

**Dover Select Board
Meeting Minutes
Dover Town Office
Tuesday, January 22, 2019**

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL THEY HAVE BEEN APPROVED BY THE DOVER SELECT BOARD

Select Board members present: Josh Cohen, Victoria Capitani, Dan Baliotti, Sarah Shippee, Joe Mahon
Also present: Administrator, Jeannette Eckert

Public: Bob Holland, Paul Fisher, Randy Johnson, Lauren Harkawik, Marco Tallini, Andy McLean, Jim & Judy McDevitt, Laurie Newton, Steve Neratko, Janice Stuart

Regular Meeting Called to Order at 6:30pm by Josh Cohen

I. Public Comments:

Tabi Freedman, although she could not be present, provided a written update on the high-speed internet/server connection. Installation of high-speed Fiber Internet access to the Town Office is complete. We now have connectivity of 50mb download speed and 30mb upload speed, provided by Duncan Telecommunications. The new file server has been physically installed and tested by Arcomm.

II. New Business:

A. Review/Approve Town Meeting Warning

Linda Sherman had contacted Vicki this afternoon regarding an article matching the state fund of \$30,000 for the re-appraisal fund; it had been discussed during budget meetings, but an article does not appear on the warning; wording has not been formalized; Linda decided to wait and reconsider for next year

a. Consider Amendment to Article 14 (Andy McLean)

Please see attachments for complete wording of the article warning, amendment and State Statute 24 VSA 2741

Article 14: Tax stabilization for commercial properties affecting the municipal side not the school tax side

- Article 14 will appear on the warning as it was written on the petition
- Suggested amendment to the article was composed by Andy McLean which mirrors the state statute more closely; key differences are the words Select board “negotiate contracts”, not enter into contracts; “voters will ratify any contracts the SB negotiates”
- Statute allows the SB power to negotiate contracts and have them ratified by the people; The Select board has a wide berth regarding contracts; Andy had concerns as Town Clerk: potential for conflict of interest—Mt Snow is a major employer in the valley-- and the other concern is fairness in equity—to be fair to the rest of the tax payers who are coming up with tax payments, sometimes in difficult circumstances; providing this tax relief to one person and not others should be up to the voters; amendment will provide checks and balances that are not found in the article as it has been petitioned

Joe: In agreement with amendment; when we have an opportunity to negotiate, how long will it take? If there is a project that is economically good for the town, will people go somewhere else if it takes too long? We don't always get a turnout of voters; could it go before a Board?

Andy: Ratification by the people does take more time; contracts could last for 10 years; Mt Snow who put the petition forward is not going anywhere; these may be properties that nobody wants; an informational meeting would have to be warned no more than 10 days ahead of the town

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meeting; 30-day notice for the special town meeting; have not researched how other towns handle this

Vicki: Wilmington has a whole set of guidelines/criteria which are guidelines and don't necessarily need to be followed by the Board; Feel the amendment has a much better chance of being voted on in the affirmative at Town Meeting

Joe: If someone bought a derelict building and tears it down to rebuild new, does the amendment wording apply to that? Could be the difference between a big company doing it in Dover or going to Killington or Stratton instead

Josh: Do not believe the Statute precludes someone from doing that

Andy: Applies to town tax rate; if enacted, granting someone tax relief our budget stays the same; everyone else's taxes will need to be higher than they would have been if property was valued at 100%; are we hitting some folks who can't pay that? Spoke with VT Dept. of Taxes regarding Homestead filing—this applies to education rate not town rate except for folks who make less than \$50,000 total household income; so, they would be protected at least by some degree. In order for people to give SB this power, people will need to vote on this by a 2/3 majority, not 50%

Sarah: When doing tax stabilization, starting point is the value at time of purchase, whatever it's worth today; say if I buy the Silo.... if taxes are stabilized and it rises more gradually than the value, I'm not taking a hit just not getting as much of a benefit?

Andy: Scenario doesn't hold water with me. When talking about ten years out, grand list grows when we build stuff, cost of services grows at the same time, but tax rate stays pretty stable. If you artificially depress the grand list, cost of services is not going to be depressed, it's going to keep growing. Money that would lessen everybody else's tax bill has to be made up by somebody & that is us.

Vicki: Scenario is better than having the Silo or another property decline in value

Andy: Think this is a great idea. No problem with the article; concern lies with the folks who elect me and how they feel about creating an inequitable tax situation. Mt Snow has done a fantastic job bringing economic development to this town and if we can enable them to continue, I'm all for it.

Steve Neratko provided some examples of other Town's tax stabilization policies; Wide range of stipulations/eligibilities in place to be able to utilize the policies (Bennington, Wilmington, Essex Junction) All are rarely used because of these stipulations; looking at less than \$1000 benefit their first year, many do not take advantage of it. Asking voters to vote on something that we don't really have an idea of yet; a lot of things to think about

Additional Board comments:

- Should we insert a copy of the amendment so the voters can review it? It is the SB's job to be able to explain it
- Is it going to look like an endorsement from the SB by inserting it in the Town report?
- Articles submitted by petition must be placed in the warning as written
- Amendment was presented to the SB and without bias or prejudice we present to the voters

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- Reading it ahead of time gives voters opportunity to bring questions/concerns to Town meeting
- Place the amendment as a separate leaflet along with Town report?

Marco Tallini: Is it going to set a precedent for other possible amendments?

Andy: Think you should address it at Town Meeting by standing up and introducing an amendment to the Article

Josh: We are not yet at Town Meeting and already discussing changing something that was petitioned. But have not heard the petitioner say, "I like the amendment better" Are we side stepping the petitioner without being in the proper venue? Do we want to endorse this as a Board?

Andy: You can do whatever you need to do as elected officials

Laurie Newton: Spearheaded the article but is only a part of a group that is putting this petition forward, not just Mt Snow. Brought to ED group for discussion. Don't feel comfortable speaking for people who signed it or the ED group

Vicki: Signing a petition brings it to a conversation; if the Board wants to support the amendment, a handout is fine, not a restrictive thing

Randy Johnson: As someone who signed the petition without really understanding it, the more information on it, the better

Jim McDevitt: believes it is setting a precedent for a litany of other amendments that anyone could bring forward

Vicki: School board is always giving out handouts at Town meeting

Josh: Concern is not the handout but whether to give it out before Town Meeting so people can come and be prepared; do we want it ready before Pre-Town? Fine with it being ready at Pre-Town

Andy: The difference between you folks providing information in whatever way you want & any voter providing information is that you are the Select board. You are elected and if you feel the voters need to hear it, then you should make it available. I'd be happy to check with VLCT on the legal aspects

Marco: Glad to see you are taking this seriously; appreciate the approach you are taking; more information the better

On a motion by Victoria Capitani, seconded by Sarah Shippee, the Board unanimously agreed to sign the Town of Dover annual meeting warning as presented

III. Police: Randy Johnson

A. Consider Sign-On Bonus Contract

- Randy provided two examples; one from Wilmington and one from South Burlington
- There are other depts that do this but did not respond to Randy's email
- Three applicants, none are full time certified in the academy; two are local
- Not sure that a sign-on contract is legally binding because of the type of job

Board comments:

- Dover-ize it, send it to VLCT and then to our local Town Attorney
- Specify the payout over two or three years; get some value out of the \$5000
 - Prefer 30% at 90 days & one year; 40% at 2 years
 - Get recommendation from VLCT for payout timing
- Goal is to keep them here, not just get them here

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IV. Liquor Control:

On a motion by Victoria Capitani, seconded by Sarah Shippee, the Board recessed and convened as local Liquor Control

On a motion by Victoria Capitani, seconded by Sarah Shippee, the Board unanimously approved the following:

A. Second Class License for Guest Convenience Stores, Inc d/b/a 7-11

On a motion by Victoria Capitani, seconded by Sarah Shippee, the Board adjourned as local Liquor Control and reconvened as Dover Select board

V. Consent Agenda:

A. Approve Minutes of January 8, 2019

Vicki pointed out an error in the time stated for the Bi-Town Housing Committee meeting; should read 3:30pm, not 3:00pm

On a motion by Victoria Capitani, seconded by Josh Cohen, the Board voted 3-0-2 to approve the minutes of January 8, 2019 as corrected (Shippee & Mahon abstained)

B. Approve Warrants of January 12, 2019 for \$131,106.25

On a motion by Victoria Capitani, seconded by Sarah Shippee, the Board voted 4-0-1 to approve warrants (Mahon abstained)

VI. FYI:

A. Town Meeting Tune-Up, February 7 in Montpelier, 8:30am to 3:15pm

B. RVUSD Annual Meeting, Feb 12 at 7pm, Wardsboro Town Hall

C. Local Government Day, February 14 in Montpelier

D. Pre-Town Meeting, Tuesday, February 26 at **6pm**

E. Town Meeting, Tuesday, March 5 at 10am

F. SB Organizational Meeting, Wed, March 6 at 6:30pm

VII. Liaison Reports:

- Steve Neratko informed the Board that 9 responses were rec'd for Trails and Recreation RFP; will open & review at next Tues ED meeting at 6:30pm
- Joe Mahon thanked the Fire Dept for the hard work done over this past weekend
- Rich Werner invited the public to help with clean up at the fire house
- Sarah Shippee expressed kudos as well to the Road Crew for their work over the weekend

VIII. Executive Session for Personnel (Bob Holland)

On a motion by Victoria Capitani, seconded by Sarah Shippee, the Board unanimously agreed to move into Executive Session for Personnel at 7:46pm

Present: All five board members, Bob Holland

On a motion by Sarah Shippee, seconded by Victoria Capitani, the Board unanimously agreed to move out of Executive Session for Personnel at 8:00pm

Decision: None. Discussed personnel issues with Bob Holland, he will keep the Board posted

IX. Adjournment at 8:02pm

Respectfully submitted by Jeannette Eckert

Public notices of these minutes have been posted at the following locations:
Dover Town Clerk's Bulletin Board, Dover Town Meeting Bulletin Board, Dover School
Dover Free Library, East Dover Post Office, Town of Dover Website: www.doververmont.com