

1 **TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT**

2 **Selectboard Meeting Minutes**

3 **Monday, December 4, 2023**

4
5 **I. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Christine Sullivan. The meeting
6 was held in person at the Town Office building and remotely via Zoom.

7 Members Present: Chach Curtis, Fred Messer, Brian Shupe, Christine Sullivan

8 Staff Present: Decker-Dell’Isola, Town Administrator; Trip Johnson, Fire Chief

9 Others Present: Bob Cook (CC), Nathan Davis, Bruno Grimaldi (CC), Phil Huffman (CC), Anthony
10 Italiano (MRTV), Curt Lindberg (CC), Gail O’Keefe (CC), Caleb Pierce

11
12 **II. Regular Business.**

13
14 **1. Review agenda for addition, removal, or adjustment of any items per 1 VSA 312(d)(3)(A).**

15 No changes were made to the agenda.

16
17 **2. Public Forum.**

18 Nobody requested time to address the Board.

19
20 **3. Consider Liquor License application for Scrag & Roe (40 Bridge Street).**

21 Caleb Pierce and Nathan Davis, who are opening a new restaurant at 40 Bridge Street,
22 confirmed that they have both completed the necessary training for serving alcohol, and that
23 they will ensure all staff is also trained. Ms. Decker-Dell’Isola explained the Waitsfield protocol
24 for the initial three years of holding a license in Town.

25
26 **MOTION:** *Mr. Shupe made a motion to approve a 1st class and 3rd class liquor license for Scrag
27 & Roe. The motion was seconded by Mr. Messer. All voted in favor.*

28
29 **4. Waitsfield Conservation Commission (CC) updates**

30 • 2023 Knotweed Work Report

31 Mr. Lindberg shared some slides related to the knotweed management work undertaken this
32 summer, pointing out the large team that was engaged, and that the area under management
33 has expanded, with the initiation in some sections of a more scientific approach to tracking the
34 average number of knotweed plants in relation to other types of growth. He also noted that
35 the Farley Riverside Park has populations of several types of invasive species, and that the CC is
36 looking for ways to address these. Finally, he explained that different management approaches
37 are being considered for areas along the river with extensive knotweed, including the use of
38 goats or herbicides. These are in preliminary stage of consideration, but would likely require
39 some financial support and community outreach if pursued.

40
41 • Initial Fair Ground parcel management discussion

42 Mr. Lindberg explained that the CC has begun to discuss the work needed to understand the
43 Fair Ground parcel and develop a management and recreation plan for the property. He
44 indicated that the CC’s understanding is that the Selectboard would like them to concentrate on
45 the forest, wetland, and riparian area, leaving discussion of the open field/fairground area in
46 the Selectboard’s purview for now. He noted that coordination will be needed regarding trails,
47 parking, and other aspects of the site’s use. Mr. Shupe indicated that the Board has not yet

48 begun the discussion of this property's management, and added that the parcel was gifted with
49 the intention to support housing in some manner, as well as for conservation purposes.

50
51 Mr. Huffman explained that the CC typically undertakes three phases of assessment for Town
52 Forest lands: a natural heritage inventory, an assessment (with assistance from Audubon VT) of
53 both forest and open land bird habitat, and a timber inventory (with assistance from a
54 professional forester). For this parcel, the CC would also like to coordinate with Friends of the
55 Mad River for a riparian assessment, as there is significant river frontage included. Additionally,
56 Mr. Huffman noted that a recreational assessment would be appropriate, focusing on the river,
57 the informal trail network already on the property, and the shared property border with the
58 Wu Ledges parcel and the trail network there.

59
60 Mr. Huffman asked if the actual fairground portion of the site be included in these assessments,
61 and Board members agreed that the entire parcel should be included. Ms. Sullivan requested
62 that the CC draft a document outlining the planned assessment work for Board review. Mr.
63 Huffman indicated that engaging with consultants for the natural heritage and timber
64 inventories may begin at any time.

65
66 Mr. Lindberg outlined some of the impacts on the property related to agricultural use by Hadley
67 Gaylord; Mr. Huffman suggested that the CC and Selectboard each select a representative to
68 meet with Mr. Gaylord to discuss these practices going forward.

69
70 Ms. Decker-Dell'Isola offered a reminder that funds for assessment needs should be included in
71 upcoming budget discussions.

72
73 • Consider FY25 Conservation Commission budget request
74 Mr. Grimaldi spoke of the CC's intention to request maintaining the same amounts in several
75 budget line items for the coming year, specifically \$20K for the Conservation Reserve, \$5K for
76 general operating expenses, and \$10K for the Invasive Species Reserve. Mr. Lindberg explained
77 that, in order to not request an increase in their operating budget, the CC plans to use Reserve
78 funds for some upcoming assessment expenses; Ms. Decker-Dell'Isola noted that this would be
79 an appropriate use of those funds. It was calculated that the Reserve fund currently has a
80 balance of approximately \$70K.

81
82 There was some discussion of the clarification needed regarding remaining funds in the Invasive
83 Species Reserve; Ms. Decker-Dell'Isola noted that all funds available for the current fiscal year
84 have been expended and cautioned against spending funds allocated for the upcoming year,
85 but Mr. Grimaldi indicated that there should be approximately \$3K remaining, and noted that
86 he needs to work with Randy Brittingham to ensure that the payment for Fayston's intern has
87 been properly adjusted. Mr. Lindberg pointed out that, should a Lake Champlain Basin Fund
88 grant be awarded, the full amount budgeted for in the Reserve Fund will likely not be needed.

89
90 **5. FY25 draft budget review.**
91 The focus of the information presented by Ms. Decker-Dell'Isola was noted to be General Fund
92 operating expenditures; the following points were made:

- 93 • Election expense up due to 2024 being a Presidential election year
94 • Insurance numbers were just received

- 95 • Computer services should be revisited and a better equipment replacement plan outlined
- 96 • Salary lines include a 3% COLA
- 97 • There will likely be some fees associated with the new web site
- 98 • Waiting for information from Planning Commission, Listers
- 99 • Road Department
 - 100 ○ Now four salaries
 - 101 ○ No longer contracting for sidewalks, mowing
 - 102 ○ Anticipated increases in materials – salt, sand harder to obtain and more expensive
 - 103 ○ Continued work with Josh Rogers to get details in place
- 104 • Fayston winter agreement information coming soon
- 105 • Joint meeting with Fayston next week for roads and Fire Department
- 106 • Fire Department
 - 107 ○ Capital West Reserve
 - 108 ▪ The project will not be proceeding as originally outlined, but Capital Fire is
 - 109 planning to apply for another FEMA grant, and the money in Reserve
 - 110 indicates the Town’s commitment
 - 111 ▪ Mr. Johnson will check on the agreement documentation, which was
 - 112 requested by the Board before any funds are transferred to Capital Fire
 - 113 ○ The Department labor expenses have been underfunded
 - 114 ▪ Associated increase included in preliminary budget
 - 115 ○ To be discussed whether an hourly rate increase (currently \$17/hour) should be
 - 116 budgeted for
 - 117 ○ Administrative support discussion needed, the time Ms. Decker-Dell’Isola and Mr.
 - 118 Brittingham have available for this work is not sufficient
- 119 • Public Safety budget information is being collated
- 120 • Dues and assessments amounts still arriving
- 121 • Special appropriations
 - 122 ○ Now have an application process, with petitions necessary only if requested by the
 - 123 Board
 - 124 ▪ MRV Seniors request up from \$7K to \$10K, they are willing to come in and
 - 125 provide supporting information
- 126 • Reserves, debt service, other portions of the budget are being developed and will be ready
- 127 for initial review at the December 18 Board meeting.

128

129 **6. Consent Agenda.**

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131 **APPROVAL:** *The consent agenda was approved without objection.*

132

- 133 • Approve the Minutes of 11/2/2023 and 11/13/23
 - 134 • Bills Payable and Treasurer’s Warrants
 - 135 • Approve liquor license renewals
 - 136 • Approve Alice Peal to the Clean Water Advisory Committee
 - 137 • Approve renewed SOS contract for Water Operations for 2024
- 138

139 **7. Selectboard Roundtable.**

140 Ms. Sullivan has submitted some local zoning information for JB Weir to address.

141

142 **8. Town Administrator's Updates.**

143 Ms. Decker-Dell'Isola noted that there will be an update regarding the Wastewater Project
144 provided at the next Selectboard meeting, including information regarding progress on
145 requirements from the staff at DEC.

146 **IV. Other Business**

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

148 **IV. Adjourn**

149 The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

150 Respectfully submitted,

151 Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary