

## **DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE LONDONDERRY TOWN MEETING**

The legal voters of the Town of Londonderry, Vermont, met at the Town Hall, 139 Middletown Road, South Londonderry in Londonderry, on Tuesday, March 5, 2024, to act on the following Articles, namely:

### **The following business was transacted from the floor:**

Selectboard Chair, Tom Cavanagh, called the meeting to order at 9:39. The assembly was led in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Article 1** To elect a Moderator: Pete Cobb nominated Doug Friant. Marge Fish seconded the motion. Doug Friant was elected by a voice vote.

**Article 2** To act on the report of the Town Officers: Dick Dale moved the article. Jeremy Dworkin seconded the motion. The article passed by a voice vote.

**Article 3** To elect all Town Officials required by law:

Selectboard member for a term of two years: Jon Wright nominated James Fleming. Dick Dale moved nominations be closed, and the Clerk cast one ballot for James Fleming. Jeremy Dworkin seconded the motion. The motion passed and James Fleming was elected to the Selectboard for a two-year term.

Selectboard member for a term of three years: Tina Labeau nominated Tom Cavanagh. Dick Dale moved nominations be closed, and the Clerk cast one ballot for Tom Cavanagh. Marge Fish seconded the motion. The motion passed and Tom Cavanagh was elected to the Selectboard for a three-year term.

Lister for a term of three years: Pat Delgiorno nominated Alex Alberti. Dick Dale moved nominations be closed, and the Clerk cast one ballot for Alex Alberti. Sandra Clark seconded the motion. The motion passed and Alex Alberti was elected to the Board of Listers for a three-year term.

Cemetery Commissioner for a term of five years: Gary Barton nominated Chris Blackey. Dick Dale moved nominations be closed, and the Clerk cast one ballot for Chris Blackey. Robert Forbes seconded the motion. The motion passed and Chris Blackey was elected to the Cemetery Commission for a five-year term.

Trustee of Public Funds for a term of three years: Mike Goodbody nominated Pauline Davison. Dick Dale moved nominations be closed, and the Clerk cast one ballot for Pauline Davison. Robert Forbes seconded the motion. The motion passed and Pauline Davison was elected to be a Trustee of Public Funds for a three-year term.

**Article 4** To see how much the Town will vote for a General Fund: The Treasurer, Tina Labeau, referenced a correction to the budget. XXXXXXX. Dick Dale moved the article with a General Fund amount of \$2,747,516.90. Jeremy Dworkin seconded the motion. There was discussion about the budget going up and increases in taxes. There was discussion about the corrections to the budget and the appropriations requests. There was a question about where there might be room for savings in the budget. The Treasurer and Selectboard talked about the budget they put together and how the municipal tax rate is set. There was a question about the increase in municipal and State Education tax rates. Representative Kelly Pajala spoke about State funding for the local match for FEMA funding. There was further discussion about Grand list values, municipal and State Education tax rates and the townwide reappraisal schedule. Jeremy Dworkin made a motion to call the question. The vote to call the question passed. The article passed by a voice vote.

**Article 5** Shall the Town vote for its taxes to be paid to the Town Treasurer as provided by law, due date to be on or before October 1, 2024? Dick Dale made a motion to move the article. Marge Fish seconded the motion. The article passed by a voice vote.

**Article 6** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$71,250 for the following organizations: Londonderry Conservation Fund \$500, Champion Fire Company #5 \$20,000, Phoenix

Fire Company #6 \$20,000, Londonderry Volunteer Rescue Squad \$15,750, and South Londonderry Library Association \$15,000? Dick Dale made a motion to move the article. Marge Fish seconded the motion. There was discussion about how the amounts for these organizations are arrived at. The article passed by a voice vote.

Martha Dale spoke about Grace Cottage Hospital as a member of their board. Bruce Frauman spoke about GNAT as a member of their organization for many years.

**Article 7** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$42,912 for the following organizations: American Red Cross \$500, Friends of the West River Trail \$1,000, Grace Cottage Foundation \$1,000, Greater Northshire Access TV \$2,000, Green Mountain RSVP \$415, Green Up Vermont \$100, Health Care & Rehabilitation Services \$1,513, Londonderry 4<sup>th</sup> of July \$1,500, Londonderry Arts and Historical Society \$1,000, Mountain Valley Health Council \$5,000, My Community Nurse program \$2,500, Neighborhood Connections \$6,000, Senior Solutions \$970, SVEDS \$5,307, SEVCA \$1,700, The Collaborative \$1,000, Valley Cares \$2,742, Visiting Nurse Assoc. of VT & NH \$7,000, Vermont Rural Fire Protection \$100, Windham County Humane Society \$450, Windham County Youth Services \$315, Women's Freedom Center \$800? Dick Dale made a motion to move the article. Jeremy Dworkin seconded the motion. There was discussion about how organizations request money and how the selectboard decides what to put on the meeting warning. The article passed by a voice vote.

**Article 8** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$11,600 to support the Londonderry Transport Services' Mountain Town Connector? Dick Dale made a motion to move the article. Bob Wells seconded the motion. Nikki from Neighborhood Connections spoke about the Service for the Londonderry community. There was discussion about why this amount was a separate funding request from the amount voted on in the previous article. There was a discussion about XXXXXXXX. Danny Cobb made a motion to call the question. The vote to call the question passed. The article passed by a voice vote.

**Article 9** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000, to be offset by registration fees, to fund the hiring of a part-time Short-Term Rental Administrator? Dick Dale made a motion to move the article. Marge Fish seconded the motion. There was discussion about the proposed fees for Short Term Rental registration covering the cost of the administrator, whether the fees should be higher and what would happen if the fees collected did not cover the full cost of the new position. There was discussion about what the administrator will do and what enforcement will look like. There was discussion about where the information used to estimate the number of SRT came from. There was discussion about what the definition of a Short-Term Rental is and what hosted versus un-hosted STR means. There was discussion about the position being full or part time and whether benefits were included in the cost of the position. There was concern that the article did not say that the cost of the employee would be "up to" \$50,000. Mike Arace made a motion to table the discussion on Article 9 indefinitely. Anna Stoddard seconded the motion. There was discussion about the need to move forward with this position and being in support of the STR Ordinance as well as concerns about the fees both being too low and needing to be higher. There was concern that the ordinance will negatively impact STR operators in the community. Steve Twitchell made a motion to call the question. Robert Forbes seconded the motion. The vote to call the question passed by a voice vote. The vote on the motion to table indefinitely did not pass on a voice vote. XXXXXXXXXX Passed eventually.

Liam Elio, the new Mountain Towns Recreation Director, spoke about what he has been doing since he was hired.

**Article 10** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$90,000 to fund the hiring of a fourth full-time Highway Department employee? Dick Dale made a motion to move the article. Pete Cobb seconded the motion. There was discussion about whether this position was a fill in position or

a full-time position, the amount of salary and the cost of benefits and the cost of contracting out work because the highway department is understaffed. The article passed by a voice vote.

**Article 11** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,000 to be deposited into the Emerald Ash Borer Infestation Reserve Fund? Dick Dale made a motion to move the article. Joel Kulberg seconded the motion. There was discussion about why the amount in this fund was so low, what the planning process had been for responding to the impacts of the Emerald Ash Borer, and the possibility that funding needs might increase in the future. The article passed by a voice vote.

**Article 12** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000 to be deposited into the Highway Equipment Reserve Fund? Dick Dale made a motion to move the article. Cindy Gubb seconded the motion. There was discussion about the total amount of money that is in the fund, why there is a need for more money to be added to the fund and the current process for purchasing equipment using the fund. The article passed by a voice vote.

**Article 13** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000 to be deposited into the Town Buildings Reserve Fund? Dick Dale made a motion to move the article. Cindy Gubb seconded the motion. There was discussion about what the plan is for spending the money in this fund at Town owned buildings including Town Hall, Town Offices, the Town Garage, and the Transfer Station. The article passed by a voice vote.

**Article 14** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$300,000 to be deposited in the Highway Improvement Reserve Fund? Dick Dale made a motion to move the article. Jeremy Dworkin seconded the motion. The article passed by a voice vote.

**Article 15** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000 to be deposited in the Community Economic Improvement Reserve Fund? Dick Dale made a motion to move the article. Emma Cating seconded the motion. The article passed by a voice vote.

**Article 16** Shall the Town vote to amend the terms of Article 13 of the 2019 Annual Town Meeting, which had appropriated \$5,000 to the Londonderry Parks Board to install a pump track at Pingree Park, to instead allow for said appropriated funds to be used at Pingree Park for a non-motorized all-wheel recreation facility? Dick Dale made a motion to move the article. Cindy Gubb seconded the motion. There was discussion about the definition of a non-motorized all-wheel recreation facility and where that might be located at Pingree Park. The article passed by a voice vote.

**Article 17** Shall the Town vote, pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 3840, to renew, retroactive to the March 2023 Town Meeting, the exemption from property taxes for the following property for the ensuing 5 years: Second Congregational Church – High Street Parsonage, Londonderry? Dick Dale made a motion to move the article. Cindy Gubb seconded the motion. Laurie Kroos, the Pastor at the Second Congregational Church, spoke about the reason this article is needed since she doesn't live in the parsonage. The article passed by a voice vote.

**Article 18** Shall the Town vote, pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 3840, to renew the exemption from property taxes for the following properties for the ensuing 4 years: South Londonderry Library Association – Old School Street (Janeway property), South Londonderry? Dick Dale made a motion to move the article. Jeremy Dworkin seconded the motion. There was discussion about the fact that this article is about the piece of land up the hill, not where the library building is. The article passed by a voice vote.

**Article 19** Shall the town authorize the assessment of a one percent (1%) local option tax on meals and alcoholic beverages, pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 138, the proceeds of which shall be applied as General Fund revenue to reduce the municipal property tax rate? Dick Dale made a motion to move the article. Joel Kulberg seconded the motion. There was discussion about the economic impact of this article on the Town budget and local businesses. The article passed by a voice vote.

**Article 20** Shall the town authorize the assessment of a one percent (1%) local option tax on sales, pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 138, the proceeds of which shall be applied as General Fund revenue to reduce the municipal property tax rate? Dick Dale made a motion to move the article. Cindy Gubb seconded the motion. There was discussion about the revenue estimates for this article, what sales tax applies

to, how shipped or delivered items are taxed, impacts on construction and landscaping costs, potential unintended consequences of this article, administrative fees retained by the State on local option taxes, other Towns that have a local option tax, online purchases collecting sales taxes, and the regressive nature of this sales tax. The article did not pass by a voice vote.

**Article 21** To transact any other business that may legally come before the Meeting. Dick Dale made a motion to move the article. Cindy Gubb seconded the motion. There was discussion about potential open meeting law violations and the cost of Police Services and ticket revenues. Dick Dale made a motion to adjourn. Robert Forbes seconded the motion. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_ Kelly M. Pajala, Town Clerk

**Selectboard of the Town of Londonderry**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas Cavanagh, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
James Fleming, Vice Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Taylor Prouty

\_\_\_\_\_  
Melissa Brown

\_\_\_\_\_  
Martha Dale

Received for the record this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2024