

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 3, 2020

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 3, 2020 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 9:05 A.M. Several announcements were made and the location of numerous handouts and surveys were 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

Request to change the order of the Articles and proceed to Article IX relating to law enforcement services, as to accommodate Sheriff Mark Anderson.

No objection.

ARTICLE IX. To see if the Town will vote to raise, by taxation, money for law enforcement services and, if so, how much?

So moved by Will Bissonnette and seconded by Andy Snelling to raise, by taxation, \$20,000.00 for law enforcement services.

Discussion ensued regarding which Law Enforcement Agency the money would go to. It was explained that it would be up to the Select Board to make that decision.

There was question as to how much is the current budget for Law Enforcement? The amount budgeted for Law Enforcement has been \$20,000.00 for the last two years.

Is law enforcement mandated by the State? Not sure if it is mandated but the Town has, in the past, engaged for police protection, investigation and speeding enforcement.

For the past two years, Townshend has relied on the State Police for Law Enforcement Services.

Motion was made to suspend the rules to allow Sheriff Mark Anderson of the Windham County Sheriff's Department to speak which was passed without objection.

He spoke about the State Police and what they provide. He stated that they are short staffed and that they are a catch all service for everyone.

The Sheriff's Department is well staffed and would provide more personal and protective services specific to our town. He also stated that the Town would get revenue from traffic stops and tickets issued.

He responded to many questions from the assembly.

Sheriff Anderson left at 9:31 A.M.

ARTICLE IX. To see if the Town will vote to raise, \$20,000.00 by taxation for law enforcement services?

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

Article IX Passed

ARTICLE II. To act upon the July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019 Independent Auditors' Report:

So moved by Eugene Kuch and seconded by Andy Snelling to approve the Independent Auditors' Report.

Brief discussion regarding the Auditor's Report.

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

Article II Passed

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

Town Clerk:	\$37,318.00/ yr
Town Treasurer:	\$30,000.00/ yr.
Select Board: (1) Chair:	\$1,200.00/ yr.
(4) Members:	\$1000.00/ yr.
Town Clerk assistants and casual labor:	\$14.75/ hr.

So moved by Elaine Hill and seconded by Will Bissonnette.

Brief discussion regarding Town Treasurer/Bookkeeper salary.

Combining the Treasurer and Tax Collector as one position.

There 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 ballot for Anita Bean for a one-year term as Town Clerk; seconded and carried by voice vote.

Anita Bean, 1-year term as Town Clerk

Town Treasurer: 1 – one-year term: Nominated: Elaine Hill

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

Elaine Hill, 1-year term as Town Treasurer

Motion was made to suspend the rules to allow Sergeant Buckley of the Vermont State Police to speak which was passed without objection.

Sergeant Buckley stated that he had been a State Policeman since November, 1994 and has been actively patrolling since 2005. He said that the State Police had responded to 346 incidents in Townshend over the past year. Twenty-one of those stops resulted in arrests.

He answered questions from the assembly. He explained the billing procedure and also noted that the town receives monies from issued traffic violations.

Explained the duties of the State Police and, in most cases, their response time was adequate. In emergency situations they request assistance from other departments.

There was further discussion concerning money, hours and costs associated with any incident.

He also stated that the State Police would respond without a contract.

There was comment made by a resident as to the quick response received when they placed a 911 call.

Sergeant Buckley also noted that they do school safety visits.

No further questions. Sergeant Buckley left at 10:05 A.M. and the meeting resumed with election of officers.

Select Board: **1 - three-year term:** Nominated: Steve Frisk

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

Steve Frisk, 3-year term on Select Board

1 – one-year term: Nominated: Crystal Mansfield

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

Crystal Mansfield, 1-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

Listers: **1 - three-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

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

West River Modified Union Education District Director:

1 – three-year term: Nominated: Al Claussen

Motion made to close nominations and have the clerk cast one ballot for Al Claussen for a three-year term as West River Modified Union Education District Director;

Al Claussen, 3-year term as West River Modified Union Education District Director

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:

No nominations. Select Board will appoint.

Library Trustees: 1 – five-year term: Nominated: Margaret Bills respectfully declined.
Jean McIntyre

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

Jean McIntyre, 5-year term as Library Trustee

Cemetery Commissioner: 1 – five-year term: Nominated: Paula Newton

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

Paula Newton, 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, 2020 through June 30, 2021, and to borrow money in anticipation of taxes?

So moved by Irv Stowell and seconded by Will Bissonnette.

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 28, 2020; November 24, 2020; February 26, 2021; and May 28, 2021. 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 May 30, 2021.

So moved by Will Bissonnette and seconded by Charlie Marchant.

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

Article VI. Passed

Motion was made to suspend the rules to allow Emily Long to speak which was passed without objection.

She addressed: Global Warming and Climate Change;
The veto of Governor Scott's decision regarding minimum wage increase;
State regulation and tax on cannabis; and
Act 250 reform.

She took questions from the assembly.

There was lengthy discussion regarding the Townshend Dam and the amount of silt created from multiple storms and what is being done to save the dam;
Act 64 Bill regarding cannabis; and
Weighting Study.

Ms. Long left at 11:15 A.M. and the meeting resumed.

ARTICLE VII. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$552,047.00, to pay for the running expenses and liabilities of the Town of which \$325,741.00 to be raised in taxes?

So moved by Will Bissonnette and seconded by Eugene Kuch.

Discussion ensued regarding Reserve Funds concerning Fog Line, Reappraisal and Lister Education.

Irv Stowell stated that the Town Report does not show where the money is going.

Numbers in the Town Report are from last year. The Fog line got rolled into something else but remained as an item in the reserve funds. Unsure how the Lister's fund works.

Elaine Hill stated that there is an error in the Reappraisal Fund which has since been resolved.

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 \$720,220.00, for the running expenses and liabilities of maintaining the Town's roads of which \$407,220.00 to be raised in taxes?

So moved by Will Bissonnette and seconded by Kristine Kuch.

There was discussion regarding the increase in the contract for retreatment from \$25,000.00 to \$100,000.00.

Andy Snelling questioned the monies for Special Projects

Steve Frisk detailed the amounts to be applied to the upcoming year for Special Projects.

\$11,000.00 - grant match for bridge 43;
\$5,000.00 - grant match for Better Roads Program;
\$5000.00 - grant match for Windham Regional Commission;
\$6000.00 – purchase of culverts; and
\$7,000.00 – purchase of ditch stone.

Update on Grants.

The town will be meeting with Meghan Brunk within the next two weeks regarding small structure grants. The town will be reapplying for two grants, one for bridge #43 (West Hill) and one for the Stone Arch Bridge #34.

Questions concerning the monies put into the Kubota Tractor. Steve Frisk stated that an aftermarket cab was purchased which was not available last year when the tractor was purchased.

Andy Snelling wanted to clarify that we still had \$88,000.00 in a Reserve Fund for the repair of the Stone Arch Bridge.

Steve Frisk stated that \$88,000.00 was raised last year and is in a Reserve Fund. He also stated that Charlie Marchant's request was to bring to the meeting today an Article to raise \$167,000.00 to get up to the full amount for the repair of the Bridge. We decided to go with \$50,000.00 in anticipation of the potential grant approval and not have to raise \$167,000.00 today to get full funds to rebuild the bridge

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

Article VIII. Passed

ARTICLE X. To see if the Town will vote to raise \$50,000.00, by taxation, to be held in a reserve account for the repair of the Stone Arch Bridge on Back Windham Road contingent upon the successful award of grant funds?

So moved by Charlie Marchant and seconded by Kristine Kuch.

Discussion: Any updates on the grants? Steve Frisk reported that there would be a meeting with

Meaghan after town meeting. He also stated that the town will be reapplying for 2 grants.

\$88,000.00 in reserve. Did not want to raise \$167,000.00.

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

Article X. Passed

ARTICLE XI. To see if the Town will vote to raise \$54,500.00, by taxation, for the running expenses and liabilities of the Library?

So moved by Will Bissonnette and seconded by Kristine Kuch

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

Article XI. Passed

ARTICLE XII. 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 Steve Frisk.

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

Article XII. Passed

ARTICLE XIII. 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 Steve Frisk.

Charlie Marchant took the opportunity to thanked Rick Snow for his years of service on the Cemetery Commission.

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

Article XIII. Passed

ARTICLE XIV. To see if the Town will vote to raise \$16,780.00, by taxation, for the support of Social Services, as recommended?

So moved by Will Bissonnette and seconded by Kristine Kuch.

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

Article XIV. Passed

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

So moved by Will Bissonnette and seconded by Kristine Kuch

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

Article XV. Passed

ARTICLE XVI. To see if the Town will vote to set the first Tuesday in March 2021, as the date for the 2021 Town of Townshend Annual Meeting?

So moved by Will Bissonnette and seconded by Steve Frisk.

There was discussion as to considering the possibility of switching Town Meeting to another day of the week that is not a work day, such as Saturday. If that were to happen Cynthia Davis said that Elected Officials would still have to be elected at Town Meeting. There could be a meeting to discuss Articles of Business on one day and then the elections would take place on Town Meeting Day

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

Article XVI. Passed

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

Issues discussed: Marilee Attley thanked Library Trustees – Maggie Bills, Marge Holt and Ann Allbee for their service; The Select Board was thanked for the work they do and Irv Stowell was thanked for running; The need for younger people to participate in town politics; Pilot Program. Request to have the Select Board look into it; Glenn Beattie gave an update on the Fire Department feasibility study; No longer mailing Town Reports. Many come back. Very expensive. Could be digitized. Send out postcards to residents asking if they want it mailed to them; Town Website. Explanation as to why the town does not have one; and Open Meeting Law

There being no further discussion, Irv Stowell made a motion to adjourn at 11:57 A.M. Seconded by Warren Beattie.

Anita Bean, Town Clerk

Will Bissonnette, Select Board Chair

David Liebow, Moderator