

**TOWN OF SUNDERLAND  
MINUTES  
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING  
MARCH 2 & 3, 2015**

Moderator Sally Ayrey called the Town of Sunderland meeting to order at 7:00 PM with approximately 56 people in attendance. Moderator Ayrey welcomed everyone and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance. Moderator Ayrey read an invocation from the Town of Danville to remind everyone to think clearly and to be respectful of each other. Moderator Ayrey announced that all three State Representatives plan on attending tonight's meeting. Representative Steve Berry had asked to address the assembly and with no objections spoke about the Human Services Committee he serves on and explained some of the work and goals of the committee. Representative Berry also acknowledged that he attended the open house for the Sunderland Municipal Offices and congratulated the Town on the project. Michael DiMonda expressed concern for the veterans of Vermont and how Vermont is 48<sup>th</sup> out of 50 states on the list of benefits for veterans but 8<sup>th</sup> on the list of welfare benefits. He also asked how Representative Berry stood on appropriating money for our veterans. Representative Berry stated that he is and has been a longtime supporter of veterans and thought it to be terrible that Vermont is so low on the list. Representative Berry did note that he has heard wonderful things about the Veterans home in Bennington. Representative Berry expressed concern that money had to be appropriated upfront to better lives for all Vermonters. Representative Berry then received contact information from Michael DiMonda and left the meeting. Moderator Ayrey introduced the Selectboard members present as Mark Hyde, Chairman, Steven Bendix and Richard Timmerman along with Town Clerk/Treasurer Rose Keough. Moderator Ayrey then reviewed the conduct and procedures of the meeting which would be under Roberts Rules of Order 11<sup>th</sup> edition and according to Vermont State law. Moderator Ayrey stated that the Annual Warning is on page 5 of the Town Report and articles 1 – 12 will be addressed tonight and the remaining articles will be voted on by ballot tomorrow. Selectboard Chairman Mark Hyde addressed the assembly by stating that 2014 was a very busy year. The Kelley Stand Road project has been completed along with the completion of the Town Hall. Chairman Hyde thanked everyone involved in these projects and they were great accomplishments. Chairman Hyde thanked John Williams for managing the open house for the Town Hall. Chairman Hyde also acknowledged and thanked James "Cubby" Ennis for his many years of service to the Town because "Cubby" is not seeking reelection to the Selectboard. Chairman Hyde announced that Kay Kwasniewski will be retiring from her positions as recording secretary to both the Selectboard and Planning Board on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Chairman Hyde thanked Kay for her service and expressed that she will be missed.

**Article 1.** Shall the action(s) taken at the meeting(s) of this town held on March 2, 2009, March 1, 2010, February 28, 2011, March 5, 2012, March 4, 2013 and March 3, 2014 in spite of the fact that the distinction between the articles voted on by floor vote and the articles voted on by Australian ballot was not made clear within the warnings for each meeting, and any act or action of the municipal officers or agents pursuant thereto be readopted, ratified and confirmed ?

Moved by: James Ayrey

Seconded by: John Williams

Judy Edmunds stated she felt that the question was not clear enough because she for one could not remember all the actions taken in those years. Moderator Ayrey stated that it was the action taken at the noted meetings and if there is a problem with the decisions it would need to be brought up for a future annual meeting. Mark Hyde stated that this does not change any votes taken in the previous years it is just a matter of the warnings did not specify which items would be by floor vote and which items would be a ballot vote. Marilyn Couture stated that in fact this is just a clarification vote and Mark Hyde stated yes. Jeremy Crumb stated that he felt that article 1 should also state which articles should have been by floor vote and which articles should have been by Australian ballot vote for each year. Article one was approved by voice vote.

**Article 2.** Shall the Town authorize the Selectboard to establish the salaries, wages and other compensation of the employees and other officers of the Town?

Moved by: John Williams

Seconded by: Weiland Ross

John Cullinan asked if this would mean that the Selectboard would be voting on their own salaries and Rose Keough explained that the voters could change the salaries or the Auditors could approve a salary change and the Selectboard is prohibited from setting their own salary.

Article two was approved by voice vote.

**Article 3.** Shall the Town pay its personal and property taxes to the Town Treasurer in equal installments with the payments to be in the hands of the Treasurer by October 15<sup>th</sup> and April 15<sup>th</sup>?

Moved by: Colleen York

Seconded by: Jeremy Crumb

With no discussion article three was approved by voice vote.

**Article 4.** Shall the Town approve the sum of **\$50,000.00** to be added to the Highway Equipment Reserve Fund, and if so voted, to authorize an increase to the Highway Fund Budget by this amount?

Moved by: Marilyn Couture

Seconded by: Carl Graves

Jeremy Crumb asked what the money would be used for and Mark Hyde explained that currently we have \$20,000.00 to \$50,000.00 in yearly leases to be paid and in the near future a new plow truck will be needed. Jeremy Crumb asked about the price of a truck and Richard Timmerman stated that equipment prices keep going up so we are looking at around \$200,000.00,

Article four was approved by voice vote.

**Article 5.** Shall the Town approve the sum of **\$50,000.00** to be added to the Paving Reserve Fund? and if so voted, to authorize an increase to the Highway Fund Budget by this amount?

Moved by: Steven Bendix

Seconded by: Colleen York

Judy Edmunds questioned the \$19,000.00 paving money in the General Fund budget and if this would be added to it. Mark Hyde stated that it is two completely separate items, highway money cannot be used for anything but highway expenses and the \$19,000.00 is for paving of the property owned by the Town.

Article five was approved by voice vote.

**Article 6.** Shall the Town approve the sum of **\$15,000.00** to be added to the Road Projects Reserve Fund? and if so voted, to authorize an increase to the Highway Fund Budget by this amount?

Moved by: Scott York

Seconded by: Randolph Schmidt

Jennifer Williams asked about what projects were being done. Mark Hyde explained that the North Road needed to be widened and all diseased and dead trees need to be removed from the Town right of way.

Article six was approved by voice vote.

**Article 7.** Shall the Town approve the sum of **\$5,000.00** to be added to the State/Town Bridge Co-Op? Reserve Fund, and if so voted, to authorize an increase to the Highway Fund Budget by this amount?

Moved by: Melanie Virgilio

Seconded by: Lilly Van Haverbeke

With no discussion the motion was approved by voice vote.

**Article 8.** Shall the Town appropriate the sum of **\$8,800.00** to be expended as follows:

\$700.00 to Arlington Area Childcare, Inc. (Happy Days Playschool);

\$850.00 to Arlington Community Club;

\$1,500.00 to Arlington Community Public Health Nursing Service, Inc.;

\$1,000.00 to Burdett Commons, Inc.;

\$2,000.00 to Greater Northshire Access Television (GNAT);

\$2,500.00 to Turning Point Center of Bennington;

\$250.00 to The Tutorial Center;

to help defray the expenses of these organizations, and if so voted, to authorize an increase to the General Fund Budget by the approved amounts?

Moved by: John Williams

Seconded by: Margaret Timmerman

Moderator Ayrey explained the change in the format of the article and stated that the Selectboard was trying to shorten the warning and to also show how much money was being requested which would then increase our taxes. Peter Luca stated that he felt all organizations requesting funding should appear before the Selectboard and present their case to the board. Mark Hyde noted that there are letters in the Town Report with some detail from the organizations and that it is up to the voters to decide to approve or defeat the requests. Melanie Virgilio stated that she thought most of the organizations are nonprofit and in some capacity serves the Town. Melanie Virgilio asked if GNAT charges anything to do the videos of the meetings. Mark Hyde stated that GNAT does not charge anything and the organizations may be nonprofit or not for profit. Steve Bendix noted that the board felt GNAT does do a good service for the Town and some other organizations may not. John Cullinan stated that he did not like the appropriations being in one article and should be kept separate. John Cullinan stated that an explanation of what the money would be used for should be included. John Cullinan also noted that on page 72 of the Town Report it shows that GNAT has \$50,000.00 above their expenses and should not need public money. John Cullinan does not feel GNAT really depends on \$2,000.00 from the Town. Carl Graves asked if the GNAT representative, Patrick Monroe could speak on the issue. Hearing no objection to allow Patrick Monroe to speak Moderator Ayrey recognized Patrick Monroe. Patrick Monroe stated that it cost GNAT \$6,000.00 per year per town to video all the Selectboard and School Board meetings and GNAT is asking for only one third of that expense from Sunderland. Patrick Monroe also noted that GNAT works a great deal with all schools and it is a wonderful program. Jennifer Williams moved to amend article eight by reducing all request to zero. There was no second to the motion so no action was taken. The original motion for article eight was approved by voice vote.

**Article 9.** Shall the Town appropriate the sum of \$4,500.00 to help defray the expenses of the Recreation Park in Arlington, and if so voted, to authorize an increase to the General Fund Budget by this amount?

Moved by: James Ayrey

Seconded by: Scott York

With no discussion article nine was approved by voice vote.

**Article 10.** Shall the Town appropriate the sum of **\$25,000.00** to help defray the expenses of the Arlington Rescue Squad, Inc., and if so voted, to authorize an increase to the General Fund Budget by this amount?

Moved by: Judy Edmunds

Seconded by: Michael Welther

With no discussion article ten was approved by voice vote.

**Article 11.** Shall the Town appropriate the sum of **\$7,000.00** to help defray the expenses of the Martha Canfield Memorial Free Library, Inc., and if so voted, to authorize an increase to the General Fund Budget by this amount?

Moved by: Colleen York

Seconded by: Margaret Timmerman

With no discussion the motion was approved by voice vote.

**Article 12.** To transact any other non-binding business.

Lily Van Haverbeke questioned why there is no auditor report for the Town. Mark Hyde stated that because of the lack of Auditors one could not be completed. The Town needs residents to get involved by becoming Auditors, Planning Board Members, Lister, Town Agent and Town Grand Juror. Mark Hyde asked anyone with the interest to be involved to contact the Selectboard. Lily Van Haverbeke asked how the Town Report was completed and Mark Hyde stated that Town Clerk, Rose Keough compiled everything and had it printed. Marie Litowsky gave an update on the Pedestrian and Bicycle Feasibility Study. Marie Litowsky expressed the need for public input on the project and meetings will be posted on the website and front porch forum. Steven Bendix reminded everyone that on May 9, 2015 at the Arlington Memorial High and Middle School from 9:00am until 1:00pm there will be a Household Hazardous Waste collection for residents. Judy Edmunds asked why the Law Enforcement line item of the General Fund

Budget has gone from \$8,000.00 to \$16,000.00. Mark Hyde explained that for the past few years we have been fortunate enough to have a grant where the Town received the Bennington County Sheriff's service for half the cost. Mark Hyde explained that the grant is no longer available so the Selectboard wanted to keep the same service and this caused the increase to the line item. Dineen Squilante asked about the lighting at the Town Hall and if it was necessary to be on all night. Mark Hyde explained that the lights now turn off at 8:30 each night and the Selectboard is working on resolutions to the lighting problems. Jeremy Crumb stated the Kesick Swamp Road sign was spelt incorrectly and how long before it is corrected. Marc Johnston stated that he was just recently made aware of the misspelling along with Shady Pines Road and it would be corrected as soon as the new signs are received. Jeremy Crumb noted that when the Borough Road sign was incorrect it was replaced immediately. Jeremy Crumb stated that he and other residents on Kesick Swamp Road had requested that the name be changed to Kesick Road and the Selectboard denied the request when all but two residents were in favor of the change. Steven Bendix noted that E-911 had stated that it was not a good idea to change names because of the confusion it caused. Steve Bendix also noted that Kesick Swamp is a historical name for Sunderland because it was dedicated as the King's Parade Ground. Jeremy Crumb stated that he felt the Selectboard should have allowed the change. Jennifer Williams agreed that the name should be changed. Mark Hyde stated that anyone could do a petition for the next Town Meeting with the required number of signatures and have the voters decide. Judy Edmunds expressed concern over the increase in the General Fund Budget because of Town Hall expenses such as paving and signage and felt that the items should have been paid for by the loan that the Town has for the Town Hall. Mark Hyde explained that because of the costs certain items had to be cut from the project and now are a part of the budget. Moderator Sally Ayrey introduced Representative Cynthia Browning and hearing no objections asked her to speak to the assembly. Representative Browning went over the Education Reform, Water Quality H-35 and energy cost. Representative Browning expressed concern that tax payers are being charged through fees and taxes for problems that we do not contribute to and some items in education are not education expenses. Representative Browning asked everyone to feel free to contact her with their concerns so she can serve everyone better. Moderator Ayrey adjourned the meeting at 8:35PM until 10:00AM March 3, 2015 for voting by Australian ballot on articles thirteen, fourteen, fifteen and sixteen.

The ballot boxes were declared open on March 3, 2015 at 10:00AM by Town Clerk Rose Keough and closed at 7:00 PM. The results follow:

**Article 13.** Shall the Town approve the sum of **\$12,800.00** to defray the expenses of the Cemetery Maintenance Fund? (Taxes estimated at \$12,800.00)

<b>YES</b>	99
<b>NO</b>	12
<b>BLANK</b>	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	115

**Article 20.** Shall the Town approve the General Fund Budget of **\$267,577.00**? (Anticipated income estimated at \$32,685.00; Taxes estimated at \$234,892.00)

<b>YES</b>	95
<b>NO</b>	16
<b>BLANK</b>	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	115

**Article 21.** Shall the Town approve the Highway Fund Budget of **\$325,590.00**? (Anticipated income estimated at \$143,920.00; Taxes estimated at \$181,670.00)

<b>YES</b>	97
<b>NO</b>	14
<b>BLANK</b>	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	115

**Article 16.** To elect by Australian Ballot the following officers, as required by law:

**Auditor** -2 year term

WRITE-IN 0

BLANK 115

TOTAL 115

**Cemetery Commissioner** -2 year term

WRITE-IN 1

BLANK 114

TOTAL 115

**Delinquent Tax Collector** -1 year term

KATHLEEN C. MORSE 93\*

BLANK 32

TOTAL 125

**Second Constable** -1 year term

RENEE TOBIN 79\*

WRITE-IN 2

BLANK 34

TOTAL 115

**Lister** -2 years of 3 year term

JOHN STUERMER 84\*

WRITE-IN 2

BLANK 28

SPOILED 1

TOTAL 115

**Selectboard Member** -1 year term (vote for 2)

RICHARD TIMMERMAN 88\*

JOHN WILLIAMS 93\*

BLANK 49

TOTAL 230

**Town Agent** -1 year term

WRITE-IN 2

BLANK 113

TOTAL 115

**Town Moderator** -1 year term

SALLY AYREY 92\*

BLANK 23

TOTAL 115

**Auditor** -3 year term

WRITE-IN 0

BLANK 115

TOTAL 115

**Cemetery Commissioner** -3 year term

WRITE-IN 3

BLANK 112

TOTAL 115

**First Constable** -1 year term

JESSE STONE 91\*

WRITE-IN 1

BLANK 23

TOTAL 115

**Lister** -1 year of 3 year term

WRITE-IN 0

BLANK 115

TOTAL 115

**Lister** -3 year term

PETER VAN VLECK 86\*

BLANK 29

TOTAL 115

**Selectboard Member** -3 year term

JON FRENCH 91\*

BLANK 24

TOTAL 115

**Town Grand Juror** -1 year term

WRITE IN 1

BLANK 114

TOTAL 115

The meeting was adjourned after announcing the results at 7:30 PM. \*(denotes elected)

Respectfully submitted,



Rose M. Keough

Sunderland Town Clerk