

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2016  
7:00 PM

The meeting was called to order by Moderator Dan McKinley at 7:00 pm. Doon Hinderyckx led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance. Dan noted that our Whitchester Varsity Girls Basketball team is playing a semifinal game at Barre Auditorium tonight and encouraged anyone who gets an update to let us know. Dan reviewed Roberts Rules of Order for all in attendance and read the warning.

**ARTICLE 1:** To elect a moderator for the ensuing year: Martha Slater nominated Dan McKinley, seconded by Frank Russell. Stan Holmquist made motion to close nominations, seconded by Sandy. Clerk cast one ballot; Dan McKinley elected Moderator.

**ARTICLE 2:** To elect all Town Officers required by law: Article moved by Walt Pruiksmas, seconded by Rob Meadows.

**Selectboard Member:** Pat Harvey nominated Doon Hinderyckx, seconded. No further nominations. Clerk cast one ballot for Doon Hinderyckx. Doon took a moment to thank everyone for their trust and support in continuing with the Selectboard position.

**Town Clerk:** Becky Klein nominated Joanne McDonnell, seconded by Mary Ann Schulze. No further nominations. Clerk cast one ballot for Joanne McDonnell.

**Treasurer:** Martha Slater nominated Joanne McDonnell, seconded. No further nominations, Clerk cast one ballot for Joanne McDonnell.

**Lister:** Sandy Haas nominated Pat Harvey, who declined the position. No nominations at this point, so the board will appoint at a future date.

**Delinquent Tax Collector:** Joanne McDonnell nominated Rebecca Klein, seconded. No further nominations, Clerk cast one ballot for Rebecca Klein.

**Library Trustee:** Barbara Shenton nominated Lynn Moltz, seconded by Jola Labejsza. No further nominations, Clerk cast one ballot for Lynn Moltz.

**Trustee of Public Funds:** Lois Bond nominated Sandy Pierce, seconded by Frank Russell. No further nominations, Clerk cast one ballot for Sandy Pierce.

**Cemetery Commissioner:** Tom Paquette nominated Joe Schenkman, seconded by Dawn Ostrow. No further nominations, Clerk cast one ballot for Joe Schenkman.

**Grand Juror:** Lois nominated Barb DeHart, seconded by Barb Shenton. No further nominations, Clerk cast one ballot for Barb DeHart.

**Second Grand Juror:** Frank Russell nominated Sandy Haas, seconded by Rob Meadows. No further nominations, Clerk cast one ballot for Sandy Haas.

**Agent to Prosecute & Defend Suits:** Frank Russell nominated Bill Matthews, seconded. No further nominations, clerk cast one ballot for Bill Matthews.

**Agent to Convey Real Estate:** Jess Arsenault nominated Pat Harvey, seconded. No further nominations, Clerk cast one ballot for Pat Harvey.

ARTICLE 3: Shall the voters of the Town of Rochester vote to elect a Road Commissioner? Stan Holmquist moved the article, seconded by Harland McKhirryr. Discussion ensued. Stan asked if this is a paid position-it is not. This article was petitioned by the populace. Harland noted that over the years, there have been problems with the roads. He has heard the past couple road commissioners state that they have not had the time required for the job. He and others in town thought that if it was an elected position, and someone with knowledge of the roads was elected, they may do a better job. Powers of the road commissioner would be to communicate directives of the Selectboard to the road crew. They act as a liaison between the board and road crew, but have no authority to hire/fire. Larry Straus noted that it is a position that takes time, but that the responsibility resides with the Selectboard regardless of whether the road commissioner is elected or appointed. He noted that the person taking on the job needs to be aware of the time needed, and if anyone is interested, they could approach the Selectboard and express interest. Discussion continued. Harland noted that the duties are not set in stone and could be changed in the future if needed. After lengthy discussion, Walt asked to call the question, so voted. Voice vote was not conclusive. Call for division of the house, Moderator McKinley asked for a show of hands. Nay's have it, Article 3 was defeated.

ARTICLE 4: Shall the voters of the Town of Rochester elect a road commissioner for a term of one year? This article was passed over due to the defeat of Article 3. Motion made and seconded to pass over Article 4, so voted.

ARTICLE 5: To hear and act on the report of the Auditors. Article 5 moved by David Marmor, seconded. No discussion. Voted in the affirmative, Article 5 passes.

ARTICLE 6: Will the voters agree to pay all taxes for fiscal year July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 to the Town Treasurer as provided by law? Joanne McDonnell moved the article, seconded by Mary Ann Schulze. No discussion. Voted in the affirmative, Article 6 passes.

ARTICLE 7: Will the voters vote to continue the quarterly tax payment schedule, with payments due August 15, 2016, November 15, 2016, February 15, 2017 and May 15, 2017, due no later than 4:00 pm on each voted due date. Postmarks are not considered timely payment. Martha Slater moved the article, Mary Ann Schulze seconded. No discussion. Voted in the affirmative, Article 7 passes.

ARTICLE 8: Will the voters approve a budget of \$1,051,339 to meet the expenses and liabilities of the Town of Rochester, with \$704,222 to be raised from property taxes? Article moved by Martha Slater, seconded by Rob Meadows. Discussion ensued. Doon noted that they have tried to keep the budget increases to a minimum, but there were some pressing issues to be addressed such as gravel, health insurance increases, and adding a third road crew member. Robert explained the need for more gravel due to the fact that for the past 13 years, we have kept the same dollar amount for gravel but have not taken into account the cost of gravel per yard has increased many times over. We have 38.67 miles of class 3 roads that should have a 4" base of gravel. There will be a road survey done this spring that will help decide how much the gravel budget will change over the next years. Evelyn Pruiksma asked where

the 10% increase in taxes came from. Lengthy discussion ensued regarding the budget amount. Scott Holtz and Bobby Cheshire of the Huntington House Inn noted that a 10% increase in taxes will shut them down after a winter like this one. Discussion continued. Barb Dehart noted that she would like to see the overall budget reduced by 5% or a dollar reduction of about \$40-50,000. After further discussion, Martha Slater asked to call the question. The voice vote was not conclusive so Moderator McKinley called for a show of hands to determine if there was a two-thirds majority. There was not, so discussion continued. Barb DeHart proposed to amend the article by reducing the budget by 5%, seconded by Mason Wade. The amended article needs clarification-a dollar amount is needed. Barb amended the article to reduce the budget by 5% with a new budget amount of \$998772.05. Joan Pontious asked if we should be reducing the amount to be raised by taxes (\$704222) and subtract that amount as well from the total budget amount. Burma asked where the budget will be cut, and Larry noted that we can only vote yes or no, and if the amendment passes, the Selectboard has to make the changes. Barb and Brion McFarlin noted that the 5% reduction would bring the amount to be raised from taxes to \$669011.00. Discussion continued as to which amount the 5% will be reduced from. Dan noted that Barb's amendment is to reduce the amount raised by taxes by 5%. Discussion continued. Several people noted that it is dangerous to play with the numbers here, and should call the question and vote and dissatisfaction with the amendment. Barb gave an amended budget number of \$998,772.05, and the amount to be raised by taxes as \$669011.00, seconded by Mason. Rob Meadows spoke against the amendment as he feels it should be thought through better. Dan restated the amendment as follows: Will the voters approve a budget of \$998772.05 to meet the expenses and liabilities of the town of Rochester with \$669011.00 to be raised from property taxes. Discussion continued. Kevin asked if this will have to be warned again if we change the amount tonight, and Dan noted that a small percentage can be passed tonight. Becky Klien noted that the people who worked on this budget-Nancy Woolley, Barb DeHart, Lois Bond, Walter Pruiksma and the Selectoard have worked on this budget for hours, and this is an informed amendment. Discussion continued. Barb noted that possibly Solid waste recycling could be reduced, office expenses could be cut and other line items across the board. Joan Pontious again noted that the amount to be raised from taxes would be \$704,222 minus \$669,011 which is about \$35,000. If you subtract the \$35,000 from the original \$1,051,339 budget amount, the new budget is \$1,016,128 with \$669,011 to be raised from taxes. Joan proposed to make this amendment to the amended article proposed by Barb DeHart. Amendment moved and seconded. Discussion continued. Question was called. Ayes have it. Voting on a budget amount of \$1,016,128 with an amount to be raised by taxes of \$669,011. Point of order called, we need to vote to replace the first amendment. All in favor, voted in the affirmative. The amendment to the amendment passes. David Marmor asked why the comitee that put together the budget is now trying to amend it. Nancy Woolley noted that the Budget and Finance Committee is only an advisory board, the Selectboard has the final say.

AMENDED ARTICLE 8: Will the voters approve a budget of \$1,016,128.00 to meet the expenses and liabilities of the Town of Rochester with \$669011 to be raised from property taxes. Ayes have it, Amended article passes.

ARTICLE 9: To see if the voters will vote to appropriate the following sums as requested by these community agencies:

American Red Cross	\$500
Capstone	\$300

Central VT Council on Aging	\$3000
Clara Martin Center	\$2066
ExC.E.L	\$1000
Green Up Vermont	\$100
Orange County Parent Child	\$500
Quintown Senior Center	\$9144
Safeline, Inc.	\$400
Stagecoach	\$1300
Visiting Nurse Assoc	\$4800
White River Partnership	\$875
White River Valley Ambulance	\$68318
Windsor Cty Partners	\$600
WomenSafe	\$600
TOTAL	\$93,503

Moderator McKinley read them all, totaling \$93503.00. David Marmor moved the article, Noel Smith seconded. David Marmor noted that there is a plan to start a "Fast Squad" in town because we are spending \$68,000 in ambulance services. Larry Straus is the WRVA representative, and he noted we pay \$60 per capita now, and we were approaching \$120 per capita with VRS. He gave an overall view of how WRVA runs now, and noted that WRVA would still be our transport agency, but that a fast track group would definitely be helpful. Anni MacKay noted that volunteering is critical and there are committees in town that can use people. Discussion continued as to whether we should cut any or some of these appropriations. Martha asked to call the question. Ayes had a 2/3 majority Moderator McKinley read the article again. Voted in the affirmative, Article 9 passes.

ARTICLE 11: Will the voters approve an amount of \$70,000 to continue funding the Highway Equipment Reserve Fund? Lesley moved the motion, seconded by Nancy Woolley. Discussion: Doon Hinderyckx noted that this amount is already reduced from the recommended amount of the capital plan. Walt asked if this amount could be reduced in order to make up for the 5% reduction in the budget. This cannot happen, this is a separate line item. Jeff asked what the next piece of equipment to be purchased will be. Doon noted that a loader will be purchased. NO further discussion. Voted in the affirmative, Article 11 passes.

ARTICLE 12: Will the voters approve an amount of \$15000 to continue funding the Fire department Equipment Reserve Fund? David Marmor moved the article, seconded. No discussion. Voted in the affirmative, Article 12 passes.

ARTICLE 13: Will the voters approve an amount of \$5000 to continue funding the Town Building and Property Reserve Fund? Article moved and seconded. No discussion. Voted in the affirmative, Article 13 passes.

ARTICLE 14: Will the voters approve the creation of a Recreation Department Reserve Fund and Vote to transfer any unused FY 17 funds to this account? Nancy Woolley moved the article, seconded by Martha Slater. Discussion: Larry Straus asked to clarify-does this mean all unused FY17 from the general fund or recreation dept. funds from FY17. He would like to propose an amendment to read “any unused Recreation Dept. budget amounts in the FY17 period”. Amended article reads: Will voters approve the creation of a Recreation Dept. Reserve fund and vote to transfer any unused FY17 Rec Dept. amounts in FY17 to this account? Becky asked what the plan is for reserving this money and Norm Christiansen explained that they have received sponsorship funds from generous local businesses, and they would plan to make capital improvements, etc. It doesn’t add up to a lot of money, but right now they would have to spend it during this fiscal year, and creating the reserve account would enable the money to be saved for those improvements. Lois Bond asked if Larry would consider a “friendly amendment” to his amendment by removing FY17 from the article so this is an ongoing article. Lois made motion to amend the amendment to say will the voters approve the creation of a Rec Dept. Reserve Fund and vote to transfer any unused Recreation Dept. budget amounts to this account annually. Motion seconded. No further discussion. Voted in the affirmative, Article 14 passes.

ARTICLE 15: To transact any other legal and proper business to be brought before said meeting:

Stan Holmquist gave a big thank you to all officials who do the job without pay. Vic Ribaudo spoke to all about the need for volunteers for a first Responder program in town. There will be a meeting at the High School on Wednesday, March 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm for anyone interested. He urged people to talk to their friends and neighbors about this. People are needed!

Jeffrey Breslow spoke about his desire to create a sculpture commemorating Tropical Storm Irene by using the large boulder that was dug out of the river at Severy’s bridge when the permanent bridge was being built. He would like to donate his time and supplies for this sculpture to the Town, as the devastation from Irene and the community efforts after impacted him. Right now it is on USFS land, and it probably won’t be moved anywhere. He would like to have the sculpture ready to be dedicated on the 5 year anniversary of Irene. He was thanked for his generosity and it was noted that this would be a great gift for the community.

Sandy Haas gave a very brief mention of the Legislative work, and urged people to email her if they have questions.

Motion to adjourn at 10:00 pm, seconded.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne McDonnell