

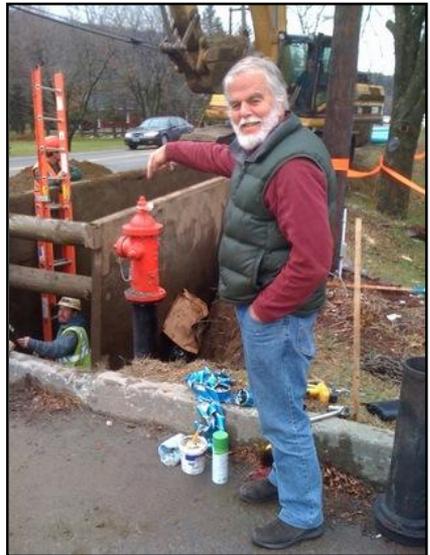
## WAITSFIELD SELECTBOARD 2010 Annual Report

The Selectboard typically meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Waitsfield Town Office. Citizens are encouraged to contact Town Administrator Valerie Capels to confirm meeting dates or to have a matter placed on the agenda. Our meetings are open to the public and citizens are invited to attend. We are also pleased that most of our meetings are filmed for broadcast on Mad River Valley TV on channel 45. Some of the Selectboard's major work of this past year is discussed below.

**Municipal Water Project.** Permits were obtained, the funding was secured, and the water project was put out to bid for construction in August 2010. Work began in September. By the winter shutdown in December, pipe was laid along Tremblay Road, Bushnell Road, East Road, Dugway Road, and Route 100 and hydrants were installed. Pending resolution of legal issues, project start-up is targeted for April 2011 with continued installation of the water main, construction of the tank, and installation of the pipes and meters for the connected properties. If all other matters proceed as planned, the project is expected to be completed by fall of 2011.

The final construction bids came in substantially lower than projected estimates, which allowed the Town to offer prospective water customers additional incentives to connect to the water system.

The Water Task Force continued to work with property owners, the funding agencies, the Selectboard, and others on the numerous details associated with moving the project forward. In the summer, Municipal Project Manager Henry Erickson was hired to represent the Town's interests during construction.



In November, Washington Superior Court Judge Crawford ruled that evidence submitted at the October trial was not compelling enough to

establish that Reed Road is a Town highway. Town Highway #21 has appeared on official Town Highway maps as a class 4 road since 1930 and on historic maps before that. The Selectboard is currently engaged in efforts, both in court and through negotiations with affected landowners, to resolve this matter.

**Route 100 Transportation Path Project.** A major milestone was achieved this year with the issuance of the VTrans right-of-way certificate. The next steps are to finalize the design plan, prepare the bid and construction documents, and put the project out to bid this coming fall for construction in 2012. Project engineer Mark Bannon's contract was renewed in December to focus on this next phase of the project.

Long-time municipal project manager Kevin Russell resigned in July to take a full-time position as the Enhancement Grant Program manager at VTrans. We appreciate all the work he did on the sidewalk project and look forward to working with Kevin on our Covered Bridge rehabilitation project.

**The 1833 Covered Bridge Rehabilitation.** The Town was awarded \$273,000 in federal funds in 2008 to address the cantilevered sidewalk on the north side of the Waitsfield 1833 Covered Bridge and repair the bridge's abutments. Dubois & King was hired to study the alternatives, present recommendations, assist the Selectboard in obtaining public input, assist with permitting and agency reviews, preparation of construction documents, and assistance with construction oversight, all of which will continue through 2011.

**Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Grant.** The Town applied for and was awarded a grant of up to \$141,000 for three projects: (1) four radar speed feedback signs at locations critical to the school, (2) installation of a crosswalk over Route 100/Main Street near the Old County Road, and (3) the re-alignment of southerly Old County Road/Route 100 intersection into a "T." This was the outcome of a great deal of work by the Safe Routes to School committee, which includes Helen Kellogg, Jennifer Stella, Kirsten Siebert, Steve Gladzcuk, Kaiya Korb, and Sue Frechette. Members of the Mad River Path Association were also involved.

**Town Pond.** Kingsbury Construction completed finishing touches to the impoundment this year. Going forward, we will need to plan for inspections of the impoundment every five years. The Friends of the

Mad River spearheaded an effort to install hundreds of native plants—a combination of riparian species, shrubs, trees, and others—around the southwestern side of the pond. As they grow, they will enhance habitat for wildlife, provide shade, and improve the beauty of the area.

**Tree Project.** The Town continues to implement its Scenic Roads Management Plan through new street tree plantings, tree pruning, and removal of dead trees.

**Flemer Green Community Orchard.** After 3 1/2 months of daily on-line voting that began in March, Waitsfield received word in June that it won a free fruit orchard through the California-based Fruit Tree Planting Foundation in partnership with Edy's Fruit Bars. A ground breaking and planting event was held in August when fifty apple, pear, and cherry trees were planted by dozens of volunteers in the day-long event. Spearheaded by Selectboard member Charlie Hosford, the success of this initiative was the result of an outstanding collaboration among Town officials, the Mad River Valley Planning District, the Waitsfield Elementary School, the Mad River Garden Center, Whole Systems Designs, Stan Ward, and others.

This orchard will add to our local food production and provide a hands-on horticultural classroom for the partner organizations and the community to learn how to raise, care for, process, and share the local fruit and berry produce. The elementary school has incorporated the orchard into its curriculum as an extension of its already successful school garden program. In time, fresh fruit and fruit byproducts will be donated to the Valley Food Shelf.

**Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Initiatives.** A combination of state and federal tax credits and ARRA stimulus money this last year prompted opportunities to move forward with a number of energy efficiency projects on Town properties.

EECBG Grant. Early in the year, the Energy Committee went through a rigorous process to successfully submit a grant application to the Vermont Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program through Vermont Clean Energy Fund (CEDF). The fund received an infusion of federal stimulus money and is administered through the Vermont Dept. of Public Service. The grant provides \$49,999 for energy retrofit projects to the Wait House, Fire Station, and

Town Garage. The 10% required minimum match will be met with a combination of in-kind time and cash.

PACE Grant. The Town also applied for and was awarded a Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) grant at the same time as the EECBG grant. Article 18 on the Town Meeting warning would authorize Waitsfield to lend money to property owners for eligible renewable energy and energy efficiency projects, with repayment of the loan made as an assessment on their tax bill. There is widespread interest throughout the state in this new program.

Solar Panels at Town Garage. State and federal tax credits that expired on December 31, 2010 led to the installation of numerous solar panels in Waitsfield and throughout the state. This prompted much discussion about the compatibility of solar panels in Waitsfield's scenic fields that will continue to be explored in the year or years ahead. The Selectboard and others spent considerable time considering a partnership with one of two companies that proposed installing an array of solar panels at the Town Garage property on Tremblay Road to offset the energy costs of Waitsfield's municipal facilities. A project did not go forward for a number of reasons: our application to the Public Service Board for a certificate of public good (CPG) was not granted because the cap on the number of CPGs had already been reached; questions were raised about the legality of entering into a multi-year contract without voter approval; and the terms of the power purchase agreement with AllEarth Renewables eventually changed.

Article 13 on the Town Meeting warning proposes establishing an Energy Reserve Fund with an allocation of \$5,000 to help ensure funds are available for future opportunities that may not have been foreseen but that require some form of matching contribution or down payment.

**Law Enforcement.** Law enforcement services continued to be provided through the Washington County Sheriff's Department. Waitsfield and Warren contract together for 40 hours of patrol coverage per week. Waitsfield Constable Peter Laskowski provides 40% of this with 16 hours of patrol per week in Waitsfield. Constable Laskowski is also a nationally registered EMT first responder who works with the Mad River Valley Ambulance Service and the Vermont State Police. This cooperative arrangement allows quicker law enforcement response for serious complaints and provides first aid in emergency situations. Deputy Sheriff/Constable Laskowski has also been working with the

constables of neighboring towns through the Mad River Community Police Association (MRCP) in an effort to increase the effectiveness of local law enforcement in the Valley. He has been in search of modest-sized office space in Warren or Waitsfield where he and other law enforcement personnel can process DUIs locally without having to drive to the Barre-Montpelier area for processing, which takes time away from patrol. It could also be a meeting place for the MRCP. The Selectboard supports the initiative if space can be found that meets the functional criteria at a reasonable cost, but suitable space has not yet been found.

**Wait House.** Long-overdue maintenance was accomplished at the Wait House this year, with help from a loan approved by voters. The asphalt shingle roof of the carriage barn roof was replaced with an enameled metal roof. The main building, barns, storage shed, and kiosk received a fresh coat of paint. Some shutters were replaced, and all got new paint. All of these were done with the approval of the Vermont Housing Conservation Board for historical compatibility.

A number of energy efficiency measures funded through the EECBG program are also underway. Seven inches of urethane foam was blown into the attic, increasing the R-value from 2 to 49. The furnace will be replaced with an Energy Star gas boiler that will increase efficiency from 79% to 95%. New exterior storm windows will be installed, more insulation will be added in the basement, and new programmable thermostats will further help manage energy use.

**Fire Station Improvements.** The replacement of the Waitsfield-Fayston Fire Station roof was put out to bid in the spring and Burrell Roofing was selected among the five bidders who responded. The discovery of asbestos in some of the roof material and the need to reinforce the structural supports for the new roof added unexpected time and cost to the project. The structural improvements were completed in the fall and will allow for the roof replacement to proceed in the spring.

**Town Office Task Force.** The need for more Town Office space has been known for many years. A Town Office Task Force was formed this fall in an effort to help move the issue forward, examine options, describe the needs, solicit public input, and make recommendations to the Selectboard. Members include Sandra Gallup, Charlie Hosford, Jennifer Peterson, John Reilly, Brian Shupe, Brian Voigt, and Valerie Capels. See page 62 for more information.

**Ancient Roads.** The Selectboard held a public information meeting in January and hearing in February to consider whether so-called unidentified corridors should be added to the Waitsfield's official highway map. Compelling testimony and a review of the available information measured against criteria the Selectboard had established led the Selectboard to decide against any further consideration of the specific unidentified corridors shown on the map produced by a consultant through a 2007 grant. The Town has until 2015 to add legally-established but non-mapped roads and road rights-of-way to the official Town Highway Map. More information about this can found at [www.waitsfieldvt.us/roads/ancient](http://www.waitsfieldvt.us/roads/ancient).

**Other Roads.** Prompted by concerns raised about the name causing confusion for deliveries and emergency responders, Town Highway #48, which was originally named Wallis Road in 2000, was officially renamed Wallis Drive, and the private section of Wallis Drive was renamed Wallis Woods Road. A private drive off of North Fayston Road was also officially named Brookside Lane.

**Emergency Operations Planning.** The Selectboard completed a process that began in 2009 to develop a broad-based Emergency Operations Plan to guide local officials' responses in the event of an emergency. The 3-part EOP identifies individuals responsible for carrying out certain duties, limits of authority, chains of command, and more under a range of potential emergency scenarios. It replaces the traditional Rapid Response Plan and should be reviewed and updated each year.

**Health Leader.** Town staff continued their participation in the Vermont League of Cities and Towns Health Leader program, which returns up to 4% of the health insurance premiums to the town as a result of activities undertaken to improve staff health and well-being. This program will not be available in 2011 since we voted to leave the VLCT Health Trust.

**Waitsfield on the Web.** Waitsfield's official Web site continues to be a source for information about Waitsfield, works in progress, departments, boards and committees, up-coming and past meetings, and more. Selectboard agendas, for example, are posted at [www.waitsfieldvt.us/sb/agenda.cfm](http://www.waitsfieldvt.us/sb/agenda.cfm) and often include links to the documents the Selectboard will be discussing. It is also used to promote Waitsfield businesses through the comprehensive listings of *Services, Shopping, Foods & Eateries, Lodging, Arts & Entertainment,*

*Recreation*, and more. Site statistics show that more than 24,000 unique visitors went to the site in 2010 (an average of 2,023 per month), a 14% increase from 2009.

The number of people who “like” Waitsfield’s Facebook page increased from 144 to 225 by the end of the year. It was launched in an effort to increase our citizen outreach efforts and promote Waitsfield events, businesses, and other activities.

**2011 Budget.** Looking back, 2010 was characterized by continued investment in community assets: gravel pit development, Wait House improvements, Town Garage and Fire Station improvements, water project construction, and progress on the Covered Bridge repair.

This trend will continue into 2011 with the anticipated completion of the water project, the sidewalk project going out to bid, progress on the Covered Bridge rehabilitation project, study of new Town Office and Library space, evaluation of Town Garage space needs, Safe Routes to School improvements, and further exploration of renewable energy.

Highlights of the proposed 2011 budget include:

- Operating costs in many areas are lower than 2010 budget.
- Operating and capital funds are increased to address culvert replacement and maintenance.
- Overall, the cost for employee benefits, including health insurance costs actually decreased from 2010 to 2011.
- Funds are allocated for the study of the Town Office space expansion.
- Funds are allocated for repairs to the existing Town Garage building as well as to study options for increased space.
- Funds are increased to the Route 100 Transportation Path Reserve Fund to provide for continued investment in sidewalk projects.
- An allocation to the existing Reappraisal Reserve Fund is proposed to prepare ourselves for the cost of a future reappraisal (see page 65).
- A fund balance of more than \$152,000 is carried over from 2010 that is the result of higher revenues than expected, including a one-time zoning violation fine, and lower operating and capital expenses than expected, in part due to being short-staffed part of the year in the Road Department.

The Budget Task Force was created in the summer 2009 to examine all aspects of Waitsfield's budgeting process, explore opportunities for improvements and efficiencies, and present recommendations to the Selectboard. Task Force members include Bill Parker, Darryl Forrest, Robin Morris, Roy Hadden, and Steve Shea.

**Staff and Volunteers.** The Selectboard wishes to acknowledge and thank the Town staff for their efforts to keep Town operations moving smoothly and delivering a high quality service. Special thanks to all the citizens who volunteer countless hours of time and other resources serving on boards, committees, commissions, and task forces.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Williams, Chair  
Charlie Hosford, V. Chair  
Paul Hartshorn  
William Parker  
Salvatore Spinosa



Waitsfield-Fayston Volunteer Fire Department celebration, 07/31/10.

(Photo: V. Capels)