

**Minutes of the Mendon Town Meeting
Monday, March 5, 2018
Mendon Mountview Lodge**

Moderator Christopher Corsones called the Mendon Town Meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Chris invited Nancy Gondella, Town Clerk and Treasurer, and Sara Tully, Town Administrator to address the gathering.

Nancy announced that Mendon is happy to honor a long-time resident, Helen Lawrence, a special woman, who served the Mendon community for over 51 years. Helen wore many different hats in Mendon: as Clerk/Treasurer, as Assistant Clerk/Treasurer and more recently as an election official. Her presence, her stories and her smile are greatly missed.

Sara welcomed Helen's husband Leo and their 5 children: Elaine, Doug, Dean, and Brian. Their son Kevin was unable to attend this evening. Helen left a legacy of not only her 5 children, but their 6 grandchildren, and 7 great grandchildren. Helen in addition to serving the Town in an official capacity, also volunteered with the Vermont Marine Corps Toys for Kids, was one of the founding members of Mendon's Historical Society and helped with the design of the present town office building. Sara noted that in 1999 Helen was awarded the Vermont Public Service Award for over 20 years of public service. Sara also shared a humorous memory of the time when Leo and Helen were caught up in the aftermath of Irene and the travails of their trip home, culminating with a ride around their flagpole, a Lawrence successful conclusion event.

Dick Wilcox, Chair of the Mendon Selectboard, spoke on behalf of the Town and advised that the Town Office Conference Room was to be dedicated to Helen for her 51 years of service to the town, and will be known henceforth as The Helen Lawrence Conference Room. Dick advised that the ribbon cutting event would take place at the Town Office at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday morning March 6, 2018. Mendon appreciates all that Helen did for the town.

Chris then introduced Jim Harrison, our State Representative, who advised that he had the pleasure of introducing to the Vermont House and Senate, a Resolution to honor Helen Lawrence. That resolution was passed this week. Jim asked Leo and his children to come forward, and Jim then presented each of them with a copy of the Resolution

Leo thanked everyone and shared that as the Town Clerk Helen was very protective of the town and would broach no criticism about Mendon from anyone.

Jim had information sheets available as to what is happening in Montpelier. He noted that half-way through the legislative year 8 bills have been passed and signed by the Governor. One of those bills is with regard to the marijuana law which will take effect on July 1, 2018. With regard to that bill, another bill has passed the house regarding a saliva test (if a driver appears to be impaired, a saliva test can be applied.) The State budget is a big ongoing project. The Governor has called for no new taxes. We will have to live within our means.

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Regarding the tragedy that occurred in Parkland Florida and the possibility of such a tragedy in Fair Haven, gun control is in the forefront of everyone's mind. The Governor has received a lot of citizen feedback. Jim said he would do his best to listen carefully and represent the majority of the people at the end of the day. Education funding will affect all of us. A bill out of Ways & Means Committee lowers property tax about 10% but adds a surcharge on school income tax. Two weeks ago the Senate proposed an increase to Vermont's minimum wage to \$15.00 an hour over the next several years. The House will likely take up this issue over the next couple of weeks.

Fred Bagley thanked Jim for coming to our Town Meeting, and Jim thanked everyone for their hospitality.

Chris Corsones resumed the meeting and asked everyone who wished to speak, to speak loudly and state their name clearly. Chris then began to cite the articles.

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?

Larry Courcelle made a motion to approve Article 1. Tom Soriano seconded the motion and there being no discussion, the article was approved 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?

Cort Jones made a motion to approve Article 2. John Rizk seconded the motion and there being no discussion, Article 2 was approved unanimously.

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

Dick Wilcox advised that the budget is a 2.6% increase over last year due to some personnel changes. It was necessary to reorganize personnel in the office due to one person retiring. An additional 17 hours have been added to the 15 hours previously worked by the retiring person to create a full-time position. Jesse Bridge has been hired for the position of bookkeeper and assistant town clerk. This addition will allow the town office to be open an additional day—on Wednesday. The town office will now be open 4 days a week.

Also, the road crew has added a full-time person. Previously we had 2 part time road crewmen; one in the winter and one in the summer. The new full-time crew member will have additional duties in grounds maintenance and office maintenance. We now have 3 full time road crew members.

The Mendon Economic Development Committee was created by the Selectboard to look at how to promote economic stability in Mendon. They have been meeting since November, 2017. Dick read the Mission Statement of the Committee and asked anyone interested to contact Sara Tully, the Town Administrator.

Mendon received a municipal planning grant for \$8,000 to rewrite the Town Plan. A survey will be available looking for input from the community. The Planning Commission meets on the 1st Monday of the month, except for this month when they will meet on Wednesday.

Tom Soriano made a motion to approve Article 3. It was seconded by Mike Tully.

Fred Bagley raised the issue with regard to street lights. The re-appraisal issue was also raised. It was important that everyone cooperate with the appraisers who will be doing the reassessment in Mendon. Our last appraisals were done in 2005 and we are required to complete a reappraisal by 2020. We sent 12 appraisal companies a request to bid for this job. Vermont Municipal Assessors was the successful bidder with a low bid of \$75,000. That amount is already budgeted. Spencer Potter is the owner of that company and he is our current Assessor. Everyone is encouraged to permit the appraiser into their home. The Reserve Fund has enough money to cover this appraisal.

Jennifer Bagley asked what was happening with the old town office advertisement. Dick Wilcox stated that issue was on the Selectboard's priority list and would be addressed sometime within the next month or two.

There being no further discussion, Article 3 was unanimously approved.

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

Cort Jones noted that on page 20 of the Town Report for the Mendon Highway Equipment, the amount of \$60,000 is cited and it should actually be \$50,000. Sara stated that \$50,000 was in the budget and she will correct the \$60,000 cited. Cort also felt that a 12-year plan to replace tractors was too long. He suggested the Selectboard reevaluate the timeframe for this replacement plan. Additionally, Cort believes that a grader would cost more like \$300,000, not the \$250,000 cited

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Mike Tully made a motion to approve Article 4. Cort Jones seconded the motion.

Sara Tully made a motion to amend the line item for Rutland Regional Planning Commission amount stated at \$925. They have requested an increase of \$50 additional money.

Mike Tully seconded the motion to increase the amount requested by \$50.

The amended Article 4 was unanimously approved.

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

After a brief discussion regarding the number of hours worked by the Sheriff and the vehicles used for law enforcement, Sara advised that our fine revenue is 100% income revenue.

Tom Soriano made a motion to approve Article 5. Larry Courcelle seconded the motion and there being no further discussion, Article 5 was unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 6. Shall the Town appropriate \$1,500 for the ARC Rutland Area Serving Citizens with Development Disabilities?

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

Sara read the information provided by ARC as to how their services affect Mendon.

Suzannah Baumer asked why ARC had asked for more money. Larry Gold said this organization helps those people who have trouble getting around; they are good people in his estimation.

Suzannah moved to change the amount of the appropriation to \$1,000. Sara Tully seconded the motion. A unanimous vote approved the amended amount of \$1,000 to ARC.

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

Fred Bagley made a motion to approve Article 7. Cort Jones seconded the motion.

Jennifer Bagley noted that The Bus is the only way some young people who work in Killington have to reach their employment. Fred Bagley said Route 4 is important to our town. There are several rentals along Route 4 and The Bus provides a service to these renters. Brian Sell agreed with Fred. Suzannah asked how the money is used by them. Fred advised that the riders do pay and Tom Soriano added that some employees subsidize the amount paid. Sara added that 6800 rides occur through Mendon

There being no further discussion a unanimous vote approved Article 7.

ARTICLE 8. Shall the Town appropriate \$600 for RSVP and The Volunteer Center?

Wanda Courcelle made a motion to approve Article 8. Larry Courcelle seconded the motion.

Wanda provided information about the organization, as well as her involvement in Dolls and More. Wanda advised that there are around 1,000 volunteers involved within the various agencies.

After a brief discussion, a unanimous vote approved Article 8.

ARTICLE 9. Shall the Town appropriate \$2,600 for the Rutland Area Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice?

Brittany Lake made a motion to approve Article 9. Irene Gold seconded the motion.

Irene expressed having been the recipient of the nursing care. Suzannah Baumer noted that we provide this money every year and wondered how this appropriation helps them. Matt Conway advised that the vast majority of Medicare and Medicaid patients underpay the costs of services. These monies help that organization to offset what isn't paid. Further discussion about the requirements that must be met to seek an appropriation, as well as how many people are served, especially Mendon people, ended with a unanimous vote to approve Article 9.

ARTICLE 10. Shall the Town appropriate \$1,343 for Rutland Mental Health Services formerly Rutland Area Community Services?

Cort Jones made a motion to approve Article 10. Larry Courcelle seconded the motion.

Sara Tully advised that 904 hours of services were provided to 27 Mendon residents. There being no further discussion, Article 10 was unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 11. Shall the Town appropriate \$600 for the Southwestern Council on Aging?

Gary Sihler made a motion to approve Article 11. Tom Soriano seconded the motion.

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Sara provided information as to the number of meals and number of Mendon residents served by this organization. Maureen McGinnis reviewed the various types of services offered: transportation, long term care, etc. Gary talked about the monthly meetings and luncheons which are greatly subsidized by the Council.

There being no further discussion, Article 11 was unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 12. Shall the Town appropriate \$2,500 for Wonderfeet Kids' Museum?

Danielle Monroe made a motion to approve Article 12. Brittany Monroe seconded the motion.

Francesca Bove, an attorney, explained when Wonderfeet started, and how they have expanded their program. They do provide lower cost membership to low income families and children. Suzannah Baumer asked how the requested money is allocated. Danielle explained how Wonderfeet operates. Brian Sell stated as a new Mendon resident with a small child, his family has benefited not only for their child's pleasure, but he and his wife have met and formed friendship with other families with children who utilize the museum. Neil Langer suggested perhaps some incentives might be offered to Mendon residents in light of our appropriation—perhaps first visit free. Wanda Courcelle said as a grandparent she is happy to have Wonderfeet available. Judy Dark added that she feels an investment for our children is money well spent. Tom Soriano questioned the \$2,500 amount.

Sara Tully agreed with Suzannah and Tom and moved to amend the requested amount to \$1,000. Tom Soriano second Sara's amendment.

Further discussion among Irene Gold, Danielle Lake, Al Wakefield, Fred and Jennifer Bagley and Tom Soriano as to the benefits to our community and the return on our investment followed.

A vote to amend the amount of the appropriation from \$2,500 to \$1,000 was proposed. In response, there were 19 yes votes to approve, and 13 no votes.

Neil Langer moved for a 2nd amendment to approve the appropriation for \$1,500. Danielle Monroe seconded the 2nd amendment. A floor vote yielded 23 yes votes to approve the 2nd amendment for \$1,500, which carried the 2nd amended vote.

ARTICLE 13. To elect all necessary Town Officer.

Chris advised the polls will be open at the Mendon Town Office on Tuesday, March 6, 2018 from 8:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. Sara informed that Harold Rosenzweig had indicated to her that he is willing to be a write-in candidate for the position of Town Agent.

ARTICLE 14. To transact any other legal business.

Al Wakefield noted what appeared to be abandoned trucks parked on the lot across from The Cortina on Route 4. Sara said others have complained to the Zoning Administrator as well; however, there is no violation at this time. That land is owned by John Kalish. Chris Corsones suggested that Al review the Planning Commission regulations and suggest changes. The Plan is being re-written.

Fred Bagley asked everyone present to please fill out the provided pink survey at voting time.

Finally, Geoff Wells advised that Marie Conway, the former Clerk/Treasurer and earlier Lister, is retiring and thanked her on behalf of the Selectboard and the Mendon community.

The Town Meeting portion of the evening was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Richard Wilcox, Selectboard Chair



Christopher Corsones, Moderator

Marie Conway, Assistant Town Clerk


