

MINUTES OF THE LOWELL ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 2026

The legal voters of the Town of Lowell, Vermont are hereby warned and notified to meet at the Lowell Graded School on **Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.** to act on the following articles of business:

TOWN MEETING:

- The Town Meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. Moderator Alden Warner asked voters to take a moment to honor our American Flag and led voters in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- The moderator read the announcements.
- Alden reviewed the Roberts Rules of conduct to be adhered to throughout the meeting.
- Christy Pion, Town Clerk, announced the retirement of Rebecca DiZazzo from the Clerk's office, and gave a speech wishing Rebecca well on her new adventure and presented her with a bouquet of flowers.

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

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

ARTICLE 2: To **HEAR** and **ACT** upon reports of **TOWN OFFICERS**.

Questions and Comments:

- **Motion made and seconded to accept the report as written.**
- **Voice vote/ carried.**

ARTICLE 3: To **ELECT** the following **OFFICERS** required by law:

- SELECT PERSON** 3-year term.
 - Darren Pion-Nominated.
 - Erin Quesnel – Nominated (herself)
 - Moderator stated paper ballot needs to be voted for both candidates.
 - Request was made to hear from Erin, as she is not well known to the residents.
 - Erin spoke about herself and her experience in running her own business and that she had a lot of kids that go to school here in town.
 - Paper ballot count was Darren Pion- 84, Erin Quesnel- 4, spoiled -3 , Total Votes-91
 - **DARREN PION-ELECTED**
- LISTER** 3-year term
 - Cheryl Clarke- nominated.
 - **CHERYL CLARKE– ELECTED By clerk casting 1 paper ballot.**
- 1st CONSTABLE** 1-year term
 - Ashley Callahan- nominated; voice vote / carried.
 - **ASHLEY CALLAHAN- ELECTED**
- LIBRARY TRUSTEE** 5-year term
 - Deborah Manning-nominated; voice vote/ carried.
 - **DEBORAH MANNING -ELECTED**
- LIBRARY TRUSTEE** 5-year term
 - Jennifer Higgins-nominated; voice vote/ carried.
 - **JENNIFER HIGGINS-ELECTED**
- LIBRARY TRUSTEE** 5-year term

- Brenda Wesolow-nominated; voice vote/carried.
- **BRENDA WESOLOW-ELECTED**

g. **LIBRARY TRUSTEE** 4-year term (remainder of 5-year term)

- Mckenna Blay-nominated; voice vote/ carried.
- **MCKENNA BLAY-ELECTED**

h. **AUDITOR** 3-year term

- Dorothy Spoerl-nominated; voice vote/ carried.
- **DOROTHY SPOERL-ELECTED**

ARTICLE 4: Shall the legal voters appropriate the sum of \$ **588,435.00** for **TOWN EXPENSES AND LIABILITIES** (Select Board's Account)?

- Article moved and seconded.
- Question was asked; why is there such a jump from last year? Jennifer Blay Selectboard Chair opted to answer this question. She stated that the amount really hasn't gone up, we just moved money from other funds to this one. Due to the fact that we had \$175,000 worth of loan payments in the admin budget that was paid off in 2025, we opted to keep that amount in the budget but move it to the equipment fund.
- Someone asked to call the question; response was no.
- Paper ballot was requested; The moderator instructed the voters to vote by paper ballot, Yes to pass the Article, and No to not pass the Article. Total-95 votes, Yes-67, No-28
- **Article passed by yes vote.**

ARTICLE 5: Shall the legal voters appropriate \$ **300,000.00** plus Vermont State Aid funding for **ROADS**?

- Article moved and seconded.
- Mike Tetreault asked a question: I just had a question in the budget that was proposed that looked like we had truck rentals for the past years that remained in the budget and I know that at least part of those trucks are missing so I'm assuming there's going to be an insurance claim on that. So, I couldn't quite figure out why that amount hadn't changed. Marie answered by telling Mike that the budget had already been set and ready for the printers before the fire happened. Yes, the insurance company is involved, and we have already replaced the two burnt trucks with the help of the insurance money. We are looking ahead to the future and putting money aside for things we need and may need in the future. Marie also explained the amount of money that we used to pay for the trucks, which allowed us to stay within the budget with the help of the insurance money. Mike was happy with the explanation.
- Question was asked why the insurance amounts were not in the book. Marie and Jenn both explained that the fire happened after the budget was made so it wouldn't be in the book, and that we don't have all the figures for the insurance on the building yet.
- **ARTICLE PASSED By Voice Vote.**

ARTICLE 6: Shall the legal voters appropriate \$ **35,000.00** for the **FIRE DEPARTMENT**?

- Article moved and seconded.
- **ARTICLE PASSED By Voice Vote**

ARTICLE 7: Shall the legal voters appropriate \$ **10,000.00** for the **COMMUNITY LIBRARY**?

- Article moved and seconded.
- Question was asked; Why did the Library request amount go up \$2500.00 from last year? Adeline Larose, the Librarian, and Katherine Pion, one of the Trustees, answered the question by stating that they had revamped the way the library is run, they have new programs for the kids in the summer, plus afterschool programs for the kids, book club for the adults, crafting clubs, and that they have ordered over 500 new books for the library. By thus making the library more community oriented. The questioner was very happy with the response.
- **ARTICLE PASSED By Voice Vote.**

ARTICLE 8: Shall the legal voters appropriate the sum of \$**3,500.00** to the **Orleans Essex VNA & Hospice, Inc.** for the Skilled Nursing, Physical Therapy, Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Medical Social Work, Licensed Nurse's Aide, Homemaker, Personal Care Attendant services provided in the Home Health, Hospice, Long Term Care, and other community health programs provided by the Agency.

- Article moved and seconded.

- Question was asked if we even used any of these services? Question was answered by several people in town who have and are still utilizing these services for their family members.
- **ARTICLE PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.**

ARTICLE 9: Shall the legal voters appropriate the following sums:

2026

- a) \$500 to AMERICAN LEGION JAYPEAK POST # 28, INC.
- b) \$1000 to GREEN MOUNTAIN FARM-to-SCHOOL, INC.
- c) \$50 to GREEN UP VERMONT
- d) \$200 to MISSISQUOI RIVER BASIN ASSOC.
- e) \$300 to NORTHEAST KINGDOM COUNCIL ON AGING
- f) \$1,758 to NORTHEAST KINGDOM HUMAN SERVICE, INC.
- g) \$843 to NORTHEASTERN VT. DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION
- h) \$200 to ORLEANS COUNTY CITIZEN ADVOCACY (ConnectABILITIES)
- i) \$500 to ORLEANS COUNTY FAIR ASSOCIATION (OCFA)
- j) \$550 to ORLEANS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
- k) \$500 to PCAVT PREVENT CHILD ABUSE
- l) \$500 to POPE FRONTIER SOCIETY
- m) \$1343 to RURAL COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION
- n) \$825 to UMBRELLA
- o) \$200 to VACD – VERMONT RURAL FIRE PROTECTION
- p) \$200 to VT ASSOC for the BLIND and VISUALLY IMPAIRED
- q) \$90 to VERMONT CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING
- r) \$250 to VERMONT FAMILY NETWORK
- s) \$100 to VERMONT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

\$ 9,909.00 Totals for above appropriations.

- Motion made and seconded.
- **ARTICLE PASSED AS WRITTEN BY VOICE VOTE.**

ARTICLE 10: To transact any other business that may legally come before the Town.

- The Moderator stated: I'm just going to ask you to please pass your questions and so forth through the moderator.
- A question was asked if the garage was covered by insurance, and how much it was going to cost to rebuild. The Moderator directed the Board to answer the question. The Board answered that we do not have all the numbers yet as there are still steps being taken to get all of this in order. We are currently still waiting for all the reports to come through, and for the insurance company to give the go ahead to start the cleanup. The Board stated that when everything is in order and we have the answers we need we plan to have a special meeting to update you on what we have found. Jenn stated that with that being said, we would like to know your preference on the day of the week for this meeting as we want to be able to include you all. The majority of the group stated that they would like to see the special meeting happen on a Saturday as most people work during the week and can't get the day off from work. There was also a little discussion of where to put the New Town garage; some people would like it to go back to where it was, some suggested behind Albert Pion's residence, someone mentioned directly behind the Town Clerk's office, and another asked about the possibility of the Lower village pit. The Board stated that this will all be discussed at the special meeting.
- Motion was made to call the question and seconded. Question was called.
- Recognition of a job well done was sent out to the new Road Commissioner, Levi Booska, from several of our town residents.
- There was some discussion on the solar panels project and Jenn updated the people on what stage it is at now, and on the donations that the town had received to help with legal fees.
- The Moderator stated that he knew that Trip (Ben) Wileman has something he wanted to speak about during this section of town meeting and gave Trip the floor. Gerry Nick asked me to speak to you all on behalf of the fire department relative to the solar. But in regard to the comments about the selectboard, I would also like to add that the reason the fire department got brought into the solar discussion was because the selectboard reached out to us and asked us if we had any concerns. I would like to thank

you, and Chief Nick, and then I'll get into what he tasked me with. I know that particularly Jenn Blay has been putting in a ton of hours working on the solar proposal and so yes things may not have gotten off as quickly as they should have but we should acknowledge the amount of work that the selectboard in particular, Jenn's putting in on this issue relative to the fire department I know Gerry has identified some concerns that relate to what you all would probably consider is our common sense. Are there any particular potential harms or risks that you know may be created either for the community or the fire department to respond to what got put in my lap and that Gerry asked me to at least make you all aware of! It has come to our attention in reaching out to other departments and when I say other departments I am not just speaking of fire departments, I'm speaking of other first responders that have similar vhf radio systems like what we have. That when solar is located too close to the base station it can interfere with the ability of, in our case, our handheld radios to communicate back with the station. I reached out to our contact at Burlington communications who handles our service as well as who we buy our equipment from provided him with a copy of both the site plan on which i noted the location of the fire station and the fire stations radio equipment as well as provided him with copies of the lights and the radio equipment. The information that was filed with the (PUC) Public Utility Commission and asked if they felt that our communication system would be negatively impacted. He was not able to give me an answer. He reached out to Northland Solar to discuss the specifics of the various components, and I have not heard back. We have communicated that we do not have a standing as the department, but we have communicated and are continuing to communicate what we learned with Jenn, and she will be working in any concerns if it turns out that there will be any potential for interference, and hopefully that she will be able to respond. We will make sure that the PUC takes steps to make sure that the fire department is not negative, and thereby the community is not negatively impacted.

- The moderator asked if there was anything else that needed to be discussed, if not he would move to Article 11.
- There were no other discussions.

ARTICLE 11: TO ADJOURN

- The motion was made and seconded to adjourn the Town Meeting; voice vote / carried.
- **MEETING ADJOURNED AT 12:10 P.M.**

Attest:

MODERATOR: Alden Warner _____

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE: Jeff Parsons _____

PRESIDING OFFICER: Christy M. Pion _____

Received for recording in Town Proceeding Book

Attest: Christy M. Pion- Town Clerk