

## TOWN OF WEST WINDSOR ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

MARCH 3, 2020

The legal voters of the Town of West Windsor, Vermont are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Story Memorial Hall in the Town of West Windsor, Vermont on Tuesday, March 3, 2020 at 9:00 AM.

Moderator Matt Birmingham announced that he was going to delay calling the Town Meeting to order as we have a line out the door, but it is 9:00 AM so I have to open the ballot boxes. There is a school budget ballot for the Unified District which is yellow and the Presidential Primary ballot. You have to pick either Democratic or Republican.

The Moderator called the meeting to order at 9:10 AM. The Moderator introduced himself and read the introductory passage of the Warning. A motion to waive the reading of the balance of the Warning was made by Ted Emerson. This motion was seconded by many and passed by a voice vote. The Town Warning is found on page 96 of your annual report. The Select board report is on page 11. I'm pleased that we have so many people turning out today. This is something that I never thought would happen; this is my thirtieth year. When Fran Fenn handed this off to me he had done sixteen and I thought maybe I would try to contend and maybe even match Fran so I have doubted him. I'm sure he is listening to me right now.

Before we get to Article 1 to elect a Moderator, I would ask for a moment of silence for friends and neighbors that passed away this year. Matt read the names of the deceased and then a moment of silence was taken.

Matt said Article 1 is to elect a Moderator for the Town for the ensuing year. I'm going to step down and Cathy will use her notes from 1994.

Town Clerk Cathy Archibald took over the meeting for the election of Moderator.

**Article 1: To elect a Moderator for the ensuing year** – Phil Arvidson nominated Matt Birmingham to serve as Moderator. This nomination was seconded by Richard Beatty. There were no other nominations for Moderator. Matt Birmingham was elected Moderator by a voice vote.

The meeting was then turned back over to Moderator Birmingham. Matt said having done that I'm going to see with the consent of the house if I can get away with a little changing of plans. Normally the last article that we do is to do anything else that we need to do at the meeting. In this case that would be article 15 where I tell you we can't do any business but we can talk about whatever you want to talk about. Last year I started to move that article up informally, I might add, so with your consent I'm going to open up the floor to any thank you, any discussions, or any questions. We will still do article 15 but it's my experience by the time we get to article 15 you are so exhausted with my voice that you might leave early. I know there are people who wish to speak and on page 11 the Select board have thanked several groups. I have at least two in mind but I think I will let Win Johnson step up and tell us what he is thinking.

Win Johnson spoke and said I think the Select board made an error in acknowledging groups. We didn't include everybody but one group that I really feel we omitted and need to recognize is

Ascutney Outdoors for all that they have done for the Town particularly Glenn and Shelley. A round of applause was then given.

Win said one issue that has come up is what preparedness the Town might want to contemplate in the event that the Coronavirus spreads more than it has and it is said to do that. This will be on the Select board agenda for Monday night's meeting even though we haven't been asked by the State to do anything yet but Brett has suggested and I think it's a good idea that we at least talk about what we might do. If any of you are interested in participating and helping us in that discussion it would be a real favor to us if you would join us on Monday night and make your contributions to what you think the Town might do in the way of preparedness in the event that this gets worse than it is.

Matt said I for one would like to recognize Peter and Lauren and thank them for everything at the General Store. A round of applause was then given.

Matt continued saying the Select board also recognized the Planning Commission for it's hard work, the Friends of the Store, the Friends of the Library, the Library Trustees and the Conservation Commission. Now before we get to article 2 does anyone have anything that they want to ask or say.

Karen Diop spoke saying she wanted to mention the Nearly New Sale which is a fabulous sale that we have each year. This year again it will benefit the West Windsor Historical Society and it will be held on April 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> which is a Friday and Saturday. We are collecting goods on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday before that. There is a little notice out in the hallway that you can pick up that gives you more details about the sale.

Cecily Monro spoke saying I represent Aging in Place in West Windsor and Reading. There's a Community Forum on April 30<sup>th</sup> at the Thompson Senior Center in Woodstock. If you would like to learn what other communities in the Mt. Ascutney area are doing to improve the lives of their older neighbors, I suggest you come to the meeting. Join us for lunch at 12 pm followed by interactive conversations starting at 1 pm.

Win Johnson spoke saying it has come to the Select board's attention that there is available annually a State grant for facilities improvements and building like this one for sound and other things. The problem is we are competing with some pretty heavy bidders for those kinds of grants for Town Halls and public spaces where there are public activities. We need to determine if there is interest in Town in doing more in the Town Hall, more events, doing entertainment events or whatever. We're not going to apply this year, but if there is interest we need to have that kind of backup to justify, other than this condition we have now, that justifies an application. Please let us know if you have an organization that is interested in doing anything that you want in the Town Hall to make it a better more active more utilized space.

Justin Burrows spoke saying we have a mailing list for West Windsor that I can e-mail to each of you. See me to sign up.

Ken Parrot said for anyone that is interested, I've been involved with some other people with the ash inventory and the EAB infection and I have a samples of the beetles and the lava and some information with me if anyone would like to find out a little bit more about it.

Win said I just want to add that Ken Parrot, Craig Gardner and others have just recently completed an inventory of ash along all the Town roads. This isn't an immediate threat but said to be a growing problem and when the bore gets here and it probably will, knowing where these ash trees are in the Town rights of way will be very useful. This small group of people including Ken, Craig, Barbara Gerstner, Anne Valentine and others did a tremendous amount of work completing inventory of every single Town road and there will be maps. There are hundreds of trees and Ken spoke up and said thousands of trees.

Tom Kenyon said I think we should recognize Edson Pierce for being a Trustee of the Library for many years. I think he has served on the Board for as long as anybody can remember. He has done a fantastic job and helped us through this transition in having it Town owned. I think we should thank Edson for his years of service to the Library.

A round of applause was then given.

Matt said we appointed Edson Pierce as an honorary life time Trustee and if I right Tom his mother was the Librarian. Was she not?

Tom replied she was for forty years.

Matt said there is a long history in the Library. This is my chance to pitch. If you haven't been there in the last four months go over and look. It's entirely different. Thanks very much to Peter.

Jackie Bertrand said he would like to compliment about one thing up at the mountain. That was a good T-bar that they put up there. A round of applause was given.

Matt said it reminds me of 1958!

Erik Boedtke spoke on behalf of West Windsor Fire and said for those of you that don't know Mike Spackman stepped down earlier this year as Fire Chief and I think we owe him a big thank you from the Town for 33 years of service. A round of applause was given.

Elizabeth Burrows spoke saying I served on the School Board and also part of the Aging in Place group. As you will learn later today that Zachariah Ralph has decided not to run for reelection. I have a petition to put my own name in for his seat so that I would represent West Windsor, Windsor and Hartland at the State.

Peter Varkonyi spoke saying we have had a great year at the Butcher and Pantry and there are a couple of groups, organizations and the Town as well that we'd like to thank. It reminds you that we couldn't do what we do without this Town and the support of the Select board, Ascutney

Outdoors and many other organizations. We are just so appreciative so thank you for another great year.

A round of applause was given.

Matt asked if there was anything else before we move to Article 2.

**Article 2: To act on the reports of the Town for the year ending December 31, 2019.** Matt said our tradition here is to get a motion and a second to adopt that article and then listen to any corrections, additions or subtractions. A motion was made by Phil Arvidson to adopt the town reports and a motion was made by Richard Beatty. Matt asked said this usually comes from Cathy but no corrections or no additions. Cathy replied none that I'm aware of. Matt said our town reports are apparently perfect this year. As usually I might add.

Mike Spackman said they are not quite perfect.

Matt said I thought you retired.

Mike said I'm reporting as the Forest Fire Warden and I have not retired from that position. In my report on page 57 the very last number is not 011. It's 911.

Mr. Spackman has asked us to amend your report to 911. I assuming that nobody objects to that.

Matt asked if there were any other thoughts about the town report and if not those in favor of adopting it as amended by our briefly retired chief please signify by saying aye. This motion passed by a voice vote.

**Article 3: To elect all Town Officers and establish compensation as proposed in the Selectboard's budget.** Matt said the elected officers are on page 7 and the appointed officers are on page 8 and 9. Matt read the positions up for election. Years ago we started a tradition that before we elect people we establish their compensation first so that if they stand up to be elected they will at least know if they are going to be paid and if so how much. I will tell you what the budgeted compensation is and we'll adopt or amend that first and then we will go on to hear who is running for those officers. Town Clerk is \$37,627.00 and these are annual figures by the way. Town Treasurer is \$37,627.00, Selectboard is \$1,000.00, Listers are \$19.38 an hour, Auditors are \$19.38 an hour, Delinquent Tax Collector is \$19.38 an hour, First Constable is \$19.38 an hour, Second Constable is \$19.38 an hour, Town Agent is zero and Campbell Fund Trustee is zero. To get this out for discussion I need a motion and a second to adopt those levels of compensation. A motion was made by Phil Arvidson and seconded by Richard Beatty.

Matt asked if anyone had anything to say.

Gordon Troy stood and said he was a relative a new comer here and has lived in two other Vermont Towns. I was actually involved in Town politics in both of those Towns and I just want to say that we owe our gratitude to Cathy for all the fine work she does in managing the Town Office and

everything that she does as the Town Clerk and her other responsibilities. Having lived in other Towns I can tell you that the task that Cathy accomplishes is really staggering having been down there and probably bothered her way too many times but be that as it may I just think in comparisons to other Towns and frankly larger Towns than this, the work that Cathy does should be recognized by us all and particularly difficult tasks because we really dealing with two sides of the Town with two completely different sets of priorities. You've got the mountain side and then you've got the rest of the Town which is exactly what I dealt with at Warren. I think we all owe Cathy our gratitude and that's all I wanted to say.

A round of applause was given.

Matt said with that being said we have a motion and a second to adopt those levels of compensation. Is there any other discussion? Hearing none this motion passed by a voice vote.

Matt said the first office is that of Town Clerk.

**Town Clerk – 1 year** –Mike Spackman nominated Cathy Archibald. The nomination was seconded by Phil Arvidson. Matt asked if there were any other nominations for Town Clerk. Hearing none, the nominations were closed and this motion passed by a voice vote. Cathy Archibald was elected Town Clerk.

**Town Treasurer – 1 year** – Phil Arvidson nominated Cathy Archibald. The nomination was seconded by Richard Beatty. Matt asked if there were any other nominations for Town Treasurer. Hearing none, the nominations were declared closed and this motion passed by a voice vote. Cathy Archibald was elected Town Treasurer.

Matt said as we get to Select board let me remind me that for Selectboard, Lister and Auditor if there is more than one candidate we have to use paper ballots. If there is only one candidate, we can take a motion and a second that the clerk cast a single ballot for that person and move on.

**Selectboard – 3 years** – Matt said Brett Myers is the present incumbent for the office and she has told me that she is going to run again. Win Johnson nominated Brett Myers. The nomination was seconded by Richard Beatty. Hearing no other nominations, Win said he would like the clerk to cast a single ballot Brett Myers. This motion passed by a voice vote.

**Lister – 3 years** – Win Johnson nominated Debra Spackman. This nomination was seconded by Lucinda Walker. Matt asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, those persons in favor of the clerk casting a single ballot for Debra Spackman for the office of Lister. Is there any discussion.

Elizabeth Burrows asked what the duties of the Listers' are.

Matt said you're not going to get me to do that because I can't. Matt asked if there was a Lister in the back that could explain it.

Shirley Ouelette replied as little as possible.

Matt said Shirley said they work hard to value the properties in Town for tax purposes. Is that what you said Shirley.

Shirley replied yes.

Matt said they are responsible for our grand list.

Elizabeth asked what qualifications do they need to be elected?

Matt said they were foolish enough to get elected.

Matt said they work very hard and their offices are downstairs so you can visit anytime you wish.

Win said there are a number of educational programs to help Listers' learn their job and one of the reasons I'm so pleased to nominate Deb Spackman is she is very anxious to start taking those programs to learn more about what the job is and fulfill the role of the job.

Matt said we have a motion and a second that the clerk cast a single ballot for Deb Spackman for the office of Lister. This motion passed by a voice vote.

**Auditor – 3 years** – Barbara Gerstner nominated Justin Burrows. This nomination was seconded by Heather Smith. Matt asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, those persons in favor of the clerk casting a single ballot for Justin Burrows for the office of Auditor signify by saying aye. This motion was seconded and passed.

**Delinquent Tax Collector – 1 year** – Phil Arvidson nominated Cathy Archibald. This nomination was seconded by Richard Beatty. Matt asked if there was any discussion or further nominations. Ted Emerson asked what's the reimbursement for that office? I didn't hear it earlier. Matt said \$19.38 per hour which we already passed. Matt continued asking if there was any more discussion. Hearing none, the motion passed by a voice vote.

**First Constable – 1 year** – Mike Spackman nominated William Young. This nomination was seconded by Win Johnson. Matt asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, William Young was elected First Constable by a voice vote.

**Second Constable – 1 year** – William Young nominated Scott Smith. This nomination was seconded by Mike Spackman. Matt asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, Scott Smith was elected Second Constable by a voice vote.

Town Clerk, Cathy Archibald, took over the meeting for the election of Town Agent.

**Town Agent – 1 year** – Phil Arvidson nominated Matt Birmingham. This nomination was seconded by Richard Beatty. Nominations were declared closed and Matt Birmingham was elected by a voice vote.

**Campbell Fund Trustee – 3 years** – Edson Pierce nominated James Kenyon. This nomination was seconded by Tom Kenyon. Matt asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, James Kenyon was elected by a voice vote.

Matt said before we get to Article 4 I'll warn you in advance based on the phone traffic that I've got. Many of our elected officers' will show up here today and at some point with your consent give them a chance to address you and let you know what they've been doing in Montpelier all winter.

**Article 4: Shall the Town vote to pay taxes to the Town Treasurer by or on Friday, October 30, 2020 by 4:30 PM with no discount for payment in advance? Postmarks are not accepted as timely payment so payments received after 4:30 PM will incur penalty and interest.** – To discuss this I will need a motion and a second. A motion was made by Richard Beatty to adopt this article. This motion was seconded by Phil Arvidson. Is there any discussion? This is a fairly standard article but that doesn't mean we can't talk about it.

Claudia Sacuk spoke and said I'm under the impression we can't change this article on the floor. Do we need a petition to change this today?

Matt said you can move to amend it.

Claudia said she would like to see a little less punitive damage if you are a day late or an hour late or a minute late. There are other Towns that have warnings or give you a grace periods or even just a sign out front telling you taxes are due. I know we get the bills in plenty of time which is probably part of the problem. They can get misplaced or lost. I'd like to see something a little more lenient in our Town with regards to that because the penalties if nobody has ever had this happen which I have is 8%. 8% put you in a tight spot with our tax liability.

Matt said if you will let me get away with this I'm not going to treat that as a motion to amend but I'll treat it as a message to the Select board that you would like them to consider that going forward. We're not going to be able to do that this year but maybe going forward they can look at that for you.

Claudia said perhaps you could get a sign out front.

Cathy said we've got one.

Claudia said that's good I saw one out front today. That would help with reminding us.

Cathy said that's why I bought it.

Matt said we have a motion and a second to adopt that article as written. This article passed by a voice vote.

**Article 5: Shall the Town provide notice of availability of the annual report by mailing a letter to all registered voters at least 30 days before the annual meeting instead of mailing or otherwise distributing the report to the voters of the town pursuant to 24 V.S.A. #1682(a)?** Matt said I will take a motion and a second to adopt this article and then I think Win wishes to speak to that. A motion was made by Richard Beatty. The motion was seconded by Elizabeth Yordy. Win spoke saying just a little background. Most of you will recall that in the past we simply made town reports available at the Post Office and Town Office. New State law requires that town reports be mailed to each household or by vote of the Town approving the alternative by sending a notice which we did this year to each household telling them the town report is now available. By voting this today you would be approving that practice going forward and sending you a notice rather than sending you the whole report which would be much more expensive.

Jack Dugdale asked if the whole town report would still be available.

Win replied oh sure. We will be putting it up on the website as a PDF and if it's not there now it will be. Not much use this year but in the future the auditors will put it up on the website when it goes to print.

Elizabeth Yordy asked if we can elect it to be sent by e-mail instead of paying for postage.

Win said I doubt it because some people may not have access to e-mail. We have to comply with the State law and I'm not sure exactly what it says. Cathy do you know. Cathy replied I'm not sure. Win said we will look at it but I wouldn't count on it.

Tom Kenyon is this only true of the annual town meeting in March.

Win replied yes.

Justin Burrows said I just wanted to comment. I worked on the annual report this year and if anyone signs up for the town mailing list I can send out an e-mail to everybody on the town mailing list with a link so you can download the report.

Matt asked for any other comments or suggestions on this article. Hearing none this article passed by a voice vote.

**Article 6: Shall the Town approve budgeted expenditures of \$640,071.00 for the General fund (excluding appropriations) and \$751,055.00 for the Highway Fund (Combined \$1,391,126.00) for the year 2020, of which \$1,076,554.00 shall be raised by taxes after applying \$257,072.00 of budgeted non-tax revenues, \$7,500.00 from a Highway Fund prior year surplus and \$50,000.00 from a General Fund prior year surplus?** I need a motion and a second to get this on the floor. A motion was made by Richard Beatty and seconded by Laura Page. It's on the floor and normally I would step aside and let the Select board speak to it. Win Johnson spoke and said Matt has already directed you earlier to the Select board report beginning on page 11. We covered the first part of it and the next part is just a review of some of the highs and lows for the past year just for your information.

Unless there are any questions on that I can move on to the first bullet on the bottom of page 12, General and Highway Fund Budgets which I won't review in detail unless you want me to, but I'll just try to pick some of the high lights. The General Fund was easy this year. As a matter of fact, the tax increase I think is a slight decrease for the General Fund. We are still budgeting the General Fund with a deficit and we have been doing that for several years. We can do that for a few more years and that's because we have a fairly large General Fund surplus, larger than we need for contingency purposes and we have been trying to work that off by keeping tax rates down each year in the amount of \$50,000.00. Where we struggled, was in the highway budget, and I might need Mike to help me out here, but I think all of you know what a great job the crew does and I must say against increasingly adverse weather conditions and adverse circumstances and some not necessarily adverse but increasingly restrictive or burdensome State requirements for road maintenance. Salt and sand, we just had a really hard time even keeping up with those expenses. We set the budget for this year for salt and at the very last moment we had to increase it further than we initially put in. The weather as you are all experiencing whatever is causing it, we are getting more ice and more time is required to deal with those conditions. We also have an aging grader and we'll get to this later. We want to replace it in 2025 but in order to get it through another five years we needed to invest a fairly large amount of money for some periodic major maintenance to get it in an upgraded condition. We also have been budgeting the highway budget deficit but we're running out of that surplus or at least we are getting it down to a level that we need to keep some contingency; so this year we also reduced the deficit from \$15,000.00 to \$7,500.00. All of those have contributed to a higher required tax increase for the highway department than we would have liked and believe me we worked hard to try and find a way to work it down (but when you combine the increase with the no increase or modest and negative increase in the General Fund). What I did yesterday, I took those two increases and then took articles 7, 8 and 10 which are our normal appropriations and added ACT 144, which is the payment we are required to make for the School and using the current grand list, it may change and probably will change some by the time tax rates are finally set. This would result if you approve those articles, this one and 7, 8 and 10 it would result in a Town tax increase of a little over 2%. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

Matt asked if there were any questions for Win. Does anybody have any comments, suggestions or thoughts on the article?

Hearing no comments, thoughts or suggestions about article 6 this article passed by a voice vote.

Peter Varkonyi said he had a question as a new comer to this town and being a small business owner. What has been historically over the last 10 years the tax increase trajectory especially with the change of how we orchestrated our school now with joining with Windsor. Where do you see this going over the next ten years? Are these small increases going to continue?

Win said I can't speak for the School budget and I'm not allowed to as a matter of fact. If you missed Saturday's meeting of the new Unified School District, you missed an important meeting. In terms of the Town, obviously the Select board is going to keep working to keep the increases as small or even decreased if we can manage it but I have no crystal ball to tell you what it is going to be next year or the year after that. Again I'm plugging but article 14 is an effort to anticipate in 2025 a relatively large potential increase and manage our financials so it will not impact the budget. We've been worried

about replacing the grader for probably ten years and now we have a plan to do that. If our plan works, it won't be an event that causes a large tax impact and if our plan works it won't have any impact on the taxes.

Matt said Peter we have passed that article but I trust that helps you.

Matt said Win's comment brings to mind that I did what I always do and I just did a head count here and unless the desk up back tells me otherwise I think there's more than 120 people here. I was Moderator at the School meeting in Windsor on Saturday and there were 21 people there and 10 of them came from West Windsor and that was just shy of a 12-million-dollar budget. I just thought I would raise that because I'm always surprised that who's not there.

**Article 7: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of \$70,650.00 to support other West Windsor organizations and activities with such funds to be raised by taxes as shown below:**

<b>West Windsor Volunteer Fire Department</b>	<b>\$52,300.00</b>
<b>West Windsor FAST Squad</b>	<b>\$ 6,000.00</b>
<b>West Windsor Historical Society</b>	<b>\$ 6,350.00</b>
<b>West Windsor Independence Day Committee</b>	<b>\$ 2,000.00</b>
<b>Sheddsville Cemetery</b>	<b>\$ 4,000.00</b>

Matt said before we get to the discussion of that I need a motion and a second to adopt the article as read. A motion was made by Richard Beatty and seconded by Phil Arvidson. Matt asked if there was anybody here from any of these groups that wishes to be heard.

Bill Howland stood and said he recently moved back to Town and that he was a member of the West Windsor FAST Squad. I just wanted to let you know that the medium age on the FAST Squad is up there towards my own so if there are any citizens of the Town who have an interest in a relatively modest amount of training and the ability to respond and help your neighbors it would be much appreciated.

Matt asked if there were any other comments. Hearing none this article passed by a voice vote.

**Article 8: Shall the Town appropriate \$9,807.00 to support organizations providing services to West Windsor with such funds to be raised by taxes as shown below:**

<b>Health Care &amp; Rehabilitation Services of Southeastern Vermont</b>	<b>\$1,067.00</b>
<b>Windsor County Mentors f/k/a Windsor County Partners</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>
<b>Volunteers in Action</b>	<b>\$ 400.00</b>
<b>Vt. Center for Independent Living</b>	<b>\$ 140.00</b>
<b>Green Up Vermont</b>	<b>\$ 100.00</b>
<b>Visiting Nurse Association &amp; Hospice of VT/NH</b>	<b>\$3,475.00</b>
<b>SEVCA</b>	<b>\$1,050.00</b>

<b>Reading/West Windsor Food Shelf</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>
<b>VT. Association of Conservation Districts</b>	<b>\$ 100.00</b>
<b>The Current</b>	<b>\$ 125.00</b>
<b>Windsor County Youth Services</b>	<b>\$ 600.00</b>
<b>Windsor on Air</b>	<b>\$ 750.00</b>

Matt said he needed a motion and a second to adopt this article as read. A motion was made by Ted Emerson and seconded by Phil Arvidson.

Matt asked if there was any discussion, questions or is there anybody here from any of those groups that wishes to be heard.

Dana Waters spoke in regards to the Reading/West Windsor Food Shelf. The food shelf is alive and well and we serve about 70 families and we just committed to a \$7,100.00 generator that Stoney Electric is going to put in and they are donating some of that themselves. We had a scare about three years ago when we lost power for three days and one of the Reading Select board members brought down a generator and kept the place going. We expanded our services a little bit this year and we are doing more with the schools. We are providing health snacks for the schools' fruit and things and things are going well. We have good volunteers and we need more volunteers and we appreciate your support.

Ted Emerson asked if anyone could speak on Windsor on Air.

Win spoke and said Windsor on Air is here and I will say that I was initially somewhat skeptical. I'm not a real fan of being on television myself as a matter of fact I would just as soon crawl under the table right now but it's remarkable how many people tell me they have watched our meetings on line on Windsor on Air. If that's any indication of the utility, they provide in terms of getting information out to you or what devilry we are up to downstairs and they do a great job.

The person from Windsor on Air spoke saying the meetings also show up on Channel 8 so this will probably show up by Friday if you want to watch the meeting all over again.

Peter Money said that Windsor on Air has also been recording events in the Library.

Matt said for those of you who may not know that's Peter Money who is our new Librarian. I think I said it earlier is doing a great job.

Matt asked if there was any further discussion. Hearing none this article passed by a voice vote.

**Article 9: Shall the Town add Senior Solutions to the group of supported organizations providing services to West Windsor by appropriating the sum of \$750.00 with such funds to be raised by taxes?** Matt said I will accept a motion and a second to adopt this article. A motion was made by Ted Emerson and a second by Phil Arvidson. Matt said this article is now on the floor for discussion.

Win said I don't know if anyone is here to speak to this article but most of you know that our practice has been any new request or annual support is once it is voted on then it graduates to article 8. They don't have to reapply every year it just goes on article 8 and then we approve it if you want to approve it in that context in a group of organizations. Being a new organization this is there first entry and it's up to you to decide whether this is an organization worthy of the Town's support.

Heather Findlay asked what do they do?

Cecily Monro said I think they provide services to the seniors no matter what the service is and I would really hope you would support this article.

Win said this use to be the Council on Aging if you remember. There was just a name change here and I believe Polly Ouelette is the Town's representative on this board.

Mary Anne Boyce spoke saying if you are a retiree and received Medicare or Medicaid the Senior Solutions runs a whole series of programs every fall to give comprehensive discussions about the different options that are available. If you have to choose a drug plan you can call them and they will help you based on what drugs you're taking and I found it very helpful and very supportive in the past.

Jack Dugdale said for anyone who's interested it looks like they put a brief description of the organization on page 83 and 84.

Matt asked if there were any further comments, suggestions or thoughts in regards to this article. Hearing none this article passed by a voice vote.

**Article 10: Shall the Town approve the expenditure of \$18,000.00 for the Mary L. Blood Library, of which \$16,000.00 shall be raised by taxes and \$2,000.00 by non-tax revenue?** Matt said I need a motion and a second to adopt this article. A motion was made by Claudia Sacuk and seconded by Richard Beatty. Matt said full disclosure that I have already made to you as to this article and the next article I am a Library Trustee so I will have to be very quiet about both of these articles. Matt asked if there was any discussion or anybody wishing to speak to it.

Win said by way of background. \$16,000.00 is the appropriation you made last year and indicative of the appropriation you have made to the Library for years running maybe not precisely the same amount but close to it so that's sort of a status quo allocation to the Library which is no change from last year Article 11 will be addressed when we get to it which the Library Trustees will speak to you about it.

Karen Diop said my question is about the decrease in donations from an estimated \$500.00 to \$15.00 in the last year. I'm wondering if that's explained by the presents of the Friends of the Library and maybe those donations are going to the Friends of the Library rather than directly to the Library.

Peter Money said that's true.

Matt said there is a group called Friends of the Mary L. Blood Library which are not Trustees but are extremely helpful to the Library and the Trustees and some of them are here today.

Penelope Bliss said as President of the Friends of the Library we actually received our 501 (c) 3 so we are recognized as a charitable tax deduction. Donations go through the Friends of the Library and then we use it for whatever purposes we designate.

Matt said Friends of the Library are now tax free and if you remember the Library now belongs to the Town.

Ted Emerson said move the motion.

The motion passed by a voice vote.

**Article 11: Shall the Town approve additional Library expenditures of \$5,850.00 to be raised by taxes to increase its hours of operation from 8 to 15 hours per week, add to the resources it has to provide and make other service enhancements as proposed by the Library Trustees?** Matt said to talk about this I will need a motion and a second. A motion was made by Richard Beatty. The motion was seconded by Ted Emerson. Richard Beatty spoke saying he was one of the Trustees of the Library. Last year the Town took over title to the Library and we'd like to welcome the new Trustees. Many people have shown support for more hours and more scheduled programs. The Library report is on page 67 and 68 on the town report. We also visited two other Libraries, the Proctor Library in Ascutney and the Reading Library. The Ascutney Library serves a larger population than West Windsor and the Reading Library serves a population smaller than West Windsor. Both Libraries have hours of operation that exceed the Mary L. Blood Library hours and checking with the State their suggestion was to increase our hours as well. I think both Libraries that we visited did emphasize that we need to have an accessible computerized book category as well as interesting programs that appeal to different age groups at regular intervals. We are trying to accomplish some of those things as well. What the Library has been doing in the last year can be seen on pages 66 to 68 which includes the Friends of the Library who has been very helpful in raising funds and contributing to planning for the future. We are seeking additional funds to increase their operation from 8 to 15 hours per week. Probably during the afternoons on Tuesday and Wednesday and on Saturday mornings as well as in taking steps to increase and update our collection and computerize our catalogs and make our Library more inviting and more comfortable for the community youth and for programs and events to take place. One of the comments that we heard from one of the Librarians that we visited is that the business of Libraries today is not just lending and collecting books but also serving as a community resource and place for various activities to take place either at the Library or even this town hall. We also communicated to the school and they appreciated the participation and so we are asking for the funds necessary to accomplish some of those things.

Peter Money spoke saying about 120 years ago community members were gathered in Brownsville to establish a building across the street that is now owned officially by the Town as of last July. Congratulations everyone! We all own a new asset. A new asset that's 120 years old. A lot has been going on in the last year and I want to thank our Board of Trustees. We have seven members of the Town who oversee the Library not only the physical asset which is not to be ignored. It is beautiful. If

it's been awhile since you've been inside the Library, please feel welcome to come back and if you've never been in please feel welcome to step inside. It's not only a place for books and learning it's also kind of a museum. A lot of the visitors we have really admire that aspect as well – the black bear, the buck (Jack can tell you all about the buck), the owl, the Civil War drum and not to mention the names of many of our friends who are on the plaque as you walk in on the right and left. We've been collaborating with the Albert Bridge School and have students over. We've been collaborating with the local resources as I said earlier Windsor on Air has been filming events. We actually use our little Library for concerts so we are trying to expand the resource and engage more people. We have had concerts, we have a knitting group, we have a writers' group that meets. We hope to have a genealogy group and that kind of thing. We serve about 100 individual contacts a month. It's a little Library doing quite big. I thank you and please come and visit the Library because it really is an asset.

A round of applause was given.

Matt asked if there were any further thoughts or comments on this article. Hearing none this article pass by a voice vote.

Matt said Peter I hope you referring to the museum pieces doesn't include the Trustees. As a point of interest if you do visit the Library stop and look at the memorial plaques on the front porch for West Windsor citizens who have served all the way from the Civil War to the Korean War to the Vietnam War. Of interest at least to me as a Civil War buff is if you look at the Civil War plaque a couple of things of interest are 1) more men died in that war from West Windsor than all of the rest of the wars of this country combined and 2) I don't know how they would allow it to happen but on the plaque are names of people who commuted their draft by paying \$300.00 and didn't go. On the plaques are names of people who hired substitutes to go in their place. I'm not sure that if I hired a substitute I'd want to be memorialized like that. Peter and I have spent many hours talking about what that must have meant in those days. By the way, there are names of two people who were African-American and were not permitted to join the West Windsor brigade and had to go to Massachusetts to the Shaw's brigade.

Matt said let me try this on for size because our elected dignitaries our here. Matt told the representatives that we are real close to the last article and we are moving at a hundred miles an hour here so if it's okay we like to finish so if you can give us 10 minutes we should be done.

Alice Nitka replied absolutely.

Matt said so we are going to do is keep going.

**Article 12: Shall the Town vote up to the sum of \$12,000.00 to support the construction of a stone wall for protection of certain Sheddsville Cemetery graves with such funds to be raised from donations first with the balance to be paid from taxes?** I need a motion and a second to adopt that article as read. A motion was made by Ted Emerson and a second by Claudia Sacuk. Many years ago somebody said to me you can tell the condition of a Town by the conditions of its public buildings, the condition of the school, condition of the roads but perhaps most of all by the condition of the cemeteries. West Windsor has always taken great pride in their cemeteries. Over the years a number

of things have taken place. Thanks to the taxpayers we have improved the walls and had them restored. We have added additional space for people to be planted. We are approaching the last stage of things that need to happen in the next 15 or 20 years. There was a new entrance put in on the east side of the cemetery and that was to gain access to the back of the cemetery so that trucks and stuff didn't have to drive through the cemetery and that has been done. The one thing that was noted though is the need of some kind of barricade to protect the graves from vehicles driving over them. We thought of a solid wall but then some people approached me and said they would like it so they could park and walk. One of the persons buried there is John Holland. He is the only resident who was killed in Vietnam. It has been brought to our attention that perhaps a break in the wall would be better so that people could walk up to the cemetery and walk back and so we've decided that we will have a section wall that will prevent people from driving in the cemetery where they shouldn't and also have a place for people to sit. It's a very reasonable price so we have proposed the article and this is the last phrase that I will probably be involved in and I ask for your support.

Matt asked if there were any further questions, comments, suggestions or thoughts as to the article as read.

Lauren Stevens said I just want to be clear that we are voting to spend up to \$12,000.00.

Matt said as I read that it is up to \$12,000.00.

Lauren said have we shopped around for other alternatives for \$12,000.00.

Tom said the Select board approved this

Lauren said how are these donations being raised?

Matt said how are your donations being raised Tom.

Lauren asked if you were doing a fundraiser.

Tom said we haven't started yet.

Matt asked if there were any further discussion on this article. Hearing none this article passed by a voice vote.

**Article 13: By Petition – Shall the Town of West Windsor pay \$2,000.00 to the Town of Windsor to enable West Windsor residents to utilize the various facilities and programs of the Windsor Recreation Center without paying the additional non-resident fee?** I need a motion and a second to adopt that. A motion was made by Nancy Pedrick and seconded by Kathleen Deschamp. Matt asked if anybody wishes to speak to this article or is knowledgeable about it. Nancy Pedrick spoke and said first of all it should say up to \$2,000.00 and this was brought up at a school board meeting but it's not part of the school board it's a Town issue. It's mostly because we have merged with Windsor and our children go the recreation center and they are not residents. Since they will be in sports and different activities with classmates it would be nice if they were all equal. We know that their non-

resident fee is not great it's maybe \$5.00 or \$10.00 or even \$25.00 in towards summer camps but if you have more than one child that adds up. When we put this online and sent an e-mail out to the school and told them that I was bringing this petition to the school, there was a line at the school that day to sign the petition. The parents were really pleased that this was going to be brought up at Town Meeting. The petition was signed in little over a week which is amazing with extra signatures. I would hope that you will consider this. We talked to Tom Marsh and he gave us a range. He said other Towns in Vermont do this for their school and all their residents. The Select board might send a check for \$200.00 or so and when that is used up send another \$200.00 and so on and so forth. It may get to \$2,000.00 and it may not, but I would hope you would support this article.

Matt said we have a motion and a second to adopt this article. Is there any other discussion or questions? Hearing none this article passed by a voice vote.

Matt said here is what I propose to do. I will do article 14 which is I believe is the road grader which Win spoke about earlier and then I'll turn loose the elected officials on you. I think they would appreciate it and I would appreciate it if you would stay because they are going to bring you reports that will affect your lives and we are not adjourned yet. We still have article 15 to go which we cleverly moved aside and did first without any motions.

**Article 14: Shall the voters authorize a transfer of \$150,000.00 from the General Fund unreserved fund balance (estimate to be \$500,000.00 as 12-31-19) to the Highway Department Equipment Reserve in anticipation of replacing the grader in 2025?** I need a motion and a second to adopt this article as read. A motion was made by Richard Beatty and seconded by Phil Arvidson. Win spoke saying as I mentioned earlier we have thanks to our annual audit a current General Fund Reserve larger than it needs to be for contingency purposes. This is an accumulation of funds over many years. We used some of that reserve last year to buy the Burke property so it didn't hit the tax rate. This is another opportunity to use that. We have roughly \$500,000.00 and we will know precisely when the year end is closed and the audit is done. Take \$150,000.00 of that and move it over to the fund which is shown starting on page 40 which shows our Capital Budget for highway equipment and for road projects. On page 40 you'll see about mid-way down the programming of scheduling the replacement of the grader in 2025 for \$300,000.00. We cannot afford that in the contexts of what we have in the equipment fund now. We can afford it if we make this one time transfer of funds from the general fund to the equipment fund. I think it is a prudent decision and it's unavoidable that we're going to have to replace the grader and this is the best plan that we could come up.

Win asked Mike if there was anything he wanted to add.

Mike said no not really but it's pretty much a no brainer to make our capital budget work for the Town so our taxes are maintained and rather than have them spike up and then go down I strongly ask you to support this because of the benefit in the end in regards to our taxes.

Tom Kenyon asked if the money is transferred over to the Equipment Fund will it be designated for the grader and not to be used for anything else that the Select board might come up with.

Win said we are going to save money for the grader. We do have other equipment that we need to replace before then but we have that covered.

Tom said so that \$150,000.00 will be designated for the replacement of the grader.

Matt asked if there were any other questions or comments. Hearing none this article passed by a voice vote.

Matt said bear with me if you would. Alice, Allison everybody John why don't you all come up here and you pick the pecking order. Come on up.

Win spoke saying he would like to make a request of each of them. It would be very nice if you would inform us of your position on the Cannabis bill particularly with respect to local options and local taxes that are suggested by Vermont League. Your support of those provisions would be in my opinion highly constructive to us so I would like to hear you speak to that and give us your opinion and your position.

John Bartholomew spoke saying thank you for the opportunity and introduced himself. John said he was one of your two State Representatives and hopefully most of you know who I am by now. I want to first state what a privilege and honor it is to serve you in Montpelier. Not a day goes by when I don't recognize what an honor that is, so thank you very much. Representative Ralph and I did as we normally do a Town Meeting Report and this has some interesting articles hopefully interesting the ones I thought were interesting anyway. Those are out back on the table and there is also a little box that you can fill out if you want to have contact information for us. I never quite know what to talk about because the bills are still moving between the House and the Senate but one thing that we know for certain is that the minimum wage bill is going to go into law. In a historic vote, I think this will be only the ninth time in the history of the State, when we've been able to override the Governor's veto. We had 100 votes in the House and we need 100 votes so that will be going into law. We failed to override the veto by 1 vote on paid family leave. I'd like to mention briefly the prison property in Windsor. I think many of you know that 800 acres or so is now part of the Windsor Grasslands Wildlife Sanctuary but there is a 100 acres that used to be the actual prison that is still kind of just been mothballed and the Governor has a proposal and we are looking at it with a proposal of \$700,000.00 towards renovating some of those buildings into new State offices from Springfield for Fish and Wildlife and Forest Parks and Recreation. It makes a lot of sense to move those offices there and make some use of the property. I received a message recently from the Vermont Agency of Transportation and they have identified the need for a project to resurface Vermont Route 5. The plan is it not going to be really a permanent fix for the road. There are a lot of issues but they'll do some paving and some guardrail improvements.

We have 15 committees in the House and I serve on Agriculture and Forestry. We have a lot of interesting things going on there. I also was elected by my caucus to serve on the Rules Committee which is really a fascinating job to have because I figure if you don't know the rules of the game then you can't really play it and my job is to kind of keep things moving and to shut down debates that are improper. It's a very interesting job that I have taken on and a lot of responsibility.

The main thing I'd like to talk about this morning is climate. I think it's on a lot of people's mind. We have a lot of caucuses in the House and in the Senate and really the largest by far is the Climate Solutions Caucus. We have over 80 members and we have really become a force to be reckoned with and the Legislatures leadership in both bodies and the Climate caucus are going to focus on climate this year. We have been and I'm hoping we can make some real progress rather than just passing bills and pretend that we are making progress. It's time to act on climate change and its effect. We're seeing warmer winters, increasing severity of storms, punishing heatwaves and we are even seeing a lot more ticks. The effects are here now and they are affecting our lives and our livelihoods despite our past effects emissions have increased since 1990 by 13% which is largely due to transportation in Vermont. For many Vermonters especially young people are demanding action so Vermont has to do its part. The House recently passed a Global Warming Solutions Act which is going to be a hallmark bill. It's now in the Senate and the most important thing that it does is it transforms our existing emissions reduction goals from goals to requirements. The State will be required to meet them. Vermont is not a pioneer in the effect a lot of other New England States are succeeding in their efforts to reduce climate pollution while growing their economies at the same time. The goal of the bill is to reduce Vermont greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 and also to help build climate resilient communities. The goal, like I said, is to reduce gas emissions to zero by 2050 and it's going to allow Vermonters' to hold the State accountable to ensure that real action is taken.

The Senate also has some really important bills that we are also following like pushing utilities to be 100% renewable by 2030. We want to cap how much energy that we can take from the big hydroelectric plants and get our grids ready for electric storage. There is also a bill to deal with home and building efficiency and yet another one that would allow efficiency to Vermont to expand beyond their traditional role of electrical service into thermal and transportation sectors. These are really important and if you care about climate the Governor is not supportive of all these issues so it's not too early to start letting him know if you are concerned about climate issues.

We could spend the whole morning going over stuff and since there are four of us I'm not going to do that but again thank you for being here. I'll remind you that the Legislature website is a really good tool and it's useful if you want to follow any bill and you can see who's going to be testifying to a committee. A lot of the testimony is online and you can see the status of any bill so that's really a great resource if you're interested.

Again, thank you for the opportunity for me to serve and don't hesitate to call with any questions, comments or concerns.

A round of applause was given.

Zachariah Ralph spoke saying I'm your newly elected representative and this is my second session of my first term. Just to respond immediately to the tax and regulation of cannabis. The Vermont House just passed legislation a very massive bill to create a legal market for recreation marijuana. Marijuana has been legal now for a couple of years and so now we have created the market to allow people sell and purchase marijuana as well. What your Select board person was referring to was there was initially a piece of the bill that would have allowed for a 2% local option tax that would have gone to the municipalities. That was taken out in the House and was replaced with a 6% sales tax where if your

Town has a local option tax you can now take that 1% and use it. I will say that there was an amendment on the floor to revert back to the local option tax and there was also a smaller tax at 18% as opposed to 20% total. I supported the amendment. The amendment failed but alternatively supported the bill and that's because this was not a poison bill for me. The Legislation and the amount of work that went into creating a legal market was enormous an enormous, amount of work.

Win asked what about the vote. Will Municipalities permit the operation of a retailer by majority vote of those present voting.

Zachariah said that's currently in the Legislation. It's my understanding it's a big bill again and it's changed quite a bit but I believe that there is yes a Municipal option to vote to have it or not to have it as well. However, the bill is not final. We did not get a strong enough support in the House to override a veto and the Governor has expressed his interest in not supporting the bill, although I can't speak for him because there is not a roadside sobriety test that is involved with that, even though that doesn't actually exist. We did provide the opportunity to do a saliva test but you need a warrant to do that. The reason for that is because these types of roadside sobriety tests have been used disproportionately against low income and minority communities. I just wanted to response to that really quickly.

I'll be as brief as possible. I'm on the Commerce and Economic Development Committee and we primarily deal with banking insurance policies but we also work with incentive programs. I have to say that the Brownsville Butcher and Pantry and the Mount Ascutney Outdoor Center has been brought up multiple times. You guys are famous in our State. You really are a prime example of how we build our local economy through the support of our local communities. You don't need Federal and State initiatives to make this happen you all make this happen. Thank you so much for your hard work.

I just wanted to give you a brief overview that our economy is doing well for most people. We have the lowest unemployment rate in the country but we are still looking for opportunities to strengthen our economy in Vermont and address some of our inefficiencies that we've seen so far or opportunities. The two biggest challenges that we are running into which I'm sure you are all aware of is the housing crunch. There is not enough housing right now to fill the needs of our work demand and because there is a tight housing market it means that housing is really expensive. If you are renting you know that it's very expensive to rent and there are very few houses that you can purchase for under \$300,000.00. We are really looking at opportunities to find that missing middle real estate. How do we find housing and create opportunities for housing for that moderate and low income housing, and that's why we have continue to support funding for the Vermont Housing Conservation Board as well as for our Regional Planning Commissions which help with municipal planning, our quasi regional government and they provide a lot of expertise to our municipal government. In particular right now they are providing some guidance on how to create some high density housing, raise the height limit for buildings and how to get away from buffer zones. So, opportunities to grow and expand on our downtowns. There is also a proposal for the Vermont Housing Incentive Program, which will give some funds to private landlords to help weatherize their apartments which will ultimately help reduce the rate that individuals are paying for rent as well as for blighted properties as you have likely notice many rental properties that are not taken care of; this is an opportunity to help revitalize those. We are

working to bring, (the other challenge that we are running into), is that we have, as Shumlin has described, we have a damaging demographic trend where we don't have enough people moving into the state. I like to describe this as opportunity. Lots of people retiring means that there are lots of job opportunities for young people who want to move here. Of course we have to get them here and we are fighting with every single rural state in the country for these young people. So, minimum wages that's huge. When we provide higher wage earning opportunities for people that attracts some people here. We are also, as many of you may be familiar with, we offer what is called the Remote Worker Program and now the new worker program which we offer incentives for people to move here. This program was extremely successful especially compared with other programs around the country. We attracted close to 100 people. Individuals moved to the state who then came with their families' majority of them under the age of 40 with children. As young people entered schools' we calculated an average of \$3,200 to \$3,500 per person. We will recuperate those costs in a single year from those families and then they continue to pay taxes moving forward. It's been an extremely successful program so that's one way we are bringing people here. We're also looking at student loan refinancing, as many of you know or if you have children in school, student debt is a big burden on cost of living and it's hard to live in a rural community when you have \$500.00 in student loans every month in additional to rent and everything like that. We are looking at VSAC to offer student loan refinancing. The other really big issue that we are looking at is how to provide affordable early childhood care opportunities. If you move here with your family, and it cost you as much as it does to put your child in daycare as it does to work a single day you will not work. It just doesn't make sense. The reason that childcare is so expensive is because there's not a lot of opportunities out there to do it and the professional opportunities for it are not there either. There's not a lot of opportunity for growth in that industry and the wages are extremely low. Even in our current model our child care centers are closing. We're looking at ways to figure out how to make childcare more affordable to pay our childcare workers more and to offer them lower interest rate loans so they can keep more money in their pockets. Some other things that we are working on just to help out towns is creating smaller tax incrementally a smaller version of our tax incrementally financing for individual municipal projects. We are looking at convertible loan programs for businesses where are currently through Vermont Employee Growth Initiative you can receive funding that is paid out over multiple years. We're looking at making that an opportunity where you are paid up front which is better for small businesses. I actually thought about this with Tom's cemetery issue is that we are looking at creating a website where you can crowd fund so if you want to raise funds for your cemetery project you can use the website to accept local donations and then the State will provide a matching grant so that's our crowd funding website grant program. So that's my update on our committee. I have one other small announcement. I regret to announce that I will not be seeking reelection this year. Working at the State house for all of you has been one of the greatest joys of my life and I'm so grateful that you all voted for me and blessed me with the opportunity to represent you at our State. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with my colleagues John, Alice, Allison and Dick. We have great relationships up there. John has become a mentor and a friend and he sits right behind me so I can turn and ask him if I am doing something wrong on the floor which surprise sometimes I am. One of the greatest compliments I received and I can think of is that I'm a good Legislator and I hope that this also translates into good representation and good lawmaking. Last year while I was serving in my first term I went to go to help the environment and instead I fell in love with the Mayor of Montpelier and we're getting married in July. A round of applause was given. Thank you so much and we're going to live in Montpelier and I don't have no plans right now except to support her in her amazing mark as a Mayor and to support us in

raising a family bringing some more young people in this world so we can continue support the local economies. I will continue to be involved with politics. I'm currently a member of Vermont Progressive Party Coordinating Committee. Since joining the office I have learned from you what you all expect from a Legislator and I hope you will look for these qualities as you elect some body new. I know that you all want someone that works hard for you, somebody that shows up to the meetings and stays in touch with you. It is my understanding that West Windsor has never had representation in the Vermont House of Representatives so I encourage you in this next election to consider somebody from your own community. There are a couple of good candidates that I can think of already but this is your opportunity to have representation right here in your small town. Thank you again so much for electing me, the opportunity to speak and for all your hard work.

A round of applause was given.

Allison Clarkson spoke saying I realized that we have exceeded Matt's deadline on time. I will be incredibly brief because John and Zack have done an awesome job on updating you as where we are on many issues. I serve you in the Vermont State Senate along with Alice and Dick McCormack and it gives us great joy and it is a privilege. I would just want to say that I treasure town meetings and this is my eighth town meeting in three days and this is the only town meeting with flowers. I am so appreciative of the color in March. This is just terrific. I would like to say that one of the things I treasured most in coming to Vermont 29 years ago is being re-enfranchised in this form of direct democracy and what's great is two weeks ago to have US News and World Report celebrate Vermont naming it the fifth best state in the country to live in. I think as we debate and look at all the challenges we face remember how we are being honored abroad as one of the special places to live in and I hope we continue to treasure the things that make us so special. I'm going to let it be because we are so way over our time limit. I would just like to remind you to be careful about the coronavirus. It is all around us. We're the only state, we're the donut hole in the middle, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York and Quebec all have cases of the coronavirus so I urge you to take the washing your hands seriously and being careful as you travel. The other thing I'd like to say is we are totally dependent in this state on the census. We need a robust census done in the next several months and there are 9,000 jobs in Vermont alone. If you know anyone that would like a part-time job beginning at \$20.00 an hour. We get over six hundred million dollars to the state from the census as a result of the numbers that are put together through the census. Our redistricting, everything from transportation and school lunches are affected by the census so I encourage you to both honor it and fill it out. Without further ado Alice Nitka. A round of applause was given.

Alice Nitka introduced herself and said she was from over in Ludlow and I will just say a few words. I'm on the Appropriations Committee, Judiciary Committee and I'm also the Chair of the committee that judge Judges which we are going through now. In other words, all Judges in Vermont with the exception of Probate Judges and Assistant Judges go through something call Retention every six years which reviews their performance that they've had. It's a tough process for them and we then vote on whether they should be retained or not. In the Appropriation Committee we are going to have a balanced budget again as we've had for many years. It's not required by law but we are fortunately able to do it. In the Judiciary Committee we are working on something called Justice Reinvestment. That's where counsel of State governments is working to get prisoners out of prison that are eligible to be released and making it so they can get out and doesn't cost us so much. One of the big deterrence is

finding appropriate housing for them. They can't get out unless they have appropriate housing. Another issue in regards to that is expungements. In other words, you'd be surprised at the number of your residents in your town that have old minor criminal records. Those records can be expunged which gives these people an opportunity to advance perhaps in their professions or to get appropriate housing because you're not allowed in Federal housing. One example is expansion of expungement. We had a 56-year-old women come in who had a criminal offense from when she was 23. At that time, she was married with two children and owned her own home. Her brother who had a lot of problems with the law had stored some stolen property on her property which she wasn't aware of. Anyway, they found out that she didn't rat on him in the end. She figured it was his and she went to jail for 45 days. Since that time she has gone back to school and got a degree to be a teacher and of course she can't be a teacher because her fingerprints show a felony. So, she's one of the people that we're working on getting her records expunged so that she can contribute more to the community. There are nine new constitutional amendments that you might want to take a look at. They range from a four-year term for Governor which comes up regularly to something that has to do with Natural Resources and resources property which sounds like in it would be for the common good of all people. So that one has some things to be sorted out. That's what is going on there and I appreciate you listening to us so thank you very much. Oh one more thing, insulin. If you are person who is spending more than \$100.00, in other words we have heard from people who are spending more than \$900.00 a month for insulin so we passed a bill in the Senate that would cap that amount at \$100.00. This is working with the insurance companies. I don't know where it's going it just passed the Senate and will go over to the House.

Allison spoke saying we haven't answered your question so we need to answer your question quickly.

Alice said I will answer it. The bill hasn't come to the Senate yet with regards.

Win interrupted and said but will you support the local option.

Alice said I may not support the bill so I don't know.

Win said if it comes to local option.

Alice said I like the local option.

Allison said as do I. We benefit as you may recall local communities benefit from liquor sales and so it's important I think to continue to have local benefit from whatever you decide to do. I would remind us while liquor sales in most of our towns and it cost the state hundreds of millions of dollars in the effects through a whole range of social challenges. We already have embedded in our culture something that is incredible damaging and costing every taxpayer hundreds of billions of dollars. We will look forward to getting the bill and thank you very much.

John spoke saying we could obviously spend hours talking about marijuana and whether it should be legalized and how that should look. I did put an article in the newsletter about what the House did. The House version of the Senate bill undoubtedly this will be ironed out in the conference committee

by the two bodies and I did vote yes on the bill. It's a very difficult issue but for me prohibition just doesn't work and it really makes absolutely no sense to have legal marijuana but no legal way to buy it.

Lauren Stevens asked are we allowed to ask questions.

Matt said I'll you what I'm going to do Lauren is normally what they'll do is go to the back of the room when we finish because we'll going to be finished in about three minutes and that way you can face to face with them. Matt asked Allison is they were going to be able to stay to answer individual questions and she replied of course.

Matt said we are at the last article which is to do any other business that we decide to do. We sort of inserted that at the beginning but this is your chance to make any comments or thank anybody that you want to thank. We don't take votes on this article we just go.

Penelope Bliss spoke saying she wanted to thank everybody for supporting the Library. Feel free to past on to Peter Money or the Trustees things that you would like to see happen at the Library. There are brochures that explain about the Friends of the Library on the table in the foyer.

Ken Parrot said I should have mentioned earlier that Craig Gardner and I are available if any of you suspect that you might have EAP on your property at no charge obviously. We've been trained to be the first line of defense against this. Please contact us or somebody in the Town Administrators office and they will get a hold of us. We are really happy to come out. I frequently hear from people that they have dead ash trees and there saying it's a result of EAP and most likely it's not at least at this point it hasn't been discovered in West Windsor yet. Please if you have any questions feel free to call on us.

Ken said also as far as ECFiber is concerned they're still looking to increase the number of customers in Town. We have a new feature with our phone service called Nomorobo that from my experience gets rid of 95% of robocalls. If you need any information on that I'll be glad to help you.

Win spoke saying the Planning Commission and it's draft of the new town plan has recommended that the Town considering forming what they call a Sustainability Committee. The role of this committee is not exactly defined yet but as far as the Select board and I believe the Planning Commission is concerned the committee would help the Town and the Select board consider things like trying to improve the way we manage our recycling and our waste. They might look at reports that are four to five years old, maybe even more, on opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of Town buildings. Hopefully the committee could look at those and recommend investments that the Town might make to reduce the budget and improve the energy efficiencies of the building. They have also talked about other things including the possibility of having electric car recharging stations in Town. The role isn't defined but if any of you are interested in serving on such a committee please let us know. If it's going to be formed, it's going to take interested and committed equal to fill the seats on the committee to advise the Select board and the Town. I remind you that we are also wanting to consider if there is interest in this capital improvement project for the town hall so if you are interested in using this space more for activities or events of any kind let us know because that's the kind of information we need to make the grant application. Finally, and then I will sit down but we thought about bringing this

question to you this year and we didn't need to thankfully Cathy is committed to continuing her service as Town Clerk and Treasurer but some day we're going to have to think about a succession plan. The State at the urging of the local municipalities like ours has allowed Towns upon approval of the voters to change those positions from elected to appointed. The benefit is if elected we might not get qualified candidates to run and if they are appointed we can be more flexible in terms of how we manage those positions and build the town office as a team. We're not putting this before you now but if you want to know more about it we can talk to you about it but it will be becoming before you perhaps as early as next year's town meeting.

Matt asked if there were any further comments or thoughts.

Matt Kantola said I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge Win for all the good work that he does. He does it with a sense of grace, professionalism, humility and we're darn lucky to have him.

A round of applause was given.

Jessica Brady spoke saying she just wanted to introduce herself. My husband John and I moved here at the end of August. I'm currently the Executive Director of Vermont Recreation and Parks Association and I work from home. My husband works from home as well. We have three young kids. We are happy to be here. We have met a lot of community people. So anything related to recreation I'd be happy to talk to you about. I was Recreation Director in three different towns in Massachusetts and what drew us here was obviously all the outdoor recreation opportunities.

A round of applause was given.

Matt asked if there were any further thoughts or suggestions.

Hearing none Matt said he would take a motion and a second to adjourn. The motion was made by Win to adjourn at 11:10 AM. The motion was seconded by Dick Beatty and passed by a voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Archibald

Attest:

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Cathy Archibald  
Town Clerk

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Matthew T. Birmingham, III  
Moderator

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Edwin Johnson  
Selectboard