

ABSTRACT OF MINUTES-TOWN MEETING MARCH 6, 2018

Meeting was called to order at 9:32 am

ARTICLE 1. To elect a moderator for the year ensuing.

Marcia Hill nominated Paul Hanlon. Martin Kovacs seconded. Ted Lamb asked for further nominations and hearing none, called the vote. **Paul Hanlon elected as Moderator.**

ARTICLE 2. To elect the following Town Officers, **by Australian ballot:**

- Town Clerk one-year **KATIE WINKELJOHN**
- Treasurer one-year **KATIE WINKELJOHN**
- Select Person two of three years **CHRIS CASEY**
- Select Person three years **PAUL HILL**
- Lister three years **PETER STRODBRIDGE**
- School Director two years **MATT DEGROOT**
- School Director three years **WILL BAKER**
- School Director three years **OPEN**

ARTICLE 3. To receive and act on the reports of the Town Officers as printed in the Town Report.

Marcia Hill moved to accept reports. Robert Martin pointed out a \$9.00 discrepancy in the Cemetery Commission report, which was corrected. The reports were accepted as amended.

ARTICLE 4. To elect a Delinquent Tax Collector for the year ensuing.

Ted Lamb nominated Katie Winkeljohn. Cheri Goldstein seconded. Katie Winkeljohn elected as Delinquent Tax Collector.

ARTICLE 5. To elect a Town Constable for the year ensuing.

Lacey Osborne nominated Shawn McManis. Roger Hill seconded. Shawn McManis elected as Town Constable.

ARTICLE 6. To elect a Cemetery Commissioner for a term of three years.

Earlene Forbes nominated Francette Cerulli. Cheri Goldstein seconded. Francette Cerulli elected as Cemetery Commissioner.

ARTICLE 7. To see if the Town will vote to have all property taxes paid to the Treasurer at the Town Clerk's Office by 5:00 p.m. on or before Wednesday, August 15, 2018 (Town Tax) and on or before Wednesday, November 15, 2018 (School Tax) **regardless of postmark** and, to charge a one-time penalty of 8% and interest at 1% per month or any part of a month on overdue taxes from the due date of the tax, as provided by law.

Robert Martin moved the Article as printed in the Town Report. Marlene Kovacs seconded. PASSED.

ARTICLE 8. To see if the town voters will approve a town budget of \$688,927.00.

Cheri Goldstein moved to adopt the Town budget proposed in article 8 as written. Ted Lamb seconded.

James (Ted) thanked Cheri for her long years of service on the Selectboard as she is not seeking re-election.

James (Ted) mentioned the Town Service Officer, who before 2017 used to coordinate efforts to make sure no one was without essential help in times of need. The town's people were asked for volunteers to form a Town Service Committee to replace this role.

Cheri defended the budget, which had not increased at all.

Robert Martin questioned the amount of health insurance paid for highway crew. Katie Winkeljohn

said the town pays 90% and employees pay 10%. Most towns, she said, pay 100% and employees pay nothing. Robert Martin also questioned the cost of maintaining the Town Hall.

Robert Martin made a motion to reduce the proposed 2018 budget from \$688,927.00 to 674,854.00 (the amount of expenditures for 2017). Charlene McManis seconded the motion. DEFEATED. Back to main motion. PASSED.

ARTICLE 9. To see if the voters of the town of Worcester shall approve an appropriation in the total amount of \$11,550.00.

Avram Patt made a motion to waive reading all the separate items in the list. Allen Gilbert seconded. Motion passed. Chris Lyon moved the article as written. Cheri Goldstein seconded. PASSED.

ARTICLE 10. To see if the voters of the town of Worcester shall approve an appropriation for the Kellogg-Hubbard Library in the amount of \$16,677.00 for the calendar year of 2017?

Michele Hill moved the article as written. Ted Lamb seconded. There was a lengthy debate on how all types of essential services are vital for the town. Article to fund the library, PASSED.

ARTICLE 11. Shall the town voters authorize an expenditure in the amount of \$5,000.00 to pay for the Worcester 4th of July fireworks display?

Charlene McManis moved the article as written. Marlene Kovacs seconded. PASSED.

ARTICLE 12. Shall the town voters enter into a communications union district to be known as Central Vermont Internet, under the provisions of 30 V.S.A. Ch.82?

Allen Gilbert moved to approve the article as written, and Cheri L. Goldstein seconded. Allen explained the concept of a communications district dedicated to bringing high-speed internet to out of the way rural areas.

The meeting was recessed at 10:58 a.m., to be reconvened after the School Meeting.

Meeting reconvened at 11:56 a.m.

Discussion of the internet communications district (Article 12) continued. There were questions about possible cost to the town or taxpayers. Allen Gilbert said that only subscribers to the internet service would pay. PASSED.

ARTICLE 13. Shall the town of Worcester voters urge the State of Vermont to:

- a) Halt any new or expanded fossil fuel infrastructure, including but not limited to energy pipelines;
- b) Firmly commit to at least 90% renewable energy for all people in Vermont, with firm interim deadlines; and,
- c) Endure that the transition to renewable energy is fair and equitable for all residents, with no harm to marginalized groups or rural communities. (Full version can be found on the Worcester Town Clerk's Office website.)

Jalila J. Pulskamp moved to accept the article as read in its full version that was not printed in the town report. Victor Ehly seconded. Jalila explained the resolution as a way to put pressure on the State of Vermont to implement CEP (Comprehensive Energy Plan).

Stewart Clark urged people to read Act 174 in the Vermont Statutes. According to Stewart, the town of Worcester should set aside 300 acres for solar panels for its energy to be totally renewable. This triggered a debate and exchange of ideas, including the importance of conserving energy rather than just producing it.

Gary W. Johnson, Jr., who lives off the grid and built his own solar panels, stressed the importance of more people using wood heat rather than oil and propane, and making the cutting

and selling of firewood more profitable for loggers. He suggested putting up solar panels on Ladd Field, which sparked lively discussion. Gary also offered to help come up with ideas to increase the proportion of renewable energy used by the town, and to help with implementation.

Stewart Clark moved to amend section 1.b. of the article. Christopher Lyon seconded. The amendment to read “b) Firmly commit to at least 90% renewable energy and increased support for energy conservation for all people in Vermont, with firm interim deadlines; and” (new amended language underlined). **AMENDMENT PASSED.**

Cheri Goldstein moved to end debate on the article as amended. Marlene Kovacs seconded. Debate ended, **AMENDED ARTICLE PASSED.**

ARTICLE 14. To see what sum of money the town will raise on the Grand List of 2018 to pay the expenses and indebtedness of the Town.

Cheri Goldstein moved to raise **\$722,154.00 on the Grand List of 2018 to pay the expenses and indebtedness of the Town. Christopher Casey seconded. PASSED.**

ARTICLE 15. To see if the voters of the town of Worcester shall increase the 2018 Veterans’ Exemption (for disabled veterans per the Veterans Administration) in the amount of \$10,000 to the amount of \$20,000, said exemption amount to be voted on every year.

Shawn McManis moved the Article as written. Robert Martin seconded. **PASSED.**

ARTICLE 16. To transact any other business that may properly come before the meeting.

Robert Martin moved to have the Selectboard make an inventory list of everything the Town owns with a value over \$500, including lands and buildings, such list to be included in the Town Report. Marlene Kovacs seconded. **DEFEATED.**

Heather Pagel moved that any request for funding over \$10,000.00 be voted on by Australian ballot in the future, so people who can’t make it to Town Meeting during the day would still have the ability to vote on such items during polling hours. Robert Martin seconded. The moderator explained that such a change would have to appear as an article in 2019’s Town Meeting. If passed, it would be put on Australian ballot for 2020’s Town Meeting. Marcia Hill stated that her mind had often been changed by discussion during Town Meeting, and putting an item onto the ballot would remove it from the possibility of such open discussion. Gary Johnson said that Vermonters are legally not allowed to be penalized in any way for time away from work to come to Town Meeting. Kim Bolduc called the question, and Shawn McManis seconded. The motion to end debate passed, and the motion was **DEFEATED.**

John Scherbatskoy moved to request that the State move Bennington Battle Day as a state holiday to Town Meeting Day. Genoa Scherbatskoy seconded. Allen Gilbert moved to end debate. Will Sutton seconded the motion to end debate, passed. Motion was **DEFEATED.**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Francette Cerulli
Assistant Town Clerk

Dated at Worcester, Vermont this 16th day of March, 2018

_____ Paul Hanlon, Moderator

_____ Katie Winkeljohn, Clerk

Filed in Town Clerk’s Office on March 16, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. and duly recorded before posting.

Attest: Katie Winkeljohn, Town Clerk