

Minutes of the Mendon Town Meeting
Monday, March 04, 2019
Cortina Inn

Moderator Chris Corsones called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Chris thanked Ravi Bhakta, owner of the Cortina Inn, and Patrick Kitchin, General Manager for their hospitality in allowing the Town to hold its meeting at their facility.

With permission from the voters, Chris invited State Representative Jim Harrison to speak. Jim thanked the Town for supporting his election bid in November. Jim provided contact information and encouraged residents to contact him with any questions or concerns they might have.

He gave a brief overview of the bills currently being addressed in Montpelier. Among these were sales and taxation of marijuana, Act 250, abortion, \$15 per hour minimum wage, and paid family leave. In addition, Jim advised that the 2019 Senate can begin the process of amending the Vermont Constitution (a six-year process). There are currently six amendments being discussed.

Teri Corsones thanked Jim for the e-mail summaries he sends out as well as his overall responsiveness whenever she contacts him.

Jim mentioned that the statewide education tax rate is currently projected to remain approximately the same as last year. This may change a bit, as school budgets across the State are collectively up over 4%. Jim thanked the audience once again as he concluded his update.

Chris Corsones stated that the Town Report was dedicated to Bill and Charlene Godair for their years of service to the community.

ARTICLE 1. Shall the Town authorize the Selectboard to acquire by gift or purchase, land for Municipal forest, to produce wood products, maintain wildlife habitat, protect water supplies, provide forest recreation, and for conservation education purposes?

Judy Barone made a motion to approve Article 1. The motion was seconded by Sara Tully. The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 2. Shall the town authorize the Selectboard to set the hourly compensation rate for non-salaried employees, and in the event of an appointment of a town officer at mid-term?

Harold Rosenzweig made a motion to approve Article 2. The motion was seconded by Mary Rizk and passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 3. To see if the Town will vote the Administrative portion of the budget to meet expenses and liabilities of the Town.

Selectboard Chair, Richard Wilcox made a presentation highlighting changes to the upcoming Budget. Increased expenses over the current year are up 2.8% if all appropriations are the same as the current year. If all new requests are approved, the total expenses will increase by 3.1%. Some changes of note were employee salary and benefit increases, increased funding for MEDC (Mendon Economic Development Committee), winter sand, vehicle maintenance, and increased coverage under the Sheriff's contract with the Town.

Gerry Sihler made a motion to approve Article 3. The motion was seconded by Jennifer Bagley. Discussion followed.

Judy Barone questioned why the Town was extending the Sheriff's contract by 8 hours per week

and questioned if there was some incentive to make that increase. Sara Tully advised that the contract rate would rise by 2% if the hours stay at 32 per week and rise by 1% if the hours increase to 40 per week. The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 4. To see if the Town will vote the Community Infrastructure portion of the budget to meet expenses and liabilities of the Town.

Amy Merrill made a motion to approve Article 4. Harold Rosenzweig seconded the motion. Chris Corsones clarified that the appropriations would be voted on later in the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 5. To see if the Town will vote the Public Safety portion of the budget to meet expenses and liabilities of the Town.

Amy Merrill made a motion to approve Article 5. Jody Wilcox seconded the motion. Discussion followed regarding the pros and cons of increasing the coverage to 40 hours per week.

Voters questioned how the increased coverage would be utilized and whether or not the coverage hours would be flexible. Dick Wilcox explained that the focus of the hours would be neighborhood patrols, speed enforcement, and investigation. After further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 6. Shall the Town appropriate \$5,000 for the Boys and Girls Club?

Patty Lancaster made a motion to approve Article 6. Steve Singiser seconded the motion.

Larry Bale from the Boys and Girls Club made a presentation regarding the importance of the program. There are approximately 20 students taking advantage of the program and no children are turned away for lack of ability to pay. Larry does not know how many of these children are Mendon residents. The program runs from 3:00 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. on school days. Those children staying until at least 6:00 p.m. receive dinner as well. The voters asked questions of Mr. Bale regarding the program. Further discussion followed. The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 7. Shall the Town appropriate \$1,200 for the Marble Valley Regional Transit District (The Bus)?

Bill Hagar made a motion to approve Article 7. Jessica Posch seconded the motion.

Lee Bizon from The Bus presented statistics on the usage of The Bus in Mendon. Discussion followed. The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 8. Shall the Town appropriate \$700 for RSVP and The Volunteer Center?

Rebecca Kerns made a motion to approve Article 8. Wanda Courcelle seconded the motion. Wanda Courcelle spoke about RSVP and The Volunteer Center and their various projects. Discussion followed. The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 9. Shall the Town appropriate \$2,600 for the VNA and Hospice of the Southwest Region?

Amy Merrill made a motion to approve Article 9. Larry Courcelle seconded the motion.

Ron Cioffi from VNA was present to answer any questions the voters might have.

Discussion followed. The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 10. Shall the Town appropriate \$1,242 for Rutland Mental Health Services formerly Rutland Area Community Services?

Jessica Posch made a motion to approve Article 10. Patty Lancaster seconded the motion.

Jessica Posch stated that this organization provides important support for young adolescents. The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 11. Shall the Town appropriate \$2,500 for Wonderfeet Kids' Museum?

Patty Lancaster made a motion to approve Article 11. Jennifer Bagley seconded the motion.

Danielle Monroe gave a presentation regarding the activities of this organization and answered questions from the voters. She stated that the Museum would be allowing one day per week over the summer months in which admission would be free of charge to children from supporting Towns. Discussion followed. The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 12. To elect all necessary Town Officers.

Chris Corsones advised that polls will be open at the Mendon Town Office on Tuesday, March 5, 2019 from 8:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m.

ARTICLE 13. To transact any other legal business.

Steve Singiser was happy to note that there was no contention during the meeting and stated the Town should continue to be generous.

Liam Fracht-Monroe gave an update regarding upcoming plans for the recreation field on South Mendon Road. Discussion followed.

Dave Brooks questioned why Mendon has to share a zip code with Rutland.

Harold Rosenzweig expressed gratitude to the Selectboard, office staff and employees for their hard work.

Jessica Posch expressed interest in having a walking path along Town Line Road. Brian Sell stated he is working with Pathways for Transportation to address such issues.

John Rizk noted that this evening's Town Meeting is taking place on the birthday of Vermont.

The Town Meeting adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Wilcox, Selectboard Chair _____

Christopher Corsones, Moderator _____

Nancy Gondella, Town Clerk _____