

TOWN of LANDGROVE

Minutes 2019 Annual Town Meeting

Call to order at 6:01 pm

Lynn Eckhardt led the town in the pledge of allegiance to open Town Meeting, and all were welcomed by Selectboard Chair John Ogden who read the first article.

ARTICLE 1: To elect a Moderator for the ensuing year. Claudia Harris was nominated by Michael Morfit seconded by Harry Lux and approved by the voters. Claudia went over rules, and asked non-voters to introduce themselves.

Guest speakers- James Ameden and Don Hazelton from the Londonderry Phoenix Fire Company #6 are here to present their request to the Selectboard for a population-proportioned contribution of \$25,000 toward a new truck. The old one is 22 years old, and it is the one used to respond to car accidents, hazmat spills, CO alarm. New truck cost is \$150K. Fire company is contributing \$45K, Londonderry is contributing \$80K, Landgrove is asked for \$25K. The Phoenix Fire Company is Landgrove and Londonderry's piece of our region's Mutual Aid- serving primarily Londonderry and Landgrove, but also get called to help Peru, Weston, etc. when needed. Lifespan of a truck is about 25 years. May Bigelow says thank you for serving and recognizes the high degree of training and commitment that Phoenix Fire Department has.

Stephanie Peters from the Bennington County Child Advocacy Center speaks about her organization's request to become a part of our Town's annual Community Appropriations at an amount of \$500 a year. The child Advocacy Center has filed a petition signed by 5% of the voters to appear on the warning. The Center is non profit and serves victims of sexual abuse of all ages, as well as child physical, medical, online abuse at no cost, since 1989. The Center aids 120-150 children a year, supporting the victim and their whole family to find services, and receive courtroom support. Also provided are prevention education, school staff trainings for response and identifying signs and signals in young people who may need help and safety to come forward. The Center is mostly funded through the Federal-to-state grants, and police grants as well as two detectives are on staff.

Andrea Ogden read a statement from Neighborhood Connections, who are already among our annual appropriations. Neighborhood Connections serves 9 towns and get their support entirely through the Towns and their own fundraisers. Thank you so much for supporting NC all this time.

Linda Joy Sullivan, our representative to the State House spoke as well. Ms. Sullivan reminds the body that she is available at her usual Listening Sessions on the 1st Sunday of every month at Hapgood Store in Peru at 10:30am, and left flyers on some issues coming out this legislative session. Please reach Linda Joy at the following email: lsullivan@leg.state.vt.us

ARTICLE 2: To elect town officers as required by law. (See table below for results)

With two nominees for Treasurer, each may speak briefly, and Moderator Harris reminds all that nobody may "campaign" from the floor in this meeting.

- Incumbent Andrea Ogden declined the nomination.

- Kim Eckhardt introduced herself- she has been in town for 10 years and observed the good example Andrea has set. Kim and also notes some areas of growth she can uniquely provide.

Some discussion about the mechanics of the transition and Ms Eckhardt was asked to highlight her previous job qualifications. Harry Lux closes nominations. The moderator directs the Clerk to cast one ballot for Kim Eckhardt for Treasurer. The Town thanks Andrea Ogden for her decade of service and excellence as Treasurer and Delinquent Tax Collector.

| officer | term | candidate | Nominated by |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Town Clerk | 1 year | Chrystal Cleary | Lynn Eckhardt |
| Town Treasurer | 1 year | Andrea Ogden | Nancie Heinneman |
| | 1 year | Kimberly Eckhardt | Greg Eckhardt |
| Selectboard Member | 3 years | John Ogden | Michael Jeffery |
| Auditor | 3 years | Liza Dee | Andrea Ogden |
| Lister | 3 years | Chuck Sweetman | Kimberly E. |
| Cemetery Commissioner | 5 year | Lynn Eckhardt | Clarence Nichols |
| Collector of Delinquent Taxes | 1 year | Kim Eckhardt | Andrea Ogden |
| Grand Juror | 1 year | Claudia Harris | John Ogden |
| Town Agent | 1 year | John Hadden | Virginia LaPrade |
| Constable | 1 year | John Wiley, Jr. | Jeremiah Evarts |
| Trustee of Public Funds | 3 years | Dick Adams | Sally Waite |

ARTICLE 3: To hear the reports of Town Officers and take proper action on the Auditors' report. Moved by Michael Jeffrey, Seconded by Lynn Eckhardt.

- John spoke about how we miss former Selectboard member Tom Dibble a lot and thanked Michael Jeffery for stepping up to serve on the Selectboard. Note SB meetings are twice a month at 8 am on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays- we would love to have anybody show up and weigh in.

- Chuck Sweetman spoke for the Listers- As the work of Listing continues to get more complex, they are happy to welcome District Advisor Cy Bailey back. The Listers will expect a town-wide re-evaluation Jan -April of next year (2020), or 2021. Money has been saved up in anticipation of this. If anyone wants to be a Lister and learn to do the job, please speak up - three of them will be interested in retiring and would be happy to help train the next round of Listers.

- Jeff Cleary, Landgrove rep to the Taconic and Green District (T&G) School Board, announced that the \$32 Million dollar budget is voted for tomorrow, even though each Town has its own rep, you do have to vote for 3 other at-large people from the other towns. Chuck would like to compliment Mr Cleary and the T & G - he read the whole school report, and its easy to read, really well done.

Motion to approve was made by Sally Waite, 2nd by Lynn Eckhardt. Article 3 passes.

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will authorize its Selectboard to apply any surplus or unanticipated funds toward the proposed budget. Moved: Harry Lux Seconded: Mary Licata. No discussion. Motion to Approve: Harry Lux, 2nd Sally Waite. Article 4 passes.

ARTICLE 5: To see whether the Town will appropriate \$5,000 one time funding to the Cemetery Commission to upright and repair the headstones in the Old Cemetery and clean up the border walls, particularly those to the back side and sand pile side. Moved: Bobby Waite Seconded: Greg Eckhardt. Motion to Approve: Greg Eckhardt 2nd Jeremiah Evarts. Article 5 passes.

ARTICLE 6: To see whether the Town will appropriate one time funding of \$1,000 to the reconstruction of the observation tower on Bromley Mountain. Moved: May Bigelow, Seconded: Virginia LaPrade. Discussion: May Bigelow tells that there was an old wooden tower at the summit for 50 years, but it became unsafe, so a new steel tower is being built for \$260K, Londonderry, Peru, Dorset have all given. The new observation tower looks into all of our towns and will be complete by next year. Motion to Approve: Michael Jeffery, 2nd Greg Eckhardt. Article 6 passes.

ARTICLE 7: To see whether the Town will appropriate \$500 to the Bennington County Child Advocacy Unit and incorporate that into our annual Community Appropriations. Moved: Greg Eckhardt. Discussion: Greg asked what the money goes to, Stephanie replied that we are asking at this time because fed & state money has been reduced. The Center doesn't want to cut back the case manager who goes to the court with the families they serve. Harry Lux asked "what is the mechanic for removal someday of these annual appropriations? Can we alter this from annual to one time?" Jeff Cleary notes that as School Director, he votes to spend lots and lots of money, and it's silly to argue over \$500. John says we need to research ways of removing from appropriations. Jerry Evarts: "If its a cause you believe in why make them come back over and over every year?" Harry says we need to know the methods - its not about the money or the need, its about the mechanism.

The Lux Amendment was proposed to read "To see whether the Town will appropriate \$500 to the Bennington County Child Advocacy Unit." (Not annual.) Shall we amend? Yeas and Nays by voice to close to call, Show of Hands- Nays have it - the amendment failed. Article 7 passes as originally written.

ARTICLE 8: To see if the Town will vote to pay its taxes on real and personal property on or before October 1, 2019. Moved: Harry Lux, 2nd Karl Pfister, no discussion. Motion to Approve: Michael Mole, 2nd Dick Adams. Article 8 Passes.

ARTICLE 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise the budgeted monies necessary to pay Town expenses and obligations for the 2019 year. Moved: Sally Waite, 2nd Jean. Discussion - Chuck - the Community Club insurance need is up to \$1700- can we add money for that? Not in this meeting. Motion to Approve: John Ogden, 2nd Michael Jeffery. Article 9 passes.

ARTICLE 10: To transact any other non-binding business proper to come before said meeting, not acted upon in the preceding articles. John Ogden spoke about the fire truck: that it will be equitable to draw the money out of the unallocated reserve, which has been paid into over years, rather than raise money out of a single year's taxation. Townsfolk are encouraged to please come to a Selectboard meeting where the financial decision should be made.

Tom Checchia described short-term rentals' impact on inns, such as vacation homes in the town operating as lodging - has it come to the attention of the SB and are they ready to make sure these places conform to the existing laws? John Ogden replies that Zoning Administrator Hal Wilkins is on this and is taking it up with certain owners. We will figure out what we as a Town can do about it. Moved: Michael Jeffery, 2nd Virginia LaPrade. Motion to Approve: John Ogden 2nd: Michael Jeffery, Article 10 passes.

ARTICLE 11: To see if the Town will agree to meet in 2020 on the first Monday before the first Tuesday in March (March 2nd) at 6pm for the annual Town Meeting. Moved: Marion Sweetman 2nd Christine Morfit. Proposed "Eckhardt Amendment:" "To see if the Town will agree to meet in 2020 on the first Tuesday in March (March 3rd) at 9am for the annual Town Meeting." 2nd May Bigelow

Voice: too close to call, Hands: nay- does not carry. Article 11 Passes as written

Motion to Adjourn- Jerry Evarts, 2nd Michael Jeffery. The 2019 Landgrove Town Meeting Adjourned at 8:12 pm

Respectfully Submitted by

Chrystal Cleary, Town Clerk

Moderator Claudia Harris

Selectboard:

John Ogden

Steve Hall

Michael Jeffery
