

MINUTES OF GROTON, VT ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2019

The Citizens of the Town of Groton, who are legal voters in Town Meeting are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Groton Community Building in Groton Village on Tuesday, March 5, 2019, at 10 o'clock in the morning, 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.

Prior to calling the meeting to order, the Moderator, Brent Abare, read administrative announcements and community service messages. The Moderator informed the voters there is voting in the back for the Blue Mountain Union School District #21 budget and the NEK Waste Management District Budget. The information is on the back table for the non-profit appropriations request that are listed on page 20.

The Blue Mountain Union School class of 2022 are selling refreshments and the Girl Scouts are selling cookies.

Words of encouragement or prayers were given by Alissa Smith, Peter Lyon and Mark Gleicher.

Peter Lyon and Brent Abare recognized William (Bill) Kane for all he does for the Town.

Aaron Smith spoke on behalf of the Selectboard recognizing the wonderful husband and wife team of Wayne and Dorothy Knott for the many years of dedicated service given to the town. For over 40 years Wayne and Dorothy have served the Groton Fire Department. With their consistent presence both for the dept. and in the station, offering a level of continuity over many decades that have been a tremendous asset to the fire dept. Nearly every single chicken BBQ, coin drop, fireman's auction and any other fund raising event held by the dept. has been attended by them (you could tack on a few more hours than a thousand). Over those 40 years Wayne has stepped up to serve the town as chief three separate times. Most recently serving ten years from 2008 to 2018. As chief, Wayne brought an excellent level of training to the dept. Wayne was one of the founding members of the Groton/Ryegate FAST Squad, being one of the first medically licensed responders in town. Dorothy has done everything Wayne has done, then some. She has done all the fire training, climbing ladders, slinging hose, pulling tools off trucks, performing CPR to making sure the dept. stayed on budget along with making sure the paper work way done and in on time. Thank you from the Selectboard and town. A round of applause and a standing ovation followed.

Representative Chip Conquest spoke on the list of unclaimed property, repaving of highways, teachers retirement fund, High speed internet and Mary Grant's retirement from RCT.

Moderator Brent Abare read Instructions to the Assembly from the Vermont Moderator's Guide according the Roberts Rules of Order.

The Girl Scouts lead the Flag Salute.

Moderator Brent Abare called the Town Meeting to order at 10:35 AM. The first action of business was to elect a Moderator for the ensuing year. Deborah Jurist, Selectboard asked if there were any nominations for moderator for the ensuing year.

ARTICLE 1: To elect a moderator for the ensuing year. Peter Lyon nominated Brent Abare. Roberta Dana seconded the motion.

Julie Oliver nominated Brent Smith. Kelly Emerson seconded the motion. Brent Smith declined the nomination. 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, 2018. Jean Denson made the motion to accept the Town Report as written with the corrections by Roberta Dana. Stan Pierce seconded the motion. Passed by voice vote.

Roberta Dana stated on page 24 the collector of current taxes shouldn't be listed as it was combined With the Treasurer's position. This was an article in 2015. The term should follow the Treasurer's term.

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. Brent Smith made the Motion to elect a Road Commissioner. Wayne Dyer seconded the motion. Passed by voice vote.

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: Brent Smith nominated Harold Hatch for Road Commissioner for one year. Sue Gordon seconded the motion. Phillip Palmer nominated Brent Smith for Road Commissioner. John Gordon seconded the motion. Brent Smith declined the nomination. Harold Hatch was elected road commissioner by voice vote.

Phillip Palmer spoke saying he felt Brent Smith deserved a round of applause as He has been a Road Commissioner for twenty six plus years. A round of applause and a standing ovation followed.

Peter Lyon nominated Stan Pierce for Selectperson for three years. Seconded by Richard Partington. Shaun Stetson nominated Wade Johnson Sr. for Selectperson for three years. Jean Denson seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations a paper ballot vote was done with a ballot count result of Stan Pierce with 30 votes. Wade Johnson Sr. with 59 votes. Total number of votes 89. Wade Johnson Sr. was re-elected for three years.

There were no nominations for the vacant Lister position. Wayne Dyer moved that the Selectboard appoint the Lister. Viola Emerson seconded the motion. Hearing no objections from the voters the motion passed.

Alissa Smith nominated Debra Tinkham as Library Trustee for one year. Susan Gordon seconded the motion. Motion passed by voice vote. Debra Tinkham was elected as Library Trustee for one year.

Susan Gordon nominated Torie Peters as Library Trustee for two years. Alissa Smith seconded the motion. Motion passed by voice vote. Torie Peters was elected as Library Trustee for two years.

Alissa Smith nominated Wade Johnson Jr. as Library Trustee for two years. Viola Emerson seconded the motion. Motion passed by voice vote. Wade Johnson Jr. was elected as Library Trustee for two years.

Susan Gordon nominated Alissa Smith as Library Trustee for three years. Jean Denson seconded the motion. Motion passed by voice vote. Alissa Smith was elected as Library Trustee for three years.

Derek Curtis nominated Tony Dennis as Cemetery Commissioner for three years. Shaun Stetson seconded the motion. Motion passed by voice vote. Tony Dennis was elected as Cemetery Commissioner for three years.

Derek Curtis nominated Shaun Stetson as Second Constable for two years. Alissa Smith seconded the motion. Motion passed by voice vote. Shaun Stetson was re-elected Second Constable for two years.

Derek Curtis nominated Gary Lamberton for Town Grand Juror for one year. Olin Gay seconded the motion. Motion passed by voice vote. Gary Lamberton was elected Town Grand Juror for one year.

Jean Denson made the motion to have the Selectboard appoint the Town Agent for one year. Stan Piece seconded the motion. Hearing no objections. Motion passed by voice vote.

Jean Denson made the motion to elect Deborah Jurist to be the Town Agent to Convey Real Estate for one year. Stan Pierce seconded the motion. Hearing no objections. Motion passed by voice vote.

Brent Smith made the motion to have the Selectboard set their compensations. John Gordon seconded the motion. Hearing no objections. Motion passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 5: To elect by ballot one School Director to serve on the Board of Unified Union School District #21, for a three (3) year term. Lise Shallberg nominated Brent Abare to be elected as School Director to serve on the Board of Unified Union School District #21, for a three (3) year term. Sharon York seconded the motion.

Kelly Emerson nominated Allison Ingerson to be elected as School Director to serve on the Board of Unified Union School District #21, for a three (3) year term. Olin Gay seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations a paper ballot vote was done with a ballot count result of Brent Abare with 42 votes. Allison Ingerson with 45 votes. Total number of votes 87. Allison Ingerson was elected for three years.

ARTICLE 6: Shall the town establish a reserve fund to be called the Emergency Services Durable Equipment Fund to be used for the purchase and replacement of durable Fire Department and FAST equipment in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 2804? Derek Curtis spoke on why they needed the reserve fund to be set up. Shaun Stetson made the motion to establish a reserve fund to be called the Emergency Services Durable Equipment Fund. Tracy Puffer seconded the motion. Hearing no objection the motion passed.

ARTICLE 7: What sum of money, shall the Town approve to raise and appropriate to fund the establishment of the Emergency Services Durable Equipment Reserve Fund? "Not to exceed \$18,000". There was much discussion concerning if the taxes would go up, also a few people discussed why they did not agree with having reserve funds. At one point it was mentioned to look at page 29 which shows the current balances in the reserve funds. John Gordon made the motion to appropriate \$1. Wayne Dyer seconded the motion. Shaun Stetson motioned to amend the main motion to increase the appropriation to \$18,000 and then withdrew the motion. During discussion it was stated that we should pay the bills as they come due and not pay in advance. Voters ultimately rejected the one dollar appropriation. Motion failed.

ARTICLE 8: Shall the town appropriate a line item in the budget of \$3,500, in order to compensate a

Second Constable for time during training, and for a background check? Stan Pierce made the motion for the town to appropriate a line item in the budget of \$3,500, in order to compensate the Second Constable for time during training, and for a background check. Jean Denson seconded the motion. Deborah Jurist explained that this is just part of the cost as it would take two years for training. Stan Pierce stated why would we want a Constable that isn't trained? Shaun Stetson explained he would be using his two week vacation from his full time job to do the training. Chris Stock made the motion to move the question. Hearing no objection the motion passed.

ARTICLE 9: Shall the town change the Emergency Reserve Funds from its original purpose, "providing financial stability to the Town in the case of a severe emergency?" To "providing stability to the Town in the case of a severe emergency, which endangers the safety and/or property of Groton or its residents?"

Wayne Dyer made the motion to approve the change of the description from (the Emergency Reserve Funds, "providing financial stability to the Town in the case of a severe emergency) to providing stability to the Town in the case of a severe emergency, which endangers the safety and/or property of Groton or its residents. Hearing no objection the motion passed.

ARTICLE 10: Shall the Town of Groton set the due date of Friday, November 8, 2019, by 5:00 PM as the deadline for the payment of taxes? (Postmarks are not accepted as a timely payment)

Wayne Dyer moved the question to set the due date of Friday, November 8, 2019, by 5:00 PM as the deadline for the payment of taxes? (Postmarks are not accepted as a timely payment) Jean Denson seconded the motion. Hearing no objection the motion passed. Roberta Dana suggested splitting the tax bill and sending it out as two installments, and changing from calendar year to Fiscal year.

ARTICLE 11: 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. Treasurer, Lisa Hart confirmed the sum of money required at \$976,478. Wayne Dyer moved the question. Stan Pierce seconded the motion. Roberta Dana brought up the funding of the Recreation Committee and if this should be funded by the town. Roberta Dana made the motion to reduce the budget by \$1,000. John Gordon seconded the motion. Anne Hatch discussed the benefits of the Free Recreation Programs that are offered. The town had a voice vote and this did not pass. Shaun Stetson made the motion to amend the motion to add \$18,000. Ruth Meter amended the motion to add to Article 7. The Moderator, Brent Abare, would not accept the motion on the basis that the Article had already failed but explained to the Assembly the process to Challenge the Ruling of the Moderator. The Decision of the Moderator was not sustained by the Assembly. Joseph Lourenco questioned what sum of money was to be budgeted to article 7. Joseph Lourenco Motioned to amend the motion to add \$18,000 to the General Fund to establish the Emergency Durable Equipment Fund. Motion was seconded and after discussion was approved. After discussion, the main motion to approve the amount of \$994,478 was approved.

ARTICLE 12: 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.

Wade Johnson Sr. Thanked Brent Smith for all the years of service to the Town.

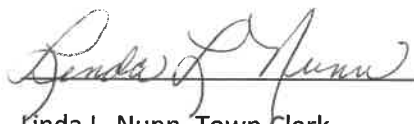
Linda Nunn thanked the students, parents, teachers and Tracy Puffer for providing refreshment's.

Linda Nunn also thanked Lee Flint, her son and other students for providing child care down stairs during Town meeting.

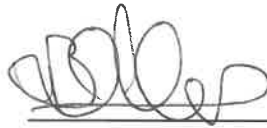
Phillip Palmer thanked the snowmobile club and Diane Kreis for the donation of the AED for the upstairs gym area.

Jean Denson spoke about "Groton's Lunch with Friends Program"

Meeting adjourned at 1:50 PM



Linda L. Nunn, Town Clerk



Brent Abare, Moderator



Election Official

Respectfully submitted by Linda L. Nunn, March 7, 2019