

**TOWN OF WASHINGTON**

**Board of Selectmen**

**Minutes**

**July 20, 2023**

**HYBRID MEETING**

**Minutes are subject to the approval of the Board of Selectmen.**

**Present:** First Selectman James L. Brinton, Selectmen Jay Hubelbank and Dean Sarjeant.

**Public:** Linda Frank, Joan Lodsins, Nancy Sarnoff, Bob Papsin, Daniel Paige, M. Brown, Ross Bartfield, LWA, Tom Godward, Kathy Ellis, Susan Smith, Marie, Mark Schwartz, Linnea Quist, Leslie Anderson, Mike Guadasno, Keith Angell, Peary Stafford, Adam Riess, Sherman Baldwin, Reid & Cathy Funston, Jesse Carroll, Mike Jacobellis, George Bitar, Molly Hart, Mike Griffin, Carole Matteo, Paul Herzan.

**Press:** Ann Jamieson – VOICES.

**Call to Order:** First Selectman Jim Brinton called the meeting to order at 5:31p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:**

- **Motion:** To approve the minutes of the July 6, 2023 meeting of the Board of Selectmen. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Dean Sarjeant and unanimously approved.

**Communications:** None.

**Appointments/Resignations:**

- **Appointment of Eliot Johnson to the temporary Building Committee:** **Motion:** To appoint Eliot Johnson of West Mountain Builders, to the temporary Building Committee for the new Ambulance Headquarters. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Jay Hubelbank and unanimously approved.
- **Appointment of Steven Inglese to the Parks and Recreation Commission:** **Motion:** To appoint Steven Inglese to the Parks and Recreation Commission until 1/1/25. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Dean Sarjeant. Discussion: Steven has attended a Commission meeting, submitted his letter of interest to the First Selectman and has the support of the Commission. The motion passed unanimously.
- **Appointment of Jennifer Averill as a full member of the Planning Commission:** **Motion:** To appoint Jennifer as a full member of the Planning Commission (moving up from an alternate) until 12/31/23. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Jay Hubelbank. Discussion: Planning Chairman Wayne Hileman has requested this appointment. The motion passed unanimously.

**First Selectman's Report:** Jim Brinton reported the following:

- **Storm:** Washington, compared to other Towns in the area, fared well with the heavy rains, wind, etc. and was able to handle repair of any damage in-house.

**Selectmen's Reports:** None.

**OLD BUSINESS: Lake Waramaug:** With the number of visitors at this evening's meeting, Jim Brinton explained that the issue of wake boarding and a possible Ordinance was not on this agenda but attendees were welcome to speak as Visitors.

## NEW BUSINESS:

- **Scheduling of a Special Town Meeting: Motion:** To schedule a Special Town Meeting for Thursday, July 27, 2023 at 10:00a.m. to approve the sale of a piece of property on Scofield Hill Road. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Dean Sarjeant. Discussion: Jim explained that this has previously been on Town meeting agendas but needed to be tabled due to incomplete available information. The motion passed unanimously.

**Visitors:** The following is a synopsis of discussion regarding a proposed Ordinance prohibiting certain uses of wake boats on Lake Waramaug.

- **Jesse Carroll:** read the following and requested his comments become a part of the meeting minutes:

### LAKE WARAMAUG JULY 20 COMMENTS:

Good evening. For the record, my formal name is Jesse Carroll, although for almost all my 75 years, I have gone by my nickname, Sam. My wife Judi and I, along with Charlie and Judy Eaton, have owned the property at 284 West Shore Road since 1981. Charlie also owns The Boulders. Collectively, we brought up seven children at the Lake. We are now blessed with seven grandchildren who, primarily during the summer, love coming to the Lake and participating in various recreational activities. Full disclosure: I own a 22' Ski Nautique that, in addition to pulling water skiers and tubers, has ballast tanks to accommodate wake boarding and wake surfing. Between the extended Carroll and Eaton families, only one member, Judi's and my youngest son Clark, 43, of Boulder, CO, is the only wake boarder and wake surfer.

Charlie Eaton and I are signatories to the letter fellow Lake

Waramaug property owner Jay Collins sent to the First Selectman, Jim Brinton, on July 18. I will not belabor the specifics of that letter at this time except to say that, in Charlie's and my opinion, any ordinance proposed by the Towns of Washington, Warren and Kent at this time proposing a total ban on wake boarding and wake surfing on the Lake would be draconian and unacceptable to a large contingent of Lake Waramaug property owners.

While Charlie and I are also signatories to the draft of the alternative ordinance that accompanied Jay Collins' letter to First Selectman Brinton, please allow us a little wiggle room and ask that you take into consideration an approach to dealing with the legitimate health-of-the lake concerns brought about by wake boarding and wake surfing. To quote the celebrated Russian-born philosopher and novelist Ayn Rand, "Individuals are inherently heroic, while governments only restrict human freedom, potential and happiness."

Parenthetically, let me add that I am an elected official where I reside in Florida, the Town of Indian River Shores. I was elected to Town Council in 2018, served four years and ran again in 2022, this time unopposed. I am the current Vice Mayor of Indian River Shores.

The "heroic individuals" in the drama playing out about the health of the lake are the long-medium and short-term property owners on Lake Waramaug who have supported, financially and otherwise, the Lake Waramaug Task Force's efforts for 40+ years to improve the health of the lake. And, you know what? We did it...on our own... without any government intervention.

So, I now advocate the same approach to dealing with the issues created by wake boarding and wake surfing. With dignified respect to the municipal government officials in

Washington, Warren and Kent who, at the urging of a few Lake Waramaug property owners, have drafted the draconian and unacceptable ordinance, we, those who oppose that ordinance, do not need your help. We, along with the Lake Waramaug Task Force, can take care of our own business, as evidenced by the proposal recently put forward by the Task Force. Thanks for your interest, concerns and the time you have already committed to solving this problem, but we do not need your help. We can and will do it on our own.

- **Keith Angell** expressed his opposition to the proposed ordinance that would prohibit the use of wake boats for wake boarding and surfing. He requested the lake community be allowed to monitor and the issue should be dropped.

- **Mark Schwartz** also expressed opposition. He like many others, have made improvements to their properties on the Lake which have resulted in a healthier lake and issues such as the use of wake boats should be left to those using the Lake. He asked that the proposed Ordinance be tabled and going forward foster open conversation.
- **Linda Frank** spoke of the dangers presented by wake boarding including the damage to the Lake itself, surrounding properties and people. She urged those who are opposed to the Ordinance to read the scientific articles. Many have worked very hard for years to assure the health of the Lake and regulations may be necessary to maintain that.

Jim Brinton explained to the attendees, that at this time there is no Ordinance to be approved or disapproved. There has been discussion, which will continue, and the Towns will rely on the science presented. The Towns of Washington, Warren and Kent will decide as whole once the information is presented – not just the Lake residents.

- **Carole Matteo** reminded those present that an Ordinance would not prohibit the boat owners from using their wake boats – if approved, it would only prohibit the activity of wake boarding or surfing. It is her opinion that the Towns became involved because the Lake groups were not willing to take any action. She encouraged the towns to continue with the study.

**Adjournment:**

- **Motion:** To adjourn the meeting at 6:02p.m. as there was no further business for discussion. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Dean Sarjeant and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Anne Greene  
Selectmen's Assistant