

Minutes of the Waterbury Selectboard
Monday, November 17, 2025 | 6:30 p.m.
28 N. Main St. and via Zoom

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

Public attendance: ORCA Media, Valerie Rogers, Sandy Sabin, Mike Loschiavo, Jane Brown, Billy Vigdor, Lisa Scagliotti

Zoom attendance: ORCA Media, Alyssa Johnson, Tori Taravella, Joe Camaratta, Mary Koen, Dustin Spence, Evan Karl Hoffman, Anne Imhoff, Lindsay Sullivan, Elizabeth Brown, Carrie Macmillan, Amy Marshall-Carney, Christa Bowdish, Nita Hulstrom

CALL TO ORDER 6:35 p.m. by K. Sweeney

AGENDAS

Meeting agenda

Motion by M. Bard to approve the agenda with the removal of Item (e) from the consent agenda; seconded by R. Clapp.

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

Consent agenda

Motion by M. Bard to approve the consent agenda as amended; seconded by A. Johnson.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

S. Sabin referred to her email over the summer questioning the legality of the formation of the Housing Trust Fund and the allowable uses of the money. She cited VT statute defining reserve funds, how they are approved, and how they are allowed to be used, concluding that the Housing Trust Fund cannot exist until voted on as an article at Town Meeting Day.

REGULAR BUSINESS

Tree Board update

J. Brown (chair of the Tree Board) and M. Loschiavo (Tree Warden) [requested a dedicated budget](#) for the Tree Board, separate from the Public Works Department, for the work they do in tree maintenance.

- The removal of trees due to emerald ash borer is especially costly, as is inoculation.
- Structural pruning also needs to be done in a timely fashion and it is hard for the board to schedule this work without available funds.

- Since the board is composed of volunteers, some professional assistance is needed (e.g. arborist insight and recommendations, specialized software) to conduct tree inventory and evaluation.
 - Some of the data has been collected already, but it is difficult to complete the inventory absent professional input.
 - Waterbury Center so far isn't included.
- Other projects include planting trees, mulching, erecting the sign designating Waterbury as a Tree City USA, attending workshops and training.

A drone photograph of the downtown Waterbury tree canopy is shockingly different from just 25 years ago and worth a look.

The Tree Board estimates a budget of \$14,800.

Discussion

M. Bard thanked M. Loschiavo for hanging the garland downtown for the holidays and asked for clarification on why we can't use more volunteer help (in addition to members of the Tree Board) instead of paying professionals.

- M. Loschiavo said they have been using volunteers for about 9 years, but we're not getting the results we need for the work to be useful. There is still 10-year-old data never analyzed.

R. Clapp asked for confirmation that inoculation can be accomplished for \$300, as noted in the budget.

- J. Brown said yes, but the cost typically depends on its size; other trees could cost more.
- M. Bard asked how long inoculation lasts; two years, according to J. Brown.
- J. Brown emphasized the spread of emerald ash borer and the importance of maintaining ash tree help.

T. Taravella praised the work the Tree Board has been doing to stay ahead of the emerald ash borer as best they can. The board has been proactive and committed to the work.

A. Johnson asked about the cycle for evaluating trees.

- M. Loschiavo said ideally every year by the Tree Board, with some training and professional guidance.
- J. Brown added that every 10 years would be ideal for professional evaluation.

Revitalizing Waterbury update

L. Sullivan, board president, reported that RW is working on updating their [strategic plan](#); their current 3-year plan is expiring.

- An important strategic priority is boosting historic Waterbury. They are bringing back their ambassador program in the Train Station visitor center, and "Train Day" celebrating the train station was very successful.
- Other meaningful initiatives include: Community Volunteer Fair, supporting news businesses, organizing a business roundtable, and hosting the Vermont Downtown Program Annual Retreat. [\[See details in report\]](#)
- RW sent a [letter of intent](#) for their financial request.
 - Their first ask is \$61,650, which is the same amount as last year, for the entry-level position of Economic Development Coordinator.
 - Second, they request \$25,000 to support marketing and promotion efforts for the Town of Waterbury.
 - Third, they request \$10,000 to support beautification efforts on behalf of the Town.
- They will submit a full report to the Town in January for Town Meeting Day.

Discussion

M. Bard asked about the extent to which the town economy is driven by the mountain biking community compared to Kingdom Trails.

- L. Sullivan replied that the study data doesn't include that information but she can inquire if such a comparison is available.
- She added that RW is giving a lot of attention to recreation pathways, not just the businesses

R. Clapp indicated he is recusing himself from the discussion and any vote on the matter as Executive Director of RW.

M. Bard asked how the 3% increase (in requests 2 and 3 above) was calculated for marketing, promotion, and beautification.

- L. Sullivan said RW itself needs marketing so the community understands what they do and how they support the town's economic development; additionally, some aspects of beautification, marketing, etc. have run their course and efforts need to be updated and refreshed.

A. Johnson asked for a breakdown of RW's finances.

- L. Sullivan said she can send something, but the final numbers won't be available until early January, for the Town Report.
- A. Johnson said 2024 and the first three Qs of 2025 would be helpful as the selectboard undertakes the budget.

K. Sweeney confirmed that the total ask for FY26 is for \$96,650.

K. Sweeney said he understands part of RW's job is to function as a chamber of commerce and asked if she perceives the town's economic vitality as increasing or decreasing.

- L. Sullivan said it has increased, given the number of new businesses and the work the former economic development director did in interfacing with businesses to understand their needs.
- Visitors for the Downtown Program retreat expressed how impressed they were.

A. Marshall-Carney worried that a focus on driving more and more tourism shifts things out of balance, and what that kind of push in economic development means for the community. Is there data to clarify that picture?

- L. Sullivan said the marketing team has been focusing more on communicating who RW is and what they do, promoting their entity with the locals.
- They are thinking about how they support the businesses that exist to serve locals, primarily.
- They also are thinking about hyper-local tourism, promoting Waterbury to nearby towns as a place to come shop and eat.
- She doesn't have a direct answer to the question without the relevant data, but RW is sensitive to the concerns mentioned.

V. Rogers asked about how the nature of the relationship between RW and the town resulted in the town covering the salary of the economic development director.

- L. Sullivan said the economic development director used to be employed by the town but was absorbed by RW because positions were redundant.
- Consequently, the salary is covered by the town but under RW's benefit program.

K. Sweeney asked L. Sullivan to speak to RW's participation with the Housing Task Force, since the former economic development director sat on the committee in his official capacity.

- She replied that since she hasn't directly been involved in the Housing Task Force work, she can't talk about that relationship.

- The money RW spends is going towards a variety of efforts, including CReW and property tax credits, not just the tourism side of things. RW works to reduce the economic challenges and support the economic vitality of all in the Waterbury community.

Town Meeting Day budget development schedule

T. Leitz presented the [revised draft of the budget development schedule](#).

- December 7 will be a long meeting day, on a Sunday; staff will come in at a designated time to discuss their budgets.
- Large items will be previewed at the Dec. 1 meeting for consideration, along with a big picture look at the budget needs.
- Saturday, January 10, is scheduled at the Legion for a budget review with the public, and again on January 12 in the Steele Community Room.

Discussion

R. Clapp said holding the second budget review day at the Grange last year was to accommodate residents in Waterbury Center, but if the session is available online, then we should be covered.

A. Johnson confirmed that December 22 is not a regular selectboard meeting date, but only noted for “if needed” purposes.

- All agreed that was the case.

K. Sweeney asked if December 1 could also accommodate requests from committees on the agenda.

- A. Johnson suggested that T. Leitz send emails to the chairs of the committees to share the work schedule so they can plan to present on either Dec. 1, 7, or 15 with their requests.

A. Johnson added that funding petitions can still be submitted for appropriations without presenting to the selectboard before Dec. 15.

The selectboard discussed a more apt name for “Have Your Say Day,” considering “Budget Preview Day” (M. Bard) and “Budget Adjustment Day” (R. Clapp).

- S. Sabin strongly encouraged a meeting title that was usefully descriptive.
- R. Clapp acknowledged the title was lifted directly from Duxbury and didn’t need to be kept.

Motion by M. Bard to call January 10/12 Budget Adjustment Day; seconded by R. Clapp.

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

Stanley Wasson update

T. Leitz briefly reviewed the history of the project to date then addressed the current status.

- One response from an interested developer, D.E.W.
- The town is drafting an agreement with D.E.W., with greater specificity about the project, what the town wants, and what the developer will provide. This is a pre-development agreement promising exclusivity to D.E.W. while they complete research and a range of studies before any development agreement
- When the pre-development agreement is ready for public view, the selectboard will take up the agreement at a public meeting for discussion. He hopes the selectboard can first review this agreement in executive session on December 1. If the selectboard doesn’t vote or doesn’t accept the agreement, nothing about the project moves forward.
- The project would have to go before the DRB, the state Historic Commission, plus there is Act 250 and other potential permitting. The current stage is highly conceptual, given all that would need to be approved before shovels hit the ground.

- There is no formal agreement with any party yet. The RFQ was well-advertised, but a project at this scale is not viable for a lot of Vermont developers; the developer that did bid has a demonstrated history with working with affordable housing partners. Since the Town is requesting an affordable housing component, it makes sense to continue exploring a relationship with this one developer.

Discussion

M. Bard asked about the Stanley Wasson coalition that has been formed in response to the project.

- T. Leitz said he will reply to their letter but wants to make sure he is drafting a response that is complete and accurately cited.

R. Clapp said concerns brought up at previous meetings about building in the flood plain and increasing traffic downtown.

- T. Leitz said these are valid concerns and the studies and the permitting process will ensure these concerns get due consideration.

S. Sabin asked if the selectboard could choose to put the project before the voters.

- T. Leitz said the selectboard can put anything they choose in front of the voters.

K. Sweeney, speaking as a citizen, said this town needs housing and citizens' concerns are reasonable, but we don't have answers yet and won't have answers until the studies are done. His position is that he is unwilling to smother the project before these answers can be derived.

Rental Registry [update](#) and short-term rental discussion

T. Leitz tested the registry in response to complaints that it wasn't working.

- He learned that everything is working except for registration of condominiums because of their tax parcel ID.
- The vendor is aware of the problem and working toward a fix.

T. Leitz reported that as of this morning, excepting condos, there are a total of 205 short-term rental properties registered, containing a total of 660 bedrooms.

J. Camaratta, Housing Task Force chair, said the last number he saw on housingdata.org was 180 active short-term rentals, full living units with dedicated bathroom and kitchen facilities.

Discussion

A. Johnson noted that the Housing Task Force will be taking up this topic at their next meeting on Thursday, Nov. 20.

K. Sweeney found the number of bedrooms available in those 205 rentals to be interesting.

J. Camaratta asked if there was an update on the analysis queries the housing task force asked for the vendor to provide to try to understand how the short-term rentals are impacting our housing stock.

- T. Leitz said not as of today.

M. Koen asked how many long-term rentals were registered.

- T. Leitz said the data set on long-term rentals is separate and he doesn't have that information at present.
- M. Koen asked for that information to be made available to the public because long-term rentals comprise a vital segment of the housing stock.

K. Sweeney requested, in response to S. Sabin's inquiry a moment earlier, that T. Leitz get data on how many of the short-term rentals are on owner-occupied properties.

Selectboard and Municipal Manager informational updates

M. Bard:

- Attended the most recent planning commission meeting and recommended people review the meeting notes.

R. Clapp:

- The recreation committee has put out a survey to organizations involved with recreational trail development around town. It should be completed by the next meeting on Nov. 24.

A. Johnson:

- Also attended the planning commission meeting, where the flood resiliency chapter of the Town Plan was discussed.

T. Leitz:

- An internal group of stakeholders and a consultant have had monthly flood resilience meetings to advance projects we hope to accomplish. The Clean Water Service Provider funds have potentially \$1 million for phosphorus reduction that could be used for the Randall Meadow project. They are pursuing
- The federal government may be open again, but no one has a lot of confidence in FEMA finding. We are still waiting to hear on the CDBG grant applications. A Town Meeting Day conversation about Randall Meadow might be worthwhile in case we don't get the grants. Hopefully we will have clarity on those grants before then, but any future bond vote, if it comes to that, would be very well informed.
- He has been having some conversations with the Historical Society to swap some space to give staff some more quiet space, and he will discuss more with their board at their next meeting on Wednesday.
 - R. Clapp asked if the Historical Society had veto privileges. T. Leitz said it is the town's building, so it should be up to the town; however, for practical purposes, he isn't going to antagonize the organization.
- V. Rogers asked if there is an update about filling the zoning administrator and ethics officer positions.
 - T. Leitz said the former will be addressed in the 8:50 p.m. agenda item.
 - There are two applicants for the ethics officer position, and he is recommending one for the town and one for EFUD. They are distinct municipalities.

Review agenda items for next meetings

Funding requests and preliminary budget review

Salt use data

Special event permit

Department head and appointment clarification

T. Leitz sent a [memo](#) describing a novel internal question about which positions count as department heads and need to be approved by the selectboard before hiring.

- Some staff are clearly department heads, but other staff are “departments of one,” with no supervisory duties as would be accorded to formal department head positions.
- T. Leitz seeks clarity from the selectboard for a common understanding.

Discussion

T. Taravella said “supervisory duties” should be added to the bullet points in the memo. She also suggested finding a place where these practices are filed for employees to reference.

K. Sweeney said non-bargaining unit managing employees would be department heads.

- T. Leitz said there are management unions, so he didn’t use that criterion even though it doesn’t apply to Waterbury’s situation.

M. Bard asked who the non-department heads report to.

- T. Leitz said they report to the town manager.

A. Johnson said documenting whatever the selectboard agrees to and making sure we align with the town charter are the most important points. The town manager does currently have the authority to hire and fire town staff without directly consulting the selectboard.

M. Bard said one of the objectives in rewriting the charter was to keep things simple. Keep this hiring process as streamlined as possible.

Motion by A. Johnson to adopt the description of department heads as described in the memo; seconded by M. Bard

Discussion

S. Sabin said it would still be helpful to have an organizational chart available.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by T. Taravella to find that premature public knowledge of labor negotiations and personnel would put the town; seconded by R. Clapp.

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

Motion by T. Taravella to enter executive session and invite the municipal manager; seconded by M. Bard.

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

Selectboard moved into executive session at 8:39 p.m.

Selectboard exited from executive session at 9:50 p.m. with no action taken.

ADJOURNMENT at 9:50 p.m.

Next meeting of the Waterbury Selectboard: Monday, December 1, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cheryl Casey.