

Minutes of the 2019 Annual Meeting of the Town of Fairfield, Vermont

The inhabitants of the Town of Fairfield met at Veteran's Hall, Fairfield Center School, on March 5, 2019. Bridget Howrigan Rivet, Moderator, made the announcements. The Robert's Rules of Order were explained. The meeting was called to order at 10:08 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. A moment of silence was held.

1. MODERATOR: Bridget Howrigan Rivet was nominated by Toby Fulwiler and seconded by Joan Burnor. Nominations ceased. The Clerk was asked to cast one ballot for Bridget Howrigan Rivet.
2. TO RECEIVE THE VARIOUS REPORTS OF THE OFFICERS OF THE TOWN AS CONTAINED IN THE CURRENT TOWN ANNUAL REPORT:

Laura Fulwiler introduced herself as chair of the Trustees of the Bent Northrop Memorial Library. She listed the wonderful things the library does for the community and she noted that the hand out indicates what has been done with the money and how libraries serve us. She went on to thank Jennifer Archambault for her years of service as a Trustee. She also congratulated Kristina Bolduc on the birth of her baby that morning. She thanked the Friends of the Library and announced that, with their help, Madeline Kunin will be speaking here on Saturday, March 30th. She thanked everyone for their support.

Sally Collopy spoke to the Community Center announcing the quilt raffle, the tickets for sale for the Sap Run Boogie and the line-up for musicians this summer at the Meeting House on the Green together with other offerings at the Community Center. She thanked the many volunteers at the center and to the new board member, Katie Schwartz.

Alisha Larocque spoke regarding the Planning and Zoning progress on the Development Guidelines review and invited people to give input. She noted the next meeting is April 15 at 7 pm.

3. TO ELECT FROM THE LEGAL VOTERS OF SAID TOWN THE FOLLOWING OFFICERS:
 - a. ONE SELECTPERSON FOR 3 YEARS: Tom Howrigan nominated by Charles Thomas and seconded by Melissa Manson. Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Tom Howrigan.
 - b. ONE SELECTPERSON FOR 2 YEARS: Charles Thomas nominated by Gavin Ryan and seconded by Damian Boomhower. Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Charles Thomas.

- c. ONE AUDITOR FOR 3 YEARS: Judy Magnan nominated by Mary Schreindorfer and seconded by Charles Thomas. Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Judy Magnan.
- d. ONE LISTER FOR 3 YEARS: Alisha Larocque nominated by Melissa Manson and seconded by Damian Boomhower. Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Alisha Larocque.
- e. ONE LIBRARY TRUSTEE FOR 3 YEARS: Samantha Thomas nominated by Kylie Ashton and seconded by Charlie Thomas. Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Samantha Thomas.
- f. ONE LIBRARY TRUSTEE FOR 2 YEARS: Peter Burns nominated by Laura Fulwiler and seconded by Laura Bellstrom. Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Peter Burns.
- g. ONE LIBRARY TRUSTEE FOR THE REMAINING BALANCE OF A 2 YEAR TERM (1 YEAR): Debra Hastings nominated by Joanna Jerose and seconded by Lorne Babb.

Kristina Bolduc nominated by Laura Fulwiler and seconded by Laura Bellstrom.

Debra Hastings requested to withdraw her nomination.

Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Kristina Bolduc.

- h. A FIRST CONSTABLE FOR 1 YEAR: Linda Hodet nominated by Gene Archambault and seconded by Charles Thomas. Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Linda Hodet.
 - i. ONE OR MORE GRAND JURORS FOR 1 YEAR: Charles Thomas nominated by Gavin Ryan and seconded by Norman Menard. Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Charles Thomas.
 - j. A TOWN AGENT FOR 1 YEAR: Vanessa Kittell nominated by Jane Williams and seconded by Joanna Jerose. Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Vanessa Kittell.
4. SHALL PROPERTY TAXES BE DUE AND PAYABLE ON THE FIRST FRIDAY IN THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER? Motion made by Toby Fulwiler and seconded by John Gorton. Motion passed by voice vote.
 5. SHALL THE LEGAL VOTERS OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD APPROVE 2019 TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES OF \$1,427,107, OF WHICH \$948,967 SHALL BE RAISED BY TAXES AND \$478,140 BY NON-TAX REVENUES?: Motion made by Daniel McCoy and seconded by Damian Boomhower.

Jane Williams asked about the budget. Gavin Ryan explained that the decrease in the budget is largely due to the library budget that was moved out into a separate article.

He explained this year's projects including the Sand Shed which started out with a grant but after design and engineering the bids to construct ranged from \$720,000 to \$1.1 million. The Board declined all of the bids and constructed it with road crew and volunteer help for \$395,000. He praised the road crew for their good work. The project was a better one for it and provided sheds along the backside for storage and the regrading of Gilbert Hill Rd. The town also repaired a large culvert in St. Rocks on North Rd. that was failing. Next year the projects include a replacement of a large culvert on South Rd. which the town has already received state funding for. The town also needs to look at funding gravel for the roads in the future.

David Gaudette noted that large rocks are being popped up during grading and asked how the town was going to handle it. Gavin responded that we do need gravel to cover the road bed and that would help. In the meantime, the road crew will have to make sure they pick those up behind them.

Motion passed by voice vote.

6. SHALL THE LEGAL VOTERS OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD APPROVE \$144,561 FOR THE BENT NORTHROP MEMORIAL LIBRARY, \$108,271 OF WHICH SHALL BE RAISED BY TAXES AND \$36,290 BY NON-TAX REVENUES: Motion made by Jessica Gaudette and seconded by Charon True. Charon True spoke to how much she cherishes the library and what a wonderful place it is. They always have new books and rarely has to wait. Toby Fulwiler said he seconded everything Charon said. Julie Wolcott asked why it was separate and not part of the town budget and what happens if this article is defeated?

Charlie Thomas spoke for the Select Board and responded that it was a suggestion that it be included in the town's budget automatically, but this year the Trustees and the Board were not able to come to an agreement. The library had the right to bring it to the town as a separate article.

It was asked whether it will go back to the budget and Charlie said it will have the same process next year. Laura Fulwiler discussed the 2017 Town Meeting minutes and the process discussed in relation to the town said that Vermont Statute states that the municipality must support and cover the library's budget. She said the budget is a 2.1% increase. The budget increase this year was due to a lack of surplus from the year before and employee pay and associated benefits. They feel it is important to keep good employees. There was also an increased expense of \$2,500 for the grant writer which was for the benefit of the community. The motion made at the prior meeting to put the library budget directly in the town budget was a recommendation not a requirement. The library went through the process of shaving expenses at the Selectboard's request and shaved things they didn't want to but they did. She stated it

was the Selectboard's prerogative to not include in their budget she didn't feel like there was unanimous support from the Selectboard but does from the community and patrons of the library.

Charlie responded that the Board's responsibility is to look at every expense in every department and keep them as low as possible for taxpayers. The Board supports the library but wanted the library to stay at a budget of \$100,000 and they wanted \$108,000. They did research and the Georgia library has a higher tax base, higher population of 4,900 and a \$122,000 budget. The Town budget increased only 2.8% and they asked them to stay within a similar increase.

Jessica Gaudette asked how the Library wants the budget to be voted on in the future, that she is a pro library vote but it is risky that this is put in front of the voters rather than directly in the budget.

Charlie responded that this came down to the \$8000 and they had the option of taking the difference out of their \$1.5 million endowment but chose to go to the voters instead. The Select Board has a responsibility to keep budgets in check to be fair to taxpayers. The library budget was only \$79,000 two years ago. When he asked what they were doing with the endowment there was no plan at the time.

Jessica Gaudette asked how the library wants this to go and Peter Burns responded that it would be easier for the Trustees to bring it to the Select Board but if they can't come to an agreement then they will not hesitate to bring it to the voters.

Melissa Manson asked why they couldn't take the \$8,000 from the endowment?

Laura replied that there is a tremendous amount of misunderstanding and misinformation about the endowment which was given to establish a library. In 2017 they learned that the town was responsible for the library's budget and they don't have the prerogative to just take money out of the endowment. Before 2017 they did draw out of the endowment for operating expenses but if they continued it would be depleted and it would become a municipal liability when the money ran out. The conversation has begun as to what the plans will be for the endowment and what is justified. They have a fiduciary responsibility to keep the endowment going so the library stays an asset rather than a liability. For now, the \$32,500 mortgage payment is taken out.

Charlie said that the stating of the will for the endowment says for the maintenance and benefit of the library and the \$8,000 the Select Board was against, is for the benefit of library. John Schreindorfer asked that in comparing with the Georgia library was the fact that their building was paid for taken into account? Gavin responded yes, this was a comparison of operating expenses only. The question was called. The motion passed by voice vote.

7. SHALL THE LEGAL VOTERS OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD APPROVE \$92,225 FOR SUPPORT OF THE FAIRFIELD VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT, SAID APPROPRIATION TO BE PAID UPON CONDITION THAT THE FAIRFIELD VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT SUBMIT TO THE TOWN, BY NOVEMBER 1, 2019, A COPY OF ITS MOST RECENT BALANCE SHEET AND BANK STATEMENT FOR REVIEW BY THE TOWN AUDITORS: Motion made by John Schreindorfer and seconded by Gene Archambault. Damian Boomhower spoke and said that they were able to keep the budget the same as last year. The budget on Page 90 should show a \$92,225 total rather than \$90,225. The \$2000 should have been moved from utilities to repairs. There are currently 18 members.

Alisha Larocque asked Damian if the firefighters felt like they were prepared well for renewable energy fires, such as solar panels and fields. Damian responded that some had received training and he it did not require special equipment, only knowing where to turn the power off at the house.

It was requested that the Fire Department submit their call report for the Town Report as they have in the past. He noted that on average they have 38-40 calls per year. Joan Burnor stated how lucky we are as a town to have our own volunteer fire department and that they deserve praise. Motion passed by voice vote.

8. TO SEE IF THE VOTERS WILL APPROVE A DONATION OF \$15,000 FOR THE FAIRFIELD COMMUNITY CENTER ASSOCIATION: Motion made by John Gorton and seconded by Dave Gaudette.

Jane Williams asked if there was a way to have the request in the Warning without having a petition signed each year. Amanda Forbes responded that the Selectboard's policy is that all outside requests for funding have a petition. However, it can always be requested to add it in their Warning without one and she recommended the Community Center approach the Selectboard before they draft next year's Warning and have that conversation then. Motion passed by voice vote.

9. TO SEE IF THE VOTERS WILL APPROVE A DONATION OF \$3,971 FOR THE FRANKLIN COUNTY HOME HEALTH AGENCY, INC.: Motion made by Damian Boomhower and seconded by Dan McCoy. Motion passed by voice vote.
10. TO SEE IF THE VOTERS WILL APPROVE A DONATION OF \$2,500 FOR THE OUTDOOR CLASSROOM: Motion made by John Baxter and seconded by Charles Thomas. Joan Burnor asked what the Outdoor Classroom is? Jaime Tibbets, Outdoor Classroom Coordinator, explained that the Outdoor Classroom teaches the rich history of the community, maple sugaring and gardening. This request funds supplies, seeds and high tunnel maintenance. There is a link to the blog in the Outdoor Classroom report. Motion passed by voice vote.

11. TO SEE IF THE VOTERS WILL APPROVE A DONATION OF \$1,000 FOR THE FRANKLIN COUNTY ANIMAL RESCUE: Motion made by Laura Fulwiler and seconded by Deb Hastings. Motion passed by voice vote.
12. TO TRANSACT ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY PROPERLY COME BEFORE THIS MEETING:

John Schreindorfer wondered about the Chester Arthur Light operation. Amanda explained that we are waiting for a part so that it will signal correctly.

Joan Burnor asked what the light was? Amanda explained location of Chester Arthur Rd. and North Rd. and how the signaling was incorrect. We are waiting for a part to correct and we are working with the state on that project.

Pat Malone introduced a group of Political Science students from UVM.

Alisha Larocque, Zoning Administrator, announced there was an opening for an Animal Control Officer.

Gavin Ryan thanked all for their help in building the sand shed.

Jane Williams expressed her wish to talk about the school at Town Meeting. The Moderator explained that should the voters wish to suspend the rules they could allow Sean O'Dell, Principal to speak. Jessica Gaudette made the motion and Matt Hughes seconded the motion to suspend the rules. Motion passed by voice vote.

Sean discussed the Maple Run informational meeting. He explained the BFA bond and the projects being planned at Fairfield. Project 1 includes paving the dirt parking lot and adding a sidewalk for students to get to the library. The second part of the proposal is an addition so that music and art can be moved up from the Common School. He noted that the Common School has had some issues lately that have cost some money including mold remediation and a new furnace in which he thanked the Selectboard for their help with. He also discussed the bond vote for BFA safety and building improvements.

In response to Jane Williams request to discuss this as part of Town Meeting Day, Sean explained that the District has an informational meeting prior to Town Meeting for information on the questions on the ballot. It is always the Wednesday before Town Meeting.

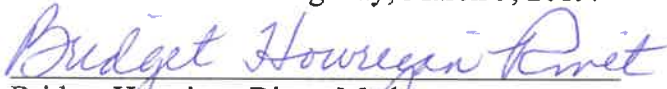
Charlie Thomas reported that there is now an active recreation committee with 5 members. He hopes to move the rec. committee into the Common School when the school vacates. There is also the hope that the historical society move there as well. They had a holiday party and had over 150 people show up. They are planning many things including a Run for Chet 5k around Chester Arthur's Birthday in October. They are also planning on redoing the ball fields, adding fencing and bleachers.

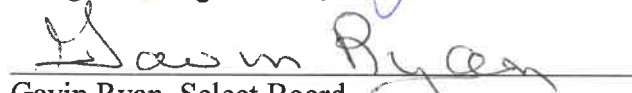
13. TO ADJOURN. A motion to adjourn was made by John Gorton and seconded by David Gaudette at 11:42 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda L. Forbes, Clerk

To the best of my recollection, I attest that these minutes are a true and accurate reflection of the events of Town Meeting Day, March 5, 2019.


Bridget Howrigan Rivet, Moderator


Gavin Ryan, Select Board