

Minutes from town meeting February 28, 2011

Representative George Till spoke to residents. He gave a brief overview of legislative issues that went on over the past year. He encouraged residents to purchase baseball hats that he is selling to support VT National Guard. The hats are \$10 each, \$5 of which goes directly to the fund to help when guardsmen and women come home. He also encouraged residents to fill out the Doyle surveys. He announced that there would be a Public Hearing on March 07 at all the interactive TV sites throughout Vermont. These will take place between 6 and 8 and anyone can testify on health care to the House and Senate. There were no questions for George.

Eagle Scout Ryan Kennedy introduced himself and informed residents that he is a member of Troop 23 and is undertaking his Eagle Scout Project. His project will consist of raising the money and having new 'Welcome to Bolton' signs made for the town. He will be fundraising to pay for the entire project and one item for this is raffle for a homemade quilt. The quilt was made and donated by Ryan's mother Hope. Donations are accepted as well.

RJ Vallie presented the Good Citizen of the Year Award to Theresa Stockwell. Theresa's family members were present and RJ thanked Theresa for her help as a town lister.

Smilie School Principal Mary Woodruff gave an overview of what's been happening at the school. She had a power point presentation of students 'at work' within Smilie.

The meeting was called to order at this point. Moderator Besse went over the rules for town meeting and reminded those who were not registered voters, could not participate.

School portion

Article 1 To hear and act upon the reports of the school directors. Phil Graff and Ken Remsen. Chair Andrew Pond introduced the Board and representatives from CESU. Quiet year for the last year. Population stayed stable. Kept expenditures as low as possible. Some things in the budget are out of the control of board. No increases for school faculty. Negotiations are beginning. Might need to ask for a bond vote next year for a new roof. In addition to roof, auditorium floor needs to be replaced. In May or June there may be meetings to discuss the creation of a regional educational district. Financial this makes sense

Susan Bralich: A bond next year for a new roof, should we be looking at that with the possibility of making merging in the near future? What about other uses for this building?

Pind: We need to continue to maintain this building even if we do merge. The debt would become part of everyone's debt.

How big a bond?

Rich Miller: Merging the district may not necessarily mean closing the school. We may still be here. We may bring up fifth grade lightening up CHMS. Just because we look at a unified district weren't looking at closing Smilie.

Mo McIntyre: If we go with the regional district what's the final determination?

Pond: End of March to June with have open meetings. Voluntary merger commission so far. There will be a public vote and all towns within the district would need to vote yes.

Mo: It's impossible to predict what will happen in four years. And we'll only have one voice on a regional board and we will lose our voice and we will lose a gem of a school. People need to consider this. Education keeps taking a hit.

Ken Remsen: Bolton rep to MMU Board. The vote will not be a co-mingled, Each town will have to approve it individually.

Mo: But if we do vote wouldn't the unified board be able to vote to close Smilie?

Ken: We have one voice on the MMU Board and the Board serves all the towns. It is an important issue and we all should be well informed.

Levesque: We shouldn't ask everyone to pay for education.

RJ Vallie: Cost per pupil is how much?

Albergini: 15,396

RJ: Does that put us in the over situation.

No

All in favor. Motion passed.

Article 2 shall the voters of the Bolton Town School District authorize the school board under VSA 16,562 (9) to borrow money by issuance of bonds or notes not in excess of anticipated revenues for the school year? Jerry and Steve Peery All in favor. Motion carried.

Article 3. Shall the voters of the Bolton School District approve payment of a \$10 stipend per board meeting to school board directors? Phil and Mica All in favor

Article 4. To vote a budget of \$1,323,014 to meet the expenses and liabilities of the Bolton Town School District? Mike Mc Intyre and Mica.

Mo: How many more years do we have to pay on debt?

Pond: 2020

MacLeod: Does this budget rep a tax increase over last year.

Pond: Budget is up slightly. Combined budget will have 5.50 for each \$100 value.

All in favor. One nay Motion Passed.

Article 5. To transact other business thought proper when met.

Mo: Your last year? Can we write yo in?

Articles 6-7-8. To be voted by Australian ballot on Tuesday March 1, 2011. To elect a moderator for one year, to elect a School Board Director for three years and a school board director for two years.

Ken and Mo. School portion closed.

Town Portion

Articles 1 through 4 to be voted by Australian ballot on march 01,2011

Article 1. To elect all officers

Article 2. To see if the voters will authorize the Select Board to add ¼ cent to the tax rate for support a fund for the purchase of conservation land.

MacLeod: I DID NOT SEE ANYTHING ON THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION'S ACTIVITY>

RJ No, you didn't miss anything, but there is some mention in the S/B report with regard to the Sara Holbrook property but no sep report from the committee.

MacLeod: This item defeated the last two years?

Deb: No, failed the last two years.

MacLeod: Has the S/B come out against this in passed?

RJ: No not against it it. But has used the money judiciously with CRAG

MacLeod: Not against this, but against building up a big pot with no reason. Don't like seeing to many conservation easements since they sometimes prohibit motorized vehicles. Some of these easements are hard to decipher. Urge town to oppose this.

Mica: RESPONDING TO ONE THING, SOME OF THE MONEY THAT THIS FUND HAS BEEN USED FOR IT'S HELPED TO PURCHASE Bolton town forests. That land had been kept over for hiking and hunting and snowmobile trails. The people in Bolton do have a lot to say about the use of this money. And I encourage people to support it.

Levesque: Don't throw money away blindly.

Amy Ludwin Happy with the way the town. How much is in it and what is on the horizon.

Deb: 20,000 \$ grand went to a conservation easement last year.

Jerry: during the depression the Tob got two parcels and logged them later earning about 40K. It can be used to offset taxes. You'd have to take 3500 off the tax rolls to make a tax dif. Urged people to say yes.

Steve Barner: It takes a long time to build up these funds. It's only about 2500 per year. Sometimes the projects come up unexpectedly and we need the money. Being sold to a private sale doesn't guarantee public use. Good idea to invest in this.

Lars: In favor of conservation projects because it can leverage big money from out of state to help projects.

Pick-up truck for highway

Dan Champney We use this truck to do the smaller areas keeping our main trucks on the main roads. The current truck is 10 years old and starting to show wear.

Rainville:

Fire station

Sally Ashworth: Another 300+ and with the Notch Road last year. I'm concerned that the Notch is cracking and concerned with debt load.

RJ: Debt load currently for the town is \$121,900 out of the budget.

Total o/s debt is about \$820K \$340 was borrowed for the Notch. 180 for office and 180 for fire truck and 80 for highway. An amount of another \$340K it means about 2 ½ cents for 20 years. What it might mean is . With regard to the Notch Road there have been some edges that show some distress. We were pleased with the results of the project and

we will look at those edges in the spring. Frost might be a factor and we will look into it. We did additional work on the banks. Working with chief.

Parot: Are looking at the entire list. The heating costs doubled in two years. As much as we were maintaining our roads, etc. we did neglect the fire station. Needs new roof, roof leaks. No insulation. As we looked at the project the scope of work became larger. We can't do one thing without affecting another. The fire chief came up with the numbers, but we will work hard to go in the best direction and keep the project under the 350K budget. We will try. Thank the firefighters for their hard work and we owe it to them to have a decent place to work out of. A generator will provide an emergency center if needed. We will try to work with contractors who will allow us to work with a la carte items.

Chris Bernadine: Will it go out to bid?

Parot: These are just budget numbers. Financing locally at 5% USDA has a 4%. Still looking for grant money. We don't qualify for grants for USDA. USDA will become construction partners and have more say. If we go locally we can manage it

Rainville: Did you consult with Efficiency Vermont?

Parot: Yes. We haven't brought in too many people because it hasn't passed.

Rainville: Make sure the local guys are bonded. Times are bad, just so they don't go out of business.

Article 3. To see if the voters of the town will authorize the purchase of a fully equipped pick-up truck for the highway department at a cost not to exceed \$40,000.

Article 4. To see if the voters will authorize renovations to the fire station building cost not to exceed \$350,000.

Article 5. To see if the voters will accept the town report. Jen Botzjoorns and Jerry. There's an error, two articles number ten and eleven got put together?

Besse: The increase in the budget is actually 6.9%.

All in favor. Motion carried.

Article 6. To vote a budget of \$744,700 to meet the expenses and liabilities of the town and authorize the Select Board to set a tax rate to do the same. Jerry and Jingles

Jason Williams: What will be effected by the 5% decrease in the highway budget. And what's planned for the Access Road.

RJ Some of the things driven in the highway budget are small items. Left the paving budget as it was, but still feel it's too small. Engineering has been removed. The significant increase is the bond payment, authorized by the voters. We tried to reduce the budget in small items to try and make up for the additional bond payment. Bulk of the increase is the bond payment. BV will get paving attention this year.

Ken Remsen: Why did liability go from 7000 to 16,000

RJ: We did bring in other insurers. VLCT is going up it's a pool. We may have to go to another provided. Some exploratory looking showed that other carriers didn't want to cover small towns.

Rainville: Would like to talk about Richmond Rescue. President met with s/b earlier about looking for paramedics. Paramedics can bring into the field the same type of care you'd be getting in the first ½ hour you were actually in the hospital. In the last 3 years the squad has lost volunteers and some are moving on. Most volunteers can only afford one day a week to stay at the rescue building. Bolton now pays 11,300 per year for this full time coverage. They are asking for \$25,000 a year. A 16K increase. Right now, sometimes no coverage at all. We need to hire another full time person. This will increase the full time people, maintain the building and equipment and build up the capital fund. I won't ask for the 14K increase, I'm biased but would someone else in the community? We don't always get paid by insurance companies, we only bill 300 call per year.

RJ: Mr. Mack did come in and the explained the paramedicine. It's very expensive and the Board felt that at the time in this community when we're all feeling very sensitive about big money issues. We asked for a public meeting, which didn't happen and but we had questions that never got answered, although Mike did answer those questions tonight. That's why the current budget only reflects the previous contribution amount.

Rainville: RR is getting squeezed. This is a very economical service.

RJ: Our own employees haven't had a raise in two years and they have paid more in health. We didn't feel this was the time to ask for a large increase.

Parot: When RR did approach us we asked very basic questions. and felt we didn't get answers. We asked for a public meeting and didn't get it. Whether a meeting is well attended or not, it should have been held.

Rainville: Ron Mack did hold meeting but in Richmond and Huntington no one showed up. So we scheduled one last week but still no one from Bolton showed up. 97 out of the 300 calls in Bolton would have benefited from paramedicine.

Alex: Communities south of us that have agreements with other towns and the paramedic jumps the call. Is that possibility?

Haggerty: Might be. Could we have Ron Mack speak?

Besse: We would have to vote

Hagg: Move to let a non-voter speak. Jen Dudley

Ron Mack: Have been president of Richmond rescue for 5 years. Like to clarify. The increase is not just for paramedics it's for an increase of staff. RR hires per diem to fill shifts. Volunteers have fallen away. We have less and less. Calls have dropped. Transports pay the bills. Money comes from insurance billing. We don't always transport. If we lose calls we don't get paid. We scoop and run but can't give pain meds. If we don't get increases we will see financial changes we can't recover from. We have nothing put away for capital expenses. A full time employee will be dedicated and there when we need them, unlike a volunteer.

Jerry Mullen: Commend the Board on being able to hold the budget down. I noticed that health insurance has gone down. How'd you do that?

RJ: We reduced what would have been increases, we switched to a higher deductible and another carrier. Experimenting with other providers. Doing it again this year. High

deductible program to keep the budget down. Only so many times we can hold that magic off.

Haggerty: I think 25K is a bargain. And I want my family protected. I want RR to be in service. Move to amend the budget and ask for an additional 25K to the budget. RR line item to 25,200. Jerry second.

Paula Gervia: 90% of this letter is about paramedics, not better service. Asking all towns to increase their budgets If we go ahead and increase our portion, but the other towns don't increase. Bolton will be paying way more. Where's the equity?

Mack: You're correct. We're asking for what we need not what we want. We can't afford to operate on the budget we have. Our faith is in the taxpayers. We will have to come back to the ones that vote no.

RJ: The impact is every 12K is 1.25 cents on a tax bill.

Jen Botzo: Had RR not responded to a call at my home, a young women may not be alive today. \$14 per family is a small price to pay.

Jason Robert: Fire dept budget is 80K and the RR is only asking for 25K. Do we need a fire department? I would support the increase.

Pete Siegel: If the fire dept requested 350K would it make a dif in the tax rate.

RJ 2 ½ cents.

Pete: 7% raise in anyone's salaries?

Parot: We looked at every line item. We would have had more of a discussion if we knew we were going to be asked to add 25K tonight. We didn't have all the answers so we didn't add it. RR is very valuable. But I'd like to put more thoguth in the addition. Voting on the amendment. Motion carried. Hand count. 41 yes 34 no. Motion carried to amend.

Question on the changed budget: ayes carry.

Article 7. To see if the town will vote to pay its real and personal property taxes to the Town Treasurer in four installments with due dates of September 15, 2011, November 15, 2011, February 15, 2012 and May 15, 2012. Jerry Stu Robinson All in favor

Article 8. To see if the town will authorize interest charges on all delinquent taxes of real and personal property of 1% per month. Interest accrues as soon as the payment is late. Jerry AL Cohen

Ken Remsen: penalty

All in favor. motion passed.

Article 9. To authorize the Select Board to borrow money for the necessary needs of the town as they arise. Mike McIntyre Mica All in favor. Motion carried

Separate these two and vote sep

Article 10. To establish expenses for the members of the Select Board. Phil Mike McIntyre. \$10 per meeting. Jerry amended to be \$10 per meeting and John Devine secondeon the amend. All in favor of amend, all in favor of main article motion passed.

Article 11. To see if the Town will authorize the Select Board to acquire by gift or purchase, land, in collaboration with the Town's conservation commission, to promote reforestation, water conservation and good forest practices or for open land for animal habitats, recreational uses and to preserve important ecological areas. Jerry Lars. All in favor. motion passed.

Article 12. To transact any other business thought proper when met. Devlins. Mike and Jerry