

1 **TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT**

2 **Selectboard Meeting Minutes**

3 **Monday, January 13, 2024**

4
5 **Members Present:** Chach Curtis, Fred Messer, Christine Parisi, Brian Shupe, Larissa Ursprung

6 **Staff Present:** None

7 **Others Present:** Misha Golfman (Mad River Path Association), Mac Rood (Mad River Path
8 Association)

9
10 **I. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Christine Parisi. The meeting
11 was held in person at the Waitsfield Town Office and remotely via Zoom.

12
13 **1. Review agenda for addition, removal, or adjustment of any items per 1 VSA 312(d)(3)(A).**

14 No changes were made to the agenda.

15
16 **2. Public Forum.**

17 Ms. Parisi noted that a proposal for a Town Meeting article regarding river dredging had been
18 received, but was not submitted through the proper petition process, so cannot be included in
19 the Town Meeting Warning.

20
21 **II. Regular Business.**

22
23 **1. Mad River Path (MRPA)/Wait House Lease discussion.**

24 Misha Golfman and Mac Rood were present for a discussion regarding the new lease
25 arrangements at the Wait House. Mr. Golfman read the letter he had sent about a year ago,
26 regarding commission membership and some information assumed by the MRPA based upon
27 past lease arrangements. He and Mr. Rood indicated that the office space rent increase was
28 acceptable, but that the amount being charged for storage space was not something the MRPA
29 can afford. Board members explained that the storage space charge is considered a fine, rather
30 than a lease amount, as the Board's goal is to eliminate the use of space for storage by the Wait
31 House tenants. The Board acknowledged the efforts of the tenants in recent months to clean
32 up the storage and outside areas of the property, but expressed concern regarding the
33 possibility of storage 'creep' and associated impacts on the appearance of the visual portions of
34 the buildings and property. It was also explained that in order to commence with some of the
35 planned work and repairs to the buildings, the stored items must be moved so as to not
36 interfere with the work.

37 Mr. Golfman outlined some of the uses of the building and storage, explaining that a grant had
38 provided canoes which are being used by MRPA programs as well as being made available to
39 the public for personal use. He had been advised by the former Town Administrator that the
40 matter of canoe storage should be taken up with the Commission; he noted that the topic was
41 just beginning to be addressed by that group. He also explained that the shed is being used to
42 store lumber for path kiosks, Steward MRV equipment, and Friends of the Mad River items, in
43 addition to the canoe storage. He noted that the barn structure has been used as an initial

44 gathering place and final drop off location for the multi-day summer camps that MRPA is
45 running.

46 There was further discussion regarding the balance between the Town's vision of the building
47 as a location for local non-profits and the need to pay for the upkeep of the building, as well as
48 maintenance of a presentable, uncluttered property. There was some disagreement among
49 Board members regarding whether to allow any storage at all on site; after some conversation,
50 it was agreed that the storage situation as it exists could remain in place for the winter and
51 further conversation will take place to define the availability and cost of future storage space
52 allowances.

53 When asked if there are any further storage needs anticipated by MRPA, Mr. Golfman
54 explained that a grant has been awarded for the purchase of three e-bikes, which will be
55 available to the occupants of the Wait House as well as Town employees. He indicated that
56 charging station(s) would also need to be installed for these. Mr. Golfman was informed that
57 any proposed modifications to the building would need to be approved by the Selectboard.

58 Board members agreed to hold an Executive Session regarding contracts in order to discuss the
59 matter more thoroughly.

60 Ms. Parisi offered a reminder that the fire doors in the building need to be kept closed

61 **2. Budget.**

62 An updated budget draft had been provided by Mr. Shupe, and was reviewed:

63 Updated amounts were available for:

- 64 • Employee benefits
 - 65 ○ Large increase projected due to insurance rate increases
 - 66 ○ Discussion regarding looking at personnel policy in time to plan for adjusting
 - 67 insurance coverage to reduce costs yet not cause significant hardship for
 - 68 employees
- 69 • Public Safety
 - 70 ○ Sheriff patrol costs
 - 71 ■ Warren had been in contact regarding coordination of hours, nothing has
 - 72 been agreed upon at this point; question of whether Fayston would
 - 73 participate
 - 74 ○ Constable has not yet billed for any of his time
- 75 • Dues and Assessments
 - 76 ○ MRVPD increase significant, but will likely stabilize in following years
 - 77 ■ Will be requested that timing of billing takes into consideration each
 - 78 Town's fiscal year
 - 79 ○ MRVAS contribution down, yet at level requested by the Service
- 80 • Special Appropriations
 - 81 ○ Several organizations had not been heard from; it was agreed to level fund those
 - 82 requests

- 83 ○ There will be special articles for the two new requests: Valley Arts and Historical
- 84 Society
- 85 ● Miscellaneous
- 86 ○ Cemetery Commission and Listers will be coming to discuss budgets
- 87 ○ Insurance of various types have different increases; the practice has been to
- 88 apply a general percent increase for the entire category

89 The Capital Expenditure Plan and Draft Budget was reviewed:

- 90 ● Discussion regarding the need to build Vehicle Reserves for new trucks needed in 2028
- 91 ● Discussion regarding reconfiguring Reserve funds to include a broader purpose for more
- 92 flexibility
 - 93 ○ Some funds currently at an adequate level, some will require increased
 - 94 allocations
- 95 ● Discussion regarding potential allocations of undesignated funds, for use in purchasing
- 96 vehicles or building Reserve accounts
- 97 ● A longer-term schedule of vehicle replacement, project plans, and paving schedule is
- 98 needed from the Road Department
- 99 ● Slow Road paving
 - 100 ○ Estimate not yet received
 - 101 ○ Was planned for an upcoming year, in conjunction with a grant
 - 102 ■ Discussion regarding whether to move ahead this year or hold off until
 - 103 grant funds are available; will be discussed further once estimate is
 - 104 available

105 Mr. Curtis and Mr. Shupe will meet with Charlie Goodman and Josh Rogers to clarify Road

106 Department capital needs.

107 The overall tax rate impact of the proposed budget was discussed. Calculations indicated that a

108 5% increase to the overall budget as currently outlined would allow for an approximately \$40K

109 increase in Reserve allocations. These impacts will be discussed further at the next budget

110 review.

111 Wait House Reserve balances were discussed, along with the need for a new roof for the

112 building. It was agreed to raise the building reserve allocation from \$7500 to \$10,000 for the

113 FY25/26 budget year. The possibility of including an Article requesting \$20K for Wait House

114 maintenance was discussed; as there has been a long-standing practice of minimal impact to

115 taxes for caring for the building, this provides an opportunity for community approval of

116 needed expenditures.

117 It was noted that revenue numbers will be reviewed at the next meeting, along with a draft

118 Warning. There was continued discussion regarding where to potentially allocate any

119 undesignated fund balance.

120 **3. Selectboard Roundtable.**

121 It was explained that, following an instance of check fraud, it had been determined that
122 account protection is available at the cost of approximately \$60/month, and it was agreed to
123 put this in place.

124

125 **4. Consent Agenda.**

126 **APPROVAL:** *The Consent Agenda was approved with no objections or concerns raised.*

127

- 128 • Approve Warrants and Bills Payable

129

130 **5. Executive Session.**

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

133 The meeting entered Executive Session at 8:12 pm and returned to open session at 9:25 pm.

134

135 **III. Other Business**

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

137 **IV. Adjourn**

138 The meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.

139 Respectfully submitted,

140 Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary