

Town of Townshend Special Town And School District Meeting Minutes

**May 30, 2007 7:30PM
Townshend Elementary School**

In Attendance: Kathy Hege, David Dezendorf, Al Claussen III, Glen Beattie, Townshend School Board; Henry (Kit) Martin, Carole Melis, Michael Donahue, Jeffery Russ, Alene Evans, Townshend Select Board; David Liebow, Townshend Moderator; Anita Bean, Townshend Town Clerk; Rick Hege, Brud Sanderson, Kurt Tietz, Cindy Davis, Irvin Stowell, Jan Stowell, Arthur Monette, Townshend Residents; Deborah Leggott, Townshend Principal, Elizabeth Walker; Vermont Rural Water Association.

- 1. Call to Order:** Moderator David Liebow called the Town of Townshend Special Town / Town School District meeting to order at 7:34P.M.
2. Moderator Liebow read the first article "*Article 1. Shall the voters of the Town of Townshend authorize the Board of School Directors to apply for a loan from the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Program and to borrow an amount not to exceed \$29,700 for water system improvements?*"
 - A. Kathy Hege MOVED the article. Carole Melis seconded the article.
 - B. Kathy Hege MOVED to set aside the rules to allow Elizabeth Walker to speak to the town on this article. Rick Hege seconded the motion. No Discussion. The motion to set aside the rules carries unanimous.
 - C. School Board Chair Kathy Hege read the following statement:

Good Evening,

We'd first like to thank you all for coming out this evening for this special Town and School District meeting.

As some of you are aware, the Townshend School has experienced some issues with water quality the last 2-3 years. This impure water problem lead the state to declare that water for consumption at the school be boiled prior to use. This forced the school to bring in bottled water for students and staff while the source to the problem was identified and corrected. The school was required to remain on the boil water order until the state was satisfied that the water was again bacteria free. This process usually resulted in several months of bringing in water plus the cost of renting several cooler/dispensers. This has been an unanticipated expense that was not budgeted for in any of the years in which it occurred.

Soon, all schools will be required by law to have a backup water disinfection system in place. The School is proposing this evening that voters approve the funds to allow the installation of an Ultraviolet Water Disinfection System to comply with the new law and to assure the community that the water that our students consume is bacteria free.

Our understanding of this process is that upon approval of the request for \$29,700 the school will move forward

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with engineering plans and the actual construction phase as it is approved by the state. Upon completion of the designated work, the school will apply for loan forgiveness from the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Program. We are assured that our loan is completely forgivable. In essence, the cost of installing this system will have no financial impact on the school or on school taxes. We have been told that the source of funding for this program is the EPA and our school is fortunate to be able to qualify for these funds to help us comply with the new law that is going into effect.

If you have any questions, the board will be happy to attempt to answer them but will most probably refer them to Elizabeth Walker who has a much deeper understanding of the program and its details.

- E.** Kit Martin asked what happens if the school is not forgiven for the loan. Elizabeth Walker said the loan is forgiven within two years following the loan approval as long as three requirements are followed. The first part is compliance with the program. The second is to have a compliant maintenance manual for the system that is installed in the school. The third is to have a long-term financial plan. The project planning loan is 0% for a five year term. The construction loan is for up to \$25,000 with a twenty year term, and an administration fee of zero to three percent. Should the loan not be forgiven, the school would be required to pay any interest on the loan amounts until the loan is repaid. Up to \$25,000 of a loan from the construction fund for improvements to a municipally owned public school water system may be forgiven.
- F.** Brud asked what caused the contamination of the water system? Kathy stated the storage tank was the primary cause. But further problems had occurred over the past year.
- G.** Elizabeth said this purification system could be left running. Most of the schools are using a UV purifier system. Schools have to have the ability to provide backup chlorination to stop any cross contamination, but the UV system will purify the water coming into the school. She recommends the UV be run all the time.
- H.** Brud asked if the water quality has been tested to ensure the possible hardness of the water will not cause problems for the UV system. Jeff Russ said the water at the school does not appear to be hard.
- I.** Glen Beattie joined the meeting at 7:40PM.
- J.** Irvin Stowell asked if the problem was due to the water not being used over the summer. Elizabeth said it wasn't an uncommon procedure to shock the well and storage system prior to school starting each year. This system will be between the school and the water storage tank.
- K.** Carole asked what pollutants would be killed by this system. Elizabeth stated it is required that all schools have a purification system and then listed the number of pollutants that would be eliminated by this system.
- L.** Kit asked what the maintenance cost would be. Elizabeth said we're just in the development phase but this system shouldn't need more maintenance than the occasional change of a UV light bulb. The system uses a double light and will switch to the second bulb when it senses a problem with the first bulb.
- M.** Kurt asked how long it would take to put the system in. Elizabeth said it wouldn't be too intrusive, but could be completed over the summer.

N. Brud Sanderson called the question. Seconded by Rick Hege. The motion on calling the question carried.

O. Moderator Liebow re-read the article. The article is passed.

Elizabeth Walker left the meeting at 7:49PM.

- 3.** Moderator David Liebow read the second article "*Article 2. Shall the Town of Townshend apply the Property Tax "Prebates" in full to the earliest installment of taxes due, to the extent that these payments are funded by the State?*"
 - A.** Carole Melis moved the article. Seconded by Cindy Davis.
 - B.** Carole Melis stated the prebates are being sent to the town instead of the individual tax payers. She explained how this article would be to lessen or fully pay the first of the four tax payments. Level funding the payment might make the tax bill easier to pay, but applying the prebate up front would help to put more money in the tax payers pocket.
 - C.** Art said since the four payments was given as a way to lessen the amount people had to put out at one time, it

would make sense to apply the prebate to all of the tax bills. Art also asked if the taxpayers been informed of this change to the prebate useage? Carole said it will show up on the individual tax bills. The state is saying by July 1, they will be able to tell who is due to receive prebates.

D. Alene asked Carole how she can tell the information is on the tax bills. Carole replied the state is saying the information will be on the tax bills.

E. Irvin asked, if I have a prebate coming, will the interest earned on the prebate be sent back to the taxpayer. Clarifying, if he's late paying his taxes and has to pay interest on the tax payment, the town should have to pay the interest on the unpaid three quarter taxpayments to the taxpayers.

F. Kit said he'll have to get clarification on the states intent, but thinks the prebate is the states money. Jan asked how he can think that, the money belongs to the taxpayers.

G. Rick Hege stated, The prebate used to come to the taxpayer where they could do with it as they wanted. This article allows a lot of people to put the money against the first tax payment as they already are doing. It's coming to the town because "we're too stupid to use it to pay our taxes". Carole said the default is to apply the prebate equallyy to the four tax payments.

H. Kathy said the state is going to send everyone a letter saying the amount of prebate the individual is eligible to. Therefore the prebate is the taxpayers money. Carole informed everyone of a tax site that will also allow the tax prebate to be calculated(<http://www.state.vt.us/tax/pdf.word.excel/pvr/hs-122calc.xls>). Jan Stowell, said not everyone who lives in Townshend is eligible for a homestead. Alene said the money will come down in each taxpayers name, but if the article is passed the tax prebate money will be applied to the next tax bill. Jan said the money has always been the taxpayers money.

I. Irvin AMENDED the article to put the prebate to the first tax payment. Moderator David Liebow said the amendment would not change the article. The amendment was not seconded.

J. Brud Sanderson called the question. Several participants seconded the motion to call the question. The motion to call the question carries.

K. David Liebow reread the article. The article is passed.

4. Moderator David Liebow read the third article "*Article 3. To transact any other non-binding business to properly come before said meeting.*" No one brought futher business before the meeting.

5. Adjourn: - Cindy Davis made the MOTION to adjourn. Irvin Stowell seconded the motion. The motion carries and the **Town of Townshend Special Town and School District Meeting** adjourned at 8:05PM.

Respectfully submitted.

David Dezendorf, Vice-Chair, Townshend School Board.

Town Clerk

School Board Clerk

Select Board Clerk

Justice of the Peace