

**TOWN MEETING MINUTES**  
**PERU, VT**  
**MARCH 7, 2017**

Peru's Moderator, Gary Ameden, called the meeting to order at 6:02pm. He extended a warm welcome to all in attendance and stated it was the first time the meeting was being held in the evening. As tradition holds, he asked all those new to Town and the meeting to stand and introduce themselves. John and Sandy Birch, Josh, Nicole and Alexa Witkin, Sally Ogden, Dylan and Sarah Snell all introduced themselves. Sandy explained, her family has lived in Town for ten years but this is the first meeting they have attended because it was being held in the evening. Gary also asked any Flood Brook Union School students present to introduce themselves. Malachy, James, Simon, and Lilly kindly obliged. All were cordially acknowledged. Gary asked all to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Warning:** As read by Gary - The legal voters of the Town of Peru are hereby warned and notified to meet at the Peru Town Center on Tuesday, March 7, 2017 at the hour of 6:00PM to act on the following articles:

**ARTICLE 1:** To hear and act on the reports of the Town Officers.

Vickie Beattie made a motion to move the article and Jill Braddish seconded. Vickie then instructed everyone to turn to page 16 in the Town Report to correct the Justices of the Peace terms to read February 1, 2017 thru January 31, 2019. Margaret corrected the State Police phone number on page 5 to (802) 722-4600. Gary asked if those assembled were ready for the question? All in favor, motion passed.

**ARTICLE 2:** To elect Town Officers as the law directs.

**Moderator:** Todd Williams, Selectboard Chair, asked for nominations for Town moderator. Alex Sheets moved to elect Gary Ameden with Todd Williams seconding. Proposition B was moved by Vickie Beattie and seconded by Ivanna Reed. Gary explained Proposition B, stating it is moved when a sole individual is nominated to move the vote. Motion passed unanimously.

- Moderator - 1 year                      Gary Ameden

Gary continued, as newly elected moderator, to move Article 2.

**Town Clerk:** John Maher nominated Margaret Cobb with Sally Ogden seconding. Hearing no other nominations proposition B was moved by Jill Braddish and seconded by Roberta Baker. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

- Town Clerk - 1 year                      Margaret Cobb

**Treasurer:** John Maher nominated Donna Williams and Rebecca Williams seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations, proposition B was moved by Jill and seconded by Roberta. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

- Town Treasurer - 1 year                Donna Williams

**Selectboard:** Gary said Peru's Selectboard is a three-member board and one seat is up for re-election. Alex Sheets nominated Todd Williams with Jay Ouellette seconding the motion. Hearing no other nominations, proposition B was moved by Jill and seconded by Ben Freeman. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

- Selectboard - 3 year                      Todd Williams

**Lister:** Rebecca Williams nominated Jack Pennypacker and Grant Braddish seconded. No other nominations proposition B moved by Vickie and seconded by Jill. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

- Lister - 3 year                              Jack Pennypacker

**Auditor:** Karen Utiger moved to nominate Alex Sheets. Josh Witkin seconded the motion. No other nominations, proposition B moved by Vickie and Jill seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

- Auditor - 3 year                              Alex Sheets

Chuck Black noted a point of order, stating Karen Utiger had been appointed as auditor when a position became vacant and a vote to be elected was required at this time. Grant Braddish made a motion to nominate Karen Utiger with Roberta Baker seconding the motion. Vickie moved proposition B and Jill seconded. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

- Auditor - 1 year (completing a term)    Karen Utiger



**Town Agent:** Alex Sheets moved to nominate Tracy Black and John Maher seconded the nomination. No other nominations, proposition B was moved by Vickie and seconded by Jill. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

- Town Agent - 1 year                      Tracy Black

**Trustee of Public Funds:** Grant Braddish nominated Mike Gayda with Josh Witkin seconding the motion. Proposition B was moved and seconded by Alex. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

- Trustee of Public Funds - 1 year                      Mike Gayda

### **ARTICLE 3:**

- a) To see if the town will vote a tax to defray the expenses of the Town for the fiscal year of July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018, as set forth in the budgets submitted in the 2017 Town Report, subject to such modifications as this meeting may vote. Chuck Black moved the motion and Alex Sheets seconded.

Discussion ensued.

Jay Ouellette pointed out on page 48, under office expense, line 421, land record book increased by more than \$6,000, and questioned why? Margaret Cobb explained, two Town Record books require significant repair and after having them evaluated was quoted a restoration price as reflected in the budget. This line item will remain at this level next year for repair of the second book.

Also questioned by Bob Steltz on page 45, community house maintenance, line 475, capital improvements increased \$10,000? Todd replied, the Selectboard is working with a contractor to repair and replace rotting windows and siding, add foam insulation, replace doors with compulsory fire rated doors, implement outside painting and repair of the roof.

Hearing no other questions, Gary ruled for a voice vote. All in favor, motion passed.

- b) To authorize the Selectboard to set the rate on the 2017 Grand List to meet the budget voted. Grant moved the motion, with Alex seconding. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

- c) To establish the date of payment of such taxes. Previous year's dates July 1 - September 30. Jay moved the motion and Cindy Mowry seconded. All in favor, motion passed by voice vote.

Gary asked to recognize Linda Joy Sullivan, the newly elected State Representative for the Town of Peru, if there are no objections. Hearing none, Linda Joy took the floor. She thanked all for their vote of confidence in electing her State Representative. She would like to hear from her constituents, and to facilitate that she provided a memo with dates and locations of meeting places. She provided phone numbers for individuals to call her with concerns. She also asked people to look at her web site for information pertaining to bills and resolutions. She will be providing individuals with a list of unclaimed property for them to collect assets.

Linda Joy was asked to give an update on the State Board of Education and school choice. She said two new people have been appointed to the State Board of Education and proposed amendments to Rule Series 2200 and new bills are pending.

Stewart Beattie asked about the highly used truck route Vermont Route 11 and if any improvements or updates are planned or being discussed. This touched off frequent and abundant complaints by numerous residents ranging from the route being in total disrepair, bridges dilapidated, center and edge line painting needed. Plus, a full host of complaints associated with trucks, specifically speed, jake brakes, extra wide loads, braking etc. Will Crandall stated there is no other southern Vermont route from east to west. Todd mentioned, because of the logging in Town there has been increased monitoring on Route 11 by the Department of Transportation inspector. The poor condition of the road could also impact disaster response time and is a public safety issue. Linda Joy said she would be willing to organize and meet with people about this issue to determine a course of action. She left informational leaflets for residents. Gary thanked her for attending the meeting.

#### **ARTICLE 4:**

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions made by law for payment of taxes to the Town Treasurer. Alex moved the article as written with Karen seconding the motion. Hearing no discussion the article was moved, all in favor, passed by voice vote.

Gary took this time to recognize a second guest speaker, Dr. Roger Fox from Mountain Valley Health Counsel. Todd jokingly asked him not to expose himself this year. Dr. Fox said, as Mountain Valley Clinic is now part of a larger organization the Board

believes that it will not be necessary to ask the towns for their support this year. Todd read the letter from Linda Bickford, Mountain Valley's Practice Administrator, which the Board of the Clinic had asked to be orated stating one and the same. The letter states they will continue to accept donations for the purpose of supporting and improving medical care in the area and will review and revisit the appropriations next spring.

**ARTICLE 5:**

To see if the community will vote a sum of money to the following organizations which serve the community

Mountain Valley Medical Center	\$3,200.00
Londonderry Volunteer Rescue Squad	\$1,000.00
Visiting Nurse Assn. of VT/NH	\$2,700.00
South Londonderry Free Library	\$1,000.00
Bennington County Conservation District	\$ 300.00
BROC	\$200.00
VT Center for Independent Living	\$140.00
SW Vermont Council on Aging	\$200.00
Center for Restorative Justice	\$300.00
Neighborhood Connections	\$1,000.00
Green Up Vermont	\$50.00
The Collaborative	\$750.00
Flood Brook Athletic Association	\$1,000.00
Project Against Violent Encounters	\$150.00
Peru Cemetery Commission	\$3,700.00
Bennington County Coalition for the Homeless	\$500.00
Rural Fire Protection Task Force	<u>\$100.00</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$16,290.00</b>

Ivanna Reed made a motion to move the article as written, with Vickie Beattie seconding the motion. Discussion followed;

It was questioned what Project Against Violent Encounter supports. Sandy Birch explained it is an organization that serves victims/ survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

Grant said a description all of the organizations requesting appropriations can be found in the back of the Town Report.

Grant asked why FBAA was continuing to seek donations when it had been rolled into Flood Brook's school budget? Jon Mowry explained that only middle school basketball was included in Flood Brook's budget. Sarah Perry said FBAA is hoping to further expand athletics for the younger grades and also bring in new sports.

Dr. Roger Fox was asked if donations could still be accepted by the clinic. He responded, saying the monies could be allocated to purchasing a new x-ray machine, building improvements, and upgrading parking. When asked about mental health care and rehabilitative services he said a mental health care provider is available at the clinic. Jay Ouellette made a motion to strike the \$3,200 allocated to Mountain Valley Medical Center and Jane Worley seconded the motion.

Discussion continued;

John Birch asked if the clinic has a balanced budget? With Roger affirming "yes".

Jay asked if the clinic continues to be a non-profit? Roger again stated, "yes".

Alex Sheets said in years past the money was used to offset patient care.

Jane Worley, a nurse practitioner, conveyed Springfield Medical Care System is financially stable and does fine.

Ivanna said Mountain Valley would still rely on fund raising activities and donations.

Sandy Birch said Mountain Valley is a gem in the community and in good faith we should support the Clinic. Peter Henry seconded her support and said Roger has been unflinching in providing medical service and is worth more than what he is being paid.

Stewart made a motion to move the amendment and end discussion. Ivanna seconded the motion.

Gary clarified point of order, the vote is on the motion made by Jay, to reduce the appropriation requests by \$3,200. Vote taken, unanimously opposed, "nays" have it with a voice vote.

Gary asked for a vote to approve Article 5 as printed. All in favor, motion passed with a voice vote.

## **ARTICLE 6:**

To transact any other business that may properly come before the meeting.

Alice Abraham thanked the Town for their continued support of the Collaborative.

Vickie thanked Jon Mowry for his years of thoughtful and responsible service as our RED Representative. He accepted her compliment and said he will continue in his role for at least one more year.

Todd recognized and thanked Barbara Petra for all that she has done and her many years of outstanding and exemplary service as the Town's Assistant Clerk/ Assistant Treasurer. The Town gave Barbara a long-standing ovation!!

Jon Mowry, RED Representative, gave a short synopsis of the school situation and the Taconic and Green redistricting. He communicated; if the merger passes the two school boards will be operating simultaneously and together during a transition year. The T&G board start date is July 1<sup>st</sup>. The school budget passed. Within the budget all reserved funds were given back to the taxpayers. Flood Brook continues to experience increase enrollment but our secondary school numbers dropped.

Jay Ouelette, Peru's Representative on the merger study board, stated if the merger passes it will increase equality, resources and teachers will be shared and it will also expand available programs. In conjunction, it will stabilize tax rates because towns won't directly rely on student numbers. Additionally, there will be a 5% cap on how high the tax rate can increase.

Barbara Pierce inquired about how the Town is doing regarding robberies in the area and questioned police coverage? She is concerned about the theft at Johnny Seesaw's and the increase in the drug epidemic. Stewart said State Police efforts have increase in the area since Londonderry agreed to contract for policing. He also suggested residents keep their doors and cars locked. Todd recommended checking the police blog for information. Bob Steltz proposed a civilian community watch.

Alex Sheets question the shift in time of the Town Meeting from 10am to 6pm. The Selectboard said it was an experiment to see if the number of people attending the meeting increased.

Alex made a motion to adjourn and Nicole Witkin seconded the motion. All in favor, Gary adjourned the meeting at 7:17pm.

Please enjoy the cuisine and one another's company in the adjoining room.



Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Cobb

Peru Town Clerk

Dated March 13, 2017

Selectboard, Moderator and/ or Justice of the Peace

-----

-----

-----

