

**TOWN OF DUMMERSTON
TOWN MEETING Minutes
MARCH 3, 2015**

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 3, 2015. The polls will be open from 10:00AM 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.

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 Gurudharm Khalsa and was seconded by Steve Glabach. No discussion followed. The motion was reread and it was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 3: To see if the voters 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 Joe Cook and seconded by Steve Glabach. Zeke asked to speak to this article. He announced that the Legislature eliminated the need to elect the collector of current taxes but mandates that Towns vote to have the Treasurer act as the Collector of Current Taxes. The Town will have to hold a special town meeting in 30 day to do so. He made a motion to amend the article to read appoint a receiver of delinquent taxes (only). Steve seconded the motion, There was no further discussion and the amended motion "to authorize its Selectboard to appoint a receiver of delinquent taxes," passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 4: To see if the voters will vote to raise the sum of \$133,000.00 through taxes and appropriate said amount to the Capital Fund for future capital needs.

A motion to raise the sum of \$133,000.00 through taxes and appropriate said amount to the Capital Fund for Future capital needs was made by Steve Glabach and seconded by Joe Cook. The motion passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 5: To see if the voters will vote to authorize capital expenditures in the amount of \$135,000.00 from the Capital Fund for FY 2016.

A motion to authorize capital expenditures in the amount of \$135,000.00 from the Capital Fund for FY2016 was made by Steve Glabach and seconded by Joe Cook. Steve noted that the expenses are shown on page 22 of the Town report. The town will purchase a new Mack truck with a sander body and a new road rake. No more discussion and the motion was reread and passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 6: To see if the voters will vote to authorize expenditures no greater than \$12,000.00 from the Capital Fund for painting the exterior of the Dummerston Community Center.

A motion to authorize expenditures no greater than \$12,000.00 from the Capital Fund for painting the exterior of the Dummerston Community Center was made by Steve Glabach and seconded by Gurudharm Khalsa. Steve explained that the building's exterior is deteriorating and needs to be painted. Preliminary estimates to have the painting done suggest \$12,000 is sufficient. Greg Brown wants to confirm that it will go out to bid and Steve confirmed that it will. Rick Mills wanted to know the condition of the building. Steve said overall it is in decent condition but maybe someone else would like to address it from the Community Center board. No one spoke from the Community Center.

Richard Epstein asked Steve if there had been consideration given to staining the building instead of painting the building. His opinion is it might be less expensive to maintain. Steve said no they hadn't.

Marcy Hermanader was concerned it would be expensive to remove paint.

With no more discussion, the motion was reread and passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 7: To see if the voters will approve total general fund expenditures of \$430,871, of which \$246,893 shall be raised by taxes and \$183,978 by non-tax revenues for the period of July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016.

A motion to approve total general fund expenditures of \$430,872. of which \$246,894 shall be raised by taxes and \$183,978 by non-tax revenues for the period of July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 was made by Zeke Goodband and seconded by Steve Glabach.

Zeke said there were corrections to be made and to see the corrected pages that were handed out to the audience. The corrected pages are included in at the end of these minutes. They include an increase of one dollar in the proposed general fund expenditures.

Zeke pointed out the following:

WSWD assessment has increased, Worker's compensation has increased, Health Insurance has also increased. The board approved a 2.5% pay increase for all employees. Janitorial and lawn services have increased. Rescue and Volunteer fire department had increases. The County tax has also increased.

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 Bill McKim and discussion followed.

Diana Wahle asked if a member of the Farmland Protection Fund could explain how the monies are used.

Vern Grubinger explained that this past year \$18,000.00 was allocated to support the Bunker Farm Project. This money was approximately 2% of the total that had to be raised to purchase the development rights of that farm by the Vermont Land Trust. The \$18,000.00 is a demonstration of the town's support of this project and leveraged much greater sums. Any expenditure of the monies from the Fund requires approval from the Selectboard. The Farmland Protection Committee gives its recommendation to the Selectboard. The Fund originated from a tax sale and the money was set aside at Town Meeting into this Fund. Historically, we put \$5,000.00 a year into that fund up until a few years ago. It works much the same way as the Capital Fund. The difference is that disbursements are not scheduled like the Capital Fund. We don't know when projects will come before the town. Vern would like to see more money put into the Fund but he is happy to see continual support of the Fund by the Selectboard as reflected in the budget.

Mark Whitaker reminded the audience that this issue was brought up last year and the private contributions to the fund have not come in as he suggested. He stated that in Dummerston 53% of the households make a gross income of \$40,000.00 or less and 37% of households make less than \$30,000.00. He doesn't think that this obligation should be put on these families. He does not support the amendment.

Zeke said that the balance of the Farmland Protection Fund will be \$30,748.00 with the \$2,500.00 that has been allotted by the Selectboard in this budget. He spoke to Jack Manix about the monies the Selectboard had budgeted and Jack said he was pleased with the \$2,500.00 they have budgeted and what is important is that the town show a commitment and support the fund. The amount of the money is immaterial. The intent of the Fund wasn't to purchase farm land but to act as seed money and show community support to help leverage the real money that would come from the Vermont Land Trust. Jack would like to see the budget remain the same because he too pays taxes. Zeke also stated that he is the orchard manager of a farm in town and the farm pays \$19,105.00 a year in taxes and he would not like to have the taxes raised.

Joe Cook said it was his understanding that this past year's disbursement to the Bunker Farm has been the only disbursement in a long time.

Vern Grubinger confirmed that the disbursement on behalf of the Bunker Farm was the only disbursement from the Farmland Protection Fund thus far.

Eesha said that the Miller and Scott Farms have not had their development rights protected. His increase to the town budget would cost each person \$1.00 a year.

Mark spoke again to state that 11% of the parcels in Dummerston are in the Current Use program.

With no more discussion, the motion was reread "there is a motion on the floor to amend the General Fund Budget main motion to increase the amount of money in the Farmland Protection Fund from

\$2,500.00 to \$5,000.00." Mark Whitaker asked to have a paper ballot. There were enough voters to support the paper ballot. The results of the votes were 50 votes Yes, in favor of the increase and 88 votes No, not to increase the budget. The amendment was defeated . No further discussion and the main motion was reread and passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 8: To see if the voters will approve total highway fund expenditures of \$487,476 of which \$365,476 shall be raised by taxes and \$122,000 by non-tax revenues for the period of July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016.

A motion to approve total highway fund expenditures of \$487,476.00 of which \$365,476.00 shall be raised by taxes and \$122,000.00 by non-tax revenues for the period of July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 was made by Zeke and seconded by Steve Glabach. Zeke presented the following items: Salt expense has increased, gasoline increase, and repaving and line painting. The motion was reread and voted by voice vote.

ARTICLE 9: To see if the voters will appropriate a total of \$9107.38 to be put in the Highway Structures Replacement Fund, using the \$9107.38 FY 2014 Highway surplus.

A motion to appropriate a total of \$9,107.38 to be put in the Highway Structures Replacement Fund using the \$,9107.38 from FY 2014 Highway surplus was made by Lewis White and seconded by Steve Glabach. Lewis explained that this money will be used for bridge and culvert replacement. The motion was reread and approved by voice vote.

ARTICLE 10: To see if the voters will vote to raise, appropriate and expend the sum of \$875 to increase the total Health and Welfare line item in the proposed 2016 General Fund budget from \$10,350 to \$11,225 with the line item allocations in the budget changed to the following:

- Brattleboro Senior Meals - \$450
- CRT (The Current) - \$500
- The Gathering Place - \$400
- Grace Cottage Hospital - \$325
- HCRS - \$700
- Morningside Shelter - \$800
- Senior Solutions - \$650
- Windham Child Care Association - \$500
- Women's Freedom Center - \$700

A motion to raise, appropriate and expend the sum of \$875.00 to increase the total Health and Welfare line item in the proposed 2016 General Fund budget from \$10,350.00 to \$11,225.00 with the line allocations in the budget changed as in the article was made by Rita Ramirez and seconded by Ed Anthes. Rita explained the need for the increase. She explained that the committee receives an application from each organization so that the committee can look at how much Dummerston Residents use these services and how much other towns give. Because it was apparent that towns similar to Dummerston give far more than we do, the committee, submitted its recommendation for an increase in the monies to be placed in the budget to the Selectboard. They declined, and so the Article was placed on the Warning by petition.

Chad Farnum is on the Morningside shelter board and the money we give will help keep those organizations running. He supports this article and urges others to as well.

Jean Newell spoke as the Treasurer for the Dummerston Community Chest. She wanted to remind people that the Community Chest gives to these organizations and their contributions are from people who can afford to give. There are people in this town who cannot afford to contribute to these organizations.

Rich Cogliano questioned the \$975.00 and there is a \$100.00 difference.

Mark Whitaker feels that this issue falls into the same category as the Farm Land Protection Fund. The Selectboard worked very hard at keeping the budget down.

Dan Snow wanted to know if any of these organizations receive contributions from the United Way. No one could answer his question.

Lewis said that the \$100 that Rich Cogliano mentioned was already voted on and included in the budget we voted on.

Cindy says that the proposed budget is the same as last year which includes \$100.00 to RSVP but that is not the recommendation the Social Services group recommended. She wanted to point out that there are

two organizations that receive monies from the Town and the Dummerston Community Chest. They are Dummerston Cares and Grace Cottage Hospital.

At this point in the discussion, Zeke explained that the budget as printed and voted on, included \$100.00 to RSVP. The Selectboard's intention was to have \$50.00 budgeted to The Current and The Gathering Place but the change was not made. They will hold a special Town Meeting to amend the budget to reflect that change.

Lester Dunklee trusts the Selectboard to do its job with the budget and he will vote against this article. Zeke shared with the audience that this a difficult part of the budget and they agreed to level fund it. He would like to have the article defeated.

Tom Bodett spoke to the audience and supports the article. He realizes the difficult decisions the Selectboard has to make with regards to the budget.

Terry Chapman believes that giving to charities should be voluntary and not through taxes.

Jonathan Flaccus also believes that giving to charities should be voluntary.

Steve Glabach feels that Dummerston gives a lot of money through other organizations in addition to what is budgeted.

Ruth Barton called the question which was seconded by Harold Newell and voted by a hand count.

The motion was reread and Mark asked for a paper ballot. There were enough voters to support the paper ballot. The ballots were counted and the results were 66 Yes and 39 No. The article passed.

ARTICLE 11: To see if the voters 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 was made by Gurudharm Khalsa and seconded by Mary Ellen Copeland.

Rick Mills thanked the Grange for such a great lunch today.

With no other discussion, the article was reread and passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 12: To see if the voters 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 provision of Title 32, Section 3840 was made by Mark Brown and seconded by Chad Farnum. Mark told the audience that the report for the camp is in the Town Report . The camp would like to thank Travis Bristol, Sam Farwell, Chad Farnum, Richard Epstein, Charlie Richardson, David Shaw, Trapper Frechette, and Kristina Naylor.

No further discussion. The article was reread and approved by voice vote.

ARTICLE 13: To see if the Town will approve the closing of the West River Crossings Fund and transfer the balance of \$7.20 into the Highway Structures Fund.

A motion to approve the closing of the West River Crossings Fund and transfer the balance of \$7.20 into the Highway Structures Fund was made by Joe Cook and seconded by Harold Newell. No discussion followed. The article was reread and approved by voice vote.

ARTICLE 14: To see if the Town will approve changing the February tax collection date from the 5th to the 20th.

A motion to change the February tax collection date from the 5th to the 20th was made by Pam McFadden and seconded by Mark Whitaker. Pam explained that the change will match the August date and tax payers can pick up their Town Report when they pay their taxes, saving the Town postage. The article was reread and passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 15: To transact any other business that may legally come before said Town Meeting.

Cindy recognized Winnie Vogt and thanked her for all she has done for the Town and people in it. Huge round of applause and standing ovation.

Mary Ellen Copeland, chair of Conservation Commission, spoke and announced that the fund raising campaign has been successful.

David Patriquin shared that the Library is celebrating its 100th year anniversary. There was a parade from WDVFD to library and Zeke presented the library with an award. Library is going digital. Book bags are on sale in the back. We are going to miss Winnie Vogt. Thank you to the town office folks.

Suzanna Griefen thanked to Moe Momaney, Taren, and Patty Blomgren for saving our church. Thank you to the Fire Department for putting out the fire.

Mary Lou Schmidt has a history of Dummerston book available for sale.

Ray Enello Thank you to the community. He is the chair of the Trustees of the church and with the donations from the community, the church is in the black after the cost of the repairs to the Church.

Chuck Fish announced the addition to the Historical Society.

Zeke Goodband Thank you to Janice Duke for serving as auditor. Thank you to Bill Conley who has served on the Energy Committee since it began. He has provided a great deal of voltage on that committee. Thank you to the painters of the Town Office: Bill Holiday, David Lane, Dave Cyr, Yvonne Harrison, Mitchell Flood, Carol Bessette and Pam McFadden.. Thank you to Lewis White for serving on the Selectboard. He always made our meetings interesting and worked hard. The Board, Pam and Laurie offer you this gift of thanks! Round of applause and standing ovation.

Sam Farwell, chair of the Planning Commission, announced the next public hearing on the zoning bylaws will be April 7, 2015 basement of the Church at 7:00pm. Regular planning committee meeting is Wednesday March 11, 2015 at 6:30pm. Please come to the meeting and educate yourself on the zoning bylaws.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Zeke and seconded by Mary Lou Schmidt. The motion was read and passed by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 2:30pm.

_____ Town Moderator, Cindy Jerome

_____ Selectboard Chairperson, Zeke Goodband

_____ Town Clerk, Pamela G. McFadden