

**Minutes of the Hinesburg Annual Town Meeting  
March 2, 2009**

**Town of Hinesburg, Vermont**

**Selectboard:** Jonathan S. Trefry, Chairman, Howard E. Russell, Randall C. Volk, Andrea Morgante and Kenneth Brown

**Town Clerk / Treasurer:** Melissa B. Ross

**Town Moderator:** Joseph Fallon

Joseph Fallon called the meeting to order at 7:31pm on March 2, 2009. Mr. Fallon reviewed Roberts Rules of Order, some general rules of the meeting and described how he planned to facilitate the meeting. He then recognized Representative Bill Lippert.

Representative Lippert mentioned the handouts he had brought to the meeting, including a legislative report and the Doyle survey. He thanked the town for the honor of representing Hinesburg.

**Mr. Fallon read the warning:**

*The legal voters of the Town of Hinesburg, Vermont are hereby warned and notified to meet at the Champlain Valley Union High School auditorium, in said Town of Hinesburg, Monday evening March 2, 2009 at 7:30 PM to transact business on all articles except Articles 1 and 2 which will be voted upon by Australian ballot Tuesday, March 3, 2009 at the Town Hall in said Town of Hinesburg. Polls will be open at 7:00 AM and close at 7:00 PM. The March 2, 2009 meeting to be adjourned to the Town Hall in said Town of Hinesburg at 9:00 AM March 3, 2009, if necessary, to act on any business left unfinished when met.*

**ARTICLE 1: To elect the necessary town and school district officers by Australian ballot Tuesday March 3, 2009 (see Officers for Election list in the Town Report).**

**ARTICLE 2: Shall the voters authorize the elimination of the office of Town Auditor, 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. § 2651(b)?**

Jonathan Trefry asked to be recognized. He stated that this article was primarily put forward because the town was unable to fully staff the three auditor positions. The town has hired certified public accountants to do actual audits. The positions are somewhat obsolete and state statute allows for this position to be eliminated. Jonathan stated that it is the board's recommendation to pass this article, which will be voted on by Australian ballot.

**ARTICLE 3: To hear the reports of the Town officers and take action thereon.**

Jonathan Trefry, chairman of the Select board introduced the Selectboard members. He noted that this is a town meeting run by a moderator and not a Selectboard meeting. He encouraged participation and feedback by all members. Jonathan showed a PowerPoint presentation of town changes, accomplishments and budgetary issues. New town employees were included in the presentation with their pictures.

Audience members made and seconded the motion to accept the Town report. The motion was approved by voice vote.

**ARTICLE 4: Shall the Town appropriate \$910,326 to defray the general expenses of the Town?**

An audience member made the Motion and it was seconded.

Discussion: John Kiedaisch said it was unclear how many employees were included in the salaries for different departments. He suggested that should be listed in the future. It appeared there were several substantial increases. He asked what the salary increases were. Jonathan Trefry answered that some salaries were coming partially out of the water and sewer budgets and that the percentages had changed, which made it appear that the increases were greater than they actually were. Kiedaisch stated that the increases seemed excessive in light of our financial situation. Jonathan noted that overall salaries were adjusted by 5%. An audience member stated that a 3-4% salary increase would be more appropriate. Rob Francis agreed that the increases are higher than they should be during these economic times. Ruth Ayer asked about long term disability and wondered if health insurance is still at 100% coverage. Ken Brown stated that the long-term disability covers the gap until social security would kick in. Health insurance costs are actually lower than last year because of the buyout option offered this year. Staff is presently paying 3% of their healthcare costs starting in July. All this was negotiated with the contract for the 5 union employees. Sam Hemmingway stated that one salary seemed to be a 10% increase.

A vote was taken and the motion was accepted by voice vote.

**ARTICLE 5: Shall the Town appropriate \$35,400 as initial down payment and finance an amount not to exceed \$114,600 plus interest over the next four years for the purpose of purchasing a dump truck, such purchase estimated to cost \$150,000 plus interest?**

An audience member made the Motion and it was seconded.

Norm Smith asked if this was the truck that was in an accident. The answer was no. Ruth Ayer asked why the life expectancy for a town vehicle is only 10 years. Volk noted that Mike Anthony could speak to the life of the work vehicles. He stated that the board looks at this closely and decided the risk of repairs is significant. Mike Anthony noted there are only 4 trucks and they are used quite heavily, especially in the winter.

The motion was passed by voice vote.

**ARTICLE 6: Shall the Town appropriate \$674,275 for highway purposes?**

The motion was made and seconded. Josie Palmer asked why the sign budget had gone up so much. Volk stated that it was due to automated work signs, and that they would help eliminate flaggers and help with safety. The board thought it might save money. Rob

Bast thought they would work well. Jonathan stated that \$7500 was spent on flaggers and the insurance provider stated these signs are safer. An audience member wanted to go on record that although the signs might work it might take jobs away. Ed Sengle asked where it says \$674,275 in the town report. The Board said to look on page 9 where there was an explanation.

After discussion the motion was passed by voice vote.

**ARTICLE 7: Shall the Town appropriate \$487,502 for the general expenses of the Community Police Department?**

A Motion was made and seconded.

Howard Russell stated that this budget was carefully developed and the strategic report showed that we should be increasing the budget based on police workloads. Some of the money is for upgrading cameras in the police vehicles. It was felt that the cameras are a priority over other items. Howard wanted to recognize the hard work by the department. Nancy Baker asked if there is such a high workload could we hire other professionals? Howard stated that OT was at 7%. Ray Keller asked why we need in-car cameras and do they improve safety. Chief Morrell gave a brief history of in-car cameras and said that they have become a standard that judges ask for. It makes legal decisions easier. Bill Lippert, who serves on the judiciary committee for the state said there are compelling reasons to have cameras and that it is well documented that cameras protect citizens and officers. Sam Hemmingway asked about the need for a new car. Howard Russell stated that this is part of the overall plan for the 4 police vehicles. One is planned every two years which results in an 8 year life for each vehicle. Ruth asked about the capital budget plan. What is planned for a new police station? Volk stated this is a plan to work with and not a definite purchasing plan. The town feels the present station is inadequate but that does not mean we can afford a new station.

The vote was called and the motion was accepted by voice vote.

**ARTICLE 8: Shall the Town appropriate \$170,800 for the Carpenter Carse Library?**

The motion to accept this article was moved and seconded.

Ruth Ayer asked about electricity and whether we get anything out of the windmill. She also wondered if we have to take it over at some point and what that might cost. Sue Barden stated that it provides about 9-12% of the monthly electric bills. She noted the library hours and computers have increased the electrical demand and that is why the total monthly bill is increasing. Jonathan Trefry stated the windmill was installed at no cost with a full ten year warrantee. If after 5 years the town doesn't want it Earth Turbines would remove it at no cost.

The motion was accepted by voice vote.

**ARTICLE 9: 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 established?**

A Motion to accept Article 9 was moved and seconded

An audience member stated we could not afford to buy more non-taxable land. Andrea Morgante stated that appropriating this money does not mean that more land would come

off the tax rolls. She gave examples where preserved land has actually generated more taxes, as in the Bissonette project, which now generates about \$12,000 more for the town than it did before. An audience member asked where the money has gone in previous years. Andrea stated the money has gone for easement purchases on several projects including Lewis Creek Road, trails, Lincoln Hill and Isham farm. Presently there is \$14,500 in the fund. The easements are purchased from landowners. The money is leveraged considerably. Bill Marks wanted to note that just a few thousand dollars leverages hundreds of thousands of dollars. He noted there is a lot of volunteer time that helps these projects. Another audience member wondered how many farms are left? Ruth Ayer asked what are the plans for the land along 116. Andrea noted that the land in question is marginal farmland. It was converted from wetland to farmland. The master plan noted that the best farmland is on the southern end of the Bissonette farm rather than the old wetlands. Eventually the land along Route 116 will return to a forested wetland over the next 100 years.

The vote was called and the motion was accepted by voice vote.

**ARTICLE 10: Shall the Town appropriate \$3,000 to the Hinesburg Land Trust?**

A Motion was moved and seconded

Norm Smith asked how article 9 and 10 relate. Andrea stated that Article 9 is controlled by the town and approved by the town. Article 10 is controlled by the land trust who can use the money up front to initiate projects with surveys and other work.

The motion was accepted by voice vote.

**ARTICLE 11: Shall the Town appropriate \$600 for the Lake Iroquois Recreation District as Hinesburg's share?**

Audience members move and seconded the Motion.

There was no discussion

The motion was accepted by voice vote.

**ARTICLE 12: Shall the Town vote to raise the sum of \$29,100 to be disbursed as specifically designated to the following agencies/organizations?**

Budget 09-10

Hinesburg Community Resource Center	\$10,000
Visiting Nurse Association	7,000
Women Helping Battered Women	2,700
Champlain Valley Agency on Aging	2,200
Committee on Temporary Shelter	2,000
Chittenden Community Action	1,500
Hinesburg Rides Elderly & Disabled Transportation	1,500
Howard Center	800
Hinesburg Community Meal Site	600
Vermont Cares	500
Vermont Center for Independent Living	300
	<u>\$29,100</u>

There was a Motion to accept the article which was seconded.

Sam Hemmingway asked about the Hinesburg rides program. Carla Munson stated this offers rides to elderly and disabled. To get funds from CCTA they needed 10% matching funds. Carl Bohlen asked why the Rape Crisis organization did not get funded. Nancy Wright stated the committee decided not to fund any additions to this article due to the economic downturn. It was not because the organization was not worthy.

The motion voted upon and accepted by voice vote.

**ARTICLE 13: Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to furnish the Town of St. George fire protection and first response coverage at the sum of \$22,959 for the period of one year?**

A Motion was moved and seconded.

There was no Discussion.

The motion was accepted by voice vote.

(If all articles are approved as printed, a total of \$2,318,503 will need to be raised for town government. This total will come from two sources: \$2,215,345 shall be raised in taxes and \$103,158 shall be utilized from the Town's fund balance. )

**ARTICLE 14: Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to borrow money when needed to meet current expenses and indebtedness of said Town?**

A Motion was voiced and seconded.

There was no audience discussion.

The motion was accepted by voice vote.

**ARTICLE 15: Shall the voters authorize the payment of real and personal property taxes for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010 payable in full to the Town of Hinesburg in one installment, with the due date being November 16, 2009? Any and all payments received in the Town Treasurer's Office later than midnight on November 16, 2009 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 1/2% per month or fraction thereof.**

A Motion to accept the article was moved and seconded

There was no discussion

The motion was accepted by voice vote.

**ARTICLE 16: Shall the voters authorize the Town to exempt 33.3% of the value of business personal property from taxation for the fiscal year starting July 1, 2010, and exempt an additional 33.3% of the value of business personal property from taxation each additional fiscal year thereafter until all business personal property is exempt from taxes beginning with the fiscal year starting July 1, 2012?**

The motion to accept the article was moved and seconded.

Kenneth Brown asked to make a friendly amendment. The amendment would correct an error in the wording. The motion to amend was seconded.

Shall the voters authorize the Town to exempt 33.3% of the value of business personal property from taxation for the fiscal year starting July 1, 2010, and exempt an additional 50% of the remaining non-exempt value of business personal property from taxation on July 1, 2011, and exempt the remaining non-exempt value of business personal property on July 1, 2012, such that all business personal property is exempt from taxes beginning with the fiscal year starting July 1, 2012?

An audience member had a question about what this tax is. Ken Brown said that all businesses have to pay tax on business equipment but there is no auditing, accountability or enforcement. Hinesburg is one of 62 towns that do this. The total tax collected is about \$21K now that Saputo has removed most of its equipment. It was stated that the passage of this article would not affect the tax rate for the coming fiscal year.

The amendment was passed by voice vote.

The motion as amended was then accepted by voice vote.

**ARTICLE 17: (By petition) Shall the voters request the Vermont Legislature to deny approval for the proposed twenty-year license extension for the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant, affirming the current March 2012 closing date for the plant?**

An audience member moved to accept the article and it was seconded.

Chuck Reiss asked to do a short presentation. Chuck showed a number of slides presenting the case for denying license extensions. The slides included information about the life and safety of the plant, as well as other information relating to carbon neutrality, waste storage and the cost of decommissioning. An audience member asked how we would replace the power while waiting for new sources to come on-line? Andrea stated there is a misconception that Vermont Yankee runs full time. She noted that when the plant goes down, other New England sources make up the difference. Rob Francis stated only 1-5% of ridgelines are open for wind and there is too much NIMBY. Will Patten noted that both major utilities put out RFP's for replacement power and they were overwhelmed with offers. The Sheffield wind project is moving forward. He felt arguments about nuclear power versus wind power are off the mark and that this issue is about this particular plant and the issue of safety. Colin McNaul stated that this is the reason IBM wants to close. Carl Novak stated that the decommissioning money is inadequate. David Fenn stated he is very concerned about the safety of this plant. GE engineers have stated that this plant design is out-dated and very dangerous. The plant radiation storage is open to terrorist attack. Other examples of inadequate safety were provided. Ray Mainer stated his opinion that nuclear power is safe.

Representative Diane Snelling stated the legislature cannot make the re-licensing decision based on whether or not the plant is safe, but rather whether it is a reliable source of power for the state. She wanted the audience to be aware of this.

The motion was voted by voice vote and passed.

**ARTICLE 18: (By petition) Shall the voters request the Vermont Legislature to hold the Entergy Corporation, which purchased Vermont Yankee in 2002, responsible to fully fund the plant's cleanup and decommissioning, as that**

**company pledged when its purchase of the plant was under review by state and federal regulators?**

A Motion was moved and seconded.

An audience member stated if you get rid of VT Yankee your bills will go up 50%.

The motion was accepted by voice vote.

**ARTICLE 19: To transact any other business proper to be brought before said meeting.**

No other business was brought forward.

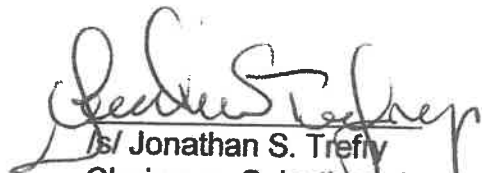
Vicki Mathews with the Hinesburg Lions club wanted to thank the town for making the Farmer's market a success. They will be back again this year.

An audience member made a Motion to Adjourn. This was quickly seconded and a voice vote was taken which passed the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

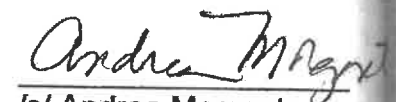
Respectfully submitted,


Philip Pouech

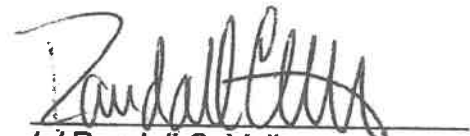
We have read, approved and accepted these minutes as a true record of the proceedings that were held at the Hinesburg Town Meeting held on March 2, 2009

  
/s/ Jonathan S. Trefry  
Chairman, Selectboard

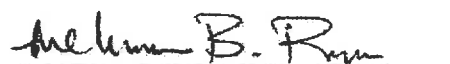
  
/s/ Kenneth Brown  
Selectperson

  
/s/ Andrea Morgante  
Selectperson

  
/s/Howard E. Russell  
Selectperson

  
/s/ Randall C. Volk  
Selectperson

I hereby certify the foregoing to be a true record of the proceedings that were held at the Hinesburg Town Meeting on March 2, 2009. Witnessed and attested to the 6<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2009 by

  
/s/ Melissa B. Ross  
Town Clerk / Treasurer