

**TOWN OF WESTON, VERMONT
MINUTES FOR TOWN MEETING
MARCH 7, 2017**

The Weston Annual Town Meeting began at 9:00 am. Moderator Wayne Granquist made several announcements and read the rules and procedures from the town report. New and non-voters were recognized; resident students of the 7th and 8th grade classes of Flood Brook School were also welcomed. The audience stood while the list of those who passed away during 2016 was read by the Moderator.

Debra Lyneis was invited to address the attendees regarding the Act 46 school district merger vote being held on Town Meeting Day. The last merger was in 2012 and created the Mountain Towns RED with one school board for the 4 towns of Landgrove, Londonderry, Peru and Weston. The Act 46 merger will further consolidate the area schools while maintaining our 100-year tradition of high school choice. The new district will create the Taconic and Green Region School District with 9 towns: Danby, Dorset, Landgrove, Londonderry, Manchester, Mount Tabor, Peru, Sunderland, and Weston. There will be one school board, one budget and eventually, one tax rate for the district. While there will be some cost savings from the consolidation including a small tax incentive, the biggest advantage of the merger will be increased opportunities for our students.

Melina Menzie was invited to address the audience and spoke briefly about the group, Just Neighbors. Originally started to help neighbors with rides to appointments and with wood deliveries, the organization has grown to include many ways to help others. Melina asked that anyone with questions see her during the break and noted that a letter from Just Neighbors could be found on page 60 of the town report.

The Moderator read the introduction from the Warning and began the official business of the town meeting.

ARTICLE 1: To elect a Moderator for a one-year term. Bill Hoyt nominated Wayne Granquist.
Wayne Granquist elected to a 1-year term by voice vote.

ARTICLE 2: To elect a Town Clerk for a one-year term. Deborah Granquist nominated Kim Seymour.
Kim Seymour elected to a 1-year term by voice vote.

ARTICLE 3: To elect a Town Treasurer for a one-year term. Deborah Granquist nominated Kim Seymour. **Kim Seymour elected to a 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. Fred Probst nominated Denis Benson; there were no further nominations. Moderator asked the Town Clerk to cast one paper ballot for Denis Benson.
Denis Benson elected to a 3-year term.

One Selectperson to a two-year term. Caroline Fritzingler nominated Bruce Downer; there were no further nominations. Moderator asked the Town Clerk to cast one paper ballot for Bruce Downer.
Bruce Downer elected to a 2-year term.

One Lister to a three-year term. Jim Lyneis nominated Howard Brosseau; 2nd by Bob Brandt; there were no further nominations. Moderator asked the Town Clerk to cast one paper ballot for Howard Brosseau.
Howard Brosseau elected to a 3-year term.

One Lister to a two-year term. No nominations offered from the floor. The position remains **Vacant.**

A Town Constable to a one-year term. Ryan Hart nominated Almon Crandall; 2nd by Bill Hoyt.
Almon Crandall elected to a 1-year term by voice vote.

A Second Town Constable to a one-year term. No nominations from the floor. Position remains **Vacant.**

Collector of Delinquent Taxes to a one-year term. Regina Downer nominated Sandra Goodwin; 2nd by Bill Hoyt. **Sandra Goodwin elected to a 1-year term by voice vote.**

Town Grand Juror to a one-year term. Bob Brandt nominated Wayne Granquist; 2nd by Mimi Neff.
Wayne Granquist elected to a 1-year term by voice vote.

Town Agent to a one-year term. Deborah Granquist nominated James "Lexi" Young; 2nd by Bill Hoyt.
James "Lexi" Young elected to a 1-year term by voice vote.

One School Director for the RED District to a three-year term. Nicole Pfister nominated Debra Lyneis, 2nd by Jim Lyneis. **Debra Lyneis elected to a 3-year term by voice vote.**

One Library Trustee to a five-year term. Mimi Neff nominated Deborah Granquist and it was seconded.
Deborah Granquist elected to a 5-year term by voice vote.

One Library Trustee to a five-year term. Deborah Granquist nominated Joanne Prouty and it was seconded. **Joanne Prouty elected to a 5-year term by voice vote.** Deb Granquist also thanked Bill Hoyt for his decade of service to the Wilder Memorial Library.

One Trustee of Public Funds to a three-year term. Debra Lyneis nominated Ronald Prouty; 2nd by Deborah Granquist. **Ronald Prouty elected to a 3-year term by voice vote.**

One Cemetery Commissioner for a five-year term. Mimi Neff nominated Raymond Heberts; 2nd by Bill Hoyt. **Raymond Heberts elected to a 5-year term by voice vote.**

- ARTICLE 5:** To receive and act on the reports of the Town Officers from January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016. Kathy Schoemer moved the article; 2nd by Andrew Harper.
Article 5 passed by voice vote.
- ARTICLE 6:** To see if the Town will authorize the Selectboard to borrow money in anticipation of taxes to pay current expenses and any part of indebtedness. Andrew Harper moved the article; 2nd by Bob Brandt. **Article 6 passed by voice vote.**
- ARTICLE 7:** To see if the Town will appropriate \$4,000 for the Town Annex Building Maintenance. (Included in Town General budget.) Andrew Harper moved the article; 2nd by Deborah Granquist. **Article 7 passed by voice vote.**
- ARTICLE 8:** To see if the Town will appropriate \$3,500 for the Town Annex Paint Reserve Fund. (Included in Town General budget.) Deborah Granquist moved the article; 2nd by Debra Lyneis. **Article 8 passed by voice vote.**
- ARTICLE 9:** To see if the Town will appropriate \$35,000 for the Fire Apparatus Replacement Reserve Fund. (Included in Town General budget.) Jeanne Nemlich moved the article; 2nd by Deborah Granquist. Question from Andrew Harper whether this article was linked to Article 10. Denis Benson stated yes, this would be used for the new fire truck. The 2nd appropriation [Article 10] was needed for the full payment. **Article 9 passed by voice vote.**
- ARTICLE 10:** To see if the Town will appropriate \$40,112.00 (balance needed) for a new 2018 Freightliner fire truck/ tanker. (Included in Town General Budget.) Bill Hoyt moved the article; 2nd by Mimi Neff. Deborah Granquist asked about the amount needed to purchase new truck and whether it was being purchased in this year or next. Denis Benson stated that the amount in the reserve fund [Fire Apparatus Reserve Fund] plus these 2 appropriations would be just enough to cover the purchase this year for delivery next year. Bill Hoyt asked about the trade-in value of the old truck; Denis advised it will be put up for sale, but it wouldn't sell for much given that it is 30-years old. **Article 10 passed by voice vote.**
- ARTICLE 11:** To see if the Town will appropriate \$5,000 to the Space Planning and Management Fund. (Included in Town General budget.) Jeanne Nimlich moved the article; 2nd by Deborah Granquist. Andrew Harper asked what the purpose was for this fund. Denis Benson stated originally it was used for the office renovations; now it may be used for a partition upstairs and any upcoming State mandates for ADA compliance, etc.. Kathy Schoemer asked if this just for the planning aspect as per the name; Denis stated it was for the actual work. Kathy

suggested that the name of the fund be changed to better reflect its actual purpose. The suggestion was taken under advisement by Denis Benson.

Article 11 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 12: To see if the Town will vote to exempt from taxation for a period of five (5) years the real estate belonging to the Weston Volunteer Fire Department. Howard Brosseau moved the article; 2nd by Kathy Schoemer. **Article 12 passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 13: To see if the Town will vote to exempt from taxation for a period of five (5) years the real estate belonging to the Weston Community Association. Mimi Neff moved the article; 2nd by Deborah Granquist. **Article 13 passed by voice vote.**

Linda Saarnijoki asked what other properties are tax exempt; Denis Benson responded with some input from the other voters. Tax exempt properties include recreation area, municipal buildings, village green, Rod & Gun club, Churches, etc.

ARTICLE 14: To see if the Town will appropriate the following sums totaling ~~\$93,725~~ **\$94,575** to the following organizations that included **(or did not include)** financial information with their request. Requested amounts are included in Town General budget. **Amendment offered by the Town Clerk to correct clerical error; 2nd by Bill Hoyt. Amendment passed by voice vote.**

Moderator read the list and requested changes from the voters at any point. When the Moderator came to the appropriation request for Mountain Valley Medical Center, he read a letter submitted by the Mountain Valley Health Council Board. The Board thanked the voters for their generosity over the years that helped to cover annual deficits. With the Clinic now affiliated with Springfield Hospital, uncompensated care was handled differently and appropriations from the towns covered by MVHC would not be necessary in 2017. MVHC would continue to work towards maintaining and improving health care in its service area and would revisit the appropriation requests for next year. Donations would always be welcomed.

Donald Hart requested that the appropriation be increased from \$0 to \$4,000; 2nd from Nicole Pfister. Caroline Fritzingler asked what would the purpose be for the \$4,000; Donald stated that the Clinic has to be spending in a deficit and funding has been ongoing for years to help offset that deficit. Tim Goodwin stated that the money, if given, should be given in the name of the original board so the appropriation would stay with the clinic and not be absorbed by the Springfield Hospital.

Ann Fuji'i gave some historical perspective on the original board (Mountain Valley Health Council) and the formation of the fully independent clinic which last year became a part of Springfield Medical Services. SMS contracts for services provided at MVHC, but Springfield Hospital doesn't own the MVHC endowment, the building or the land. Any money donated to the Mountain Valley Health Council would stay with the clinic to cover items not part of the contracted Springfield Hospital operations. Deborah Granquist stated that Dr. Roger Fox gave her the letter to be read. She asked him if we should vote money for Mountain Valley and he advised that the town should not donate money this year. Dr. Delores Barbeau stated that Springfield Hospital was obligated to provide services to all of our residents regardless of their ability to pay. **Amendment was rejected by voice vote.**

Jim Linville asked if a GNAT representative could take a moment to speak. Tammie Reilly stated original request was for \$2,000 which was the same amount requested of all the towns being covered. The appropriation would cover some, not all, of the costs to provide videos of the 40 municipal meetings in Weston. Tim Goodwin stated that the request was reviewed and the appropriation was lowered from \$2,000 to \$500 based on the financial information submitted with the request and the size of Weston vs. other 6 towns that provided that same level of funding. Denis Benson also stated that there is funding for GNAT through cable subscriber fees which would indicate we are paying twice. Moderator advised that since the point to modify the amount had already passed in the proceedings, it would not be appropriate to change the amount until the article for the General Fund was reached. Tammy clarified that the amount of \$21,000 in the fund raising/other category includes \$14,000 from the annual appropriations from the 7 towns served. She stated that while GNAT is primarily funded by Comcast subscriber (PEG) cable fees, only 4% of Weston homes have cable and contribute to the fee on their bill.

Kathy Schoemer asked why there wasn't an appropriation for the West River Sports Association. Denis Benson advised we received a letter stating that the cost was being absorbed by the school itself. Deborah

Granquist read the letter from West River Sports Association included in the town report. Debra Lyneis stated that the change was partly due to volunteer fatigue and also part of the merger the school is taking back the soccer team to match what other schools are doing in the merger district.

No changes were made to the appropriations as listed. **Article 14 passed by voice vote.**

Organization	2015 Actual Request		2016 Actual Request	2016 Voter Approved	2017 Actual Budget
Cold Spring Park - WCA	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Farrar Park Association	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
Weston Cemetery Commission*	\$500	\$8,000	\$500	\$8,300	\$9,825
Weston Recreation Club	\$6,500	\$6,500	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$13,000
Weston Volunteer Fire Department	\$21,825	\$21,825	\$36,525	\$36,525	\$26,225
Wilder Memorial Library	\$12,600	\$12,600	\$12,600	\$12,600	\$14,585
Subtotal of Organizations located in Weston	\$51,425	\$58,925	\$72,625	\$80,425	\$78,635
Londonderry Rescue Squad	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
GNAT TV *	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$500*
SEVCA –SE Vermont Community Action, Inc.	\$630	\$630	\$630	\$630	\$630
Mountain Valley Medical Clinic*	\$4,052	\$9,000	\$4,052	\$9,000	\$0*
Flood Brook Athletic Association	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Vermont Green-Up	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50
The Collaborative	\$750	\$750	\$750	\$750	\$750
Neighborhood Connections	\$2,000	\$2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Vermont Assn for the Blind & Visually Impaired	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
Vermont Center for Independent Living	\$230	\$230	\$230	\$230	\$230
West River Sports Association	\$990	\$990	\$990	\$990	\$0
HCRS Health Care & Rehabilitation Services	\$630	\$630	\$630	\$630	\$630
Visiting Nurse Assoc. & Hospice of VT & NH	\$2,350	\$2,350	\$2,350	\$2,350	\$2,350
Council on Aging – Senior Solutions	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$1,600
Subtotal of Other Organizations	\$20,382	\$26,330	\$20,382	\$26,330	\$15,090
Total of Weston & Other Organizations	\$71,807	\$85,255	\$93,007	\$106,755	\$93,725

* See appropriations request report and letters.

Organization	2015 Actual Request	2015 Voter Approved	2016 Actual Request	2016 Voter Approved	2017 Actual Budget
Southern Vermont Transit (The Current)	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250
Windsor County Youth Services	\$600	\$600	\$600	\$600	\$600
Subtotal of other Organizations	\$850	\$850	\$850	\$850	\$850
Total of All Organizations	\$72,657	\$86,105	\$93,857	\$107,605	\$94,575

Prior to discussing ARTICLE 15 Moderator advised voters of a clerical error of \$66,000 to the Highway Expenditures. It should have totaled \$868,399.86 instead of the \$802,399.86 listed in the town report. Tim Goodwin explained how the error occurred and offered several options on how to offset error: change an appropriation such as the Bridge Repair Fund to cover the \$66,000; do nothing and leave the anticipated expenses at \$802,000; or raise taxes to cover the amount. Greg Carroll asked whether the Highway Contingency Fund could be used to offset the amount needed. Tim advised that the select board could make the decision to use that fund if necessary. Moderator advised that the Contingency Fund was not on

the Warning so it would not be appropriate for the voters to direct the select board to use that fund without it having been warned.

Donald Hart stated that under receipts [Highway Revenues] there were two categories that have been historically under budgeted by about \$25,000 that could help reduce the shortfall. Denis Benson advised that one is from State Aid to Highways and there is no guarantee that the funding will continue. To clarify, the Moderator restated the options from Tim Goodwin. Christine Mix asked how many bridges still need repaired in town. Jim Linville stated the "simple answer, we have no idea" long answer, "they all need repaired". Many were built in the 1930's with a 100-year life span and many will have to be repaired in the next 15+ years. It's difficult to estimate what the costs will be in the future; \$90,000 per year will help offset the costs though will not be enough cover the total. Denis Benson advised voters last year's bridge repair on Route 100 north [Bridge 98] was rebuilt at a cost to the State of \$1.8 million.

ARTICLE 15: To see if the Town will appropriate \$90,000 for the Bridge Repair Fund. (Included in the Town Highway Budget.) Barbara Lloyd moved the article and it was seconded. Linda Aldrich offered amendment to lower article to \$45,000; 2nd by Deborah Granquist. As the voice vote was unclear, Moderator asked for a standing vote. Amendment was rejected.
Article 15, unamended, passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 16: To see if the Town will appropriate \$85,000 for the Highway Equipment Replacement Reserve Fund. (Included in Town Highway Budget.) Kathy Schoemer moved the article; 2nd by Mimi Neff. Question from Syd Straw on whether this fund covers culvert repairs. Denis Benson advised that this article does not cover culvert maintenance; this is for equipment.
Article 16 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 17: To see if the Town will appropriate \$25,000 for the Highway Maintenance Fund (for paving). (Included in Town Highway Budget.) Bill Hoyt moved the article; 2nd by Kathy Schoemer. Syd Straw asked if there was a fund in the budget that covered culvert repairs. Denis Benson advised that culverts are in the highway budget, but not for those at private homes. Those would be the responsibility of the homeowner. The town could replace the culvert and the homeowner would then reimburse the town for the cost of it.
Article 17 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 18: To see if the Town will set the Annual Salary for the Town Treasurer at \$22,583 for the calendar year January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017. (Included in Town General Budget.) Mimi Neff moved the article; 2nd by Deborah Granquist.
Article 18 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 19: To see if the town will set the Annual Salary for the Town Clerk at \$17,330 for the calendar year January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017. (Included in Town General Budget.) Mimi Neff moved the article; 2nd by Deborah Granquist. **Article 19 passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 20: Shall the town set the Annual Compensation for the Selectboard at ~~\$4,200~~ **\$2,500** each for the calendar year January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017. (Included in Town General Budget.) Jeanne Nimlich moved the article; 2nd by Kathy Schoemer. Linda Aldrich offered an amendment to increase the selectboard compensation to \$2,500; 2nd by Linda Saarnijoki. Andrew Harper asked when the amount was last increased; about 5 years ago per Denis Benson. As the voice vote was unclear, Moderator asked for a standing vote.
Amendment passed. Article 20, as amended, passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 21: To see if the Town will vote to have the Town Clerk/Town Treasurer collect current taxes due on or before Monday, October 2, 2017. Kathy Schoemer moved the article; 2nd by Bob Brandt. **Article 21 passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 22: Shall the voters approve total General Fund expenditure of ~~\$523,407.00~~ **\$529,607.00** of which ~~\$378,968.12~~ **\$385,468.12** shall be raised by taxes and \$106,690.00 by non-tax revenues and \$37,448.88 by prior year surplus. Bob Brandt moved the article; 2nd by Ryan Hart. **Article amended to include the increase made to Article 20. Amendment passed by voice vote.**

Tim Goodwin reminded the voters of the GNAT matter [change between appropriation requested and amount budgeted]. Linda Saarnijoki asked for clarification on the amount for GNAT; clarified by Denis Benson that the amount originally requested by \$2,000 and after discussion, the selectboard decreased the amount to \$500.

Linda Aldrich asked about the impact the \$385,486 on the tax rate and if the taxes would go up. Denis Benson indicated it would add about a penny per \$20,000; \$6,500 increase equals about a 1/3 of a penny on the tax rate. Linda Saarnijoki asked how much of a tax increase does the \$385,486 represent? Denis stated that we had a large surplus [in 2015] of about \$138,000 and only about \$37,000 [in 2016] so the additional \$100,000 that we need to raise in the General Fund equates to about 5 cents. Tim Goodwin mentioned that the CLA (Common Level of Appraisal) may have more impact on the tax rate. General discussion on CLA, its impact on our State Education Tax Rate; CLA also outlined in the Lister's Report on page 25. Jim Lyneis also added that the CLA only applies to the State Education Tax Rate; the town expenditures are just divided by the value of the Grand List to determine the town tax rate. He stated that our CLA will cause the tax rate to increase by 8%. Per Debra Lyneis there is one education tax rate that applies state-wide; the CLA adjusts the local values [appraisals] so that everyone pays their fair share education tax rate. Andrew Harper referred the voters to page 25 which outlines how our CLA changed for the coming year based on a rolling average of property sales. **Article 22 as amended, passed by voice vote.**

Moderator asked that Nicole Pfister, Debra Lyneis and Carrie Chalmers come forward to offer the Rudolph Johnson Awards. Carrie advised what the awards were for and that the 8th grade students submitted a letter outlining what the money would be used for in high school. Nicole read a brief recap of each student's letter from Karson Barclay, Bradley Wade, Alyssa McLaughlin, Tadgh Bannon, and Stella Turner.

ARTICLE 23: Shall the voters approve total Highway Fund expenditure of ~~\$802,399.86~~ **\$868,399.86** of which ~~\$532,335.33~~ **\$598,335.33** shall be raised by taxes and \$127,280.00 by non-tax revenues, offset by a prior year surplus of \$142,784.53. Deborah Granquist moved the article; 2nd from Mimi Neff.

Moderator requested a recap from Tim Goodwin on the options to cover the clerical error: do nothing and hope that the amount will be absorbed over the course of the year, take the money from another fund or borrow it.

Town Clerk offered an amendment to change the amounts to include the \$66,000; 2nd by Deborah Granquist. **Amendment passed by voice vote. Article 23, as amended, passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 24: To transact any other non-binding business proper to come before said meeting, not acted upon in the preceding articles.

Deborah Granquist referred everyone to the list of elected and appointed town officers on pages 6 and 7 in the town report. She stated that, in addition to the select board many other people serve as elected and appointed officers and help keep the town running as well as it does. She asked for a round of applause for all the officers. Deborah offered a thank you to Malcolm Bell for his many, many years of service on the ZBA [Zoning Board of Adjustment]. She thanked Marguerite Mason who served as a Library Trustee and has since stepped down; Linda Saarnijoki offered to fill the vacancy until the end of the term.

Question from Caroline Fritzinger regarding the interest rates on the funds listed as Cash on Hand in the town report. Can we do better? Kim Seymour stated that she would look into the matter.

Discussion on enforcing the speed limit on Route 100 in the village; better signage, flashing speed sign similar to what Ludlow has on Route 100 north entering the village, speed bumps, speed traps, stand outside and point a hairdryer at the passing cars to mimic a speed radar. Donald Hart advised that the State of Vermont sets the speed limit on Route 100 in the village, not the selectboard. The selectboard was offered the responsibility of Route 100 in Village and could have then set speed limit with an ordinance. Howard Brosseau restated that it's an enforcement issue in the village. Syd Straw offered to help with the situation by volunteering to be the 2nd Constable in town. Lee Phillips stated that the official speed limit is 50 mph unless otherwise posted. Betty Currie also commented that even with posted speed limits of 30 and 40 drivers don't slow down. The speed limit in front of the Little School is 50 mph and it would be helpful to have some mechanism to occasionally enforce the limits. Jim Linville advised that the selectboard has looked at the issues in the past and would look at it again. Setting the speed limits in town is complicated and there would be State regulations to work through in the process. State Police can set up speed traps, but the town would

mechanism to occasionally enforce the limits. Jim Linville advised that the selectboard has looked at the issues in the past and would look at it again. Setting the speed limits in town is complicated and there would be State regulations to work through in the process. State Police can set up speed traps, but the town would have to pay for that expense. The opportunity to take over Route 100 came with the opportunity of fixing all the culverts, paving, and accepting all of the liability; that didn't seem like a great bargain.

Discussion of recent break-ins in the area and what is being done to keep our area secure. Dana Thompson suggested the possibility of starting a citizen's watch group program. Jim Linville stated that her suggestions are all good and we all know we should be doing many of them. Linda Aldrich commented that the problems of speeding and break-ins have the same issues – lack of enforcement and lack of consequences.

Tim Goodwin stated that the position of Zoning Administrator was inadequately covered and several other people in the room would make a great Zoning Administrator.

Syd Straw asked if animals have the right-of-way on the back roads. Denis Benson stated that given the way cars are made these days, common sense would suggest that the animals should be given the right-of-way. Moderator reminded the audience that the selectboard meetings are open to the public and provide a good opportunity to discuss concerns.

Moderator adjourned the meeting at 11:45 am.

Act 46 Merger Vote continued until the closing of the Polls at 7:00 pm. The votes in Weston for the district merger were 97 YES, 8 NO, with 2 spoiled ballots and 5 blank.

**Dated at Weston, Vermont
March 17, 2017**

Respectfully submitted by:



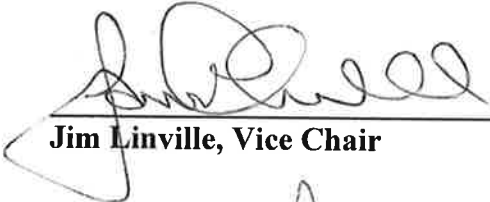
**Kim Seymour
Town Clerk**



**Wayne Granquist
Town Moderator**

Received by the Selectboard on 11th day of April, 2017:

Denis Benson, Chair



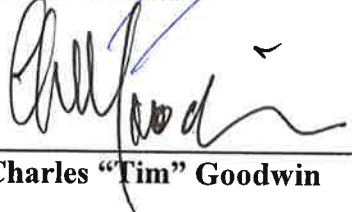
Jim Linville, Vice Chair



Bruce Downer



Ann Fuji'i, Secretary



Charles "Tim" Goodwin