

Minutes of the 2019 Annual Town Meeting
Tuesday, March 5, 2019 at the Charleston Elementary School

The Annual Town & School District Meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Moderator Jean Wilson, with School Business concluding at 10:22 am. With Moderator Jean Wilson having been re-elected during School Business, business began with Article 2.

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

Town Clerk & Treasurer: Teri Gray nominated by Bob Devaney, second by Steve Wilson. Unopposed. Ayes have it; elected for 3 years.

Selectboard: Peter Moskovites nominated by Tom Jensen, second by Robert Cleverdon; Ed Brown nominated by Bob Devaney, second by Dan Whipple; Ron Willson nominated by Ted Taft, second by Robert Frizzell. 81 paper ballots cast: Moskovites 47; Brown 19; Willson 14; 1 spoiled. Moskovites elected for 3 years.

Lister: Steve Wilson nominated by Bob Devaney, second by Nancy Engels. Unopposed. Ayes have it; elected for 3 years.

Auditor: Diana Marckwardt nominated by Tom Jensen, second by Janice Bowen. Unopposed. Ayes have it; elected for 3 years.

Delinquent Tax Collector: Grace Frizzell nominated by Nikki Simpson, second by Diana Marckwardt. Unopposed. Ayes have it; elected for 1 year.

First Constable: Jon Bruce nominated by Ed Brown, second by Bob Devaney. Unopposed; elected for 2 years.

Second Constable: Crystal Langmaid nominated by Bob Devaney, second by Jon Bruce. Unopposed. Ayes have it; elected for 1 year.

Cemetery Commissioner: No nominations; will be appointed by Selectboard.

Town Agent: Julianne Woolard nominated by John Kellogg; second by Penelope Newcomb. Unopposed. Ayes have it; elected for 1 year.

Grand Juror: Tom Jensen nominated by Penelope Newcomb, second by Peggy Stevens. Unopposed. Ayes have it; elected for 1 year.

[Business was suspended briefly while Representatives Lynn Batchelor and Brian Smith were invited to address attendees.]

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 25, 2019, 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 25, 2019 at 5:00 pm, with postmarks not accepted as timely payment. Moved by Nancy Engels, second by Penelope Newcomb. Treasurer Teri Gray said the due date is always a Friday and was October 19th last year. Vote: Ayes have it: RESULT: Passed.

[Business was suspended briefly while Jeff Johansen, new CEO of Newport Ambulance Service, was invited to provide a service update.]

Article 4. To see if the town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$871,031.70 less anticipated revenue, 2018 encumbered funds, and separately voted articles, for a net assessment of \$649,723.52, necessary to support the town's general, highway, and cemetery expenses for the year beginning Jan. 1, 2019. Moved by Tom Jensen, second by Nancy Engels. Vote: Ayes have it. RESULT: Passed. Discussion: Cindy Lyon acknowledged work done on the Durgin Rd Bridge, and asked for a better way to clear snow and avoid pooled water. Selectboard member Larry Young said the board and crew will talk about how to improve the situation.

- Article 5. To see if the town will vote to apply approximately \$4,500 of the 2018 Road Surplus funds totaling \$55,413.69 to replace the Town Garage wood furnace chimney, with the remaining 2018 surplus funds to be transferred to the Road Equipment Fund.** Moved by Nancy Engels, second by Sue Dwelle. Vote: Ayes have it. RESULT: Passed. Discussion: Asked how this relates to Article 4, Moderator said Article 5 dealt with 2018 rather than 2019 funds. Selectperson Meghann Carter said the board proposed this in lieu of the usual \$20,000 Road Equipment appropriation and is shaping an equipment replacement schedule to plan how best to use the fund going forward.
- Article 6. To see if the town will support an increased appropriation to the Charleston Volunteer Fire Department in future years to support purchase of a new tanker truck. This is a non-binding discussion item.** Moved by Bob Devaney, second by Ed Brown. Vote: Ayes have it. RESULT: Passed. Discussion: Fire Chief Duane Moulton thanked the town for continued support. With greater medical assist and rescue demands on the department, plus advanced training to meet new regulations and loss of work when on calls, there is no longer time for the fundraising done for past purchases. As more dwellings are built away from main roads, a maneuverable tanker is needed, and the 1987 truck is hard to maintain and drive safely. Treasurer Blair Moulton said the new Canadian-built truck, already used in two district towns, will cost \$175,000-180,000. With down payment funds in reserve, CVFD will finance \$140,000-150,000 for ten years, and starting next year would ask Charleston for a \$50,000 appropriation to cover the town's \$11,755 share of the annual \$16,600 loan payment for ten years. Dan Whipple added the department will also seek grants to reduce overall cost.
- Article 7. To see if the town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$38,245 to support the Charleston Volunteer Fire Department and direct the Selectboard to assess a tax over and above the budget to meet the same.** Moved by Nancy Engels, second by Ed Brown. Motion by Bob Devaney to amend the amount to \$50,000, second by Terra Verge. Dan Whipple said the department was not asking for this amount in 2019 but if appropriated would apply these additional funds to the truck purchase. Vote on the amendment: Ayes have it. Amendment Carries. Vote on the article as amended **'to appropriate the sum of \$50,000 to support the CVFD'**: Ayes have it. RESULT: Passed as amended. Several voters attested to the department's importance in providing dependable, fast help in emergencies and a desire to help them get the equipment that's needed to continue.
- Article 8. To see if the town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$13,324 to support the following organizations and direct the Selectboard to assess at 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. \$1,100 to Dailey Memorial Library; e. \$700 to Island Pond Library; f. \$1,650 to Rural Community Transportation; g. \$500 to the Orleans County Citizen Advocacy; h. \$200 to Orleans County Child Advocacy; i. \$200 to Orleans County Court Diversion; j. \$550 to Orleans County Historical Society; k. \$600 to Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging; l. \$1,074 to Northeast Kingdom Human Services, Inc.; m. \$500 to Pope Memorial Frontier Animal Shelter; n. \$3,000 to Orleans Essex VNA & Hospice; o. \$50 to support GreenUp Vermont; p. \$100 to VT Rural Fire Protection Task Force Dry Hydrant Program; q. \$100 to Vermont Symphony Orchestra Symphony Kids; r. \$700 to Umbrella.** Moved by Dan Whipple, second by Nancy Engels. Vote: Ayes have it. RESULT: Passed.

Article 9. To see if the town will vote to omit the names of delinquent taxpayers from the annual Town Report and list only the total amount of delinquent taxes due, beginning with the 2019 report. Moved by Nancy Engels, second by Bob Devaney. Linda Studer called for paper ballot, with 7 supporting. Paper Ballot Vote: 28 Yes; 48 No. RESULT: Defeated. Discussion: Treasurer Teri Gray said some taxpayers want to end the practice, but officers would only do so at the will of voters. Some voters spoke in favor, citing unnecessary shame and negative impact on those who sell their property after April 1st, and argued that the annual tax sale is a more effective incentive. Others opposed it, stating that late payment is unfair to those who pay on time, and that listing names is an incentive to pay that also lets neighbors know who needs help. It was suggested to add an asterisk next to names who are no longer property owners.

Article 10. To see if the town will approve the following declaration: Whereas the basing of the nuclear capable F-35A fighter bomber and storage of nuclear weapons at the Burlington International Airport is unacceptable due to extreme hazards inherent in the 1) storage of nuclear materials, 2) toxic waste byproducts of maintenance of the jet and its weaponry, 3) potential accidents including crashes, and 4) effectively turning this commercial airport, located in a residential community, into a military target; we the voters of Charleston demand that the F-35A fighter bomber not be based in the state of Vermont. Moved by Penelope Newcomb, second by Tom Jensen. Moderator invited those who presented the article, but no one came forward. Nikki Simpson moved to postpone indefinitely, second by Beverly Spaulding. Voice vote: Call for division. Linda Studer called for paper ballot, with 7 supporting. Paper Ballot Vote: 40 Yes; 28 No. RESULT: Passed over.

Article 11. To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting. Dan Whipple said chimney fires occur at this time and encouraged residents to keep driveways wide enough for emergency vehicles. Cindy Lyon asked the Town Clerk about extending office hours to 5:00 pm one day a week; Ms. Gray said current hours plus being available for appointments at other times seems to meet town needs.

Seeing no other business, the Annual Town Meeting was adjourned at 12:06 pm.
DATED AT CHARLESTON, VERMONT THIS 5TH DATE OF MARCH 2019.

Respectfully submitted:

BCA

Selectboard

Moderator

Town Clerk