

TOWN OF BRANDON
MINUTES OF EVENING MEETING
MARCH 4, 2019

Moderator Bill Moore called the Annual Town Meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Attending the meeting were Select Board Members Seth Hopkins, Douglas Bailey, Devon Fuller, Tracy Wyman and Brian Coolidge, Town Manager David Atherton, Clerk Sue Gage and 84 registered voters. Cub Scout Pack 110 including members Sarah-Lynne Carrara, Cubmaster, Alisha Krans, Den Leader, and scouts Jon Carrara, Jacob Krans, Lucia Carrara, Jesse Flanders, Jr, and Scouts BSA Troop 2019 including Michelle Smith, Scoutmaster, and Christina Carrara led the flag ceremony. Notably BSA Troop 2019 is the first female scout troop in the Rutland Area. Doug Bailey addressed the dedication of the annual report to Harmon Thurston. Harmon was greeted with a standing ovation. Moderator Moore thanked all for coming and provided an overview of the proceedings. Seth Hopkins/Jan Coolidge made a motion to dispense with the reading of the warning. The motion approved.

1. To hear the reports of officers as they appear in the Town Report. Seth Hopkins/Joan Rowe moved to accept the reports as printed. Motion was approved.
2. To hear a presentation by the Select Board of its recommended budget for fiscal year 2019-2020. This budget and appropriations will be voted by Australian Ballot on March 5, 2019 at the Brandon Town Hall, Basement Meeting Room, 1 Conant Square, Brandon, VT. Carol Fjeld/Jeanne Lamarre moved to open Article 2. Motion was approved.

The Select Board, led by Seth Hopkins, presented the proposed budget. Mr. Hopkins thanked budget committee members, Jan Coolidge, Doug Sawyer, and Anthony Peduto. Mr. Hopkins then provided an overview of tax rates and delinquent collections over time. Doug Bailey provided an overview of the effect of taxes on individual tax bills, and the components of the tax assessments. Mr. Hopkins followed with information about Segment 6 and matching fund needs and sources. Mr. Hopkins also spoke about the Union Contract and employee benefits. Devon Fuller spoke about the town's infrastructure and the improvements that have been made in Brandon. Mr. Fuller stated that Daryl Burlett, the head of Brandon's Department of Public Works has done an outstanding job managing the public works department. Mr. Fuller then explained the rationale behind requesting paving funds through voted appropriations and suggested that we budget for this important line item in the regular budget in the future. Mr. Fuller explained that Mr. Burlett feels a reasonable figure would be \$250,000 annually in paving to properly fund road maintenance.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Mr. Moore asked the assembly if there were questions regarding the presentation. Mr. Moore enlisted help from Sophie Moore who ran the microphone to speakers. Priscilla McKeighan asked what portion of the budget covers expenses at the Town Hall. Mr. Hopkins stated that the buildings and grounds department encompasses all the costs for maintenance of the Town Hall. Priscilla McKeighan also asked about deceased individuals on the delinquent listing in the town report. Town Manager Dave Atherton stated that if someone dies without a will or extended family, collection of the debt becomes more complicated and lengthier, but the town is working on this issue.

Brent Buehler stated that he would like to see footnotes at the bottom of the budget describing changes or large variations on line items. He asked why these were not included despite his request for them last year. Mr. Hopkins stated that the format for the town report makes producing the footnotes difficult, but the board agrees that they would be helpful and they are working to make that happen in the future.

Keith Arlund asked whether the town had a 5-year paving plan and whether there been a complete inventory and assessment of the paved and gravel roads. Devon Fuller stated that Mr. Burlett completed this when he first started with the town. Mr. Arlund then asked if there has been an updated culvert inventory. Mr. Fuller answered in the affirmative.

Bill Claessens asked for clarification on tax figures as listed in the town report. Treasurer Sue Gage answered that the difference is likely due to the changes in grand list values during the year. Ms. Gage invited Mr. Claessens to the office to go through the detailed financials. Mr. Claessens would like to see the budget reflect the tax increase as well as the budgeted expenses. Seth Hopkins stated that we can do this in the future.

Liz Gregorek asked for clarification on the Project Manager/DPW Manager's salary from a figure reflected in the select board's earlier slide. Seth Hopkins stated that the figure on the slide is the amount of money the town is being reimbursed for Mr. Burlett's services. This does not reflect his salary.

Larry Rodgers asked about Segment 6, and whether it was appropriate to ask about it at this point. Bill Moore said it was not germane to this discussion but that he can bring it back up under other business.

Keith Arlund asked if the capital plan for paving and gravel is written down and available to the public. Devon Fuller stated that it is not currently in writing. Mr. Arlund wondered why if there was a plan, it was not written down somewhere. Mr. Fuller stated that we don't have the funding for these projects yet, so it has not been written down. Doug Bailey stated that we are working with what we have until we get through the current projects.

Bill Claessens sought further clarification on the increase in taxes. He does not feel the report properly reflects the tax increase. Seth Hopkins indicated that we need to encompass the appropriation for paving in order to compare the two years accurately, and any increase in taxes should reflect that. Mr. Claessens felt the presentation on the paving was confusing

3. Shall the voters of the Town of Brandon exempt the buildings and property belonging to Brandon Area Rescue Squad located at 1338 Franklin Street (parcel ID 0086-1338) from **municipal property tax and education property tax** for a period of five (5) years in accordance with the exemption clause for charitable and fraternal organizations as set forth in 32 V.S.A § 3840?

Charles Powell / Mona Rodgers moved to open the article. Motion was approved. Jan Coolidge asked about reimbursements from insurance companies and whether they could cover additional expenses. Representatives from the Rescue Squad stated that not all passengers have health insurance, and the insurance companies don't cover the cost of providing the service. Motion to approve tax exemption passed.

4. Shall the voters of the Town of Brandon exempt the buildings and property belonging to the Brandon Masonic Association located at 1046 Park Street (parcel ID 0030-1066) from **municipal property tax and education property tax** for a period of five (5) years in accordance with the exemption clause for charitable and fraternal organizations as set forth in 32 V.S.A § 3840?

Jeanne Lamarre / Larry Rodgers moved to open the article. Representatives from the Masons spoke about the community services provided by them annually. Amy Menard questioned whether an organization that is fraternal in nature and does not allow women to join is truly a charitable organization per the Vermont Statutes. Kathy Rausenberger stated that there is a women's group associated with the masons. Representatives for the Masons stated that if they must pay property taxes then they will not have the funds to do their charitable work. Doug Bailey/Jeanne Lamarre made a motion to move the question. The motion passed. The article was voted on and the voice vote was unclear. Voters were asked to raise their hands, and the motion to approve tax exemption passed.

5. To transact any other business proper to be done when met. Mr. Rodgers / Emily Nelson moved to open article. Motion approved. Barbara Ebling spoke on behalf of OVUUD with Emily Nelson and Barry Varian. Explained the school budget and bond. Spoke about the task force formed to provide a 5 to 10-year district plan.

Larry Rodgers had questions about Segment 6. He wondered if we will continue having with traffic lights and why there were so many fire hydrants close together in the downtown area. Dave Atherton stated that the lights will remain blinking until we can paint permanent lines on the road this spring. Mr. Atherton encouraged everyone with question about Segment 6 to attend the pre-construction meeting on March 21 in the town hall.

Newly elected representative Stephanie Jerome and representative Butch Shaw spoke about their activity in Montpelier representing Brandon, Pittsford and Sudbury.

Bill Moore asked Richard Baker to be temporary moderator so that he could outline events in the town hall for both the recreation department and the Friends of the Town Hall.

Jeanne Lamarre and Martha Thurston spoke about traffic light issues. Dave Atherton again encouraged everyone to come to the pre-construction meeting on March 21st.

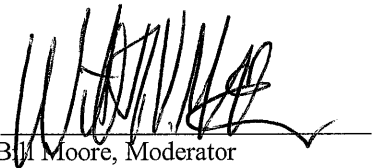
Charles Powell thanked the Select Board for their service to the town.

Dave Atherton acknowledged Devon Fuller's 10 years on the Brandon Select Board with the gift of a plaque. Those in attendance acknowledged and thanked Mr. Fuller as well.

6. Adjourn. Motion to adjourn Devon Fuller / Richard Baker. Meeting was adjourned at 8:36 pm.



Susan Gage, Town Clerk



Bill Moore, Moderator