

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Monday, December 15, 2025

Final

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

Staff Present: York Haverkamp, Town Administrator

Others Present: Laura Arnesen (Mad River Valley Recreation District), Craig Eilers, Peter Franzoni, AnnMarie Harmon, MRVTV, Bobbi Rood

I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm by Brian Shupe. The meeting was held in person at the Waitsfield Town Office and remotely via Zoom.

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

The Consent Agenda was adjusted, and an update on the Meadow Road bridge added to the Covered Bridge agenda item.

2. Public Forum

Nobody requested time to address the Board.

II. Regular Business

1. Consideration of Outdoor Consumption Permit for Mad Moose Bar and Grill

The applicant(s) were not present at the meeting, and so this item was postponed and then passed over.

2. Due Process Resolution

Mr. Shupe explained that the Board had been requested at their previous meeting to adopt this Resolution, and that he had incorporated edits as appropriate to remove the language related to requesting that law enforcement officers also adopt this, as it had been explained that such officers are not permitted to commit to signing on to documents other than their duty oaths. Board members agreed that this Resolution is compatible with/supportive of the previous Resolution adopted regarding inclusivity.

MOTION: *Mr. Curtis moved to adopt the Resolution and to direct all related communications to the Town Administrator. The motion was seconded by Mr. Babbott-Klein, and passed unanimously.*

3. Budget Planning: Health Insurance Options

Mr. Eilers provided an overview of available employee health insurance plans, noting that the rates for the current BCBS plan will be increasing approximately 5%, that an MVP plan with the same coverage would provide a rate decrease of 8%, and that a captive plan through Blue Edge Business CDHP (BCBS) would reduce premium costs by 25%, allowing for the funding by the Town of an HRA to cover the additional out-of-pocket costs associated with the plan. Funds designated for the HRA but not used would remain available to the Town, and the level of use by employees may provide for a partial refund of premiums. Mr. Eilers provided some further details about these plans, and indicated his availability to speak with the staff to explain any changes if a new plan is chosen by the Board.

4. Mad River Valley Recreation District

Laura Arnesen reviewed the Recreation District's accomplishments for 2025 and then outlined goals for 2026 and upcoming years. Upcoming priorities include further enhancements at Mad River Park, and researching the level of local support for establishment of an indoor recreation space. Ms. Arnesen asked that Board members provide feedback on the District's five-year strategic plan if desired.

Ms. Arnesen indicated that there will be a continuation of current work, including the CRV work, and there is the potential to provide for some level of assistance with middle school sports activities, which have been reduced by the School District. The Recreation District is requesting level funding for the coming year, of \$40K from each of the three full member towns and \$20K from Moretown.

5. Village Covered Bridge and Meadow Road Bridge Inspection Proposals

Mr. Haverkamp reported that he had recently met with Miles Jenness, and highlighted some of the information he had included in his written Town Administrator report. He explained that Mr. Jenness had done some testing of the bridge beams where the decking is raised, and would like to do a full inspection before he outlines how to move forward with repairs. A rough estimate of \$1750 was provided for the cost of the inspection. Board members indicated that they would like to know what costs would be associated with repairs as they work on finalizing the budget, and confirmed that the inspection should take place, preferably within the coming weeks.

It was also noted that the only way to allow for a higher weight limit on Vermont's covered bridges is through the installation of metal support beams.

MOTION: *Mr. Messer moved to authorize an expenditure of up to \$2000 for Vermont Heavy Timber/Miles Jenness to complete an inspection of the Village Covered Bridge. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ursprung, and passed unanimously.*

A proposal had been submitted by Dubois & King for completion of a two part inspection of the Meadow Road bridge, to outline decking replacement and to provide a summary of potential rehabilitation strategies. Mr. Haverkamp explained that the firm is also willing to complete another site visit in order to provide a cost-benefit analysis regarding rehabilitation vs replacement. He also noted that the decking work would be eligible for reimbursement by FEMA, but an engineering study would not be eligible if the decking work was not subsequently completed. The Board agreed to wait until the further information is available before deciding whether to move forward with requesting this analysis.

Mr. Babbott-Klein reported on the camera research he had completed, outlining options and related expenses. Mr. Haverkamp noted that he is continuing to research the legal implications of camera installation at the bridge; it was agreed that a policy regarding this should be drafted. It was agreed to place a camera at Meadow Road, but to not install cameras at the Village Bridge at this point.

MOTION: *Mr. Babbott-Klein moved to approve the expenditure of up to \$500 on a camera and related data plan for installation at the Meadow Road bridge. The motion was seconded by Mr. Messer, and passed unanimously.*

6. General Wait House Leases

AnnMarie Harmon explained that the GWH Commission recommends that the tenant leases be renewed with no rent increase in January 2026, and a 2% increase be imposed in July, providing some notification time for the tenants. She indicated that current rent receipts are less than \$500 short of covering the building's expenses for the year, and that the building's reserve fund has a balance of over \$70K after all completed projects have been paid for. There was some discussion regarding modifying the lease language to include an annual increase, and it was noted that the current lease language contains a clause indicating a need for a 3-month advance notification of any rent increase. It was also pointed out that annual incremental rent increases may be more palatable than another large increase such as the one agreed upon for this year. It was agreed that adoption of a policy which outlines that rental rate changes be considered every year, with no automatic increases specified, was the most suitable approach. Mr. Haverkamp spoke of there being minimal costs associated with the connector space, and suggested not increasing the rent for that space. Mr. Shupe noted that the Town has some legitimate

expenses at the building, and that it is appropriate that the General Fund is used for the \$500 of expenses not covered by rent receipts. It was also agreed that the recent improvements to the roof and heating system may lead to reduced building costs for the coming year.

MOTION: *Mr. Messer moved to increase the General Wait House rental rates by 2%, effective July 1, 2026. The motion was seconded by Mr. Babbott-Klein, and passed unanimously.*

7. Fire Department Review

Board members spoke of being impressed with the Fire Department's leadership team and pleased with the current number of volunteer members. There was some discussion of the need for a new Fire Station, and it was agreed to ask Breadloaf Construction for a general outline of the feasibility of co-locating the Fire and Road Department buildings. It was also agreed that the Board will likely need to plan for some investment in the current building, particularly the needed electrical panel and heating system work. It was reiterated that it would be beneficial to receive a copy of the inspection report that was completed for the Fire Station several years ago.

8. Budget

Review Budget Principles – Mr. Shupe outlined that budget planning is beginning, and that he, Mr. Curtis, and Mr. Haverkamp have been doing some preliminary work in preparation for Board discussions. The Principles agreed upon previously were provided in the meeting packet, and were reviewed. There was a discussion of building maintenance and rewording the Principle associated with a maintenance plan, to include replacement considerations. It was also noted that the ARPA reference was removed. Some additional edits were suggested, and an updated document will be reviewed again at the next Board meeting.

LOT Update – Mr. Shupe reported that he has had conversations with Eric Friedman regarding outreach to the business community regarding the implementation of a LOT, and that they spoke of the potential for a survey to be conducted. He also noted that Joshua Schwartz has updated the revenue estimates from a LOT in Waitsfield, and is finalizing that data. It was agreed that there should be a public meeting on this topic, with a suggestion that the LOT memo be finalized and made public on January 5, a discussion be placed on the Board's agenda for January 12, and to potentially schedule a second public meeting for later in January or in February.

Both the FY26 Year-to-Date and Capital Budget Projections are available, and are being reviewed in budget preparation efforts. Mr. Shupe indicated that it should be possible to put together a fairly tight budget again this year.

8A. Review Minutes of November 24, 2025

The Minutes of November 24 were amended and approved.

9. Consent Agenda

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

- Approve Bills Payable & Treasurer's Warrants
- Approve Minutes of 12.8.2025
- RCAP – Community Wastewater System Emergency Response and Vulnerability Assessment
- Approve amendment to Municipal Planning Grant, Designating the Town Administrator as the Municipal/Authorizing Official

10. Selectboard Roundtable

Mr. Babbott-Klein offered to take Ms. Ursprung's place on the tri-town traffic calming group which has been meeting.

Mr. Babbott-Klein indicated that he would work with Mr. Haverkamp to determine if the Town might benefit from posting events on the Bee App.

11. Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Haverkamp reported that:

- A BRIC grant has been submitted by CVRPC to cover some of the costs related to recent LHMP work.
- The Northern Catalyst grant of \$1M for wastewater system work between Bridge Street and the Elementary School has been awarded.
- The CDBG grant applied for to cover work at the Carroll Road/Main Street area was not awarded, as the program was seeking projects more directly connected to housing.
- He has been meeting with VTrans regarding the 'no parking' signs in the Bridge/Main Streets area; some will be removed and others left in place.

III. Executive Session

MOTION: *A motion to find that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage passed unanimously.*

MOTION: *A motion to enter Executive Session per 1 VSA §313(a)(1)(B) [Labor Relations], per 1 VSA §313(a)(1)(A) [Contracts], and per 1 VSA §313(a)(1)(F) [Legal], inviting Mr. Haverkamp to join, passed unanimously.*

The meeting entered Executive Session at 9:23 pm and returned to open session at 10:00 pm.

MOTION: *Mr. Curtis moved to approve changing employee health care coverage to Blue Edge Business CDHP, as outlined by Mr. Eilers at the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Messer, and passed unanimously.*

MOTION: *Mr. Babbott-Klein moved to authorize the Town Administrator to establish a contract with Dubois & King for the amount discussed, for completion of an inspection of the Meadow Road bridge. The motion was seconded by Mr. Messer, and passed unanimously.*

IV. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary