

Wallingford Selectboard

Meeting Minutes

December 2, 2024

Selectboard Chair Kathy Luzader called the regular Selectboard meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Selectboard Members Present: Rob Barker, Carolyn Behrendt, Justin Jankus, Kathy Luzader and Mark Tessier.

Others present: Sandi Switzer, Erika Berner, Tom Fort, Shannon Pytlik, Anne Awad, Juile Sharon, David Fox, Denise Eddy, Robert Cook, and Greg McCormack.

Agenda Amendments. R. Barker asked about adding a tree planting grant to the agenda and then decided to wait until the 12/16 meeting.

Minutes. M. Tessier made a motion that was seconded by J. Jankus to approve the 11/18/24 Meeting Minutes. Motion carried (5-0).

Pay Orders. J. Jankus made a motion that was seconded by C. Behrendt to approve the 12/03/24 pay order total of \$24,928.21. Motion carried (5-0).

Honorable Mentions. Tony Cirelli for donating a photograph of White Rocks to Town Hall; All the individuals, organizations and businesses who donated to the Boy With the Boot fund; Tom Fort for his extensive and ongoing assistance with energy projects at Town Hall and the Town Garage;

Public Comments. None.

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget – Public Safety. Rutland County Sheriff David Fox said the rate for law enforcement patrols under the current contract rate is \$51.01 per hour for 1248 hours annually (24hrs/week), which totaled \$63,660.48. The projected 2025/2026 rate (up 6%) of \$54.07 per hour over 1248 hours annually would total \$67,479.36 or an increase of \$3,818.88. C. Behrendt said town officials were interested in increasing weekly coverage. K. Luzader suggested an incremental increase. After some discussion, the Board agreed to budget for 28 hours of patrols a week starting July 1 at a cost of \$79,000 (Public Safety line 5406).

Constable Robert Cook presented options for the purchase of a radio for use during parades and in cases of emergency. M. Tessier said the constable had no authority as he was not a certified law enforcement officer and radio use required training and certification. J. Jankus said the radio was a large expense for a once or twice a year parades. By consensus, the Board agreed to level fund line 5402 constable stipend at \$250; line 5408 dog warden stipend at \$1,260; line 5410 dog warden expenses at \$50.

Town Hall Heating and Cooling. Town Administrator Sandi Switzer said Lohsen Plumbing and Heating would be installing heat pumps at Town Hall next week.

J. Jankus said the engineer's structural assessments of the town garage and sand shed were grim as far as adding solar panels for a net metering system to lower municipal utility rates at the garage, town hall and transfer station. There was an extensive discussion about working with Wallingford Rescue on installing solar arrays with the benefit of covering that nonprofit group's utility costs in addition to municipal utilities. Energy Committee Chair Tom Fort said the urgency was net metering was being phased out and a Certificate of Public Good (CPG) would have to be

obtained for the chosen location by the end of the year. Shannon Pytlik asked about solar arrays at the ballfield parking area similar to Rutland High School. Multiple CPG applications were discussed. Mr. Fort suggested the Energy Committee's budget of \$500 could be used to offset a portion of the cost if committee members agreed. By consensus, the Board authorized securing up to three CPGs at a cost of \$250 each. With the amounts paid from the Building Fund and/or Energy Committee budget. M. Tessier requested the town administrator contact the zoning administrator and floodplain manager about necessary permits/permissions.

The Board by consensus agreed to utilize the Building Fund to pay for the \$2,000 structural assessment costs.

Wallingford Asset (Formerly ARPA) Fund Agreement Extension – Highland Water System.

Anne Awad requested an extension to June 30, 2025 to complete a curb stop replacement project estimated at \$9,200 for the Highland Water System (30 households). After a brief discussion, M. Tessier made a motion that was seconded by C. Behrendt to approve the extension to June, 30, 2025. Motion carried (5-0).

Recreation Facility Grant Application Review/Approval – Concession Stand.

Shannon Pytlik requested approval to submit preapplication forms to the Land and Water Conservation Fund for upgrades to the Elfin Lake concession stand at an estimated \$87,000. Board members reviewed the documents and design plan for the structure. Ms. Pytlik said the grant, if approved, required a 50 percent match. She said design work on the erosion reduction measures would offset a portion of the match along with in-kind labor and grant administration, leaving a gap of about \$11,000. After some discussion, the Board by consensus granted S. Pytlik permission to submit the pre-application. If approved, the full application would be submitted in March of 2025.

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget – Town Government.

Board members reviewed the Conservation Commission's level funded budget request of \$2,500 on line 5157 of the Town Government budget. By consensus, the Board approved the figure and the following Town Government line items: Elections and Town Meeting 5112 \$1,300; Town Report 5113 \$3,150; Office Expenses 5114 \$14,000; Delinquent Tax Collector Expenses 5114a \$475; Legal 5115 \$3,000; Planning and Zoning Notices 5116 \$750; Ads and Warnings 5117 \$750; Seminars 5118 \$500; Memorial Day Expenses 5123 \$300; VLCT Dues 5125 \$4,114 ; RRPC Dues 5126 \$2,129; Workplace Safety 5130 \$250; Dog Licenses 5133 \$2,500; Civil Marriage License 5134 \$650; Transfer Station Expenses 5150 \$100,000; Town Hall Expenses 5151 \$20,000; Rutland County Tax 5155 \$20,000; Conservation Commission 5157 \$2,500; Energy Committee 5158 \$500; Communication Group (newsletter) \$5,500.

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget – Capital.

By consensus, the Board approved the following lines for the Capital budget: Bridge 5712 \$40,000; Highway 5716 \$20,000.

Employee Gift Certificates. M. Tessier made a motion seconded by R. Barker to approve \$50 holiday gift certificates for employees. Motion carried (5-0).

Boy With the Boot Restoration. By consensus, the Board approved Kevin Mulholland of Vermont Forging's offer to restore the Boy With the Boot statue at material costs only of up to \$500. They further agreed the road crew would deliver the statue to Vermont Forgings.

Selectboard Concerns. C. Behrendt said the US flags in East Wallingford should be replaced before next spring.

Other Business. K. Luzader noted the upcoming FY'26 budget review dates:

Recreation, Highway and Appropriations on December 16; Includes the recreation budget (including Summer Rec program); Appropriations includes all non-profit funding requests such as Gilbert Hart Library, Wallingford Rescue, and Highway.

Administration, Insurance and Revenue on January 6, 2025.

M. Tessier suggested the conduit for the camera surveillance system at Town Hall could be removed from the front of the building and installed alongside heat pump conduits inside the structure.

J. Jankus made a motion that was seconded by R. Barker to adjourn at 8:20 p.m. Motion carried (5-0).

Submitted By: Sandi Switzer/Town Administrator

APPROVED THIS 16th Day of December in the year 2024:

Wallingford Selectboard

Carolyn Behrendt _____

Rob Barker _____

Justin Jankus _____

Kathy Luzader _____

Mark Tessier _____