

TOWN MEETING MINUTES
February 28, 2011
Champlain Valley Union High School

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. Moderator Joe Fallon reviewed some procedural rules prior to proceeding with the Articles.

Article 1: To elect the necessary town and school district officers by Australian ballot Tuesday, March 1, 2011.

Article 2: To hear the reports of the Town officers and take action thereon.

Selectboard Chair Jonathan Trefry gave a brief overview of important happenings in the town over the past year. He thanked the volunteers who serve on the multitude of committees and stated that the town would not be where it is today without their efforts. He went on to thank the staff for stepping up to help during Hinesburg's transition to a new town administrator. He specifically mentioned the new historic site marker at the bottom of Lincoln Hill and urged people to take a look at it. Steve Russell gave a brief update on the Town Forest. The reports were approved as presented by Trefry.

Article 3: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of \$935, 160 to defray the general expenses of the Town?

Article 3 was moved and seconded. Ruth Ayer offered the first amendment to the proposed budget. She stated that in her opinion the planning and zoning office only served 2 percent of the population, so she proposed reducing the budget for planning and zoning by 98 percent to a total of \$3849. The motion was seconded and Moderator Fallon then read the motion as amended so that the new total for Article 2 was \$746,585.84. He called for a voice vote and the amendment was defeated.

There was discussion relating to the increase in the budget compared to last year. Jon Trefry stated that several projects and repairs had been deferred over the last few years and now it was time to proceed with them. The Silver Street bridge project is happening this year, along with a section of sidewalk, fire department increases in dispatch services and professional development, recreation department work on the soccer field and tennis courts and safety doors on town hall.

There was then discussion about staff salary and benefits. People wanted to know why the staff was getting a salary increase and how much staff is contributing to benefits? Randy Volk explained that the salary increase for the staff is tied to the Cost of Living Increase calculated by the Federal Government. Tim Casey noted that the Consumer Price Index showed an increase of 2 percent over last year and suggested that the budget should only go up that much. He then made a motion to decrease spending for this article by \$45,160 for a new total of \$890,000, which would be the equivalent of a 2 percent increase over last year. There was a voice vote that was too close to call. The moderator asked for those in favor of the amendment to stand first, then those opposed to the amendment. The count was not completed as it was obvious after those opposed to the amendment stood that the motion was soundly defeated.

The moderator then called the question with the original proposed amount of \$935,160 and the Article was approved by voice vote.

Article 4: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of \$894,707 for highway purposes?

Article 4 was moved and seconded. There was some discussion about some of the increases in the highway budget. The Selectboard outlined some of the projects responsible for the increase such as the Silver Street bridge project, the replacement of the culvert on Shelburne Falls Road and the replacement of the mower deck for the tractor for roadside maintenance. There is also some money being set aside for a new dump truck. Someone asked about health insurance costs and the Board stated that costs were down by 2.4 percent and they thanked the employees for switching to a high deductible on short notice. The employees are also paying 10 percent of the premium.

The moderator called the question when there was no further discussion and the Article 4 was passed by voice vote.

Article 5: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of \$452,138 for the general expenses of the Community Police Department?

Article 5 was moved and seconded. Len Duffy then made a motion to amend the amount to \$75,000 and call it "police services" rather than the community police department. A lively discussion then ensued. Duffy asked why we couldn't contract with a neighboring town for police services like Charlotte does? Another person pointed out that the police do provide EMT services for a much cheaper cost than having an ambulance service. After discussion, the amendment was defeated on a voice vote.

There were then several questions related to the police department operations including the number of employees, hours of coverage and types of calls. People would like a better breakdown of the types of calls. Someone requested that we revisit the hours of coverage and decide whether we wanted to change that.

After the discussion ended, Moderator Fallon reread the question and asked for a voice vote. The vote was too close to call. Fallon then asked all those in favor of the Article as written to stand, followed by those opposed. The Article passed with 117 in favor and 97 opposed.

Article 6: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of \$182,150 for the Carpenter Carse Library?

Article 6 was moved and seconded. Vicki Matthews asked about the wind turbine and how it was working. Sue reported that it was working intermittently and Rocky said that the town wasn't paying for any of the repairs as it was a demonstration project. After a brief discussion, the article was approved on a voice vote.

Article 7: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of \$7,500 for the purpose of obtaining options and/or the acquisition of lands, or those rights in land, which would preserve open space and natural resources, any unexpended portion of such sum to be placed in the Land Preservation Reserve Fund?

Article 7 was moved and seconded. Tom Ayer asked how much land was enough? Does the Town need to continue to purchase land and take it off the tax rolls? Bob Linck clarified that the land doesn't come off the tax rolls. Andrea Morgante pointed out that the Bissonette conservation project actually generated more tax revenue than the land did when it was owned by the Bissonette family. After some discussion, Article 7 was passed on a voice vote.

Article 8: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of \$2,000 to the Hinesburg Land Trust?
The motion was made and seconded. The article was approved on a voice vote with no discussion.

Article 9: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of \$600 for the Lake Iroquois Recreation District as Hinesburg's share?
The motion was made and seconded and Article 9 passed on a voice vote with no discussion.

Article 10: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of \$10,000 for the Lake Iroquois Association?
Moved and seconded. Steve Lidle, a member of the Association and acting as their representative, gave a brief overview of who they are and what their goals are. He then asked that Article 10 be withdrawn given the current economic situation and the efforts being made to keep the tax rate down. A motion was made to that effect and passed on a voice vote and the article was withdrawn.

Article 11: Shall the Town vote to raise the sum of \$28,700 to be disbursed as specifically designated to the following agencies/organizations?

Hinesburg Community Resource Center	\$9,500
Visiting Nurse Association	7,000
Women Helping Battered Women	2,000
Champlain Valley Agency on Aging	2,000
Maple Leaf Farm	1,900
Chittenden Community Action	1,500
Committee on Temporary Shelter (COTS)	1,500
Hinesburg Rides Elderly & Disabled Transportation	1,000
Howard Center	800
Vermont Cares	500
Vermont Center for Independent Living	300
Women's Rape Crisis Center	<u>200</u>
	\$28,700

Moved and seconded. Kate Schubart asked that the article be increased by \$500 to correct an error on the committee's part. They thought that the \$500 for the Community Meal Site, which we typically appropriate for this group, was included in the request from Champlain Valley Agency on Aging, when in fact it wasn't. A motion was made to amend the article by adding

\$500, thereby increasing the total amount for Article 11 to \$29,200. The Article was approved as amended by voice vote.

Article 12: Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to furnish the Town of St. George fire protection and first response coverage at the sum of \$23,061 for the period of one year?

Moved and seconded and approved by voice vote.

The passage of all Articles, with the addition of the \$500 for the Community Meal Site means that \$2,513,455 will need to be raised in taxes for town government.

Article 13: Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to borrow money when needed to meet current expenses and indebtedness of said Town?

Moved and seconded and passed by voice vote.

Article 14: Shall the voters authorize the payment of real and personal property taxes for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012 payable in full to the Town of Hinesburg in one installment, with the due date being November 15, 2011? Any and all payments received in the Town Treasurer's Office later than midnight on November 15, 2011 will be considered delinquent and will be subject to the collection of interest at the rate of 1% per month or fraction thereof for the first three months and thereafter at the rate of 1 ½% per month or fraction thereof.

The Article was moved and seconded and approved with no discussion.

Article 15: To transact any other business proper to be brought before said meeting.

Marge Sharp suggested that some clarification was needed on page 11 of the annual report so that it was clear which departments were included in which article. A motion was made and seconded and passed on voice vote.

Steve Russell made a motion to set up a committee to study the police department given the discussion at the meeting. The motion was seconded and the Selectboard agreed that it might be a good idea and they would take action on it. The motion was approved on a voice vote.

Ray Mainer moved to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa B. Ross
Town Clerk & Treasurer