

# Waterford Selectboard Working Meeting Minutes

Monday, November 25, 2024 @ 6:00 PM

Davies Library

In Attendance: Sue Hayes, Ron Gray, Kevin Gillander, Sukey Watson, Marcia Martel.  
Attendance list attached.

Ron Gray called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Modifications to Agenda

- No modifications were made.

Riverside Rescue Appropriation Request (Discussion/Action)

- Ron Gray read a letter sent to the Selectboard from Riverside Rescue. The letter gave a brief history of Riverside Rescue and explained that they had to take over for Riverside Boarding. They requested a budget appropriation for \$1000. They are the only active shelter for dogs and cats in the area. The average nonprofit cost for each male and female dog is \$300 and \$360 respectively, and the average cost for each male and female cat is \$175 and \$195 respectively.
- Marcia Martel noted that the town already has a \$500 allocation for Kingdom Animal Shelter in St. Johnsbury, but it was pointed out that they only take care of cats. Town Clerk Deb Benoit noted that Waterford's animal control works with Riverside Rescue regularly.
- In previous years, there was a separate article in Town Meeting to vote on each appropriation. Town Treasurer Heather Gonyaw noted that this can cause problems when the budget is defeated, because a commitment was already given for those expenditures. She suggested changing this practice to give them more leeway to adjust the budget should it be defeated.
- Marcia Martel suggested dropping the donation to Kingdom Animal Shelter and instead allocating \$1000 for Riverside Rescue. Heather pointed out that the Selectboard does not have the authority to remove a previously approved allocation, it must be voted down by the taxpayers.
- Sue Hayes offered a compromise to give Kingdom Animal Shelter their \$500 allocation and give Riverside Rescue a \$500 allocation to be used for servicing dogs. Heather did not believe the amount could be changed. Riverside Rescue sent a specific allocation request that can be accepted or denied but cannot be changed.
- Heather explained that all appropriations send a letter to request the amount they need. If they have been included in a past year's budget, they are included in the new budget,

which will be voted up or down or altered on the floor of Town Meeting. If they have not been included before, the Selectboard has to give approval for it to be included in the new budget which will be presented at Town Meeting.

- The Board decided to keep all allocations listed in separate articles so they can each be discussed during Town Meeting.
- Sue Hayes motioned to approve an appropriation for Riverside Rescue in the amount of \$1000. Sukey Watson seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

#### 2025 Budget (Discussion)

- Town Treasurer Heather Gonyaw went over the updated version of the budget with the Selectboard and pointed out the changes made in the time since their last conversation.
- The mowing contract was separated between the Cemetery Committee, Town Office, and Fire Department and listed under Contractual Services.
- Under Public Safety, the amount for Animal Control was increased to \$2000. Enforcement has increased, more tickets are being given out, and revenue is being created. There is one more invoice due before the end of this year.
- Heather multiplied the rough monthly cost of the Sheriff's Dept by twelve to get a year's cost of \$5,000.
- The Zoning Administrator's yearly contract was left at \$11,000.
- The Town Office's section of the budget increased by \$862, including the newly approved \$1000 appropriation for Riverside Rescue.
- Heather updated the wage line for the Highway Department by taking the hourly wage for all three employees, adjusting it for the cost of living (2.5%), and multiplying it by 40 hours. Overtime expenses are under a different line item.
- Ron Gray asked how it would work with Wendal Hollbrook on the team on an on-call basis. Heather said that is listed under subcontractors.
- The budget for the Highway Dept increased by \$3870.
- Sue Hayes asked if there is any funding for the Town Garage that needs to be spent before the end of the year.
- Heather drafted an article for Town Meeting asking the taxpayers to allocate the approximate \$150,000 Highway Dept 2024 surplus to a capital reserve account specific for the repair of the Highway Dept so it can be used on the Town Garage.
- Sue Hayes and Sukey Watson edited the wording of the article for better clarity.
- Heather informed the group that the remaining ARPA money has been allocated to Town Garage Repairs and must be spent by 2026.
- If a loan needs to be taken out to pay for the Town Garage repairs, it will need to be voted on by taxpayers. Heather has estimated that a loan may not be needed.
- Sue Hayes asked if the employees of the Highway Dept were budgeted for a raise. Heather said the only increase in their wage was for the cost of living. Sue noted that they have not received a raise in the three years she has been on the Selectboard. She proposed

a Special Meeting at 5:30pm before the Regular Meeting on Dec 9 so they can have an executive session to discuss. The Board agreed.

- Heather said she will need the exact dollar amount if they decide to give a raise so she can have the budget finalized to present for approval during the 6:00pm Regular Meeting.
- Marcia Martel asked for more information about the grant the Fire Dept applied for.
- Heather explained the Fire Dept has applied for the American Firefighters' Grant for the last two years. They did not get awarded the grant in the past, so they are applying again this year. It is a \$200,000 grant with strict cash match requirements of \$20,000. She asked Fire Chief Colin Fucci to include that cost in his budget to ensure the town is prepared in case the grant is awarded. If the grant is not awarded, the money will be used to repair equipment that is reaching the end of its lifecycle.
- The appropriation of \$16,000 for air packs was removed as it will be covered by the grant.
- The budget for the Fire Dept increased \$3,085.
- Heather answered questions about the Fire truck purchase. The budgeted amount was calculated based on current interest rates and the dollar amount borrowed. The sale of the current fire truck will generate revenue the Board can vote to pay down the principal of the loan.
- The total budget increase of all three departments is \$7,817.91, which is 0.55%.
- Deb Benoit answered questions about mowing expenses. The contract this year was for \$6330, and it is increasing to \$7350 for next year because additional mowing will be needed in new areas.

#### Town Meeting Warrant – Discussion of First Draft (Discussion)

- All appropriations will be written out, as done in past years. Heather Gonyaw suggested breaking up the budget into the three major sections for discussion- Town Office, Highway Dept, and Fire Dept. The Board agreed. Heather will speak with VLCT to make sure the language she drafted is appropriate.
- Article 6 was edited.
- Heather was asked about a budget item to pay for the loan taken out to pay for flood damage. She said she did not include an amount in the budget because it is expected to be covered. FEMA will pay for 90%, and the state will pay 7.5%.
- She has the first disaster inventory 80% complete and the second disaster inventory has been started. The town has been assigned the same representatives for both disasters and she has had meetings with them.
- Sukey Watson spoke with VLCT about the ATV ordinance. She explained what she learned from the conversation and shared a few ideas on how to proceed. The group discussed a few options.
- Marcia Martel motioned to have a vote by Australian ballot to decide if ATVs should be allowed on Waterford roads. If citizens vote yes, the Selectboard will draft a new

ordinance that outlines specific rules and regulations for ATV use and which roads they will be allowed on. Sukey Watson seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

- Heather Gonyaw and Deb Benoit volunteered to draft a warning for the vote to present at the Dec 9 meeting.
- Kevin Gillander asked Heather for clarification on the childcare contribution for town employees. She explained that Selectboard members receive a stipend, not a wage, so they are not considered town employees.

#### Agenda Items for Regular Meeting December 9, 6:00pm

- Warning for ATV Australian Ballot (Discussion/Action)
- Town Meeting Warning (Discussion/Action)
- Final 2025 Budget (Discussion/Action)
- Zoning Administrator Contract (Discussion/Action)
- Highway Department Update (Discussion)
- Citizen Concerns

#### Special Meeting December 9, 5:30pm

- Approve Regular and Special Meeting Minutes of November 12, 2024
- Executive Session

#### Adjourn

- Marcia Martel made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Sukey Watson seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Waterford Selectboard Meeting November 25, 2024

Sign In Sheet

Name

Deb Benoit

Jim Hayes

Kathy Hodgson

Signature

Deb Benoit

Jim Hayes

Kathy Hodgson