

**TOWN OF WILMINGTON  
2020 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING  
MINUTES  
MARCH 3, 2020**

**The Annual Town and Town School District meeting was called to order by Moderator Robert Fisher at 10:03AM.**

At 10:03AM the Moderator declared the Town Meeting open. Moderator led the Pledge of Allegiance. In attendance were Moderator Robert Fisher, Selectboard members Tom Fitzgerald, John Gannon (arrived 12:15 PM), Sarah Fisher, Vince Rice, Ann Manwaring; Town Manager Scott Tucker; Police Chief Matthew Murano; Fire Chief Scott Moore; Road Supervisor Sheldon Brassor; Town Treasurer and Finance Officer Christine Richter; Zoning Administrator Michael Tuller; members of the Board of Civil Authority and approximately 75 voters and members of the public. The Moderator made a few announcements and went over the requirements for participating and voting at Town Meeting and asked those who are not registered voters to identify themselves.

The Moderator asked for unanimous consent of the body to allow members of the Town Administration and Staff who are not Wilmington voters, to speak during the meeting. **NO OBJECTION VOICED.**

The Moderator asked for the Body's consent to waive the full reading of the Town Meeting Warning. **VOICE VOTE** – ayes had it.

- ARTICLE 1:** To elect all Town and Town School District Officers required by law and the vote of the town. (Australian Ballot – Polls open 7:00 A.M. until 7:00 P.M.)
- ARTICLE 2:** Shall the Town vote to accept the Town Report?
- ARTICLE 3:** To see what date or dates will be set for the payment of taxes (8/28/20 and 2/26/21)?
- ARTICLE 4:** Shall the Town vote to authorize the Selectboard to appoint a Town Clerk as provided in 17 VSA §2651e?
- ARTICLE 5:** Shall the Town vote to authorize the Selectboard to appoint a Town Treasurer as provided in 17 VSA §2651f?
- ARTICLE 6:** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,155,219 to care for the expenses and liabilities of the General Fund for Fiscal Year 2021 (7/1/2020 to 6/30/2021)?
- ARTICLE 7:** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,518.452 to care for the expenses and liabilities of the Town Road Budget for Fiscal Year 2021 (7/1/2020 to 6/30/2021)?
- ARTICLE 8:** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate an additional \$1425, for a total of \$1500, to Groundworks Collaborative whose purpose is to provide ongoing support to families and individuals facing a full continuum of housing and food insecurities?
- ARTICLE 9:** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$10,000, to fund Wings Community Programs whose purpose is to actively engage students in experiences to help them be successful in school and in life as they grow into productive adults?

- ARTICLE 10:** Shall the Town vote to allocate the state per parcel payment estimated to be \$26,765 to the Reappraisal Reserve Fund?
- ARTICLE 11:** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$175,000 to fund the Highway Town Road Equipment Capital Fund?
- ARTICLE 12:** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$35,000 to fund the Bridge Capital Account?
- ARTICLE 13:** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$150,000 to fund the Fire Department Equipment Capital Account?
- ARTICLE 14:** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$5,000 to fund the Fire House Capital Fund?
- ARTICLE 15:** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$20,000 to fund the Memorial Hall Capital Fund?
- ARTICLE 16:** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$12,000 to fund the Library Capital Reserve Fund?
- ARTICLE 17:** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$20,000 to fund the Town Hall Capital Fund?
- ARTICLE 18:** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$20,000 to fund the Police Equipment Capital Fund?
- ARTICLE 19:** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$5,000 to fund the Transfer Station Capital Fund?
- ARTICLE 20:** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$5,000 to fund the Public Lands and Fences Capital Fund?
- ARTICLE 21:** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$221,000 to fund the Planning and Acquisition for Town Facilities Fund?
- ARTICLE 22:** Shall the Town of Wilmington enter into a communications union district to be known as Deerfield Valley Communications Union District, under the provisions of 30 VSA CH82?
- ARTICLE 23:** To transact any other non-binding business.

**ARTICLE 2: MOTION** to accept the Town Report made by Tom Fitzgerald, seconded by Fred Houston.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (including but not limited to):** None

**SPEAKERS:** None

**VOICE VOTE** – ayes had it unanimously. **MOTION CARRIED – SO VOTED.**

**ARTICLE 3: MOTION** to set the dates of 08/28/2020 and 02/26/2021 for the payment of taxes made by Tom Fitzgerald, seconded by Fred Houston.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (including but not limited to):** None

**SPEAKERS:** None

**VOICE VOTE** – ayes had it unanimously. **MOTION CARRIED – SO VOTED.**

**ARTICLE 4: MOTION** to authorize the Selectboard to appoint a Town Clerk as provided in 17 VSA §2651e made by Tom Fitzgerald, seconded by Diane Chapman.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (including but not limited to):**

Concern the Town Clerk needs to operate independently and someone from the Wilmington area. Shortage of potential candidates in the area, where an appointment may allow the town to approach other professionals locally. Attractive government position where we need to trust our voters and encourage our neighbors to pursue the position. Creates a separation between church and state. Huge skill set necessary to perform the Town Clerk position, which includes the Presidential Election, town-wide reappraisals, and the grievance process. No required skill set if a person runs for office. Town Clerk supports the article where the pool of candidates in the town is limited. She has spoken to 6-7 individuals expressing interest who may be qualified for the position. Significant independence in the position. Position can take 3-5 years to become comfortable with the Town Clerk role based on other jurisdictions. Town Clerk's retirement in mid-April is in alignment with the logical transitioning of the position for a new Town Clerk.

**SPEAKERS:** Martha Gehring, Tom Fitzgerald, Michelle Doucette, Ann Manwaring, and Susie Haughwout

**MOTION TO END DEBATE** made by Bill Adams, seconded by Fred Houston

**VOICE VOTE – UNDETERMINED** - Moderator called for Division of the House

Standing vote count 70 ayes and 22 nays

Motion to end debate passed by 2/3 majority.

**MAIN MOTION** on Article 4

**VOICE VOTE – UNDETERMINED** – Moderator called for Division of the House

Standing vote count - 34 ayes - 46 nays. **MOTION DEFEATED – SO VOTED.**

**ARTICLE 5: MOTION** to authorize the Selectboard to appoint a Town Treasurer as provided in 17 VSA §2651f made by Ann Manwaring, seconded by Fred Houston.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (including but not limited to):**

Concern over the financial structure of the town and the dependency on these skills for the Town Treasurer role. Importance of the Town Treasurer being an appointed office position.

**SPEAKERS:** Ann Manwaring

**VOICE VOTE** – ayes had it. **MOTION CARRIED – SO VOTED.**

**ARTICLE 6: MOTION** to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,155,219 to care for the expenses and liabilities of the General Fund for Fiscal Year 2021 (7/1/2020 to 6/30/2021) made by Tom Fitzgerald, seconded by Fred Houston.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (including but not limited to):**

Anticipated changes related to the Town Clerk position and the need for someone adequate to run the department. Reappraisal fund is depleted by \$250,000. Wings Program in the past paid through user fees. Whitingham no longer participating in the program.

**SPEAKERS:** Tom Fitzgerald

**VOICE VOTE** – ayes had it. **MOTION CARRIED – SO VOTED.**

**ARTICLE 7: MOTION** to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,518.452 to care for the expenses and liabilities of the Town Road Budget for Fiscal Year 2021 (7/1/2020 to 6/30/2021) made by Vince Rice, seconded by Fred Houston.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (including but not limited to):** None

**SPEAKERS:** None

**VOICE VOTE** – ayes had it. **MOTION CARRIED – SO VOTED.**

**ARTICLE 8: MOTION** to raise and appropriate an additional \$1425, for a total of \$1500, to Groundworks Collaborative whose purpose is to provide ongoing support to families and individuals facing a full continuum of housing and food insecurities made by Tom Fitzgerald, seconded by Claudette Hollenbeck.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (including but not limited to):**

Groundworks in Brattleboro helping the homeless, alcohol dependent, those with behavioral issues at the homeless shelter. Homeless Family relief at Morningside. Old Motel purchased to serve homeless individuals living under bridges. On site social worker and nurse at the motel to serve the individuals.

Groundworks benefits Wilmington residents, as well.

Program provides legal advice to individuals.

**SPEAKERS:** Tom Fitzgerald, Claudette Hollenbeck, Sarah Fisher, and Jessica Smith

**VOICE VOTE** – ayes had it. **MOTION CARRIED – SO VOTED.**

**ARTICLE 9: MOTION** to raise and appropriate \$10,000, to fund Wings Community Programs whose purpose is to actively engage students in experiences to help them be successful in school and in life as they grow into productive adults made by Ann Manwaring, seconded by Fred Houston.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (including but not limited to):**

Concern the funds may be \$20,000 and not \$10,000 as advertised.

Why the schools are not budgeting for this particular expenditure and can volunteers be utilized?

Federal funds contribute 50% of the total allocation funds but local contributions are also necessary.

Approximately, 80% of the students participate in the program to some extent.

Theatrical plays and programs like Jr. Iron Chef are funded through this program.

Need for data collection for outcomes.

First-hand witness of the impact the program on children and transforming their lives for the better

**SPEAKERS:** Ann Manwaring, Bruce Mullen, Tom Fitzgerald, James Brunn, Michelle Park, Lisa Sullivan, Geri Kogut, and Gary Henry

**VOICE VOTE** – ayes had it. **MOTION CARRIED – SO VOTED.**

**ARTICLE 10: MOTION** to allocate the state per parcel payment estimated to be \$26,765 to the Reappraisal Reserve Fund made by Sarah Fisher, seconded by Sharon Adams.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (including but not limited to):**

In the past funding can from the Listers budget. Need to reallocate the funds for reappraisals in the future which are costly.

**SPEAKERS:** Sarah Fisher

**VOICE VOTE** – ayes had it. **MOTION CARRIED – SO VOTED.**

**ARTICLE 11: MOTION** to raise and appropriate \$175,000 to fund the Highway Town Road Equipment Capital Fund made by Sarah Fisher, seconded by Fred Houston.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (including but not limited to):**

Staff referenced the need in trading one vehicle in with a greater payment being necessary for the new replacement vehicle. John Deere mower being budgeted for as a purchase instead of a lease.

**SPEAKERS:** Sheldon Brassor

**VOICE VOTE** – ayes had it. **MOTION CARRIED – SO VOTED.**

**ARTICLE 12: MOTION** to raise and appropriate \$35,000 to fund the Bridge Capital Account made by Sarah Fisher, seconded by Fred Houston.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (including but not limited to):**

Look Bridge improvement referenced and the needs to improve other town bridges and culverts near the Sitzmark and Higley Hill areas.

**SPEAKERS:** Sarah Fisher

**VOICE VOTE** – ayes had it. **MOTION CARRIED – SO VOTED.**

**ARTICLE 13: MOTION** to raise and appropriate \$150,000 to fund the Fire Department Equipment Capital Account made by Vince Rice, seconded by Fred Houston.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (including but not limited to):**

Funding will go towards equipment including a new truck and outfitting firefighters with compliant gear meeting NFP standards. Cancer-related deaths to firefighters referenced.

**SPEAKERS:** Scott Moore

**VOICE VOTE** – ayes had it. **MOTION CARRIED – SO VOTED.**

**ARTICLE 14: MOTION** to raise and appropriate \$5,000 to fund the Fire House Capital Fund made by Vince Rice, seconded by Fred Houston.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (including but not limited to):**

Question why the money from the capital fund is going towards maintenance. On-going need to repair the Fire House building related to the roof and the overall building built in 1969. Question the cost for repairing the roof as significant, where funds appear to be already available. Bay doors also need to be repaired/replaced.

**SPEAKERS:** Vince Rice, Scott Moore, Fred Houston, Tom Fitzgerald, and Barker Willard

**VOICE VOTE** – ayes had it. **MOTION CARRIED – SO VOTED.**

**ARTICLE 15: MOTION** to raise and appropriate \$20,000 to fund the Memorial Hall Capital Fund made by Sarah Fisher, seconded by Claudette Hollenbeck.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (including but not limited to):**

Memorial Hall needs significant improvements to help protect it from future flooding. Flood vents proposed to address the problem, in addition to roof and window repairs.

**SPEAKERS:** Sarah Fisher

**VOICE VOTE** – ayes had it. **MOTION CARRIED – SO VOTED.**

**ARTICLE 16: MOTION** to raise and appropriate \$12,000 to fund the Library Capital Reserve Fund made by Ann Manwaring, seconded by Bettina Krampetz.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (including but not limited to):**

Concern the funding for the Library is not in the book.

Staff indicated funding for the Library is in a separate Library Fund from the Town.

**SPEAKERS:** Christine Richter, Barker Willard

**VOICE VOTE** – ayes had it. **MOTION CARRIED – SO VOTED.**

**ARTICLE 17: MOTION** to raise and appropriate \$20,000 to fund the Town Hall Capital Fund made by Ann Manwaring, seconded by Elizabeth McEwen.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (including but not limited to):**

Historic building is an on-going need to improve the structure. Road noise referenced.

Replacing historic windows with energy efficient windows approximately \$30,000 and lead paint abatement, as necessary.

**SPEAKERS:** Ann Manwaring, Scott Tucker

**VOICE VOTE** – ayes had it. **MOTION CARRIED – SO VOTED.**

**ARTICLE 18: MOTION** to raise and appropriate \$20,000 to fund the Police Equipment Capital Fund made by Vince Rice, seconded by Fred Houston.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (including but not limited to):**

Deferred cost of police equipment, where older equipment is still being utilized.

**SPEAKERS:** Vince Rice

**VOICE VOTE** – ayes had it unanimously. **MOTION CARRIED – SO VOTED.**

**ARTICLE 19: MOTION** to raise and appropriate \$5,000 to fund the Transfer Station Capital Fund made by Sarah Fisher, seconded by Fred Houston.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (including but not limited to):**

Improvements for the Transfer Station include a bathroom and a sink for washing up at the facility.

**SPEAKERS:** Sarah Fisher

**VOICE VOTE** – ayes had it unanimously. **MOTION CARRIED – SO VOTED.**

**ARTICLE 20: MOTION** to raise and appropriate \$5,000 to fund the Public Lands and Fences Capital Fund made by Vince Rice, seconded by Fred Houston.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (including but not limited to):**

Need to do timber activity at the 25 acre Hermitage tract. Need to upgrade our parks, including tennis courts which would require grant funds. Timber is proposed by the town with a new Zoning Administrator and Highway Supervisor hired recently. Town should notify abutting land owners when neighboring property are scheduled to be sold.

**SPEAKERS:** Merrill Mundell, Scott Tucker, and Ralph Staib

**VOICE VOTE** – ayes had it unanimously. **MOTION CARRIED – SO VOTED.**

**ARTICLE 21: MOTION** to raise and appropriate \$221,000 to fund the Planning and Acquisition for Town Facilities Fund made by Tom Fitzgerald, seconded by Fred Houston.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (including but not limited to):**

Not a valid expenditure of the Town's 1% funds. Population is stagnant. Ladder truck ownership referenced. Old school would be a better site for the facility. State Police should take over Police duties in the town or consolidate with the Town of Dover. Changing school safety concerns and the need for local public safety. Big concern for a town impacted by TS Irene. Traffic circulation a big concern. Need for a police, fire, and town hall services to relocate. New employees hired at Mount Snow and Hermitage bankruptcy concern. Taxpayers will need to absorb the cost of this governmental facility. Town owns \$3,000,000 in equipment stored in the flood zone. Another flood is a likely situation due to weather changes. South Main Street access is essential for emergency response. A bond vote will be necessary to fund the facility construction for the future. The town has been pursuing a new facility location for 6 years now. Payments ending for the Look Bridge and Town Garage projects. Interest rate at 3% very advantageous. Concern the facility is being located in the wrong location when flooding occurs. Maintaining current Fire House for potential resale in the future. People in custody a challenge processing at current PD location. Outdated equipment and a camera system. Regionalizing State Police will not be helpful to Wilmington. Annual property tax increase \$62.50 for a house valued at \$250,000 in the town. Resident's wife and daughter stayed at OSEC during Tropical Storm Irene. No acquisition costs to the taxpayers with the proposed site location. Architectural expenses approximately \$39,000 thus far.

**SPEAKERS:** Tom Fitzgerald, Bruce Mullen, Jessica Smith, Michelle Doucette, Helen Staib, Gerry Osler, Ann Manwaring, Ralph Staib, Wendy James, Matthew Murano, Gary Henry, Christine Richter, Charles Clerici, and Barker Willard.

**MOTION TO END DEBATE** made by Tom Fitzgerald, seconded Bill Adams.

**VOICE VOTE** - Motion to end debate passed by 2/3 majority.

**MAIN MOTION:**

**VOICE VOTE** – ayes had it unanimously. **MOTION CARRIED – SO VOTED.**

**ARTICLE 22: MOTION** to enter into a communications union district to be known as Deerfield Valley Communications Union District, under the provisions of 30 VSA CH82 made by Ann Manwaring, seconded by Claudette Hollenbeck.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (including but not limited to):**

Many towns are without high-speed internet or broadband technology. Benefits to aggregate demand to get a more favorable proposal to run internet locally. No taxpayer money will be used and the service will be voluntary for residents to sign-up. Asked if it would be better if the Select Board made the decision. Select Board could vote on the program, if necessary. Concern the cost to run fiber lines may be extensive when satellite technology is evolving quickly. Combatting economies of scale to the communities. Several neighboring towns have the CUD on their Town Meetings as well. Act regionally, state or federal partners will not help us.

**SPEAKERS:** Ann Manwaring, Bill Adams, Merrill Mundell, Charles Cherici, Sarah Fisher, Adam Grinold

**VOICE VOTE** – ayes had it unanimously. **MOTION CARRIED – SO VOTED.**

**ARTICLE 23:** non-binding business

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (including but not limited to):**

Need for more community volunteers for programs like Old Home Week. Senior Solutions for promoting dignity to our senior community members, including help lines and case management. Also transportation and companionship programs. ECO grants helping aging population with dementia issues. Building along Route 9 west of town and what is being done about the unsafe structure. VTrans indicates it is within their right-of-way where little is being done presently. Meg Staloff of Wilmington Works spoke about the Art Project Mural and voting on the best option for the town. Tom Fitzgerald recognized Select Board Member Ann Manwaring for her years of service to the community.

**SPEAKERS:** Nicky Steele, Geri Kogut, Meg Staloff, Linda Brophy, Tom Fitzgerald, Gary Henry

**MOTION TO ADJOURN FLOOR MEETING:** made by Tom Fitzgerald, seconded by Claudette Hollenbeck.

**VOICE VOTE** – Ayes had it. **MOTION CARRIED – SO VOTED.**

**MEETING ADJOURNED AT 12:57pm. Australian Ballot voting continued until 7pm.**

TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION AND BELIEF, THESE MINUTES ARE A TRUE AND OFFICIAL RECORD OF ALL ACTION TAKEN AT THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD, MARCH 3, 2020.

Prepared on: March 3, 2020

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Tuller

TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION AND BELIEF, THESE MINUTES ARE A TRUE INDICATION OF THE BUSINESS OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD, MARCH 3, 2020.

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

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