

EAST MONTPELIER

Town Meeting

March 3, 2015

minutes

The legal voters of the Town of East Montpelier, Vermont were warned to meet at the East Montpelier Elementary School located at 665 Vincent Flats Rd in East Montpelier on Tuesday, March 3, 2015 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 270 residents were in attendance.

Moderator Duane called the Town and School Meeting of 2015 to order at 9:37 AM. He introduced himself as the duly elected Town and School Moderator and welcomed all those present. He briefly addressed the emergency exits, voter registration and voter cards.

Moderator Duane requested a moment of silence and respect for community members that have passed away and a moment to remember our former Town Clerk Minnie Lane who passed away this past week. He then asked for a moment of respect to acknowledge our military soldiers and their families.

Moderator Duane explained that he will conduct this Town Meeting according to Robert's Rules of Order. Vermont State Law does allow Articles that are on the ballot to be discussed with the exception of Town Officers, but no changes can be made on ballot items.

He explained the tradition in East Montpelier was to alternate the Town and the School each year. This was the Town's year to go first, however the Selectboard is honoring a special request from the School Board to go first and therefore, the Town's meeting will be recessed until after the School's portion of the meeting. Town's meeting recessed at 9:40 am.

Town Meeting was resumed at 10:37 AM.

Moderator Duane read the town 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 third (3rd) day of March, 2015 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)

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

- Town Moderator, 1-year term
- Town Clerk, 3-year term
- Selectboard Member, 3-year term
- Selectboard Member, 2-year term
- Lister, 3-year term
- Auditor, 3-year term
- First Constable, 1-year term
- Second Constable, 1-year term
- Cemetery Commissioner, 5-year term
- Planning Commissioner, 2 of 3-year term
- Planning Commissioner, 3-year term
- Planning Commissioner, 3-year term
- Planning Commissioner, 3-year term

Moderator Duane read Article. As this Article is for elected officers to be voted by Australian Ballot, no discussion was allowed.

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

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

He referred to their report on page 11 in the Town Report and summarized the report on the topics of the appointment of the Town Treasurer, the new Dog Ordinance, the Road Equipment and the maintenance of the Town Roads, and reclassification of some Town Roads from Class 3 to Class 2 for more State Funding. He added that this allows the Town to receive about \$14,000 more in State Highway aid that can be used to upkeep the town roads as well as increase the eligibility for available grants, one being Vincent Flats Road.

A question came up regarding the speed limit on reclassified roads. Selectboard Member Gardner responded that it did not.

Mr. Gardner offered a thank you to Town Administrator Bruce Johnson for all the work he has done on the various road projects.

Karen Saudek wanted to know if Dodge Road was going to be paved. Mr. Gardner responded that her end of Dodge Road would not be.

Mr. Connor asked about the data on traffic and the process of decisions to pave roads.

Selectboard Member Northrup explained the corridor that was included on the reclassification was Quaker Hill-Vincent Flats-Lyle Young-Templeton Road-County Road. This was mainly due to the school and more agriculture traffic.

Selectboard Member Gardner spoke on the status of the Park-n-Ride project in that there has not been as much progress as hope. A grant is in place, however there is a Washington Electric Co-Op parking issue holding things up at this time.

He responded to a question if the delay had anything to do with the contamination, of which he said not so much as the parking matter.

Stephen Knowlton stood and introduced himself as a new Board Member at WEC, and invited anyone to contact him with questions or concerns.

Selectboard Member Gardner continued with mention of the creation of the Capital Improvement Committee, and turned the conversation over to Selectboard Member Northrup.

Selectboard Member Northrup referred to the Committee's report on page 45 outlines the results they had come up with regarding the expenses of the Town and a schedule for the Town's assets as charted on pages 36 & 37.

Selectboard Member Gardner touched on the Capital Reserve budgeted every year, and the plan for Article 6 in attempt to keep the Municipal Tax Rate more level.

A question came from the audience as to whether or not the Selectboard had anything to do with the bridge to Barre of which the response was "NO".

Mr. Gardner continued to briefly remark on the Contingency fund as voted last year regarding the town's fund balance and the support to maintain a reserve fund.

He concluded with an appreciation to the town employees and officers for their time and efforts to the smooth operations of our town. With an invitation to attend Selectboard meetings, he opened up the meeting to any further questions or comments.

Ms. Watson inquired about the contingency fund and the capital reserve money for the Emergency Services Building. Mr. Gardner responded that there are no funds going to the fire department for their equipment any longer.

Craig Mugford wanted to know why the Article in the *Times Argus* indicated that our town taxes were increasing by 9.2%, when the Selectboard only indicates a 0.2%. The response was that the *Times Argus* article was incorrect.

Don Welch referred to page 17 in the town report that shows many percentages regarding the budget items.

Moderator Duane inquired if no further discussion then called for and received motion with second to vote on Article 2. All voted in favor and Moderator declared Article 2 passed.

ARTICLE 3: Shall the Town raise the sum of **\$1,620,701** as proposed by the Selectboard, for laying out and repairing highways and for other necessary Town expenses for fiscal year 2016 (July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016). (To be voted by Australian Ballot)

Moderator Duane read Article and explained that this Article was to be voted on by Australian Ballot and already discussed on the floor.

ARTICLE 4: Shall the Town raise the sum of **\$38,614** for Kellogg-Hubbard Library for the support of the Kellogg-Hubbard Library. (To be voted by Australian Ballot)

Moderator Duane read Article and explained that this Article was to be voted on by Australian Ballot but could be briefly discussed on the floor, however no changes could be made.

Lindy Biggs referred to the Library's report on page 57 in the town report for information pertaining to the figures. She also noted that after a long search process, Tom McKone was named the new Director of the Library.

With no further comments, Moderator called to move onto the next Article.

ARTICLE 5: Shall the Town authorize all property taxes for the fiscal year 2016 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 Monday, November 16, 2015 and the second installment will be due on or before 5:00 PM Friday, May 16, 2016.

Moderator Duane read Article and inquired for motion to discuss. Motion and second received. No discussion or questions were presented. Moderator asked for and received motion with a second to vote; all voted in favor, and Moderator declared Article 5 passed.

ARTICLE 6: Shall the Town authorize the Selectboard to create a Capital Reserve Fund, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2804(a) and funded by annual budget appropriation, to be expended under the control and direction of the Selectboard for general and highway purposes pursuant to the Selectboard's Capital Plan.

Moderator Duane read Article and inquired for motion to discuss. Motion and second received.

Paul Cate inquired to what the advantage would be of which Selectboard Member responded to the preparedness of expenses that may arise for the town.

With no discussion or questions were presented, Moderator asked for and received motion with a second to vote. All voted in favor, and Moderator declared Article 6 passed.

ARTICLE 7: Shall the Town raise the sum of **\$4,400** for the Four Corners Schoolhouse Association for operating expenses during fiscal year 2016.

Moderator Duane read Article and inquired for motion to discuss. Motion and second received. No discussion or questions were presented. Moderator asked for and received motion with a second to vote. All voted in favor, and Moderator declared Article 7 passed.

ARTICLE 8: Shall the Town raise the sum of **\$7,000** for the East Montpelier Cemetery Commission for the support and maintenance of Town cemeteries during fiscal year 2016.

Moderator Duane read Article and inquired for motion to discuss. Motion and second received. No discussion or questions were presented. Moderator asked for and received motion with a second to vote. All voted in favor, and Moderator declared Article 8 passed.

ARTICLE 9: Shall the Town raise the sum of **\$8,200** for the East Montpelier Signpost to provide for the production and mailing of six issues of the East Montpelier Signpost for each East Montpelier resident household and non-resident property owner during fiscal year 2016.

Moderator Duane read Article and inquired for motion to discuss. Motion and second received. No discussion or questions were presented. Moderator asked for and received motion with a second to vote. All voted in favor, and Moderator declared Article 9 passed.

ARTICLE 10: Shall the Town raise the sum of **\$4,000** for East Montpelier Trails, Inc. for the enhancement, development, and maintenance of trail network in East Montpelier during fiscal year 2016.

Moderator Duane read Article and inquired for motion to discuss. Motion and second received.

Tim Jennings inquired where to obtain maps of the trails, and someone referred him to Google emtrails.org.

Doris Washburn commented that she had asked the same question at the forum on Saturday, of which Nona Estrin provided some printouts.

With no further discussion or questions, Moderator asked for and received motion with a second to vote. All voted in favor, and Moderator declared Article 10 passed.

ARTICLE 11: Shall the Town raise the sum of **\$5,000** for the Montpelier Senior Activity Center for operating expenses during fiscal year 2016.

Moderator Duane read Article and inquired for motion to discuss. Motion and second received.

Sam Dworkin inquired why this funding request was separate from the other requests listed in Article 13.

Selectboard Chair Gardner explained the financial cap amount of floor voted in the amount of \$25,000 and that the \$5,000 requested by the Montpelier Senior put the total figure over. So this item was put separate, thus allowing the other requests to be discussed and changed.

Andy Christiansen inquired if there was anyone present on the Board from the Town. The response was not sure.

Jenna Clark from the Senior Center spoke up in that they are looking for a representative from the Town.

Lisa Helm wanted to know why more money was going to the Montpelier Senior Center than to the Twin Valley Senior Center that was in our own town.

Selectboard Chair Gardner explained that the figures were based on the organizations request amount and the Funding Committee's recommendations.

Doris Washburn asked about changing the amount to Twin Valley of which she was advised to wait until we got to that Article.

Lynn Blackwell spoke on behalf of the Funding Committee in that she has been on for many years. Each year, requests come in with supporting information of which the committee has kept track for a long time. They review the membership for our town residents, and the services provided for each entity and make the best possible recommendations possible. She also noted that the Montpelier Senior Center had requested \$5,800 last year, and this year's amount was less.

Moderator Duane received notification that LUNCH was ready, and ORDERED recess for lunch.

TOWN MEETING recessed at 12:25 PM.

TOWN MEETING resumed at 01:25 PM.

Moderator Duane recapped the status of discussion regarding Article 11. With no further questions or comments, he called for a vote. All voted in favor, and Moderator called Article 11 passed.

Moderator Duane took a moment to acknowledge and thank the lunch crew followed by a nice applause from the attending audience.

ARTICLE 12: Shall the Town raise the sum of **\$8,333** as its share of the annual ongoing cost of providing the Green Mountain Transit Agency 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 Duane read Article and inquired for motion to discuss. Motion and second received.

Robert Morey inquired why we have this Article and line item 'm' for Green Mountain Transit on the funding request Article 13.

Selectboard Member Northrup responded that this Article supports the service of the bus service, while the line item specifically goes towards the services of the drivers who drive folks to medical appointments.

Rachel Grossman spoke in support of the Route 2 Bus Service.

Craig Mugford felt that it was money spent recklessly if his memory served him correctly.

Sam Dworkin spoke in that he uses the system, but often boards the bus in Montpelier.

Jeff Cueto spoke in that this is the most expensive Article to vote on with the least amount of supporting information available. He was hoping that someone would be here and available to support the request.

Selectboard Member Gardner noted that Tawnya Kristen from GMTA was here.

She quickly provided a summary of some numbers that included the cost per passenger spending of \$14.00 per passenger, the total cost per year of \$140,000 per year to operate the service of which East Montpelier was contributing \$8,333. The Route 2 Corridor was the most successful in the State.

Edie Miller inquired as to what passengers pay elsewhere.

Tawnya responded it was \$2.00 in Waterbury and \$2.00 in Burlington. This has resulted in about \$13,000 in revenue.

Casey Northrup commented that in the last couple of weeks, about 8 customers from his business on Route 2 have used the bus service.

Jeff Cueto asked why Montpelier does not contribute.

Tawnya responded because they are a destination. They do put up \$30,000 for transit service.

Carl Etnier spoke in that he rides the bus from Montpelier to Plainfield on the RCT Route which is not counted. However, the RCT and GMTA services are combined.

Moderator Duane inquired for further comments or discussion. With none, he called for a vote. All voted in favor, and Moderator declared Article 12 passed.

ARTICLE 13: 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 2016.

a) Capstone Community Action (formerly CVCAC)	\$ 500
b) Central Vermont Adult Basic Education	\$ 750
c) Central Vermont Community Land Trust	\$ 150
d) Central Vermont Council on Aging	\$1,875
e) Central Vermont Home Health & Hospice	\$5,500
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) Girls/Boyz First Mentoring	\$ 200
l) Good Beginnings of Central VT	\$ 300
m) Green Mountain Transit	\$1,366
n) Green Up Vermont	\$ 150
o) Home Share Now	\$ 600

p)	North Branch Nature Center	\$ 750
q)	Onion River Food Shelf	\$1,000
r)	OUR House of Central VT	\$ 250
s)	People's Health and Wellness Clinic	\$1,250
t)	Prevent Child Abuse Vermont	\$ 300
u)	Project Independence	\$ 250
v)	Sexual Assault Crisis Team	\$ 250
w)	Twin Valley Senior Center	\$1,000
x)	Vermont CARES	\$ 150
y)	Vermont Center for Independent Living	\$ 245
z)	Washington County Diversion Program	\$ 450
aa)	Washington County Youth Service Bureau	\$ 400
	TOTAL	\$22,561

Moderator Duane read Article and inquired for motion to discuss. Motion and second received.

Doris Washburn spoke in that she had been a town resident for over 50 years. She has been a member of and supports the Twin Valley Senior and wishes to increase the amount to from \$1,000 to \$2,000.

Moderator Duane said it was unclear whether funding in a warned article can be increased from the floor. He said there was not state law prohibiting it, but there was a long-standing East Montpelier tradition to not increase on the floor a dollar amount in properly warned article. He asked for guidance from the voters on whether to even consider the increase.

Ann Stanton spoke on the long process of consideration for the Funding Request Committee of which she is a member. She further explained that Rita Copeland, the Director of Twin Valley appeared before the committee. She was very engaging, powerful, and passionate about Twin Valley especially with their move to East Montpelier. The full amount requested was not the amount presented, and perhaps next year's request will have different information based on new local status and East Montpelier residents.

Alan Ploof commented that we (the people) have increased the amounts of funding requests on the floor before. Sam Dworkin also remembered that we have done this before.

After a call for division, Moderator Duane called for a hand vote using the yellow voter cards on whether the Town would consider increasing the warned amount from \$1,000 to \$2,000. Board of Civil Authority verified **YES=51 NO=38**.

Amy Willis inquired where the funds would come from.

Selectboard Member Gardner answered from the Municipal budget.

Rubin Bennett and Craig Mugford called for the question. Moderator called the question, and the No's have it. Moderator declared no further amendment.

Edie Miller appreciates the efforts of the Funding Request Committee and supports the Twin Valley Senior Center. She strongly feels that we should not override the Committee.

Loring Starr reiterated Edie Miller and referred to the Montpelier Senior Center report on page 58.

Doris Washburn commented in that we (Twin Valley) are not in competition with Montpelier Senior

Center. There are lots of other services provided like Meal-On-Wheels for homebounds.

Ann Stanton also supports the recommendations of the Funds Committee.

Dave Coburn advised that the bottom line of the Funding Requesting Article should be noted in the motion to read \$23561.00.

Bob Nuner favors the recommendations of the Funds Committee.

Janna Clar, Director of the Montpelier Senior Activity Center, supported the increase. She also commented that the about \$3.00 per person in federal reimbursement for Meals-On-Wheels does not cover the costs of providing the meals.

Someone noted that other Towns are asked and donate funds as well.

Moderator called for further discussion. With none received, he read the motion as presented to increase Line W-Twin Valley amount from \$1,000 to \$2,000 thus increasing the total amount to \$23561.00. Voice vote was too close to determine. Moderator called for voter tag count. Board of Civil Authority verified **YES=46 NO=51**. Moderator declared no Line W amount increase. Moderator called for a vote on Article 13 as warned. Most voted in favor and Moderator declared Article 13 passed.

ARTICLE 14: Shall the State of Vermont set a statewide per-pupil spending amount for each district, excluding capital expenditures, with adjustments possible for a district's extraordinary expenses.

Moderator Duane read Article and inquired for motion to discuss. Motion and second received.

Carl Etnier began in that this Article was cognizant of the matter regarding the property taxes. He noted that our Representative Tony Klein has already put together a bill to the State Senate to address this matter.

Tony Klein took a moment to speak on the bill that he introduced to the Senate beginning the pressure of property taxes. His bill labeled HH60 sets a per pupil amount that will level off property taxes in the State. The Education Department heard the message and voted 11-0 to put a temporary cap on spending until the year 2019. Therefore, therefore there is no need to debate this Article as they got the message!

Unknown and Richard Brock made the motion to table Article 14. Moderator called for a vote and all voted on favor.

ARTICLE 15: To transact any other business that may properly come before the meeting.

Moderator Duane read Article 15 first thanked the Boy Scouts for the microphone circulation. Troop Master Christopher Flynn spoke on behalf of Troop 742 thanking the community for the support over the many years, especially during events of Town Meeting for the community portions of their badges. He expressed his gratitude and appreciation for the opportunity of being a Scout Master as his boys move on past the Eagle Scouts honor.

Moderator Duane thanked Colin McCaffrey for the sound system.

Selectboard Member Gardner inquired to the audience a general consensus as to the location of Town Meeting being held at EMES versus U32, and a voice vote indicated EMES!

Tony Klein wanted to thank the residents of East Montpelier for the opportunity to serve as our town Representative. He invited anyone that had a question or issue with Health Care exchange to contact him.

Sam Dworkin offered a thank you to our Moderator that was applauded by the attendees.

Motion and many seconds received to adjourn. All voted in favor and Moderator declared Town Meeting 2015 adjourned at 02:30 PM.

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

Town Meeting minutes of March 3, 2015 approved by:

East Montpelier Selectboard Board Members

East Montpelier Town Moderator

Seth Gardner

Michael O Duane

Casey Northrup

East Montpelier Town Clerk

Steve Sparrow

Teresa E Conti

Carl Etnier

Kimberly Swasey

Received for Recording:

East Montpelier Town Clerk's Office this ____ day of _____, 20__ AD at ____ : ____ AM

Attest: Teresa E. Conti-Town Clerk