

# GROTON, VERMONT ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

## MINUTES

**TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2020**

The Legal Voters of the Town of Groton, are hereby warned and notified to meet at the Groton Community Building in the Groton Village on Tuesday, March 3, 2020, at 10 o'clock in the morning, to transact the following business from the floor:

Peter Lyon said a prayer and Alissa Smith gave words of encouragement.

Brent Abare, Moderator stated there was voting for the Presidential Primary, Blue Mountain Union School Budget and Solid Waste Budget in the back of the building.

The Class of 2022 were doing the lunch and there is a Child care services down stairs.

The Flag salute was said.

Chip Conquest spoke on the condition of Route 302 and the complaints concerning the road, it is scheduled to be paved in 2021.

Chip Conquest spoke on Unclaimed property and people could look it up on Google. Chip Conquest talked about primary care work force shortage and a few other topics.

Henry Knott spoke on residents putting up reflective 911 signage so that the Fire or FAST Squad could find your property if there was an emergency and that you could order the signs from the Fire Dept.

Henry Knott also explained the Fire Department were installing smoke detectors and CO detectors at no cost for people.

Aaron Smith stated there are 2 cakes up front to recognize Brent Smith for all the years of dedicated service to the Town of Groton. Aaron read a piece from "A to Z" on Road Commissioner by Judson Carr.

Brent Abare reviewed Roberts Rules of Order for town meeting.

Brent Abare called Town Meeting to order at 10:25 AM.

Stan Pierce requested Brent Abare ask people to Please hold their noise down so that people could hear what was going on.

Bill Dickey from the American League spoke of ways they could help Veterans and survivors of Veterans. He also stated they could use more volunteers.

**ARTICLE 1:** To elect a moderator for the ensuing year. Peter Lyon nominated Brent Abare seconded by Stan Pierce. Roberta Dana nominated Brent Smith. Brent Smith declined. Hearing no other nominations Brent Abare was nominated.

**ARTICLE 2:** To act on the Town Report of the Town Officers as printed for the year ending December 31, 2019. Mary Grant made the motion to accept the Town Report as written. Dawn Evans seconded the motion. Lisa Hart, Treasurer had a couple of corrections on page 59 for the Library revenue. Motion passed.

**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 Select Board to appoint a Road Commissioner.

Peter Lyon made the motion to have the Selectboard appoint a Road Commissioner. Fred Braman seconded the motion. There was some discussion and Harold was asked what he would like to see. Harold answered elected. Jean Denson challenged the moderator decision. Jean Denson made the motion to elect the Road Commissioner. Stan Pierce seconded the motion. Passed.

**ARTICLE 4** Shall the voters authorize the elimination of the office of Town Lister in accordance with 17 V.S.A. §2651c (b)(1) and replace it with a professionally qualified assessor who shall have the same powers, discharge the same duties, proceed in the discharge thereof in the same manner, and be subject to the same liabilities as are prescribed for Lister's or the Board of Lister's under the provisions of Title 32? And to authorize the Select Board to appoint an assistant to the Assessor?

Richard Montague moved the question. Gary Lamberton seconded the motion.

Dorothy Knott spoke giving a brief explanation as to the reasons of doing away with Lister's and going with an assessor with an appointed assistant.

Jean Denson moved the question. Stan Pierce seconded the motion. The article passed with a paper ballot of 77 total votes, 5 No to 72 Yes.

**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 have the Select board fix their compensations:

Phillip Palmer nominated Harold Hatch **Road Commissioner** for one year.

Brenda Bruleigh seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations the Town Clerk cast one ballot for Harold Hatch. Harold Hatch was elected.

Erica Conaway nominated Zachary Conaway as **Select person** for Three years. Viola Emerson seconded the motion. The Town Clerk Cast one ballot for Zachary Conaway.

Sue Murray nominated Carrie Peters for **Town Clerk** for Three years. Martha Montague seconded the motion. Roberta Dana nominated Linda Nunn. Torie Peters seconded the motion. Linda Nunn declined the nomination Stating Carrie Peters had worked with her for three years and felt that Carrie would do a great job as the next Town Clerk. The Town Clerk cast one ballot for Carrie Peters.

There are no **Listers** to be voted on.

Shaun Stetson nominated Jim Downing as **1<sup>st</sup> Constable** for Two years. Jean Denson seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations the Town Clerk cast one ballot for Jim Downing.

Tracy Puffer nominated Carrie Peters for **Collector of Delinquent Taxes** for Three Years. Sara Dennis seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations. The Town Clerk cast one ballot for Carrie Peters.

Alissa Smith nominated Deborah Jurist for **Library Trustee** Three Years. Zachary Conaway seconded the nomination. Henry Knott nominated Wayne Knott for Library Trustee Three Years. Deborah Jurist seconded the nomination. Both Deborah and Wayne spoke. Deborah Jurist was elected by voice vote.

Mark Shallberg nominated Aaron Smith for **Cemetery Commissioner** for Three Year. Shaun Stetson seconded the nomination. Hearing no other nominations Aaron Smith was elected.

Aaron Smith nominated Mark Shallberg for **Cemetery Commissioner** for One Year. Shaun Stetson seconded the nomination. Hearing no other nominations Mark Shallberg was elected.

Shaun Stetson nominated Gary Lamberton for **Town Grand Juror** for one year. Jean Denson seconded the nomination. Hearing no other nominations. Gary Lamberton was elected.

Roberta Dana made the motion to have the Selectboard appoint **Town Agent** for One year, Liise Shallberg seconded the motion. Motion Passed.

Roberta Dana made the motion to have the Selectboard appoint the **Town Agent to Convey Real Estate** for One year. Viola Emerson seconded the motion. Motion Passed.

**ARTICLE 6:** To elect by ballot one School Director to serve on the Board of Unified Union School District #21, for a three (3) year term.

Julie Oliver nominated Sarah Sanders for School Director. Viola Emerson seconded the nomination. Devon Powell nominated Tracy Puffer. Tracy Puffer stated she couldn't be a School Director because she was a teacher at the school. Hearing no other nominations the Town Clerk cast one ballot for Sarah Sanders.

**ARTICLE 7:** Shall the Town of Groton establish a reserve fund called the General Fund Surplus Reserve Fund in accordance with 24 V.S.A 2804 and deposit \$203,557.93 (this amount is currently in a CD listed on the Balance Sheet) from the General Fund Balance Surplus to fund the account?

Richard Montague moved the question. Jean Denson seconded the motion There was some discussion on this. Paper ballot vote 60 total, 18 No, 42 Yes. Article passed.

**Article 8:** Shall the Town of Groton fund the Highway Equipment Reserve account (\$64,189) and the Highway Infrastructure Reserve account (\$10,000) from the Highway Fund Balance Surplus and fund the General Fund Reserve Account (10 accounts listed in the Town Report Budget, \$76,745) from the General Fund Balance Surplus? A total of \$150,934. Article Passed.

**ARTICLE 9:** Shall the Town of Groton appropriate \$50,000, from the General Fund Balance Surplus to tear down, remove and fill in the Cilley House and to pay for the engineering costs of updating and improving the drainage around the Community Building and Emergency Services Building? Article Passed.

**ARTICLE 10:** Shall the Town of Groton establish a reserve fund to be called the Constable Durable Equipment Reserve Fund to be used for the purchase and replacement of durable equipment associated with the performance of Constable duties in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 2804? And appropriate \$4950 to fund this Reserve account?  
There were some discussion. Article Passed.

**ARTICLE 11** Shall the Town of Groton enter into a communications union district (CUD) to be known as NEK Community Broadband, under the provisions of 30 V.S.A Ch82? Michael Gaiss gave some information concerning the (CUD). Martin Klein spoke. Article Passed.

**ARTICLE 12** Shall the Town of Groton set the due date of Friday, November 6, 2020, by 5:00 PM est. as the deadline for the payment of taxes? (Postmarks are not accepted as a timely payment) Article Passed.

**ARTICLE 13** Shall the voters authorize total fund expenditures for operating expenses of \$1,120,438 of which \$661,513 shall be raised by taxes and \$458,925 by non-tax revenues? Peter Lyon made the motion to amend the amount and put \$3,000 into the Community and Economic Development line that is at 0\$ at this time. Fred Braman seconded the motion.

It was explained the CEDC had been dissolved and this is why there are no funds in it. The amendment was voted down. Failed.

Olin Gay called the question. Dan Webster seconded the motion. The article passed with \$1,125,388 as the final budget because of the addition of Article 10.

**ARTICLE 14** 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.

Peter Lyon presented Mary Grant with a plaque for the many years of service to the Town and Fall Foliage.

Fred Braman would like to see Town Meeting changed to an evening or weekend. Pam Smith spoke about the NEKSRS Program.


Tonya Palmer and the whole town Thanked Linda Nunn for her service.

Stan Pierce Thanked the Fire and FAST Squad for their services.

Zachary Conaway spoke concerning the Library.

Richard Montague made the motion to adjourn. Olin Gay seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 1:22 PM

  
Linda L. Nunn, Town Clerk Brent Abare, Moderator Election Official

Respectfully submitted by Linda L Nunn, March 7, 2020