

TOWN OF BETHEL ANNUAL MEETING
MARCH 1, 2016

Pursuant to the warning recorded on the previous page, the Annual Town Meeting was held at the Whitcomb High School Gym on March 1, 2016 with 213 checking in. Before the meeting was called to order, pies and coffee were enjoyed by all. The meeting was called to order by Moderator Eric Benson at 10:06 AM. The Pledge of Allegiance was given and the Moderator made a few announcements and went over the rules of procedures.

Our District Representative Sandy Haas was asked to say a few words about what was going on in Montpelier.

Donald Hyde was recognized for this being his 50th Town Meeting.

Art. 1 **Eric Benson** was elect **Moderator** for the ensuing year. Vv un
Nominated by Jim Gray and seconded by Donald Hyde.

Art. 2 **Jean Burnham** was elected **Town Clerk** for the ensuing year. Vv un
Nominated by Jim Gray and seconded by Maureen Burnham.

Art. 3 The auditor's report was accepted as printed . Motion made by Kirk White and seconded by David Eddy. Vv un.

Art. 4 **Jean Burnham** was elected **Town Treasurer** for the ensuing year. Vvun
Nominated by Jim Gray.

Art. 5 A motion was made by Donald Hyde that the rules be suspended and that we pass over this article until after Art. 6 was acted on. This was seconded by Becky Rousseau. Motion passed by a paper ballot. Total votes cast – 177 YES – 139 NO - 33

Art. 6 Voted to elect **two additional Selectboard Members** for terms of two years each, pursuant to 17 VSA 2650(b). Motion made by David Eddy and seconded by Paul Vallee.

Before article was voted, there was much discussion on the pros and cons of having a 5 member board. Some of the pros were being able to talk with another member outside of a meeting without breaking the open meeting law, a wider representation and we can always revert back to 3 if it doesn't work out.

Some of the concerns were finding people to fill the spots, decisions being made outside of a public meeting and getting 5 members to agree.

A motion was then made to call the question, this was passed by a voice vote. Paper ballot used. Total votes cast were 190 YES – 139 NO – 51

Art. 5 **Carl Russell** was elected as **Selectboard Member** for a term of **3 years**. Nominated by David Eddy. Neal Fox as nominated by Jim Gray.

Total votes cast were - 185 Carl Russell -151 Neal Fox – 34

Art. 7 **Chris Jarvis** was elected as **Selectboard Member** for a term of **2 years to expire in 2017**. He was nominated by Laura Rubenis. Other nominations were Neal Fox, nominated by Jim Gray; Paul Vallee nominated by Julie Nelson and Ola O'Dell nominated by Rebecca Stone.

Before article was voted, each nominee was asked to speak.

Total votes cast were – 186 Chris Jarvis – 97 Ola O'Dell – 22 Neal Fox – 37 Paul Vallee – 30

Art. 8 **Vanessa Brown** was elected as **Selectboard Member** for a term of **2 years to expire in 2018**. She was nominated by Carl Russell. Other nominations were Maurice Brigham, nominated by David Eddy; Paul Vallee nominated by Laura Rubenis and Lucien Hinkle nominated by Julie Nelson.

Those nominated were asked to speak before the vote was taken.

Total votes cast were - 183 Brigham - 27 Vallee – 44 Hinkle – 37 Brown – 70

With nobody getting the majority vote of 92, a second vote was taken with Maurice Brigham being eliminated with lowest vote.

Total votes cast were - 173 Brown – 84 Vallee – 53 Hinkle – 36

Again, nobody received the majority vote of 87, so a third vote was taken with Lucian Hinkle being eliminated with the lowest vote.

Total votes cast were: 163 Vanessa Brown – 92 Paul Vallee – 71

Art. 9 **Debra Leahy** was elected **Lister** for a term of **3 years**. Nominated by Louise Ferris-Burt. Clerk was instructed to cast one ballot. Motion was made by Donald Hyde and seconded.

Art. 10 **Laura Rubenis** was elected as **Grand Juror**. Nominated by Kristen Judkins. Vv un.

Art. 11 **Debra Leahy** was elected as **Agent** to prosecute and defend suits in which the Town is interested. Nominated by Jim Gray. Vv un.

Art. 12 **Eric Benson** was elected a **Trustee of Public Funds** under Section 24, VSA for a term of **3 years**. Nominated by Jim Gray. Vv un.

Art. 13 Passed as amended. Voted a sum of \$1,381,743 to defray Highway and General expenses for the 12 month interval commencing July 1, 2016. This was amended from the original recommended amount of \$1,437,743.

Original motion made by David Eddy and seconded by Jim Gray.

Lucian Hinkle spoke on his concerns in the budget increase, especially if the next 5 articles were also passed. He asked that the article be amended from \$1,437,743 to \$1,381,743. This motion was seconded by Julie Nelson.

Several others spoke in favor of the amendment as well as Carl Russell, who felt that the current budget needed to be looked at a little more and that he was in favor of the amendment.

Joanne Wood didn't feel that the increase was unreasonable and felt we should have confidence in the board.

Mary Jeanne Taylor asked what this reduction would do to the tax rate. Felt it would lower it by about 3 cents.

A motion was made by Gene Kraus and seconded that we call the question and vote on the motion to amend the article. Total votes cast were: 153 YES-89 NO-64

There being no further question, David Eddy made a motion to call the question and this was seconded by Jim Gray. The amended article passed by a voice vote.

Art. 14 Voted to **appropriate** the sum of **\$110,000 for paving** to maintain Town Roads. Motion made by Jim Gray and seconded by Chris Hemond. Passed by a voice vote.

Before article was voted Town Manager, Keith Arlund spoke on their plan for future road maintenance. Said they had hired a firm to take inventory of all the town roads, with recommendations which should be worked on first. He stated that it might not be the worst roads first, but to maintain those that are in need of some repairs to keep them in good shape before they need major repairs.

Art. 15 Voted **not to appropriate** the sum of **\$8,000 for additional roadside mowing** . Motion made by David Eddy and seconded by Jim Gray. Defeated by show of hands.

Keith Arlund said this additional money would be used to do a second mowing to help control invasive plants.

Several felt that mowing wouldn't help, that you need to actually pull the plant before it goes to seed.

There were some concerns over the conditions of the roadsides after last year's mowing. Felt the town should not use the same person again.

Art. 16 Voted too **appropriate \$20,000** to the **Recreation Facility Improvement Fund**. Motion made by Brian LaFromboise and seconded by Jim Gray. Passed by a voice vote.

There were some concerns over the building of a skate park at the recreation center. Elinor Griffin spoke in favor of it, saying the recreation committee had done a lot of planning and research into this project, reading several letters from students who requested it be considered.

Art. 17 Voted to **appropriate \$5,000 to repaint the clock tower** at the **Town Hall**. Motion made by Jim Gray and seconded by Kirk White. This passed by a voice vote.

David Kent felt we should look into what is causing the rust before it is painted. David Aldrighetti said it was from the metal shingles, which would be very expensive to replace.

Art. 18 Voted **not to appropriate** the sum of **\$4,400 to repaint the iron fence** on Main St. Motion made by Kirk White and seconded by Jim Gray. Defeated by a paper ballot.

Total Votes cast were: 98 Yes – 44 No – 54

Some voters felt that the portion damaged by an automobile accident would be covered by insurance and that the rest of the fence might be painted by students needing to do their community service project.

Art. 19 **Voted** the sum of **\$19,900** for the support of **Human Service Agencies**. (see Warning) Motion made by David Eddy and seconded by Carroll Ketchum. Passed by a voice vote.

Art. 20 **Voted** to appropriate the sum of **\$121,760** to continue service provided by the **White River Valley Ambulance, Inc.** Motion made by Jim Gray and seconded by Kirk White. Passed by a voice vote.

Art. 21 Voted to collect **Town Taxes and Town School Taxes** in **four equal installments** being due Aug. 15, 2016, Nov. 15, 2016, Feb. 15, 2017 and May 15, 2017. Motion made by Jim Gray and seconded Don Hyde. Passed by a voice vote.

Art. 22 Town Manager, Keith Arlund thanked all the volunteers who have put in many hours on Town of Bethel committees and then introduced our new Constable Mark Belisle and new bookkeeper Ryan Poiroir.

It was suggested that child be provided for pre-schoolers next year.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Town Clerk