

TOWN OF DUMMERSTON TOWN MEETING Minutes MARCH 7, 2017

The legal voters of the Town of Dummerston and School District of the Town of Dummerston, Vermont, met as warned at the Dummerston School on Tuesday, March 7, 2017. The polls were open from 8:00AM to 7:00PM. Moderator Cindy Jerome called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM and declared the polls open for voting by Australian ballot on Article 1 of the Town Warning and the Town School District Warning. The Moderator led all the assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag and reviewed the rules of procedure. She also gave a brief invocation and read the names of town residents who passed away during the last year. A moment of silence followed.

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

A motion to approve the Auditors' report was made by Joe Cook and seconded by Zeke Goodband. No discussion followed. The motion was reread and passed by voice vote.

A motion to authorize the Selectboard to appoint a receiver of current and delinquent taxes was made by Hugh Worden and seconded by Jerelyn Wilson. The motion was reread and passed by voice vote.

A motion to raise the sum of \$170,000.00 through taxes and appropriate said amount to the Capital Fund for future capital needs was made by Steve Glabach and seconded by Zeke Goodband. Eesha Williams asked if this was the correct time to move to increase the amount for the Farmland Protection Fund. The Moderator explained that would be included under the general fund. Paul Normandeau asked if the fire department had decided to not request a new fire truck this year. The Moderator responded that the fire department had requested to have Article 6 withdrawn. Mr. Normandeau then asked if the \$170,000 being raised could be lowered. Steve Glabach explained that the Selectboard anticipates their request being presented next year, along with the purchase of a grader for the town. The motion passed by voice vote.

A motion to authorize capital expenditures in the amount of \$90,000.00 from the Capital Fund for FY2018 was made by Steve Glabach and seconded by Hugh Worden. The town will purchase a new one-ton dump truck. Erich Kruger asked if there was a guaranteed buy-back option for this vehicle. Steve Glabach explained that buy-backs are for the larger trucks and not for this size vehicle. The motion was reread and passed by voice vote.

The article regarding the request from the West Dummerston Volunteer Fire Department to purchase a new fire truck was withdrawn by Steve Glabach. The fire department decided to postpone the purchase at this time.

A motion to approve total general fund expenditures of \$512,093 of which \$311,560 shall be raised by taxes and \$200,533 by non-tax revenues for the period of July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018 was made by Zeke Goodband and seconded by Jerelyn Wilson. Zeke went over the budget and pointed out increases and decreases in various line items.

Eesha Williams moved to amend the main motion by increasing the bottom line of the total General Fund expenses by \$2,500.00 and have the additional monies put in the Farmland Protection Fund. It was seconded by Lyle Holiday and discussion followed.

Erich Kruger asked for the balance in the Farmland Protection Fund. As of June 30, 2016 it was \$30,810.54

Diana Lischer-Goodband spoke on behalf of the Farmland Protection Committee, who decided to support the \$2500 allocation for this year, not to ask for more.

Zeke Goodband explained that this fund is to be used as "seed money" to show the town's support for local farmland protection.

Lyle Holiday, Jesse Diamondstone, Jody Normandeau and Ed Anthes spoke in support of the amendment.

Joe Cook, Hugh Worden and Zeke Goodband spoke in defense of the \$2500 budget.

Beverly Tier called the question to cease debate. Harold Newell seconded the motion; it passed by a voice vote.

The Moderator called for a division of the house on the voice vote. The amendment failed 79-82.

Harold Newell questioned the increase in the Emergency Management Director's stipend from \$5000 to \$10,000. Zeke explained that the funding comes from a grant from Entergy VT Yankee & the State of Vermont.

Linda Rubinstein asked what is the County Tax. Zeke explained that the funds go to support the maintenance of the County Courthouse and the funding of the Windham County Sheriff's Department.

Linda Rood asked why there were no funds in the budget to support recycling after the Windham Solid Waste Management District removes the roll-offs from outlying towns at the end of June. Beverly Tier and Lyle Holiday asked about food composting. Joe and Zeke spoke about the potential \$20,000 increase in the General Fund if the town were to pursue taking over the recycling bins at the highway garage.

Suzanne Weinberg questioned what the town receives for its annual assessment. Steve Glabach responded that the Board has the same question.

Michelle Cherrier (one of Dummerston's representatives to the WSWMD) queried the Board about contracting out the rolloff service. She invited residents to write letters to the WSWMD expressing their concerns.

Larry Crockett asked about charging the Selectboard with providing a comprehensive explanation of the recycling process. Zeke responded that it should be available through the WSWMD but that the Board will discuss it at a future meeting.

Further comments were heard from Ed Sbardella, Tony Parment, Jerelyn Wilson, Suzanne Weinberg, Beverly Kenney, Molly Stoner, Joyce Marcel and Erich Kruger.

Dan Normandeau moved to remove the Reappraisal Fund line items from the budget (both revenue and expenditure). Paul Normandeau seconded the motion. A lengthy discussion ensued, with Charlotte Neer Annis, Jean Newell, Hugh Worden, Joe Cook and Maeve Jenks speaking in favor of the reappraisal. Paul Normandeau, Dan Normandeau, Lewis White and David Baxendale spoke in favor of the amendment. Roger Turner called the question to cease debate. Erich Kruger seconded the motion; it passed by a voice vote.

The Moderator called for a division of the house on the voice vote. The amendment to remove the Reappraisal Fund line items passed 86-58.

Erich Kruger asked where the Town's were invested. Charlotte Neer Annis explained they are in a sweep account at Merchants Bank. Restricted funds are kept in either money market accounts or Certificates of Deposit. Joe Cook spoke about the recently adopted financial investment policy.

The motion approving general fund expenditures, as amended, passed by a voice vote.

State Representative David Deen and State Senator Jeanette White spoke to the assembly.

The meeting was recessed at 12:30pm for lunch and reconvened at 1:30pm.

State Representative Mike Mrowicki briefly spoke to the audience.

A motion to approve total highway fund expenditures of \$512,093.00 of which \$311,560.00 shall be raised by taxes and \$143,804.00 by non-tax revenues for the period of July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018 was made by Zeke Goodband and seconded by Steve Glabach. Zeke presented the budget. The motion was passed by voice vote.

The Grange folks were given a round of applause for the delicious luncheon.

A motion to grant tax exempt status to the Evening Star Grange for a period of one year was made by Jerelyn Wilson and seconded by Harold Newell. The motion passed by voice vote.

A motion to grant tax exempt status to the Green Mountain Camp for a period of one year was made by Mark Brown and seconded by Ruth Barton. Billie Slade thanked the Town for their support of the camp over the years. The motion passed by voice vote.

Zeke Goodband thanked Maria Glabach for serving as the interim Selectboard Assistant.

He requested volunteers to serve on the Development Review Board, Planning Commission and Energy Committee.

Mark Brown spoke about the upcoming Green Up Day in May.

Catie Gormley-Berg spoke on behalf of Rupa Cousins about the Brattleboro Area Interfaith Initiative and Transition Dummerston's pursuit of creating compassionate communities. There was a sign-up sheet to form a study group.

Mary Ellen Copeland spoke about the Conservation Commission's recent activities and ongoing projects.

Bill Schmidt spoke about the regeneration of Dummerston Cares. He thanked the Selectboard for their continued financial support. He explained their mission and new programs.

Larry Crockett moved to request that the Selectboard explore non-trash-making alternatives for plates and cups to be used at future Town Meeting luncheons. Alex Wilson seconded the motion; it passed by a voice vote.

Suzanne Weinberg urged residents to participate in the decision making process earlier.

Connie Woodberry presented a non-binding resolution that reads as follows:

WHEREAS Dummerston is proud to be a town that values diversity;

and WHEREAS, nearly 60 million people worldwide are displaced by violence, political strife, or natural disaster and forced to become formal refugees;

and WHEREAS, millions of additional people worldwide are driven to seek out immigration opportunities for better lives and opportunities for their well-being;

and WHEREAS, immigration has been the cornerstone of Dummerston's, Vermont's and the United States of America's development throughout our history;

and WHEREAS, Dummerston has a long and proud tradition of being a community that welcomes immigrants and refugees as "New Americans" and valued members of our community;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we join our Congressional delegation – Senator Leahy, Senator Sanders, and Representative Welch – and Governor Scott in declaring our intention to welcome and protect the rights of immigrants and refugees who seek to come to our nation and to our community.

Connie moved to pass this resolution; Lynn Levine seconded the motion. It was passed by a voice vote.

Jody Normandeau expressed her appreciation to Town Clerk, Laurie Frechette for all of her hard work. Molly Stoner thanked Laurie for her weekly email updates. The audience gave Laurie a standing ovation.

Susan Kern spoke about the Lydia Taft Pratt Library's activities. She invited everyone to attend the Geranium Festival on May 20th.

Calvin Farwell thanked the Selectboard for their work and asked them to stand when they speak at future meetings.

Zeke Goodband moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:15pm. Ruth Barton seconded the motion; it passed unanimously.

Town Moderator, Cindy Jerome

Selectboard Chair, Zeke Goodband

Town Clerk, Laurie Frechette