

1 **TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT**

2 **Selectboard Meeting Minutes**

3 **Monday, January 21, 2026**

4 **Draft**

5
6 **Members Present:** David Babbott-Klein, Chach Curtis, Fred Messer, Brian Shupe, Larissa
7 Ursprung

8 **Staff Present:** York Haverkamp, Town Administrator; Steve Lewis, Town Treasurer

9 **Others Present:** Emily Beliveau, Doug Bergstein, Alison Duckworth, Eric Friedman (MRV
10 Chamber), Misha Golfman (Mad River Path), Lisa Loomis (Valley Reporter), Robin Morris,
11 MRVTV, Bobbi Rood, Mac Rood, George Schenk, Colleen Senterfitt, Jimmy Senterfitt, Josh Turka
12

13 **I. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Brian Shupe. The meeting was
14 held in person at the Waitsfield Town Office and remotely via Zoom.
15

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

17 No changes were made to the agenda.
18

19 **2. Public Forum**

20 Nobody requested time to speak to the Board.
21

22 **II. Public Hearing – Local Option Tax (LOT)**

23 Mr. Shupe provided a presentation covering the Town’s infrastructure and capital projects
24 needs, explaining: that a LOT could help alleviate related property tax increases; what a LOT is
25 and some of the details involved; and why a LOT is being considered again at this time,
26 including an outline of the differences between a Waitsfield LOT and the previous consideration
27 of a Valley-wide LOT. He then summarized some of the uses made by other towns of LOT
28 receipts, and indicated that the Board’s intent is to use LOT funds received for infrastructure
29 and capital improvement projects.

30 The potential revenue that Waitsfield would receive from a 1% LOT approved for all three
31 allowable categories (sales, rooms and meals, and alcohol) is projected at \$600K, a significant
32 portion of which would be paid by non-Waitsfield residents. The projected impact of the LOT
33 on Waitsfield residents is approximately \$186 per household annually. The timeline for
34 adoption and implementation was provided, including a vote at Town Meeting and initialization
35 on July 1, 2026 if the vote is in favor of adopting a LOT.

36 Several questions from those in attendance were answered. Comments were also provided,
37 with George Schenk speaking to the potential inequity of a sales tax and the additional
38 premium already placed on food/beverage and alcohol sales. Generally, the comments were in
39 favor of the Town adopting a LOT. It was explained by the Board that there are no other taxing
40 options available for municipalities, as the State would need to pass legislation allowing for any
41 other methods of raising local taxes.

42 Board members explained that they are working to find ways to fund the many infrastructure
43 needs in Town, alongside the diminishing availability of State and Federal funds for much of this

44 work. Mr. Messer spoke of his opposition to the creation of additional tax burdens on
45 Vermonters, noting that they increase the affordability problem being experienced in the state.

46 **MOTION:** *Mr. Babbott-Klein moved to have ballot language prepared for seeking approval via*
47 *Australian Ballot for a 1% LOT tax to be placed on all three of the allowable categories, with*
48 *final language to be approved at the January 26 Selectboard meeting. The motion was*
49 *seconded by Mr. Curtis, and passed unanimously.*

50

51 Mr. Haverkamp will look into whether this should/must be presented as one article or a
52 separate article for each of the three tax categories.

53

54 **III. Regular Business**

55 **1. Budget update with Steve Lewis**

56 Mr. Lewis provided an overview of the status of the current fiscal year's General and Capital
57 Fund budgets, noting that both revenues and expenditures are in line with what was
58 anticipated. He outlined the Town's current CD investments, and indicated that the unassigned
59 fund balance for the prior fiscal year is estimated to be \$600K. Mr. Lewis confirmed that the
60 current year's general expenses are similar to those of the prior year for this point in the year,
61 although the use of the previous \$300K of unassigned funds creates the appearance that
62 spending has generally increased.

63

64 **2. Active Transportation Corridor**

65 Misha Golfman outlined the trail maintenance services provided by the Mad River Path for
66 approximately five miles of trails in Waitsfield, for which the Town provides \$4500. He also
67 noted educational programming, summer camps, equipment lending, and other services
68 provided by the Path.

69

70 Mr. Golfman then spoke of the continuing work to implement the scoping study which was
71 completed for the Active Transportation Corridor, and explained that a committee has been
72 formed to complete some of the necessary steps. He explained that oversight of the project is
73 necessary, and that he is proposing that a half-time Implementation Coordinator position be
74 created, to be funded in equal parts by the Path, the Town of Warren, and Waitsfield. This
75 person would be responsible for grant administration, coordination of volunteers and the many
76 groups involved in the project, and other needed tasks. The amount being requested from
77 each entity is \$15K.

78

79 Board members provided feedback on this proposal, and Mr. Golfman answered questions,
80 including providing information related to future financial needs and the economic benefits
81 that will be realized due to completion of the Corridor. Mr. Shupe indicated that this matter
82 would be addressed by the Board during further Budget/Town Meeting planning, and that it
83 was more likely that the matter would be presented to the voters as a separate Article rather
84 than incorporated into the Budget.

85

86 **3. GWH Commission Budget**

87 It was noted that this budget does not have any items of concern to be discussed.

88

89 **4. Agricultural Tax Stabilization Agreement**

90 Mr. Shupe explained that he had discussed this matter with Mr. Haverkamp, and proposed that
91 a one-year agreement be put in place, to provide time for the property owners to enroll in the
92 Current Use Program, particularly as the Town’s agreement was not in place for the current tax
93 year due to staffing changes. Board members agreed that this program, initiated before the
94 State’s program was in place, should be discontinued.

95
96 **MOTION:** *Mr. Messer moved to request that Mr. Haverkamp draft language for a one-year tax*
97 *stabilization agreement to be entered into with the two property owners with whom the past*
98 *agreement was entered into. The motion was seconded by Mr. Babbott-Klein, and passed*
99 *unanimously.*

100

101 **5. A&E proposals for Old Center Fayston and Center Fayston Road culverts**

102 Mr. Haverkamp presented the bid information received for these projects, noting that the bid
103 from New England Consulting Engineers (NECE) was \$1000 higher than the lowest bid. He
104 explained that the proposal provided by NECE fully covers anticipated permitting needs, and
105 includes 30%, 60%, and 90% design phases, which would serve to minimize risk. Mr.
106 Haverkamp noted that the bid amounts are all above the amount previously approved by FEMA
107 for this work, but that FEMA had indicated that the amount would be reconsidered once bids
108 were received.

109

110 **MOTION:** *Mr. Babbott-Klein moved to accept the \$30K bid from New England Consulting*
111 *Engineers for the culvert work outlined, and to authorize the Town Administrator to sign a*
112 *contract for the work. The motion was seconded by Mr. Messer, and passed unanimously.*

113

114 **6. Consideration of assistance in preparing Town Report**

115 Mr. Shupe recused himself from this agenda item.

116

117 Mr. Haverkamp explained that Valerie Capels had offered to assist with compiling the Town
118 Report, and outlined why her assistance would be valuable. Ms. Capels had provided a memo
119 outlining her proposal.

120

121 **MOTION:** *Mr. Babbott-Klein moved to approve contracting with Valerie Capels for Town Plan*
122 *preparation work, for approximately 20 hours at \$75/hour, and to authorize the Town*
123 *Administrator to sign the agreement. The motion was seconded by Mr. Curtis, and passed*
124 *unanimously.*

125

126 **7. Budget Discussion**

127 Mr. Haverkamp noted that Josh Rogers, Road Foreman, has agreed to have the Road Crew take
128 on the mowing of the Library grounds.

129

130 Miscellaneous and Public Safety Budget Sections

131 Mr. Haverkamp reviewed these with the Board. The following was agreed upon:

- 132
- 132 • Raising the Town Health Officer stipend to \$1000
 - 133 • Reducing the Constable line item to \$4000

- 134 • Requesting the Mark Giometti (MRVAS) meet with Mr. Haverkamp and any interested
135 Board members to explain the options considered and the decision to contract with
136 Capital West for future dispatching needs.

137

138 Revenues

139 Anticipated revenues were reviewed, including potential increases.

140

141 Capital Items

142 It was indicated that line striping on the East Warren Road would likely be covered by
143 unassigned balance funds. It was agreed that the fire hydrant installation at the corner of
144 Rolston and East Warren Roads should be budgeted for.

145

146 Cyber Security and IT Proposals

147 Mr. Haverkamp indicated that the information distributed to Board members was not included
148 in the meeting packet due to the sensitive nature of some of the information included. He had
149 compiled a comparison of the several proposals, and noted that he had met with all those who
150 had submitted a plan for the Town's consideration. He highlighted that Rural Solutions had
151 completed an audit of the Town's IT systems free of charge, and indicated that they are the
152 firm likely to provide the best general IT services, although all the submitters would likely be
153 appropriate vendors of cyber security solutions.

154

155 **MOTION:** *Mr. Babbott-Klein moved to authorize the Town Administrator to pursue entering*
156 *into an agreement with Rural Solutions for IT and Cyber Security services. The motion was*
157 *seconded by Mr. Messer, and passed unanimously.*

158

159 **8. Ballot Question – Term of Collector of Delinquent Taxes**

160 Mr. Babbott-Klein read the proposed question aloud, which seeks approval for establishing a 3-
161 year term for the Delinquent Tax Collector. It was noted that the only term lengths allowed by
162 statute are 1-year and 3-year.

163

164 **MOTION:** *Mr. Babbott-Klein moved to approve the inclusion of the question regarding a 3-year*
165 *term for the Delinquent Tax Collector in the warning for Town Meeting. The motion was*
166 *seconded by Mr. Messer, and passed unanimously.*

167

168 **9. Consent Agenda**

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

- 170 • Approve Bills Payable & Treasurer's Warrants
- 171 • Approve Minutes of 1.5.2026 and 1.12.2026

172

173 **10. Town Administrator's Report**

174 Mr. Haverkamp noted that several municipal positions (Fence Viewer, Weigher of Coals,
175 Inspector of Lumber) have become optional rather than mandatory positions to be filled.

176

177 **11. Selectboard Roundtable**

178 Mr. Babbott-Klein reported that the new Planner hired by MRVPD will be starting in the
179 position in February.

180

181 Mr. Shupe reported that work is continuing on determining the location of a water main leak.

182

183 **IV. Adjourn**

184 The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

185

186 Respectfully submitted,

187 Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary