



Select Board

Town of Hinesburg
10632 Route 116 Hinesburg VT 05461
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Special Meeting Minutes – January 26, 2021

- Draft -

Attending the Meeting: Phil Pouech, Merrily Lovell, Jeff French, Mike Loner, Maggie Gordon, Joy Dubin Grossman, Becky Alford, Nisha Hickok, Tom Giroux, Rahn Fleming, Sau, Meg Reilly, Christina, Alyssa Lasher, Miles Hickok, Alexander Goss, Suzie M.

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. via zoom. Phil noted you are allowed to hold a special meeting without the usual three-day notice requirement. The primary reason for this meeting is to consider applying some of the fund balance when setting the tax rate. Also, the request to display the Black Lives Flag which was noted to be acted on at the next Board meeting.

Additions / Deletions / Public Comment

None

Discussion of Applying Fund Balance to FY 22 General Fund Budget

In checking the fund balance it was noted it is over 10% and the Board generally likes to keep it between 7% and 10%. The proposal is to apply \$100,000 toward reducing the tax rate. In doing so the Town will still have a little over 10% left in the fund balance.

Maggie said she feels this is a good use of the fund balance especially this year. Mike agreed it makes sense. And Merrily also feels it is a good idea. Jeff asked what the change over last year will be using these funds. Joy said if using these funds, the difference is .0191 or a little less than 2 cents. Jeff said he was looking for the percentage of increase. Joy said it still is about 3.4 or 3.3%.

Phil said this is the Town's tax money and it does not seem prudent to keep more than 10%.

Phil moved as part of the budget plan to approve applying \$100,000 of fund balance toward reducing the overall tax rate from the budget based on the budget expenses and estimated revenues. Second by Merrily and approved with 5 yes votes.

Joy noted changes made to the warning; removed some funds from article 4 / added \$5,000 to Highway Department from discussion at last meeting / adjustment in Police budget for animal control officer / article 8 increased to include the workers comp.

Phil moved to amend and approve the official Town Warning as discussed. Second by Mike and approved with 5 yes votes.

Discussion of Resolution to Display Black Lives Matter Flag

Phil said he received a few emails in favor of the resolution.

Mike moved to pass the resolution as written and presented. Second by Maggie.

Merrily mentioned she was not sure she was in favor of the resolution at the last meeting and wanted to research it more. She thanked Alyssa Lasher for directing her to the 13 points and thanked those who reached out to her with information. Merrily said she was uncomfortable with the “defund the police” statement by Black Lives Matter movement.

Merrily read the following statement.

- 1- I am in favor of flying the Black Lives Matter flag at the Hinesburg Town Hall because it acknowledges that racism is a problem and that racism exists in our community.
- 2- I am in favor of the 13 tenets of the Black Lives Matter Global Network Guiding Principles
- 3- I am not in favor of the proposal by the national Black Lives Matter movement to defund the police. This is not a solution.
- 4- The solution is to fund the police to include social workers, diversity training, de-escalation training and other strategies, all of which our Hinesburg Community Police, under the direction of Chief Anthony Cambridge, are currently doing.

Merrily added she wants to be clear that she is in favor of Black Lives Matter but is against defunding the police. She is in support of the Hinesburg Police and thinks they are doing all the right things.

Phil agrees this is only one step and looks for guidance on what future steps would be appropriate.

Maggie said it will be a visible symbol of our commitment to racial equity. Raising a flag is one thing which shows the intention but making a commitment to take action is needed. One area we can do that soon is in the hiring of the next Town Administrator/Manager.

Mike said he has the same feelings and he wants us to take the challenge of taking the next steps.

Jeff said this has been a long time coming and agrees with the comments on the hiring process. He would like to see the racial equity group take a bigger role in how to guide us and make the Town more inclusive.

Rahn Fleming asked if it will be flown to or through June 19. Sau said it will be taken down the Monday following June 19. Sau also noted she forgot to remove the word “sign” from the resolution.

Mike said he will accept that as a friendly amendment to the resolution to remove the word sign.

Alyssa said she is in charge of organizing the event for the flag raising.

Motion on the resolution voted and approved with 5 yes votes.

The Board discussed meeting with members of the racial equity group.

Phil mentioned the interviews that will be taking place for the TA/TM position and asked the Board if they feel it is appropriate to include Dennis Place (Select Board candidate running un-contested) to be part of the interview process. Board members will consider this and provide feedback to Phil.

Mike moved to adjourn at 8:00 p.m., second by Maggie and approved with 5 yes votes.

Respectfully Submitted,
Valerie Spadaccini, clerk of the Board