

Minutes of the 2022 Annual Town Meeting
Tuesday, March 1, 2022 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 10:17 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 Cindy Lyon. Unopposed. Elected for 3 years.

Selectboard: Peter Moskovites nominated by Bob Devaney, second by Penelope Newcomb. Unopposed. Elected for 3 years.

Lister: Steve Wilson nominated by Bob Devaney, second by Cindy Lyon. Unopposed. Elected for 3 years.

Auditor: Diana Marckwardt nominated by Penelope Newcomb, second by Mickey Morelli. Unopposed. Elected for 3 years.

Delinquent Tax Collector: Grace Frizzell nominated by Bob Devaney, second by Mickey Morelli. Unopposed. Elected for 1 year.

First Constable: No nominations; open seat.

Second Constable: David Bradshaw nominated by Penelope Newcomb but declined the nomination. No other nominations; open seat. Discussion: Dan Whipple asked if the town could reach an agreement with local law enforcement like the Orleans County Sheriff, since Charleston has been unable to elect a Constable in recent years due to steep training requirements and low pay. Pat Austin said the town met with the Sheriff, so such an agreement is not off the table, but it is expensive for only 4-6 hours per week. He does not see a lot of need and feels a Constable could handle small complaints. He added the Town is also looking for a Health Officer. Bob Devaney said if the Town wants a Constable, we may have to up the ante, and Peter Moskovites agreed, saying there would have to be a budgeted item with adequate pay. The Town would pay for required training.

Cemetery Commissioner: Martin Davis nominated by Bob Devaney, second by Corrinne Moulton. Unopposed. Elected for 5 years.

Article 3. Shall the voters authorize the Treasurer to collect current taxes with a final due date of Friday, October 21, 2022, with the policy of turning over to the delinquent tax collector taxes not physically received by the Treasurer in the Town Clerk's office by 5:00 pm on October 21, 2022, with postmarks not accepted as timely payment? Moved by Nancy Engels, second by Peggy Stevens. Vote: Ayes have it: RESULT: Passed.

Article 4. Shall the voters authorize total fund expenditures of \$896,555.13 for selectboard, highway, and cemetery operating expenses for the year beginning Jan. 1, 2022, of which \$663,562.06 shall be raised by taxes and \$232,993.07 by non-tax revenue? Moved by Dan Whipple, second by Bob Devaney. Vote: Ayes have it. RESULT: Passed. Discussion: Chair Patrick Austin said this year's budget is straightforward and includes only small increases needed to maintain basic town function—resulting in an estimated \$.01 tax rate increase. Ron Lavoie asked if roads to only one house can be thrown up to save maintenance costs. Austin said the board is looking into this and happy to talk further about considerations—including the reclassification process and aid received for these roads—at a selectboard meeting. Selectperson Peter Moskovites said that a recent court case overturned a board decision to discontinue such roads when cost savings was the only reason because the roads are a public

good. Helene Schnopp said the town stopped plowing her road even though her daughter needed access for health care. Moskovites said that Class 4 roads are not plowed.

- Article 5. Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to transfer the 2021 Road Surplus of \$61,596.12 to the Road Equipment reserve fund?** Moved by Rod Lyon, second by Penelope Newcomb. Vote: Ayes have it. RESULT: Passed. Discussion: Rod Lyon, who worked for years as Derby's Road Foreman, said this was a great idea. Derby did the same thing and was able to buy three trucks during his time there without raising tax funds to do it. David Bradshaw clarified that these funds can only be used for road equipment.
- Article 6. Shall the voters appropriate the sum of \$50,000 to the Charleston Volunteer Fire Department and direct the Selectboard to assess a tax over and above the budget to meet the same?** Moved by Rebecca Midthun, second by Bob Devaney. Vote: Ayes have it. RESULT: Passed. Discussion: Referring to the department financial report on page 42 of the Town Report, Treasurer Blair Moulton said the correct amount of the Robert Frizzell Memorial Fund was \$735, but the bottom line remains the same.
- Article 7. Shall the voters 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 2026 tax year)?** Moved by John Kellogg, second by Corrinne Moulton. Ayes have it. RESULT: Passed.
- Article 8. Shall the voters appropriate the sum of \$12,374 to the following organizations, which received appropriations of the same amount in 2021, and direct the Selectboard to assess a tax over and above the budget to meet the same?** a. \$500 to Charleston Historical Society for support of the museum and collection; b. \$1,000 to Echo Lake Protective Association for milfoil prevention programs; c. \$800 to NorthWoods Stewardship Center for conservation and education services; d. \$1,100 to Dailey Memorial Library for services to residents; e. \$700 to Island Pond Library for services to residents; f. \$1,650 to Rural Community Transportation for transportation services to residents; g. \$500 to Orleans County Citizens Advocacy for mentoring individuals with developmental disabilities; h. \$600 to Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging for services to elder and disabled Vermonters; i. \$1,074 to Northeast Kingdom Human Services, Inc. for mental health, substance use, and intellectual disabilities services to residents; j. \$500 to Pope Memorial Frontier Animal Shelter for care of unwanted pets; k. \$3,000 to Orleans Essex VNA & Hospice for community nursing and health programs; l. \$50 to GreenUp Vermont for the statewide cleanup event and bags; m. \$100 to VT Rural Fire Protection Task Force for the Dry Hydrant Program; n. \$100 to Vermont Symphony Orchestra Symphony Kids for performances for local students; o. \$700 to Umbrella for domestic violence prevention and services to victims Moved by Nancy Engels, second by Sam Stevens. Vote: Ayes have it. RESULT: Passed. Discussion: David Bradshaw said these are about the best way to spend town money other than keeping up the roads, especially ELPA, since it's important to stay on top of water quality issues.
- Article 9. To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting.**

Fire Chief Duane Moulton said that changes are happening to local dispatch that will increase the fire department budget next year—the first budget increase in years. Vermont State Police dispatch in Williston will stop providing dispatch within six months due to labor and budget issues. After exploring options, Newport Police Department will provide local dispatch for 19 departments within the Mutual Aid area. This is expected to cost CVFD around \$3100 per year, a third of which will come from the Town of

Morgan. The new arrangement will be an advantage because they know the area well. Residents will not see any change in service. Calls still go to 911, but instead of Williston dispatch, Newport Police dispatch will “tone” member firefighters who carry beepers. Rebecca Midthun acknowledged CVFD’s recent congratulations from VSP for their work on a very tough accident a couple weeks ago, and voters responded with applause. Member Bob Devaney said volunteering was strong in Charleston, with 26 members of the department, and he is proud to volunteer.

Penelope Newcomb said the Ralph Sweatt estate included a library of Abenaki records that are in need of a home. Jess Applegate suggested she contact Lucy Neel about a museum at the old Holland School.

Seeing no other business, the Annual Town Meeting was adjourned at 11:03 am.

DATED AT CHARLESTON, VERMONT THIS 1st DATE OF MARCH 2022.

Respectfully submitted:

BCA

Selectboard

Moderator

Town Clerk