

MINUTES  
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING  
March 1, 2016

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 1, 2016 for the 239<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Town of Halifax.

Moderator Patricia Pusey called the meeting to order at 10:03 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, Zoning Regulations Question and the Presidential Primary.

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; Doug Grob and Bradley Rafus. 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.....	Vicki Allen
SELECTMAN - three years.....	Bradley Rafus
SELECTMAN – two years .....	Mitchell Green
LISTER – two years.....	Kattie Russ
LISTER – three years.....	Mary Brewster
AUDITOR – three years.....	April Dupuis
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.....	Joe Tamburrino
TOWN AGENT – one year.....	Tina Blais
TRUSTEE OF PUBLIC FUNDS – three years.....	Stephen Cohen
CEMETERY COMMISSIONER – three years.....	Jeff Deforest

ARTICLE 2: The results of the Presidential Primary were as follows:

DEMOCRATIC:	Hillary Clinton .....	26
	Bernie Sanders .....	189
	Write-in: Donald Trump .....	1
	Spoiled Votes .....	1
	Blank Votes .....	1
	TOTAL VOTES .....	218
REPUBLICAN:	Jeb Bush .....	4
	Ben Carson .....	8
	Chris Christie .....	1
	Ted Cruz .....	14
	John R. Kasich .....	17
	Marco Rubio .....	22
	Donald J. Trump .....	52
	Blank votes .....	2
	TOTAL VOTES .....	120

ARTICLE 3: To vote by Australian ballot to approve proposed zoning bylaws. Moderator Pusey asked if there was any discussion regarding this Australian Ballot article.

Russel Denison was given permission from the assembly to speak as a non-voter. Mr. Denison spoke about growing up in Colrain, Massachusetts. He was the first hardwood log trader in the area. Mr. Denison spoke of his heritage in this country and this area. He is the third generation to own this property. Mr. Denison said that the quarry will not hurt this area. There would be work on the quarry for a few months throughout the year and the rest of the year they would cut timber.

Gerry Pratt was given permission from the assembly to speak as a non-voter. Mr. Pratt is the co-applicant for the quarry. He strongly encouraged the voters to understand the literature on the zoning regulations. A point of order has been asked about discussion on this article.

Moderator Pusey stated the Secretary of State says discussion can be made on this article.

ARTICLE 4: Arthur Copeland 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, 2015. Linda Combs seconded the motion. Reports were heard from town officers as follows:

Patricia Dow spoke about the new Mr Voter Page and how to use this page for voter participation.

Andrew Rice spoke as First Constable. The town is having a real bad dog problem with people not registering them. The dogs are behind on their rabies vaccinations. There has been dog bite incidents in town with a dog that was not up to date with rabies.

Laura Sumner for Delinquent Taxes stated that at the start of the year the uncollected delinquent tax amount was \$ 251,600.18 at the end of the year it was \$ 39,434.41 and today the uncollected delinquent tax amount balance is \$ 15,829.20.

Catherine Bell spoke as the Trustee of the public library. She stated that patron visits are up in the library.

Andy Rice spoke for the Loan Committee. There is still the original amount in the accounts to loan out and anyone can call any of the committee members to apply for a loan.

Bradley Rafus thanked his road crew for all their work. The culvert on Reed Hill Road was replaced this year and a full road reclaim on Town Hill Road. This year we will replace the concrete posts and guardrails on Branch Road, and Collins Road will get ditch work and culverts and new paving. Gerry Pratt a non-registered voter thanked the road crew for the great work they have done.

Lewis Sumner spoke for the Windham Solid Waste and stated the recycling boxes will be here until the end of June 2017.

Maggie Bartenhagen spoke on behalf of the Windham Regional Commission. She spoke of their activities throughout this past year.

John LaFlamme spoke as Emergency Management Director. This last year was spent rewriting the emergency response plan. The facility presents a lower amount of risk. The Potassium Iodine KI tablets are not needed anymore because the fuel rods are not emitting that kind of radiation anymore.

Article 4 was so voted and Moderator Pusey declared that Article 4 was approved.

ARTICLE 5: Andrew 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, 2016 payable to the Town Treasurer. Taxes will become delinquent after September 30, 2016 and payable with penalties and interest to the Collector of Delinquent Taxes. Linda Combs seconded the motion and it was so voted. Moderator Pusey declared Article 5 approved.

ARTICLE 6: Mary Brewster moved that the Town apply budget surplus from the current fiscal year (FY16) to reduce taxes in the next fiscal year (FY17) and Laura Sumner seconded the motion.

Patricia Dow stated that this article is good for reducing the tax rate, but it would have been nice to have been able to use the surplus to purchase equipment for cash instead of getting a loan.

A hand count was performed and counted by the Board of Civil Authority. The hand count resulted in 44 in favor of the article and 19 against the article. Moderator Pusey declared Article 6 approved.

ARTICLE 7: Mitch Green moved that the town raise and appropriate the sum of \$ 1,391,682 of which \$ 1,205,682 shall be raised by taxes and \$ 186,000 by non-tax revenues to care for the expenses and liabilities of the Town for FY17. Charlene Martynowski seconded the motion.

Cara Cheyette asked a highway question regarding crushing our own gravel and reducing our costs. Brad Rafus stated we pay roughly \$ 18.00 per yard. To rent a crusher it is \$30,000 per month. Plus man hours to run our equipment. Crushed gravel is roughly \$ 5-6 per yard. We have approximately 8-10 thousand yards ready to crush. Our plan is to crush with funds that will be left over from FY16.

Cara Cheyette asks about paving roads. Brad Rafus stated that a number of years ago we went about 5 years without paving and if we continued to pave our road would not be in such a

bad shape. It saves us money when the road is in bad shape and we reclaim it instead of just repaving.

Moderator Pusey declared Article 7 approved.

ARTICLE 8: Arthur copeland 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 FY17. Linda Combs 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 \$4,000.00 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 2017 fiscal year. Linda Combs seconded the motion and Moderator Pusey declared Article 9 approved.

ARTICLE 10: Arthur Copeland 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 FY17. Linda Combs seconded the motion. Article 10 was so voted and Moderator Pusey declared Article 10 passed.

ARTICLE 11: Arthur Copeland moved that the town vote that the Selectboard appoint the first and second constable Linda Combs seconded the motion.

Marilou Parkhurst asks if the term would be 1 or 2 years? Andy Rice stated the Selectboard would set the term when they appoint the position. The person would be retained as Constable until the Selectboard felt they should be terminated.

James Coughlin suggests this will open up the town for a lot more expense. Such as health insurance, retirement and a vehicle to use. Patricia Dow stated that appointed positions do not get benefits, such as vacation, health insurance or retirement. The expenses cover the mileage costs of using their own vehicle.

Jonathan Lorch wants to know the advantage of having all the training opposed to having police coverage. Andrew Rice stated that the biggest advantage is time. Windham County Sheriff does not do anything except traffic control. The State Police likes having a local constable to back them up in an incident.

Linda Lyon stated it would be good for the Selectboard to look into an applicants credentials and the whole process would be done in an open meeting.

Andrew Rice stated that the local constable can work closely with the State Police.

Marilou Parkhurst commented that the number of years should be changed, and keep this position an elected position.

Betty Roberts commented that an elected person has a hard time reporting to the whole population. If the person is appointed, then that person has a responsibility to report back to the Selectboard on a regular basis.

Laura Sumner amends the article to add "for a term on one year". The amendment was seconded by Mary Brewster.

Margo Avakian moves the question. Moving the question was seconded by Mary Brewster. Debate has been ended. A Vote was taken to amend the article. Moderator Pusey asked for the counters. A paper ballot was requested and 7 people stood for a paper ballot.

Results of the paper ballot were as follows:	YES	38
	NO	36
	Total Votes	74

Moderator Pusey declared the amendment to the article passed.

Patricia Dow stated that we are not losing our voice if this position becomes appointed. We have more of a voice. We just have to go to the Select Board meeting and we can nominate anyone we want. And also state any reasons why a person should not be appointed.

Sam Groves calls the question, Arthur Copeland seconded. Article 11 was so voted and Moderator Pusey declared Article 11 approved.

ARTICLE 12: Linda Combs moved that the Town vote to approve the sum of \$ 4,000 to continue support of

the Whitingham Free Public Library. Arthur Copeland seconded the motion.

Maggie Bartenhagen stated that the request is up \$ 500.00 from last year. Catherine Bell told us their budget is up to \$ 60,000 per year. Article 12 was so voted and Moderator Pusey declared Article 12 approved.

ARTICLE 13: 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.
\$ 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.

April Dupuis asks if the Windham Childcare Bookmobile program is still providing support to Halifax? Edee Fenton stated the Secretary of the Halifax School said the bookmobile does not come to Halifax anymore.

Marilou Parkhurst amends the article to eliminate the \$ 250 Windham Childcare appropriation. Edee Fenton seconded the amendment. The amendment was so voted a approved.

Marilou Parkhurst amends the article to increase the appropriation to the Halifax Community Club to \$ 2,250.00, the amendment was seconded by Joan Courser. A hand count was requested by the Moderator. The amendment was so voted and approved.

Article 13 was so voted and Moderator Pusey declared Article 12 approved.

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

Cara Cheyette asks the possibility to place on Australian the expansion of the Selectboard. She also talks about a public hearing regarding the paved road vs dirt roads in relationship to the houses and businesses.

Joan Courser presents flowers and cards to Patti Pusey for her 21 years of service as Moderator for the Town of Halifax and the Halifax School District.

Patricia Pusey shared how her family arrived at Halifax in 1970. They have raised 7 children in Halifax and they went to the Halifax School. She shared how the Towns people came together in a time of need for her family in 1971. The townspeople took care of our kids and cleaned our house and took care of all parts of our lives. She thanked everyone for all their support throughout the years.

Arthur Copeland moved and Linda Combs seconded that the meeting be adjourned and it was so voted. The meeting was adjourned at 11:52 A.M.

Attest: Patricia Pusey  
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 1, 2016 is a true record of all action taken at the meeting.

Attest: Patricia Pusey  
Moderator

Attest: Linda Combs  
Other Election Official