

ABSTRACT OF THE 2017 TOWN MEETING

The 2017 Annual Town District Meeting was called to order at the Elementary Auditorium at Bellows Free Academy, Fairfax, Vermont by Moderator Roberta (Robby) Rodimer at 11:25 a.m. on Saturday, March 4, 2017. Robby read Robert's Rules as modified by VT State Law.

ARTICLES 1 through ARTICLE 4 were voted upon by the use of the official Australian ballot on Tuesday, March 7, 2017 at the Middle School Gymnasium of Bellows Free Academy, Fairfax, Vermont. The polls opened at 7:00 a.m. and closed at 7:00 p.m.

Thomas Fontaine, Select Board Chair introduced the Select Board.

Barbara Murphy, State Representative, spoke about the weekly letter that she puts on Front Page Forum, Henry Raymond's Website, and on Facebook; the Doyle Poll survey that was out in the lobby and will also be at Tuesday's Election; along with a list of unclaimed property listing that is in the lobby.

Mark Kane, Planning Commissioner presented a slide show of the Current Gateway Enhancement Study along Route 104. It address's the primary entrance point into the Village of Fairfax. The community has recognized its Village through a Village Center Designation with the State of Vermont. Fairfax has pursued several planning studies (Non-Motorized Transportation and a Pedestrian Scoping Study) related to mobility. Some of these studies addressed (in some ways) the arrival to town. Efforts are underway to expand sidewalks in Town. Town offices have been relocated to the intersection of Buck Hollow Road and Main Street. Recent senior housing has been built in the Village core. Changes in the community are happening, but identifying Fairfax as a real village remains elusive. Study is commissioned to help explore how this identity might be established and support longer-term growth and vibrancy within the Village Center. The project goals are:

1. Create a welcoming public process to broaden the conversation about the identity for Fairfax.
2. Explore a range of options that help establish a welcoming atmosphere on the entry points to Fairfax and assist in traffic calming.
3. Establish options that address a wide variety of community concerns or interests; safety of pedestrians, speed of vehicles, sense of place, support of local businesses.
4. Use the results of the work to inform future decision-making and as guidance to long-range investments.

The project study extends from Route 104A intersection to just past Minor's Store along Route 104 heading east. Mark showed the 3D Point Cloud provided detailed information of terrain and buildings. Analysis and concepts were shown.

Colin Santee, Recreation Department spoke about our new Community Center, formerly the Baptist Building that was donated to the Town of Fairfax. Alex Hamel a Senior High School student spoke about the advantages of this Center for a future Youth Center, keeping students from being left behind with nothing to do. A Teen Center would be a great asset to our Community. Colin said this Center would also be available for school programs and the Town's people. Anyone that would like to get involved can sign up in the lobby. Colin also informed us of upcoming events such as the Egg Hunt, June Fitness, the 4th of July Parade with activities, and the Egg Run.

Tom Fontaine, Select Board Chair and Lauri Fisher, Select Board Vice Chair, presented a slide show titled Balancing Governance in Fairfax, VT 2017 and beyond. Overview highlights of 2016 in overview included

the trash update – SWIP, sidewalks...will they ever be complete?, ordinance revisions – Zoning/Fire, Recreation Department growth, on the horizon – state mandate briefing, employee safety training, staff changes, thanks to Stacy Wells, and appreciation recognition to Sheri Rainville, Amy Sears, and Colin Santee for minding the assistant gap.

The new 18 month transition will consist of a budget year January 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018. The property tax bills will consist of three (3) payments. Trash remains as a separate flat fee on the bill. The proposed budget has excluded traditional year-end payments to assist transition with no penalty or interest on late payments until the final payment that is due in May of 2018.

The Select Board highly recommends a Town Manager. Mandates from the State of Vermont, the requirements of Vermont Leagues of Cities and Towns and the Auditors as to oversight of town management are too much for lay Board members. He or she shall have general supervision of the affairs of the town, will be the administrative head of all departments of the town government, and shall be responsible for the efficient administration thereof.

Article 4 would be an elimination of Lister. As of today, we have two Lister vacancies. Upcoming legislation requires certification. This would put Fairfax in compliance ahead of schedule.

Article 7 moves all items to Australian ballot without eliminating Town Meeting, allowing the entire taxpayer base to vote.

ARTICLE 1 To following officials were elected by the legal voters of the Town:

Town Moderator	One Year Term	Roberta Rodimer	648 votes
Selectperson	Three Year Term	Steve Cormier	624 votes
Selectperson	Two Year Term	Stephen Bessette	629 votes
Lister*	Three Year Term		
Lister*	One Year remaining Of a Three Year Term		
Town Agent	One Year Term	Thomas Fontaine	619 votes
Town Grand Juror	One Year Term	Thomas Fontaine	347 votes
Community Library Trustee	Three Year Term	Christina Fearon	443 votes
Community Library Trustee	Three Year Term	Eric A Foreman	382 votes
First Constable	One Year remaining Of a Three Year Term		
Cemetery Commissioner	Five Year Term	Doug Collins	662 votes

*pending the outcome of Article 4

The floor was opened to discussion and there was none.

ARTICLE 2 Shall the registered voters of the Town of Fairfax approve the **eighteen (18) month Transitional Budget** covering the period from January 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018, as recommended by the Select Board, of \$4,018,488.08 of which \$2,452,415.06 is to be raised by taxes and \$959,677.00 to be raised by the previously approved trash fee (Article 3, 2016)?

The floor was opened to discussion and there was a question and answer session. There was a question of when are the payments due on the 18 month fiscal year transition and if there would be interest and penalties if not paid on time. Property tax will be in three payments. The payment stubs will be at the bottom of your 2017 property tax bill that will go out around August 2017. The first of three payments is due November 20, 2017. The second of three payments is due February 20, 2018. The third and final of three payments is due May 20, 2018. There will not be any interest or penalty due until after the last payment is due.

In Favor: 483

Opposed: 257

ARTICLE 3 Shall the registered voters of the Town of Fairfax vote to take advantage of the provisions of Chapter 37 of Title 24 V.S.A. § 1241 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated and authorize the Select Board to employ a Town Manager?

The floor was opened to discussion and there was a question and answer session. Some floor discussion consisted of if the Town Manager would come from our town or out of town; if voted in, how long would it take to get someone hired and how will you go about this; what would the wage be and how many hours per week; and would this Town Manager also work with our Utility Department.

In Favor: 407

Opposed: 325

ARTICLE 4 Shall the registered voters of the Town of Fairfax vote to eliminate the elected positions of "Lister" and hire and contract with or employ a professionally qualified Assessor?

The floor was opened to discussion and there was a question and answer session. Some floor discussion consisted of what happens to the Lister that we already have if this is voted in; will we have a Lister and a Assessor; do we hire outside Assessors or do we hire a permanent employee; if passed and our Listers are getting done in 45 days, will we have a replacement by then; and why did Fairfax want to do a Town wide reappraisal when our CLA is 95.34.

In Favor: 407

Opposed: 308

ARTICLE 5 Shall the registered voters of the Town of Fairfax vote to raise, appropriate and expend the sum of \$22,877.50 for the support of social contributions to provide services to the residents of the Town?

A. Age Well (CVAA)-----	\$1,400.00
B. American Red Cross-----	\$1,000.00
C. Fairfax Success by Six-----	\$2,500.00
D. Franklin County Home Health Agency-----	\$8,998.50
E. Franklin County Industrial Development-----	\$500.00
F. Franklin Grand Isle Restorative Justice Center-----	\$300.00
G. Friends of Northern Lake Champlain-----	\$300.00
H. Green Mountain Transit/CCTA-----	\$2,229.00
I. Green Up Vermont-----	\$300.00
J. Northwestern Counseling-----	\$1,800.00

K. Samaritan House, Inc./Tim's House-----	\$1,000.00
L. Vermont Association of Conservation District-----	\$100.00
M. Vermont Center for Independent Living-----	\$500.00
N. Voices Against Violence Laurie's House-----	\$1,500.00
O. Vermont Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired-----	\$300.00
P. Vermont Council on Rural Development-----	\$150.00

TOTAL: ----- \$22,877.50

A motion was made by Randy DeVine and seconded Lauri Fisher. The floor was opened to discussion and there was a question and answer session. Some discussion and comments consisted of how important it is to have contribute to Franklin County Home Health due to helping out when they needed the help after surgery; with Franklin County Home Health being such a large amount, why isn't it a separate article; discussion was who was on or off this list compared to 2016 list; did these agencies submit 18 month of 12 month amount, they submitted 12 month. The motion was passed by a show of cards.

ARTICLE 6 Shall the registered voters of the Town of Fairfax approve the **eighteen (18) month Transitional Budget** of \$108,674.00 covering the period from January 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018 in support of the Fairfax Rescue toward operation expense?

A motion was made by Cathy Carlson and seconded by Marti Sterin. Daniel Vanslette, Fairfax Rescue President presented a slide show consisting of some highlights; why an Article and not a town budget, Fairfax Rescue is primarily a Volunteer Squad; how you can support your volunteer squad; increase in levels of service. He presented the 2017 budget that is not in the town report. Medical supplies continue to increase; ambulance increase with upgrading a truck in the future; medical equipment increase; payroll expense is up this year; billing is now in house; sometimes we need to hire someone when the volunteers are not available; Medicaid tax on all runs; \$18,000 lost in 2016; insurance comparisons; and they are always looking for volunteers and are looking for grants. The subscription plan will go out next month at \$60. The floor was opened to discussion and there was a question and answer session. One comment was made that it was a good thing that the billing is back in Fairfax. The motion was passed by a show of cards.

ARTICLE 7 Shall the registered voters of the Town of Fairfax authorize all the Town current and contingent expenses be voted upon by the use of the Australian ballot beginning in the year 2018?

A motion was made by Mike Cain and seconded by Jeff Corey. The floor was opened to discussion and there was a question and answer session. Some floor discussion consisted of people feeling that they would not have a voice in Town decisions if the article passed. Other people felt that we would still have an informational meeting; this article would be the best for our Town; why is it that people do not show up for this floor vote Saturday meeting; and there is always more people that show up to vote

Australian ballot. The motion was passed by a show of cards with 46 voters in favor and 29 voters not in favor.

ARTICLE 8 Shall the registered voters of the Town of Fairfax act on the reports of the town officers?

A motion was made by Lauri Fisher and seconded by Thomas Fontaine. The floor was opened to discussion. Barbara Murphy asked that the Abstract of the 2016 Town Meeting be amended, with omitting her as servicing for Vermont Right of Ways. The motion was passed by a show of cards.

ARTICLE 9 Shall the registered voters of the Town of Fairfax authorize the Select Board to place the tax bills in the hands of the Town Treasurer as heretofore?

A motion was made by Lauri Fisher and seconded by Carol Vallett. The floor was opened to discussion and there was none. The motion was passed by a show of cards.

ARTICLE 10 Shall the registered voters of the Town of Fairfax authorize the Select Board to borrow money in anticipation of property taxes for the current year expenses?

A motion was made by Lauri Fisher and seconded by Thomas Fontaine. The floor was opened to discussion. There was a comment of why the Line of Credit had increase so much compared to 2016, which is due to the 18 month budget, transitioning into fiscal year. The motion was passed by a show of cards.

ARTICLE 11 Shall the registered voters of the Town of Fairfax act on any other business?

A motion was made by Thomas Fontaine and seconded by Lauri Fisher. The floor was opened to discussion. A comment was made that the Select Board and the Town Office work double duty, which probably is not understood by most people in the room and that the Select Board should get payroll raises. The motion was passed by a show of cards.

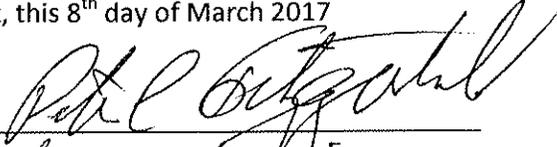
ARTICLE 12 Shall the registered voters of the Town of Fairfax recess Town Meeting until March 7, 2017 at 7:00 A.M.?

A motion was made Lauri Fisher and seconded by Thomas Fontaine. The floor was opened to discussion and there was none. The motion was passed by a show of cards at 1:35 p.m. to recess the Town until March 7, 2017 at 7 a.m.

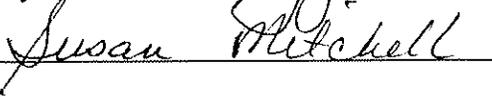
There are 3650 registered voters with 746 voting by Australian ballot making a 20% voter turnout.

Dated at Fairfax, County of Franklin, State of Vermont, this 8th day of March 2017

Peter Fitzgerald, Justice of the Peace

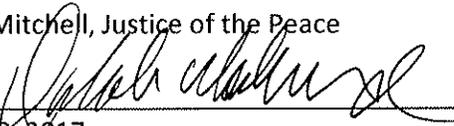


Susan Mitchell, Justice of the Peace



Attest:

March 8, 2017



Deborah Woodward, Town Clerk/Treasurer

ABSTRACT OF THE 2017 FAIRFAX TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING

FAIRFAX TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT *Annual Meeting 2017*

The 2017 Annual Town School District Meeting was called to order at the Elementary Auditorium at Bellows Free Academy, Fairfax, Vermont by Moderator Roberta (Robby) Rodimer at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 4, 2017. Robby read Robert's Rules as modified by VT State Law.

ARTICLES 1 through ARTICLE 3 were voted upon by the use of the official Australian ballot on Tuesday, March 7, 2017 at the Middle School Gymnasium of Bellows Free Academy, Fairfax, Vermont. The polls opened at 7:00 a.m. and closed at 7:00 p.m.

Elaine Carpenter, School Board Chair introduced our FWSU, our Principals, and the School Board. A slide show was presented. Elaine Carpenter, Chair spoke about the Fairfax School Budget FY18 Proposal consisting of the BFA Fairfax's committed to ensuring all students become informed, literate, critical thinkers who demonstrate responsible social and civic behaviors. This year's budget is \$13,259,900
Next year's budget will be \$12,107,122

- In 2014, BFA began moving Speech and Language services to the Supervisory Union to comply with Act 156. Over the next several years, more services were moved out of the local budget into the SU budget (special education, EEE, transportation).
- Next year, as a result of Act 156, the state will now reimburse the SU directly for the above services instead of reimbursing schools directly. FWSU will reduce charges to BFA to the net cost of the services (total expenditures minus state revenue).

The impact on the local budget is a decrease of \$1,445,000 in revenue and \$1,445,000 in expenditures. Budget-to-budget expenditure comparison is no longer a valid measure to assess budget growth. Per pupil growth provides a more consistent comparison. The budget reallocation summary consists of:

- **High School Technology Integrationist (\$65K)** – This position will provide additional technology opportunities for high school students through direct instruction and expanded course offerings (coding), as well as support for teachers with technology-based instruction in classrooms.
- **Increase Spanish Teacher 0.3 FTE (\$16K)** – Expand Spanish offerings to meet increased demand.
- **Grade 1 Classroom Teacher (\$65K)** – Hire an additional classroom teacher due to increased enrollment, based on class size policy requirements.
- **Early Education Program Expansion (\$43K)** – To comply with Act 166, we are expanding our capacity to serve early ed students. We will hire a part-time teacher and paraprofessional to staff an additional session, and equip a new classroom.
- **Flexible Pathways Coordinator (\$61K)** – This position was grant-funded for the past few years, but is now being added to the local budget in anticipation of diminishing grant revenue.
- **School Resource Officer (20\$K)** – The SRO will enhance security and safety of our school and provide resources as a law enforcement officer, counselor, and educator. Duties would include truancy enforcement, substance abuse prevention, providing resources and guidance to students, families, and staff, and sharing their expertise in class to help students better understand the law.
- **Reduce 2 Paraprofessionals and Hire a Special Educator** – Provide increased instructional and behavioral expertise for special education students.
- **Summer School Program Restructure (-\$15K)**– Restructure learning opportunities to provide direct, targeted instruction for special education students.

The estimated school tax impact would have a 2017 tax rate of 1.3681 and a 2018 estimated tax rate of 1.3838. Article 2 was explained indicating that the tax rate increase is 1.15%. Increases in per pupil spending do not correlate with the tax rate increases. The estimated school tax bill was discussed. Property owners with household income less than \$141,000 will receive a reduction on their education tax bill based on income. There was a comparison with different towns along with the state average, showing that BFA Fairfax is low on spending in the projected 2018 regional spending per equalized pupil.

The tax rates also remain low in Fairfax. Enrollment was summarized for all grades from 2009-2010 through 2016-2017 increasing the pupil count for PK-5 but decreasing in grades 9-12. Rachele LeVau, School Board, spoke about The Capital Improvement Plan highlighting: replacing the underground storage tank, renovations, roof, tile, and parking lot paving. LRFPC Committee updates consisted of the following:

- Committee has been meeting for the past two years to consider options for upgrading the middle/high school facilities
- Middle/High School have essentially had no building upgrades in 30 years
- Board and community meetings are being developed for a planned bond vote this fall. Construction would start in the spring/summer.
- Elementary bond will be completely paid off before we begin payments on any new bond
- The draft proposed plan to be put forth by the committee includes:
 - *Upgraded Bathrooms and Flooring*
 - *A New Middle School Gymnasium*
 - *A New School Auditorium*
 - *Relocated/Redesigned Front Entrance and Administrative/Guidance Offices*
 - *Updated Science/STEM Labs*
 - *Upgraded Multipurpose Room and Cafeteria*
 - *Relocated/Redesigned Nurse Stations*

Elaine spoke about the tradition of fiscal responsibility consisting of:

- Open FWSU Negotiations for fair and equitable teacher and para educator contracts. **Visit www.fwsu.org/negotiations for detailed information.**
- Since 2010, we have reduced 6.02 teacher FTEs from the High School in response to declining enrollment/class size.
- Following DMC Report recommendations to provide better student services for less cost:
 - *Increase contact time that Special Educators and Speech Language Pathologists directly serve students*
 - *Increase Speech Language Pathologists group sizes*
- Added a fourth Kindergarten classroom, but continued to operate with 3 general ed para educators
- Upgrades of the facilities have essentially been deferred 30 years
- Consolidated purchasing across the supervisory union in technology
- Future focus on creating a robust high school program to remain competitive with area high schools or run the risk of losing students

Act 46 update was discussed along with the White House timeline. The next steps consist of:

- High School students completing film to document history of the White House
- Submit information for final Act 250 approval to remove the White House
- Solicit bids and have board approve removal of structure

Article 1

The following officials were elected by the legal voters of the Town:

<i>School Moderator</i>	<i>One year term</i>	<i>Roberta Rodimer</i>	<i>634 votes</i>
<i>School Director</i>	<i>Three-year term</i>	<i>Elaine Carpenter</i>	<i>629 votes</i>
<i>School Director</i>	<i>Two-year term</i>	<i>Michael Bruso</i>	<i>615 votes</i>
<i>BFA Trustee</i>	<i>Five-year term</i>	<i>Dale Bellows</i>	<i>672 votes</i>

The floor was opened to discussion and there was none.

Article 2

Shall the voters of said school district approve the school board to expend \$12,107,122, which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$13,292.77 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 4.39% higher than spending for the current year. BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT

Robby explained that the revised Article 2 was done due to correcting 1.15%, to per equalized pupil is 4.39% and correcting the date of the Australian vote from March 6, 2017 to March 7, 2017. A subsequent Town Meeting to validate the revision will be taking place. The motion was made by Rachelle LeVau and seconded by Kathy Muehl. The floor was opened to discussion and there was none.

In Favor: 404

Opposed: 339

Article 3

Shall the voters of said school district authorize the School Directors to borrow money for school expenses in anticipation of revenue for the ensuing year? BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT

The motion was made by Rachelle LeVau and seconded by Kathy Muehl. The floor was opened to discussion and there was none.

In Favor: 455

Opposed: 284

Article 4

To approve reports of School Directors from the previous year.

A motion was made by Mike Cain and seconded by Geoffrey Schukei. The floor was opened to discussion and there was none. The motion was passed by a show of cards.

Article 5

To conduct any other legal business to come before said meeting.

A motion was made by Amber Soter and seconded by Steve Bessette. The floor was opened to discussion and there was a question and answer session. Some floor discussion consisted of the surprise and concern of a possible Construction Bond; pros and cons of school choice in the future; along with making sure that we as a School do not live beyond our means. The motion was passed by a show of cards.

Article 6

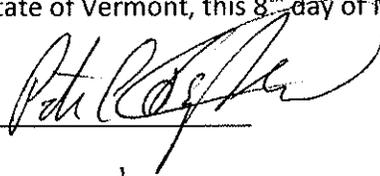
To adjourn.

A motion was made by Carol Vallett and seconded by Geoffrey Schukei. The floor was opened to discussion. The motion was passed by a show of cards at 11:22 a.m. The School recessed until March 7, 2017 at 7:00 a.m.

There are 3650 registered voters with 746 voting by Australian ballot making a 20% voter turnout.

Dated at Fairfax, County of Franklin, State of Vermont, this 8th day of March 2017

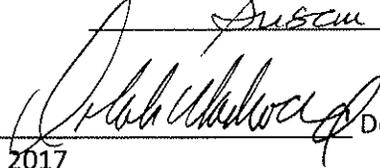
Peter Fitzgerald, Justice of the Peace



Susan Mitchell, Justice of the Peace



Attest:



Deborah Woodward, Town Clerk/Treasurer

March 8, 2017