

Town of Fairfax



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Fairfax, VT 05454
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ABSTRACT/MINUTES OF THE 2019 ANNUAL TOWN DISTRICT MEETING

The 2019 Annual Town District Meeting was called to order at the Elementary Auditorium at Bellows Free Academy, Fairfax, Vermont by Moderator Roberta (Robby) Rodimer at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 2, 2019. Robby welcomed everyone and said that the meeting would run using Robert's Rules except where State Law takes precedence. Speaker would be limited to three minutes during the time for questions and comments and they only speak twice to an issue. She thanked the set up crew for the wonderful job they did setting up for Town Meeting. She welcomed all the new people that are here, informing them that if they were not registered to vote that they could go to the entrance table and fill out a voter registration so that they could vote and participate at Town Meeting.

ARTICLES 1 through ARTICLE 8 were voted upon by the use of the official Australian ballot on Tuesday, March 5, 2019 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.

Barbara Murphy, State Representative, spoke in sympathy of the absence of long-time resident Henry Raymond. His was recognized for all that he has given to the town servicing in numerous ways including his website, putting together Fairfax genealogy and serving as Justice of the Peace.

Steve Cormier, Select Board Chair introduced the Select Board and our new Town Manager, Brad Docheff. He shared his thoughts that, "our Town Manager runs the town. He has done a wonderful job. He is a real gem." Brad spoke about new faces in Fairfax: Town Librarian Emily DiGiulio, and Brian LaClair, who replaced Colin Santee as Recreation Director. Brian spoke saying his goal was to expand programming and events for all age groups. He stated how to get in touch with him and thanked everyone for coming.

Brad spoke about the sidewalks being almost completed with only a small stretch left to do. It should be completed in early Spring. The town plans to purchase a compact tractor to meet our needs to maintain the sidewalks. He thanked the Fire Department and the community for keeping the sidewalks clear. He stated that the Highway crew has done a tremendous job with our roads. They are the backbone of our Town. Two new trucks have been added to our fleet. He thanked Northwest Regional Planning and Amber Soter, our Zoning Administrator, for all their work on our Town Plan. Brad presented a couple bullet points on our town grants which include:

- The Town Staff worked together as a team to acquire over \$1million in State and Federal Grants in 2018, including
 - \$463K from Economic Development Administration
 - \$263K from Northern Border Regional Commission
 - \$140K from VTrans Bike and Ped Program
 - \$175K from VTrans Structures Grant Program
- The Town is working to leverage as much outside funding as possible to lessen the burden on the Fairfax taxpayer when it comes to making necessary, but expensive improvements to Town.

Brad stated that we are working to continue to grow our community and are asking for public participation for fun town activities. Our Utility Department continues to work on growing resources and upgrading our facility, to benefit the growth of the Town.

The floor was opened to discussion. Some questions consisted of if there were plans for a caution light at the crosswalk? This needs to go through the State of Vermont because it is a State-owned road. It will be addressed. A question was asked regarding the location of the bridge that is closed? It is the Shepardson Hollow Bridge on Shepardson Hollow Road. Barbara Murphy thanked the town on the crosswalk that will be in place soon on Main Street by the corner of Stones Throw by the bridge. She has been working 25 years to have this happen. Brad was commended as our new Town Manager for the great job he has done. He was thanked for all his work on receiving town grants. Water was talked about on Fletcher Road and the parameters around our water to protect it. Brad stated that the town has a great team working together to get the job done.

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

Town Clerk	Three Year Term	Deborah Woodward	665 votes
Treasurer	Three Year Term	Deborah Woodward	648 votes
Town Moderator	One Year Term	Roberta Rodimer	671 votes
Selectperson	Three Year Term	Randy L DeVine	658 votes
Selectperson	Two Year Term	Stephen E Bessette	676 votes
Town Agent	One Year Term		
Community Library Trustee	Three Year Term	Lisa M Griswold	671 votes
First Constable	One Year Term		
Cemetery Commissioner	Five Year Term		

ARTICLE 2 Shall the registered voters of the Town of Fairfax approve the **twelve (12) month Fiscal Budget** covering the period from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020, as recommended by the Select Board, of \$3,007,756.00 of which \$2,013,971.00 is to be raised by taxes and \$667,840.00 to be raised by fees associated with the previously approved trash contract?

The floor was opened to discussion. Barb Murphy asked what year we are in our contract with Casella trash collection? Are we thinking about being a member of the Solid Waste District? Our contract with Casella runs through 2020. We will be examining all options before going forward. Projected column of the comparative budget report on page 35 of the Town Report was explained as the current budget expenditures for the current fiscal year. Carl Jones stated that on page 21 of the Town Report show a true picture under note (at the bottom of the page) of what the

estimated cost per unit for trash will be. He stated that you could not hire a hauler to come to your home for cheaper. Brad stated that the bulk of our budget increase is due to the need to keep up with road maintenance, the health insurance cost, IT, administration, and a new highway position.

In Favor: 560

Opposed: 182

ARTICLE 3

Shall the registered voters of the Town of Fairfax approve the **twelve (12) month Fiscal Budget** of \$92,545.00 covering the period from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020 in support of the Fairfax Rescue toward operation expense?

Tim Wasilewski, President; Bambi Dame, Director of Operations; and Kathy Jochim did a presentation speaking about Fairfax Rescue facts, working 24 hour / 7 days per week coverage at the paramedic level. They have 20-30 volunteer members. Three to six are paid members with one full time director. 80% of the hours are from volunteers. They presented a call volume for the last three years. This showed an increase in call volume and volunteer hours. They showed the 2018 Fairfax Rescue call break down by volume and between Fairfax and neighboring Towns. There was also call stats on whether the call was a sick person to whether the call was an overdose. They presented their community events such as pumpkin carving; along with getting into the schools in Fairfax and St. Albans; working with the Boy Scouts; CPR; and First Aid. The current 18 month budget was viewed. Kathy said it was an honor to be in Fairfax and to help this community.

The floor was opened to discussion. Some people questioned the number of calls in Cambridge and will Cambridge be asked to contribute fund. The answer was no. People questioned if Fairfax Rescue would be doing an outside audit for transparency reasons as the Town of Fairfax does? They are not planning on doing it in this budget. The people recommended having an audit added in the next budget year. Other questions included why the minutes are not posted on their website with the new open meeting laws through the State of Vermont along with posting the agenda to when they are having meetings. They will post them on their website in the future. Why the price for CPR and First Aid classes has risen so high, especially for Child Care Providers? Bambi stated that they are charging the best possible price. Is Fairfax able to get statewide bulk pricing for medical supplies and equipment? We are not, but are working towards this. Should the Town be in a contract with the Rescue Squad? Steve Cormier stated that we as the Town of Fairfax cannot tell them how they spend their money; it is up to the people. Many commended the Rescue Squad for their service to this town. Lives have been saved. It is such an important part of Fairfax.

In Favor: 617

Opposed: 123

ARTICLE 4

Shall the registered voters of the Town of Fairfax vote to raise, appropriate and expend the sum of \$27,777.00 for the support of social contributions to provide services to the residents of the Town?

- | | |
|--|------------|
| A. Age Well (CVAA) | \$1,500.00 |
| B. American Red Cross | \$500.00 |
| C. Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity | \$500.00 |

D. Fairfax Historical Society	\$2,000.00
E. Fairfax Success by Six	\$2,500.00
F. Franklin County Home Health Agency	\$8,998.00
G. Franklin County Industrial Development	\$500.00
H. Franklin Grand Isle Bookmobile	\$750.00
I. Franklin Grand Isle Restorative Justice Center	\$300.00
J. Friends of Fairfax Community Center Inc	\$1,000.00
K. Friends of Northern Lake Champlain	\$500.00
L. Green Mountain Transit	\$2,229.00
M. Green Up Vermont	\$300.00
N. Northwestern Counseling & Support Services	\$1,800.00
O. Samaritan House Inc (Tim's House)	\$1,000.00
P. Vermont Adult Learning	\$350.00
Q. Vermont Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired	\$300.00
R. Vermont Association of Conservation District	\$100.00
S. Vermont Center for Independent Living	\$500.00
T. Vermont Council on Rural Development	\$150.00
U. Vermont Family Network	\$500.00
V. Voices Against Violence Laurie's House	\$1,500.00
TOTAL	\$27,777.00

Julia Stark, Co- Chair of Friends of Fairfax Community Center was introduce. She is a grant writer offering community support to increase their funds. They are looking for more outreach and awareness and needs for our community finding ways we can support our community most effectively. They now have a quarterly newsletter out on the table in the lobby or on their website. Please reach out if you have any questions. Your skills are welcome and we appreciate your feedback.

The floor was opened to discussion. Mike Cain appreciated and thanked Franklin County Home Health Agency for all their help this year on his recovery at home. He greatly encourages their support. Nicole Vance, President of the Fairfax Historical Society said that the Historical Society is now reopened. She thanked the Town of Fairfax for their support. Tom Traber and Mike Cain stated that Green Mountain Transit is a volunteer service. They will take you to and from an appointment free of charge. Carl Jones stated that there is a better way to do this article. That maybe we should separate each social service because if this article does not pass then none of the services will receive their contribution. People can also support whatever agencies they want personally instead of this being an article. The Town supports these agencies because they are serving someone in the Town in one way or another. Requests must be submitted with a suggested dollar figure included.

In Favor: 603

Opposed: 148

ARTICLE 5

Shall the registered voters of the Town of Fairfax vote to apply any surplus from the current fiscal year to reduce taxes in the next fiscal year?

The floor was opened to discussion. A good question was asked, what happens if this vote is defeated? We would need to go back to the drawing board for the next budget. Do we have a rainy day fund? We do not.

In Favor: 723

Opposed: 33

ARTICLE 6 Shall the voters of the Town of Fairfax authorize the Select Board to borrow an amount not to exceed \$120,000.00 for a period not to exceed 15 years from the Vermont Municipal Bond Bank for the purchase of Utility Meters to be installed and used by the Town Utility Department? This loan will be repaid using funds received by the Utility Department from fees paid by the users of the Town Water and Sewer Systems.

The floor was opened to discussion. Some question consisted if all meters would be replaced? What is the difference between the old and the new meters and how do they work? Will there be addition increase to the quarterly bills? Amy Sears, Fairfax Utility Manager, stated that all meters would be replaced; that the new meters are much more accurate without moving parts that can cause problem with the reading. The meters will no longer need to be read the old way. The increase will consist of \$5.00-\$7.00 per quarter.

In Favor: 549

Opposed: 192

ARTICLE 7 Shall the registered voters of the Town of Fairfax authorize the Select Board to appoint a Town Clerk as provides in 17 V.S.A. § 2651e?

The floor was opened to discussion. Some discussion consisted of if this was a permanent change? It is. What are the qualifications? The Select Board will come up with a job description. This article has nothing to do with the work performance of our current Town Clerk Deb Woodward. This has to do with protection for the Town with a non-qualified person winning an elected position. What does our charter say? We are not a charter Town so that does not pertain to our Town.

In Favor: 598

Opposed: 150

ARTICLE 8 Shall the registered voters of the Town of Fairfax authorize the Select Board to appoint a Town Treasurer as provides in 17 V.S.A. § 2651f?

The floor was opened to discussion and there was none.

In Favor: 590

Opposed: 153

ARTICLE 9 Shall the registered voters of the Town of Fairfax accept on the reports of the town Officers?

A motion was made by Scott Mitchell and seconded by Meredith Roberts. 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 place the tax bills in the hands of the Town Treasurer as heretofore?

A motion was made by Josiah Raiche and seconded by Bruce Alvarez. The floor was opened to discussion and there was none. 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 Mike Cain and seconded by Cathy Carlson. The floor was opened to discussion. Some discussion consisted of whether or not the Water Bond and the Sewer Bond have been paid off? The Sewer Bond has been and the Water Bond has 14 years remaining. Carl Jones stated that we should pay our qualified Select Board a larger stipend. He would like to see that increased. Robbi Rodimer asked Tom Traber what happened to his woodpecker situation. Tom stated that \$8000 later, he removed the cedar siding on his house and replaced it with vinyl siding. There were also a few bats that flew out from between the siding during the renovations. 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 5, 2019 at 7:00 A.M.?

A motion was made Marilyn Prevuznak and seconded by Tom Traber. The floor was opened to discussion and there was none. The motion was passed by a show of cards at 1:05 p.m. to recess the Town until March 5, 2019 at 7 a.m.

There are 3960 registered voters with 762 voting by Australian ballot making a 19% voter turnout.

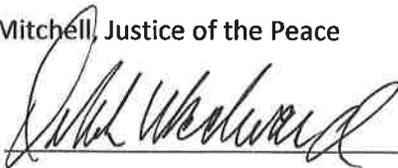
Peter Fitzgerald, Justice of the Peace



Susan Mitchell, Justice of the Peace



Attest:



Deborah Woodward, Town Clerk/Treasurer
March 11, 2019

ABSTRACT/MINUTES OF THE 2019 ANNUAL FAIRFAX SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING

The 2019 Annual Town 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 2, 2019. Robby welcomed everyone and said that the meeting would be run using Robert's Rules except where State Law takes precedence. Speaker would be limited to three minutes during the time for questions and comments and they only speak twice to an issue. She got approval to have School Officials and FWSU staff to speak. She thanked the set up crew for the wonderful job they did setting up for Town Meeting.

ARTICLES 1 through ARTICLE 3 were voted upon by the use of the official Australian ballot on Tuesday, March 5, 2019 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 the School Board that was present, Scott Mitchell and Kathi Muehl, along with New Executive Assistant Amanda Duling. Elaine stated that our school has been approved by the State of Vermont to move forward without a school merger. A slide show was presented. She spoke about the Fairfax School Budget FY20 Proposal consisting of:

Our Mission: Committed to ensuring all students become informed, literate, critical thinkers who demonstrate responsible social and civic behaviors.

Per pupil spending is decreasing by 1.51%, with the budget increase of 2.56% causing the school portion of property taxes to decrease. BFA has gained 90 students over the last 4 years. Decrease is due to offsetting revenues, surplus, retired debt, and additional equalized pupils.

A few highlights from FY19 consisted of BFA Farm to School programs was recognized as a model case study program by the State of Vermont Farm-To-School Network; five presidential scholars in the last four years; flexible learning opportunities for students in grades 5-8 and travel to nationwide and global destinations through HS co-curriculars and academic courses. Innovation labs grew in ES, MS and HS providing additional opportunities; varsity Ultimate Frisbee makes its debut this spring as the newest of VPA sanctioned athletic offerings, putting our total of varsity sports programs at 13. The number of students accessing music department opportunities has more than tripled in the past three years.

Building improvements have been made, consisting of: new bleachers; new front office in the high school; added solar to our energy portfolio; tile replacement; and renovating and adding new bathrooms in the high school. The BFA story consisted of a Principal reflecting on shared values and traditions at BFA; we partner with the United Way to host foster grandparents; every Monday is magnificent for the Kindergarten class with fun activities; learner traits and the path to proficiency; there was celebration over a decade of tradition, spirit and community; 2018 outstanding teacher Ian Flint was congratulated; 7th graders embarked on Arbor Trek Adventure; the elementary students incorporated drums during gym; and BFA students return from their China learning experience.

BFA cares about safety. They installed new safety cameras; trained staff and students in safety protocols; installed new front office security measures through a grant; upgrading E911 capabilities on phones; added School Resource Officer; and continue with monthly drills as required.

The summary of budget impact: Pre K-6: additional Pre K session - from .33 to .67 FTE; K Para; ES 4/5 Drama stipend; Lexia Unlimited License; BCBA position; and a .5 FTE Guidance. Grades 7-12: .5 Music Educator; and 1:1 laptops to replace iPads. Building and Grounds are increasing custodial wages. They are adding an athletic/outdoor grounds keeper staff position. Athletics: Boys Lacrosse was added along with increased coach salaries. Transportation: Replacement bus and higher driver wages. Administration added a 1.0 FTE Administrator.

A graph was presented showing enrollment grades K-12 plus tech center counts from 2010 to present.

The tax rate remains low in Fairfax. A graph was presented with Fairfax's rate lower than surrounding towns. The estimated school tax bill prior to income sensitivity property tax adjustments will be down.

Capital improvements plan project consisting a few: tile High School hallways; roof High School /Elementary Gym /roof off 1941 wing and kitchen; tennis courts, retile multi-purpose room; repave parking lot; replace Middle

School gym floor; and UV replacement "89". The total anticipated project cost \$668,460. BFA will need to plan for these projects over the next 4 years to maintain the integrity of our facility and grounds.

The Long Range Facilities Planning Committee is to evaluate and assess the needs of the facility to be viable for the next 25 years. Over the past year they have been evaluating the current state of the facility; broken down improvements into categories; reviewed past plans for reference; surveyed the community; and are beginning to generate a new facility plan for the future. This is a 4-phase approach: Phase 1: Assessment-Complete Phase 2: Planning-Underway Phase3: Public Presentation-Pending Phase 4: Possible Vote

The presentation ended with the statement that this projected spending per equalized pupil is 1.51% lower the spending for the current year.

ARTICLE 1: Shall the legal voters of said school district elect the following officers?
BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT

School Moderator	One Year Term	Roberta Rodimer	667 votes
School Director	Three Year Term	Kathi Muehl	647 votes
School Director	Two Year Term	Michael Bruso	638 votes
School Trustee	Five Year Term	Lee Minor	671 votes

ARTICLE 2: Shall the voters of said school district approve the school board to expend \$12,900,330 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 \$13,226.40 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 1.51% lower than spending for the current year.

BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT

The floor was open to discussion. There was none.

In Favor: 544

Opposed: 216

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 floor was open to discussion. There was discussion of instead of having a large \$16,000,000 bond vote, would it be better to have separate smaller bond votes. Scott Mitchell stated that we are not there yet. Randy DeVine thanked whoever brought on board the School Resource Officer. Elaine stated that it took five years to get this funded.

In Favor: 537

Opposed: 218

ARTICLE 4: To accept reports of School Directors from the previous year.

A motion was made by Jason Boyd and seconded by Josiah Raiche. The floor was open for discussion. 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.

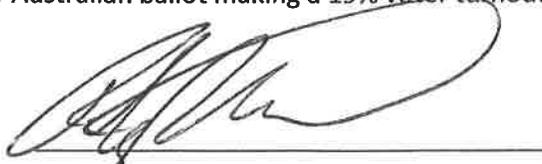
A motion was made by Mike Cain and seconded by Jason Boyd. The floor was opened to discussion. Barbara Murphy thanked the Board for all their work putting forward a budget of what is needed. The motion was passed by a show of cards.

ARTICLE 6: To adjourn.

A motion was made by Jason Boyd and seconded by Mike Cain. The floor was open for discussion. There was none. The motion was passed by a show of cards at 10:45 a.m. to recess the School meeting until March 5, 2019 at 7 a.m.

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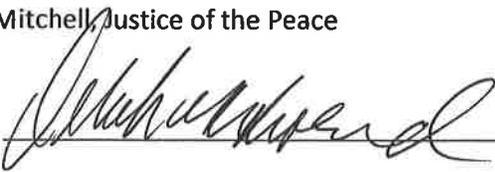
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March 11, 2019