

Cabot Town Meeting
March 7, 2017
Cabot Gym

The meeting was called to order by Selectboard Chair Jack Daniels at 10:02 a.m.

Art. 1. To elect a Moderator for the ensuing year.

R.D. Eno motioned to nominate Ed Smith as Moderator, Caleb Pitkin seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

After Ed Smith (Ed) assumed the position of Moderator, the Body voted to suspend the rules to allow Danville resident Kitty Toll, Cabot's representative to the State Legislature, to speak.

Representative Toll began her comments by commenting on the excellent turnout at the Annual School meeting held the previous evening. Representative Toll emphasized that she wanted to make sure that Cabot residents let her know of any issues we may have. Representative Toll currently chairs the House Appropriations Committee. She emphasized that there are lots of changes from the Federal Government that will be affecting education that Vermont relies on to include receiving 35% of its resources from federal money. The State annual budget as of Town Meeting Day is \$17.9 million short from being balanced and further reductions will have to be made. In closing, Representative Toll wished the Cabot girl's high school basketball team the very best of luck in their quarterfinal game at the Barre Auditorium Tuesday evening.

Art. 2. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot hear the reports of the Town Officers?

Caleb Pitkin motioned that we hear the reports from the Town Officers which was seconded by Chris Tormey. Motion carried.

Ed asked if there were any corrections to the Town Report.

Cecilia Gulka stated that the DIRECTORY on page 6 requires the following corrections:

1. Births, Deaths, and Marriages should say page 52;
2. Births Deaths and Marriages, Births (page 52): William Charles Baker was listed as 11-5-16 but should be 10-5-16;
3. Page 14 - Planning Commission: the correct spelling of Araonson should be Aronson;
4. Page 15 - Conservation Commission: remove Mark Christensen and add Ken Denton; and
5. The list of Officers for the Library Trustees was omitted.

Jack Daniels stated that the "projected" 2017 Municipal Property Tax Rate contained in the Selectboard Report on page 19, sixth paragraph, should read 0.5285, down from 0.5386 in 2016.

Mike Hogan reported on a meeting held last fall with members from the State Police to

discuss Safety and Security issues in Cabot. Following that meeting, the Selectboard formed two Work Groups, with Public Security being led by himself and Public Safety being led by Ted Domey.

Mike Hogan reported that one of the first areas the Security Working Group is exploring is how to expand the role of the Constables in the Community. The Security Working Group will also be exploring ways to better coordinate security matters with area towns. Mike provided a handout with names to contact in the Public Security area.

Ted Domey, in his role as head of the Public Safety Group, reported that the Working Group is in the process of putting together a Cabot Neighborhood Watch.

Jack Daniels, representing the full Selectboard, recognized four individuals who have contributed so much to the Cabot Community over the years:

Erma Perry: the Town Report was dedicated to Erma Perry and Jack presented her with a plaque. Fred Ducharme, as one of her former students, presented her with flowers.

Marvi Domey: Marvi was recognized for her many years serving on the Cemetery Commission, to include serving as Secretary to the Commission. Marvi was presented a plaque by Jack and flowers from her son Ted. Melvin Churchill also thanked Marvi for all of her hard work and dedication while serving on the Commission.

Roland "Slim" Payne: Slim was thanked for the many years of service that he has provided to the community in his role as tree warden. Slim has planted many many trees over the years throughout the community, something we can all be grateful for. His son, Roland Payne, Jr., will assume the responsibility of Tree Warden and has said that he will rely heavily on his father in this roll. Jack also reported that the road leading to the Town Forest will be name Roland "Slim" Payne Lane.

Robyn Hall: While Robyn only served as a Lister for two years, she accomplished a tremendous amount of work in that short period of time. Robyn will not be running again as she will be moving out of Cabot.

Following the presentations, those in attendance provided a large round of applause for these four wonderful individuals.

Bob Burke, Chair of the Cabot Community Investment Fund (CCIF) stated that under Administrative Expenses on page 46, the Printing and Reproduction figure represents a Discretionary Grant for CCA paid in 2016.

Regarding the Budget Article, Amy Hornblas stated that she was hoping for more information about the budgets. Jack responded this would be covered under the Budget at the time the Budget Articles are under discussion.

Art. 3. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot authorize payment of real and personal property taxes on November 16, 2017 by delivery to town hall postmarked on or before the date; and,

Establish that overdue taxes will bear interest at a rate of one percent per month or fraction thereof for the first three months and thereafter one and one-half percent per month or fraction thereof from the due date of such tax pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5136; and,

Establish the amount of the penalty charged by the collector of delinquent taxes for payments made after the due date for payment to 8 percent of the tax collected pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § § 1674(3)(A)?

A motion was made by Caleb Pitkin and seconded by R. D. Eno to approve this Article. Discussion then followed regarding the 8% delinquent amount collected by the Delinquent Tax Collector. Amy Hornblas requested to have a report submitted to the Selectboard regarding this 8% delinquent fee. Sue Carpenter then spoke and stated that it is quite hard to break down her time as Delinquent Tax Collector. Sue said that the time it takes to perform this work is variable and can be intense at times; lots of statements must be sent to people, and phone calls made, etc. She pays for all the expenses of postage, phone calls. After discussion a floor vote was taken, and the motion carried and Article 3 was adopted as written.

Article 4 Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot elect all Town Officers required by law, according to law?

Listers:

Robyn Hall will be resigning as of today. A motion was made by Fred Ducharme to nominate Jacqueline Lumbra to a three-year term which was seconded by Neils Larson. A motion was then made by Caleb Pitkin and seconded by Richard Hourihan for the Town Clerk to cast one vote for Ms. Lumbra. Motion carried.

Ed then asked for nominations for the one-year position of Lister. There were no nominations or suggestions. The Selectboard will then appoint someone for this one-year position.

Auditors:

Caleb nominated Lynn Jones and Cecilia Gulka seconded the motion. Motion passed. A motion was then made by Caleb Pitkin, with a second from Chris Tormey, that the Town Clerk cast one vote for Ms. Jones. Motion carried.

Delinquent Tax Collector

Caleb Pitkin moved that we nominate Susan Carpenter as Delinquent Tax Collector, Gary seconded. Motion carried. David Pike then moved that the Town Clerk cast one vote, seconded by Judy, for Ms. Carpenter to serve as Delinquent Tax Collector. Motion carried.

Cemetery Commission

Marvi Domey moved that Deb Bothfeld be nominated for the five-year term with a second from

Caleb Pitkin. Motion carried.

A motion was made to nominate Marvi Domey for another term on the Cemetery Commission. Ms. Domey respectfully declined.

A motion was then made by Melvin Churchill and seconded by Deb Bothfeld to nominate Angela Ward for a one year position on the Cemetery Commission. Motion carried.

Willey Building

Richard Payne nominated Fred Ducharme to serve on the Willey Building Committee which was seconded by R. D. Eno. Motion carried.

Jack Daniels nominated Brad Alexander to serve on the Willey Building Committee which was seconded by R. D. Eno. Motion carried.

Library Trustees

The two three-year terms for Erica Burke and Beth Wade are up. Beth Wade nominated Susan Dinesen, which was seconded by Caleb Pitkin; motion carried.

Jan nominated Beth Wade for a three year term as a Library Trustee which was seconded by R.D. Eno; motion carried.

Recreation Committee

Jack Daniels nominated Irving Robbins to serve on the Recreation Committee which was seconded by R. D. Eno; motion carried.

Cabot Community Investment Fund (CCIF), formerly UDAG

Bob Burke reported that one vacancy exists that needs to be filled by the Selectboard to take the place of Jan Westervelt. Bob also reported that Jeremiah Brier, who joined the CCIF last year, has resigned. There were no nominations from the floor and Bob Burke asked help in getting the word out seeking volunteers for the vacant CCIF position.

The following Articles will be voted on by Australian Ballot and may be discussed on the floor except for Articles 5, 6, 7, and 8.

**Art. 5. To elect a Selectperson for a term of two years. [Australian Ballot]
Bernard Shatney, 287; Amy Hornblas, 1; Laura Augustinian, 1; Bridgette Codling, 1;
Blank, 1; David Pike, 2; Chris Duff, 1; Steve Godin, 1; Jessica Miller, 1; Aaron Kelley,
1; Nedahe Stoddard, 1; Write in: Blank, 92; Total 390**

Art. 6. To elect a Selectperson for a term of three years. [Australian Ballot]

Fred Ducharme, 323; Tammy Cookson, 1; David Pike, 4; Jessica Miller, 3; Amy Hornblas, 2; Don Mitchell, 2; David VanDeusen, 1; Steve Gregg 1; Blank, 1; Write In: Blank, 52; Total 390

- Art. 7. To elect a Town Clerk for a term of three years. [Australian Ballot]
Betty Ritter, 355; Robyn Hall, 2; RD Eno, 1; Blank, 1; Write in: Blank, 31; Total 390
- Art. 8. To elect a Town Treasurer for a term of three years. [Australian Ballot]
Betty Ritter, 336; Jan Westervelt, 2; Kathleen Hoyne, 1; Jessica Miller, 3; RD Eno, 1; Blank, 1; Write in: Blank, 46; Total 390
- Art. 9. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot appropriate the sum of \$799,622.00 to defray the general expenses of the Town, with an estimated \$209,000.00 to come from income and \$590,622.00 from local taxes? [Australian Ballot]
Yes, 266; No, 112; Write in: Blank, 12, Total 390
- Art. 10. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot appropriate the sum of \$18,522---included in the General Fund Budget (Article 9)--- for Organizations requesting Special Services Appropriations identified in the Town Report? [Australian Ballot]
Yes, 260; No, 118, Write in, Blank, 12, Total 390
- Art. 11. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot approve the sum of \$90,000--- included in the General Fund budget (Article 9) --- for the purpose of undertaking Capital Improvements in the Willey Building and the Masonic Hall, to be paid for by a loan over five years that will increase Property Tax Rates by 0.99 per \$100,000 of assessed value for the years 2018-2022? [Australian Ballot]
Yes, 234; No, 146; Blank, 10, Total 390
- Art. 12. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot appropriate the sum of \$1,656,700.00 to repair and maintain the highways of the Town including summer, winter and special treatment, of which an estimated \$1,135,300.00 is to come from income and \$521,400.00 from local taxes? [Australian Ballot]
Yes, 306; no, 80; Blank, 4, Total 390
- Art. 13. Shall the Town of Cabot vote to authorize a loan in an amount not to exceed \$244,100, to be matched by \$333,400 in State Highway Paving grants---included in the Highway Fund budget (Article 12)--- for the purpose of repaving the South Walden Road and Route 215 South? [Australian Ballot]
Yes, 318; No, 65; Blank 7, Total 390

Selectboard Chair Jack Daniels provided a power point pertaining to the budget Articles. Jack reported that the Town will not know what the Hold Harmless dollar amount or the value of the Grand List will be until later this spring. Jack thanked the listers for the extraordinary work they performed in 2016. Jack reported that the Municipal Property Tax rate will go up the

next 5 years beginning in 2018 if voters approve Article 11 authorizing improvement to the Willey Building and the Masonic Hall. Lastly, Jack emphasized that the 2017 budgets contain no contingency funds or reserve funds for unexpected expenses.

Caleb Pitkin asked if we really want to spend the money on the Willey Building even though it will have no effect on the 2017 budget. Jack responded that that subject should be the focus of a separate discussion.

Karen Williams asked why the Town is spending \$90,000 on gravel for the roads. Road Commission Karen Deasy responded that last year was an unusual year in that mud season was light, and we cannot anticipate that same situation will recur in 2017.

Jessica Miller asked why certain articles are also included in the budget and why are we voting on them separately. Jack responded that the budget does include Article 10 Special Service Appropriations, but if Article 10 is not approved, then the General Fund budget will be reduced by this amount. Jessica also pointed out that in Article 13 paving is not to exceed \$244,100 instead of \$246,000. Jack Daniels responded that the budget will remain at the lower \$244,100 amount.

Jessica Miller asked if a date has been set for a revote on Article 9. Jack Daniels responded that as Article 9 is correct as written, if approved by the voters there will be no need to have a revote. In response to a question from Jessica on what actions will be taken by the Selectboard if the other budget articles are voted down, Jack said that if the Special Service Appropriations (Article 10) is voted down, it will not be voted on again. If Article 11 (Willey Building/Masonic Hall) is voted down, the Selectboard will not ask for a revote. If Article 12 (Highway Budget) is defeated, it will have to be voted on again. Lastly, if Article 13 (Paving Loan) is voted down, the Selectboard will want to bring this Article up again for a revote as the Town will lose \$333,400 in grant money if the paving is not done this year.

Article 10 (included in the Budget) - page 10, 11, and 12. Caleb Pitkin suggested forming a committee to review Appropriation Requests before work begins on the budget. Caleb state that he would like to see the Selectboard come up with a plan about particular organizations. Town Auditor Cecilia Gulka stated that the policy for Special Appropriations was updated this past year, and the Town Auditors carefully reviewed each organization seeking Town Fund asking some requestors to submit more detailed information as appropriate.

Nidayia Stoddard spoke about increase violence against women and how important it is to support these particular agencies. Judy Pransky also spoke about supporting these agencies.

Article 11 - Question about Masonic Hall from R. D. Eno.: The budget states that the Town will receive \$8,000 fees, and asks if this includes rental income. Jack responded yes. R. D. Eno then said that the Masonic Hall was acquired without checking with the Town, and he wants to go on record that he objects to the Town owning it and recommends that we vote against Article 11.

Amy Hornblas stated that she feels that the rent is quite expensive for a nonprofit.

Caleb Pitkin mentioned that when he was on the Selectboard they had a lease with Faith In Action (FIA) with rights to rent out the building for other functions. Caleb asked if the Selectboard renegotiated the lease with Faith In Action. Jack Daniels explained that within the last month they did renegotiate the lease and Faith In Action has the sole rights to the first floor. The rent was raised in order to meet the expenses of the building. The action was taken because the food shelf takes up so much space that the Town has found that it is impossible to rent the first floor and the new lease was written to reflect this change.

Richard Hourihan said that he and Bill Cobb started FIA. Faith in Action serves approximately 200-250 families twice a month. Richard Hourihan asked why FIA couldn't ask for funds from other surrounding towns as FIA serves families from many communities.

Town General Fund Expense Budget, page 26 – Masonic Hall expenses at \$11,000. Fred Ducharme explained that the new lease does not cover the roof gutter expense and painting of the exterior walls. The lease covers operating cost and nothing else.

Fred Ducharme detailed the work that will be undertaken in the Willey Building if Article 11 is approved by the voters. The work will include painting the exterior, refinishing floors on 3rd floor, repairing the roof outback that is leaking, and improving drainage around the elevator shaft.

Caleb Pitkin asked about the extra \$1,000.00 in Masonic Hall in the budget. Jack Daniel responded that the budget was completed before the lease was renegotiated.

Richard Payne stated that he feels we shouldn't have to pay for the upkeep to Masonic Hall.

Amy Hornblas suggested that we have some fund raisers to cover the expense of the Willey Building and Masonic Hall.

Jack Daniels stated that the Masonic Hall is owned by the Town of Cabot and we would need to do a petition to sell it in accordance with State Statute.

Melvin Churchill inquired about saving money for these projects and then go ahead with the projects instead of borrowing money and paying the interest rate.

Article 12 - Highway budget - no comments or questions

Article 13 - Paving - no comments or questions

Art. 14. Shall the Town vote to adopt a July 1 through June 30 fiscal year, effective for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2018 as provided by 24 V.S.A. § 1683, with a six month

transition year extending for the period January 1, 2018 through June 30, 2018?
[Australian Ballot] No Comment
Yes, 277; No, 84; Blank, 29, Total 390

Caleb Pitkin wanted to know if there would there be any benefit to adopting this Article such as a discount if you pay early. Jack responded that no discounts were anticipated at this time. Jack then stated that for the taxpayer it would mean not having to pay out as much money all at once. Jack Daniels also said that if this Article is approved, the Town would probably only have to borrow fewer funds as part of the Tax Anticipation Note process.

Ellen Voigt asked about a penalty for taxes that are not paid in August. Ted Domey stated that this is for 2018 taxes and for 2017 there would be no penalty.

Amy Hornblas said that she heard that collecting taxes twice a year would be an extra burden on the Town Clerk's office. Betty, Town Clerk stated that she felt that it would not be too big of a burden for the office.

Art. 15. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot authorize the Town Treasurer to collect real and personal property taxes two times per year commencing in 2018 with the first collection for Town taxes occurring in August and the second collection for school taxes occurring in November? [Australian Ballot]
Yes, 230; No, 144, Blank, 16, Total 390

Art. 16. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot conduct the Town's annual meeting on one of the three options identified below, understanding that the voting on all Australian Ballot Articles will take place on Town Meeting Day per 17 V.S.A. sub-section 2640:

- A. The first Tuesday of March which is the traditional Town Meeting day; or,**
- B. The Saturday morning preceding the first Tuesday in March; or,**
- C. The Monday night prior to the first Tuesday in March to correlate with the annual school meeting.**

Please vote for not more than one option. [Australian Ballot]

A, 239; B, 83; C, 51; Blank 17, Total 390

Art. 17. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot authorize the Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District to appropriate and expend a budget of \$755,527, at no expense to the Town of Cabot? [Australian Ballot]
Yes, 346, No 22; Blank 22, Total 390

Article 17 - No comments or questions

Art. 18. To transact any other non-binding business that may come before said meeting.

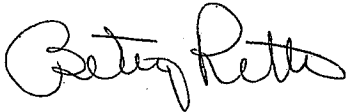
Moderator Ed Smith stated that he was impressed and happy with the attendance. Ed said

that this Town Meeting, with the Budget Articles being voted on by Australian Ballot, felt like a Hybrid meeting. Ed said that he felt that it was good Town Meeting and there were plenty of productive comments. In closing, he thanked everyone for attending Town Meeting.

Art. 19. To adjourn this meeting.

A motion was made by Caleb Pitkin and seconded by Judy Pransky to adjourn the 2017 Town Meeting. Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 12:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Betty Ritter, Town Clerk/Treasurer



Jack Daniels, Chair – Selectboard



Ed Smith, Town Meeting Moderator