

GROTON, VERMONT ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2017

The citizens and legal voters of the Town of Groton gathered at the Groton Community Building on March 7, 2017 at 10:00 AM to act on the following articles along with casting their ballots for the Blue Mountain Union School District # 21 budget and the NEK Waste Management District Budget.

Moderator Wayne Dyer called the meeting to attention informing the voters the polls for the voting on the Blue Mountain Union School District # 21 budget and the NEK Waste Management District Budget by Australian ballot opened at 10:00 AM.

Moderator Wayne Dyer announced the Sophomore Class from Blue Mountain Union School were selling refreshments, there is information on the back tables for the non-profit Agencies, there were also copies of the Town Plan available on the back table.

Henry Knott spoke on behalf of the Groton Fire Department and the Groton-Ryegate FAST Squad concerning the need for people to have address signage as when they are called out for an emergency they are only given an address and if there isn't signage telling them where your address is, it delays them getting to you. Henry Knott explained the Fire Department were selling reflective 911 address signs you could purchase with your address on it which would aid in finding your place in an emergency.

Moderator Wayne Dyer stated he had a request from Karen Woods representing Cottage Hospital to speak if there were no objections from the voters. Hearing no objections Karen Woods spoke on health care and thanked people for using Cottage Hospital.

Representative Chip Conquest didn't bring his town meeting information sheet, Representative Conquest also spoke on the budget, Governor's foci's on affordability of higher Education, rather to fund the Veteran's home, legalization of small amounts of marijuana, rural economic committee for energy and telecommunications.

The Flag Salute was given.

Moderator Wayne Dyer stated the floor was open for anyone wishing to offer prayer or words of inspiration or encouragement.

Words of inspiration were offered by Alissa Smith, Phil Coutu and Mark Gleicher. Richard Montague offered words encouragement. Lawrence Daniels Sr. offered a prayer.

Moderator Wayne Dyer welcomed the Blue Mountain Union School Seniors to Town Meeting.

Moderator Wayne Dyer 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 Brent Abare. Richard Montague seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations Brent Abare 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, 2016. Moderator Brent Abare, asking if the Town Report would be accepted as written. Gary Lamberton made the motion to accept the Town Report. Stan Pierce seconded the motion.

Treasurer Lisa Hart explained there was a corrections on pages 27, there was an \$8,000.00 Delinquent Tax Penalty revenue that was forgotten in the report changing the amount to be raised by 2017 town taxes figure from \$416,213.00 to \$408,213.00 which changes the figure for total estimated tax revenue needed for 2017 from \$731,947.00 to \$723,947.00.

Roberta Dana spoke stating on page 5 Article 7 the wording should say the \$4,533.00 money was for a Professional audit not for the **purpose to fund financial Auditing services.**

Linda Nunn answered stating she had listen to the recording many times and it said for the **purpose to fund financial Auditing services.**

Peter Lyon stated we are recognizing two people this year for their contributions to the community. Diane Kreis donated the funds to purchase a tractor trailer load of decorative blocks for the memory wall that with this purchase we believe we are close to having all the blocks necessary to complete the first tiers from end to end. Bob Farquharson donated his time and his excavator to install the next set of decorative blocks and also the memory granite slabs that cap the wall so the first section is nearly complete. We want to thank Diane and Bob for their generous donations

Gary Lamberton stated there was an error on page 23 it reads that Andrew Dorsett was put in as Agent to Convey Real Estate and it should be Gary Lamberton. Lisa Hart explained there was a misprint. Roberta Dana questioned a figure of \$4533.00 on page 31. Lisa Hart answered the Town Report is correct.

Stan Pierce stated two Special Town Meetings had been held and questioned if these meeting minutes should have been in the Town Report? Linda Nunn answered I wasn't asked for them so I didn't give the minutes to them. They probably should have been put in the Town Report.

Lawrence Daniels Sr. requested the minutes for the two special Town Meetings be printed in next year's Town Report. Linda Nunn answered they could be.

Mark Gleicher questioned why the two new Justice of the Peace names were left out of the Town Report?

Linda Nunn answered the Town Report was for 2016 and the Justice of the Peace didn't take office until February 10, 2017 so this was the reason.

Hearing no more corrections the 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. John Gordon made the motion to elect a Road Commissioner. Susan Gordon seconded the motion. Hearing no objections the motion passed to elect a Road Commissioner.

ARTICLE 4: 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:

Jim Downing nominated Brent Smith for 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.

Viola Emerson nominated Linda Nunn for Town Clerk for three years. Stan Pierce seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations or objections the clerk cast one ballot. Linda Nunn was elected Town Clerk. Passed by voice vote.

Viola Emerson nominated Mary Grant for Selectboard for One year. Stan Pierce seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations or objections the clerk cast one ballot. Mary Grant was elected Selectperson. Passed by voice vote.

Brent Smith nominated Deborah Jurist for Selectboard for Three years. Phil Coutu seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations or objections the clerk cast one ballot. Deborah Jurist was elected Selectperson. Passed by voice vote.

Caroline Diggings nominated Dorothy Knott for Lister for Three years. Lynn Palmer seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations or objections the clerk cast one ballot. Dorothy Knott was elected Lister. Passed by voice vote.

Kristian Connolly nominated Bill Paton for Library Trustee for Two years. Stan Pierce seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations or objections the clerk cast one ballot. Bill Paton was elected Library Trustee. Passed by voice vote.

Erik Volk nominated Suzette Murray for Library Trustee for Three years. Stan Pierce seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations or objections the clerk cast one ballot. Suzette Murray was elected Library Trustee. Passed by voice vote.

Aaron Smith nominated Shaun Stetson for Cemetery for one year. Stan Pierce seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations or objections the clerk cast one ballot. Shaun Stetson was elected Cemetery Commissioner. Passed by voice vote.

Aaron Smith nominated Tony Dennis for Cemetery for two years. Stan Pierce seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations or objections the clerk cast one ballot. Tony Dennis was elected Cemetery Commissioner. Passed by voice vote.

Erik Volk nominated Roberta Dana for Collector of Delinquent Taxes for three years. Julie Oliver nominated Carrie Peters for Collector of Delinquent Taxes for three years. Hearing no other nominations a paper ballot vote was done with a ballot count result of Roberta Dana 48 votes, Carrie Peters 69 votes. Total number of votes 117. The Moderator stated that someone needs to have a majority of the votes. Carrie Peters was elected to the Collector of Delinquent Taxes for three years.

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

Brent Smith 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.

Linda Nunn 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 4: (Second part) to authorize the Selectboard to fix the compensations of the elected officials: Hearing no objections it was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 5: Shall the Town of Groton authorize the Fire Department to spend up to \$30,000.00 for four (4) self-contained Breathing Apparatus including Tanks and four (4) spare tanks?
Aaron Smith spoke on behalf of the Fire Department explaining the need for upgrading the equipment. There were several comments, with Richard Montague making the motion to authorize the expenditure. Lynne Palmer seconded the motion. Hearing no objections it was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 6: Shall the registered voters of Groton approve the opening of certain roads in the town to All-terrain vehicle use in accordance with chapter 31 of Title 23 of Vermont Statutes Annotated sections 3501-3518)? Brenda Shepard made the motion to approve the opening of some roads. Stan Pierce seconded the motion. Jim Downing explained there was a piece in the newspaper that voiced many

concerns of speed control, noise & smoke & narrow roads. There were many questions and comments there were some for opening the roads so they could get from one place to another and many against. Wayne Dyer called the question. Susan Gordon seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken with undetermined results. The motion has been made for a paper ballot was requested. Moderator Brent Abare stated if you vote yes this means the roads would be open if you vote no this means the roads wouldn't be opened. Hearing no objections a paper ballot vote was done with a ballot count of yes 41 votes, no 61 votes. Total number of votes 102. The Moderator stated that the no's have it.

(B) If (A) above passes, then which one of the following proposed routes will be open? (A) Did not pass so the remainder goes away.

ARTICLE 7: To elect by ballot one School Director to serve on the Board of Unified Union School District #21, for a three (3) year term. Carrie Peters nominated Julie Oliver for School Director to serve on the Board of Unified Union School District #21, for a three (3) year term. Aaron Smith seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations or objections the clerk cast one ballot. Julie Oliver was elected School Director to serve on the Board of Unified Union School District #21, for a three (3) year term. Passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 8: Shall the Town of Groton set the due date of Friday, November 3, 2017, by 5:00 PM as the deadline for the payment of taxes? (Postmarks are not accepted as a timely payment) Stan Pierce moved the question. Susan Gordon seconded the motion. Hearing no objections to the due date it was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 9: 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, Town Treasurer made the motion to set the amount at \$975,571.00. Stan Pierce are the additional request added in. Lisa Hart Yes. Stan Pierce seconded the motion. Susan Gordon thanked the Town for supporting Area of Aging Service.

Roberta Dana questioned the increase in pay. Selectperson Mary Grant responded to the question stating the Selectboard had asked the employees what they thought their pay increase should be as they hadn't received any increase in several years and the increase equals about fifty cents a year. If the state raises the minimum wage to \$15.00 we will be ahead of them for once. The Highway has done a great job. Richard Montague stated what the Town employees are paid is a small amount.

Roberta Dana questioned why the book keeping wages and Auditing wages were still in there? Lisa Hart responded that the bookkeeping wages are for the Selectboard Secretary and her administrative duties wages. Mary Grant responded to the question concerning the Auditors wages as they are there for the CPA wages for doing the auditing and helping to put the town report figures together at the end of the year.

Roberta Dana questioned the \$6,982.00 for sidewalk. Lisa Hart and Carrie Peters responded this was a Repo printing error putting the town report together. These figures are from 2015. The totals at the bottom are correct. Roberta Dana wanted to amend the motion to reduce the figure by \$6,982.00, making the amount to be raised \$968,589.00. Lisa Hart responded again, to explain this is a typo error and that they are 2015 figures and it was not added to the bottom line and the bottom line is correct.

Janet Page stated that if the treasurer states the figures are correct then we do not need the amendment. The question was called to cease debate. It is not for the amendment. The aye's have it to cease debate without the amendment .

ARTICLE 10: 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.

Stan Pierce sidewalk project plans and if the state grant is still in place? Brent Smith stated the pole is Removed. When the pole was removed there were other problems found. There was water leaking up into the parking lot so a DI was installed and then when this was being done they found more pipes under where the sidewalk would be going. When they dug for the drainage they found the parking lot base is in poor condition and when the excavating work was being done out back of the Community Building the water lines to the spring had been cut off. Then to repair the parking lot there needs to be eighteen inches to two feet of gravel put in before we pave.

Then as many of you know there are several water lines that run under the parking lot that we need to deal with. We did get the second grant. Brent Smith stated that he had been here for many years and he didn't want to intentionally spend tax payers dollars so wants to have a plan in place before starting a project that would cost the tax payers un-necessary money. Brent Smith stated that he will meet with the Selectboard to see where they want to go now. Stan Pierce stated that during the special town meeting people were concerned if the grants would still be in place. The grants are still place and the Selectboard has just signed more papers on the grants.

Erik Volk stated the Library has a survey on the back table that they would like people to fill out.

Mark Shallberg spoke stating that there are many people and businesses that have given of their time and donations for work that have been done on various Town projects. We wouldn't be where we are with these projects without their contributions. However, there are several projects in various stages of completion namely: the memory wall, the drainage around the Community Building and the well, gutters for the Community Building, a design and plan for the back-up septic system for the Community Building. The design and plan for the back-up septic system for the Community Building were identified by the old Building Committee as top priority. These issues have been brought up at previous town meetings. The taxpayers are disappointed that no response has been received from the Selectboard regarding these issues. I would like to propose this as a Resolution that the Selectboard address these issues that have been set aside and uncompleted. We would like Cost Estimates and Completion Dates (Inclusive of all grants and donations) for each of the four items previously stated by June 1, 2017. We recognize that the Selectboard has had the task of making many decisions about various projects and the taxpayers appreciate what they have done in the past and present. Alissa Smith stated there is a bad smell from the bathrooms. Mary Grant spoke on these issues stating it will take a lot of money. The septic is working and being pumped. Peter Lyon is working on the wall. There are other projects that need to be done first. The Moderator's mentor spoke and there can't be money issues discussions made at this article. The Resolution was amended to report back to the people with the status on when these issues will be Completed by June 1, 2017. (minus cost estimates)

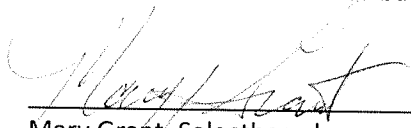
Caroline Diggins reported that the Town will be doing a Town Wide Appraisal.

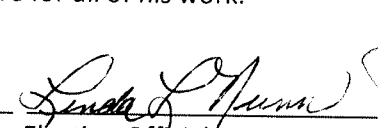
Linda Nunn wanted Thank the Sophomore Class, the Mothers and Fathers for all their cooking and time.


Linda Nunn: Thanked everyone for electing her back into office.

Linda Nunn: Thanked Wayne Dyer for being her righthand man and jumping in each time she needed help with Town Meeting.

Linda Nunn: Thanked Brent Abare for all of his work.


Mary Grant, Selectboard
Linda L. Nunn, Town Clerk


Election Official


Moderator