

ABSTRACTS OF MINUTES

TOWN OF WHITINGHAM ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The Annual Town Meeting was held on Tuesday, March 3, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. e.s.t. at the Twin Valley Middle High School in the Town of Whitingham, Vermont agreeable to the warning.

Leon Corse, Moderator went through the following announcements:

Benefit dinner for Robin Kingsley on Friday, March 6th at the Whitingham Municipal Center.

Selectboard member Wayne Corse could not attend the meeting as he was in Florida with his ill father-in-law. Carol Millett was at the meeting and was asking voters to complete a Town Hill survey.

Moderator trivia: How many Selectboard members have served since the moderator became moderator? Moderator stated he would buy the first individual with the correct answer lunch. After lunch the moderator announced that no one got the correct answer. The correct answer was 30.

At 10:00 a.m. the Cub Scout Troop 461 led the Pledge of Allegiance. Town Clerk, Almira Aekus declared the polls open.

The Moderator asked if there were any objections with dispensing with the reading of the warning. There were none. He asked the Board of Civil Authority to introduce themselves: Wayne Wood, Scott Reed, Craig Hammer, Tyson Dix, Elizabeth McKinley, Dana Homer, Susan Cooke Johnson, Abigail Corse, Seth Boyd, and Almira Aekus. At 10:10 a.m. the moderator declared the meeting open for business.

Article 1

Voted to accept the reports of the Town Officers.

Article 2

Voted to authorize general fund expenditures for operating expenses for fiscal year July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 of **\$608,406.00** of which **\$358,851.00** to be raised in taxes, the balance to be offset by **\$194,893.00** in anticipated revenues and **\$54,662.00** appropriated from prior year's fund balance.

Article 3

Voted to raise and appropriate **\$18,878.00** for the Parks Committee (formerly known as Town Hill Committee) for fiscal year July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021.

Article 4

Voted to raise and appropriate **\$76,046.00** for the operation of the Town Fire Department for fiscal year July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021.

Article 5

Voted to raise and appropriate **\$20,000.00** to the Fire Department Equipment Fund for fiscal year July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021.

Article 6

Voted to authorize **\$1,369,882.00** for the maintenance and repair of Town Highways for fiscal year July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 of which **\$1,250,726.00** to be raised in taxes, the balance to be offset by **\$119,156.00** in anticipated revenues.

Article 7

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$85,000.00** to the Highway Equipment Fund for fiscal year July 1, 2020 -June 30, 2021.

Article 8

A Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$25,000.00** to the Hazard Mitigation Fund for fiscal year July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021.

State Representative John Gannon addressed the electorate.

Article 9

Voted to establish a reserve fund to be called the Town Highway Garage Renovation and/or Replacement Fund to be used to address the renovation or replacement of the Town Highway Garage in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 2804.

Article 10

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$50,000.00** to fund the Town Highway Garage Renovation and/or Replacement Fund.

Article 11

Voted to authorize **\$82,596.00** for the operation of the Whitingham Free Public Library for fiscal year July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 with **\$69,271.00** to be raised in taxes, and the balance to be offset by **\$13,325.00** in anticipated grants and donations.

Article 12

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$10,000.00** to the Municipal Facilities Fund for fiscal year July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 for continued maintenance.

Article 13

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$15,000.00** for continuing support of Deerfield Valley Rescue for fiscal year July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021.

Article 14

Voted to authorize payment of real estate taxes on or before November 1, 2020 with ninety-days' notice; to be made by physical delivery to the tax collector before 2pm on that date or with a first-class postmark on or before that date.

Article 15

Voted to make overdue taxes bear interest at a rate of one percent (1%) per month or fraction thereof for the first three (3) months and thereafter one and one-half percent (1 ½%) per month or fraction thereof from the due date of such tax pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5136.

Article 16

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$20,550.00** for the operation of Town Cemeteries for fiscal year July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 with **\$19,550.00** to be raised in taxes, and the balance to be offset by **\$1,000.00** in anticipated revenue.

Article 17

Voted to enter into a communications union district to be known as Deerfield Valley Communications Union District, under the provision of 30 V.S.A. chapter 82.

Article 18

Voted to grant an exemption pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 3840 for a period of five years for the property owned by Unity Lodge 89 Free and Accepted Masons and used exclusively for the purposes of that organization for a five-year period beginning with July 1, 2020 tax year.

Article 19

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$400.00** for Brattleboro Area Hospice for delivery of volunteer hospice care, bereavement care and advance care planning services in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691.

Article 20

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$1,000.00** for Deerfield Valley Community Cares, an organization that provides fuel assistance for those not on state aid.

State Representative Laura Sibilila addressed the electorate.

At 12:25 p.m. Moderator recessed the meeting until 1:30 for lunch.

Meeting reconvened from lunch at 1:30 p.m.

Article 21

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$2,500.00** for Deerfield Valley Community Partnership, an organization that provides programming and activities for youth and families that promote healthy behaviors and prevent youth drug and alcohol use.

Article 22

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$500.00** for Deerfield Valley Food Pantry for the purpose of providing supplemental food assistance to area families in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691.

Article 23

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$1,500.00** to offset the cost of providing the community meals, to Dave and Terrie Dumaine, who provide the meals to the senior citizens in the valley.

Article 24

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$305.00** for Green Mountain RSVP for support of senior volunteer program with training and support for the volunteers who teach Bone Builder classes and who deliver meals in Whitingham in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691.

Article 25

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$1,203.00** for Health Care and Rehabilitation Services, Inc. to help support outpatient mental health and substance abuse services, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691.

Article 26

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$750.00** for Senior Solutions - The Council on Aging for Southeastern VT, Inc. to serve elders and assist with funding the community meal, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691.

Article 27

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$4,071.00** to Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies (SeVEDS) to provide workforce and economic coordination services to the Windham Region.

Article 28

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$6,000.00** for Twin Valley Youth Sports, an organization that provides all students in Whitingham, grades pre-k through 6th, the opportunity to play the organized sports of soccer, basketball, baseball, and softball.

Article 29

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$4,000.00** for Visiting Nurse and Hospice for VT and NH to help support the home health, maternal and child health, and hospice care provided in patients' homes and in community settings.

Article 30

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$250.00** for the Windham County Disaster Animal Response Team ("WinDART") in order to assist in the care and sheltering of pets in the event of a local emergency.

Article 31

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$1,795.00** for Wings Community Program's summer programming providing four weeks of academic, enrichment, and physical activity for students entering grades K-8 in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 2691.

Article 32

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$10,000.00** for Wings Community Programs that provide after school programs for Whitingham students Kindergarten through 12th grade.

Article 33

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$850.00** for the Women's Freedom Center for general operating support to provide services to domestic and sexual assault survivors and their children who are experiencing emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse and are residents of the town, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691.

Article 34

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$10,000.00** to support Economic Development in Whitingham for the fiscal year July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021.

Article 35

Voted to raise and appropriate **\$2,000.00** for support of Old Home Week activities for 2026.

Article 36

Voted to allow the Whitingham Free Public Library to spend grant monies and donations at the discretion of the Board of Trustees and Library Director.

Article 37

To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting.

Voted to suggest the town offer free childcare during future Town Meetings to encourage young parents, who may not have the ability to find and/or fund childcare, to attend and participate in town meeting. Discussion: Kristy Corey questioned who would be organizing that. Ms. Corse thought maybe the school or Selectboard could get the ball rolling. She suggested the care could possibly be done by high school students that need community service. Mary Lemaire questioned if the service would need to be provided by a qualified daycare. Elaine Foster stated she works with the regulating agency for childcare and as long as the parents are onsite there would not be regulations required. She agreed to help with support of the service.

Voted to recommend the selectmen uphold the right to bear arms as outlined in Chapter 1, Article 16 of the Vermont Constitution. The article was called and Moderator ruled the motion carried but there were 7 people who asked for a paper ballot. The results of the ballot were: 64 votes cast; 43 yes and 21 no, the article passed.

Article 38

Elected the following officers as required by law. Polls were open from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Twin Valley Middle High School Auditorium, 4299 VT Route 100, Whitingham, Vermont with the following results:

- Moderator, 1 year** - Leon L. Corse
- Treasurer, 1 year** - Almira L. Aekus
- Selectboard, 1 year** - Phil Edelstein
- Selectboard, 2 years** - Craig Hammer
- Selectboard, 3 year** - Scott Reed
- Town Grand Juror, 1 year** - Susan Cooke Johnson
- Town Agent, 1 year** - Tanya Bernard
- Delinquent Tax Collector, 1 year** - Almira L. Aekus
- Road Commissioner, 3 years** - Stanley A. Janovsky, Jr.
- Library Trustee, 3 years** - Maryann Cheveralls
- Cemetery Commissioner, 3 years** - Bradford S. Lackey
- School Director, 1 year** - Lesa Trowt
- School Director, 2 years** - Kristy Corey
- School Director, 3 years** - Christy Ann Betit

Meeting adjourned at 2:44 p.m.

Dated at Whitingham, Vermont this 4th day of March 2020

Attest: *Almira L. Aekus*

NUMBER OF VOTERS ON THE CHECKLIST – 890
 NUMBER WHO VOTED BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT – 386
 HIGHEST NUMBER VOTED FROM THE FLOOR - 105