TOWN OF READING
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
February 29, 2020

The Town of Reading, Annual Town Meeting was held on Saturday, February 29, 2020 at The Reading Elementary School at 9:30 am.

The Moderator, Peter Vollers, called the meeting to order at 9:35 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.

109 registered voters checked in.

Article 1: To elect a Moderator for the Town ensuing year. Jon Springer nominated Peter Vollers. Gordy Eastman seconded the nomination. John Fike moved to close nominations, Jim Peplau seconded and nominations were ceased. Mr. Peter Vollers was elected. Peter Vollers appointed Jon Springer as parliamentarian for the meeting.

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 Wednesday, November 4, 2020 by 5:00 P.M. (NO POST MARKS). Robert Allen moved to have Article 2 be accepted and Jim Peplau 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. Robert Allen moved to have Article 3 be accepted and Jim Waterfall 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 nominations. Jim Peplau moved to close nominations Jon Springer seconded. The motion passed. Jon Springer moved to have the clerk be instructed to cast one ballot for Calista Brennan for Town Clerk for a three-year term. Bob Allen seconded the motion. The motion passed, the clerk cast one ballot, and Calista Brennan was elected.

- **Town Treasurer for a three (3) year term.**

- **Bob Hartnett** nominated Calista Brennan. No other nominations. Jon Springer moved to close nominations. Jim Peplau seconded. The motion passed. Jon Springer moved to have the clerk be instructed to cast one ballot for Calista Brennan for Town Treasurer for a three-year term. Jim Peplau seconded the motion. The motion passed, the clerk cast one ballot, and Calista Brennan was elected.

- **SELECTPERSON for a three (3) year term.**
  Lisa Kaija nominated Stephen D'Agostino. Jon Springer nominated incumbent James Peplau. John Fike moved to close nominations. Robert Allen seconded. Both candidates addressed the assembly stating their qualifications for office. Several people addressed the assembly on behalf of each

candidate. Paper ballot was taken. 55 for James Peplau; 52 for Stephen D'Agostino; 1 spoiled and 1 blank. Total votes 109. James Peplau was elected.

**** While the votes were being counted, Representative Charlie Kimbell and Senator, Alison Clarkson addressed the assembly regarding bills that are being worked on in the state house.**

- **LISTER for a three (3) year term.**
  Penny Allyn nominated John Fike. No other nominations. Jon Springer moved to close nominations Gordy Eastman seconded. The motion passed. Tim Bishop moved to have the clerk be instructed to cast one ballot for John Fike for Lister for a three-year term. Jon Springer seconded the motion. The motion passed, the clerk cast one ballot, and John Fike was elected.

- **AUDITOR for a three (3) year term.**
  Esther Allen nominated Charline Hagar. No other nominations. Jon Springer moved to close nominations Tim Bishop seconded. The motion passed. Jim Peplau moved to have the clerk be instructed to cast one ballot for Charline Hagar for Auditor for a three-year term. Jon Springer seconded the motion. The motion passed, the clerk cast one ballot, and Charline Hagar was elected.

- **TOWN GRAND JUROR for a one (1) year term.**
  Esther Allen nominated Jon Springer. No other nominations. Jim Peplau moved to close nominations, Gordy Eastman seconded. Jon Springer was elected.

- **TRUSTEE OF PUBLIC FUNDS for a three (3) year term.**
  Esther Allen nominated Curt Allen. No other nominations. Jim Peplau moved to close nominations, Gordy Eastman seconded. Curt Allen was elected.

- **LIBRARY TRUSTEE for a five (5) year term.**
  Vanessa Maxham nominated Bill Bakker. No other nominations. Jim Peplau moved to close nominations. Jon Springer seconded. Bill Bakker was elected.

- **TOWN AGENT for a one (1) year term.**
  Esther Allen nominated Ken Norcross. No other nominations. Jim Peplau moved to close the nominations. Jon Springer seconded. Ken Norcross was elected.

- **CEMETERY COMMISSIONER for a three (3) year term.**
  Adam Kozlowski nominated Tim Bishop. No other nominations. Jim Peplau moved to close nominations, Gordy Eastman seconded. Tim Bishop was elected.

ARTICLE 5: To act on the reports of The Officers for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019. Robert Allen moved to accept the Article. Jim Peplau seconded. No questions were asked regarding the reports. Article 5 was adopted.

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town of Reading will vote to appropriate the amount of $633,211 (Six Hundred Thirty-Three Thousand Two Hundred Eleven Dollars) to be raised by taxes for the Selectboard's Budget beginning July 1, 2020. Robert Allen moved to accept the article. Jim Peplau seconded. Robert Allen spoke to the Selectboard budget stating that an adjustment would be needed. During the budget process, the interim town manager of Weathersfield indicated there would be a change in

the method of assessing Reading's fee for the use of the Weathersfield transfer station. The new assessment would reduce the cost to the Town, so line item 201 in the budget was reduced from $18, 635 to $10,000. Subsequently, the Weathersfield Selectboard decided to hold off on any changes to the assessment to Reading for the 2020/2021 fiscal year. Based on this, line item 201 must be increased back to $18,635. This results in increasing the amount to be raised by taxes to $641,846.00. Ray Johnson asked for clarification on the cost of the vehicle sticker and the dump tokens.

Hazel King made a motion to amend the amount of the budget by $25,000. Motion seconded by Ray Johnson. Discussion followed. Robert explained that the board had worked very hard to 'hold the line' with the budget amount while working to approve more monetary requests from town committees. He also spoke to the needs of highway work required to meet deadlines of the State Municipal Roads General Permit and line item costs in the budget that the board cannot control, such as certain assessments and insurance costs. Discussion was closed and the amended budget was put to a vote. The no's outweighed the aye's. Motion was defeated.

Robert Allen made a motion to amend the article to increase the budget by $8,635 to $641,846. Jim Peplau seconded. Motion was put to a vote and aye's carried.

ARTICLES 7 – 12: Appropriations for special funds.

Lisa Kaija made a motion to suspend the rule and take up Articles 7 – 12 that add up to $6,457, to be voted on as one article and increase the articles by $800 for Pentangle and $1,000 for the Ottauquechee Health Foundation. Changing the total of special funding to $8,257. Jean Goldsboro seconded. Moderator, Vollers ruled this motion out of order because according to Vermont Statutes, articles can only be added to the warning with the appropriate legal petitions filed by the deadline. Lisa Kaija then made a motion to overrule the moderator, seconded by Jean Goldsboro. A vote was taken on the motion to overrule and the ayes had it. Discussion followed why the petitions had not been filed as required. Lisa stated that in the future the petitions would be filed as required. People spoke in favor and against the amendment. Robert Allen cautioned the assembly about opening this up to potential additions being made that had not been duly warned. Jon Springer called the question. The motion to suspend the rule and increase the articles to $8,257 was voted on. Motion carried.

Article 13: Other business.

Anna Sessa introduced herself as the candidate running for the WCMUUSD board seat from Reading. She spoke of her interest in the school and willingness to help us move forward.

Jean Goldsboro questioned why the Reading School was still on the list of Town Assets. Robert Allen explained it is still there because the property transfer paperwork has not been filed from the WCMUUSD to the State and Town.

Hazel King suggested that an assistant to the Selectboard be created so that new people could learn what is required of being a selectperson.

John Malcolm spoke about ECFiber increasing its presence in Reading to help improve internet access for residents. There is an information meeting being held on March 5, 2020.

Steve Strait spoke about the work that the planning commission is doing for rewriting the town plan. There will be a public discussion at the regular meeting of the planning commission on March 9, 2020.

Adam Amalee feels that a lot of growth is needed in Town.

Kristen Hurd asked the Selectboard to consider changing the night of their meeting so that it doesn't conflict with the WCMUUSD board meetings. Peter Semen stated more people would like to attend the Selectboard meetings. Rayna Bishop stated that the WCMUUSD is considering changing their meeting night so the board should have that information first.

Robert Allen spoke to the issue of change in Reading and feels that change will come with the increase in connectivity to the internet which allows more people to work from home; the lack of cell service is another issue to be resolved.

John Fike thanked Esther Allen for the great job done on the 2019 Town Report.

Abby Rowlee was thanked for giving us one of her beautiful photos for the cover of the town report.

Motion to adjourn was made by Jim Peplau. Seconded by Gordy Eastman. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 11:40 am.

Respectfully submitted by Esther E. Allen Date: March 3, 2020

Peter K. Vollers, Moderator

Robert K. Allen

Robert K. Allen, Selectboard Chair