

EAST MONTPELIER

Town Meeting

March 5, 2013

minutes

The legal voters of the Town of East Montpelier, Vermont were warned to meet at the East Montpelier Elementary School on Tuesday, March 5, 2013 at 9:30 AM to transact the following business and to vote by Australian Ballot from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM on those Articles so noted. Approximately 340 residents were in attendance.

Moderator Brock called the Town Meeting of 2013 to order at 9:33 AM. He introduced himself as the duly appointed Town and School Moderator and welcomed all those present. He accepted a request for a moment of respect for community members that have passed away and then acknowledged our military soldiers and their families.

Moderator Brock explained the Town Meeting proceedings will be conducted according to the 10th Edition of Roberts Rules of Order. He acknowledged Martin Miller as Parliamentary Moderator for guidance.

Moderator Brock began by reading the Town Meeting warning as follows:

The legal voters of the Town of East Montpelier, Vermont are hereby notified and warned to meet at the East Montpelier Elementary School in East Montpelier on Tuesday, the fifth (5th) day of March, 2013 at 9:30 AM to act on the following:

The polls for articles to be voted on by Australian ballot will open at 7 AM and close at 7 PM (17VSA § 2561)

He explained that the tradition of East Montpelier was to alternate the Town and the School each year, and this year, the Town would be first. East Montpelier Elementary School Town Meeting was recessed at 9:35 AM until after the Town portion of the meeting.

ARTICLE 1: To elect all necessary officers for the ensuing year. (To be voted by Australian Ballot)

**Town Moderator, 1-year term
School District Moderator, 1-year term
Selectboard Member, 3-year term
Selectboard Member, 2-year term
Lister, 3-year term
Auditor, 3-year term
Trustee of Public Funds, 3-year term
Town Law Agent, 1-year term
Town Grand Juror, 1-year term
First Constable, 1-year term
Second Constable, 1-year term
Cemetery Commissioner, 5-year term
Planning Commissioner, 3-year term
Planning Commissioner, 3-year term
Planning Commissioner, 3-year term
EM Elementary School Director, 3-year term
EM Elementary School Director, 2-year term
U-32 School Director, 3-year term**

Moderator Brock read Article. Due to this article being Australian Ballot, no decision was allowed.

ARTICLE 2: To hear the reports of several Town Officers and to act thereon.

Moderator Brock read Article. He introduced the East Montpelier Selectboard Board and turned the discussion over to them. Selectboard Member Seth Gardner introduced himself as chair and the other members present: Carl Etnier, Steve Sparrow, Casey Northrup and Kim Swasey.

Selectboard Member Gardner referred to their report in the Town Report on page 12. He pointed out the changes over the last year that included the split of the Town Clerk and Town Treasurer position, the combination of the Town Administrator and Zoning Administrator position, the implementation of the Park & Ride project and the digitizing of the Land Records. It also should be noted that the Town received a \$490,000 grant from the state for the sidewalk and shoulder enhancement that will be tied in as part of the Route 14 South and US Route bridge intersection construction scheduled hopefully for 2014.

The only major increase in the budget was in the paving on our town roads. He acknowledged thanks to the Town Clerk, Town Treasurer, Denise Brown, and Bruce Johnson for their noted dedication and tireless work with the changes over the past year, especially in the shifting to utilize the space at the town office.

Selectboard Member Gardner touched upon the subject of Treasurer Welch's reference to a change for a Town Charter. He reiterated that the Selectboard wished to form a committee to study this change of town government.

Moderator Brock asked if there were any other comments or questions. He asked for and received motion with a second to accept the Selectboard's report. All voted in favor and Moderator declared motion passed.

ARTICLE 3: Shall the Town raise the sum of \$1,507,365 as proposed by the Selectboard, for laying out and repairing highways and for other necessary Town expenses for fiscal year 2014 (July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014). (To be voted by Australian Ballot)

Moderator Brock read Article. Due to this article being Australian Ballot, no decision was allowed.

ARTICLE 4: Shall the Town raise \$50,000 for the Capital Reserve Fund. (To be voted by Australian Ballot)

Moderator Brock read Article. Due to this article being Australian Ballot, no decision was allowed.

ARTICLE 5: Shall the Town raise the sum of \$36,775 for Kellogg-Hubbard Library for the support of the Kellogg-Hubbard Library. (To be voted by Australian Ballot)

Moderator Brock read Article. Due to this article being Australian Ballot, Moderator Brock explained that he would allow discussion or comments, but no decision could be made.

Charlie Catlin introduced herself as the Town's representative for the Kellogg Hubbard Library. She commented that East Montpelier residents use the Library a lot.

Carolyn Shapiro encouraged more use of the Library's many resources-especially the increased use of technology; however, not to forget the fundamentals.

Michelle Harper spoke in support of the Library especially with her children doing homework there a lot.

Charles Johnson spoke on the many resources that the Library offers that he and Nona (Estrin) use. They recently participated in a 'spelling bee' that was a lot of fun.

Jewel Love commented on her being new to Town, and uses the personal service via telephone at the Library, but finds it frustrating that the return book bin is not very handicap accessible. She would like to see the Library address this issue.

Janet Allen supports the technology offered through the Library especially in her work as a Special Educator.

With no further comments, Moderator Brock moved on.

ARTICLE 6: Shall the Town authorize all property taxes for the fiscal year 2014 to be paid to the Treasurer, without discount in two installments and received by the Town Treasurer at the East Montpelier Municipal Building as follows: The first installment will be due on or before 5:00 PM Friday, November 15, 2013 and the second installment will be due on or before 5:00 PM Thursday, May 15, 2014.

Moderator Brock read Article and offered comments.

Chris Pratt inquired as to the reason for this Article. An explanation was offered that it allowed discussion or change.

With no further comments or questions, Moderator Brock asked for and received motion and second to vote. All voted on favor and Moderator Brock declared Article passed.

ARTICLE 7: Shall the Town raise the sum of \$4,400 for the Four Corners Schoolhouse Association for operating expenses during fiscal year 2014.

Moderator Brock read Article and offered comments.

Hobie Guion introduced himself as the President of the Four Corners School. He was proud to share that the schoolhouse is used for many community functions. The requested amount reflected the increased costs of building operation, especially in repairs to the furnace.

With no further comments, Moderator Brock asked for and received motion with a second to vote. All in favor, and Moderator Brock declared Article passed.

ARTICLE 8: Shall the Town raise the sum of \$8,500 for the East Montpelier Cemetery Commission for the support and maintenance of Town cemeteries during fiscal year 2014.

Moderator Brock read Article and opened the floor for comments or discussion. With none received, he called for and received motion and second to vote. All voted in favor, and Moderator Brock declared Article passed.

ARTICLE 9: Shall the Town follow the Farm Contract Study Committee's recommendation to stop offering local farmers' contracts.

Moderator Brock read Article and opened the floor for comments or discussion.

Selectboard Member Gardner began with referring the floor to page 46 of the Town Report-the report of the Farm Contract Committee that was requested last year to study the Farm Contracts.

Austin Cleaves spoke on the program that was started on the 1970's. There used to be about 40 or so farmers participating in the program. The program was very successful in that there is a lot of land conserved. Over the years, many farmers have enrolled in the State Current Use program. The committee that met over the last year at the request of the Town recommends the discontinuance of the town program.

Ed Deegan spoke in support of the Committee and that the decision is not out to hurt anyone. The enactment of Act 60 by the State some years ago is the biggest reason for the change. Everyone would

save money if the Town got away from the program.

Anne Ormsbee inquired about the two that were against the motion to end the programs, and she wanted to know why.

Selectboard Member Gardner offered that these people had issues with dealing with the State involvement in their land.

Austin Cleaves offered that the woodlands that are in the State Program management are evaluated by State Forestry. The State's current use program saves a significant amount of money and overall, the program has been great.

Tim Carver commented on his concern of his neighbor, Mr. Butler being forced to comply to put his land in The State program, and the concerns of the land being developed. Selectboard Member Gardner responded that everyone can enroll in the State program, save money, and woodlands would be conserved. Mr. Gardener also noted that the Town would be available to assist any one with their concerns about the enlistment.

Bruce Chapell spoke in appreciation of the Committee's efforts. He commented that he has been enrolled in the State program for about 20-25 years. He reflected on the savings and the conservation of his land.

Michelle Harper expressed her concern about the Butlers land and assistance to reassure them that the land will be protected.

Selectboard Member Gardner commented that this Article will not trigger action tomorrow. This would hopefully move them forward to land conservation.

Carol Johnson commented that she had spoken with the Butlers, and it appears that they may not understand the benefits of the State Program.

Ella Chapin advised that there are other programs besides the current use program.

Norma Raymond inquired about amending the Article to reflect any one in the Town program can remain, but no new enrollments.

Moderator Brock asked for and received an amendment to the Article to allow enrollees in the Town program continue, but no new enrollees allowed. Moderator Brock called for and received motion to discuss the amendment.

Representative Klein inquired about the cost of the Current Use program to the Town. Selectboard Member Gardner responded about \$15,000 per year.

Ann Stanton spoke to express her concern of getting involved with lives. She supports the Committee and their efforts, but feels it is disrespectful to discuss the Butlers situation.

Tim Carver commented that he was defending the Butlers.

Chris Pratt commented that the amendment assumes people are enrolling in the program. He supports and thanks the Committee for doing exactly what the Townspeople had asked them to do.

Ed Deegan reiterated that the twelve remaining parcels in the Town program would be much better off in the State program.

Deborah Glottman wanted to know if there was any affect if these parcels were grandfathered. Selectboard Member Gardner responded that all of our tax dollars are affected.

Moderator Brock asked for and received motion to accept amendment on Article. A few voted yes, most voted no. Moderator Brock declared amendment failed, and back to discussion of the Article as presented.

Gwen Lewis commented on the State program has a cost of \$5.00 and wondered if there was any assistance with any other fees that may arise. Selectboard Member Gardner responded in that we cannot give away public money. Mr. Lewis wondered if the assistance could come in the form of donations. Selectboard Member Gardner responded in that there are programs available, and the Town would assist the enrollees in the changeover.

Andrew Christiansen mentioned that there are others programs available through the State.

Steve Miracle acknowledged the Study Committees efforts, especially Austin Cleaves who was involved with the program from the beginning. He noted the success of the Current Use program other the last many years, and offered that there is only one other town in the state besides East Montpelier that offer the Town program.

Betsy Barstow questioned the Town's impact on the Education portion of the taxes. Ed Deegan explained that the State does not acknowledge the Town programs, and the education portion of the taxes are absorbed in the Municipal Budget.

Martin Miller offered the comment that the State program is a benefit to all of us-not just the farmers.

Moderator Brock called for and received motion to proceed with voting on the Article unamended. Most voted yes, one vote for no. Moderator Brock declared Article passed to follow the Committees recommendations and discontinue the Town program.

ARTICLE 10: Shall the Town raise the amounts listed below as recommended by the Town's Funding Request Study Committee, or what other amounts, for the following organizations for fiscal year 2014.

a) American Red Cross	\$ 250
b) Central Vermont Community Action Council	\$ 500
c) Central Vermont Community Land Trust	\$ 150
d) Central Vermont Council on Aging	\$ 1,600
e) Central Vermont Home Health & Hospice	\$ 4,200
f) Central Vermont Memorial Civic Center	\$ 1,000
g) Circle (formerly Battered Women's Services & Shelter)	\$ 675
h) Community Connections	\$ 2,500
i) Family Center of Washington County	\$ 500
j) Friends of the Winooski River	\$ 200
k) Green Mountain Transit	\$ 1,366
l) Green Up Vermont	\$ 150
m) Onion River Food Shelf	\$ 1,000
n) People's Health and Wellness Clinic	\$ 950
o) Prevent Child Abuse Vermont	\$ 300
p) Project Independence	\$ 250

q) Retired & Senior Volunteer Program	\$ 275
r) Sexual Assault Crisis Team	\$ 200
s) Twin Valley Senior Center	\$ 750
t) Vermont Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired	\$ 100
u) Vermont CARES	\$ 150
v) Vermont Center for Independent Living	\$ 245
w) Washington County Diversion Program	\$ 350
x) Washington County Youth Service Bureau	\$ 400
TOTAL	\$18,061

Moderator Brock read the Article and received motion with second to discuss.

Lynn Blackwell spoke on behalf of the Funding Committee of the applications received and reviewed. The services provided to our community residents weigh highly on the decisions to fund. She welcomed any feedback from the community for information on any other programs.

Jewel Love spoke in that she uses some of these services of which she has issues with handi-cap accessibility. She recommends that we not pay for services until we are sure that these organizations comply with the Disabilities Act.

Dave Tucker inquired about the difference between the Articles #10, #11, and #12 and the requests that are listed. Selectboard Member Gardner offered that the amount on Article for the Montpelier Senior Center requested was higher and they felt that a separate Article was more beneficial.

Selectboard Member Etnier explained that the GMTA figure in Article #10 reflects the support of private individuals to give people rides and the sort. Article #12 supports the bus service GMTA provides between the Towns.

Edie Miller explained that the amount of funding requested by the Senior Center on Montpelier came after the Center became under the authority of the Montpelier City Council.

Doris Washburn spoke on the benefits of the Twin Valley Senior Center in Marshfield served by quite a few East Montpelier residents.

Becky Reed commented on the level-funding of these requests may be something that the Funding Committee could look into.

Rachel Grossman thanked the Committee for their work, and praised their efforts over the past years.

Jack Pauly wanted to know what the money amount limit was for voting on the floor rather than on Australian Ballot. Selectboard Member Gardner responded that the amount was \$25,000.

Richard Hoffman wanted to know if we could vote on each separately. Motion and second received to discuss amendment to the Article. No discussion to amend the Article. Moderator Brock called for and received motion with second to amend Article to divide the requests. Most voted no and Moderator Brock called amendment failed.

Moderator Brock called for and received motion with second to vote on Article as presented. All voted in favor and Article was declared passed.

Moderator Brock noted the time and inquired the pleasure of the floor to recess for lunch. Consensus was

to continue.

ARTICLE 11: Shall the Town raise the sum of \$2,800 for the Montpelier Senior Activity Center for operating expenses during fiscal year 2014.

Moderator Brock read article, called for and received motion with second to discuss Article.

Diana Fielder commented on the Twin Valley Senior Center and the Montpelier Senior Center as being very valuable services to the town residents. She shared the various fees incurred to belong to these organizations being around \$400 per membership.

Fran Weinbaun wondered if there was a study or figures that would show any differences to the membership fees for town residents. Ms. Fielder explained that the membership fees go towards the Center's expenses. Out of the \$157,000 needed to cover expenses, the City council only budgeted \$8,000 to the Center.

Ann Stanton commented that the fees these organizations charge individuals support some of the various activities they offer.

Betsy Barstow inquired about the apartments at the Montpelier Senior Center help support them. Diana Fielder responded that the apartments are under the Montpelier Housing Authority and have no bearing on the cost for the Center.

Andy Christiansen inquired about the mechanics of the representation of these organizations. Diana Fielder explained that there is an advisor from our Town on the Montpelier Senior Center board, and recently noticed that there was a similar plea for a representative on the Front Porch Forum from the Twin Valley Senior Center.

Richard Czaplinski wanted to know why the Montpelier Senior Center's requested went from \$1200.00 last year to \$2800.00 this year.

Diana Fielder referred the matter of the Center being caught up in being under the jurisdiction of the Montpelier City Council.

With no further questions or comments, Moderator Brock called for and received a motion with second to vote on the Article. Most voted in favor, a few voted against. Moderator declared Article passed.

ARTICLE 12: Shall the Town raise the sum of \$8,333 as its share of the annual ongoing cost of providing commuter bus service along Route 2 with service into Montpelier. This appropriation funds a portion of the total cost of the service, which will also be supported by appropriations from other towns, State and Federal funds, and rider fares.

Moderator Brock read Article and received motion with second to discuss.

Rachel Grossman expressed her support for the service provided along the US Route 2 corridor.

Michelle McFadden also expressed her support, as her children ride the bus and she likes that it is safe and clean.

Jeff Cueto wanted to know how much ridership these was of East Montpelier residents and if Montpelier City contributes. It was explained that the towns along the US Route 2 pay for part of the service. Montpelier and St. Johnsbury do not pay to support the service.

Moderator Brock inquired about further discussion. With none received, he asked for and received a motion with second to vote. All voted in favor, and Moderator declared Article passed.

ARTICLE 13: Shall the Town Voters authorize expenditure in the amount of \$750 to help support the services provided by the Friends of the North Branch Nature Center in Montpelier? (Petitioned Article)

Moderator Brock read Article, asked for and received a motion to discuss or comment.

Nona Estrin and first asked for a show of hands of those who have participated of which there were quite a few. She continued on to explain that the North Branch works with the Elementary School to get children involved in outside activities and projects that involve nature.

A request came from the floor as to why this Article was separate. Ms. Estrin commented in that she wanted this request separate which allowed her the opportunity to get out into the community, and get feedback for the Nature Center.

Charles Johnson spoke in support of anything that will get kids outdoors into real nature and away from computers.

Ellen Knodler commented on her support of the program, and wanted to make sure that it was not only for young children. Ms. Estrin responded in that there is support for all kinds of activities, especially the ECHO program that is very popular.

A comment came from the floor that we were spending too much time on \$750.00.

Moderator Brock inquired about any further questions or comments. Receiving none, he asked for and received a motion to proceed with vote. All voted in favor. Moderator declared Article passed.

ARTICLE 14: To transact any other business that may properly come before the meeting.

Moderator Brock read Article. He received a motion and second to discuss and opened the floor for discussion. He reminded that no action and no votes could take place, but that this was discussion time.

The first item brought up was the Tar Sands Oil topic. Brian Tokar spoke on the matter of not receiving enough signatures for an Article to be presented for Town Meeting. He wanted to see if somehow our Town could send a message along with neighboring communities and proposed the following language:

The assembled participants at the 2013 East Montpelier Town Meeting 1) oppose the transport of tar sands oil from Canada through Vermont through an aging pipeline in the Northeast Kingdom or by other means, and 2) support ongoing efforts to remove oil obtained by mining the Alberta tar sands from New England's fuel supply.

Moderator Brock called attention to his opinion that a 2/3 vote of participants was needed to discuss and consider matters outside ordinary town business. After discussion, a motion was made and second received to discuss this topic and discussion included a motion to consider such an important matter to public health. Tar sands are extremely toxic and dangerous for humans as well as the environment. A citizen commented that the Tar Sands matter should be presented to the town so that we are educated on the various aspects of the topic. Conversation included the matter that due to this not being a warned Article, no action would be taken. After brief discussion, Moderator Brock called for and received motion to vote on resolution. Most voted in favor, and Moderator called motion adopted.

Moderator Brock asked for and received motion with second to recess Town Meeting for lunch. All voted in favor and Moderator Brock announced that Town Meeting would break for Lunch and reconvene in one hour.

Town Meeting recessed at 12:30 PM.

Moderator Brock resumed Town Meeting at 1:38 PM. He first thanked the Lunch crew for their efforts and a wonderful job. He resumed with Article #14.

Jewel Love commented on the recently installed Green Mountain Power wireless smart meters in town and at U32 School. She would like to see a committee formed to study the concern off any effects on health.

Michael Duane inquired as to why the U32 budget numbers were not a warned article.

Renee Carpenter spoke on the Coburn Road Quarry and referred to the report on page 67 of the Town Report. She encouraged citizens to utilize the grounds.

Ed Deegan addressed the Selectboard regarding the liter on the town roads. Dave Grundy spoke on the topic of 'adopt-a-road' years ago that helped the liter problem back then.

Moderator Brock inquired if there were any other issues. Receiving none, he thanked all those in attendance and declared Town Meeting 2013 adjourned at 1:55 PM.

Moderator Brock inquired about announcements.

Rachel Grossman spoke on the wonderful pot luck lunch and acknowledged the organizing work of Susan Racinelli for the lunch.

Scott Hess on behalf of the Planning Commission announced the upcoming meeting for the new Town Plan.

Dave Coburn addressed the crowd in reference to the availability of funds through the Revolving Loan Fund. He encouraged ideas for projects for use of the money to the Committee.

Dave Grundy summarized the Energy Committee referring to the report in the Town Report. He was pleased that over the last four years, the Municipal Buildings have received and implemented Energy savings. A new project has been developed to serve residents. Free kits are available.

Norma Raymond shared a newspaper article for Liz Stephens, our town resident Olympic Skier that was on a *Rossignal* Poster.

Representative Klein briefly spoke on the privilege to reside in the greatest town in the state. He appreciates the contacts received from residents on the topics of concern. He welcomed any further comments and concerns.

Laurie Mekkelsen presented a slide show as a tribute to Sylvia Tosi.

Respectfully noted and recorded by Teresa E. Conti-Town Clerk

Town Meeting minutes of March 5, 2013 approved by:

East Montpelier Selectboard:

Seth Gardner

Carl Etnier

Steve Sparrow

Casey Northrup

Kim Swasey

East Montpelier Town Moderator

Richard Brock

Received for Recording: East Montpelier Town Clerk's Office, _____ day of _____ A.D. 20__ at
_____ AM

Attest: Teresa E. Conti - Town Clerk