

TOWN OF READING, VT
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
March 4, 2017

The Town of Reading, Annual Town Meeting was held on Saturday, March 4, 2017 at The Reading Elementary School at 9:30 am. Approximately 87 people were in attendance.

The Moderator, Jonathan Springer, called the meeting to order at 9:30 am and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. The Moderator reviewed the rules for speaking and voting for non-residents and addressing the moderator for questions. Jon allowed Becky Basch to speak about energy savings and that information was available to attendees. Heather Evans thanked our prior Reading Recreation Commission, Kevin Barnes, Chris Titus and Diane Moore for all of their hard work putting together wonderful events for the community. A card was available for people to sign thanking the commission.

Article 1: To elect a Moderator for the Town ensuing year. Gordon Eastman nominated Jon Springer. Penny Allyn seconded the nomination. Jim Peplau moves to close nominations, Tim Bishop seconded and nominations were ceased. Mr. Jon Springer was elected.

Article 2: To see if the voters shall set the date and time, by which the Town property taxes must be paid and received by the Town Treasurer, to be Monday, November 6, 2017 by 5:00 P.M. (NO POST MARKS). John Fike moves to have Article 2 be accepted and Gordon Eastman seconded. The Article was adopted.

Article 3: To see if the Town will elect the Town Treasurer as Collector of Delinquent Taxes for the ensuing year. John Fike moves to have Article 2 be accepted and Jim Peplau seconded. The Article was adopted.

Article 4: To elect all other Town Officers, as required by law:

- **Town Clerk for a three (3) year term.** John Fike nominated Calista Brennan. No other nomination. Robert Allen moves to close nominations, Tim Bishop seconded. Calista Brennan was elected.
- **Town Treasurer for a three (3) year term.** John Fike nominated Calista Brennan. No other nomination. Robert Allen moves to close nominations, Tim Bishop seconded. Calista Brennan was elected.
- **SELECTPERSON for a three (3) year term.** Gordon Eastman nominated A. James Peplau. No other nomination. Robert Allen moves to close nominations, John Fike seconded. The motion passed. Chris Titus moves to have the clerk be instructed to cast one ballot for A. James Peplau for Selectperson for a three-year term. Tim Bishop seconded the motion. The motion passed, the clerk cast one ballot, and A. James Peplau was elected.
- **LISTER for a three (3) year term.** Penny Allyn nominated John Fike. No other nomination. Jim Peplau moves to close nominations, Gary Vittum seconded. The motion passed. Jim Peplau moves to have the clerk be instructed to cast one ballot for John Fike for Lister for a three-year term. Robert Allen seconded the motion. The motion passed, the clerk cast one ballot, and John Fike was elected.

- **AUDITOR for a three (3) year term.** Adam Kozlowski nominated Liesbeth Kozlowski. No other nomination. Jim Peplau moves to close nominations, Chris Titus seconded. The motion passed. Jim Peplau moves to have the clerk be instructed to cast one ballot for Liesbeth Kozlowski for Auditor for a three-year term. Gordon Eastman seconded the motion. The motion passed, the clerk cast one ballot, and Liesbeth Kozlowski was elected.
- **TOWN GRAND JUROR for a one (1) year term.** Esther Allen nominated Peter Vollers. No other nomination. Jim Peplau moves to close nominations, Gordon Eastman seconded. Peter Vollers was elected.
- **TRUSTEE OF PUBLIC FUNDS for a one (3) year term.** Jim Bartlett nominated Curtis Allen. No other nomination. Chris Titus moves to close nominations, Tim Bishop seconded. Curtis Allen was elected.
- **CEMETERY COMMISSIONER for a three (3) year term.** Adam Kozlowski nominated Kevin Kaija. No other nomination. Susan Goodhouse moves to close nominations, Gordon Eastman seconded. Kevin Kaija was elected. Kevin presented a note to be entered into record.
- **READING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DIRECTOR for a three (3) year term.** Justin Sluka nominated Donna Martin. No other nomination. Chris Titus moves to close nominations, Susan Goodhouse seconded. Donna Martin was elected.
- **LIBRARY TRUSTEE for a five (5) year term.** Milde Waterfall nominated Vanessa Maxham. No other nomination. Jim Peplau moves to close nominations. Robert Allen seconded. Vanessa Maxham was elected.
- **TOWN AGENT for a one (1) year term.** Sarah Norcross nominated Kenneth Norcross. No other nomination. Heather Evans moves to close the nominations. Libbet Downs seconded. Kenneth Norcross was elected.

ARTICLE 5: To act on the reports of The Officers for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016. Sandy Peplau moves to accept the Article. Jim Peplau seconded. No questions presented. Article 5 was adopted.

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town of Reading will vote to appropriate the amount of \$630,255 (Six Hundred Thirty Thousand Two Hundred Fifty Dollars) to be raised by taxes for the Selectmen's Budget beginning July 1, 2017. John Fike moves to accept the article. Gary Vittum seconded. Robert Allen spoke to the town budget that there needed to be a change to some line items in the budget. This resulted in line 420 Total Expense being changed to \$1,753,955 and line 430 Total Income was changed to \$1,200,700. Based on this Robert Allen made a motion to amend the amount to be raised by taxes to \$553,255. John Fike seconded the motion. Steve Strait asked questions on line 134, 202, 212 and 312 asking why the YTD to 12/31 was so low. Robert Allen explained that these are typically items that have increased cost during the winter months so they did not show in the 6 month numbers. Costs of the Informer have been reduced, due to a negotiation on pricing with the printer and moving people to receiving it via e-mail rather than hard copy and mailing. Steve also questioned the increase in bridges to \$800,000. The bridges to be replaced on the Tyson Road and Town Farm Road will be more expensive than originally estimated. Tyson Road bridge alone will be between \$450,000 and \$500,000. Article 6 was adopted.

ARTICLES 7 - 14: Appropriations for special funds.

Robert Allen made a motion to suspend the rule and take up Articles 7 – 14 that add up to \$7,800, to be voted on, as one article. Carol Boerner seconded. Moderator asks if all are in favor to suspend the rules to say aye, because it requires a 2/3 majority. The ayes have the majority and the rules were suspended. Jim Peplau moves to accept and Susan Goodhouse seconded. Articles 7 - 14 are adopted.

Article 15: To see if the voters will authorize the purchase of the Reading Historical Society lot that is adjacent to the Library property, for a sum of **\$42,000 (Forty-Two Thousand Dollars)**. Esther Allen moves to accept the article. Jim Peplau seconded. Moderator Springer allowed RHS President, Esther Allen, to address this article as to why it was requested and answer questions from the floor. Town librarian, Tony Pikramenos, spoke as to how this would benefit the library. Nina Salvatore asked the Selectboard why they would agree to buy this lot but would not buy other parcels when they come up for tax sale. Selectman, Allen, stated that the RHS lot was adjacent to the current town lot of the library and would make additional space for the library for badly needed parking, access to the lift and the control of the water. Article 15 was adopted.

Article 16: To elect a Moderator for the School ensuing year. Adam Kozlowski nominated Jon Springer. Marie Anderson seconded the nomination. Chris Titus moves to close nominations, Tim Bishop seconded and nominations were ceased. Mr. Jon Springer was elected.

Article 17: To act on the reports of the School Directors for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016. Sandy Peplau moved to accept the article. Tim Bishop seconded. No discussion of this article. The article passed.

Article 18: Shall the voters of the Reading Elementary School District approve the Reading Board of School Directors to expend \$1,039,665 (One Million, Thirty Nine Thousand, Six Hundred Sixty Five Dollars), 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 \$17,383 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is .14% higher than spending for the current year. Sandy Peplau moves and Shiri Macri seconded. A general discussion of the budget ensued.

- Board was commended for reducing the budget amount and being under the per equalized pupil cost.
- Line 129 Why an increase in the principal's salary? Board stated this is due to combining the principal position (3 days) with library and media tech 1 day. Salary is for 4 days a week.
- Line 208 Special Education Excess Cost of \$53,000 – Board stated this is cost accessed by WCSU needs that are not broken out.
- Line 225 – Health insurance for food service – comment that this is unheard of in the industry for part time work.
- Staffing – reduction in
- Goldberg – asked if the budget printed in the town report could be asterisked ** to identify which costs the School Board has no control over. [this can be done if the board identifies the items to book preparers].

Robert Allen made a motion to amend the school budget request to be **\$1,053,665** which adds \$14,000 back into the budget specifically for the custodian position to be full time. Seconded by Jim Peplau.

Discussion: Reduced hours for maintenance of the building; concerns over deterioration of the facility and equipment. Board stated they are doing a full analysis of maintenance costs to see where they can reduce costs. Water testing, septic, electricity and boiler maintenance are all higher than they should be.

Rayna Bishop asked the question if adding the \$14,000 to the budget would put us above the per pupil spending line and into the penalty phase. Justin Sluka said it would, and explained it would add several pennies to the tax rate. Robert Allen removed his motion returning the School Board budget back to the original request.

A voice vote was taken and ruled by the moderator that the ayes had it. The moderator's decision was challenged by Steve Strait calling for a paper ballot vote of the article. There were at least seven people in favor of a paper ballot. There were 83 votes cast 69 yes and 14 no. Article 18 was adopted.

Article 19: To see if the Voters will authorize the School Directors to borrow money, if necessary, in anticipation of taxes. Robert Allen moves to accept. Jim Peplau seconded. The Article was adopted.

Article 20: To do any other business that may legally be done at this meeting.

Adam Kozlowski commended the board for their budget reductions but wondered about a five-year plan from the board. Justin stated that they could not have a five-year plan with all the questions regarding the ACT46 implementation. They would go forward after Tuesday's vote.

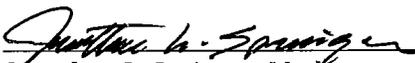
Carol Boerner questioned why test scores were not in the Town Report – again. Principal, Cathy Knight distributed a sheet of test scores. Carol then questioned why students are doing poorly. Board stated that the numbers are skewed.

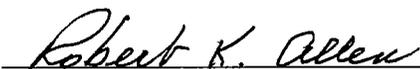
Esther Allen thanked Shiri Macri for her work on the school board the last three years and her work serving on the ACT46 merger committee.

Donna Martin and Rick Stahl were thanked for providing food and beverages for the meeting.

Motion to adjourn made by Robert Allen; seconded by Donna Martin. All in favor. Meeting Adjourned at 12:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted By Calista Brennan


Jonathan L. Springer, Moderator


Robert K. Allen, Selectboard Chair

Results of the Australian Ballot Vote on Tuesday, March 7, 2017 203 voters

WCSU High School Budget: 115 = Yes, 86 = No

ACT46 Merger: 64 = Yes, 135 = No

2 Year Board Member; Timothy Bishop = 109

1 Year Board Member; Nina Salvatore = 49

MARCH 5, 2017

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I was born in a small town
And I live in this small town
Probably die in this small town
As a member of the Cemetery Commission
I apologize for possibly sending subliminal
messages regarding the town itself.

Please refer to this years and last years
Town report cover photo.

Be informed, the town is NOT near death.
The demographics are changing in this town
through this statement is personal observation
and gut feeling... not based on any clear
concise, science, data, or models.

As a cemetery commissioner I will
try to steer the commission away from
placing cemetery photos on town reports.

Respectfully submitted
Karin Payne