

TOWN OF WOODBURY, VERMONT
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2020

The legal voters of the Town and School District of Woodbury, Vermont met at the Woodbury Elementary School on Tuesday, March 3, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. and took action on the warned articles.

The meeting was called to order by Steven Freihofner, Moderator, who first invited the voters to join in the Pledge of Allegiance, and to observe a moment of silence to remember those who have died in the last year. He then explained the rules and procedures that would govern the meeting. He asked that any guests who were not registered voters raise their hands to identify themselves, and explained that those people could only speak with the approval of two-thirds of the voters present.

The meeting proceeded with the following articles:

Article 1: Election of a moderator to govern the Town meetings for the ensuing year – Steven Freihofner was elected.

Article 2: What action will the Town take in regard to the printed report of the Town Officials for the year ending December 31, 2019?

Skip Marchesani moved to accept the report as written, and the motion was seconded by Dave Barnowski. There were no comments and the motion passed.

Article 3: Election of Town Officers:

Town Treasurer – Brandy Smith was elected to a three-year term.

Select Board Member – Michael Gray was elected to serve on the Select Board for three years.

Lister – Ronald Wells was elected to serve a three-year term.

Delinquent Tax Collector – Ronald Wells was elected to serve in this position for one year.

Grand Juror – Retta Dunlap was elected to serve in this position for one year.

Town Law Agent – Retta Dunlap was elected to serve in this position for one year.

Cemetery Commissioner – Patti Garbeck was nominated and elected to serve as Cemetery Commissioner for five years.

Library Trustee – Brandy Smith was elected to serve as Library Trustee for 3 years.

Library Trustee – Robin Durkee was elected to serve as Library Trustee for 3 years.

Library Trustee – Margaret Lee Wohlers was elected to serve as Library Trustee for 2 years.

Library Trustee – Ginger Etkind was elected to serve as Library Trustee for 1 year.

Agent to Transfer Real Estate – Diana Peduzzi was elected to this position for 1 year

Article 4: Voters agreed to have property taxes payable to the Town Treasurer 60 days after tax bills are mailed (estimated due date to be Oct. 29, 2020). Taxes which become delinquent will then be turned over to the Collector of Delinquent Taxes for collection with a penalty that increases by $\frac{1}{2}$ % per month of delinquency to a maximum of 6% for one full year or more of delinquency, and interest of 6% per year or $\frac{1}{2}$ % per month.

Article 5: Voters agreed to authorize and empower the Select Board to borrow money on the credit of the Town.

Article 6: Voters agreed to authorize and empower the Select Board to borrow money to pay current expenses in anticipation of taxes raised and uncollected.

Article 7: Voters approved an appropriation of \$17,850.00 to the Woodbury Volunteer Fire Department, to be added to the truck replacement fund.

Article 8: Voters approved an appropriation of \$102,682. 00 to fund the operations of the Woodbury Volunteer Fire Department , including the Capital Equipement Replacement Fund, for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2020.

Article 9: The voters were asked to appropriate \$10,000 to allow the Planning Commission to hire a qualified vendor to assist them in creating a Town Plan.

Peter Peltz asked when a Town Plan would be completed. Skip Lindsay, Planning Commission Chair, explained that a town contribution is necessary because there was no grant money available. Norm Etkind asked whether the “Village Plan” which was completed a few years ago, would be incorporated. Skip explained that the Town Plan process will involve a series of public meetings to determine how the townspeople want the town to grow, and what aspects and resources are of most value in the town. A consultant to work with the Planning Commission will be hired through a public Request for Proposals process.

The appropriation was approved.

Article 10: The voters approved an appropriation of \$12,000 to support the Woodbury Community Library for the next fiscal year.

Article 11: The voters approved an appropriation of \$7,000 to support the operations of the Woodbury Cemeteries.

Article 12: Susan Martin made a motion to consolidate Articles 12-35. The motion was seconded by David Barnowski. The motion to consolidate was approved on a voice vote.

Susan then made a motion to approve all of the appropriations requested in Articles 12-35. Chance Payette seconded the motion and it was approved on a voice vote. The following articles were thus approved:

Article 12: Approved - \$1,000 for the “Friends of Woodbury Elementary School”.

Article 13: Approved - \$976 to the Woodbury/ Calais Food Shelf.

Article 14: Approved - \$500 to the Sylvia Jackson fund.

Article 15: Approved - \$750 to AWARE - Aid to Women, Men and Children in Abuse and Rape Emergencies.

Article 16: Approved - \$250 to the American Red Cross of NH/VT.

Article 17: Approved - \$600 to Central Vermont Adult Basic Education.

Article 18: Approved - \$750 to the Central Vermont Council on Aging.

Article 19: Approved - \$300 to the Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation.

Article 20: Approved - \$2,000 to Central Vermont Home Health & Hospice Inc.

Article 21: Approved - \$650 to CIRCLE (Battered Women's Services).

Article 22: Approved - \$100 to the Family Center of Washington County

Article 23: Approved - \$484 to Green Mountain Transit.

Article 24: Approved - \$50 to Green Up Vermont.

Article 25: Approved - \$300 to the Hardwick Area Community Justice Center.

Article 26: Approved - \$750 to Hardwick Community Television.

Article 27: Approved - \$200 to Our House of Central Vermont.

Article 28: Approved - \$100 to the People's Health and Wellness Clinic.

Article 29: Approved - \$500 to Rural Community Transportation.

Article 30: Approved - \$200 to the Sexual Assault Crisis Team.

Article 31: Approved - \$1000 to the Twin Valley Senior Center.

Article 32: Approved - \$210 to the Vermont Center for Independent Living.

Article 33: Approved - \$100 to the VT Rural Fire Protection Task Force for the Dry Hydrant Program.

Article 34: Approved - \$1,000 to Washington County Mental Health Services.

Article 35: Approved - \$500 to the Washington County Youth Service Bureau.

Article 36: Voters were asked to approve an amount to meet the expenses and liabilities of the Town for general purposes for the period from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021, and to authorize the Select Board to set a tax rate sufficient to provide the same. Michael Gray made a motion to approve a general fund budget of expenditures of \$335,420.70. The motion was seconded by Skip Lindsay and passed with no comments or questions.

Article 37: Voters were asked to approve an amount to meet the expenses and liabilities of the Town for highway purposes for the period from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 and to authorize the Select Board to set a tax rate sufficient to provide the same. Michael Gray made a motion to approve a budget for highway expenditures of \$556,520. Brandy Smith seconded the motion.

Peter Peltz asked for an update on past proposals to pave additional sections of Cabot Road . Michael explained that the project was dropped because of landowner concerns about speeding and the estimated cost was prohibitive.

Cacky Peltz asked about planned work at the bottom of Valley Lake Road and the school driveway. Michael explained that the project is being funded by the state with a Better Back Roads grant. It is a complicated spot with multiple driveways and the culvert carrying Kingsbury Branch.

Robert Martin asked if there are plans to upgrade the grader, and Michael explained that the town is considering the purchase of a used grader currently being replaced by the Town of East Montpelier.

Skip Marchesani asked if the paving of the “Village Green” area in front of the Fire Dept. and the bottom of Valley Lake Road is planned and he was told that this is planned and will be paid for from the Paving Fund.

The motion was passed.

Article 38: To transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

Peter Peltz asked about plans for the recently cleared “former Woodbury Store” site. Diana explained that FEMA has placed severe restrictions on what can be done on the site, no buildings are allowed and only a small gravel parking lot may be allowed. A grant application for landscaping is being prepared for submittal to the Woodbury Fund (no landscaping was allowed to be part of the FEMA grant).

School Board member Phoebe Slater offered to speak about what is going on at Woodbury Elementary School. She encourages more participation at the meetings of the new consolidated “Orleans Southwest Union Elementary School District” Board. She explained that the current merged board has no plans to close any of the three elementary schools in the district (Lakeview, Hardwick Elementary and Woodbury Elementary) The board is working to bring out the strengths of each school “campus” so as to best serve the needs of the students and to focus on sustainability. The Board is holding a second meeting each month to brainstorm ideas about the future configuration of the three schools.

Mr. Justin Brown rose to read a resolution regarding gun owner rights. The request was ruled out of order by the moderator as not germane town business because town government has no authority to make rules regarding gun control.

The moderator explained that his ruling can be over-ridden by a two-thirds vote of the voting body, which can vote to suspend the applicability of Roberts Rules of Order. Norman Etkind moved to allow the presentation and discussion. The moderator determined that the vote by a show of hands met the two-thirds level, the rules were thus suspended and the discussion of the resolution could proceed.

Mr. Brown read a resolution proposing to declare the Town of Woodbury to be “An Article 16 and Second Amendment Constitutional Sanctuary Town” and to adopt the resolution “as a symbol of our civil disobedience to those who would attempt to render us defenseless”

Lisa Flood, Barbara Kittredge-Russell and Andrea Rosin each spoke about the need for reasonable laws to keep guns away from people who should not have them for various reasons. Waiting periods and background checks were advocated.

Gary Smith moved to call the question to end discussion. The motion was seconded, then approved by two-thirds of the voters present.

The motion to accept the non-binding resolution was defeated in a voice vote.

Article 39: At 12 noon, Roy Demers moved to adjourn. The motion was approved and lunch was served by the Friends of Woodbury Elementary School.

Dated at Woodbury, Vermont this 21st day of July, 2020.

Steven Freihofner, Moderator

Michael Gray, Select Board Chair

Attest: Diana Peduzzi, Town Clerk, July 22, 2020



The Woodbury Volunteer Fire Department surprised longtime Woodbury resident Ken King with a fire truck parade on his 93rd birthday. Chance Payette presented Ken with a WVFD t-shirt, as well as a lifetime membership. Ken was the Woodbury Fire Chief for 27 years.

Photo by Olivia Payette.