

**CRAFTSBURY TOWN MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 7, 2023 AT CRAFTSBURY ACADEMY GYM
DRAFT**

Call to Order: Jeannine Young, Moderator, called meeting to order at 9:06 AM.

Article 1: To elect a Town Moderator.

Bruce Urie nominated Jeannine Young. No other nominations.

Voice vote, voice carried. Article 1 approved.

Article 2: To hear and act upon the Auditors' report.

Cheryl Bailey thanked Barb Paterson for her 17 years as a lister, and also Joan Simmons who helped write Barb's dedication. Cheryl stated she swears it is accurate and true and to just speak up if there are any questions. Cheryl made a motion to approve the auditors' report as presented, Doug McCarty seconded.

Voice vote, voice carried. Article 2 motion passed.

Article 3: Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to appoint a collector of delinquent taxes pursuant to 17 V.S.A. § 2651d(a)?

Bruce made a motion to move Article 3, Tim Fritz seconded. Bruce explained that it's been a tough decision this year not to have the Delinquent tax collector in office, especially with Effie's health concerns. It will make Cheryl's job easier auditing, also keep the information ready for escrow companies. Bruce noted they prefer in-house and asked to allow Selectboard to appoint a delinquent tax collector for this year.

Victoria Hudson asked the term, Bruce Urie said 1 year position.

Doug McCarty asked for the pay. Bruce Urie said it's 8% for the penalty, which comes from proceeds of collected taxes.

Joseph Young requested a paper ballot, more than 7 people agreed with the paper ballot request.

Leigh Harding asked what would happen if the Delinquent tax collector wasn't appointed. Jeannine Young said it would be voted on in Article 4 instead.

Alison Blaney asked if voted to appoint the position, when would it happen. Bruce Urie explained the Select Board would have to meet with interested people.

Penelope Doherty asked how the Select Board would invite people for the position. Bruce mentioned media such as FPF.

Yvette Brown said she didn't want to get done with this position. All the Selectboard had to do was call her if there was something they were concerned with. She would still like to have the elected position one more year.

110 total voters. 77 yes, 25 no, for a total of 102 votes cast. Article 3 passed.

Article 4: To elect all Town Officers required by law:

- Selectboard Member for a term of 3 years
Bruce Urie made a motion to nominate James Jones for Selectboard member for a term of 3 years. Penelope Doherty moved that the Clerk cast one vote. Voice vote, voice carried, passed.
- Collector of Delinquent Taxes for a term of 1 year
Jeannine Young suspended the rules, due to the approval of Article 3.
- Lister for a term of 3 years
David Rowell nominated Tom Boyle as a lister for a term of 3 years. No other nominations. Harry Miller moved that the Clerk cast one vote, Carolyn Ryan seconded. Voice vote, voice carried, passed.
- Auditor for a term of 3 years
Cheryl Bailey nominated Michael Waterhouse as an auditor for 3 years. Cheryl moved that the Clerk cast one vote, seconded by Doug McCarty. Voice vote, voice carried, passed.
- Cemetery Commissioner for a term of 5 years
Bruce nominated Bob Davis as a Cemetery Commissioner for a term of 5 years. Voice vote, voice carried, passed.
- Craftsbury Public Library Trustee for 2 years of a remaining 4 year term
Janice Anders nominated Steve Moffatt as Craftsbury Public Library trustee for 2 years of 4 year term. Voice vote, voice carried, passed.
- Supervisor Lamoille Solid Waste District for a term of 2 years
Jane Solomon nominated Penelope Doherty for Supervisor Lamoille Solid Waste District for a term of 2 years. Voice vote, voice carried, passed.
- Trustee of Public Funds for a term of 3 years
Bruce nominated Rudy Chase as Trustee of Public Funds for a term of 3 years. Voice vote, voice carried, passed.

- World War II Memorial Fund Trustee for a term of 3 years
James Jones nominated Bruce Urie as World War II Memorial Fund Trustee for a term of 3 years. Voice vote, voice carried, passed.
- World War II Memorial Fund Trustee for 2 years of a remaining 3 year term
Bruce Urie nominated Ross Davis for World War II Memorial Fund Trustee for 2 years of a remaining 3 year term. Voice vote, voice carried, passed.

Bruce took a moment to thank Clyde (Sunny) Simmons for the 30-40 years served in this position.

Article 5: Shall the voters authorize total fund expenditures for operating expenses of \$978,750 of which \$572,830 shall be raised by taxes and \$405,920 by non-tax revenues?

Bruce Urie made a motion to move Article 5, Doug McCarty seconded.

117 Total Voters; 105 yes, 3 no, 1 spoiled, for total of 109 votes cast. Article 5 passed.

Article 6: Shall the town authorize an amount not to exceed \$275,000 to purchase a grader to be paid back in 5 yearly installments, plus interest?

Bruce made a motion to move Article 6, Carolyn Ryan seconded.

Carolyn Ryan asked for a few details. Bruce Urie explained that are comparing Caterpillar and John Deere. Cost is \$369,000-\$440,000 less trade in. They may need to take out some funds from the Infrastructure account go with it. Last year, the Town used funds from past FEMA funds to cover a loader.

119 Total Voters; 91 yes, 8 no, for a total of 99 votes cast. Article 6 passed.

Article 7: Shall the Town appropriate \$65,000 to the Craftsbury Fire Department for payment of necessary expenses from January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023?

Jeremiah McCann made a motion to move Article 7, seconded by Tim Fritz.

121 total voters; 105 yes, 3 no, for a total of 108 votes cast. Article 7 passed.

Article 8: Shall the Town appropriate \$10,000 to the Craftsbury Fire Department for paying stipends to its volunteers?

Jeremiah made a motion to move Article 8, seconded by Penelope Doherty.

Kris Coville thought brilliant idea, wondered if it would be enough.

Carolyn Ryan said years ago they used to offer a stipend for the fire department, but the funds came out of fundraising funds, which in turn was much more volunteer time. Some of those extra funds, maybe \$100-\$300 each, meant a lot to members, and she supports this.

Penelope Doherty lives on Route 14, has witnessed their assistance blocking traffic, etc. and thinks we should support them.

Voice vote, voice carried; Article 8 passed.

Article 9: Shall the Town vote the sum of \$19,250 for Town committee/event appropriations as follows:

\$1,500 Craftsbury Block Party Fund

\$6,400 Craftsbury Cemeteries, for mowing

\$7,000 Craftsbury Conservation Fund, money set aside for future conservation projects

\$ 100 Craftsbury Historical Society

\$ 750 Craftsbury Memorial Day Expenses

\$2,000 Craftsbury Recreation Committee

\$1,500 Craftsbury Village Improvement Society, for maintenance on the Common

TOTAL \$19,250

Carolyn made a motion to move Article 10, Susan Houston seconded.

Joseph Young asked about the Conservation fund and what it would be used for. Steve Moffatt explained that there is a strict process that would need to be recommended by the Conservation Commission and approved by the Selectboard. It could be used for a variety of items such as easements, mapping, dam restoration, etc. Right now about \$20,000. There is more information at the Conservation Commission booth.

Don Houghton, president of the Craftsbury Historical Society, wanted to let people know the Historical Society exists on the Common and that Craftsbury people matter. Yes, the history is in the past, learning about Simpsons and Craftsbury. History keeps happening though, like this 2013 Town Meeting Day picture, naming the many people we have lost since then. The Historical

Society is interested in stories of all Craftsbury folks. Please visit the Historical Society's booth in the back.

Dave Stoner moved to divide Article into 2 parts so we don't have to do a paper vote, Tule Fogg seconded. Voice carried, Dave's motion was passed.

First Part:

\$1,500 Craftsbury Block Party Fund

\$6,400 Craftsbury Cemeteries, for mowing

Total of first part is \$7,900. Voice vote, voice carried for first part, passed

Second Part:

\$7,000 Craftsbury Conservation Fund, money set aside for future conservation projects

\$ 100 Craftsbury Historical Society

\$ 750 Craftsbury Memorial Day Expenses

\$2,000 Craftsbury Recreation Committee

\$1,500 Craftsbury Village Improvement Society, for maintenance on the Common

Doug McCarty moved to increase the Historical Society to \$500 from \$100, Joseph Young seconded. Voice vote, voice carried, passed.

Penelope Doherty asked why two cemetery articles. Carol Ceraldi explained one is for the mowing and regular maintenance of the four cemeteries. Article 13 is a one time article to help with restoration of the cemeteries, such as the fences of the Common and the Village.

Voice vote, voice carried to approve the second part of \$11,750 (includes the extra \$400 for the Historical Society), passed.

Article 10: Shall the Town vote the sum of \$ 49,803 for appropriations as follows: (see Agencies Requesting Town Funds)

- \$ 500 American Red Cross
- \$ 1,000 AWARE, for preventing and healing the trauma of domestic and sexual violence
- \$ 6,000 Craftsbury Saplings, a community children's center
- \$ 1,200 Green Mountain Farm to School, Inc., for providing fresh, local food and nutrition education to students in Northern Vermont
- \$ 2,500 Greensboro Nursing Home
- \$ 2,500 Hardwick Area Food Pantry and the expanded Craftsbury Food Share
- \$ 19,905 Hardwick Rescue Squad, Inc.
- \$ 1,500 Lamoille County Mental Health Services
- \$ 1,000 Lamoille Family Center, for parent and child programming services designed to promote health, safe and resilient families
- \$ 500 North Country Animal League
- \$ 650 N.E. Kingdom Council on Aging
- \$ 1,266 N.E. Kingdom Human Services
- \$ 300 N.E. Kingdom Learning Services
- \$ 1,142 N.E. Vermont Development Assoc. (NVDA), for planning, developing, promoting and publicizing resources
- \$ 700 Old Stone House Museum
- \$ 350 Orleans County Children's Advocacy Center
- \$ 500 Orleans County Fair
- \$ 4,200 Orleans Essex V.N.A. & Hospice, for providing services to the elderly, homebound and chronically ill
- \$ 500 Pope Memorial Frontier Animal Shelter
- \$ 600 Rural Community Transportation, for providing public transportation services in Northern Vermont
- \$ 500 Salvation Farms, for distributing produce from local farms to the region's residents
- \$ 140 VT Center for Independent Living
- \$ 500 VT Assoc. for the Blind & Visually Impaired
- \$ 250 VT Family Network
- \$ 1,500 Rural Arts (formerly Wonder Arts), supporting programs and activities for Craftsbury families
- \$ 100 VT Rural Fire Protection Task Force

Total \$ 49,803

Bruce made a motion to move Article 10, Harry Miller seconded.

Jane Solomon questioned the clarity of the articles, with Care Center and Hardwick Rescue. Bruce said they look to revise for next year.

Bruce supported Hardwick Rescue, with 79 medical assists in Craftsbury last year. Peggy Ann Smith said her experience with Hardwick Rescue has been amazing and comforting.

Peggy Ann Smith asked to have Lamoille County Mental Health taken off from Article 10, seconded by Penelope Doherty. When she said she asked for assistance for her sister, she was basically told it wasn't their jurisdiction. Michelle Warren explained that Lamoille County Mental Health was for mental health services for Craftsbury children, while mental health services for adults is the Northeast Kingdom Human Services, which can be confusing. Monique Reil, from Lamoille County Mental Health explained further, that OSSU school district goes to Lamoille County Mental Health. The voice vote to take off Lamoille County Mental Health was not approved, motion not passed.

Fran Rowell asked about North Woods, Jeannine Young explained it was in a different article.

Seth Hayden said that Saplings appreciates the support of Craftsbury appropriations, which helps with operating costs. They have received \$40,000 from Craftsbury ARPA funds, \$20,000 now and \$20,000 for expansion planning later. Joseph Young asked how many children were from Craftsbury. Seth said about half of the children were from Craftsbury. Joseph then asked if they were asking from appropriations from other Towns and Seth said yes, they were asking funds from Albany and Wolcott.

Both Allison Van Akkeren and Catherine Cusack supported the Green Mountain Farm to School program, with a school garden and more.

Kris Coville directed Food Pantry information on a back table.

124 total voters; 97 yes, 3 no and 2 spoiled for a total of 102 votes cast. Article 10 passed.

Article 11: Shall the Town appropriate a sum of \$12,000 for the Craftsbury Community Care Center, a level 3 residential care facility?

Carolyn Ryan made a motion to move Article 11, Penelope seconded.

Jane Marlin spoke on behalf of the Care Center and said they have been in operation for over 28 years, serving 300 seniors, and offering 64,000 Meals on Wheels meals. There have been 10 level 3 care centers that have recently closed. She emphasized the importance of Craftsbury's Town support. These

funds go to help pay the differential medical costs, providing housing to those not able to afford it.

Penelope Doherty said Craftsbury Care Center had one of the best economic models.

Voice vote, voice carried. Article 11 passed.

Article 12: Shall the Town appropriate a sum of \$46,000 to the Craftsbury Public Library?

Ned Houston made a motion to move Article 12, seconded by Jenny Stoner.

Steve Moffatt remarked that libraries have been deemed essential by State Statues. He noted the Library has 5 stars, best library of its size in the nation. The Library has many volunteers, dedicated staff, trustee volunteer hours. The increase will go toward staffing, benefits.

124 voters; 89 yes, 6 no, for a total of 95 votes cast. Article 12 passed.

Article 13: Shall the Town appropriate a sum of \$10,000 to Craftsbury Cemeteries, for upkeep and maintenance?

Carol Ceraldi made a motion to move Article 13, seconded by Carolyn Ryan.

Carol Ceraldi noted that although some maintenance has been done, it's never been a restorative process. Although it doesn't cover it all, it would be a good start.

Voice vote, voice carried. Article 13 passed.

Article 14: Shall the Town appropriate a sum of \$500 to Northwoods Stewardship Center, for widespread conservation and educational services?

Laura Berry made a motion to approve Article 14, Catherine Cusack seconded. Jared Nunery explained Northwoods is from East Charleston, and helps manage hiking trails, grooming forest area trails, and offers summer camps.

Voice vote, voice carried. Article 14 passed.

Article 15: Shall the Town vote to continue to exempt the Masonic Hall from property taxes for a period of five years, per 32 V.S.A §3840?

Doug McCarty made a motion to move Article 15, Joseph Young seconded.

Doug McCarty explained that this was started by Crafts, only a few members left now, half the number just a few years ago. It is used as a fundraising location for Snowmobile Club, etc.

Joseph Young said, although not a Masonic member, like other charity organizations, it would go out of existence if it had to pay property taxes.

Robert Linck stated that the Masons are a private, exclusive club and he doesn't understand why it is tax exempt.

Voice vote, voice carried. Article 15 passed.

Article 16: Shall the voters elect its town officers by Australian ballot pursuant to 17 V.S.A. §2680(b)?

Bruce made a motion to move Article 16, Jane Solomon seconded.

Susan said the Town is looking for ideas on better community involvement for Town Meeting Day. There will be a Freedom & Unity task force starting in the Spring with public gathering sessions. She noted she will be waiting to vote for Australian ballot until after this group has organized.

Penelope Doherty commented that she understood having Town Meeting, and also looking at getting more people voting. She asked if voting for Australian Ballot would preclude us from having Town Meeting. Bruce Urie said it doesn't preclude Town Meeting, it was just an effort to get more people to vote. With Australian Ballot, we had 400-450 votes.

Doug McCarty stated he was against the article. He said when people get together, we get democracy. Government of the people and for the people.

Carolyn Ryan remarked she likes Town Meeting, liked seeing people, but doesn't believe 100-125 people represent the people.

Monique Reil could see both sides. Having worked in Mental Health, have missed half of the Town Meetings. There are many people, like those working in hospitals, that don't have the option of voting at Town Meeting. Be great to have the best of both worlds.

Linda Ramsdell said she believes in Democracy. 2023 still in pandemic, knows of people not attending for risk of Covid. Would like a hybrid model, for all committees as well, for all people that are interested. Democratic process to everyone.

Alan Turnbull said he wouldn't vote to change it until discussed more, in a thoughtful manner, as part of a plan. Shouldn't do lightly, without consideration of all alternatives.

Bruria Mille suggests more discussion, so it doesn't erode the foundation of Town Meeting. Let's go through the process.

Jenny Stoner said an advantage of Australian Ballot is that we know in advance elected officers. A sentence or two about each person is helpful.

David Rodgers said if the State of Vermont is serious, should make Town Meeting a holiday. Maybe possibly hold Town Meeting on the first Saturday instead so more people could participate.

Allison Van Akkeren spoke, noting thought same as others, wanting to wait until discussed more.

Kris Coville said that although sounds like a good idea, she's going to vote no, wants to be part of the discussion. She encourages us to check with NEK Organizing for in depth discussions with people, make sure they are all heard.

Yvette Brown moved for a paper ballot, over 7 people agreed.

David Solomon noted would be more comfortable going further.

Joseph Young said this is just for officers, everything else would be same as this year.

Doug McCarty said if not the majority, would need to have another special election.

Alan Turnbull asked what would happen if it was passed today. Bruce said would be open for voting 9am to 7pm for Australian Ballot. Bruce explained would still be first Tuesday in March unless voters change it to a Saturday.

126 voters; 36 yes, 52 no for a total of 88 votes cast. Article 16 did not pass.

Representative Katherine Sims spoke of State Legislative news

Article 17: Shall the voters authorize the Treasurer, pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 4791 to collect current taxes?

Doug McCarty made a motion to move Article 17, Tim Fritz seconded.

Voice vote, voice carried. Article 17 passed.

Article 18: Shall the Town vote that taxes payable in installments, with due dates being July 15th, September 15th and November 15th (§32 V.S.A.4871), will bear interest at a rate of 1% percent per month or fraction thereof for the first three months and thereafter 1½% percent per month or fraction thereof, from November 15th, pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 4873?

Bruce made a motion to move Article 18, seconded by Doug McCarty.

Voice vote, voice carried. Article 18 passed.

Article 19: Discussion of other nonbinding business.

David Rowell said the Barn Party is coming back, scheduled May 20th, to help with several non-profits, including renovation at Simpson Library.

Susan said Antiques & Uniques is back this year, July 8th.

Carolyn Ryan, asked the Recreation Committee to hold Old Home Day, the 2nd Saturday in August.

Meeting adjourned at 12:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Warren
Craftsbury Town Clerk