

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
March 6, 2017**

TOTAL IN ATTENDANCE: 69

The meeting was called to order by Moderator Martin Nitka at 7:00PM. The pledge of allegiance was recited. He asked any non-voter to identify himself. He introduced the front table Selectmen Logan Nicoll, John Neal, Bruce Schmidt and Howard Barton, Frank Heald, Town Manager and Ulla Cook, Town Clerk/Treasurer. Moderator Nitka stated this meeting will be conducted according to Roberts Rules of Order.

Informational meeting for articles 2 – 6

ARTICLE 2. Shall the Town of Ludlow vote to appropriate and expend the sum of \$800.00 for the support of the Women's Freedom Center to provide services to women and their children who are experiencing emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse and are residents of the Town?

No one was present to represent the Women's Freedom Center.

ARTICLE 3. To see if the Voters of the Town of Ludlow will vote to exempt the property owned by the Trustees of the Gill Odd Fellow Home of Vermont (Nursing Home) from property taxes for a period of two (2) years; commencing with the 2017 tax year?

No one was present to represent the Gill Home. Mr. Van Guilder stated he is support if this article as they do a great job.

ARTICLE 4. Shall the voters of the Town of Ludlow renew the exempt status of the property located at 22 Buttermilk Falls Road owned by the Ludlow Masonic Building Association from Property Taxes for a period of (5) five years commencing with the 2017 tax year?

Mr. Washburn stated we have had exemption status before and would like to have it again. We have been a leader in the state in fund raising for training for Masonic Model Student Assistance Training which teaches teachers to recognize at risk behavior in children K-12. We contribute roughly 28-30 thousand dollars to fund these trainings every year. We have been a part of this community for 149 years will be celebrating our 150th.

ARTICLE 5. Shall there be established a Cemetery repair, replacement and acquisition reserve fund to be known as the Cemetery Capital Fund into which shall be transferred the balances of the Cemetery Capital Reserve, the Cemetery Equipment Fund, and the Cemetery Building Fund?

Mr. VanGuilder these monies we have had for a period of time and only wish to combine the three accounts.

ARTICLE 6. Shall the sum of \$50,000.00 originally appropriated for Bike Path improvements be expended to make the necessary Highway Garage improvements?

Mr. VanGuilder asked if the bike path will still be considered at a later date. Ms. Bixby stated yes we will continue to work on it and will in the future again ask for money. Mr. Lagro stated he would like to see the funds used on Buttermilk Falls Road.

Informational meeting concluded.

ANNUAL MEETING:

ARTICLE 7. Shall the voters of the Town of Ludlow act on Town Officers' reports for the period from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016?

Motion made by Mr. Pace to approve the article, second by Mr. Lagro. There was no discussion. The motion was voted and the article was adopted.

ARTICLE 8. Shall the voters of the Town of Ludlow fix the salaries of the Select Board, Cemetery Commissioners, and Trustees of Public Funds for the ensuing year?

Motion made by Mrs. Gurdak to fix the salaries the same as last year, second by Mr. Kirkbride. There was no discussion. The motion was voted and the article was adopted.

ARTICLE 9. Shall the Town of Ludlow collect taxes on Real Property in installments, taxes to be paid to the Town Treasurer on August 15, 2017, November 15, 2017, February 15, 2018, and May 15, 2018?

Motion made by Mr. Kirkbride to approve the article, second by Ms. Bixby. There was no discussion. The motion was voted and the article was adopted.

ARTICLE 10. Shall the voters of the Town of Ludlow authorize the Select Board to borrow money to pay the necessary expenses of the Town and Town School District and any part of its indebtedness?

Motion made by Ms. Carter to accept the article, second Ms. Gulli. There was no discussion. The motion was voted and the article was adopted.

ARTICLE 11. Shall the voters of the Town of Ludlow vote a specific amount in lieu of a rate on a dollar on the Grand List as set forth in the Select Board's budget and the Windsor County budget? Then the Select Board shall set the tax rate necessary to raise this amount after the Grand List has been completed and lodged in the office of the Town Clerk. **The amount to be raised by taxes will be \$3,886,940.83.**

Motion made by Mr. Buckley to adopt the article, second by Mr. Kolenda. There was no discussion. The motion was voted and the article was adopted.

ARTICLE 12. Shall the voters of the Town of Ludlow vote a specific amount in lieu of a rate on a dollar on the Grand List as set forth in the Cemetery Commission budget? Then the Select Board shall set the tax rate necessary to raise this amount after the Grand List has been completed and lodged in the office of the Town Clerk. **The amount to be raised by taxes will be \$67,755.00.**

Motion made by Ms. Gurdak to accept the article, second by Mr. Bixby. There was no discussion. The motion was voted and the article was adopted.

ARTICLE 13. Shall the voters of the Town of Ludlow authorize the Select Board to maintain a Highway Equipment Fund for highway purposes? **The amount to be raised by taxes will be \$30,000.**

Motion made by Mr. Bixby to accept the article, second by Mr. Kirkbride. There was no discussion. The motion was voted and the article was adopted.

ARTICLE 14. Shall the voters of the Town of Ludlow authorize the Select Board to maintain a Fire Equipment Fund? **The amount to be raised by taxes will be \$20,000.**

Motion made by Mr. VanGuilder to adopt the article, second by Fr. Farr. Mr. VanGuilder wanted to thank the fire department for all they do. There was no further discussion. The motion was voted and the article was adopted.

ARTICLE 15. Shall the voters of the Town of Ludlow authorize the Select Board to maintain a Police Equipment Fund? **The amount to be raised by taxes will be \$5,000.**

Motion made by Mr. Bixby to approve the article, second by Ms. Remy. There was no discussion. The motion was voted and the article was adopted.

ARTICLE 16. Shall the voters of the Town of Ludlow authorize the Select Board to maintain a Recreation Facilities Fund for recreation purposes? **The amount to be raised by taxes will be \$5,000.**

Motion made by Ms. Gauthier to adopt the article, second by Ms. Carter. Mr. Denner asked about the fund balance and Mr. Heald stated there is an error it should be 66,000. Ms. Gulli questioned getting a recumbent bike machine instead of the spinning as she does not believe anyone uses it. Mr. Paul answered that is something they can look into getting. There was no further discussion. The motion was voted and the article was adopted.

ARTICLE 17. Shall the voters of the Town of Ludlow authorize the Select Board to maintain a Capital Fund for repairs and restoration at the Ludlow Community Center? **The amount to be raised by taxes will be \$5,000.**

Motion made by Mr. Kirkbride to adopt the article, second by Mr. Pace. There was no discussion. The motion was voted and the article was adopted.

ARTICLE 18. Shall the voters of the Town of Ludlow authorize the Select Board to maintain a Capital Fund for repairs and restoration at the Black River Senior Center? **The amount to be raised by taxes will be \$2,500?**

Motion made by Mr. Bixby to accept the article, second by Ms. Gurdak. There was no discussion. The motion was voted and the article was adopted.

ARTICLE 19. Shall the voters of the Town of Ludlow appropriate the sum of **\$7,250.00 to the Southeast Vermont Transit, (formerly The Current) and Marble Valley Regional Transit Company of Rutland** to support the public transit bus service to Ludlow, from Bellows Falls and from Rutland?

Motion made by Ms. Gurdak to adopt the article, second by Mr. Kolenda. Ms. Kirkbride question if people really use this transit system. Ms. Bixby stated there is a number of residents who use this especially for individual rides to doctors' appointments. Ms. Leary stated her mother used this system meaning individual drivers numerous times for her appointments for dialysis in Burlington or Dartmouth. It was an immense help for the family. There was no further discussion. The motion was voted and the article was adopted.

ARTICLE 20. Shall the voters of the Town of Ludlow appropriate the sum of **\$1,500.00 to the Friends of the Ludlow Auditorium** to promote special events for the community?

Motion made by Ms. Carter to adopt the article, second by Mr. Blodgett. Mr. Welch wanted to thank Ralph Pace and his confederates for all the work he does. There was no further discussion. The motion was voted and the article was adopted.

Recess

Senator Dick McCormack of Windsor County gave a brief summary of activity in Montpelier. We have this week off and then we go back next week for what we call crossover when bills from the Senate go to the House and House bill have to be in the Senate. At this point a lot of the work is just finishing up but not thoroughly finished including the budget coming out of the House. The education committee has decided not to pass a bill that had been introduced by several senators on Act 46. They are working on a committee bill.

Senator Alice Nitka of Windsor County also spoke and stated Representative Dennis Devereux will not be here as he was not feeling well. We represent the 24 towns of Windsor County and Londonderry and Mount Holly (not in Windsor County). I serve on the appropriations committee which does the budget. We plan on leaving the State House with a balance budget. There is currently a 20 million dollar hole. There was some things mention in the gubernatorial campaign such as paying for child care and college tuition out of the education fund. I do not supporting these. We already put money into the state college system. We are working on the opiate heroin crisis in the judiciary committee. We passed a bill on fentanyl and the illegal use of it when mixed with heroin that it is an offense to sell it other than for medical reasons.

Recess over.

ARTICLE 21. To transact any other business necessary and proper when met.

Mr. VanGuilder stated they could not get enough part time help for the cemetery he wanted to thank the grounds keeping staff, the select board and the town road crew for helping us maintain the cemetery in the fashion we expect it to be in.

Mr. Heald wanted review what will be a busy construction summer this year. We are working on some repairs on the Red Bridge dam. The first part of April, the Pleasant Street Extension Bridge will get a new deck and the bridge will be closed for about 30 days. Detour will be on Elm Street, Depot Street and Pleasant Street.

There will be extra cautionary signs. The first part of May the state will close the bridge at the intersection of Route 100 North and Route 103 for about 10 days. The State will identify detour routes. The first part of June, Walker Bridge will get done. The State will do the detour routes. There will be no trucks through town. There will be parking restrictions on Pleasant Street, Pleasant Street Ext, Elm Street and Depot Street during the Pleasant Street Ext Bridge construction and then on High Street and Depot Street during the Walker Bridge construction. Later in August or September we will be replacing the culvert at the bottom of Hemenway Hill and will maintain one way traffic on Route 100. There will be no round about at the intersection of Route 100N and 103 but a high likelihood that the signalization project will be constructed this fall. It is a smart system that will balance traffic usage.

Mr. Remy commented that we should help support our police officers. There was a tremendous amount of breakins and robberies. I know the police department has been short handed and as we fund our police department we should consider the safety of our citizens.

Mr. Miele wanted to address ACT 46 and asked do you really want a community where you cannot educate your kids in your backyard anymore.

Mr. Schmidt addressed the audience on ACT 46 stated there will be a meeting on Thursday at 6:00PM at the Elementary School on this subject. There is an ACT 46 committee. We do have to make some direction such as keeping the school open and running a pre K-12 school and get into a district that has a similar set up. There is one that is being formed which includes Proctor, West Rutland, Poultney. We would be in the same district with the same superintendent with one board. The other option is closing Black River and getting involved with Mill River and running PreK-6 in town. The third one is choice. We would have a PreK-6 or 8 and then allow limited choice which allows 3 choices for high school, 2 public schools and one private. We are trying to get some direction from parents. ACT 46 really emphasizes opportunities for kids, cost to tax payers and not having long transportation distances. It is a very emotional and tough decisions have to be made.

Motion to adjourn made by Ms. Gurdak, second Mr. Kolenda. Meeting adjourned at 8:07PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ulla P. Cook, Town Clerk

Moderator Martin Nitka

BCA Chair Jean Strong