

**TOWN OF WESTON, VERMONT
TOWN MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 6, 2018**

The Town Meeting was called to order at 9:05 am. Moderator, Wayne Granquist reviewed the rules for the meeting; asked new voters to introduce themselves; and asked for a moment of silence to remember those residents who passed away in the prior year as the list was read. General announcements were made including that the budget vote for the Taconic & Green school district ballot polls are open until 7:00 pm.

Kelly Pajala, State Representative, spoke and responded to questions regarding the State proposed legislation on gun control (Marguerite Mason); legislation to protect Vermonters from negative impact of Federal Tax Law changes and reformatting education funding (Tim Goodwin); finding the Agency of Transportation legislation difficult to comply with (Denis Benson). Asked if 100% of VT Lottery goes to education funding, Ms. Pajala advised technically it does, but by separating the Ed Fund from General Fund this will be more transparent.

Moderator read the introduction to the town meeting warning rather than the whole warning and, without objection, began with Article 1.

- ARTICLE 1:** To elect a Moderator for a one-year term. Marguerite Mason made a motion to nominate Wayne Granquist; 2nd by Barbara Lloyd. **Wayne Granquist elected to 1-year term by voice vote.**
- ARTICLE 2:** To elect a Town Clerk for a one-year term. Kim Seymour nominated by Marguerite Mason; 2nd by Charma Bonanno. **Kim Seymour elected to 1-year term by voice vote.**
- ARTICLE 3:** To elect a Town Treasurer for a one-year term. Kim Seymour nominated by Marguerite Mason; 2nd by Bob Brandt. **Kim Seymour elected to 1-year term by voice vote.**
- ARTICLE 4:** To elect the following Town Officers as required by law:

One Selectperson to a three-year term Bill Hoyt nominated Jim Linville; 2nd by Bob Brandt. Jim Linville spoke briefly. No further nominations. Moderator asked for a motion to close nominations and direct the Town Clerk to cast one paper ballot for Jim Linville. Moved by Shirley Knowlton; 2nd by Bob Brandt. **Jim Linville elected to 3-year term.**

One Selectperson to a two-year term Deb Granquist nominated Ann Fuji'i; 2nd by Deborah Hennessy. Ann Fuji'i spoke briefly. Moderator asked for a motion to close nominations and direct the Town Clerk to cast one paper ballot for Ann Fuji'i. Moved by Shirley Knowlton; 2nd by Deborah Granquist. **Ann Fuji'i elected to 2-year term.**

One Lister to a three-year term Howard Brosseau nominated Ron Prouty; 2nd by Marguerite Mason. No further nominations. Moderator asked for a motion to close nominations and direct the Town Clerk to cast one paper ballot for Ron Prouty. Motion made by Mimi Neff; 2nd by Deb Granquist. **Ron Prouty elected to 3-year term.**

One Lister to a three-year term Position was vacant for 2017. Howard Brosseau nominated Greg Carroll; 2nd by Deb Granquist. No further nominations. Moderator asked for a motion to close nominations and direct the Town Clerk to cast one paper ballot for Greg Carroll. Motion by Marguerite Mason; 2nd by Bob Brandt. **Greg Carroll elected to 3-year term.**

A Town Constable to a one-year term Position was vacant in 2017; no nominations. **Position vacant.**

Collector of Delinquent Taxes to a one-year term Bonnie Rounds nominated Sandra Goodwin; 2nd by Deborah Hennessy. No other nominations. **Sandra Goodwin elected by voice vote.**

One School Board Director to the Mt. Town Regional School Board (One-year term or until expiration [of the RED]) Nicole Pfister nominated Carrie Chalmers; 2nd by Marguerite Mason. No other nominations. **Carrie Chalmers elected to a 1-year term by voice vote.**

Town Grand Juror to a one-year term Deb Granquist nominated Wayne Granquist; 2nd by Bob Brandt. No further nominations. **Wayne Granquist elected to a 1-year term by voice vote.**

Town Agent to a one-year term Maureen Brandt nominated James Young; 2nd by Charma Bonanno. No other nominations. **James Young elected to a 1-year term by voice vote.**

One Library Trustee to a five-year term. Donna Bonang nominated by Deb Granquist; 2nd by Marguerite Mason. No further nominations. **Donna Bonang elected to a 5-year term by voice vote.**

One Trustee of Public Funds to a three-year term Nicole Pfister nominated by Mimi Neff; 2nd Marguerite Mason. No further nominations. **Nicole Pfister elected to a 3-year term by voice vote.**

One Cemetery Commissioner for a five-year term Maureen Brandt nominated William Hoyt; 2nd by Charma Bonanno. No further nominations. **William Hoyt elected to a 5-year term by voice vote.**

One Cemetery Commissioner for a one-year term Deb Granquist nominated Mimi Neff; 2nd by Bob Brandt. No other nominations. **Mimi Neff elected to a 1-year term by voice vote.**

Moderator gave the voters an opportunity to ask questions of the town officers about any of the reports submitted or other questions. Bill Hoyt advised that Dick Lechthaler has been working on the Cemetery Commission filling a vacancy on that board. He asked how to make that official. Jim Linville responded that the Selectboard would accept that suggestion.

Jim Linville spoke about the Selectboard report in which the numerous volunteers were thanked, but forgot to mention Jeff Yrsha who worked hard to repair the Shaw Knoll culvert when it was washed out last year. Jim Linville thanked Jeff in person and commented that it is so easy to leave people out when writing the report. Many residents work hard for nothing more than the satisfaction of making the town what it is; he thanked them all.

Marguerite Mason asked for a definition of what the "arm's length transaction" meant in the Lister's Report. Howard Brosseau stated that it is a sale between people who have no personal or business relationship between them.

ARTICLE 5: To see if the Town will appropriate the following sums totaling ~~\$96,945~~ **\$98,445** to the following organizations that included financial information with their request. Moved by Barbara Lloyd; 2nd Deb Granquist. Moderator read the list of appropriations requests giving voters an opportunity to ask questions on any.

Nicole Pfister asked how the \$9,500 would be used for the Cold Spring Park. Response from David Raymond, President of WCA that about half of the amount would be used for the annual upkeep of the park. Engineering firm, DuBois and King will draw up plan to approach the State of Vermont for a permit to determine what the State will be amenable to having done to the park. Ann Fuji'i also clarified that \$5,000 would be used for the regular maintenance; \$4,500 would be used to help pay for reinforcing the upper dam to keep it secured. WCA asked for half the total cost from the town on the capital expense. Karnie DeCell asked that the land below the dam be cleaned up as part of the upcoming work/maintenance.

Organization	2016 Actual Request	2016 Voter Approved	2017 Actual Request	2017 Voter Approved	2018 Actual Request	2018 Actual Budget
Cold Spring Park – WCA	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$9,500	\$9,500
Farrar Park Association	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$9,500	\$9,500
Weston Cemetery Commission*	\$500	\$8,300	\$500	9,825*	\$10,005	\$10,005
Weston Recreation Club	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$13,000
Weston Volunteer Fire Department	\$36,525	\$36,525	\$26,225	\$26,225	\$27,850	\$27,850
Wilder Memorial Library	\$12,600	\$12,600	\$14,585	\$14,585	\$15,000	\$15,000
Subtotal of Organizations located in Weston	\$72,625	\$80,425	\$69,310	\$78,635	\$84,855	\$84,855
Organization	2016 Actual Request	2016 Voter Approved	2017 Actual Request	2017 Voter Approved	2018 Actual Request	2018 Actual Budget
GNAT-TV	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$500	\$2,000	\$500 \$2,000
SEVCA –Southeastern Vermont Community Action, Inc.	\$630	\$630	\$630	\$630	\$630	\$630
Flood Brook Athletic Association	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Green-Up Vermont	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50
The Collaborative	\$750	\$750	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$750	\$750
Neighborhood Connections	\$2,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Vermont Assn for the Blind & Visually Impaired	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
Vermont Center for Independent Living	\$230	\$230	\$230	\$230	\$230	\$230
West River Sports Association	\$990	\$990	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Health Care & Rehabilitation Services (HCRS)	\$630	\$630	\$630	\$630	\$630	\$630
Visiting Nurse Hospice for VT & NH	\$2,350	\$2,350	\$2,350	\$2,350	\$2,350	\$2,350
The Current – Connecticut River Transit, Inc.	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250
Council on Aging – Senior Solutions	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$1,600
Subtotal of Other Organizations	\$13,580	\$14,580	\$13,840	\$12,340	\$13,590	\$12,090 \$13,590
Total of Weston & Other Organizations	\$86,205	\$95,005	\$83,150	\$90,975	\$98,445	\$96,945 \$98,445

* Vermont Statute V.S.A. Title 18 §5361 A town may vote sums of money necessary for purchasing, holding, and keeping in repair suitable grounds and other conveniences for burying the dead. The selectmen may make necessary regulations concerning public burial grounds and for fencing and keeping the same in order.

Tammie Reilly of GNAT-TV spoke about the activities of the non-profit including the 51 meetings recorded for Weston available online and through Comcast local channels 8 and 10. She asked that the original amount of \$2,000 requested be approved by the voters. She also advised that many volunteer opportunities are available to residents. Betty Currie asked why the amount was reduced. Denis Benson stated when GNAT started no money

was requested of the town to record the meetings until at a later date. The same amount was requested of all the towns and with a smaller population Weston pays a higher percentage than other towns. The Selectboard felt it was appropriate to give a smaller amount. Tim Goodwin stated that the reduction did not have 100% agreement among the Selectboard; they seek feedback from the voters on the decision. Jim Linville reiterated that the appropriations are not set in concrete; the amount in the budget is a placeholder and needs the voter input on the decision. Carrie Chalmers spoke in support of GNAT as a centralized place for meetings, life in our region, keeping residents in touch with changes in the school district, etc.

Motion made by Carrie Chalmers to amend the appropriation from \$500 to \$2,000; 2nd from Marguerite Mason. Marguerite spoke in support of Carrie’s comments. Bill Hoyt asked for clarification on where GNAT-TV can be found. Tammie Reilly advised it is available on Comcast channels 8 & 10, YouTube channel, or their website at GNAT-TV.org.

Regina Downer, as local community nurse, thanked the voters for their support of Neighborhood Connections (a not-for-profit) which is solely supported through the local appropriations, grants and generous donations. It is a confidential organization that works in the community very quietly. Mimi Neff asked for an explanation on Vermont Center for Independent Living. Moderator referred to the report in the town report for the details.

Article 5 amended to \$98,445 and passed with a voice vote.

Rudolph Johnson Memorial Fund Awards

Moderator asked that the meeting pause for the presentation of Rudolph Johnson Memorial Fund awards for the 8th graders. Carrie Chalmers and Nicole Pfister introduced the presentations by explaining that Rudolph Johnson was the principal at the former Weston school (now the Little School). The Fund was set up to honor 8th graders as they transitioned to high school. Nicole read highlights from each student’s letter to the Trustees describing their individual interests and strengths, and how they would use the money.

Nicole Pfister thanked Flood Brook Principal, Neal McIntyre for bringing the students to the meeting, thanked the voters for the pause in the regular meeting, and thanked Debra Lyneis for her work with the committee. The 8th graders honored were Sarah “Summer” Murphy, Alexis Seymour, William Borhek, Coleman Reese, Brielle Proctor, Angelo Bonanno, and Hilary Morrow.

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will appropriate the following sums to the following organizations that did not include financial information with their request. (Total amount is included in Town General budget.)

Organization	2016 Actual Request	2016 Voter Approved	2017 Actual Request	2017 Voter Approved	2018 Actual Request	2018 Actual Budget
Londonderry Rescue Squad	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Mountain Valley Medical Clinic	\$4,052	\$4,052	\$0	\$0	\$2,500	\$2,500
Windsor County Youth Services	\$600	\$600	\$600	\$600	\$600	\$600
Subtotal of other Organizations	\$7,652	\$7,652	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$6,100	\$6,100
Total of All Organizations	\$93,857	\$102,657	\$86,750	\$94,575	\$104,545	\$103,045 \$104,545

Discussion on Article 6 was moved by Deb Granquist; 2nd by Jeannie Nemlich. **Article 6 passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 7: To see if the Town will appropriate \$1,698 to SeVEDS [Southeastern Vermont Development Strategy] as requested. (No financials and not included in Town Budget.)

Discussion on Article 7 was moved by Barbara Lloyd; 2nd by Bob Brandt. Marguerite Mason asked if someone could explain SeVEDS. Wayne Granquist advised it is a non-profit focusing on workforce and housing development in

southern Vermont to stem loss of population, housing, etc. While northwestern Vermont is booming, southern Vermont is not.

Question from Charma Bonnano wondering if their efforts are producing and affecting our area. Wayne Granquist stated that SeVEDS is seeing results in Bennington and Manchester; Weston does not have an economic development committee. Tim Goodwin advised that SeVEDS sends out newsletters and communicates with local schools about employment opportunities. Kathy Schoemer asked if this also covered public systems accessibility (public water, waste water systems, etc.) Wayne advised that there is an effort to address this and Tim stated it is not covered now by SeVEDS. Three commissions in the area do address public systems. Linda Saarnijoki asked why Article 7 and 8 were separated. Jim Linville advised that new requests are separated to offer discussion and/or approval from the voters. **Article 7 passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 8: To see if the Town will appropriate \$500 to the Women's Freedom Center as requested. (No financials and not included in Town Budget)

Motion to discuss made by Bill Hoyt; 2nd by Deb Granquist. Kelly from Women's Freedom Center spoke about the services they provide. Advocacy and support for legal, medical, transportation, food cards, gas cards, education, safe shelter. WFC has been in existence for 40 years. Bruce Downer spoke and encouraged the voters to approve the request. As an educator, he has seen the negative effects of the abuse on women and children and it has increased; the need is compelling. Marguerite Mason asked how the services are accessed. Kelly advised that access is obtained through a toll free number or contact information on business cards and that the calls, along with support, are confidential. **Article 8 passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 9: To see if the Town will approve the following resolution, received by petition January 18, 2018: WHEREAS extreme and erratic temperatures, increasingly severe storms, flooding, a rise in tick-borne diseases, and threats to farmers and maple sugar makers clearly demonstrate that climate change is one of the most urgent problems facing our state, nation, and the world and

WHEREAS the State of Vermont has a goal in the Comprehensive Energy Plan to achieve 90% of its energy from renewable sources by 2050, yet is making insufficient progress towards achieving that goal; Now, therefore, be it resolved:

1. That the Town urges the State of Vermont to:
 - a. Halt any new or expanded fossil fuel infrastructure, including but not limited to energy pipelines;
 - b. Firmly commit to at least 90% renewable energy for all people in Vermont, with firm interim deadlines, and,
 - c. Ensure that the transition to renewable energy is fair and equitable for all residents, with no harm to low-income people, people of color, or rural communities.
2. That the Town will do our part to meet these demands by committing to efforts such as:
 - a. Protecting town lands from fossil fuel infrastructure, denying easements or agreements for any pipelines crossing town lands;
 - b. Enlisting state support in weatherizing town buildings and installing alternative energy; such as roof--top solar, to town structures;
 - c. Other initiatives to improve the quality of life while helping to reduce overall use of energy.

Moved to discuss by Loretta Murphy; 2nd by Shirley Knowlton. Loretta Murphy spoke stating that there are 2 parts to this: 1st to encourage the State to follow through with prior commitments; 2nd to encourage the Town to invest/improve its use of clean energy. Discussion ensued about the damage from climate change and use of fossil fuels. Marguerite Mason stated that 70% of the pollution particulates in the air in Vermont are from car exhaust; we need our cars or more mass transportation which has been totally overlooked. Loretta Murphy referred the voters to review the exhibit in the lobby which does address alternatives. **Article 9 passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 10: Shall the town provide notice to all registered voters at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting by postcard that the annual report is available for pickup at the Town Office. In any case, one copy of the town report will be mailed to each household at least ten days prior to annual meeting pursuant to 24 V.S.A. Section 1682(a2).

Deb Granquist moved the article for discussion; 2nd by Shirley Knowlton. Kim Seymour reviewed the reasoning behind moving from the current production of one to every voter and each homeowner (900 copies) to one per household which would reduce the number of reports printed and save money. Shirley asked why we need to mail the postcard. Kim and Deb Granquist said that it is required. Several versions of a motion were offered with the final motion being:

The Town shall send to each household one copy of the Town Report at least 10 days prior to the town meeting pursuant to 24 V.S.A. Section 1682(a2). In addition a postcard will be mailed to all voters and homeowners notifying them that additional hard copies of the Town Report are available at Town Hall and electronic copies are available by email. Motion made by Jim Linville with 2nd by Shirley Knowlton. **Article 10 as amended passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 11: To see if the town will appropriate \$90,000 for the Bridge Repair Fund. (Included in town Highway Budget) Moved by Shirley Knowlton; 2nd by Barbara Lloyd. **Article 11 passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 12: To see if the town will appropriate \$85,000 for the Highway Equipment Replacement Reserve Fund. (Included in town Highway Budget) Moved by Kathy Schoemer; 2nd by Marguerite Mason. **Article 12 passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 13: To see if the town will appropriate \$25,000 Highway Maintenance Fund (for paving and included in town Highway Budget). Moved by Marguerite Mason; 2nd by Deb Granquist. **Article 13 passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 14: To see if the town will appropriate \$35,000 to the Fire Apparatus Replacement Reserve Fund. (Included in town General Budget) Moved by Marguerite Mason; 2nd by Charma Boanno. **Article 14 passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 15: To see if the town will appropriate \$3,500 for the Town Annex Paint Reserve Fund. (Included in town General Budget) Moved by Marguerite Mason; 2nd by Shirley Knowlton. **Article 15 passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 16: To see if the town will appropriate \$5,000 to the Space Planning and Management Fund. (Included in town General Budget)

Moved by Marguerite Mason; 2nd by Deb Granquist. Kathy Schoemer asked if this fund was being used for future expansion or research. Denis Benson advised it was being used to replace the furnace with possible heat pumps and not being used for research. **Article 16 passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 17: Shall the town set the annual compensation for the Selectboard at \$2,500 each for the calendar year January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018. (Included in town General Budget). Moved by Deb Granquist; 2nd by Marguerite Mason. **Article 17 passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 18: To see if the Town will set the Annual Salary for the Town Treasurer at \$23,260 for the calendar year January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018. (Included in Town General Budget).

Moved by Maureen Brandt; 2nd by Donald Hart. Linda Saarinjoki asked if this was the same as last year or an increase; Jim Linville advised it was a 3% increase. **Article 18 passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 19: To see if the town will set the Annual Salary for the Town Clerk at \$17,820 for the calendar year January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018. (Included in Town General Budget).

Moved by Bob Brandt; 2nd by Kathy Schoemer. Linda Saarinjoki asked if this was the same as last year or an increase; Jim Linville advised it was a 3% increase. **Article 19 passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 20: To see if the Town will vote to have the Town Clerk/Town Treasurer collect current taxes due on or before Tuesday, October 9, 2018.

Question from Linda Aldrich if we ever considered quarterly instead of just annually. Deny Benson advised that it would entail more expense/more bookkeeping, planning and paperwork. Marguerite Mason asked if anything prevents people from paying early. Kim Seymour advised there was not and payments can be accepted throughout the year. Moderator asked how mortgage company payments were made. Kim Seymour responded that escrow payments are usually received right before the due date. Tim Goodwin stated that in order for tax payments to be used as a deduction, a bill must have been received.

Donald Hart stated that making the payment quarterly would be out of order at this meeting since not adequately warned. Moderator agreed that it would be an amendment deemed out of order since it would exceed the scope of a reasonable amendment. **Article 20 passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 21: Shall the voters authorize total General Fund expenditure for operating expenses of ~~\$495,866~~ **\$499,564** of which ~~\$298,602~~ **\$302,300** shall be raised by taxes and \$125,890 by non-tax revenues, offset by a prior year surplus of \$71,374.

Moved by Deb Granquist; 2nd by Jim Linville. Article amended by Kim Seymour due to changes made to appropriations in Article 5; 2nd by Jim Linville. Prepaid property taxes question from Marguerite Mason – amount that was paid early to be a deduction in 2017; will it work; not sure if it will per Kim Seymour. Amendment passed by voice vote. **Article 21, as amended passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 22: Shall the voters authorize total Highway Fund expenditure of \$831,329 of which \$639,301 shall be raised by taxes and \$70,270 by non-tax revenues, offset by a prior year surplus of \$121,758. Moved by Bob Brandt; 2nd by Mimi Neff. **Article 22 passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 23: To transact any other non-binding business proper to come before said meeting, not acted upon in the preceding articles. Moderator Wayne Granquist opened up the floor to any questions from the voters.

Maureen Brandt thanked the road crew for keeping the “mud pit” on Dale Road passable and cleared of mud, ice and snow. Brian Lundberg advised that the Weston Volunteer Fire Department (WVFD) is working with the Red Cross on the “Sound the Alarm” program providing residents with free smoke alarms, fire safety materials and installation. Green Mountain Fire Company is offering reduced cost for dry chemical fire extinguishers; sign up at the WVFD table in the lobby or call the WVFD. Denis Benson stated that CO detectors are also available through this program. Kathy Schoemer advised that Weston would be featured in the December issue of Yankee Magazine featuring the Christmas in Weston celebration and commented that it would be great to see Weston on the “map”.

Mimi Neff asked the Town Clerk why the lists of births, marriages, and deaths [Vital Statistics] were not in the town report and can they be added back. Kim Seymour responded that she would have to look into the history of the change as it preceded her. Tim Goodwin thought it might be a privacy issue. Donald Hart also requested that the lists be added back into the town report.

With no further questions or comments, the Moderator announced that lunch and snacks would be available in the lobby by the Little School. Moved to adjourned by Jim Linville; 2nd by Marguerite Mason. Adjourned at 11:30 am.

Polls were open from 8:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. All articles on the Taconic and Green Unified School District ballot were voted on by Australian ballot and passed.

Dated at Weston, Vermont on March 12, 2018 and

Respectfully submitted by:

/s/ Kim Seymour

Kim Seymour
Town Clerk/Treasurer

/s/ Wayne Granquist

Wayne Granquist
Town Moderator

WESTON SELECTBOARD

June 12, 2018

Date

/s/ Denis Benson

Denis Benson, Chair

/s/ Jim Linville

Jim Linville, Vice Chair

/s/ Ann Fuji'i

Ann Fuji'i, Secretary

/s/ Bruce Downer

Bruce Downer

/s/ Charles "Tim" Goodwin

Charles Goodwin