

Town of Royalton, Vermont
Minutes of the Annual
Town Meeting
March 4, 2014
South Royalton School Gymnasium

Prior to the onset of Royalton Town Meeting, Town Moderator, David Ainsworth asked townspeople if they would allow a guest speaker: Windsor County State Senator John F. Campbell. He understands there are crime, tax and finance issues, which Sarah Buxton will speak to us about. However, his concern is the drug problem. As a former police officer in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, he dealt with crime on the street. He sees it here too, with Vermont's current Oxycodone and opioid problem. As of now, three to five million dollars per year are being spent to circumvent the epidemic of abuse, arrest and to find treatment for Vermont families. Senator Campbell introduced Sarah Buxton. To recap her talk at last night's Royalton School Meeting, she described why taxes are going up while budgets are voted level. She said she is concerned, but potential remedies which support lower spending, negatively impact communities like ours. Possibilities include income sensitivity on higher earnings household and state mandates for student teacher ratios. She's aware we do not have 100 percent broadband coverage and that we need access to high quality healthcare. Our legislature is asking questions of our agencies and of governing bodies regarding use and cost. Doyle poll and Buxton survey are available in lobby.

Seated at head table are Selectboard members: Peg Ainsworth, Phil Gates, Larry Trottier, Ernie Amsden and Joan Goldstein. Administrative and Finance Manager: Rose Hemond and Clerk: Karmen Bascom

Presiding over Town Meeting is Town Moderator, David Ainsworth. He invited all to join him in The Pledge of Allegiance and read the Warning for Annual Meeting to the townspeople, beginning with:

Article I. To elect by Australian ballot, the following officers:

Town Moderator	One Year	Collector of Delinquent Taxes	One Year
School Moderator	One Year	Cemetery Commissioner	Three years
Town Clerk	One Year	Town Agent	One Year
Town Treasurer	One Year	Grand Juror	One Year
Selectboard	Three Years	Trustee of Public Funds	Three Years
Selectboard	Two Years	School Director	Three Years
Lister	Three Years	School Director	Two Years
First Constable	Two Years	School Director	One Year left on a 2 Year appt.
Second Constable	One Year left on a 2 year appt.	Library Trustee	Two Years

All are reminded that polls will remain open until 7 p.m. for voting and Article II is read.

Article II. Shall the action taken at the meeting of this town held on March 5, 2013 in spite of the fact that the second constable position was missing from Article I, and any act or action of the municipal officers or agents pursuant thereto be readopted, ratified and confirmed? Motion made, moved and seconded; call for discussion?

Floor: Bushrod Powers called point of order: "What on Earth is this all about?" David Ainsworth said a constitutional position was omitted, verification is needed. Selectboard member Peg Ainsworth states that the position was on ballot, but was not on warning. Second Constable was then appointed before they realized it was not on Article I. This year's Article II asked town if the appointment was "okay?" Call for discussion, none. Motion carried bay hand vote.

Article III. To receive the reports of the Town officers?

Moved and seconded; open for discussion.

Floor: Jo Levasseur said there are problems with the Minutes of the Town Meeting. There are typos, needs proof-reading, figures wrong, Senior Center monies left out, Article V figure in dispute. She moved that the report be edited and resubmitted to the Selectboard for approval before entered as town record, 2013. Moderator Ainsworth asked her to restate motion for clarification. She reiterates. Point of order is called to ask "Is that an amendment to the motion to accept the report; was there a motion on the floor already?" JoJo Levasseur stated it is an amendment. Moderator Ainsworth says, "Amendment on floor to not accept." JoJo Levasseur said motion has already been seconded; her hope was to correct minutes. Theresa Harrington, prior Town Clerk, reminded us that these are history and that the clerk might have a tape of last year's meeting. Motion as Ainsworth understands is not to accept minutes as printed. Levasseur reiterates that motion was to correct them and send to Selectboard. Moderator Ainsworth says "that's passed... already printed." JoJo Levasseur asked, "Is this what Selectboard approved for last year's meeting?" Selectman Amsden said: "Town Clerk wrote minutes and to best of my knowledge, Selectboard has no authority over Town Clerk." JoJo Levasseur said the Selectboard

should approve. Moderator stated it was his job and he had not approved them for the last few years. So, if there's any error, it probably would be with him, as he runs the meeting. Floor: Charles Bascom said you can't have a negative motion, it's illegal. Moderator confirmed. Floor: Pam Levasseur said there is a statute that basically says that minutes should be submitted to Selectboard and Civil Authority and two members need to attest to them within seven to fourteen days of actual meeting. Moderator maintains that's one of his jobs and he did not do this. Floor: Theresa Harrington spoke to correct. She believed that the Moderator is supposed to review and sign off. Floor: Gary Hobart made motion to amend the amendment, to review tapes for fully corrected minutes and then vote at next year's meeting. Moderator confirms that amendment to amendment is legal. Amendment is to accept Town Reports as printed, except for minutes, until reviewed by Town Clerk and Moderator by tape recording for corrections. Town Agent may look into legalities. Verification of minutes will be available. Moderator Ainsworth called for amendment. Motion to amend carried. Discussion? Floor: Marie Lampson was concerned. She felt perhaps wording was being changed and that everyone has a little different view of what happened. She continued: We all try to clarify, however town reports tend to have informal language. We should voter original motion and accept the minutes and if the Moderator made a mistake, let it be corrected. "That's a process that doesn't have to be legislated."

Floor: Tim Dreisbach mentioned there have been two resignations this year: Rebecca Beguin and JoJo Levasseur, former chair to Planning Commission. The Planning Commission surveys are coming. It is required to update the Town Plan every five years; first stage is to send survey within two to three months. Please participate. The next meetings will include Selectboard, Schoolboard and any individuals are welcome as the survey is designed. Results will be made available to all residents. Moderator Ainsworth asks for round of applause for Planning Commission.

Moderator read corrections to delinquent tax report. Should not have been listed: Amell, Brown, Colangelo, Bruce Read Estate, Regan, Taber and Stravaski. Floor: Geo Honigford: Believes it time we take out the itemized delinquent tax reports, as the information is available at the office. "We don't need to splash it out in the Town Report."

Floor: Charles Bascom made point of order: There is still an amendment out on floor, not voting on main motion. Ainsworth stated: We voted to accept everything, except the minutes, ruling we are voting on main motion as amended. Levasseur reminds them that the motion was to correct minutes with Selectboard approval. Moderator Ainsworth says amendment is accepted; Levasseur's is no longer on floor. Point of order called. Moderator Ainsworth reiterates that the amended motions to not accept minutes of last year's Town Report and resubmit them at next Town Meeting after review by Moderator and Town Clerk, "All in favor of main motion as amendment to not accept minutes of last year's town meeting? Dreisbach clarified Bascom's point of order. Ainsworth called for end of discussion, to vote. All in favor of accepting town report, except minutes of town meeting, please signify by raising cards, opposed? Motion carried.

Article IV Shall the voters appropriate \$258,810 to the following Royalton organizations, pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §2691?

	Approved 2013	Requested 2014
South Royalton Fire District #1 (pg.50)	\$49,000	\$49,000
Royalton Memorial Library (pg. 48)	\$54,355	\$55,355
South Royalton Rescue Squad (pg.51)	\$146,255	\$148,355
Royalton Town Band (pg.54)	\$2,400	\$2,400
Fuller Sterns Post #51 (Memorial Day)	\$700	\$700
S. Royalton Area Senior Citizens (pg.54)	\$3,000	\$3,000
Total	\$255,710	\$258,810

Motion to appropriate is moved and seconded.

Selectman Ernie Amsden asked to amend line one to read Royalton Fire District #1. Correction noted. Motion carries to appropriate funds.

Article V Shall the voters appropriate \$21,160 to the following social service agencies, pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §2691?

	Approved 2013	Requested 2014
CV Community Action (pg.55)	\$400	\$400
CV Council on Aging (pg.55)	\$1,000	\$1,000
Clara Martin Center (pg.56)	\$4,180	\$4,180
The Family Place (pg.56)	\$200	\$200
HCRS (pg.57)	\$2,689	\$2,689
HIV/HCV Resource Center (pg.57)	\$500	\$500
Northern VT Resources C&D (N/A)	\$100	\$0
Safeline (pg.58)	\$1,000	\$1,000

Stagecoach (pg.58)	\$2,300	\$2,300
Vermont Adult Learning (pg.58)	\$500	\$500
VT Assc. of the Blind (pg.59)	\$750	\$750
VT Ctr. For Independent Living (pg.59)	\$305	\$305
Visiting Nurses (pg.60)	\$5,876	\$5,876
WR Partnership (pg.60)	\$500	\$500
WC Partners (pg.61)	\$500	\$500
WC Youth Services (pg.61)	\$400	\$400
Total	\$21,260	\$21,160

Motion moved and seconded; discussion? Floor: Minor Correction. Requested total amount for 2014 should be \$21, 160 not \$21.160. Motion carried.

Article VI Shall the voters approve total ^{general} highway fund expenditures of \$1,024,109 of which \$703,609 shall be raised by taxes pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 2664?

Motion moved, seconded; discussion? Larry Trottier said budget increased one percent; primarily due to less state police coverage and more local police, acquisition of local cemetery and meetings/election budget. \$12,374 increase overall. However, Delinquent Tax Collector brought in enough taxes so previous revenues applied to this year decreases overall money needed to be raised by \$8,376. Article VI motion carries.

Article VII Shall the voters approve total highway fund expenditures of \$1,051,700, of which \$906,700 shall be raised by taxes pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 2664?

Motion is moved and seconded with discussion. Floor: Del Thurston feels we do not owe Tunbridge or Sharon any money because of the services we give them and he wants a more complete accounting of our Town Highway department. Larry Trottier feels that those towns came through for us and assisted us during Irene. Loaders and trucks are furnished because "Vermont's all about neighbors." Town had to replace a nine year old truck and many repairs were needed. Budget is up 1.7 percent due to labor, equipment rental, salt, maintenance repairs, but delinquent taxes income resulted in no increases for townspeople at this point. Floor: Harry Dodge wants to know why town doesn't plow and sand his bridge; why foundation of bridge is not being repaired, although town crew did repair a pothole on the bridge. State aid is received by town and yet his taxes continue to rise. Floor: Bushrod Powers thanked the road crew. "On a cold, snowy, lousy morning, it really makes me happy to be woken up by the sound of that diesel truck..." "...our crew does a (explicative) of a good job." Article reread, motion moved, seconded, carried.

Article VIII Shall the voters of the Town of Royalton call on the State legislature to explore the creation of a Public Bank for Vermont?

Motion moved, seconded, floor open for discussion. Floor: Peg Elmer, who has work with community development in Vermont for over 35 years (infrastructure i.e. water, sewer, transportation) Federal government give less every year and expecting states to step in. Vermont has limited resources: people and land, but not enough money to do what we need to. Public Bank was initiated in Oklahoma back in the 1920's. Wall Street and banking issues have cause about 20 other states to look at public banking. Four years of Vermont legislation, proposed, studies available. Current legislation is looking to make a few changes to utilize existing VSAC, VEDA and VHFA which have similar lending procedures. Our legislature, hearing from towns will make a difference. Floor: Suzanne Long's attention captured regarding public banking because of amount of money to remain in state. "All that money that goes out state playing the Wall Street interest game just leaves the state and we can't use it anymore." Local market paid \$26,000 in credit card fees. Their mission is to invest in this community economy, meaning \$26,000 has left this community and state.

Floor: Nick Manouvelos: said he knows Vermont is second poorest state in America next to Mississippi. He's travelled across Vermont and he is "...reminded of the old country, where somebody has everything and somebody has nothing." Taxes are his concern. Moderator read list on taxes handed to him: real estate, excise, rooms and meals, sales tax, federal, fuel, etc. Manouvelos asked Joan Goldstein why such a poor state has such high taxes, when other states have similar taxes, but they make more money. There's no opportunity here. Dan Kinney makes point of order. "We want to know what you think about the bank." Manouvelos said he already pays taxes and it's not fair we pay such taxes and still our children must leave Vermont for jobs. Ainsworth thanked Nick and returns to question on floor.

Floor: Elmer said taxpayer money will stay in state with state bank and shouldn't compete with small private banks. This bank will help keep money at home. First rule in economic development is to "plug the leaks" and keep money home. That is what the state bank is about. Floor: Harry Dodge said he doesn't want to send money to state where politicians are; "private enterprise is doing a pretty good

job." Floor: Carol Dermody asked where does initial money comes from. Moderator Ainsworth said tax dollars. Elmer stated: "its tax dollars that are already there." Existing entities are already sufficiently capitalized to provide base. Floor: Dick Ellis said almost everything state or federal government takes over becomes a mess. Floor: Kate Fellows reminded us that we're voting to explore and that she doesn't see any problem in looking at it further." Floor: Alison Gravel said the government is portrayed as evil, but Wall Street and the banks are any less evil. Ainsworth call for discussion then rereads Article VIII. Card vote is too close so Board of Civil Authority is called for a standing count.

Moderator asked people to sit down and reminded everyone that for eight dollars, the Rebekah Lodge has chicken pie available.

Article passes with 74 in favor and 59 against.

Article IX To transact any other non-binding business proper to be brought before said meeting.

Floor: Daniel Kinney said he cannot get high speed internet, although Fairpoint goes across his property. He asks that townspeople call governor because they don't have access to high speed internet even though he lives only 1/4 mile off Vermont Route 14. People are not able to sell or rent homes to college students because they don't have high speed. He stated "This is just like rural electrification." He rents in Randolph so he may run his company. That's tax dollars our town isn't getting. "If we are going to build a tax base here, we have to have the infrastructure." Kinney said the school requires high speed access for homework assignments. His daughter has to go to town green for access, while she sits in her car. Our town has to get their act together. He is asking town not to just "surf the web," but to help those who don't have high speed access.

Larry Trottier thanked Selectboard member of seven years: Ernie Amsden, who is stepping down. Ernie thanked board and townspeople. He said, often they do not agree, but the board has a unique set of perspectives, makes good decisions and is "extremely judicious in their stewardship of your money." One thing that drives taxes is spending and the board is not frivolous with town money. Amsden acknowledged Rose Hemond; Financial Manager. "She has been a tremendous asset in putting together a good budget for this community." Thank you for your support. "It's been a blast for me."

Moderator Ainsworth asked if anything else is to be brought forth and ends meeting before lunch by announcing: "All those in favor of recessing until polls close at 7 o'clock p.m. to please signify by standing up."

174 In attendance
2003 registered voters on checklist

Respectfully submitted,

Karmen M Bascom, Royalton Town Clerk

Karmen M. Bascom

David Ainsworth, Royalton Town Moderator

David Ainsworth

Joshua Powers, Royalton Justice of the Peace

Joshua B Powers -

ROYALTON TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

This 14th day of March 2014

at 2 o'clock and 0 minutes P M

Received for record the instrument of which the foregoing is a true

copy.

Attest: Karmen M. Bascom

Town Clerk