

Town Meeting Minutes

255th Annual Town Meeting of New Haven, Vermont

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 6, 2017 at 6:30 PM** to act on Articles 1 through 3; and on **Tuesday, March 7th, 2017 from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM** to vote by Australian Ballot on Articles 4 through 28.

Moderator Pam Marsh opened the meeting at 7:00 pm and welcomed all in attendance. There were approximately 95 in attendance. Selectboard members, Kathy Barrett, John Roleau, Doug Tolles and Jim Walsh introduced themselves. Steve Dupoise is currently in Florida.

The Moderator asked everyone to be respectful of one another; we follow Roberts Rules of Order, and all questions should be directed to the Moderator. Pam Marsh asked for those wishing to speak, to stand and state your name.

The Moderator read the Warning and invited State Representative, Harvey Smith to address the audience. Harvey offered a ride to Montpelier to anyone who would like to spend the day with the Legislature.

Pam Marsh said later in the meeting she would recognize the two gentlemen running for the 3 year Selectboard term.

ARTICLE 1. Shall the Town of New Haven vote to pay real estate taxes to the Town Treasurer on October 2, 2017; delinquent taxes will be subject to interest charges of one percent per month, and an eight percent penalty charged against them from October 2, 2017?

Jim Gallott made the motion, seconded by Richard Sawyer. No discussion.
All in favor.

Passed

ARTICLE 2. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven accept the Auditor's Report for the year 2016?

Suzy Roorda made the motion, seconded by Erin Wollem-Berens.

Suzy Roorda thanked the Auditors for the time they put in to have the Town Report ready. Applause.

Pam Marsh announced there is a correction sheet in the back of the room that is about the Vermont Green Line Devco (Anbaric). She also mentions on page 13, there is a correction to the employee health insurance that was inadvertently omitted.

All in favor.

Passed

ARTICLE 3. To transact, vote and act upon any further non-binding business, which may legally come before this meeting.

Moderator, Pam Marsh recognized the candidates running for Selectboard:

Barb Torian asked if everyone still wanted to receive the Town Reports by mail. By a show of hands, the overwhelming majority said yes.

Caroline Donnan asked who wrote the dedication in the Town Report, she thought the person should be recognized because it was so well written.

Pam Kingman said it was Barb Torian who wrote it, applause for Barb.

Al Karnatz asked why the Delinquent Tax Collector is only a 1 year position.

Kathy Barrett said several years ago the town voted to change the Clerk and Treasurer Positions from 1 year to 3 years. The Moderator is also 1 year. The town can vote to change these positions to 3 years if they want to submit a petition in the future.

ARTICLE 4. To elect the following Town Officers by Australian Ballot:

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|--------------------------|---------|
| Auditor | 3 years |
| Beeman School Director | 3 years |
| Delinquent Tax Collector | 1 year |
| Grand Jurors (2) | 1 year |
| Library Trustee (2) | 3 years |
| Moderator | 1 year |
| Mt. Abe School Director | 3 years |
| Selectboard | 2 years |

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|-------------------------|---------|
| Selectboard | 3 years |
| Town Agent | 1 year |
| Trustee of Public Funds | 1 year |

Taborri Bruhl (3 yr. term Selectboard) – He comes from a military family, and served in the Marines. He lives on River Road with his wife and 3 kids. He would like to bring a more positive attitude to the Selectboard.

Jon Christiano (3 yr. term Selectboard) – He feels he can bring his contract negotiation skills to the Board, especially with larger monetary projects. He has good common sense, and works well with others.

Kathy Barrett asked Jon Christiano if he knows Clemson Davidson who has been supporting Jon on Front Porch Forum regularly.

Jon said he does not know who the guy is.

Dean Gilmore said he had done some checking on this Clemson Davidson, and has found there is no such person. There are no DMV records, no postal address; he is not a registered voter. He said the person doesn't exist in Vermont; and feels it is dirty politics.

Mark Livingston agreed and said someone has to know who he is. It is kind of odd that he is showing all kinds of support, but no one knows who he is.

Moderator, Pam Marsh urged everyone to vote tomorrow.

ARTICLE 5. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to adopt the proposed Road Fund Budget of \$1,265,080.00, less anticipated revenues of \$525,700.00 less 2016 surplus of \$162,203.34 leaving a portion thereof in the amount of \$577,176.66, to be raised by taxes, for the purpose of maintaining town roads for the year 2017? By Australian Ballot.

This is for discussion only.

Karen Gallott asked Road Commissioner, John Roleau what his plans are for the coming year.

John Roleau said the Road Crew is getting brush cut along roadsides, and doing ditching. He is a big fan of cutting brush back far from the road so the sun gets on the roads and dries them out. John negotiated with VT Gas for damages to River Road, Town Hill Road and North St., we have already received the check, so repairs will take place this summer. Some problem areas are the twin culverts on Quaker Village Road, they are failing and will need to be replaced soon. There are paving projects on Dog Team Road. Bridge 19 on Plank Road will be replaced this summer, depending on if we receive grant money. John encouraged the audience to call or email him with any questions or concerns.

Nancy McFadden asked about plans to control the poison parsnip.

John Roleau said it is taking over the State. He currently has a road crew member considering taking a course in order to be certified to spray weed killer alongside the roads.

There was a lot of discussion about spraying insecticides along the roadside to kill weeds, and the potential hazards. The life cycle of poison parsnip and the best time and way to eradicate it was also discussed.

John feels this will protect the road crew from these weeds. Spraying from a vehicle is a new technique, and it will be trial and error.

Craig Zondag asked for best practice management.

John Roleau said there are a couple of problem areas, those that are not easy to get to.

Dean Gilmore said you must apply for a permit from the State before you can spray, and the deadline to do so is in April.

John Roleau assured everyone that he will research before he does anything.

Tim Bouton asked to move away from spraying and congratulated John on his purchase of the Village Green Market. He added if the town has plans to pave the parking lot adjacent to the store, we should work something out with the Roleau's.

Jim Walsh added the town recently negotiated with the State for railroad crossing improvements on Campground Road and Plank Road. There will be lights and gates at each crossing. This is for safety, as Amtrak trains will be using the rails in the future.

The bids for these projects went out on March 1, 2017. Because Campground crossing needs more attention, it will be closed for a week during construction.

ARTICLE 6. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to adopt the proposed General Fund Budget in the amount of \$722,350.00, less anticipated revenues of \$245,086.00, less 2016 surplus of \$104,422.39, plus 2017 taxes paid in 2016 of \$16,016.84 leaving a portion thereof in the amount of \$388,858.45, to be raised by taxes? This amount to be increased by any additional monies voted affirmatively by Australian Ballot on March 7, 2017. The tax rate to be determined by the Selectboard. By Australian Ballot.

Mary Pratt asked why last year we budgeted \$40k for solar opposition, and ended up spending \$77k; and this year only \$20k is proposed. What was the \$77k spent on?

Doug Tolles explained most of it went to paying the town Attorney.

Steven Crimy asked why we are opposing them.

Doug Tolles said because most applicants violated the Town Plan. He and Attorney Hill worked closely together, and made enough noise with the State to force developers to start doing things right. Some arrays have been done well with screening and siting and some have been done poorly. He is not sure the \$20k will be enough for this year. The Board is hoping the Town Plan will be approved, and hoping for fewer applications for arrays.

Francie Caccavo asked about the Solar Litigation on page 22 in the Town Report.

Doug Tolles said because some developers had more than one array, and they went beyond the Town Plan limit. Some offered to cut back, but ended up still being in excess of the Town Plan. He referred to the solar next to the State Police barracks; they started with a small array, and then added on, making the array over the limit. They have said they will screen it better, and is hoping they follow through. He added some members of the board did not like negotiating these deals.

Ruth Penfield asked about the Cemetery budgets in the Town Report; specifically Riverside Cemetery. She thought Cemeteries had to show funds.

Kathy Barrett said the Riverside Cemetery budget covers the cost of mowing, and maintenance. There is a fund started for fence replacement, but we don't yet know the cost of the fence; because we don't know the type of fence we will install yet. When we are ready it will go out to bid. State Statute says all cemeteries must have fences to keep the cattle out.

Jim Walsh said he and Steve Dupoise negotiated with Vermont Green Line Devco (Anbaric) for additional funds. The Town should be receiving a check for \$35k in the near future.

ARTICLE 7. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to adopt the Town Plan approved by the Selectboard on January 17, 2017? By Australian Ballot.

Steve Crimy said he received a post card in today's mail about the Town Plan.

Moderator, Pam Marsh said it was sent by John Madden.

John Madden suggested everyone read the card, his concerns are on it.

Kathy Barrett said there are miss –statements on the post card: Place Sense hasn't worked on the Town Plan since June, when the Planning Commission turned it over the Selectboard. She added the changes to the Town Plan include an enhanced energy section (ACT 174), which may give the town substantial deference. Statistics were added to show what kind of town it is.

Al Karnatz said the members of the Planning Commission should be recognized for their work on the Town Plan, applause.

Discussed other changes to the Town Plan.

Tim Bouton said the Town Plan is a moving target; it will be adopted by the town tomorrow or not. If it does pass, then things in it will need to be addressed right off. The Planning Commission and Selectboard shouldn't wait. The Plan needs constant updating; he just wants folks to be prepared for it.

Dan Monger added no town in Vermont needs a Town Plan, but without it there is no funding.

Doug Tolles said New Haven will be the first Town in Vermont to send their Town Plan to the Public Service Dept. for review. He spent many hours with attorney Hill working on the Energy section of the Plan; they went step by step through the checklist. He hopes it passes.

John Roleau has learned there is a lot more riding on the Town Plan than just solar. The Plan can be amended yearly.

Jim Walsh said not having a Town Plan does not affect the zoning regulations.

Mike Kiernan from Weybridge asked if he could speak to solar. No one objected. He spoke about planting pollinators under the solar like they do in Minnesota. This encourages the bee population to thrive.

ARTICLE 8. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to appropriate \$1,700.00 for the Addison County Community Action Group (ACCAG), d.b.a. HOPE? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 9. Shall the Town of New Haven vote to appropriate \$500.00 for Addison County Restorative Justice Services 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 10. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to appropriate \$1,753.25 for the Addison County Home Health and Hospice, Inc.? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 11. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to appropriate \$1,800.00 for the Addison County Parent/Child Center? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 12. Shall the Town of New Haven 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 13. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to appropriate \$500.00 for the Addison County Riverwatch Collaborative? These funds will help support the Collaborative's continued water quality work: sampling sites on the Otter Creek and the New Haven River within the Town of New Haven, analyzing the data, and reporting water quality information to the public. By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 14. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to appropriate \$4,850.00 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 15. 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 16. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to appropriate \$2,500.00 to Bristol Recreation Department? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 17. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to appropriate \$700.00 for Age Well f/k/a Champlain Valley Agency on Aging? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 18. Shall the voters of Town of New Haven vote to appropriate \$1,750.00 for the Counseling Service of Addison County? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 19. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven appropriate \$700.00 for the Elderly Services, Inc.? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 20. Will the voters vote \$600.00 to Hospice Volunteer Services to be used to help pay part of the cost of providing home Hospice care for terminally ill patients in this town, said sum to come from town funds? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 21. 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.

ARTICLE 22. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to appropriate \$1,075.00 for the John W. Graham Emergency Shelter Services, Inc.? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 23. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to appropriate \$500.00 for the Open Door Clinic? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 24. Shall the Town of New Haven vote to appropriate the sum of \$950.00 to the Otter Creek Child Center, Inc. located in Middlebury, Vermont, to support the center's need-based Tuition Assistance Program and its mission to provide quality, affordable early care and education to the Addison County community? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 25. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to appropriate \$390.00 for the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 26. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to appropriate \$525.00 for Vermont Adult Learning? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 27. Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to appropriate \$215.00 for the Vermont Center for Independent Living? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

ARTICLE 28. Shall the Town of New Haven vote to appropriate the sum of \$1,250.00 to WomanSafe, Inc. to support their mission to: work toward the elimination of physical, sexual and emotional violence against woman and their children through direct service, education and social change? By Australian Ballot.
No discussion.

Tim Bouton made a motion to adjourn at 8:41 pm, seconded by Jim Gallott
All in favor.

Attest: _____
New Haven Town Clerk