

TOWN OF SUNDERLAND
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES AND RESULTS
MARCH 4TH & 5TH, 2024

Select Board Chair, Richard “Dixie” Zens called the Town of Sunderland Annual Meeting to order at 7:00PM with an audience attendance of 61 and select board members Alex Bresnick, Bruce Mattison, Andrew McKeever and Martin Nadler, as well as Town Clerk Susan Whitney and Assistant Town Clerk Caroline Hartshorn also in attendance.

Article 1. To elect a Town Moderator. Andrew McKeever nominated Alyson Grzyb. No other nominations were received. Alex Bresnick seconded the nomination. All in favor, Alyson Grzyb was declared Moderator.

Moderator Grzyb welcomed everyone. Chairperson Dixie Zens requested briefly tabling the articles to make some announcements. No objections received. Dixie Zens informed the audience of the passing of longtime former moderator, Sally Ayrey. He also recognized former select board chair, Jon French for his service. He then thanked the town office staff, Susan Whitney and Caroline Hartshorn for their work. He also thanked the town highway department, Marc Johnston, Josh Corey and Keegan Hawley for their work.

At approximately 7:05PM, with the arrival of State Representatives Kathleen James and Seth Bongartz, Moderator Grzyb paused the meeting and turned the microphone over to the State Representatives to address their constituents. The meeting resumed at 7:15PM. Moderator Grzyb thanked Representatives James and Bongartz.

Moderator Grzyb then reviewed Roberts Rules of order with those in attendance. Reminding all present of the meeting procedures and to be respectful

Article 2. Shall the voters of Sunderland authorize the payment of the personal and property taxes to the Town Treasurer in equal installments with the payments to be in the hands of the Treasurer by Tuesday, October 15th, 2024 and Tuesday, April 15th, 2025?
Harriet Welther moved, Joe Boutin seconded. All in favor. Motion passed with no discussion.

Article 3. Shall the voters of Sunderland approve the sum of \$70,000 to be added to the Highway Equipment Reserve Fund?

Melanie Virgilio moved the question. Marge Skinner seconded. Joe Boutin asked about the amount of the transfers, questioning an increase? Bruce Mattison responded that the amount requested is the same as last year. A new dump truck has been ordered. Road Foreman Marc Johnston stated a new dump truck’s total cost is \$260,000. All equipment pricing has increased. John Garrow asked if one truck will be gotten rid of? Bruce Mattison responded yes. He also noted that the total highway fund transfers are less than last year as some reserves are not requesting a transfer this year. With no further discussion, Article 3 was unanimously approved.

Article 4. Shall the voters of Sunderland approve the sum of \$70,000 to be added to the Paving Reserve Fund?

The question was moved by David Traver Adolphus, seconded by Colleen York. No discussion. Motion approved with all in favor.

Article 5. Shall the voters of Sunderland approve the sum of \$1,500 to be added to the Building Maintenance Reserve Fund?

Lenore Bresnick moved the question, seconded by Michael Welther. Joe Boutin asked how much is currently in the fund? Treasurer Susan Whitney responded approximately \$3,000. With no further discussion, the motion passed with all in favor.

Article 6. Shall the voters of Sunderland establish a reserve fund to be called the Special Projects Fund to be used for Projects that benefit the Town of Sunderland and its residents in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 2804 and fund this reserve fund using anticipated fund balances of up to \$200,000 from the Highway Fund and up to \$65,000 from the General Fund?

Moved by Harriet Welther, seconded by Melanie Virgilio. Melanie asked why if there is a fund balance are monies being asked for? Dixie Zens explained that the fund balance is created by ARPA Funds and rolling it into a reserve fund eliminates when and how the monies are spent. Marge Skinner asked if residents will get a vote on the use of funds? Dixie Zens isn't sure, not finalized yet. Harriet Welther wonders if the money could be used for extending the bike path? Alex Bresnick says that was discussed as a possible use. He also explained that this article is a procedural maneuver to "turn the clock off". Michael Welther asked what things are under consideration? Martin Nadler responded that the ARPA committee has looked at several things, including protection for the town equipment, fire department requests, pavilion or gazebo for public use, enclosed bulletin boards, welcome signage etc. Colleen York explained the bike path extension has already received another grant approval for its extension. Joe Boutin asked for clarification about the wording and will this be a reoccurring reserve fund transfer? Martin Nadler responded that is not our intent. Joe Boutin asked how residents can communicate to the board regarding the usage of funds? Martin Nadler suggested completing the ARPA survey and attending board meetings. Alex Bresnick explained the transfer procedure and mechanics of the process. Rick Timmerman asked what happens if the article does not pass? Dixie Zens replies it is back to surplus. Ryan Porter asked why voters can't vote on the usage? Alex Bresnick stated that with a large variety of suggested uses there isn't a straightforward way. By creation of the Special Projects Fund it would buy more time. Joe Boutin made a motion to amend the article to require a public vote prior to using the money in the fund. Bruce Mattison seconded the motion. Jeff Dexter explained that he knows of no other towns requiring a public vote prior to using the funds. Caroline Hartshorn said she believes a petition could be done following the article, but an amendment of this type cannot be made. Dixie Zens mentioned the number of small cost items under consideration. Joe Boutin suggested a spending cap. Alex Bresnick pointed out that the board could have already spent the funds, but have gone to great lengths to garner public input. He supported the article as written. Colleen York asked how many have filled out the ARPA survey? A few attendees responded positively. She suggested filling out the survey during voting. Jeff Dexter reiterated that creation of the reserve fund would allow for more time to decide on uses. Ryan Porter asked about the guidelines for fund usage? Martin Nadler responded that the guidelines have broadened and encouraged all to attend select board meetings, the spending of funds will be on the agenda and warned ahead of time. Come to meetings and participate. Moderator Grzyb asked if the amendment motion stands or is rescinded. Joe Boutin rescinds his motion to amend. The original article is approved.

Article 7. Shall the voters of Sunderland vote to raise, appropriate and expend the sum of \$700.00 for the support of Arlington Area Childcare, Inc. (Happy Days Playschool) to provide services to the residents of the town?

Melanie Virgilio moved the question, seconded by Brandon Smith. Melanie Virgilio stated the request is the same as prior years. Juliann Filipkowski asked if this allowed for Sunderland children to attend for free? Moderator Grzyb stated no, this is just to support their daily operations. Motion passed with all in favor.

Article 8. Shall the voters of Sunderland vote to raise, appropriate and expend the sum of \$11,000.00 for the support of Northshire Day School to provide services to the residents of the town?

Article was moved by David Traver Adolphus and seconded by Alex Bresnick. Brandon Smith asked why the amount is so different from Happy Days. Moderator Grzyb responded it is just what was asked for. Is it a non-profit? Moderator Grzyb responded yes. Ryan Porter asked about wait lists? Members of the audience confirmed yes. Irene Nadler read a prepared statement in support of the Northshire Day School and the importance of early childhood programs for the later school success. Maria Timmerman asked about the number of Sunderland students. Irene Nadler responded 11. Kim Norman asked about other town's appropriation requests? Irene Nadler responded \$13,000 from Dorset and \$80,000 from Manchester. Jared Bianchi spoke in support of Northshire. No further discussion, ayes have it, motion approved.

Article 9. Shall the voters of Sunderland vote to raise, appropriate and expend the sum of \$1,500.00 for the support of Arlington Community Public Health Nursing Service, Inc. to provide services to the residents of the town?

Marie Litowinsky moved the question. Melanie Virgilio seconded. No discussion. Motion approved with all in favor.

Article 10. Shall the voters of Sunderland vote to raise, appropriate and expend the sum of \$5,000.00 for the support of Recreation Park in Arlington to provide services to the residents of the town?

Juliann Filipkowski moved the article, Colleen York seconded. Moderator Grzyb stated she uses the park daily. No other discussion. Motion approved with all in favor.

Article 11. Shall the voters of Sunderland vote to raise, appropriate and expend the sum of \$9,100.00 for the support of Martha Canfield Memorial Free Library, Inc. to provide services to the residents of the town?

Harriet Welther moved the question. Leslie seconded. Question raised as to whether this is for upgrades to the library? Moderator Grzyb, speaking as a trustee replied it is for daily operations. Colleen York spoke in support. Motion approved with all in favor.

Article 12. Shall the voters of Sunderland vote to raise, appropriate and expend the sum of \$700.00 for the support of Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging to provide elder services to the residents of the town?

Joe Boutin moved the question, Marge Skinner seconded. No discussion followed. Motion was approved with all in favor.

Article 13. Shall the voters of Sunderland vote to raise, appropriate and expend the sum of \$150.00 for the support of Project Against Violent Encounters (P.A.V.E.) to provide victim services to the residents of the town?

Harriet Welther moved the article, Melanie Virgilio seconded. No discussion. Motion approved with all in favor.

Article 14. Discussion of other non-binding business that may come before this meeting.

Jeff Dexter, Chair of the Sunderland Energy Committee explained Green Procurement designation. The Energy Committee held an energy forum last fall in Manchester. Will be sending a survey to residents. There will be an energy audit of energy efficiency at the town municipal building and garage through the Act 172 Municipal Resiliency grant.

The committee is also continuing the Windows Dresser project. Window inserts are built to mitigate drafts and help residents save on their fuel bills. Cost for residents is \$40 to \$80 each. The next build will be October 17th, likely at the Legion.

Arlington will be having an energy and resiliency fair June 1st at Arlington Commons.

Green Up Day is May 4th, it's 52nd year. 67 bags collected last year by 72 volunteers. Thank you to the road crew, Marc Johnston and Josh Corey.

Jeff also spoke regarding the progress of the installation of a State of Vermont historical marker honoring Lucy Prince. The area where Lucy Prince lived was near Ondawa Road. Expect installation of historic marker by end of the year. Film being released by Jay Craven featuring Lucy Prince. Jeff thanked Susan, Caroline and GNATV.

Joe Boutin asked about the cost of sheriff patrols and minimal revenue? Martin Nadler and Alex Bresnick explained their review of patrol logs and cost analysis. Ryan Porter asked if state police might be an option? Isn't really an option? Pete Luca asked about the revenue? Susan Whitney explained the state says payments are only sent to the town when someone actually pays their fine. Patty Rutins asked about drugs and if that is an issue in town? Dixie Zens responded not that we are aware of.

Marie Litowinsky spoke in favor of Window Dressers. Encouraged volunteers.

Todd Lawrence introduced himself as Emergency Management Coordinator and raised awareness of resources residents can use in an emergency. Rick Goddard asked about using the school in an emergency? Todd Lawrence responded it would be considered a secondary shelter for only limited use as it does not have a kitchen, showers etc. Arlington High School and Mount Anthony would be primary shelters.

Brandon Smith asked for a Village Center update. Andrew McKeever says the progress is slow. More discussions with BCRC and the state are pending. Reality is that very little will probably change as the area does not fit the classic definition. Dixie Zens added that there is no financial commitment to get the designation.

Pam Harder would like to see an alternative found by the Highway Depart to burning wood debris. Suggests a chipper or composting to help with air quality.

Joe Boutin asked why the employee appreciation line item is so small? Dixie Zens replied just starting small with a luncheon.

Dixie Zens invites the audience to attend the next ARPA meeting. Martin Nadler stated the next one will be in April, usually on a Sunday at 7PM. The agenda will be posted.

Moderator Grzyb reminded everyone that the remaining articles would be voted by Australian ballot on Tuesday from 10 AM until 7 PM. With no more discussion, this portion of the meeting adjourned at 8:37PM.

Polls were declared open on Tuesday, March 5th, 2024 at 10:00AM by Town Clerk Susan Whitney and closed at 7:00PM. Balloting Results as follows:

Article 15. Shall the voters of Sunderland approve the sum of \$ 21,245.00 for the Cemetery Maintenance Budget?

YES	249
NO	34
BLANK	14
TOTAL	<u>297</u>

Article 16. Shall the voters of Sunderland approve the sum of \$ 383,627.00 for the General Fund Budget?

YES	246
NO	38
BLANK	13
TOTAL	<u>297</u>

Article 17. Shall the voters of Sunderland approve the sum of \$ 544,090.00 for the Highway Fund Budget?

YES	236
NO	51
BLANK	10
TOTAL	<u>297</u>

Article 18. To elect by Australian Ballot the following officers, as required by law:

(* Denotes Elected)

Auditor- 3 year term

Write-ins	6
Blank	<u>291</u>
TOTAL	297

Cemetery Commissioner – 3 year term

Avis Hayden	247	*
Write-ins	2	
Blank	<u>48</u>	
TOTAL	297	

Delinquent Tax Collector- 1 year term

Richard A. Davis II	235	*
Blank	<u>62</u>	
TOTAL	297	

First Constable- 1 year term

Wayne Godfrey	192	*
Write-ins	14	
Blank	<u>91</u>	
TOTAL	297	

Second Constable- 1 year term

Kevin Hewes	224	*
Write-ins	3	
Blank	<u>70</u>	
TOTAL	297	

Lister- 3 year term

Peter R. Van Vleck	228	*
Write-ins	2	
Blank	<u>67</u>	
TOTAL	297	

Select Board Member- 3 year term

Martin Nadler	119	*
Michael Pugliese	118	
Write-ins	1	
Blank	57	
Overvotes	<u>2</u>	
TOTAL	297	

Select Board Member- 1 year term

Todd Lawrence	150	*
Michael Perra	94	
Ryan Porter	73	
Richard "Dixie" Zens	107	*
Write-ins	6	
Blank	160	
Overvotes	<u>4</u>	
TOTAL	594	

Town Moderator- 1 year term

Write-ins	15	
Blank	<u>282</u>	
TOTAL	297	

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Whitney

Town Clerk

Approved 3/11/2024 Select Board Meeting