

Annual Town Meeting
Monday, March 5, 2018
7:00 pm, Rochester Auditorium

*Approved by:
Dan McKinley
Tom Moderator
3/5/18*

The legal voters of the Town of Rochester, County of Windsor, State of Vermont are hereby notified and warned to meet in the Rochester High School Auditorium on said town Monday, March 5, 2018, at 7:00 pm to transact the following business:

Current Moderator Dan McKinley called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance. He reviewed Roberts Rules of Order for the meeting, and Robert Meagher will run the microphones. Representative Sandy Haas noted that the Doyle Poll and her written report are in the lobby. She noted that they are halfway through the legislative session. Friday was the crossover deadline, so anything that did not come out of committee last Friday, it is probably dead for the remainder of the biennium. She mentioned that there are employers all over Vermont who can't find employees to work, and there is a gap between employee skill, and the skills employers need. One of the bills would set up a workforce development system. Budget info and tax info are in her report. Sandy explained that she is home this week and would be happy to speak to anyone. Dan noted that Orca Media is videoing the meeting, and also gave an invocation that he does each year that is designed to remind all that this is a civil assembly that comes together for decisions, but not at the expense of others, and that the community is of greater importance than differences.

Article 1: To elect a Town Moderator for the ensuing year. Joanne nominated Dan McKinley, seconded by Ethan Bowen. Lois Bond moved to close nominations, seconded. Clerk cast one ballot for Dan McKinley.

Article 2: To elect all Town Officers as required by law:

- 1) **Selectboard Member ~ 3 year term**
- 2) **Lister ~ 3 year term**
- 3) **Collector of Delinquent Taxes ~ 1 year term**
- 4) **Library Trustee ~ 5 year term**
- 5) **Trustee of Public Funds ~ 3 year term**
- 6) **Cemetery Commissioner ~ 5 year term**
- 7) **Grand Juror ~ 1 year term**
- 8) **Second Grand Juror ~ 1 year term**
- 9) **Agent to Prosecute and Defend Suits ~ 1 year term**
- 10) **Agent to Convey Real Estate ~ 1 year term**

Selectboard: Mason Wade called point of order. He would like an amendment to Article 2. Moderator noted not a point of order, but a motion to amend. He read the article in its entirety. Martha moved Article 1, Ethan seconded. Mason moved to amend article 2 with a 3 third yes floor vote and according to Title 17,ss2646 (10) to eliminate one of the two grand

juror positions. Moderator noted motion on floor to amend to not elect a second grand juror with a 2/3 floor vote. Ethan seconded the amendment. Discussion: Mason noted on page 19 the description of grand juror. State statute states 1 or more grand jurors, so we can eliminate one as it is obsolete. Doon mentioned that this is a petition presented by Mason and was discussed at the January 22nd meeting. With legal advice under 17 VSA ss 25-46(10), the town is not able to eliminate this position. Discussion ensued. Becky asked to call the question, Martha seconded. Discussion ended. Voting on the amendment would mean voting to elect one Grand Juror position, and eliminate the Second Grand Juror. Voted in the negative, amended article does not pass.

Selectboard member-3 year term: Frank Russell nominated Jim Bowen, Becky seconded. Jess nominated Pat Harvey, seconded. Ginny Bowman nominated Robert Meagher, seconded. No further nominations. All were given a chance to speak. Jim declined the nomination-family time is important, and a new baby on the way. Robert noted that it is not an enjoyable position as he has been a board member in the past. It is difficult. Pat explained she moved here in 1986 and is involved in 4 different businesses in the valley. She has two children and two grandchildren in town, and has time and ambition to work with the board and to represent the voters of Rochester. She believes that we need to expand into more recreational areas so more people can enjoy them. Becky asked Pat where she stands on the Pine Gap Rd issue. Pat responded that she feels the resolution of the immediate issue is in legal hands, but she believes that as a recreational area, a lot of people enjoy it. It reinforces to her that there are a lot of people who like to get outdoors, and we should expand RASTA and work with the forest service to find more areas to recreate. David Marmor asked about the position of the two candidates about expanding the board to 5 members. Robert-he feels that a three member board is fine, and is ambivalent for a 5 member board. With 3 members, two is a quorum, outside of open meetings, no discussions can happen. Pat would like to leave it up to the voters to decide. Pat also noted that she would recuse herself from any town businesses that might conflict with their businesses. Mason asked if she is running for Lister. No. Paper ballot was requested. Votes counted on the checklist was 152; paper ballots counted was 153. The checklist was checked three times, ballots were only counted once due to the totals of the vote. Pat Harvey received 89, Robert Meagher received 64 votes. Dan thanked Jim for his service, and congratulated him on his upcoming baby.

Lister-3 year term: Dave Harvey nominated Jess Arsenault, seconded by Joanne. Richilde moved to close nominations, Judy seconded. Clerk cast one ballot for Jess Arsenault as Lister.

Del Tax Collector-1 year term: Joanne nominated Rebecca Klein, seconded by Frank. Alvina moved to close nominations, seconded. Clerk cast one ballot for Rebecca Klein as Delinquent Tax Collector.

Library Trustee-5 year term: Tim Crowley nominated Jola Labejsza, seconded. Motion to close nominations. Clerk cast one ballot for Jola Labejsza as Library Trustee

Trustee of Public Funds-3 year term: Nancy Woolley nominated Barb DeHart, seconded. Frank Russell nominated Mike Harvey, but he is still serving a term as Trustee. Nominations closed, clerk cast one ballot for Barb DeHart as Trustee.

Cemetery Commissioner-5 year term: Dick White nominated Tom Paquette, seconded. No further nominations, clerk cast one ballot for Tom Paquette as Cemetery Commissioner.

Grand Juror-1 year term: Nancy Woolley nominated Barb Dehart, seconded. Mason called point of order and stated that it is incompatible for a Trustee to be a Grand Juror. The chart that Mason presented shows it is not compatible for a grand juror to be an election official, not a trustee. Moderator rules that the point of order is incorrect, Barb can hold both positions.

Second Grand Juror-1 year term: Barb DeHart nominated Sandy Haas, seconded by Judy. No further nominations, Clerk cast one ballot for Sandy Haas as 2nd Grand Juror.

Agent to Prosecute and Defend Suits-1 year term: Joanne nominated Bill Matthews, Becky seconded. No further nominations, clerk cast one ballot for Bill Matthews as Agent.

Agent to Convey Real Estate-1 year term: John White nominated Pat Harvey, seconded by Jess. No further nominations, clerk cast one ballot for Pat Harvey as Agent.

Article 3: Shall the Town vote to elect two additional Selectboard members, each to a term of one year, in accordance with 17 V.S.A.ss 2650(b)(1)(A)? Judy moved the article, seconded. Judy asked how the serving members feel about this idea. Jim Bowen noted that there are plusses to either way. At times, flexibility and scheduling is hard to manage and he thinks with five members it might be even harder. Three members work well together, and he would hope that members that did decide to run would be committed and be looking out for the best interests of the town. Tom agreed with Jim. Doon noted that Joanne had asked other clerks with 5 member boards and received good feedback, but also that meetings are longer with more discussion. While that is not necessarily bad, the volume of meetings that have to take place seem to grow every year. He is inclined to keep it at a 3 member board and asked Mason Wade who sponsored the petition to give his feelings as to why he would like to see this happen. Mason thanked Doon for using the work “sponsor” because this is a process of democracy to put a petition of article together and while he sponsored it, it was signed by 50+ people. He has more faith in democracy with a 5 member board than a 3 member board. Susie Smolen noted that she signed the petition but the way she was approached was “why not sign this petition because it will at least allow us to have the discussion”. She did not sign this with the express purpose of saying that it is her preference to have 5 people on the board. She felt it is important to clarify this as she has talked to others signed this and other petitions and it was not the intent to commit to a particular point of view. Lesley Straus suggested voting no to this article. The quorum is two, and the board members she has known in this town respect that. A 5 member team allows people to meet, discuss and potentially persuade other members which can result in collusion. She reiterated her decision to vote no. Bruce Flewelling noted that he has been on boards etc for his entire adult life. They have had members numbering 3 to 20. The more people there are, the harder it is to come to a sensible conclusion and issues can drag on and on. Also, a 5 member board increases

by 2/3. The population of Rochester has not increased by 2/3, and he asked all to vote with him and vote this down. Richilde Whalley thanked the board for their professional behavior and activities and noted they have done a good job in her opinion. She also stated that her dad used to say “if it ain’t broke, don’t break it”! John White asked to call the question. All in favor of ending discussion. Article 3 voted down, does not pass.

Article 4: To elect two Selectboard members, each to a one year term. Pass over, Article 3 voted down.

Article 5: To hear and act on the report of the Auditors. Ethan moved the article, seconded. No discussion. Voted in the affirmative, Article 5 passes.

Article 6: To hear and act on the reports of the Town Officers. David Marmor moved the article, Ethan seconded. No discussion. Voted in the affirmative, Article 6 passes.

Article 7: Will the voters agree to pay all taxes for fiscal year July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019 to the Town Treasurer as provided by law? Joanne moved the article, seconded by Alvina. No discussion. Voted in the affirmative, Article 7 passes.

Article 8: Will the voters vote to continue the quarterly tax payment schedule, with payments due on August 15, 2018, November 15, 2018, February 15, 2019 and May 15, 2019 due no later than 4:00 pm on each voted due date. Postmarks are not considered timely payment. Ethan moved the article, Joanne seconded. No discussion. Voted in the affirmative, Article 8 passes.

Article 9: Will the voters approve a budget of \$1,061,941 to meet the expenses and liabilities of the Town of Rochester, with \$703,899 to be raised from property taxes? David Marmor moved, seconded by Ethan. Alvina asked if we should table this article until after voting on appropriations and reserve articles so we have a correct total to be raised by taxes. Joanne noted (incorrectly, by the way-my apologies to all!) that the appropriations and reserves are part of the total budget but they could be voted separately. Short discussion ensued. Voted in the affirmative, Article 9 passes.

Article 10: To see if the voters will vote to appropriate the following sums as requested by these community agencies:

American Red Cross	250.00
Capstone Community Action	300.00
Central VT Council on Aging	3,000.00
Clara Martin Center	2,066.00
Green Up Vermont	100.00
One Planet Afterschool Program	1,000.00
Orange Cty Parent Child Ctr	500.00

Quintown Senior Center	9,380.00
SafeLine, Inc.	500.00
Stagecoach	1,300.00
VT Rural Fire Hydrant	100.00
VNH-Visiting Nurses Association	4,800.00
White River Partnership	875.00
WRVA	71,757.00
WomenSafe	500.00
Total:	\$96,428.00

Ethan moved the article, Judy seconded. Rob Meadows asked about the WRVA amount. Vic Ribaldo is the Rochester rep for WRVA, and explained the increase. Brookfield splitting part of their town off to contract with Barre due to more timely service in their area. Also, expenses are increasing. WRVA has two ambulances that are in service 24 hours 7 days a week serving 10 towns. Harland asked how it will affect other towns if Randolph pulls out, and Vic responded that WRVA is having discussions with the new Town Manager of Randolph. He voiced his concern about how a Randolph service would support Randolph residents, and concern also as to how it would affect the other towns. He will know more about it after tomorrow's Town Meeting. Dawn Ostrow asked if we pay for WRVA employee's meals and for the ambulance to go to the grocery store for them to get meals. Vic explained that they pay for their own meals, and have taken ambulances to the grocery store so if a call goes out they are ready. Kathryn Schenkman expressed her thanks to WRVA and to Vic. Discussion closed. Voted in the affirmative, Article 10 passes.

Article 11: Will the voters approve an amount of \$60,000 to continue funding the Highway Equipment Reserve Fund? Judy moved the article, Alvina seconded. Mason asked how we work toward reducing the volume of tax dollars. On page 45, education for drivers is \$300. Where do we start talking about water quality with funds for salt, and how do we start backing off. He asked the board what they are doing about water quality. Doon noted that backing off and dealing with water quality will not be less expensive. We are facing new state regulations to address water quality, erosion and run off, and have received a grant to study and analyze the road system to identify hot spots. Unfortunately, Rochester has a lot of hot spots. A few years ago we struggles to increase the gravel budget in order to bring up the road quality without having the budget go through the roof. It is a challenge, and hoping to limit the increases. Jim mentioned that Article 11 is just to deal with the equipment fund. John called the question, all in favor of ending discussion. Voted in the affirmative, Article 11 passes.

Article 12: Will the voters approve an amount of \$15,000 to continue funding the Fire Department Equipment Reserve Fund? Alvina moved the article, seconded by John. Mason asked to amend the article to \$30,000. He asked if the reserve fund will be completely spent.

Doon explained that this money has not been spent, this if for the next fiscal year. Also the committee worked very hard to keep the budget as low as possible, and this amendment would add \$15000 to the number we approved earlier. Mason asked if this money is used to purchase the new \$65000 pumper truck, or will it be used for that. Terry noted that the truck is being purchased and some of this \$15,000 will go to purchasing the truck. Joanne noted that the truck is not available until after August 2018 and the balance needed to pay for the truck will come from this amount. Question called, no further discussion. Voted in the affirmative, Article 12 passes.

Article 13: Will the voters approve an amount of \$15,000 to continue funding the Town Buildings and Property Reserve Fund? Alvina moved the article, seconded. Burma asked if the Library is considered a town building, and Doon noted that they do pull some of these funds. Mason asked if the goals will be to save money in relation to the overall electric bill that taxpayers pay. We pay about \$24150. Back metering had already existed in 2008, is there anything in this reserve about that? Doon responded no, this is more for maintenance on town buildings. Jim noted that all the street lights were changed to LED lights and have saved a couple hundred dollars each month. Lesley noted that Mason has attended many meetings over the years and points fingers asking what has the board done. She asked what he has been doing to seek or write or secure grants. Mason responded that he was on the school board and is trying to save \$250,000 which could be used on building repair. He asked do we start living in the future or do we let the future step on us. Lesley responded that we all work for the town, and anyone can step up and help the board with grants. John White asked what back metering actually is. Doon explained it is generally producing electricity in town, most likely solar. The town had authorized spending up to \$40,000 to install solar panels on town buildings but we don't have suitable buildings. Bud Venturini noted that we might save money if less people sued the town. Question was called, no further discussion. Voted in the affirmative, Article 13 passes.

Article 14: Will the voters approve an amount of \$1000 to fund the Tennis Reserve Fund for on-going and future court maintenance? Susie moved the article, Alvina seconded. No discussion. Voted in the affirmative, Article 14 passes.

Article 15: To transact any other legal and proper business to be brought before said meeting. Article moved, seconded. Rod Leehy motioned that the Town of Rochester starting July 1 2018 provide digital video recordings of all Town Meetings and Selectboard meetings only and those recordings be uploaded to the town website. Dan explained that no binding business can be conducted during this article. Doon explained that this was discussed in Selectboard meetings, and Orca Media (who is videoing this meeting tonight) provides free video services dedicated to free speech, content neutrality etc. Again, in trying to save money for the town, we have this service for free, why pay for it. Harland recommends that the town gives Orca money. We have money for everything else, we should give to them. Doon mentioned that anyone can donate, but Harland wants it as a TOWN. David noted that Orca is funded by cable networks and television stations for public use. We already pay for this in our cable bill. Frank noted that a large group of skiers were arriving in electric cars, and would like the board to speak to the possibility of an electric charging station in town. Mason moved the conversation back to

Orca. Orca is a nonprofit that we may lose federal funding very soon. It is not in our personal town's best interest-we are talking about storage that is done by our paid employees so townspeople can see what is going on. We can download from Orca to our website since we can't be sure that Orca will be there. This is about digital recording so all can participate in democracy. Andrea Wicher noted that we could link the Town's website to Orca's website to provide access to this content from our website. Susie noted that all Selectboard and town meeting minutes are recorded and kept at the Clerk's office, and are available to anyone. Doon noted they are also posted to the town website. Susie suggested we continue reading to save money. Spencer Homick noted that it would be good to consider that YouTube is a commercial for profit site. Once videos go on that site, we lose our rights to them, as well as possible privacy infringement. How do we protect ourselves from people who may be working against the virtues and motives of nonprofit organizations? He thinks it's a good idea to protect ourselves. John asked if there is a recommendation on this-it is non-binding. Frank came back to his question about charging stations. Doon noted that the immediate plan is in the next stage of developing the park and ride which would be to get a grant for one. It is in the plans, just not sure when it will happen. Dan reminded all that this is non-binding business, recommendations can be made. Larry Creech noted that ECFiber putting in cable in town and he believes they are mandated by federal law to put all local meetings, activities, etc which should be free. This should be checked into. Chris recommended that the board rearrange the articles that vote for the budget after the appropriations and reserve accounts. Becky explained that the general budget and highway budget are what is reported in Article 9. We add to the budget with the following articles of appropriations and reserves. Alvina agreed, the budget vote should be delayed until the other articles pass so there is a final figure for the budget. Discussion continued about the budget numbers which are found on page 48-the budget summary. John White, ECFiber representative thanked all for their patience in waiting for ECFiber and advised people contact them if they want to get signed up.

Motion to adjourn at 9:30 pm, seconded. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne McDonnell