TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 24, 2026

Draft

Members Present: David Babbott-Klein, Chach Curtis, Fred Messer, Brian Shupe, Larissa Ursprung
Staff Present: York Haverkamp, Town Administrator
Others Present: Emily Beliveau, Anna Church, Dierdre Darr, Mary Beth Herbert, MRVTV, Keith Morris, Robin Morris (Water Commission), Gail O'Keefe, Jimmy Senterfitt, Eve Silverman, Jonathan Ursprung

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. Animal Control Ordinance Hearing
Mr. Shupe explained that the hearing was an opportunity to continue the discussion regarding the recent goat attack incident, in order for the Board to determine what appropriate actions are to be taken.

Mr. Messer, as the Town's Health Officer, had provided a written report for the Board earlier in the day, which he summarized. The report outlines the events leading to the death of three goats of the knotweed-control herd owned by MaryBeth Herbert, and concludes that Dierdre Darr, the caretaker of the dog at the time of the incident, had acted responsibly and not violated the Town's leash law. The report also finds that the dog, Shadow, is a vicious dog, and that Keith Morris is the dog's owner. Mr. Messer also recommended that the Town initiate the process necessary to enable a civil ticket writing system and collection of associated fines.

Ms. Darr outlined the steps she took in an effort to handle the situation when Shadow jumped out of the vehicle in which he was leashed (and had chewed through the lead), and her responsiveness in attempting to retrieve him and call for assistance in doing so. Mr. Morris indicated that he would be seeking a way to compensate Ms. Hebert for the deceased goats, noting that he understands the loss of livestock. He also outlined that he had on several occasions needed to retrieve Shadow, generally in Burlington, and that he had never seen Shadow exhibit aggression toward people or other dogs. He acknowledged that Huskies have a prey drive, and that Shadow needs to be restrained when near chickens and rabbits.

Anna Church presented information gathered from public records requests, and summarized that there have been some dog-at-large incidents reported in Burlington and associated tickets issued, dating back to 2022. Ms. Church also reported on similar incidents in Jeffersonville, as well as a situation in Jeffersonville where Shadow killed a penned in goat.

Ms. Hebert expressed a preference to an outcome that contains Shadow but that does not call for his euthanization, emphasizing that in this type of situation the risk lies with the owner/handler, not with the animal.

Mr. Shupe noted that the Board needs to address Shadow's actions in Waitsfield, rather than the dog's actions in general.

Additional questions were raised by Board members, some of which were answered by the parties present. Mr. Shupe explained that the Board and Mr. Messer were working to understand what jurisdiction is possible, and explained that after conferring in Executive Session later in the meeting, the Board would issue a written finding, including any action to be taken.

Mr. Morris indicted that he had no objection to Shadow's being banned from Waitsfield.

2. Green Mountain Valley School (GMVS) Fall Orientation Event

It was outlined that this orientation event began last year, and is currently an annual event where GMVS students, in groups of 11 or less, travel through the area on foot and bicycle. Board members requested that Mr. Haverkamp advise Sam Jackson of GMVS to inform the Sheriff's Department, GMVS, and any other pertinent parties of the event, as well as to notify the Valley Reporter through a press release.

3. Planning Commission Appointment

Jimmy Senterfitt introduced himself, provided some background information, and spoke of his interest in serving on the Planning Commission.

MOTION: *Ms. Ursprung moved to appoint Jimmy Senterfitt to the Planning Commission for the remainder of a four-year term ending in March 2030. The motion was seconded by Mr. Messer, and passed unanimously.*

4. Community Wastewater Ordinance

Mr. Shupe reported that an initial legal review of the draft Ordinance had been completed, and that after some further editing there will be opportunities for public presentations scheduled. The Water Commission will become the Water and Wastewater Commission when the Ordinance is adopted, and Mr. Morris explained that changes will be made to the Water Ordinance as well, in order to ensure that the two documents are compatible. Some details regarding allocations, capacity, and other aspects were discussed; Mr. Morris noted that he will be completing some further edits to the draft.

It was agreed to place additional review time on upcoming Selectboard agendas as opportunities for informal public presentation in advance of scheduling the formal public hearing for the Ordinance. The Board will spend time on October 12 (overview) and October 26 (Article 3 details) discussing the Ordinance. In the meantime, the subcommittee (Mr. Morris, Mr. Shupe, and Mr. Curtis) will continue to work on preparing further draft revisions.

5. Downstreet/Verdmont Update

Jennifer Petersen had received an email from a Verdmont resident, stating that some of the Downstreet efforts were backsliding. Mr. Messer reported that he had spoken with Jenny Hislop of Downstreet, and had informed her that there are at least three bears roaming the area, that garbage had been left on porches, the roll-off dumpster was full, and that there were still dog feces on the site. Ms. Hislop had provided a written report, and Mr. Messer noted that the following work was being undertaken:

- An engineering study of the replacement leach field has begun
- The contractor has been requested to replace the full dumpster
- The large mound of dirt, stumps, etc. is being removed
- Quotes for fencing around the dumpster are being received
- The water pressure issue is being assessed
- A BBQ for residents has been scheduled for September 3
- Flyers have been left on doors regarding dog waste and trash issues

Both Mr. Messer and Mr. Shupe had driven through the park recently, and noted that there have been improvements made, but that work is still needed.

Mr. Morris reported that all the water meters are operational, but that no work on meter pits had yet taken place. Mr. Shupe pointed out that communication with Nate Fredericks is critical when any meter pit work is taking place. Mr. Morris noted that water testing indicated that the pressure is suitable at 70 psi, and that *e. coli* testing results were good.

Mr. Messer will follow up with the resident who sent the email, as well as with Downstreet.

6. Tier 1B Act 250 Status

Jonathan Ursprung explained that Tier 1B status shifts development review responsibility to the Town, as it exempts from Act 250 review any development of up to 50 residential units in the Tier 1B designated area.

Mr. Shupe pointed out some anomalies in the associated mapping, indicating some areas designated on the proposed Tier 1B mapping that are not suitable for this level of development, particularly noting the area north of the Waitsfield Telecom property. Mr. Ursprung explained the coordination of the Regional Planning Commission's proposed Future Land Use map and the Tier designations, indicating that it is likely that the Board is able designate which of the pertinent FLU areas are to be considered Tier 1B by the Town.

MOTION: *Mr. Babbott-Klein moved to amend the draft Resolution for Tier 1B status to have the final clause read as: "Now, therefore be it resolved that The municipality hereby requests to have the Irasville Village District, the Waitsfield Village Business District, and the Waitsfield Village Residential District, as designated in the Waitsfield Zoning Bylaws, mapped for Tier 1B status," to approve the amended Resolution, and to authorize the Board Chair to sign the Resolution. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ursprung, and passed unanimously.*

7. Meadow Road Bridge

No responses to the published RFP for initial design work on the bridge had been received; Tyler Billingsley had provided a contract for consideration for his completing both the design work and the construction-related engineering in his role as Town Engineer. Mr. Billingsley indicated that the contract would need to be adjusted if it is decided to pursue a covered bridge for this location, although the initial design/Geotech work will be necessary in any scenario.

Board members noted that it is important to consider emergency vehicle and loaded agricultural vehicle access when determining capacity. Mr. Haverkamp is consulting with appropriate parties, and confirmed that Miles Jenness had indicated that a covered bridge can be designed for the same capacity as a steel bridge. It was also noted that Mr. Billingsley should be reminded that the bridge design requires a pedestrian component.

Mr. Haverkamp reported that a Northern Borders preapplication had been submitted for consideration for construction of a covered bridge.

MOTION: *Ms. Ursprung moved to approve the contract with Tyler Billingsley and to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the same, with the contract to be amended to clarify that if the Board decides to pursue a covered bridge and hold a successful bond vote for the same, that any post-bond portion of the contract would need to reflect this change in scope. The motion was seconded by Mr. Messer, and passed unanimously.*

8. Work Plan Review

This item was tabled.

9. Town Garage Update

Mr. Shupe reported that the project planning is moving quickly at this point, with weekly meetings taking place. He explained that the site plan is being reconsidered, with the group now exploring moving the garage to a new location on the site, and retaining a portion of the existing building for cold storage. Alternatives are being studied, and some interior plan changes are being incorporated. Mr. Shupe indicated that there is the possibility of 3-phase power being brought to the site. Mr. Haverkamp indicated that Phase 2 Environmental Assessment borings are complete, and that test results are not yet available, but it is assumed that some level of remediation will be necessary.

10. Fire Hydrant Quote Review

Mr. Haverkamp outlined some of the details involved in the two quotes which had been received, and indicated that Josh Rodgers would be provided an estimate of the cost involved to increase the road width in order to provide better access for fire trucks.

MOTION: *Mr. Curtis moved to approve the quote from Kingsbury for the installation of fire hydrants on Rolston Road as described in the Board packet, in the amount of $16,760. The motion was seconded by Mr. Babbott-Klein, and passed unanimously.*

11. Federal Award Cash Management and Cost Allowability Procedures

Mr. Haverkamp confirmed that the procedure outlined in the document provided is consistent with current practice.

MOTION: *Mr. Curtis moved to approve the Federal Award Cash Management and Cost Allowability Procedures, and the authorize the Board Chair to sign the document outlining the same. The motion was seconded by Mr. Messer, and passed unanimously.*

12. Consent Agenda

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

- Approve Bills Payable & Treasurer's Warrants
- Approve of Minutes of August 10, 2026

- Accept Errors and Omissions correction, Parcel 040008000
- Approve Town Garage roadside mower accounting correction
- Approve Irene 15 Public Festival Permit

13. Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Haverkamp reported that:

- The stormwater permit for the gravel pit is close to finalization.
- The draft outline of the Municipal Project Manager position is almost ready to be sent to interested parties.
- The bid opening for the FEMA culverts on Center Fayston and Old Center Fayston Roads is complete; likely the matter will be before the Board in two or four weeks in order to approve a contract.
- RRFB malfunctions continue to be addressed.
- Joslin Hill paving will take place in the next two weeks, according to Pike.
- Line striping continues to be a challenge to have scheduled, but is on a timeline to be completed.

14. Selectboard Roundtable

Ms. Ursprung reported that a resident had requested that toddler fencing be installed at the Library park area. It was agreed that Mr. Haverkamp should inquire of Anna Church, the Children's Librarian, if this would be appropriate.

Mr. Messer noted that Emergency Management will have a table at the September 10 block party on Bridge Street, to provide educational information and potentially recruit volunteers.

IV. 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)(2) [Real Estate], 1 VSA §313(a)(1)(A) [Contracts], 1 VSA §313(a)(4) [Employee Discipline], and 1 VSA §313(a)(1)(E) [Civil Litigation], inviting Mr. Haverkamp to join, passed unanimously.*

The meeting entered Executive Session at 9:25 pm and returned to open session at 10:11 pm.

MOTION: *Mr. Babbott-Klein moved to instruct the Town Administrator to draft a letter to Keith Morris, notifying him that he is in violation of the Town's Domestic Animal Control Ordinance based on the recent actions of his dog Shadow, specifically running at large and causing damage to the property of another; additionally, the Board finds Shadow to be a public safety risk due to his aggressive behavior, and directs the Town Administrator and Animal Control Officer to work with the Town Constable and issue fines in accordance with the Ordinance; and the Board finds that Shadow shall be permanently prohibited from entering the Town of Waitsfield. The motion was seconded by Mr. Messer, and passed unanimously.*

MOTION: *Ms. Ursprung moved to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the proposed contract with Connor Contracting, subject to legal review and any appropriate amendments per said review. The motion was seconded by Mr. Babbott-Klein, and passed unanimously.*

V. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary