

MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 01, 2010 TOWN MEETING

About 100 residents were in attendance. Moderator Joss Besse introduced himself and opened the floor to the state representatives for a few minutes each.

Representative Bill Frank reminded voters of the Doyle Survey and said results would be posted on his web site. He indicated the most asked questions he encountered have to do with VT Yankee and the regarding re-lincensure and the state budget. With the large deficit even if we used last year's budget it would still mean level funding plus deficit. Representative George Till explained that the source of the leak at Vermont Yankee has been found and is a relatively small confined area of soil contamination. The leak appears to not be an on-going issue. He also stated that Vermont is one of the few states that balances the budget. There will be services that have to be cut, but at this point no new taxes have been discussed. Most revenues have been going down. Vermont is further ahead with health cares issues and we will move ahead with something quite substantial. An unclaimed funds list has been left with the town clerk.

The Good Citizen of the Year was awarded to Sherry Mahoney
Select Board member RJ Vallie spoke with regard to retiring member John Devine, thanking him for his many years of service.
Moderator Besse reminded those who were not registered voters to refrain from voting and went over the rules for Town Meeting.

The meeting was called to order and began with the school portion.

SCHOOL PORTION

Article 1: To hear and act on the reports of the school directors. Motioned by Phil Graf and seconded by Ken Remsen. Rich Miller gave a short presentation and indicated that there has been a shift to multi-age classrooms, which was accomplished by lots of flexibility. This helped with the budget. NECAP scores crept up a little. Teachers and administration have been focusing on changing curriculum. Another new thing is development for teachers from other teachers. The proposed budget is a slight decrease from previous year and the Board worked on reducing expenditures but still maintaining quality. Multi-age classrooms saved money. He thanked CESU, Principal Mary Woodruff and Sherry Mahoney for their help. Miller did say that the Smilie tax rate would increase .075 and MMU by 0.8. While the budget went down, the tax rates will increase due to a shift in Title 1 money. Health insurance and teachers salaries are up. Declining enrollment does not help with costs. The Board is very aware that taxpayers cannot afford increase taxes and are striving to keep costs down; there will be no step increase and a salary freeze for next year. The Board will also be looking for larger co-pays for health insurance in next negotiations. A factor in the budget is state funding. With the decline in students state funding also goes down. Some of the pro-active things that the board has done: The Board is preparing to study the idea of school unification and/or consolidation of schools, which doesn't mean closing Smilie but could mean bringing 5th graders back to Smilie. Any major changes will require voter approval.

The Board has been seeking grants to help with school issues. Rich introduced the superintendent and principal and board members.

John Devine: What's the full capacity of Smilie School?

John Alberghini: 125

Mary Woodruff: There are 87 this year with pre-school; with 68 in the K-4 grades.

The question was called. All were in favor, motion passed.

Article 2 **Shall the voters of the town of Bolton authorize the school board under 16 V.S.A. 562 (9) to borrow money by issuance of bonds or notes not in excess of anticipated revenue for the school year.** Motioned by Sharon Murray with a second by Steve Peery. All in favor, motion passed.

Article 3 **Shall the voters approve the payment of \$10 stipend per meeting per board member.** Motion by Steve Peery and seconded by Phil Graf.
Mo McIntyre: Perhaps the teachers should take at this type of level funding. All in favor, motion passed.

Article 4 **To vote a budget of \$1,300,872 to meet the expenses and liabilities of the town school district.** Motioned by Mariellen Woods with a second by Dave Mahoney. All in favor, motion passed.

Article 5 **To transact other school business thought proper when met.** Motion by Paula Gervia with a second by Sharon Murray. Paula Gervia announced she is interested in the open seat on the Bolton school board.

The motion to adjourn was made by Jen Botzjoorns and seconded by Sharon Murray.

The **Town portion** of the meeting began after a short recess.

Chairman John Devine introduced Board members. Moderator Besse went through the first four articles that would be voted by Australian ballot on Tuesday and offered that if all agreed those would be discussed under Article 12. All agreed.

Articles 1, 2, 3 and 4 Australian ballot questions to be voted Tuesday March 02, 2010.

Article 5 **To see if the voters of the Town of Bolton will accept the town report.** Motioned by Margot Pender and second by Ken Remsen. Joss made correction on page 16. All in favor, motion passed.

Article 6 **To vote a budget of 696,450 to meet the expenses and liabilities of the town and to authorize the selectmen to set a tax rate to provide the same.** Motioned by Phil Graff with a second by Lars Botzjoorns. All in favor, motion passed.

Article 7 To see if the town will vote to pay real and personal property taxes to the Town Treasurer in four installments with due dates of September 15, 2010, November 15, 2010, February 15, 2011 and May 15, 2011. Motioned by Mike McIntyre and seconded by Sharon Murray. All were in favor. Motion passed.

Article 8 To see if the town will authorize interest charges on all delinquent taxes of 1% per month. Interest accrues as soon as the payment is late. Motion by Phil Graf and seconded by Linde Emerson. All were in favor. Motion passed.

Article 9 To authorize the Select Board to borrow money for the necessary needs of the town as they arise. Motion by Margot Pender and seconded by Mica Cassara. All were in favor. Motion passed.

Article 10 To establish expenses for Select Board. Motion by Chris Bernadine to pay Select Board members \$10 per member per meeting. Seconded by Mica Cassara. All were in favor. Motion passed.

Article 11 To see if the town will authorize the select board to acquire by gift or purchase, land in collaboration with the town's conservation commission to promote reforestation, water conservation and good forest practices or for open land for animal habitat, recreational uses and to preserve important ecological uses. Motion by Sharon Murray and a second by Lars Botzjorns. All in favor. Motion passed.

Article 12 To transact other business thought proper when met.

(Back to the first 4 Articles for discussion)

Article 2. The ¼ cent for conservation

Sharon Murray addressed the ¼ cent for conservation land. Murray explained that there is a one-page sheet describing the fund. There is a policy now and application for getting funds.

John Westie Is there a piece of land the town is looking at? Anything in the next year?

Murray: Not right now, but it was used previously for Preston Pond. The most recent application was from CRAG for a conservation easement. CC is considering an inventory to discover if there is any land. Funds aren't intended to purchase the land but help leverage a purchase or be used for conservation easements.

Tucker Andrews: What happened with the CRAG land application?

Murray: Crag filled out the application and went before the Select Board and asked for \$7500 but were approved for \$5000. The project they were requesting funding for hasn't been completed yet so they have not drawn on the funds. If the funds aren't used they will go back into the fund.

Steve McLeod Was there a vote last year? Did it pass?

Murray It was defeated last year by about 30 votes.

Mica Cassara: I think a ¼ cent on tax rate is small amount.

Andy Stevens: Does land that's purchased in this way end up coming off the tax rolls?

Murray: If the money is used for a conservation easement, no. And open land doesn't require any services. Some studies show open land actually increases neighboring properties values.

Stevens: If it increases my taxes, it doesn't help me.

Peter Chapman: I think these purchases do have an impact because climbers and hikers may need services like rescue and parking facilities.

Murray: The DRB looked at that when it gave CRAG their sub-division. CRAG assured us there wasn't going to be any organized tours or events. There isn't adequate parking and they will need to come back to the town for additional approval.

Article 3 **Notch Road Re-Construction**

Nick Heintz: Could the Board explain the cost?

John Devine: Our engineer estimated about \$335,000 the board added the extra 50k as a buffer. Whatever is not used will go towards paying down the note.

Tucker Andrews: What will be paid by the gravel pit?

Devine: All the gravel for the job is being donated by the pit and the owners have offered to also take any material from the road that can't be re-used. They will be allowing us to widen the road onto their property. We estimate they will be donating about 30 to 50 K to the project, As far as assessing any money to the pit, we have not done that.

Dave Beckman: My wife and I are the owners of the pit. We are donating the gravel to the road project and we also allow the town to store materials on the property and donated materials when needed for small projects.

Don Whitman: Given the history of runaway trucks would the Board please consider a ramp.

Devine: Since that would involve use of federal land, we know it won't happen.

Andrew Pond: What happens if this issue ends up a "no" vote?

Devine: We'll just maintain as we go. Perhaps try again. The road will not get any better.

Heintz: Will there be another entrance for the pit?

Devine: Farther down the road.

Murray: Is the new design good enough to handle increased truck traffic.?

Devine: The engineer feels it will be good. The water under the road is the main problem.

Amy Ludwin: Any discussion to separating the repairs; into phases?

RJ Vallie: The town held two public meetings and that topic did come up, the engineer feels it's more cost effective to do it all at once rather than have contractors move equipment in and out and then back in and out. A bidding process at this time may work to our advantage.

Cassara: How much will this add to the tax rate

Devine: About 3 cents per hundred dollars of value.

James Cornett: Has there been any discussion on how to get money out of the pit? Making others pay?

Vallie: Fee structures are normally a part of a permitting process and we're not in that type of situation.

Cornett: Fee based wouldn't be allowed?
Vallie: Correct. The Town cannot impose a fee at this time, according to our attorney.
Chapman: Since there is a fudge factor in the dollar amount you're asking for, will there be protection in the bid process so the contractor does pad the bill?
Devine: Yes
Mike Rainville: How much longer before the pit goes dry?
Beckman: Probably not in my lifetime.
Rainville: If the trucks weren't there, there'd still be damage. Widening will be good.
Ken Remsen: At the first meeting the board mentioned that the road would not be closed? Is that still true?
Devine: Probably one lane. When the blasting takes place it may close.
McIntyre: Are there weight limits?
Devine: We allow the truckers 75,000 to get over weight permits to go over the road.
Joanna Pallito: Is the pit permit based on volume or number of trucks? How do we control the number?
Beckman: The pit has been operating since 1960 so it's grandfathered. We have no intent of changing the scope of business.

Article 4 Fire Truck

Ron Lafreniere: What do we now?
Mike Gervia: Pay mileage for members to use their own vehicles. We don't like to turn guys away from training, so right now they drive themselves. This will take members to training all over the state. Last year I had 4000 miles on my personal vehicles. We will also use the truck for traffic control.
Jen Botzjorns: What about leasing? How long will this one last?
Gervia: We replace every 20 years. It's hard to say about this truck, since it'll be used all over the state
John Westie: Mike your truck had 4000 miles last year at 50 cents a mile that'd only be \$2,000. A 40K loan would be \$8400 a year in payments. How could that be better than paying mileage?
Gervia: Over 20 years it'll be cheaper to buy the truck.

There was no other business to be brought before this Board. Duncan Galbraith motioned to end the meeting, seconded by Linde Emerson. The meeting closed at 8:30

Attest:
Deborah LaRiviere
Town Clerk