Town of Charleston
Annual Town Meeting – March 1, 2016
Charleston Elementary School

MINUTES

The Annual Town & School District Meeting was called to order at 10:02 am by Moderator Jean Wilson, with School Business concluding at 10:17 am. Moderator Jean Wilson was re-elected during School Business, and town business began with Article 2.

Article 2. To elect all officers as required by law.

- Teri Gray nominated for Town Clerk & Treasurer by Dan Whipple, seconded by Sue Dwelle. Unopposed. Ayes have it; elected for 3 years.
- Meghann Carter nominated for Selectperson by Tom Jensen, seconded by Nancy Engels. Unopposed. Ayes have it; elected for 3 years.
- Steve Wilson nominated for Lister by Ron Moulton, seconded by John Kellogg. Unopposed. Ayes have it; elected for 3 years.
- Seeing no nominees for a 1 year Lister position, the Selectboard will appoint.
- Diana Marckwardt nominated for Town Auditor by Tom Jensen, seconded by Medora Jensen. Unopposed. Ayes have it; elected for 3 years.
- Grace Frizzell nominated for Delinquent Tax Collector by Tom Jensen, seconded by Diana Marckwardt. Unopposed. Ayes have it; elected for 1 year.
- Jonathan Bruce nominated Second Constable by Gloria Bruce; seconded by Nancy Engels. Unopposed. Ayes have it; elected for 1 year.
- Wayne Bowen nominated Cemetery Commissioner by Larry Young, seconded by Richard Colburn. Unopposed. Ayes have it; elected for 5 years.
- Jason Brueck was elected School Board Director for a 3 year term during the earlier School Meeting.
- Seeing no nominees for Town Agent or Town Grand Juror, the Selectboard will appoint.

Article 3. To see if the town will vote to have its taxes collected by the treasurer with a final due date of Friday, October 21, 2016, with the policy of turning over to the delinquent tax collector taxes not received by the treasurer in the town clerk's office by October 21, 2016 at 5:00 pm, with postmarks not accepted as timely payment. Moved by Tom Jensen, seconded by Jana Ferrie. No discussion. Vote: Ayes have it. Approved.

Article 4. To see if the town will vote to appropriate the sum of $827,179.70 less anticipated revenue and separately voted articles, for a net assessment of $621,377.88, necessary to support the town's general, highway, and cemetery expenses for the year beginning Jan. 1, 2016. Moved by Tom Jensen, seconded by Roy Steuwe. No discussion. Vote: Ayes have it. Approved.

Article 5. To see if the town will vote to apply the 2015 Road Surplus of $46,766.82 to pay off the 2014 Truck Loan. Moved by Nancy Engels, seconded by Darald Moulton. Discussion: Nancy Engels asked the reason for putting funds toward a loan instead of road work. Selectboard Chair Dean Bennett said reasons for the surplus included a workers comp credit, lower fuel prices, and a mild winter. With a new truck/excavator loan taken out in 2015, he added that paying-off the older loan will keep payments stable while helping the town update equipment. Vote: Ayes have it. Approved.

Article 6. To see if the town will vote to renew a property tax exemption for the fire station parcel in East Charleston owned by the Charleston Volunteer Fire Department for a period of five years (through 2020). Moved by Sam Stevens, seconded by Darald Moulton. No Discussion. Vote: Ayes have it. Approved.

Article 7. To see if the town will vote to appropriate the sum of $38,245 to support the Charleston Volunteer Fire Department. Moved by Tom Jensen, seconded by Jana Ferrie. No discussion. Vote: Ayes have it. Approved.

Article 8. To see if the town will vote to permit the Selectboard to borrow up to $348,000 to install a solar array in the gravel pit on Ten Mile Square Road in East Charleston to offset electric costs to the town and the school over the life of the project? Moved by Nancy Engels, seconded by Jana Ferrie. A call for a paper ballot was echoed by more than 7 voters. Vote by paper ballot: 79 in favor; 36 opposed. Approved.

Solar Subcommittee Chair Tom Jensen provided highlights of the project: To be located in an exhausted area of the pit, the frame-mounted array would net meter to offset electricity costs of the school, town office, garage, and street lights, which total $25,000 annually. Breaking even during the 15–20 year loan, savings increase to 100% once paid off and continue for the life of the array, which is guaranteed for 25 years and may produce longer. With VEC's net-metering cap met, the town will reapply for 2017, allowing time to hear about a $50,000 USDA grant to increase savings.

Voter concerns included the need for fencing, maintenance needs and cost, potential impact of school consolidation, tax/insurance liability, winter production, option for residential buy-in, capacity of existing transmission lines, if a Vermont company would be used, if the project reduces the carbon footprint or shifts it, and whether or not the town has taken steps to reduce electricity usage. Voter statements in favor included support for environmental and watershed benefits, opinion that the project was well designed and planned, preference for small local projects over industrial ones, and a liking that the money and control stay in town.

Article 9. To see if the town will vote to appropriate the sum of $11,499 to support the following and direct the Selectboard to assess a tax over and above the budget to meet the same: a. $500 to Charleston Historical Society; b. $1,000 to Echo Lake Protective Association Milfoil Prevention Project; c. $800 to NorthWoods Stewardship Center; d. $900 to Dailey Memorial Library; e. $500 to Island Pond Library; f. $1,650 to Rural Community Transportation; g. $425 to Orleans County Historical

Society; h. $500 to the Orleans County Citizen Advocacy; i. $400 to Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging; j. $1,074 to Northeast Kingdom Human Services, Inc.; k. $500 to Pope Memorial Frontier Animal Shelter; l. $3,000 to Orleans Essex VNA & Hospice; m. $50 to GreenUp Vermont; n. $100 to VT Rural Fire Protection Task Force Dry Hydrant Program; o. $100 to Vermont Symphony Orchestra Symphony Kids. Moved by Nancy Engels; seconded by Roy Steuwe. Discussion: Maurice Cerutti commented that milfoil improves fishing. George Thompson commented that the town adds more appropriations each year and is concerned that Charleston is an easy mark, noting Symphony Kids. Assistant Town Clerk Colleen Kellogg explained that the $100 appropriation was on the warning because 5% of Charleston voters signed a petition in support. Vote: Ayes have it. Approved.

Seeing no other business, the Annual Town Meeting was adjourned at 11:10 am.

DATED AT CHARLESTON, VERMONT THIS 1st DAY OF MARCH 2016.

Respectfully submitted:

BCA

Selectboard

Moderator

Town Clerk