

MINUTES OF THE WESTON TOWN MEETING

MARCH 7, 2023

The legal voters of the Town of Weston, in the County of Windsor and State of Vermont, were notified and warned to meet at the Weston Playhouse in Weston, Vermont on Tuesday, the 7th day of March, 2023 at nine o'clock in the forenoon (9:00 AM) to act on the warned Articles.

At 9:00 a.m., the Moderator called for the attention of the voters in the room and welcomed them to the 223rd Town Meeting in Weston. Kelly Pajala, State Representative for our voting district briefly gave a legislative update: school choice bills (S.66 and H.258) and encouraged voters to reach out to their State Senators. Debra Lyneis announced that the 8th grade students receiving the Rudolf Johnson awards were not able to attend town meeting and their awards were being mailed to them. The 8th grade students this year were Annabelle Hennessey, Vanuel Okie and Hudson Via. She also spoke about the school district vote being held in the lobby.

The Moderator officially called the meeting to order at 9:15 am and reviewed the rules and procedures of conducting a Town Meeting. Asking the audience to stand and for a moment of silence, the Moderator read the list of those in our community who passed away in the prior year [see bottom of page 25]. He then began the meeting by reading Article 1.

ARTICLE 1: To elect a Moderator for a 1-year term "Syd" Straw-Harris nominated **Wayne Granquist**; elected by voice vote.

ARTICLE 2: To elect a Town Clerk for a 1-year term Marguerite Mason nominated **Kim Seymour**; elected by voice vote.

ARTICLE 3: To elect a Town Treasurer for a 1-year term Marguerite Mason nominated **Kim Seymour**; elected by voice vote.

ARTICLE 4: To elect the following Town Officers as required by law:

- One Selectboard member to a 3-year term Doris Linville nominated **Denis Benson**. With no further nominations, the Moderator directed the Town Clerk to cast 1 paper ballot for **Denis Benson**. He was elected to a 3-year term.
- One Selectboard member to a 2-year term Doris Linville nominated **Lisa Yrsha**. With no further nominations, the Moderator directed the Town Clerk to cast 1 paper ballot for **Lisa Yrsha**. She was elected to a 2-year term.
- One Lister to a 3-year term Without any nominations, the position remained **vacant**.
- One Library Trustee to a 5-year term Carrie Chalmers nominated **Tina Hartell**; elected by voice vote.
- One Library Trustee to a 2-year term Carrie Chalmers nominated **Kiernan McKenna**; elected by voice vote.
- One Trustee of Public Funds to a 3-year term Debra Lyneis nominated **Ron Prouty**; elected by voice vote.
- One Town Constable to a 1-year term Maureen Brandt nominated **Syd Straw Harris**; elected by voice vote.
- One Collector of Delinquent Taxes to a 1-year term Jeff Yrsha nominated **Morgan Hart**; elected by voice vote.
- One Cemetery Commissioner for a 5-year term Bob Brandt nominated **Bill Hoyt**; elected by voice vote.

ARTICLE 5: To see if the Town will vote to eliminate the position of Town Constable under 17 V.S.A. §2651a (d)(1) Moved by Barbara Lloyd; 2nd by Deborah Granquist. Marguerite Mason asked why the voters were asked to eliminate the position. Jim Linville, after thanking Syd for her service, advised that the position was primarily for animal control in Weston. In [2022], Patrick Salo was hired to handle the increasing number of dog issues. Discussion on the responsibilities of the Town Constable which include [thank you, Google] civil and criminal process, destroy animals, kill injured deer, assist the health officer in the exercise of his or her duties, serve as a district court officer, and remove disorderly people from town meeting. Syd Straw said she would be glad to work with Patrick Salo and be a backup for dog issues. After additional discussion, Peter Areson moved to call the question; 2nd by Howard Brosseau. The voice vote was inconclusive and the Moderator requested a Standing Vote. **Article 5 defeated by Standing Vote.**

- ARTICLE 6:** To see if the Town will appropriate \$4,000 for the Town Annex Paint Reserve Fund. (Included in the Town Budget) Moved by Deborah Granquist; 2nd by David Raymond. Question from Andrew Thompson on the purpose of the fund to which the Moderator replied that it is for painting the Little School from time to time. **Passed by voice vote.**
- ARTICLE 7:** To see if the Town will appropriate \$4,000 for the Town Annex Building Maintenance Fund. (Included in the Town Budget) Moved by Deborah Granquist; 2nd by David Raymond. **Passed by voice vote.**
- ARTICLE 8:** To see if the Town will appropriate \$95,000 for the Highway Equipment Replacement Reserve Fund. (Included in the Highway budget) Moved by Bob Brandt; 2nd by Howard Brosseau. **Passed by voice vote.**
- ARTICLE 9:** To see if the Town will appropriate \$70,000 for the Highway Maintenance Fund. (Included in the Highway Budget) Moved by Jim Linville; 2nd by Shirley Knowlton. **Passed by voice vote.**
- ARTICLE 10:** To see if the Town will appropriate \$35,000 for the Fire Apparatus Fund. (Included in the Town Budget) Moved by Jim Linville; 2nd by Bob Brandt. Marguerite Mason asked if, given the cost of replacement trucks, the amount would be enough. Reply from Fire Chief Ryan Hart that \$35,000 would be enough given that we won't need to replace a truck for 5-7 years. **Passed by voice vote.**
- ARTICLE 11:** To see if the town will appropriate \$3,000 to the Space Planning, Management and Maintenance Fund. (Included in the Town Budget) Moved by Jim Linville; 2nd by Howard Brosseau. Question on the purpose of the fund; response by Jim Linville that it pays for improvements to the Town Office (windows, roof repairs, etc.). **Passed by voice vote.**
- ARTICLE 12:** To see if the Town will appropriate \$10,000 for the Bridge Repair Fund. (Included in the Highway Budget) Moved by Jim Linville; 2nd by Deborah Granquist. Andrew Thompson asked if there are bridges that need repaired now. Jim Linville advised that while nothing needed repairs now it is difficult to know when the bridges may be damaged in a storm or need repairs. It is also difficult to know who will pay for the repairs – the town or the State and it will likely be a cost of 7 figures for a bridge such as the one [near the town office] on Lawrence Hill. **Passed by voice vote.**
- ARTICLE 13:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$50,000 for the Wilder Memorial Library Capital Fund. (Included in the Town Budget) Moved by Jim Linville; 2nd by Linda Saarnijoki. Linda Saarnijoki thanked the voters for their support of the expansion and improvements planned at the Library including a restroom and running water. **Passed by voice vote.**
- ARTICLE 14:** Shall the Town of Weston raise and appropriate a sum not to exceed \$7,500 for the purpose of funding, in part, a full-time position of Mountain Towns Recreation Director to be hired by the Town of Londonderry, pursuant to an inter local agreement as established in 24 V.S.A. 4901. (Not included in the Town General Budget) Moved by Deb Granquist; 2nd Mark Falango. Jason Murino from Flood Brook Athletic Association addressed questions from voters. He said the Director would expand, coordinate and manage all the recreation activities (softball, baseball, t-ball, basketball, West River Soccer) currently under FBAA, but not the parks/facilities of towns other than Londonderry. Position will be paid for from appropriations (based on populations) and Londonderry will pay 20% of the salary. **Passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 15: To see if the Town will appropriate the following sums totaling \$137,113 to the following organizations that included financial information with their request (Included in Budget) Moved by Jim Linville; 2nd by Malcolm Hamblett. **Passed by voice vote.**

Organizations	2022 Actual Request	2022 Voter Approved	2023 Actual Request	2023 Budget Request
Weston - Cemetery Commission	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Weston - Cold Spring Park (WCA)	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,500	\$7,500
Weston - Farrar Park Association	\$9,500	\$9,500	\$9,500	\$9,500
Weston - Recreation Club	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$13,000
Weston - Volunteer Fire Department	\$25,075	\$25,075	\$37,675	\$37,675
Weston - Wilder Memorial Library	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
TOTAL WESTON ORGANIZATIONS	\$89,575	\$89,575	\$107,675	\$107,675
Flood Brook Athletic Association	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
GNAT-TV	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Green Up Vermont	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50
Health Care & Rehabilitation Services (HCRS)	\$630	\$630	\$630	\$630
Londonderry Rescue Squad	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Moover, The (formerly SE Transit & The Current)	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250
Mountain Valley Health Council	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
My Community Nurse Project	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
Neighborhood Connections	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$6,000	\$6,000
Senior Solutions	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$1,650	\$1,650
SEVCA-Southeastern VT Community Assoc.	\$630	\$630	\$630	\$630
SEVEDS	\$1,698	\$1,698	\$1,698	\$1,698
The Collaborative	\$750	\$750	\$750	\$750
VT Assoc. for the Blind & Visually Impaired	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
VT Center for Independent Living	\$230	\$230	\$230	\$230
Visiting Nurse Hospice for VT & NH	\$2,350	\$2,350	\$2,350	\$2,350
Windsor County Youth Services	\$600	\$600	\$600	\$600

Women's Freedom Center	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500
TOTAL NON-WESTON	\$27,888	\$27,888	\$29,438	\$29,438
TOTAL ALL ORGANIZATIONS	\$117,463	\$117,463	\$137,113	\$137,113

ARTICLE 16: To see if the Town will set the annual salary for the Town Treasurer at \$28,514 for the calendar year January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023. (Included in Budget) Moved by Jim Linville; 2nd by David Raymond. **Passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 17: To see if the Town will set the annual salary for the Town Clerk at \$21,824 for the calendar year January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023. (Included in Budget) Moved by Jim Linville; 2nd by David Raymond. **Passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 18: To see if the Town will set the annual compensation for the Selectboard at \$2,500 each for the calendar year January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023. (Included in Budget) Moved by Jim Linville; 2nd by Geoff Brown. **Passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 19: To see if the Town will pay its taxes to the Town Treasurer as provided by law, due date to be on or before the first Tuesday of October (October 3, 2023). Moved by David Raymond; 2nd by Bob Brandt. **Passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 20: To see if the Town will authorize a total General Fund expenditure for operating expenses of ~~\$654,798~~ **\$662,298** of which ~~\$478,265~~ **\$485,765** shall be raised by taxes, \$156,105 by non-tax revenues and offset by a surplus of \$20,428. Moved by Shirley Knowlton; 2nd by Jim Linville. Amendment offered by Town Clerk to add in the additional \$7,500 from Article 14. **Passed by voice vote as amended.**

ARTICLE 21: To see if the Town will authorize a total Highway Fund expenditure for operating expenses of \$868,951 of which \$763,661 shall be raised by taxes, and \$105,290 by non-tax revenues. Moved by Shirley Knowlton; 2nd by Jim Linville. **Passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 22: To transact any other non-binding business proper to come before said meeting, not acted upon in the preceding articles

A question was asked about the status of the ARPA funds. Charles "Tim" Goodwin responded that the fund has a total of [\$163,750] and the disbursement time frame is unknown. Decisions have not been made yet on the various requests that were given to the Selectboard. Regina Downer asked how the used of the funds for the septic at the town garage could be an allowable option. Jim Linville responded that infrastructure is a qualifying option. Carol Lechthaler asked what will be the process of deciding which projects will be funded. Jim Linville advised that public meetings were held about the use of the funds, the funding requests received exceed the amount of ARPA Funds available so the selectboard will have to cull through the list of projects.

Betty Currie asked about hearing that the fire house would be moved. Fire Chief, Ryan Hart indicated that they have looked for a new location, but it will be a long process; not likely to happen anytime soon.

Barbara Lloyd stated that the new signs [just north of the Village Green] were great, but after 5 accidents this winter, the Ladies of the Green [Farrar Park Association] wonder what else can be done to reduce the accidents. Jim Linville reviewed what steps had been taken with VTrans. A survey was done about using flashing signs or not and the results were against having flashing lights at the curve [Bunker Hill]. Given that it is a state road, the selectboard felt they have done everything they could within the given constraints.

Betty Currie asked how the speed limit could be enforced. Jim Linville advised that a traffic survey was done by VTrans and it indicated there wasn't a speeding issue. Ann Fuji'i, Treasurer for the Farrar Park Association, said she dealt with the insurance claims; most of the accidents were by out of town people who do not have snow tires, weren't familiar with the

road or the sharp curve. She has brought up the issue in every meeting with VTrans and often offered creative solutions like putting a dummy police car at the curve. Improvement was made by reduced sign clutter and they had hoped that the brighter, bigger signs would help with the awareness of the issue. Josh Allison, Deputy Fire Chief reiterated that the accidents were often due to not having the right tires, being distracted or not being accustomed to the roads. It hasn't anything to do with the signs or the posted speeds. Road Foreman, Almon Crandall stated that VTrans previously suggested installation of guard rails, but no one wanted to have them [on the historic green due to the esthetics]. Andrew Harper spoke and said that he remembered this debate going on when he first moved here 43 years ago and guard rails were suggested; Ladies of the Green didn't want to put them up, but Ron Prouty advised him that VTrans didn't want them. He asked if someone could settle the debate on the guard rails. Per Almon, VTrans brings up guard rails in every [conversation] about the issue. He stated that if someone were killed, and the Town knew guard rails were an option but were not installed, the Town would have liability.

Brian Lundberg asked for clarification on a statement by Jim Linville on why the speed limit couldn't be reduced to 25 on a State road like in Chester. Jim Linville stated that the portion of road Brian referred to was purchased by the Town of Chester and no longer owned by the State. That allowed Chester to lower the speed limit. Now the town has to maintain that road portion. Brian further stated that someone was killed by hitting the fence many years ago.

Christine Mix asked when the survey was done [3-4 years ago per Jim Linville] and how long before another one could be done. With more tourists in the summer season and more people living in town, she has seen people going too fast through the village, so maybe another survey needs done. Jim agreed that would be a good idea. Caroline "Bill" Fritzingler said she was told that the survey was done the weekend of the Antique Show in early October and how could anyone possibly speed through the town that weekend. Jim Linville replied that there are 2 surveys being discussed; the 1st being the one conducted by the selectboard [regarding flashing lights, etc. at the Bunker Hill curve] and the 2nd being the speeding survey done by VTrans in October a few years ago.

Charles "Tim" Goodwin stated that he stood in the Post Office and watched cars coming through town at a reasonable speed that still ended up against the power pole. With 6 accidents this winter, the Selectboard had more to discuss with VTrans about the situation. Ann Fuji'i stated that due to the fire department [volunteers] and Melvin Twitchell at the Post Office, the Ladies of the Green were now getting better information on the accident details and thanked them all. They were more successful getting reimbursed for the damages. Additionally, Almon Crandall repaired and welded the fence back together each year and they thanked him for that as well.

Regina Downer asked if in the conversations with VTrans would be discussed that the road was banked oddly. Jim said yes, it has been discussed along with size of shoulders, width of road, etc. Deb Granquist asked if VTrans was coming often enough [to treat the road] if the road conditions were the issue. Comment from Nicki Pfister, that it was obvious that the issue needed to be revisited by the Selectboard. Bob Brandt asked if we [the Town] can augment what VTrans does at the corner.

Statement from Barbara Lloyd about how beautiful the town is and that a guard rail would look awful. She asked that they [Selectboard] get together with VTrans to find a solution including reducing the speed at the corner. Wayne Granquist relayed a suggestion using the fence seasonally; response from Gene Palma that he often saw people walking within the Green and that would leave them unprotected from cars coming into the Green. Ann Fuji'i replied that not having the fence would cause more damage to the actual Green. Dick Lechthaler stated that there must be a better solution than the use of traditional concrete or steel. Betty Currie stated that the triangle at the turn for the Playhouse was misleading and people may not understand the curve is there or as sharp as it is. Susanna Gellert, Executive Artist Director of the Weston Theatre Company stated that the Vermont Arts Council has a creative use grant and perhaps that would be something that could be investigated. She will follow up on it.

Marguerite Mason asked if a fence could be installed that would crumple [collapse] instead of break. Caroline "Bill" Fritzingler stated we still have a speeding issue easily noted when standing at the Marketplace and with restrictions; speeding isn't an issue in Andover and Chester. David Raymond reminded the group that in Chester it isn't a state road, and they have a police department to enforce the speed regulations.

Will Freeman stated that on March 18th at 9:00 am to 10:30 am, the HUB and New Thought Vermont would be hosting a Legislative Forum with our legislators. Reservations required due to limited seating.

Charles "Tim" Goodwin commented that if Lisa Yrsha weren't injured and if Denis wasn't ill, they would be at the meeting. Tim wished them well and stated that they were missed at the town meeting.

With no further comments or suggestions, the Moderator adjourned the meeting at 11:07 am.

Respectfully submitted at Weston, Vermont this 14th day of March, 2023:

Kim Seymour
Kim Seymour
Town Clerk/Treasurer

Wayne Granquist
Wayne Granquist
Moderator

Acknowledged by the Town of Weston Selectboard and dated at Weston, Vermont this 23rd day of May, 2023:

Denis Benson
Denis Benson, Chair

Jim Linville
Jim Linville, Vice Chairman

Ann Fuji'i
Ann Fuji'i, Secretary

Charles "Tim" Goodwin
Charles "Tim" Goodwin

Lisa Yrsha
Lisa Yrsha