

**Minutes of the Mendon Town Meeting  
Monday, March 03, 2020  
Mendon Methodist Community Church**

Moderator Chris Corsones called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Chris invited Judy Barone, chair of the Community Visit Steering Committee to speak.

Judy invited community members to the “Mendon on the Move” meeting which will be held on April 02, 2020 at the Red Clover Inn. Appetizers will be served at 5:30 and representatives from VCRD (Vermont Council for Rural Development) will officiate a meeting in which attendees will discuss ideas for what direction Mendon should take in the future. Judy also stated that a second meeting would take place on May 14, 2020. At this time, VCRD will bring people that match the goals and opportunities developed at the first meeting in order to strengthen neighborhood communication.

Chris Corsones thanked Pastor Ron Sherwin and the Mendon Methodist Community Church for their hospitality in allowing the Town to hold its meeting at their facility.

With permission from the voters, Chris invited State Representative Jim Harrison to speak. Jim thanked everyone for their continued support and stated that he gets a lot of feedback from community members. Jim stated that the Governor presented a budget plan that is not built on new taxes or fees. Education funding is projected to incur a 5.5% increase per pupil. These costs are a result of increased costs and a decreasing student population. Jim discussed some changes to Act 250 rules. He encouraged voters to check the unclaimed property list which he had printed out. Jim also stated that he had information regarding composting in the back of the room. The new rules forbidding compost materials in landfills begin on July 01, 2020.

Jennifer Bagley thanked Jim for his thoroughness and responsiveness. Other voters echoed this sentiment. John Rizk suggested that Jim visit the Rutland Transfer Station to see the area set aside for compost materials.

Chris Corsones stated that the Town Report was dedicated to Neil Langer for his 37 years of service to the community. Chris stated that Neil has a habit of saying what a lot of people are thinking and that Neil has been a real asset to the Town of Mendon.

ARTICLE 1. Shall the Town authorize the Selectboard 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?

Betsy Reddy made a motion to approve Article 1. The motion was seconded by Jody Wilcox. The motion passed unanimously.

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?

Gary Sihler made a motion to approve Article 2. The motion was seconded by Mary Rizk and passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 3. Shall the Town adopt all budget articles by Australian ballot?

Selectboard Chair, Richard Wilcox discussed the advantages of voting by Australian Ballot on budget issues. The Selectboard believes this would allow more people to vote on the budget, and also allow early voting. Steve Singiser (husband of Ann) stated that he is mostly opposed because re-votes would have to take place when budgets fail. Neil Langer stated that Mendon has a history of passing the budget. Jennifer Bagley stated that it is important to hear the opinions of other voters and to get questions answered. Sara Tully stated that she supports the article in the hopes that it will engage more citizens. In addition, voters can always change back to a floor vote if they don't feel Australian ballot voting is working for the Town. Fred Bagley, Mary Ann Reich, Ann Singiser, and Gary Sihler also spoke against this article.

Sara Tully made a motion to approve Article 3. Fred Bagley seconded the motion. The motion failed.

ARTICLE 4. Shall the Town transfer \$10,000 from the Town Shop Maintenance Fund to the Town Office Maintenance Fund for the purpose of constructing a historic kiosk at the former location of the Town Shop also known as the Old Town Hall?

Sara Tully gave an overview of Articles 4,5, and 6. Ann Singiser stated that the Town tried for many years to save the Old Town Hall but could find no justifiable use for it. She and Fred Bagley discussed the kiosk that the Historical Society would like to construct on the site of the Old Town Hall. In addition to the money from the Town, the Historical expects to contribute at least \$5,000 toward the project. Fred Bagley displayed a model of what the kiosk would likely look like and said that it would hopefully be installed before the summer tourism season. Discussion followed.

Ann Singiser made a motion to approve Article 4. Jody Wilcox seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 5. Shall the Town transfer \$10,000 from the Town Shop Maintenance Fund to the Town Office Maintenance Fund?

Jennifer Bagley made a motion to approve Article 5. Betsy Reddy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 6. Shall the Town transfer the remaining balance of the Town Shop Maintenance Fund to the Contingency Fund and close out the Town Shop Maintenance Fund?

Tom Soriano made a motion to approve Article 6. Larry Courcelle seconded the motion. Gary Bannister asked what the contingency fund was. This was clarified by Richard Wilcox. The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 7. To see if the Town will vote the Administrative portion of the budget to meet expenses and liabilities of the Town.

Selectboard Chair, Richard Wilcox made a presentation highlighting changes to the upcoming Budget. Increased expenses over the current year are up .2%. Dick further stated that the Town Garage Improvement Bond had a remaining balance of approximately \$34,000. As a result, \$19,000 of these funds would be used toward the upcoming principal payment. Without the excess bond funds, the increase would have been 1.8%

Tom Soriano made a motion to approve Article 7. The motion was seconded by Larry Courcelle. The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 8. To see if the Town will vote the Community Infrastructure portion of the budget to meet expenses and liabilities of the Town.

Jennifer Bagley asked for an explanation of the bond reduction. Richard Wilcox gave the bond details. Judy Barone asked where the bond money is put? Sara Tully directed voters to the bond schedule in the town report which shows how much is still owed in principle and interest. Nancy Gondella further explained that the Town has to follow the specific bond schedule and that excess funds are sitting in an income bearing account that can only be expended for paydown of bond principle or qualified bond expenditures. Further discussion followed.

Tom Soriano made a motion to approve Article 8. Patty Lancaster seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 9. To see if the Town will vote the Public Safety portion of the budget to meet expenses and liabilities of the Town.

Larry Gold had questions about the Sheriff's Department and how much ticket income the Town earns. With unanimous consent, Deputy Dan Pennington presented information regarding the number of incidents, traffic stops, arrests, tickets and warnings written. Larry Gold was concerned that Mendon is gaining a reputation for giving out tickets. Richard Wilcox stated that the goal is to keep Route 4 safe and to help avoid fatalities. Further discussion followed. Brian Sell stated that the Rutland County Plan has statistics on Route 4 speed and safety.

Tom Soriano made a motion to approve Article 9. Betsy Reddy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 10. Shall the Town appropriate \$1,500 for the support of ARC Rutland Area Serving Citizens with Developmental Disabilities?

Ross Almo, Executive Director described the services that ARC provides

Patty Lancaster made a motion to approve Article 6. Wanda Courcelle seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 11. Shall the Town appropriate \$1,200 for the Marble Valley Regional Transit District (The Bus)?

Lee Bizon, with unanimous permission from the voters, described the services provided by The Bus. Neil Langer asked if there is a fee to ride the bus. Lee said there is. Jennifer Bagley asked if there would be a conversion to electric busses. Lee stated they are in the process of testing this.

Jennifer Bagley made a motion to approve Article 11. Betsy Reddy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 12. Shall the Town appropriate \$500 for the support of the Mendon Seniors?  
Gary Sihler presented information regarding the services provided by the Mendon Seniors.

Gary Sihler made a motion to approve Article 12. Jody Wilcox seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 13. Shall the Town appropriate \$700 for the support of the RSVP Retires Senior Volunteer Program?

Wanda Courcelle presented information on the various programs offered through RSVP.

Wanda Courcelle made a motion to approve Article 13. Larry Courcelle seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 14. Shall the Town appropriate \$1,242 for Rutland Mental Health Services formerly Rutland Area Community Services?

Larry Courcelle spoke of the importance of supporting this article.

Betsy Reddy made a motion to adopt Article 14. Irene Gold seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 15. Shall the Town appropriate \$2,600 for the VNA and Hospice of the Southwest Region?

Betsy Reddy made a motion to approve Article 15. Phil Douglas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 16. Shall the Town appropriate \$600 for the support of the Southwest Council on Aging?

Gary Sihler made a motion to approve Article 16. Gary Bannister seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 17. Shall the Town appropriate \$2,500 for the support of Wonderfeet Kids' Museum?

Jennifer Bagley spoke about the programs offered by the museum.

Patty Lancaster made a motion to adopt Article 17. Jody Wilcox seconded the motion.

Mary Rizk stated that she would like to see a lower level of support for the museum and made a motion to amend the level of support to \$1,000. Scott Bradley seconded the motion.

Irene Gold stated that the museum is a wonderful facility but \$2,500 seemed quite high in comparison to what other organizations were asking for. Betsy Reddy stated that it is hard for non-profits to make ends meet and that the museum is truly a great resource for the Town.

The motion to amend the level of support to \$1,000 failed.

The original motion passed.

ARTICLE 18. To elect all necessary Town Officers

The polls are open at the Mendon Town Office from 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

ARTICLE 19. To transact any other legal business.

Phil Douglas asked that attendees wait a few minutes after the meeting was over so he and Deputy Pennington could set up blue lights so people who had parked across the street could make it safely to their vehicles.

Fred Bagley reminded people to monitor the Town Website and Facebook page for up to date information regarding the proposed AT & T Tower Project.

The Town Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Wilcox, Selectboard Chair

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Christopher Corsones, Moderator

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Nancy Gondella, Town Clerk

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53 Voters attended this meeting.