

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 26, 2026

Draft

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

Staff Present: York Haverkamp, Town Administrator

Others Present: Lisa Loomis (Valley Reporter)

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 speak to the Board.

II. Regular Business

1. Contract for limited surveying services – Wu Ledges

Mr. Shupe explained the proposal from the Conservation Commission (CC) to have surveying work completed, with the first phase to be completed by Glenn Towne, who has done prior extensive work regarding this property. The CC feels strongly that Mr. Towne is the person to contract with for this work, as he knows the history of the property. The second phase would be the completion of any field work determined to be necessary to finalize the survey. Mr. Towne does not have the insurance coverage which may be required for this phase of the work, but has expressed a willingness to sign a hold harmless agreement. Board members noted that the first phase of the work may serve to answer most of the questions surrounding the property lines and other survey details, and agreed to postpone a decision regarding a contractor for the field work portion of the survey.

MOTION: Mr. Babbott-Klein moved to approve a contract with Glenn Towne for Phase One work on the proposed limited surveying at the Wu Ledges property. The motion was seconded by Mr. Messer, and passed unanimously.

2. Final Budget Review and Appropriations

Recent changes to the budget were reviewed, with it being noted that the Library budget had been reduced slightly and that the Appropriations section had been adjusted in order to allow for new requests to be voted on. The Ventrac will be paid for out of the Town Garage Facilities budget. The version of the budget reviewed had a bottom line increase of 2.3%.

There was some discussion of the changing needs for MRVAS dispatch services, which will likely increase in the coming months. Mr. Haverkamp will confer with Warren to determine if there is potential for a discount to be requested due to both Fire Departments and now the ambulance service all contracting with Capital dispatch for dispatching.

46 It was noted that changes in electrical costs due to the age of the solar array will need to be
47 determined for future budgeting purposes.

48
49 The Capital Budget was reviewed, with Mr. Curtis explaining that reserves are being spent
50 down, but that funds will likely be available as needed in the upcoming few years if the current
51 rate of contributions is continued. It was agreed that it is likely that unassigned funds will be
52 used for covered bridge work to take place in the spring, before the FY27 budget is operational,
53 and also that the reappraisal fund is currently sufficient and does not need a contribution at
54 this time.

55
56 After some discussion and a determination of the overall budget increase if all expense items
57 which will be presented to voters are approved, it was agreed to increase the Street Tree
58 Reserve contribution by \$10K in order to address tree treatment and removal due to emerald
59 ash borer impacts.

60
61 **3. Review and Approval of 2026 Town Meeting Warning**

62 Mr. Shupe outlined the suggested changes provided through legal review, noting which of these
63 had been incorporated into the draft Warning. The Board then reviewed each Article, adjusting
64 the budget numbers and agreeing upon retaining the language regarding the allocation of LOT
65 receipts as drafted. The Article related to borrowing in advance of tax receipts was removed, as
66 Mr. Babbott-Klien had learned that this authority is granted to municipalities without the need
67 for voter approval.

68
69 Mr. Haverkamp will communicate with the landowners impacted by the one-year agricultural
70 stabilization proposal.

71
72 There was some discussion regarding the inclusion of the Article regarding the Town's
73 participating in funding a project manager position to assist with implementation of the Active
74 Transportation Corridor. Concerns were raised regarding the position potentially not being able
75 to accomplish much progress in the upcoming year, due to the current funding climate, and
76 that financing this position, as well as ongoing and future expenses related to the Corridor,
77 need to be understood more clearly. It was also noted that the Mad River Path has put in much
78 effort on the Corridor to date, and that in order to maintain momentum some assistance will be
79 necessary. It was agreed to add language to Article specifying that this is to be a one-year
80 expenditure.

81
82 **MOTION:** *Mr. Curtis moved to include the Article as amended in the Warning. The motion was
83 seconded by Mr. Babbott-Klein, and passed with Mr. Messer opposed.*

84
85 Regarding the Article related to adoption of an LOT, it was agreed that it is important to keep
86 the language related to the purpose of the funds, although it had been advised that this is not
87 necessary. It was confirmed that the language as proposed is in alignment with the statutory
88 allowances for an LOT. There was some discussion regarding posing a separate question for
89 each tax category, but that change was not favored by all.

90

91 MOTION: Mr. Curtis moved to approve the language for the LOT Article, to be voted on by
92 Australian Ballot. The motion was seconded by Mr. Babbott-Klein, and passed with Brian
93 Shupe, Dave, and Chach approving with Mr. Messer opposed?

94

95 **Town report**

96 Mr. Shupe will draft a Selectboard Report and circulate it for review. He noted that a Budget
97 Report should also be written. Suggestions were made for the dedication of the Town Report.

98

99 It was agreed to meet on January 29 at 4:00 pm to approve the Budget and Warning.

100

101 **4. Consent Agenda**

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

- Approve Bills Payable & Treasurer's Warrants

104

105 **5. Town Administrator's Report**

106 Mr. Haverkamp had nothing to add to what was included in the meeting packet.

107

108 **6. Selectboard Roundtable**

109 Nobody had anything to report.

110

111 **III. Executive Session**

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

114

115 **MOTION:** *A motion to enter Executive Session per 1 VSA §313(a)(1)(E) [Civil Litigation or Prosecution],
116 inviting Mr. Haverkamp to join, passed unanimously.*

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118 The meeting entered Executive Session at 9:12 pm and returned to open session at 9:43 pm.

119

120 No further action was taken by the Board.

121

122 **IV. Adjourn**

123 The meeting adjourned at 9:43 pm.

124 Respectfully submitted,
125 Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary