

**Dover Select Board
Pre-Town Meeting Minutes
February 25, 2020
6pm**

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

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

Public: Lauren Harkawik, Randy Johnson, Bob Holland, Steve Neratko, Rich Werner, Shannon & Sadie Wheeler, Mike Garber, Marc Schaubert, Paul Fisher, Andy McLean, One and Jorja Smith, Adam Levine, John Flores, Chris Kelly, Charles LaFiura, Marlaine McLean, Regina & Rich Werner, Tabi Freedman, Marco Tallini, Linda & David Sherman, Randy Capitani, Maggie Lewis

Called to Order at 6pm by Town Moderator Rich Werner

I. Review Town Meeting Warning

ARTICLE 1: To choose all Dover town officers and Unified School District officers for the following positions required by law to be elected at the annual meeting:

Auditor	3-year term
Auditor	3-year term (1 year remaining)
First Constable	1-year term
Grand Juror	1-year term
Library Trustee	5-year term
Library Trustee	5-year term (1 year remaining)
Moderator - Town	1-year term
Select Board Member	3-year term
Select Board Member	2-year term
Town Agent	1-year term
Trustee of Public Funds	1-year term
Unified School Director	3-year term

All of the above offices are open positions to be voted on at Town Meeting, March 3

Moderator Rich Werner gave a brief description of the town meeting process. Please review pages 4-5 of the Town Report for a guide sheet on the rules. All questions should be directed to the moderator who will repeat the question and the answer as needed.

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TOWN MEETING

ARTICLE 2: Shall the voters accept the annual report of the auditors and other town officers?

- No comments

ARTICLE 3: Shall the voters compensate town officers as follows: Town Treasurer \$5,000 annual stipend, Select Board Chairman \$2,500 annual stipend, Select Board members \$2,000 annual stipend, and Town Auditors \$18.48/hr., all others – chairmen Vermont minimum wage plus \$1.50/hr., members Vermont minimum wage, and mileage based on the Federal reimbursement rate for the month in which the mileage occurred?

- No comments

ARTICLE 4: Shall the voters compensate the Town Clerk with an annual salary of \$64,403.43?

- Andy McLean offered his comments on this article which the Select board placed on the warning on his behalf. He has been the Town Clerk for 12 years as an elected official. This is the first time he has requested a merit increase outside of the annual cost of living increase which town employees receive. This year the State increased the recording fees from \$10 to \$15 per page. This increase in revenue would more than pay for the raise. He gives above and beyond the level of service needed in the Town Clerk's office. In relation to other employee's wages, there are 10 who take home more compensation than Andy. With the increase, there will be 7 who take home more compensation. The increase places him in a comparable level with town clerk's in Stratton, Stowe, Norwich, Middlebury which are similar in nature. His institutional wealth of knowledge helps all town departments.

Public Comments:

Charles LaFiura inquired as to what Andy's current salary is: **\$55,731**; is there also retirement pension? **Yes, VMERS is the retirement program.** In a typical week, how many hours do you work? **40 hours per week. There is a job description available that lists with all town clerk job duties**

Adam Levine: Health insurance is fully funded? **Yes, 100% which is a great benefit**

One Smith: What, if anything, has expanded in your job responsibilities? And how do you balance that workload? Are there annual merit raises for employees?

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- When Andy came on as Town Clerk, there were less than 1000 voters, now have 1300. Real estate recording has gotten busier. Have taken on other extra projects including expanding trails networks on public land; currently on the map with the National Forest service; Takes focus, persistence & consistency to get these projects permitted for the Town, rather than in hours of time.

Marco Tallini: Andy spends a lot of time training new Zoning Administrators

Tabi Freedman: I would not be able to do my job without Andy's knowledge and assistance as a former ZA prior to being Town Clerk. Immensely thankful.

Chris Kelly: We can't pay you enough for just knowing my dog's name

One Smith: Are there annual merit raises for employees? ***There are not. When people move up and take on more responsibility, they are usually compensated for that. The voters determine Andy's salary as an elected official***

ARTICLE 5:

Shall the voters authorize general fund expenditure for operational expenses of \$2,105,244.12 for the coming year?

- The operational budget is reflected on pages 25-32. It would appear that we are proposing 10% less overall but the articles that are voted on separately do not appear in the budget total such as The Gathering Place, SeVEDS, Library, DVR, SASH. The Library, for example, is broken out individually as we wanted to have a conversation about its programs. Memorial Hall Center for the Arts is not requesting any funds this year.
- Anyone who is not a Dover voter, such as Maggie Lewis of the Gathering Place or John Flores of the Library, will be allowed to speak if the assembly of voters agrees. The Town has never said no to this.

ARTICLE 6:

Shall the voters authorize highway fund expenditure for operational expenses of \$1,532,000.18 for the coming year?

- No comments

ARTICLE 7:

Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$650,000.00 for the Capital Paving Fund?

- See page 36 of the Town Report which indicates the schedule of paving
- Funds are left over from last year to finish the paving that was scheduled & not completed
- Same amount as requested for the last several years

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ARTICLE 8: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$300,000.00 for the Capital Equipment Fund?

- This amount is \$50,000 more than in year's past
- For equipment that is needed to purchase and plan for
- Trade in amounts are listed and factored into the budget
- Equipment is moved in and out as the need arises; some can be moved to the following year
- In 5 years, a potential exists to be short
- Voting is for this year, and it is the best-case scenario; may have to raise it but capital budget is also a best guess estimate
- Fire Dept especially has bumped everything out as the vehicles don't get the mileage or daily use; still have the 1984 Mack
- But they are getting older and in need of more repair work; Ladder truck was rebuilt after Irene & is still in really good shape
- Capital Reserve funds are also available in an emergency

ARTICLE 9: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$80,000.00 for the Capital Building Improvement Fund?

- Same amount as last year
- Most of the allocation is for the steeple and handicap access for the Town Hall
- Does that include lighting in the parking lot, and will it transfer to the library parking area as well? **Most likely will include lighting**
- Also just informed of the likelihood of drilling a brand new well that serves this building, Library and Daycare. That could be \$30,000 which can't wait

ARTICLE 10: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$236,198.00 for The Dover Free Library?

John Flores, Director and Chris Kelly, Trustee, represent the Library

- \$240,550 is the actual amount budgeted; this will have to be amended from the floor on Town Meeting day (see pages 68-71 of Town Report)
- Dover Free Library is one of the greatest libraries in the State of Vermont
- Difference in appropriation amount is due to new employee who is eligible for health benefits and retirement benefits. She will be working 33 hours per week; benefits are provided on a pro-rated basis
 - Previous employee had insurance from the military
 - Surplus from last year was added to this year's budget
- Most of the budget is based on salary for three employees

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- How many patrons? Online internet access users? **John will get those numbers for Town Meeting**
- How many hours is the Library open? **32 hours per week**
- Dover provides children's programs, computers, digital access, pays for own publicity, etc.
- Informational flyers will be available; surveys are available as well
- Cleaning expense went up dramatically
 - **John used to do the cleaning but will be hiring an outside cleaner; John has also taken on the accounting duties**
- Library is partnering with WRC to provide snowshoes for free
- Fundraising efforts are listed at the top of the budget, approximately \$5000
- Electric, heat and building maintenance are covered by the Town? **Those numbers are broken out in the operational budget on pages 27-28 under Brick Building**

ARTICLE 11: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$20,000.00 for Deerfield Valley Rescue Inc.?

- Same amount as last year, to be voted on by the town
- A rep will be present at Town Meeting
- Report is found on page 95

ARTICLE 12: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$20,000.00 for Support and Services at Home (SASH)?

- Becky Arbella plans to be present to speak to this article
- Asking \$5,000 more than last year
- Becky goes above and beyond to serve community members regardless of whether they are part of SASH panels
- Find a write up on services in the Town Report on page 104

ARTICLE 13: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$10,000.00 for The Gathering Place?

Maggie Lewis, Executive Director

- Two years ago, a site was opened in Dover; Report is found on page 103
- Previously asked for \$500 in appropriations; asking for an increase to support sustainability of services
- Services are available to ages 18 and up for those with disabilities, chronic illness, socialization needs, exercise, wound care, to name just a few
- Served over 109 families; 25 in the Deerfield Valley; 8 from the Town of Dover, nearly 4000 hours of services to residents including planned activities, lunches and snacks, exercise

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- Three full time employees and three part time employees, also per diem staff that can provide home care in the region
- Reimbursed \$16.72 from Medicaid but our cost is \$20.00/hour; grants and fundraising takes place but there is an almost \$13,000 gap
- Asking for increase in support to a level of \$10,000
- Asking from other Deerfield Valley towns: Wilmington gave \$50,000 over a two-year period; goes back to 3,000 annually; asking other towns for funds based on a percentage of those served
- Majority of funds (75%) come from Medicaid; others pay privately at \$17/hour; Medicare does not pay for adult day care; applies to both locations, Dover and Brattleboro; funding resources include fundraising & grants as well for those who cannot afford it; funding also affords the families respite care and ability to maintain their work schedules; lots of success stories from families in Dover that have been helped
- Informational flyers will be available Town Meeting day

ARTICLE 14: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$3,372.00 for Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies (SeVEDS) activities?

- A rep from SeVEDS will be present at Town Meeting
- Board member Randy Capitani provided an update
 - Laura Sibia, Ashley Havreluk also represent Dover on the Board
 - Offers technical assistance for business growth; loans for business development
 - Pipelines and Pathways programs at area schools
 - Paid Internships--a real asset to area businesses
- Request amount is based on population (\$3.00 per person based on 1124 population)

ARTICLE 15: Shall the voters authorize the Selectmen to apply any surplus from the current fiscal year to reduce taxes in the next fiscal year?

- No comments

ARTICLE 16: Shall the voters authorize the Selectmen to sell properties, which the Town has acquired by gift or through tax sales?

- Standard article every year
- Used to be pages of delinquent taxpayers
- Commend Marylou and Marco for their work on this; only three delinquencies as of January

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ARTICLE 17: Shall the voters authorize the Selectmen to set the tax rate sufficient to cover the approved expenses of the Town of Dover and the Town of Dover Highway for taxes due on September 15, 2020 and February 15, 2021?

- Standard article
- First payment date changed to Sept 15th last year and it has worked well

ARTICLE 18: Shall the voters authorize the Selectmen to borrow money in anticipation of taxes?

- Reserve funds have been set aside historically

ARTICLE 19: To discuss any items that the voters would like to discuss, and to conduct any other business that may legally come before the voters.

Vicki Capitani:

- Cemetery space is lacking in Dover; will need to be seriously addressed; most cemeteries are not solvent, lacking money
- East Dover is full, some space in W. Dover, some in Dover Center
- Potential to use tax sale property for cemetery space...it's possible
- Need to expand the charters and plan for this in future
- No monies are expended on the Town level for cemeteries
- How much space would be needed? Unknown at this time
- A lot of Towns have cemetery commissions; Dover does not; there are associations for the various cemeteries but not as a whole
- Fascinating places to explore; historical aspects to them

Linda Sherman asked about the ability for folks to hear and be heard clearly at Town Meeting. Questions/comments will be repeated. Won't move on until everyone understands and hears properly. There is a new audio system that may be tried out on Town Meeting day.

Rich Werner: Come back in a week at 10am. There are three clues in the Town Report. Win prizes for correct answers to the questions.

ARTICLE 20: Adjourned at 7:30pm.

II. Approve Warrants of Feb 22, 2020 for \$131,739.74—defer motion to approve to March 4

III. Adjournment at 7:40pm

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