

DUMMERSTON TOWN MEETING Minutes

MARCH 5, 2013

THE LEGAL VOTERS OF THE Town of Dummerston are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Dummerston School at 52 Schoolhouse Road in said Town on Tuesday, March 5, 2013 at 10:00AM to transact the following business of the Town. (Voting on Article 1 will be by Australian Ballot.) The polls will be open from 10:00AM to 7:00PM.

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).

Election results follow

ARTICLE 2: To act on the auditors' report of the Town Accounts.

A motion to approve the auditors' report was made by Steve Glabach and was seconded by Ruth Barton. 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 Steve Glabach and was seconded by Muriel Taylor. 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 \$112,000 through taxes and appropriate said amount to the Capital Fund for future capital needs.

A motion to raise the sum of \$112,000 through taxes and appropriate said amount to the Capital Fund for future capital needs was made by Tom Bodett and seconded by Ruth Barton. Tom explained that this is the amount of money needed to keep the capital fund flush for future capital expenses. Harold Newell asked to amend the amount to \$57,000. Cindy did not accept the motion because it should be addressed in article 5. Harold accepted her suggestion. 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 \$80,000 from the Capital Fund for FY 13-14 (\$25,000 for Town Garage Heating system and \$55,000 for Tractor/Mower/Blower).

A motion to authorize capital expenditures in the amount of \$80,000 from the Capital Fund for FY 13-14 (\$25,000 for Town Garage Heating system and \$55,000 for Tractor/Mower/Blower) was moved by Bill Holiday and seconded by Lyle Holiday.

Bill presented the benefits to purchasing the road side mower. Harold asked to amend the Article by reducing the amount from \$80,000 to \$25,000. The amended article was read by the moderator " **To see if the Town will vote to authorize capital expenditures in the amount of \$25,000 from the Capital Fund for FY 13-14 for Town Garage Heating system.**" The amended article was seconded by Ruth Barton and discussion continued.

Paul said it was his understanding that the mower under consideration was Flail Mower. He expressed concerns about the costs related to the purchase of a Flail mower.

Chuck Fish asked to have the quality of mower explained. Lee explained that it is a 60 horse-powered mower. It is the same model that the previous contractor used to mow the roads.

Zeke said that he was originally against the purchase but now supports it idea. He explained that it is an articulated mower which will allow the mowing to take place on various terrains.

Mark Whitaker supports the amendment. He has spoken with the previous road foreman and feels the purchase of this equipment will be very expensive.

Beverly Kenney asked what are the incremental labor costs involved in using this mower. Bill quoted the time for crew to work the mower.

Erich Kruger pointed out the potential savings the town would have by using the tractor and blower. Lee agrees, he feels the town should save about \$4,000 in fuel.

Don Hazelton urged the audience to defeat the amendment. He feels that the town is behind the times and we need to clean the sides of the roads. Its not grass that is the problem, it's the shrubs. He also pointed out that the highway crew removes the leaves from the culverts after rain storms instead of blowing them out prior to rainstorms.

Steve Casabona asked if there were any other uses for tractor. Lee answered yes, they will benefit from the posthole digger and York rake attachments.

Tom is in support of the tractor because of the ancillary uses it will provide the highway department.

Rick Looman works for highway department in Brattleboro and is in full support the purchase of mower.

Steve Glabach has been hesitant to support the purchase. He is concerned that the repair and maintenance costs may not have been addressed.

The Governor and our local legislators arrived to the meeting and the meeting was adjourned to allow them to address the audience.

Jody spoke in support of the amendment.

Steve Casabona asked the cost of hiring versus buying the tractor. Bill answered it appears to be a wash.

Roger Turner trusts the Selectboard and Road foreman to make these decisions for us.

A motion to call question was brought to the floor it was seconded. The moderator asked for a show of hands for all in favor of calling the questions. There was a two-thirds vote to call the question. Vote on the amendment. An Aye vote indicates you are in favor of the amendment which will remove the tractor from the article and a no vote would keep the tractor in the article. The votes were cast and the Nays won, so the amendment was defeated. The original article was reread and further discussion was allowed.

Bill Conley, as a member of the Energy Committee, asked what type of heating system. Bill answered outside wood burning furnace.

Erich wants to know more about the system. Lee explained that Wade Masure from VLCT recommended the system but there will need to be more research will be done.

Suzanne Weinberg wants the Energy Committee to be a part of this decision.

The amendment was read "to see if the Town will vote to authorize capital expenditures in the amount of \$80,000 from the Capital Fund for FY 2013-2014, \$25,000 for the Town Garage Heating system (to include consultation between the Selectboard and the Dummerston Energy Committee to ensure that their expertise is used to purchase the heating system) and \$55,000 for Tractor/Mower/Blower."

The amendment was seconded by Muriel Taylor and the amendment was passed by voice vote. The Article 5 as amended was reread and was seconded by Ruth Barton and the motion passed by voice vote.

Ruth moves to recess for lunch at 12pm.

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, 2013 to June 30, 2014, and if so, in what amount.

A motion to raise and appropriate the sum of \$439,875.00 to defray its general operating

expenses and liabilities for the period of July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014, was moved by Zeke Goodband and seconded by Ruth Barton. Zeke presented several points on the budget.

- * WSWMD increased slightly
- * Contract services have decreased
- * Audit and accounting expense for a full audit of the Town accounts.
- * Debt repayment for the loan approved for Gravel pit.
- * May use the line of credit that was opened last year for the Gravel Pit.
- * Pay raise increase of 2.5% for town employees.
- * Dues and meetings for Planning and Zoning has increased with hopes of new members taking advantage of the programs offered by VLCT.
- * Public safety has remained the same.

Roni Byrne questioned Health Insurance cost increase/Property Owners Policy and VLCT Insurance. Pam explained the association between VLCT and the town and they provide our insurance. Erich asked which employees receive Health Insurance. Pam answered that it is the Road Crew and they have accepted a higher deductible and the town has agreed to pay the additional monies to make up the higher deductible. Suzanne questioned the improvements might be to the library with the money which has been budgeted. Bill Menzes explained that there are new windows. David Patriquin says that the Library may not be pretty but it is a functioning Library. Winnie feels that the Library is our town Library. Ruth Barton called the question and seconded by Muriel Taylor by hand signal the question has been called. The motion was reread and the motion 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, 2013 to June 30, 2014, and if so, in what amount.

A motion to raise and appropriate \$458,600.00 to defray its highway operating expenses and liabilities for the period for July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014 was moved by Zeke Goodband and seconded by Roni Byrne.

- * Gravel Pit opening this year.
- * Retreatment of paved roads increase to \$95,000. This increase will allow for 1 full mile to be resurfaced. Dummerston has 12 paved miles of road. It is standard practice to repave all the roads every 10 years. So by repaving one mile every year we will stay on tract.
 - Road sign budget is the same.
 - Budgeting for diesel fuel is a real gamble but the Road foreman felt comfortable with this number.

Richard Epstein questions the retreatment. Zeke advised that we need to continue to retreatment a whole mile to keep the roads in tact.

Beverly Kenney asked about the increase in gravel. Tom explained that the cost of gravel from the Carpenter pit is at \$2.25 per yard and the Renaud pit will cost \$3.50 yard. We are getting a deal on the price for the next 5 years.

Harold asked if any limitations on the amount of gravel we can take from the gravel pit yearly. Tom said yes there is a limit set by our ACT 250 permit. The motion was reread and the motion passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 8: To see if the Town will appropriate a total of \$17,401 to be put in the Highway Structures Replacement Fund, using \$3,401.00 FY 2012 Highway surplus and an additional appropriation of \$14,000 to be raised from taxes.

A motion to appropriate a total of \$17,401 to be put in the Highway Structures Replacement Fund, using \$3,401.00 FY12 Highway surplus and an additional appropriation of \$14,000 to be raised from taxes by Bill Holiday and seconded by Bill Menzes. Bill explained that the repairs will be for Dutton Farm Road. The current culvert is undersized and needs to be replaced.

The town will contribute 10% of the project which is the \$14,000. The motion was reread and voted by voice vote.

ARTICLE 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise, appropriate and expend the sum of \$2,000.00 for the support of the Lydia Taft Pratt Library.

A motion to raise, appropriate and expend the sum of \$2,000.00 for the support of the Lydia Taft Pratt Library by David Patriquin and seconded by Janet Avery

Joann Tyler asks what the money will be used for. David Patriquin explains that the money will be used to reimburse the monies that were spent on the window repairs and window quilts. Joann states that the only monies the Town pays toward the Community Center building is \$2,000 and insurance. The only monies that are used to support the Community Center comes from fundraising monies. She wants to know why the Library has not paid the rent for the space they use. Much discussion followed concerning the rent issue between the Library and Community Center. Dan Normandeau moved to suspend the rules to allow Joann to speak for a third time and Ruth seconded the motion. The moderator asked the assembly for a vote. A 2/3 approval from the assembly is needed. The assembly voted and approved the motion to suspend the rules. Joann was allowed to speak and pointed out that as of July 1st the rent of \$2,000 will be paid and there is no lease signed at this point. The question was called and a second from Ruth Barton and voted by voice vote. The motion was reread and voted by voice vote.

ARTICLE 10: To see if the Town will vote to remove the business personal property assessments/tax in whole from the Grand List, pursuant to the provisions of Title 32, Section 3849.

A motion to remove the business personal property assessments/tax in whole from the Grand List, pursuant to the provisions of Title 32, Section 3849 was moved by Doug Hamilton and seconded by Jean Newell. Doug explained that we are one of the last towns of Vermont to still charge for Personal Property. He feels it is not fair and equitable. It does not bring in enough money. The motion was reread and voted by voice vote.

ARTICLE 11: To see if the Town will vote to raise, appropriate and expend the sum of \$3,000.00 for the application of white fog lines along East West Road, Middle Road, and Schoolhouse Road as directed by the road foreman.

A motion to raise, appropriate and expend the sum of \$3,000.00 for the application of white fog lines along East West Road, Middle Road, and Schoolhouse Road as directed by the road foreman was moved by Pam McFadden and seconded by Janet Avery. Pam explained that she has been asked by several residents in the town to put this article on the warning and I feel it is a safety issue and I feel it is important. Richard Epstein asked if this is yearly expense, have there been any accidents attributed to not having the white lines along the road and can the timing of the repavement and application of the white lines work together. Lee answered that it will be every other year and yes they will try to schedule it with the repavement. Janet supports it so does Mark Whitaker.

Herb wants to know if we can pick the time the lines are applied. Lee answered yes we will be able to schedule the application time. Rick Mills asked for clarification on whether this will be a yearly expense or every other year. Lee explained that the state paints the yellow lines every other year and when they

want to paint them. The town puts the money in for year the State does not pay. The white lines will be either \$1,500 every year or \$3,000 every other year. The motion was reread and voted by voice vote.

ARTICLE 12: 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, pursuant to the provisions of Title 32, Section 3840 by Ruth Barton and seconded by Rick Mills. Jody Normandeau asked why can't the town vote on this one time and not have to do it every year. Pam explained that this is a non-contracted agreement and by Vermont Statute we have to vote annually. Pam agreed to look into changing it for a longer period of time. The motion was reread and voted by voice vote.

ARTICLE 13: 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 announced the new director and they had a great year last year. They raised \$12,000 for scholarships. The motion was reread and voted by voice vote.

ARTICLE 14: To transact any other business that may legally come before said Town Meeting.

Bill Holiday asked Carol Bessette and Don Hazelton to stand up and be recognized for their work on the Ancient Roads committee.

Bill Holiday thanked Tom Bodett for his tireless work for the town on the Selectboard. He wanted the audience to know "...that no one has worked harder on behalf of you people in the Town of Dummerston than this man. He is a veracious worker and has been a tireless advocate for the Town of Dummerston."

Lynn Levine reports for the Conservation Commission. Lots of educational programs; Black Bear, Geology, garden design and upcoming program on April 9 about Glaciers in Dummerston. Sign up for the email.

Catey Berg is a representative of Transition Dummerston. The organization wants to build community resilience between neighbors. Meeting at the Dummerston Center Church on March 22, 2013.

Harold Newell is a member of the Rescue Inc. board. The Board is looking for two new board members from Dummerston. If any one is interested please contact him.

Jody Normandeau speaking on behalf of the Views of Dummerston wants the audience to know that the Views is looking for new members, layout editor and advertising coordinator.

Bill Schmidt as a Farmland Protection Committee member announced that there is a farm in town which may actually receive some of the funds from the Farmland Protection Committee. He is fairly confident that the monies will be used.

Catherine O Callaghan from the Lydia's Friends will be having the Geranium Festival on Saturday May 18, 2013.

Brenda Davis Lane would like to see if the Energy Committee could look into the PACE program that is available in Putney. Sam says that it is a program that helps homeowners get funding for energy savings improvements. The loan comes from the Town and the debt is reflected on the Tax payer's bill. The repayment of the loan stays with the property. It requires a town meeting approval for the town to get a bond to pay for the improvements. The Energy Committee has discussed it and does not feel the taxpayers are ready to do this because of the costs to the town.

Roni Byrne gave Coodos to the Road Crew. Thank you for your work.

Cindy moved to adjourn the Town portion of the meeting, seconded by Ruth barton adjourned at 2:35pm.