

1 **TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT**

2 **Selectboard Meeting Minutes**

3 **Monday, January 20, 2025**

4 **Draft**

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

7 **Staff Present:** None

8 **Others Present:** Nancy Coombs (Cemetery Commission), Misha Golfman (Mad River Path
9 Association), AnnMarie Harmon (Wait House Commission), Robin McDermott (Cemetery
10 Commission), Mark Peal (Cemetery Commission), Mac Rood (Mad River Path Association)

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

14
15 **1. Review agenda for addition, removal, or adjustment of any items per 1 VSA 312(d)(3)(A).**

16 No changes were made to the agenda.

17
18 **2. Public Forum.**

19 AnnMarie Harmon, Chair of the Wait House Commission, spoke in support of the Town
20 budgeting funds for repair and maintenance work on the building, particularly for the needed
21 roof restoration.

22
23 **II. Regular Business.**

24
25 **1. Cemetery Commission.**

26 Mark Peal, Robin McDermott, and Nancy Coombs were present to provide information
27 regarding the Town's cemeteries. They explained that the trust which funds the cemetery
28 upkeep provides disbursement that fluctuate between \$0 and \$20K per year, and also reviewed
29 the income provided through lot sales and burials. A main concern of the Commissioners is the
30 ability to pay the current Sexton a suitable wage; they noted that the person currently filling
31 the role has not had a raise in years – their current salary of \$26K for the seven months' work
32 they perform each year comes to about \$37.52/hour. Job responsibilities include cemetery
33 care, burials, repairs, and other duties. It was noted that a property management firm would
34 charge \$75/hour, and the Commissioners would like to compensate the Sexton at a rate of \$50-
35 \$60/hour. They indicated that the Trustees have committed to providing a minimum of \$20K
36 for the coming year, and that they are requesting that the Town contribute \$15K, which would
37 enable a salary of \$50/hour. It was also explained that there are repairs to be completed,
38 including fencing and tree replacement, for which \$5K is budgeted annually. Commissioners
39 also explained that they would be requesting financial support from the Town annually, in
40 order to help provide regular salary increases going forward.

41 Ms. Parisi spoke of the need to work with the Trustees to better understand the trust
42 complexities and work to create a policy regarding investments and related logistics, but noted
43 that this topic is not on the agenda at this point.

44 Board members thanked the Commissioners for their report, and indicated that they would
45 discuss the request during budget conversations.

46 **2. Ethics Commission update.**

47 It was explained that a training must be attended every three years, with current Board
48 members having until late September 2025 to complete their initial training, and new members
49 needing to do so within 120 days of becoming a Board member. This applies to Selectboard
50 and DRB members at this point.

51 **3. Wastewater update.**

52 Joshua Schwartz was unable to attend the meeting, and Mr. Curtis provided an update on the
53 Wastewater Project. He indicated that the final design work is in progress, with topographical
54 mapping, a layout of the collection system, and other factors being outlined and completed. A
55 submittal of archeological findings is being prepared, as is an application for an Indirect
56 Discharge Permit. Conversations with parcel owners regarding both connections and needed
57 easements are ongoing.

58 Mr. Curtis pointed to the summary of funding provided in Mr. Schwartz's written report,
59 highlighting that applications for different programs have either been submitted or are in the
60 process of being drafted. Due dates for the applications range from the coming weeks to six
61 months out. Mr. Curtis also noted that a \$14M construction loan has been awarded, which will
62 not be accepted until other funding avenues have been fully explored.

63 **4. Brookfield Service contracts.**

64 It was noted that the Fire Station will contract for generator services through their propane
65 provider. The contracts under consideration by the Board were for the Town Office, the
66 Elementary School, and the Water System. Details were outlined and budgeted amounts
67 confirmed.

68 **MOTION:** *Mr. Shupe made a motion to approve the three contracts with Brookfield Service for*
69 *generator services. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ursprung, and passed unanimously.*

70 **5. Mad River Path lease follow up.**

71 It was agreed that the storage charges for the pass-through area of the outer building will be
72 minimal and split between the Mad River Path and Friends of the Mad River, those charges will
73 be confirmed.

74 The matter of e-bike storage and charger locations was discussed; Board members noted that
75 they are not opposed to this, but consultation will be required regarding the location,
76 particularly as the outer building will be either worked on or taken down at some point going
77 forward.

78 Mr. Messer noted that the fire doors must be consistently kept closed, as pointed out in a
79 previous meeting.

80 **6. Budget.**

81 Mr. Curtis reviewed the Capital Budget, which he had been updating. There was an extended
82 conversation regarding the best approach for making use of the undesignated fund balance,
83 particularly the portion of the confirmed amount that might be allocated while still leaving
84 several months of expenses available as undesignated, in accordance with the Town's related
85 policy. Mr. Curtis explained that the proposed FY26 allocations to Reserve funds have been
86 outlined during this year's budget discussions at \$617K, up from the \$611K allocated for the
87 current FY25 budget. He proposed lowering that amount to \$522K through the use of
88 undesignated funds for purchasing some specific items and paying for a portion of the paving
89 projects anticipated in the coming year. Ms. Parisi explained that the Board is always
90 attempting to keep the tax rate as steady as possible, which would indicate that Reserve
91 allocations be kept level or increased steadily in order to provide for the needs outlined in the
92 Town's Capital Improvement Plan. She emphasized that there will consistently be paving
93 needs, and with costs regularly increasing, proposed that the amount allocated for the Paving
94 Reserve be \$205K, although indicated that the amount allocated might include a transfer of
95 undesignated funds. Other specific purchases discussed were a chipper and a pickup truck,
96 both Road Department needs; the chipper proposed as a FY25 purchase using undesignated
97 funds and the pickup truck moved up a year in the plan, to be purchased in FY26 using Reserve
98 funds.

99 Also discussed was using some of the undesignated funds to fund repairs at the Wait House,
100 covering roofing and painting needs. Ms. Ursprung spoke of the benefit that would be provided
101 were the Wait House Commission to form a relationship with a non-profit, through which there
102 may be eligibility for a broader number of grant opportunities.

103 Other possibilities for the use of undesignated funds were discussed, including a contribution to
104 a new Road Department Facilities Reserve to support the development of a new Town Garage,
105 and a Maintenance and Repair Reserve for the Town Office. It was noted that a Maintenance
106 Plan also needs to be developed for the Town Office building.

107 Other budget points made included:

- 108 • Town Administrator salary will be discussed in Executive Session
- 109 • Fire Department capital needs will not be addressed through the use of undesignated funds
110 for purchases, due to the relationship with Fayston for these expenses
- 111 • Provision of \$15K for the Town Cemetery Commission
- 112 • Allocation of \$340K for various Road Department Reserve funds
- 113 • Allocation of \$12,500 for smaller reserves, such as Lareau Park, sidewalk work, etc.
 - 114 ○ Mr. Curtis proposed reducing these and putting a larger amount into the covered
115 bridge reserve fund
- 116 • Conservation Commission reserves discussed – it was agreed that invasive species expenses
117 would be an annual allocation for direct use rather than passing through reserve - \$7500
- 118 • Agreed to put \$7500 in Wait House Reserve, which is the same as last year

119 A few points were made regarding anticipated revenues: Current Use receipts will likely
120 increase a little, solar tax credits to be received from the School District and Water System need
121 to be clarified, otherwise not much change is anticipated in Revenue lines.

122 It was noted that, should funds be needed for Meadow Road bridge work, the amount is likely
123 to be large enough to necessitate borrowing.

124 **MOTION:** *Mr. Shupe made a motion to approve the FY26 Waitsfield Town Budget in the*
125 *amount of \$2,795,116.00. The motion was seconded by Mr. Curtis, and passed unanimously.*

126 Mr. Shupe reviewed the Warning and individual Articles it contains, noting that an Article is
127 needed for the new Facilities Reserve and that there are two new special appropriation
128 requests that have been submitted for warning. There was some discussion regarding when a
129 petition should accompany such requests, particularly if the amount requested is above what is
130 typically provided for local organizations.

131 *Mr. Shupe temporarily left the meeting at this point.*

132 **7. Town Report options.**

133 Ms. Parisi explained that a contract is in place for the printing of the reports, and that Valerie
134 Capels has offered to assist with compiling the Report and preparing it for printing. Ms. Parisi
135 read the outline of Ms. Capels' proposal.

136 **MOTION:** *Mr. Messer made a motion to approve the proposal from Ms. Capels for work on this*
137 *year's Town Report. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ursprung, and passed unanimously.*

138 **8. Selectboard Roundtable.**

139 Mr. Messer mentioned a recent meeting held at Harwood for those involved in local Emergency
140 Management, noting that schools are now required to integrate their emergency operations
141 with local Towns.

142
143 *Mr. Shupe returned to the meeting at this point.*

145 **9. Executive Session.**

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

148 The meeting entered Executive Session at 8:44 pm and returned to open session at **xxx** pm.
149

150 **III. Other Business**

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

152 **IV. Adjourn**

153 The meeting adjourned at **xxx** pm.

154 Respectfully submitted,
155 Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary