

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
TOWN OF STOCKBRIDGE
MARCH 7, 2017

The legal voters of the Town of Stockbridge are hereby warned to meet at the Union Meeting House on the Stockbridge Common on Tuesday, March 7, 2017 at 9:00 A.M. to transact the following business:

Kent Butterfield, Moderator, brought the meeting to order at 9:00AM. He reminded everyone that the meeting was for registered voters only. Rep. Sandy Haas addressed the meeting. She noted that the Doyle poll was available as well as a survey regarding cell phone coverage. She discussed Act 46 and the state budget. She was asked about solar and wind power which she felt was a benefit to the State. Marilyn Edgerton asked about universal primary care. Sandy thinks that is years away.

The Town Clerk read the official warning.

Article 1: To elect the following officers for terms indicated and to fill other offices vacant:

1. Moderator for 1 year term. Mark Pelletier took over to accept nominations for Moderator. Louis Chap nominated Kent Butterfield. Seconded. Nominations were closed and Kent was elected.
2. Selectman for 3 year term. Herkie White nominated Richard Lunna. Seconded. Joanne Mills nominated Lee Ann Isaacson. Seconded. Patrick Giordano noted Mark Doughty's service to the town. Nominations were closed. Richard Lunna declined nomination. Linda Lunna withdrew her motion to close nominations and Bill Edgerton withdrew his Second. Mark Doughty nominated Steve Farrington. Seconded. Lee Ann introduced herself. She is a business owner with a background in real estate. She was involved in community affairs previously and was recently appointed as the town zoning administrator. Steve Farrington has lived in town since 1994. He raised his family here and is also a business owner. He currently serves as a town representative on the EC Fiber Board. A paper ballot was requested. 75 ballots were cast. Lee Ann 49 votes Steve 26 votes.
3. Lister for 3 years. Linda Lunna nominated Zach Cavacas. Carl Groppe seconded. Nominations were closed and Zach was elected.
4. Auditor for 3 years. Rebecca Burns nominated Kathie Burns. Tony Caparis seconded. Nominations were closed and Kathie was elected.
5. Agent to defend and prosecute suits for 1 year. Richard Lunna nominated Jack Green. Seconded. Nominations were closed and Jack was elected.
6. Grand Juror for a 1 year term. Bill Edgerton nominated Louis Chap. Carl Groppe seconded. Nominations were closed and Louis Chap was elected Grand Juror.
7. First Constable for a 1 year term. Carl Groppe nominated Zack Cavacas. Seconded. Nominations were closed and Zach was elected.
8. Second Constable for 1 year. Sylvan Groth nominated Brian Merrill. Seconded. Nominations were closed and Brian was elected as Second Constable.
9. Trustee of Public Funds for 3 years. Craig Cota nominated Bill Edgerton. Carl Groppe seconded. Nominations were closed and Bill was reelected as Trustee.
10. Cemetery Commissioner for 3 years. Kelly Burns nominated Brenda Hillier. Seconded. Nominations were closed and Brenda was elected.

11 Memorial Day Chair for 1 year. Kathie Burns nominated Suzanne Butterfield. Carl Groppe seconded. Nominations were closed and Suzanne was elected.

Article 2: To hear the auditors' report and to take any necessary action thereon. Kathie Burns read the Auditors report. Donna Bryan asked about the delinquent tax collector report. She noted that there were some mistakes and wondered where the abatements were reflected in the report. Susan Pelletier noted that the 1992 and 1993 taxes were abated and advised that there was an error in the report. Kathie Burns apologized for the mistakes. Steve Farrington moved to instruct the delinquent tax collector and the auditors to meet to review a revised report and submit it to the Selectboard for acceptance. Seconded and approved. Bill Edgerton commended Susan for the work she has done over the past year.

Article 3: Will the Town vote to pay real estate taxes in two equal installments due on August 15 and November 15? Craig Cota moved to approve the article. Carl Groppe seconded. Approved.

Article 4: Will the Town vote to elect a Collector of taxes or vote to authorize the Town Treasurer to collect current taxes? Carl Groppe moved to authorize the Town Treasurer to collect current taxes. Seconded and approved.

Article 5: Will the Town vote to elect a Collector of delinquent taxes? Craig Cota moved to elect a Delinquent tax collector. Julie Groppe seconded and approved. Craig Cota nominated Susan Pelletier. Seconded. Tony Caparis questioned how the salary was determined and Donna Bryan asked about the expenses. Mark Pelletier stated that there was no change in the tax collector pay and that she pays her own expenses. Vance asked how much the town had paid for the software program and was advised it was around \$2,900. Beth Dawley noted that the Secretary of State's website has answers to tax collector questions. Susan noted that she attended a seminar where she learned that a 15% charge can be added to the sale to cover the attorney cost and that anything under \$500 should go to small claims court.

Article 6: Will the Town vote to accept the proposed budget? Recommended: \$777,287 Craig Cota moved to approve the recommended budget. Carl seconded. Vance asked about the purchase of a new truck this year. Dave Brown noted that they will be purchasing a new truck. They have kept trucks 2 years longer than previously and are just now getting numbers together. Vance suggested that the Board consider using the \$75,000 slated to go into the equipment fund and use it to pay off the town office and save 7 years of interest. Sylvan Groth noted that it could be a risk if the truck ends up needing to be replaced. Vance pointed out that there are 3 trucks and 2 drivers. Mark Pelletier felt that the town should move forward with the truck purchase as planned and look at that issue next year. The Town will not be financing the truck purchase. Steve Farrington suggested that the voters allow the Board to shift funds from the equipment fund if appropriate after analysis. Vance also asked about the increase in the assistant clerk line and the highway salary. The Assistant clerk line was increased to allow for an assistant 8 hours a week to learn how to perform the Clerk duties and provide backup. The Board did look at changing the highway payroll line but were uncertain about the severity of the winter and how many hours would be needed. Tony Curiale wondered if the highway equipment fund should be increased if the town was hanging on to trucks longer. The Board feels it is adequate now and held the trucks because they were still functional and had extended warranty. Carl Groppe asked if there was anything that the Board would like to discuss regarding the budget. Mark Doughty noted that the Gaysville bridge is a concern to them. He gave an update on the FEMA buyouts and noted that the Campground is schedule to close next and the one on Tweed Lane is in limbo. The State share is scheduled to end on June 30th. Vance requested notice of future purchase of equipment and asked if the town used the Gaysville bridge. Dave noted that nothing over 24,000 lbs will be allowed to cross including the town truck. He apologized for not including the truck purchase in his report. He has applied for a grant to hire an Engineer to evaluate the bridge and make recommendations on repairs to get us through the next 5 – 10 years and intends to apply for a grant to make the repairs. The bridge is on a list to be replaced and it is hoped it will be moved up, but even then replacement is several years away. Ethan Phelps suggested a line in the Selectboard narrative rather than a line item. Bill Edgerton commended the Board for having an equipment fund in place and for pursuing grants to help for improvement projects. Dave noted that when the Taggart Hill project begins everyone who lives above the

project will have to use Taggart Hill to Ranney Road Discussion was closed and the motion to accept the proposed budget was approved.

Article 7: Shall the Town of Stockbridge vote to postpone any changes or amendments to the existing town plan and zoning regulations or adoption of new town plan or zoning regulations, until such a time as a decision has been made on the future of the Stockbridge Central School as it is such an integral part of our town and directly impacts town growth? Kathie Burns moved to approve the article as written. Seconded. Donna Bryan noted the purpose of the article was to open discussion about the town plan and zoning regulations and she felt that last year's vote was not given consideration by the Planning Commission. She felt that the current town plan limits what could happen with the school building if the school closed. The current plan and proposed bylaws do not match. Kim Robertson is frustrated with the planning process and feels that the current plan limits property owners rights and does not welcome new business. Suzanne Butterfield noted that Act 250 reviews proposals against the town plan and Chad Merriss noted that the town is a 10 acre town. Joanne Mills is a new Planning Commission Member. She feels that the zoning regulations have loosened up but that the town plan will not change even though both must be the same. Todd Trzaskos is a member of the Planning Commission and noted that the town plan must conform with state law and the Regional plan. He pointed out that the Planning Commission has worked hard on the town plan. He stated that the town plan and zoning regulations must be aligned as close as possible. He feels there is a risk to the town if they are not able to move forward with the zoning regulations. He encouraged everyone one that is interested in the zoning regulations to attend their meetings. Kim Robertson stated that the plan had been adopted by the Selectboard because they were advised that FEMA grants were linked to the town plan. Mark Pelletier did meet with the Planning Commission as well as the Regional Planning Commission and was advised that the town plan must conform to the regional plan. The Board was concerned about the loss of grant funding if the town plan was not adopted. He was advised that the zoning regulations could be drafted to be more lenient. Valerie Burrige did attend many planning meetings and felt that she was ignored. Bill Edgerton thinks that there is a need for better communication. He noted that as a result of last year's vote the Planning Commission did review the town plan but that they felt that making changes to the town plan would delay the zoning regulations and put the town at risk. They have allowed citizens to participate in the discussions and feel that development along Route 100 and 107 can be allowed through Act 250 conditions. He doesn't feel that the Planning Commission should be stopped from continuing their work and noted that there will be public hearings in the future for public review. Joanne Mills noted that no franchises are allowed in the current plan. Janie Feinberg noted that a decision regarding the future of the school could be years away. Carl Groppe gave an update on the status of Act 46 and the proposed timetable. Tony Caparis feels that the town needs to work to attract business. Marilyn Edgerton feels that the best way to attract business is to adopt zoning regulations that work for small businesses. Brian Merrill wondered if we needed zoning regulations. A town plan is required but zoning regulations are not mandatory. Kathie Burns called the question. Pat Humphrey seconded. Louis Chap questioned if this was a legal vote. Kathie withdrew her motion and Pat withdrew her second. Mark Doughty moved to table the article. Seconded. A voice vote was affirmative.

Article 8: Will the Town vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to borrow money in anticipation of taxes? Craig Cota moved to approve the article. Seconded and approved.

Article 9: To do any other necessary and proper business brought before said annual Town Meeting. Forrest Newton noted that the Historical Society is looking for a flag which was donated to the School. The flag covered the casket of Raymond Knowlton in Argonne, France where he died during WWI. 2017 marks the 100th anniversary of his death and the family is planning a visit to his grave and would like to borrow the flag and bring it back to France with them. Marilyn Labadie noted that the Gaysville Church will be holding a breakfast on March 19th at the school. Steve Aldrich is the Stagecoach Representative. He noted there will be hearings regarding their proposed merger. He will be leaving the Board in April and is looking for someone to fill his spot. Wil Eigenbrod felt that the Selectboard report which deals with legal action regarding Town Highway #30 was incorrect. He refuted the Board's claim that the town obtained Clear title to the road as he signed a quit claim easement. He feels that the Board has harassed him during this process and he objects to it being called Bishop Road. Rich Lunna noted that in most cases with roads

the property owners owns the property with an easement passing through. All roads are easements and that the Selectboard's description was correct. Ethan Phelps questioned how this discussion was necessary. Steve Farrington noted that EC Fiber has been installed on Music Mountain and along Route 100 to Rochester and Pittsfield. They are currently taking orders for service. He would be glad to answer any questions by email mail@stepehnfarrington.com. They have room for a 2nd alternate delegate if anyone is interested. The meetings are held at the Vermont Law School. The Quintown Senior Center is temporarily holding their lunches at the Meeting House on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. All are welcome. Suzanne thanked them for making the space available.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 PM.

Cathy Brown, Town Clerk

Approved:

STOCKBRIDGE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Jim Shands

Lee Ann Isaacson

Mark Pelletier