

## POMFRET

## ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

March 4, 2008

Moderator Robert J. O'Donnell called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M. The Rev. Jennifer Donaldson was asked to begin the meeting with a prayer.

## Articles:

1. Robert J. O'Donnell was elected Moderator for a 1 year term. He was given the oath of office by the Town Clerk, JoAnn Webb, and then reviewed the procedures and rules of order for the meeting.

Note: During the meeting, whenever the Moderator made a ruling or decision, he stated that the body had the power to question that ruling or decision and overrule it if the body so voted.

2. Andrew A. Mann was elected Town Clerk for a 1 year term and given the oath of office by Robert O'Donnell.
3. Bill Emmons moved to accept the reports as submitted. Orson St. John seconded.

Daphne Gratiot referred to the minutes of the 2007 Town Meeting on pages 38 of the Town Report, and she discussed the amendments offered and defeated under Articles 14 and 15 regarding the establishment of a study committee to review and make recommendations related to the Town Office expansion. It appeared that a committee had been established following the 2007 Meeting. Robert O'Donnell offered his interpretation of last year's vote, that the failure of the amendments to create a committee was not direction, but a failure of direction that did not prohibit the creation of a committee.

Daphne Gratiot reminded the assembly that Article 15 had been passed, authorizing the expenditure of \$222,000 for the expansion of the Town Office. She asked why there had been nothing in the 2007 Town Report about what had happened since the 2007 Meeting, or how that money had been spent.

Selectboard member Bob Harrington explained that the Selectboard's understanding of the motion passed last year was that the Town wanted to proceed with the expansion and left it to the Selectboard to review alternatives and to decide how to proceed. The Selectboard set up a committee to do that, and did spend some money to get cost estimates on the different alternatives.

Selectboard member Neil Lamson explained that he served on the committee chaired by Tim Thacher for the Town Office expansion and that he had been the liaison on that committee to the Selectboard. He drew attention to the Selectboard's Report on page 4 of the 2007 Town Report which included a paragraph describing what had been done and that \$2,344 had been spent on estimates for the different options explored. He gave the reason for his support of the committee process, that although it was clear in the 2007 Town Report minutes what had been voted, it had not been clear at the 2007 Town Meeting itself. There had been too much confusion and it would be better to take a year to sort it all out. He reviewed the committee's work, mentioned the meetings in which the alternatives were presented and the public made comment, and said that the Selectboard then decided what to do.

Doug Tuthill commended the committee for their work, approved of the process, and stated that all future capital expenditures should be handled in the same manner.

The motion to accept the reports as submitted passed by voice vote.

4. The following officers were elected:

Selectboard	3 year term	Douglas J. Tuthill	99 votes
		<i>James M. Havill</i>	<i>69 votes</i>
Treasurer	1 year term	Hazel B. Harrington	Unopposed
Collector of Delinquent Taxes	1 year term	Jay L. Potter	Unopposed
Cemetery Commissioner	3 year term	Patricia A. Allen	Unopposed
Lister	3 year term	Lynne A. Leavitt	Unopposed
Auditor	3 year term	Robert J. Anderegg	Unopposed
Auditor	1 year term	Carlene M. Hewitt	Unopposed
Grand Juror	1 year term	Michael S. Reese	Unopposed
Town Agent	1 year term	William B. Emmons	Unopposed
Library Trustee	3 year term	Joanna R. Long	Unopposed
Library Trustee	3 year term	Susan D. Heston	Unopposed

Note: After the results of the Selectboard election were announced, several people expressed appreciation for Jim Havill's 24 years of service on the Selectboard. A standing ovation followed.

5. Fred S. Doten, Sr. was elected for a 3 year term as Trustee for the Russ, Hawkins, and Hutchinson funds.
6. Michael S. Reese was elected for a 5 year term on the Pomfret Emergency Services Commission.
7. Betsy Siebeck moved that the Town appropriate the sum of \$27,667 for the Abbott Memorial Library. Anne Bower seconded. Several people spoke in favor of the Article. Betsy Siebeck noted that the approximately 6% increase was due to increased costs and a small decrease in annual giving. Joanna Long

noted that many people were coming in and many books were going out. Fixed costs, especially electricity and oil, have increased disproportionately. Speaking in favor of the motion, Joanna Long and Librarian Cory Smith reviewed Library activity, reporting that business had been steady and mentioning ongoing and new programs. Geoff Klingenstein, Fred Doten, and Barrie Thacher also spoke in support. The article passed unanimously by voice vote.

8. Marge Wakefield moved that the Town appropriate \$27,550 for the Emergency Services Organization account administered by the Town Treasurer to be used for operating expenses. Tim Thacher seconded. Bob Harrington, Chief of the Pomfret Fire Dept., asked that all the volunteers stand and be recognized. Speaking in favor of the motion, he pointed out that the appropriation would be in support of these volunteers, who come out day or night in any weather whenever there is an emergency, and that the money is for heat, light, oil, and insurance, to keep the operation going. He also paid tribute to Dean Tracy, "a firefighter from day one", who will be missed. The assembly applauded. Note: Dean Tracy passed on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, the day before the meeting.

Marge Wakefield spoke in support of the motion. The amount requested is 5% over last year, which is insufficient to meet operating costs. The shortfall will be met by using approximately half of the existing surplus. Doug Tuthill commended the committee, and warned that next year the committee would likely ask for an even greater appropriation as prices he has seen for used equipment were higher than the committee's estimates. Marge Wakefield explained that all three departments do annual fundraising and that some of the money shown in the report of Private Discretionary Funds would go towards major equipment expenditures in addition to money from the Fire Equipment Reserve Fund. Jennifer Donaldson thanked the department for putting out her chimney fire before major damage occurred.

The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

9. Marge Wakefield moved that the Town appropriate \$25,000 for the Fire Equipment Reserve Fund. Peter Gratiot seconded. Bob Harrington explained that the long range plan made in 1999, with input from all three departments, addresses the six major pieces of equipment, three at each end of town. Each department's primary vehicle, a tanker/pumper, will be replaced with new equipment. Each department's tanker will be replaced with used equipment, as will Teago's mini-pumper and North Pomfret's rescue vehicle. The long range plan is due for review, and rising equipment prices may warrant a greater request next year.

Michael Doten asked how this tied in to the next article (the release of funds from the Fire Equipment Reserve for the purchase of a used tanker for Teago). Bob Harrington listed the two new fire stations and equipment purchases over the last few years, saying that the departments have done very well with the town's generous help. He explained that the plan calling for the release of funds in the next article to replace Teago's aging tanker would still leave enough in the Reserve Fund to contribute to the next scheduled purchase of a new primary vehicle for North Pomfret in 2013, a tanker/pumper to replace the one purchased new in 1993. The long range plan calls for primary vehicles to be replaced every twenty years. Robert O'Donnell pointed out that the current balance in the Fire Equipment Reserve Fund as shown on page 28 was \$118,000, before passage of the current article.

Orson St. John asked that the long range needs of the departments be detailed in the Town Report. Tim Thacher explained that the next new piece of equipment is scheduled for purchase in 2014 for \$200,000, and the subsequent major purchase is scheduled for 2022. If the schedule for an annual \$25,000 appropriation for the Reserve Fund is maintained, this will allow for the purchase of these pieces of equipment. When the long range capital budget is completed it is intended that this sort of detail will be available and included in the annual Warning and Town Report.

Marie Harrington asked about replacing the rescue vehicle and questioned the need for such a vehicle. Bob Harrington replied that the current 1998 rescue vehicle, replacing an '89 model, was purchased recently from Hartford with \$15,000 from Discretionary Funds, and it should be good for another ten years. The rescue vehicle goes out on all Fast Squad medical calls, has rescue equipment for auto accidents, and has room for five firefighters to put on air tanks while traveling, avoiding the use of five personal vehicles to get to a scene. Frank Perron drew attention to the report on page 26, Emergency Calls for 2007, showing 42 Medical Emergencies, to all of which the rescue vehicle responded. The rescue truck gets out more than the other vehicles.

The article passed by unanimous voice vote.

10. Bob Harrington moved that the Town authorize the release of \$30,000 from the Fire Equipment Reserve Fund for the purchase of a used tanker for the Teago Fire Dept. Frank Perron seconded. Robert O'Donnell noted that this would not be an expenditure to be added to tax bills but simply an authorization to release funds previously reserved by the Town.

Marge Wakefield, speaking in favor, said the authorization would be necessary in order to be ready to purchase a suitable used vehicle when one does become available. Also speaking in favor, Kevin Rice, a member of the Teago Fire Dept., said the current '78 tanker is in "rough shape", that most members won't drive it, and that it is necessary to have a reliable tanker. He pointed out that it might be difficult to find a suitable used vehicle for \$30,000. There will be fundraisers and the difference can come from Discretionary Funds.

Doug Tuthill suggested that a larger sum be appropriated that would be more in line with an anticipated purchase price. Robert O'Donnell responded that an amendment that greatly exceeded the warned amount would be declared invalid. Kevin Rice explained that a release of more than \$30,000 for the tanker could

jeopardize the ability to purchase the two new primary pieces of equipment as outlined in the long range plan.

Neil Lamson suggested delaying the authorization until the revised comprehensive long term plan is completed. Bob Harrington responded that the current plan calling for this purchase was presently working and might not be greatly revised, and reiterated the need for the authorization so as to not miss an opportunity to purchase a good used piece of equipment. The intention is still to work on a revised long term plan to present to the Town next year.

Frank Perron, Chris Reilly (N. Pomfret FD Safety Officer), and Tim Thacher spoke in support of the article, describing the poor condition of the '78 tanker, warning of the hazard to volunteers, and noting that tankers are perpetually wet and rusty and that the '78 tanker could suddenly fail completely. Marge Wakefield pointed out that the current balance in the Teago Discretionary Funds account was now greater than the \$25,000 reported in the Town Report.

The article passed by unanimous voice vote. Robert O'Donnell commended the two fire departments for working so well together and the assembly applauded.

11. Marge Wakefield moved that the Town appropriate \$3,750 to support the home care and hospice care of patients in their homes by staff and volunteers of the Visiting Nurse Alliance of Vermont and New Hampshire, Inc. Nancy Pike seconded. Judy Repp reported that last year 100 hours of visits were paid to nine residents. Victoria Jas, Caroline Shepard, and John Leavitt each identified themselves as one of the nine residents served. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.
12. Phil Dechert moved that the Town appropriate \$1,500 to support programming of the Ottauquechee Community Partnership which includes the Spectrum Teen Center and the Shining Light Mentoring program. Anne Bower seconded. Speaking in support of the article, Marie Harrington and Doug Tuthill said that their daughters spent time at Spectrum. Doug Tuthill offered to donate his Selectboard wages to the Spectrum Teen Center. Loreda Sola, also speaking in favor, supported mentoring and said that the \$1,500 investment would save much taxpayer money in subsequent years. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
13. Leon Stetson moved that the Town exempt property of the Teago Volunteer Fire Department from taxes for a five year period. Kevin Rice seconded. Speaking in favor of the article, Marge Wakefield pointed out that the fire department did the building upkeep themselves, and suggested that this would be a small way for the community to show its support of the fire department. In response to a question by Alex Henzel, Marge Wakefield stated that the department was not currently paying taxes, that the Town must vote every five years to continue the exemption, and that the Town voted an exemption five years ago. Frey Arnio asked if the exemption as moved would apply to any new property purchased by the department. Robert O'Donnell offered his interpretation that the exemption would only apply to the property currently owned. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
14. Mark Warner moved that the Town exempt property of the Pomfret Volunteer Fire Department from taxes for a five year period. Marge Wakefield seconded. Marge Wakefield supported the motion for the same reasons as the previous article. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
15. Marge Wakefield moved that the Town vote a five year tax exemption of the Teago Grange Hall Building and lot, owned by the non-profit corporation known as the Teago Community Hall Association. Tim Thacher seconded. Alan Graham, chair of the Pomfret Historical Society, announced that the Grange had agreed to allow the Historical Society to use the Grange Hall for the Historical Society's permanent collection, and that the Historical Society would take responsibility for the preservation of the Grange Hall. Approval of the exemption would help the transition go smoothly.

There was discussion regarding the validity of the exemption should title pass from the Teago Community Hall Association. Wording was suggested for potential amendments to address questions and concerns about a transfer of ownership and the timing of such a transfer. Norm Buchanan explained that extending the exemption would cost less than one cent per hundred on current tax bills. Jim Havill expressed the opinion that there would be a warned article next year to see if the Town would take title to the building. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

16. Phil Dechert moved that the Town authorize the Selectboard the authority to spend unanticipated funds such as grants and gifts. Anne Bower seconded. Speaking in favor, Phil Dechert explained that the Town can only spend money that has been authorized, as in a voted budget. Should the article not pass, any grant or gift money received but not included in the budget could not be spent until authorized by the Town. Andrew Hutt moved to amend the article by adding the words "received by the town", which was seconded according to Robert O'Donnell. Peter Gratiot proposed that the amendment be further modified to instead add "in accordance with the terms of the grants and gifts", however the Moderator ruled this to be out of order while a current amendment remained on the floor. The original amendment was passed. Emily Grube asked if there were specific grants for which applications had or would be made, and if this related to the article's inclusion by the Selectboard. Neil Lamson replied that the inclusion of this article had been recommended by the Secretary of State in her newsletter because grant funds not included in the authorized budget can not otherwise be spent. No grant applications had been made, but that may yet happen. Bob Harrington described several potential grants including a sizeable paving grant and Two Rivers Regional Planning Commission grants for tax maps or for the Planning Commission. A grant committee has been set up to apply for building renovation grants. Ted Staples inquired about the duration of the authorization. Phil Dechert replied that the Town would have to annually authorize the Selectboard

to spend unanticipated grants and gifts. Betsy Seibeck requested that the article be voted on as amended. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

State Representative Mark Mitchell addressed the assembly before consideration of Article 17. Pending legislation regarding climate change and income tax based school funding was discussed. Questions were taken regarding a lowered drinking age and the resolution warned in Article 22 regarding management and financing of the education system, property tax rebate checks, net metering of electricity, and carbon tax credits.

Moderator Robert O'Donnell drew attention to a chart listing abandoned property being held by the state. He asked the assembly whether or not to break for lunch. It was decided to continue.

17. Phil Dechert moved that the Town authorize the full balance of the Appalachian Trail 1984 Land Sale Fund (approximately \$76,000) to be used toward the cost of the expansion of the Town Office space. Ted Staples seconded. Bob Harrington, speaking in support, reviewed the 2007 proceedings when \$222,000 had been authorized for the Town Office expansion, of which up to \$75,000 could be borrowed for a period of three years. He said now the \$76,000 from the Appalachian Trail Fund could either be used if there are additional costs or used to replace the funds to be borrowed. Exact figures were not yet available, and the cost of the vault may be more than originally anticipated.

Ron Galotti asked about the original intent of the Appalachian Trail Land Sale Fund. Robert O'Donnell offered his understanding that the funds were to be held for future authorizations by the Town. Hazel Harrington drew attention to the report on page 24 of the Town Report which detailed all disbursements from the Fund.

Andrew Mann pointed out that the Appalachian Trail Fund money requested and denied last year had been instead raised through taxes, and that this year's budget anticipated the release of the funds in order to avoid borrowing the \$75,000. Robert O'Donnell questioned what would happen if the article were to be defeated. Hazel Harrington replied that we currently had \$144,000, and that \$75,000 of the \$222,000 budgeted last year was to be borrowed. Andrew Mann said that he believed the Appalachian Trail money would substitute for the funds to be borrowed and that it was correct that the \$75,000 could still be borrowed, but that no more than the amount budgeted, \$219,656, could be spent without authorizing the increase.

Norm Buchanan asked what would happen to the Appalachian Trail money if the expansion were to cost less than the amount budgeted. There was discussion to clarify how the various combinations of funds (\$144,000 already raised and reserved, \$76,000 Appalachian Trail Fund, \$75,000 to be borrowed) could be used to pay for the expansion, and Robert O'Donnell suggested that an amendment could be made to either authorize an increased expenditure or reduce funds to be borrowed. Sherman Kent pointed out that there was also a fundraising component that could reduce the amount required from the Appalachian Trail Fund, the amount to be borrowed, or both.

JoAnn Webb said that her understanding was that the Appalachian Trail money would be used in lieu of borrowed funds, and Robert O'Donnell pointed out that it was still unclear whether or not the article authorized an expenditure over \$222,000. JoAnn Webb suggested that the Appalachian Trail money be used in lieu of borrowed funds if the cost stayed under \$222,000, and that borrowed funds be used if the cost exceeded \$222,000. Robert O'Donnell said that he believed that was how Bob Harrington explained the way the funds would be applied. Jim Havill said that there was not an authorization to spend over \$222,000 and that there had already been \$144,000 raised, so if the article as warned passed, borrowing wouldn't be necessary.

Tim Thacher suggested that the best use of the Appalachian Trail money would be for the Town Office expansion because it would provide a long term benefit to the town. Noting that final costs would not be available until the competitive bidding process was complete, he suggested amending the article in order to allow, in addition to the \$144,000 already raised, the use of both the Appalachian Trail money and borrowed funds if necessary. This would give flexibility to the Selectboard.

Kevin Geiger moved to amend the article to add "in lieu of borrowing if the project does not exceed \$222,000, and in addition to borrowing if needed not to exceed a building cost of \$298,000". The amendment was seconded by Betsy Seibeck. Lydia Spitzer, Betsy Seibeck, and Jim Havill asked for confirmation that this amendment would cap at \$298,000 the amount of tax money authorized to be spent, but that grant money could be used over and above that. This appeared to be the case. Betsy Seibeck stated that the Selectboard will need the flexibility to deal with all unknowns so as to not be stopped in the middle of the project. There was further discussion by Bob Merrill, Rob Anderegg, and John Scialdone clarifying the impact of the amendment. A friendly amendment was made and accepted by the original mover, original seconder, and the body, so that the amendment added the following to the original motion: "in lieu of borrowing if the project does not exceed \$222,000, and/or in addition to borrowing if needed not to exceed a building cost of \$298,000". The amendment was passed by unanimous voice vote.

The final amended motion was "that the Town authorize the full balance of the Appalachian Trail 1984 Land Sale Fund to be used toward the cost of the expansion of the Town Office space in lieu of borrowing if the project does not exceed \$222,000, and/or in addition to borrowing if needed not to exceed a building cost of \$298,000". The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

18. Andrew Mann moved that the Town vote a budget of \$1,656,863 for town and highway expenses as shown in the Town Report. Joanna Long seconded.

There was a short discussion confirming that the \$75,000 added to the original warned amount to be spent would not increase the amount to be raised in taxes because that \$75,000 would instead be borrowed.

Tim Thacher asked why an excavator was being purchased instead of leased. Jim Havill and Neil Lamson spoke to the issue. Although a backhoe was in the original plan, an excavator would work better for cutouts, cleaning sand out of plugged ditches, and replacing culverts. An excavator had been rented twice last summer. Three options were explored: buying, leasing, or renting. Buying is the least expensive over a ten year period. Jim Havill pointed out that whether or not a piece of equipment is rented by the day, week, or month, it can sit idle while rental charges are still accruing. Robert O'Donnell clarified that the total purchase price of the excavator and trailer is \$108,000, of which \$53,000 will be taken from the Equipment Reserve Fund.

Fred Doten requested the article. Kevin Geiger, Andrew Mann, and Marie Harrington discussed the \$1000 discrepancy in the budgeted transfer from the Appalachian Trail Fund and a friendly amendment was made, seconded, and accepted to vote a budget of \$1,657,863 for town and highway expenses. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

19. Hazel Harrington moved that the Town raise \$893,222 in taxes. Frank Perron seconded. Norwood Long asked what the tax rate would be and Hazel Harrington said that the figure reported in the Valley News appeared to be correct. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
20. Tim Thacher moved that the Town have the treasurer collect taxes in two installments, on August 5, 2008 and on November 5, 2008. Late payments to be subject to interest of 1% per calendar month or part thereof. All taxes outstanding on November 6, 2008 to be delinquent and subject to a penalty of 8% for the Town. Bill Emmons seconded. The motion carried by voice vote.
21. Bob Merrill moved that the Town adopt the following resolution:

***“Be it resolved, the Town of Pomfret shall enter into an Interlocal Contract with other municipalities, under Title 24 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated Section 4901, for the purpose of establishing a universal, open-access, financially self-sustaining broadband communications system to provide communication services, including high-speed Internet, telephone and cable television, to the residents, businesses and institutions of these towns.”***

Mark Warner seconded. Bob Merrill described the plans and manner in which fiber optic cable services could be extended to every home and business in town, at no cost to the Town and with no bonds issued. The Town would receive Property Tax equivalent payments and eventual profits. The project would be owned by the towns, funded by the subscribers, and operated locally. When presented with information about the project, initial responses from the Vermont Telecom Authority, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, and the Vermont Municipal Bond Bank were positive. Loreda Sola presented additional details in support of the project.

Rob Anderegg inquired as to the difference between the term “Contract” as referred to in the Warning, and the term “Agreement” as used elsewhere in supporting documents; related discussion followed. Bob Harrington, while stating that the project was a “great idea”, asked that any potential downside be discussed. Given the complexity and multi-million dollar nature of the project, he asked for details in order to determine if there would be any risk to the Town. Loreda Sola responded to the question regarding risk and financial liability, referring to the attorney who drafted the contracts for ECFiber, Paul Giuliani, discussing “skepticism about the non-recourse nature of the capital lease, and other details of the town’s financial liability”. Loreda Sola read a comment attributed to attorney Giuliani as follows:

*“The statute that allows the towns to enter into capital lease financing agreements for the provision of broadband service limits the town’s financial liability to its proportionate share of revenues generated by the utility itself. No town property is mortgaged or pledged, nor are the utility revenues themselves. The statute forbids the use of the town’s taxing authority to cover leasing payments.”....*

*.... “As a matter of law, the broadband utility has to be a self-sustaining enterprise, without any general fund subsidy. Even if the town wanted to use tax revenue to support the utility, it is barred by law from doing so.”....*

*.... “The town’s commitment is to seek an annual appropriation out of system revenue sufficient to cover that year’s lease payment. If, for whatever reason, that appropriation is not made, the town’s involvement in the utility comes to an end without any residual obligation or penalty.”*

Loreda Sola went on to say that in the event that revenues became insufficient to meet obligations, in the worst case the network would revert to the financier who funded the project. A more likely scenario would be a renegotiation of the lease and in any case the network would likely continue to function. Roger Amato, inclined to support the project, was concerned that the Town's ability to borrow might be affected were there to be a default on this approximately \$100,000,000 project, even though there would be no recourse back to the Town in the event of such a default. Ron Galotti reported that Vermont is one of the most secure bond borrowers in the country.

Frey Arnio asked who would have liability for maintenance and repairs. Loreda Sola replied that the group of 26 towns would enter into an agreement with ValleyNet, who has the requisite technical expertise and who would be contractually responsible for the operation of the network. Jon Harrington, Loreda Sola, Bob Harrington, Bob Merrill, and Ted Staples further discussed potential liability to the Town. Orson St. John asked about monthly fees and Loreda Sola listed the range of projected fees and services.

Tim Thacher explained that the banks would buy the system and then lease it back to the towns with the system as collateral. The Town would not be borrowing the money, and neither the Town’s nor the State’s

credit rating would be affected. Roger Amato asked who would be the owner of the system. Loreda Sola replied that a financial institution would own the system until the lease is paid, after which time the title would pass to the towns.

Laura Kent, speaking in favor, pointed out that this type of technology would be necessary for the increasing numbers of people working from home. She thanked those who had been working on the project and she encouraged support for the project as an important factor in maintaining quality of life. The assembly applauded. Greg Greene, John Scialdone, and Loreda Sola discussed details of construction, construction scheduling, and projected installation charges.

The article carried by voice vote.

A motion was made and seconded to recess the meeting until after the Pomfret School District Meeting, which was passed by voice vote. The meeting was recessed at 1:20 pm, to be continued after lunch and the School Meeting.

The meeting was reconvened at 2:35 pm.

22. Daphne Gratiot moved that the Town adopt the following resolution:

***"WHEREAS: Vermont's hybrid system of State- and locally-controlled education finance is not working, proven by the complicated and expensive changes enacted almost yearly into law;***

***WHEREAS: Each year more State control of the education system is either enacted into law or discussed under the guise of controlling costs, hoping to make the system work better or making it less complex, and this process will continue each year under our current education funding law, without ever producing any meaningful reform,***

***Whereas: The complexity of Act 60/68 and the associated lack of clear accountability are the ultimate drivers behind the explosive growth in the education costs;***

***RESOLVED; The Administration, Legislature and Vermonters should identify and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of breaking from Act 60/68 and moving in one of two different directions:***

***1. A public education system that is governed, managed, and primarily financed locally, or;***

***2. A public education system that is governed, managed, and financed by the State;***

***BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: There needs to be public discussion and a meaningful debate with the goal of moving to one model or the other while maintaining our commitment to a substantially equal educational opportunity for all Vermont students."***

Gerry Fields seconded. Joanna Long asked after the source of the resolution and Jim Havill explained that the Selectboard was asked by Daphne Gratiot to warn the article and that the resolution came from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT). Daphne Gratiot explained that she didn't know that the VLCT had sent out the resolution to Selectboards. It is the policy of the VLCT that the current system created an onerous burden for the Towns, and that the State should either completely take over the education system, or completely return it to the Towns.

Robert O'Donnell, JoAnn Webb, and Kevin Geiger discussed the meaning of the resolution, whether a vote in favor indicated support for either of the two choices, whether the most important aspect was the encouragement of public discussion, and that it was constraining that the resolution was limited to an "either/or" choice.

The voice vote was inconclusive and the Moderator asked for a division of the house. The motion passed, 36 voted in favor and 20 opposed.

23. Other Business:

JoAnn Webb thanked everyone for their support during the time she served as Town Clerk and was applauded.

John Leavitt requested a new picture for the Town Report.

Orson St. John moved to adjourn and Frey Arnio seconded. Upon a voice vote in the affirmative, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Andrew Mann*

Andrew Mann, Town Clerk

Minutes approved by:

Date:

*Bob O'Donnell*  
*Neil Larson*  
*Robert Sturmyton*

*March 19, 2008*  
*3/18/08*  
*3/19/08*