

ANNUAL MEETING
TOWN OF WESTMINSTER
WESTMINSTER FIRE DISTRICT NUMBER 3
TOWN OF WESTMINSTER SCHOOL DISTRICT
2016

The legal voters of the Town of Westminister, the Westminister Fire District #3 and the Westminister School District met at the Bellows Falls Union High School Auditorium in Westminister, Vermont on Saturday February 27, 2016 at ten o'clock in the morning (10:00 A.M.) to take action on the Articles following 1.

Approximately 216 people were present at the commencement of the meeting.

Moderator Fletcher Proctor welcomed Representatives David Deen and Michael Mwrocki, and Senators, Becca Balint and Jeannete White, who offered comments. Representatives Carolyn Partridge and Mathew Trieber were available for questions.

Moderator Proctor began the day with an invocation, and opened the meeting at 10:30 A.M. He noted that Roberts Rules of Order, subject to modification made by Vermont Statutes, will be used as the rules of procedure for the meeting, read the Warning of the meeting, and proceeded to Article 1.

Article 1: To choose all Town Officers, Town Fire District Number 3 Officers and Town School District Officers by Australian ballot, Tuesday March 1, 2016 from eight o'clock in the forenoon (8:00 A.M.) until seven o'clock in the evening (7:00 P.M.).

Candidates for office were offered an opportunity to briefly address the meeting.

Results of March 1 Australian ballot vote:

Number of names on the checklist: 2311

Number Voting: 1197

Results of Australian Ballot Voting:

Town Moderator: Fletcher D. Proctor

School Moderator: Fletcher D. Proctor

Fire District Moderator: Fletcher D. Proctor

Selectboard, 3 yr. term – Susan J. Harlow (831) Paul Banik (236)

Selectboard, 2 yr. term – Frances “Nancy” Dalzell (495) Kevin Hughes (435)

Lister, 3 yr. term – David Mulholland

Lister, 2 yr. of a 3 yr. term – Jacklyn Atwood

Lister, 1 yr. of a 3 yr. term – Bruce Sterling

Grand Juror, Peter McH. Stamm, vacant

Town Agent, Fletcher D. Proctor

Commissioner of Campbell Fund, Karen S. Walter, Ila Mitchell, vacant

Trustee Campbell Fund, Peter K. Harrison

Trustee of Public Funds, Peter K. Harrison

School Director, 3 yr. term, Timothy Young

School Director, 2 yr. term, Cheryl Charles (585), Molly Banik (462)

Director of U.H.S. #27, Molly Banik

Fire District #3, Daniel S. Green

U.H.S.D. #27 Budget – Passed (Yes 693, No 299)

River Valley Technical Center Budget – Passed (Yes 682, No 292)

Gregory "Greg" Holton is the recipient of the 2016 Citizen of the Year Award.

The Moderator opened the annual meeting of the Town of Westminster and proceeded to Article 2 from the warning.

Article 2: To hear the reports of the Town Officers and to take action there upon.

Sheldon Beebe moved article 2 as warned, seconded by Russell Hodgkins. Russell then added corrections to the reports, the Butterfield Library submitted the wrong report and there is a new insert with the correct report, also the FY17 Revenue Report was not correct and an insert for the Town report was available as well.

Discussion, need for clarification on the rainy day fund and where the FEMA bridge money was? The FEMA money was not in this audit as we received the money in October. Matt Daskall asked why Town salaries were all over the place and not the same for all. It was explained the salaries had not been set as of this meeting and they will be revisited.

The amended reports were accepted, and the motion passed.

Article 3: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminster will raise and appropriate the sum of \$130,000.00 for the Town Highway Equipment Reserve Fund.

Sheldon Beebe moved article 3 as warned, seconded by Norm Wright.

Discussion, Michelle Shrader asked if this money could go towards the purchase of a new grader? It was explained that this money was for the rotation of all the town equipment and by using this money would not allow for replacement of the smaller equipment as needed. Stephen Major asked if this fund was different from the rainy day fund? The board said that yes it was.

The motion passed.

Article 4: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminster will authorize the Selectboard to purchase a 2016 grader for the sum of \$360,000.00 reduced by trade-in of existing grader, with the balance to be financed through a 5 year promissory note in an amount not to exceed \$175,000.00.

Craig Allen moved article 4 as warned, seconded by David Mulholland.

Discussion, Craig Allen explained the 15-year rotation on the grader, wear and tear and that repairs get more and more costly. Between the trade-in and \$100,000.00 in reserve fund the amount to be borrowed would be no-more than \$165,000.00. Purchasing the grader with our equipment reserve fund would wipe that fund out. Katie Dearborn asked why we wouldn't use our surplus money and pay the grader off instead of borrowing the money. Craig stated the surplus would be used to lower taxes for the town. Resident asked why have a 5-year note? Craig answered so it would not hit the tax payer so hard. Ms. Gifford asked if there was any loan information? Craig stated the Treasurer had contacted 3 financial institutions, the rate that was chosen was at 2.1%, from Mascoma Savings Bank.

Cynthia Stoddard moved to amend the article that the money for the grader come from the surplus the Town now has.

Discussion on the amendment ensued. Toby Young stated the renovation of the Town Hall was in the near future and those funds may be needed. Residents were in favor of

having the rainy day fund as the cost to bail us out of an emergency like "Irene" would cost more than the 2.1% we would pay for the grader. It was also stated that there was a capital improvement fund solely for the renovation of the Town Hall, how much was left in that fund? It was stated that \$110,000.00 was in that fund. Norm Wright said the budget that is proposed is less than last year and the long term planning is in the best interest if the Town. Tax rates are not going up for Westminster but because the State School tax. Chris Hackett called the question on the amendment.

The amendment failed. Mr. Wilner called the question as warned. The original motion passed.

The meeting recessed for lunch at 12:00 noon. The Moderator called the meeting back to order at 12:46 PM.

Article 5: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminster will raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,000.00 for the Bridge Rehabilitation Reserve Fund.

Sheldon Beebe moved article 5 as warned, Martha Mitchell seconded. The motion passed.

Article 6: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminster will raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000.00 for the monthly publication of the Westminster Gazette.

Paul Banik moved the article as warned, seconded by Martha Mitchell.

Discussion by Janice Wojcik to clarify that there is already an appropriation for the Westminster Gazette for \$4,600.00 and that this is just for \$400 to make it to equal \$5,000.00? Paul Banik stated that is correct.

The motion passed.

Article 7: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminster will raise and appropriate the sum of \$9,534.00 for the support of Southern Economic Development Strategies to provide work force and economic coordination services to residents of the Town.

The Moderator stated that this article was placed on the warning by petition. Adrienne Major move article 7 as warned, seconded by Martha Mitchell.

Discussion: The Moderator asked if the voters would approve of the representative from Southern Vermont Economic Development Strategies (SVEDS) to speak on this Article as he was not a resident. With voter's approval, Alex Beck spoke of the benefits offered by this organization, working with the students, school and local employers to keep our kids and young adults in the area with training and placement in decent paying jobs. Norm Wright stated it was a good way to move forward for the Town and the money would be well spent but where did the figure \$9,534.00 come from? Alex explained it was \$3.00 per resident. The Selectboard did not support SVEDS when it came before the Selectboard twice. They did not feel it would be helpful or beneficial to the Town as other organizations offered the same resources for free. Ms. Gifford asked what organizations? Sheldon Beebe stated the Compass School and the UHS#27 had these programs in place. Paul Banik thought the \$3.00 was a random amount and that the guidance department at UHS#27 could offer these tools. Tony Elliot stated Compass School did not have this program in place. Corrie Haskell said she is a guidance counselor and this would be an awesome program and it would be great to have SVEDS help. Cynthia Stoddard sat on the SVEDS board for a time and found it to have done good work in the high schools and is in support of having them here.

Kathy Kingston called the question. The motion passed.

Article 8: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminster will vote to purchase a parcel of land (1.7± acres) and dwelling located adjacent to the Town Hall on the south side of RT 5 in Westminster for the purpose of providing additional parking, storage and office space for the sum of \$224,200.00, to be financed through a 5 year promissory note.

Toby Young moved article 8 as warned, seconded by Martha Mitchell.

Discussion: Russell Hodkins stated a donation was made in the name of the Historical Society to equal amount of taxes that would have been owed to the Town which would be about \$5,000.00±.

The DRB had approved the parking lot at the post office, the cost would be cheaper than purchasing and up-keep on the Barrett House. The Historical Society has their meetings for no cost to them at the Westminster Institute and have not been asked to leave the Town Hall. The engineers report was quite detailed and shows many issues with the structure of the house. To comply with the State we could use the Fire and Safety report, which to bring the house to code would be \$15,000.00±. It was stated that the Fire District House was unfinished and available for Town use. It was asked if the Town did not buy the house would it be put on the market after Town Meeting, the Board thought that yes it would. The presumed parking lot in the back of the Town Hall was a concern for the historic aspect of the Town Hall.

Bruce Parker called the question. A voice vote on the question was held however Ruth Grandy called for a paper ballot and six others joined in the request. 204 votes were cast, 56 yes, 148 no.

The article did not pass.

Article 9: *Article 9 shall not be considered unless Article 8 (above) is approved.*

To see if the voters of the Town of Westminster will authorize the Selectboard to sell the parcel of land and Post Office building located on Route 5 in the Westminster Village for a price to be determined in the discretion of the Selectboard.

Article 8 having been defeated, Article 9 was withdrawn.

Article 10: To see if the voters of the town of Westminster will raise and appropriate money to pay the indebtedness of the Town, repair highways and pay general expenses of the Town for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2016 and ending June 30, 2017, and if so, how much?

Toby Young moved Article 10 as warned, seconded by Martha Mitchell. Toby then moved to amend the article as follows: To raise One Million, Nine Hundred Fifty-Seven Thousand, Six Hundred Twenty-Four Dollars (\$1,957,624.00) to pay the indebtedness of the Town, repair highways and other general expenses of the Town beginning July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017 with One Million, Five Hundred Ninety-Nine Thousand, Five Hundred Seventy-Nine Dollars (\$1,599,579.00) to be raised by taxation.

The amendment passed.

Jim Matteau moved to amend the article a second time to read One Million, Four Hundred Ninety-Nine Thousand, Five Hundred Seventy-Nine Dollars (\$1,499,579.00) to be raised by taxation, noting the \$100,000 surplus.

The amendment passed.

The article as amended, to raise and appropriate the sum of One Million Nine Hundred Fifty Seven Thousand Six Hundred Twenty Four Dollars (\$1,957,624.00), with One Million Four Hundred Ninety Nine Thousand Five Hundred Seventy Nine Hundred Dollars (\$1,499,579.00) to be raised by taxation and Four Hundred Fifty Eight Thousand Forty Five Dollars (\$458,045.00) by non-tax revenues to pay the indebtedness of the Town repair highways and other general expenses of the Town beginning July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017, passed.

Article 11: To transact any other proper business to be brought before the Town of Westminster.

The Selectboard was thanked for their work this year.

A projector would be nice so the proposed figures could be seen.

The Selectboard was thanked for the ongoing use of space for the Historical Society.

The gravel pit from last year's article would like to be revisited.

Russell Hodgkins wanted to thank, Karen Astley, Administrative Assistant, Alison Bigwood, Town Clerk and Patty Mark, Assistant Town Clerk for their work into putting Town Meeting together.

The trash option chosen last year feels successful.

The Moderator declared the Annual Town Meeting recessed at 3:15 p.m. until March 1, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. for Australian Ballot voting.

The Moderator opened the annual meeting of the Town Fire District Number 3 and proceeded to Article 12 from the warning.

Article 12: To hear the reports of the Town Fire District Number 3 and to take action thereupon.

Chris Hackett moved the article as warned, seconded by Randy Major

The Article passed.

Article 13: To see whether the Town Fire District Number 3 shall authorize and instruct the Prudential Committee and Treasurer to borrow money, if necessary, to meet current expenses, on the credit of the District, in anticipation of the collection of taxes and/or the receipt of any State or Federal funds.

Daniel Green moved the article as warned, seconded by Martha Mitchell.

The Article passed.

Article 14: To see whether Town Fire District Number 3 shall raise and appropriate money to pay the indebtedness and other general expenses of the District for the FY beginning July 1, 2016 and ending June 30, 2017, and if so how much?

Bob Haas moved the article as warned, seconded by Kevin Hughes, Mr. Haas then moved to amend the article as follows: That the Town Fire District Number 3 raise and appropriate the sum of \$246,350 to pay the indebtedness and other general expenses of the District for the FY beginning July 1, 2016 and ending June 30, 2017.

Ruth Grandy moved to amend the article by adding "said sum to be raised by taxation" seconded by Martha Mitchell.

The amendment passed, and the main motion as amended passed.

Article 15: To transact any other business proper to be brought before the Town Fire District Number 3 meeting.

The Fire District was thanked.

The families of the Fire District asked to stand, thanked and applauded.

The Moderator declared the Town Fire District Meeting recessed at 3:23 p.m.

The Moderator opened the annual meeting of the Westminster Town School District and proceeded to Article 16 from the warning.

Article 16: To hear the reports of the Westminster Town School District Officers and to take action thereupon.

Elise Manning moved the article as warned, seconded by Kevin Hughes.

Discussion: The Board spoke on the numerous projects they were working on this year. To include the strategic plan, VSTA facilities process, volunteers, grant resources, incorporating crafts, outdoor activities, as well as Act 46. Informational meetings on Act 46 will be starting in April/May for each Town in the district, to come up with a plan to satisfy the goals of Act 46.

The article passed.

Article 17: Shall the Westminster Town School District authorize and instruct its School Directors and Treasurer to borrow money, if necessary, on the credit of the Town School District for its current expenses in anticipation of the collection of taxes and receipt of money due from State aid.

David Major moved the article as warned, seconded by Kevin Hughes. The motion passed.

Article 18: Shall the Westminster Town School District vote to pay its District Officers compensation in the amounts of: Board Chair-\$1,100.00; Board Members-\$800.00; Clerk-\$125.00 and; Treasurer \$1,000.00.

Ian Sbrardellati moved the article as warned, seconded by Kevin Hughes.

Discussion: It was asked if the amounts paid were by the meeting or for the year? The Board and Treasurer is paid by the year and the Clerk compensation is for the Annual Meeting.

The article passed.

Article 19: Shall the Westminster Town School District apply the sum of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000.00) from the fiscal year 2015 fund balance to create a reserve fund to be used for capital improvements at the Westminster Schools and authorize the Board to expend said funds.

Rick Gordon moved the article as warned, seconded by Martha Mitchell.

Discussion: Ian Sbardellati spoke of non-budgeted items failing and this fund would be in place to repair, replace these items. This fund would not burden the tax payer.

The motion passed.

Article 20: Shall the Westminster Town School District apply the sum of eighty thousand dollars (\$80,000.00) from fiscal year 2015 fund balance to create a reserve fund to offset expenditures in fiscal year 2018 in order to reduce taxes.

Elise Manning moved the article as warned, seconded by Kevin Hughes, the article passed.

Article 21: Shall the voters of the Westminster Town School District approve the school board to expend five million, thirty three thousand, five hundred three dollars (\$5,033,503.00) which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of sixteen thousand, ninety nine dollars and eight cents (\$16,099.08) per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 1.33% higher than spending for the current year.

Rick Gordon moved the article as warned, seconded by Kevin Hughes. Ian Sbardellati then moved to amend the article to read: Shall the voters of the Westminster Town School District approve the school board to expend Five Million, Thirty-Three Thousand, Five Hundred Three Dollars (\$5,033,503.00) which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of Fifteen Thousand, Nine Hundred Eighty-Eight Dollars and Sixteen Cents (\$15,988.16) per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 0.62% higher than spending for the current year.

Discussion: Ian Sbardellati these numbers are estimated pending mandates from the State, and that this figure also has the tax rate dropping a little better than .3 cents. He also stated that the proposed budget included after school programs and food service.

The amendment passed.

Molly Banik then moved the amendment to add Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000.00) knowing it cannot be allocated but would strongly suggest it was used for the winter sports program to make the total of Five Million Forty-Eight Thousand Five Hundred Three Dollars for the ensuing fiscal year. Seconded by Martha Mitchell.

Discussion: Elise Manning stated that \$6,000.00 was in the budget already for the winter sports program.

Ms. Banik then withdrew her amendment to the article. The first amendment to the article passed.

Article 22: To transact any other proper business to be brought before the Town School District Meeting.

The Board wants to publicly thank Ian Sbardellati and David Ramos for their honesty and integrity as well as hard work on the School Board.

Steve Tullar will be moving on in his career and leaving as Westminster School Principal, he was thanked for his service to the community.

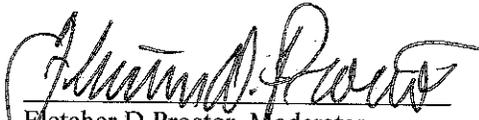
David Clark would like it noted that the students of UHS#27 have been to State wide competitions and have come in first and second place. National Advanced Honor Roll

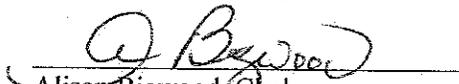
Poster in the lobby has UHS#27 as one of the attending schools. He stated that UHS#27 meets excellence in education.

The microphone runner, Cooper Newall was thanked.

There being no other business proper to be brought before the meeting, the Moderator declared the Town School District Meeting recessed at 4:25 p.m.

Dated at Westminster, Vermont this 4th day of March, 2015.


Fletcher D Proctor, Moderator


Alison Bigwood, Clerk

Ian Sbardellatti, Chairperson
Westminster Town School District


K. Sheldon Beebe, Chairperson
Westminster Selectboard


Christopher Hackett
WFD#3 Prudential Committee