

## Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Waterbury Select Board Saturday January 11, 2025

Location: Waterbury American Legion Stowe Street Waterbury VT

Attendees: Roger Clapp, Alyssa Johnson, Kane Sweeny, Ian Shea, Mike Bard, Tom Leitz, 27 Attendees: See attached list

The meeting was called to order at 12:16 pm after participants indulged in pies donated by participants. Approve Agenda: A motion to approve the agenda was made by M Bard. The motion was seconded by I. Shea and passed unanimously.

Board Chair Alyssa Johnson made opening remarks about why the Board voted to have "Have Your Say Day". This is an informal discussion of the Town budget to inform residents. It does not replace Town meeting and a formalized vote there is forthcoming. The Board will be looking for input after each section presented by a Board member. There will be another "Have Your Say Day" on Monday January 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm at the Grange Cultural Center in Waterbury Center.

R Clapp Local Option Tax (LOT) Recognized Waterbury's two State Reps to help sheppard the LOT thru the legislature. LOT was put in place on July 24, 2024. Was not budget in the 2024 budget due to uncertainty of approval. Year end revenues between \$425-450K. 2025 revenues expected conservatively at \$750K Input by residents was to use LOT to reduce the tax rate. Affordable housing was a priority. Efforts made to streamline expenditures. Waterbury doesn't have a close source of gravel. Bolton quarry closed. Having to truck gravel from South Barre. New fire truck is needed. Money added to the Highway Capital fund planned. Recreation facility planning and estimated to be done due to limited indoor facilities \$17.5K needed to plan facilities. \$75K to Housing Trust fund for initial injection. \$25K for card access system for municipal building. \$55k for pool flexi-coat to extend pool life. Better than PVC liner. \$50K for Planning and Conservation Commissions for costs associated with Town Plan. Double digit tax increase without LOT.

T Leitz-Gravel cost to truck is getting very expensive. Road crews will now truck. Use tax stabilization fund to eliminate tax increases. Pool we were using gravel as a liner. With new liner will be less algae growth. LOT expenses are embedded in the different portions of the budget. 2024 we had a windfall on taxes. Will get final payment from State in Feb 2025. Set aside for flood mitigation/hydrologist.

C Viens- LOT is just another tax to business owners. Need to get our house in order and give selectboard some time.

G Miller-Discussed redoing Anderson complex. Ian Sweet said rec committee recommendations and how to pair down expenses.

Discussed 3 major flood projects: The Harvey Farm berm, Randall St cornfield and State complex protection as per B Shepluck questions.

General Government, Library, Fire, Planning and Zoning M Bard- No major changes. Reserves used for reappraisal and flood recovery. Lister moved to F/T due to reappraisal needs. VSP budget increase from \$415 to 477K. Ambulance service increase from \$128 to 199K. Lack of

volunteer help. ARPA funds 100% allocated and no longer available. Library and FD flat budget. Reduced debt due to Selectboard August 2024 action. Planning Commission to be used for consultant for town plan update and CC needs to do Natural Resource Inventory. \$50K to maintain cemetery as staff vs. vendor cost as reallocation of expense.

T Leitz- VSP 3 year contract. Much less than a in house PD. Ambulance service if town ran the service cost to taxpayers would substantially increase. Struggle to recruit volunteers and more F/T employees being used.

W Shepluck- Encouraged WASI to ask for more from the Town.

R Ellis-Flood Mitigation -cornfield can't be done w/o grant funds. 200K ton of gravel extracted. Where do you put it?

Police coverage- 2 F/T VSP officers gets you about 65 hours after leave, travel and other expenses. What can we afford for other services? May use Sheriff department to supplement services for speeding, traffic control, etc.

Do we want to fund some of the fund balances for reserve funds. Public Works has problems spending their budget, Have not allocated full LOT to account for future needs.

T Stevens- trying to craft public policy on private property. FEMA process is lengthy. If we do buyouts what does it do to our grand list. 9 buyouts already approved.

Highway Budget K Sweeney

Budget flat. Several employees retiring. New tandem dump truck and gravel funded by LOT. Paving budget remains strong at \$450K. Stowe Street bridge replacement scheduled and predominately State funded.

Recreation I. Sweet. Despite many wants in Rec area, Selectboard has been mindful of potential costs. Pool has \$50K operation costs. Summer rec program revenues are down. Manly due to staffing challenges. \$17.5 Rec facility study. \$128K to maintain parks.

General questions- Concern over funding the housing study funded with LOT versus putting a separate line item on warning.

Expecting a 6% increase proposed on the education property tax.

A Johnson- We are putting on warning, do voters want "have you say day" to replace town meeting process in respect for budget. Would be an austrialian ballot vote in future years.

Discussion of pros and cons.

Alyssa thanked the Legion for letting us use their space.

R Ellis Moderator offered help to individuals to craft amendments to warned items.

K. Sweeney made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by R Clapp. Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:03 pm.