

Town Meeting Minutes 251st Annual Town Meeting of New Haven, Vermont

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The legal voters of the Town of New Haven are hereby warned and notified to meet at the Town Hall in New Haven, Vermont on **Monday March 4th, 2013 at 4:00 PM** to act on Articles 1 through 4; and on **Tuesday, March 5th, 2013 from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM** to vote by Australian Ballot on Articles 5 through 29.

Moderator, Lanny Smith introduced himself and Selectboard members Pam Marsh, Kathy Barrett, Roger Boise, Kathleen Ready, Charlie Roy and Town Clerk, Pam Kingman.

The Moderator asked everyone in light of new technology to please turn off their cell phones.

This year the School went first, the School meeting ended at 4:15pm. There was a 10 minute intermission followed by the Town Meeting which began at 4:35pm.

ARTICLE 1. Shall the Town of New Haven vote to pay real estate taxes to the Town Treasurer on October 1, 2013; delinquent taxes will be subject to interest charges of one percent per month, and an eight percent penalty charged against them from October 1, 2013?

Eldon Sherwin made the motion, seconded by Ed Gomeau.

All in favor; none opposed.
Passed.

ARTICLE 2. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven accept the Auditors' Report for the year 2012?

Sue Ford made the motion; seconded by Matt Ford.

Kathy Barrett thanked the Auditors for their hard work. It is a thankless job that comes with awesome responsibility. The Auditors have done a good job.

Pam Marsh said the Auditors Report within the Town Report explains why the Auditors are asking for a yearly outside audit. There was an outside audit done by Telling & Associates, in time for the Town Report; which the Selectboard is expected to approve at the next meeting. Previously, the Town had an outside audit done every three years on the election of a new Treasurer. The Auditors came to the Selectboard because they were concerned with the rash of embezzling going on felt having an outside audit would be helpful. They are willing to continue to assist the outside auditor and assemble the Town Report, but do not want the legal responsibility that comes with the elected auditor position. Pam Marsh recognized Auditors Iva Menard, Angie Dunbar and Polly Darnell for filling in at the last minute.

All in favor.

Passed.

ARTICLE 3. Shall the voters authorize the elimination of the office of Town Auditor, effective after Town Meeting 2013, with future audits to be provided by a certified public accountant, and all other auditor duties performed by others as directed by the Selectboard, in accordance with 17 V.S.A. § 2651b?

Susie Leonard made a motion to accept Article 3; seconded by Jim Walsh.

Stewart Cornstock-Gay – This must be something you feel you are losing.

Kathy Barrett – This was request made by the Auditors, in light of recent embezzling cases they want to work with an outside Auditor. They don't want the liability. The Selectboard is confident that the Treasurer is not doing anything illegal or inappropriate. Pam Marsh – Even if the elected auditor position is eliminated, the Town won't lose anything by having a professional audit. The Auditors feel they may still want to put together the Town Report. Comparing our Town Report to other towns, ours has so much more information. Pam is hoping they will continue to put the Report together even if the Auditor position is removed.

Tim Bouton – He is not in favor of doing away with the Auditors. They are doing a good job, and any liability would be covered under the Towns liability insurance.

Susie Leonard – The people who are elected as Auditor would no longer be Auditor, but want to do the same stuff?

Pam Marsh – Yes. They will still do what they feel they can do, possibly renaming them “Financial Committee”. No compensation has been discussed.

Iva Menard – She is currently a Town Auditor. She and the other two Auditors all have full time jobs; they find it very difficult to find time to warn their meetings as they are required to do. Several other Towns have Audit Committees. They are really just asking to change their title, and keep doing what they are doing.

Eldon Sherwin – In a recent embezzlement case, over a million dollars was stolen. The owner challenged why the Auditor didn't find the missing money? The Auditor told him it wasn't his job. Eldon is concerned we won't get what we are looking for.

Dean Percival – The Auditor budget is \$4,792, will this amount stay the same?

Pam Marsh – The outside Audit is a separate line item. There may be less money spent on the Auditors. We have been paying on both for the last couple of years.

Iva Menard – The outside Auditor does look at more detailed information the Town Auditors. Telling & Associates know exactly what to look for.

Tim Bouton – Has no issue with hiring an outside audit. His biggest issue is getting rid of an elected position. This gets rid of people who run town government.

Mary Pratt – Is there any way to add to this Article to add elected financial people?

Moderator, Lanny Smith – That increases the budget, which would require it to be warned separately.

Kathy Barrett – Is an elected Auditor for Mt. Abe. Mt. Abe has tried to eliminate the elected auditor position for 4 years, but it was defeated each year. It is always better to have more people involved and looking at the finances. She was originally against this losing the Auditors; but is okay with it if there is a committee that works with the professional auditor and oversees the books throughout the year.

Pam Marsh – Article 3 can be amended if that is what Mary Pratt would like to do.

Mary Pratt made a motion to amend Article 3 to: Shall the Selectboard establish and appoint a Financial Oversight Committee, seconded by Iva Menard.

Tim Bouton – So the folks in charge of spending the money, will now be in charge of appointing this Committee?

Pam Marsh – The Treasurer is elected; and has done an excellent job. There are several layers of oversight.

Michaela Granstrom – Tomorrow we are voting on the ballot for a new Auditor.

Moderator, Lanny Smith – If Article 3 is passes, there will be no Auditors.
Dean Glimore – Elected position, it shouldn't take effect until next year.

Moderator, Lanny Smith – The Warning says, "eliminate after Town Meeting 2013..."

Mary Pratt – If the Article is defeated, we still have the Auditors do what they do.

Moderator, Lanny Smith – Yes, if the Article is defeated, then everything will remain the same.

Rick Shappy – If we amend this, can the Auditors not accept the job; can they refuse? Or can we amend tonight not to eliminate it?

Iva Menard – They can resign at any time. Polly Darnell was gracious to hop in and help Angie and herself when Annie Perkins resigned.

Mary Pat Roche – The Auditors have agreed to this, why not go ahead and do it. It's not like it is a hotly contested race with a lot of people running.

Moderator, Lanny Smith – Any further discussion on the Amendment to Article 3?

Karen Danyow – Is there a difference between keeping the elected Auditors vs. having an outside audit?

Pam Marsh – Auditors feel they have to meet statutes for elected town officers. They'd like to continue under another name, basically assisting the professional auditors. This relieves them of the opening meeting law requirements. The Town Auditors can continue, but we would still need an outside audit.

Tim Bouton – If we don't have Auditors, can they meet without warning it?

Pam Marsh – All should warn their meetings; that is one part that may not change and is one of the Auditors concerns.

Moderator, Lanny Smith – Read the Amendment to Article 3 again, and is in doubt by the voice vote. The Moderator asked for a show of hands.

12 yes / 20 no – the Amendment to Article 3 failed.

Moderator, Lanny Smith – We are back to Article 3.

Susie Leonard – Feels she needs more information, don't approve now we can figure out what to do.

Moderator, Lanny Smith – Read Article 3, is in doubt by the voice vote and asked for a show of hands.

21 yes / 18 no – Article 3 Passed.

ARTICLE 4. To transact, vote and act upon any further non-binding business, which may legally come before this meeting.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 5. To elect the following Town Officers by Australian Ballot:

Auditor	3 years
Beeman School Director	3 years
Delinquent Tax Collector	1 year
Grand Jurors (2)	1 year
Library Trustee (2)	3 years
Lister	3 years
Moderator	1 year
Selectboard	3 years
Selectboard	2 years
Town Agent	1 year
Town Clerk	3 years
Town Treasurer	3 years
Trustee of Public Funds	1 year

No discussion.

ARTICLE 6. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven adopt the proposed Road Fund Budget in the amount of \$1,276,628.61, a portion thereof in the amount of \$598,320.45, to be raised by taxes, for the purpose of maintaining town roads for the year 2013? By Australian Ballot.
Kathy Barrett mentioned there are a couple of corrections: Sherm Jewett's name was misspelled. Also, when the truck was purchased, \$64,000 was taken out of the Equipment Fund. At the end of the year, the Selectboard put the \$64,00 back into the Equipment Fund along with the money received from the sale of the old truck.
No further discussion.

ARTICLE 7. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to adopt the proposed General Fund Budget in the amount of \$653,006.00, a portion thereof in the amount of \$153,555.24, to be raised by taxes. This amount to be increased by any additional monies voted affirmatively by other articles of this Annual Meeting or voted affirmatively by Australian Ballot on March 5, 2013. The tax rate to be determined by the Selectboard. By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 8. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to expend up to \$150,000.00 from the Road Equipment Fund for the replacement of the 1996 International: the new truck to include a plow, dump body and sander? By Australian Ballot.
Barb Torian asked to hear more about the truck they are looking to purchase.
Roger Boise said he has gotten 4 bids, 2 of which are within \$1,000 of each other. The new one that they would like to purchase will more than likely be an International, single axle with a side dump body. The old truck has high mileage and is a 1996.
No further discussion.

ARTICLE 9. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven appropriate \$1,700.00 for the Addison County Community Action Group (ACCAAG), d.b.a. HOPE?
By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 10. Shall the Town of New Haven appropriate \$500.00 for ADDISON COUNTY COURT DIVERSION AND COMMUNITY JUSTICE PROJECTS, INC. to help provide restorative justice projects for offenders who have potential to learn from their mistakes and avoid incarceration and a criminal record, said sum to come from Town Funds? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 11. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven appropriate \$1,753.25 for the Addison County Home Health and Hospice, Inc.? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 12. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven appropriate \$1,800.00 for the Addison County Parent/Child Center? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 13. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to appropriate \$750.00 for Addison County Readers, Inc. to be taken from Town Funds for the purpose of improving literacy skills for children under 5 years of age? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 14. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven appropriate \$500.00 to the Addison County Riverwatch Collaborative, in support of water quality work within the Town of New Haven? By Australian Ballot.
Rick Shappy made a motion to allow Steve Diminico to speak as he is not a New Haven resident, motion seconded by Dean Percival. All in favor.
Steve Diminico introduced himself; he has been the president of the Riverwatch Collaborative for many years. They gather information on water quality, and send that information to the State. They pass this information on to each town that is affected. He appreciates all the towns who have contributed in the past. He feels our state's water quality can stand improvement.
Conservation Commission Chair, Dean Percival said they support this Article, as E-coil has become a problem in our rivers. Riverwatch monitors the recreation areas in town. He is hoping to get the state reports on the towns' website. This is a safety issue as well as a conservation issue.
No further discussion.

ARTICLE 15. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to appropriate \$4,211.00 for Addison County Transit Resources to be taken from Town Funds for the purpose of maintaining and improving public transportation services for elders, persons with disabilities and the general public? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 16. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to appropriate \$500.00 for the Bristol Family Center? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 17. Will the Town of New Haven vote to appropriate \$2,200.00 to Bristol Parks, Arts and Recreation Department? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 18. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to appropriate \$700.00 for the Champlain Valley Agency on Aging? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 19. Shall the voters of Town of New Haven appropriate \$1,750.00 for the Counseling Service of Addison County? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 20. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven appropriate \$700.00 for the Elderly Services Inc.? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 21. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven appropriate \$400.00 for the Hospice Volunteer Services? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 22. Shall the Town of New Haven vote to appropriate \$750.00 to the Addison County Humane Society, Inc., d.b.a. Homeward Bound Animal Welfare Center? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

