

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES MARCH 4, 2025

The legal voters of the Town of Townshend are hereby notified and WARNED to meet at Dutton Gym in Townshend, Vermont, on Tuesday, March 7, 2024 at 9:00am to act on the following articles viz:

David Liebow, moderator, calls the meeting to order at 9:05am. The moderator gives his opening remarks on the rules and guidelines for the meeting and welcomes new residents.

ARTICLE 1: To choose a moderator for the ensuing year:

Liebow opens the nominations for Moderator. Craig Hunt nominates David Liebow for Moderator. There being no other nominees, nominations are closed. The nomination passes by a voice vote and the clerk casts a single ballot for David Liebow for moderator for a one year term.

David Liebow, Moderator, one year term

ARTICLE II: To act upon the July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 independent auditor's report.

Eugene Kuch makes a motion to approve the article. Craig Hunt seconds. There is a discussion of the auditors' findings. The motion to act upon the auditor's report passes by a voice vote.

ARTICLE III: Shall the voters authorize the Treasurer, pursuant to 32V.S.A. d4791, to collect taxes and to add \$1,500.00 for the Treasurer's salary.

Hunt makes a motion to pass Article III. Kristine Kuch seconds the motion. Andy Snelling makes a motion to amend the article to add \$5,000.00 to the treasurer's salary. Bob DeSiervo seconds the motion. Amendment fails by a voice vote. The original Article III passes by a voice vote.

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

Town Clerk: Craig Hunt nominates Ellenka Wilson for Town Clerk. Being there are no other nominations, Moderator, Liebow closes nominations, nomination carries by a voice vote. Liebow instructs the Clerk to cast one ballot for Ellenka Wilson for a one year term.

Ellenka Wilson elected to one year term as Town Clerk

Town Treasurer: Anita Bean nominates Elaine Hill for Town Treasurer. Haley Felker nominates Shaun Marrow for Town Treasurer. Moderator Liebow closes nominations. A paper ballot vote is conducted. Elaine Hill receives 63 votes, and Shaun Marrow receives 33 votes.

Elaine Hill elected to one year term as Town Treasurer

Select Board:

Three Year term: Allie Evans nominates Nick Suarez. Anita Bean nominates Steve Frisk. Kevin Brooks nominates Rob Wright. Rob Wright declines the nomination. A paper ballot vote is conducted. Nick Suarez receives 63 votes and Steve Frisk receives 39 votes.

Nick Suarez is elected to the three year term

One Year Term: Anita Bean nominates Steve Frisk. Andy Snelling nominates Dale West. Nick Suarez Shiloh Tedrow. Shaun Marrow nominates Rob Wright. Rob Wright declines the nomination. 3 paper ballots were conducted to obtain a majority.

1st Vote Results: No majority is achieved in the first vote: Steve Frisk receives 39 votes, Dale West receives 30 votes, and Shiloh Tedrow receives 28 votes. Rob Wright receives 2 votes. The vote was inconclusive.

2nd Vote Results: No majority is achieved in the second vote. Steve Frisk receives 47 votes, Dale West receives 28 voters, and Shiloh Tedrow receives 20 votes. The vote is inconclusive.

3rd Vote Results: Steve Frisk receives 60 votes, Dale West receives 23 votes, and Shiloh Tedrow receives 10 votes. Rob Wright receives 1 vote.

Steve Frisk is elected to the one year term.

One Year Term: Andy Snelling nominates Dale West. Nick Suarez nominates Shiloh Tedrow, and Steve Frisk nominates Rob Wright. 2 paper ballots were conducted to obtain a majority vote.

1st Vote Results: No majority is achieved in the first vote: Wright receives 40 votes, Shiloh Tedrow receives 30 votes, and Dale West receives 26 votes.

2nd Vote Results: Dale West withdraws his nomination. Rob Wright receives 48 votes, Shiloh Tedrow receives 40 votes, Dale West receives 1 vote and Rick Hege receives 1 vote.

Rob Wright is elected to the one year term

Lister 3 Year Term: Connie Holt nominates Helen Holt. Moderator closes nominations and the nomination carries by a voice vote. Moderator instructs the Clerk to cast one ballot for Helen Holt for the three year lister term.

Helen Holt is elected to the three year term

Delinquent tax Collector one year term: Irv Stowell nominates Becky Nystrom Reilly to the one year term. Moderator closes the nominations, and the nomination carries by a voice vote. Moderator instructs the Clerk to cast a ballot for Becky Nystrom Reilly.

Becky Nystrom Reilly is elected to the one year term

1st Constable one year term: Irv Stowell nominates Warren Beattie. Moderator closes the nominations, and the nomination passes by a voice vote. Moderator instructs the Clerk to cast one ballot for Warren Beattie.

Warren Beattie is elected to the one year term

2nd Constable one year term: Warren Beattie nominates Mike Cutts. Moderator closes nominations, and nomination passes by a voice vote. Moderator instructs the Clerk to cast one ballot for Mike Cutts.

Mike Cutts is elected to the one year term

Cemetery Commissioner five year term: Charlie Marchant nominates Paula Diamondstone Newton. Moderator closes nominations, and the nomination passes by a voice vote. Moderator instructs the Clerk to cast one ballot for Paula Diamondstone.

Paula Diamondstone Newton is elected to the five year term

Library Trustee 5 year term: Kathy DuGrenier nominates Miriam Shuldenfrei. Moderator closes nominations, and the nomination passes by a voice vote. Moderator instructs the Clerk to cast one ballot for Miriam Schuldenfrei.

Miriam Shuldenfrei is elected to the five year term

West River Modified Union Education District Director three year term:

Al Claussen nominates Joe Winrich, Moderator closes nominations, and the nomination passes by a voice vote. Moderator instructs the Clerk to cast one ballot for Joe Winrich.

Joe Winrich is elected to the three year term

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, 2025, through June 30, 2026, and to borrow money in anticipation of taxes?

Craig Hunt makes the motion to approve the article. Gene Kuch seconds the motion. The article is approved by a voice vote.

ARTICLE VI: To see if the Town will authorize its Property Tax Collector to receive its Real Property Taxes quarterly, August 25, 2025, November 25, 2025, February 25, 2026, and May 26, 2026. Monthly interest will be charged at the rate of one-half percent (.5%) or fraction thereof. Interest of one percent (1.0%) or fraction thereof plus penalties will commence on May 30, 2026?

Craig Hunt makes the motion to approve the article. Kris Goetz-Kuch seconds the motion. The article is approved by a voice vote.

ARTICLE VII: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$646,435.00 to pay for the running expenses and liabilities of the Town of which \$278,312.00 to be raised in taxes?

Craig Hunt makes the motion to approve the article. Kris Goetz-Kuch seconds the motion. Laura Richardson asks why the Selectboard Assistant is getting a \$6,000 raise to help write road grants when the town has a grant writer. Allie Evans said that the selectboard voter to increase her hours with her still helping the Road Foreman. Richardson brought up that the Grant Writers Report in the Town Report made it seem like they received Grants that they did not write. Grant Writer, Katie Marrow explained that the grants also had to be managed and how she had to figure that out. Liza Martin asked if the \$10,000 that the taxpayers were overcharged would be rebated or reduce the tax rate later. Evans explained that the money was in the General Fund. Gene Kuch explained that because of that \$10,000 less has to be raised in taxes. Dale West spoke of the General Fund revenue and the use of fund balance monies and why the Selectboard anticipates a surplus before finishing the fiscal year. Treasurer Elaine Hill explained that the Auditors recommend that if the Town has a surplus, 10-15% should be kept in order to have funds available between tax collections. Hill also stated that the fund balance does reduce the tax rate and the Selectboard decided the amounts to keep. Warren Beattie questioned what Special Projects were under Highway. Chad Greenwood asked why the Selectboard added a highway grant writer while we have a grant writer, and didn't the Road Foreman used to do that? Evans said that there have been growing pains and times have changed. A paper ballot is conducted, and the article is approved with a vote of 48 to approve and 13 to reject.

ARTICLE VIII: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$1,039,752.00 to pay for the running expenses and liabilities of maintaining the Town's roads of which \$834,455.00 to be raised in taxes?

Craig Hunt makes the motion to approve the article. Khris Goetz-Kuch seconds the motion. Andy Snelling asks what the plan on the \$80,000.00 deficit from FY24 is. Connie Holt answers that the FEMA and Federal Highway funds coming in FY25 will cover the deficit. Steve Frisk asks what the special projects are for FY26. Jeremy Zumbruski answers materials for road work, and culverts. Liza Martin asks about leasing and states that the town should do more of it. Marrow answers that the town is leasing. Dale West states that municipal leasing is a form of borrowing for purchase. A paper ballot is conducted. The article is approved with a 43 yes votes and 19 no votes.

ARTICLE IX: To see if the Town will vote to raise \$77,850.00, by taxation, for the running expenses and liabilities of the library?

Craig Hunt makes a motion to approve the article. Charlie Marchant seconds the motion. Laura Richardson asks why there is a \$14,777.00 increase over last year's budget. Marilee Attley, Library Broad of Trustee, clarifies that the \$13,000.00 increase occurred at last year's Town Meeting through a special article. She clarifies that there is a \$1,300 to \$1,400 increase this year. Article IX passes with a voice vote.

ARTICLE X: To see if the Town will raise \$2,100.00, by taxation, for the Old Cemetery Fund?

Charlie Marchant makes the motion to approve the article. Irv Stowell seconds the motion. The article is approved by a voice vote.

ARTICLE XI: To see if the Town will vote to establish a Highway Reserve Fund to be used for highway infrastructure projects as well as the purchase, current and future leasing, and repair of highway equipment in accordance with 24 V.S.A x2804?

Gene Kuch makes a motion to approve the article. Shaun Marrow seconds the motion. Snelling asks why the language to create this reserve fund is different than the language used in the past. Katie Marrow explains the background of NEMRC and VLCT recommendation to creating a reserve and she consulted VLCT on the wording. Dale West asks why infrastructure and equipment are being combined. Marrow reports that it was made for clarity and simplicity. Suarez states that VLCT said it was appropriate either way. Article is approved by a voice vote.

ARTICLE XII: To see if the Town will vote to raise, by taxation and appropriate \$500,000.00 to the Highway Reserve Fund with the following allocation;

- 1. \$200,00.00 to be used towards funding highway infrastructure.**
- 2. \$300,000.00 to used towards funding current leases (for FY26 only, after which leases will be added as a budgetary line item), as well as future purchases, leasing and repair of highway equipment.**

Katie Marrow makes the motion to approve the article. Nick Suarez seconds the motion. Marrow explains the purpose of the article. Snelling makes a motion to decrease the amount of the article to \$50,000.00. Warren Beattie makes a friendly amendment to Snelling's amendment to change the amount of the funds to \$200,000.00. The friendly amendment passes by a voice vote.

Nick Suarez makes an amendment to change the funding to \$200,000.00 for infrastructure and \$200,000.00 to continue the lease for the grader and to payout the running balance of the backhoe lease. Patrica Hatch seconds the amendment. There is a paper ballot vote conducted. The amendment passes with a vote of 29 Yes votes and 28 No votes.

The revised Article XII: To see if the Town will vote to raise, by taxation and appropriate \$400,000.00 to the Highway Reserve Fund with the following allocation;

- 1. \$200,00.00 to be used towards funding highway infrastructure.**
- 2. \$200,000.00 to used towards funding current leases (for FY26 only, after which leases will be added as a budgetary line item), and to pay the remaining balance on the backhoe lease, as well as future purchases, leasing and repair of highway equipment.**

A paper ballot vote is conducted. The article is approved by a vote of 30 Yes votes and 25 No votes.

Article XIII: To see if the Town will vote to move highway surplus funds up to \$75,000.00 in the Highway Reserve Fund?

Katie Marrow makes a motion to approve the article. Nick Suarez seconds the motion. Marrow explains that this is the balance of last year's \$200,000.00 appropriation for highway equipment procurement. Dale West makes an amendment to use Highway surplus up to \$75,000.00 to offset the highway deficit. Warren Beattie seconds the amendment. There is a voice vote that is too close to call. Liebow counts hands 17 votes for Yes 26 for no. Amendment fails.

Charlie Marchant proposes to pass over this article due to the fact that the funds were already approved last year and the Board can decide how to use them. Gene Kuch seconds the proposal. Al Haumann calls the question on the proposal. The proposal passes by a voice vote. Article XIII is passed over.

ARTICLE XIV: To see if the Town will vote to raise \$20,000.00, by taxation, to be placed in the Fire Truck Capital Fund toward a future pumper?

Gene Kuch makes a motion to approve the article. Charlie Marchant or Shawn Marrow seconds the motion. Laura Richardson asks for a clarification if the ARPA Funds are paying for this truck. Fire Chief, Glen Beattie clarifies that ARPA did fund the Fire Truck that is on order. This article concerns funding a future truck. Al Haumann asked why not put \$50,000 in the CD or a Capital Fund that would raise interest. The article is approved by a voice vote.

ARTICLE XV: To see if the Town will vote to raise \$10,000.00, by taxation, to be placed in the Fire Pond Reserve account toward a future fire pond or maintenance of the existing fire ponds?

Shaun Marrow makes a motion to approve the article. Gene Kuch seconds the motion. The article is approved by a voice vote.

ARTICLE XVI: To see if the Town will vote to raise \$22,388.00, by taxation, for the support of Social Services, as recommended by the Social Services Committee?

Kris Goetz-Kuch makes a motion to approve this article. Nick Suarez seconds the motion. Kris Goetz-Koch reads through each organization and how they helped Townshend residents. Kris Goetz-Kuch makes an amendment to delete the Visiting Nurse Association because they do not cover this area anymore. The revised total would be \$19,688.00. Gene Kuch and Dale West second the motion. Shaun Marrow amends the amendment to delete Grace Cottage Hospital from the list, Allie Evans seconds the amendment. The revised total would be \$18,688.00. Gene Kuch calls the vote. A paper ballot is conducted on the amendment to delete Grace Cottage Hospital. The amendment to the amendment fails in a vote of 20 votes not to exclude and 18 votes to exclude Grace Cottage Hospital.

The amendment to exclude the Visiting Nurse passes by a voice vote. The revised funding total is \$19,488.00.

Allie Evans makes a motion to drop the funding to BDCC (SoVeds) which would result in a revised funding level of \$15,815.00 in social services. Shaun Marrow seconds the motion. Joe Winrich and Al Claussen speak to the purpose of SoVeds and the programs that benefit Townshend students and local businesses. The amendment to drop SoVeds fails by a voice vote, leaving the funding balance at \$19,488.00 for social services.

Tom Simmons from Neighborhood Connections (Meals on Wheels) speaks about how many Townshend Residents benefit from Meals on Wheels

Moderator Liebow points out that the Article funding is different than the total of the organizations listed. Shaun Marrow makes a motion to change the total social services funding to the exact amount, noting the discrepancy between the Social Services Total & the Article, \$19,488.00 (The total of the individual appropriations minus Visiting Nurse Association) Nick Suarez seconds the motion. The social services article passes by a voice vote.

ARTICLE XVII: To see if the Town will vote to maintain the current trash collection system with the following modifications: institute an annual charge of \$100.00 for the transfer station "hang Tag" and to charge \$4.00 per town trash bag?

Nick Suarez makes a motion to approve the article. Shaun Marrow seconds the motion. Nick Suarez explains that the Selectboard formed a Trash Committee with various town employees and former employees & Windham Solid Waste and their recommendation was to eliminate the Transfer Station in town, and this article is being proposed as a way of offsetting the expense of trash collection. Andy Snelling makes an amendment to reduce the annual fee to \$50.00 and \$4.00 per bag. Nick Suarez and Dale West second the amendment. Craig Hunt states that he believes the numbers to be arbitrary and that recycling should be free. Suarez stated that the numbers are not arbitrary. The amendment passes by a voice vote.

Dale West amends the article to drop the annual hang tag fee and to keep the increase in the cost of the trash bags. Gene Kuch and Shaun Marrow second the amendment. The amended article passes by voice vote.

ARTICLE XVIII: 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?

Kathy Greve makes a motion to approve the article. Dale West seconds the motion. Article is approved by a voice vote.

ARTICLE XIX: To see the Town will vote to set the first Tuesday in March 2026 as the date for the 2026 Town of Townshend Annual Meeting?

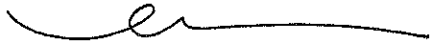
Katie Marrow makes a motion to approve the article. Shawn Marrow seconds the motion. The article is approved by a voice vote.

ARTICLE XX: To transact any other non-binding business to properly come before said meeting?

Kris Goetz-Kuch states that 2025 is the 250th anniversary of the United States. Any person interested in putting together celebration please contact her.

Kathy DuGrenier asks if the town can find a better way to communicate in emergency situations such as what happened at the hospital. Town Clerk & Local Aid Coordinator, Ellenka Wilson, responds that a meeting with the hospital has been set up.

Moderator Liebow adjourns the meeting at 4:04pm.



Ellenka Wilson, Town Clerk



Alene "Allie" Evans, Selectboard Chair



David Liebow, Moderator