

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 7, 2017

The legal voters of the Town of Townshend are hereby notified and WARNED to meet at the Town Hall in Townshend, Vermont, on Tuesday, March 7, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. to act on the following articles, viz:

The Assembly recited the Pledge of Allegiance and David Liebow called the meeting to order at 9:15 A.M. Several announcements were made and the location of numerous handouts and surveys was pointed out to the Assembly. The preamble was read and a brief explanation was given of the procedure that would be followed during Town Meeting.

ARTICLE I. To choose a Moderator for the ensuing year:

David Liebow opened nominations for Moderator.

Nominated: David Liebow.

There being no others, nominations were closed and the clerk was instructed to cast one ballot for David Liebow as Moderator for a term of one year. Motion seconded and passed by voice vote.

David Liebow, 1 year term as Moderator

ARTICLE II. To act upon the July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016 Independent Auditors' and CPA's Reports:

So moved by Craig Hunt and seconded by Will Bissonnette.

Phil Moriarty questioned whether the Article should read "approve or accept". Motion is to accept.

Comments: Heidi Clawson – Was looking for a full Auditor's Report. Carol Nilges asked why we don't have the same type of report as in previous years. Kathy Hege gave a brief explanation.

Maggie Bills questioned whether there would be a less money allocated for the finance office. Andy Jackins questioned what we are actually voting on. Kathy Hege said that we are acting on the acceptance of the two letters. Laura Richardson asked about the actual numbers.

Ryan Hockertlotz asked what the repercussions would be if Article is not accepted. Kathy Hege told him by accepting it the voters were acknowledging that the board had attempted to have a professional audit done and was in the process of following through on the recommendations that came as a result.

Carole Melis asked if there were any plans to prevent this in the future.

There being no further discussion, Article II passes by voice vote.

Article II Passed

Craig Hunt made a Motion to Suspend the Rules and discuss other business which passed without objection.

Discussion ensued regarding Waste Management and the future of municipal government which Mr. Liebow explained were non-binding issues.

Phil Moriarty asked why these items were not on the Warning. Ms. Hege explained that these issues came up after the fact. The information became available after the Warning had been signed.

There was extensive discussion regarding option, recycling, composting, private haulers and costs.

Motion was made to suspend the rules to allow Emily Long to speak which was passed without objection. Emily spoke to the assembly regarding cuts in many programs, Act 46 and possible modifications, Act 166 and possible modifications, Technical Education, per pupil equalized spending, etc...

Questions from the assembly regarding Act 46 and the State taking control of the School buildings; Jobs available to graduating students; affordable housing; state mandated car inspections; making Vermont more affordable.

The meeting reverted to discussion regarding the future of municipal government.

The Select Board is looking for direction. They feel there needs to be someone in the building at all times. Ms. Hege spoke to the possibility of hiring a Town Manager or Town Administrator. The administrative Assistant position would be diminished but there would still be a need for an Assistant to the Select Board for tasks such as taking meeting minutes.

Kathy Hege addressed the preparation of the Town Report and the lack of information to be able to put one together. Having a Town Manager and or Town Administrator would hopefully prevent that from happening again.

Gaila Gulack expressed concern about losing the small town government. Ms. Hege explained that a Town Manager and/or Town Administrator would have a specific job description, which would include grant writing, and would be governed under the Select Board.

The Select Board is seeking members of the community to set up a research committee to see what other towns do, what the costs would be and the possibility of dividing the position with other towns.

Henry (Kit) Martin made a Non-Binding Motion which was seconded by Paul Jerz to instruct the Select Board to present to the town a proposal for hiring a Town Manager/Town Administrator including costs and job description which could be presented to the community at a Special Warned Town Meeting.

Several people volunteered to serve on the committee.

Paul Jerz called the question. No objection. Discussion ends.

ARTICLE III. To see what salaries the Town will vote to pay its various officials for the ensuing year:

So moved by Irv Stowell and seconded by Will Bissonnette.

Brief discussion regarding benefits, Treasurer's position, financial position of Town and casual labor hourly wage for clerk's assistants.

The being no further discussion. Article III passes by voice vote.

Article III Passed

ARTICLE IV. To elect all Town Officials for the ensuing year(s):

Town Clerk: 1 – one year term: Nominated: Anita Bean

Motion made to close nominations and have the clerk cast one

Anita Bean, 1 year term as Town Clerk

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Town Treasurer: 1 – one year term: Nominated: Joseph Daigneault

Motion made to close nominations and have the clerk cast one ballot for Joseph Daigneault for a one year term as Town Treasurer; seconded and carried by voice vote.

Joseph Daigneault, 1 year term as Town Treasurer

Select Board: 1 - three year term: Nominated: Kathy Hege

Motion made to close nominations and have the clerk cast one ballot for Kathy Hege for a three year term on the Select Board; seconded and carried by voice vote.

Kathy Hege, 3 year term on Select Board

1 – one year term: Nominated: Irvin Stowell

Motion made to close nominations and have the clerk cast one ballot for Irvin Stowell for a one year term on the Select Board; seconded and carried by voice vote.

Irvin Stowell, 1 year term on Select Board

1 – one year term: Nominated: William Bissonnette

Motion made to close nominations and have the clerk cast one ballot for William Bissonnette for a one year term on the Select Board; seconded and carried by voice vote.

William Bissonnette, 1 year term on Select Board

Listers: **1 - three 3 year term** Nominated: Eugene Kuch

Motion made to close nominations and have the clerk cast one ballot for Eugene Kuch for a three year term as Lister; seconded and carried by voice vote.

Eugene Kuch, 3 year term as Lister

Property Tax Collector: **1 – one year term:** Nominated: Joseph Daigneault

Motion made to close nominations and have the clerk cast one ballot for Joseph Daigneault for a one year term as Town Treasurer; seconded and carried by voice vote.

Joseph Daigneault, 1 year term as Property Tax Collector

Delinquent Tax Collector: **1 – one year term:** Nominated: Becky Reilly

Motion made to close nominations and have the clerk cast one ballot for Becky Reilly for a one year term as Delinquent Tax Collector; seconded and carried by voice vote.

Becky Reilly, 1 year term as Delinquent Tax Collector

First Constable: **1 – one year term:** Nominated: Warren Beattie

Motion made to close nominations and have the clerk cast one ballot for Warren Beattie for a one year term as First Constable; seconded and carried by voice vote.

Warren Beattie, 1 year term as First Constable

Second Constable: **1 – one year term:** Nominated: Michael Cutts

Motion made to close nominations and have the clerk cast one ballot for Mike Cutts for a one year term as Second Constable; seconded and carried by voice vote.

Michael Cutts, 1 year term as Second Constable

Town Grand Juror: **1 – one year term:** Nominated: Margaret Bills

Motion made to close nominations and have the clerk cast one ballot for Margaret Bills for a one year term as Town Grand Juror; seconded and carried by voice vote.

Margaret Bills, 1 year term as Town Grand Juror

Town Agent: **1 – one year term:** Nominated: Carole Melis

Motion made to close nominations and have the clerk cast one ballot for Carole Melis for a one year term as Town Agent; seconded and carried by voice vote.

Carole Melis, 1 year term as Town Agent

Library Trustees: **1 – five year term:** Nominated: Marjorie Holt

Motion made to close nominations and have the clerk cast one ballot for Marjorie Holt for a five year term as Library Trustee; seconded and carried by voice vote.

Marjorie Holt, 5 year term as Library Trustee

Cemetery Commissioner: 1 – five year term: Nominated: Charles Marchant

Motion made to close nominations and have the clerk to cast one ballot for Charles Marchant for a five year term as Cemetery Commissioner; seconded and carried by voice vote.

Charles Marchant, 5 year term as Cemetery Commissioner

ARTICLE V. To see if the Town will authorize the Selectmen to set a tax rate sufficient to cover all monies raised for municipal entities for the period July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018, and to borrow money in anticipation of taxes?

So moved by Craig Hunt and seconded by Carole Melis.

There being no discussion, Article V passes by voice vote.

Article V. Passed

ARTICLE VI. To see if the Town will authorize its Property Tax Collector to receive its Real Property Taxes quarterly, August 25, 2017; November 29, 2017; February 23, 2018; and May 25, 2018? Monthly interest will be charged at the rate of one-half percent (1/2%) or fraction thereof; interest of one percent (1%) or fraction thereof plus penalties will commence on June 1, 2016.

Motion to change the date to June 1, 2018 made and seconded.

So moved by Craig Hunt and seconded by Carole Melis.

There being no discussion, Article VI passes by voice vote.

Article VI. Passed

ARTICLE VII. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$ 420,389.00, to pay for the running expenses and liabilities of the Town?

So moved by Craig Hunt and seconded by Irv Stowell.

Discussion ensued regarding the increase in electrical costs. It was explained that all entities are all included, ie. Town Hall, Town Garage, Library and Street Lights;

Was money being budgeted to work on the Town Hall; Administrative Assistant benefits; Bank fees and Public Safety (Law Enforcement and Rescue Contract)

There being no further discussion, Article VII passes by voice vote.

Article VII. Passed

ARTICLE VIII. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$ 431,867.00, for the running expenses and liabilities of maintaining the Town's roads?

So moved by Kathy Hege and seconded by Carole Melis.

Discussion – Special projects, bridge replacement, guardrails and possible grants.

There being no further discussion, Article VIII passes by voice vote.

Article VIII. Passed

ARTICLE IX. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate up to \$ 120,000.00, for the purchase of a Highway Department front end loader?

So moved by Craig Hunt and seconded by Dale West.

Discussion – Possibility of budgeting money over time like the Fire Department does.

What is the condition of the loader? Road Foreman, Kurt Bostrom, stated it needs to be replaced. The town put \$2,800.00 into it last year in repairs.

Questioned whether \$120,000.00 would cover the cost? Mr. Hunt stated that the actual cost is \$150,000.00 with a trade-in amount of \$30,000.00. Financing is available and does not need to be paid off all in one year.

Jeff Russ called the question. No objection.

There being no further discussion, Article IX passes by voice vote.

Article IX. Passed

ARTICLE X. To see if the Town will vote to raise \$ 47,400.00, by taxation, for the running expenses and liabilities of the Library?

So moved by Maggie Bills and seconded by Will Bissonnette.

There being no discussion, Article X passes by voice vote.

Article X. Passed

ARTICLE XI. To see if the Town will vote to raise \$ 10,000.00, by taxation, to be placed in the Capital Expenditure Fund Fire Department Reserve toward a future pumper?

So moved by Irv Stowell and seconded by Will Bissonnette.

There being no discussion, Article XI passes by voice vote.

Article XI. Passed

ARTICLE XII. To see if the Town will vote to raise \$ 1,750.00, by taxation, for the Old Cemetery Fund?

So moved by Charlie Marchant and seconded by Irv Stowell.

There being no discussion, Article XII passes by voice vote.

Article XII. Passed

ARTICLE XIII. To see if the Town will vote to raise \$ 16,620.00, by taxation, for the support of Social Services, as recommended by the Screening Committee?

So moved by Craig Hunt and seconded by Dale West.

Kathy Greve noted that the report put into flyer was incorrect. A handout with the correct requests and recommendations were provided.

There was discussion regarding Newbrook Fire and Rescue about the recommended increase in the amount to be appropriated which reflects an increase in call volume plus DHART landings.

Motion to amend made by Carole Melis and seconded by Jennifer Joyce to change the amount from \$16,620.00 to \$14,625.00 to match the numbers appropriated last year.

A brief discussion ensued concerning Newbrook First Response Squad and the importance of having their services available to the town.

Carole Melis revoked her motion.

Charlie Marchant objected to the fact that DHART calls are not rescue calls they are Fire department calls and subject to mutual aid protocols.

There being no further discussion, Article XIII passes by voice vote.

Article XIII. Passed

Motion to recess for lunch and to reconvene after Townshend School District Annual Meeting.

Town Meeting Reconvened at 2:00 P.M.

ARTICLE XIV. To see if the Town will authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire, by gift or purchase, land for municipal forest, to promote reforestation, water conservation and good forestry practices?

So moved by Charlie Marchant and seconded by William Lincoln.

There being no discussion, Article XIV passes by voice vote.

Article XIV. Passed

ARTICLE XV. To see if the Town will vote to set the first Tuesday in March 2018 at 9:00 A.M. as the date for the 2018 Town of Townshend Annual Meeting.

So moved by Charlie Marchant and seconded by William Lincoln.

There being no discussion, Article XV passes by voice vote.

Article XV. Passed

ARTICLE XVI. To transact any other non-binding business to properly come before said Meeting?

Items Discussed: Taft Meadows, Holiday Lights and decorations on the Town Common, Small Raised Bed Gardens, Volunteers for Social Service Committee.

Non-Binding Motion made and seconded to see how the town feels about building a small raised bed garden on the Town Common. Motion failed to pass by voice vote.

There being no further discussion, Craig Hunt made a motion to adjourn at 2:15 P.M. Seconded and unanimously carried.

Anita Bean, Town Clerk

Kathleen Hege, Select Board Chair

David Liebow, Moderator