

**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 5, 2019**

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 5, 2019 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 9:13 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

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

Emily spoke to:

Act 250 complete review

Family leave medical insurance program

Child Care affordability lack of access and finding providers

Rebecca spoke to:

Rural economy demographic challenges not enough workers not enough jobs need to attract the younger generation

Need more affordable housing, child care and broadband

Need to invest in infrastructure

Ms. Balint and Ms. Long took questions from the audience.

Meeting resumed at 10:00 A.M.

ARTICLE II. To act upon the July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018 Independent Auditors' Report:

So moved by Kathy Hege and seconded by Will Bissonnette to approve the Independent Auditors' Report.

Discussion ensued regarding recommendations of the auditor. Kathy Hege said it is a work in process.

Kris Kuch, Charles Murray, Roger Jasaitis and Jim Kowalski brought up their concerns about the duties of the individuals regarding the financial activities of the town.

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:	\$	36,407.00/ yr
Town Treasurer	\$	2,342.00/ yr.
Select Board: (1) Chair:	\$	900.00/ yr.
(4) Members:	\$	775.00/ yr.
Town Clerk assistants and casual labor:	\$	14.40/ hr.

So moved by Crystal Mansfield and seconded by Will Bissonnette.

Berenice Brooks brought up the compensation for Town Clerk and the hours worked.

Gene Kuch said that the Town Clerk works very hard for her money.

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: 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: Will Bissonnette

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

Will Bissonnette, 3 year term on Select Board

1 – one year term : Nominated: Steve Frisk

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

Steve Frisk, 1 year term on Select Board

1 – one year term: Nominated: Crystal Mansfield
Dan Holt – Not on checklist

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

Listers: 1 - three year term Nominated: Helen Holt

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

Helen Holt, 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

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

Motion made to close nominations and have the clerk to 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 to 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 to 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 to 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: Judy Slowik

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

Judy Slowik, 5 year term as Library Trustee

Cemetery Commissioner: **1 – five year term:** Nominated: Bruce Bills

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

Bruce Bills, 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, 2019 through June 30, 2020, and to borrow money in anticipation of taxes?

So moved by Kathy Hege 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 30, 2019; November 22, 2019; February 28, 2020; and May 29, 2020? 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, 2020.

So moved by Will Bissonnette and seconded by Steve Frisk.

Following brief discussion, Article VI passes by voice vote.

Article VI. Passed

ARTICLE VII. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$536,360.00, to pay for the running expenses and liabilities of the Town of which \$399,254.00 to be raised in taxes?

So moved by Will Bissonnette and seconded by Gene Kuch.

Discussion regarding revenues and monies spent.

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 \$ 544,675.00, for the running expenses and liabilities of maintaining the Town's roads of which \$ 431,675 to be raised in taxes?

So moved by Will Bissonnette and seconded by Dale West.

Discussion – Irv Stowell had concern about the town paving funds and feels they should not be used for the Library.
Laura Richardson questioned the increase in Highway salaries
Chad Greenwood asked why there was an increase in highway employees.

Steve Frisk explained that the increase was due to the fact that there are 4 employees now instead of 3.

Dale West made a motion to amend the Article to add \$40,000.00 for special projects seconded by Kevin Munson.

Motion to Amend the Article to add \$40,000.00 as a line item for road maintenance made by Dale West and seconded by Kevin Munson.

Voice Vote not clear. Article VIII, as amended, failed by hand count.

Chad Greenwood questioned the added costs for the additional highway employee. It was explained that the added person takes care of snow blowing and lawn mowing. Also, two of the employees have taken flagging classes making it unnecessary to hire out.

There was additional discussion regarding the cost difference for snow blowing and lawn mowing which was previously paid at the casual labor rate and now is paid at a higher rate.

The Select Board was asked what the additional cost is for the additional highway employee. Kathy Hege estimated it to be between \$42,000.00 to \$43,000.00.

A Motion to Amend Article VIII to reduce the amount appropriated to \$494,675.00 was made by Chad Greenwood and seconded by Warren Beattie.

Motion to Amend the Article failed by voice vote.

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

Article VIII. Passed

ARTICLE IX. To see if the Town will vote to raise \$170,000.00, by taxation, to be used toward the purchase of a new Highway Department truck?

So moved by Will Bissonnette and seconded by Tim Lynch.

Discussion regarding what truck is being replaced and why.

The T9 2012 International is being replaced with a Western Star Viking Tandem Axle. It will decrease the number of runs made on West Townshend roads. More truck for the money. Trade-in value is much better.

Ken Hoffman asked if the \$170,000.00 has to be raised in one year? Ms. Hege said that the town will get a low interest loan.

Motion made by Chad Greenwood and seconded by Irv Stowell, to amend the motion to decrease the amount to be raised to \$150,000.00 for the purchase of the truck.

Motion to Amend fails by voice vote.

Dick Jackson moved to Call the Question.

No further discussion. Request for Paper Ballot on Main Motion.

Total Votes – 111 Yes - 92 No - 17 Blank - 2

Article IX. Passed

ARTICLE X. To see if the Town will vote to raise \$88,000.00, 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 Gene Kuch and seconded by Charlie Marchant.

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

Article X. Passed

ARTICLE XI. To see if the Town will vote to raise \$ 52,345.00, by taxation, for the running expenses and liabilities of the Library?

So moved by Maggie Bills and seconded by Berenice Brooks.

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 Joe Daigneault.

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 Irv Stowell and seconded by Charlie Marchant.

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

Article XIII. Passed

ARTICLE XIV. To see if the Town will vote to raise \$13,460.00, by taxation, for the support of Social Services, as recommended?

So moved by Gene Kuch and seconded by Will Bissonnette.

Discussion – Mike Bills questioned why there was no allocation for SEVCA.

Motion to Amend made by Mike Bills and seconded by Richard Lucier to add \$1,500.00 for SEVCA.

Alicia Moyer, a Townshend resident and employee of SEVCA addressed the audience. She thanked the Select Board and town for the assistance SEVCA has received in the past. She also stated that \$60,600.00 was awarded to 55 Townshend residents last year.

There were questions as to the application process and whether or not it is income based or asset based.

Motion was made to suspend the rules to allow Steve Geller to speak on behalf of SEVCA which was passed without objection.

He explained the application process and the eligibility requirements. The services are very beneficial to those in need. They are provided to lower income families who otherwise could not afford to have repairs and updates done to their homes.

Jeff Russ moved to call the question which passed with a 2/3 voice vote.

Motion to Amend the article to add \$1,500.00 for SEVCA and raise \$14,960.00 for Social Services passed by voice vote.

Further discussion on main motion. Why were some of the recommendations lower than the requests?

Many townspeople questioned why several social services requests did not receive any recommendation.

Motion to Amend the main motion was made by Berenice Brooks and seconded by Laura Richardson to add \$100.00 for Gerda's Equine Rescue and \$500.00 for Windham County Humane Society.

Sally Newton questioned why there is no money in Social Services for Southeastern Vermont Watershed Alliance.

Motion to Amend the Amendment was made by Sally Newton and seconded by Laura Richardson to add \$260.00 for Southeastern Vermont Watershed Alliance.

Amendment to the amendment passed by voice vote.

The amendment to add \$100.00 for Gerda’s Equine Rescue, \$500.00 for Windham County Humane Society and \$260.00 for Southeastern Vermont Watershed Alliance to Social Services was then discussed.

The amendment was then passed by voice vote.

Main Motion, as amended, “To see if the Town will vote to raise \$15,820.00, by taxation, for the support of Social Services, as recommended?

Continued discussion.

Motion to amend made by Chad Greenwood and seconded by Jeff Russ to decrease the amount recommended for the Townshend Community Food Shelf and Newbrook Fire and Rescue.

Why is the town donating more to Newbrook Fire and Rescue? Glenn Beattie said that Newbrook covers a large portion of Townshend. They provide First Response EMS Services. The Department does not have a First Response Squad.

Joe Winrich spoke to the need of the Townshend Community Food Shelf.

A voice vote was not conclusive. The house was divided and a hand vote was taken.

The Motion to Amend fails.

Main Motion, as amended, “To see if the Town will vote to raise \$15,820.00, by taxation, for the support of Social Services, as recommended?

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

Article XIV., as amended, 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 Irv Stowell and seconded by Gene Kuch.

Following brief 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 2020, as the date for the 2020 Town of Townshend Annual Meeting?

So moved by Irv Stowell and seconded by Gene Kuch.

There being no 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:

- Declare Hospital Zone as a Safe Zone
- Safe passage from Valley Cares to the Town Common Sidewalk
- No safe passage through town to Harmonyville
- Inadequate parking – Hospital needs a larger parking area
- Need designated crossing areas
- Excessive speed on Route 35 possibility of flashing speed sign
- Officers Elected and Appointed

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

Town Meeting Reconvened at 1:40 P.M.

Additional non-binding business:

- Auditor’s Report
- Change to finance office and Treasurer position
- Fire Department Letter – Possible Feasibility Study
- Limitations to the current fire station facility
- Dollar Store update

There being no further discussion, Kris Kuch made a motion to adjourn at 1:52 P.M. Seconded by Joe Daigneault and unanimously carried.

Anita Bean, Town Clerk

Kathleen Hege, Select Board Chair

David Liebow, Moderator