

1 **TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT**

2 **Selectboard Meeting Minutes**

3 **Monday, December 18, 2023**

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5 **I. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Christine Sullivan. The meeting
6 was held remotely via Zoom.

7 Members Present: Chach Curtis, Fred Messer, Brian Shupe, Christine Sullivan

8 Staff Present: Randy Brittingham, Town Treasurer; Annie Decker-Dell'Isola, Town Administrator;
9 Tripp Johnson, Fire Chief

10 Others Present: Laura Arnesen (MRV Recreation District), Laura Brines (Cemetery Commission),
11 Karen Cetinkaya, Nancy Coombs (Cemetery Commission), Eric Friedman (Chamber of
12 Commerce), Mark Giometti (MRVAS), Misha Golfman (Mad River Path Association), Anthony
13 Italiano (MRTV), Mark Peal (Cemetery Commission), Joshua Schwartz

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15 **II. Regular Business.**

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

18 No changes were made to the agenda.

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20 **2. Public Forum.**

21 Nobody requested time to address the Board.

22
23 **3. Consider Liquor License application for Mad Events (6163 Main Street).**

24 Karen Cetinkaya provided an overview of plans to create an event space/pop up restaurant
25 location in the former Alpino Vino location. She noted that both she and her partner Carolyn
26 Lessard have either completed or will complete the required training for alcohol service, and
27 that they will be the only alcohol servers. Ms. Decker-Dell'Isola explained the Waitsfield
28 protocol for the initial three years of holding a liquor license in Town.

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30 **MOTION:** *Mr. Shupe made a motion to approve a 1st class and 3rd class liquor license for Mad*
31 *Events. The motion was seconded by Mr. Curtis. All voted in favor.*

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33 **4. Wastewater Project Update.**

34 Joshua Schwartz provided a presentation covering recent activity for the Wastewater Project:

- 35 • Conclusion of the planning phase has been reached
- 36 • Feasibility phase (Feb 2022 – Jan 2023) was for development of options and
37 determination of which to focus on
- 38 • Preliminary engineering work was undertaken throughout 2023
- 39 • PER and EID (Environmental Information Document) both completed
- 40 • Currently at the beginning of design phase
- 41 • 30% design – Town needs to contribute \$20K after all grants awarded
- 42 • Median income approach requested for eligibility determination has been granted by
43 DEC
- 44 • First of three design phases, which go through Feb 2025
- 45 • Construction planned to begin in 2025

- 46 • November 2024 bond vote to provide evidence of support when seeking further grant
47 funds
- 48 • Project website developed
- 49 • Noted upcoming application deadlines and meeting schedule

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51 Mr. Schwartz will provide a more detailed update at the end of January. Mr. Curtis offered his
52 appreciation to all the Committee members, noting that much had been accomplished.

53

54 **5. FY25 draft budget review.**

55 a. Consider budget requests and program updates from:

56 •MRV Recreation District – Laura Arnesen provided updates on Rec District
57 accomplishments, and noted that this year’s request is for level funding. She also
58 explained that the District intends to invite Moretown to become a one-half member,
59 which would increase their contribution, and would require an adjustment to the MOU.
60 She indicated that the VOREC work is on track, that conservation visioning work is
61 ongoing, and that there is currently a survey available for residents to complete.

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63 • Steward MRV – Eric Freidman provided some background on this program, which is
64 seeking level funding this year. He indicated that, going forward, the program would
65 like to engage with towns in planning a wider array of projects to be undertaken.

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67 •Mad River Path – Misha Golfman provided an update, noting that the Scoping Study
68 grant application has been submitted, and that fundraising goals have been met. He
69 indicated that no increase in funding is being requested, but that the contracted
70 mowing services budget line is underfunded. Mr. Golfman explained that expenses for
71 the mowing are up due to factors such as an increased area to be mowed and the change
72 to using electric equipment. Most other mowing undertaken by MRPA is through
73 volunteers. He requested that this budget line be increased from \$2500 to \$4500;
74 Board members indicated they would take this into consideration.

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76 •Mad River Valley Ambulance Service – Mark Giometti reported that 27,000 hours were
77 logged by MRVAS volunteers this year, and explained that the Service is facing
78 challenges regarding capital expenditures, as donations are no longer able to fund these
79 expenses. He noted that, while the funding request is the same as last year, MRVAS
80 leadership intends to have a discussion regarding more dependable funding
81 mechanisms next year in order to adequately provide for both ambulance purchases
82 and ongoing provision of services.

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84 •Waitsfield Cemetery Commission – Mark Peal, Laura Brines, and Nancy Coombs were
85 present in order to provide information related to the cemetery trust and budget
86 projections. Mark explained that recent changes related to the trust fund indicate a
87 need to request support from the Town for cemetery operations. It was outlined that
88 the Town provided \$17K in support for the current year, and that due to upcoming
89 repairs and tree work, the Commission is requesting that same level of support in the
90 coming budget. Board members indicated that they would like to have further
91 conversation regarding the income that the trust might provide going forward; there
92 will be an attempt to schedule this before the end of January.

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b. Review and approve draft FY25 WFFD Operating budget and CIP
Ms. Decker-Dell’Isola noted that the Fire Department Operating budget is reflected in the Town’s draft budget, and is based upon the budget discussion which took place at the Fayston Board meeting. The labor increase reflects more accurate hours, but no wage increase.

She also explained that the Capital Improvement Plan, including Fire Department and Road Department information, will be available in the coming days, and may be considered for approval on January 8, 2024.

MOTION: *Mr. Curtis made a motion to approve the Fire Department Operating Budget as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Messer. All voted in favor.*

c. Review draft FY25 Operating Budget expenditures, revenues, and debt service schedule
Drafts of these items were included in the meeting packet; it was indicated which lines are still being finalized. An estimated bottom line was available, including level funded capital funding expenses; the proposed increase is less than has been approved in recent years. Ms. Decker-Dell’Isola pointed out some specific items:

- Election expenses are up – several to be held this year, including Presidential and possibly a bond vote
- Computer services are up – the actuals still need to be finalized; a separate line may be called out for Wastewater Project work; the upcoming email address (domain) change may have an associated cost
- Office Equipment is up – a new color copier/scanner is needed; contract details and what is currently being expended will be looked at more closely
- Recording secretary – a breakdown between Selectboard and Zoning work is being determined
- Special planning projects – Alice Peal has provided a PC request; she will be invited to the January 8 meeting for a discussion
- Listers – waiting for information
- Road Department
 - Equipment operations and repairs – increase across the board of 9.8%; less than previously anticipated
 - Uniform services – working to break out detailed components
 - Contracted services – this is typically for emergency response support; might be used to rent equipment if needed for non-emergency purposes
 - Materials section – sand costs up significantly; this line will likely continue to increase as materials and hauling cost are both up; the pit currently being purchased from is closing
 - No gravel crushing scheduled this year; crushing is on a biannual schedule; agreed it would be good practice to put amount in reserve on off years
 - Fayston winter agreement will be final in January; \$10,814 is approximate amount of Waitsfield expenses to be included in the calculation
 - MRGP permit fee – it will be confirmed that this isn’t changing
 - Likely a total approximate 5% increase for the Road Department

- 139 • Employee benefits – no changes in enrollment anticipated; rates up 14%, but decrease
- 140 expected due to enrollment levels, 10% increase projected for second half of the FY
- 141 • Public safety – once an hourly billing rate is received from the Sheriff’s Department,
- 142 coverage time and a budget amount will be determined
- 143 • Hydrant fee is based on water rates
- 144 • Constable information will be finalized for accuracy as well
- 145 • Dues and assessments – some information still needs to be received
- 146 • Special appropriations – the biggest increase in requested amount is from the Seniors;
- 147 they will come to a meeting if requested
- 148 • Maintenance of parks – biggest expense has been contracted mowing, the budget line is
- 149 down significantly; potential to add an amount for projects/maintenance tasks
- 150 • Trail maintenance – the increase requested by Mr. Golfman was discussed; it was noted
- 151 that many users of the trails are from outside of Waitsfield, and therefore to increase
- 152 the amount to \$3000 rather than the full \$4500 requested
- 153 • Pond maintenance work and a required dam inspection were mentioned as items that
- 154 will need budgeting for in this or the coming year
- 155 • Cemetery commission contribution – Ms. Decker-Dell’Isola and Mr. Curtis will meet with
- 156 the Trustees as discussed
- 157

158 d. Review draft FY25 Capital Improvement Plan

159 The following was noted:

- 160 • Complete information will be available before the end of December
- 161 • Transfer to capital reserves amounts will likely be consistent with past years
- 162 • Debt service numbers have been updated and are accurate
 - 163 ○ Ratio continues to decline
- 164 • Wait House
 - 165 ○ Level funding for both operations and capital contribution
 - 166 ○ Rent income approximately \$12K/year
 - 167 ■ Stagnant for about four years
 - 168 ■ Conservative estimate of expenditures is \$11,500
 - 169 ■ Capital expenses additional
 - 170 ■ Deferred maintenance should be addressed
- 171 • Revenues detail
 - 172 ○ Not many significant anticipated changes
 - 173 ○ There has been a drop in recording fees
 - 174 ○ Snow clearing at the school needs to be discussed
 - 175 ○ Hydrant snow clearing within sidewalk corridor included
 - 176 ○ Draft debt service table included in operating budget
- 177

178 Town garage status was reviewed, only one bid has been received, and Board members would
179 like to see multiple bids. More information is needed from the Road Department.

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181 **6. Waitsfield Conservation Commission Lake Champlain Basin award discussion.**

182 Ms. Decker-Dell’Isola reported that the Warren, Fayston, and Waitsfield Conservation
183 Commissions have received a joint award of \$100K for knotweed removal. She noted that
184 there is a need to clarify administration of the grant, and suggested that the Commissions take

185 on a leadership role with staff assistance as necessary. Mr. Brittingham explained that funds
186 may need to come for the Conservation Reserve Fund and be reimbursed; Mr. Shupe
187 recommended working the plan in small pieces so that intermittent invoices may be submitted.
188

189 **7. CD Investment Recommendation from Treasurer.**

190 Mr. Brittingham provided some background information and an update, recommending specific
191 CD investments and answering related questions from the Board.

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193 **MOTION:** *Mr. Shupe made a motion to authorize the Treasurer to invest \$500,000 from the*
194 *general fund into a 6-month CD with Northfield Savings Bank and \$1,100,000 of reserve funds*
195 *into another 6-month CD with Northfield Savings Bank, both at an interest rate of 5%. The*
196 *motion was seconded by Mr. Messer. All voted in favor.*

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198 **8. Road Department truck order request.**

199 Ms. Decker-Dell'Isola had provided quote information to Board members, and explained that
200 there is language included related to budget approval, due to the order needing to be placed so
201 far in advance. The delivery of the truck would like take place during the 2025 calendar year if
202 ordered now.

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204 **MOTION:** *Mr. Messer made a motion to proceed with ordering a 2025 HV from Allegiant, based*
205 *upon the quote received of \$218K, with a \$15K trade-in bringing the cost to \$213K, in*
206 *accordance with the provisions outlined regarding no payment due until the vehicle has been*
207 *built and the allowance for cancelling the sale should the proposed FY25 budget not pass. The*
208 *motion was seconded by Mr. Shupe. All voted in favor.*

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210 **9. Consent Agenda.**

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212 **APPROVAL:** *The consent agenda was approved without objection.*

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- 214 • Bills Payable and Treasurer's Warrants
- 215 • Approve liquor license renewals
- 216 • Approve Water System Source permit contract with VHB conditioned on Water
217 Commission final review and approval

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219 **10. Selectboard Roundtable.**

220 Mr. Messer noted that the current flood alert had been extended to the next morning. He also
221 indicated that no major road damage had been caused by the current rain event, although
222 some work will be needed on Meadow Road. He provided some other updates and kudos to
223 local emergency services personnel.

224

225 **11. Town Administrator's Updates.**

226 Ms. Decker-Dell'Isola outlined the upcoming schedule.

227 **12. Executive Session**

228 **MOTION:** *A motion to enter Executive Session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a) (3) [Personnel]*
229 *passed unanimously.*

230 The meeting entered Executive Session at 9:18 pm and came back into open session at 10:00
231 pm.

232 **IV. Other Business**

233 **1. Correspondence/reports received** were reviewed.

234 **IV. Adjourn**

235 The meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm.

236 Respectfully submitted,
237 Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary