

Minutes of the Mendon Town Meeting
Monday, March 2, 2015
Mendon Mountainview Lodge

Moderator Christopher Corsones called the Mendon Town Meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Chris thanked Steve Olsen, owner of the Mendon Mountainview Lodge, as well as Maxim Davidov, the general manager, for their hospitality again this year.

Chris advised that the Town Meeting would present first this year. Chris then introduced Job Tate our new State Representative and thanked him for coming to our meeting. Job said that he and his wife were happy to be here, and introduced their son, Mendon. He also shared the good news that he and his wife are expecting another child. Job distributed a hand-out outlining the current condition as he sees it, in Montpelier.

Megan Smith raised the question of healthcare and health connect. Matt Conway asked Job if he was familiar with Act 361. Job stated that while the Act was difficult to understand, he was not in favor of this Act. Matt said he disagreed with the 2% cap on education budgets. Erica McLaughlin stated that as a principal, she thinks the 2% cap, as a one size fits all concept, doesn't work. Amy Merrill felt that the education goals will be lost. Job stated that government needs to provide education, but needs to be married to the reality of what can be afforded.

Chris and the audience thanked Job for his input and following Job's departure, Chris referred to page 70 of the Town Report and began to address the proposed articles.

ARTICLE 1: Shall the Town authorize the Selectmen to acquire by gift or purchase, land for municipal forest, to produce wood products, maintain wildlife habitat, protect water supplies, provide forest recreation and for conservation education purposes?

Matt Conway made a motion to approve Article 1, and it was seconded by Jonathan Reynolds.

- Larry Courcelle displayed a large placard depicting the Proposed Jim Jeffords State Forest and discussed access to the land and an easement in case of emergency, as well as parking areas.
 - Larry displayed another large map of the Cauty Trail.: The town has offered to maintain a parking area large enough for 3-4 cars.
 - A third map showed a photo after Hurricane Irene near the Medway Bridge. There will be a 502 Hearing on February 19.
 - Map #4 will be available in the Town Office, and displays a culvert broken during Irene. The proposal is to rebuild. A section of Rte 4 will also be rebuilt. The berm will be removed and the stream will go wherever it wants to go.
- Construction will take a bout 2 months, starting around April until October, 2016. Amy Merrill asked who would be responsible for any future damage to the new culvert? Larry advised that would be the State of Vermont. Jim Ruth asked who

owned the ravine. Larry stated Stonybrook Estate owns the land now. VTrans has been trying to contact them. Fred Bagley asked about where the ravine takes a turn— would that be eliminated? Larry didn't have a definite answer. The new culvert will be made of steel. Cost will be \$1,900,000.00, not including engineering costs.

Chris called for a floor vote to the motion. It was unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 2: Shall the town authorize the Selectboard to set the hourly compensation rate for non-salaried employees, and in the event of an appointment of a town officer at mid-term?

Steve Singiser made a motion to approve Article 2. It was seconded by Jennifer and upon vote, was unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 3: To see if the Town will vote the Administrative portion of the budget to meet expenses and liabilities of the Town.

Steve Singiser made a motion to approve Article 3. It was seconded by Ann Singiser.

Greg Smith as representative for the Selectboard displayed the summary page (page 9) of the Town report. Greg took a moment to advise everyone that after 9 years of service, he was resigning at the end of this week from the Selectboard.

Greg referred to the overhead and stated that the Selectboard monitors expenses and budget and follows it very closely, as well as maintaining revenue. Greg noted that we have done well with our grants for bridges and culverts. Greg advised that we do not have an Auditor's Report in the Town Report, since the auditors ran into a delay and are finishing the paperwork now. We should have their report within thirty days.

Greg moved to amend the administrative portion of the budget to remove all healthcare spending for employees. Larry Courcelle seconded the motion. Greg stated that there are five employees who receive health benefits at approximately \$80,000.00 a year. Amy Merrill felt this action which would affect the staff, is not a measure of their service.

Greg Smith asked for any input and guidance. After discussion, Greg withdrew his motion. Chris noted that Greg's motion was withdrawn.

Greg then moved to amend the administrative budget to add \$3,000.00; \$1,000.00 for each Selectboard member. That would raise the salaries to \$7,000.00. Justin Lindholm seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Chris called for a vote on Article 3 (without the \$3,000.00 increase--\$1,000.00 per member of the Selectboard.) It was unanimously approved.

Larry Courcelle then presented Greg Smith with a plaque and gift certificate in gratitude for his service on the Selectboard. Larry noted that there is now a vacancy on the Selectboard and asked people to consider serving their community.

Another presentation of flowers and gratitude was made to Karen Prescott, who is retiring from her position as Principal at Barstow after 17 years of service, at the end of this school year.

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will vote the Community Infrastructure portion of the budget to meet expenses and liabilities of the town.

Matt Conway made a motion to approve Article 4. It was seconded by Jennifer Bagley.

- A discussion about the Irene recovery fund and the highway improvement fund ensued.
- Concerning the salt for roads, Larry said that on average we use 600 tons of salt a year. This year has seen an increase in price of 40%, amounting to \$12,600.00 more in the budget.
- With regard to the Falls Road Bridge, our engineer and contractors advised us not to spend anything on repairs there.
- As to the deterioration of the salt shed, built in 1986, the concrete walls were not constructed properly and the structural integrity is compromised. Bids have come in, and the engineer will take a look at it. When we have all the information, a special meeting will be called at the garage for a bond vote to get this work done. More information will be put on the website.

Fred Bagley and Megan Smith both noted the new Mendon sign on Rte 4 on the Mendon Orchard side of the road.

Chris called for a vote on Article 4. It was unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 5: To see if the Town will vote the Public Safety portion of the budget to meet expenses and liabilities of the Town.

Geoffey Wells introduced both Constable Phil Douglas, as well as Special Officer Brent Howard. Geoff noted:

- We had to hire the Rutland Sheriff's department to help patrol our roads early in 2014.
- Officer Howard was brought on board and he has completed all his training.
- Constable Phil Douglas has been trained, and will be patrolling roads shortly.
- We've updated police computers, incurred police vehicles maintenance, salary increases, as well as uniform and vest costs.

Phil Douglas advised we are not trying to discourage tourist by ticketing; however, when someone is speeding, they are endangering everyone. Years ago there were several fatalities on Route 4 and it is his object to keep our roads safe. Brent Howard added that

he is all about saving lives as well as monitoring the roads. He stated that he will be touring all neighbors in Mendon.

Bert Winans moved to approve Article 5. It was seconded by Justin Lindholm and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 6: Shall the Town provide notice of the availability of the town report to the voters of the town in lieu of mailing or otherwise distributing the report pursuant to 24 V. S. A. Sec 1682? The notice of availability will be provided by public notice.

Sara Tully advised that most towns have already adopted a policy of no longer mailing out Town Reports. The expense to do so is about \$2,500. If we no longer mail out reports, we could save the town about \$2,000.00. Fred Bagley asked if a certain number of reports would be available at Town Meetings. Sara acknowledged they would, as well as copies would be available in the Town Office. We will however, continue to mail out the the Warnings. Matt Conway was not in favor of this proposal.

Justin Lindholm moved to approve Article 6 and it was seconded by Amy Merrill. By floor vote, there was one nay, and the Article was carried.

ARTICLE 7: Shall the Town appropriate \$81,200 for the Marble Valley Regional Transit District (The Bus)?

Greg Smith moved to approve Article 6, and it was seconded by Ann Singiser.

A discussion about the number of Mendon residents using The Bus ensued. Several people noted their family members' use of the bus, as well as riders headed to Killington. The representative for The Bus, listed several bus stops available to Mendon riders. Upon floor vote, the vote to approve the Article was unanimous.

ARTICLE 8: Shall the Town appropriate \$230 for RSVP and the Volunteer Center? Fred Bagley moved to approve Article 8, and it was seconded by Larry Courcelle.

Sara Tully moved to amend the amount of the appropriation to \$500. Wanda Courcelle seconded this motion. Upon floor vote, the amended motion was unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 9: Shall the Town appropriate \$2,600 for the Rutland Area Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice?

Matt Conway moved to approve Article 9 and it was seconded by Laura Coppola-Znurko. Upon floor vote the motion was carried.

ARTICLE 10: Shall the Town appropriate \$1,242 for Rutland Mental Health Services formerly Rutland Area Community Services?

Jonathan Reynolds moved to approve Article 10, and it was seconded by Jennifer Bagley. Upon floor vote, the motion was carried.

ARTICLE 11: Shall the Town appropriate \$400 for The Southwestern Council on Aging?

Amy Merrill moved to approve Article II and it was seconded by Beth Charles. Upon floor vote the motion was carried.

ARTICLE 12: To elect all necessary Town Officers.

Chris asked Marie Conway when the polls would open on Tuesday. Marie advised the polls would open at 8:00 a.m. and close at 7:00 p.m. Chris noted that three people are candidates for School Board: Michelle Erickson, Erica McLaughlin and Rhonda Bates.

ARTICLE 13: To transact any other business.

A discussion ensued with regard to relocating the 911 center currently in Westminster to a closer location. Another concern was expressed about the condition of properties which are empty along Route 4 and whether anything could be done to improve their appearance.

Larry Courcelle stated that Mendon need more people to volunteer their time and service to the community. He noted that both Greg Smith is retiring from the Selectboard, as well as Roy Prior has retired as Fire Warden. Thanks from the Town of Mendon for a job well done was extended to both people.

The Town Meeting portion of the evening was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Gregory Smith, Selectboard Chair

Christopher Corsones, Moderator

Marie Conway, Town Clerk
