

Wallingford Selectboard

Meeting Minutes

August 3, 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, and Kathy Luzader. Carolyn Behrendt did not attend.

Others present at the Meeting: Sandi Switzer, Jill Stone-Teer, Cecile Betit, Denise Eddy, Phil Baker, Lisa Donohue, and Greg McCormack from Peg-TV.

Agenda Amendments. By consensus, the Board added an executive session to the end of the meeting.

Minutes. G. Mayer made a motion that was seconded by R. Barker to approve the 07/06/26 Meeting Minutes. Motion approved (4-0).

Pay Orders. G. Mayer made a motion that was seconded by A. Awad to approve 08/04/26 pay orders totaling \$51,652.57. Motion approved (4-0). R. Barker made a motion that was seconded by A. Awad to approve revised 06/30/26 pay orders totaling \$148,850.52. Motion carried (4-0).

Road Commissioner's Report. Road Commissioner Phil Baker said the sand shed foundation would be installed in late August and construction of the sand shed would begin in early September. He said he had spoken to all involved contractors on the timeline.

There was a discussion about the Chevy Silverado list of repairs and the use of FY'26 Highway funds to purchase a used pickup. Mr. Baker estimated summer paving would take place at the end of the week. Mr. Baker said once the sand shed was erected, the road crew should start hauling salt to ensure a supply this winter as last year there was a shortage.

Road Salt. The Board and the road commissioner reviewed the Cargill road salt estimate. No other contractor submitted an estimate. Mr. Baker recommended the Board approve an agreement with Cargill for \$106.50/ton for road salt. By consensus, the Board agreed and authorized K. Luzader to sign the agreement.

Honorable Mentions. Charlie Woods for hauling wood chips to the playground off Meadow Street and Tom Barone for using his own tractor to spread the wood chips.

Public Participation Reminders. Rules read aloud to members of the public:

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. None.

Municipal Tax Rate. Town Clerk and Treasurer Jill Stone-Teer provided a final year-end statement for Fiscal Year 2026. She indicated the state Dept. of Taxes set Wallingford's Homestead Education rate at \$1.0572 (a decrease from last year's \$1.6996) and the Non-Homestead rate at \$1.1555 (down from \$1.8328).

The town clerk and treasure indicated the Fiscal Year 2027 budget approved by voters required \$1,189,804 to be raised in taxes; the Local Agreement Tax would be \$.0029; and the fire protection tax would be \$.0529. This would require a municipal tax rate of \$.2851 (down 11.5 cents).

R. Barker made a motion that was seconded by G. Mayer to set the municipal tax rate at \$.2851. Motion carried (4-0).

Tax Anticipation Loan. Ms. Stone-Teer said the information she obtained from local banks indicated a tax anticipation loan would take several weeks to secure and property tax bills would be distributed by then to generate revenue. She said state reimbursements for School Street sidewalks should flow into the Town soon to alleviate concerns.

She noted in the future, the Town should consider a grant anticipation loan as part of any sizable grant project to close the gap between expenditures and revenue.

Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Comment Period. Denise Eddy shared the Conservation Commission had concerns about invasive species including knotweed, which beyond being a nuisance actually exacerbated flood issues. A brief discussion ensued. K. Luzader suggested property owners near waterways could track the invasive species as part of a mitigation strategy.

By consensus, the Board approved of the updated Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) to date and agreed the LHMP Committee should move onto mitigation strategies.

Termination of Water Rights for the Hunter Property at 33 Weston Road. The board chair asked Town Administrator Sandi Switzer to read aloud the Town attorney's advice with regard to Ms. Betit's request to terminate water rights between the Hunter property at 33 Weston Road and Ms. Betit's adjacent land (the Town will become owner of the Hunter parcel as part of a Vermont Emergency Management Buyout program for flood prone properties).

The town administrator read:

The Town should request Cecile Betit's attorney prepare a document (Quit Claim Deed or Release of Water Rights) for him to review. He would then advise the Town on how to proceed.

A discussion ensued. Ms. Betit indicated her preference this matter be resolved at the Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) Buyout Closing (between the Town, FEMA, VEM and the Hunters). She noted attorneys advised her the best time to amend a deed was at a closing. K. Luzader said VEM officials wanted the closing to be strictly a matter of the buyout between VEM, the Hunters and the Town. K. Luzader said the termination of water rights was a separate matter between the Town (once ownership was established) and Ms. Betit.

K. Luzader informed Ms. Betit the Town's attorney further advised the following:

Ms. Betit gains from this action and the Town should not be paying the full legal bill. He said this is not a matter for the buyout closing and can be addressed at a later date.

K. Luzader said any document drafted by Ms. Betit's attorney to release the water rights would be reviewed by the Town's attorney. Ms. Betit said she would send a release and associated documents to the town administrator.

Building Use Request. Michael Luzader submitted a request to use Town Hall on Saturday, August 22nd as a backup rain location for a small celebratory gathering. K. Luzader recused herself from this matter. There was a discussion regarding the \$25 per day fee. R. Barker noted it was customary to waive the fee for taxpayers interested in small local gatherings on the second floor as those requests were rare. A. Awad indicated fees should be consistent across the board. The town administrator noted the Board last spring assessed an out-of-town theatre group a \$50 fee to use the second floor for nine days.

R. Barker made a motion that was seconded by G. Mayer to approve the Building Use application and waive the \$25 fee. The motion failed (2-1). A. Awad voted no and K. Luzader did not vote (to pass a motion, there must be three affirmative votes when a quorum is five Board members).

G. Mayer made a motion that was seconded by A. Awad to approve Mr. Luzader's Building Use request with a \$25 fee. Motion carried (3-0). K. Luzader did not vote.

R. Barker made a motion that was seconded by G. Mayer to approve Wendy Savery's request to use the second floor of Town Hall on Saturday, August 29th for a membership meeting of a non-local group with a \$25 fee and \$75 deposit pre-paid. Motion carried (4-0).

AT&T Lease Negotiation. The Board reviewed an email and letter from AT&T lease negotiator Dominic DeMeno from MD7 in an effort to pursue re-negotiations for the Town's cell tower agreement. In his letter, Mr. DeMeno offered \$1,850 per month starting in 2029 with annual 2 percent increases. The Selectboard was informed in September of 2017 that the Town re-negotiated a lease with MD7 that dropped the monthly income from \$1,800 to \$1,455 starting in July of 2018 with annual 3 percent increases. The Town received \$1,843 from AT&T last month, which meant it took 10 years to get back to the income level of 2017.

By consensus, the Board agreed to take no action on the request for lease re-negotiation.

Non-Profit Requests for Town Meeting. With two new Town Meeting funding requests from nonprofit agencies (Wonderfeet Kids Museum and NAMI National Alliance on Mental Illness), the town administrator asked the Selectboard how they wanted to respond. The town administrator said in the past, the Board included such requests in the municipal budget under Appropriations rather than as separate articles on the Town Meeting ballot. She said the Board often adjusted requested amounts and non-profits could petition items onto the ballot if they were unhappy with adjusted amounts. The town administrator said the Town's Fiscal Year '27 Appropriation budget was \$84,764.

After a brief discussion, the Board agreed a subcommittee should study funding requests and make a recommendation to the full Board in October just before budget sessions begin.

Agenda Building. By consensus, the Board agreed Appropriations requests should be added to an October agenda; and User fees for burn permits should be addressed at an upcoming meeting.

Selectboard Comments/Concerns. A. Awad said there was discussion at a recent Conservation Commission meeting of various acts of vandalism at Stone Meadow during

Wallingford Day weekend. She said a greater police presence should be considered for the annual event.

Public Comments. Lisa Donohue expressed her concern regarding the status of the Creek Road bridge and asked what actions the Town would take if it were to become impassable. The road commissioner indicated funding for bridge work was set aside in every municipal budget.

Other Business. The town administrator advised the Board to circle back to Ms. Betit's request for termination of water rights at 33 Weston Road. The town administrator printed an email sent by Ms. Betit following the discussion earlier in the meeting. Copies of that email were then provided to G. Mayer and K. Luzader. The town administrator said Ms. Betit in that email requested the Town's attorney draft the release and it be completed at the Buyout closing. G. Mayer asked if that document was Ms. Betit's release and she responded in the affirmative.

K. Luzader made a motion that was seconded by G. Mayer to enter executive session at 7:55 p.m. with the road commissioner for a disciplinary action against a public officer or employee as allowed under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(4). Motion carried, (4-0).

G. Mayer made a motion that was seconded by A. Awad to exit executive session at 8:58 p.m. Motion carried, (4-0).

By consensus, the Board agreed to issue a letter as discussed in the closed-door meeting.

R. Barker made a motion that was seconded by A. Awad to adjourn at 8:59 p.m. Motion approved (4-0).

Submitted By: Sandi Switzer/Town Administrator

APPROVED THIS 17th Day of August in the year 2026:

Wallingford Selectboard

Carolyn Behrendt _____

Rob Barker _____

Anne Awad _____

Kathy Luzader _____

Glenn Mayer _____