

**East Montpelier Selectboard Meeting APPROVED (01/19/15) MINUTES
January 5, 2015 at the Town Office**

Selectboard members present: Carl Etnier (recording secretary), Seth Gardner, Casey Northrup, Steve Sparrow, Kim Swasey; Bruce Johnson (town administrator).

Others present: Tom McKone, Lindy Biggs (Kellogg-Hubbard Library); Ross Hazel (lister).

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Seth Gardner called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

B. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Possible appeal of the state's Common Level of Appraisal determination for the town
Personnel matter

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

Lindy Biggs complimented Seth Gardner for his post on Front Porch Forum about the dog ordinance; it explained the rationale well.

D. KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY 2015 TOWN MEETING ARTICLE

The library has asked for \$36,775 from East Montpelier in the last two years. This year, they are asking for a 5% increase, to \$38,614. The library board is asking user towns outside of Montpelier to pay \$16 per capita of population. The current request is less than \$16 per capita for East Montpelier, but the board also has the policy of asking for no more than a 5% increase each year.

Library director Tom McKone shared statistics about what some other towns of comparable size in the region pay in tax support for library services. The ten towns he listed either paid more per capita than this request, or had access to a smaller library that was open fewer hours per week, or both.

Asked about the usage of the library, Mr. McKone said it is generally stable. Some areas are up: use of computers, wifi, downloading books.

Lindy Biggs, the East Montpelier representative on the library board, said libraries are becoming centers for activity. People go to them to use computers, get advice on computers, to search for jobs. Librarians help young people learn to use computers to find jobs.

Motion: I move to put the Kellogg-Hubbard Library funding request for \$38,614 on the 2015 Town Meeting Warning. Made: Mr. Northrup. Second: Mr. Etnier. 5-0.

E. POSSIBLE APPEAL OF THE COMMON LEVEL OF APPRAISAL (CLA)

Lister Ross Hazel is concerned that the 94.10% CLA is lower than our statistics warrant. He has invited Bill Tobin, state Property Valuation & Review interim agent for our district, to explain the result to our board of listers on January 12th. If an appeal is warranted, the letter of appeal needs to be signed by the Selectboard.

Mr. Hazel noted that the CLA assigned by the state to East Montpelier has dropped to 94.10%, from 98.98%. This drop is calculated by the state from properties selling at more than their appraised value, and each year it is averaged over the three previous years. Mr. Hazel said the CLA drop adds 10 cents to the town's residential tax rate for education, and all the additional money raised goes to the state's

education fund.

The Selectboard will meet in a special meeting on January 12, after the listers' meeting with Mr. Tobin. Whether to file an appeal will be on the agenda.

F. DEVELOPMENT OF SELECTBOARD REPORT FOR 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

Content of the report was discussed. The SB will review a draft at a later meeting.

G. FUNDING REQUEST COMMITTEE 2015 TOWN MEETING ARTICLE

Motion: I move to include the Funding Request Committee's \$22,561 appropriation on the 2015 Town Meeting Warning. Made: Ms. Swasey. Second: Mr. Northrup. 5-0.

H. DISCUSSION ON FY2015 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

The fund balance is being invested in the newly created capital reserve fund. That means that the year's contribution to the capital reserve fund is the major control the SB has in determining any potential tax increase. If the capital reserve fund is fully funded, the tax rate goes up from 56 cents to over 61 cents.

Different possibilities were discussed to smooth out the increases in the tax rate. One was to phase in full funding of the capital reserve fund over two or three years. Another was to set a maximum tax rate increase for next year and calculate backwards to the FY2016 contribution to the capital reserve fund.

The SB asked Mr. Johnson to present a budget with a 2-cent increase for next year and report what contribution that would allow to the capital reserve fund.

I. DISCUSSION ON 2015 TOWN MEETING WARNING

The draft warning was reviewed.

J. EXCESS WEIGHT PERMITS

Motion: I move to approve the excess weight permit for Paul Poulin. Made: Mr. Northrup. Second: Mr. Etnier. 5-0.

K. WARRANTS

Signed.

L. MINUTES

Motion: I move to approve the minutes of December 15, 2014 as revised. Made: Ms. Swasey. Second: Mr. Sparrow. 5-0.

M. OTHER BUSINESS

Road Foreman Mike Garand would like an open letter from the Selectboard laying out the rules for town resident use of the town's salt and sand piles. Mr. Johnson will draft a letter for SB review.

Mr. Gardner and Mr. Northrup will meet with Road Foreman Mike Garand later this week to discuss details of town garage use of the Templeton Road fire station and other issues.

Mr. Gardner and Mr. Etnier propose to meet with Treasurer Don Welch on January 12 at 6 pm to discuss his appointment to the position after town meeting day.

Mr. Johnson showed the board a letter from the attorney for Ellery and Jennifer Packard, proposing a

settlement of the case involving the merger of Pine Ridge Lots 8 and 9. Attorney Bruce Bjornlund has not yet had a chance to comment on the proposal to the town.

P. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: I make the motion to adjourn. Made: Mr. Sparrow. Second: Ms. Swasey. 9:39 pm.