rate.
- M. Poulin added that when it comes to nights, holidays, and weekends, they will be implementing a shift differential in the future, which has money implications.

T. Leitz asked if office space would be needed. M. Poulin said definitely maybe. If there is a dedicated officer at some point, then the office space would be great.

T. Leitz asked if M. Poulin has made any statements about what happened with the Franklin County Sheriff.

- M. Poulin explained he was part of the group that asked the sheriff to resign.
- There are statewide policies around policing that the department implements no matter what, along with policies specific to the department.
- All policy documents are available by request while they work to have them posted on their website.

A. Johnson asked how their business model and fiscal year might affect when they could begin working with Waterbury.

- M. Poulin said they could begin offering hours very soon on a part-time basis.
- If they get the go-ahead for service equating to one FTE, they will begin searching for the right candidate right away.

R. Clapp asked who does dispatch.

- M. Poulin replied that two office staff are trained as dispatchers for daytime calls
- Evening and overnight dispatch is contracted out.
- All cars have computers and printers, so a lot can be done from inside the car.

R. Clapp asked how the sheriff's department works with the state prosecutor in building a case, using the example of the drug activity that was happening in the Route 2 neighborhood that had many residents frustrated with the state police.

- M. Poulin acknowledged that knowing something is happening and proving it beyond a reasonable doubt are very different, and this is the challenge for all law enforcement.
- B. Meyer also said that building a case doesn't happen overnight, which makes the public feel like nothing is being done when in fact there is a lot of work going into the issues.
- They have a very good relationship with the state attorneys, especially through their prisoner transport work.

A. Johnson thanked Sheriff Poulin and Captain Meyer for their time and the information. The select board will have further discussion and T. Leitz will circle back.

State police statistics

A. Johnson presented the data and pointed out where it is posted on the [public safety page](#) of the town website.

T. Leitz said we currently have a 3-year contract with VSP, signed last summer, with simple "out" clauses for either party on relatively short notice.

K. Sweeney noted the differences between responses by a trooper assigned to Waterbury compared to a trooper not assigned to Waterbury (nearly twice the responses). He suggested it might be worth having someone who is dedicated to Waterbury.

T. Leitz said if we shift to a county sheriff contract, state police will still give attention to Waterbury because we are centrally located with many popular bars and restaurants.

- Working with the sheriff won't take away from the state police presence altogether.
- Currently, we are typically without service all day Sunday until Monday morning.

M. Culbertson noted that since crime stats look pretty flat over time, it's not clear why there is a push for an increased police presence in Waterbury.

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- A. Johnson said part of the motivation is to calibrate our policing. What we have now doesn't efficiently cover the needs that the public often brings up, particularly traffic enforcement.
- R. Clapp said another frustration is people seeing patterns not addressed through law enforcement no matter how many times they come to the select board and ask.
- M. Culbertson followed up asking if the board has considered other options around traffic enforcement as opposed to armed police. One concern is that having armed police deal with traffic enforcement can lead to an escalation of the situation, with sometimes deadly consequences.
 - R. Clapp noted the town invested in 3 additional radar units a couple of years ago; these can be effective for a short period of time, but their influence tends to wane.
 - T. Leitz said the state police contract is unique in that we have embedded officers as opposed to on-demand service. He also pointed to the Better Connections grant, which is meant to target motor vehicle, pedestrian, and bike traffic to improve safety in Waterbury Center.

T. Leitz will get a sample contract from the sheriff and have more discussion about the capacity of that office to expand.

- Because the contract with the state police is unique and has been in place for seven years already, there is obviously something about it that has been working.
- Any changes or a move away from the state police would amount to a pilot program that doesn't cut us off from future contracts with VSP.

A. Johnson will put this issue on a future agenda as next steps are ready to consider.

Subaward grant partnership with PH International

[[letter of support](#) and [application](#) available in meeting docs]

T. Leitz summarized the grant's purpose of establishing an embedded restorative justice program in Waterbury. There is no financial impact for the town to establish this program.

R. Clapp acknowledged he was involved in the development of this grant when he worked with PH International. No conflict of interest has presented itself, but he will still recuse himself from the vote.

K. Sweeney thought it would be wise to pursue this program to shift practices away from having armed law enforcement be the standard for public safety.

Motion by T. Taravella to approve the submission of the grant application; seconded by K. Sweeney.

No further discussion; **motion passed 3-0 with 2 (R. Clapp and M. Bard) abstaining.**

Prospective housing projects– Stanley Wasson site

[[Option to Purchase](#) included in meeting docs.]

T. Leitz explained that the option to purchase the site has been signed.

- He is starting to engage with some folks to apply for state funds appropriated for housing development in flood plains.
- The purchase price is \$400K, but we would only spend those funds if we have an agreement in place on the back end.

Discussion

R. Clapp asked about the feasibility of developing single-family mini-homes on the site.

- J. Camaratta replied that the housing task force has only been looking more generally at the different kinds of housing Waterbury might need in terms of both rentals and home ownership.
- The data does show we have a shortage of starter homes in Waterbury.

K. Sweeney said we are in a housing crisis and the location is better suited for multi-unit construction than any other site we have available. There is a lot of space across town for single-family homes; this site isn't the place to do it.

T. Leitz said there are 4 main zoning requirements with regards to the site: 20-ft setback, 60-ft height restriction, 60% lot coverage maximum, and the fact that it is both in the historic district and the town's design review district, requiring review.

- These restrictions should not be difficult for a developer.
- These rules allow for quite a bit of density, and we need housing density.

Woody Avenue

Formerly Armory Avenue, it is the location of the town storage shed and a small parking lot.

T. Leitz described the site considerations using AxisGIS.

- If the shed is moved to the bottom of the parcel and the parking is reconfigured a little bit, it's possible to put 4 or 5 lots that are typical size for the village in that space and build duplexes or triplexes.
- This is an area with a lot of clay, so a firm is coming to take soil samples to give information for an engineer to design the new storage shed.
- A little bit of that location would need to be leveled because it is quite steep.
- An easement would provide a walking path from the elementary school to the recreation space up on the hill.
- Then there is the discussion of how much control the town wants over what kind of housing is built there, from single-family homes to triplexes.

Discussion

T. Taravella agreed with K. Sweeney's earlier statement about the housing problem, so maybe we want to direct the sites to be used for density.

M. Bard asked what kind of density would be possible in that site.

- T. Leitz replied it is certainly possible to put triplexes or duplexes.
- The site doesn't seem to lend itself to larger multi-family buildings.
- K. Sweeney agreed that triplexes or duplexes better fit the character of the neighborhood.
- A. Johnson said one of the original motivations for looking at this site was to build options that people who are taking FEMA buyouts could have access to, if they wanted to remain in Waterbury.

V. Rogers asked if a developer is currently being considered.

- T. Leitz said not yet.
- One one hand, the town can hire a developer for every step of the way if we want to control what is built on that site; on the other hand, the town can rebuild its storage shed and hand the rest over to a realtor.

M. Culbertson asked about restrictions the town might put on the lots if it sold the land through a realtor.

- T. Leitz acknowledged that deed restrictions are on the table.

A. Imhoff referred to a February 1909 article in the Waterbury Record about the need for more tenement housing in the village, so housing is not a new problem at all.

K. Sweeney said there is another spot behind the Seminary that the town owns but absolutely nothing is being done with it. The lot should be added to the broader allowable use conversation.

- T. Leitz again brought up the AxisGIS and pointed out the portion of that lot that holds the septic for the Seminary building.
- He concluded there is probably about 1 acre that can be put to use, whether once again for recreation (former ballfield) or for other purposes.

A. Johnson asked T. Leitz to speak to the process for moving forward on the Stanley Wasson site.

- T. Leitz said they would just need to find a developer who will do the project they want done.
- There isn't a long list of developers potentially big enough to take on a project restricted by affordable housing requirements.

Flood resilience projects—

Randall Meadow site

[[environmental testing results](#) included with meeting docs]

T. Leitz summarized that some pollution was unsurprisingly found on the site, but the concentrations are at a level that continues to make the site workable.

- The soil is classified as urban fill that can be used typically on nonresidential sites.
- There were no forever chemicals detected or anything over the state limits where remediation is required.
- The chemicals are typical of agricultural land from manure. We should be able to move the soil elsewhere with little difficulty.

The grant application for this site will be wrapped up by the end of this week.

- It would include the funds we need to move the soil.
- If that grant is awarded, the state is covering our 25% share; there's no town liability unless we go over the grant amount.

A. Johnson repeated D. Kehlmann's announcements about the Natural Disaster Preparedness Committee and CReW events.

T. Leitz pointed out that he created a [new section of the website](#) related to flood resilient topics. He is working with D. Kehlmann on uploading information and Dana Allen on posting grant reports.

Lamoille Community House (LCH) Housing Opportunity grant letter

[[certification document](#) included in meeting docs.]

LCH has indicated a desire to operate a shelter at the armory, and this application authorizes them to seek state grants. The Town must provide certification of its approval.

M. Bard asked what other properties LCH operates. T. Leitz said they are based in Hyde Park and operate a housing shelter with 21 beds.

Motion by R. Clapp to authorize T. Leitz as the municipal manager to sign the certification for LCH; seconded by K. Sweeney.

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

Additional liquor permits

[see [agenda](#); separated out from consent agenda because of potential conflicts of interest for board members]

A. Johnson confirmed that there are no zoning issues with respect to the permit applications.

Motion from T. Taravella to approve The Tropic permit request for outside consumption; seconded by M. Bard.

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

Motion from T. Taravella to approve the Blackback Pub permit request for outdoor consumption at the Music in the Alley series; seconded by K. Sweeney.

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

Select board and municipal manager informational updates

T. Taravella:

- NQID is June 28. The theme is "Vermont Weather."

K. Sweeney:

- reiterated information for Natural Disaster Preparedness Committee events: pump training in conjunction with CReW, 5-7p.m. at the pool, 6/19; volunteer recruitment event on 6/25 at 6p.m. in Dac Rowe Park under the pavilion.

R. Clapp:

- Rec committee is meeting later this month.
 - The pool is full and holding water.
 - Committee is looking at field house costs to replace the current rec facility.
 - They are also pursuing different initiatives for non-motorized rec trails throughout town.

- RW events include Music in the Alley with Turn Music on 6/27; Visitors' Center Train Day 10am-2pm on 6/28 with the Champlain Valley Chapter of the National Railroad Historical Society; and ArtsFest on 7/11-12.

A. Johnson:

- Housing task force is meeting this Thursday and anticipates having a lot to report out next time.
- She has been learning about what other communities are doing around flood resilience and although it often feels like we're not doing enough, other communities are interested in what we are doing.

T. Leitz:

- A new section of the website is dedicated to the [Better Connections](#) grant and study.
 - There will be a steering committee of 10 or 12 people, and an advisory committee that is larger but more limited in its role.
 - Duncan MacDougall, Katie Gallagher, and he are running point on the project
 - The steering committee should be appointed by the select board, and it is at the select board's discretion to appoint the advisory committee. R. Clapp suggested the select board only spend time appointing the steering committee.
- The grand list will available June 30 for setting the tax rate at the next meeting.
- EFUD is building a waterline from Guptil Rd by the town garage through the East Wind mobile park, eventually to Route 100 if there are sufficient funds.
 - There should be a joint conversation with EFUD at some point about this topic. If municipal water runs through the mobile park, zoning regulations are different and there is space for several more mobile homes.
 - The project does not have funding for fire hydrants. There has never been a policy about who pays for fire hydrants, which are about \$15K each.
- Finally, the capital plan is close, so the select board should decide to either have a broad conversation about it as a whole or go through it department by department. T. Leitz will talk to Gary Dillon about fire hydrants in the capital plan.
- T. Leitz responded to Sandy Sabin's question at a previous meeting about the housing trust fund: if the money is not used, it can be reappropriated.

C. Casey:

- Reminded select board about the publication of a new municipal newsletter, to be initially announced and disseminated via Front Porch Forum and social media; it will live on the town website.

Next meeting agenda

Local emergency management plan

Setting tax rate

Follow up on policing and contract with the sheriff's department

Stanley Wasson site

Update on rental registry

Capital plan review - in sections

Paving and road projects

Motion by T. Taravella to enter executive session because premature knowledge of labor relations agreement, contracts, and personnel would place the town at a substantial disadvantage; seconded by M. Bard.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION entered at 8:41 p.m.

Select Board exited executive session at 9:27 p.m. with no action taken.

Being no further business–
ADJOURNMENT at 9:27 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cheryl Casey.