

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
March 3, 2018

Present on Stage: Matt Maxham, Philip Swanson, Jill Davies, John Doten, Bob Holt, L. D. "Butch" Sutherland Jr., Sonya Stover, Charles Degener

Matt Maxham gave some interesting facts from the 1918 Town Meeting, \$4,579 was spent on Highways, or \$97,000 in current funds; \$1,226 was spent on the poor after deducting income from the Town Farm, and \$150 for sheep killed by dogs.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Vermont League of Cities & Town's Executive Director Maura Carroll presented Phil Swanson with the VLCT's Lifetime Achievement Award. With 32 years of service to Woodstock, Phil is currently the longest serving Municipal Manager in Vermont. Phil thanked the League for the award and also for the valuable legal assistance provided the Town over the years. Tom Debevoise recalled hiring Phil. Tom was serving on the Select Board with John Audsley and Jack Keeling at the time. Several candidates had been interviewed and the search was down to Phil and one other candidate, who were asked to return for a second interview. After interviewing both candidates for a second time, Tom was prepared for a lengthy meeting to discuss the merits of each. Jack Keeling said "I guess we know who we'll hire. That one guy is way too smooth." And so Phil Swanson was hired. Phil informed the audience that the "Smoothy" has spent a lengthy career in the Legislature.

At 10:15 Matt Maxham called the meeting to order, mentioned points of order and read out the Town Meeting Warning.

ARTICLE I: "The election of Town Officers for the ensuing year as required by law including: (Australian Ballot)" Mary Riley introduced herself as a candidate for the Select Board two year term. L. D. Butch Sutherland Jr. introduced himself as a candidate for the Select Board three year term.

ARTICLE II: "To see if the Town will receive and act upon reports submitted by the Town officers."
 Moved by Ed English, seconded by Suzy Krawczyk, voted and adopted.

ARTICLE III: "To see if the Town will vote to collect the Town General, Highway, School Taxes and State Education Taxes on real property and all other taxes levied through the Treasurer under the provisions of Title 32 VSA Chapter 133 and fix the dates of payment as November 2, 2018, and May 3, 2019." Moved by John Doten, seconded by Sally Miller, voted and adopted.

ARTICLE IV: "To see if the Town will vote to pay the Town Officers in accordance with Title 24 VSA, Section 932 as follows:

Select Board	\$ 1,000.00	per year
Town Treasurer	16,000.00	per year
Listers	23.80	per hour
Constable	23.80	per hour
Town Clerk	30.00	per hour
Moderator	50.00	each time serves

Moved by John Doten, seconded by Eddie English. Jeff Kahn asked if any figures are different from last year, Phil said yes, Town Clerk has not been listed separately for many years, Ed English asked why Treasurer is paid more than the Select Board. Phil explained and noted that the Select Board is underpaid for their hours of service. The vote was taken and the motion passed.

ARTICLE V: "To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board to borrow money, if necessary, in anticipation of taxes for Fiscal Year 2018-2019 to defray current expenses and debts of the Town and Sewer Department."

Moved by Tom Weschler and seconded by John Doten. Pat Hesterberg asked about sewer billing and usage. Phil explained about minimum rates and how they had been developed. The motion passed.

ARTICLE VI: "To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of Six Million Forty Thousand Three Hundred Twenty Three Dollars (\$6,040,323) which includes the specified sums of money to operate each department; and to raise by taxation the amount of Four Million Forty Three Thousand Fifty Three Dollars (\$4,036,053) which is the necessary sum to defray operating costs for FY 2018-2019." Moved by John Doten and seconded by Ed English. The moderator turned the floor over to the Select Board for a thorough examination of the budget. Bob Holt thanked everyone for the privilege of serving for the past six years and explained that he would not be

presenting any portion of the budget. Sonya made a presentation to explain the budget in General terms and in comparison to other Vermont Towns. Woodstock municipal taxes are 204 out of 255. Of area towns in the new school district, only Killington has lower municipal taxes. However, Woodstock has a high Homestead Education tax. Out of 255 towns Woodstock ranks 52, meaning that only 51 Vermont towns pay less school tax. Roughly 80% of a Woodstock tax bill is paid to Montpelier to support the State's schools. The Select Board's proposed budget has 10% increase which would be roughly an additional \$200 in property taxes on a \$500,000 home. Jill made a presentation regarding proposed savings from utility bills, lack of payment to the school for use as an emergency shelter, and reduced energy costs at Town Hall along with new lighting at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. She explained a change in how the Rockefeller endowment fund is managed with fewer fees.

The Board has implemented a new approach to capital budgeting. Presently we incur debt to purchase items. The proposal is to change to a method of saving for our needs instead. We will need a new fire truck and Emergency Services Building in the near future. As we move to a savings policy rather than a borrowing policy there will be a bit of a financial squeeze at first. Jill then began a line by line examination of the budget. Marian Koetsier, Chris Miller, Ed English, Sari White, Byron Quinn, Alita Wilson, Tom Debevoise, Carl Huck, Sally Garmon, Susan Ford, Anne Macksoud, and Joe Dinatale, participated in discussion. John Doten then took over the presentation of the budget after first telling about Jimmy Aikens' experience with his cowdog, and his humility at learning that the dog knew more than he did. Pat Hesterberg discussed the North Street retaining wall and advised a new concrete replacement rather than dry-laid stone which can create habitat for groundhogs and skunks. Al Alessi, Marian Koetsier, Chris Miller, Jeff Kahn, Sari White, Carolyn Kimbell, Heidi Lang, Bill MacDonald, Amy McElroy, Byron Quinn, Jason Drebitko, Candice Coburn, Karl Huck, Tom Debevoise, and Greg Gosselin participated in the discussion. Butch Sutherland then led the review. Sally Garmon, Sari White, Ed English, Pat Hesterberg, Byron Quinn, and Dee Anderson participated in discussion. Sonya Stover finished the line-by-line review of the budget.

After a complete review of the budget, there was discussion on the merits of purchasing things with savings or credit. Tom Debevoise spoke in opposition of the budget. Tom felt that a 10% increase is too much. The change in policy regarding the Capital Budget is misguided. There must always be some debt. Towns can always borrow more easily and more cheaply than individuals and businesses. He explained the differences between personal and municipal finances and the borrowing methods of each. This new policy is only good if Woodstock taxpayers have absolutely nothing better they could be spending their own money on. Matt Stover, Candace Coburn, Alita Wilson, Bill McDonald, Al Alessi, Tom Weschler, Suzanne Marier, Joe Dinatale, and Byron Quinn all discussed the pros and cons of each method. Jack Anderson asked for a paper ballot, and more than six people agreed. While voters cast their ballots, State Representative Charles Kimbell and Senator Alison Clarkson gave presentations. The meeting was recessed at 1:15 for lunch.

The meeting reconvened at 2:00 and the results of the paper ballot were read.
48 Yes 91 No 1 Blank.

David Brown was called to the stage. Bob Holt thanked him for his years of service on the ECFiber Board and presented him with a certificate. George Sadowsky and Bill McGowan spoke about ECFiber and the progress they are making.

Butch made a presentation to Bob, on behalf of the Select Board, thanking him for his service and dedication to the Select Board.

ARTICLE VII.

"To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of One Million Seventy Nine Thousand Three Hundred Seventy Five Dollars (\$1,079,375), which includes Eight Hundred Seventeen Thousand Eight Hundred Seventy Five Dollars (\$817,875) from user fees and Two Hundred Sixty One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$261,500) from other revenues, to pay the current expenses and debt of the sewer department for FY 2018- 2019." Moved by Ed English and seconded by Chris Miller. Sari White asked how the defeat of the budget would affect this. Phil said this was a separate budget for the Sewer Corporation. Voted and adopted.

ARTICLE VIII:

"To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of Nine Hundred Dollars (\$900) and pay each of the Trustees Three Hundred Dollars (\$300) for the purpose of paying the Trustees of Public Funds for services rendered, and approve the expenditure from the income of the Trust Funds for that purpose." Moved by Butch Sutherland, seconded by John Doten and passed.

- ARTICLE IX:** "To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$1,500) for the purpose of having the Public Trust Funds audited and approve the expenditure of One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$1,500) from income of the Trust Funds to pay for the Annual Audit." Moved by John Doten, seconded by Butch Sutherland and passed.
- ARTICLE X:** "To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of Twenty Five thousand Dollars (\$25,000) for general improvements to Vail Field." Moved by John Doten and seconded by Ed English. Jack Anderson asked what is planned. Phil said the money will go towards rehabilitation of the 40 year old tennis courts. Bob Benz asked what the total project cost was, Phil did not have the figures. Motion passed.
- ARTICLE XI:** Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of Three Thousand Dollars (\$3,000) for the support of the Woodstock Area Job Bank to continue free employment referral services in the greater Woodstock area. (By Petition) (Australian Ballot) Beth Crowe, Executive Director spoke in support.
- ARTICLE XII:** Shall the Town of Woodstock vote to appropriate the sum of Three Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$3,500) for Woodstock Community Television to help support coverage of ongoing events within the Town of Woodstock. (By Petition) (Australian Ballot) Macy Lawrence spoke in support.
- ARTICLE XIII:** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate from the general fund the sum of Twenty Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) to help support the home health, maternal and child health, and hospice care provided in patients' homes and in community settings by the Visiting Nurse and Hospice for VT and NH. (By Petition) (Australian Ballot) Ed English spoke in favor.
- ARTICLE XIV:** Shall the Town appropriate the sum of Three Thousand Two Hundred Forty Seven Dollars (\$3,247) to help support outpatient mental health, and substance abuse services by the staff of Health Care and Rehabilitation Services, Inc. (HCRS). (By Petition) (Australian Ballot) No discussion.
- ARTICLE XV:** Shall the Town appropriate the sum of Three Thousand Dollars (\$3,000) to Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) to assist Woodstock in responding to the emergency needs of the community and providing all available and applicable services to families and individuals in need. (By Petition) (Australian Ballot) No discussion.
- ARTICLE XVI:** Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$1,500) for the support of Senior Solutions (formally Council on Aging for Southeastern Vermont) for help to support seniors and their families who are trying to remain at home and not be placed in a nursing home. (By Petition) (Australian Ballot) No discussion.
- ARTICLE XVII:** Shall the Town appropriate the sum of One Thousand Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$1,250) to support programming of the Spectrum Teen Center. Our objective is to engage teens in healthy activities and make youth feel supported, welcomed and included. There is no charge to attend our program. (By Petition) (Australian Ballot) Alita Wilson spoke in support of this article.
- ARTICLE XVIII:** Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000) to support the mission of WISE (Women's Information Services, Inc.) in providing free crisis intervention and support services to victims of domestic and sexual violence, prevention education, and training to community members and professionals. (By Petition) (Australian Ballot) Jackie Fisher spoke in support of this article.
- ARTICLE XIX:** Shall the Town of Woodstock appropriate the sum of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) for the Ottawaquechee Health Foundation (OHF). OHF is a nonprofit community resource that provides funding and support for individuals with limited financial means to help meet critical health and wellness needs such as medical and dental care, eyeglasses, hearing aids, dentures, prescription co-payments and short term caregiver services. (By Petition) (Australian Ballot) Adrienne Sass spoke in support of this article.
- ARTICLE XX:** Shall the Town of Woodstock appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500) for Windsor County Partners for youth mentoring services provided to children in Windsor County. (By Petition) (Australian

Ballot) No discussion.

- ARTICLE XXI:** Shall the Town of Woodstock appropriate the sum of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500) to Green Mountain RSVP & Volunteer Center of Windsor County to develop opportunities for people age 55 and older to positively impact the quality of life in the community of Woodstock through volunteer service. (By Petition) (Australian Ballot) No discussion.
- ARTICLE XXII:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of Twenty Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) to be allocated to the Woodstock Area Chamber of Commerce for operational expenses of the Mechanic Street Welcome Center for FY 2018-19. (By Petition) (Australian Ballot) George Sadowsky asked about the format of the article. Susan Ford Asked why this amount is more than what is already in the town budget. Phil said it is to support staffing, the budget is for utilities. Sonya Stover asked if they petition the Village for money, Phil said they can but do not.
- ARTICLE XXIII:** Shall the Town of Woodstock vote to appropriate the sum of Thirty Four Thousand Nine Hundred Thirty Five Dollars (\$34,935) as the Town's share of service for the Woodstock Area Council on Aging to run the Thompson Senior Center. The Thompson is an important community resource – providing daily meals, medical and area transportation, and an array of health, educational and social services. (By Petition) (Australian Ballot) Deanna Jones, Executive Director spoke in support of this article. Ed English also spoke in favor.
- ARTICLE XIV:** Shall the Town vote to appropriate and raise by property taxes, the sum of Fifty One Thousand Two Hundred and Fifty Dollars (\$51,250) for the Norman Williams Public Library to help support the operations and maintenance of the library. These funds are over and above the level budgeted support that the Town provides to this library for Fiscal Year 2018-2019. (By Petition) (Australian Ballot) Amanda Merk, Executive Director spoke in favor of the article. Byron Quinn asked if other towns support the Library. Amanda said only Bridgewater supports the Library with \$3,500 because they have no town library. Residents from towns other than Woodstock or Bridgewater must pay fees.
- ARTICLE XXV:** Shall the Town of Woodstock vote to raise, appropriate and expend the sum of Thirty Nine Thousand Dollars (\$39,000) for the support of Pentangle Arts to provide services to the residents of the Town of Woodstock. (By Petition) (Australian Ballot) Alita Wilson, Executive Director spoke in support of the article.
- ARTICLE XXVI:** To entertain the discussion of any other business of interest to the legal voters, such discussion shall not be construed in any manner as binding Municipal action.

“We The Town Meeting of Woodstock Vermont meeting on Saturday March 3, 2018 send a nonbinding message of positive support for Gun Violence Protection bills before the Vermont legislature: House Bill 422 and Senate Bills: 6 and 221” moved by Chris Lloyd, and seconded by Paul Regan. Alan Willard, Ed English, Pat Hesterberg, Charlie Kimbell, Jackie Fisher, Bill McDonald, Al Alessi, and Paul Regan spoke in favor. Motion passed.

In other conversation there was a suggestion that the Economic Development Commission become more transparent and communicate more openly with taxpayers.

There being no other business Chris Miller moved and Eddie English seconded to adjourn the meeting at 3:18 P.M. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted

F. Charles Degener III

F. Charles Degener, III Town Clerk

ATTEST

Matthew Maxham

MATTHEW MAXHAM, MODERATOR

