

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 25, 2025

Final

Members Present: David Babbott-Klein, Chach Curtis, Fred Messer, Brian Shupe, Larissa Ursprung

Staff Present: York Haverkamp, Town Administrator; JB Weir, Zoning Administrator

Others Present: Bob Cook, AnnMarie Harmon, Phil Huffman, MRVTV, Alice Peal, Mac Rood, Joshua Schwartz

I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Brian Shupe. The meeting was held in person at the Waitsfield Town Office and remotely via Zoom.

II. Regular Business

1. Review agenda for addition, removal, or adjustment of any items per 1 VSA 312(d)(3)(A).

The preliminary design for Farley Park and a potential public hearing for a disaster recovery grant were added to the agenda.

2. Public Forum.

Nobody requested time to address the Board.

III. Business Items

1. Irasville Village Master Plan Presentation.

AnnMarie Harmon explained that the Board had been provided with three potential development scenarios drafted by SE Group in the Master Planning work. These have been presented to Shannon Morrison, DEC's District Wetlands Ecologist for this area, in the anticipation of receiving guidance regarding how this planning process and document might facilitate the Wetlands permitting process for future development. Ms. Morrison's response to this inquiry did not sufficiently address the questions raised, and so follow-up correspondence has been drafted and sent to DEC. The Master Plan Steering Committee is looking for some level of predictability for future applicants proposing development in the Irasville area.

Mac Rood indicated that the written report provided to the Board members offers a good summary of where the planning process is at, and the letter to Ms. Morrison also explains the wetland considerations and preservation planned for all high functioning wetlands as well as a large percentage of the lower functioning wetlands. He explained that DEC in the past has halted Irasville development requiring a Wetlands permit, indicating that a Master Plan was needed, but that Ms. Morrison is now indicating that any upcoming project needs to be looked at independently.

Mr. Rood noted that the goal of the planning work is not only to create housing and an activity hub in the Irasville area, but also to preserve wetlands. He explained that mitigation can include both the enhancement of wetlands and flood prevention measures. It was also explained that contact with the Army Corps of Engineers, which has some wetland jurisdiction and requires compensation for impacts to certain wetlands, indicates that any compensation

for development in Irasville would be in the form of payment, as the person contacted has explained that none of the Irasville wetlands create enough of a benefit to make enhancement a suitable option.

It was confirmed that any formal conservation of wetlands would need to be arranged with property owners, and agreed that there may be other development proposals which will require some of the anticipated wastewater capacity.

2. Conservation & Recreation Visioning Presentation.

Phil Huffman provided a presentation on the work of the Conservation and Recreation Visioning (CRV) group that took place under a VOREC grant, working to proactively address the need for balance between ecological integrity and outdoor recreation in the Mad River Valley. He outlined that 15 different organizations were involved in this work, which provided three deliverables: an online mapping tool depicting ecological features to be considered when planning trails; a shared vision, values, and guiding principles statement; and a recreational trail development process guide. Mr. Huffman then explained that this work is moving into another phase, CRV 2.0, which will be under the management of the MRVPD, and will be addressing the priorities that were agreed upon during the first phase of this work. The group will now be holding quarterly meetings, and the first one is scheduled for September 23, 2025.

2A. Farley Park Design

Mr. Shupe provided some background information on the Virginia Farley Memorial Park, noting that a draft site plan had been provided to Board members. He explained some of the restrictions on the site, and that it is anticipated as a lower-use area, with plans for parking for six to eight cars, nestled into a berm area outside of the flood zone. There are also plans for footpaths, a pollinator garden, and installation of a stone bench in honor of Ms. Farley's environmental legacy in the Valley and beyond.

Mr. Shupe reported that he had conferred with JB Weir, who has expressed no concerns regarding the parking area of the bench being permitted. Work with VTrans regarding an access permit is underway. The group organizing these plans intends to have the bench in place in time for a soft opening in October of this year, most of the other landscaping work will take place next year.

Mr. Huffman noted the Conservation Commission's familiarity with and support for this project.

MOTION: *Ms. Ursprung moved to approve the site plan for the Farley Memorial Park, and to approved submission of the necessary permitting applications, waiving any fees associated with the Town permits. The motion was seconded by Mr. Messer, and passed unanimously.*

3. Waitsfield Historical Society Rent Agreement.

Mr. Shupe provided some background information regarding the Society's request that rent be waived for the larger of the two office spaces they occupy. Ms. Ursprung explained that the upstairs space previously provided free of charge is 323 square feet, and that the smaller of the two spaces currently occupied is 150 square feet, with the larger one being 250 square feet. The rent charged for the 250 square foot space is \$310/month.

There were concerns expressed regarding equity and avoiding creating any adversarial atmosphere among the building's tenants. It was also noted that the Town has approved significant increases in building improvements in recent months.

Mr. Messer indicated that if rent relief is not approved, the Society will devolve into an ineffectual group with many fewer members and projects, and suggested that the \$1K special appropriation that was approved at March's Town Meeting be increased to \$3K in March of 2026, allowing the Society to continue to function effectively and be sited at the Wait House. Mr. Ursprung spoke of having the Wait House Commission cover the cost of recent tree work which was paid for by the Society; the related reimbursement would provide a large portion of the funds necessary to cover the rent until the next fiscal year begins and appropriations are allocated. This strategy had support among the Board.

MOTION: *Ms. Ursprung moved to deny the Historical Society's request for a rent waiver, to agree to consider during budgeting for the upcoming fiscal year that the Society's special appropriation be increased, and to make the accounting adjustments necessary to provide for the Wait House Commission's covering the cost of recent tree work, and to have the Society reimbursed for their payment of that expense. The motion was seconded by Mr. Babbott-Klein, and passed unanimously.*

4. Short-Term Rentals (STRs).

Mr. Shupe outlined that the Board is considering asking the Planning Commission to look into what options are available for determining the impacts of STRs and whether a policy/ordinance should be developed. Ms. Ursprung noted that gathering this information is one of the goals included in the recently adopted Town Plan.

MOTION: *Mr. Babbott-Klein moved to approve the Selectboard's requesting the Planning Commission to consider options for identifying potential impacts of STRs and suggesting options for addressing any of those impacts. The motion was seconded by Mr. Curtis.*

Mr. Messer spoke of the need for lodging in a tourist-based economy, and asked that all facets of STRs be looked at, including the need for homeowners to have supplemental income, and any impact a registry/regulation would have on increasing the number of Long-Term Rentals available. It was agreed that a better understanding of the local situation is the first step in addressing this matter.

The motion passed unanimously.

5. Wastewater Project Grants.

Northern Borders Catalyst Grant – Mr. Haverkamp provided some background information, explaining that an application to this program would be for an extension of the wastewater line from Irasville (the end of the first phase) to the Elementary School, which serves as an emergency shelter and for which there may be plans for expansion.

MOTION: *Mr. Curtis moved to authorize the Town Administrator to submit a pre-application for the Northern Borders Catalyst Grant. The motion was seconded by Mr. Babbott-Klein, and passed unanimously.*

July 10 2023 flood – Mr. Haverkamp explained that there is new funding available through the Community Development Block Grant, for use in mitigation projects in Washington County; the proposed projects must have a nexus to flooding. Repairing the Town pond was raised as a possible project, as was addressing the slump/slide along the Mill Brook at the Waitsfield/Fayston town line. A public hearing needs to be held before this application is submitted. It was agreed that, while it would be beneficial to receive input from the community on what project might be best to pursue, the timeline does not allow for that. It was agreed that Mr. Haverkamp will research the options and determine which would best be applied for under this grant's requirements.

MOTION: *Mr. Messer moved to authorize Mr. Haverkamp to research the options discussed and to schedule a public hearing for this grant application at the September 20 Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ursprung, and passed unanimously.*

6. Road Crew/Traffic.

Mr. Shupe noted that the anticipated update to the Traffic Ordinance is more complex than anticipated, but that the recurring request for a stop sign at the corner of Dugway and Butcher House Drive may be considered in advance of that ordinance update. Mr. Haverkamp spoke of conflicting information being received, with VLCT indicating that residents of a private road are able to install stop signs, that the Town may also do this at the homeowners' request, and with the Sheriff's Department indicating that there may be Town liability considerations in the event of an accident at the site (although Mr. Haverkamp has not been able to connect further with the Department and receive clarity on this matter). Mr. Shupe explained that he is looking into the relocation of a recently installed stop sign at the Downstreet development, placed near his driveway entrance to the road. He also indicated that there is some overgrowth blocking the sight distance at the intersection in question, and it was agreed to have Mr. Shupe direct the Road Crew to mow that growth as a short-term solution.

7. Vacancies and Appointments.

It was agreed that Mr. Haverkamp should post information regarding the several vacant Town positions, and to also request that an article about this be published in the Valley Reporter. It was indicated that the ACO position should be addressed separately, rather than included in the rest of the slate of open positions.

8. Consent Agenda.

APPROVAL: *A motion to approve the Consent Agenda passed unanimously.*

- Approve Bills Payable and Treasurer's Warrants
- Approve Minutes of August 11, 2025
- Appoint Pete Reynolds to the Water Commission

7. Selectboard Roundtable.

Mr. Messer asked if there would be a second mowing of all roadsides this year; Mr. Haverkamp will check on this.

Ms. Ursprung noted that she is attempting to set up a September meeting with representatives from Moretown and Warren, in order to discuss strategies for making the back roadways between these towns more walkable.

186 Ms. Ursprung noted that she would like a copy of the bylaws for the General Wait House
187 Commission; Mr. Messer indicated that he would provide this.

188 **8. Town Administrator Update.**

189 Mr. Haverkamp highlighted some items from his written report:

- 190 • The ANR permit for work on Butternut Hill was issued, and gravel removal and clearing
191 of culverts is underway
- 192 • Elevator repair has been scheduled for August 26
- 193 • He is working with the Sheriff's Department to complete the Traffic Ordinance update
- 194 • He and Mr. Messer are coordinating a response to a recent noise complaint
- 195 • Dana hill was graded and rolled
- 196 • FEMA will be covering costs associated with engineering for and replacement of two
197 culverts on Old Center Fayston Road; the temporary culverts currently in place are Town
198 property, and will be able to be reused
- 199 • The inspection report for the Meadow Road bridge has not yet been received; there is a
200 possibility that there will be some FEMA funds for this project
- 201 • Town garage RFP has been published, some responses have been received

202 **9. Executive Session.**

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204 **MOTION:** *A motion to enter Executive Session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a) (3) [Personnel],*
205 *passed unanimously.*

206 The meeting entered Executive Session at 8:49 pm and returned to open session at 9:15 pm.

207 No further action was taken by the Board.

208 **IV. Other Business**

209 **1. Correspondence/reports received** were reviewed.

210 **V. Adjourn**

211 The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

212 Respectfully submitted,

213 Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary