

TOWN OF TOWNSHEND
TOWN MEETING MINUTES
March 5, 2024

Town Meeting begin with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for community members we lost in 2023.

Craig Hunt brought up that there were two different WARNINGS approved by the Selectboard. The Town wished to continue the meeting.

David Liebow, Town Moderator explained the role of moderator and gave a few housekeeping updates.

ARTICLE I: To choose a moderator for the ensuing year. DAVID LIEBOW

Craig Hunt nominates **David Liebow**. Kurt Bostrom seconds the nomination. There are no other nominations.

ARTICLE II: To act upon the July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023 independent auditor's report. YES

Craig Hunt says there is no summary for the Auditor's Report in this years Town Report. Hunt says according to State Statutes the Auditor's Report must be available, Sherwood Lake, Jr. (Selectboard Chair) says that the statute states that the Report must be available, not printed in the Town Report. Selectboard state that the 3-page summary from the Auditor's Report will be printed in next years Town Report. Gene Kuch moved to pass Article II, Rick Matschke seconds. Most yays, a few nos.

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

Craig Hunt asks to amend the motion to have the wages of the Clerk & Treasurer listed as *salaries* and be listed in Article III as they has been. Andrew Snelling seconds. Hunt requests a paper ballot. The amendment fails, 36 in favor, 46 opposed. Hunt moves to pass article, Helen Holt seconds. The Article passes.

Selectboard: Chair: \$1,500.00
Members: \$5,200.00
(\$1,300 per member)

Town Clerk Assistant(s) & Casual Labor: \$17.55

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

Lake, Jr. makes a motion to excluded the WRED (West River Education District) Officer from the vote, as no position is currently open. Joe Winrich seconds, the motion passes.

Town Clerk: 1 year term ELLENKA WILSON

Kathy Greve nominates Ellenka Wilson, Rick Matschke seconds. There are no other nominations.

Town Treasurer: 1 year term ELAINE HILL

Kurt Tietz nominates Elaine Hill, Rick Matschke seconds. There are no other nominations.

Selectboard: 3 year term ALENE "ALLIE" EVANS

Lake Jr. nominates Robert Wright. Greve nominates Alene "Allie" Evans. Wright receives 35, Evans 55.

Selectboard: 1 year term

KATHRYN "JANSK" ALLEY

Susan Hunt nominates Kate Jansk. Rob Swiger nominates Haley Felker. Lake Jr. nominates Rob Wright. Nick Suarez nominates himself. Jansk/Alley receives 40, Wright 30, Felker 19 & Suarez 10. No one receives a majority. Second vote: Jansk/Alley receives 57, Wright 30, Felker 11 & Suarez 2.

Selectboard: 1 year term

NICOLAS SUAREZ

Swiger nominates Felker. Amon DeWitt nominates Wright & Swiger nominates Suarez.

First vote: Wright 34, Felker 32 & Suarez 28

Second vote: Wright 35, Felker 34 & Suarez 27

Third vote: Wright 32, Felker 31 & Suarez 33

Fourth vote: Wright 34 & Suarez 64

Lister: 3 year term

STANLEY "MIKE" BILLS

Kuch nominates Stanley "Mike" Bills. There are no other nominations.

Delinquent Tax Collector: 1 year term

BECKY NYSTROM RIELLY

Kuch nominates Becky Nystrom Reilly. There are no other nominations.

First Constable: 1 year term

WARREN BEATTIE

Jeff Russ nominates Warren Beattie. There are no other nominations.

Second Constable: 1 year term

MICHAEL CUTTS

Russ nominates Michael Cutts. There are no other nominations.

Cemetery Commissioner: 5 year term

BRUCE BILLS

Charles Marchant nominates Bruce Bills. There are no other nominations.

Library Trustee: 5 year term

JUDITH SLOWIK

Marilee Attley nominates Judy Slowik. There are no other nominations.

* Representative Emily Long speaks *

ARTICLE V: To see if the Town will authorize the Selectboard to set a tax rate sufficient to cover all monies raised for municipal entities for the period July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025, and to borrow money in anticipation of taxes? **YES**

Hunt so moved, Kuch seconds. All are in favor.

ARTICLE VI: To see if the Town will authorize its Property Tax Collector to receive its Real Property Taxes quarterly, August 23, 2024, November 22, 2024, February 21, 2025, and May 23, 2025. Monthly interest will be charged at the rate of one-half percent (.05%) or fraction thereof, Interest of one percent (1%) or fraction thereof plus penalties will commence on May 30, 2025? **YES**

Hunt so moved, Kuch & Matschke second. All are in favor.

ARTICLE VII: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$441,565 to pay for the running expenses and liabilities of the Town of which \$267,827 to be raised in taxes? **YES**

Snelling inquires why the entirety of the \$300,000 surplus hasn't been used, Selectboard Assistant, Connie Holt responds that the Auditor's recommended that we do not spend it all.

Hunt asks if it was written in the Auditor's Report. Dale West says that the Selectboard does not

have the authority to choose how to spend the surplus. Hunt motions to pass the article. Kuch seconds it, all are in favor.

ARTICLE VIII: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$921,552 to pay for the running expenses and liabilities of maintaining the Town's roads of which \$782,9565 to be raised in taxes? **YES**

Snelling asks why there is such a large increase in the budget. Some of the money set aside for the Stone Arch Bridge project has not been set aside, there is no objection for road foreman, Jeremy Zumbruski, to speak. Zumbruski spoke of..... Suarez inquired what the Highway Budget surplus will be applied to. Zumbruski said there are lots repairs needed. Snelling motioned for an amendment to the article, Bob DeSeirvo second it, to have the Highway Budget be decreased by \$125,000 to \$657,956. Amendment fails. Hunt motions to pass, Kris Kuch seconds it. Article passes with a few nos.

ARTICLE IX: To see if the Town will vote to raise \$63,473, by taxation, for the running expenses and liabilities of the library? **YES**

Attley motions to pass, Jansak/Alley seconds it. Article passes.

ARTICLE X: To see if the Town will vote to raise \$13,000, by taxation, to increase the librarian's hours by 8 hours per week? **YES**

Marilee Attley, Library Trustee, speaks about the Librarian, Karen LaRue and the Library's Strategic Planning and that it would increase the Librarian's salary to \$49,000. Attley motions to pass, Jansak/Alley seconds it. Article passes.

ARTICLE XI: To see if the Town will raise \$2,100, by taxation, for the Old Cemetery Fund? **YES**

Marchant motions to pass, Hunt seconds it. Article passes.

ARTICLE XII: To see if the Town will vote to raise \$21,243, by taxation, for the support of Social Services, as recommended by the Social Services Committee? **YES**

People were interested in who was on the Social Services Committee, Kathleen "Kathy" Greve, Barbara Bedortha & Kris Grotz-Kuch make up the committee. Numerous people asked questions about certain organizations. Grotz-Kuch motions to pass, Greve seconds it. Motion passes with a few nos.

ARTICLE XIII: To see if the Town will vote to raise \$200,000, by taxation, to be held in a reserve account for the purchase of new highway department equipment? **YES**

* Meeting Adjourned for 30 minutes due to LOUD noise *

Residents inquire to why money is not set aside in a reserve account and how the cost of everything has increased. Snelling states that since it is such a big amount of money the town should know what is being bought. Zumbruski states that he talking about the worst of the equipment. Eileen Fahey states that it is better to get them now. Snelling motions to pass, Rick Hege seconds it. The motion passes, there are some nos.

ARTICLE XIV: To see if the Town will vote to raise \$50,000, by taxation, to be held in a reserve account for the repair/renovation of the Town Hall. This includes prompt compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act for building accessibility, and an ADA compliant bathroom?

YES

Presentation by the Bob DeSeirvo for the Planning Commission. Evans motions to pass, Kuch seconds. Motion passes.

ARTICLE XV: To see if the Town will vote to raise \$50,000, by taxation, to be held in a reserve account for the repair of the stone arch bridge on Back Windham Road? **YES**

Marchant motions to pass, Helen Holt seconds. Motion passes.

ARTICLE XVI: To see if the Town will vote to decide what the format for Town Meeting will be in the future? **YES**

Ellenka Wilson motioned to pass over article; due to it being unclear and improperly worded. All were in favor.

ARTICLE XVII: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectboard to acquire land by gift or purchase for municipal forest to promote reforestation, water conservation and good forestry practices? **YES**

Hunt motions to pass, Irvin Stowell seconds it. All in favor,

ARTICLE XVIII: To transact any other non-binding business to properly come before said Meeting? **YES Discussion:**

-Ellenka Wilson spoke about ARTICLE XVI, which was passed over and how voters have expressed that they would like a chance to vote on changing the format of Town Meeting, as there are more and more obstacles that make it hard for voters to attend the traditional Tuesday morning meeting. Those that commented agreed that change was needed and spoke of the possibility of hybrid meetings and having Australian ballots for the election of officers. No conclusion was reached.

-Rick Hege spoke about the February 27th Selectboard meeting, where a selectboard member was given a paid grant writing position; why the position wasn't advertised to the public and where the money to pay for the position would come from.

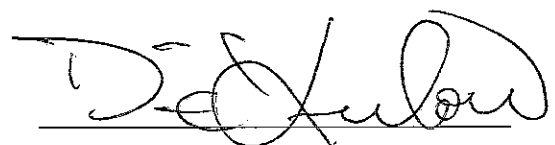
-Eileen Fahey asked for people to consider volunteering at the Grace Cottage Hospital Fair. - Michael Adrian spoke to the town about the *Convention of States*.

ARTICLE XIX: To see if the Town will vote to set the first Tuesday in March 2025, as the date for the 2025 Town of Townshend Annual Meeting? **YES**

Hunt so moved, Dale West seconds. All are in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellenka Wilson, Town Clerk



David Liebow, Moderator