

TOWN OF BRANDON
MINUTES OF EVENING MEETING
MARCH 6, 2017

Moderator Bill Moore called the Annual Brandon Town meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. Attending the meeting were select board members Chairman Douglas Bailey, Devon Fuller, Seth Hopkins, Tracy Wyman and Brian Coolidge, Clerk Sue Gage and 108 registered voters.

Brandon Girl Scout Troops 30067 and 30159, led by Liz Alvarado and Tonya Larouche including scouts, Erica Chapin, Aly Larouche, Jaylee MacJarrett, Adriana Watkins, Isabella Watkins, Linnea Faulkner, Clara Cifone, Elizabeth Atherton and Emily Pierro presented the colors and lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Moderator Moore welcomed all to the beautifully restored Brandon Town Hall, hosting its first town meeting since 1979, thanks to the efforts of the Friends of the Town Hall and Dennis Marden. Moderator Moore then introduced the Brandon Select Board members and Town Manager David Atherton. Mr. Moore then turned the meeting over to Chair Doug Bailey.

Chair Bailey recognized Maria Wiles, daughter of Tina and Brian Wiles, one of the top youth volunteers in Vermont for 2017 and recipient of the Prudential Spirit of Community awards. Chair Bailey highlighted Ms. Wiles community volunteerism including construction of a learning center in her church, a book drive for low income families and setting up a website for youth volunteering opportunities. Chair Bailey presented Ms. Wiles with a certificate from the Brandon Select Board.

Chair Bailey then recognized our Town Report dedicatees, Bud and Jane Coolidge. Mr. and Mrs. Coolidge were met with a standing ovation from the meeting attendees and thanked the board for the recognition. They also shared some stories and spoke about their love of community specifically the Brandon community. They returned to their seats with a second standing ovation.

Chair Bailey also recognized those individuals recognized in the memoriam, Judy Eve Brown and Dave Rowden.

Moderator Moore then went over the rules of the proceeding and read the Town Meeting Warning.

The following business was then transacted:

1. Take appropriate action on the reports of officers as they appear in the Town Report. Seth Hopkins moved to accept the reports as they appear in the Town Report. The motion received a second from Bernie Carr. The motion was approved.
2. To hear a presentation by the Select Board of its recommended budget for fiscal year 2017-2018. This budget and appropriations will be voted by Australian Ballot on March 7, 2017 at the Brandon Town Hall, Basement Meeting Room, 1 Conant Square, Brandon, VT. Seth Clifford made a motion to move the article. The motion was seconded by Dolores Furnari. The attendees approved the motion.

Moderator Moore then turned the meeting over to the Select Board for its presentation. Chair Bailey presented a list of projects that were started, completed and ongoing since the last Town Meeting which are substantial. A photo slideshow of the same was running as he spoke.

Brandon Select Board member Seth Hopkins thanked the budget committee, Carol Bertrand, Jan Coolidge, Doug Sawyer and Anthony Peduto, for helping craft the current budget. Mr. Hopkins explained the relationship between tax rates and grand list values, the components of everyone's tax bills, as well as explaining how the Town Local Option Tax will be recorded and utilized. Mr. Hopkins also illustrated how grants are used to complete large projects and thereby reduce local spending. He emphasized that grants were crucial for longevity and for financing large projects.

Chair Bailey spoke about the budget and effect on homeowners' taxes. The current budget would not increase taxes, but instead people should see a reduction in their property taxes.

Brandon Select Board member Devon Fuller spoke about the Segment 6 project which is finally getting off the ground. The project utilizes 95% federal and state funds and 5% local funds. There is a 50% match is for the buried utilities, which will be from the library to the town hall. Bids on the project will be due April 14, 2017 at 2 pm. It is anticipated that construction will begin in the Summer of 2017. The expertise of Public Works Director Daryl Burlett is crucial in the process. Mr. Fuller stated that the Board thanks Dave Atherton and the Town Office team for getting this project off the ground.

Moderator Moore then opened up the floor for questions and answers with help from Sophie Moore handling the mobile microphone.

Sam Glaser noted that although Segment 6 is exciting, Park Street is still neglected. He has been in town for 10 years, and Park Street is still a mess. Mr. Glaser would like to see Park Street construction included in the Segment 6 construction as having the contractor in town would make sense and save money. He would like to see Park Street finished or at least a formal plan for Park Street.

Mr. Fuller responded that the Select Board and management are thinking about and working on Park Street, but it is not shovel ready. Mr. Fuller stated that he and the board concur with many of Mr. Glaser's concerns. Mr. Glaser requested that the board charge the Town Manager and management with making a plan for the repair of Park Street.

Bernie Carr asked whether the town must take the low bid on segment six or are there other factors in the bidding process. Mr. Atherton stated that we have to take the lowest qualified bid because it is a federal project. We are utilizing a firm to qualify the bids, and once the qualification process is complete, a contract will be awarded to the lowest bidder.

Bill Claessons appreciated the presentation from the Select Board, and asked about any surplus from prior years, and why we don't report surpluses in the Town Report. He feels the financials are not fully disclosed without such a report. Treasurer Sue Gage provided the fund balance surplus in the General Fund and explained the importance of having a positive fund balance. Mr. Claessons concurred with Ms. Gage regarding a positive fund balance, but would like to see detailed information about any fund balances in the annual Town Report so that readers can have a better understanding.

Dennis Marden thanked Bernie Carr and the Chamber of Commerce for keeping everyone up to date on the construction activity around the overflow culvert. Mr. Marden wondered at which end of route 7 segment 6 construction will begin. Mr. Fuller answered that the contractor will decide how to approach the project. Mr. Fuller did confirm that construction work in the center of town will be done at night.

Chair Bailey mentioned that two of the long time appropriations are not included on the ballot this year, as they will no longer be in business and did not request funds. This will reduce the tax rate as well.

Bill Claessons asked for details on individual budget line items which were answered by Mr. Atherton.

3. To see if the voters of the Town of Brandon will authorize the Select Board to spend unbudgeted, unanticipated income received by the Town so long as the expenditure of such funds will not create a deficit? Motion to bring the question to the floor by Richard Baker, and seconded by Ethan Nelson. Article approved for discussion. Bernie Carr moved the question, seconded by Seth Clifford. Motion to move the question was approved. Article was approved.
4. To transact any other business proper to be done when met.

Clerk Susan Gage stated that there was an error on the ballot. Carol Fjeld was misspelled as Carol Field on the ballot.

Wayne Rausenberger spoke about BLSG mosquitos. Any concerns can be fielded at 247-6779. There is a recording which must be listened to and after the recording an operator will eventually pick up and you can leave message. Those who do not want treatment must send a letter to PO BOX 88, with one's name, 911 address, phone number and a map of your property. This request must be done annually. The district can be reached by email at: blsgdistrict@gmail.com


Kevin Thornton recognized Sophie Moore as the assistant to the moderator. He hopes she has enjoyed her evening and remains interested in government and democracy her entire life.

Judy Bunde of the Downtown Committee wanted to recognize and thank Jeff Stewart for his efforts in reroofing the Methodist church through grants and fundraising.

Stacey Doucette spoke about the Chamber summer concert series every Wednesday night and stated that this will be happening again in the summer of 2017. Due to construction, the concerts will be held behind the Brandon Inn. Rain location is the Brandon Town Hall.

Barbara Ebling introduced herself and stated that she is running for the Otter Valley Unified Union School District board, and would be happy to speak with anyone after the meeting is adjourned.

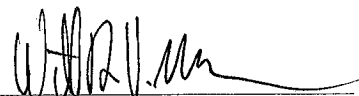
Motion to adjourn by Mitch Pearl, seconded by Dawn Bailey. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.



Susan Gage, Town Clerk



Del Cook, BCA Chair



Bill Moore, Moderator