

Town of Huntington: 2009 Town Meeting Abstract
Tuesday, March 3, 2009 – Brewster-Pierce Memorial School

The legal Voters of the Town of Huntington, Vermont are hereby warned and notified to meet at the Brewster Pierce Memorial School in said town on Tuesday, March 3, 2009 at 9:00 A.M. to transact the following business:

Voting will be conducted on Tuesday, March 3, 2009, between the hours of six-thirty (6:30) in the forenoon (a.m.), at which time the polls will be open and seven o'clock (7:00) in the afternoon (p.m.), at which time the polls will close.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 9:04 am by Moderator Britt Cummings, who gave an introduction, made a couple of brief announcements, reviewed the rules of the meeting noting that Roberts Rules would be followed. Cummings noted a change in statute that now allows for discussion of Australian ballot items at Town Meeting, regardless of whether the polls are in the same room. The exception is that candidates cannot be discussed or politick.

Cummings also noted that it has been a town tradition for the past few years to announce the names of military personnel who are serving or have served in Afghanistan or Iraq:

Jedediah Veino is now serving in Iraq.

ARTICLE 1: Australian ballot.

ARTICLE 2: To elect all Town Officers as required by law. (Australian ballot).

Corrections to the 2008 Town Report made by the town auditors:

1. Table of Contents:
 - a. Pages 60 and 61 should be changed from 2008 to 2009
 - b. Chittenden Regional Planning Commission report on page 41 was omitted from the Table of Contents
2. on page 45 under November elections: the town auditor elected for the remainder of a three-year term ending in 2010 is Pam Hart
3. line item 319 under Lister is not shown. It is a blank line anyway.

MOTION: Les Hunton moved to approve with corrections; seconded by Doug Graver.

DISCUSSION: More corrections from the floor: word "passed" is missing from Article 6 of the Town Meeting; Don Sheldon's photo credit for the cover is not accurate.

Scott Brace raised the question of discussion of Ancient Roads since there was a report from this committee in the report.

Britt Cummings told him that this should be brought up under Other Business (Article 8).

Ken Pillsbury challenged Cummings's ruling and requested to address the topic "now because most people are here" and it was "tremendously appropriate that these people are here to have their questions answered."

MOTION: Ken Pillsbury moved to challenge the ruling; seconded by Larry Brace. The voice vote then went to a hand vote.

RESOLUTION: Motion defeated 87-22.

Heather Pembroke then asked if this discussion was appropriate, noting that this was a report of the officers and the Huntington Ancient Roads Committee (HARC) was not the governing body. It was confirmed that the narrative report of this committee was not part of the report of the governing body.

RESOLUTION: Motion to approve the report of the officers was approved on a voice vote.

ARTICLE 3: Shall the Town pay current taxes to the Treasurer of the Town and School District?

MOTION: Doug Graver moved to approve; seconded by Terry Ryan.

RESOLUTION: Motion passed on a voice vote.

ARTICLE 4: Shall the voters of the Town of Huntington increase the appraised value of the property tax exemption available for qualified veterans from \$10,000 to \$40,000 as authorized by 32 V.S.A. §3802(11) Veterans?

MOTION: Kevin Wiberg moved to approve; seconded by John Hadden.

DISCUSSION: Selectboard chair Roman Livak explained how this was brought to the Selectboard to put on the ballot. He noted that the reduction would only be on the town portion and not on the school portion of the tax and represented an aggregate \$1000. There are four veterans in Huntington who qualify for the exemption.

Skeeter Lawyer-Sanders clarified that this exemption was for disabled veterans. Livak responded that there was a 50% disability. Larry Brace said, "We should honor vets any chance we get. They serve our country."

RESOLUTION: Motion passed on a voice vote.

ARTICLE 5: Shall the voters of the Town of Huntington authorize the Selectboard to purchase a replacement plow-truck for the highway department and borrow funds, not to exceed \$140,000, plus interest? (This to be paid for over a period of not more than 5 years at the most competitive rate possible.)

MOTION: Mark Smith moved to approve; seconded by Dave Clark.

DISCUSSION: Roman Livak explained that the proposed new truck would be replacing a 2001 truck on which \$4000 was spent on repairs in 2008 and \$8000 has been spent so far

in 2009. The repairs have included brakes, brake lines, and the town is “spending a lot of money.”

Brett Lindemuth asked if the decision to ask the voters for the truck was unanimous. Livak replied that the Selectboard was “all in favor.”

In a brief exchange between Jim Fecteau and Livak, it was ascertained that the truck was an International, a tandem or single axle was being explored and the brake lines and hydraulic hoses needed to be replaced. Fecteau commented that the road crew used “too much salt.” Livak responded that the comment was “not appropriate. Yogi and the crew take good care of the trucks.” Road Foreman Clinton “Yogi” Alger stated that the floor is rotting out and the truck broke down during the last storm. There is \$35,000 in the budget for repairs of the dump body and pistons as well as other repairs to other vehicles. Three years ago, the budget had \$9000. He noted that the truck was in the capital budget for next year, but he wanted to push it up a year. The trade-in on the truck will make a good down payment.

Aaron Worthley asked how much was spent on repairs when the average truck is two years old. Alger replied that the truck would be under warranty at that point.

Worthley then asked how the \$140,000 figure was derived.

Alger replied that he had gotten quotes for both single and tandem for three different brands of trucks. The prices range from \$79,236 to 106,000 for single axle and were 106,000 to 109,000 for a tandem. Additionally, the dump body and plow would be an additional \$64,000 to \$69,000. The vehicle would be guaranteed for two years and the balance not covered by the bond [sic] [loan/budget as this is not a bond] would be paid for with a trade-in. Alger added that he changed the oil in the town’s vehicles every 250 hours.

Les Hunton asked about the replacement schedule for other trucks to which Livak replied that the town was on a seven-year cycle and this truck was now at eight years.

Terry Ryan asked where repairs showed up in the report. Livak replied line 227.

In answer to a question from Heather Pembroke about the trade-in and how it would affect the tax rate, Livak replied it would be a “penny and a half.”

Don Sheldon asked what contributes to the breakdown, wondering if the town could use alternative materials than road salt.

Alger talked about the trucks, stating that “no town goes over eight years.” He said it was costing the town lots of money and the truck went back and forth for sand. “Every six or seven years we should talk about a trade-in.”

Harvey Schugar noted that Calcium Chloride is a conducting corrosive and suggested putting a coating of zinc on the truck bed to protect it.

Ken Pillsbury cautioned voters to be “extremely cautious. This country is drowning in debt and it all starts in Huntington, Vermont. We spend money like drunken sailors. All our thinking should be tempered by the over \$500,000 debt this town took on in November.” He then went on to talk about his 27-year-old tractor and how it continues to work because he repairs it. Treat it with care, it will go on and on.”

George Mincar continued the thought about the zinc coating noting that it had to be a pre-emptive measure because “once it’s corroded, it’s the kiss of death.” He explained some of the points of the effect of salt on vehicles and how warm garages actually increase the rate of corrosion.

Skeeter Lawyer-Sanders pointed out that everyone in the room knows there “comes a time, after a certain point when maintenance costs increase exponentially and a vehicle can become unsafe to operate. Then you can’t use it. Safety can’t be compromised.”

Kevin Wiberg commented that Alger and other road crew members live in the community and also pay taxes in Huntington, so they weren’t operating in a vacuum.

Wiberg then called the question; seconded by Terry Ryan. This idea was supported by the room in a voice vote.

RESOLUTION: Article 5 passed on voice vote.

ARTICLE 6: Shall the voters of the Town of Huntington authorize the Selectboard to borrow money when needed to meet current expenses and indebtedness of the Town and in anticipation of taxes?

MOTION: Doug Graver moved to approve Article 6; seconded by Les Hunton.

DISCUSSION: Skeeter Lawyer-Sanders remarked that this was not an ordinary year. He asked if the town will be able to borrow money.

Joe Segale replied that passing this article won’t change this.

Town Treasurer Dan Stoddard shared that the town’s bank, TD Banknorth, is rated in the top seven banks in North America and still had a triple A rating.

Dori Barton asked, “Do we typically borrow money and how do we do this?” Stoddard replied that the town normally doesn’t borrow money, except for an emergency.

Mark Smith asked about the federal stimulus package and money coming into the town. Roman Livak responded that the money would come through CCMPO and VTrans. Four projects in the stimulus could be taken from the bond and there could be \$500,000-\$600,000 for “shovel ready” projects.

Duncan Keir asked that people in the room resist the urge to call the question. He suggested that if people get bored they could get up and get something to eat or coffee.

Britt Cummings explained that someone in the room could ask for the question to be reconsidered and for discussion to continue.

Scott Brace asked if there was a cap to the money that could be borrowed and Livak responded that there was none.

John Sollinger remarked that the Selectboard had authority to borrow to meet authorized expenses as voted at this meeting.

Megs Keir remembered that the town had voted \$10,000 cap on new expenses before the Selectboard had to come back to the voters. Livak said the Selectboard would honor this.

Barbara Fellitti asked for clarification: was the ability to borrow to meet emergency expenses or expenses voted in the budget at town meeting. Livak said that the Selectboard is authorized by statute to borrow for emergency repairs.

Ken Pillsbury pointed out that he had not been recognized by the moderator. After recognition was given, he pointed out that Duncan Keir can propose reconsideration, but he needs to be convincing.

Jean Sturm asked that if the town borrowed money would it be paid back by taxes. Do the current taxes cover expenses? On what occasion would the town borrow money? Livak gave the example of the road slide as an emergency expense. Joe Segale added "At the end of the year, if we have an emergency, we won't have the money to pay it off."

Gail Conley explained that borrowing in anticipation of taxes is a routine thing. "It doesn't give you a magic authority to borrow."

Skeeter Lawyer-Sanders remarked on the decline in income for federal and state government. He asked about the status of revenues to the town. Livak replied that the town's listers say that the property values aren't going down.

RESOLUTION: Article 6 passed on a voice vote.

ARTICLE 7: Shall the voters of the Town of Huntington authorize a total general fund expenditure for operating expenses of \$1,334,713, of which \$1,117,313 shall be raised by taxes, and \$217,400 by non-tax revenues?

MOTION: Doug Graver moved to approve article 7; seconded by Dave Clark.

DISCUSSION: Roman Livak explained that the article had been rewritten with explicit numbers. In the past, the tax rate was a "gray area."

Dori Barton asked about line 230 and why all the equipment repairs were lumped together. Livak explained that the expenses would be broken out.

Doug Graver said that his tax bill in July was “startling. The tax rate was higher than was sufficient for the budget that was voted.” He said that the town had collected \$115,000 more than was needed and asked what was to become of the \$115,000.

Joe Segale said that Graver was right. He explained how the tax rate is set before the audit is done and it appeared that in June, the town had a \$45,000 deficit from the previous fiscal year. However, after the audit was complete, the town had a surplus of \$1500. In order to get a more accurate tax rate, the Selectboard needed to wait 60 days after the fiscal year ended; this was not possible as the tax bills had to be calculated, printed and mailed before July 15 so as to make the 30-days mandate from the state, the first tax payment being due on August 15. As far as the remaining \$70,000, Segale explained that \$30,000 will be used toward the Carse Bridge, \$10,000 was set aside for the Capital Bond (anticipating the first interest payment) and \$30,000 was intended to be used in anticipation of the rising cost of fuel. He said \$45,000 aren't costs and the rest are accruing. “I can explain it; I can't justify it.

Graver said that the taxes that were collected weren't voted on and the townspeople should decide what to do with the revenue.

MOTION: Graver proposed this amendment; seconded by Don Sheldon: That the town shift \$115,000 to non-tax and surplus revenues and change the amount to be raised by taxes to \$1,102,313.

DISCUSSION ON AMENDMENT: Roman Livak said he was not in favor of this. Some of the money was already expended and we “don't have \$115,000.”

Dori Barton asked if the Selectboard routinely added money into the budget after it was approved. Livak said that it was an “unclean process” and there was a “fudge factor” for anticipation of unexpected expenses.

Aaron Worthley said that this should be built in as all committees submit budgets that can't change in June.

Gail Conley said “The Selectboard decided to raise the taxes and the budget without our approval.” Livak said the town's attorney had been consulted and had told the Board “what we did was a gray area.”

Conley persisted, “Did you raise the budget beyond what we approved?” Livak said yes.

Graver then said that what he brought to the floor “wasn't easy. I know how much goes into this. I sat in this chair. I want to put a stop to it. I know no dishonesty was intended by the Selectboard. I realize that this has upset people. It has been addressed;

it won't happen again. We will have taxation with representation. We should all give the Selectboard a break on a personal level."

Charlotte Barrowman addressed a question to Livak asking if there indeed was \$45,000 to be carried forward. Livak replied yes.

Dan Stoddard explained that some of what contributed to the \$45,000 "surplus" [disappearance of the deficit of \$45,000] was that the Delinquent Taxes went down. He pointed out that this could go up this year with the current economic situation. He then explained about the process for the professional audit, noting that all surplus funds flow through to next year. To state a specific amount before the audit "makes no sense."

Knox Cummin said that Graver had made the process more transparent. He asked the Selectboard what the replacement was for not spending the money. In an ideal situation, would there be a special town meeting? Livak responded that the town would be running a deficit.

Ken Pillsbury moved the question on the amendment; seconded by Lynne Reed.

RESOLUTION: Passed on a voice vote.

RESOLUTION: Amendment was defeated on a voice vote.

DISCUSSION: David Worthley then got up, commenting that the Selectboard had done a good job in general and noted that it was a "tough job." He said he disagreed with the budget and would be voting against it. "We are in tough times. People are losing their jobs all over the state. Salaries are being frozen." He said he expected the budget to be less than last year's. "We're not in good times." He encouraged the town to vote nay.

Heather Pembroke asked about line 283 (Legal fees). Livak said it was an appeal of a tax appraisal.

Ken Pillsbury said the Selectboard needed a "solid effort to get a handle on things." He said the budget could be reduced and that expenses normally in the budget are now in the Capital Fund. "We're buying now and paying later."

Pillsbury then discussed the blacktopping of Hinesburg Hollow Road, for which \$30,000 had been budgeted in 2008/2009 and another \$35,000 in 2009/2010. He asked why the Energy Committee didn't zero in on this and exercise conservation because this is a petroleum product.

Livak said the \$30,000 was not expended and the town was hoping for grant money to pay the cost of the project.

Segale explained that the road needed its final course of asphalt and the cost would be approximately \$140,000, which would be paid off in five-years through the loan unless the Federal Stimulus Package paid it all off at once.

Pillsbury pointed out that the town was spending \$8600 per mile per year for every mile of blacktop.

In answer to a question about the process should the budget be defeated, Livak explained that the town would hold a special town meeting so the budget could be implemented in July 2009.

Barbara Elliott then said that line item 283 should be reduced to \$2500 from \$30,000 because the lawsuit for which this line item had increased had been withdrawn. She made a motion to reduce line 283 by \$27,500 and level fund it; seconded by Heather Pembroke.

Town Administrator Ed Wildman asserted that the lawsuit withdrawal was verbal, but not confirmed in writing. He added that this information had been provided to the town by the town's attorney.

Clarification of the motion was to reduce the budget by \$27,500 to \$1,307,213 and the amount to be raised by taxes to \$1,089,813.

Terry Ryan asked about specifying line items and asked if statute allowed for the amending of line items. Doug Graver spoke to the fact that it did.

Mark Smith pointed out that there was a half hour until lunch and said he thought it was inappropriate for line item discussion.

Donna Lewis then said that an item can be increased by line as she had been told this by the Secretary of State's Office the previous year.

There then followed a discussion about what would happen if the budget were voted down or passed. Joe Segale said that the townspeople should "hold the Selectboard's feet to the fire – and maybe pass the budget." David Worthley said that this "was not a bottom line budget. I'd rather see you come back with decreases, cutting the budget as much as you can to run this town. I know budgets can be cut. I'd like to see you go through this exercise." George Mincar expressed frustration, saying "We pass a budget and it doesn't mean 'must spend.' In this economy, the Selectboard needs to work to spend less money." Brett Lindemuth noted that the \$27,000 reduction already suggested represented a 1% decrease.

In answer to Angela Gatesy's question about whether the Capital Budget Bond expenses approved in November was in the budget, Joe Segale replied that they are.

Further discussion around the budget reductions included Kevin Wiberg asking how much a special town meeting would cost the town (\$1000-\$1500) and Tristan Leggett encouraging the voters to pass the budget and not delay it for a future meeting because it would mean fewer people would participate. Ken Pillsbury said he had an "educated guess" that the budget could be reduced by discussion and to "keep in mind that the Selectboard are servants of the people of Huntington and are guided by our comments."

Ken Pillsbury called the question on the amendment; seconded by Heather Pembrook.

RESOLUTION: Passed on a voice vote.

RESOLUTION: The amendment to reduce the budget by \$27,500 passed on a voice vote.

DISCUSSION: Jeannette Segale asked about changes already made to the budget. Joe Segale replied that cuts had already been made.

Jennifer Esser asked if the \$45,000 surplus [over tax] from 2007-2008 was applied to this year's budget. Roman Livak said that is was "sitting in the bank;" this budget starts in July. Esser asked, "Do we usually keep money in the bank? Will the surplus at the end of the year be brought to the voters?" [Actually, 2008-2009 was the over-tax year.]

Debbie Worthley asked about the benefit package for the town's employees: was it a full contribution? Do employees contribute toward their benefits? If not, why not? Livak replied, "The town pays. The employees don't pay anything."

Pam Hart asked about the Conservation Fund (line 52) and whether it still needed to stay there. Aaron Worthley replied that it was established in 2001, accruing money over time to be used so "we could make it useful. We hope to use it to augment for other projects. It's a long process."

Back to benefits: Don Sheldon, identifying himself as the insurance guy, said that it's rare that anything more than the employee's premium is paid at 100%. Ed Booth said that he was doing research in other towns in Chittenden County and would be making a report on six towns. Lynne Reed objected to the clerk and treasurer as two part-time positions getting any benefits, stating, "It's not commonly done."

Skeeter Lawyer-Sanders counseled the Selectboard that, given the current economic situation where employment is uncertain and property values are declining, it should "hope for the best and prepare for the worst." He also said to expect a deficit: "it can't be ignored. It will trickle down to the towns."

Gail Conley noted that there was a \$22,000 deficit from last year, to which Dan Stoddard replied that it was "expenses only. Anticipated income was higher."

Doug Graver clarified that this was not what the tax bills were going to be. The budget being discussed this morning is not covered by Act 60 and Act 68. The tax rate went up 3.8%. He suggested that essential services could be provided and asked for a target figure of 6% reduction.

Duncan Keir said he was hoping for improved methods of taxation. He noted that a lot of projected budgets are "pulled out of the air."

AMENDMENT: Duncan Keir moved that due to the economic situation and comments made here, that the budget be reduced by 5%; seconded by Jeanine Carr.

It was clarified by the Moderator that the motion was to reduce the budget by \$65,360 to \$1,241,853 with \$1,024,453 to be raised by taxes.

In response to a question by Jennifer Esser as to whether this was reasonable, Roman Livak said that "some of the other stuff" will be going away.

Ed Booth asked the voters for guidance; Joe Segale said that it would take a "complete town-wide effort."

Dave Clark objected to the amendment said that it was too broad and did not give guidance; There was no due diligence of where it should be reduced.

Alan Brace, identifying himself as a member of the Conservation Commission suggested that a cut could be made to the Conservation Fund: "it's important to live today and get through the hard time."

Mark Smith asked about economic development: "Are we making any attempts in an organized fashion to encourage economic development? He commented on the town's robust small business community and asked that this be looked at comprehensively over the long term.

Susan Farrell called the question on the amendment; seconded by Dave Clark. The motion to call the question passed on a hand count.

RESOLUTION: A voice vote on the amendment was challenged from the floor; the amendment passed on a hand vote 77-66.

MOTION TO RECESS: Doug Graver moved to recess until after the school meeting; seconded by Dave Clark. The motion was defeated on a voice vote.

DISCUSSION: Miles Jenness asked for a longer town meeting and suggested moving the school meeting.

Other discussion around the suggested budget cuts included Jim Fecteau suggesting that residents make the budget meetings and give comments; Holly Stadtler pointing out the

40% increase in the Zoning Administrator budget and 29% in the Planning Commission budget; Megs Keir asking to have benefits cut.

In answer to a question about cost of benefits, Roman Livak stated that it was \$500/month single and \$1200/month family.

Doug Graver said, "Nothing we've decided will reduce our tax bill." This doesn't address the surplus money. He noted that there were no other revenue options, only the property tax.

Yogi Alger told the room that the Selectboard had already cut his pay by \$7,000 to \$52,000 and since he was on salary and was no longer getting overtime. He wanted the town to start looking at the benefits for the part-time employees. Alger objected to contributing to benefits, stating, "I'm not going to stick around and pay to work here."

Eric Krull stated that he supported the benefits for those of us who are publicly funded. Don Sheldon said that some "institutions may be cut."

Livak answered Barton's questions about line 212 – culvert thawer – and line 260 – town garage roof improvements energy conservation explaining there was not enough money in the bond to cover the costs.

Terry Ryan asked if \$115,000 was going to happen again; Segale answered, "We will not build it into the tax rate."

Dave Clark called the question; seconded by Heather Pembroke. Motion passed on a voice vote.

RESOLUTION: Article 7, as twice amended, passed on a voice vote.

MOTION TO RECESS: David Clark made a motion to recess until after the school meeting; seconded by Larry Brace.

RESOLUTION: Motion to recess passed on a voice vote.

RESUMPTION OF MEETING: Town Meeting resumed at 2:46 pm.

ARTICLE 8: To transact any other Town business thought proper when met.

DISCUSSION: Scott Brace read a statement he had prepared about the work of the Huntington Ancient Roads Committee (HARC). Among many points he made during the eight-minute statement were "How do we know these roads weren't given up?" "Were these roads documented or was it word of mouth?" Brace talked about policing trails and trash, legal fees that would cost the taxpayers money when landowners objected to the town keeping ancient roads and past tax payments being reimbursed for ancient roads, how property owners wouldn't be able to ask someone to leave the property and the

possibility of abductions. He asked about new roads that were traded for ancient roads. Where would people park when they wanted access to these roads? Brace, giving an example of a childhood swimming hole that has filled in with gravel and now cannot be excavated due to new laws, compared ancient roads as a thing of the past.

George Mincar, HARC chair, responded that the people who got involved with HARC' did this because of "love of community, love of outdoors, interest in history." Each person had his or her own opinion. He explained that Act 178 had created the opportunity for the towns to identify its ancient roads. Mincar said that the committee had researched 138 surveys dating back to 1791, converting rods to feet, and the town was lucky to have a GIS specialist on the committee who converted the data to maps. The town was also lucky as "we have a lot of those records." He stated that the committee "had no agenda for the roads." He explained that Huntington was well along in the process, having had original documents, and he and Aaron Worthley had testified before the legislature to help towns that were just beginning the process. A survey had been sent out to all landowners and the results had been published. The committee has no agenda and the town can decide what roads it wants to keep; it had pointed out which roads may be of interest.

Mincar said, "No one is going to come marching through anyone's land. I agree with many of your positions. There are some ancient roads that might be of interest of the town. Nothing will be done without the owners consent."

He said that Brace was "premature with your concern."

Committee member Joe Segale said that the number of ancient roads had been reduced to about 20. A list of the landowners had been created and the Selectboard would talk with the landowners. If the landowner objects, "I don't think it will go further from here. If the landowner is ok, then we'll discuss other issues."

Larry Brace spoke talked about the Founding Fathers, loving people and watching out for your neighbors.

Doug Graver said, "At the end of the process, there will be no more Ancient Roads. It will be black and white – there will be no more surprises." He added that this committee was created solely to identify ancient roads.

In answer to a question from Jim Fecteau about Act 178, Roman Livak said that it was in response to a house in another part of Vermont being built and the right-of-way having not been found by researchers. He explained that a title search for a typical property purchase has to only go back 40 years. As a result, many ancient roads remain undetected unless they are stated in a deed.

George Mincar explained further that roads are created by surveys and ended by discontinuance. Since towns have the right to discontinue, it's still a town road. The times period for ancient roads goes to 2015. The committee researches, identifies and looks for

official discontinuances. Any road on which no action is taken is discontinued in 2015. This will help to clear up people's property. He again said about the Vermont road law, "A road once surveyed is a road until it is discontinued."

Duncan Keir asked if the committee had exhausted its research. Mincar replied that all surveys had been exhausted. He asked residents to look through their files for letters of discontinuance or anecdotal evidence.

Keir asked at what point the public would be invited to engage in the discussion. Mincar said the Selectboard would review the material and be asked to make their first cut choices; then HARC can narrow their research. Livak added that a dozen roads might be interesting and HARC has a grant to clarify these roads before June.

Ken Pillsbury asked if when the Selectboard had criteria in hand, which wasn't weighted equally and the landowners were involved in the process, "Are you going to honor his wishes or engage in leverage to coerce him into bending to their wishes? Will the landowners wishes be the deciding factor or will the Selectboard's [wishes]?"

Livak responded, "The Selectboard will not enter into an adversarial position."

Pillsbury pushed for all the Selectboard members present to individually state whether they agreed that landowner wishes will be the deciding factor. Each one said he did.

Mincar said that the committee had tried to keep the process open. He said that the people who responded to the survey had ranked non-motorized recreation as their top priority for ancient roads, then conservation; ranked lowest was development and connection of roads.

ADJOURNMENT: Skeeter Lawyer-Sanders moved to adjourn; seconded by Ken Pillsbury. The meeting adjourned at 3:25 pm.

Town of Huntington
2008 Annual School District Meeting Abstract
Tuesday, March 4, 2008 – Brewster-Pierce Memorial School

The legal voters of the Town of School District of the Town of Huntington, Vermont are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Brewster-Pierce Memorial School in Huntington Center, Vermont on Tuesday, March 3, 2009 at one o'clock in the afternoon to transact the following business:

Voting for Australian ballot questions on Tuesday, March 3, 2009 between the hours of six-thirty o'clock (6:30) in the forenoon (a.m.), at which time the polls will open, and seven o'clock (7:00) in the afternoon (p.m.) at which time the polls will close.

CALL TO ORDER: Prior to the start of the Annual School Meeting, Representatives Sue Minter and Tom Stevens made presentations, after which they entertained questions.

Huntington School Moderator Britt Cummings called the meeting to order at 1:50 pm.

ARTICLE 1: To hear and act upon the reports of the Officers.

MOTION: Gail Conley moved to approve; seconded by Abbott Rachampbell.

RESOLUTION: The article passed on a voice vote with no discussion.

ARTICLE 2: Shall the voters of the Huntington Town School District authorize the school board under 16 V.S.A. 562 (9) to borrow money by issuance of bonds or notes not in excess of anticipated revenue for the school year?

MOTION: Dave Clark moved to approve; seconded by Heidi Racht.

DISCUSSION: In answer to a question from Skeeter Lawyer-Sanders, Andrea Ogilvie replied that this article was a formality that dealt with the issue of cash flow.

RESOLUTION: Article passed on a voice vote.

ARTICLE 3 To vote a budget of \$1,815,578 to meet the expenses and liabilities of the Town School District.

MOTION: Dave Clark moved to approve; seconded by Mark Smith.

DISCUSSION: Andrea Ogilvie answered financial questions for the Board.

Line 2220 Educational Media Services is allocated based on the number of students and staff in grades 2-4 and the number of computers in the building. The integration specialist teaches teachers. The entire system in the school district is linked.

Under salaries and benefits, the item went up because a returning teacher has more experience and a family benefit package.

Helen Keith asked about the preschool equivalent for the teacher and aide. She was told that both are certified for EEE. BPMS Principal Mark Trifilio explained that the program does not currently do home visits and that the program takes all four-year-olds and some three-year-olds. Keith asked about professional development and was told that the town gets state reimbursement.

Dave Clark asked about student activities. Ogilvie said that the Board had cut trips to the Flynn Center, but ELF remains. Rebecca Golden added that BPMS PIE (Partners in

Education) raises funds for the Flynn trips. Clark clarified that the program was to continue without tax-funded dollars.

Clark asked about transportation. Have the Huntington bus routes been changed? Ogilvie replied that one bus route has been dropped and Huntington's percentage of the transportation assessment is greater.

Lisa Bisbee expressed concern about the lack of a school nurse and would vision and hearing screenings be done. Mark Trifilio replied that the school had just hired a nurse, who would start in March.

After he remarked that the school budget was easy to read, Duncan Keir asked about medical benefits and if they were prorated?

Joanne Machia said that there was a 7% to 9% co-pay and staff was eligible for full benefits at 20 hours.

Debbie Worthley asked about professional development and was told that the Board was looking for places to cut.

David Worthley said he noticed that the low budget items had gone down while the higher budget items had gone up. "Why didn't you look at the higher items?" Ogilvie replied that the Board had looked at every single line item. All CESU items became bigger due to the increase in students with shared positions. There was "not a lot of fluff to cut out. We cut furniture." Rebecca Golden added, "We have no control over assessed costs."

Lynne Reed asked if there was any discussion about reducing the budget through teachers retiring. Co-Superintendent John Alberghini replied that the retirement package of 3-4 years ago didn't work out across the district. He also noted that Special Ed needs have increased. "We are required morally, and by law, to meet these kids' needs."

Ken Pillsbury noted that the budget had started at 8%. He said he had gone to a school board meeting and questioned by it was so much higher. Some adjustments were taken, but this was the second highest in Chittenden County (Burlington is at 9%) and he objected to this.

Kevin Wiberg said that some amazing kids had come out of the school. The costs of running operations in rural systems are higher. He said this was a challenge for rural America.

Dave Clark said that the three major costs in a school budget were salaries, health care costs and Special Education. Skeeter Lawyer-Sanders added "No Child Left Behind" and the Brigham Decision as adding to the costs.

Doug Graver asked for a couple of examples of items over which the School Board had no control. Andrea Ogilvie listed transportation, Special Ed and CESU employees.

Graver asked what entity mandated the formulas for assessment. Ogilvie replied that the allocation is to smooth out ups and downs in the student population and special needs.

In answer to Heidi Racht's question about an added position in the CESU office, Jon Alberghini replied that a position had been cut. A tech position has been added and this has grown more and more for curriculum and data management systems. This person "fixes computers."

Alison Forrest talked about health insurance, stating that "we should try to get a different system of health insurance in the state. Outside the school budget, we can support measures that ensure universal health insurance."

Dana Cummings asked about the \$53,000 changes in salaries and benefits. He asked about students populations to which John Alberghini said that Richmond and Huntington were stable; Jericho had decreased and Bolton had had a steep decrease.

Helen Keith mentioned that there would be Title 1/Special Education stimulus money forthcoming. Alberghini replied that he was "going to a meeting on Friday" with Vermont's senators.

Pam Hart asked about activities buses. Andrea Ogilvie said that BPMS did not have one and the ones for MMU and CHMS had been cut so they left earlier.

Pillsbury said that he was not comparing BPMS to Burlington and spoke about his attachment to the school. Mike Dooling said it was hard to just look at the bottom line to compare. Kevin Wiberg apologized to Pillsbury, noting that "we can't compare school to school." He then talked about how things get presented in a personal way. "Mine wasn't," he said and said that a comment that Pillsbury had made earlier about a "certain school board member" had crossed that line.

David Worthley addressed the School Board, stating, "I get perturbed when I hear 'we can't do anything about it' because of the district or the state. You have a lot of power. I encourage you to make your voices heard loud and clear."

Yasmine Ziesler identified herself as one of the Huntington representatives on the MMU Board, stating, "We have all looked very carefully at our budgets."

RESOLUTION: With no further discussion, Article 3 passed on a voice vote.

ARTICLE 4 To transact any other school business thought proper when met.

DISCUSSION: Lisa Bisbee talked about Principal Mark Trifilio's departure from the school at the end of the year. She thanked him, saying "Mr. T has created the school to be the heart and soul of the community."

ADJOURNMENT: Skeeter Lawyer-Sanders moved to adjourn; seconded by Alan Homans. The Annual School Meeting adjourned at 2:45 pm.

School Australian Ballot Questions

ARTICLE 5 To elect a Moderator for a period of one year.

ARTICLE 6 To elect a School Director for a period of three years.

ARTICLE 7 To elect a School Director for a period of two years.

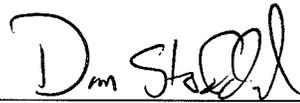
ARTICLE 8 To elect a School Director for a period of one year, to complete an unexpired three-year term, for Mt. Mansfield Union School District #17, term to begin day of election.

Minutes prepared by Heidi Racht

Submitted this 6~~th~~ day of April ~~March~~ 2009


Heidi Racht, Town Clerk
Huntington, Vermont

Approved this 6 day of April ~~March~~ 2009


Dan Stoddard, Justice of the Peace


Les Hunton, Justice of the Peace

Australian Ballot Results March 3, 2009

1400 registered voters, including 19 Buels Gore
426 voted

Local Election - Town
Auditor (3 yr) Lucinda W. Hill 362

Cemetery Trustee (5 yr) Pam Alexander 366
Delinquent Tax Collector (3 yr) Brent Lamoureux 377
Library Trustee (3 yr) two positions
 Lorraine Richland 363
 Harvey Schugar (write-in) 34
Library Trustee (1 yr) remainder of three-year term Elizabeth Greenberg 359
Lister (3 yr) Joan Sargeant 376
Lister (2 yr) remainder of three-year term
Town Moderator (1 yr) Britt Cummings 384
Planning Commission (3 yr) 1 position
Selectboard member (3 yr)
 Wayne Curley 220
 Roman Livak 172
Selectboard member (2 yr) Jim Hildebran 351
Selectboard member (1 yr) remainder of three-year term Jim Christiansen 337
Town Agent (1 yr)
Town Grand Juror (1 yr)
Town Clerk (3 yr) Heidi Racht 370
Town Treasurer (3 yr) Dan Stoddard 385

Local Election - School

Brewster-Pierce School Board member (3 yr) Rebecca Golden 353
Brewster-Pierce School Board member (2 yr) Jennifer Peterson 346
School Moderator (1 yr) Britt Cummings 365
MMU School Director (1 yr) remainder of three-year term Ken Wyman 337

The MMU budget passed: 3,894-yes, 2,076 no
The ballots from five towns were commingled and counted in Jericho.