

## TOWN of LANDGROVE Minutes 2016 Annual Town Meeting

**Call to order at 6:04 pm**

Lynn Eckhardt led the town in the pledge of allegiance to open Town Meeting, and all were welcomed by Selectman Jeremiah Evarts who read the first article.

ARTICLE 1: To elect a Moderator for the ensuing year. Claudia Harris was nominated by Jerry Evarts, seconded by Sally Waite and approved by the voters.

Claudia went over rules, and asked non-voters to introduce themselves. Chrissy Blaylock from the Collaborative spoke about their work and distributed their annual survey. Bobby Waite moved to dispense with reading of the full warning, which was approved by the majority.

ARTICLE 2: To elect the following officers as required by law:

| <b>officer</b>                       | <b>term</b> | <b>candidate</b> | <b>move</b>   | <b>second</b>  |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|
| <b>Town Clerk</b>                    | 1 year      | Chrystal Cleary  | May Bigelow   | Jon Bigelow    |
| <b>Town Treasurer</b>                | 1 year      | Andrea Ogden     | Sally Waite   | Victoria Duffy |
| <b>Selectboard Member</b>            | 3 years     | John Ogden       | Lynn Eckhardt | Kathy Snyder   |
| <b>Auditor</b>                       | 3 years     | Mary Gouger      | Anne McClaran | Kathy Snyder   |
| <b>Auditor</b>                       | 1 year      | Mary English     | Andrea Ogden  | Sally Waite    |
| <b>Lister</b>                        | 3 years     | Chuck Sweetman   | Bobby Waite   | Kathy Snyder   |
| <b>Cemetery Commissioner</b>         | 5 years     | Clarence Nichols | Lynn Eckhardt | Jerry Evarts   |
| <b>Collector of Delinquent Taxes</b> | 1 year      | Andrea Odgen     | Sally Waite   | Kathy Snyder   |
| <b>Grand Juror</b>                   | 1 year      | Claudia Harris   | Kathy Snyder  | Jerry Evarts   |
| <b>Town Agent</b>                    | 1 year      | John Hadden      | John Ogden    | Jerry Evarts   |
| <b>Constable</b>                     | 1 year      | John Wiley, Jr.  | Bobby Waite   | Kathy Snyder   |
| <b>Trustee of Public Funds</b>       | 3 years     | Dick Adams       | Bobby Waite   | Jerry Evarts   |

ARTICLE 3: To hear the reports of Town Officers and take proper action on the Auditors' report.  
Moved: Chuck Seconded: Michael Mole.

Jerry Evarts spoke about the Selectboard report, expressing frustration with the expense of the lengthy 2014 tax appeal that went to court a few weeks ago. He praised the Listers and recognized the many, many hours spent by Chuck Sweetman in preparation and in court for the Town's case. In response to questions, Jerry and John Ogden explained that mediation was attempted but brought no resolution and the appellant chose to take the Town to court vs arbitration, and that even if the Town wins the case the legal fees are not part of the award. Claudia Harris also noted that even if the assessment of this one property is reduced, the Town still has the obligation to send the same tax revenue to the State, so that will likely mean an increase for the rest of the property owners.

John Ogden stated that the town had put a great deal of effort into accurate assessment and the work of our Listers, and we need to stand by them. Chuck Sweetman noted that our Town's coefficient of dispersion is 8.%, and for reference under 10% = equity across all properties in town, Our CLA is 100.39, with 100 being ideal. Treasurer Andrea Ogden reminded the body of the right of property owners to grieve each year and have things explained. Despite the frustration at this time, don't go away thinking you can't grieve. Mary English thanks the Selectboard for supporting the Listers.

Our Education Tax rate may drop as low as 10¢. This will drop the resident tax rate closer to the nonresident rate. Education Director Jeff Cleary explained that the reason it went down is due to loss of tuition student (high school) and special education savings. A study group of volunteers is convening to discuss the formation of further school district consolidation into a larger RED with Manchester and Dorset. Jeff also described the sharing of special education costs across the Supervisory Union.

ARTICLE 4: To see whether the Town will appropriate \$10,000 to the Landgrove New Cemetery Stonewall Project. Moved: Bobby Waite Seconded: Kathy Snyder Approved: AYE

Karl Pfizer asked if there is an estimate for total? Clarence Nichols said it is 50% done, but the remaining sides are constructed differently and will go faster and cost less. If we get the donations expected and the Town Appropriation, we will be well on our way to finishing it. Lynn Eckhardt hopes that people have gone inside the cemetery and seen the sitting stones and appreciating the see-through Galloway Dike style of the side walls.

ARTICLE 5: To see whether the Town will appropriate \$10,000 to hire the Winhall Police for enforcement of traffic ordinances. Moved: Chrystyna Young, Lynn Eckhardt

May Bigelow does not approve of this Article and feels we should do a better job of controlling ourselves, and put up more signs. Jerry Evarts described the meeting with the Winhall police- our town is becoming a crossroad for people to go through to Weston or Danby. He learned that 10K doesn't really go that far- about 100 hours of policing with less than 20% of a ticket going back to Landgrove, and a big bust would cost Landgrove a lot of money to prosecute. John Ogden notes that the Selectboard is not advocating this expenditure, but having done the research

felt that this issue needs to be a town discussion and town vote.

Andrea Ogden added that as Treasurer, she feels protective of all of our dollars and that we should do this another year, and that just by discussing this we ought to be able to slow ourselves down. Road Commissioner Steve Hall feels there is not a speeding issue that requires this level of presence. His research with other towns noted that the radar digital sign is effective but expensive and prone to vandalism.

John Bigelow makes the motion to Approve, seconded by Anne McClaran, but the Article does not pass.

ARTICLE 6: To see whether the Town will appropriate \$1000 for the Flood Brook Athletic Association, as petitioned. Moved: Kathy Snyder, Victoria Duffy

Andrea Ogden directs the body to view the town community appropriations and explains the donation aspect of these. Questions around what other towns are paying of the \$6000. There was a discussion as to the difference between FBAA, FBSAC, and West River Sports.. Dana McNair explained how Act 60 sent all the sports out of the school budget, so community groups formed to take up the fundraising for sports, field trips, etc. John Ogden described the effectiveness of community fundraising for sports to keep the value of the contributions in the community, vs being thrown into the state pool and redistributed throughout the state. Andrea notes that Peru paid \$500 last year and is being asked for \$1000 also. Chuck observes that it should be part of the school budget, but also that no representative from FBAA showed up here to answer questions about their mechanism when it is up for a vote for the first time.

Malcolm McNair motions to amend the article to reduce the appropriation to \$500, seconded by Karl Pfister. Article 6 passes as amended.

ARTICLE 7: To see if the Town will authorize its Selectboard to apply any surplus or unanticipated funds toward the proposed budget. Moved: Michael Mole Seconded: Karl Pfister. No discussion. Motion to Approve: Kathy Snyder, May Bigelow. The Article passes.

ARTICLE 8: To see if the Town will vote to pay its taxes on real and personal property on or before October 1, 2016. Moved: Kathy Snyder, Mary English, no discussion Motion to Approve: Karl Pfister, Victoria Duffy. The Article Passes.

ARTICLE 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise the budgeted monies necessary to pay Town expenses and obligations for the 2016 year. Moved: John Bigelow, Sally Waite. No Discussion.

Motion to Approve: Chuck Sweetman, Kathy Snyder . The Article passes.

ARTICLE 10: To transact any other non-binding business proper to come before said meeting, not acted upon in the preceding articles. Moved: Kathy Snyder, John Bigelow. There is no discussion. Motion to Approve: Kathy Snyder, Karl Pfister. The Article passes.

ARTICLE 11: To see if the Town will agree to meet in 2017 on the first Monday before the first Tuesday in March (March 6th) at 6pm for the annual Town Meeting. Moved: Kathy Snyder, Chrystyna Young. No discussion. Motion to Approve: May Bigelow, Kathy Snyder. The Article Passes.

Adjourned at 8.04pm

Respectfully Submitted by Chrystal Cleary, Town Clerk

Moderator Claudia Harris

Selectboard:

Jeremiah Evarts

Greg Eckhardt

John Ogden

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