

Dummerston Town Meeting minutes
MARCH 6, 2012

THE LEGAL VOTERS OF THE Town of Dummerston are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Dummerston School in said Town on Tuesday, March 6, 2012 at 10:00 AM to transact the following business of the Town. (Voting on Article 1 will be by Australian ballot.) The polls will be open from 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

ARTICLE 1: To elect all necessary Town Officers for the following positions required by law to be elected at the annual meeting (by Australian Ballot).

Moderator 1 year term	Town Clerk 1 year term
Town Treasurer 1 year term	Selectperson 3 year term
Selectperson 2 year term	Lister 3 year term
Auditor 3 year term	Town Agent 1 year term
Town Grand Juror 1 year term	Trustee of Cemetery Funds 1 year term
Library Trustee 5 year term	

Election results follow the minutes.

ARTICLE 2: To act on the auditors' report of the Town Accounts.
A motion to approve the auditors' report was made by Bill Holiday and was seconded by Florence Howe. No discussion followed, the motion was reread and it was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 3: To see if the Town will vote to authorize its Selectboard to appoint a receiver of current and delinquent taxes. A motion to authorize the Selectboard to appoint a receiver of current and delinquent taxes was made by Bill Holiday and was seconded by Mary Lou Schmidt. No discussion followed, the motion was reread and it was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will vote to raise the sum of \$104,000 through taxes and appropriate said amount to the Capital Fund for future capital needs. A motion to raise the sum of \$104,000 through taxes and appropriate said amount to the Capital Fund for future capital needs was made by Greg Brown and seconded by Ruth Barton. Greg explained that the amount of \$104,000 was to include a modest rate of inflation. With no further discussion, the motion was reread and it was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 5: To see if the Town will vote to authorize capital expenditures in the amount of \$131,525 from the Capital Fund for FY 12-13 (\$42,525 for the fifth of five annual payments on new fire truck; \$9,000 for new roof on Town Office building, and \$80,000 for new backhoe). A motion to authorize capital expenditures in the amount of \$131,525 from the Capital Fund for FY 12-13 (\$42,525 for the fifth of five annual payments on new fire truck; \$9,000 for new roof on Town Office building, and \$80,000 for new backhoe) was made by Greg Brown and seconded by Ruth Barton. Greg explained that these expenditures could be found in the Town Report on the

capital expenditure page. With no further discussion the motion was reread and passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will raise and appropriate a sum of money to defray its general operating expenses and liabilities for the period of July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013, and if so, in what amount. A motion that the Town raise and appropriate \$469,492 to defray its general operating expenses and liabilities for the period of July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013 was made by Tom Bodett and seconded by Ruth Barton. Tom provided the following explanations to various points of the budget. Some of the information was provided on the Highway budget which is the following article.

- The Selectboard set out to level fund the budget and keep it under cost of living index of 2.5%.
- Correction as pointed out by Cindy earlier this morning. Please note that the total revenue amount at the bottom of page 15 should be \$524,252. This number is correct in the other places throughout the report.
- Gravel amount decreased by \$2,000
- Vehicle and equipment insurance did increase but it is moved out from the Selectboard budget line.
- \$15,000 is the first repayment towards the \$75,000 the Selectboard asked to borrow last year for the Gravel pit on US Rte 5.
- Payment in Lieu of Health Insurance. The health insurance has changed to a higher deductible insurance policy and has fewer benefits. The previous policy was unsustainable. There are two employees who have health insurance available through their spouses and as is customary, the Selectboard was able to negotiate a Payment in Lieu of Health Insurance.
- Listers wages are lower.
- Fire fighters' request was \$45,000 and the Selectboard wanted to level fund their budget at \$40,000. The Selectboard was under the impression that last year's request of \$45,000 was for additional equipment. The department did purchase the equipment but they also wanted to increase their annual request to \$45,000. After further discussion, it was agreed by both parties to split the difference to \$42,500.

Janet Avery: Is the road painting for fog lines? No, Lee said.

Jody Normandeau: It looks like we will have some savings on sand and salt budget. Can that money be used for the white lines on the road? Tom explained that the surplus from this budget will not be used until the following year 2014.

Mary Lou Schmidt made a motion to amend Article 6 by increasing the Farmland Protection Fund budget line from \$2,500 to \$5,000 and it was seconded by Jody Normandeau.

Discussion followed:

Steve Casabona asked what the fund does.

Bill Schmidt answered that it would be used to protect farm lands from development. There are approximately 65–70 farm parcels here in town. The monies could be used to purchase development rights to insure that a parcel is not developed. It is a capital fund for the protection of farm land. The State reviews the monies that a town sets aside for its farm land. The fund reflects the seriousness the town has towards its farm land.

Mark Whitaker: Thank you to Selectboard for keeping the budget level funded. He has faith in the town to keep development down. 44% of town land is enrolled in Current Use. That is 8,782 acres and is 102 parcels. The land enrolled in Current Use saves the property owners \$356,229 in taxes. The State reimburses the town for \$56,000 in the PILOT program but that leaves \$300,229 that the town does not get. He feels this fund is a rainy day fund. He does not support the amendment.

Larry Crockett: how do budget recommendations to the Selectboard work with regards to how they can spend the money?

Moderator: The assembly can change individual lines of the Selectboard Budget.

Vern Grubinger responded for the Farmland Protection Committee. Sorry no report for the Town Report. The money is for a future need for the town and its land. The goal of the committee is to leverage money from other sources and the town has to have matching funds to save a certain project.

Ruth Barton: do not increase the budget; the Selectboard has made its cuts.

Roger Turner: (Current Use Program) is the \$300,000 saved by the property owner money that is lost by the town?

Laurie Frechette explained that for FY 2011 \$56,000 was received from the PILOT program.

Paul Normandeau said that the town gets reimbursement for the municipal portion of the taxes due from Current Use. He said the school taxes go to the State and the State rate reflects the amount in Current Use.

Ed Anthes supports the amendment.

Steve Casabona asked if the farms have to be actively farmed.

Bill Schmidt answered yes. It has to be productive farm land. A study in 1990 was conducted on the farms in Dummerston. The study reviewed and scored the farm land on type of soil, capability to be farmed and other related factors. The Committee then reviews the scores of these farm lands and uses those scores to determine the most important farm lands to be protected. The Committee would then send their recommendation to the Selectboard and it is the Selectboard's decision to make. In Vernon it goes to a special meeting.

Jody Normandeau supports the amendment.

Brenda Davis feels there needs to be both commercial and farm land. There needs to be a balance.

Sallie Olmstead wants us to raise our own food.

Linda Hellus says she is torn on this issue.

Mark Whitaker asked for a paper ballot. The moderator asked if there were 6 others who would support the motion. There were 6 others and the audience was divided between A–M and N–Z to vote by paper ballot. The votes were cast and counted. Motion on the floor was to amend the budget to reflect an increase to the Farmland Protection Fund from \$2,500 to a total \$5,000. The Moderator announced the count of the total ballots cast 122, no vote 55 and yes 67. The motion carried. This amends the main motion. The Moderator read the article as amended, that the Town raise and appropriate \$471,992 to defray its general operation expenses and liabilities for the period of July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013. No discussion and it passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 7: To see if the Town will raise and appropriate a sum of money to defray its highway operating expenses and liabilities for the period of July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013, and if so, in what amount. A motion that the Town raise and appropriate a sum of money to defray its highway operation expenses and liabilities for the period of July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013 in the amount of \$524,252 was made by Tom Bodett and seconded by Ruth Barton. No discussion and it passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 8: To see if the Town will raise, appropriate and expend the sum of \$9,800 for the development and support of Intraoffice Server and Network system by NEMRC (New England Municipal Resource Center). A motion that the Town raise, appropriate and expend the sum of \$9,800 for the development and support of Intraoffice Server and Network system by NEMRC was made by Pam McFadden and seconded by Ruth Barton. Brief introduction to the existing computer system was given. Of the total amount of money, \$3,200 would be spent on the hardware and labor to install the network setup. The remaining monies would be spent on maintenance and support of the network.

Michele Cherrier asked if there will be anyone trained on this system in the office and are there any other town offices in Windham County who use this system. Pam answered that yes we will be trained on the server and two towns currently use the server and networking – Westminster and Guilford.

Richard Epstein asked if the maintenance monies for the server will be an ongoing expense. Yes, there will be ongoing expenses for this server.

Tom Bodett supports the article and wants to see it pass. The Selectboard wanted the town to make the decision and that is why it was put on the warning as its own article.

The money in this article and the additional money for the Farmland Protection fund will bring the budget to a 3% increase.

Jody Normandeau asked if there were any other corporations who do this work and might be any less expensive. No, Pam only asked for a price from

NEMRC.

Fred Lee asked what are the down sides to keeping the situation the same. Pam answered that it would stay the same.

Carol Bessette supported the choice to upgrade the office computers.

Andrew MacFarland supports the article. He feels we should get the computers managed by another source.

Barbara Gilmore can attest to the professionalism of Ernie Saunders the owner of NEMRC. She also supports the article.

Mark Whitaker spoke in favor of the article. He has spent significant amount of time in the office over the past 3 years. He has hands on knowledge of what happens in the town office and Pam and Laurie work really, really hard. They don't ask for a lot and they do a lot for nothing.

A motion to call the question was presented and it was seconded by Ruth Barton. The motion passed by voice vote.

The motion was reread and it passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 9: To see if the Town will grant tax exempt status to the Evening Star Grange for a period of one year, pursuant to the provisions of Title 32, Section 3840. A motion to grant tax exempt status to the Evening Star Grange for a period of one year was moved by Lewis White and seconded Ruth Barton. The motion was reread and it was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 10: To see if the Town will grant tax exempt status to Green Mountain Camp for a period of one year, pursuant to the provisions of Title 32, Section 3840. A motion to grant tax exempt status to Green Mountain Camp for a period of one year, pursuant to the provisions of Title 32, Section 3840 by **was moved by** Mark Brown and seconded by Chad Farnum. Mark Brown updated the audience on the status of the camp. There were 27 girls from Dummerston at the camp this past year. Fran Lyngaard Hansen has moved on and has put the camp in a good place and the staff is great. David Shaw has taken some great photos and they are on the pamphlet. The motion was reread and it was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 11: To transact any other business that may legally come before said Town Meeting.

Tom Bodett thanked Charlie Richardson for serving as Tree Warden. "You have saved a lot of trees in Dummerston."

Tom also thanked Greg Brown for serving on the Selectboard. His gentle nature and soft voice among some difficult debates has been a tremendous asset to the town.

Tom Bodett announced that we are losing our Queen of our Listing Brigade. Beverly Knapp is retiring this year after 33 years. He feels it is a rare thing

in

this world to have someone be as dedicated to a task with such high integrity. She was presented with flowers and she received a standing ovation for her dedication to this town.

David Patriquin: Lydia's Friends of the Library will have a Geranium sale the weekend before Memorial Day weekend. Thank you for the continued support.

Jody Normandeau wants to see that the minutes of the Town Meeting reflect a HUGE Thank you to Kevin Ryan for your help. He helps with the Views and the Website.

Shirley Perkins wants to remind people Dummerston Cares is sponsoring a talk from Richard Davis RN on March 12, 2012 at 11am at the Community Center.

Ruth Barton asks that the recreation board please let her know who you are; she wants to participate. If the Selectboard has extra money in the highway budget, could you spend the money on the white fog lines on the road?

Fred Taylor announced that the Dummerston Transition Initiative will be having an event on March 23, 2012 @ 6:00pm at the Community Center.

Mark Brown reminds the audience of Clean Up Day.

Diana Lischer-Goodband read the resolution that was adopted by the Selectboard to support Takako Ueda and Frances Herbert. She moved that the assembly support the resolution that the Selectboard has adopted and forward the resolution to the necessary authorities. The motion was read

and

it was seconded by Bill Menzes:

Let it be known that on February 22, 2012 the Selectboard of Dummerston, Vermont voted in favor of a resolution in support of the family of Takako Ueda and Frances Herbert.

Takako and Frances have been long-term members of our community. They have enriched the lives of friends and neighbors and contributed to the vitality of our town. Their lives have been woven into the fabric of our community and we would be diminished by their absence.

We resolutely urge the United States Citizen and Immigration Service to grant Takako Ueda deferred action to allow Takako and Frances to remain together in their family home, among friends and neighbors, in Dummerston, Vermont.

The motion was passed by voice vote.

Carol Bessette liked the new direction of the voting booths.

A motion to adjourn Town Meeting was made by Paul Normandeau and seconded by Michele Cherrier. The motion passed by voice vote and the meeting was adjourned at 3:08 pm

Respectfully submitted:

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----- **Tom Bodett**, Chair of Selectboard

----- **Cynthia D. Jerome**, Town Moderator

----- **Pamela G. McFadden**, Town Clerk