

TOWN OF SCOTLAND



ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES MAY 20, 2021

The Annual Town Meeting was called to order by First Selectman Gary Greenberg at 7:06 pm. Present were Gary Greenberg, First Selectman, Robert Keator, Wendy Sears, Selectmen and Christine M. Bright, Town Clerk and members of the audience.

First Selectman Greenberg asks that you stand and state your name and address for the record if you are going to speak.

1. To elect a moderator. First Selectman Greenberg called for nominations.

Motion to nominate Clark Stearns was made by John Aldrich, 2nd by Bill Adams. (No other nominations.)

Motion carries.

Moderator Clark Stearns reads the call for the meeting.

Moderator begins by thanking the citizens of Scotland for coming and wishes to review meeting rules before proceeding.

* Each individual wishing to speak must stand and state their name and address for the record.

* All questions and comments should be addressed to the Board of Selectmen and not other members of the audience.

* Please keep comments brief and germane to the topic being discussed.

*Please keep comments to 3 minutes.

*To vote, please raise your colored voting slip - blue for budget items only - orange for all agenda items.

2. To elect a member to the Regional District 11 Board of Education for a term of three years.

Michael Smardon was nominated by Kevin Benito; 2nd by Rachel Smardon.

Motion to close nominations was made by Steve Kurcinik; 2nd by Jen Nelson.

Motion carries.

A vote was held to elect Mr. Smardon to the Regional District 11 Board of Education for a term of three years. Vote was in favor of Mr. Smardon.

Motion to move agenda item 13 to be discussed before item #3 was made by Bud Smallwood; 2nd by Deb Stearns.

Motion carries.

13. To levy a tax upon the Grand List of October 1, 2020 of \$112,269,164 for the Regional School District 11 budget, subject to state mandated tax rates for the Motor Vehicle Grand List of \$13,059,820.

Motion to levy a tax upon the Grand List of October 1, 2020 of \$112,269,164 for the Regional School District 11 budget, subject to state mandated tax rates for the Motor Vehicle Grand List of \$13,059,820 was made by Jen Nelson; 2nd by Deb Stearns.

Discussion: Bud Smallwood asked about the money we received for Covid and the surplus we currently have, and how RD 11 has come up with an increase in the budget. First Selectman Greenberg suggested this question was better directed to RD 11 during their budget process. Sherry Smardon noted that if people have questions for Board members, the monthly BOE meetings are open to the public and she encouraged people to attend those meetings.

Motion carries.

3. To consider and act upon the budget of the Scotland Board of Education and levy a tax on the Grand List of October 1, 2020 of \$112,269,164 for Scotland Elementary School, subject to state mandated tax rates for the Motor Vehicle Grand List of \$13,059,820;

Motion to approve the budget of the Scotland Board of Education and levy a tax on the Grand List of October 1, 2020 of \$112,269,164 for Scotland Elementary School, subject to state mandated tax rates for the Motor Vehicle Grand List of \$13,059,820 was made by Steve Kurcinik; 2nd by Dennis LaBelle.

Discussion: Jen Nelson asked what would happen if we voted no to levy a tax on Parish Hill or Scotland Elementary. First Selectman Greenberg explained there is a difference between the regional school and the elementary school. We have no choice but to levy a tax on Parish Hill although the budget is voted on separately. For the elementary school, if we voted no, we would just sent it back to the Board of Ed and they would do it again.

Motion carries.

4. To consider and act upon the recommendations of the Board of Selectmen that appropriations be made for the expenditure of Town Aid monies for fiscal year 2021-2022 budget and to make such appropriations as are advisable.

Motion to approve the recommendations of the Board of Selectmen that appropriations be made for the expenditure of Town Aid monies for fiscal year 2021-2022 budget and to make such appropriations as are advisable was made by Steve Kurcinik; 2nd by Bill Adams.

Discussion: First Selectman Greenberg clarified that the town aid monies are town aid road monies.

Motion carries.

5. To empower the Board of Selectmen to borrow a sum not to exceed \$500,000 in anticipation of tax revenue.

Motion to empower the Board of Selectmen to borrow a sum not to exceed \$500,000 in anticipation of tax revenue was made by Carol Withington; 2nd by Charlie Lasch.

Motion carries.

6. To consider and act upon an Amendment to the Interlocal Agreement for the Quinebaug Regional Technology Park Development.

Motion to approve the Amendment to the Interlocal Agreement for the Quinebaug Regional Technology Park Development was made by Scott Sears; 2nd by Jen Nelson.

Discussion: Selectman Wendy Sears explained that in 2016 we entered into an agreement with the Town of Putnam in partnership with the Towns of Brooklyn and Pomfret to join in the Interlocal Agreement for the tech park. Our one share was \$80,000; Brooklyn purchased 2 shares and Pomfret purchased 1 share. We are now 5 1/2 years into this agreement and the contract specifically stated that Putnam will move "expeditiously" to move this forward. Scotland paid \$80,000 in one lump sum. The project was not moving forward so the three towns asked if a refund was possible. An amendment was drafted whereas all three towns will get whatever money they invested refunded. If approved, we will get our \$80,000 back and then when Putnam moves forward with the promised development, once the tax revenue starts coming in, our share of that money (10%) will go towards paying for the \$80,000 we initially invested. Anything beyond the \$80,000 we will continue to get the tax revenue in perpetuity. We get our initial investment back for now and we continue to participate in the tech park.

Motion carries.

7. To consider and act upon an Ordinance Regarding Building Permit Fees.

Motion to approve the Ordinance Regarding Building Permit Fees was made by Kevin Benito; 2nd by Sherry Smardon.

Discussion: Jim Troeger explained that item 1C should be at the building official's discretion so as to avoid instances where a homeowner may undervalue their project or consider materials only. Industry practice is to have the building official evaluate the project if there is a large discrepancy in what a project value should be. First Selectman Greenberg further explained that some projects will have an assigned value subject to review by the Building Official. Valuations are based on the value of the improvement.

Jim Troeger made a motion to amend 1C to read as follows "Building Permit Plan Review: \$150.00 at the Building Official's discretion, non-refundable." Second was made by Scott Sears.

Motion to amend 1C carries.

Motion to approve the Ordinance carries.

8. To consider and act upon an Ordinance Regarding Tax Exemptions for Certain Ambulance -Type Vehicles.

Motion to approve the Ordinance Regarding Tax Exemptions for Certain Ambulance-Type Vehicles was made by Kevin Ring, Sr.; 2nd by Bill Adams.

Discussion: First Selectman Greenberg explained this is for disabled people who have specially modified vehicles. The assessor explained this would affect approximately three vehicles in town and would remove approximately \$3000 from the Grand List.

Motion carries.

9. To consider and act upon an Ordinance Establishing an Emergency Declaration Fund.

Motion to approve the Ordinance Establishing an Emergency Declaration Fund was made by Carol Withington; 2nd by Steve Kurcinik.

Discussion: Treasurer Maryann Fitzsimmons explained that the auditors suggested we establish this fund so we can easily track state and federal funds received under this grant vs. depositing monies into the General Fund. Jen Nelson questioned what prevents the town from writing blank checks on this account and making appropriations without oversight. Treasurer Fitzsimmons clarified that only those designated grant funds can be deposited into the account and the expenditures are specific as to what the money can be used for and we will be audited yearly. It is similar to the town aid road monies account. No transfers would be made from the Town's General Fund into this account.

Motion carries.

10. To consider and act upon the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan.

Motion to approve the Five-year Capital Improvement Plan was made by Henry Bowers; 2nd by Scott Sears.

Discussion: First Selectman Greenberg explained that this year's 5 year CIP is a little more involved than in years past as we now received an assessment of our buildings and we have a plan to repair things like the library roof, to add to the Public Works garage; breathing apparatus upgrade request from the Fire Department; and to make repair in town buildings. We also have bridges that have been identified by the Stat that will need repair. The CIP is mostly just a statement of what we expect to be doing over the next 5 years.

Motion carries.

11. To consider and act upon the 2021-2022 Capital Improvement Program Budget.

Motion to approve the Five-year Capital Improvement Plan was made by Jen Nelson; 2nd by Kim Martin.

First Selectman Greenberg gave a brief explanation of the 2021-2022 Capital Improvement Budget.

Motion carries.

12. To consider and act upon the budget of the General Government and levy a tax on the Grand List of October 1, 2020 of \$112,269,164, subject to state mandated tax rates for the Motor Vehicle Grand List of \$13,059,820.

Motion to approve the budget of the General Government and levy a tax on the Grand List of October 1, 2020 of \$112,269,164, subject to state mandated tax rates for the Motor Vehicle Grand List of \$13,059,820 was made by Steve Kurcinik; 2nd by Bill Adams.

First Selectman Greenberg gave a brief explanation of the town budget and states he expects the mill rate to remain flat - a zero mil increase at the most.

Motion carries.

13. To levy a tax upon the Grand List of October 1, 2020 of \$112,269,164 for the Regional School District 11 budget, subject to state mandated tax rates for the Motor Vehicle Grand List of \$13,059,820.

This item was moved to #3 on the agenda.

14. To Transact any other business proper to come before said meeting.

Carol Withington thanked the Board for the job they have been doing for the town. Bud Smallwood also thanked the Board and asked for an update on combining the Hampton and Scotland Elementary Schools. First Selectman Greenberg explained that a committee from both towns that is trying to look at the possibility of using a cooperative agreement will be meeting in June. A visitor from another part of the state who is also trying to combine schools will be in attendance. There are many legal issues regarding this issue and unfortunately everything related to this matter will happen slowly.

Motion to adjourn at 9:06 p.m. was made by Steve Kurcinik, 2nd by Charlie Lasch.

Motion carries.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine M. Bright
Scotland Town Clerk