

**ANNUAL TOWN & SCHOOL MEETING
MARCH 3, 2015 6:30 P.M.**

Town Moderator, Adrian Otterman called the annual meeting for the Town & School to order at 6:33 p.m. Adrian opened with a meeting with the pledge of allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

Adrian explained the Roberts Rules of Order that he would be following for the meeting and that he would moderate this meeting until another Moderator was elected under article 1 of the town meeting.

Representative Rodney Graham attended the meeting. Adrian asked if there was any objection to allowing Representative Graham to speak. Hearing none, Mr. Graham approached the stage and introduced himself. He explained that he is newly elected and still learning his way. He has been appointed to the Agriculture and Forest Products committee. They just voted a bill out of committee concerning water quality. He mentioned that Representative Davis was unable to attend, as she was attending other town meetings in the district. She is serving on the Institutions Committee.

Linda Labrie commented that education is center stage this year and urges Representative Graham to not allow the legislature to blame towns for school spending. She mentioned the preschool mandate as a prime example of unfunded mandates. Rep. Graham agreed with her.

Moderator Adrian Otterman opened the town and school meetings concurrently, and read both warnings. He reminded the body that we need to recess the school meeting to act on the town meeting first. At 6:45 pm, the School meeting was recessed.

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Article 1. Elsie Beard nominated Adrian Otterman for Moderator. The motion was seconded by George Malek. Adrian was elected Moderator for the ensuing year.

.Article 2. There was motion by George Malek to approve the reports of the Town Officers as printed. Adrian told the body that Kathie Felch had some amendments to make to the town report. She made the following amendments/corrections to the report: On page 35, the 5th bullet point in the second section of the Selectmen's Report should read **Lords Road, not Ladd Road**. On page 3, Corrine Relation's term as School Director **expires in 2016, not 2017 as printed**. On a motion made by George Malek and seconded by Jessica Foster, the town report was approved with corrections noted.

Article 3. Lee Youngman made a motion to nominate Kathie Felch as Town Clerk. Jessica Foster seconded the motion. Kathie was elected for the ensuing year.

Lee Youngman made a motion to nominate Kathie Felch as Town Treasurer. Jessica Foster seconded the motion. Kathie was elected for the ensuing year.

Linda Labrie made a motion to nominate Mary Claflin as Delinquent Tax Collector. The motion was seconded and Mary Claflin was elected for the ensuing year.

Elsie Beard made a motion to nominate David Otterman as Town Grand Juror. It was seconded and David Otterman was elected for the ensuing year.

John McNeil made a motion to nominate Elsie Beard for Town Agent. It was seconded and Elise Beard was elected for the ensuing year.

John McNeil made a motion to nominate Elsie Beard for Town Agent to Deed Lands. She declined the nomination, stating that she felt it should be a position filled by a selectman. She made a motion to nominate George Wild, Jr for Town Grand Juror. Carroll Beard seconded the motion, and George Wild, Jr was elected for the ensuing year.

Ron Tallman made a motion to nominate George Wild, Jr for a three year term as Selectman. The motion was seconded by Elsie Beard. Chad Spencer stood and voiced his objection, citing a project that took too long to complete. George Malek moved to cease nominations and have the Clerk cast one ballot for George Wild. That motion was seconded and approved. The Clerk cast one ballot for George Wild, Jr.

John McNeil made a motion to nominate Edmund Bedard for a three year term as Lister. The motion was seconded. There was a motion to cease nominations and for the Clerk to cast one ballot for Edmund Bedard, and it was seconded. The Clerk cast one ballot for Edmund Bedard.

Lee Youngman made a motion to nominate John McNeil for a three year term as Auditor. The motion was seconded, and John McNeil was elected to serve a three year term.

David Childs pointed out to the Moderator that there was also a vacancy to fill for an open Auditor position. Adrian asked for nominations. Hearing none, the motion was passed over.

Ron Tallman made a motion to nominate Clark Agnew for a three year term as Cemetery Commissioner. The motion was seconded and Clark Agnew was elected for a three year term.

Article 4. There was a motion made by Ron Tallman to break out the votes on compensation for Town officers. The motion was seconded and approved. Ron then made a motion to set the Town Clerk's salary at \$41,000 this year. Lee Youngman seconded the motion. Fred Kidder wants to see the position level funded. The Town Clerk's salary was approved at \$41,000.

Ron Tallman made a motion to set the Assistant Town Clerk's salary at \$19,000. There was a second. Chad Spencer questioned why the Town Clerk needed an assistant. The board explained

that federal regulations and financial accounting requirements make it too big a job for one person. Linda Labrie commented that it's not a new position, and Kathie Felch informed the body that the position has been funded since 2011. There was a question about how many hours a week the position was. It's a 21 hour a week position. The Assistant Town Clerk's salary was approved at \$19,000.

Lee Youngman made a motion to set the Select Board salary at \$3000 per year and all other town officers at \$20.00 per hour. She then asked to clarify her motion: Set the Select Board Salary at \$1000.00 per Select Board Member, and all other town officers at \$20.00 per hour. George Malek made a motion to amend the other town officers compensation at \$12.00 per hour. There was a second. Lee Youngman said that the town had been unable to hire an auditor at \$10.00, and if the town couldn't fill that vacancy, it would be forced to hire an outside firm to conduct an audit. When the town clerk put an independent audit out to bid last year, the bids came back at \$15,000, which would add a penny to the tax rate. Adrian Otterman asked for a division of the house to vote on the amendment to the motion. 33 stood to approve the motion as amended. 36 stood to NOT approve the motion as amended. The amendment failed. Adrian then asked for a vote on the original motion to compensate each select board member \$1000 for service and all other town officers at \$20.00 per hour. The motion passed. Janis Blais commented that at \$20.00 per hour, the vacant position of auditor was more appealing.

Article 5. There was a motion by Darin Magwire to raise the sum of \$237,561 for the General Fund of which \$188,825.72 is to be raised in taxes. Ron Tallman made a motion to amend the numbers as follows: \$242,902 to be raised, and \$194,166.72 to be raised in taxes. He explained that three items came up after the budget was passed by the Select Board. A) John McNeil discovered that a tax payer had been overcharged for several years on his property and the state advised us that we had to repay the over taxed amount of \$8,628.00. He proposed that we abate the tax payer's taxes over three years at \$2,876.00 per year. B) Orange County Court had originally indicated that they would not be raising our dues. When the bill came, after the town report had already been printed, the bill was \$2,065 more than they originally told us. C) The Employers contribution to the retirement fund will be going up by \$400.00 more than we had budgeted for, and again, we did not receive that notice until after the town report had already gone to print. The three changes will increase the budget by a total of \$5,341.00 and will add 1 cent to the tax rate, bring it from .19 to .20. There was a second by Darin Magwire to the motion to amend the General Fund budget, and the amended motion passed.

Article 6. Darin Magwire made a motion to raise the sum of \$616,874.00 for the Highway Fund of which \$306,009.68 is to be raised in taxes. George Malek seconded the motion. There was some discussion about the conditions of roads. Fred Kidder wonders if the town increased the budget for road fill, citing the condition of Bennetts Mill Road. George Wild spoke about roads, and outlined some of the plans for the coming year. The Highway Fund budget was approved as presented.

Article 7. Darin Magwire made a motion to raise the sum of \$2,000.00 to support the Town Cemeteries. Jessica Foster seconded the motion. Janis Blais asked the Select Board if most of this money was for mowing, and asked them to consider budgeting money next year for the mowing of the Recreation Field. The motion was approved.

Article 8. Lee Youngman made a motion to appropriate \$500 for The Family Center of Washington County. Darin Magwire seconded. The motion was approved.

Article 9. Darin Magwire made a motion to appropriate \$750.00 for Adult Basic Education. John McNeil seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Article 10. Elsie Beard made a motion to appropriate \$200.00 for Orange County Diversion. Lee Youngman seconded. The motion was approved.

Article 11. Dirk Anderson made a motion to appropriate \$1,000.00 for Central VT Council on Aging. Maise Anderson seconded. The motion was approved.

Article 12. Lee Youngman made a motion to appropriate \$300.00 for Capstone Community Action. There was a second. Colette Smith said 76 Orange households were helped by Capstone this year. The motion was approved.

Article 13. Lee Youngman made a motion to appropriate \$500.00 for Safeline. Jessica Foster seconded. The motion was approved.

Article 14: Jessica Foster made a motion to appropriate \$500.00 for People's Health and Wellness. There was second. The motion was approved.

Article 15: Jessica Foster made a motion to appropriate \$2,150.00 for Central VT Home, Health and Hospice. Dirk Anderson seconded. The motion was approved.

Article 16: A motion was made and seconded to collect taxes in two installments, August 15 and November 15, and to collect 1% interest on all delinquencies and an 8% penalty after the November installment. The motion was approved.

Article 17: Darin Magwire made a motion, seconded by Elsie Beard, to authorize the Town Treasurer, with approval of the Select Board, to borrow money in anticipation of the taxes and money allocated by the State and Federal Government. The motion was approved.

Article 18: Elsie Beard made a motion, seconded by John McNeil, to set Town Meeting 2016 for the first Tuesday in March at 6:30 pm. The motion was approved.

Article 19: Adrian asked if there was any other non-binding business to come before the assembly. Cedric Royea suggested that the town tag all future salary changes to social security changes. He also asked the Select Board to talk about why the discussions with American Towers over the cell tower have stopped. Ron Tallman described the process the board went through and said that American Towers never responded to the town's counter offer. Jim Robbins asked why Bennetts Mill was fixed and Reservoir Road wasn't. Ron said the town knows roads need to be addressed and the select board is developing a 5-10 year plan to address issues with the roads.

Darin Magwire made a motion, which was broadly seconded, to recess the town portion of the meeting at 7:50 pm.

Town Moderator Adrian Otterman called the assembly back to order at 8:00 pm for the school portion of the meeting.

ANNUAL SCHOOL MEETING MARCH 3, 2015 6:30 P.M.

Darin Magwire welcomed everyone and opened the School Meeting at 8:03 p.m.

Article 1. Darin Magwire made a motion, seconded by George Malek, to nominate Alan Small for a three year School Director term. The motion was approved.

Article 2. Jessica Foster made a motion, seconded by Lee Youngman, to nominate Darin Magwire for a two year School Director term. The motion was approved.

Article 3. Francis Kidder made a motion to nominate Chris Keane to fill a remaining two year term for a School Director. Chris declined. With no other nominations, Darin Magwire made a motion to pass over article 3. The motion was seconded and approved.

Article 4. George Malek made a motion, seconded by Linda Labrie, to authorize the School Treasurer to borrow money on the notes of the School District in anticipation of taxes. The motion carried.

Article 5. Fred Kidder made a motion to set the compensation for School Directors and the School Treasurer the same as last year. The motion was seconded by Dirk Anderson. George Malek made a motion to amend the School Directors' compensation to \$1000.00 each, up from \$750.00 last year. Lee Youngman seconded the motion. Elsie Beard made a motion to amend the School Treasurer's compensation from \$3,717 to \$3,900. Kathie Felch, the School Treasurer, declined the raise, and Elsie withdrew her amendment. The motion was approved as amended.

Article 6. Linda Labrie made a motion, seconded by George Malek, to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,760,209 for the operation of the Orange K-12 School District for the ensuing year. Linda said that she was on the budget committee this year and supports the budget. George Malek said that he appreciates the hard work the board has done to keep expenses down, but wants the board to continue to hold Montpelier accountable for increases in Special Education. He also questioned the big jump from \$3000 to \$5000 for the food service. Darin explained new federal mandates about menus and ingredients. The motion was approved as presented.

Article 7. George Malek made a motion, seconded by Darin Magwire, to apply \$30,000 of the FY14 fund balance for the replacement of two roof sections. Darin stated that this will complete the roofing project, and the roof should be good for 25 years. The motion was approved.

Article 8. Linda Labrie made a motion, seconded by George Malek, to apply \$7,500.00 of the FY14 fund balance, to be placed in the Capital Improvement Fund. Darin stated that the fund has a balance now of \$18,500, and the School Directors are anticipating the need to replace the boiler in the next year or so. He said that the ONSU business manager has been looking at alternatives such as wood chips. The motion was approved.

Article 9. Ron Tallman made a motion, seconded by Darin Magwire, to apply \$24,750.00 of the FY14 fund balance, to create and be placed in a Bus Reserve Fund. The motion was approved.

Article 10. Jessica Foster made a motion, seconded by Lee Youngman, to apply \$24,750.00 of the FY14 fund balance to create and be placed in a Preschool Reserve Fund. Linda Labrie said that she was opposed to this motion. The legislature hasn't finished the bill, and she isn't sure when it will be mandated. Better to give it back to the taxpayers now and raise it when we need it. Jessica Foster said that the intention of the article was to cushion taxpayers against a big increase in taxes when we do need to fund this mandate. Darin said that this \$24,750 is about half what they anticipate the preschool will cost. The motion failed.

Article 11. Fred Kidder spoke in support of the school board and school budget committee. Darin Magwire said that we have a valuable resource in Orange North Supervisory Union and it's business manager, and that Montpelier could learn from them. George Malek asked the board to continue to push back about behavior and special education costs and requirements. Darin pointed out that School Principle Tim Franke had been working on behavior issues since he was hired and there have been noticeable improvements. He also mentioned that WCAX did a story about the OCS program. There was a request for the school reports to be larger print next year, and for a microphone to be provided.

With no other business to come before the board, Adrian asked for a motion to adjourn at 8:30 pm.

Attest: Kathie Felch, Town Clerk