

**Minutes
FOR
2023 Town of Dover Annual Town Meeting**

The legal voters of the Town of Dover, Vermont met at the Dover Town Hall at 189 Taft Brook Road in said Dover, Vermont on Tuesday, March 7th, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. to act upon the following articles to wit:

ARTICLE TO BE VOTED BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT (Include Article 1 only)

The polls were open for Australian ballot voting from 10:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m.

ARTICLE 1: To choose all Dover town officers and Unified School District officers for the following positions required by law to be elected at the annual meeting:

Auditor	3-year term	Tamara Allen	85
First Constable	1-year term	Andy McLean	91
Library Trustee	5-year term	Edward Brookman	84
Moderator - Town	1-year term	Richard J. Werner	89
Select Board Member	3-year term	Scott Salway	83
Select Board Member	2-year term	Victoria Capitani	85
Trustee of Public Funds	1-year term	Marco Tallini	92

MODERATOR, RICHARD WERNER INTRODUCES GIRL SCOUTS, SADIE WHEELER AND MACKENZIE SHERMAN, WHO LEAD THE ASSEMBLY IN THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

A MOMENT OF SILENCE IS OBSERVED FOR THOSE DEPARTED OVER THE PAST YEAR.

THE MODERATOR ASKS FOR PERMISSION OF THE BODY BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO ALLOW NON-RESIDENT TOWN EMPLOYEES, TRAVIS BRIGGS AND ERIC DUROCHER TO SPEAK. PERMISSION IS GRANTED.

THE MODERATOR THANKS DAN BALIOTTI FOR THE COFFEE.

THE MODERATOR GOES OVER THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT.

TOWN MEETING

ARTICLE 2: Shall the voters accept the annual report of the auditors and other town officers?

M: Tabi Freedman

2nd: Marco Tallini

V: Aye, unanimous.

ARTICLE 3: Shall the voters compensate town officers as follows: Select Board Chair \$3,000 annual stipend, Select Board members \$2,500 annual stipend, Town Treasurer \$5,000 annual stipend, Town Clerk \$72,841.19 Town Auditors \$20.39/hr., all others – chairmen Vermont minimum wage plus \$1.50/hr., members Vermont minimum wage, and mileage based on the Federal reimbursement rate for the month in which the mileage occurred?

M: Cathy Kaufmann

2nd: Susan Rand

D: Select Board Chair, Victoria Capitani, explains that they are recommending a 4% raise for the clerk and all other administration.

V: Aye, unanimous.

ARTICLE 4: Shall the voters authorize general fund expenditure for operational expenses of \$2,520,452.51 for the coming year?

M: Marc Schaubert

2nd: Linda Kersten

D: Vicki explains that approving all warned appropriation articles would result in a 10% increase. Susan Rand, how many Dover residents served by The Gathering Place? Vicki, the report is on page 96, 97. Dana Sorce, board member, a number of families. Vicki explains that the police are getting a 10% raise in this budget to attract good candidates and help retention. Jodi Keeler, increase in HRA? Actually an extra person, different plan. Cathy Kaufmann, cemetery maintenance down? David Smith explains that he takes care of the cemeteries and that the new number more accurately reflects the expense. Alan Block, Planning Commission up? Sarah Shippee, Town Plan rewrite going on at this time requiring more work from the P.C. Alan, with planner or consultant? Sarah, P.C. working with Windham Regional Commission planner under a grant. CB Goldstein, Visiting Nurse Assoc. not serving this community anymore? Much discussion ensues – we think they are still serving Dover.

V: Aye, unanimous.

ARTICLE 5: Shall the voters authorize highway fund expenditure for operational expenses of \$1,619,759.03 for the coming year?

M: Charles LaFiura

2nd: Ed Brookman

D: Vicki explains, \$2.50/hour raise for highway crew. Two crew members defected to other towns this year. Hard to keep employees. This coming year two crew members will be trained in testing pavement. Janet Rivers, over time down? Vicki, yes, based on past years. Kit Cleanthes thanks road crew. Applause for Travis and the Road Crew.

V: Aye, unanimous.

ARTICLE 6: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$600,000.00 for the Capital Paving Fund?

M: Dave Rosso

2nd: Ira Colby

D: Sarah Shippee, Vice-chair of the Select Board, explains level funding capital paving on page 37. Andrea Seaton, Dover Hill Road - where? Travis, Sugarhouse to just below Holland Road, Taft Brook corner to Newfane town line. Marc Schaubert, cost between maintaining dirt vs. paved roads? Travis, depends on usage. Travis explains costs relative to usage and variable prices of materials including salt and sand - there is no easy rule of thumb. Sue Rand, I live on Dover Hill Road, is it deteriorating? How is this determined? Travis, I have observed reflective cracking and alligator cracking in the area of the school. Also, wheel ruts that hold and channel water creating a hydroplaning danger. Sue, glad our ruts aren't Route 30 ruts. Kevin Stine, cost of salt for paved roads is twice the cost of sand for dirt roads. Better to have dirt than paved? Travis, salt is twice the cost of sand but you don't need the volume and it doesn't create silt. Andrea Seaton, asking for money for speed bumps on Dover Hill Road on behalf of Fran Bond? General laughter.

V: Aye, unanimous.

ARTICLE 7: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$650,000.00 for the Capital Equipment Fund?

M: Jessica DeFrancesco

2nd: Bob Stone

D: Sarah, bumping up from level funding because of deferred expenses pages 38, 39. Hoping to cut it back in the future. Linda Kersten, what is Fire gear, line item? Turn-out gear. John Cleanthes, \$41,000. for Ford Interceptor? With all the cool cop stuff, yes.

V: Aye, unanimous.

ARTICLE 8: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$80,000.00 for the Capital Building Improvement Fund?

M: Gerry Golet

2nd: Linda Holland

D: Sarah explains, level funded, page 40. We need new windows in the Town Hall and the ongoing water issues are expensive. Sue Rand, user of library, are we thinking about heat pumps? Vicki, we would need more room in utility room with new water system first.

V: Aye, unanimous.

ARTICLE 9: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$238,939.00 for The Dover Free Library?

M: Bobby Holland

2nd: Martin Conroy

V: Aye, with a few nays. Motion passes.

ARTICLE 10: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$30,000.00 for Deerfield Valley Rescue Inc.?

M: Becky Arbella

2nd: Kevin Stine

D: Gerry Golet, they did a very good job when they took me to the hospital. However, what are response times vs. Rescue Inc? Becky Arbella, I'm on Deerfield Valley Rescue. We can have longer response times but we are a volunteer service. Rescue Inc has full time employees. John Cleanthes, used them twice took ten minutes. Cathy Kaufmann, used ambulance service recently and they came from Townshend? Rescue Inc has a base in Townshend and cover for Deerfield Valley when they can't respond.

V: Aye, with some nays. Motion passes.

ARTICLE 11: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$25,000.00 for Support and Services at Home (SASH)?

M: Dana Sorice

2nd: Johnny Cleanthes

D: Becky Arbella, 2022 distributed 8,000+ pounds of produce in Dover. More valley wide, 100,000+ pounds. Sixty-one participants in Dover. Andy McLean, SASH and Becky in particular serve an extremely important function in our Town. I don't know where I would turn in difficult situations involving ageing issues without Becky being a phone call away. Dan Baliotti, used their services - walker etc. Great organization serving a need in the community.

V: Aye, unanimous.

ARTICLE 12: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$20,000 for Dover Historical Society?

M: Roscoe Shippee

2nd: Kit Cleanthes

D: Dan Baliotti, History of Dover books available. Remakes of photos – Dan shows some amazing large format prints from old photos. Capital expenses to improve/maintain the building.

V: Aye unanimous.

ARTICLE 13: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$3,372.00 for Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies (SeVEDS) activities?

M: Kate Merriam

2nd: Lindsey Brown-Rosso

D: Laura Sibilia explains, workforce development is where much of these funds go. Kate what kind of problems are you addressing? Aging population, lack of workforce, broadband, help for start-up businesses. Jodi Keeler, why separate article? Vicki, because we like to have a representative from SeVEDS like Laura here to answer questions. Alan Block, practically, how are these planning activities implemented. Laura, programs in public Schools like Pipelines and Pathways program for career development in L&G and Twin Valley. Reality fair - here's your budget make a new business work. Help welcoming new immigrants working or living in Dover. Idea Jams, pitch your new business ideas. Windham economic summit held in Dover outlining challenges. Linda Kersten, letter is general, what are the specifics re: immigrants? Laura, immigration is a federal issue. SeVEDS welcomed the Federal ECDC agency to the region. They found and brought immigrants. So, we helped with workforce development - driving buses, etc. Rick Judd, what about local people with problems similar to immigrants. Laura, we predominantly help with locals. Helping locals is 95% of what we do.

V: Aye, unanimous.

The business of Town Meeting is interrupted so that we can hear from our State Representative, Laura Sibilia. Laura updates us on many issues and her work including recent School Choice ruling and what it means for religious schools and public dollars, the clean-heat act and what it may mean for the environment and who will bear the cost financially. Laura Dobbin is concerned about the barriers to becoming an appraiser given the state of Vermont's grand lists. Linda Kersten, an appraiser, says that they are overseen by the Federal Government not the State. Linda Sherman, Dover's Assessor, says that Towns should remain in control of grand lists and we should not support the legislature's current movement toward State control. Gerry Golet has concerns about the specifics of the Clean-Heat Act. Rick Judd, 2nd amendment rights? Laura, I get legal opinions on legislation before I vote. Marshall Brooks, pie chart on page 86 is there still lack of accountability in how Education dollars are spent? Laura, no. We asked for a chart of accounts from the Agency of Education and they refuse to give it to us. Not happening. The assembly recognizes Marc Schaubert and Laura Sibilia for their tireless and effective work on Education issues.

LUNCH PROVIDED BY DOVER SCHOOL 6TH GRADE

ARTICLE 14: Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to apply any surplus from the current fiscal year to reduce taxes in the next fiscal year?

M: Randy Johnson

2nd: Dan Baliotti

V: Aye, unanimous.

ARTICLE 15: Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to sell properties, which the Town has acquired by gift or through tax sales?

M: Ian Schrauf

2nd: Alan Block

V: Aye, unanimous.

ARTICLE 16: Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to set the tax rate sufficient to cover the approved expenses of the Town of Dover and the Town of Dover Highway for taxes due on September 15, 2023 and February 15, 2024?

M: David Smith

2nd: Mickey Kersten

V: Aye, unanimous.

ARTICLE 17: Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to borrow money in anticipation of taxes?

M: Michelle Pinkham

2nd: Jollene Mahon

V: Aye, unanimous

ARTICLE 18: To discuss any items that the voters would like to discuss, and to conduct any other business that may legally come before the voters.

Valley Trail A Section - south of Town Office. Eric Durocher, Dover's Economic Development Director, explains potential cost has ballooned from \$350,000 to \$800,000. Possible 80% grant. John Hannon, dangerous bridge for pedestrians would be eliminated. Currently historical district is split by this bridge. Linda Kersten, all for going all the way to Dover Green. Dana Sorice, better to build it than have a tragedy. Laura Sibilia, the current paved trail has been transformative. Long-term payback. Becky Arbella, would love to see it. Andy McLean, everyone should read the report put together by John Hannon. This would be a wonderful way to spend some of the 1% tax dollars. Linda Kersten, floodplains and river crossings make the trail headed north significantly more expensive if that's the alternative.

Vicki Capitani initiates discussion about buying a gravel pit. Becky Arbella, why'd Stratton back out? Travis, right, why are the commercial people who run this type of business not interested? General skepticism expressed.

Marc Schaubert, April 24th Annual School Vote & April 25th Annual School Meeting. Poor participation in the most recent vote. Lindsey Brown-Rosso, I didn't know about the vote. Better signs?

Alan Block, cannabis products? Time to re-visit the issue, bring them to Dover?

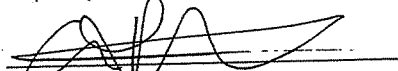
ARTICLE 19: Adjourn.

M: Linda Sherman

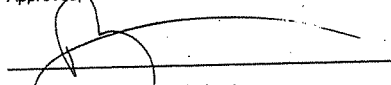
2nd: None required.

V: Unanimous consent.

Respectfully submitted,


Andy McLean, Town Clerk

Approved,


Richard Werner, Town Moderator