

Minutes of the Select Board  
Monday, June 17, 2024  
28 North Main Street and via zoom

**Attendance:** Kane Sweeney, Roger Clapp, Alyssa Johnson, Ian Shea, Tom Leitz, Karen Petrovic

**Public Attendance:** ORCA Media, Owen Setti-Ducati, Sandy Sabin, Chiyomi McKibbin, Tessa Yip, Teagen Comeau, Tom Gloor, Billy Vigdor, John Grenier, Nicole Grenier, Mal Culbertson, Lisa Walton, Scott Culver, Dan McKibben, Evan Hoffman

**ZOOM:** ORCA Media, Marge's iPad, Valerie Rogers, LS, Evan Hoffman, Mike Bard

R. Clapp called the meeting to order at 7:00pm

**Approve Agenda: K. Sweeney moved to approve the agenda as presented. A. Johnson seconded the motion, a vote was held and passed unanimously.**

**Consent Agenda Items: K. Sweeney moved to approve the consent agenda has presented. I. Shea seconded the motion, a vote was held and passed unanimously.**

For the purpose of Zoom participants, it was relayed that the agenda and consent agenda have been approved.

**Public:** M. Culbertson asked the board to pass a Gaza Ceasefire Resolution, see the attached document relating to her request. She stated she has a petition signed by 70 Waterbury residents requesting a Ceasefire Resolution. R. Clapp stated this will be placed on the July 1<sup>st</sup> agenda and encouraged more signatures.

N. Grenier thanked the Select Board for her time to share and their public service. She spoke to the board about participation in public hearings then read a social media / letter to the editor post she created. [LETTER: In support of a Select Board resolution on Gaza — Waterbury Roundabout](#)

C. McKibbin asked to echo the thoughts of M. Culbertson and N. Grenier

T. Yip also requested the Select Board take immediate action on a Ceasefire Resolution in Gaza by reading a short statement to that end.

S. Culver thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak about the Entertainment Permit that was issued on 5/6. He stated he sent the Board an email and hoped the Board will consider rescinding the permit that was approved.

V. Rogers has a question about Phase 1 Zoning Bylaws which is not on the agenda this evening. She would like the Downtown District to also be considered in the Zoning Bylaw Phase 1 update for single family homes to be a conditional use.

**Economic Development Strategic Plan:** O. Sette-Ducati introduced the Economic Development Strategic Plan as presented in his handout. O. Sette-Ducati recognized there are a couple of edits to be made such as median income levels. R. Clapp asked what constraints there are along Route 100 and Route 2 corridors for development? O. Sette-Ducati stated on Route 100 traffic and conservation is the issue; on Route 2 the flood plain is the constraint. They both share a lack of public water and sewer infrastructure. Waterbury Center Downtown designation does not relate to increased commerce in that area. The new Zoning Regulations allow for Pilgrim Park to expand with multi-family housing. T. Gloor asked about the mission statement of Revitalizing Waterbury. Economic Development is the focus but we're talking about

housing. O. Sette-Ducati stated that many of the businesses in Waterbury have spoken to him about a lack of housing and how that is impacting their ability to find and retain employees. T. Gloor spoke of a longer-term strategic plan that stretches 10-20 years and developing more industry and businesses in Waterbury Center. B. Vigdor spoke about the suggestions made in the Plan about Zoning and clarifying if they are focused on just Phase 1 of the rewrites. O. Sette-Ducati confirmed it is for Phase 1 only and he will make that adjustment for clarity. **K. Sweeney moved the Select Board endorse the Economic Development Strategic Plan with noted adjustments. A. Johnson seconded the motion. A vote was held and passed unanimously.**

**Phase 2 Bylaw Discussion:** T. Leitz stated initially the Planning Commission was planning to be in attendance to discuss their schedule as presented in the packet. It has come to light the Town Plan requires an update, necessary every 10 years. This priority will impact the Phase 2 schedule. A. Johnson spoke of the opportunities surrounding Town Planning Grants and grants that are available for consultants for a large Bylaw rewrite.

**Signs ROW:** T. Leitz stated that C. Viens placed a sign near the Welcome to Waterbury sign on Thursday May 30<sup>th</sup> during the school budget vote which was removed. C. Viens was very upset by these actions and sent a message to T. Lietz to be read aloud to the Board. "The cry for equal rights by certain segment of our community...after seeing several other signs supporting the budget...our ability to express our opinions by banners or signs...if it can't be fair for everyone, then it shouldn't be allowed for anyone". K. Petrovic stated as we approach the Presidential Election this fall; she does not want her office or other Municipal Staff to be policing signs left near the Welcome sign in Town. K. Sweeney stated he believes this sort of behavior is part of the game of politics and has been going on for a long time. I. Shea stated the use of that space is an asset to the public. If someone places their personal property in a public space it is their personal responsibility. In the spirit of free speech signs, being permitted under the Waterbury Welcome sign is an asset to the Town. Staff will draft a motion to clarify where temporary signs will be permitted for consideration at the July 1 meeting.

**Changes to Open Meeting & Ethics Law:** T. Leitz introduced the new law that takes effect July 1. There are several boards in Waterbury this law would impact. There are also a couple of questionable boards such as the Cemetery Commission that has a non-advisory role with the Cemetery Trust Fund. The new Ethics Law requires the Select Board to have a policy in place to handle ethic complaints and enforcement of violations. Complaints must be reported to the State along with detail outcomes. T. Leitz will have something for the Select Board to consider adopting at the July 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.

**Comments Local Hazard Mitigation Plan:** Each Select Board member has rated the options as detailed on a spreadsheet they were provided. These are to be submitted to T. Leitz by Friday 6/21. T. Leitz and N. Leitner will collate the responses to be submitted to CVRPC.

**Set Tax Rate:** T. Leitz presented the Board with the most up to date information of the Grand List which was provided late today following grievance hearings. There are three properties in the FEMA buyout process that the Board anticipates a request for full abatement in the coming year, totaling roughly \$10,000. R. Clapp wonders what the Town should be anticipating for the following years, looking ahead at 2025 and how that might impact any decisions made now. T. Leitz stated he always has a working budget for the coming year but there are many known unknowns in the future budgets because of the Local Options Tax. He doesn't anticipate any major spending that would cause a tax increase to match

the rate of inflation. K. Sweeney stated he supports the rate as approved by the taxpayers at Town Meeting. I. Shea likes the idea of splitting the difference and giving back what we can to the taxpayers. Putting a surplus back in the General Fund doesn't buy the Board that much good will for the taxpayers but it's the best the Board can offer. **I. Shea made a motion to set the tax rate at .5550. K. Sweeney seconded the motion.** Discussion followed. A. Johnson stated she was in support of .5540. Clarity was made as to what the .5550 rate would do to impact the budget and surplus. **A vote was held and passed unanimously.**

**A. Johnson moved to set a tax rate of .0019 for the Disabled Veterans exemption. I. Shea seconded the motion a vote was held and passed 4-1 with M. Bard abstaining.**

**K. Sweeney made a motion to set a tax rate at .0021 for the Hunger Mountain Children's Center. A. Johnson seconded the motion, a vote was held and passed unanimously.**

T. Leitz explained late Homestead Declaration filings that occur each year. **K. Sweeney moved to impose a 2% penalty on late filing Homestead Declarations. I. Shea seconded the motion, a vote was held and passed unanimously.**

**Parking Ordinance (Preliminary Discussion):** T. Lietz stated the calls he receives are generally relating to fees people incur using the paid parking lots in Town. There is no staff recommendation to change the Winter Parking Ban. T. Leitz has reached out to the Wesley Church about developing additional parking at that location but he has not received a response. S. Sabin stated parking along Guptil Road has been an issue because of safety issues with patrons being in the roadway. R. Clapp has stated he will speak to the owners of the establishment. T. Leitz stated he has a different outlook; he sees the Local Options Tax as a burden to local businesses and we need to support them in finding solutions to issues such as this. M. Bard stated the signs along the roadway on Guptil Road were appropriate but need to be enforced. A tragic accident is going to reflect badly on the business and the Town. L. Walton suggest that the Zen Barn be responsible for the parking issue and not the Town because it could set a bad precedent. They could perhaps shuttle patrons from a second lot.

**Noise Concerns (Second Discussion):** The decibel meter was found in the vault at the Municipal Office. A discussion followed about the use of jake brakes and whether VTRANS allows Municipalities to regulate the use of them. As staff works towards updating the Entertainment and Special Events permits, a noise limitation should be considered that can be waived by the Select Board when warranted. **A. Johnson moved the Board continue the noise concerns discussion at the July 15<sup>th</sup> meeting to discuss signage as well as the State Ordinance and enforcement. K. Sweeney seconded the motion, a vote was held and passed unanimously.**

**Farmers Market Debrief:** R. Clapp attended the Farmers Market where he engaged in conversation about Waterbury being the following topics:

- \*Best beer town in New England
- \*Boston Globe named Waterbury the best little foodie town in New England
- \*Complimented the temporary stop light at bridge #4 on Guptil Road opposed to a flagger being on site.
- \*Discussion about a left-hand turn from Hill Street to Railroad Street which was agreed to be unsafe.
- \*Some concerns about affordable parking
- \*Walk to Shop was there, they have organized a cart that can be purchased for \$45-\$65 for a walkable friendly area to carry goods.
- \*Suggestions to look more at accessibility for seniors
- \*Do we have defibrillators available in the downtown area?

Aug 8<sup>th</sup> and Sept 12<sup>th</sup> the Recreation Committee will be at the Farmers Market to ask the community about visions of a new Recreation Facility.

A. Johnson can volunteer from 4-6pm this coming Thursday. M. Bard is available for many dates because he will be there for Rotary purposes.

**Next Meeting Agenda:**

Gaza Ceasefire Resolution

Sign Bylaw Update

Ethics Code

Phase 2 Bylaw timeline and Town Plan Update

Parade and Event Permits in the parking lot

move Housing Trust Update to the top of the agenda

move police stats to July 15<sup>th</sup>

possible move Leaf Peeper Traffic to July 15<sup>th</sup>

Text My Gov

**Executive Session: A. Johnson made a motion that premature public knowledge of a real estate transaction will clearly place the town at a disadvantage. K. Sweeney seconded the motion, a vote was held and passed unanimously.**

**K. Sweeney moved to enter executive session to discuss pending real estate matters along with the Municipal Manager T. Leitz. I. Shea seconded the motion, a vote was held and passed unanimously.**

**Adjourn:** The board exited Executive Session at 10:03pm having taken no action

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.