

Selectboard Minutes  
**AUSTRALIAN BALLOT INFORMATION HEARING**

2/08/2021

Members Present by Zoom: Christine Werneke, David Sander, Roger Brown, Bard Hill, Katie Mather

Absent:

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Others Present by Zoom: Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Kathy Daub-Stearns, Admin.; Kyle Kapitansky, acting Police Chief; Pete Gosselin, Highway; Kendall Chamberlin, Water & Sewer; Rebecca Mueller, Library; Connie Bona, Finance; Ravi Venkataraman, Planner; Dennis Gile, Fire Chief; Gerald Levesque, FD Asst Chief; the meeting was recorded for MMCTV Channel 15, also present Jeff Forward, Jared Katz, Jana Brown, June Heston, Jill Merkle, Emily Mitchell, J Low, Martha Nye, Frances Thomas, Templin, Laurie Dana, Nathans6561, Jane Van Landingham, Michael Mitchell, Suzanne Parent, Allen Knowles, David Thomas, Brad Elliott, Marie Thomas, Judy Rosovsky, Karen & Don, Gretchen Paulsen, Colleen Flahery

**Called to Order:** 7:06PM

**Welcome by** David

**Public Comment:**

An email from Marie Thomas was read by David Sander: Marie wanted to say she felt that the Town should change banks to a local bank that supports local people and businesses.

Christine moved to enter into a Public Meeting to discuss items on the Australian Ballot since there will be no Town Meeting; Katie seconded. Roll call vote: Bard, Christine, Katie, David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

The Public Meeting began at 7:10PM

Josh reported that since there would be no Town Meeting all issues would be decided by Australian Ballot adding there would be two informational meetings, the second meeting will take place on March 1, 2021.

Josh showed how to access the Town Meeting information on the website.

Josh reported:

- that there would be no candidate forum tonight adding that on Monday, February 15 MMCTV would hold a candidate forum night and that there is a link is on the website where Town Meeting information is found
- that Jennifer Sensenich withdrew her name from consideration for Selectboard Member

Josh thanked the staff and Selectboard for the months of work that went into putting the budget together in a very thoughtful way. He let everyone know that department heads are available for any questions.

## I. Australian Ballot Information Hearing

### a) Article 2: FY22 Budget

Josh provided:

- a brief overview of the FY 22 BUDGET noting that the budget is up by \$164,803 a 1.32% increase from FY21
- a review of Municipal Operations providing information on the staffing of each of the departments
- information that the Water/ Sewer budget will be done in May as usual
- a review of Reserves & Unassigned Funds including an explanation of the different types of funds, the restrictions that apply to reserve and unassigned funds as well as each fund's balance
- a review of the general Town debt excluding the Water System debt
- a review of significant changes (\$5000 and over) in Revenue from FY21 to FY22
- a review of significant changes (\$5000 and over) in Expenses from FY21 to FY22
- that there are two categories, the Veterans and Richmond Terrace Exemption's that result in a reduction in the Grand List
- that the proposed Municipal Tax Rate Increase is \$0.7393
- that the if the Conservation Fund passes it would add \$0.01 to the rate
- that the Town rate is about 34% of the tax bill

Discussion included:

- that Town Reports will be available in the next few weeks
- that there are twelve (12) disabled veterans that participate in the tax reduction program
- that health benefits are not prorated for an employee working 30 hours

### b) Article 3: Dump Truck Loan

Josh reported:

- that this Article would be for a loan to borrow up to \$110,000 to go toward the purchase of a new dump truck, this includes a down payment on this truck in the amount of \$50,000.

Discussion included:

- that Pete said that trucks are replaced on a 7year cycle to prevent expensive, unexpected repairs out of warranty

### c) Articles 4 and 5: Town Center Reserve Fund

Josh reported:

- that these Articles run together and are related to the fund and the use of the fund
- that the original reason for the fund was to repay a loan that has been repaid  
Since then, the funds have been used for paying expenses related to the Town Center
- that the voters will decide how to use the fund moving forward

Christine provided:

- a review of a report put together by the Town Center and Library Building Committee that included information that there will be new leases for part of the 3<sup>rd</sup>

- floor of Town Center and the library heating system needs to be replaced adding that there are essential repairs needed in the next year to both buildings.
- information on the process for identifying the scope of the work and getting approval for the work to be done
  - that planning for the future includes determining the future of the buildings and, that includes weighing the benefits and costs of new construction vs renovation

Discussion included:

- that there are committee seats available on the Town Center and Library Building Committee

d) Article 6: Cannabis Retailers

Josh reported:

- that there is a FAQ's on the Cannabis issue on the Town website
- that this would allow cannabis retailers in Richmond, but not online sales and would not regulate the growing of cannabis

Discussion included:

- that Fran Thomas asked why the Selectboard decided to put this on the ballot now. Christine responded that because of COVID the requirement to have signatures had been waived and this was brought to the board by a resident who asked to have it be included as an Article to be voted on by Australian Ballot adding it was decided to not stand in the way and let the voters decide. Bard said that the Selectboard decided to defer to the voters. Roger said it is an important decision for the voters to settle. Fran Thomas said she would like to see what happens in other towns. Christine responded that if the vote does not pass it can be brought back and if it passes it can still be reviewed again in the future.

e) Article 7: Conservation Reserve Fund

Josh reported:

- that the chair, Judy Rosovsky is here to share information

Judy Rosovsky provided:

- a presentation that included information on the fund and what it is used for. The presentation is available on the Town website under the Conservation Committee documents
- that if the Article is approved it will increase the tax rate by \$.01 and she asked voters to vote in favor of keeping the Conservation Fund funded

f) Article 8: Waterline Replacement Bond

Josh reported:

- that if approved, the town would get a bond for \$400,000
- that the source of payment for the bond would be generated by the water and sewer department even though voted on by all residents
- that there could be a 75% subsidy that we are in position to take advantage of

Kendall reported:

- that this is coming at a good time because of sidewalk improvements that need to be done and could be coordinated with this project

Discussion included:

- that Bard said that the Water Sewer Commission does not have authority to approve the bond and requires a vote of the residents
- that the new line will be installed while the old one is in place

Katie moved to move out of the Public Meeting; Bard seconded. Roll call vote: Roger, Katie, Christine, Bard and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

The Public Meeting ended at 9:04 PM

David thanked everyone for the work that went into the budget without increasing taxes too much.

## **VI. Adjourn**

Katie moved to adjourn; Bard seconded. Roll call vote: Bard, Christine, Katie, Roger, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 PM.