

## Town of Starksboro

### Annual Town and School District Meeting

Saturday, March 4, 2017

#### Robinson Elementary School Multipurpose Room

The Town of Starksboro met for their yearly Town Meeting on Saturday, March 4 with 150 voters in attendance. The meeting was called to order by Dan Dubenetsky, Moderator, at 9:09. Child Care was provided by Eliza Bent, Sophie Heggen, Morgan Barnes, Caleb Russell, Olivia Campbell, Ruby Jean Hall, Evan Russell, a special thank you to them for the service they provided on such an important day. The Town's Meeting was televised by Jon Fenner.

All stood for Pledge of Allegiance. Moderator, Dan asked the residents for their hands in showing how many years of attendance with first timers receiving a pint of Maple Syrup. The residents attendance ranged from 12 first timers to 3 with over 50 years in attendance. Dan also went over Robert's Rule's and other Town procedures before commencing with the start of Town Meeting.

This date March 4, 1791 Vermont became the 14<sup>th</sup> state to join our Country.

This Town Report was dedicated to the Education in Starksboro and the school house's that were located here.

Tony Porter acknowledged Norman Cota & Tom Estey for their 50 years of service with the Starksboro Volunteer Fire Dept. They both joined the department on September 11, 1967.

Eric Cota presented Norman with an award and listed his years of service as Treasury 1971-1978, Treasury 1980 to present, Trustee 1999 to present, Captain 1990-2009.

Matt Estey presented Tom with an award and listed his years of service as Secretary 1974-1991, C3 1979, Captain 1980, LC3 1981-2002, and Chief 2002 to present.

Jim Geier also donated to each, a Vermont Folk Rocker of their choice. Followed by a standing ovation for each to recognize their dedication and selfless acts with the Volunteer Fire Dept.

Representatives present were Dave Sharpe, Chris Bray, and Fred Baser. They each spoke in reference to Natural Resource Energy, Education, Clean Water Act, Act 46, Sexual Abuse Statue Extension, Higher Education, Doyle Suvery, Pre-K. Stated Pilot Projects across the state were being conducted to see how the expense for special education can be reduced. Concerns from the residents were the clean up for the lake, pre-school education and the hours that are being offered. They answered as many questions as possible that the time allotted them.

Patrick Reen, Christina DiNapoli, Edorah Frazer answered questions from the residents in reference to class sizes, special education funding and how that will work for all five towns. Having Special Educator staff members circulate to other towns as to where the needs are. They also answered questions in regards to Act 46, budgets, substitute teacher expense, and how this will effect Robinson. Residents stated they still wanted to feel independent and as a whole community, not lumped in with all the other towns. Budgets needed to be transparent during and after this transition. Facility use was a concern and was reassured that would stay the same. The overall saving for this unification was \$200,000.

Polls were open from 7am to 7pm on March 7, 2017 at the Robinson Elementary School to elect town and school district officers, also to vote on the Mount Abe and Hannaford Career Center Budgets.

**Article 1** – Results of the Australian Ballot voting held on March 7, were as follows:

Moderator – Dan Dubenetsky - 330

School Moderator – Dan Dubenetsky - 343

Select Board 3yr term – Keegan Tierney - 340

Select Board 2yr term – Dan Baker - 102

Peter Marsh - 270

Select Board 1yr term – Koran Cousino - 308

Jeff Dunham - 63

Lister 3yrs – Charles Webber - 308

Auditor 3yrs Peter Ryersbach - 331

Auditor 1yr -

Planning Commission 3yrs Dan Harris - 284

Planning Commission 3yrs Daniel Nugent – 279

Cemetery Commission 3 yrs – Norman Cota - 362

Library Trustee 3yrs Judith Kessler - 315

Library Trustee 3yrs Chris Runcie - 324

Delinquent Tax Collector 1yr – Amy McCormick - 356

Robinson School Director 3 yrs – Louis DuPont –

School Director #28 3yrs -

First Constable 1yr -

Second Constable 1yr –

First Grand Juror 1yr -

School District Director 3yrs -

Town Agent 1yr – Jim Runcie - 350

First Grand Juror -

The Total number of voters that turned out this day was 391.

**Article 2** – Jeff Keeney made a motion to accept the auditor’s report for the year ending June 30, 2016. Seconded by Tom Estey. Voice vote called, so voted. Article 2 passes.

**Article 3** – Susan Jefferies made a motion to vote for the following sum of money for the proposed FY 17-18 General Fund Budget seconded by Peter Ryersbach. Voice vote called. Article 3 passes.

Susan Jefferies stated the Town Garage affected the budget by being under budget by \$200,000 and done 3 months earlier than anticipated. With many thanks going to Tom Estey, Paul Porter and Tony Porter for their assistance with completing this project. Administrator assistance, 8 hours a week, is new to the budget. The duties would include a number of items, taking minutes, updating the website with these, and other items that may be delegated to help the select board.

**Article 4** – Norman Cota made a motion to vote the following sum of money for the Fire Equipment Reserve Fund, being \$44,653, seconded by Jill Schoendorf. Voice vote called. Article 4 passes. Louis DuPont asked what the next big purchase would be for the Fire Dept. Susan Jefferies replied with Article 7 – replacement tanker.

**Article 5** – Jeff Dunham made a motion to vote the following sum of money for the Road Equipment Reserve Fund of \$88,849, seconded by Jeff Keeney. Voice vote called. Article 5 passes.

Jeff Dunham asked what next big equipment purchase would the town be looking at. Tom Estey replied with the 1 ton truck.

**Article 6** – Jill Schoendorf made a motion to vote the following sum of money for the Starksboro Public Library to fund the costs of its operation FY 17-18, \$27,450 seconded by Chris Runcie. Voice vote called. Article 6 passes.

Chris Runcie gave an update on the new hours for the winter months – Sunday 1-4pm and extended hours on Saturday from 10am to 2pm.

Judith Kessler also mention the Listen Up Vermont for audio books. But need to come to the library to learn how to use it and receive an access code.

**Article 7** – Tom Estey made a motion to authorize the Select Board to borrow an amount not to exceed \$290,000 for the purchase , in FY 17-18, of a replacement tanker, seconded by Margo Schips. Voice vote called. Article 7 passes.

Tom Estey stated they are working with a contract with Mid-West for what they need of a replacement tanker. It holds 1000 gallons more than the old tanker, its an automatic (so more than a few drivers can use) it meets all the NFPA requirements, and the body is poly stainless steel for added life to the tanker. If in 30 years the chasis needs to be replaced it can be done with ease.

Caleb Elder questioned who would finance this, and with what interest rate. Susan Jefferies replied a loan, bond bank and pay out from the Fire Reserve equipment. The interest rate would be around 2% like the last loan.

Tom stated the 1986 mack which was purchased in 1993 is rusted out and the parts needed to fix are no longer available due to its age. Alan Quittner asked if this rig would be able to get onto the back roads and have better traction. Tom replied with yes it will be easier. Nancy Cornell asked if this would be an added expense to the town. Susan replied with it’s already in the reserve fire equipment fund each year

that the town votes on, so it creates level funding without strapping the residents with an increase in taxes. Bob Hall asked about the status of the truck up south. Tom Estey stated that it is a 2003 pumper that holds 1250 gallons, engine is on a 20yr cycle and may extend it due to it being in good shape.

**Article 8** – Tony Porter made the motion to vote for the town to authorize the Selectboard to create and maintain a reserve fund in accordance with 24 VSA 2804 to establish a cash reserve for paving of \$40,000. The fund would be restricted to paving town roads, parking lots, and walkways. Seconded by Peter Ryersbach. Voice vote called. Article 8 passes.

Eric Hanson asked if this is for paving town roads or an expansion. Tony replied with only existing roads of 3 miles. Louis DuPont asked is this was the regular amount of \$40,000. Tony stated this is an increase. Normally it's \$20,000. If we don't use it, this will be rolled over. Jeff Dunham asked about the hole at the intersection of Route 116. Tom replied with that the traffic now needs to move over even with the bigger vehicles. He also stated that State of VT Transportation Agency District 5 should be called, they are the ones that would take care of this. Judith Kessler asked if the walkway at the office/library could be fixed. Peter Marsh stated that he is aware of walkway at the Town office and library, the state does not match the funds for parking lots or walkways. They are working to try and resolve this issue. Jayne Germain asked why the extra fund and why isn't it part of the general fund. Tom stated that in 1989 the town asked for \$20,000, and mix was \$23 a ton and 3 miles of pavement, and still as of today ask for the same with mix being \$78 to \$82 a ton. With all the higher cost for the mix for paving it was necessary to ask for more, the State/Grants should not be relied upon to pay for these, only to assist when needed. Hoping to build up the fund. Robert Turner stated that the State contribution is like winning the lottery. They dole out the funds to the communities in each county and you never know what year you will receive it. They try to give some to each county every year but it's hard to depend on that. Eric Cota asked if this \$40,000 is for this year only or continuing going forward. Tony stated they are not sure due to the uncertainty of the State matching fund. Tom said that when using grants there is a time frame to use them in. Susan Jefferies stated that building up this fund will help in the future for when disasters happen, (such as the replacement of Ben Roberts Road Bridge). Matt Montgomery asked what the 3 miles were and could we remove some of them. Tony Porter stated Big Hollow, Hinesburg Hollow, States Prison Hollow, Gore and Tyler Bridge Road are the 3 miles in Starksboro that they take care of. No we can't remove any because we border other towns that also help with maintenance.

**Article 9** – Eric Hanson made a motion to vote for the following sums of money for the Listed in Town Requests, seconded by Jeff Dunham. Voice vote called. Article 9 passes.

Starksboro Cooperative Preschool - \$4500

Robinson Mentoring Program - \$2000

Starksboro First Response - \$9500

Starksboro Sports Program - \$2500

Starksboro School Age Program (RASYS) - \$425

Starksboro Volunteer Fire Dept - \$22000

Total in Town Requests - \$40,925.00

Tom Estey expressed that the department is looking for younger volunteers for the fire dept. Stated it's a very rewarding job to be able to help your neighbor. He also stated that Matt Estey and Eric Cota are third generation fire fighters. He is also a part time Fire Academy Instructor and encourages all to join or at least check it out. New apparatus gear is needed and the price has increased to \$7900/\$9200. This is a small price to pay to make sure of everyone's safety at any and all fire scenes.

**Article 10** – Jeff Keeney made a motion for the voter of the town vote the following sums of money for the listed out of town requests, seconded by Celine Coon. Article 10 passes.

AC Restorative Justice Services Inc - \$600

AC Home Health & Hospice - \$1964

AC Parent/Child Center - \$1600

AC Readers - \$350

AC Transit Resources - \$1708

American Red Cross - \$500

Bristol Family Center - \$500

Bristol Rec Center - \$2500

Bristol Rescue Squad - \$7500

Age Well - \$1300

Homeward Bound (AC Humane Society) - \$500

Hope (formerly ACCAG) - \$1750

Hospice Volunteer Services - \$500

John W Graham Emergency Shelter Services Inc - \$970

Lewis Creek Association - \$550

Open Door Clinic - \$250

Otter Creek Natural Resources Conservation Dist - \$176

RSVP - \$370

Vermont Adult Learning - \$700

Vermont Assoc for the Blind/Visually Impaired - \$500

Vermont Center for Independent Living - \$250

Vermont Rural Fire Protection Task Force - \$100

Women Safe - \$1250

Total out of town requests - \$29,588

Peter Ryersbach stated the AC Restorative Justice Services is run by volunteers to help offenders avoid court procedures by following another course of action to make amends for their indiscretion. Peter Marsh questioned the Bristol Rec Center and who actually participated in it, and thought more information needed to be sent out for their program. Several people spoke on the programs they offer to a reduce price for being in the five town district. The information that is provided from Bristol Rec is done by newsletter, website, and information booklets that are sent home through the school. They also support lots of community events, New Years Eve in Bristol, The Hub, the Starksboro Community Picnic and supports classes for all community members to enjoy or learn, to name a few. Residents stated its a wonderful program that all towns benefit from. Susan Thompson asked how one would get on the list of in town or out of town requests. Susan Jefferies stated first timers need to start a petition for requesting what they were looking for with the adequate amount of signatures (65). Amounts can be raised in the future without having to repeat the process if it's a small amount, but larger ones, would need to repeat the process.

Peter Ryersbach asked if we could amend any of these amounts. Dan Dubenetsky stated yes. Donna Lescoe moved the voice to vote, Eric Hanson seconded it.

**Jim Runcie made a motion to take a short recess before addressing the School Meeting at 10:46. Seconded by Kirsten Talmage.**

**Started School Meeting at 11:05**

Edorah Frazier started with acknowledgments for Liz Greenberg being awarded Innovated Technology, Amy Johnston Life Time Achievement Award, and Donna Shephardson retirement after 19years with Robinson but 35 years of teaching and being the only military veteran in the school district. She spoke briefly about the awards given to Connor Peck, David Charlebois, and Colby Little . The mentoring program still going strong and the benefits of this program for the kids involved. Louis DuPont thanked Herb Olson for his participation on the Act 46. Bob Hall stated the Special Education has an over abundance of money being spent on administration and that Patrick Reen has his work cut out for him in handling these tasks. Louis stated the 2 new members for the Unified Board are Caleb Elder and Jodi Bachand. Richard Warren asked why do we have them now when the board doesn't have authority until 2018. Nancy stated informational meetings and will be Australian Ballots for next year 2018-2019.

**Article 1** – Louis DuPont made a motion for the voters of the Starksboro Town School District approve the school board to expend \$2,721,254, which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year, education spending of \$15,692 per equalized pupil. Seconded by Mary O'Brien. Voice vote called. Article 1 passes.

Louis DuPont their goals are to provide excellent instruction, continue to support all students, adjust staff to support struggling students. Continue support for pre-school for a better start in kindergarten and lower numbers to kindergarten to establish a better start to their education. Bill Coon asked if the solar panels would be shared by everyone in the district. Caleb Elder stated that yes they would, expense and benefits. The trackers are not the school assets but the land is. Louis DuPont stated the informational meetings will be forth coming in many ways during this transition. Susan Pare asked what reductions will there be in Early Education Funds. Nancy said it is based on how many students.

**Article 2** – Nancy Cornell made a motion for the voters of Starksboro Town School District authorize the Starksboro Town School District Board of Directors to borrow money by issuance of bonds or notes not in excess of anticipated revenue for the school year, as provided in 16 V.S.A 592 (9). Celine Coon seconded. Article 2 passes.

**Article 3** - Louis DuPont made a motion to transact, vote and act upon any further non-binding business which legally may come before this meeting. Seconded by Nancy Cornell. Article 3 passes.

Donna Lescoe made a motion to adjourn the School Portion of the meeting, seconded by Jennifer Turner. School meeting adjourned at 12:00.

### **Town Meeting resumed at 12:00**

**Article 11** – Norman Cota made motion for the voters of the Town vote the Real Estate taxes be paid, without discount, to the treasurer on or before Wednesday November 1, 2017 at 5:00pm becoming delinquent after November 1, 2017 at 5pm, taxes must be received by this time, postmarks are not accepted as on time payments, Taxes may be paid in installments on Aug. 1, Sept. 1, Nov. 1, 2017, seconded by Ben Campbell.

Celine Coon made a motion to amend the last line for tax payment installments. To remove the 3 installments down to just one due November 1, 2017. But still can pay anytime and the bills will still go out in July but no later than August. Bob Hall asked what the tax bill will show. Celine answered that it should show just one installment on the tax bill.

Koran Cousino made a motion to amend article 11 and to remove the installment wording. Seconded by Jim Runcie. Voice vote called. Article 11 passes.

**Article 12** – Susan Jefferies made a motion for the voters to transact, vote and act upon any further non-binding business which may legally come before this meeting. Seconded by Peter Ryersbach. Voice vote called. Article 12 passes.

Susan Jefferies wanted to send a Thank you out to Jennifer Turner who was at recycling on this cold March day – listed at only 5 degrees. Another Thank you for Marcia Perry for the years she spent being the Green-Up Coordinator, Becky Trombley is taking on this responsibility. Also Wayne Marcelle retired from being The Town’s Animal Control Officer and Heather Ragsdale was gracious enough to handle this tough task for the Town. Peter Ryersbach also wanted the Town to recognize Michael Gray for his years as Health Officer – he and his wife moved to be closer to their children and grandchildren. Robert Turner states the Historical Society spent over 100hours on the research of this town, and if anybody would like see pictures or information pertaining to this, please visit the town office or give one of the members a call. Alan Quittner wanted to Thank the Boards for all their hardwork and good luck to the new members. He also wanted us remember that William Sullivan passed away last month and will be sorely missed. Norman Cota also wanted to let the town know that Jacob Hansen won’t be returning as lister, he is retiring due to health issues and wish him a speedy recovery and enjoy his retirement. Richard Warren and Nancy Cornell noted that Frank Bryan missed Town Meeting due to a scheduling conflict.

Jim Runcie made a motion to adjourn the town meeting, seconded by Jeff Keeney, so voted. Meeting adjourned at 12:19pm.

DRAFT