

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TOWN  
OF WATERBURY  
TO BE HELD MARCH 5, 2024**

The inhabitants of the Town of Waterbury who are legal voters in Town Meetings are hereby notified and warned to conduct business to meet in the Brookside Primary School Gym at 47 Stowe Street at 9:00 o'clock in the forenoon on March 5th, 2024 to act on the following matters:

**Article 1:** To elect a Moderator to preside at the meetings of the Town whose term of office shall be for the ensuing year.

Jeff Kilgore called the 233rd meeting to order at 9am and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roger Clapp thanked J. Kilgore and made a motion to elect Rebecca Ellis to preside at the meetings of the Town whose term of office shall be for the ensuing year. The motion was seconded from the floor. K Petrovic was instructed to cast one vote on behalf of the Town of Waterbury. R. Ellis was elected as Town Moderator.

R. Ellis reviewed Robert's Rules of Order to the audience as well as announcements of lunch and special guests.

**Article 2:** To elect by Australian ballot the following offices: Clerk for 3-year; Treasurer for 3 - year; one Select Board member for 3-year term and two Select Board members for 1-year term each; Lister for a 3-year term; Library Commissioner for a 5-year term and one Library Commissioner to fill an unexpired term for 1 year and one Library Commissioner to fill an unexpired term for 2 years; and Cemetery Commissioner for a 5-year term.

**Article 3:** To elect by Australian ballot for the Harwood Unified Union School District two School Directors for a 3-year term.

**Article 4:** To act upon the reports of the several Town Officers with the exception of claims for fees or compensation during 2023.

Note: The polls for voting by Australian ballot on Articles 2, 3 and 4 will be open from seven o'clock in the forenoon to seven o'clock in the afternoon at Brookside Primary School at 47 Stowe Street.

Dani Kehlmann moved to accept the reports of the several Town Officers as printed in the Annual Report, with the exception of claims for fees or compensation by Town officers for services rendered during 2023. J. Malter seconded the motion. Discussion followed. T. Gloor asked if this article is the appropriate time to ask about the budget? No, that will be discussed in Article 7. T. Stevens asked to have the Town Manager go over July and December flooding. Moderator R. Ellis asked if there were any objections to Municipal Manager T. Leitz speaking during the meeting as he is not a resident of Waterbury – there being none; T. Leitz explained there was \$200,000 in debris clean up and dumpsters which should be reimbursed by FEMA. One of the largest impacts was many of the town staff were removed from duties to work on clean up regarding the flood. Paving was not completed as a result as well as a bridge repair. The State wide burden on paving contractors made it impossible to complete the work. There was a positive impact of volunteer efforts throughout the Town. The motion passed by floor vote.

**Article 5:** To act with respect to claims of Town Officers for their services during 2023.

Karen Petrovic moved to pay the claims of the Town Officers for their services rendered during 2023, as appears on Page 8 of the Annual report. Select Board Chair, \$1,450, Vice Chair \$1,450, other Select Board members, \$1,200 each; Listers, \$500 each. J. Malter seconded. C. Viens asked considering the potential of the reappraisal process, would the listers be compensated more than \$500 each? W. Shepeluk stated this compensation is for last year's work opposed to 2024. The motion passed by floor vote.

**Article 6:** To see what action the Town will take with reference to fixing the date of the tax warrant and to set a date or dates when taxes on such property shall become due and payable and to specify the time of acceptable, the method of delivery, and to see whether the same shall be paid with or without discount and to provide for interest and penalty on such taxes as are not paid when due.

Mike Bard moved that the tax warrant on real property be dated July 1, 2024, and the taxes be due in two installments, with the first installment due and payable on August 9, 2024 and the second installment be due and payable on November 8, 2024. That each installment be paid in hand at the Municipal Office by 5:30pm on the due date without discount and that interest be charged at the maximum allowed by statute, not to exceed one and one-half percent per month or portion thereof on each installment and a late penalty of eight percent be charged as allowed by statute on taxes not paid when due. J. Malter seconded the motion. M. Bard stated this is typical for each year apart from the closing of the office being at 5:30pm. T. Gloor asked if the 8% is new, which it is not. He noted the delinquency rate is higher than previous years. T. Leitz stated previous reports were formatted differently. To give context, \$15 million is needed to pay the schools and must be paid by the state mandated due date. W. Shepeluk called attention to page 18 \$21,000 and \$22,000 are currently due and not reflective of delinquency of previous years.

W. Shepeluk would like to ask for permission to change the first due date in the event the school budget fails and additional time is needed to obtain the education tax rate. Will the Town give the Select Board authority to change the first due date if necessary? W. Shepeluk made a motion to amend. The first installment due and payable on Aug 9 or on a date set by the Select Board. T. Wood seconded the motion to amend. Discussion of the amendment to the motion followed. A vote was held on the motion to amend August 9<sup>th</sup> 2024 or a later date selected by the Select Board. The amendment to the motion passed by floor vote.

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**Article 7:** To vote sums of money for necessary general government, highway, and library expenses, with the same to be expressed either in specific dollar amounts or as a rate or tax on the grand list.

Aylssa Johnson moved to approve for the Town of Waterbury sums of money for the interest of its inhabitants and for the prosecution and defense of common rights, for laying out and repairing highways and other necessary expenses: for general expenses of \$4,231,957 plus sums approved in Articles 10 through 21 of the warning for this meeting; plus for highway expenses of \$1,393,716; plus for library expenses of \$636,018; plus for expenditures and transfers of designated reserve and special

purpose funds, estimated at \$135,000 for which no additional taxes are necessary; and that the Select Board be authorized to issue bills for property taxes with a total municipal tax rate on the Town's Grand List, estimated to be \$.5570/\$100 of property valuation for calendar year 2024. J. Malter seconded the motion.

A. Johnson stated the Board and Town Manager did well to establish a 2.4% increase taking into consideration the possible impact of the Education Taxes. T. Leitz anticipates a .7% increase to the Grand List. On Page 22 of the Town Report, there is a large revenue increase because of the proposed local options tax. The Town received \$400,000 from the State pilot payment in 2023. Town Clerk fees are largely driven by home sales and refinancing and have seen a decline in recent years. There are no staffing changes or operational changes anticipated in 2024. As previously stated, a reappraisal is indeed coming; the Town anticipates this will begin in 2025 and take approximately three years to complete.

T. Leitz has projected an increase in the contract with the State police from \$385,000 to \$425,000. The Waterbury Ambulance has had to raise their per capita fee to keep up with inflation and expenses. T. Leitz anticipates a substantial increase in the future. The Fire Department has an increase for a new fire truck based on voter approval today.

Health and Social Services, the Town does not have an Animal Control Officer; anyone interested is encouraged to reach out.

Recreation Department is a large department with two full time staff members. 2024 sees a rate increase for the summer camp and after school camp. Staff has been working hard on program offerings. T. Leitz anticipates in a couple of years coming to the voters regarding recreational facility upgrades.

Planning and Zoning 2024 budget is down because Parks Study has been completed. Staff is hoping to implement an online permitting process. The Town has not had a major focus on enforcement issues which the Development Review Board has asked to make a priority. This request has led to the legal fee budget increase. Updated zoning fees were previously approved by the Select Board.

Highway Budget there are no dramatic changes on the employment side this year but the mechanic who left the Town was not replaced and at this point likely will not be. There is a plan to hire a floater employee working for both the Town and EFUD. The budget reflects capital changes due to the lack of ARPA funds that were used to repair bridges. The unspent ARPA funds remain in the Town for improvements to be scheduled in 2024. Many locals have asked about the Stowe Street bridge project. This is a state project with a 5% Town share, work to begin on that project is slated for 2025.

Library Budget has a meaningful increase due to higher health insurance costs as well as library payroll. The Select Board and Library Commissioners worked closely to negotiate a pay increase to ensure equity among staff that work for Town Hall.

Moderator R. Ellis asked if there were any objections to Library Director Rachel Muse speaking during the meeting as she is not a resident of Waterbury – there being none; R. Muse introduced herself and thanked the community for the resources. There are three full and four part time employees and a wonderful volunteer staff. Additionally, there are 4,000 registered borrowers and many individuals who do not hold library cards but took advantage of library resources.

Moderator R. Ellis asked if there were any objections to Recreation Director Katarina Lisaius speaking during the meeting as she is not a resident of Waterbury – there being none; K. Lisaius stated there are roughly 20 students in the after-school program. There is a summer program that will launch tomorrow at 9am for residents. 8-5pm this summer. The pool was built in 1941 with the filter being updated in 1971. There has been research conducted with a current projected cost of 3.5 million to replace the pool using the

same location and reusing some of the same walls. There is a growing need for indoor space for youths and sports. The Recreation Committee is looking into uses for Anderson Park where the pool and rec building are currently located.

K. Grace asked a question of the Town regarding property tax values. T. Leitz explained uniform values and the equitable ways of imposing property values. K. Grace asked about impact taxes. The Town does not have an impact tax currently. C. Viens stated concerns moving forward and asked Tom to explain the local options tax and how it might impact our local tax rate? The Town has lost its local gravel pit resource which will impact costs. C. Viens complimented the Select Board and staff to hold a tight budget this year. T. Leitz stated before the local options tax was advanced to the voters, the Select Board set a policy. The policy states the uses of the options tax are economic development, affordable housing, and community vitality efforts. Bulk gravel and sand have been an impact to the Highway budget. Duxbury, Moretown, Bolton, and Fayston are working together to hire an engineering firm to identify local gravel pits and operate them but this has challenges. M. Frier asked about reappraisal impacts on Commercial versus Residential property values. T. Leitz stated Burlington reappraised during Covid when commercial properties were not deemed as valuable. T. Lietz pledged to have a conversation in public if there is an inkling that Waterbury may be subject to the same impact. T. Gloor asked about page 22 of the Town Report; what is the Natural Disaster Coordinator? There is ongoing work that a new part time employee following the July flood has continued to perform. T. Leitz believes for the foreseeable future that it will remain in the budget. W. Shepeluk asked to make an amendment to the budget motion by removing the word "estimated," suggest to use the language "not to exceed." If amended, this would read "the Select Board be authorized to issue bills for property taxes with a total municipal tax rate on the Town's Grand List, not to exceed \$.5570/\$100 of property valuation for calendar year 2024." W. Shepeluk explained the Grand List is unknown. K. Grace called the question; a vote was held and passed. There will be no further debate on the motion to amend. A vote was held on the amendment and passed by voice vote.

D. DeSanto asked about page 33 of the Town Report. He stated the Highway fund appears to have a 20% reduction while the Town continues to experience mud season. T. Leitz was able to provide an explanation, ARPA funds that were in the budget last year and are now removed.

M. Culberston stated frost and two floods have negatively impacted agriculture crops. T. Leitz stated the Town has applied to a grant for roughly \$85,000 to investigate those issues.

Madame Moderator reread the amended motion to approve for the Town of Waterbury sums of money for the interest of its inhabitants and for the prosecution and defense of common rights, for laying out and repairing highways and other necessary expenses: for general expenses of \$4,231,957 plus sums approved in Articles 10 through 21 of the warning for this meeting; plus for highway expenses of \$1,393,716; plus for library expenses of \$636,018; plus for expenditures and transfers of designated reserve and special purpose funds, estimated at \$135,000 for which no additional taxes are necessary; and that the Select Board be authorized to issue bills for property taxes with a total municipal tax rate on the Town's Grand List, not to exceed \$.5570/\$100 of property valuation for calendar year 2024. A voice vote was held and passed.

**Article 8:** Shall general obligation bonds or notes of the Town of Waterbury in an amount not to exceed Three Hundred Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$380,000), subject to reduction from the receipt of available state and federal grants-in-aid and reserve funds, be issued for the purpose of acquiring a (replacement) fire truck, the estimated cost of such improvements being Three Hundred Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$380,000)?

Kane Sweeney moved that the Town of Waterbury is authorized to borrow up to \$380,000 by note, for a

period not to exceed 5 years, subject to reduction from the receipt of available state and federal grants-in-aid and reserve funds, for the purpose of acquiring a replacement fire truck, the estimated cost of such improvements being \$380,000. J. Malter seconded the motion. The Fire Chief previously presented the Select Board with an opportunity to purchase a demo fire truck back in May of 2023. The current truck should have been replaced 6 years ago but for various reasons the purchase had to be delayed. MK Monley stated the FD has been to her house 4 times and applauded the FD response time and volunteers. C. Viens applauded G. Dillon's efforts to always spend money wisely.

Madame Moderator reread the motion moved that the Town of Waterbury is authorized to borrow up to \$380,000 by note, for a period not to exceed 5 years, subject to reduction from the receipt of available state and federal grants-in-aid and reserve funds, for the purpose of acquiring a replacement fire truck, the estimated cost of such improvements being \$380,000. A vote was held and passed by floor vote.

**Article 9:** To see if the voters will authorize a sum of money to be expended from the capital funds for capital projects.

Roger Clapp moved to authorize the expenditure of \$601,000 for purchases of vehicles, capital improvements, building operations and building fund budgets. J. Malter seconded the motion. In 2024 this will be focusing mostly on bridge repair and replacement as well as improvements to Hope Davey Park. A vote was held and passed by floor vote.

Sara Utton was recognized for her 50 years of dedication to the Waterbury Ambulance Service. Dick and Anne White as well as Jeff Kilgore were presented with co Keith Wallace Awards.

**Article 10:** To see if the Town will, during 2024, appropriate:

Mike Bard moved that the Town, during 2024 appropriate

- \$1,000 for support of the Capstone Community Action
- \$1,375 for support of CIRCLE
- \$500 for support of Community Harvest of Central Vermont
- \$1,500 for support of Downstreet Housing and Community Development
- \$500 for support of Everybody Wins! Vermont
- \$1,000 for the support of the Family Center of Washington County
- \$1,000 for support of The Friends of the Waterbury Reservoir
- \$500 for support of Good Beginnings of Central Vermont
- \$200 for support of Mosaic
- \$250 for support of OUR House of Central Vermont
- \$1,000 for support of the People's Health and Wellness Clinic
- \$500 for support of the Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- \$600 for support of the Vermont Center for Independent Living
- \$1,500 for support of Elevate Youth Services (formerly the Washington County Youth Bureau)
- \$800 for the support of the Waterbury Community Band

The motion was seconded by J. Malter. Madame Moderator received voter permission not to restate the motion. M. Bard stated the grouping of these appropriations is in line with the requests being less than \$2,000. A vote was held and passed by floor vote.

B. Kravitz moved the Town of Waterbury vote to appropriate \$2,000 for support of Central Vermont Adult Basic Education. Many seconded from the audience. B. Kravitz stated CVABE has offered service in Waterbury for 58 years. Average cost per student is \$3,700. Students now have lower scores than ever seen. A vote was held and passed by floor vote.

MK Monley moved the Town of Waterbury vote to appropriate \$4,000 for support of the Early Education Resource Center of Waterbury ("Children's Room"). J. Malter seconded the motion. A vote was held and passed by floor vote.

A. Imhoff moved the Town of Waterbury vote to appropriate \$2,383 for support of the Green Mountain Transit Agency. S. Minter seconded the motion. Green Mountain Transit Authority provides rides to seniors and those with disabilities as well as bus service to Montpelier and Burlington. S. Mackey stated he does ride the Montpelier bus. The service is still operating at no cost so it is not clear to him why they are operating a free service and then asking Town's for appropriations to cover operating fees. S. Minter stated the free fare was a legislative decision using ARPA funding. Fed's pay 80% and the State is responsible for 20%. A vote was held and passed by floor vote.

D. McDougall moved the Town of Waterbury vote to appropriate \$2,500 for support of Waterbury LEAP (Local Energy Action Partnership). The motion was seconded from the floor. D. McDougall outlined the organizations services. Their next event is scheduled Saturday April 13, 2024 at Crossett Brook Middle School. A vote was held and passed by floor vote.

R. Seymour moved the Town of Waterbury vote to appropriate \$6,500 for the Waterbury Area Senior Citizens Association in addition to the amount included in the General Fund Budget for such purpose. L. Pagan seconded the motion. R. Seymour spoke to the audience regarding the gap of federal funding compared to costs for Meals and Wheels and the Senior Center to operate in Waterbury. A vote was held and passed by floor vote.

D. Luce moved the Town of Waterbury vote to appropriate \$2,000 for support of the American Red Cross. J. Willard seconded the motion. There is a report on page 65 detailing the activities of the Red Cross work in Washington County. Blood donations are crucial. A vote was held and passed by floor vote.

A. Cawley moved the Town of Waterbury vote to appropriate \$3,000 for the support of Washington County Mental Health. J. Malter seconded the motion. A. Cawley stated the organization report is on page 109 of the Town Report. A vote was held and passed by floor vote.

D. Schneider moved the Town of Waterbury vote to appropriate \$2,500 for the support of the Waterbury Area MakerSphere Cooperative. D. Luce seconded the motion. D. Schneider explained that 70-75% of their operating by tuition with the remaining 25% through means like appropriations. A vote was held and passed by floor vote.

W. Goulet moved the Town of Waterbury vote to appropriate \$4,125 for the support of the Waterbury American Legion. J. Malter seconded the motion. W. Goulet thanked the audience for their support to serve in the armed forces. The Legion intends to use these funds to replace the lightbulbs in the Stowe Street building with low volt LED bulbs. A vote was held and passed by floor vote.

P. Nolte moved the Town of Waterbury vote to appropriate \$2,250 for the support of Central Vermont Council on Aging and AmeriCorps Senior RSVP. J. Malter seconded the motion. P. Nolte has been a benefactor and contributor to the organization. A vote was held and passed by floor vote.

W. Shepeluk moved the Town of Waterbury vote to appropriate FEMA reimbursements for volunteer hours, estimated to total \$30,000, to CreW (Community Resilience for the Waterbury Area), for the purpose of assisting property owners to make the community more resilient, with the appropriation contingent upon the actual receipt of the FEMA funds. A. Imhoff seconded the motion. W. Shepeluk stated FEMA may reimburse the Town for volunteer hours for clean-up relief because of the July 10, 2023 flood. There is a Flood Recovery Resource Fair at Brookside Primary on Saturday March 18, 2024, please attend. W. Shepeluk moved to amend the motion to state up to \$30,000. Many seconds from the floor. A vote was held and passed from the floor.

Shall the Town of Waterbury vote to appropriate FEMA reimbursements for volunteer hours, up to \$30,000, to CreW (Community Resilience for the Waterbury Area), for the purpose of assisting property owners to make the community more resilient, with the appropriation contingent upon the actual receipt of the FEMA funds? A vote was held and passed by floor vote.

Other Business:

Discussion regarding the April 8, 2024 eclipse.

Mike Bard recognized all the volunteers in the room by asking them to stand.

Betty Jones recognized her husband Robert Jones, a long-time firefighter and community volunteer who is 90 years old.

William Shepeluk thanked Dani Kehlmann for her service as she has decided not to run for reelection.

Anne Imhoff thanked Rebecca Ellis for doing a great job today as moderator.

Chris Viens stated the eclipse would be a great time for the FD to have a coin drop.

Aylssa Johnson stated the Planning Commission has a public hearing scheduled for Thursday March 14<sup>th</sup> zoning by law update.

Lunch is being served in the cafeteria.

Kathi Grace is concerned about the rules of the by-laws and wants others to look at the changes and speak up with questions.

John Malter made a motion to adjourn which was duly seconded and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted

Karen Petrovic