

Minutes of the Waterbury Selectboard
Monday, January 5, 2026 | 6:30 p.m.
28 N. Main St. and via Zoom

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

Public attendance: ORCA Media, Chris Viens, Peter Martel, Carrie Macmillan, Valerie Rogers, Owen Duffy, Zack Rounds, Lisa Scagliotti, Bette Lewicke, Dani Kehlmann, Evan Karl Hoffman, John Malter, Zach Rounds

Zoom attendance: ORCA Media, Wayne Quillin, Amy Marshall-Carney, Sandy Sabin, Richard Cohen

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

[AGENDAS](#)

Meeting agenda

Motion by K. Sweeney to approve the agenda with the removal of the budget request by WATA; seconded by M. Bard.

No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously 5-0.**

Consent agenda

Motion by M. Bard to approve the consent agenda as presented; seconded by K. Sweeney.

No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously 5-0.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

R. Clapp said he received a letter from a concerned resident about slippery road conditions. He spoke with Public Works Director Bill Woodruff, who said they have been conserving salt as they wait for a delivery, which is expected tomorrow (Jan. 6). R. Clapp asked for patience and careful driving from the public, and commended the road crew for their work.

REGULAR BUSINESS

Update on Town Clerk and Treasurer positions

A Johnson reviewed what has happened to date:

- Selectboard received Karen Petrovic's resignation, effective January 2, 2026. She served both the Town and then also EFUD, for a total of over 10 years.
- Selectboard is able to appoint interim clerk and treasurer until the next Town Meeting.
- They have appointed Beth Jones as interim Town Clerk and Bill Shepeluk as interim Town Treasurer.

- Both positions will be on the ballot to fill each of the roles for the remaining one year on Karen's term.
- The posted vacancy notice followed best practice guidance from Vermont League of Cities and Towns; it notifies the public of the vacancies, that action was taken, and the public can petition to have a town meeting sooner to elect a clerk and treasurer.

Discussion

R. Clapp asked A. Johnson about how the town is hiring some support in the interim.

- A. Johnson said retired Town Clerk of Barre Cite, Carol Dawes, has stepped up to serve as part-time assistant town clerk, appointed by Beth Jones, to help with notices and preparations for Town Meeting Day.

O. Duffy asked if a Rec Director had been hired.

- A. Johnson confirmed the position has been filled.
- T. Leitz said Erika Linskey started last week and she's getting up to speed quickly.

Budget review - Waterbury Ambulance Service, Inc.

Z. Rounds, chief of Waterbury Ambulance, brought some [2025 data to review](#) with the selectboard.

- WASI has proposed an 8% increase across the towns they serve.
- For Waterbury, the total is \$41.04 per capita in FY26
- Waterbury is the busiest community they serve.
- They are increasing their payroll expenses to meet demands, which entails having an ambulance ready 24/7, and this also comes with increased overhead.
- They are working creatively to build revenue streams through different partnerships and programs to eventually become independent.

Discussion

R. Clapp asked for clarification from Z. Rounds how many total ambulance calls they received in 2025: 880 documented incidents where the ambulance was needed in some capacity, of which 677 were for Waterbury.

M. Bard expressed some surprise at how few heart attacks were listed in the call distribution.

- Z. Rounds said the dispatch reason often changes once emergency service providers arrive onsite and assess the situation.

A. Johnson acknowledged the rapid budget increase in a short amount of time

C. Viens asked if there were projections about future increases to the budget.

- Z. Rounds said he hasn't been in the position long enough to get a handle on what the needs are and this is just his first budget. He is proposing a balanced budget to the ambulance trustees in two weeks but our paramedics are only paid \$17-\$18/hr.

T. Leitz summarized some history: Covid was a financial windfall for ambulance services because of significant grants; if the pandemic hadn't happened, these budget increases would have happened much sooner.

- Towns of our size that have municipal ambulance services cost 5 times as much.
- He confirmed the building project is paid for and not driving this budget.
- He also asked for a rough breakdown of billing to the patient versus insurance.
 - Z. Rounds said basic life support is \$1200 for call, \$32 per ground mile to get to the hospital from the patient's location. Most common is a Medicaid patient, and the ambulance service will be reimbursed 80% from insurance.

- C. Viens followed up on his previous question about future challenges that might make staying within budget guidelines far more difficult.
 - Z. Rounds said any big changes in federal programs like Medicare and Medicaid are the only factors that would cause concern.

V. Rogers asked how many paramedics we have in Waterbury and what the transport times are to Berlin or Burlington.

- Z. Rounds said they have 2 credentialed full-time paramedics and a handful of paramedics working through the credential process. Transport can be at least 15 minutes to CVMC.

M. Bard asked for the difference between an EMT and paramedic.

- Z. Rounds said an EMT is an entry level position that is allowed to provide the most basic level of care. Paramedics are licensed to provide a greater level of diagnostics, perform higher-level procedures, administer medication, and make decisions as “the doctor of the ambulance.”

Z. Rounds added that WASI is making some strategic changes in 2026 to become more modern, including a change to their lights and sirens policy.

- Reducing use of lights and sirens to life-threatening emergencies
- For more routine transports, the directive is to go with the flow of traffic.
- This policy aligns with emergency vehicle national standards for road safety, while responding appropriately to patients’ needs.

Budget review - Natural Disaster Preparedness Committee (NDPC)

D. Kehlmann presented two budgets:

- purchase recommendations for a one-time preparedness trailer fully ready to respond.
- A response budget that includes training, public works staff overtime, and other necessary supplies

She explained that future years would only need to budget to replenish or update inventory. It is a strategy of building and then maintaining the budget/inventory.

Discussion

R. Clapp asked if either budget includes a stipend to retain the natural disaster coordinator position.

- D. Kehlmann said no, that is part of general staff, but this budget builds in available funds to pay someone hourly if the coordinator isn’t available for if extra staff is needed.

K. Sweeney noted Airtags in the budget and D. Kehlmann said getting dehumidifiers back has been a significant challenge.

K. Sweeney and M. Bard both asked about the Vactor truck and concerns about availability if other municipalities are having the same idea/need.

A. Johnson said she appreciated the approach of ensuring there is something on hand with which we can respond to emergencies.

R. Clapp said the Town submitted a community development block grant application for education and outreach; D. Kehlmann explained that the grant money can support the training and outreach piece of NDPC’s work in 2027.

K. Sweeney said this project has been taking shape over nearly three years. This isn’t a subject we should look to cut corners or skimp on and the selectboard should lean into it completely.

M. Bard asked if we could have some kind of program to help subsidize homeowners’ purchase of dehumidifiers in flood-prone areas.

- D. Kehlmann said planning ahead is an important part of the communication and outreach plan so people already have dehumidifiers on hand.
- A. Marshall-Carney asked if a trailer will be able to get to where it is needed if the roads are flooded.
- D. Kehlmann said the goal is to be able to get the trailer in place before the flooding occurs. Regarding the trailer price, they used the MSRP listing as a “not to exceed” number.
- P. Martel asked if there are any other natural disasters the committee is prepared for.
- D. Kehlmann said the committee is working toward that goal, but flooding was the imminent need.
- V. Rogers asked the difference between NDPC and CReW.
- D. Kehlmann said CReW is shifting to long-term recovery, while the NDPC addresses the response to the emergency event itself and its immediate aftermath.
 - V. Rogers added that people have extras of some of the tools listed in the budget and would be happy to donate them. She also offered a bucket from the American Red Cross that she has from the last flood.
- T. Leitz said funding the response part of the budget sounds like a special reserve fund warned for Town Meeting Day that becomes a dedicated, guaranteed fund that is always available. The special reserve fund is kind of a “lock box.”
- K. Sweeney said a reserve fund sounds great, but the town’s collective trauma around flooding demands somehow acquiring all of the inventory necessary before flood season.
 - D. Kehlmann said a flood crisis is coming again some time in the future, and knowing the inventory and funding is available makes the committee’s work much easier.
- NDPC members J. Malter and B. Lewicke joined D. Kehlmann at the table.
- J. Malter remarked that the sooner they can build their inventory, the sooner the volunteers can train on the actual equipment, which is crucial.
 - B. Lewicke added her gratitude to the Town for hiring D. Kehlmann.
- R. Clapp asked what changes the committee has taken on since D. Kehlmann came on as coordinator.
- J. Malter said they have established an ongoing training schedule for volunteers, and they have set specific goals for training and preparedness.
 - D. Kehlmann said the manual has been updated quite a bit. The intake and evaluation form has been streamlined and made compatible with CReW’s database for the transition to long-term recovery.
- R. Clapp asked how many on-the-ground volunteers they have.
- D. Kehlmann said about 30 volunteers are on the email list. The focus is on getting these volunteers confident in being leaders on the ground for the community members who come to help during the disaster itself.
- A. Johnson said a public question about a natural disaster reserve fund is appropriate if the selectboard decides on that route, and she reviewed the process for establishing a reserve fund as allowable by Vermont law. It would be its own item on the warning.

Budget review - Recreation Department

T. Leitz said he reviewed the budget with the Rec Director in detail but did not want to throw her into a late meeting on this matter during her first week. He reviewed [each budget area](#), calling out particular details:

- The pool is the most straightforward section of the budget. There isn't a lot of public usage of the pool outside of the day camp. The net operational cost will stay in a fairly consistent range as long as the town has a pool.
- Summer camp program revenue is achievable, if not conservative, given historical data.
- The budgeted donation revenue is an average. Sometimes people donate by paying for summer camp t-shirts instead of giving cash.
- Summer camp salaries are tied to how many kinds we can accommodate.
 - We're running three separate summer camps with three different ages, and it is important to have adults trained or experienced with each age group (including college students advanced in their studies). The budgeted pay is a bit higher than previously, but that is a high-value investment. Quality camp directors are critical.
- For summer camp field trips, the work is extensive and stressful. One field trip instead of the four taken in the past is more manageable.
- Total rec expenses just under \$400k, which is a typical range for the tax rate.

Discussion

K. Sweeney clarified that the difference between revenue and expenditures is covered by taxes.

M. Bard asked if there could be programs for adults at the pool, to expand interest to more groups in the community besides kids.

- T. Leitz said a variety of approaches have been tried and he's not sure about insurance implications of events including alcohol.

R. Clapp asked about the after school program.

- T. Leitz said he would like to reintroduce that program because there is minimal expense on part-time staff that can be covered and then some by having 8 or 9 kids enrolled. The program waned but he is hearing there is still demand because the primary focus is on being outdoors.

A. Johnson acknowledged that a good portion of the budget is for recreation director salary and benefits and that role does a lot more all year around, not just run summer camp and the pool.

- A Marshall-Carney suggested reaching out to sports clubs and programs for revenue opportunities.
- C. Viens clarified that recreation is running in the red by nearly \$379k.

M. Bard asked if Waterbury residents have priority registration for summer camp.

- T. Leitz said yes, and added that pricing day camp is really difficult.
 - It's a captive market with few options, so jacking up the registration prices might be tempting to increase our revenue; however, if the camp isn't affordable, then we wouldn't have anything to offer the families in our community.
 - The registration cost will increase about 5%.

K. Sweeney said he is growing more concerned about talk of a rec building, given that the budget already runs in the red.

T. Leitz continued with parks maintenance expenditures:

- He noted that the second full-time rec department position is going to include some parks maintenance responsibilities instead of putting all of that on public works.
- Net parks costs are consistent with our history.
- Transfer of \$150k from the local options tax to the capital fund will cover the new filter system for the pool, which is a critical equipment upgrade to keep the pool serviceable.

- Expenditures for the capital fund are consistent with the revenues.

Additional discussion

R. Clapp asked the thinking on the rec building/field house at this point.

- T. Leitz said we spent a little money on some basic design. A building in the range of 16,000 sq. ft., with 89 parking spaces, with an estimated price tag of \$8-\$10 million. We wouldn't need the current rec building or poolhouse.
- Other towns of our size tend to break even in operating such buildings. The challenge is to fund their design and construction in the first place.
- We have a rough number and rough design; to have a better understanding of a more accurate cost means a six-figure fee for architecture and engineering.

R. Clapp asked if the school would be a partner and have a need for the facility.

- T. Leitz said during critical hours, like Saturday mornings, there would be high demand, but the town would charge them for its use.
- The only way to cover operations is to have user fees, including for residents.

C. Macmillan said she very much values the recreation department and used it as much as possible with her kid.

- She asked for the Recreation Committee to form a task force to study programming and costs in order to reduce the budget deficit and to conduct a public outreach campaign about the rec facility. They should be driving this conversation but they never seem to be at selectboard meetings.
- R. Clapp, as the liaison to the committee, said they have been very involved in the recreation chapter of the new town plan over the last several months.
- T. Leitz said they have applied for a grant to further a facilities study, but didn't get it this year. Unfortunately, there is no clear grant pipeline in this area.

S. Sabin asked if the money allocated to WATA last year was paid directly to them or to the contractor that did the work.

- T. Leitz said it was paid directly to WATA.

C. Viens recalled the 2018 proposed design for a community center costing \$14 million that stopped consideration cold, with reference to the possibilities of finding a way to fund a rec center.

Review of [funding petitions](#) received to date

T. Leitz said the amount is in the range of his predicted increase of \$7400.

- He noted the Legion is actually asking for less money this year.
- A. Johnson said they expect a petition from WATA. The deadline is January 16.

Review of full draft budget for presentation

LOT update from T. Leitz:

- The fire command vehicle is not funded and the tanker truck is funded at \$110k.
- Line 32 shows an estimated end of year balance, but given the NDPC presentation, there would be funding available for the trailer. If there is a desire to establish a natural disaster reserve, he thinks that is consistent with the LOT policy to avoid affecting the tax rate.

Discussion

K. Sweeney said given the LOT fund balance, moving the NDPC request to a reserve fund seeded by the LOT makes a lot of sense. Other selectboard members agreed.

M. Bard suggested putting LOT funds toward raising the town mechanical box two more feet.

- T. Leitz said this was originally part of the FEMA package we applied for ages ago; however, we still haven't been formally denied.

S. Sabin clarified there is an additional \$175,000 balance that the housing task force hasn't yet spent.

- T. Leitz clarified that he estimated the budget as if all of the money was spent.

A. Marshall-Carney reiterated her request from a previous meeting that a column be added to show which LOT use each line item refers to.

K. Sweeney urged pragmatism regarding natural disasters because recent events show there is no guarantee the federal government will grant us a natural disaster declaration, which is a prerequisite for FEMA funding.

- P. Martel added the consideration of infrastructure repairs, such as to culverts.

K. Sweeney suggested giving the NDPC the full amount of \$14,000 to start. Being disaster ready is a priority.

M. Bard asked how flexible we can be if we get a sudden surge in tourism and LOT revenue.

- T. Leitz said with due warning to the public and some rational guardrails in place, the selectboard should be able to allocate unbudgeted funds as they see appropriate.
- C. Viens said all of these little needs that keep coming up is why he advocated for putting a larger chunk of LOT revenue into the tax stabilization fund.
- S. Sabin said just because we can do something doesn't mean it should be done, especially if it's not an urgent need; disaster preparedness is an urgent need.

A. Johnson summarized: add a trailer to LOT expense for disaster response; add a column showing LOT categories; there is a desire to warn the creation of a disaster reserve fund, to seed that fund with \$25,000, and draft a spending policy for that money.

T. Leitz confirmed there is \$50k for culverts for next year in the budget.

V. Rogers asked why there is still \$10,000 from the LOT for Randall Meadow.

- T. Leitz said there might be some costs that aren't covered by the grant.

For budget adjustment day on Jan. 10 and again on Jan. 12, A. Johnson asked each selectboard member to take a part of the budget and present a high-level overview with 1-2 slides each.

- General government: A. Johnson
- Library: K. Sweeney
- Parks and Recreation: R. Clapp (also the capital fund)
- Highway: M. Bard (also the capital fund)
- Fire Department: K. Sweeney (also the capital fund)
- Planning & Zoning: T. Taravella
- Public Safety: R. Clapp
- Cemetery: M. Bard
- Local Option Tax: T. Taravella

T. Leitz addressed the LOT allocations to the housing trust fund:

- The \$175k likely won't all be needed since there has been little interest expressed in the grant assistance program so far. That money can be put toward buying down the tax rate, but that always comes with paying for it the following year.

- M. Bard said buying down the tax rate with \$75k might be really helpful given the likely increase in school taxes.
- T. Leitz said the increase for next year would be about \$38 on a \$400k house if the selectboard decided to do that.
- K. Sweeney said we're going back on our commitment to giving the housing assistance program one year.
 - T. Leitz responded that there would still be \$100k in the trust fund and if interest in the assistance program increases, additional funds can be budgeted next year. The pressure from school taxes won't let up any time soon.
- S. Sabin said the reimbursement process takes so long on the assistance program, moving money now won't affect the grants it would fund.
- C. Viens said he would rather see a reduction in debt in perpetuity rather than adopting an expenditure in perpetuity.

Reappraisal plan and use of reserve:

T. Leitz said with the reappraisal underway, now is the time to use the intended reserve fund.

- It is factored into the tax rate.
- There will still be a strong balance in the reserve fund at the end of the year.
- He also noted that the state is looking at regionalizing reappraisal; if we have a large reserve, the state might try to take the money back.

Discussion

Board members voiced general support for spending the money.

S. Sabin asked whether the full-time lister is permanent.

- T. Leitz said yes, it is, and will add to the general budget in about 2 years. With the growth we have had, it will be needed as a full-time position.

Resolution Certificate for Bond Vote for Randall Meadow project

T. Leitz explained the specific series of warnings at specific intervals and in a certain number of locations; the public hearing requirement; and the various actions the selectboard needs to take in order to complete the warning process.

Discussion

A. Johnson noted some copyedits to be made. She clarified this would be an Australian ballot voting item.

L. Scagliotti from the Roundabout asked for a summary of why we are bonding for the full amount and not for the partial amount.

- T. Leitz said requesting authorization for the full amount is common practice and, as has been mentioned already tonight, grant money from a federal funding source is never fully guaranteed.
- The expectation is that the grant money will cover half of the project expenses.

V. Rogers asked why we are moving forward before we even own Randall Meadow and conduct all of the studies, especially the environmental testing.

- T. Leitz explained that the grant award has funding contingencies. The town won't have a grant contract until we have proof of full funding to complete the project as envisioned or a new project plan that only costs the amount of the grant award. The selectboard does not want to cut the project in half.

- Another grant through the state is a great fit for this project, but we aren't a candidate until we have the final design. Any grants would be first payers before we incur debt. It is complex and seemingly backwards, but is the best road forward for addressing what has been a clear priority.
- A. Johnson emphasized that despite the rapid timeline, this opportunity to access the grant funding is too important to pass up. The state has given us until March 16, 2026 to establish the remaining funding for the project.
- C. Viens recommended the selectboard be prepared to explain the full impact on the community and taxes for incurring that debt.
- S. Sabin noted that we only need to show we can come up with the money should we need it, not that we have to incur that much actual debt.
- K. Sweeney added that every time we flood, we have to abate taxes, which is also extremely expensive to the town.

Motion by K. Sweeney to adopt the warning for the bond totaling \$4.3 million, with the changes that the informational meeting will be Tuesday, Feb. 17, 2026. at the Municipal Office and this warning will be received and recorded on Jan. 6; seconded by R. Clapp.

No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously (4-0).**

Motion by K. Sweeney to adopt the declaration of official intent to reimburse certain expenditures from proceeds of indebtedness with the correction of the amount from \$4.5 million to \$4.3 million throughout the packet; seconded by M. Bard.

No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously (4-0).**

Motion by R. Clapp to adopt the resolution certificate with the change in public hearing date from Feb. 16 to Feb. 17 at 6:30 p.m. at the Municipal Offices and dated Jan. 6; seconded by M. Bard.

No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously (4-0).**

Motion by M. Bard to adopt the official ballot as recommended by the bond counsel for the Randall Meadow project; seconded by K. Sweeney.

No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously (4-0).**

Municipal manager and Board member updates

R. Clapp: Waterbury VT250 committee meets on Thursday.

T. Leitz: Reminder he is unable to be at Saturday's budget review in person.

Review agenda items for next meeting

Jan. 10: Budget review

Jan. 12: Budget final review and debrief

Appointments for town meeting study committee

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 (4-0).**

Motion by K. Sweeney to enter executive session and invite the Municipal Manager; seconded by M. Bard.

No further discussion; **motion passed unanimously (4-0).**

Selectboard entered executive session at 10:11 p.m.

Selectboard exited executive session at 10:54 p.m. with no action taken.

Motion by K. Sweeney to adjourn; seconded by M. Bard.

Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

ADJOURNMENT at 10:54 p.m.

Next meetings of the Waterbury Selectboard: *“Budget Adjustment Day” Special Meetings*
Saturday, January 10, 2026 – 9:30 a.m. (Legion)
Monday, January 12, 2026 – 6:30 p.m. (Steele
Community Room)

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cheryl Casey.