

## **Town Meeting Minutes Monday, March 2, 2015**

The legal voters of the Town of Cornwall met at the Anna Stowell Sunderland Bingham Memorial School on Monday evening, March 2, 2015 at 6:30 PM with approximately 125 people in attendance and transacted the following business:

Before the meeting was called to order, Willem Jewett our State Representative, was given a few moments to report on the current happenings in Montpelier. He reported that he has stepped back from a leadership role and has been assigned to the Judiciary Committee. He indicated that the legislators will be working on keeping their yearly increases to 3% vs. the 5% that has been happening most recently. Eliminating the budget gap is one of their top priorities.

The meeting was called to order at 6:35PM by Moderator, Cy Tall. Cy indicated that the meeting would be run using Robert's Rules of Order. She also indicated that nonvoters were welcome to attend the meeting, but could not speak at the meeting. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Bruce Hiland took a few minutes to give the state of the town remarks. A copy of his remarks will be attached to these minutes.

**ARTICLE 1:** *To elect all town officials as required by law. Voting for officials will be by Australian ballot. Polls will be open from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM on Tuesday, March 3, 2015, at the Cornwall Town Hall. Officials to be elected are:*

**5 years:** *Cemetery Commissioner*

**3 years:** *Town Clerk; Town Treasurer; Two (2) Planning Commissioners; Selectboard; Lister; School Director; Auditor; Trustee of Public Funds; Cemetery Commissioner (to fill an unexpired term)*

**2 years:** *Selectboard; School Director; Planning Commissioner (to fill an unexpired term); Four (4) Library Trustees*

**1 year:** *Moderator; Selectboard (to fill an unexpired term); First Constable; Second Constable; Collector of Delinquent Taxes; Town Agent; Two (2) Grand Jurors; School Director (to fill an unexpired term); Cemetery Commissioner (to fill an unexpired term)*

No action was taken on this article as voting will take place on March 3, 2015 from 7 am to 7 pm at the Cornwall Town Hall.

**ARTICLE 2:** *To see what action the voters will take regarding the town's financial deficit of (\$56,896) for the fiscal year July 2013 – June 2014.*

Bruce Hiland/T Tall moved to apply the deficit to next year's tax rate calculation. Stan Grzyb asked what the deficit was. Bruce H. explained that it was a combination of unpaid property taxes and over spending of budgeted areas. Sue Johnson also explained that the town is using the modified accrual system within the municipal fund accounting program and making the various funds whole also contributed to the deficit number. Dave Donahue wondered if it was or would be typical. It is not typical for Cornwall to have a deficit. Richard Carpenter asked if there was any other alternative to deal with the deficit besides raising taxes. There is not any other alternative. The motion carried on voice vote.

**ARTICLE 3:** *To see if the voters will approve a General Fund budget of \$486,610.*

Jordan Young/Frank Punderson moved to approve a General Fund budget of \$486,610. There was no discussion on this article. The motion carried on voice vote.

*ARTICLE 5: To see if the voters will approve a Highway budget of \$400,250. State Aid is expected to be approximately \$60,000, leaving \$340,250 to be raised by taxes.*

Bruce Hiland/Gary Margolis moved to approve the Highway budget of \$400,250, with state aid expected to be approximately \$60,000, leaving \$340,250 to be raised by taxes. Rick Greene asked how the budget problems in Montpelier will affect the town's state aid dollars. It is unknown at this time. Stu Johnson did not think that the state would reduce or take away the state aid to local roads. Sue Johnson indicated that the state did reduce state aid several years ago for one year, so it is a possibility. The motion carried on voice vote.

*ARTICLE 6: To see if the voters will appropriate \$57,400 to be transferred to the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department to pay its expenses from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016.*

Gary Margolis/David Donahue moved to appropriate \$57,400 to be transferred to the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department to pay its expenses from July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016. There was no discussion. The motion carried on voice vote.

*ARTICLE 7: To see if the voters will appropriate \$4,000 to be transferred to the Cornwall Free Public Library to pay its expenses from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016.*

Alicia Romero/Bruce Hiland moved to appropriate \$4,000 to be transferred to the Cornwall Free Public Library to pay its expenses from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016. Ginny Moser asked how much the property taxes were on the \$4,000 appropriation. At the time, Sue Johnson did not have the answer. The calculation done later indicates that the taxes on \$4,000 with the current 20 cent rate amounts to \$8.00 on the tax bill. Sue Johnson took a few moments to speak about the Cornwall Library services and that the library has current books and movies that are available for check out vs. the many month wait at Ilsley Library. Sue J. also thanked Patty McCormick for her work on purchasing the various items for the library. The motion carried on voice vote.

*ARTICLE 8: To see if the voters will approve holding the School District Meeting prior to the Town Meeting beginning in 2016 and then alternating the town and school district meetings in subsequent years.*

Lisa Roberts/Alicia Romero moved to approve holding the School District Meeting prior to the Town Meeting beginning in 2016 and then alternating the town and school district meetings in subsequent years. Katie Kramer asked why this change was being voted on. John Eagan responded by saying that the school board would like to be in front of the larger crowd. Many people leave after town meeting prior to the school district meeting. Liam English spoke to low attendance at the meetings in general and wondered if a Saturday morning meeting or a daytime meeting might be better attended. Marc Lapin felt it was a great idea. He mentioned that the voters have little control over the budget. The motion carried on voice vote.

*ARTICLE 9: To see if the voters will appropriate the following amounts to be transferred to the listed organizations:*

a.	Addison Central Teens, Inc.	\$2,000.00
b.	Addison County Community Action Group, Inc. d/b/a/ HOPE	4,000.00
c.	Addison County Court Diversion and Community Justice Projects, Inc.	350.00
d.	Addison County Home Health and Hospice, Inc.	1,440.00
e.	Addison County Parent/Child Center, Inc.	1,600.00
f.	Addison County Readers, Inc.	250.00
g.	Addison County Transit Resources, Inc.	1,181.00
h.	Champlain Valley Agency on Aging, Inc.	950.00

i.	<i>Counseling Service of Addison County, Inc.</i>	2,300.00
j.	<i>Elderly Services, Inc.</i>	800.00
k.	<i>Green Up Vermont, Inc.</i>	100.00
l.	<i>Homeward Bound, Animal Welfare Center</i>	500.00
m.	<i>Hospice Volunteer Services, Inc.</i>	450.00
n.	<i>John W. Graham Emergency Shelter Service, Inc.</i>	1,925.00
o.	<i>Mary Johnson Children's Center, Inc.</i>	700.00
p.	<i>Northern Vermont RC&amp;D Council</i>	100.00
q.	<i>Open Door Clinic/Community Health Services, Inc.</i>	750.00
r.	<i>Otter Creek Child Care Center</i>	1,000.00
s.	<i>The Retired &amp; Senior Volunteer Program, Inc.</i>	360.00
t.	<i>Vermont Adult Learning, Inc.</i>	500.00
u.	<i>WomenSafe, Inc.</i>	<u>\$1,000.00</u>
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>\$22,256.00</b>

Gary Margolis/Dave Donahue moved to appropriate the listed amounts to the various charitable organizations. Bjarki Sears commented on the fact that more children from Cornwall might be attending Mary Johnson Children's Center vs. Otter Creek Childcare. Sue Johnson explained that the various organizations make specific requests for the amount of funding. The motion carried on voice vote.

**ARTICLE 10:** *To see if the voters will approve the billing date of September 10, 2015 for property taxes, payment of half that amount due November 1, 2015, and payment of the second half due May 1, 2016. Taxes are to be paid to the Cornwall Town Treasurer. Any taxes that are due, but unpaid after November 1, 2015, are considered late. Interest will be charged at the rate of one percent (1%) per month. Any taxes unpaid after May 1, 2016 will be considered delinquent. Interest will be charged on delinquent taxes at the rate of one percent (1%) per month, plus a collector's fee of eight percent (8%).*

John Roberts/Bruce Hiland moved to approve the article as printed with the billing date being September 10, 2015 and installments being due on November 1 and May 1 with the specific interest and collector's fees applied. Tom Moser asked if the 8% was required. The collector's fee of 8% is written in statute. It can be lowered with a warned vote. Sue Johnson indicated that some towns have eliminated the position of delinquent tax collector and the delinquent taxes are collected by the Treasurer with the fees going to the town. The motion carried on voice vote.

**ARTICLE 11:** *Any other business proper to come before this meeting.*

Cy Tall reminded the voters that no binding business could take place during the "other business" article.

Liam English, one of our three elected Listers, talked about the development of the town's Grand List. The State of VT requires a reappraisal every 10 years or sooner if the town's CLA drops below 80%. The Listers will be mailing a letter to those that have building permits to see what the status of the building is. The Listers will be inspecting buildings during March in preparation for the April 1 deadline.

Peter Conlon asked about the status of the water contamination on South Bingham Street at the town garage. The issue is under review by the town's attorney. Bruce Hiland pointed out that John Roberts, who was on the Selectboard at the time of the initial problem will be elected to the Selectboard tomorrow and will provide expertise on the subject.

Ginny Moser expressed her thanks to the Selectboard for the enormous amount of time and effort that was put into fighting the gas pipeline.

Bobbie Carnwath explained that despite the negative aspects of the gas pipeline issue, people have become much more informed and aware of renewable energy sources such as heat pumps and solar arrays. There is interest in forming an Energy Committee in the Town; Bobbie indicated that anyone interested can speak to her or any member of the Cornwall Planning Commission. This would be an effort to build community and save money.

David Dodge, Chair of the Lemon Fair Insect Control District, explained that the district is in the process of selling their plane. There is one party that is interested in buying the plane. The district will be using a third party to apply larvicide in the future. The third party aircraft do have a minimum number of acres when they are hired to apply larvicide, so the district will be somewhat more reluctant to put the aircraft up. Some of the reasons for selling the plane include major maintenance issues and a large increase in insurance costs.

Sue Johnson announced that the Capital Committee will be holding a public meeting early in April to discuss the future plans for the Cornwall Town Hall with a possible expansion of the building increasing the size of the vault and renovating the office area to provide a more efficient work space. The meeting will be warned in the paper and around town. The Capital Committee welcomes all townspeople to participate in this process.

Marc Lapin spoke about the conclusion of the Natural Resources survey that has been going on for the last year or so. He thanked the land owners that allowed Brett Engstrom to access their property. Mr. Engstrom visited 19 sites that were of high significance. There will be a draft report out at the end of March 2015. Mr. Engstrom found new local and state significant natural resources of rare, threatened or endangered species. The Conservation Commission will be holding a public meeting on Wednesday, April 29, 2015 at 7 PM at the Cornwall Town Hall. Amy Sheldon, Landslide Natural Resource Planning, provided water quality and land use recommendations. There is information about Douglas Pond and the ponds on South Bingham Street. The Conservation Commission would like to increase their number from 5 to 7 members. The Selectboard will add this to an upcoming meeting agenda.

Rene Langis, also a Conservation Commission member spoke about the River Watch group. The group gets together to gather water samples and study the various bodies of water. The Cornwall Conservation commission met with the Salisbury Conservation Commission in a joint discussion about water quality sponsored by the River Watch group.

John Roberts expressed his thanks and appreciation to Bruce Hiland for his time on both the school board and the Selectboard.

David Sears also expressed the Selectboard's appreciation to Bruce Hiland for all that he had done for the Town of Cornwall. A copy of the remarks will be attached to the minutes. Bruce received a standing ovation.

T Tall/David Donahue moved to adjourn the Town Meeting. No discussion. The motion carried on voice vote and the meeting was adjourned at 7:39 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Johnson, Town Clerk