

## **Minutes of the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Town and Town School District of Fairfield, Vermont**

The inhabitants of the Town of Fairfield met at Veteran's Hall, Fairfield Center School, on March 4, 2014. Bridget Howrigan Rivet, Moderator reviewed Robert's Rules of Order and requested those who were not registered voters to raise their hand. The meeting was then called to order at 10:02 a.m. The Moderator led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for those beloved townspeople who are no longer with us. The Warning was reviewed and nominations for Moderator were requested.

1. MODERATOR: Bridget Howrigan Rivet was nominated by Albert Tetreault and seconded by Gene Archambault. Nominations ceased. The Clerk was asked to cast one ballot for Bridget Howrigan Rivet.
2. TO ACT UPON THE VARIOUS REPORTS OF THE OFFICERS OF THE TOWN AND TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT AS CONTAINED IN THE CURRENT TOWN FINANCIAL REPORT: No discussion.
3. TO ELECT FROM THE LEGAL VOTERS OF SAID TOWN THE FOLLOWING OFFICERS:
  - a. ONE TOWN CLERK FOR 3 YEARS: Amanda Forbes nominated by Albert Tetreault and seconded by Jerry Yates. Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Amanda Forbes.
  - b. ONE TREASURER FOR 3 YEARS: Amanda Forbes nominated by Tom Howrigan and seconded by Michael Malone. Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Amanda Forbes.
  - c. ONE SELECTPERSON FOR 3 YEARS: Gavin Ryan nominated by Tom Howrigan and seconded by Howard Mitchell. Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Gavin Ryan.
  - d. ONE SELECTPERSON FOR 2 YEARS: Norman Menard nominated by Gavin Ryan and seconded by Bennett Dawson. Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Norman Menard.
  - e. ONE AUDITOR FOR 3 YEARS: Jeanne Persons nominated by Joy Kane and seconded by Anne Howrigan. Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Jeanne Persons.
  - f. ONE LISTER FOR 3 YEARS: Linda Hodet nominated by Gavin Ryan and seconded by Rebecca Moyer. Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Linda Hodet.
  - g. ONE LIBRARY TRUSTEE FOR 3 YEARS: Kerry Lambert nominated by Gene Archambault and seconded by Susan Magnan. Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Kerry Lambert.
  - h. ONE LIBRARY TRUSTEE FOR 2 YEARS: Albert Tetreault nominated by Julie Wolcott and seconded by Jerry Yates. Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Albert Tetreault.
  - i. A FIRST CONSTABLE FOR 1 YEAR: Linda Hodet nominated for First Constable by Amanda Forbes and seconded by Michael Malone. Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Linda Hodet. Motion passed by voice vote.
  - j. ONE OR MORE GRAND JURORS FOR 1 YEAR: Todd Merchant nominated by Mary Schreindorfer and seconded by Howard Mitchell. Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Todd Merchant.
  - k. A TOWN AGENT FOR 1 YEAR: Vanessa Kittell nominated by Tom Howrigan and seconded by Jessica Gaudette. Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Vanessa Kittell.
4. SHALL THE VOTERS APPROVE 2014 TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES OF \$1,380,761, OF WHICH \$932,691 SHALL BE RAISED BY TAXES AND \$448,070 BY NON-TAX REVENUES?: Motion made by Julie Wolcott and seconded by Shaunee Higgins. Melissa Manson requested Gavin Ryan speak on the increase in the budget this year. Gavin explained

that the \$73,000 increase for 2014 was largely due to the higher costs for equipment maintenance and road maintenance seen in 2013. The fund balance for the 2013 budget was approximately \$5,000. He discussed some projects completed during the year, including replacing lights in the garage and a generator purchased to run both the garage and fire station. A question was asked whether resurfacing of roads was planned. Gavin responded that there is \$150,000 in the budget each year but large projects will depend upon whether we received a state grant. Discussion ended. Motion passed by voice vote.

5. SHALL PROPERTY TAXES BE DUE AND PAYABLE ON THE THIRD FRIDAY IN NOVEMBER, THIS YEAR BEING NOVEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup>? Motion made by Tom Howrigan and seconded by James Gregoire. Motion passed by voice vote.
6. SHALL A 4% DISCOUNT BE ALLOWED FOR 30 DAYS FOLLOWING THE ISSUANCE OF THE TAX BILL?: Motion made by Melissa Manson and seconded by John Baxter. Motion passed by voice vote.
7. TO HEAR THE REPORT OF THE LIBRARY: Julie Wolcott, Library Trustee, asked that the Trustee's Report be submitted as written in the Town Report. Kristen Runyon Hughes briefly discussed library programming and asked that everyone complete the survey sent out by the Growth Fund Committee. She thanked Julie Wolcott for her service as Trustee.
8. SHALL THE VOTERS APPROVE EXPENDITURES OF \$128,150 FOR THE BENT NORTHROP MEMORIAL LIBRARY, \$15,128 OF WHICH SHALL BE RAISED BY TAXES AND \$113,022 BY NON-TAX REVENUES? Motion made by Laura Bellstrom and seconded by Toby Fulwiler. Motion passed by voice vote.
9. SHALL THE VOTERS ALLOW THE USE OF VOTE TABULATOR MACHINES FOR THE CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS? Motion made by Greg Christie and seconded by Dan McCoy. Amanda Forbes explained that the Secretary of State's Office supplies the tabulators at no cost to the Town. Formatting the tabulators for each election will cost approximately \$800. A bill is in the legislature that would provide \$500 towards the cost. We currently rely on volunteers and physically hand count ballots. Recounts have proven that tabulators are accurate while hand count towns have had inaccurate results. In an election it is common to have 25-30 volunteers who count for 2-2.5 hours and then the Town Clerk and Assistant, continue their work until midnight or longer. This would shorten that time significantly. Discussion continued regarding paying volunteers, doing a manual hand count back up to ensure accurate tabulator results, and concerns of distrust regarding the process. It was explained that these were not voting machines but a scanner to count ballots. It was confirmed that local votes, such as the school budget, would still be done by hand. It was suggested by Gene Archambault that next year more discussion be had on the \$1+ million budget. Other discussion included letting other towns go first and having both the hand counting and tabulator next election. A motion to call the question was made by Brian Jerose and seconded by Matt Hughes. A voice vote was indistinguishable so a show of hands was called. Motion passed 54-41.
10. SHALL THE VOTERS APPROVE THE DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTOR BE COMPENSATED BY A SALARY IN LIEU OF FEES? Motion made by Melissa Manson and seconded by Dustin Tanner. Gavin Ryan explained that when Linda Hodet was hired 6 years ago as Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer she agreed to let her Delinquent Tax Collector fees go to the Town to help pay for her salary. The Delinquent Tax Collector is an elected position and by law the fees go to them. In order to make the position an appointed position it would require a lengthy process and a Town Charter. This article allows the Selectboard to avoid that process and set a salary instead of fees. Discussion continued regarding the position being in the clerk's office and how much more efficient it is to use the computer programs and take payments during regular business hours. Amanda Forbes noted that ultimately the setting of the salary at a dollar would discourage another person outside of the office from seeking the job and keep things running as they have

been. Motion made by Mary Schreindorfer and seconded by Toby Fulwiler. Motion passed by voice vote.

11. TO ADJOURN TEMPORARILY THE BUSINESS OF THE TOWN UNTIL AFTER COMPLETION OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING: Hearing no objection the business of the town was adjourned temporarily until after completion of the School District Meeting.
12. TO ORGANIZE THE ANNUAL TOWN SCHOOL MEETING.
13. TO ELECT A MODERATOR FOR THE ANNUAL TOWN SCHOOL MEETING: Bridget Howrigan Rivet was nominated by James Gregoire and seconded by Howard Mitchell. Nominations ceased. The Clerk was asked to cast one ballot for Bridget Howrigan Rivet.
14. SHALL THE LEGAL VOTERS OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT APPROPRIATE \$5,491,179 WHICH IS NECESSARY FOR THE SUPPORT OF ITS SCHOOL FOR THE YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2014? [AUSTRALIAN BALLOT]: Moderator explained that Australian ballot items could be discussed at the meeting if the voters chose to and polls were open until 7pm to vote.

It was asked if the school budget amount had anything to do with building plans and it was answered, no, it did not. Questions about the projected 26 cent tax increase despite a modest budget increase by the School Board. What should be said to legislators? Michael Malone answered that schools with modest increases should be rewarded. Perhaps also another source of income should be used to fund schools, such as income or sales tax. Discussion continued regarding legislators coming to speak to the school board and the cost per student ratio. It was suggested that people call Don Collins to discuss their concerns.

(Results counted after the polls closed at 7:00 p.m. showed the budget was defeated 115 to 97)

15. SHALL THE LEGAL VOTERS OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT AUTHORIZE THE SCHOOL BOARD DIRECTORS TO BORROW MONEY IN ANTICIPATION OF TAXES AS NECESSARY, FOR THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR: Motion made by Julie Wolcott and seconded by Dustin Tanner. Motion passed by voice vote.
16. SHALL THE LEGAL VOTERS OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD AUTHORIZE THE USE OF \$4,000 OF THE CURRENT (June 30, 2013) CAPITAL RESERVE FUND FOR THE FUNDING OF THE TOWN GRANTWRITER POSITION: Motion made by Joanna Jerosse and seconded by James Gregoire. It was asked whether the grant writer has been successful in obtaining grants for the school? It was answered by Barry Fauteux that many grants have been awarded that are not specific to the school, but are beneficial to the entire town. Motion passed by voice vote.
17. SHALL THE LEGAL VOTERS OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT APPROVE THE USE OF ANY CURRENT (JUNE 30, 2013) FUND BALANCE RESERVED FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS FOR VARIOUS BUILDING AND GROUNDS IMPROVEMENTS: Motion made by James Gregoire and seconded by Barry Fauteux. What is in the fund balance and what will it be used for? Michael Malone answered that the fund balance is \$356,080 and they are looking to do some asbestos abatement, new flooring and new lockers. How much money approximately would be needed for this work? An amount could not be given. Question regarding where the fund balance comes from? From previous years money not spent. Why so much leftover? Much of it is from changes in high school or special education numbers. It was asked why this money could not be spent to offset tax increase in budget and provide tax relief? Michael Malone responded that this has been done in the past but was not done this year. How was the money spent in 2013? Barry Fauteux responded that \$84,658 was used to replace the gym floor, the security system and purchasing the old firestation. Recently there were kitchen problems and this money needs to be available for emergencies such as this. Motion to call the question made by Toby Fulwiler and seconded by Jessica Gaudette. Motion passed by voice vote.

18. TO ELECT ONE (1) SCHOOL BOARD DIRECTOR BY BALLOT FOR A THREE (3) YEAR TERM: Bennett Dawson nominated by Barry Fauteux and seconded by Kenderlyn Phelps. Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Bennett Dawson. Motion passed by voice vote.
19. TO ELECT ONE (1) SCHOOL BOARD DIRECTOR BY BALLOT FOR A TWO (2) YEAR TERM: Charles Thomas nominated by Kristen Runyon Hughes and seconded by Jessica Gaudette. Nominations ceased, moved to cast one ballot for Charles Thomas.  
  
Michael Malone thanked Barry for his service on the School Board.
20. TO TRANSACT ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY PROPERLY COME BEFORE THIS MEETING. No discussion. Break for lunch at 11:45 a.m.
21. TO RESUME THE TOWN PORTION OF THE MEETING. Hearing no objection the meeting resumed at 12:28 pm.
22. SHALL THE LEGAL VOTERS OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD APPROVE \$57,243 FOR SUPPORT OF THE FAIRFIELD VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT. APPROPRIATION TO BE PAID UPON CONDITION THAT THE FAIRFIELD VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT SUBMIT TO THE TOWN, BY JUNE 30, 2014 A COPY OF ITS MOST RECENT BALANCE SHEET AND BANK STATEMENT FOR REVIEW BY THE TOWN AUDITORS: Motion made by Tom Howrigan and seconded by Patrick Winegar. Motion passed by voice vote.
23. SHALL THE LEGAL VOTERS OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD APPROVE \$35,000 FOR SUPPORT OF THE EAST FAIRFIELD VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT. APPROPRIATION TO BE PAID UPON CONDITION THAT THE EAST FAIRFIELD VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT SUBMIT TO THE TOWN BY JUNE 30, 2014 A COPY OF ITS MOST RECENT BALANCE SHEET AND BANK STATEMENT FOR REVIEW BY THE TOWN AUDITORS: Motion made by Toby Fulwiler and seconded by Kenderlyn Phelps. Motion passed by voice vote.
24. TO SEE IF THE VOTERS WILL APPROVE A DONATION OF \$15,000 FOR THE FAIRFIELD COMMUNITY CENTER ASSOCIATION: Motion made by Bennett Dawson and seconded by Father Bill Giroux. Motion passed by voice vote.
25. TO SEE IF THE VOTERS WILL APPROVE A DONATION OF \$3782 FOR THE FRANKLIN COUNTY HOME HEALTH AGENCY, INC. : Motion made by Tom Howrigan and seconded by Dan McCoy. Motion passed by voice vote.
26. TO SEE IF THE VOTERS WILL APPROVE A DONATION OF \$1500 FOR THE CHAMPLAIN VALLEY AREA AGENCY ON AGING: Motion made by Kenderlyn Phelps and seconded by Kelly Deb Paradee. Motion passed by voice vote.
27. TO SEE IF THE VOTERS WILL APPROVE A DONATION OF \$2500 FOR THE OUTDOOR CLASSROOM: Motion made by Toby Fulwiler and seconded by Dan McCoy. Motion passed by voice vote.
28. TO SEE IF THE VOTERS WILL APPROVE A DONATION OF \$1000 FOR THE FRANKLIN COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY. (PREVIOUS YEAR-\$1000): Motion made by Gail Williams and seconded by Joanna Jerose. Gail Williams spoke to their feral cat spay/neuter program. Motion passed.
29. TO TRANSACT ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY PROPERLY COME BEFORE THIS MEETING.

Joanna Jerosse announced that the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class is celebrating America's Heroes for the 250<sup>th</sup> celebration. Any of those who knew veterans who served from Fairfield call Joanna Jerosse or Jen Wood.

If you have any wood to donate to the sugarhouse a ½ cord of dry wood is needed.

Jane Dowbrowski thanked the town for their support of the Community Center.

30. TO ADJOURN. A motion to adjourn was made by Toby Fulwiler and seconded by Michael Malone at 12:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda L. Forbes, Clerk

To the best of my recollection, I attest that these minutes are a true and accurate reflection of the events of Town Meeting Day, March 4, 2014.

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Bridget Howrigan Rivet, Moderator

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Tom Howrigan, Select Board Chair

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Michael Malone, School Board Chair