

2019 Combined Town of Fletcher Annual Meeting & Fletcher Town School District Annual Meeting

The legal voters of the Town of Fletcher and the Fletcher School District, Franklin County, State of Vermont, were hereby notified and warned to meet in the Fletcher Elementary School in said Fletcher on Tuesday, March 6, 2019 at 9:30am to act on the following articles:

Barry Doolan called the meeting to order at 9:30am. He asked for a brief break in the proceedings to allow for a special presentation. Jon Bondy introduced Leslie Nulty and Brian Davidson, both from Mansfield Fiber. They spoke about their proposed expansion of broadband service to the Town of Fletcher. They had a display set up at the back of the gym.

Fletcher Girl Scouts Hailey Zamuda and Alison Ashton led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Barry then asked the audience to join him in a moment of silence to honor those who've passed in the past year. Barry also recognized any first-time voters and folks attending Town Meeting for the first time. He also recognized any non-voters and explained that they would need the permission of the audience to speak.

Article 1 To adopt of Robert's Rules of Order.

Barry gave a brief explanation of Robert's Rules of Orders and outlined the general format of the day's proceedings. Steve Smith moved to bring the article to the floor. Alice Drake seconded. There was no discussion. Steve Smith moved to cease debate. Melanie Meilleur seconded. Article passed by voice vote.

Article 2 To elect a Moderator for the Town Meeting.

Gloria Brunette moved to bring the article to the floor. Sandy Doolan seconded. Keith Prescott nominated Barry Doolan. No other nominations. Dawn Pelkey moved to cease nominations and have the Clerk cast one ballot for Barry Doolan. Steve Smith seconded. Barry Doolan elected Moderator by voice vote.

Article 3 To act on the reports of the various officers of the Town contained in the current Town Report covering the 12 month Town Budget from July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018.

Wes Graff moved to bring the article to the floor. Melanie Meilleur seconded.

Discussion:

Karrie Sweet shared that there was a corrected Listers Report available at the back table if folks hadn't grabbed one on their way in. She also outlined some new information in the Town Report that folks had requested at last year's meeting (long-term liabilities, loans, grants) and pointed out the updated map in the middle of Town Report. If anyone had suggestions of additions/changes for future reports, they could contact her or the Auditors.

Janet Young asked who submitted the paperwork for the Town Grants. She wished to thank everyone involved as it saves us a lot of money. Matt Gillilan said that we hire Jim Smith, a consultant formerly with VTrans, who researches grants for us and drafts the applications. It's a joint effort with Norm Rainville (Road Foreman), the Select Board, Karrie Sweet, and Aimee Tinker.

Wes Graff wished to commend Aimee on the minutes from last year's Town Meeting, as they are detailed and organized for easy reading. They are an important part of the historical record.

Terry Riggs said that the new grader should be listed under this year's column in the Fixed Assets table, not last year's. The change was noted.

Sara Villeneuve referred to the Road Commissioner's report, questioning the amount given for the new grader purchase (\$255K) versus what it's valued at in the Fixed Assets table (\$275K). Matt Gillilan said the Road Commissioner's report was incorrect and should have listed an amount

of \$225K (after trade-in of old grader). He also stated that the value listed in the Fixed Asset is a replacement value.

Terry Riggs asked how the lease for the new grader will work. Matt said that at the completion of the lease, there is a \$1.00 buy out. Terry then stated that the Town spent extra money on the grader when the voters only approved \$150K at last year's Town Meeting. Matt said this was not true, referencing the minutes from last year where the article was amended from the floor to eliminate a specific dollar amount.

Sara Villeneuve echoed Terry's comments and feels that the Town did not stay within the scope of what was discussed at last year's meeting. Jon Bondy said that the monetary limit was removed via the passed amendment and the Select Board proceeded with the purchase of the grader. He said if residents feel there should be a change or other limit set, they are free to propose an amendment at the time of discussion.

There was no more discussion. Melanie Meilleur moved to cease debate. Wes Graff seconded. Article passed by voice vote.

Article 4 Will the Town instruct the Town Auditors to have the Town Report printed as usual?

Melanie Meilleur moved to bring the article to the floor. Annette Kalinoski seconded.

Discussion:

John Lavallee asked if this included comments on the school section of the report. Barry said no, that needs to be asked later on during the school portion of the meeting.

Michelle Frennier suggested that the Town should act more frugally and not have a color photo on the cover. Karrie Sweet stated that the color photo came at no additional cost to the Town, rather it was given to us for free by the printers (Reprographics).

Shannon Lenox asked why the school budget article in the Warning has some information in bold. Karrie said that the information is put in exactly as it is sent to us by the school.

Wes Graff moved to cease discussion. Melanie Meilleur seconded. Article passed by voice vote.

*** Barry called for a voice vote to suspend rules to allow switching the order of Articles 5 and 6. There were no objections and the meeting continued with Article 6.

Article 6 Will the Town authorize the Select Board to spend the surplus of \$134K from FY2018 as follows: \$45K for the Equipment Fund, \$45K to reduce taxes in FY2020, and \$44K to reduce taxes in FY2021?

Sandy Doolan moved the article to the floor. Melanie Meilleur seconded.

Discussion: Slide presentation by Select Board (see attached).

Matt Gillilan discussed the Equipment Fund slide. Barry Doolan asked if this was pertinent to this article. Jesse Wiens said it gave context as a portion of surplus could be going to that fund.

Jesse presented the Municipal Taxes slide.

Chris Lenox asked Matt what the expected costs will be for road maintenance, specifically paving, before we decide to spend the surplus on equipment. Matt said paving should be on a 10 year cycle and the loan payment for paving project is 7 years out.

Wes Graff asked if the Board considered putting some of that money towards the paving loan. Jon said the Board felt that they reduced the paving loan a good amount already, as we will be paying it off a lot earlier than previously expected. Wes had a follow up question: We are paying interest on loans, might it be a better savings if we pay down a loan rather than put the money into reducing taxes. Jon said the Board felt it was an appropriate trade-off as presented. He reminded the audience that they always have the option to change it from the floor as they choose.

Suzanne Stritzler feels there is a lot of confusion surrounding the fiscal years. Jon shared that the Board is also confused at times. He explained that fiscal years cover parts of two calendar years and are named for the second of the two years.

Michelle Frennier asked if the Town has money in current budget to do a top coat on Buck Hollow Road. Matt said the paving that was done recently was the top coat.

David Clark appreciates the proposal of reducing taxes in 2021, but would like more money to go into the Equipment Fund as we seem to be anticipating a new truck purchase. Jon said the Town has more than one option in acquiring a new truck (purchase, lease). The Town currently has enough money to lease a truck and that might be a better option, given our cash flow.

David had a follow up comment. He feels we don't just need to purchase a new truck but also need to maintain ALL the equipment. He proposed an Amendment to the article of splitting the surplus 50/50 (\$67K each) between the Equipment Fund and reducing taxes for this year. Diane Dayvie seconded.

Amendment Discussion:

Terence Keating spoke up against the amendment and feels the voters elected the Select Board and we should trust their judgment and do what they originally proposed.

Annette Kalinoski feels the money should be put towards reducing the Town's debt-load.

Terry Riggs asked where we stand in the budget we are currently in, as that will affect how we decide what to do with the current surplus, if there is any. Matt said we are in good shape right now but he didn't have a current budget in front of him. Things can always change, so it's hard to say where we'll end up at the end of the fiscal year.

Annette Kalinoski moved to cease debate on this amendment. Suzanne Stritzler seconded.

Amendment failed by voice vote and discussion went back to the main article.

Phil Pelkey made an amendment to have 2/3 (\$90K) given back to taxpayers in next FY. There was no second and the amendment died.

Sue Williams moved to cease debate. Melanie Meilleur seconded. Original article passed by voice vote.

Article 5 Will the Town vote a sum of money to meet the expenses and liabilities of the Town for the FY 2020 (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020)?

Karrie Sweet announced corrections to the article as presented, noting there were errors in the dates. (*These minutes reflect those corrections.*) Melanie Meilleur moved to bring the article to the floor. Wes Graff seconded.

Discussion: Slide presentation by Select Board (see attached)

Christine Nilsen spoke about the "FY2018 Report" slide.

Diane Dayvie asked where the Town Land was that was sold. Matt Gillilan said it was on the Waterville side of town, was very steep and hard to access.

Gloria Brunette asked how much it sold for. Christine said it's listed as a revenue in the budget report, about \$5K.

Brent Simoneau asked why we are referring to loan money as income. Christine explained that's how we have to account for it within NEMRC (our accounting system).

Matt Gillilan spoke about the "FY19 Roads Report" slide. He gave an explanation of grants, thanking Jim Smith Technical Services and Bethany Remmers (NWRPC) for their assistance in getting these. He shared that Fletcher paid the lowest price per ton for asphalt for the entire state, because we bid all the material as one big project.

Sara Villeneuve asked if the rest of Buck Hollow was being paved this year. Matt said we'll have to see how the roads fared this winter. It will also depend on the price/ton of asphalt.

Terry Riggs asked where we stand for the work completed in regards to what was budgeted last year versus now. How is the current budget looking? Matt said he does not have the current budget numbers in front of him so won't comment on that, but he does feel we have enough money to get us through the end of the FY with no problems.

Terry asked if it's looking like we are going to have a surplus this year or not. Matt said he doesn't think that we will, but the year's not over. It's hard to guess when you never know what's going to happen in the future.

Terry asked if we had enough sand and gravel in stock. Matt said we do and we still have

money to buy more if it's needed.

Jesse Wiens wanted to extend his thanks, both as a select Board member and a resident, to Matt and all of the others who got the paving costs down from the voter-authorized \$1.3M. There was a round of applause.

Christine Nilsen spoke about the "Proposed Budget for FY2020" slide.

Michelle Frennier asked about the electronic newsletter and whether or not there was a public computer available at the Town Office for those folks who don't have access. If there wasn't, was that something we could look into getting? Christine said there was not and it's not something the Board had discussed. Folks will still have the option to receive a hard copy by mail, but they will need to request that from the Clerk's office.

Rich Bidwell spoke about the "Looking Ahead: Maintenance in 2019" slide

Dawn Pelkey asked about the needed floor and heating repairs at the Town Office. Rich said some are normal anticipated repairs, but we are also having some issues with heating not regulating the temperature properly and the flooring lifting in some places. These issues are being researched and addressed.

Jesse Wiens spoke about the "New Town Website" slide. He said there is a clipboard in the back of the gym for folks to sign up for e-newsletter, or they can do so directly on the website (www.fletchervt.net). He shared that local meetings and events will be listed there, drawing attention to the upcoming Hearing on May 6 for proposed ATV Ordinance. If folks had events or other content they wanted added to the website, they could email the Town office.

Barry Doolan gave a clarification of the budget amount: \$1,339,700.00

Diane Dayvie moved to cease debate. Sue Williams seconded. Article passed by voice vote.

Article 7 Will the Town authorize the Select Board to purchase a new plow truck should a good deal become available during FY2020?

Tom Kalinoski moved to bring the article to the floor. Sue Ferguson seconded.

Discussion:

Matt Gillilan shared that the Town is looking at lease options as well as purchase quotes.

Terence Keating asked what "a good deal" means. Matt answered "not full price".

Terry Riggs asked which truck is looking to be replaced. Would we be getting a new single-axle or a new tandem? He suggested getting a single-axle as it would be a lower cost. Matt said we would either getting rid of 07 International or the 08 Mack. Based on his research, Matt feels the new purchase price of single axles are only about \$20K less than tandem. The Town has been contracting the hauling-in of material due to our trucks not being operational when needed to haul it ourselves. He feels there are certainly pros and cons to both styles, but it will depend on which truck we get rid of.

Annette Kalinoski made an amendment to the article to have it read "Will the Town authorize the Select Board to purchase a new plow truck should a good deal become available and is within the current FY2020 budget?" Brent Simoneau seconded.

Amendment Discussion:

Chris Lenox asked how much money was budgeted for new equipment in FY2020. Matt said that money is broken down and appears in multiple places in budget. Jon Bondy said the Equipment Fund (separate account from the operating account) has a current balance of about \$110K, and then we also have \$15K from the budget itself which will be added to this Fund.

Wes Graff moved to cease debate on this amendment. Sue Williams seconded. Amendment passed by voice vote.

Sue Williams moved to cease debate. Annette Kalinsoki seconded. Article passed by voice vote as amended.

***Barry Doolan called for a 5 minute recess as we transition to the School portion of meeting.

- Article 8 To elect a Moderator for the School District Annual Meeting.
- Article 9 To elect a Clerk for the School District Annual Meeting.
- Article 10 To hear and act on reports of School Directors from previous year.
- Article 11 To elect by ballot a School Director for a three year term (Diane Dayvie).
- Article 12 Shall the voters of said school district approve the School Directors to expend **\$3,448,372.00** which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of **\$16,333.92 per equalized pupil**. This projected spending per equalized pupil is **7.62% higher** than spending for the current year.
- Article 13 Shall the voters of said School District authorize the School Directors to borrow money for school expenses in anticipation of revenue for the ensuing year?
- Article 14 To conduct any other business that may come before the School Directors.
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Article 15 To elect by ballot a Selectman for a three year term. (Jesse Wiens)

Annette Kalinsoki moved the article to the floor. Sue Ferguson seconded. Wes Graff nominated Jesse Wiens. Gloria Brunette moved to cease nominations and have the Clerk cast one ballot for Jesse Wiens. Wes Graff seconded. Article passed by voice vote and Jesse Wiens was elected.

Article 16 To elect by ballot a Lister for a three year term. (Alex Sargent)

Annette Kalinoski moved the article to the floor. Brent Simoneau seconded. Wes Graff nominated Alex Sargent. David Clark moved to cease nominations and have the Clerk cast one ballot for Alex Sargent. Annette Kalinoski seconded. Article passed by voice vote and Alex Sargent was elected.

Article 17 To elect by ballot an Auditor the remaining two years of a three year term. (Kevin Holmes-Henry)

Annette Kalinoski moved the article to the floor. Sue Ferguson seconded. Katie Towle nominated Andrea Zamuda. Andrea spoke, introduced herself. Dawn Pelkey moved to cease nominations and have the Clerk cast one ballot for Andrea Zamuda. Sue Ferguson seconded. Article passed by voice vote and Andrea Zamuda was elected.

Article 18 To elect by ballot an Auditor for a three year term. (Nancy Cardinal)

Todd Baumeister moved the article to the floor. Katy Towle nominated Nancy Cardinal. Patricia Freed-Thall moved to cease nominations and have the Clerk cast one ballot for Nancy Cardinal. Wes Graff seconded. Article passed by voice vote and Nancy Cardinal was elected.

Article 19 To elect by ballot a 1st Constable for a two year term. (Bill Stygles)

Todd Baumeister moved to bring the article to the floor. Gloria Brunette seconded. Barry Doolan read the official description of the position. Wes Graff nominated Bill Stygles. Wes Graff moved to cease nominations and have the Clerk cast one ballot for Bill Stygles. Article passed by voice vote and Bill Stygles was elected.

Article 20 To elect by ballot a Town Agent & Conveyor of Lands for a one year term. (Neal

Smith)

Todd Baumeister moved to bring the article to the floor. Patricia Freed-Thall seconded. Barry Doolan read the official description of the position. Neal Smith nominated himself. Patricia Freed-Thall moved to cease nominations and have the Clerk cast one ballot for Neal Smith. Article passed by voice vote and Neal Smith was elected.

Article 21 To elect any other Town Officer to fill any Town Office that may be vacant at this time.

Annette Kalinoski moved to bring the article to the floor. Alice Drake seconded.

Discussion:

David Clark said that he has served on NWSWD board for over 30 years. He's hoping someone else might be interested in taking this position as he's ready to pass the torch. There are 6 to 8 meetings per year. He invited folks to speak with him if they are interested in learning more.

There was no more discussion. Wes Graff moved to cease debate and pass over this article. Annette Kalinoski seconded. Article passed over by voice vote.

Article 22 Will the Town authorize the Town Treasurer to receive all Real Estate taxes?

Diane Dayvie moved to bring the article to the floor. Phil Pelkey seconded. There was no discussion. Phil Pelkey moved to cease debate Annette Kalinoski seconded. Article passed by voice vote.

Article 23 Will the Town instruct the Select Board to borrow money to pay current expenses in anticipation of taxes?

Sue Ferguson moved to bring the article to the floor. Alice Drake seconded. There was no discussion. Phil Pelkey moved to cease debate. Tom Kalinsoki seconded. Article passed by voice vote.

Article 24 To discuss any other business that may properly come before the Town Meeting.

Tom Kalinoski moved to bring the article to the floor. Dawn Pelkey seconded.

Discussion:

Sue Ferguson asked if there was a survey about changing to Australian Ballot. Jon Bondy answered that the select Board did put out a survey about changing the date of Town Meeting. He explained that the results were not conclusive. There was a discussion of this year's informational meeting in Fairfax not being well-attended, but it was yet to be determined what their turnout would be for the Australian Ballot vote on Town Meeting Day.

Ellen Bethea asked about the possibility of the elementary school using the stage at the Historical Society for school's plays, musical performances, etc.

Diane Dayvie shared that the Historical Society could really use volunteers to assist in clearing out leftovers from bi-annual Rummage Sales so that the space can be utilized by any groups.

Deb Tilton agrees and feels the space has become a depository for peoples' trash, broken, and unwanted items.

Annette Kalinsoki suggested ending the sales altogether as a way to end it being a trash depository.

Diane Dayvie and Karrie Sweet echoed the sentiment that these sales are a huge money-maker for the church and the Historical Society.

Deb Tilton felt the true problem with leftover junk came when there was no longer a means of disposal via NWSWD holding a trash/recycle collection the same day of the sales. David Clark said that this idea could be explored again, but advised there would be a cost associated. Who would pay for it? He suggested perhaps holding it the Monday after the sale.

Jesse Wiens suggested utilizing the website and e-newsletter to promote any of these types of events in the future.

Chris Lenox asked if the Historical Society Building available for the public to rent for events. Barry Doolan said it was and interested people should contact Charles Tinker.

Chris Nilsen shared that the Animal Control officer (Bill Stygles) would hold a stray dog for 5 days, and then that dog would be going to Pope Memorial Animal Shelter in Orleans. Stray cats and kittens of feral cats (not adults) would be dealt with by Chris herself.

There was no more discussion. Sue Ferguson moved to cease debate. Annette Kalinoski seconded. Article passed by voice vote.

Article 25 To Adjourn.

Annette Kalinoski moved to bring this article to the floor. Sue Ferguson seconded. There was no discussion. Annette Kalinoski moved to cease debate. Sue Ferguson seconded. Article passed by voice vote. Meeting was adjourned at 1:40pm.

Dated at Fletcher, Vermont this 5th day of March, 2019.

DRAFT