

## TOWN OF WEST WINDSOR ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

MARCH 7, 2023

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 must open the ballot boxes for the Mt. Ascutney School District, but I encourage you to consider voting later, while this meeting is still going on, they are open till 7:00 PM tonight. As I think all of you all know, we no longer vote on the school warning here. It's over there.

The meeting was called to order at 9:14 AM.

The Moderator read the warning. The legal voters of the Town of West Windsor, Vermont are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Story Memorial Hall in said Town of West Windsor on Tuesday, March 7, 2023 at 9:00 AM to act on the following articles. I will need a motion to waive reading the rest of the warning. Ted Siegler made the motion to waive the reading of the rest of the warning and the motion was seconded by Mike Spackman. This motion passed by a voice vote.

Matt said Article 1 is to elect a Moderator for the Town for the ensuing year. As I am that now I will step down and turn it over to Cathy.

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

**Article 1: To elect a Moderator for the ensuing year** – Ted Siegler nominated Matt Birmingham to serve as Moderator. This nomination was seconded by Mike Spackman. 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 we've been away from a meeting like this for two years so I hope you will forgive me if I'm a little rusty up here. I will miss Tom Kenyon correcting me when I make a mistake, somebody will have to take his position. This is my 33<sup>rd</sup> year of doing this. A round of applause was then given.

If anybody has any questions, comments or suggestions, let me know. I will try and give the floor to you as quickly as I can. Remember that you must be wearing a yellow sticker in order to speak and to vote. Page one is the warning that we will go through. Page six is the Town Offices eight of whom are elected today. The Selectboard report is on page 10, in memory of the people who we have lost from the community is on page 15 and your budget is on page 19.

**Article 2: To act on the reports of the Town for the year ending December 31, 2022.** 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 Justin Burrows to adopt the town reports and a second was made by Win Johnson. Matt asked if anyone had any corrections and Justin Burrows stood and said he had a correction.

Justin said on page 34 the Listers' Report three quarters of the way down on the page you will see Total Listed Value. The first number of \$281,921,680 should be \$282,582,213. The second number of \$135,900,100 should be \$142,673,300. The third number of \$146,021,580 should be \$139,908,912 and the fourth number of \$281,921,680 should be \$282,582,212.

Matt said as those are corrections, I'm not going to need a motion to amend. I'm going to need a motion to adopt Article 2 as corrected by Justin. A motion was made by Joel Schreiber and seconded by several. Matt asked if there was discussion and hearing none this article 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 6. Matt read the positions up for election. In the past I call this the Kenyon amendment we have established the compensation first on the theory that if someone is running for office, they will at least know what the pay is. 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 \$42,796.00 and these are annual figures by the way. Town Treasurer is \$42,796.00, Selectboard is \$1,000.00 annually, Listers are \$22.00 an hour, Auditors are \$22.00 an hour, Delinquent Tax Collector is \$22.00 an hour, First Constable is \$22.00 an hour, Second Constable is \$22.00 an hour 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. The motion was made by Ted Siegler and seconded by Win Johnson.

Matt asked if anyone had anything to say. Hearing none this motion passed by a voice vote.

Matt said Moderator for one year is the first office in Article 3. You've already elected a Moderator.

I will take a motion and a second to an objection to consideration which is Vermont, pass over the Moderator because you've already elected him. The motion was made by Shelley Seward and seconded by Cindy Siegler. This motion passed by a voice vote.

**Town Clerk – 1 year** – Cathy Archibald is the Town Clerk, and I will accept nominations for that position. Deb Spackman nominated Cathy Archibald. The nomination was seconded by Deb Shearer. Matt asked Cathy if she had anything to say. Cathy's response was no. Matt said Cathy preps for this meeting starting in February. Hearing no other nominations this motion was passed by a voice vote. Cathy Archibald was elected Town Clerk.

**Town Treasurer – 1 year** – Cathy Archibald is the Town Treasurer, and I will accept nominations for that position. Deb Shearer nominated Cathy Archibald. The nomination was seconded by Mark Harley. Matt asked if there were any other nominations for Town Treasurer. Hearing none, this motion passed by a voice vote. Cathy Archibald was elected Town Treasurer.

Matt said we have one vacancy as I understand it. Brett Myers is up this year. Matt said as we get to Selectboard let me remind me that for Selectboard, Lister and Auditor if there is more than one candidate, we must 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 we have a vacancy as I understand Brett Myers is not running again. Deb Shearer nominated Mark Harley. The nomination was seconded by Deb Spackman. Mark said I can do a quick introduction for those of you that don't know me. Mark said my wife Catherine and I have lived in town for 37 years as of next month. We love living in West Windsor.

I've been really busy in my career, especially the last few years working as an engineer for TomTom, and I did a lot of international travel. I'm retired now and feel I can give back to the Town. A little bit of my educational background. I have a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. I also have a softer side to my geeky side as a piano classical organist. I got into that when I was a kid when I was learning to play. I had to learn inside how the instruments worked. In my senior year of high school, I started a business tuning new pianos and repairing pipe organs. By the time I was a sophomore in college, I was tuning 165 pianos a year and maintaining about a dozen church pipe organs. At the age of 13 I also built a pipe organ in my parent's basement from some recycled parts. I really get into technical planning. My career was first building electronic test equipment used by major corporations in the US back when a lot of electronics were built in the US and not overseas. From there we came to Vermont building high end digital audio systems used throughout the upper end of the music and entertainment movie and television industry. The last 30 years I've been in GIS geographic information systems. Most of you have used Google maps, maps on computers, things like that. As far as qualifications for office, I've been attending all Select board meetings since January of last year to try to come up to speed and learn about the Select board and what the issues are facing the Town. I've been reviewing the Vermont League of Cities and Towns handbook which includes a lot of law. Select board is a position that's in Vermont law. It's not just something the Town of West Windsor put together. Working particularly for TomTom I've managed large international teams. So, there's a lot of challenges in getting people from India, Poland and Belgium to communicate and work effectively together with different cultural backgrounds and involve managing multimillion dollar I should say, multimillion-euro budgets. I was always coming in, on or under budget. So, it's a little bit of my background. Mark asked if anyone had questions.

Chuck Kurtzhalz said is that just a little bit?

Peter Money asked Mark if he still tunes piano.

Mark said I have an immunocompromised person at home. I'm trying to be super careful. So, for the moment I'm on pause for piano tuning.

Matt said based on your resume you may want to reconsider the salary for this Select Board.

Mark said I'm not in it for the money.

Matt asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, with the office of Select board, Listers' and Auditors, we are obligated to do it by paper ballots. However, there's an out and the out is with a single candidate somebody can move and second that the clerk cast a single ballot for Mark. We can move and second that and he's elected without the necessity of going to the box. A motion was made by Matt Kantola to have the clerk cast a single ballot for Mark. This motion was seconded by Cindy Siegler. This motion passed by a voice vote.

Win Johnson said he'd like to thank Brett for her six years on the Select board. A round of applause was then given.

**Lister – 3 years** – Matt said Deb Spackman’s term is up and I understand that she wishes to be nominated and run again. Joel Schreiberman nominated Debra Spackman. This nomination was seconded by several. Matt asked if there were any other nominations. The same rule applies here. We can avoid a paper ballot by a motion and a second for the clerk to cast a single ballot for Deb Spackman. Several people responded so moved and seconded the motion. The motion passed by a voice vote.

**Auditor – 3 years** – Matt said that Justin Burrows term is up this year so I will accept nominations for Auditor. Shelley Seward nominated Justin Burrows. This nomination was seconded by Nancy Gaynor. 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 passed by a voice vote.

**Delinquent Tax Collector – 1 year** – Cathy Archibald holds that position and again in 2023 that office needs to be elected again. Mike Spackman nominated Cathy Archibald. This nomination was seconded by several people. Matt asked if there was any discussion or further nominations. Hearing none, the motion passed by a voice vote.

**First Constable – 1 year** – Erik Boedtke nominated William Young. This nomination was seconded by David Jaacks. Matt said we’re going to be done by 9:45 at this rate. We’ve got to find something controversial to talk about. That reminds me by the way, while your warning does not have a final article to discuss any and all things that you wish to discuss. We will do it that way. Normally, there is an article there that to do any other business that the Town would choose to do. You can’t pass any articles there and you can’t take any votes but it’s a great chance to speak on any issue that you think is important. So, we will do that at the end of the posted articles. Those persons in favor of William Young for First Constable please signify by saying aye. The motion passed by a voice vote.

**Second Constable – 1 year** – Matt said that Scott Smith’s term is up, and I understand that he is not running again. I need a nomination for Second Constable. There were no nominations. Matt said this is going to test my Roberts Rules of Order. I’m going to declare this office vacant. If there is no candidate, we will not have a Second Constable.

**Campbell Fund Trustee – 3 years** – Patricia Kenyon term is up. Cathy Archibald nominated Patricia Kenyon. This nomination was seconded by Mike Spackman. Matt asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none Patricia Kenyon was elected by a voice vote.

**Article 4: Shall the Town vote to pay taxes to the Town Treasurer by or on Friday, October 27, 2023 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.** – A motion was made by Mike Spackman to adopt this article. This motion was seconded by Erik Boedtke. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, this article passed by a voice vote.

Matt said I'm going to read Article 5 and ask for a motion and a second and then intuitively I expect a motion to amend from the Selectboard. So, we're going to have to go through the amendment procedure in order to get this article passed.

**Article 5: Shall the Town approve the expenditures of \$673,659.00 for General, \$899,710.00 for Highway (Combined \$1,573,369.00) for the year 2023, of which \$1,190,966.00 shall be raised by taxes, \$324,903.00 by non-tax revenues, \$7,500.00 from a Highway Fund surplus from prior years, and \$50,000.00 from a General Fund surplus from prior years?** Matt said to get to the anticipated amendment, I need a motion and a second to adopt this article as I just read to you. Ted Siegler made a motion to adopt the article as read and the motion was seconded by Mike Spackman. Matt said that the article is on the floor and now if there is an amendment, I think I will hear from the Selectboard.

Matt Kantola said I will read article 5 amendment to you. It reads as follows: **Shall the Town approve budgeted expenditures for the General, Highway, Library and Cemetery Funds for the year 2023 as shown below: General \$673,659.00, Highway \$899,710.00, Library \$47,974.00, Cemetery \$5,000.00 for a total of \$1,626,343.00 of which \$1,222,950.00 shall be raised by taxes after applying \$336,903.00 of non-tax revenues and \$66,490.00 from prior year surpluses, as shown in the financial statements published in the Town Report?**

Matt said what I need is a motion and a second to adopt that amendment as read by Matt. Ted Siegler made the motion to adopt the amendment and seconded by Edwin Johnson.

Matt said it's now on the floor for discussion.

Karen Diop asked does that mean that Article 9 will not be voted on.

Matt said that the article will be passed over when we get there. Once again, like the office of Moderator, we're not going to do it twice.

Any questions or comments for the Selectboard. This is pretty much their article.

Dave Dugdale said just curious. Article 9 as a \$32,000.00 budget for the Library and I believe you said \$47,974.00 is being added to Article 5 for the Library. Does anyone want to speak to the difference.

Matt said I disclose in a second that I am a Trustee of the Library. So, you know ahead of time, I do not know what the difference is. I do know that the amendment is accurate. Is there any reason what you know why it's different.

Matt said the \$47,974.00 is the expense and that does not include the revenue. There is a revenue number that is part of the budget that reduces it to the amount that's in Article 9. Matt continued saying the amount we are raising for the Library this year is \$31,984.00. That's under the revenue section of the Library budget. If you go to your town report page 27 it shows the total expense of

Peter Money said so the Town does not contribute 100% yet to the Library that the town owns. So, the \$32,000.00 figure is from the tax base and the rest we've been making up from grants, donations, Friends of the Library and others. So, what is represented in that higher figure that's just the general budget as I understand.

Dave Dugdale said I get the difference in the numbers but article 5 you're asking for the taxpayers to fund \$47,974.00 for the Library.

Peter Money spoke saying it would be wonderful if the Town would fund the Library completely.

Dave Dugdale said I get that. I'm not arguing the concept. The article is asking what the taxpayers are contributing to the Library.

Mark Higgins said the old article 9 speaks to the amount of taxes being given to the Library the \$32,000.00 but the Library has budgeted \$47,974.00 for their total expenses. So, the original concept was that they were a separate organization that was receiving tax revenue from the Town so we would have approved the amount of tax revenue moving from the Town to the Library. What's happening now, because they're a town department, and the warning is wrong, we're approving the total expenses of the library, of which \$32,000.00 is tax revenue raised. You can see that on page 27 under the 2023 budget and that has not shifted.

Dave Dugdale said it would be a lot clearer if it said \$32,000.00 of which would be raised by taxes.

Mark Higgins said that's a fair amendment point for clarification.

Matt asked if Jennifer Aldrich wished to speak. Jennifer is in addition to being a principal at the school, she is also thanks to me, drafting her a Trustee.

Jennifer Aldrich spoke saying thank you for letting me speak. I just want to share a little bit about what the goals of the library are as we're moving forward. So first is to add new staff to address extended hours that have been asked for as well as extending programs. So, we have taken out the younger and extended programs, as well as to promote programs that are collaboration in our community, such as the Western Playhouse that comes and sets up at AO. We take part in helping to support that and we also support the music program that happened here this past summer. We plan on doing those things again. We also have a new and improved website for those we love websites. We're also adding books so that we can start doing a more modern form of checking out books in that way. We are continuing to add new books to enhance our collection. We're also trying to increase our rate of pay for our staffing because right now we are significantly underpaid compared to other libraries within our State. As Peter mentioned, we have a lot of funds that are raised outside of taxes. The State of Vermont is traditionally 80% of the library funds that come through taxes from the town, and sustainable practice so we're not counting on donations and fundraising as consistently as we are now. Are there any questions.

Hearing none, Matt thanked Jennifer and he also thanked Peter.

Matt said we have a motion and a second to adopt an amendment to Article 5. So, I need all persons who are in favor of that to signify by saying aye. Those opposed. You have adopted the amendment and the amendment is now magically Article 5. I know this sounds crazy, but now I need a motion and a second to adopt the new article 5 as amended. Shelley Seward made the motion to adopt article 5 as amended. The motion was seconded by Mark Harley. Any discussion. The motion passed by a voice vote.

It occurs to me that at some point I should do this because it's a tradition that we adopted 15 years ago and that is to remember our friends and neighbors who have passed away this year. Matt read the names and asked for a moment of silence for those who had passed.

**Article 6: Shall the voters of West Windsor exempt all properties of Mt. Ascutney Outdoors, Inc., a legally registered 501 (C ) (3) not-for-profit organization, from municipal and state property taxes for a period of (5) five years in accordance with state statute? I'll take a motion and a second to adopt this article as read. The motion to adopt the article as read was made by Rita Johnson. The motion was seconded by several. This article is now open for discussion.**

Shelley Seward spoke on behalf of Ascutney Outdoors. We are asking the town to extend this for another five years. For those of you who've been around for five years, this is the second time now that we've come to you. We're trying to do everything we can for the community, and we hope that the community supports what we're doing. We certainly are immensely appreciative of what the community does for us. So, if you have any questions about what Ascutney Outdoors is and what we do I'd be happy to answer them but otherwise, we ask for your support in exempting us from property taxes for the next five years.

Xaveria Vegh said I believe everyone should pay property tax, nothing's free and it puts more burden on the rest of us.

Ted Siegler spoke saying I'm the ex-officious representative on the Ascutney Outdoors board representing the town. I highly encourage you to adopt this article as read. I think it's unbelievable how much Ascutney Outdoors has done for the town over the course of the last 5 to 10 years they essentially tore down the burnt lodge, completely built a new lodge, built a T-bar, put in a rope tow and supplied endless amounts of opportunities for children and adults in the town at no cost to the town. I think this is a very worthy attempt to continue to support Ascutney Outdoors in a very minor way for all the things that Ascutney Outdoors does for the town.

Annalise Kurtzhalz spoke saying I work at the school. Without Ascutney Outdoors we would be lost as a school. Ascutney Outdoors is always welcome to host our skiing host our outdoor classrooms, helps our fundraising activities. They're incredibly supportive of our school. Shelley's incredibly supportive of our school so I really suggest that we let this pass because I think that Ascutney Outdoors is such a wonderful asset for this community and especially for our younger generation.

Ray Shannis said as a volunteer of Ascutney Outdoors in which there are many a few things need to be noted here for those who are unaware of, and one is the unbelievable amount of work that Glenn and

Shelley Seward puts into this. A round of applause was given. It's definitely a wrap in the ski outdoor industry, what we do up there and what we provide for society of people all over. I was working up there a couple of weeks ago, a couple flew in from Georgia. Their kid had never seen snow. They got on a flight in Atlanta and flew into Hartford and drove up here so they could go tubing and said what a time we had. So, we are now drawing attention in such a nice way with people able to afford it, enjoy the outdoors. To put a tax burden on this, this beautiful business would be an absolute insult to all the efforts that everybody has put together to make this operation come alive again.

Amanda Yates said as a young family in town skiing here is extremely affordable where there's not a lot of other areas in Vermont and so I'm very appreciative that this continues to be an affordable way for families to get out and enjoy skiing and to learn those skills where other mountains in this area are just not accessible for many families and a large part of that is due to the cost structure that Ascutney Outdoors setup.

Matt asked if there were any other questions.

The question was asked how much the taxes would be if Ascutney Outdoors paid taxes.

Shelley Seward said the amount would be about \$3,657.00. That is based on the current tax rate. I don't know what it would be like for this year.

Matt said I have a motion and a second to adopt article 6 as read. Those persons in favor please signify by saying aye and those opposed by nay. The ayes have it and you have adopted article 6.

Matt said traditionally, even though they're not wearing yellow tags, we let our local legislators address you briefly and so I see at least two and I thought I saw three. Oh, there is Elizabeth I thought so. So, Elizabeth let's hear from you and then John and then we will get Allison who is a member of the Senate. This is Elizabeth Burrows.

Elizabeth spoke saying thank you for allowing me to be here today and speak in the capacity as your representative at the Statehouse along with John Bartholomew. We represent Windsor one, which is Hartland, West Windsor and Windsor. This is the first half of my second biennium. The first biennium I spent on the House Committee on Health Care. This biennium I am in the exciting General and Housing Committee, which the general part consists of really broad variety of bills such as, for example, the state blanks like the state smell, the state color, those are the bills that are in our committee right now. Also, there is a bill that would allow for funeral pyres and some broad stuff, but also Native American affairs and we also have charge of labor. We have two big labor bills so far, this biennium one is the paid family leave insurance, and it allows for as passed it out of our committee 100% paid family leave with ample time for things like serious illness or caring for a family member with a serious illness or bonding with a child, having a child. Things that take a long amount of time bereavement and substance abuse, rehabilitation, physical rehabilitation. There's a whole host of categories that it falls into. There are three important features and that was one. The second is that we, it's a 100% paid 100% job protection. We also updated the definition of family to include what we called in our committee, chosen family. Family members that have a significant importance to a person, but aren't necessarily blood relative or, or legal relatives extend to that. Another bill that we



passed was and I'll be presenting this when I get back is updating the basic needs budget, which is how much it costs to live in Vermont and a lot of our state aid is based on that calculation on how much it costs to live in Vermont. We're given inflation and all the other skyrocketing costs we have proposed to update that number. Then we also, of course, have some housing-related things that are in the General and Housing Committee. We have a lot of renters, rights, things that include like a cap on, on rights of rising rents, a cap on deposits. A requirement that all residential buildings, these are all proposed residential buildings that are new, be made with created with universal design, which is allowing for the potential of ADA compliance. We focused a lot in our committee on Rural Development and that means taking some of the better town's initiatives that have been created and scaling them down to small rural towns, and providing assistance, technical assistance on grants, and pushing information to town Selectboards, and providing grants assistance and some of the zoning, scaling down some of the zoning opportunities. Thank you.

Elizabeth said I just want to add that I feel very privileged to be able to represent West Windsor, Hartland and Windsor. I really love this job so thank you.

John Bartholomew spoke saying and as always, as Elizabeth just said, I want to express what an honor and privilege it is to serve you in Montpelier and as always, there is a lot going on in the state house. I made a few notes. Unbelievably we're about halfway through the legislative session and the state house like town meeting has returned a lot more looking more like it's normal, with a bunch of lobbyists, advocates, journalists, citizens, tourists and school groups all gathering in the hallways. So, it's kind of like normal. Elizabeth and I prepared a mid-session report. It's electronic like it was last year. So, you can pick the articles that interest you. Most of the stuff I'm going to say is in those articles, and there's a slip of paper out there that has the web address, and I think we're going to get an omnibus serve. I am again on the Transportation Committee. I was also elected to the House Rules Committee. The Transportation Committee, this time of year or so will be the transportation bill and this year, we're looking at a bill that's going to provide about \$850 million in funding for transportation policies and this is for road and bridge maintenance, aviation, railroads and snow removal. It's the second largest transportation we've ever had and that's because we need to leverage the unprecedented federal funds that are coming to us, which come to a total of 1.6 billion over five years to provide us the opportunity to make transformational investments in our transportation infrastructure and to address climate change. Many of the committees in the House are looking at ways to combat climate change and develop plans for resiliency. Over 40% of Vermont's carbon emissions come from our transportation sector. So, our T bill is going to continue to make investments in policies to help Vermonter's transition to more fuel-efficient vehicles and to expand the electric vehicle charging infrastructure. We're also going to include in the T bill stuff to help infrastructure for walking biking public transit options across the state. As recommended in the Vermont's Climate Action Plan, the primary goal is to electrify our transportation system to meet our mandated climate goals. I mentioned just briefly what some of the other committees are doing agriculture and forestry, their jurisdictions have expanded to include food resiliency, and they've been working on ways to continue universal school meals. They're also working to address the financial crisis facing organic dairy farmers in Vermont. The Appropriations Committee has finished the process for our annual budget adjustment bill and we're working now on the budget for 2024 and as always, a Vermont tradition, it will be a balanced budget, even though there's no statutory requirements for us to do that. Commerce and Economic Development committees working on workforce development. We have

historically low unemployment in Vermont and there is desperate need for trained and skilled workers in many sectors but particularly health care, construction and education. The Corrections and Institutions committee is working on the capital bill. This is a two-year bill that authorizes the safety to use bonded money to fund critical infrastructure projects. This is stuff like construction and maintenance of public buildings, schools, state police barracks, correctional facilities, state offices and stuff like that. They work on water issues, including the Clean Water fund, which funds water quality, controlling pollution in streams, rivers and lakes. There's also a drinking water fund that they work with that provides funding for improving safety and quality of our drinking water. The Education Committee is looking at options to address the statewide backlogs or needs for renovation and replacing school buildings and looking at how better to support youth mental health care across the state. They're also taking on the very difficult issue of public tuition for independent students that are going to independent schools. The Environment and Energy Committee is developing a plan to permanently conserve an increasing percentage of our landscape and the golden era strategic conservation and lead, protect biodiversity and ensure continued ecological and economic benefits from a resilient and connected landscape. They're also looking at toxic waste, how to address the disposal of hundreds of everyday chemicals that we all have under our sinks and in our garages and basements. They're looking to update the decades old bottle bill. Our Government Operations and military affairs are taking on the controversial topic of online sports betting wagering and there also have been updating our election laws. The Health Care Committee is enhancing their training to enhance our health care workforce through interstate licensure compacts, which allow health care providers to work across state borders, specifically mental health counselors, physical therapists, audiologists and speech language pathologists. They're also working on suicide prevention. There are a couple more committees but these committees are described in our newsletter so you can read more about any of these topics and that just covers what's happening in the house.

Elizabeth and I are planning some constituent meetings in all of our three towns on Saturday and on Friday it will be virtual.

A round of applause was given.

Alison Clarkson spoke saying she was one of our three State Senators, and it gives us great pleasure to represent you in Montpelier. Thank you very much for making time for us to speak briefly. I serve you as the Majority Leader in the Senate. I serve you as vice chair of Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs and on Senate government operations. It is in that capacity I particularly appreciate being able to be here on town meeting as we celebrate our municipal life together because towns are the creatures of the state and we work very closely together, enabling each other work hoping to make progress on behalf of all the people of Vermont and in our communities. The Senate had four top priorities going into this year and I'm going to speak to the four of them. They will not surprise you. Housing, workforce, childcare and reducing climate change. On housing, I serve on the housing committee, we have just finished a huge omnibus bill which is now in Senate natural, and it addresses many of the barriers we have created into impact housing. We have spent for the last two and a half years millions of dollars, about \$400 billion in federal money, creating new housing, and enabling the renovation of blighted non code compliant housing and building accessory dwelling units. Those programs continue. However, we need to address the barriers we've created to housing, zoning, permitting, regulatory forms. So, this has some of the first 250 reforms that are designed to increase

density in the areas each community identifies for growth. So that bill is working its way through and hopefully will have a big impact on what we're able to build and do smart growth development in our communities, downtowns and village centers. The second one is the workforce that's coming to us from the house. We're working closely together on it and building on a lot of the work we did last year. And childcare. The bill that's coming out of the Senate is improving access to childcare, adding financial support for families, so that we hope that families will not spend more than 10% of their income on childcare, which is a big step forward. It also provides some resources for childcare centers and childcare workers. The thorniest issue is how we pay for it and how we bring business to the table. Business is the one financial support that isn't present in any consistent way in supporting childcare. So that's another key piece of that. So that's housing workforce childcare. The last is reducing climate change. I have heard from many of you about S5 and it's a huge step forward. This bill is a huge step forward, which puts in place a plan to transition over the next 25 years to a cleaner energy future. The plan is designed to help Vermonters afford what we know is going to be a costly transition off of our polluting fossil fuels we have all become dependent on. This bill simply sends our vision, our goals and expectations to our policy architect the Public Utilities Commission and in two years they will come back to us with a detailed plan with all the cost analysis and the implications worked out and that we will then be able to pass this bill and build a transition with a better understanding of what the costs and implications are. We can't afford to wait any further. This simply puts us on the path to doing what we know we need to do to save Vermont as we know and love it. And heavens, we have invested so much in Ascutney Outdoors to have a climate that doesn't support all that work is would just be heartbreaking. So, you know how to reach me. I look forward to chatting with you and hearing more from all of you. Thank you so much for this opportunity and have a fabulous town meeting.

A round of applause was given.

Ted Siegler asked if there was an opportunity to ask a question. It's directed at Alison but it's just as important to everyone.

Ted continued saying as probably many of you know, or may not know, the full impact. Large sections of property in our town are in current use, which means that they get a significant tax deduction associated with being in current use. One of the differences between New Hampshire and Vermont is that in Vermont you get the same tax reduction, whether you post all your land or none of it. In New Hampshire if you post your property, you pay a higher tax than if you don't. It's particularly galling to all of us who in our town who use trails and promote trails use that that continues to occur in Vermont. I've talked to Alison about this for several years now and I think it's high time that Vermont adopts a similar measure as New Hampshire and provide a real benefit to those like the Seward's who open their land, as opposed to those who post very large portions of their lands or all of it to trespassing. I'm just saying publicly Alison because it's something that the legislature needs to change and I'm hopeful that John and Elizabeth that you also assume this because I'm sure it's important to everyone in the town of West Windsor.

Thank you, Ted.

Alison said a short response Ted, this is an ongoing concern of mine as well. We were first to the table, and then we went ahead, New Hampshire in terms of creating a current use program. It's a challenge to take away a benefit, so New Hampshire had the benefit of seeing what we did first. They created a tiered system, which I think worked very well. I would love to have us consider this and have asked for several years our Finance and Ways and Means committees just consider this. The challenge is taking away a benefit and resetting that and that's huge because so many of us rely on that. It's another one of the competing votes that we have to way and today Ways and Means and Finance have chosen not to take that up. We continue to encourage them to consider it because we want to make sure we continue to have access to land and to have consistent understanding of what's possible. So, Ted we're on the same page in this and we hope to make some progress. We just need to convince our colleagues to do so.

Elvin Kaplan said you listed the four major issues that you were dealing with, but I was surprised that one of the issues wasn't the difficulty that so many of us face in the area of health care.

Alison said I'm deeply discouraged that we do not have the political courage to address reforming health care in the way that we would like to. We had an opportunity under Governor Shumlin and back in a way that I thought was reprehensive. I was on Ways and Means the moment when their plan was presented, and it was dead out of the water because it was so poorly messaged. There are bills to address universal primary care. We missed a huge opportunity last year for us to reset our waiver with the federal government on Medicaid and Medicare. It's very frustrating, particularly coming out of the pandemic, where public health has been paramount in our lives and the costs of health care keep escalating and we are not addressing it in any meaningful way I would say in this session. Maybe John or Elizabeth have more to say on this.

John said I would just add that it is indeed very discouraging. One of the problems we continually face in Vermont as you know, is the small population we're the second smallest in the country. So, it's difficult for us to do it financially, and I keep hoping for more cooperation regionally with other states whether you're talking about health care or climate change. If we could work better with colleagues across borders and have more regional cooperation because it would make it more viable and easier to do this.

Elizabeth said I don't serve on the health care this term, but I know that they're had universal primary care bill which has received some traction in medical. So, fingers crossed that it gets through sometime in the next few years and doesn't mean it will get through by the end of next week but it actually has taken testimony on it and the savings projection from universal primary care that savings coming from not needing as much emergency care and the thought is that we'll be able to slowly scaffold universal health care if we can get the universal health care.

Matt Kantola said I just want to mention, and I don't know which one of you this would be towards but one of the things I was thinking about, we're going to be getting an electric car soon and there's a lack of charging stations along the interstate. If there were Level 2 charging stations at all the park and rides that would be great. I think we would encourage people to get them because our climate is hard with the hills and the cold weather. That would be a use of federal funds highway funds. The other one I was thinking about to is Level three charges.

John said we have gotten a massive amount of federal money and a lot of that is going towards the electric car infrastructures and the state goal we're not there yet is to have the fast charges within a mile of every interstate exit, and I believe it is within 50 miles on every state highway.

Matt said or better yet just have them at the park and rides. There is one in Hartland now.

John said the Agency of Transportation is taking chargers out of the park and rides because people are setting up camps there.

Matt said that's because they're level one.

John said if you want to charge your vehicle, we need a place where people can go for 30 minutes and maybe have a cup of coffee.

Matt said another thing is the ACT 250 reform for recreational trails. It's a real hindrance for this town to make new trails. I think that's something that should be taken much more seriously. In terms of economic development for the smaller towns I think that's pretty much all we have. I'm sure there's a lot more issues in the rural counties.

John said one of the real challenges we have when you're talking about current use or ACT 250 is every legislator has their own idea on how to fix it. So, it's an interesting process.

Alison said I think we'll see some progress on ACT 250 in terms of housing work. So, I think you are going to see some changes in ACT 250 on that front but on the trails, I don't know if the House, Energy and Environment Committee is addressing those. I know there's interest in addressing and I don't know if that's beginning in the house. It's not in the Senate rulings devolve into S5 to the Affordable Care Act in terms of making it possible.

Elizabeth said there is what's called an omnibus recreation bill which means it takes little bits from every committee because there's some federal funding to support trails, trail networks and recreation departments statewide and creating more open infrastructure but not state government. That just came out so it's making its way through right now but that includes a small change to ACT 250.

Peter Money said to the health care concern community nursing is portable and we have a community nurse Rita Rice. Reading has one as well. The state does help communities further that program. Our community nurse has held clinics in the library. We're working with aging in place.

Sherry Barbour said for healthcare is the State of Vermont addressing anything to do with fentanyl epidemic.

Alison said absolutely and I sadly say I'm not up to date on what is coming out of the health care committees, but I know there's quite a bit in both health care and judiciary. Elizabeth, do you have your ear to battle on the health care piece.

Elizabeth said I don't know anything.

Alison said on the opioid epidemic I just don't know what our major health initiatives are.

Elizabeth said I do know that they are in the judiciary, and they are planning to extend what the state provides in terms of rehabilitation services. I honestly don't know but I will find out for you what they're doing about fentanyl particular opioid in general.

Matt asked if there were any more comments or questions for our legislators, if not let's look at article 7.

**Article 7: Shall the Town vote the sum of \$61,500.00 as a donation for the support and maintenance of the West Windsor Volunteer Fire Department with such funds to be raised by taxes?** I will take a motion and a second to adopt this article as read. Edwin Johnson made the motion, and it was seconded by several. Erik Boedtker spoke saying he was the fire chief in West Windsor and I work for the Highway Department and I help Mike as the assistant emergency management director. At the last Selectboard meeting, I brought up VT alert to the board and the town decided to adopt the VT alert which is an automated messaging system for the public that will notify you if there's road closures, major incidents and anything that we want to put on it. So, when you sign up as an individual you can filter what you would like to get for information. When you first sign up by default, you would be signed up for everything statewide. In my opinion, that's too many alerts. So, you're going to want to go through and filter out what you want to receive for alerts. The reason this is important for people in West Windsor I believe that we can use this with the highway department for road closures, fire calls or if we must shut down trails on the mountain or roads this is a way, we can notify the public that we're doing that and hopefully you won't be late for work. Soon I'll be working with Chris Dolan, the Town Administrator, on setting that account up. Effective immediately you can sign up as an individual and the easiest way is just go to Vermont emergency management's website and look for VT alert. You can get either text messages, phone calls, emails, all of them built for however you like. For those that have questions about signing up or are hesitant to I'm going to put Chris on the spot here but feel free to go see her at her office. Any questions feel free to reach out but I'm grateful we're adopting it and I think it's a great way to get information out to the public.

Brett Myers asked Erik if that could be another way to alert people about the races and events that take place on our roads.

Erik said that's a great idea and I think that would be something that the Town Administrator may be able to throw something out the date of the event and the roads involved, and we do have some major events in town coming up.

Erik said on another note more emergency management that I will speak on. Reading/West Windsor Aging in Place has a survey out in the foyer. They're collecting information pertinent to emergencies and individuals who may have emergency medical equipment that they need to have powered up by generators. What you might see as an issue for you or a loved one in the event that we have a mass power outage or mass incident in the town. That information is going back to them, and they will distribute it to the American emergency management team which will be held confidentially. As we progress, this will be information that we can use to find people that may need help with generators or

oxygen systems and things like that. So, if you have a need for that please grab one of these surveys, fill it out and it will get back to Aging in Place.

Christine Eggleton spoke saying this is more of a statement, but the second part of that form allows you to sign up to be a volunteer to help out one of your community members. Where do we bring them when they are filled out.

Lee Monro said you can drop them off at the town office or mail to P O Box 6 Brownsville. There is also a box in the foyer to drop them in. I just really encourage people to fill out the survey to help the local agency to determine the scale of help needed by the older people.

Ted Siegler said sorry to be the one who keeps standing up but for those that in general it seems to me American citizens have historical amnesia, but we had a large flood here not that long ago and the fire department was inundated. So, it may seem like strange bedfellows but the Conservation Commission has been really pushing the fire department to move forward with relocating the fire department. It seems incredibly short sighted for us to continue to keep the fire department where it is knowing that the next time there's a large flood and the emergency responders who help us are buried in water. I think it's critical that everyone understands that it's highly likely that the fire department is going to be coming to the town in the future and asking for a bond issue to move the fire department. I know they're working on it and we're working with them on it, and I just want to warn everyone that I think this is an incredibly important for the town of West Windsor to continue to move forward on that.

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

Matt said I just noticed that unless the fire department is looking for \$12,300.00 there's a somewhat a redundant part of this article that we're going to pass over. **Article 8 says Shall the town vote the sum of \$7,500.00 as a donation for the support and maintenance of the West Windsor FAST Squad with such funds to be raised by taxes.** It also says shall the Town vote the sum of \$61,500.00 as a donation for the support and maintenance of the West Windsor Volunteer Fire Department with such funds to be raised by taxes. I don't know I see Spackman in this.

Mike Spackman said I make the motion to strike that last section. Does this have to be an amendment?

Matt said let's get the amendment on the floor. I need a motion and a second to adopt the amendment. The motion was made and seconded.

Mike said what I recommend is that we strike that last whole paragraph that references the \$61,500.00 to the fire department.

Matt said I'm not sure that Robert's Rules of Order knows what a motion to strike is, but I'm going to accept that. That's a speedy way of getting where we're supposed to go. So, let's do it this way. There's a motion to strike the double dipping by the fire department. Those in favor of striking I hope I don't get caught at this please signify by saying aye. This motion passed. So, we have article 8 and we have a motion to adopt article 8 in part. Is there any discussion. Those persons in favor of the

article as read please signify by saying aye. Opposed by nay. The ayes have it and you have adopted a portion of article 8.

**Article 9: Shall the Town vote the sum of \$32,000.00 as a donation for the support and maintenance of the Mary L. Blood Library with such funds to be raised by taxes?** We've already done that. I'd like to employ your motion to strike a second time, but I don't think so. What I need here is a motion for objection to consideration which is in Vermont a motion to pass it over because you've already done it. Chris Nesbitt made the motion, and it was seconded by Joyce Martin. The motion to pass over article 9 was passed by a voice vote.

**Article 10: Shall the Town vote the sum of \$8,500.00 as a donation for the support of the West Windsor Historical Society with such funds to be raised by taxes?** I need a motion and a second. Chris Nesbitt made a motion to adopt this article as read. The motion was seconded by several.

Karen Diop spoke saying she was the current president of the Historical Society. This is the support for the maintenance of the Grange Hall, which reverts to the town, if for any reason the Historical Society ceases to exist. So, this is support for things like making sure there's heat, making sure the sewer works and all that basic maintenance. We don't use it for anything else but maintenance and repairs. I want to put in a plug to say that there are a lot of organizations and groups that are now using the Grange Hall and it is open to the public for a donation whether it be a community group who wants to have a community supper there or whether it be the school. The school comes sometimes after school or when they're not using the school they come and use it. It's also available for birthday parties, family reunions and things like that. Get in touch with one of us and we can get you on the calendar in return for a donation of your choice. I want to sneak in a couple more things. We're having monthly programs this year. The third Sunday of every month, we're calling this the third Sundays at the Grange we have a local history program and the one coming up not this Sunday but the following one is on sugar houses and the history of sugaring in West Windsor and historical sugar houses, current sugar houses and all of that. That day coincides with a costume swap which if you're not aware of it the following weekend we are having a seventies dance party. We are encouraging people to come in costumes but who has costumes anymore. So, the weekend before we're going to have an opportunity for people to drop off sort of costumes that don't fit you anymore and on the Sunday before our program come in and go through and pick up costumes, accessories that will help you to have a good time. There are postcards with all this information out on the table in the foyer. So, feel free to take one of those and that's a fundraiser. I want you to know we're having two bean suppers this year in collaboration with SCIP. These suppers are back as fundraisers for SCIP and the Historical Society. Thank you.

A round of applause was given.

Matt said with all due respect some of us don't have to swap because everything we have is from the 70's.

Matt asked if anyone had any comments or suggestions as the article has been read and there's been a second. Those people in favor of adopting article 10 as read please signify by saying aye. Those opposed. The ayes have it and you've adopted article 10.



**Article 11: Shall the Town vote the sum of \$3,000.00 to West Windsor Independence Day Celebration with such funds to be raised by taxes?** I need a motion and a second to adopt that article. The motion was made by Mary Anne Boyce and seconded by Karen Diop. It's on the floor does anybody have any questions, suggestions or thoughts. Hearing none, those persons who are in favor of article 11 as read please signify by saying aye. Those opposed by nay. The ayes have it and you have adopted article 11.

Linda Ley spoke saying I'm on the Independence Day Committee and I just want you all to be aware of these two days that celebrate is the largest town celebration and I think we ought to give a round of applause to the volunteers and thank you. A round of applause was then given.

Matt said that's the first post article argument that I've heard. You've already got your money.

**Article 12: Shall the Town appropriate \$10,937.00 to be raised by taxes, for distribution to thirteen other organizations which provide important social services to Town residents in the amounts listed below:**

<b>Health Care &amp; Rehabilitation Services of Southeastern Vermont</b>	<b>\$1,067.00</b>
<b>Windsor County Mentors</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>
<b>Volunteers in Action</b>	<b>\$ 500.00</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>Senior Solutions</b>	<b>\$ 780.00</b>
<b>Reading/West Windsor Aging in Place</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>

Matt said I need a motion and a second to adopt this article as read. A motion was made by Anne Valentine and seconded by several.

Lee Monro spoke on behalf of the Reading/West Windsor Aging in Place and thanked everyone for their generosity with donations and time volunteered.

Ray Shannis said for the sake of extending this meeting which is going much too fast what is the Current?

Matt replied it's a bus.

Matt said those persons who are in favor of the article as read please signify by saying aye. Those opposed by nay. The ayes have it and you have adopted article 12.

Matt said now don't go.

Nancy Pedrick spoke saying you can send your children to the Windsor Recreation Center and claim being a West Windsor resident and get the lower fee for Windsor.

Matt said there must be some post article disease going on. We would normally have a last article that says that we can take up any other business that you would like to take up understanding that you cannot pass any article that is defining is a matter of town policy. This is normally where people point something out or thank somebody for something or not. So, it gives you there really are no rules here except decency. So does anybody have anything that they want to add to this.

Catherine Boedtger asked what happened. I noticed we didn't vote for the town agent. What does that mean and why did we decide not to have a town agent.

Matt replied the greater minds of Montpelier abolished that post. So, I got fired before I got hired.

Heather Findley spoke saying there's a job that I didn't even know about until this year, and it's the town clock winder and caretaker and it happens every week. David Silvester has held that post for the last five years and so I want to thank him for passing that on and before that it was Edson Pierce for decades I believe. It was passed on to my husband Tony Pikramenos and my son Ryder and we incorporated it into our home school program. They have shined it up and it's a real asset. If anyone wants a tour, it's very fascinating to see. That's part one. The other part is that we have a new candidate running for the school board. Her name is Kaitlyn Gould from Windsor. She's a young candidate with three children, with a child in first grade and two on the way and she works with youth and families. Her job is finding resources and working within the mental health community in schools. She is really committed, and I just want to encourage you to consider voting for her. Thank you.

Matt said the town clock winder. I bet no town in Vermont has that position.

Chuck Kurtzhalz said I have no connection to anybody in this thing that I want to say but West Windsor is very fortunate to have a town crew that maintains our roads and I am very appreciative of these people. Like I said I don't know any of them and I don't want any special favors to my road, but I do think they deserve a hand.

A round of applause was then given.

Matt said Erik maybe you can neglect to plow that road the next time around.

Chuck said Erik has nothing to do with it.

Mike Spackman said we are going to rename almost every road in town to my road.

Mary Anne Boyce spoke saying several people in this room are members of the Bone Builders of Brownsville. We meet twice a week Mondays and Wednesdays from nine to ten in this room and we

build balance and we have at least twelve people both men and women. There are fliers out in the foyer and everyone is welcome.

Edwin Johnson said I'm a Lister and I just want to give you an update on the reappraisal that has started. During the winter the appraisers and their consultants are not working in town so there's no business going on now but soon probably we don't know exactly yet but probably March or April they're starting up again. They have done most of the northwest corner of town and they'll start down in the southern and eastern section, so you'll be hearing from the listers. You'll get a postcard giving you notice of when the consultants hope to come by and this will go on in the spring and through the summer and into next fall. Hopefully, we'll have a new grand list. You can all base your appeals on next April 1.

Lynne Birmingham said they gave us a website to check on but it's not working.

Deb Spackman said anyone that has received a postcard or received the door hanger that directs you to look at the website we're aware of that and yes there was an error. Go to the town website and on the left side you will see something that says reappraisal. Click on that and it will bring it up and that's where you can enter the number that's on your door hanger and that will bring up your property record card for your review.

Connie Dowse and I live on Cemetery Road. I'm the third house on the right as you come up Cemetery Road and I'm having a lot of trouble with people driving too fast on my road. The speed limit is 30 but most people that are coming down the road when they hit the cemetery think that they're on a major highway. The Casella guys are the worst, but I had a dog get hit last Friday night. We had snow and mistakes were made by me of course and the dog was out there. A white truck came barreling down the road and the dog couldn't get out of the way. I miss Cathy's dad. Ralph would sit there and hid behind trees. We have no constable. Who is going to tell these people with their big trucks with the very bright lights that they must slow down. I remember when I first moved into town, I came down the hill and I was going to fast. Ralph was sitting in his car, and he stopped me and said there's a school. So, I don't know what can be done but the speed cart might be helpful if we could have it on Cemetery Road. Thank you.

Candace Brohinsky spoke saying I live on Bible Hill, and I would like to acknowledge and say thank you so much to the FAST Squad and the ambulance crew for their quick response and stayed so long when my husband unexpectedly passed so quickly last fall. I just wanted to say thank you. We are so blessed to have them and the community who has had my back every step of the way. I just can't thank this community enough.

Matt Kantola spoke saying I'd like to take a moment to introduce Christine Dolan who is our new Town Administrator. Probably a lot of you have already met her. She's working out great and she's awesome. She's friendly and her door is open so take a minute to meet her sometime and she's there to help with whatever problems might occur.

A round of applause was then given.

Matt Birmingham said I'm going to take a second to say don't ever give up these meetings. We are one of the last towns that does what we do here. Towns around us, for example Reading struggled to find some way to get the meeting going. They put it on Saturdays, they put it at night and now they're on Australian ballot. Don't give up this right. It's standing here. It's wonderful.

A round of applause was then given.

Matt said I will take a motion to adjourn. Ted Siegler made a motion to adjourn, and the motion was seconded by several. The motion passed on 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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Matt Kantola  
Selectboard

