

TOWN OF GROTON, VERMONT ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2016

The citizens and legal voters of the Town of Groton gathered at the Groton Community Building on March 1, 2016 at 10:00 AM to act on the following articles along with casting their ballots in the Presidential primary, Blue Mountain Union School District # 21 budget and the NEK Waste Management District Budget.

Town Clerk, Linda Nunn opened the polls for the voting by Australian ballot at 10:00 AM.

Peter Lyon Selectboard Chairman stated the floor was open for anyone wishing to offer prayer.

Mark Gleicher spoke stating he didn't feel this was the place as people can go to other places of prayer.

Lawrence Daniels Sr. gave a short prayer.

Eric Volk stated his disappointment in the Selectboard for making a resolution without talking to the town's people.

Representative Chip Conquest spoke on traffic safety, the use of IIB devices for DUI drivers.

Representative Chip Conquest also spoke on H571 driver's license suspension and legalization of marijuana.

The Flag Salute was given and it was announced the Freshman Class from Blue Mountain Union School were selling refreshments and have a baby sitting service down stairs.

Peter Lyon announced Town Meeting was called to order and the first action of business was to elect a Moderator for the ensuing year.

ARTICLE 1: To elect a moderator for the ensuing year. Linda Nunn nominated Wayne Dyer.

Shaun Stetson seconded the motion.

Hearing no other nominations Wayne Dyer was elected moderator by voice vote.

ARTICLE 2: To act on the Town Report of the Town Officers as printed for the year ending December 31, 2015. Wayne Dyer, asking if the Town Report would be accepted as written. Gary Lamberton made the motion to accept the Town Report. Roberta Dana seconded the motion.

Peter Lyon stated he would like to recognize Fred Grant for his donation of time hauling the concrete blocks for the wall. Peter would also like to recognize Stan Pierce for his donated time to do the electrical wiring in the Treasurer's office and to put electric power to the flag poles both at the Community Building and the center on Flag Street.

Lisa Hart explained there were Balance Sheets by funds and there are corrections on pages 21, (General Fund total budget should be \$406,855.00 a difference of \$1.00 due to rounding) annual reserve funds, (General Fund total budget should be \$406,855.00 a difference of \$1.00 due to rounding) Article 7 was thought to have been added twice but after more research was compiled it was found that it wasn't. Groton Town Report was accepted by voice vote as corrected.

ARTICLE 3: To see if, as provided in 17 V.S.A. Section 2646 (16), the Town will vote to elect a Road Commissioner or authorize the Selectboard to appoint a Road Commissioner. Shaun Stetson made the motion to elect a Road Commissioner. Jim Downing seconded the motion. Hearing no objections the motion passed to elect a Road Commissioner.

ARTICLE 4: To see if, as provided Under 17 V.S.A. § 2651b, if the Town will vote to eliminate the office of Town auditor. Mary Grant made the motion to eliminate the office of Auditors. Jim Downing seconded the motion. Olin Gay questioned if the town would hire independent auditors and if so what would be the cost difference? Mary Grant Thanked the Auditors for all their years of service and explained how difficult it is trying to work with the new system. Mary Grant explained the Audit firm that is working with the Treasurer now understands the program so will be able to follow the work. Andrew Dorsett explained the cost would be around \$7,000. To \$12,000. Every three years. Passed by voice vote.

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ARTICLE 5: To elect the following Town Officers as provided for by the Public Laws of Vermont, and citizens to serve on the other committees as herein specified, and to fix their compensations: Moderator Wayne Dyer stated we would vote on fixing the compensations. Jim Downing moved to have the Selectboard set the compensation. Wayne Knott seconded the motion. Passed by voice vote.

Roberta Dana nominated Brent Smith Road Commissioner for one year. Stan Pierce seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations or objections the clerk cast one ballot. Brent Smith was elected Road Commissioner. Passed by voice vote.

Tracy Puffer nominated Mary Grant for Selectperson for one year. Jim Downing nominated Stan Pierce for Selectperson for one year. Stan Pierce declined the nomination. Hearing no other nominations Mary Grant was elected to the Selectboard for one year. . Passed by voice vote

Shaun Stetson nominated Wade Johnson Sr. for Selectperson for three years. Peter Lyon nominated Daniel Robinson for Selectperson for three years. Hearing no other nominations a paper ballot vote was done with a ballot count result of Wade Johnson Sr. 89 votes, Daniel Robinson 33 votes. Total number of votes 121. The Moderator stated that someone needs to have a majority of the votes. Wade Johnson Sr. was elected to the Selectboard for three years.

Caroline "Kitty" Diggins nominated Lise Shallberg as Lister for three years. Debra Johnson seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations or objections the clerk cast one ballot. Lise Shallberg was elected Lister for three years. Passed by voice vote.

Alissa Smith nominated Sarah Despins for Library Trustee for one year. Brent Smith seconded the nomination. Hearing no other nominations or objections Sarah Despins was elected Library Trustee for one year and the clerk cast one ballot. Passed by voice vote.

Kristian Connolly nominated Alissa Smith for Library Trustee for three years. Martha Montague seconded the nomination. Hearing no other nominations or objections Alissa Smith was elected Library Trustee for three years and the clerk cast one ballot. Passed by voice vote.

Eric Volk nominated Kristian Connolly for Library Trustee for three years. Pam Smith seconded the nomination. Hearing no other nominations or objections Kristian Connolly was elected Library Trustee for three years and the clerk cast one ballot. Passed by voice vote.

Deborah Jurist nominated Aaron Smith for Cemetery Commissioner for three years. Brent Smith seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations or objections Aaron Smith was elected Cemetery Commissioner for three years and the clerk cast one ballot. Passed by voice vote.

David Emerson nominated James Downing Jr. for First Constable for two years. Phillip Palmer seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations or objections James Downing Jr. was elected first Constable for two years and the clerk cast one ballot.

Brent Smith made the motion to hold the position open and authorize the Selectboard to appoint a second Constable for two years. Phillip Palmer seconded the motion. Hearing no objections the position will be held open and authorize the Selectboard to appoint a second Constable for two years. Hearing no objections it was passed by voice vote.

Brent Smith nominated Gary Lamberton for Grand Juror for one year. Voila Emerson seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations or objections, Gary Lamberton was elected Grand Juror for one year and the clerk cast one ballot. Hearing no objections it was passed by voice vote.

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Roberta Dana made the motion to have the Selectboard appoint the Town Agent. Stan Pierce seconded the motion. Hearing no objections, the Selectboard are authorized to appoint a Town Agent for one year. Hearing no objections it was passed by voice vote.

Roberta Dana made the motion to have the Selectboard appoint the Town Agent to Convey Real Estate. Stan Pierce seconded the motion. Hearing no objections, the Selectboard are authorized to appoint a Town Agent to Convey Real Estate for one year. Hearing no objections it was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 6: To see if, the Town will vote to provide elected officials who's positions require a full time work schedule with a payment equal to 5% of said official's annual salary, when that official declines Town offered health insurance, payments will be made quarterly. And to see if when an official is covered by Medicare the Town will pay for that official's premium directly. The estimated cost of this article for 2016 is \$5,200. Gary Lambertson made the motion to provide elected officials whose positions require a full time work schedule with a payment equal to 5% of said official's annual salary, when that Official declines Town offered health insurance, payments will be made quarterly. And to see if when an Official is covered by Medicare the Town will pay for that official's premium directly. Voila Emerson seconded the motion.

Roberta Dana made the motion to amend article 6, splitting it into two parts. Viola Emerson seconded the motion. It was voted and passed to split article 6.

Roberta Dana made the motion: To see if elected officials whose positions require a full time work schedule with a payment equal to 5% of said official's annual salary, when that official declines Town offered health insurance, payments will be made quarterly. Passed by voice vote.

Roberta Dana made the motion: When an elected Official whose positions require a full time work Schedule, is covered by Medicare and supplemental insurance will the Town pay for that official's premium directly. Motion seconded by Voila Emerson. Passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 7: To see if, the Town will vote, pursuant to Title 24 V.S.A. § 2804, to create a Professional Services Reserve Fund, whose purpose is to fund financial consulting services, and to fund the reserve fund with \$4,533.00 from the 2015 surplus. **This should read (to create a Professional Services Reserve Fund, whose purpose is to fund financial Auditing services, and to fund The Reserve fund with \$4,533.00 from the 2015 surplus).** Passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 8: To elect by ballot one School Director to serve on the Board of Unified Union School District #21, for a three (3) year term.

Tom Page nominated Brent Abare for School Director for three years. Pam Smith nominated Jennifer Kidder for School Director for three years. Hearing no other nominations a paper ballot vote was done with a ballot count result of Brent Abare 58 votes, Jennifer Kidder 28 votes. Total number of votes 86. The Moderator stated that someone needs to have a majority of the votes. Brent Abare was elected to the School Director for three years.

ARTICLE 9: Jean Denson made the motion the Town of Groton set the due date of Friday, November 4, 2016, by 5:00 PM as the deadline for the payment of taxes? (Postmarks **are not** accepted as a timely payment) Viola Emerson seconded the motion. Hearing no objections to the due date it was passed by voice vote.

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ARTICLE 10: Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum up to Three THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$3,000.00) to purchase radio equipment for use by the Town Constable? Daniel Robinson explained the Town is looking into some funding through grants. Jim Downing explained that the radios aren't compatible with the Sheriff's and the State Police radios. Viola Emerson made the motion to purchase the radios. Jean Denson seconded the motion. Hearing no objections it was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 11: Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum up to three THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$3,000.00) to purchase traffic radar sign equipment for use by the Town Constable? Daniel Robinson Again explained the Town is looking into some funding through grants. Laurine Grant made the motion to purchase the radar sign equipment. Jean Denson seconded the motion. Hearing no objections it was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 12: Shall the Town of Groton appropriate the sum of two hundred dollars (\$200.00) for the support of Northeast Kingdom Learning Services, Inc.? Mary Grant made the motion to approve article 12. Jean Denson seconded the motion. Hearing no objections it was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 13: Shall the Town of Groton appropriate the sum of two hundred dollars (\$200.00) for the support of Northeast Kingdom Youth Services, Inc.? Laurine Grant made the motion to approve article 13. Jean Denson seconded the motion. Hearing no objections it was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 14: Shall the Town of Groton appropriate the sum of six hundred fifty dollars (\$650.00) to Umbrella, Inc. to be used in providing services to women, children and men? Jean Denson made the motion to approve article 14. Eric Volk seconded the motion. Hearing no objections it was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 15: Shall the Town of Groton appropriate the sum of seven hundred dollars (\$700.00) to assist the Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging in providing services to senior citizens in the ensuing year? Pamela Smith made the motion to approve article 15. Roberta Dana seconded the motion. Hearing no objections it was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 16: Shall the Town of Groton vote to raise, appropriate and expend the sum of nine hundred and twenty dollars (\$920.00) for the support of Northeast Kingdom Human Services, Inc. not-for-profit 501(c) (3) organization, to assist in providing psychiatric mental health services to residents of Caledonia, Essex and Orleans Counties. Jean Denson made the motion to approve article 16. Alissa Smith seconded the motion. Hearing no objections it was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 17: Shall the Town of Groton vote to appropriate one thousand three hundred fifty Dollars (\$1,350.00) to Caledonia Home Health Care and Hospice to be used in providing health care services? Jean Denson made the motion to approve article 17. Laurine Grant seconded the motion. Hearing no objections it was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 18: Shall the Town of Groton vote to appropriate two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00) to Little Rivers Health Care in providing health care services? Jean Denson made the motion. Jim Downing seconded the motion. Brenda Powers made the motion to amend the article to \$1000.00. After some

discussion the motion was called. It was passed to amend the article to \$1000.00. Andrew Dorsett made the motion to approve article 18 as amended. Tonya Cozadd seconded the motion. Hearing no objections it was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 19: Shall the Town of Groton vote to appropriate the sum of eight hundred dollars (\$800.00) for the services provided by Rural Community Transportation (“RCT”) to residents living in the town of Groton. Peggy Burgin made the motion to approve article 19. Laurine Grant seconded the motion. Hearing no objections it was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 20: Shall the Town of Groton vote to appropriate the sum of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for Green Up Vermont. Alissa Smith made the motion to approve article 20. Jim Downing seconded the motion. Hearing no objections was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 21: What sum of money shall the voters approve to raise by taxation, to be reduced by receipts, state aid and other income, to meet the current expenses and liabilities of the Town General Fund and Highway budget, including any other warned articles so voted at this town meeting, and authorize the Selectboard to set a tax rate sufficient to provide the same?

Lisa Hart stated the amount needed is \$770,801.00. Gary Lamberton seconded.

Andrew Dorsett would like to amend article 21 to add \$7500.00 for the sidewalk reserve fund bringing it to \$778,301.00.

Dorothy Knott made a motion to amend article 21 to raise \$20,000.00 for the Emergency Services Vehicles fund and \$5,000.00 Emergency Services Building fund.

Shaun Stetson seconded the motion. Changing the amount to \$803,301.00. The amendment passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 22: To transact any other business proper to come before this meeting, this does not include the

expenditure of town funds or other business acted upon in the preceding articles.

Mark Gleicher requested that the Selectboard resolve the Resolution of the adoption of prayer and bring any Resolution adoption before the Town’s people sixty days before making it a resolution.

Jordan Smith questioned what is happening with the hole out back of the Community Building and why isn’t

there any building permit. Peter Lyon answered the Lawyer said that it didn’t need a permit as it is a retaining

wall not a structure. Roberta Dana questioned where the rest of the money is coming from. Peter Lyon answered depends on the good hearts of the people.

Meeting adjourned at 1:55 P. M.

Respectfully Submitted

Linda L. Nunn, Town Clerk

Wayne Dyer, Moderator

Election Official