

Wallingford Selectboard

Meeting Minutes

July 6, 2026

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

Selectboard Members Present: Anne Awad, Rob Barker, Glenn Mayer, Kathy Luzader and Carolyn Behrendt.

Others present at the Meeting: Sandi Switzer, Jill Stone Teer, Sarah Wicker, Grey Wicker, Leo Wood, Eric Prescott, Austin Wood, Justin Filskov, Tyler Wood, Mark Tessier, Tom Barone, Sabra Shulman, Gabriella Netsch, Ralph Corbo, Gary Erickson, Dave Blodgett, Ann Erickson, Kathi and Rob Aines, Richard Kendall, Jr., Larry Kendall, Kurtiss Houghton, David Wolk, Tony Masuck and Greg McCormack from Peg-TV.

Agenda Amendments. By consensus, the Board tabled Fire District 1 water/sewer discussion; moved ATV Ordinance discussion to the next item after Public Comments.

Minutes. R. Barker made a motion that was seconded by G. Mayer to approve the 06/15/26 Meeting Minutes. Motion approved (5-0).

Pay Orders. G. Mayer made a motion that was seconded by R. Barker to approve 07/07/26 pay orders totaling \$232,987.15. Motion approved (5-0). R. Barker made a motion that was seconded by C. Behrendt to approve 06/30/26 pay orders totaling \$79,139.81. Motion carried (5-0).

Road Commissioner's Report. Road Commissioner Phil Baker did not attend. G. Mayer said the Volvo was back in service; the Town was waiting for the Fire Safety Permit to schedule installing a foundation for the sand shed; roadside mowing would begin this week; Depot Street work was ongoing (paving later this month). By consensus the Board agreed to invoice and collect payment from Fire District 1 for the Depot Street paving as part of the overall municipal summer paving projects as Pike Industries does not have an account set up to bill the district directly.

Honorable Mentions. The 5th grade students from Wallingford Elementary School and teacher, Karen Castle, for the generous donation of non-perishable food items to stock the Wallingford Community Cupboard. They chose "Acts of Kindness" as their class project. John Squier for mowing trails at Stone Meadow; Bruce Duchesne, Jim Bagnall, Kathy Luzader and the town administrator for ongoing work on the Sidewalk Steering Committee; residents who supported the monthly newsletter Silent Auction;

Public Participation Reminders.

A reminder about rules of procedure.

If you wish to address the Board, you may speak only after raising your hand, being acknowledged by the chair, and stating your name and where you live.

All comments shall be directed to the chair and not to others present.

Personal comments are not permitted.

Comments should be on topic.

We discuss issues not people.

Public Comments. Tom Barone addressed safety concern regarding the Meadow Street playground and skateboard park, including: swings/chains, a chain climbing apparatus, benches, wood chips, the skateboard ramp, and water spigot. He previously submitted photographs of the items of concern. There was a discussion about routine inspections and consistent maintenance for recreation facilities. The Board agreed to address the climbing apparatus immediately then tackle the other items and request an inspection from Vermont Leagues of Cities and Towns.

Tony Masuck said there had been two recent ATV-related deaths in Vermont and he opposed opening Wallingford backroads to ATV use. Doug Blodgett said he had no objection to ATV use for agricultural/work purposes but objected to the draft map that would allow recreational use on dirt roads. Ann Erickson said five ATVs were seen on Sugar Hill Road over the weekend. Sabra Shulman said the draft map had a lot of dead ends resulting in ATV turnarounds in private driveways. She added regulation enforcement would be an issue.

ATV Ordinance – Town Roads. G. Mayer said in considering a request for a Town ordinance related to ATV usage of some roads, he spoke with Paul Donaldson, Town Manager in Poultney; Ann Reed, Town Manager in Pittsford; Steve Pytlik, Recreation Director for the Manchester Division of USFS; Dani Luce, Executive Director of VASA (Vermont ATV Sportsman's Association); and many residents of Wallingford. He said ATV usage was not allowed on US Forest Service land in Wallingford. However, he said illegal riding was taking place and damaging trails creating a headache for the Forest Service to police. Opening up roads that adjoin the forest service land would make matters worse, especially if it attracted out-of-town or out-of-state riders. G. Mayer said the ATV road network as proposed contained a few gaps that the Town could not authorize travel. The most notable was from the west end of Sugar Hill Rd to the top of Church St featuring about a half mile of state-controlled road. The Town or an ATV club would have to work with the state to open this section to ATV usage - a long process, and in the meantime, riders would be tempted to travel that section anyway. There were other sections, including a short, very busy section of US Route 7 in the middle of the village.

G. Mayer said there would be people who ignore the rules and cause problems – as is already the case. He added by opening up our roads, the Town would be inviting more non-local riders and more potential for trouble. He said the Town has virtually no capability to monitor usage or enforce penalties. G. Mayer noted many people and organizations, including ATV manufacturers and ATV riders, have safety concerns about operating ATVs on paved roads, especially on roads like Route 140 with sharp turns and a 40mph speed limit (high clearance, short wheelbase, and rider position result in a high center of gravity and increase likelihood of tipping; lack of rear differential makes sharp or sudden turns on pavement less stable; wide, low pressure, knobby tires don't grip pavement as well as dirt). G. Mayer said VASA recommended towns start with a strong local club and concentrate on getting access to trails on private property, using short connections on dirt roads to link the trails. Their focus on trails instead of roads was based on their goal of building “sustainable” trail networks. Their belief is that moving too quickly to open up roads (especially in areas without adequate enforcement), leads to riders travelling too fast, and roads becoming too dangerous, more complaints, and eventually the town shutting down the program. G. Mayer said he did not think an ATV Ordinance allowing use of local roads was appropriate for the Town.

K. Luzader said possible next steps could be to take a “do nothing” approach; include a non-binding article on the Town Meeting ballot in March for voter input; or draft an ordinance either in support or banning ATV use of Town roads – a lengthy process that would encompass legal review, a public hearing, an appeal period and possibly a townwide vote.

C. Behrendt said Mark Barone wanted to address the Board. Mr. Barone requested the Fire Warden agenda discussion take place as he needed to leave the meeting for an emergency. Board members agreed to pause the ATV discussion to address the fire warden agenda item.

Fire Warden. Mr. Barone said a new state statute effectively appointed the fire chief to act as fire warden (East Wallingford fire chief was not interested) and he said he had appointed Roger Sheehan as deputy fire warden. He said he submitted a proposal to the Town for annual compensation (\$1,500 each plus mileage reimbursement). R. Barker said Mr. Barone should leave the meeting to respond to the emergency. After a brief exchange, Mr. Barone said he would not be disrespected by a Selectboard member and said he would depart the meeting, but indicated no fire permits would be issued until these matters were addressed.

G. Mayer and A. Awad said they had questions for Mr. Barone about his proposal. G. Mayer said due to the timing of the passage of the state statute, the increased stipend/salary was not in the approved Fiscal Year 2027 budget. A. Awad requested Mr. Barone be invited to the July 20th meeting. K. Luzader and G. Mayer agreed to reach out to Mr. Barone in the interim. Board members by consensus affirmed support for Mark Barone as fire warden and Roger Sheehan as deputy fire warden and agreed to address compensation at the next meeting.

ATV Ordinance – Town Roads. Discussion continued. R. Barker said the Town was divided on the issue and he made a motion that was seconded by K. Luzader to place an advisory article on the Town Meeting ballot seeking voter input.

Grey Wicker said he opposed the motion as the ATV activity would only impact select roads and residents. He added a ballot initiative should come from proponents of an ordinance allowing ATVs on Town roads. Richard Kendall suggested allowing only local ATV club members be allowed to use the roads to offset some concerns. Mark Tessier said an item could be petitioned onto the March ballot giving the Board direction on the ordinance. Tony Masuck asked who would enforce an ordinance. Sarah Wicker said speed limits, time of day limits, insurance, helmet requirements would all have to be included in an ordinance. Tom Barone agreed the matter should be put to voters via the March Town Meeting ballot.

R. Barker called for a vote on his motion. The motion failed (2-3). With R. Barker and K. Luzader voting in the minority. A. Awad said the Selectboard was responsible for Town roads and this issue had split the Town with half in favor and half opposed.

After further discussion, M. Tessier said he would draft language for a petition to place an article on the Town Meeting ballot.

David Wolk – State Senate Candidate. David Wolk introduced himself and said he was running for a Rutland County senate seat. He asked for input on what laws should be changed or issues to be addressed. R. Barker said the state had closed Bridge 15 in East Wallingford due to infrastructure issues and they should find the money to rehabilitate the bridge. Jill Stone Teer said there were dead zones in the broadband coverage in South Wallingford and East Wallingford – which was problematic during recent emergency events. Town Administrator Sandi Switzer said unfunded mandates were an issue. Tom Barone suggested eliminating some rules and regulations rather than creating new ones.

Low Flying Military Aircraft. Ralph Corbo reiterated his concerns from the June 15th meeting relative to low flying military aircraft posing a risk to residents and property in his East Wallingford

neighborhood. He read aloud statutes regulating air traffic and altitude/height restrictions. Tom Barone said he had seen C-130s, Blackhawk helicopters, and F-35s in the region. He said he fully supported the training missions and was proud of the flyovers. He urged the Town to take no action to oppose the training events. Kurtiss Houghton agreed with Mr. Barone and said he had a son in active military, and he was proud to see the aircraft training missions.

G. Mayer said out-of-state Air National Guard cargo planes (such as C-130 Hercules transports from the Connecticut or Rhode Island Air National Guards) conducting low-altitude tactical training over Vermont were governed and authorized at the federal level, not by the state. He said complaints to local or state police, town selectboards, or VTrans would not yield results. Depending on the nature of the issue (noise vs. a safety violation), there were specific entities to contact. He provided Mr. Corbo with that information.

Mr. Corbo said filing those complaints would not yield results and he urged the Board to contact the governors in neighboring states to express safety concerns about the low altitude flights. Following further discussion, R. Barker made a motion that was seconded by C. Behrendt to take no action. Motion carried (5-0).

Wallingford Day Events. Heather Johnson provided a copy of the Wallingford Day fireworks permit and checklist signed by the fire chief. She said a Certificate of Insurance would be provided. R. Barker made a motion that was seconded by K. Luzader approving the fireworks permit. Motion carried (5-0).

The Board by consensus approved sidewalk chalk drawings on the new School Street sidewalk as part of the day's events. They further approved Gilbert Hart Library's Building Use request for Town Hall on July 18 from noon to 2:00 p.m. for a speaker as part of Wallingford Day.

Monthly Financials. Town Clerk and Treasurer Jill Stone-Teer provided a written monthly financial report for review. She noted early calculations indicated Fiscal Year 2026 would end with a \$40,000 plus surplus.

Agenda Building. R. Barker requested Florence Avenue/Route 7 parking restrictions be added to the next agenda.

Other Business. None.

Selectboard Comments/Concerns. K. Luzader asked about the identification of "Kevin" noted in the Prudential Committee's June 17th minutes. The town administrator said she would inquire.

C. Behrendt made a motion that was seconded by K. Luzader to adjourn at 8:22 p.m. Motion approved (5-0).

Submitted By: Sandi Switzer/Town Administrator

APPROVED THIS 20th Day of July in the year 2026:

Wallingford Selectboard

Carolyn Behrendt _____

Rob Barker _____

Anne Awad _____

Kathy Luzader _____

Glenn Mayer _____

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