

Town of Huntington: 2013 Town Meeting
Tuesday, March 5, 2013 – 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 5, 2013 at 9:00 A.M. to transact the following business:

Voting by Australian ballot will be conducted on March 5, 2013, between the hours of six-thirty (6:30) in the forenoon, at which time the polls will be open and seven o'clock (7:00) in the afternoon, at which time the polls will close.

Before the meeting was called to order, Holly Stadtler led the room in the Star Spangled Banner and the Pledge of Allegiance.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 9:06 am by Moderator Britt Cummings.

Representatives Tom Stevens and Rebecca Ellis addressed the meeting. Stevens announced that they had put two handouts at the back of the room – a Town Meeting Day Report from the reps and the Doyle Survey. He then went on to make brief comments about the Health Care Insurance Exchange, acknowledged that it is a difficult year in the aftermath of the recession and stated that this is the new “economic reality.”

Ellis added that it was another “tough budget” – the seventh year in a row. The cuts would be the “least painful possible.” She noted that the issues that have been brought to her attention by residents when she was campaigning last fall are the issues that are now being discussed in the Legislature: roads, health care transition to Vermont Connect, and climate change.

She informed the assemblage that the current tax system for transportation, which is based on pennies per gallon, will need to be reconsidered as Vermonters are using \$40 million less gas. Also, Vermont is the only state in the country with a rise in median income. She attributed Town Meeting with helping to create the close communities that impressed FEMA with their strength after the flooding from Irene.

OLGA HALLOCK AWARD: Town Clerk Heidi Racht presented the Olga Hallock Award to Andy and Onnie Palmer. Many comments were made by Racht. Here is the introduction and highpoints:

Recreation Field and Pavilion. Our town’s first Recreation Committee in the early 1980s took a wasteland of overgrown hayfield planted with pieces of old road equipment, cleaned it up and it is now the soccer field and horseshoe pits. Andy led the charge to build the pavilion – an outstanding structure, which has not had any work done on it since it was built.

BPMS playground. The original old playground that had one of those exciting, potentially decapitating merry-go-rounds, an old metal slide that could fry an egg in May and take the skin off the back of your legs in January, swings with the wooden seats that could knock your teeth out and one of those square jungle gyms that were great for hanging little kids by their scarves, plus a few other things. The playground committee worked very hard to get some modest new playground equipment that served the community for 15 years. It was all done with fund-raised money.

Huntington Community Theatre, Huntington Arts Festival held in the Town Hall, School volunteers and advocates, Union Meeting House Building Committee and volunteers including the addition on the back and the front porch, plus work on the UMH Bell Tower (including the removal of 150 years of pigeon droppings out of the tower by carrying it down the stairs in plastic garbage bags).

Luke Palmer Fund. In mid-November 2005, the Palmers asked that people make memorial donations to the Luke Palmer Fund, which was used to pay for the repairs to the bell tower, after their son was killed in a car accident on his way home from MMU.

INTRODUCTION: Town Moderator Britt Cummings gave an introduction, made a couple of brief announcements, and reviewed the rules of the meeting, noting that Roberts Rules would be followed. He explained about the change in the day's schedule and explained some of the specifics on how articles are brought to the floor, discussed, amended and voted.

Article 1. To elect all Town Officers as required by law. (Australian ballot).

Article 2. To hear and act upon the reports of Town Officers.

MOTION: Dave Clark moved to approve; seconded by Terry Ryan.

DISCUSSION: Selectboard chair Jim Christiansen gave an introduction, talking about the Selectboard's process for developing the budget. He thanked the people at the meeting for their participation.

Town Clerk Heidi Racht noted two corrections: warnings are on page 63, not 65; she apologized for the caption under Hannah Marshall's photo on page 60, which was butchered.

Barbara Felitti spoke on behalf of the ad-hoc Water/Wastewater Committee. She said the group had a report and gave a summary of its work. This was noted and will be included.

RESOLUTION: Article 2 passed as corrected on voice vote.

Article 3. Shall the Town pay current taxes to the Treasurer of the Town and School District?

MOTION: David Worthley moved to approve; seconded by Knox Cummin.

DISCUSSION: None.

RESOLUTION: Article 3 passed on voice vote.

Article 4. Shall the voters of the Town of Huntington authorize the Selectboard to borrow money when needed to meet the current expenses and indebtedness of the Town in anticipation of taxes?

MOTION: Rick Moulton moved to approve; seconded by Mark Smith.

DISCUSSION: None

RESOLUTION: Article 4 passed on voice vote.

Article 5. Shall the voters of the Town of Huntington authorize the Selectboard to purchase a replacement plow-truck, using \$40,000 from the Equipment Reserve Fund, \$40,000 from the general fund surplus for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012, and

**to borrow additional funds for a total purchase price not to exceed \$162,000?
(Borrowed money to be paid over a period not to exceed 5 years at the best
competitive rate.)**

MOTION: Dave Clark moved to approve; seconded by Jennifer Esser.

DISCUSSION: Jim Christiansen asked the voters for a single-axle plow truck with an 84-month warranty. This follows the capital projects plan; replaces the 2005 truck, which is on an eight-year schedule. Salient points: anticipated non-warranty expenses to the existing truck may exceed the amount of the first-year payment on a new truck and are unlikely to be recovered on trade-in such as uninstalled dump bed at \$27,000; there are low interest rates; funds from 2011-2012 surplus and equipment reserve fund will be used; three separate quotes were obtained; extended warranty will be purchased; single-axle recommended by Road Foreman.

Terry Ryan asked about \$40,000 in surplus. Would it reduce the amount in Article 7? No, replied Christiansen.

Heather Pembroke asked who did the math. Quick back of envelope calculations shows \$162,000 minus \$80,000, leaving \$82,000 over five years and asked for clarification. Christiansen explained the math and then confirmed the dump bed costs of \$27,000 uninstalled and that it was a single-axle replacing a single-axle.

RESOLUTION: Article 5 passed on voice vote.

Article 6. Shall the voters of the Town of Huntington increase the annual salary of the Town Clerk by the amount of \$10,400?

Before the discussion began, Moderator Britt Cummings talked about the process. The Town Clerk will step down from the front of the room and Assistant Town Clerk Mary Keller-Butler will take notes. He also spoke about emotions. He encouraged the speakers to express their opinions in a manner that showed respect. He also talked about having a paper ballot instead of a voice vote or hand vote; seven people were needed to move this forward, which was done.

MOTION: Dave Clark moved to approve; seconded by Lorrie Richland.

DISCUSSION: Town Clerk Heidi Racht introduced the article. She gave an overview of her request for a salary adjustment. She said she had made a request to the Selectboard and it "declined to put it in the budget" and she had then asked for it to go on the warning in order for the people of the town to discuss the request and for to explain a little about what she does as Town Clerk; it also seemed an appropriate forum to discuss the Town Clerk's role in Huntington. She acknowledged a certain discomfort level in the room and stated that the paper ballot had been set up to be done and that Don Dresser would be administering the paper ballot.

She talked about her goals when elected to create an atmosphere in the town that is professional, welcoming, inclusive, helpful and competent. People coming into the office or calling the office would be treated with kindness and respect and would get information and correct answers to their questions; to provide regular information from the town. The Town Clerk's Office is the friendly face of government and it is about customer service, including statutory responsibilities: land records, vital records, elections, licensing of dogs, minutes recording, etc. Other duties include updating the website (minutes and other information), representing the town at official and personal events, thanking people on behalf of the town, community outreach. The Town Clerk is available, the office is clean and tidy, the records are maintained.

Statutory duties are detailed that require focus and she then talked about the elections process. Highlights included outlining statutory elements of managing elections, the open and honest process, and Huntington being the only town in Vermont where the polls open at 6:30 am, a time that is busy and for which the elections staff always receives thanks.

She talked about land records dating back to the founding of the town, vital records going back to the 1700s, and other documents. She talked about the researchers who work for the property owners being able to find documents quickly and how this translates to savings to the taxpayer, who would not be paying for legal time. All documents signed at a transfer of land or a mortgage have their genesis from documents in the town vault. Work is organized and timely. Among other things, Racht talked about flexibility, opening the office for emergencies. She went on and on about a variety of topics from title searches and recording or permits, additional absentee voters, residents coming in to do their own title searches to save legal fees (a cost shift), HAVA grant funds obtained.

She said the position was not technically full time, but it is 24/7 and she is in the phone book and happy to take the phone calls. She was told to make a proposal, which she did, based on the time spent for 17 months. This does not include time spent on volunteer boards and initiatives like the repackaging shed. The discretionary expense part of the Town Clerk's budget is less than half of what it was in 2006 and she "makes do." She asked for help with the priorities, if people did not see the position as she saw it. Acknowledging the Selectboard's "fiscal fastidiousness," Racht said it is good that they are conscientious about the townspeople's money. It was, in her opinion, an issue about a fair salary for work done on behalf of the people of the town.

Terry Ryan asked about how Racht's salary compared to clerks salaries in similar-sized towns. Racht explained this: it was hard to find comparables – most work 30-plus hours with assistants close to 20 hours. Circumstances are different: clerks and clerk/treasurers, differences in properties (businesses, seasonal). Westford, higher population (40 hours at \$23 per hour, single person benefit; assistant 20 hours) and Lincoln, lesser population (33 hours, lower hourly rate, full family benefit).

Miles Jenness asked how many hours were worked and what the wage increase would be. Racht said the salaried position could not be based on hours, even though she had kept track. It wasn't a wage increase, but compensation for the calculated extra hours worked.

Don Sheldon referred to Racht as "the cornerstone of the community" and said it was uncomfortable listening to her have to talk about this preemptively. He asked what would happen if this didn't pass. Racht said she hadn't thought it through past this meeting. She would have to make some pretty big changes in who she is and how she does things if town said otherwise by its vote. Sheldon then asked what it would cost each tax payer individually.

Gail Conley said that he calculated \$6.25, based on the number of voters. "He said Racht was a "phenomenal town clerk" and he didn't think the town could pay her too much. He asked about benefits for the Town Clerk that went up and why did the Treasurer get \$4000 in the budget and the Clerk get \$300. Christiansen said the Clerk had used the opt-out and is now taking the benefits; the \$364 increase was 2% cost of living proposed. Duncan Keir asked about the Treasurer's salary increase. Dori Barton said there were two separate requests treated separately.

Wiberg talked about the separation of Clerk and Treasurer and that the town had been told that there would be no fiscal impact. He asked about expected hours for part-time

and what was working. Barton replied it was a salaried position with an assumption of a minimum of 24 hours.

After making comments, Mark Smith said he thought the Selectboard could appoint a three-person arbitration board to examine the facts more carefully and come back with a recommendation. Barton replied the Town Clerk is an elected position, not an employee, and really accountable to the voters. The Selectboard went through a deliberative process to get to this point "where it should be" and we "have a good process in place right now."

Dave Clark, after making many comments about the friendly, inviting office and increased functionality, said "When you are paying an attorney \$150 or \$200 an hour, you want them to be there the least amount of time." He encouraged people to vote for the article.

Liz Greenberg calculated that the 24-hour rate is \$20; at the longer hours, it was more like \$14. She then asked why the Selectboard felt comfortable giving the Treasurer beyond the cost of living increase without the similar conversation and if it was germane to get an answer. Dave Clark challenged the germaneness. The Moderator ruled it germane; the ruling was not challenged. Barton said Clerk and Treasurer are separate and independent and requests were treated that way. In Executive Session, information was provided and facts were different. With the Clerk, it is defined as half-time, comparables showed the salary was in line. "At the root of it, there are duties that are defined in statute and then there are discretionary duties." This discussion is about the desire of the town to support discretionary duties. Less with the Treasurer."

Rick Moulton's observation was that Olga Hallock wanted to do both positions and so the town hadn't decided to split them. The Selectboard hired a Town Administrative Assistant. According to the report, the Administrative Assistant[Administrator], on a partial year is making \$4000 more than the Town Clerk. When the position was created, the salary was half and it was brought up. "It was never our intent to have the Town Clerk making less." It's an adjustment that needs to be made for the Town Clerk.

Jennifer Esser said the job description should reflect the hours worked, so hourly rate makes sense and what's a fair salary. "I want to think long term. That person should be paid fairly." Barton said the Selectboard has no authority over the Town Clerk. "There's an assumption that at least 24 hours are being worked." About duties, "We don't review the work that's done... The idea of an amendment to dictate the number of hours is one way to institute a specific number that would carry through for future clerks ... The Selectboard is not in a position to review or supervise any of this."

Dana Cummings asked about benefits. Christiansen said benefit calculation was only there for VMERS (Vermont Municipal Retirement System); that's where that number came from. Clerk is eligible for a single person benefit, which is not tied to hours. The Town Clerk is accountable to everyone in this room. Some of the "nice things" that happen in our office are not mandated. "What is the expectation of the town for the Town Clerk?"

Patrick Reagan spoke of the substantial raise and asked what Racht's position would be if this was not given. "Would you say I haven't been granted this, so I would leave." Racht said, "I would like to think that I would take the high road and not just clean out my computer and walk out the door. It is a lot of money. When I wrote the figure down, I cringed myself because I knew it would get a reaction. And, I also felt it needed to be discussed. The people in this room, who are representing the town, make this decision. There's a motion on the floor... if you want to change something, go right ahead. If you think it's too much money... in the interest of sticker shock and also what might have

been able to happen before we got to this point, there's always room for discussion and change."

Eric Hall appreciated the issue being brought to the Town. When positions were split, the expectation was that this was a 50/50 split. There is a lack of definition. "We have become accustomed to a certain level of service from our Town Clerk and I think we simply need to decide whether that level of service is worth paying for. Personally, I believe it is. I think we are getting more than we pay for and I think we should make some adjustment."

Dana Cummings sought clarification from the Board. "The Town Clerk is an elected position and this is the place to decide that salary increase. The Town Treasurer is an elected position and the Board made a decision to increase that salary, so I'm either misunderstanding something or there's an inconsistency there." Barton said the request for the Clerk came through as a budget line request. The Treasurer's request came as a salary adjustment. The request from the Town Clerk is an evaluation of the level of service. The request from the Town Treasurer was treated differently." Cummings supported the increase.

Jim Couture said that 32 hours in the general public is full time and asked if the town wanted a full-time Town Clerk or is it a part-time position? He asked about assigning a number of hours. Barton said it was. Cummings referred to Mark Smith's earlier comments and getting a report from a committee. Would there be an increase now or would it wait until after the report?

Todd Weston said this would bring it up to \$45,000 with benefits. The Road Foreman was now getting \$45,000 and what hours did he work for his money? "Everyone's taking a hit... there are other people out there who will do it cheaper... I'll put out that option if someone thinks they can do it better, they can run for it." Barton said the Road Foreman is full-time and salaried.

Joan Carson said a lot of the non-profit and governments positions are not sustainable. "You could have an infinite number of hours that you could put in..." Personally, we have to think about the boundary that we have in terms of how much we are willing to give to our town. We also have to think about what's going to happen to the next person who takes that job in terms of salary and number of hours Are people willing to get the phone call on a Sunday. Do we expect that level of service and if so, we have to be willing to pay a decent salary for that."

Margaret Taft pointed out the hours of the Town Clerk's Office and the days that the Town Clerk is there, which she estimated is 25 hours. By adding the benefits back into the budget instead of the opt-out, this shows 23.5% increase over last year. With the additional \$10,400, this is a 56% increase for 25 hours. "I want that job." She said she felt that, for the money, it should be a fulltime job, not the 25 hours staff time in the office for the \$47,000 salary. She pointed out that the Town Clerk's increase in benefits was the third highest percentage increase in the budget.

Lisa Barrett talked about the benefits needing to be added to everyone's salary if this was going to be discussed. She talked about value-added to the office in terms of service.

Barbara Felitti asked about the discretionary items. Racht stated that the hours mentioned earlier were spent in the office when it is open and she is actually there more. To cut back, she might do form letters, not host field trips to office and other projects with kids, not call 70 people to remind them about dog registrations that translates to income for the town, not write grants, not send out reminder notices or put out signage. "I would not like to have a machine office." She said, "It's about service. I

don't think I'm overdoing it... it's what we like to do. We like our town and I would also like to say that a lot of what makes this office work is that we have a great Town Treasurer. I don't in any way want to diminish anything of Dan Stoddard. He is worth every penny he gets and more, if he asked for it, and I truly enjoy working with him. ... And it's been a pleasure working with Mary and Barbara, too. It's a good office.” David McKinstry suggested mandating hours and expecting people to put in the hours. He said it was vague and the town should look at the hours the clerk is expected to be there before she gets the money.

David Worthley complimented the work being done in the office. He thought it was a “heavy increase” in the salary. Positions were split evenly and it was fair at the time. It should be re-examined. The town needed to responsibly act as an employer. He then proposed that the Town Clerk and Treasurer be paid equally for one year and the Selectboard, as representatives of the town, select a three-person committee to review these elected positions and to come back next year and make a proposal on salary increases for elected positions. We have to look at other positions, too. Britt Cummings suggested a dollar amount so it would be cleaner.

AMENDMENT: David Worthley moved to amend the article to read \$3500, with a three-person committee appointed to review and propose in one year salary increases for elected positions in the town; seconded by Mark Smith.

DISCUSSION: Dawn Taylor spoke as a new resident, who dealt with Racht for a variety of business, including outside office hours.

AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDMENT: Barrett Grimm moved to amend the amount back to \$10,400 and keep the three-person committee; seconded by Dave Clark.

DISCUSSION: Dave Clark spoke about the value of the Review Committee; spoke to the fact that the two positions should have been dealt with the same way and called the process confusing.

Knox Cummin supported change in dollar amount – it's fair to pay for what we have already gotten in service. We should pay people what they are worth – we are getting it back elsewhere.

Terry Ryan asked about if the committee could also include job description.

Mark Smith called the question; seconded by Dave Clark.

RESOLUTION: Motion to call the question on the amendment to the amendment passed on a voice vote.

Cummings clarified that this would only change the dollar amount to \$10,400 from \$3500.

Confusion on the amendment to be voted. Cumming clarified: amendment to change amount from \$10,400 to \$3500 and add three-person review committee; amendment to amendment to change amount from \$3500 back to \$10,400; to approve this would be \$10,400 and the committee to review salaries for elected positions in town.

RESOLUTION: Amendment to the amendment approved on voice vote.

AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDMENT: Gail Conley said he wanted to amend this to include job descriptions for the Clerk, Treasurer and other elected officials. He said he wanted clarification about the authority of the Selectboard over these elected positions. If there was none, then the Selectboard would have no authority over the three-person committee. Cummings commented that someone smarter than he would be needed to explain their Selectboard's authority over elected officials. However, he pressed on to clarify the amendment: to review the job descriptions and salaries and the reporting authorities of elected officials and report back in one year. Cummings then went on say that the amendment should not have the original salary of \$10,400 in the amendment

because this amount is already in the article/amendment under discussion; seconded by Diane Gallagher.

DISCUSSION: Dori Barton asked who appointed the committee and who do they report to and how do their recommendations present themselves; are these proposed articles next year at Town Meeting? “State statute already defines very clearly the jobs of elected officials. What we’re talking about potentially is expanding upon those job descriptions. How does Huntington define... in addition to what Statute predefines and, again, how does the town envision adopting those definitions?” She went on, “The Selectboard cannot administer these descriptions. We have no control over these elected positions... We get the point... the wording is problematic for administering at any level, I think.” Jordan Davies said Barton made a very good point. The definition of Town Clerk is by Statute. And any variations in that would have to be amended to the law. It’s a new law we’re talking about here, not a group of individuals making a decision about what should or might be the case.

Jeanine Carr said, “I think we’re having a really hard time separating the person from the position. I haven’t heard anyone say Heidi’s not doing a good job. I think she does a wonderful job. People have certainly given her lots of compliments in that regard. I think the question is there’s a difference between what we expect and what we need in this town in terms of the position. The question we should be asking ourselves is do we need a fulltime Town Clerk?”

Margaret Taft asked about the \$10,400, which was clarified by Cummings. She then said she wanted to throw out a different amount. She said she didn’t understand the procedure and Cummings clarified that that she could add a different amount. But then there was confusion, but Cummings said he would entertain a change in the dollar amount. Taft then asked who decided the hours in the office and why the Clerk had Wednesday off. Who decides the hours? Barton said, “The Town Clerk decides that.”

David Worthley returned to the question about the three-member committee, noting that the Statutes can’t be changed, but what could be looked at and written into the town books is a job description. He said he put the \$3500 in the amendment because if the Committee reviews the positions and the salaries of elected officials, they at least have a point of reference to give further increases. To give a \$10,400 increase all in one jump leaves this Board not much in a position to negotiate a salary except a higher salary; it’s harder to cut people’s salary than to increase them. To be fair all around, we start out at a position only for one year and the Committee makes a recommendation. He suggested an article with the Committee’s recommendation. He went on to say that everyone who works in the world puts in a lot more hours than they get paid for or volunteer outside the job... but, let’s be reasonable to look at it in a professional manner.

Duncan Keir said that Racht is an asset, more than the new, shiny dump truck. He was confused as to what was statute and what was volunteer. “All the fringe benefits that Heidi gives to people when they go into that office are not necessarily part of the job description, but they certainly guarantee her job security. Because if she were not outgoing and providing these fringe benefits to the town, it’s conceivable that someone could come along the next election and Heidi would be voted out of there... She’s guaranteeing herself job security by doing those fringe benefits... Analytically, he said he appreciated the idea of the Committee, he found it difficult to vote for such a large salary increase, even though “she’s worth it,” because the town has a half time Treasurer and halftime Clerk and I would like to know how that compares.. to look at other towns. Not just Chittenden County. He proposed tabling the salary increase until the report of the Committee.

Caitlin Jenness is concerned that there is no oversight to the position and no one reviews how it is performed. This is not the appropriate forum – too many details and not the right thing from a fiscal point of view. She respects the Selectboard and their decision and it needs more clarity.

Rick Moulton described the 34 hours as fulltime. She just wants to get paid for the work she's doing. The Committee still has validity and the clerk and treasurer have been separate jobs, even when Olga [Hallock] was doing them. He suggested keeping the Committee to also be sure the Treasurer is also adequately compensated. He advocated for not making Racht work another year at the current rate, describing it as "cruel and unusual punishment."

Jim Couture asked about the amendment where the dollar amount was for one year or ongoing. Cummings said he thought it went until it was changed.

Jordan Davies said the job was described by Statute and he was supporting the increase because the Racht had done the job and he knew that the job had a lot of recordkeeping. He said that Racht's presentation should have had more comparables.

Jennifer Esser called points of order: the first amendment [to \$3500 from \$10,400] had specified one year and that had not been taken out, so it still stands. Also, adding the words job descriptions made it an amendment to an amendment; Cummings agreed. He then explained there was an amendment to the main article: appoint a three-person committee to review the job descriptions, salary and authority of elected town officials and report back in one year.

Confusion on whether this was an amendment or an amendment to the amendment. Cummings determined it was the latter.

MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION: Jennifer Esser moved to call the question on the amendment to the amendment; seconded by Dave Clark. Passed on a voice vote.

RESOLUTION ON AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDMENT: [appoint a three-person committee to review the job descriptions, salary and authority of elected town officials and report back in one year.] Passed 99-34 on a division of the house.

DISCUSSION ON AMENDMENT: Appoint a three-person committee to review the job descriptions, salary and authority of elected town officials and report back in one year. In answer to an inaudible question from the floor, Cummings said that there was ambiguity about whether the one year referred to the salary or the Committee's report; the way it is worded now, it's around the Committee. He proposed that someone could add in language about making the salary for one year. He deferred to David Worthley, who then said that the Selectboard should appoint this Committee. "Somebody has to appoint the Committee and the Selectboard does represent all of us as the governing body of this town." Worthley then went on to say that the Committee could be more than one year. Jim Christiansen then commented that the Board of Auditors could do this.

AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDMENT: Gail Conley said that he would amend by adding the words Selectboard would appoint; seconded by George Brisson.

DISCUSSION: None

MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION ON THE AMENDMENT: Bruce Hennessey moved; John Hadden seconded.

RESOLUTION TO CALL THE QUESTION: Passed on voice vote.

RESOLUTION ON AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDMENT: [adding the words Selectboard would appoint]. Passed on voice vote.

MOTION TO RECESS: Dave Clark moved to recess for lunch; seconded by Patrick Reagan. Defeated on a voice vote.

DISCUSSION ON AMENDMENT: Liz Greenberg commented that everything in the budget was for one year, so it would come up again next year. She added this thoughtful, two-hour discussion on \$10,000 would be followed this afternoon by the \$2 million school budget and hoped that people would stay and participate in that discussion.

MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION ON THE AMENDMENT: Liz Greenberg moved to call the question; seconded by Diane Gallagher. Passed on a voice vote.

RESOLUTION: Amendment passed on a voice vote.

MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION: Bruce Jamieson moved to call the question; seconded by Dave Clark. Passed 94-35 on a division of the house.

Don Dresser took over the paper ballot and explained the procedure. The meeting did not recess, although everyone seemed to get lunch during the paper ballot.

RESOLUTION: Article 6 passed 84-69 on a paper ballot.

Article 7. Shall the voters of the Town of Huntington vote to apply \$46,351 from the general fund surplus for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012 to reduce taxes in the next fiscal year?

MOTION: Knox Cummin moved to approve; seconded by Heather Pembroke.

DISCUSSION: The article was introduced by Jim Christiansen, who explained that the majority of the surplus (close to \$70,000) came from the highway department. The town spent \$17,000 less on salaries due to a workers compensation claim; \$19,000 not used in employee benefit deductibles; legal fees not used. Also, some highway work could not be done due to weather, and there was fuel savings on town buildings due to milder weather and insulation of town buildings, mainly the Town Garage.

DISCUSSION: Terry Ryan asked about previous articles; Christiansen said that these were not included.

David Worthley asked about the Capital Plan and did the Selectboard think about putting surpluses into a fund for this. Christiansen replied that surpluses weren't expected going forward. The Treasurer and Auditors are trying to narrow estimates for non-tax income, which have been traditionally conservative.

Knox Cummin asked about \$40,000 for the truck and was the whole surplus \$86,000, which was confirmed.

Gail Conley pointed out that in the school budget, an surplus automatically goes into tax relief, unless it is voted otherwise. He suggested the Selectboard comport itself in a similar manner. Roman Livak responded that, by law, the Selectboard had to bring the surplus before the voters.

Jim Couture asked why, since the majority of the surplus came from highway, why wasn't more used to pay for the dump truck. Christiansen replied that it was a global budget and the Selectboard decided where to apply surpluses to the best benefit of the town. This is why 50% of the surplus went to the truck.

RESOLUTION: Article 7 passed on voice vote.

Article 8. Shall the voters of the Town of Huntington authorize a total general fund expenditure for operating expenses of \$1,481,811 of which \$1,211,757 shall be raised by taxes and \$270,054 by non-tax revenue?

MOTION: David Worthley moved to approve; seconded by Diane Gallagher.

DISCUSSION: Jim Christiansen spoke on behalf of the Selectboard stating that the budget meets the needs of the taxpayers, after having met with each representative group and taking their comments.

Liz Greenberg asked why the highway salaries went down. Christiansen said overtime is part of the calculation with a four-year average.

Heather Pembroke asked about page 5 Spring and Irene Flooding Summary, where 75% was covered by FEMA, 15% by State, 10% by town. Her calculation showed the town's expense to be \$54,000 – where was this used in the budget? Christiansen said the costs were labor and that stays the same, regardless of what projects the crew was working on.

Question on whether Article 6 was included in this budget. Christiansen replied that the approved articles monies would get added when the tax rate was calculated.

Eric Palola asked about the Capital Plan and the town buildings. He asked about the funding decrease for a lot of these buildings. Christiansen said estimated costs were still to be determined. First work was to evaluate options and finding out status. Under Article 9, the Board plans to reconstitute a buildings and facilities committee.

Terry Ryan asked about line 37 and why it went down. Christiansen said it came from a request and it was less.

Heather Pembroke asked about item 81 (Fire Department) for staff. Christiansen said it was cleaning the fire station and for an administrative person to handle paperwork for the 25 volunteer members who need training and certification paperwork managed.

Megs Keir asked about page 5 Summary of Wages, which is calendar year, and the budget is fiscal. Why? Christiansen complimented her on the question. Typically, it follows the tax year for the employees.

Dave Clark asked about line 83 (paggers) . Why this has increased by a third, which is twice the actual numbers. Christiansen said the number came from Fire Chief Tate Jeffrey, based on need for new members, lost pages, and replacements, plus related supplies.

Clark then asked if the town had insurance on hand-held devices. Christiansen replied no.

Duncan Keir commended the Selectboard for keeping the budget low. He then asked about the significant increases in salaries above the 2% COLA. Although the salaries are not large, the percentage increases are large: Selectboard 30%, treasurer, listers, etc. Christiansen said the listers have been \$10 per hour for many years, for example; the Town Auditors recommended an increase to \$12 per hour. Selectboard chair would get more due to many, many more hours. Dori Barton said that the Town Treasurer had made a request in benefits line and he had made a request based on performance. She said, "Based upon review of performance in Executive Session, the Selectboard agreed to an increase in this line item." Christiansen said the Zoning Administrator is new in the last two years and, based on actuals, the proposed budget for 12-13 is less than 11-12; now it represents what he believes that position is going to take with this hourly position.

Heather Pembroke asked about lines 189 (rental) and 192 (culvert) which had significant increases. Were these because of flooding and FEMA or were these larger culverts? Christiansen responded that these, along with line 193, represent replacement of a culvert on Class 2 road, including rental of excavator.

Dave Clark said he was confused about the Town Treasurer and the fact that the Selectboard did an evaluation, especially when the Treasurer doesn't report to nor is accountable to the Selectboard. He asked about the basis and what the evaluation

entails. "Semantics aside," Christiansen said, "When we look at a line item, we look at any proposed budget line item and we evaluate it as for what is the benefit to the town and what the town receives for that line item. Does it reach the threshold of being of value to the town? And while the term evaluation gets used what happened with the treasurer is a clear description of the benefits provided to the town – the specific reporting and how that benefits the town." He talked about the professional and town Auditors comments. "It's not a salary item, it's a line item." Clark said that it sounded like the evaluation was a fiscal evaluation rather than a performance evaluation.

MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION: David Worthley called the question; it was seconded.

RESOLUTION: Article 8 passed on voice vote.

Article 9. To transact any other Town business thought proper.

1. Jim Christiansen announced the formation of a Town Buildings Committee, a 9- to 15-month commitment. He referenced the Facilities Committee from the late 1980s. Information sheets are in the back of the room.
2. Gaily Conley asked that the roles of Town Treasurer and Town Clerk be defined and printed in the next Town Report.
3. David Worthley thanked the meeting for the vote on Article 6.
4. Alison Forrest talked about Meals on Wheels, stating that the program was looking for a coordinator in Huntington. She detailed the duties of coordinator and drivers, noting that, while the meal is important, contact with the driver is more important.
5. Terry Ryan took the opportunity to promote Camels Hump Nordic Ski Area, a local 501c3, whose mission is to help people ski. CHNSA is looking for Board members.
6. Larry Brace mentioned the Sugarmakers Open House on March 23.

ADJOURNMENT: Dave Clark moved to adjourn; seconded by Heather Pembrook.
Meeting adjourned at 1:38 pm.

—±Minutes prepared by Heidi Racht from written notes and recording.

**Town of Huntington
2013 Annual School District Meeting
Tuesday, March 5, 2013 – Brewster-Pierce Memorial School**

The legal voters of the Town 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 5, 2013, at the conclusion of the Town portion of the Annual Meeting, to transact the following business:

Voting for Australian Ballot questions on Tuesday, March 5, 2013, 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: Huntington School Moderator Britt Cummings called the meeting to order at 2:04 pm.

Approval was given to non-residents to address the meeting: Gail Webb, John Alberghini and Joanne Russell.

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

MOTION: Dave Clark moved to approve; seconded by David Worthley.

DISCUSSION: No corrections.

School Board chair Breck Knauft briefly discussed the format of the meeting. He shared some “good news,” – some recent reports and evaluations, which discussed progress being made and accomplishments at Brewster-Pierce. He read excerpts from a Picus Report, completed in January 2013. Done by an independent evaluator out of Wisconsin, Brewster-Pierce was one of 18 schools selected because of being able to reduce the achievement gap with a particular focus on students who receive free and reduced lunch. Highlights of the report: “Teachers implemented a solid curriculum program complemented by multiple additional strategies designed to ensure that all students received the instructional time needed to perform at a proficient levels and above.” Based on written reports and interviews with all certified staff, it is part of a study of the Vermont School funding conducted by the Legislature. Knauft described it as a holistic study, which was complimentary of the current principal, and described the theories of action. He talked about the daily 90 minutes of reading, 90 minutes of mathematics and other programs now used in the school. Common Curriculum Units and early reading and intervention were also highlighted. [There was a round of applause.]

He spoke of another award from the USDA, the Healthier US School Challenge Gold Award, acknowledging School Cook Alison Forrest and Phys Ed teacher Chris Shackett {extensive applause}. Knauft discussed discipline and NECAP results, which show significant increases in performance over previous year and good comparison with other schools in the District. “We are pleased with the trend and pleased with the numbers.” Principal Gail Webb then went on to elaborate on the details of the test scores. Heather Pembroke asked about the addition of the one/two teacher and the recommended class size. Webb responded that parents wanted the class size kept below 20 students. Knauft said that it is predicted by the Central Office that the trends will remain the same.

RESOLUTION: The article passed on a voice vote.

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 Mark Smith.

DISCUSSION: None

RESOLUTION: The article passed on a voice vote.

ARTICLE 3: To vote a budget of \$2,113,531 to meet the expenses and liabilities of the Town School District.

MOTION: Jennifer Esser moved to approve; seconded by Ken Wyman.

DISCUSSION: Breck Knauft introduced the budget on behalf of the Board. Budget is a 10.99% increase, which is significant, so he wanted to present “drivers” and the process. Enrollment is up: 145 to 154 students. New first grade teacher – cost was not factored into the current budget, but shows up in budget to be voted. Salaries are

receiving 2.5% increase as well. With the decision to hire an additional first grade teacher, the cost of this position, as well as the consequent need for additional "Specials" (art, music, Spanish) were not incurred in the 2012-2013 budget. 14% increase in health care; fewer Federal dollars for Special Ed; Huntington's share of shared services at the District level increases with more students. On page 51, there is a chart that shows 56% of the budget increase comes from increased students. Process: budget work begins in October and the Board asked for \$40,000 in reductions from the initial budget proposal, which did not eliminate personnel. The goal was to continue the positive gain while making the best use of taxpayer dollars.

Megs Keir asked about line 185 (repair and maintenance), which has gone down. Why? For the debt service, it has gone down – has it been paid off? Knauft said the reduction was due to the fact that half of the ducts won't be cleaned this year.

Dave Clark remarked on the elimination of the Contingency Account and was it to reduce the budget, which Knauft confirmed was the case.

Harry Frank raised the issue of sharing resources and he asked about what would happen about looking outside of the town's borders. Knauft raised the RED, which "has lost a lot of steam" and it wasn't part of the subtext of the budget. The Board would work closely with the Superintendent and his team on efficiencies. John Alberghini said a new initiative is going out to bid for oil, woodchips and trash; trash is shared; Special Ed is run centrally; ideas are shared around food service. The District is looking into allowing students to attend other schools within the District. Gail Webb gave details of support given to the school as well as the interfacing of Huntington teachers with others in the District.

Duncan Keir asked about Bolton's tax rate increase of 17% and the fact that Smilie School had lost students contributed to this. Huntington has more students and also sees a tax increase. "I'm confused. If you have less students, your taxes go up; if you have more students, your taxes go up. Can you put some rationale to that?" Additional students mean more revenue, so our taxes are going up relatively less, Knauft replied. Alberghini said Smilie began paying on a bond, reduction in equalized pupils and they were also in the excess spending threshold; there is a penalty applied when you go above the level set by the State of Vermont. It's a complicated formula, but it is trying to achieve equity and fairness.

Jim Christiansen, said that on page 57, there's a mistake in the equalized three-year comparison. Knauft confirmed it was an error and the figure should be zero.

Christiansen asked the equalized spending and the \$13,387 per pupil – where does that put us? Joanne Russell replied that the State's number is \$15,400. Knauft said line 26 is \$13,387 plus \$24 plus \$1.12.

Barbara Felitti said that she had a conceptual question about the 11% increase this year and the 5%-6% last year, larger than the Governor's recommended 3%. She noted that the Selectboard "suffered" over the budget to not increase taxes, but the increases in the school budget are driving the tax rate. Is this what our future is going to be – 5-10% increases every year? Are we going to become a community where only wealthier people can afford to live because that's what our tax rate is going to be? I have a frustration when you talk about the increases in medical insurance and salaries; the town also had that. I see this as an unsustainable path. What do you see being able to be done about that? Where are we going here? Knauft said the 10.99% was "an anomaly." School budget is driven by contractual decisions that are mandated. "We make every effort to eliminate every cost that is not needed and we are responsive to the request from the community." He went on to say that the Board could entertain fewer staff, but

that would not give the good results that the school has achieved for the past several years. Mike Dooling said, "Our hands are virtually tied. We are kicking around very small numbers here." Half of the 10.99 was "doled out" by the Chittenden East assessment. He talked about the aspects of the costs and Vermont needed to approach funding of education differently. Make your vote count and communicate with the Board.

Liz Greenberg requested again that the School Board go first in the day since there needed to be more people to vote on the School budget as it is twice the size of the Town budget. She asked what the percent increase is per equalized student. 4.23% was the response from Alberghini. Greenberg said that she was surprised that the nurse and specials were increased with the increase in staff, as it is not done this way in a neighboring District. Knauft replied that nine additional students was a "tipping point" for the need for additional classes. Class time was reduced from 35 to 28 minutes and it felt like a waste of money, so specials time was increased.

Dori Barton commented on Line 83, Student Activities decreasing by \$1000, and Line 104, Professional Developer, introduced in 2012 has been steadily increasing and she wondered what it is. Gail Webb said it was hoped that fundraising would help field trips and Flynn trips continued. Line 104 is an assessed cost from CESU as a technology support for staff. Alberghini said this position, providing "embedded professional development," had been funded by Federal Title 2a and Title 1 money. With decreased funding, the costs have been passed on to the local school districts.

Megs Keir asked about Line 110, Integration Specialist, which "commands a pretty good salary" and asked for an explanation. Buried in the budget are lines 46, 47, and 48 are supplies and textbooks (\$21,000 – 1% of the budget; adding library books and computer software added to this don't bring it to \$30,000). She asked about the two positions and whether "we are required to take them at the 'charged price.'" Webb said the Integration Specialist, who is in the building three days per month by request. Professional Development budget was cut a bit, but support from CESU helps to mitigate this. Knauft said that the town is required to pay for these CESU Services. Keir noted that Lines 103, 104 and 110 needed to be clarified. Webb attempted to do this with the two positions. Knauft talked about exponential penalty with Huntington's increased enrollment and the other towns' is going down making for an accelerated increase.

Aaron Worthley questioned Webb about the Integration Specialist being in the building three days per month and "we're paying a salary that is about \$25,000?" Webb replied that it was a shared position with other schools and Huntington got three full days per month. Worthley reflected on the morning's discussion about the Town Clerk's salary. Someone asked if it was three days per month when school was in session and Webb said it was. Harry Frank talked about the drivers of costs in this budget is "caught" by towns that want to look at budgets line by line. Numbers are determined outside the context of budget setting. He then talked about collective bargaining and infrastructure. Pam Hart said she had a problem with line items that have gone up 38% to 50%. She asked about the Art Teacher going up 58%. She said she would have like to see Phys Ed go up instead. She talked about the new teacher's salary. Knauft responded that the new teacher's salary was less and the assessed salaries (Lines 35, 36, and 37) had another section. Hart responded that she had heard that earlier, but to add one more class, you had to "double both those items when the teacher is already here?" Knauft said it was a half day increase and included benefits.

Gail Conley disagreed with Harry Frank, noting that on page 58, the Central Office, the assessment is 4.5% this year and 4.9%, but the number is over \$1 million, so the dollar figure is high. He noted that the Board needed to be clear about the fact that some of the items are mandatory and others are discretionary.

Jennifer Esser wondered what the Food Service Director's salary is - she said she wanted to make sure Alison [Forrest] was getting paid fairly. "It looks like it's not very much," based on page 50 salaries. She asked the School Board to think about increasing Forrest's salary. Esser went on to ask about how the insurance worked. Are teachers required to contribute to their benefits? Mike Dooling answered that it's a "fine line" and there is now a one-year contract. Knauff said the amount varies, based on longevity. Brett Lindemuth shared that if we feel that it does become unsustainable, I'd be interested in the school board considering that "we would go our own way and have our own school." He suggested tuitioning and choice to other schools for the upper grades. Liz Greenberg asked about the Integration Support and where was the budget for technology and assessed fees. She talked about more time for Tech Integration. Alberghini responded that technology is under Education Media Services Computer Tech Support; the Executive Committee develops the budget. Greenberg asked about page 58, Central Office budget, where the deficit was carried forward. Alberghini said that the negotiated salaries and estimates had been off. Greenberg wanted to know who prepared the CESU budgets and when would taxpayers be able to weigh in on this. Alberghini said the Executive Committee makes the decision and it meets on the third Monday of the month.

Dori Barton wanted to know where the Integration Specialist (IS) and other specials - where are these salaries listed. Alberghini said the IS also worked in the summer. Barton said she was having a hard time with the math - what is this person being paid? On page 51, new classroom teacher increase is \$64,107. It was explained that the figure included benefits.

Eric Hall said he was struggling with the math as well. He works 20 days per month in one school as an IS. With technology budgets, he had an going concern with money put into computers and software and one thing is the services of the IS could be put in as a BPMS position. Alberghini then stated that the lines between the IS and Computer Tech Support were mixed up and should be reversed (Lines 110 and 111).

Dave Clark talked about the IS and the hourly rate was \$100 to \$250 per hour. He then spoke to changing the funding of education in Vermont.

Gail Conley referenced chart on page 51 where the Foreign Language person's salary did not match up with the same position on page 50. It was clarified that there were two teachers of Foreign Language.

Bruce Hennessey suggested that he was very interested in seeing the optimal class size of 17 students and the increases are there because it isn't being funded at a high enough level. He couldn't see anything more important than preparing kids for a successful life.

RESOLUTION: The article passed on a voice vote.

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

1. BPMS Principal Gail Webb discussed security at the school. After consultation with the staff, Board and CESU administration, and soliciting comments from parents through surveys, she is recommending a locked front door (all other doors are locked) with a video camera and a buzzer to let visitors in. Several residents made comments, expressing concern with the change, the outside events and culture that influences the administration to propose security changes, and whether this would, indeed, make the

school safer in that how the choices would be made to unlock the door to let people in. Also, the doors would be unlocked during drop-off and pick-up times. Jim Christiansen asked where the agenda was posted and requested that the school expand its outreach to engage the community in the discussion since no one comes to the school board meetings. He wants the school not to “shut out” the community. Webb responded by pointing out that people with mental health issues strike out at the vulnerable and the proliferation of assault weapons is especially alarming. She said she had to go with the “best odds.” At this point, residents spoke in favor of the security. Sylvia Everts asked whether people can go out, and, at that time, can they let people in. Webb stated that the exiting would continue to be safe and community groups could continue to use the building. The estimated cost would be \$4000, plus \$2000 for site work.

2. David Worthley thanked several people including Alan Campbell for providing the sound system and Moderator Britt Cummings.
3. Gail Conley asked about RED. Knauft said the Community has been disbanded and there has been no movement in Chittenden East to restart. There are State incentives. Alberghini said that some other CE Districts may bring this up. Duncan Keir asked about the discussion about Huntington being “voted off the island,” to which Knauft replied that there are no organization merger conversations or committees within the District at this point.
4. Breck Knauft recognized Board member Mike Dooling, who is not running for re-election. There was a standing ovation. Knauft pointed out that Dooling known for his response, when asked how he was, “I’m living the dream.” He noted that Dooling was a steady presence on the Board, his attention to detail when drafting the budget and his work on negotiations.

ADJOURNMENT: Dave Clark moved to adjourn, seconded by Heather Pembroke. The annual school meeting adjourned at 4:17 pm.

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 three years for Mt. Mansfield Union School District #17, term to begin day of election.

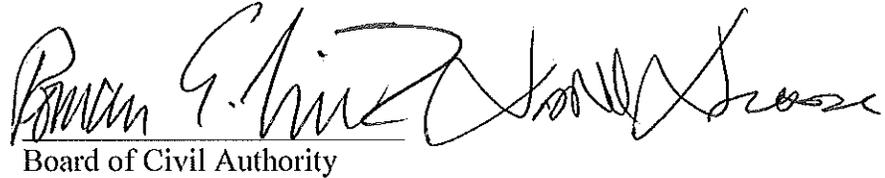
Minutes prepared by Heidi Racht from written notes and recording.

Submitted this 9 day of March 2013 (first draft) / 5 day of April 2013 (second draft),


Heidi Racht, Town Clerk, CVC
Huntington, Vermont

Approved this 16 day of April 2012


Board of Civil Authority


Board of Civil Authority

March 5, 2013 Town Election Results

376 people voted
1468 people are registered to vote in Huntington

Town Auditor, 3 years: Pamela Hart, 322

Town Auditor, 2 years remainder of 3-year term: Patricia Quinn Baumann, 323

Cemetery Trustee, 5 years: Paula Kelley, 327

Library Trustee, 3 years: Liz Greenberg, Library Trustee, 323 *two positions elected

Library Trustee, 3 years: Heidi Racht, Library Trustee, 310 *two positions elected

Lister, 3 years: Carol Wildman, Lister, 326

Moderator, 1 year: Britt Cummings, 343

Planning Commissioner, 3 years: * 3 positions

Everett Marshall, 293

Gordon Miller, 265

No one elected

Selectboard, 3 years: Roman Livak, 191

Mark Smith, 156 (write-in)

Selectboard, 2 years: Jim Christiansen, 309

Town Agent, 1 year: Mary Taft, 344

Town Grand Juror, 1 year: no one elected

March 5, 2013 School Election Results

BPMS Board, 3 years: Megs Keir, 65 (write-in)

BPMS Board, 2 years: Stacey Symanowicz, 314

MMU School Director, 3 years: Ken Wyman, 309

Moderator, 1 year: Britt Cummings, 339