

Minutes of the Waterbury Selectboard - Special Meeting
Monday, December 22, 2025 | 6:30 p.m.
28 N. Main St. and via Zoom

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

Public attendance: ORCA Media, Chris Viens, Pete Martel, Carrie MacMillan, Lisa Scagliotti, Dana Allen

Zoom attendance: ORCA Media, Tori Taravella, Amy Marshall-Carney, Anne Imhoff, Valerie Rogers, Rebecca Ellis

CALL TO ORDER 6:36 p.m. by A. Johnson

AGENDAS

Meeting agenda

Motion by R. Clapp to approve the agenda with the addition of the letter of support for the Lake Champlain Basin Program grant application to be discussed at 7:45 p.m.; seconded by K. Sweeney.
No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously.**

Consent agenda

Motion by M. Bard to approve the consent agenda as presented; seconded by R. Clapp.
No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Johnson noted that the Municipal Manager is out sick and cannot join either in person or online.
No additional comment.

REGULAR BUSINESS

Conservation Commission membership review

[Amended bylaws](#)

[WCC email to SB](#)

A. Marshall-Carney gave context for the discussion, explaining that the commission drafted an update to the bylaws to clarify attendance expectations. This amendment was driven by the absence of a member, Rachel Campbell, since the summer, with no communication from her.

Discussion

K. Sweeney asked how many emails were sent to R. Campbell before reaching this point of asking to remove her from the commission.

- A. Marshall-Carney said R. Campbell has been copied on all Commission business, including the agenda item about making the bylaws amendment.

- In August, they also did a welfare check on her and VSP relayed the message that she was fine.
- One email was sent asking to have a conversation or receive resignation.
- A. Marshall-Carney confirmed that this email was attached to her communication with A. Johnson and the municipal manager, on which the selectboard was copied.

Motion by R. Clapp to remove Rachel Campbell from the Conservation Commission and invite her to reapply if she is interested; seconded by M. Bard.

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

A. Johnson added her thanks that the Commission went above and beyond to check on R. Campbell and revise the bylaws to avoid such a problem in the future.

Deputy Clerk position [description](#)

[[Email](#) from Municipal Manager]

A. Johnson explained the recommendation from the Municipal Manager that the two part-time positions for which the town was already intending to hire be combined into a single full-time role.

Discussion

M. Bard clarified that the current draft for the Deputy Clerk position only describes the current role as filled by Beth Jones. He gave his support for a position that includes administrative duties.

K. Sweeney said he is mostly supportive but concerned that one position will need to be dissolved in order to create the new position. There is the additional question of who this person would report to given that the Deputy Clerk reports to the Clerk and the part-time admin position reported to the Municipal Manager.

R. Clapp also wondered about the hiring authority for a combined position.

C. Viens asked that the selectboard speak to the internal staff about the pros and cons of the combined position to make sure it doesn't create additional problems.

M. Bard said the biggest issue is probably lines of authority/reporting.

T. Taravella worried about the timeline for making a decision and filling the Deputy Clerk position in a timely manner.

A. Johnson said we could advertise just for the Deputy Clerk as it currently exists.

Motion by R Clapp for the municipal manager and appropriate staff to draft and advertise the combined position with the understanding that the questions brought up tonight are resolved; seconded by M. Bard.

Additional discussion

K. Sweeney said he wants to make sure every t is crossed and every i is dotted before we advertise.

M. Bard recommended that the union be consulted before the position is advertised because the administrative function would be part of town staff.

R. Clapp accepted these conditions as a friendly amendment to the motion.

C. Viens clarified that the new staff member would not have to join the union if they so chose. R. Clapp explained that the position would still be included as a union position in the contract but the individual would not be obligated to join.

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

Town Meeting study group

[[description](#)]

R. Clapp summarized the description of the study committee, saying he worked on this description in consultation with Susan Clark, who previously spoke before the selectboard about Town Meeting models, and Town Moderator Rebecca Ellis.

Discussion

A. Johnson said she appreciated having all of the information clearly laid out in a one-pager.

K. Sweeney echoed this sentiment and inquired why the proposal settled on 13 members.

- R. Clapp said that 13 members is the most number we have on any committee. Beyond that, the functioning of a committee can get unwieldy.

M. Bard added his support for the committee.

A. Johnson asked for more detail about the timeline.

- R. Clapp responded that he wanted to make sure the committee was established before the warned agenda went out for Town Meeting, but also give the chance to meet at least twice before Town Meeting so they can be prepared to present some of their initial discussions.

M. Bard asked if the selectboard members would be excluded from the committee.

- R. Clapp said he doesn't perceive that as a problem; however, if there is a huge outpouring of interest, selectboard members should recuse themselves in favor of making room for community members.
- A. Johnson suggested *ex officio* membership for a selectboard member, and not more than two selectboard members.

E. K. Hoffman asked if people could join the committee after learning more at Town Meeting.

- R. Clapp said that was possible, especially if they don't have the full 13 members by then. The committee itself will also structure some kind of community outreach to ensure interested members of the community can have their voices heard.
- E. K. Hoffman followed up by asking how the selectboard will ensure the committee represents a diversity of viewpoints.
 - R. Clapp said that will be part of the review of applications.
- A. Johnson suggested appointing up to 9 members at the Jan. 12 selectboard meeting and additional members after Town Meeting.

C. Viens expressed his concern about informed participation on the committee regarding options for Town Meeting models.

- R. Clapp said that is why he reached out to the town moderator, and her experience is an important viewpoint. There are some different options, including the representative model used in Brattleboro.
- M. Bard said the representative model is common in Massachusetts.

A. Marshall-Carney asked about getting research on how different models have been working out, not just the options themselves.

- R. Clapp responded that he invited Susan Clark to be a part of the committee's discussions for this very reason. She has worked with several other towns as well as other researchers on the topic.

K. Sweeney noted that all of these questions would or should be answered by the committee in time.

E. K. Hoffman recommended the Board of Civil Authority be kept in the loop since they would be in charge of implementing any potential changes.

R. Ellis said she is excited to participate on this committee and explore ways to increase community involvement in Town Meeting.

- R. Clapp asked her current thoughts on the Town Meeting format.
- She responded that the lively discussion about this topic at the last Town Meeting was important because it laid out the different viewpoints in the community and helped the selectboard understand public sentiment.

A. Johnson said anything that can improve engagement, whatever the format, is a real asset.

R. Clapp said he supports the approach of starting with up to 9 individuals and adding additional members up to 13 total after Town Meeting Day.

Motion by K. Sweeney that the selectboard authorize the creation of the Waterbury Town Meeting Study Committee, with the membership appointment schedule as just described by R. Clapp; seconded by M. Bard.

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

R. Clapp will coordinate soliciting applications.

Potential bond vote for Randall Meadow

[[memo](#) from Municipal Manager], [[grant award letter](#)]

T. Taravella read the memo aloud, in the municipal manager's absence.

Discussion

A. Johnson noted the conditions in the award letter, including evidence of other sources of funding for project completion.

K. Sweeney sought clarification on when we would be asking the public to vote on a bond measure.

- A. Johnson said the vote would take place on Town Meeting Day, but bonds have longer notice requirements than the Town Meeting warning itself.

Motion by R. Clapp to authorize the municipal manager to enter into this agreement with Darby, Kolter, & Roberts to prepare for a bond vote; seconded by K. Sweeney.

Additional discussion

C. Viens asked if all of the questions that pertain to this project have been discussed and whether bonding would be a backwards plan.

- R. Clapp said this authorization does not obligate the town to borrow any money; it only enables us to borrow the money when it is needed.
- M. Bard said this authorization doesn't preclude the town from pulling the plug. It's more like getting a letter of credit if we need it.
- R. Clapp added that without proving this credit, we won't get the grant funding. There are other grant opportunities that can decrease the amount we ultimately borrow.

A. Johnson said the legal fees are higher than they have been, but the amount does align with the market.

K. Sweeney and A. Johnson both noted there are several options to explore for funding this project, including using some local option tax money.

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

Letter of support for the Lake Champlain Basin Program

D. Allen, Waterbury flood resilience grant manager, summarized his role in putting together the grant application for the LCBP Education and Outreach Grant of \$50,000.

- The application is due January 5, 2026, and the education and outreach program would begin in January 2027, running for two years.

- He noted that the town is currently listed as the primary applicant, but he is working out whether that will remain the case or if the primary applicant is CReW. One entity needs to be the primary applicant/administrator, but that detail doesn't materially change anything about the application itself.

Discussion

A. Johnson asked about the expectation for a match.

- D. Allen responded that a match isn't required, but he is working on developing volunteer hours as a partial match, which would be viewed favorably.

R. Clapp noted the grant would actually come to Revitalizing Waterbury as the fiscal sponsor of CReW; accordingly, he will recuse himself on this matter.

M. Bard asked why the LCBP experts can't be part of the educational program.

- D. Allen said they can't be a partner because they are the funder, or pass-through for the money.

Motion by K. Sweeney to sign the letter of support for the Lake Champlain Basin Program

Education and Outreach Grant; seconded by M. Bard.

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

2026 Budget review and discussion

A. Johnson said the selectboard will hear from WATA, WASI, and the Natural Disaster Recovery Committee, now along with Recreation, on January 5.

M. Bard said he feels comfortable to flesh out the LOT ideas but hesitant to further consider budget requests from those from whom we haven't yet heard in person.

R. Clapp said the Rec Committee is focusing mostly on their submission to the Planning Commission, which includes a strong feeling about the pool continuing to function. This priority, plus the potential for a field house initiative, would inform any budget request.

He confirmed there is a 3.37% overall increase to the budget at present.

Re-review of local option tax spending proposals

A. Marshall-Carney asked for each of the line items to be mapped back to the allowable uses in the LOT policy, adding a column to the spreadsheet.

- K. Sweeney said anything related to roads or public works more generally maps to the infrastructure use. The information would be useful as part of the presentation at Town Meeting Day.
- M. Bard expressed his agreement. Mapping to the allowable uses supports transparency.
- R. Clapp recommended citing the allowable use "buckets" as the discussion proceeds.

The following line items received comments/questions in the selectboard's review of the options:

New fire truck

- A. Johnson said this line reduces debt service to lower property taxes, by allowing us to avoid bonding for the truck.
- With reference to property taxes, R. Clapp advised the selectboard to be cognizant of the education tax increases.

Card access/security system

- A. Johnson noted that the \$25,000 cost might need to be revised higher.

Pool

- K. Sweeney indicated his increasing concern about the cost needed to maintain the current pool.

- R. Clapp said the new replacement filter system is costly, but maybe we can avoid it for another year.
 - T. Taravella said she thought the filter system could help lengthen the life of the pool.
 - M. Bard agreed that this system is a necessary stopgap until we understand the benefits/drawbacks to funding a new pool in this community.
 - R. Clapp added that after summer 2026, the reservoir will be drained for a couple of years, so access to swimming might be in higher demand during that time. There are justifications for funding the new filter system.

Fire command vehicle

- K. Sweeney suggested that if we eliminate the Sheriff contract and the new payroll/accounts payable system expenses
 - A. Johnson pointed out that the payroll system has already been removed from the LOT budget.
- M. Bard said that if Chief Dillon is okay with swapping out the command vehicle for the tanker, we should take that route. Too many people have asked for policing solutions.
- R. Clapp reminded other members that Chief Dillon did point out that the tanker will cost substantially more if we wait another year.
- K. Sweeney reiterated his position about eliminating the Sheriff contract and spending the money where it needs to go in our own departments.
 - The Sheriff money would go toward the fire command vehicle, and the LOT would fund the tanker.
- C. Viens said the swimming pool has been a luxury in this town for decades, and at some point we're going to have to decide whether or not to keep it.
 - He cautioned the selectboard about getting in over our head on the LOT money.
 - He is having a hard time understanding the property tax increase even with nearly a million dollars additional in revenue with the local option tax.
 - We are going to need every bit of the LOT revenue to maintain our own infrastructure and not make significant increases to property taxes.
- A. Johnson said incremental property tax increases are necessary, but agreed with C. Viens that it needs to be done responsibly and strategically.
 - She is struck by the town's ability to pay off fire trucks in only three years using the local option tax money; prompt debt repayment is strategic.
- K. Sweeney commented that the way to double the LOT revenue is to add more people.
- R. Clapp supported the money for the Sheriff and pointed out the ongoing concerns about our ability to direct the VSP activities as we need. The Sheriff contract gives us that ability. He doesn't think testing a new system of public safety is a huge expense in this case. The time has come to explore the option, without losing our contract with VSP.
- K. Sweeney accepted R. Clapp's position but still wanted to find a way to fund both the command vehicle and the tanker.
 - A. Johnsons said if the chief's assessment of the situation is that the command vehicle can wait, then it should wait.
 - R. Clapp added that we fund two fire stations, which is unusual. We are very well equipped, which is part of what maintains a robust volunteer force and a well-protected community.

Randall Meadow

- Since we need some match money to secure grants, the selectboard agreed that the already-reduced amount, now at \$10,000, should stay.

FEMA buyout projects

- K. Sweeney said a lot of FEMA buyouts have stalled and wondered if it was fiscally responsible to put money in this pot when FEMA itself may disappear.
- M. Bard said if we don't put the money there and the projects come about, we're screwed.
- E. K. Hoffman requested clarification of these projects
 - A. Johnson said this had to do with unanticipated expenses, mostly in environmental studies, before the town can take ownership of the properties in the FEMA buyout.

Sidewalks

- M. Bard said the public has been very vocal about the state of the sidewalks, so this item is important.

Payoff Union Bank Loan and Payoff (early) of Fire Tower Truck

- M. Bard said we already have debt out there and maybe that money should be used to fund something else.
- Other selectboard members pointed out how much money in interest and future budgets would be saved.
- M. Bard asked if restructuring those debts would be an option.
 - R. Clapp suggested looking into the tax rate when we took out those loans versus now.
 - K. Sweeney said buying down debt is important to him as someone who pays into the local option tax.

Town Plan

- R. Clapp asked about the availability of municipal planning grants to reduce this item.
- A. Johnson said the timing of the Planning Commission applying for another one won't work.
 - A. Marshall-Carney confirmed that timeline.

Additional discussion on LOT an budgeting

K. Sweeney asked selectboard thoughts about adding any leftover balance from the local option tax into the tax stabilization fund, or where it would make the most sense to put that balance.

- A. Johnson confirmed that creating a local option tax reserve is an allowable use. There is an important distinction between the tax stabilization fund and other means of reducing the tax rate.
- A. Marshall-Carney asked for clarification on the definition of tax stabilization; additionally, she suggested a column showing key indicators for reducing property taxes.

C. Viens reiterated his concern that the budget is still showing property tax increases despite the influx of nearly \$1 million in revenue through the local option tax.

- He is interested in talking to the municipal manager more about the strategy of buying down some of the debt in order to free up future money.

L. Scagliotti said the slide show at the Have Your Say Day presentations had one slide dedicated to explaining those "buckets" and it was helpful, but LOT uses are still new enough that clarifying what those buckets map to would be even better. She recommended a table that has colored dots where people can quickly grasp the connections visually.

R. Clapp clarified that the LOT expenditures would be warned as a single article.

- A. Johnson confirmed that is the case, but anyone can make a motion to break out any of the line items for separate considerations.

- A Marshall-Carney asked the methodology for selecting this approach.
 - A. Johnson replied that the legal advice they received was to keep everything as a single item, but separate from the regular budget.

A. Marshall-Carney asked if the board would consider an alternative approach to presenting LOT uses to the voters, including a step where they would ask the public to provide feedback on how they would like to think about the issue.

- A. Johnson said the selectboard would consider that suggestion.

Municipal Manager and Board Member updates

None.

Review agenda items for next meeting

Outstanding budget areas/requests: Recreation Department, WATA, WASI, and the Natural Disaster Recovery Committee

Bond update

A. Johnson noted the 2026 meetings have not been updated on the 2026 municipal calendar yet, but in addition to the regular selectboard meeting on January 5, there are special meetings on Jan. 10 and 12 for the public to review the proposed budget; additionally, the meeting on MLK, Jr. Day is pushed to Tuesday, Jan. 20.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by K. Sweeney to find that premature public knowledge of personnel matters would place the Town of Waterbury at a significant disadvantage; seconded by R. Clapp.

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

Motion by K. Sweeney to enter executive session and invite the Library Commissioners; seconded by R. Clapp.

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

Selectboard entered executive session at 9:01 p.m.

Selectboard exited executive session at 9:21 p.m.

Motion by R. Clapp for the selectboard to ratify the separation agreement for Sandra Schweikert and authorize the chair to sign it; seconded by K. Sweeney.

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

Motion to adjourn by K. Sweeney; seconded by R. Clapp.

ADJOURNMENT at 9:23 p.m.

Next meeting of the Waterbury Selectboard: Monday, January 5, 2026, 6:30 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cheryl Casey.