

Minutes
Town of Starksboro
Annual Town and Town School District Meeting
Saturday, March 2, 2019
Robinson Elementary School Multipurpose Room

The Town of Starksboro met for their yearly Town Meeting on Saturday, March 2, 2019 with 111 voters in attendance. The meeting was called to order by Dan Dubenetsky, Moderator, at 9:03. Child Care was provided by Hayley Bromley, Lauren Cousino, Louisa Painter, Meghan Porter, Isabella & Maya Shea and Joanna Toy, a special Thank You to the service they provided on such an important day.

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. Moderator, Dan asked for a show of hands in how many years they have been attending. First timers received a pint of maple syrup, which were 3 residents - Charline Alexander, Ryan & Evelyn Sleeper, and 4 that have been attending 50 plus years Bob Reynolds, Norman Cota, Robert & Blair Hall, received a GC to The Rotissere Restaurant. Dan went over Robert's Rule's and other Town procedures before commencing the start of Town Meeting.

Four Winds Nature was providing excellent food for the attendees and all proceeds go to the program for future use.

Luke McCarthy spoke about the Jerusalem School House - provided \$25,000 toward a site survey and the need to renovate and rebuild. The building will house a fire truck for South Starksboro, a structural assessment was done, an environmental assessment still needs to be done, looking for town input, an architect will be contacted to see how to best improve the building and what needs to be done first.

Project Read was also on hand to sell VT Folk Rocker rocking chair Tickets, only 200 are sold each year, the price per ticket is \$10.

Nancy Cornell spoke about the passing of Mary O'Brien Hines on December 20, 2018 - Robinson School's dedicated teacher and principal from 1976-2005. In honoring Mary's memory and for her love of reading, a fund has been set-up to receive donations in her memory that will be dedicated to the public town library and to Robinson School's Library for all to enjoy the love of books as she so thoroughly enjoyed.

A special Thank you went out to a few individuals for their dedication to the Town for the positions they held - Hugh Johnson - Planning Commission- 14 years, Norman Cota -Planning Commission - 33 years, Peter Marsh - Select board Member - 23 years, Amy McCormick - Lister - 16 years. Thank you for all your hard work and valuable knowledge that will be greatly missed.

Representatives present were Chris Bray and Ruth Hardy. They each spoke in reference to Natural Resource Energy, Special Education, Clean Water Act, and Tax Education Fund. Along with the new cultivation of hemp and the regulations concerning it. Mari Cordes & Caleb Elder both spoke in reference to State Health Care Policy, Energy Technology, House Education Committee, along with better weatherization for homes in VT.

Stephen Rooney spoke about Article 10 in reference to \$610,000 that is being set aside for maintenance requirements and would be allocated back to the budget for MAUSD. Town Voters will need to authorize the Board to in how to spend or use it in the future.

Some questions and comments that were directed at the Representatives - When will Route 17 be fixed, repaved - response was in 2020. When will more attention be given to Route 17 due to the constant motorcycle accidents and racing that occurs? Mari Cordes said she will take the information back with her and look into it.

The Clean Water Act that was passed, is being passed on to the tax payers - for each parcel owned, a \$40 tax would be applied to that property instead of fundraising as they had stated last year. The Committee felt this was the most efficient way to fund the Clean Water Act through the taxpayers.

Edorah Frazier spoke about the Robinson School/MAUSD budget and the need to pass it based on keeping the class room sizes small for better education. The biggest increase for the budget is the health insurance. The school has seen numerous changes this year for staff - half are new to teaching at Robinson and half are new to the grade they are teaching. Class sizes are 16-21. If budget passes no staff changes will happen, if it doesn't, this may eliminate staff in the future and increase classroom sizes. They are experiencing substitution shortages and recommended anyone interested in helping contact Kelly Services. Mentors and volunteers were recognized for their services with a round of applause.

Polls were open from 7am to 7pm on March 5, 2019 at the Robinson Elementary School to elect town officers, and to vote on the Mount Abraham Unified District Budget, and Hannaford Career Center Budget.

At 10:11 the Starksboro Town Articles were called to vote:

Article 1 -Heather Ragsdale made a motion to bring Article 1 to the floor, seconded by Rob Liotard.

Results of the Australian Ballot voting held on March 5, were as follows:

Dan Dubenetsky - Moderator 1yr - elected
Nancy Boss -Selectman 3yrs - elected
Tony Porter - Selectman 2 yrs - elected
Robert Turner - Auditor 3yrs - elected
Auditor 2 yrs -
Brad Boss - Planning Comm 3 yrs - elected
Jeffrey Keeney - Planning Comm 3 yrs - elected
Rodney Orvis - Planning Comm 3 yrs - elected
Larry Shepard - Lister 3 yrs - elected
Katie Antos-Ketcham - Library Trustee 3 yrs - elected
Liz Fairchild - Library Trustee 3 yrs - elected
Amy McCormick - Delinquent Tax Collector 1 yr - elected
First Constable 1 yr -
Second Constable 1 yr -
James Runcie - Town Agent/Prosecute/Defend Suits 1 yr - elected
First Grand Juror 1 yr -
Cemetery Commissioner 3yrs -

Larry Shepard - Cemetery Commissioner 2yrs - elected
Cemetery Commissioner 3yrs -

The total number of voters that turned out this day was 292.

Article 2 - Peter Ryersbach made a motion to accept the auditor's report for the year ending June 30, 2018. Seconded by Jeff Keeney. Voice vote called Article 2 passes.

Article 3 - Koran Cousino made a motion to vote the following sum of money for the proposed FY 19-20 General Fund Budget, seconded by Donna Lescoe.

Koran Cousino stated there is a .1% decrease from last year. This includes raises, health insurance and small changes in road supplies. There is not a lot of extras this year.

Jeff Dunham made a motion to amend Article 3 to by increasing it by \$1700 and for the gazette to be published once a month. Keegan stated the budget for the gazette has not changed for the monthly to quarterly. The budget itself had doubled for the gazette due to the hours the Town Clerk and Assistant were putting into it. They did look into outsourcing it to Minute Man Press - this would approximately be \$6233 for 4 pages monthly & page layout would be 11x17. Printing and bulk mailing costs are included. Being outsourced would free up the staff time. Dan asked if Jeff wanted to clarify the number to amend to \$6233 - new total amount. Yes he says that would be fine. I would like to amend the budget by \$4633 - Amended total budget to \$709,737. Seconded by Ruth Beecher.

Koran stated this would limit the amount of info that is included, such as a possibility the library, JSH, and advertisements may not be able to still be included. If we increased it to the pages to 8 - the amount would be \$7980.

Donna Lescoe stated she would rather see that money go elsewhere for a more effective solution - there are too many other options for people to be able to read this - FPF, email, website, call to have one mailed to you, leave some at specific locations for residents to pick up like the Town Report. This is too much of an increase not to explore more of our options. Opting out of receiving this is not an option. What are the costs for keeping it the same way - having staff still do it.

Peter Marsh stated that the staff prints this on a copier that has not been reliable as we had hoped it would be. The copier can't handle the amount that we produce it only can produce 10 copies at a time before continuing. It takes roughly 8/10 hrs to complete the copying and mailing.

Betsy Dunham stated bulk/individual mailings are a huge difference of 71 cents for labels versus - 18 cents. Not everyone wants to go online and read and really enjoy the paper copy.

Advertisements were suggested to offset the price but with limited pages that would eliminate the amount of those to be included/sold for the gazette. Volunteers were also suggested but was pointed out that it is not always a reliable guaranty for a monthly effort. Staff time is still needed to compile it and get it started.

Moved the question to vote and end debate by Donna Lescoe, seconded by Heather Ragsdale

Voice Vote ended debate on amendment

Voice vote unclear and division of the house was called for by the moderator

In Favor of Amendment to increase \$4633 budget to \$709,737 - 52 favor

Opposed of Amendment to increase \$4633 budget to \$709,737 - 37 opposed

Vote tally approved amendment to article 3

Made a motion to bring amended Article 3 to the floor at \$709,737. - 1st Rob Liotard, second by Richard Faesy

Koran Cousino made a motion to amend the amount of expenses by \$1,018,844 for final amount of \$709,737. Seconded by Colin O'Brien-Lucas. This was overlooked in the first amendment and it affected the other budget number as well. There was no objection to this friendly amendment.

Neely Jennings stated there was not enough info for the gazette to vote on it to increase it. We shouldn't be allowed to tell where or how to produce the gazette. That there might be a better solution if we let the office handle it that we may not be aware of. Amend it by \$2000 reduced to \$1,016,844 for final amount \$707,737 - Seconded by Erin Buckwalter

Jim Runcie questioned the process of the amendment due to we already passed the article.

Confusion on how the amendment was handled and thought the article was passed.

Dan stated only the amendment was passed and now the newly amended article was being discussed.

Donna Lescoe wanted clarification on amount that is being amended.

Eric Hanson wants to understand the amended amendment - if only asking for an additional \$2000 and letting the town best utilize the funds. To the original amount of \$705,104.

Dan states no you have to go to the amount that was amended.

Louis DuPont Call the Question of the amendment - Seconded by Heather Ragsdale.

In favor of ending debate - voice vote passes.

Amendment of \$1,016,844 expenses for final amount of \$707,737. Voice vote called
Amendment did not pass - back to amended article 3 in the amount of \$1,018,844 expenses
19/20 yr for final amount of \$709,737

Margo Schips made a motion to bring it to the floor, seconded by Megan Nedzinski.

Bill Coon asked Cheryl if she would speak about how many people are interested in receiving it by mail or in other forms.

Cheryl states that a survey was done a few years ago - and only about 15 responded to this.

Tom Estey - if advertisement is a way to pay for the gazette then a fee should be passed on to them

Peter Ryersbach moved to Question - Seconded by Donna Lescoe. Voice vote called
Debated ended.

Voting goes forward on expenses being \$1,018,844 with final amounts of \$709,737.

Voice vote called. Article 3 has passed.

Article 4 - Jeff Dunham made a motion to vote for the following sum of money for the Fire Equipment Reserve Fund, seconded Tom Estey. Voice vote called. Article 4 passes.

Article 5 - Ben Campbell made a motion to vote for the following sum of money for the Road Equipment Reserve Fund, seconded by Tom Estey. Voice vote called. Article 5 passes.

Article 6 - Norm Cota made a motion to vote the following sum of money for the Paving Reserve Fund, seconded by Jeff Keeney.

Jeff Dunham asked which roads were on the list to be paved this year. Tom Estey replied right now, finishing States Prison Hollow Rd and Hinesburg Hollow Rd to Thrasher Rd .Voice vote called. Article 6 passes.

Article 7 - Chris Runcie made a motion to vote the following sum of money for the Starksboro Public Library for FY 19-20, seconded by Jim Runcie.

Chris Runcie introduced the board members - Liz Fairchild, Celina Aiguier, Judy Kessler, Katie Antos-Ketcham. Our library has snowshoes available for members and lots of monthly activities for kids and adults. Voice vote called. Article 7 passes.

Article 8 - Bill Coon made a motion to authorize the Selectboard to borrow an amount not to exceed \$210,000 for the purchase of a replacement tandem dump truck for FY 19-20. Loan will be paid within 5 yrs from Road Equip Fund starting FY 20-21, seconded by Jeff Keeney.

Kerry Kurt asked if this amount would be reduced by Article 5 - Tom Estey replied yes it would. Celine Coon stated payments would not be used until next fiscal year 21/22.

Colin O'Brien Lucas stated money is put into a reserve then slowly payout as needed when loans are incurred in the future.

Tom Estey stated that we are not trading in but buying out right. For about a month they have been down at least one truck (used Hinesburg Town Truck) through these snowstorms and a grader is not conducive for sanding.

Voice vote called. Article 8 passes.

Article 9 - Jeff Keeney made a motion to vote for the sum of \$3,000 to support the Starksboro Village Meeting House to provide exterior upkeep. Seconded by Chris Runcie.

Michael Blakeslee discussed on the up keep of the 1st Town Hall in Starksboro built in 1840 - responsibility as town folks to keep the building from falling into disrepair and bringing it back to life. This would be an annual support from the town. The building has been rewired and upgraded. The lead paint has been address, the roof leaks, plastic has been used to help with this issue, wallpaper needs to be removed where it is falling off, but the structural frame is good. There will be many fundraisers to assist with the painting, window replacements and other needs that may arise as the work is done.

Celine Coon would like to increase the amount being asked.

Richard Faesy would like amend the amount to \$25,000 to paint the building.

Dan Dubenetsky - moderator stated you cannot amend the amount that much, it's not germane.

The amount was not given proper notice to public to vote on. It was too large an increase.

Keegan stated that there are fundraisers and donations that do come in and now are ready to start spending it and working on the building.

Richard Faesy withdrew his motion to amend article to \$25,000.

Donna Lescoe moved the motion to amend it to \$10,000 seconded by Richard Faesy.

Bill Coon stated that preschool is housed in the bottom of the building and we want our children in a safe place. Supports budget increase to \$10,000.

Jim Runcie asked if this would be an anticipated annual article in the budget.

Keegan Tierney stated this would not be a regular amount but would like to have something going forward from the town.

Heather Ragsdale made a motion to call vote. Seconded by Eric Hanson. Voice vote called - passed. Debated has ended.

Article 9 amended to \$10,000 - Voice vote called. Article 9 amendment passes

Bill Coon made a motion to vote the following sum of \$10,000 for article 9, Second Mary O'Brien Voice vote called. Article 9 passes

Article 10 - Jeff Dunham made a motion vote the following sum of money for the listed In-Town request of \$45,928, seconded by Heather Ragsdale.

Starksboro Cooperative Preschool - \$4500

Robinson Mentoring Program - \$2000

Starksboro First Response - \$9500

Starksboro Food Shelf - \$2000

Starksboro Sports Program - \$3500

Starksboro School Age Program - \$425

Starksboro Volunteer Fire Dept - \$24000

Voice vote called - Article 10 passes.

Article 11 - Larry Jones made a motion to vote the following sums of money for the listed out of town requests, seconded by Norm Cota.

AC Restorative Justice Services - \$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

Counseling Service of Addison Cnty - \$2200

Elderly Services - \$900

Green Up VT - 100

Homeward Bound - \$500

HOPE - \$1750

Hospice Volunteer Service - \$500

John Graham Emergency Shelter Services - \$970

Lewis Creek Association - \$550

Open Door Clinic - \$250

Otter Creek Natural Res. Conser. Dist - \$176

RSVP - \$370

VT Adult Learning - \$700

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

VT Center for Independent Living - \$250

VT Rural Protection Task Force - \$100

WomenSafe - \$1250

Total out of town requests - \$29,588

Charles Webber amended the article - decrease by \$500 - due to that Richmond Rescue will become part of the service route for Starksboro Residents on the side of Big Hollow

Rd/Hinesburg Hollow Rd. Donna Lescoe made a motion to call the question and end debate, seconded by Heather Ragsdale. Amendment failed - the decrease of \$500 did not pass for Bristol Rescue. Remains at \$7500.

Voice vote called Article 11 passes with total out of town requests of \$29,588

Article 12 - Ben Campbell made a motion to vote the Real Estate Taxes to be paid, without discount, to the Treasurer on or before Thursday November 1, 2019, at 4:30pm, becoming delinquent after November 1, 2019 at 4:30pm. Taxes must be received by this time, postmarks are not considered receipt, seconded by Norm Cota.

Discussion - do banks know of the timeline/deadline and does it really matter if they are a few minutes/hours late as long as it's on the 1st.

Celine Coon replied with yes it does - Banks are aware of the timeline and get an electronic file sent to them for the taxes due. It's rare when a bank misses it unless it is a new property that has transferred hands.

Bill Coon also stated we need to draw the cut off at some point so we can reconcile the taxes paid/unpaid and the bills are mailed out in August so you have plenty of time to make arrangements.

Voice vote called, Article 12 passes.

Article 13 - Koran Cousino made a motion to transact, vote and act upon any further non-binding business which may legally come before this meeting, seconded by Keegan Tierney.

Heather Ragsdale stated she was leaving her position of Animal Control Officer and if anyone was interested please see the Selectboard.

Tom Estey wanted to remind everyone to have working CO/Smoke detectors in their homes.

Jim Runcie asked if Monkton was going to pick up where Starksboro leaves off for paving on Tom Estey replied with not at this time.

Bill Coon wanted to Thank Tom Estey for his years of service on the Road Crew and Congratulations on his upcoming retirement and the town will definitely miss him!!

Voice vote called – article 13 passes

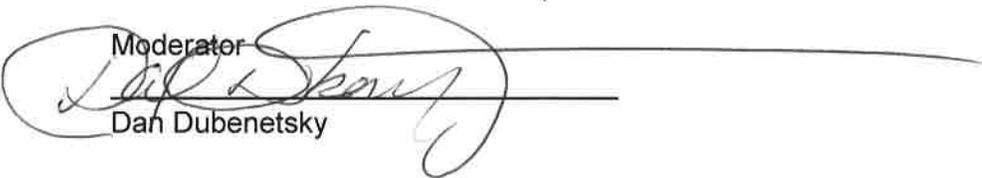
Bob Hall made a motion to adjourn the town meeting, seconded by Heather Ragsdale, so voted.

Meeting adjourned at 12:11pm.

Town Clerk


Cheryl Estey

Moderator


Dan Dubenetsky