

# TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT

## Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 22, 2025

**Draft**

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

**Staff Present:** York Haverkamp, Town Administrator

**Others Present:** James Donaldson (Conservation Commission), Misha Golfman (Mad River Path Association), Charie Hosford, Bob Kogut, Kaiya Korb, Leo Laferriere (Conservation Commission), Curt Lindberg (Conservation Commission), MRVTV, Alice Peal, Mac Rood, Joshua Schwartz (MRVPD), Karrie Thomas, Don Wexler, Candice White

**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. Public Hearing: Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery

Mr. Shupe opened the Public Hearing.

He outlined that the proposed flood mitigation project includes:

- Replacement of Carroll Road culvert
- Acquisition/restoration of the parcel containing wetlands at Carroll Road and Main Street intersection
- Assessment/potential redesign of Town Pond

Mr. Haverkamp provided further details, noting that the parcel acquisition will provide protection from development, with the wetland to be enhanced, that the culvert is failing and will likely be replaced with a box culvert, and that it should be assessed whether the Town Pond is still the best practice for flood prevention, or if another strategy (such as a wetland) would better serve prevention needs. Some wetland information was clarified in a response to a question from Ms. Peal.

**MOTION:** *Mr. Curtis moved to approve submitting an application for the Community Development Block Grant as outlined. The motion was seconded by Mr. Babbott-Klein, and passed unanimously.*

The Public Hearing was closed.

### III. Regular Business

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

Items were added related to an agreement for the Town's Annual Audit, a Liquor License for the Village Grocery, and authorization of voting at the upcoming VLCT meeting.

#### 2. Public Forum.

Nobody requested time to address the Board.

#### IV. Business Items

##### 1. Liquor License \_ DLL Afterthoughts.

Emily Shea confirmed that Afterthoughts' employees' server trainings are all current. It was noted that the Village Grocery did not need to make an appearance, as they have held their licenses for over two years and no problems have been reported.

**MOTION:** *Mr. Babbott-Klien moved to authorize the Town Clerk to submit approvals for the requested Liquor and Tobacco Licenses for Afterthoughts and the Village Grocery. The motion was seconded by Mr. Messer, and passed unanimously.*

##### 2. Mad River Path – update on recently completed Scoping Study.

Mr. Golfman provided a presentation on the progress of planning for development of a multi-use path extending from Warren to Middlesex. He noted the following:

- The history of the project, alternatives that were looked into, and public events held
- The preference indicated for working on Alternative C – a separate shared-use path, using existing trails where possible and the Route 100 corridor when necessary
- The completion of a Scoping Study for the preferred alternative
- The phasing planned for closing the gaps between existing sections of the Mad River Path
- The Warren to Waitsfield connection, including the route, timeline, and costs
  - A .9 mile section in Waitsfield to be addressed in the near term
  - Two .5 mile segments that will be addressed in the future

Several of those present spoke in support of this project, noting various aspects of the proposed path that will be beneficial to different populations that are part of the local community.

Mr. Golfman explained that connection of existing trails, particularly bike trails, through this route helps to create a more interesting, mature network, as well as providing for beginner-level bike rider access. He indicated that he was seeking an endorsement from the Town for the Scoping Study and support for the Project's moving forward with exploration of funding opportunities, noting that an overall endorsement would be beneficial as he will be seeking letters of support as funding opportunities become available.

**MOTION:** *Mr. Ursprung moved to affirm that the Town supports the Scoping Study results, and also supports the Mad River Path Association's associated planning and funding efforts. The motion was seconded by Mr. Babbott-Klein, and passed unanimously.*

##### 3. General Wait House (GWH).

Fire Alarm System Upgrade Proposal

- Quote from Royal Group (\$1,098.79) for cellular communication installation
- Consider cost, savings, and monitoring fee adjustment

Mr. Haverkamp had provided information in the meeting packet, and summarized that a power failure at the property may trigger the alarm system and disable the wireless connection. He noted that the cost of this change in communication service will be recouped in 14 months, as monthly costs will be lower.

**MOTION:** *Mr. Messer moved to approve the purchase of cellular communication equipment and services from Royal Group in the amount of \$1098.79. The motion was seconded by Mr. Babbott-Klein, and passed unanimously.*

#### Foundation Assessment – Dairy Barn

- Update on pending quote from Miles Jenness

Mr. Haverkamp explained that Mr. Jenness has inspected the foundation, and will be providing a quote for raising the barn building and repairing the foundation. It was discussed that there may be less expensive alternatives to this foundation repair. It was also noted that prior to foundation work being completed, the interior structures of the barn will need to be removed.

#### Interior Removal Request – Dairy Barn

- Consider approval of removal of interior structures

Mr. Messer explained that the GWH Commission has proposed removal of the stalls and other interior features of the dairy barn, he indicated that there are likely no elements of historic value that would be removed in this process. He confirmed that volunteers will likely be able to complete most or all of the work, but that some payment for trash removal may be required. Mr. Messer further explained that the GWH Commission plans to evaluate the space and propose highest and best uses going forward.

**MOTION:** *Mr. Babbott-Klein moved to accept the GWH Commission's recommendation and approve removal of the interior structures from the Wait House Dairy Barn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Curtis, and passed unanimously.*

#### Bylaws Review

Board members explained that they felt it important to be involved in the review/update of the GWH Commission Bylaws, in order to ensure that support for community use as well as historic preservation goals will be included; it was acknowledged that a balance of participation between the Commission and Board is important. Mr. Messer asked that the Commission be allowed to have a related conversation, and continue their work on Bylaw revisions for presentation and further discussion with the Board. It was agreed that this matter will be on a future Board agenda, once that draft is ready for review.

### 3A. Letter of Engagement with Sullivan and Powers

**MOTION:** *Mr. Curtis moved to authorize the signing of a Letter of Engagement with Sullivan and Powers for their completion of the Town's Annual Audit. The motion was seconded by Mr. Messer, and passed unanimously.*

### 3B. VLCT Annual Meeting

**MOTION:** *Mr. Messer moved to authorize Mr. Shupe to represent the Town in voting at the annual VLCT meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Babbott-Klein, and passed unanimously.*

**4. PACIF Grant Application – Water System.**

Proposal to apply for PACIF grant in the amount of \$2500 (\$5864 total cost) for Hydrant Buddy and Adjustable Valve Key

Mr. Haverkamp explained that this equipment will allow for a single individual to safely open and flush the valves when necessary, and confirmed that the matching funds will be taken from the Water Commission budget.

**MOTION:** *Mr. Messer moved to approve the PACIF grant submission for purchase of the Hydrant Buddy and Adjustable Valve Key. The motion was seconded by Mr. Babbott-Klein, and passed unanimously.*

**5. Ordinance Review.**

Traffic Ordinance – Mr. Haverkamp explained that wording has been included regarding current speed limits, allowing the Town to receive a portion of proceeds from related fines. There was some discussion regarding enforcement of covered bridge weight limits and related impacts on larger pickup trucks, and the inclusion of only Town Highway crosswalks rather than all crosswalks in the document. Due to some clarifications being needed regarding these items, as well as some other editing that Mr. Haverkamp explained was necessary, it was agreed to postpone adoption of this update.

Domestic Animal Ordinance – The draft of this Ordinance was reviewed, with Mr. Haverkamp explaining that pertinent aspects of the current Dog Ordinance had been incorporated. It was agreed to amend the draft to include language allowing for switching at any point in the enforcement process between the two strategies outlined. It was also agreed to amend the language to allow for enforcement of the Ordinance for all dogs, except for the Registration aspects, which will pertain solely to dogs residing in Waitsfield.

**MOTION:** *Mr. Messer moved to adopt the Domestic Animal Ordinance, incorporating the revisions agreed to by the Board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Babbott-Klein, and passed unanimously.*

Consider rescinding Dog Ordinance – It was agreed that this process may begin once the new Domestic Animal Ordinance has gone through the public notice period and is in place.

**6. Covered Bridge Inspection**

A quote had not yet been received from Miles Jenness (Vermont Heavy Timber), and this item was postponed.

**7. Conservation Commission.**

Approval of Apex Trailworks Proposal

Phase 2 trail construction at Scrag Mountain

Mr. Donaldson indicated that Phase 1 construction was successfully completed last summer, and feedback has been positive. He explained that the one bid received in response to the RFP for Phase 2 trail construction is from the same contractor who undertook the Phase 1 work, and that the Conservation Commission is recommending that the offer be accepted, allowing for

work to begin in June of 2026. It was confirmed that the funds will be paid from the Town Forest Stewardship Reserve Fund.

Mr. Donaldson outlined that the new trail will run through a hardwood section of the forest, and intersect with the current trail just below the beaver pond. This trail will relieve some of the use of the old skid road which currently serves as a trail, and is subject to erosion. He confirmed that the trail will be hand built, with the contractor proposing use of an e-bike and trailer to access the location in order to save travel time hiking to those elevations.

**MOTION:** *Mr. Curtis moved to authorize the Town Administrator to develop and execute a contract with Apex Trailworks for Phase 2 trail construction at Scrag Mountain. The motion was seconded by Mr. Babbott-Klein, and passed unanimously.*

#### Approval of Intervale Conservation Nursery Quote

Planting project funded by Lake Champlain Basin Program grant

Mr. Lindberg outlined the plans to purchase 700 trees, for which Intervale will assist with planting. These will be planted on the Austin, Farley, Riverside, and other properties.

**MOTION:** *Mr. Babbott-Klein s moved to authorize the Town Administrator to develop and execute a contract with Intervale Conservation Nursery for the purchase of trees and planting assistance. The motion was seconded by Mr. Messer, and passed unanimously.*

#### Grant Planning

Development of invasive species management and habitat restoration grant to LCBP

Mr. Lindberg indicated that he has begun drafting an application for this grant, the work under which will continue to improve habitat restoration efforts, as well as to begin addressing a suite of invasive species in addition to the knotweed control currently underway. He noted that there is an intent to include middle and high school students in this work, and that most or all of the match will likely be covered by in-kind services/volunteer efforts.

#### Wu Ledges/Fairgrounds Planning

Work on RFP for consultant services

Mr. Lindberg explained that the RFP for consultant work to help with drafting a Management Plan is being finalized, and that the Conservation Commission wished to confirm with the Selectboard that the Fairgrounds section of the new parcel will be included in that Plan only so far as to address potential conservation related issues and trail access. It was agreed that there should be no limiting of the potential for future uses of that area of the parcel, and that any public meetings should emphasize that this portion of the parcel is being held open for potential public uses.

### 8. Policy Review

Flag-Lowering Policy – There was a discussion precipitated by the recent order for flags to be at half-staff to commemorate the assassination of Charlie Kirk; an action for which a significant number of comments had been received from residents regarding the politicization of the flag lowering practice. Mr. Shupe asked Board members to weigh in on whether the Board should

take a role in deciding whether to fly flags at half-mast following a presidential or gubernatorial proclamation. Mr. Messer explained that the current practice is for the Legion to proceed with the lowering of the Town's flags when such a proclamation is issued.

It was agreed by the Board that when the flag is politicized, a decision either way regarding the lowering of the flag will insult some portion of the population. Board members expressed hope that this situation will not arise again, and acknowledged that the Board does have the option of holding an Emergency Session to discuss whether to follow the proclamation if a similar situation does arrive.

Mr. Shupe noted that, while there is statutory provision for such Emergency meetings, the Selectboard Rules of Procedure should likely be updated to include the process to be followed when scheduling an Emergency meeting.

### **9. Property Acquisition – 516 North Fayston Road**

It was explained that this FEMA property buyout is scheduled for closing on October 9, and that Mr. Shupe is available for necessary document signing as the property is transferred to Town ownership.

**MOTION:** *Mr. Babbott-Klein moved to authorize the Board Chair to sign documents related to the buyout of the 516 North Fayston Road property. The motion was seconded by Mr. Messer, and passed unanimously.*

Mr. Shupe explained that this property will become a green space maintained by the Town, and indicated that the Conservation Commission may wish to consider what management of the parcel is suitable.

### **10. Festival Permit Request – Waitsfield PTA**

Ski and Skate Sale permit request and fee waiver consideration

**MOTION:** *Mr. Messer moved to approve the Ski and Skate Sale Festival Permit application, and to waive the associated fee. The motion was seconded by Mr. Curtis, and passed unanimously.*

### **11. Consent Agenda.**

**APPROVAL:** *A motion to approve the Consent Agenda passed unanimously, with some edits to the dog letter approved.*

- Approve Bills Payable and Treasurer's Warrants
- Approve Minutes of September 8, 2025
- Mail dog letter to 1102 East Warren Road

### **12. Selectboard Roundtable.**

Mr. Babbott-Klein has initiated a committee to address generating interest and increased attendance at Town Meeting, he noted that some additional members would be welcome.

Mr. Messer reported that two dog cases had been addressed that day, in both instances the dogs needed to be housed somewhere. He explained that these situations are difficult to

274 address, as there is no arrangement in place with the Humane Society. Mr. Haverkamp will  
275 look into establishing such an agreement. Mr. Messer noted that, in the event he does need to  
276 board an animal, he may submit an invoice for the food required.

277 **13. Town Administrator Update.**

278 Mr. Haverkamp reported that the Town has received approval of the pre-application submitted  
279 to the Northern Borders Regional Catalyst program, and been asked to apply; this application is  
280 for construction of Phase 2 of the Wastewater Project.

281  
282 **14. Executive Session.**

283 **MOTION:** *A motion to find that premature general knowledge of confidential attorney- client*  
284 *communications made for the purpose of providing professional legal services to the public body would*  
285 *clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage passed unanimously.*

286  
287 **MOTION:** *A motion to enter Executive Session per 1 VSA §313(a)(1)(F) [Attorney-Client Communications]*  
288 *and per 1 VSA §313(a)(3) [Personnel], inviting Mr. Haverkamp, Mr. Lindberg, and Mr. Laferriere to join,*  
289 *passed unanimously.*

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291 The meeting entered Executive Session at 8:46 pm and returned to open session at 9:53 pm.

292  
293 **MOTION:** *Mr. Messer moved to proceed with planning for the use of a Town-owned right-of-*  
294 *way for access to Wu Ledges Town Forest and to notify the landowners of that intent. The*  
295 *motion was seconded by Mr. Babbott-Klein, and passed unanimously.*

296 **V. Other Business**

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

298 **VI. Adjourn**

299 The meeting adjourned at 9:54 pm.

300 Respectfully submitted,  
301 Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary