

**TOWN OF ROCKINGHAM
ANNUAL TOWN AND TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING
MARCH 2 & 3, 2015**

Present: Michael Harty, Moderator; Doreen Aldrich, Clerk; Ann C. DiBernardo, Peter Golec, Susan Hammond, Joshua Hearne & Thomas MacPhee, Selectboard Members; Willis D. Stearns, II, Municipal Manager

Press: FACT8, Wendy M. Levy, The Commons; Dominic Poli, Brattleboro Reformer; Becca Balint, Carolyn Partridge and Matthew Trieber, State Representatives

The Moderator called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and immediately turned it over to Selectboard Chair, MacPhee who led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance. MacPhee then presented a small plaque to Dennis Knight honoring him for his length of service and his work ethic. The Moderator then gave a brief overview of Roberts Rules.

WARNING

The legal voters of the Town of Rockingham and Town of Rockingham School District are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Town Hall Auditorium (Bellows Falls Opera House) in said Town on Monday, March 2, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. to act upon all matters which may be voted upon by acclamation and not otherwise to be voted upon by Australian ballot, and then to adjourn to the Masonic Temple (61 Westminster Street) in said Town at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, March 3, 2015 to vote by Australian ballot on Article 1.

ARTICLE 1: To elect Town Officers and Town School District Officers as required by law. (By Australian ballot)

ARTICLE 2: Motion by Hearne and seconded by Golec to approve the reports of the Town Officers for the past year. There was no discussion and **the motion passed.**

ARTICLE 3: Motion by Golec and seconded by DiBernardo that the voters of the Town of Rockingham authorize the Selectboard and Treasurer to borrow money from time to time in anticipation of tax collection, or payment of money due the Town from the State of Vermont for highway or other purposes or payment to the Town from federal funds. There was no discussion and **the motion passed.**

ARTICLE 4: Motion by Hammond that the voters of the Town of Rockingham authorize the Selectboard to seek out and/or accept funds available from non-property tax revenue sources and to spend those funds in appropriate ways after required public input; seconded by Golec. There was no discussion and **the motion passed.**

ARTICLE 5: MacPhee spoke to the article. One cent will raise approximately \$50,000. If everything passes this evening, it will amount to an anticipated tax rate of 4.95 cents. He then moved that the voters of the Town of Rockingham raise and appropriate the sum of Five Million, Twelve Thousand, Three Hundred Fifty-Five Dollars (\$5,012,355) with Four Million, Two Hundred Forty-One Thousand, One Hundred Forty (\$4,241,140) to be raised by taxes; seconded by Hearne. James McAuliffe asked Stearns, as a point of clarification, does the Five Million Dollar number appear anywhere in the report. It looked to him that we would have to add up a bunch of different numbers. If so, it leaves a lot to be desired. MacPhee responded, "yes, and you bring up a good point". McAuliffe then asked, on the general fund, how much of an increase is that? MacPhee said about 4.4% above the current year budget. McAuliffe asked what the key drivers are. Stearns responded recycling (pg. 24); it went **Annual**

from \$25,000 to \$100,000 in anticipation of Westminster who last Saturday put back curbside pick-up. McAuliffe asked if we shouldn't take it out now. Stearns responded that if you look at the revenue stream, there's a \$100,000 revenue stream that matches that number so the net result is no taxes in relation. McAuliffe felt it should be revised. Stearns said his question this afternoon was could we reduce by \$75,000 the expense and reduce by \$42,000 the income. He would have to adjust both sides. McAuliffe also noticed on page 24 that the wages for recycling have doubled. Stearns said, again in anticipation of Westminster and Rockingham having to be open more hours. Neither one of those events need to take place which they, literally, learned about Sunday morning in the newspapers. McAuliffe said he realized it was short notice; but in terms of raising taxes, his goal is to see fewer dollars raised and less of a cushion. McAuliffe said the general fund is \$2,513,000; that's up 4.4%. If you took out the close to \$80,000-\$85,000 that would be the amount to reduce the amount to be raised by taxes. Stearns said it has gone up \$105,000 in total from last year's budget. They went on to explain what else goes into the five million. Cemeteries & parks, \$73,626, that is identical to last year. The highway fund adds \$2,836,657 which is actually down \$134,000 because we eliminated paving. The amount to be raised by taxes is \$2,531,317 and that's up about 7%. McAuliffe asked what the key drivers are there. Stearns responded, Averill's bridge \$200,000 with a 5% match to the State of Vermont. MacPhee added that they eliminated paving because the state will pave from the north end of Town all the way to Westminster. McAuliffe moved to amend Article 5; that the voters of the Town of Rockingham raise and appropriate the sum of \$4,983,675 with \$4,194,640 to be raised by taxes. Joel Love seconded the motion. **The amendment to the motion passed.** Article 5 now reads: That the voters of the Town of Rockingham will raise and appropriate the sum of \$4,983,675 to pay the indebtedness of the Town, repair and maintain highways and pay all other general and regular expenses of the Town beginning July 1, 2015 through June 30 2016 with \$4,194,640 to be raised by taxes. **The motion passed.**

Article 6: Motion by DiBernardo and seconded by Hammond to see if the voters of the Town of Rockingham will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Hundred Eighty-One Thousand Nine Hundred Six Dollars (\$381,906) in operating expenses for the support of the Rockingham Free Public Library with Three Hundred Thirty-Eight Thousand, Three Hundred Sixty-Four Dollars (\$338,364) to be raised by taxes. There was no discussion and **the motion passed.**

ARTICLE 7: Moved by Hammond and seconded by Hearne that the voters of the Town of Rockingham vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000) for the purchase of a Rockingham Fire Department 1 Ton Rescue Vehicle with Forty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$45,000) to be raised by taxes and Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000) to be taken from the Fire Equipment Fund. Greg Noble asked how much is in the fund now and Stearns said \$18,419.91 as of today. He also explained why the need for replacement of the existing truck. **The motion passed.**

Article 8: Moved by Hearne and seconded by Hammond that the voters of the Town of Rockingham vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) as matching funds for a grant to purchase equipment for the Recreation Department. **Ryan Stoodley spoke to the article and asked to amend this motion to Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000). Colin James seconded the amended motion.** When asked what is being replaced, he explained that all the new equipment will be handicapped accessible and more expensive. There will be matching funds. Noble cautioned that Stoodley needed to be sure the grant will allow matching funds up to \$20,000 and not just \$10,000. Stoodley said the more money we put up, the better the match. **The amended motion passed.** The

Moderator explained that we were on the motion to appropriate \$20,000. **The motion for \$20,000 passed.**

Article 9: Moved by Golec and seconded by DiBernardo that the voters of the Town of Rockingham raise and appropriate the sum of Seventy-Three Thousand One Hundred Three Dollars (\$73,103) to be allocated to the social service agencies. American Red Cross \$2,000, Bellows Falls Senior Center \$21,384, Connecticut River Transit (The Current) \$3,825, Green Mountain RSVP & Volunteer Center \$1,450, Meeting Waters YMCA \$5,000, Our Place \$5,000, Southeastern Vermont Community Action \$4,770, Vermont Adult Learning \$1,350, Visiting Nurse Alliance of VT & NH \$26,024 and Youth Services \$2,300. Golec advised that the appropriation is an increase from last year; up about \$5,700. Falko Schilling spoke to the appropriation for VNA which is level funded. **The motion to appropriate \$73,103 passed.**

Article 10: Moved by DiBernardo and seconded by MacPhee that the voters of the Town of Rockingham vote to raise, appropriate and expend the sum of Two Thousand Seven Hundred Dollars (\$2,700) for the support of outpatient mental health and substance abuse services by the staff of Health Care and Rehabilitation Services, Inc. to residents of the Town. Robin Story said it is a worthy cause, however, HCRS just gave their outgoing CEO a \$650,000 severance package. MacPhee explained that this took place three years ago and there is visibility on this now. The new CEO isn't making anywhere near what the outgoing CEO made. **The motion failed.**

Article 11: Moved by DiBernardo and seconded by Hammond that the voters of the Town of Rockingham appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Five Hundred (\$2,500) to the Springfield Supported Housing to assist families and individuals find permanent housing and provide in-home case management services for six months to two years after placement. Don Tretler, a director spoke to the article. **The motion passed.**

Article 12: Moved by Hammond and seconded by DiBernardo that the voters of the Town of Rockingham vote to raise, appropriate and expend the sum of Four Thousand Dollars (\$4,000) for the support of Parks Place Community Resource Center to provide services to residents of the Town. There was no discussion and **the motion passed.**

Article 13: To transact any other business deemed proper when not involving the expenditures of Town funds or any other business acted upon in the preceding articles. McAuliffe said he'd like to make an observation for the board. If you look on page 25 of the Town Report, now that we have the Affordable Care Act, employees' health insurance budget is \$59,000. The item for insurance incentives, \$29,500 and he is focusing more on the insurance incentive line. On page 41 under the library budget, the health insurance has dropped from \$22,000 last year to \$7,900 this year and the incentives have gone from \$6,800 to \$16,200. Looking at these numbers, there is something going on and needs to be reviewed and looked at closely. MacPhee responded that the insurance incentive saves the Town money in the end. The Town pays out 35% of the plan cost for the employees who do not take the health insurance so we save 65% of that value; but they have to prove they have insurance to get it. The library employees are seen through the insurance program as Town employees and the reason for a shift is we had an employee leave while the budget process was going on. When an employee leaves who had a family plan and someone comes in and is covered by their spouse, those costs shift because

they are entitled to take the incentive instead. Many employees changed during the year and we had a few get married. We have a few get divorced. The numbers and values change constantly. Camilla Roberts said she is very interested in the Merger Committee report. She would like an overview of the process. MacPhee responded that right now, the BF Trustees and Rockingham Selectboard are working their way through to see if they can come up with a plan of merger to put to the voters. We just got underway. He is hopeful they can come up with a fair plan to put to the voters and let the voters decide.

The Town portion adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

I certify that these are true minutes of the Town of Rockingham’s Annual Meeting.

Attest: _____ Town Clerk

Approved: _____ Moderator

Approved: _____ Chair, Rockingham Selectboard

Registered Voters 3,480

Voters Checked Off Checklist 111

0.03% Participation

Minutes School Portion of Annual Town Meeting

Present: Michael Harty, Moderator; Doreen Aldrich, Clerk; Chris Kibbe, Supt. Rockingham School Dist.; Sherri Arvin, Kate Coburn, Margo Ghia, Rick Holloway and James McAuliffe, School Board Members

Press: FACT8, The Commons and the Brattleboro Reformer
The Moderator called the school portion of the meeting to order at 8:50 p.m.

Article 1: Moved by Arvin and seconded by Ghia to accept the reports of the Town School District Officers for the last year as presented. There was no discussion and **the motion passed.**

Article 2: Moved by Coburn and seconded by Arvin to authorize the Town School Directors and Treasurer to borrow money, if necessary, on the credit of the Town School District for its current expenses in anticipation of the collection of taxes and receipt of money due from state aid. There was no discussion and **the motion passed.**

Article 3: Shall the Rockingham Town School District appropriate the sum of Ten Million, Six Hundred Seventy-Six Thousand Five Hundred Ninety-Five Dollars (\$10,676,595.00) to operate and maintain its public schools for the period of July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 (By Australian ballot). McAuliffe spoke to the expense side of the budget and Kibbe spoke to the revenue side. McAuliffe explained that the budget is practically level funded; it's up \$38,000.

Article 4: Moved by McAuliffe and seconded by Arvin that the Town School District vote to release \$2,039.00 currently held in a 22 George Street reserve fund to the general fund to be used to offset expenses in the proposed FY16 school budget. **The motion passed.**

Article 5: Arvin moved and seconded by McAuliffe that the Town School District vote to release \$6,760 currently held in a BFMS Safety Street Signs reserve fund, to the general fund to be used to offset expenses in the proposed FY16 school budget. **There was no discussion and the motion passed.**

Article 6: Moved by Holloway and seconded by Ghia that the Town School District vote to release \$1,930.50 currently held in a CES Sewer Disposal System reserve fund to the general fund to be used to offset expenses in the proposed FY16 school budget. There was no discussion and **the motion passed.**

Article 7: Moved by Ghia and seconded by Holloway to authorize the Town School District to pay its District Officers compensation in the amount of: Board Chair \$700, Board Members \$600 and Treasurer \$400. There was no discussion and the motion passed.

Article 8 Other Business: There was no other business.

At 9:10 p.m. McAuliffe moved to adjourn, seconded by Jill James.

I certify that these are true minutes of the Annual Town and Town School Meeting.

Attest: _____ Town Clerk

Approved: _____ Moderator

Approved: _____ Chair, Rockingham School Board

Registered Voters 3,480

Voters Checked Off Checklist 111

0.03% Participation

The polls opened at 9:00 a.m. for the Australian ballot portion of Town Meeting and closed at 7:00 p.m. The results are as follows:

Moderator, 1 Yr. Term – Vote 1

Michael P. Harty	452 Votes
Write-Ins	4
Overvotes	0
Undervotes	49
Total	505

Selectboard, 3 Yr. Term – Vote 1

Josh Hearne	435 Votes
Write-Ins	5
Overvotes	0
Undervotes	65
Total	505

Selectboard, 1 Yr. Term – Vote 2

Stefan A. Golec	206 Votes
Susan Hammond	321
Thomas MacPhee	324
Write-Ins	7
Overvotes	0
Undervotes	152
Total	1010

Lister, 3 Yr. Term – Vote 1

Michael P. Harty	444 Votes
Write-ins	2
Overvotes	0
Undervotes	59
Total	505

Town Grand Juror, 1 Yr. Term – Vote 1

George M. Kuusela	410 Votes
Write-Ins	3
Overvotes	0
Undervotes	92
Total	505

Annual Town Mtg. Minutes**8.****March 2 & 3, 2015****Town Agent, 1 Yr. Term – Vote 1**

L. Raymond Massucco	426 Votes
Write-Ins	6
Overvotes	0
Undervotes	73
Total	505

Trustee public Funds – 3 Yr. Term – Vote 1

Matt Guild	442 Votes
Write-Ins	3
Overvotes	0
Undervotes	60
Total	505

Trustee Campbell Fund – 3 Yr. Term – Vote 1

Kathleen Kelly Neathawk	426 Votes
Write-Ins	2
Overvotes	0
Undervotes	77
Total	505

Custodian Campbell Fund , 3 Yr. Term - Vote 1

Jennifer Aldrich	424 Votes
Write-Ins	1
Overvotes	0
Undervotes	80
Total	505

Trustee Public Library, 3 Yr. Term – Vote 3

John Bohannon	370 Votes
Martha E. Rowley	355
Leslie A. Lassetter	336
Write-Ins	22
Overvotes	0
Undervotes	432
Total	1515

Annual Town Mtg. Minutes

9.

March 2 & 3, 2015

Trustee Public Library, 1 Yr. Term – Vote 1

Karin Fischer	401 Votes
Write-Ins	6
Overvotes	0
Undervotes	98
Total	505

School Moderator, 1 Yr. Term – Vote 1

Michael P. Harty	441 Votes
Write-Ins	3
Overvotes	0
Undervotes	61
Total	505

Rockingham School Director, 2 Yr. Term – Vote 2

Sherri Arvin	349 Votes
Margo Ghia	383
Write-Ins	3
Overvotes	0
Undervotes	275
Total	1010

Rockingham School Director, 3 Yr. Term – Vote 1

Kate Coburn	390 Votes
Write-Ins	2
Overvotes	0
Undervotes	113
Total	505

BFUHS #27 Director, 3 Yr. Term – Vote 2

Colin James	291 Votes
Kristen Swartwout	369
Write-Ins	9
Overvotes	0
Undervotes	341
Total	1010

**Article 3 Budget Rockingham School District
\$10,676,595.00**

Yes	291 Votes
No	193
Overvotes	0
Undervotes	21
Total	505

Annual Town Mtg. Minutes

10.

March 2 & 3, 2015

Article 5 BFUHS #27 School Budget

\$7,235,432.00

Yes

285 Votes

No

198

Overvotes

0

Undervotes

22

Total

505

Article 1 River Valley Tech. Center Budget

\$2,737,793

Yes

325 Votes

No

157

Overvotes

0

Undervotes

23

Total

505

End