

Westford Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes

Special Discussion – Ice Rink Updates

Date: July 14, 2026

Time: 7:27 PM

Location: Westford Town Office with Zoom option

Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at **7:27 PM**.

Committee Members Present:

- George Elliott
- Greg Arendt
- Ben McElvany
- Bayley Greer

Others Present:

- Ada Dunkley, Ice Rink Coordinator
- Becca Davanon (in person)
- Celeste and Art Gaspin (via Zoom)

Changes to Agenda

No changes were made to the agenda.

Review of June Minutes

The June meeting minutes were not reviewed.

Public Comment

Public comments were incorporated into the Ice Rink Discussion.

Ice Rink Discussion

Current Status

The Committee discussed the condition of the existing ice rink. The original wooden boards have deteriorated beyond repair due to rot and were removed and discarded. The Committee reviewed several replacement options, including:

- Plastic boards with aluminum framing
- Plastic boards with steel framing
- Construction of a new wooden rink

Prefabricated plastic rink kits begin at approximately \$5,000 but would require customization to accommodate the longer end boards used in Westford's rink. A preliminary estimate from J&L Hardware placed the cost of a new wooden rink at approximately \$3,500 for lumber and hardware, with additional costs anticipated for paint and painting supplies.

Funding

The Committee discussed several potential funding sources, including:

- Funds that may be available through the Common Committee.
- Gifted funds previously discussed by the Common Committee that may be applicable to the rink project.
- Vermont grant opportunities supporting community recreation and small-town recreation programs.

The Committee agreed that approximately \$5,000 will likely be needed to move the project forward and that funding should be secured before proceeding with construction.

Location

The Committee discussed whether the rink should remain on the Town Common or be relocated.

The Pidgeon property was suggested as a potential alternative because it could potentially accommodate a year-round recreation surface for wheeled sports during warmer months and ice skating during the winter.

The Committee generally favored keeping the rink on the Town Common because of its visibility and the opportunity it provides for residents to see the rink being actively used as they travel through town.

Construction, Storage, and Maintenance

Ada Dunkley, Ice Rink Coordinator, expressed support for rebuilding the rink using wood and suggested that volunteer organizations, such as local hockey teams, may be willing to assist with construction. She also recommended modifying the original plans so that all boards would be uniform and interchangeable, making annual assembly more efficient.

Art and Celeste noted that the original wooden boards lasted more than twenty years with only one repainting. They stated that regular maintenance and indoor storage could provide a long service life for a replacement wooden rink.

Art and Celeste also offered continued use of their barn for off-season storage, painting, and maintenance. Art raised the question of insurance coverage while the rink is stored on private property. The Committee agreed that insurance responsibilities should be clarified before long-term storage arrangements are finalized.

The Committee discussed establishing a formal maintenance plan, including scheduled repainting, routine inspections, and budgeting annually for maintenance supplies.

Volunteers and Community Support

The Committee discussed the ongoing need for volunteers to assist with construction, installation, removal, and maintenance of the rink.

Potential volunteer partnerships discussed included:

- Local hockey organizations
- Girl Scouts
- High school community service programs

Ada Dunkley noted that many of the volunteers who assisted with the most recent rink installation and removal were personal acquaintances rather than Westford residents.

Becca shared that she frequently observed residents using the rink throughout the season and emphasized that it is a valued community asset.

Becca also suggested expanding communication efforts through the Town newsletter and improving maintenance of the Recreation Committee's website to better advertise volunteer opportunities and rink work days. The Committee agreed these would be beneficial improvements.

Celeste commented that volunteer participation this past season was among the strongest in recent years and credited Ada Dunkley for coordinating those efforts.

Historical Information

The Committee discussed documenting the history of the rink to support future funding requests. Information such as the original funding source, historical maintenance practices, and

approvals for constructing the rink on the Town Common would strengthen future grant applications and funding requests.

Celeste suggested contacting Dave (last name unknown), who helped establish the rink, for historical information.

Financial Discussion

The Committee discussed the ongoing costs associated with operating the rink, including coordinator compensation, replacement materials, annual liner replacement, and maintenance equipment.

Ben McElvany noted that the Recreation Committee continues to invest significant funds into the rink and that additional funding or revenue sources may be necessary if the community wishes to continue the program.

George Elliott clarified that the Recreation Committee operates largely through revenue generated by its own programs, while Town funding supports only the Recreation Coordinator position.

Next Steps

Greg Arendt and Bayley Greer will attend an upcoming Selectboard meeting to discuss potential funding opportunities and determine the appropriate process for requesting financial support.

Once funding has been identified, the Committee will move forward with recruiting volunteers and planning construction, painting, and long-term maintenance of a replacement rink.

Becca Davanon shared that her daughter asked her to express how much she enjoys the ice rink and hopes it remains available for future seasons.

Following the conclusion of the ice rink discussion, Becca Davanon, Ada Dunkley, Celeste Gaspin, and Art Gaspin departed the meeting.

Recreation Committee Business

The Committee discussed the need for additional volunteers and coordinators to ensure the continuation of several Recreation Committee programs. Positions needing recruitment include:

- Recreation Coordinator (future)
- Ice Rink Coordinator (future)
- Turkey Trot Coordinator
- Fourth of July Coordinator
- Recreation Committee members

Motions

Motion: Ben McElvany moved to authorize spending an amount equivalent to the previous order's expense for recruitment signs advertising coordinator positions and Recreation Committee membership.

Second: George Elliott

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

Ben McElvany, Treasurer, acknowledged receipt of **\$171.25** from George Elliott, representing donations collected during the Fourth of July children's activities.

Motion: Ben McElvany moved to nominate Greg Arendt to serve as Committee Chair following George Elliott's final meeting as Chair.

Second: Bayley Greer

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

The Committee also noted that George Elliott is still owed compensation for serving as Fourth of July Coordinator while Tommy was unavailable during the holiday period.

Next Meeting

**Tuesday, August 4, 2026
7:00 PM**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.