

## ABSTRACT OF MINUTES MARCH 6, 2012 — TOWN MEETING

*[Full minutes are available at the Town Office. Note: Per 17 VSA §2640, articles on Australian Ballot (except Article 1) can be discussed on the floor.]*

Moderator Michael Dworkin called to order the meetings of the Town and School District at 9:30 A.M. Approximately 330 residents attended. A moment of silence was observed for residents who had died in the last year, especially Sylvia Tosi (Town Clerk 1983–2006). He asked for a moment to recognize our residents serving our country overseas. Meeting temporarily adjourned at 9:38 A.M. for the School Meeting and reconvened at 10:40 A.M.

**Art. 1:** Voted and elected the following Officers by Australian Ballot:

Town Moderator, 1-year term .....	No Candidate
School District Moderator, 1-year term .....	No Candidate
Town Clerk, 3-year term .....	Teresa “Terri” Conti
Town Treasurer, 3-year term .....	Don Welch
Selectboard Member, 3-year term .....	Seth B. Gardner
Selectboard Member, 2-year term .....	Steve Sparrow
Lister, 3-year term .....	Ross Hazel
Auditor, 3-year term .....	David Grundy
Auditor, 2 of 3-year term .....	Sally Longhi
Trustee of Public Funds, 3-year term .....	Teresa “Terri” Conti
Trustee of Public Funds, 2 of 3-year term .....	Don Welch
Town Law Agent, 1-year term .....	No Candidate
Town Grand Juror, 1-year term .....	No Candidate
First Constable, 1-year term .....	Sandy F. Conti
Second Constable, 1-year term .....	Paul Haynes
Cemetery Commissioner, 5-year term .....	Pauline Coburn
Planning Commissioner, 3-year term .....	John “Jack” Pauly
Planning Commissioner, 3-year term .....	Jean Vissering
Planning Commissioner, 3-year term .....	Mark Lane (write-in)
EM Elementary School Director, 3-year term.	Flor Diaz Smith
EM Elementary School Director, 2-year term.	Priscilla Gilbert

**Art. 2:** Voted to hear the reports of several Town Officers and to act thereon.

Selectboard chair Bruce Johnson summarized the board’s work in 2011, including expenditures of FEMA and state funds associated with Tropical Storm Irene. He noted line-item organization changes to the budget, the purchase of a new excavator, and that **one-third** of the repayment of the Fire Dept Bond is paid by the Town of Calais. Norma Raymond inquired as to the increase in payroll associated with the Town Administrator and the consolidation of Town Office personnel into one line item; Johnson explained that the TA position went from 32 hrs to 40 hrs per week, Town Auditor Deborah Fillion added that the auditors will continue to include a page of salaries and benefits by employee in the annual Town Report. Nathan Phillips inquired about the auditors’ reports, specifically findings of errors in payroll tax payments resulting in IRS and state levies, in-

consistencies between electronic fund transfers and deposits, and discrepancies in ledger postings, to which both Auditor Fillion and Town Clerk/Treasurer Terri Conti responded. Donald Welch and Conti spoke of the internal control work they had been doing as Assistant Treasurer and Town Treasurer, respectively.

**Art. 3:** Shall the Town raise the sum of **\$1,446,639.75** as proposed by the Selectboard, for laying out and repairing highways and for other necessary Town expenses for fiscal year 2013 (July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013). Passed by Australian Ballot.

Charles Johnson thanked the Town for the work on Town Roads during this especially tough year of storms. He would like to see plans for bike paths or lanes on paved roads.

**Art. 4:** Shall the Town raise **\$50,000** for the Capital Reserve Fund. Passed by Australian Ballot.

**Art. 5:** Shall the Town raise the sum of **\$32,296** for Kellogg-Hubbard Library for the support of the Library. Charlie Catlin, East Montpelier representative to the Library Board, spoke and some discussion followed. Passed by Australian Ballot.

**Art. 6:** Shall the Town authorize all property taxes for the fiscal year 2013 to be paid to the Treasurer, without discount in two installments and received by the Town Treasurer at the East Montpelier Municipal Building as follows: The first installment will be due on or before 5:00 P.M. Thursday, November 15, 2012, and the second installment will be due on or before 5:00 P.M. Wednesday, May 15, 2013. Passed by voice vote.

**Art. 7:** Shall the Town raise the sum of **\$3,900** for the Four Corners Schoolhouse Association for operating expenses during fiscal year 2013. Passed by voice vote.

**Art. 8:** Shall the Town raise the sum of **\$8,000** for the East Montpelier Cemetery Commission for the support and maintenance of Town cemeteries during fiscal year 2013. Passed by voice vote.

**Art. 9:** Shall the Town continue offering local farmers' contracts, the costs of which are borne entirely by East Montpelier, when the State's current use program offers similar benefits with costs shared statewide.

Discussion included several people asking for more information about the program. Selectboard member Seth Gardner recounted the history of the program since the 1970s, when 40 farms were involved, through its current scope of 12 parcels, only one of which is a farm. Cost to taxpayers is approximately \$15,000 per year. Many people raised questions and concerns about the program. Several called for better understanding of the ramifications of maintaining or discontinuing it. Dave Grundy made a motion (seconded by many) to amend the Article to direct the Selectboard to create and sponsor a committee to develop an alternative proposal for action at the next Town Meeting. The amended Article was passed by voice vote.

**Art. 10:** Shall the Town raise the amounts listed below as recommended by the Town's Funding Request Study Committee, or what other amounts, for the following organizations for fiscal year 2013.

a) Central Vermont Community Action Council .....	\$400
b) Central Vermont Community Land Trust .....	\$150
c) Central Vermont Council on Aging .....	\$1,500
d) Central Vermont Home Health & Hospice .....	\$3,200
e) Circle (formerly Battered Women's Services) .....	\$675
f) Community Connections .....	\$2,500
g) Family Center of Washington County .....	\$500
h) Friends of the Winooski River .....	\$150
i) Green Mountain Transit .....	\$1,366
j) Green-up Vermont .....	\$150
k) Montpelier Senior Activity Center .....	\$400
l) Onion River Food Shelf .....	\$800
m) People's Health and Wellness Clinic .....	\$950
n) Prevent Child Abuse of Vermont .....	\$250
o) Project Independence .....	\$250
p) Retired & Senior Volunteer Program .....	\$275
q) Sexual Assault Crisis Team .....	\$200
r) Twin Valley Senior Center .....	\$500
s) U-32 Project Graduation .....	\$300
t) Vt Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired .....	\$100
u) Vermont CARES .....	\$150
v) Vermont Center for Independent Living .....	\$200
w) Washington County Diversion Program .....	\$350
x) Washington County Youth Service Bureau .....	\$400

**Total:        \$15,716**

Discussion included several people expressing support for specific allocations, explaining the activities supported by them. Article passed by voice vote.

**Art. 11:** Shall the Town raise the sum of **\$1,000** for the Central Vermont Memorial Civic Center for the support of the Central Vermont Memorial Civic Center. Rick Hopkins explained that the Civic Center had submitted a funding request for \$300, then withdrew it and submitted this \$1,000 request after they lost their tax-exempt status. Edward Deegan spoke in support of the Article, as the Center offers many sports opportunities for all ages. Article passed by voice vote.

**Art. 12:** Shall the Town of East Montpelier raise the sum of **\$8,333** as its share of the third year cost of commuter bus service along Route 2 with service into Montpelier. This appropriation funds a portion of the total cost of the service, which will also be supported by appropriations from other towns, a state grant, and rider fares. Article passed by voice vote.

**Art. 13:** Shall the town raise the sum not to exceed **\$2,000** to be expended for the fabrication and installation of four (4) "Welcome to East Montpelier Village" signs to be placed at the four approaches to the Village along U.S. Route 2 and VT Route 14, subject to affected landowner permission. Discussion, included a friendly amendment to delete the word

“Village” from the signs, which was defeated by voice vote. The original Article passed by voice vote.

**Art. 14:** For discussion: Shall the Town consider a process of strategic disinvestment in roads and other infrastructure that is at risk of severe damage from natural disasters. Selectboard Member Etnier introduced the issue of limited funds (and limited state support) to deal with chronic problems. He pointed to nearby precedents where responsibility has been turned over to the adjacent property owners. Selectboard member Gardner mentioned that the Roads Policy Committee is working on a proposed policy. Issues discussed included the need to consider projects on a case-by-case basis and to avoid bias in these considerations.

**Art. 15:** For discussion: Shall the Town continue to include the payments to the East Montpelier Fire Department, Inc. for providing ambulance, fire protection, and emergency services to the Town in the general fund budget or shall those amounts be presented in separate articles on the warning. Discussion: Selectboard members traced the history back to 1987 when the EMFD budget was last warned as a separate budget item. Presently three entities are involved (East Montpelier, Calais, EMFD) with over \$200,000 of the operating budgets paid by our Town. The budgetary working relationship was described as including quarterly meetings open to the public. Don Welch added his perspective, having been extensively involved in the project. Michael Duane suggested that the Selectboard might review and approve budgets before warning them separately. Deputy Chief Ty Rolland expressed concern about operational continuity if a separately warned budget were voted down.

**Art. 16:** In light of the United States Supreme Court’s Citizen United decision that equates money with political speech and gives corporations rights constitutionally intended for natural persons, shall the Town of East Montpelier vote to urge the Vermont Congressional Delegation and the United States Congress to propose a United States Constitutional amendment for the States’ consideration which provides that money is not political speech, that corporations do not possess the rights of persons under the United States Constitution, that the General Assembly of the State of Vermont pass a similar resolution, and that the town send its resolution to Vermont State and Federal representatives within thirty days of the passage of this measure? (Petitioned Article) Discussion included two motions to amend the article, which were rejected by voice vote. The original Article was passed by voice vote.

**Art. 17:** To transact other business that may properly come before the meeting. The Moderator invited discussion, but no actions or votes.

Carolyn Shapiro summarized the Montpelier Water System project, including the 3-yr moratorium in place and the role of the Town Plan (being revised by the Planning Commission) and preliminary meetings toward GPS mapping.

Moderator Dworkin called Town Meeting 2012 adjourned at 3:35 P.M.