

**Town Meeting Minutes
Town of East Montpelier
March 7, 2017**

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 Road in East Montpelier on Tuesday, March 7, 2017 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 265 residents were in attendance.

Moderator Duane called the Town Meeting of 2017 to order at 11:22 AM, after a brief break following the School Meeting. He reconvened the crowd, and announced that since the potluck lunch could not be ready before 12:00 PM, that we would handle as many Town Meeting items as possible, until lunch was ready to be served.

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

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 seventh (7th) day of March, 2017 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 (17 VSA §2561)

He then proceeded with the warned Articles.

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

**Town Moderator, 1-year term
Town Clerk, 1 of 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, 3-year term
Planning Commissioner, 3-year term
Planning Commissioner, 3-year term**

Moderator Duane read the 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

Selectboard Chair Seth Gardner began with the review of Selectboard's report on page 12 of the Town report. He began by citing 2016 as a year of much upheaval politically at all levels and locally with our conservation program, but felt that all the factors existed for consensus building and healing to begin on both fronts. He acknowledged the resignation of long time Town Clerk Terri Conti, thanked her for her years of service and urged any townsfolk who were interested to reach out, to contact her.

Chair Gardner then touched on the dissolution of the Fire District #1 due to the failure to reach agreement with the Crystal Springs company. He thanked the Charter Committee for all their work on the proposed Charter Amendments being voted on by Australian Ballot. He also lauded the fine work being done by the Planning Commission on the Village Master Plan, and the Village Committee on the Sidewalk Project, which is now in the Right of Way process, and the presentation of potential uses of the "Old LaPerle Farm" property. He also confirmed that the Village Park-and-Ride project was ready to go out for bid.

The Route 14 Bridge replacement project is now completely in the hands of the State, he informed the assemblage. There is scheduled work for the summer and fall of 2017 and all of 2018. There is now a final, expected completion date of 2019, with a minimum of road closure (to be determined by the state) and the bulk of the work being done at night. He briefly mentioned pending road improvements as well as the scheduled retirement of Road Foreman Mike Garand, who agreed to work past the summertime deadline if necessary, until a suitable replacement for his position could be hired and trained.

Chair Gardner went on to praise the diligence of our road crew on the maintenance of the roads. He expressed satisfaction on behalf of the town, for the successful renovation of the Fire Station which led to better storage availability for highway equipment. He also stated his pleasure with the truck purchases that the Murray Road grant funded culvert replacement project will happen this summer.

Regarding the upcoming FY2018 budget, Chair Gardner reiterated the board's efforts to provide all necessary services without unduly burdening the taxpayers. The Selectboard continues to maintain the budget with only a slight increase, which allows for slow, sustainable growth. The General Budget shows a 0.7% increase, despite significant increases in Health Insurance costs and Ambulance Services.

Finally, Chair Gardner acknowledged all of the volunteers whose hard and heartfelt work brought so much life and community to our town. He remarked on the resignation of longtime Selectboard member Casey Northrup and took a moment to welcome new Town Clerk, CJ Flynn.

Moderator Duane asked for any questions.

A single question was raised regarding whether or not we had input on the Park and Ride design and it was confirmed that we had.

Moderator inquired for any further questions. With none, he asked for and received a motion with a second to vote. All voted in favor, he declared Article 2 adopted.

ARTICLE 3: Shall the Town raise the sum of \$1,681,597 as proposed by the Selectboard, for laying out and repairing highways and for other necessary Town expenses for fiscal year 2018 (July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018). (To be voted by Australian Ballot)

Moderator Duane read the Article and explained that this Article was to be voted on by Australian Ballot. There was no discussion, so he moved on to the next Article.

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 the 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 spoke on behalf of the library, stressing that the library is only 50% funded by the area towns and 50% funded through other sources. She pointed out that there were a variety of programs available, many specifically targeted for children or senior citizens. It was shared with the assembly that Library Outreach is available and Book Delivery as well, for home-bound individuals.

With no further comments, Moderator moved on to the next Article.

ARTICLE 5: Shall the Town adopt the proposed amendments to the East Montpelier Town Charter, as recommended by the East Montpelier Charter Committee and the East Montpelier Select Board (to be voted on by Australian Ballot)

Moderator Duane read the Article and explained that this Article was to be voted on by Australian Ballot. There was no discussion, so he moved on to the next Article.

ARTICLE 6: Shall the Town adopt the proposed Plan of Merger of East Montpelier Fire District #1 with the Town of East Montpelier as an amendment to the East Montpelier Town Charter as recommended by the East Montpelier Select Board (to be voted on by Australian Ballot)

Moderator Duane read the Article and explained that this Article was to be voted on by Australian Ballot. There was no discussion, so he moved on to the next Article.

ARTICLE 7: Shall the Town authorize all property taxes for the fiscal year 2018 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 Wednesday November 15, 2017 and the second installment will be due on or before 5:00 PM Tuesday May 15, 2018.

Moderator Duane invited discussion. Finding none, he asked for and received a motion with a second to vote. All voted in favor, he declared Article 7 was adopted.

ARTICLE 8: Shall the Town raise the sum of \$7,500 for the Land Conservation Fund

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

Several concerns were expressed by various citizens. The Conservation Fund Advisory Committee was concerned that they were making decisions based upon outdated data, and so reassessed their goals and program guidelines. It was pointed out that minimizing available land raises land prices, and that land development overtaxes services but increases enrollment. The Conservation Fund Advisory Committee Chair read a statement stressing the committee's desire to coordinate their efforts with the Town Plan.

When asked what their goals were, going forward, they highlighted retaining natural sites, preserving farm land and farming or dairies, and preserving rural life styles. They stated that conservation raises the costs of schools but lowers land costs.

When asked about how much say the town has regarding conservation, the response was that conservation breeds creativity. Committee members were reminded by the crowd that property is only valued when someone is preparing to sell it. It was stressed to the gathering that East Montpelier values the land for trails and welcomes and embraces design suggestions regarding roadsides, trails and wildlife concerns from the public, which in turn attracts young families.

The subject of GMO Corn was brought up and highlighted as a growing issue that warrants our increasing attention, as materials rinsing off our corn crops are getting into the water table and thus into the ground water.

Finally, the Committee stressed that they have made every effort to work with the Planning Commission.

Moderator Duane invited further discussion. Finding none, he asked for and received a motion with a second to vote. All voted in favor, and he declared Article 8 was adopted.

At this point, it was 12:08 PM, so Moderator Duane declared a one hour break for lunch.

Town Meeting Reconvened promptly at 1:08PM. Moderator Duane took a moment to acknowledge and thank the lunch crew. He referred to lunch as the Best Potluck Lunch in Vermont. This was followed by rousing applause from the attending audience.

ARTICLE 9: Shall the Town raise the sum of \$3,100 for the Four Corners Schoolhouse Association for operating expenses during fiscal year 2018

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

A brief statement was made, regarding the recent repairs and renovations to the space. No

further discussion ensued, so the Moderator asked for and received motion with a second to vote. All voted in favor, and Moderator declared Article 9 adopted.

ARTICLE 10: 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 2018

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

The Sexton, Elliott Morse spoke in support of the Cemetery Commission. He commented that the monies cited in Article 10 aid greatly in the running of the operations and the maintenance of the local cemeteries. He acknowledged that there are funds available, currently held in CDs, but that they can only use the interest generated from them. There was brief public comment complimenting the diligent work of the Cemetery Commission. The Sexton sincerely thanked retiring commissioner Paulie Coburn for her long time service and many years devoted as a Cemetery Commissioner. She will be greatly missed in this role.

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

ARTICLE 11: Shall the Town raise the sum of \$7,000 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 2018

Moderator Duane read the 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 11 adopted.

ARTICLE 12: 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 2018

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

A representative for the East Montpelier Trails Inc. gave the townspeople a big thank you on behalf of the entire organization. A townsperson asked for an updated trails map. After a brief, heartwarming story, there was a request for better communication with the townspeople, going forward. With no further discussion or questions, Moderator asked for and received motion with a second to vote. All voted in favor, and the Moderator declared Article 12 adopted.

ARTICLE 13: Shall the Town raise the sum of \$7,500 for Cross Vermont Trail Association to be used as a part of the required local match of federal grants for the construction of a stretch of the Cross Vermont Trail, mostly in East Montpelier, including a bridge across the Winooski River.

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

A representative for the Cross Vermont Trail Association gave a broad overview of the project. It was asked if this was a one-time appropriation and the townspeople were assured that it was. A townspeople asked whether this cost was being shared by the surrounding towns, and once again we were assured that it was. It was asked what would happen if we didn't collect the necessary funds to obtain the matching allocation and we were told that it would then be obtained through fund raising. After discussing bridge alternatives and the ultimate aims of Cross Vermont Trail the Moderator asked for and received motion with a second to vote. All voted in favor, and the Moderator declared Article 13 adopted.

ARTICLE 14: Shall the Town raise the sum of \$7,000 for the Montpelier Senior Activity Center for operating expenses during fiscal year 2018

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

With no questions or discussion regarding article 14, Moderator Duane asked for and received motion with a second to vote. All voted in favor, and the Moderator declared Article 14 adopted.

ARTICLE 15: Shall the Town raise the sum of \$5,500 for the Central Vermont Home Health & Hospice for operating expenses during fiscal year 2018

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

Comments were shared regarding the local organization being the best in Vermont, and far and away the best in the area on grief counselling. No further questions or discussion were presented, so Moderator Duane asked for and received motion with a second to vote. All voted in favor, and Moderator Duane declared the town had adopted Article 15.

ARTICLE 16: Shall the Town raise the sum of \$8,333 as its fiscal year 2018 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 the Article and inquired for motion to discuss. Motion and second received.

Questions and/or comments centered on ridership numbers, route timing and the current need for local busing coinciding nicely with the East Montpelier Master Plan being considered by the East Montpelier Planning Commission. With no further discussion or questions, the Moderator asked for and received a motion with a second to vote. Most voted in favor, and Moderator declared Article 16 adopted.

ARTICLE 17: 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 2018

1)	American Red Cross	\$ 250
2)	Capstone Community Action	\$ 500
3)	Central Vermont Adult Basic Education	\$ 750
4)	Central Vermont Council on Aging	\$1,875
5)	Central Vermont Memorial Civic Center	\$1,000
6)	Circle	\$ 675
7)	Downstreet Housing & Community Development	\$ 150
8)	East Montpelier Community Connections	\$2,500
9)	Family Center of Washington County	\$ 500
10)	Friends of the Winooski River	\$ 200
11)	Girls/Boyz First Mentoring	\$ 300
12)	Good Beginnings of Central VT	\$ 300
13)	Good Samaritan Haven	\$ 750
14)	Green Mountain Transit	\$1,366
15)	Green Up Vermont	\$ 150
16)	Home Share Now	\$ 800
17)	North Branch Nature Center	\$ 750
18)	Onion River Food Shelf	\$1,000
19)	OUR House of Central VT	\$ 250
20)	People's Health and Wellness Clinic	\$1,250
21)	Prevent Child Abuse Vermont	\$ 300
22)	Project Independence	\$ 125
23)	Sexual Assault Crisis Team	\$ 250
24)	Twin Valley Senior Center	\$3,000
25)	T.W. Wood Gallery	\$ 500
26)	Vermont Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired	\$ 150
27)	Vermont CARES	\$ 150
28)	Vermont Center for Independent Living	\$ 245
29)	Washington County Diversion Program	\$ 600
30)	Washington County Mental Health Services	\$ 800
31)	Washington County Youth Service Bureau	\$ 400

Moderator Duane read the Article and inquired for motion to discuss. Motion and second received. He referred to page 10 of the Town Report that listed the 31 items. He inquired about questions or discussions regarding Article 17 on the funding committee report.

The only comment was in regard to the spelling of Girls on item #11. Some felt that if Boys was to be spelled Boyz, that Girls should be likewise spelled Girlz. This comment elicited polite laughter from the crowd. 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 17 adopted.

ARTICLE 18 Shall the Town of East Montpelier adopt the following policy:

Moderator Duane began by pointing out that the original amendment had been modified from what was printed on page 10 of the Town Report and that copies of the modified language were readily available. It was moved and seconded that any discussion or vote would be based on the amended language of the copies that were handed out. He read the Article and inquired for motion to discuss. Motion and second received.

The Town of East Montpelier will direct employees not to inquire into any resident's immigration status or religious affiliation as part of their official duties and not to dedicate any time or resources to:

1) Providing a state or federal agency with information that would not otherwise be available to the public; or,

2) Assistance in enforcing federal immigration policy.

The residents of East Montpelier accept, welcome, and will support immigrants.

Moderator Duane informed the crowd that the original article had been brought to the Selectboard in November. Since then there had been a great deal of political posturing, culminating in the newly elected governor's statement that Vermont "is not a sanctuary state". Since there was no legal precedent to use as a guide, the original was drafted based on similar legislation passed by neighboring towns. However, some guidance was provided right before Town Meeting, and this was the blueprint for the modified language used. No further discussion or questions were forthcoming, although the Selectboard did receive a thank you from the crowd for their work on this policy. The Moderator asked for and received a motion with a second to vote. Most voted in favor, and Moderator declared Article 18 adopted.

ARTICLE 19: To transact any other business that may properly come before the meeting

The Energy Committee has been re-instated and a sign-up sheet was provided to encourage new members to join and participate.

A motion was put forward in Support of Presidential Financial Transparency. Copies of the exact language were likewise provided and distributed throughout the Town Meeting location.

It read: The following motion highlights the efforts already underway in the Vermont State legislature (H. 243 and S. 77) and in the U.S. Congress (S. 26). Here is the proposed motion:

"The citizens of East Montpelier, Vermont support the efforts of our state and federal legislators to enact legislation that would require the disclosure of federal tax returns before a presidential candidate's name can be placed on the primary and general election ballots; and, upon passage, we direct the Select Board to convey the result of the vote to our elected state and federal representatives."

It was suggested and agreed that since this was a Friendly Motion, that a semi-colon be added to divide the two statements into one unified thought. This was agreed to and implemented (see above). With no further discussion or questions, the Moderator asked for and received motion with a second to vote. All voted in favor, and Moderator declared the motion adopted.

Moderator Duane asked for and received a motion and second to adjourn. All voted in favor and Moderator declared Town Meeting 2017 adjourned at 02:15 PM.

Respectfully noted and recorded by CJ Flynn - Town Clerk

Town Meeting minutes of March 7, 2017 approved by:

East Montpelier Selectboard Board Members

East Montpelier Town Moderator

Seth Gardner

Michael O Duane

Casey Northrup

Gene Troia

East Montpelier Town Clerk

Carl Etnier

CJ Flynn

Kimberly Swasey

Received for Recording:

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

Attest: CJ Flynn - Town Clerk