

# Town of Woodford Annual Town Meeting Minutes March 3, 2020- Unapproved

*Moderator Dick Frantz opened the meeting at 7:30pm starting with the pledge of allegiance. Dick explained that he is also a member of the Elementary Union school board and that the annual meeting is being held the same time as this one. If a vote is needed he may have to excuse himself to participate in order to make a quorum. Upon hearing no objections Dick introduced Nelson Brownell, State Representative for Woodford and Pownal.*

*Nelson remarked that he would leave business cards with his contact information and an informational flyer for anyone who is interested. He also explained that if anyone is interested in knowing what legislation is being proposed they can go to legislature.vermont.gov. Here you can see any bills that have been submitted and the ability to send him an email with any comments you may have. He continued to explain current bills he is involved with. Discussion followed concerning Act 250 and the changes that were proposed, particularly elevation construction requirements. It was proposed that anyone building over 2000 ft. would need an Act 250 permit. In Woodford that would affect everyone since Woodford is at 2100 ft. so the proposal was changed to 2500 ft. Other bills included climate study, marijuana law, and 2% option tax. Questions were asked and discussed concerning other bills and all were reminded to go to legislature.vermont.gov for more information of any bill they are interested in. Ryan Thurber commented that Nelson must be confident to represent Woodford which is completely different from Pownal. What is good for one could be catastrophic for the other. He emphasized that the Act 250 proposed changes need to be polished and perfected and if not, to please vote no since Woodford would be greatly affected. Nelson responded that they are already aware that he will be voting no if the bill had a negative effect on Woodford.*

*All thanked Nelson for attending the meeting. Dick reminded everyone that only registered voters could vote on articles or anything else that was called to vote. Dick took the opportunity to thank the select board and the town clerk for their hard work and keeping the Town running. He then read the warning as posted:*

THE INHABITANTS OF THE TOWN OF WOODFORD, VERMONT, QUALIFIED TO VOTE IN THE TOWN MEETING, ARE HEREBY WARNED AND NOTIFIED TO MEET AT THE WOODFORD TOWN BUILDING ON MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2020 AT 7:30 PM TO TRANSACT THE BUSINESS SPECIFIED BELOW TO BE DONE FROM THE FLOOR:

FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF SUCH BUSINESS, THE MEETING WILL STAND ADJOURNED TO TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2020 AT THE WOODFORD TOWN BUILDING FROM 7AM TO 7PM FOR ELECTION OF OFFICERS BY BALLOT AND VOTE AS TO WHETHER THEY WISH TO APPROPRIATE \$158,257.44 NECESSARY FOR SUPPORT OF THE TOWN AND \$30,000.00 NECESSARY FOR SUPPORT OF THE HIGHWAY TO BE DONE BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT.

ARTICLE 1: TO HEAR THE REPORTS OF THE AUDITORS.

***Motion** by Chuck Suss, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wayne Tiff to approve. Ryan explained that an outside auditor conducts a financial audit and has found everything to be in line. Municipalities are now responsible for certain things that the State passed laws for and has cost the town budget to increase of up to \$5000 for certain items such as the new solid waste law. Mike Charette, Woodford's representative to the Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance, explained the Universal Recycling Law and other solid waste requirements. There being no further discussion, All in favor, **Motion Carries**.*

ARTICLE 2: TO DETERMINE IF THE TAXES SHALL BE PAID TO THE TREASURER OR A NON DEFINED COLLECTOR OF TAXES.

***Motion** by Chuck Suss to have taxes paid to the Treasurer, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Betty Charette. There being no discussion, All were in favor, **Motion Carries**.*

- ARTICLE 3: SHALL THE TOWN APPROPRIATE \$3000 FOR THE BENNINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION DUES?  
*Motion by Chuck Suss to approve, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Betty Charette. There being no discussion, All were in favor, Motion Carries.*
- ARTICLE 4: SHALL THE TOWN APPROPRIATE \$250 FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE TUTORIAL CENTER?  
*Motion by Chuck Suss to approve, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Betty Charette. There being no discussion, All were in favor, Motion Carries.*
- ARTICLE 5: SHALL THE TOWN APPROPRIATE \$100 FOR THE SUPPORT OF VERMONT RURAL FIRE PROTECTION TASK FORCE?  
*Motion by Chuck Suss to approve, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Betty Charette. There being no discussion, All were in favor, Motion Carries.*
- ARTICLE 6: SHALL THE TOWN APPROPRIATE \$650 FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION AND HOSPICE OF THE SOUTHWEST REGION?  
*Motion by Chuck Suss to approve, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Betty Charette. There being no discussion, All were in favor, Motion Carries.*
- ARTICLE 7: SHALL THE TOWN APPROPRIATE \$300 FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE BENNINGTON-RUTLAND OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL (BROC)?  
*Motion by Chuck Suss to approve, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Betty Charette. There being no discussion, All were in favor, Motion Carries.*
- ARTICLE 8: SHALL THE TOWN APPROPRIATE \$2500 FOR THE SUPPORT OF BENNINGTON FREE LIBRARY?  
*Motion by Chuck Suss to approve, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Betty Charette. There being no discussion, All were in favor, Motion Carries.*
- ARTICLE 9: SHALL THE TOWN APPROPRIATE \$250 FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE VERMONT CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING?  
*Motion by Chuck Suss to approve, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Betty Charette. There being no discussion, All were in favor, Motion Carries.*
- ARTICLE 10: SHALL THE TOWN APPROPRIATE \$300 FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE CENTER FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE (CRJ)?  
*Motion by Chuck Suss to approve, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Betty Charette. There being no discussion, All were in favor, Motion Carries.*
- ARTICLE 11: SHALL THE TOWN APPROPRIATE \$100 FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER?  
*Motion by Chuck Suss to approve, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Betty Charette. There being no discussion, All were in favor, Motion Carries.*
- ARTICLE 12: SHALL THE TOWN APPROPRIATE \$250 FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE SOUTHWESTERN VERMONT COUNCIL ON AGING?  
*Motion by Chuck Suss to approve, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Betty Charette. There being no discussion, All were in favor, Motion Carries.*
- ARTICLE 13: SHALL THE TOWN APPROPRIATE \$100 FOR THE SUPPORT OF AMERICAN RED CROSS?  
*Motion by Chuck Suss to approve, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Betty Charette. There being no discussion, All were in favor, Motion Carries.*

ARTICLE 14: SHALL THE TOWN APPROPRIATE \$100 FOR THE SUPPORT OF PROJECT AGAINST VIOLENT ENCOUNTERS (PAVE)?

Motion by Chuck Suss to approve, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Betty Charette. There being no discussion, All were in favor, Motion Carries.

ARTICLE 15: SHALL THE TOWN SET THE DUE DATE FOR THE COLLECTION OF TAXES AS THE LAST SATURDAY IN SEPTEMBER (THIS YEAR IT WILL BE SEPTEMBER 26, 2020)?

Motion by Chuck Suss to approve, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Betty Charette. There being no discussion, All were in favor, Motion Carries.

ARTICLE 16: SHALL THE TOWN VOTE THE SALARIES FOR THE SELECT BOARD MEMBERS TO BE \$1230 EACH?

Motion by Chuck Suss to approve, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Betty Charette. Chuck thanked the select board for doing the job they do for the amount of money they receive. There being no further discussion, All were in favor, Motion Carries.

ARTICLE 17: SHALL THE VOTERS APPROVE PART TIME SHERIFF DEPARTMENT COVERAGE WITH A SPENDING CAP OF \$11,000 PER YEAR? (NET AMOUNT IS COMPUTED BY: 12 MONTHS PAID TO SHERIFF'S DEPT. LESS 12 MONTHS OF FINES COLLECTED BY THE STATE AND GIVEN TO THE TOWN).

Motion by Chuck Suss to approve, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Betty Charette. There being no discussion, All were in favor, Motion Carries.

ARTICLE 18: TO CONDUCT ANY OTHER BUSINESS FOUND PROPER WHEN MET (NO BINDING ACTION CAN BE TAKEN UNDER OTHER BUSINESS).

*Ryan stated that he had contacted the Town's portfolio advisor concerning how the volatility of the stock market had affected the Town's investment account. She responded that the account has not been affected since it is conservatively invested. Ryan continued to state that the account balance is currently \$450,000 which is \$50,000 less than the \$500,000 goal. Part of this account has been made liquid in order for the town to address capital improvements as needed.*

*Ryan urged property owners to do their due diligence concerning their property values from the reappraisal. Use the orange cards left by the appraisers to review what is being reported to be sure it is correct. The listers are doing the best they can but the appraising is being done by NEMRC.*

*Dick Frantz, being a member of the Southwest Union Elementary School District, explained the school budget. The board is struggling to create a budget that works for all students. Student counts are down, the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) is down and health insurance has been taken over by the State which have all contributed to the increases in the budget. He continued to state that the merger has amounted to a great amount of work in order to make it good for everyone. Woodford still has a reserve fund of \$140,000 that will be used for the Woodford School building. However, we are paying for other towns' situations, as they in turn will pay for Woodford's situation if the need arises.. Ryan noted that Woodford has never borrowed money to run the school but because of the merger, we are now a part of other schools' financial situations. It is a shame that Woodford is now a part of this.*

Motion by Chuck Suss to adjourn, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Betty. There being no further discussion, All were in favor. Motion Carries. Meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm until 7:00 am Tuesday March 3, 2020 for elections by ballot.

Submitted by,  
Susan Wright  
Woodford Town Clerk