

MINUTES  
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING  
March 3, 2015

Pursuant to notice the inhabitants of the Town of Halifax, Vermont, who are legal voters in the Town Meeting met at the West Halifax Elementary School multi-purpose room in West Halifax, Vermont, on Tuesday, March 3, 2015 for the 238<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Town of Halifax.

Moderator Patricia Pusey called the meeting to order at 10:05 A.M. and announced that the polls would be open from 10:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. for voting by Australian Ballot for Town and Town School District Officers.

Moderator Pusey called for a moment of silence in memory of those who had passed away.

The Board of Selectmen led the voters in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

The town officers were introduced: Town Clerk - Patricia Dow and Selectmen – Lewis Sumner, Chairman; Edee Edwards and Earl Holtz. Lewis Sumner introduced Robbin Gabriel as Selectboard Assistant. Moderator Pusey stated that the meeting would be run by Roberts Rules of Order except where state law overrules and gave a brief explanation of parliamentary procedure.

Moderator Pusey read the Warning in its entirety.

ARTICLE 1: The following Town Officers were elected by Australian Ballot:

TOWN MODERATOR - one year.....	Patricia A. Pusey
SELECTMAN - three years.....	Earl Holtz
LISTER – two years.....	Robbin Gabriel
LISTER – three years.....	Joe Tamburrino
AUDITOR – three years.....	Diane Longe
FIRST CONSTABLE – one year.....	Andrew Rice
SECOND CONSTABLE – one year.....	Roy G. Richardson
COLLECTOR OF DELINQUENT TAXES – one year.....	Laura Sumner
GRAND JUROR – one year.....	William Pusey, Jr.
TOWN AGENT – one year.....	Dora Green
TRUSTEE OF PUBLIC FUNDS – three years.....	William Moore
CEMETERY COMMISSIONER – three years.....	Kimberly Tine
LIBRARY TRUSTEE (WHITINGHAM LIBRARY) – three years.....	Catherine Bell

ARTICLE 2: Paul Blais moved that the town hear the reports of the Town Officers and to accept the Town Report as printed for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014. Joe Tamburrino seconded the motion. Reports were heard from town officers as follows:

Patricia Pusey spoke as Town Moderator. Went to Montpelier on Feb. 10 to a Moderator Tune-up workshop. Many towns have moved their articles to Australian Ballot.

Bradley Rafus spoke as Road Commissioner. Thanked his Road Crew and their families for all their support. Some of the projects will be reclaiming and repaving Town Hill and replacing a small structure near the Post Office. Grants will be available for both projects. Other work will include ditch and tree work.

Lewis Sumner spoke as Windham Solid Waste Mgmt Representative. Act 147 is a new law will start 7/1 which states food waste and recyclables are not to be put in household garbage.

Andrew Rice spoke for the Loan Review Committee. The committee still has the original \$300,000 available to applicants.

Lewis Sumner spoke as the Recycling Coordinator. It has been voted to keep the recycling containers until January 1. The new law 148 states that there cannot be a 24/7 recycling site. It needs to be fenced in and have operating hours.

John LaFlamme spoke as Emergency Management Director. Vermont Yankee did shut down as of December 29, 2014. The fuel rods have been removed from the reactor and are in a spent fuel pool. In 2020 the fuel rods are planned to be moved to cast storage. Halifax is still actively drilling and training.

Christina Moore spoke for the Halifax EMS. A rescue vehicle was received this year. We have been looking for property to house the vehicle with facilities and possible training space. The team usually responds to one call on average per week.

Article 2 was so voted and Moderator Pusey declared that Article 2 was approved.

ARTICLE 3: Andy Rice moved that the Town collect taxes for the Town and Town School District as follows: Taxes will be due on or before September 30, 2015 payable to the Town Treasurer. Taxes will become delinquent after September 30, 2015 and payable with penalties and interest to the Collector of Delinquent Taxes. Mitch Green seconded the motion and it was so voted. Moderator Pusey declared Article 3 approved.

ARTICLE 4: Edee Edwards moved that the voters will establish a reserve fund in an amount not to exceed \$60,000 to cover unanticipated revenue shortfall and to pay non-recurring and unanticipated general and highway fund expenses, to be funded with any budget surplus from the current fiscal year (FY15) Turner Lewis seconded the motion.

Edee Edwards stated that VLCT recommends towns have an emergency fund to cover up to 3 months of expenses which is 5-15% of the budget. Emergency funds can be used to fill a shortfall in employee benefits for example. Norm Fajans asks where the money will come from? And is any of this money from FEMA funding? Edee Edwards believes that most of the FEMA funds have been spent and we are not sure if there will be any surplus this coming year. Fajans proposes that any surplus be used to crush gravel. Pusey states that this proposal is not "germain" and the article cannot be changed in its purpose. A vote was taken on whether or not this amendment was "germain". Moderator Pusey declared the vote approved. This amendment is not germain.

Christina Moore amends the article to remove the words "not to exceed". Joe Tamburrino seconds the amendment. Earl Holtz stated the Selectboard did not want to put more than \$60,000 in a reserve fund in one fiscal year if the surplus is over \$60,000. Edwards states the surplus/emergency fund should be used for emergencies and not standard maintenance deferral. A vote on the amendment was defeated. Article 4 was so voted and Moderator Pusey declared that Article 4 was approved.

ARTICLE 5: Arthur Copeland moved that the Town apply any budget surplus beyond \$60,000 from the current fiscal year FY15 to reduce taxes in the next fiscal year FY16. Paul Blais seconded the motion.

Rachelle Ackerman asked how the figure of \$60,000 came to be. Edwards stated that \$60,000 was 5% of last years' budget. This amount would keep us operating for one month. Article 5 was so voted and Moderator Pusey declared Article 5 approved.

ARTICLE 6: Christina Moore moved that the Town recommend to the Selectboard the leasing of the old town garage building and premises to Halifax EMS for a term of not more than 49 years. Charlene Martynowski Seconded the motion.

Nick Bartenhagen asks why a term of 49 years was chosen. Holtz stated it was suggested to the Selectboard via state law. Robert Leete asked who would be responsible for the repairs and upkeep of the building. Holtz stated that will be worked out in the lease. Ray Combs asked if EMS wants to lease the building. Christina Moore stated they are not sure. The building sits in a very wet area, it doesn't have a well or septic. Rachelle Ackerman asks if the town will have a liability risk since the building is in such rough shape. Cara Cheyette asks if the improvements will be paid by Halifax EMS or will the town have to contribute. Andy Rice stated both the town and EMS are insured by the same company. Rachelle Ackerman amends the article to read the terms of the lease to exempt the Town of Halifax of liability in the event of structural failure. The Amendment was seconded. Lewis Sumner stated that all these details will be discussed with an attorney. Edee Edwards stated that liability and legal issues are so complicated that exempting the Town from liability would tie our hands. And not sure that we legally can do that. The amendment was so voted and Moderator Pusey declared the amendment defeated. The question has been called and seconded and so approved by vote. Article 6 was so voted and Moderator Pusey declared Article 6 approved.

ARTICLE 7: Arthur Copeland moved that the town raise and appropriate the sum of \$ 1,405,700 of which \$ 1,213,700 shall be raised by taxes and \$ 192,000 by non-tax revenues to care for the expenses and liabilities of the Town for FY16. Linda Combs seconded the motion.

Cara Cheyette asks if the budget currently contains \$ 80,000 to cover employee's insurance premiums. Edwards states the town covers 100% of the platinum plan. We have made adjustments to bring the wages closer to a median wage with other towns. Cheyette states there ought to be some cost sharing with the employees. Holtz said that some towns pay 50-75 % of the cost and some towns pay 100%. We capped the cost at \$ 80,000 and in future years the employees may have to contribute. Marilyn Allen asks about high deductible plans with the town assuming some of the cost of the high deductible. Edwards noted the cost of health insurance has gone down during this year. We did not look at this option for the current year. Norm Fajans states last year's budget went up 21% and this year's budget went

up 11%. Suggested an amendment changing \$ 1,405,700 to be last year's figure \$ 1,285,139 of which \$1,093,139 shall be raised by taxes. Mary Brewster asks where the cut in budget would come from with the cost of gravel and other services going up. Holtz stated we would have to discuss what services would be cut. Sirean LaFlamme asks what the savings would be if we crushed our own gravel? Rafus stated that crushing our own gravel costs about \$6/yard. We currently are paying \$ 16-18 per yard to have it trucked to our location. Lewis stated that salt increased by 36%. Edwards stated when budgets are cut, we get into deferred maintenance. Joe Tamburrino stated putting off paving only costs us more money next year because the cost of those materials increases. It has been moved and seconded to call the question. 7 people stood in agreement to have a paper ballot to vote on the amendment.

Result of paper ballot on the amendment was as follows:

YES	27
NO	68
BLANK	1

Moderator Pusey declared the amendment to Article 7 defeated.

The question has been called and seconded. Article 7 was so voted and Moderator Pusey declared Article 7 approved.

ARTICLE 8: Mitch Green moved that the Town set the Treasurer's budget for salary and collection of current taxes at \$ 13,000.00 plus \$ 4,000.00 for expenses for FY16. Charlene Martynowski seconded the motion. Article 8 was so voted and Moderator Pusey declared Article 8 approved.

ARTICLE 9: Arthur Copeland moved that the Town raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,000.00 total for the First and/or Second Constable salary and basic operating expenses as they exercise the powers enumerated in 24 V.S.A. 1936a (b) or enforce civil ordinances if so directed by the Selectboard, for the 2015 fiscal year. Charlene Martynowski seconded the motion

Doug Grob amends the article to read \$ 4,000. The amendment was seconded by Arthur Copeland. Len Derby was asked what he thought about the \$ 2,000. He stated the amount was quite low especially when it was shared with the Second Constable. Andy Rice explains that article 9 is basically for animal control and serving civil duties. Sue Kelly stated this article is more about the availability to serve civil papers and be there when needed. Various people stated all the help the current Constable has provided to townspeople. The amendment was so voted and Moderator Pusey declared the amendment passed. Amended Article 9 was so voted and Moderator Pusey declared Article 9 passed.

ARTICLE 10: Laura Sumner moved that the Town raise and appropriate the sum of \$ 8,000 total to supplement the First and/or Second Constable salary and basic operating expenses if they are actively attending the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council (Police Academy) towards becoming appropriately certified, or have completed the training from VCJTC and are certified constables with full law enforcement authority, for FY16. Bradley Rafus seconded the motion.

Article 10 was so voted and Moderator Pusey declared Article 10 passed.

ARTICLE 11: Laura Gerdes moved to Passover voting to elect two additional Selectboard members for terms of one year each pursuant to 17 V.S.A. 2650(b), effective the 2016 Halifax annual town meeting. Charlene Martynowski seconded the motion to Passover.

A motion was made and seconded to have a paper ballot. Seven people stood in agreement. The result of the paper ballot is as follows:

YES	46
NO	24

This vote needed a 2/3 vote. With 70 ballots cast, to Passover this article 46.2 votes would have to be yes. There was a small debate over what to do in this case. The majority of the room votes to revoke the Passover.

The result of the second paper ballot to Passover this article is as follows:

YES	52
NO	22

A total of 74 votes were cast, needing 2/3 vote to pass, Moderator Pusey declared passing over the article approved.

ARTICLE 12: Arthur Copeland moved that the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of:

\$ 200.00	Brattleboro Area Hospice
\$ 550.00	Senior Solutions (Council on Aging for Southern Vermont)
\$ 700.00	Woman's Freedom Center
\$ 250.00	Windham Child Care Bookmobile Program
\$ 190.00	RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) of Windham County
\$ 750.00	HCRS (Health Care and Rehabilitative Services)
\$ 200.00	Youth Services
\$ 50.00	Green-Up Vermont
\$ 250.00	American Red Cross
\$ 790.00	Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA)
\$ 500.00	The Gathering Place Adult Day Program
\$ 1,900.00	Visiting Nurse Assn. & Hospice of Vermont & New Hampshire, Inc.
\$ 3,500.00	Whitingham Free Public Library
\$ 4,000.00	Halifax EMS
\$ 2,500.00	Wings Community Programs
\$ 500.00	Deerfield Valley Community Partnership
\$ 2,000.00	Halifax Community Club
\$ 500.00	Deerfield Valley Food Pantry

Linda Combs seconded the motion.

James Coughlin asked what does the \$ 4,000 for the Halifax EMS cover. Andy Rice explained the money is used for pharmaceuticals such as Epi pens and similar medicines which expire every year.

Article 12 was so voted and Moderator Pusey declared Article 12 approved.

ARTICLE 13: Andy Rice moved that the Town vote to exempt the Halifax Community Club from property taxation for the ensuing five years pursuant to Title 32, V.S.A. Section 3840. Charlene Martynowski seconded the motion.

Article 13 was so voted and Moderator Pusey declared Article 13 approved.

ARTICLE 14: Moderator Pusey reminded the voters that any business transacted under this article would be nonbinding.

John LaFlamme recommended crushing gravel to save money.

Marilou Parkhurst asked the Selectboard to look into the highway employees paying a portion of their insurance premiums.

Craig Stone requests an edit of page 37 to correct the Justice of the Peace persons.

Linda Lyon thanked the Selectboard for their hard work and it would have been nice to have been able to discuss the article regarding the five member Selectboard.

Edee Edwards asks for help with the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. Page 38 is a list of appointments that are made during the first and second Selectboard meetings this year. There is an opening on the Planning and Zoning Board and the Energy Coordinator would like help. The Broadband Committee is short one member and would appreciate some help.

Andy Rice proposes a board to be placed at the bottom of Thomas Hill and Hale Road for the purpose of posting notices. Earl Holtz asked if someone would be willing to build a notice board. Edee Edwards stated that we are required to post notices in three places and if someone can get on an email list and print it to post it up there.

Joe Tamburrino suggests a change to the length of the constable term from 1 to 3 years.

Arthur Copeland moved and Charlene Martynowski seconded that the meeting be adjourned and it was so voted. The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 P.M.

Attest: Patricia Dew  
Town Clerk

We, the undersigned, approve and attest that the record of the Annual Town Meeting of the Town of Halifax held at the West Halifax Elementary School multi-purpose room on Tuesday, March 3, 2015 is a true record of all action taken at the meeting.

Attest: Patricia Pusey  
Moderator

Attest: Lewis L. Lemmon  
Other Election Official