

MINUTES OF THE LOWELL ANNUAL TOWN MEETING AND SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING 2018

The legal voters of the Town of Lowell, Vermont are hereby warned and notified to meet at the Lowell Graded School on **TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 2018** at **10:00 a.m.** to act on the following articles of business:

Note: The Town of Lowell has a checklist of 598 eligible voters. The highest number of votes cast for Town Elections was registered at 87 votes.

- The School District Meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. Moderator Alden Warner asked voters to take a moment to honor our American Flag and led voters in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Alden announced several upcoming events.
- Alden reviewed some Roberts Rules of conduct to be adhered to throughout the meeting.
- Alden Warner announced the hours of the Australian ballot voting for North Country Supervisory Union Budget.

SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING:

ARTICLE 1: *To ELECT SCHOOL MODERATOR for the ensuing year.*

- Alden Warner nominated; voice vote / carried.
- **ALDEN WARNER – ELECTED**

ARTICLE 2: *To ELECT an ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DIRECTOR for a two-year term.*

- *Article 2 was a misprint.*

ARTICLE 3: *To ELECT an ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DIRECTOR for a three-year term.*

- Steve Mason was nominated.
- Kelly Backus was nominated.
- A request was made to hear from each candidate.
- Alden Warner instructed the voters to cast a paper ballot to determine who would be elected.
- Total votes cast 83: Steve Mason-64 and Kelly Backus-19
- **STEVE MASON - ELECTED**

ARTICLE 4: *Shall the voters of the **LOWELL TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT** approve the school board to expend **\$1,735,799.00**, which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year **2019**. It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of **\$13,329.00** per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 6.74% higher than spending for the current year? The overall budget has decreased 5.52% from the current year.*

- Article moved and seconded.
- A request was made to explain the cost decreased.
- Steve Mason, School Board Chair explained that the number of pupils has gone down from a high of 128 to 111 pupils. He also stated that as the pupil count goes down so does the

reimbursement from the State. He also explained that Pre-k students were rated differently than elementary students because they are not full-time students.

- Steve Mason continued to answer questions and explained how the Board creates the budget and the approval process.
- A question was asked to Steve Mason on why the teacher's salaries are not posted publicly? Steve Mason answered this question by saying that the teacher's salaries are public information, and anyone can come to any School Board meeting to get that information.
- It was suggested that teacher's salaries be listed publicly in the town and school report every year.
- Request was made by 7 people to vote by paper ballot on Article 4
- Voted by "Yes" or "NO" on proposed budget amount as written at \$1,735,799.00, Total votes cast: 85, Yes's-62 and No's-23, **ARTICLE PASSED AS WRITTEN.**
- Motion was made to suspend Roberts Rules and change the requirement of paper ballot requests from 7 to 20.
- Motion failed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 5: *Shall the voters of the **LOWELL TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT** authorize the Board of School Directors to use **\$75,000.00** of the unallocated, unaudited general fund balance from the 2016-2017 school year, to **reduce taxes** in the 2018-2019 school budget?*

- *Motion made and seconded to authorize Article 5 as written.*
- *A question was asked where the money comes from?*
- *Steve Mason answered that it is budgeted money that is not spent and given back to the school.*
- *A question was asked why is the money not just rolled over for the next year?*
- *Steve Mason answered that due to State rules, it was not allowed, some of the money goes to a building maintenance fund and some goes toward unforeseen problems the school may acquire through out the school year.*
- *Motion made to call the question/seconded*
- *Motion to call the question was passed by 2/3 voice vote.*
- **Motion for ARTICLE 5 AS WRITTEN, passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 6: *Shall the voters of the **LOWELL TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT** authorize the Board of School Directors to transfer to the Building Maintenance Fund \$5,290.00 of unallocated, unaudited general fund balance from the 2016-2017 school year.*

- Article moved and seconded; voice vote / carried.
- **ARTICLE PASSED AS WRITTEN.**

ARTICLE 7: *Shall the voter of the **LOWELL TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT** Authorize the Board of School Directors to transfer to the Tax Stabilization Fund \$23,452.00 of unallocated, unaudited General Fund balance from the 2016-2017 school year to be used in future budgets when the tax rate is to increase more than 3 cents?*

- Article moved and seconded; voice vote/carried
- **ARTICLE PASSED AS WRITTEN.**

ARTICLE 8: *To transact any other non-binding business which may legally come before this meeting.*

- Question was asked if the Lowell School Board was going to join other districts and would that lose control of our school?

- Steve Mason stated that as of right now we are proposing an Alternative Structure under ACT 46, but that doesn't mean that they won't try to make us merge with other towns in the future.
- *Motion made and seconded to cease debate.*
- *Motion to cease debate carried by voice vote.*

ARTICLE 9: *To Adjourn.*

- *Article moved and seconded; voice vote/carried.*
- *Meeting broke for lunch at 11:50 a.m.*

OUTCOME OF AUSTRALIAN BALLOTING FOR NORTH COUNTRY UNION HIGH SCHOOL:

Polls were open from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

ARTICLE IV: NCUHS BUDGET- TOTAL VOTES CAST: 62
 IN FAVOR-38 OPPOSED-22 BLANK-2
ARTICLE PASSED

ARTICLE VI: NCUHS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT RESERVE FUND
 TOTAL VOTES CAST: 62
 IN FAVOR-37 OPPOSED-22 BLANK- 3
ARTICLE PASSED

Attest:

MODERATOR: Alden Warner _____

SCHOOL BOARD DIRECTOR: Steve Mason _____

TOWN MEETING: Moderator call Annual Town meeting to order at 12:50 p.m.

ARTICLE 10: *To ELECT TOWN MODERATOR for the ensuing year.*

- Alden Warner nominated; voice vote / carried.
- **ALDEN WARNER – ELECTED**
- *The Moderator asked to suspend Roberts Rules to hear from our town Representative Mark Higley.*
- *Motion moved and seconded; voice vote/carried.*
- *Mark Higley, Town Representative spoke about the bill for Marijuana had passed, and that the Senate was still working on the New Tax Bill processes that are in the review process to be voted on and possibly passed.*

ARTICLE 11: *To HEAR and ACT upon reports of TOWN OFFICERS.*

- Motion made and seconded to accept the reports as written.
- Moderator asked for any errors or omissions in the town reports.
- Question was asked about our Town Audit from last year.
- Priscilla Matten one of the Town Auditors answered the question by stating that the Town Officials agreed to update the accounting system to comply with GASB Accounting rules and

procedures. After the 2016 professional audit cited the books as unauditable, the NEMRC accounting software supplied balance sheets by funds (depts.), but not for the Town as an entity. It was determined to switch to QuickBooks to save costs and to supply a total balance sheet.

- The Town Clerk announced that there were two pages that had been corrected, and the inserts for these corrected pages were available by the voting table, the pages were pg. 19 and pg. 25A.
- No other comments or questions were brought to the floor.
- Motion made and seconded to accept the Town Report as written with corrected pages; voice vote / carried.
- **TOWN REPORT ACCEPTED AS WRITTEN WITH NOTED CORRECTIONS.**

ARTICLE 12: To **ELECT** the following **OFFICERS** required by law:

a. SELECT PERSON 3-year term

- Richard Pion nominated.
- There were no additional nominations, so using unanimous consent from the voters, the moderator instructed the clerk to cast one paper ballot for Richard Pion.
- **RICHARD PION - ELECTED**

b. LISTER 3-year term

- Christine Hager nominated.
- There were no other nominations, so using unanimous consent from the voters, the moderator instructed the clerk to cast one paper ballot for Christine Hager.
- **CHRISTINE HAGER - ELECTED**

c. AUDITOR 3-year term

- Priscilla Matten nominated.
- There were no other nominations, so using unanimous consent from the voters, the moderator instructed the clerk to cast one paper ballot for Priscilla Matten.
- **PRISCILLA MATTEN - ELECTED**

d. 1st CONSTABLE 1-year term

- Craig Matten nominated; voice vote / carried.
- **CRAIG MATTEN - ELECTED**

e. 2nd CONSTABLE 1-year term

- Darren Pion Nominated-declined
- Mike Greenway Nominated-declined
- Albert Pion Nominated-declined
- Calvin Allen Nominated-declined
- Wayne Richardson Nominated-declined
- No other nominations were made

f. TOWN AGENT 1- year term

- Andre Tetreault nominated; voice vote / carried.
- **ANDRE TETREAUULT - ELECTED**

g. GRAND JUROR 1-year term

- Andre Tetreault nominated; voice vote / carried.
- **ANDRE TETREAULT – ELECTED**

h. LIBRARY TRUSTEE 5-year term

- Jennifer Blay Nominated- declined
- Gynette Manning nominated; voice vote / carried.
- **GYNETTE MANNING – ELECTED**

ARTICLE 13: *Shall the legal voters appropriate the sum of \$ 280,000.00 for TOWN EXPENSES AND LIABILITIES (Select Board’s Account)?*

- Article moved and seconded. Voice vote / carried.
- **ARTICLE PASSED AS WRITTEN.**

ARTICLE 14: *Shall the legal voters appropriate \$ 135,000.00 plus Vermont State Aid funding for WINTER ROADS?*

- Article moved and seconded.
- Motion carried by voice vote.
- **ARTICLE PASSED AS WRITTEN.**

ARTICLE 15: *Shall the legal voters appropriate \$ 135,000.00 plus Vermont State Aid funding for SUMMER ROADS?*

- Motion made and seconded for article 15 as written.
- Question was asked about Kempton Hill bridge lawsuit.
- Town Officials answered that we could not comment at this time.
- Arlon Warner answered that it was being worked on by his Lawyers, and that the Town was out of compliance and his Lawyer was going to prove it but could not elaborate any further.
- Motion carried by voice vote.
- **ARTICLE PASSED AS WRITTEN**

ARTICLE 16: *Shall the legal voters appropriate \$ 25,000.00 for the FIRE DEPARTMENT?*

- Article moved and seconded.
- Motion carried by voice vote.
- **ARTICLE PASSED AS WRITTEN.**
- The Fire Chief Calvin Allen Announced that the Fire Department was able to buy a brand-new Firetruck with the help of the extra funds kicked in by the Fire department and the Loan that The Towns people had approved to get last year.

ARTICLE 17: *Shall the legal voters allow the Select Board to transfer the Kingdom Community Wind CD and the People’s United Bank CD to a savings account to borrow from until property taxes are received, to save the Town interest cost?*

- Article moved and seconded.
- Motion carried by voice vote.
- **ARTICLE PASSED AS WRITTEN.**

ARTICLE 18: Shall the legal voters authorize the Select Board to **APPOINT** a **TOWN CLERK** pursuant to 17 V.S.A. &2651e?

- Article moved and seconded.
- Questioned was asked why to appoint?
- Sandy LaDeau, Town Clerk, stated she was for this to be voted as an appointed position, as she has put her heart and soul, and has been through intense training earning her certifications, and would hate to lose her positions due to a popularity contest. It would give the Select Board the opportunity to choose someone based on qualifications.
- Motion carried by voice vote.
- **ARTICLE PASSED AS WRITTEN.**

ARTICLE 19: Shall the legal voters authorize the Select Board to **APPOINT** a **TOWN TREASURER** pursuant to 17 V.S.A. &2651f?

- Article moved and seconded.
- Motion carried by voice vote.
- **ARTICLE PASSED AS WRITTEN.**

ARTICLE 20: Shall the legal voters appropriate \$ 6,000.00 for the **COMMUNITY LIBRARY**?

- Article moved and seconded.
- Motion carried by voice vote.
- **ARTICLE PASSED AS WRITTEN.**

ARTICLE 21: Shall the legal voters appropriate \$ 3,000.00 for the **LITTLE LEAGUE & T-BALL** teams?

- Article moved and seconded.
- Question was asked, who oversees baseball now?
- Jennifer Blay stated that Ryan and Mandy Sargent and Ryan and Mandy Kneeland have taken over this program.
- Motion made and seconded to call to question. Motion to call the question carried by voice vote.
- Main motion carried by voice vote.
- **ARTICLE PASSED AS WRITTEN.**

ARTICLE 22: Shall the legal voters appropriate \$ 1,000.00 for the **JR. HOOP BASKETBALL** teams?

- Article moved and seconded.
- Motion carried by voice vote.
- **ARTICLE PASSED AS WRITTEN.**

ARTICLE 23: Shall the legal voters appropriate the sum of \$ 3,500.00 to the **ORLEANS ESSEX VNA & HOSPICE, INC.** for the services of Skilled Nursing, Physical Therapy, Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy,

Medical Social Work, Licensed Nurse's Aide, Homemaker, Personal Care Attendant, Hospice, and Maternal Child Health Programs, and other community health programs provided by the Agency?

- Article moved and seconded; voice vote / carried.
- **ARTICLE PASSED AS WRITTEN.**

ARTICLE 24: *Shall the legal voters appropriate the following sums:*

- a) **\$ 500** to AMERICAN RED CROSS
- b) **\$ 250** to GREEN MOUNTAIN FARM-to-SCHOOL, INC
- c) **\$ 50** to GREEN UP VERMONT
- d) **\$ 450** to HAZEN'S NOTCH ASSOC. CAMPSHIP FUND
- e) **\$ 250** to JAY AREA LOCAL FOOD SHELF
- f) **\$ 200** to JAY PEAK POST NO. 28, INC. - AMERICAN LEGION
- g) **\$ 300** to NORTHEAST KINGDOM COMMUNITY ACTION, INC. – ORLEANS COUNTY COURT DIVERSION
- h) **\$ 300** to NORTHEAST KINGDOM COUNCIL ON AGING
- i) **\$ 923** to NORTHEAST KINGDOM HUMAN SERVICE, INC.
- j) **\$ 200** to NORTHEAST KINGDOM LEARNING SERVICES INC
- k) **\$ 659** to NORTHEASTERN VT DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION
- l) **\$ 500** to ORLEANS COUNTY CITIZEN ADVOCACY
- m) **\$ 450** to ORLEANS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
- n) **\$ 500** to POPE MEMORIAL FRONTIER ANIMAL SHELTER
- o) **\$ 200** to PREVENT CHILD ABUSE- VERMONT
- p) **\$ 700** to RURAL COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION
- q) **\$ 825** to UMBRELLA
- r) **\$ 100** to VACD - VERMONT RURAL FIRE PROTECTION
- s) **\$ 200** to VT ASSOC for the BLIND and VISUALLY IMPAIRED
- t) **\$ 90** to VT CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING
- u) **\$ 85** to VT TRAILS & GREENWAYS

Total for above appropriations = \$7732.00

- Article moved and seconded.
- Motion carried by voice vote.
- **ARTICLE PASSED AS WRITTEN.**

ARTICLE 25: *To transact any other business that may legally come before the Town.*

- *A question was asked about the condition of the Bridge by the Post Office.*
- *The Board Chair stated that it was inspected by the State and it was passable.*
- *A question was asked, if something were to happen to one of the bridges, is there money to help fix them?*
- *The Board Chair stated that we would apply for State Funding.*
- *Question was asked if anyone could use the Town garage for personal use?*
- *The Board Chair stated that it was up to the Road Commissioner to decide who could use the Garage.*
- *Question was asked if there was any further information on the Mines Asbestos's project?*
- *Mark Higley stated that he had personally spoke with Gary Nolan from Manosh, and that the project was still in the works, no further information has been brought forward on this.*

ARTICLE 26: *TO ADJOURN*

- The motion was made and seconded to adjourn the Town Meeting; voice vote / carried.

- MEETING ADJOURNED AT 2:24 P.M.

Attest:

MODERATOR: Alden Warner _____

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE: Steve Mason _____

PRESIDING OFFICER: Sandy LaDeau _____

Received for recording in Town Proceeding Book

Attest: Sandy LaDeau- Town Clerk