

# TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT

## Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 12, 2026

**Draft**

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

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

**Others Present:** Bruno Grimaldi (Conservation Commission), Curt Lindberg (Conservation Commission), MRVTV

**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.

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

No changes were made to the agenda.

### **2. Public Forum**

Nobody requested time to address the Board.

## **II. Regular Business**

### **1. Treasurer's Report**

Steve Lewis was not available, and will present at the next meeting. Mr. Shupe noted that he had been in contact with Mr. Lewis and Ms. Gallup, and that there were no concerns raised regarding current expenditures.

### **2. Conservation Commission (CC) budget presentation**

Curt Lindberg and Bruno Grimaldi explained that the CC had agreed to request the same budget amounts as last year; \$5K for general expenses, \$20K to be placed in the Restroom, Recreation and Conservation (RRC) Reserve, and \$10 in the Invasive Species Reserve, of which \$7500 is intended for addressing plant species and the balance for emerald ash borer management.

Mr. Lindberg outlined that the \$139K two-year grant which had been awarded by the Lake Champlain Basin Program will require a match from the three towns, to be split along the same percentages as prior grants for invasive treatment/goat herding. A large portion of the match is covered by volunteer in-kind work, with any funds needed being drawn from the Invasive Species Reserve. He recommended that this practice continue, rather than putting the funds potentially needed into the general fund, as the reserve amounts can be carried over from year to year.

Mr. Lindberg and Mr. Grimaldi then made note of the larger project expenditures which are on the horizon for the CC; already in progress are the second phase of trail development at Scrag Forest and full implementation of the plans for the Farley Park. Following those projects will be Management Plan completion and any property work resulting from that Plan's recommendations. They noted that the third phase of Scrag trail development will be the most expensive portion of that project, and that grants will be sought to fund this work. Mr. Grimaldi also noted that having funds available is important if any new opportunities arise for beneficial land acquisition. There is currently \$118K in the RRC, with \$20K slated to be moved to that fund at the end of the current fiscal year. Other Scrag Forest funds were reviewed briefly.

There was some further discussion of the RRC, and Mr. Haverkamp noted that he plans to work on clarifying the establishment timeline and potential used for this fund, as well as other Reserve Funds. It

was confirmed that the RRC fund may be used to address restroom projects at the Wait House if necessary.

Mr. Lindberg indicated that he would follow up on the previous meeting regarding emerald ash borer management by scheduling a meeting with the CC, the Tree Board, Caitlin Cusack (VLT) and Joanne Garton (DFW).

Due to the small number of responses for Management Plan consulting services, the CC plans to extend the time allowed for project completion and repost the RFP.

### **3. Consider appointment of Robin Morris to Water Commission**

Mr. Morris had indicated that he is willing to begin serving on the Water Commission again. Mr. Shupe explained that Mr. Morris' experience will be helpful in considering wastewater system design implications on the water system and developing a wastewater ordinance. He indicated that the Water Commission is likely to become the Water and Sewer Commission once the wastewater system is in place.

**MOTION:** *Mr. Messer moved to appoint Robin Morris to the Water Commission, for a position running through March 2027. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ursprung, and passed unanimously.*

### **4. Budget**

#### Local Option Tax (LOT)

The final version of the projected LOT revenues for Waitsfield had been provided by Joshua Schwartz; this information will be posted on the web site in anticipation of a public discussion regarding the matter scheduled for the coming week.

#### Town Operations

This budget was reviewed with Mr. Haverkamp, with his noting the following:

- Town Office repairs and maintenance will need to be increased if it is decided to refinish the concrete floors
- Cybersecurity has not yet been included in the budget
- There is the potential to put cleaning services out to bid, but the staff is not in favor of making any changes

Other increases, decreases, and areas where further information is needed were outlined. It was agreed to adjust the employee health insurance line to account for a potential increase in rates on January 1, 2027; Mr. Haverkamp will look into Library budgeting details; it was agreed that the General Wait House needs a detailed budget, but that the Town's General Operating budget should include only the total amounts for the building's operations and reserves. Solar Array, Public Safety, and Miscellaneous areas were noted as still needing to be completed.

#### Capital Budget

Mr. Curtis noted that the Town's debt service is decreasing, and that the intent is to continue to fund Reserve accounts and avoid borrowing, except for long term infrastructure needs such as the Town Garage and Wastewater System. He outlined fund balances, contributions, and use over the past year, noting that contributions have typically included an amount from each year's budget surplus. The Capital Plan runs through five years, or longer for some Road Department categories.

Mr. Shupe explained the Town's policy of keeping two months of operating expenses available, rather than applying the full amount of any budget surplus to reserve funds. He suggested that it might be considered to raise the amount to be kept available, or to set up a line item/reserve fund for emergency response activities, primarily those related to flooding.

Mr. Curtis explained that LOT revenues, if the tax is implemented, will be applied to this budget for infrastructure needs.

There was general agreement that an Emergency Response Reserve Fund should be established and funded, with a percentage of LOT receipts to be applied to that fund.

Covered bridge needs were discussed, with it being noted that the work may take place in the current fiscal year; the proposed capital funding is in line with what was allocated for the current year.

It was agreed that the General Operating Budget should be finalized before reviewing the Capital Budget for finalization.

## **5. Consent Agenda**

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

- Approve Bills Payable & Treasurer's Warrants

## **6. Town Administrator's Report**

Mr. Haverkamp reported that the Rapid Response Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) are in place, and that he has been addressing the buttons which have been getting stuck. He noted that new, approved signage is being delivered. The paperwork for grant reimbursement for this project has been submitted.

He also reported that a letter has been sent to FEMA requesting an extension of time for project completion for the Center Fayston Road culvert work.

## **7. Selectboard Roundtable**

Mr. Babbott-Klein reported that the Town Meeting Committee had sent a survey out to parents.

Mr. Curtis expressed appreciation for the Road Crew's efforts in keeping roads safe during the holiday period.

## **III. Executive Session**

**MOTION:** *A motion to enter Executive Session per 1 VSA §313(a)(3) [Personnel], inviting Mr. Haverkamp to join, passed unanimously.*

The meeting entered Executive Session at 8:23 pm and returned to open session at 9:08 pm.

No further action was taken by the Board.

## **IV. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary