

## Town Meeting Minutes 262<sup>nd</sup> Annual Town Meeting of New Haven, Vermont

District Rep. (ADD – 5) Jubilee McGill both spoke briefly.

MAUSD Board of Directors, Sarah La Perle spoke briefly about the purchase of the building on Munsill Ave. in Bristol as well as the proposed budget.

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 4, 2024, at 6:30 PM** to act on Articles 1 through 3; and on **Tuesday, March 5, 2024, from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM** to vote by Australian Ballot on Articles 4 through 11.

### **A DISCUSSION PERIOD FOR THE AUSTRALIAN BALLOT ARTICLES WILL BEGIN IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING TOWN MEETING.**

Moderator, Lanny Smith introduced himself and called the meeting to order at 6:50 pm and welcomed approximately 65 people. Selectboard members, John Roleau, Mike Audy, Bruce Many and Marie Jewett were introduced along with Town Clerk, Pam Kingman and Town Treasurer, Danielle Hubbell. The Moderator indicated the use of Robert Rules of Order, and asked everyone to direct their questions to him, and to be respectful of one another. Lanny Smith read the Warning.

**ARTICLE 1.** Shall the Town of New Haven vote to pay real estate taxes to the Town Treasurer on October 1, 2024; delinquent taxes to be subject to interest charges of one percent per month, and an eight percent penalty charged against them from October 2, 2024?

Kathi Apgar made the motion to approve, seconded by Al Karnatz.

All in favor.

**Passed**

**ARTICLE 2.** Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven accept the Auditors' Report for the year 2023?

John Roleau made the motion to approve, seconded by Pam Marsh.

All in favor.

**Passed**

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

Kathi Apgar made the motion to approve, seconded by Al Karnatz.

**Tim Bouton** – Article 8 should be voted by floor vote due to it not being a monetary item.

**Moderator, Lanny Smith** – agreed, however it was already warned, therefore he will let it stand.

**Barb Torian** – We are in a very stressful economic time; we need to think about the future and maybe start rolling towards county government.

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

Auditor	3 years
Auditor	3 years
Delinquent Tax Collector	1 year
Library Trustee	3 years
Lister	3 years

Moderator	1 year
Mt. Abe Unified School District Director	2 year
Mt. Abe Unified School District Director	3 years
Selectboard	2 years
Selectboard	3 years
Trustee of Public Funds	1 year

**Gail Freidin** – All the other positions get paid better than the Moderator.

**Lanny Smith** – He used to get \$100.00 for being Moderator.

**ARTICLE 5.** Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to adopt the proposed Road Fund Budget of \$1,176,162.69 less anticipated revenues of \$97,000 less 2023 surplus of \$169,653.94, leaving a portion thereof in the amount of \$909,508.75 to be raised by taxes, for the purpose of maintaining town roads for the year 2024?

By Australian Ballot.

**Steve Bauer** – Asked about the Road sign for Legend Lane. His neighbors ordered a sign from the town but never received it.

**Pam Kingman** – The town office will look into it.

**ARTICLE 6.** Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to adopt the proposed General Fund Budget in the amount of \$1,414,246.48 (General Fund expenses, \$814,246.48 plus school payment due \$600,000.00) less anticipated revenues of \$178,215.00, less 2023 surplus of \$736,395.55, leaving a portion thereof in the amount of \$499,635.93, to be raised by taxes? This amount to be increased by any additional monies voted affirmatively by Australian Ballot on March 5, 2024. The tax rate is to be determined by the Selectboard. By Australian Ballot.

**Kathi Apgar** – Can we anticipate a surplus in 2024.

**Treasurer, Danielle Hubbell** – The School runs on a fiscal year, and the Town a calendar year. Taxes are collected in 2023 and due in 2024 this will cause a large surplus of \$600k, that is allocated to the school, however we can use those funds until they are due.

**Jim Cross** – The school budget is so high; we are the third highest in the country, even higher than Connecticut. The per Capita is high and he is concerned about how we fund education.

**Kathi Apgar** – is on the MAUSD Board, she wished this question had been posed to Jubilee McGill. It is a level service budget. We are seeing rates increase across the state, we are concerned about our taxes.

**Sarah LaPerle** – We no longer have local control; budgets are pooled at the State level.

**Jim Cross** – There is a good article written about education costs in VT Digger that he feels is the most accurate.

**Kathi Apgar** – She read that article and doesn't feel it gives an accurate account. Numbers are changing daily at the state level, you need to vote tomorrow to send a message to the State. She added there are too many small schools to manage and control, it is a statewide issue.

**Sansae Sparling** – One strong point about purchasing the building is there are no disruptions to the staff, and it is less expensive.

**Kathi Apgar** – They are asking permission to buy the building, if we buy it we must maintain it. The third floor of Beeman is empty, it can be re-purposed and the transition to the new space would happen over the summer. Several services within Beeman can be delivered within the classroom.

**Betsy Taylor** – There is so much tension over taxes, education spending and caring for seniors. She is curious if anyone has heard of or seen any creative solutions. She also asked if there were any changes to the General Fund budget from last year.

**Treasurer, Danielle Hubbell** – No

**John Roleau** – We're all feeling the crunch, and we all work hard to make ends meet. He thinks with added funds from COVID the past 2 years, really messed things up and it will take a while to even out.

**Benj Putnam** – When does the \$600k get paid to the school?

**Treasurer, Danielle Hubbell** – After taxes are collected.

**Benj Putnam** – Don't vote down the General fund budget to vote down the school budget.

**Barb Torian** – Small town Vermont, things aren't sustainable anymore. We have to think about what we are willing to give up. Services are up, so we pay more for them. If we want to keep our small schools open, were going to have to pay for them.

**Tim Bouton** – go to the polls tomorrow. Re-elect or elect our Representatives and senators in November.

**Sarah LaPerle** – we discussed consolidation last year, it didn't pass. Efforts to come up with new solutions, Bond always gets voted down. If the School board could have purchased the building without the voters' consent, they would have.

**Rick Shappy** – We've been here before; we will get through it.

**Gail Fredin** – At last year's town meeting there was a discussion about the ARPA funds, what the status is of that. Also, where are we in the townwide reappraisal process.

**Town Clerk, Pam Kingman** – The reappraisal process has begun.

**John Roleau** – When we first were told we were to receive ARPA funds, there were a lot of folks with their hands out. The Board made a collective decision to spend the money on things for our town. The Board considered putting ARPA money into Broadband; however, the money was pooled and wouldn't necessarily have been used to expand Broadband in New Haven.

**Treasurer, Danielle Hubbell** – the Funds need to be allocated by the end of 2024. The Selectboard has put \$200k aside for the Depot, but ARPA monies cannot be used for matching grants. There is also \$70K allocated to purchase property for the Fire Dept.

**Kathy Cahill** – Were ARPA Funds used to buy the "slowdown" solar signs?

**Treasurer, Danielle Hubbell** – No, they were purchased with budgeted funds.

**George Merkel** – Thank you for your diligence.

**ARTICLE 7:** Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to expend up to \$20,000.00 from the Reserve Facilities Fund to do repairs to the geothermal system in the Town Offices and Library? By Australian Ballot.

**Town Clerk, Pam Kingman** – The library side of the system needs a new coil and heat pump. The system will be 15 years old in June.

**John Roleau** – They have done a temporary fix until repairs can be made.

**Rick Shappy** – Is the leak in the ground?

**Town Clerk, Pam Kingman** – No, it is upstairs, within the building.

**ARTICLE 8.** Shall the voters of the Town of New Haven vote to extend the office of Delinquent Tax Collector from a 1-year term to a 3-year term beginning in 2025? By Australian Ballot.

**Barb Torian** – It is very difficult to have a 1-year position, after the first year you are just figuring things out. She supports going to a 3-year term.

**Pam Marsh** – Agrees. She would like to see the Moderator and Trustee of Public Funds both be 3-year terms.

**Rick Shappy** - Asked if these positions work at will of the Selectboard.

**Moderator, Lanny Smith** – No they are elected positions. This probably should have been a voice vote.

**ARTICLE 9.** Shall the Town of New Haven vote to appropriate \$1,200.00 for the Have a Heart Food Shelf? By Australian Ballot.

**Jim Cross** – Has anyone looked at how this money is spent.

**Gail Freidin** – They are all non-profit and have Boards, or some even have staff.

**Susie Leonard** – This Food shelf is in Bristol, and they serve quite a few poor people.

**Moderator, Lanny Smith** – There used to be a few representatives from each agency that would come and explain who they serve and what they do.

**Jim Cross** – Encourage them to attend Town Meeting?

**Moderator, Lanny Smith** – Reach out to them.

**Gail Freidin** – There is a wide range of agencies. Elderly Services has over a million-dollar budget and has 50 staff members. Must approach each agency for more information.

**Betsy Taylor** – These are well known groups, and demand for services is so high. It would not be good to put a further burden on them.

**ARTICLE 10.** Shall the Town appropriate \$1,200.00 to the Open-Door Clinic, Community Health Services of Addison County which provides access to high quality dental and healthcare, free of charge, to those who are uninsured or under-insured in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691? By Australian Ballot.

**Cheryl Mitchell** – This clinic has served 74 residents of New Haven. There are Doctors, nurses, and folks on staff, they also serve the migrant community. Cheryl offered to organize a van trip to visit the agencies if anyone was interested.

**Sansae Sparling** – Her daughter was visiting here from London, and needed a Dr. She ended up being seen by a Dr. at the clinic.

**Ruth Penfield** – Has their appropriation request gone up?

**Town Clerk, Pam Kingman** – Yes, this is their second-year petitioning at this amount.

**Kathi Apgar** – She is the Vice Chair of Court Diversion. She would like to ask the Selectboard to approve an appropriation without petitioning if the request is not greater than \$500.

**ARTICLE 11.** Shall the Town of New Haven appropriate \$1,000.00 to the Turning Point Center of Addison County for the purpose of supporting its mission to assist persons, their families, and their friends in recovery from substance use disorder and addictive behaviors? By Australian Ballot.

**No discussion.**

**Moderator, Lanny Smith** – Has served on many boards, it's a lot of work, but you take pride in your community by giving back. This is a great town. Consider the Fire Dept. These folks put in 240 hours to qualify to be a firefighter, all on their own time, but to serve the community. (applause)

**Pam Marsh** – would consider being a write-in candidate for Moderator.

Tim Bouton made a motion to adjourn at 7:57 pm, seconded by Al Karnatz.  
All in favor.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Town Clerk