

Town of Royalton
Royalton Selectboard Public Hearing
February 24, 2015 7:00pm
Royalton Academy Building

Royalton Selectboard: Larry Trottier, Phil Gates, Joan Goldstein, Peggy Ainsworth

Regrets: Sandy Conrad

Public Present: Tim Dreisbach, Jo Levasseur, Alison Gravel, Chris Mabey, Kim Hebard, Norm Hebard, Joshua “Bushrod” Powers, Gidget Lyman, Jordan Carpenter, Michael Hershberg, Christine Hudson, Ernie Amsden, Laurie Smith, David and Peggy Ainsworth, Mark Wood, Emily Parker, Tim Parker, Myron Vesper, Pam Levasseur, Stuart Levasseur, Peter Chap, Kate Caldwell, Ron Cavanaugh, Delbert Thurston, Paul Whitney, Mary Whitney

Town Staff: Administration and Finance Manager Rose Hemond, Town Treasurer LuAnn Bingham, Town Clerk Karmen Bascom, Delinquent Tax Collector Theresa Harrington, Chief Bob Hull

Selectboard Chairman Larry Trottier opened the Informational Hearing at 7:03 pm

Larry Trottier spoke about the importance of changing the Town Treasurer from an elected to a hired position. Larry explained how it would be better for the town to have someone with the right experience to do the job.

Some of the questions and comments from attendees are as follows:

- Alison Gravel asked if the Selectboard can be changed to hired positions. Larry responded she could start a petition if she wanted.
- Bushrod Powers spoke in favor of the amendment. He commented on how complex the Treasurer’s duties have become over the years.
- Theresa Harrington addressed Alison’s inquiry about needing two people in the Treasury department. Theresa pointed out that a newly elected treasurer can change the entire accounting system the town uses if he/she wants. She also stated there should be two people in the Treasurer/ Finance Department. Theresa went on to say that it is difficult for a qualified professional to run for a position because of the uncertainty of having the job from year to year. Not everyone wants to take the chance of being an elected official only to be replaced in a year.
- Issues regarding costs of the position were brought up. It was pointed out that there is more than enough funds between the Selectboard budget and the Treasurer budget to pay for a part time treasurer.
- Peggy Ainsworth used herself as an example of how someone known in the community and well liked can get elected and not have a clue about doing the job. The Selectboard would not have any recourse with an inexperienced Treasurer.
- Questions arose about the process to get the charter change approved by the State of Vermont Legislature. David Ainsworth explained how long this amendment would take to go through the legislature if passed.
- LuAnn Bingham, the current Royalton Town Treasurer, stated she is running for Town Treasurer and will be on board through this entire process. She has worked as Assistant Treasurer for Royalton for the past 6 years. She also stated she would like to apply for the position and does not mind being interviewed in a public meeting.

- Delbert Thurston asked if this was permanent change. He was told it was unless the town wants to reverse it the same ways it was implemented.
- Ernie Amsden provided some background on how the town acquired a finance manager. He also expressed his skepticism of a handout that the Selectboard prepared on the topic that was available for the meeting. Ernie did some research and the only requirement to be a town treasurer is to be a resident of Royalton. Larry emphasized how skills matter in regards to this position.
- Rose Hemond introduced herself as Finance Manager and spoke about the need for always have two people in the accounting department for internal control purposes and separation of duties. She also stated that it was in the town's best interest to hire someone with the necessary skills and background to do the job. It would actually cost the town more money for a person to be trained and then decide they are no longer interested in the position. Chronic turnover can lead to lack of continuity and disruption in the treasurer department. She informed everyone that the town is subject to an extensive year end audit by a CPA Firm. A hired treasurer would be evaluated by the Selectboard and if need be encouraged to take classes or workshops to improve their skills.
- Larry said that as a business owner he seeks out qualified people to work in his business and the town should do the same.
- Tim Dreisbach spoke in support of the amendment. He said in the near future the Planning Commission would like to do some capital planning which would help with budgeting

Hearing Adjourned 7:55 pm

Respectfully submitted

By Rose Hemond