

Town of Huntington: 2014 Town Meeting
Tuesday, March 4, 2014 – 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 4, 2014 at 9:00 A.M. to transact the following business:

Voting by Australian ballot will be conducted on March 4, 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, Les Hunton led the room in the Star Spangled Banner and the Pledge of Allegiance.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 9:08 am by Moderator Britt Cummings.

Representatives Tom Stevens and Rebecca Ellis addressed the meeting.

Stevens noted that the Legislature has been in session for six weeks and many things are “still in process.” He talked about the education tax and minimum wage.

The Representatives had put two handouts at the back of the room – a Town Meeting Day Report and the Doyle Survey.

Ellis also talked about the education tax, stating that there were “boiling points” as the requests are bigger now; ideas for change for finance education are flying around the Statehouse. She talked about Vermont’s “highest” test scores and graduation rate. Ellis as vice chair of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, also talked about solar net metering; village growth centers were also discussed.

Comments from residents mainly concerned the education tax. Helen Keith expressed concern that the Legislature itself “isn’t knowledgeable” and needed to commit to changing the system. People are being priced out of their homes. Larry Brace asked for simplification; Andrea Ogilvie asked about the cost drivers for education and wanted to be sure that solutions wouldn’t just be “moving money around.” Jordan Davies said that education is for the kids and he hoped the Legislature is up to this.” Stevens responded that “education is a complex thing” from the local budgets to how it gets funded, there is a “disconnect.” He then explained Acts 60 and 68, which resulted from the Brigham decision; prior to this, tax rates ranged from \$0.40 to over \$4 and these Acts were intended to equalize education funding.

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 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 and Committees.

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

DISCUSSION: Town Clerk Heidi Racht noted one correction on a name on the Grand List on page 42.

Margaret Taft asked about the Article 6 Committee summary, stating she wanted hours for a comparison. Dave Clark spoke on behalf of the Committee that the comparison was between towns for salaried positions. The valid basis for comparison is to look at salaries.

Jim Christiansen made introductory comments on the report. He also mentioned the Town Volunteer Fair on March 9 and the work of the Ad Hoc Building Committee that contributed to the capital repair report.

Barbara Felitti asked about the absence of a report from the Energy Committee, mentioning that there had been discussion the previous year about solar panels on municipal buildings, requiring long-range and strategic planning. Christiansen said the Selectboard discussed asking the Energy Committee come into an April meeting.

Taft asked for comments from the Selectboard about the Article 6 Committee report.

Clark responded that the Town Clerk and Town Treasurer are salaried positions and the Committee looked at salaries.

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: Knox Cummin moved to approve; seconded by Larry Brace.

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: John Hadden moved to approve; seconded by Andrea Ogilvie.

DISCUSSION: Don Sheldon remarked that the article was "a rather vague statement." He asked for history. Town Treasurer Dan Stoddard said that this has not been exercised "that I know of" and it is a formality in case something comes up, so there's no need to have another Town Meeting. Other comments were made in the discussion about the current extraordinary situation in Duxbury, where the town road equipment had to be used as collateral for a bank loan,

RESOLUTION: Article 4 passed on voice vote.

Article 5. Shall the voters of the Town of Huntington authorize the Selectboard to construct an equipment storage addition to the Town Sand Shed for an amount not to exceed \$48,000, using \$24,000 from the General Fund accumulated Fund Balance as of the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013 and up to \$24,000 from the General Fund Highway operating budget?

MOTION: Jim Fecteau moved to approve; seconded by Knox Cummin.

DISCUSSION: Road Foreman Clinton (Yogi) Alger explained this is a proposed 20'x100' addition to the sand shed to store equipment; enclosed with doors on the ends and on the

north side; intended to be used for cold storage of equipment. He said that the equipment was sitting outside now and this would enhance the trade-in value and keep the rust down.

Dori Barton then referenced page 7 (Capital Projects Plan) noting it was “prudent to store equipment under cover. \$24,000 would be spent from the General Fund budget and the \$24,000 from the accumulated fund balance (surplus). The latter is a net surplus of FEMA reimbursements spanning multiple years.

Salient discussion points included a bid process will be used based on the town’s purchasing policy; the scope of work is the same as last year although it is a “refined estimate,” which account for the reduction in the figure, previously listed as \$68,000 in the 2012 Town Report; no official study has been done on the payback cost of the shed, but there is a “human cost” due to time lost conducting repairs to equipment. Voting yes on this will have no effect on Article 6.

Duncan Keir said it was a good value to keep equipment under cover, but he had a problem with a line item in the General Fund and a capital expense should be brought forward in its entirety. After some discussion back and forth about the recent history of this type of purchase, Keir pointed out that the voters at Town Meeting had voted to have capital expenses of \$10,000 or more brought as an article and doing it as worded in Article 5 has “taken away the voters’ right.” After more discussion and a clarification by the Moderator, Gail Conley asked about the location of the surplus funds in the town report, specifically the \$24,000 being discussed in this article. Dan Stoddard acknowledged that the General Fund balance does not appear in the report, but “it will be in next year.” Barton said that the total in the fund balance is \$196,500 to which Conley noted that the voters could “spend more or reduce taxes” with this money. Barton went on to explain that the General Fund balance is attributed to an “influx of money for disaster relief,” due to work on projects done by the road crew and staff. She went on, “in light of disasters, the professional auditors recommended leaving one to two months operating expenses in the General Fund.” This is a new situation because of FEMA’s timing for reimbursements and, again, the Duxbury cash flow issues were mentioned.

Jim Fecteau asked for a local bids request. Barton explained the process of a disaster declaration and how the town has asked local contractors for bids and “often don’t get a response; this can relate to the timing of projects.” Fecteau asked for “a good clear description of what you want when you put out the bid.” Alger explained how he went about getting pricing: one contractor gives a price “about what I need” and anyone in town who has Workers Comp can bid.

MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION: Mark Smith called the question; seconded by Dave Clark.

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

RESOLUTION: Article 5 passed on voice vote.

Article 6. Shall the voters of the Town of Huntington vote to apply \$30,000 from the General Fund accumulated Fund Balance as of the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013 to reduce taxes in the next fiscal year?

MOTION: Barb Winters moved to approve; seconded by Kevin Wiberg.

DISCUSSION: Dori Barton introduced the article. \$30,000 will be used to reduce the tax rate, which she described as a “systematic approach to stabilize the tax rate.”

Terry Ryan said he wanted to amend the article to add “and apply the remaining General Fund accumulated fund balance of \$142,500 to establish a rainy day fund.” Britt Cummings said this was not germane as “people didn’t have a chance to have it warned.” Ryan responded that they were “tacitly told this is what is going to happen” and why not make it official?

Cummings ruled the proposal as not germane.

Skeeter Sanders challenged the Moderator; seconded by Gail Conley.

POINT OF ORDER: Lorrie Richland pointed out there was no second on the amendment.

Gail Conley provided the second.

RESOLUTION: Motion to overrule defeated on a voice vote.

After clarification that this reduction in taxes would be applied in July 2014, Dave Clark spoke against having one-time monies applied against an ongoing tax rate. It is “not a prudent course.” David Worthley agreed, talking about funding capital plan items.

Barton responded that the Selectboard had planned to make the tax reduction monies less each year: “We do not plan on surpluses when we estimate the budget.

Doug Graver talked about the Camels Hump Road bridge, which will cost the town \$80,000, and the Sheldrake bridge, which will be a multi-million project with 10% payment by the town. Joe Segale said it was “hard to divorce” the \$172,500 sitting there from the decision-making process.” He asked for how and when it is applied. Barton responded that the Selectboard would be making the decision and “wouldn’t be coming to the town.” More discussion ensued about the importance of offsetting the anticipated school tax increase; investing the money, which is done by the Town Treasurer; and/or developing a plan for it.

MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION: Margaret Taft called the question; seconded by Dave Clark.

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

RESOLUTION: Article 6 defeated on a voice vote.

Article 7. Shall the voters of the Town of Huntington authorize a total General Fund expenditure for operating expenses of \$1,525,224 of which \$1,243,866 shall be raised by taxes and \$281,358 by non-tax revenue?

MOTION: Terry Ryan moved to approve; seconded by Knox Cummin.

DISCUSSION: The article was introduced by Jim Christiansen, with discussion of salaries, increase in rescue services, and decreases in highway blacktop and anticipated legal expenses. The budget increase is 1.51%. He also said that, through an oversight, the Library employees were not given increases when it should have been 1.5%.

Rebecca Golden requested the figure of \$281,358 in the warning of the non-tax revenue, where the total on page 7 adds up to \$254,878. Dan Stoddard clarified, explaining that the total on the 2014-2015 Estimate of Itemized Estimate Income was a portion of the total; he directed the assemblage to the fifth column:

Liz Greenberg made a brief presentation about the Library budget and the Trustees’ request to the Selectboard for an increase for the staff and funds to pay substitutes.

MOTION TO AMEND: Liz Greenberg moved to increase the budget by \$1777 to \$1,527,001 with \$1,245,643 to be raised by taxes; seconded by Lorrie Richland.

DISCUSSION: Greenberg explained that the request had been made, but the Library employees were not given COLAs (Cost of Living Allowance), despite the fact that other town employees were given a range of increases. She noted that it was hard to fund volunteers to cover all the vacations and sick days that were the sole benefits for

the Library staff. Four components were included in the motion: \$662 for the Assistant Librarian, who is no longer probationary; \$50 FICA/Medicare; \$990 for substitutes (110 hours at \$9/hour); \$75 FICA/Medicare. She then talked about fundraising, asking if the Trustees should use fundraised money for salaries. David Worthley asked to stop the discussion “at this level” and questioned the forum “every time someone wants a salary increase.” Ken Wyman disagreed with the assertion. Margaret Taft wanted to defer to the Selectboard because “someone else brought a salary to this forum.” There followed several testimonials to the value of the Library. Lisa Barrett pointed out that the Selectboard doesn’t supervise the Library staff and it was “entirely appropriate for the Trustees to decide or bring to this meeting.” More discussion ensued with people expressing divergent views.

MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION: Terry Ryan called the question; seconded by Dave Clark.

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

RESOLUTION: Motion on the amendment passed 89-31 on a division of the house.

DISCUSSION: After David Worthley again raised the issue of the forum for discussion of salary increases and asked the Selectboard to speak, Jim Christiansen said that the town employee increases were not a straight COLA and the Selectboard thought it was “not prudent” to pay volunteers at the Library. It is a “nicety, not a necessity.” He went on, the Library is unique and has its own governing structure. “It’s possible that the Trustees can supplement and the Selectboard won’t know.”

The discussion then went on to address the need for job descriptions with Greenberg asserting that this was done, but not on the website. More discussion about whether this salary increase had been properly warned, the “bad precedent” of the previous year’s “slippery slope” and that the open discussion of salaries might discourage people from applying for positions.

MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION: Mark Smith called the question; seconded by Skeeter Sanders.

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

RESOLUTION: Article 7 passed by voice vote.

OLGA HALLOCK AWARD: Town Clerk Heidi Racht presented the Olga Hallock Award to Bob Spear, who was not at the meeting. Erin Talmage, director of the Birds of Vermont Museum, and Trustee Becky Cozzens, accepted the award on his behalf.

Bob Spear, a Huntington resident since 1975, he is a naturalist, teacher, author, visionary. He is 94 years old and has been a meticulous carver of exquisite birds for over 75 years. He had a major role in procuring the property which the Audubon Center now owns, allowing a vista of beautiful green fields, a sugarhouse and forest, access to swimming in the Huntington River and many trails for people of all ages to enjoy the outdoors. Among his many accomplishments that have garnered him state and national recognition are: Founder National Audubon Society Vermont Chapter, 1962; Director of the Green Mountain Audubon Center, 1971-1978; Founder of the Birds of Vermont Museum in 1987 and its first director for many years. He has been the recipient of numerous state & national awards for his work in the natural world of Vermont.

RECOGNITION OF BRITT CUMMINGS: Dori Barton presented a gift to Britt Cummings, who is stepping down as Town Moderator. Cummings has capably filled this position with verve since 1989.

He received an extended standing ovation from the entire room. Cummings spoke briefly, noting that it took “give and take to make it work.”

Article 8. Shall the Town modify the customary order on Town Meeting Day for the Town Meeting and the School District Meeting so that on odd years (2015, 2017, 2019...) the School District meeting will be held first, commencing at 9:00 A.M., with Town Meeting to follow the conclusion of the School District Meeting and that on even years (2016, 2018, 2020...) the Town Meeting will be held first, commencing at 9:00 A.M., with the School District Meeting to follow the conclusion of the Town Meeting?

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

DISCUSSION: Roman Livak introduced the article. This is a joint initiative by the Selectboard and School Board. Both Carmen Tedesco and Barb Winters spoke about choosing to take time off from work to attend the meeting. This point was re-iterated throughout the conversation, as there was confusion as to when the Town Meeting would begin. Others had concerns about the feel of the day, with Mark Smith noting that the morning meeting is business like roads and, while he valued the school, it is hard to “pay equal attention to both.” Joe Perella joked that his concern was about the cinnamon rolls being gone before he got to the meeting. Another concern included the drift to an Australian ballot and subsequent deflation of attendance at the meeting. Suggestions were made to move the School Meeting to Monday night and keep Town Meeting at 9 am on Tuesday.

MOTION TO AMEND: Skeeter Sanders moved to move the School Meeting to Monday evening; seconded by Dawn Taylor.

At this point, the Moderator consulted with Dave Clark, on the germaneness of motion, which was then dropped.

POINT OF ORDER: Speaking to the original article, Gail Conley stated, “This body cannot decide the school meeting.”

Although the assemblage could not move a meeting to Monday, it was pointed out that the two boards had discussed and agreed to run this article. It was suggested that the schedule be done on a trial basis.

MOTION TO AMEND: David Worthley proposed an amendment to insert language, so the article would read: “**Shall the Town, on a two-year trial basis, modify the customary order on Town Meeting Day for the Town Meeting and the School District Meeting so that on odd years the School District meeting will be held first, commencing at 9:00 A.M., with Town Meeting to follow the conclusion of the School District Meeting and that on even years the Town Meeting will be held first, commencing at 9:00 A.M., with the School District Meeting to follow the conclusion of the Town Meeting?**” Seconded by Mark Smith.

Discussion included points on what the people who only attend the school meeting think and the legality of the vote as it was not warned for the School Meeting. Jordan Davies pointed out that the two Boards had agreed and that makes it legal.

MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION: Mark Smith called the question; seconded by Terry Ryan.

RESOLUTION: Motion to call the question passed on a voice vote with one abstention stated.

RESOLUTION: Amendment passed 55-37 by a division of the house.

MOTION: Terry Ryan moved to start the 2015 Town Meeting Day at 8 am; seconded by Michele Grimm.

DISCUSSION: Brief discussion about attendance issues; also, the concept was floated of agreeing on amendment before proposing. Cummings said that the meeting was following Roberts Rules, which doesn't allow for this.

MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION: Don Dresser called the question; seconded by Eliot Lothrop.

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

RESOLUTION: The amendment to begin the meeting at 8 am was defeated 46-50 by a division of the house.

MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION: Dave Clark called the question; seconded by Skeeter Sanders.

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

RESOLUTION: Article 8 passed 55-41 by a division of the house.

MOTION TO RECESS: Dave Clark moved to recess until 1:30 pm; seconded by Doug Graver.

RESOLUTION: Passed on a voice vote.

The meeting resumed at 1:31 pm.

Chris Bray, Senator from Addison County, representing Huntington, addressed the room. He referred people to the legislative website. Among his remarks were comments made about public service at the State level, "Everyone is owed fair, accurate and kind service in the State of Vermont." He also stated that he supported the efforts of the Friends of Gillett Pond.

Article 9. Shall the Town reduce the number of Huntington Planning Commission members from seven (7) to five (5) members?

MOTION: Andrea Ogilvie moved to approve; seconded by Jim Fecteau.

MOTION TO TABLE: David Worthley moved to table until after the discussion of Article 10; seconded by Joe Perella.

RESOLUTION: As this could not be discussed, the motion passed quickly on a voice vote.

Article 10. Do the voters of the Town of Huntington support moving from the current model of a Planning Commission (PC) and Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) to the model of a Planning Commission (PC) and Development Review Board (DRB)?

MOTION: Mark Smith moved to approve; seconded by Jennifer Esser.

DISCUSSION: Doug Graver introduced the article, noting that the decision falls on the Selectboard to make – the article is advisory. The Selectboard hasn't taken a position. He read the description of a DRB from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT): administers decisions about local land use, quasi-judicial appeals from the Zoning Administrator, variance, conditional use, subdivision, site plan review. The Selectboard will still have a Public Hearing on this issue. Planning Commission chair Knox Cummin spoke in favor of the change, stating it would make the Planning Commission work better by dividing the burden of development review from the Planning Commission.

Dawn Taylor, who strongly opposed the article, thanked the people who had signed her petition. She stated that the Planning Commission is elected and the DRB is appointed. This should entail a town-wide vote. She also said that the HPC had missed deadlines due to a lack of a quorum. Graver responded that the Board would look at the request and consider it. There will be no special election out of sequence.

Britt Cummings suggested an amendment.

MOTION TO AMEND: Dawn Taylor moved to amend the article to read: **Do the voters of the Town of Huntington support having an Australian ballot to determine whether to move...** Seconded by Kathleen Clark.

DISCUSSION: Joe Perella supported the article; opposes the amendment as the discussion is lost in the Australian ballot process. Several people expressed concern that they did not have enough information. Others proposed that the Planning Commission self-monitor its workload by restructuring meetings or producing documents with less vigor – to not do “sweeping change” with every document revision. Various people spoke for and against the Australian ballot.

MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION: Mark Smith called the question; seconded by Joe Segale.

RESOLUTION: Motion to call the question passed 53-19 by a division of the house.

RESOLUTION: The amendment to have an Australian ballot vote was defeated on a voice vote.

DISCUSSION: In answer to a question about the composition of the DRB, Knox Cummin explained that the ZBA would be disbanded when there were enough people to fill the slots on the DRB. He went on to answer questions about regulations revisions. Aaron Worthley, a self-professed supporter of planning, pointed out that the HPC could be “doing a lot more” and “the folks to take it to the next step are too busy to do it.” He mentioned transportation planning as on the perennial long-term to-do list. Gail Conley attempted moving to table Article 10 indefinitely. Indefinite tabling is not allowed, so the suggestion went nowhere.

Other topics covered were the timing of the Selectboard’s Public Hearing and whether a DRB could be elected. Currently, variances and conditional use decisions are made by the ZBA, which is an appointed body. Some felt that the regulatory body should not be elected. Joe Segale suggested that the process be considered from the applicant’s perspective and this was a way to streamline government. Everett Marshall talked about the time that Sketch Plan Review takes away from revising documents and working with other committees. Kendra Christiana related a personal experience with the variance process, going back and forth between three boards; she supported having elected officials. Gordon Miller opposed the DRB, stating it “creates the opportunity or planning in a vacuum.” Joe Perella advocated for “one-stop shopping” where it is a benefit to apply all regulations and prevents “whip sawing.” Right now, the ZBA is administering regulations it didn’t write and it is not elected and is “out of the political process.” He described the DRB as the ZBA on steroids. Doug Graver noted that of all the towns that have chosen to implement the DRB, “no town has gone back.” He suggested that anyone who can’t attend the Selectboard’s Public Hearing submit written comments.

MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION: Breck Knauft called the question; seconded by Jennifer Esser.

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

RESOLUTION: Article 10 passed on a voice vote.

Article 9. Shall the Town reduce the number of Huntington Planning Commission members from seven (7) to five (5) members?

MOTION: David Worthley moved to move Article 9 from the table; seconded by Dave Clark.

DISCUSSION: Everett Marshall spoke about the value of having a quorum of five committed members. Jim Christiansen cited a VLCT survey from 2008 that showed Planning Commission memberships: seven members (38%) and five members (32%), noting that the request for five members was “not out of the realm of ordinary.”

MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION: Mark Smith called the question; seconded by Dave Clark.

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

RESOLUTION: Article 9 passed on a voice vote.

Article 11. To transact any other Town business thought proper.

DISCUSSION:

1. **Dave Clark:** wants to have Selectboard and Planning Commission meetings recorded.
2. **Dana Cummings:** Encouraged the Selectboard to start a Capital Fund with the monies from the Accrued General Fund.
3. **Jennifer Esser:** wanted more detail from the Article 6 Committee, including hours worked and comparison with more rural towns.
4. **Knox Cummin:** governance issue about acquiescence suggestions of all questioning of the Selectboard. “We, in this room, are the checks and balances with the Selectboard.”
5. **Knox Cummin:** speaking for Holly Stadler announced a Field Day on June 7 to celebrate the town’s 250th; more people are needed. He also mentioned the time capsule.
6. **Aaron Worthley:** valued Town Meeting and is dismayed by the calling of the question. He stated it should be “a last ditch option if two people were going back and forth seven or eight times.”
7. **Larry Brace:** we have to remember how precious our freedoms are.
8. **Debbie Worthley:** hours Town Clerk’s Office is open is a concern. For 32 hours, the office should be open five days/week. Wants hours adjusted and open on Friday.
9. **Gail Conley:** commended Britt Cummings.
10. **Megs Keir:** how to make meeting work better; exchange points of view without calling for a motion right away.
11. **Terry Ryan:** made a plug for the Camels Hump Nordic Ski Area and also the Little Library.
12. **David Worthley:** responding to comments about Article 6 Committee additional reports – “We are disbanded.”

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

—Minutes prepared by Heidi Racht.

Town of Huntington
2014 Annual School District Meeting
Tuesday, March 4, 2014 – 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, 2014, at the conclusion of the Town portion of the Annual Meeting, to transact the following business:

Voting for Australian Ballot questions on Tuesday, March 4, 2014, 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 3:21 pm.

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

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

MOTION: Ken Wyman moved to approve; seconded by David Worthley.

DISCUSSION: No corrections.

School Board chair Breck Knauft introduced new school Principal Sally Hayes. She gave an overview of her professional background, speaking of the “passion for education in our family.” She talked about the program at the school, the test scores (NECAPS and mid-year assessment results). She said she hoped to improve professional growth opportunities for writing. Hayes talked extensively about areas for growth, including more non-fiction.

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: Karen Kretzer moved to approve; seconded by Gail Conley.

DISCUSSION: None

RESOLUTION: The article passed on a voice vote.

ARTICLE 3: To vote a budget of \$2,211,993 to meet the expenses and liabilities of the Town School District.

MOTION: Ken Wyman moved to approve; seconded by Eric Krull.

DISCUSSION: Breck Knauft stated three goals for setting the budget: 1. Offer highest quality education; 2. Provide fair and reasonable compensation for staff; 3. Responsible stewards for the building and land. He also discussed the ratio of student to teachers; health care costs; using a comparison of BPMS to the CESU schools. Cost per pupil was discussed. He made a comment that the Board understand that there are “larger forces that affect education.” The proposed expenditure is a 4.66% increase over last year. Areas include 1. Special Education, increased needs of qualifying students representing an allocation change (increase) to BPMS; 2. Instructional costs increase of 3.5% which includes a position of 20 hours per week to replace Title 1 position that was

eliminated, and health insurance; 3. Transportation – additional \$9000 shared service expense for BPMS.

After a clarification of the principal's salary, Mark Smith asked about the increase in Special Education costs and it was explained that there are more young people on the autism spectrum and fewer federal dollars available. The goal is to make the services provided consistent.

Beth Sands asked about the elimination of the Title 1 position, asking if this was a fulltime professional going into part-time. The position, it was explained, was 4 days per week (.9), going to 20 hours per week over five days. Whether it is a professional or paraprofessional depends on the person who applies.

Eric Hall, speaking about integrated support, urged the Board to advocate for increased support in this area for students and teachers.

In answer to Andrea Ogilvie's question as to how many people at the Central Office that Huntington is paying for, Joanne Russell enumerated the positions [20 CESU staff are listed in the MMU Annual Report]. Helen Keith asked for a printout of the cost allocation system for reference.

RESOLUTION: The article passed on a voice vote.

ARTICLE 4: Shall the Huntington School District allocate \$33,000 to make the following capital improvements: add energy efficient windows and lighting fixtures, heating system improvements and safety upgrades to the playground and HVAC system.

MOTION: Ken Wyman moved to approve; seconded by Tiffany Michael.

DISCUSSION: Knauft introduced the article, stating the windows in the east wing of the building are 47 years old, the heaters don't work and there is poor air circulation and a safety upgrades need to be made to the playground. This is the lowest figure – "what the voters could stomach."

The playground upgrades include covering pebbles with woodchips and discussion ensued about getting the materials donated. Jim Fecteau made suggestions about sources. David Worthley asked what items weren't included if \$30,000 was based on what the Board thought the voters would approve and not necessarily on what needs to be done. Knauft listed a number of items ranging from \$12,000 to \$45,000: replacement of windows, cleaning ductwork, water filtration, blinds in classroom, parking lot upgrades. Worthley asked if there were items in the next budget that should be in this year. Megs Keir responded that the School Board had a Capital Plan with 19 categories that runs out for 20 years.

MOTION TO AMEND: David Worthley moved to increase the article to \$50,000; seconded by Larry Brace. The discussion included concerns that small increases may be a double-digit tax increase and the improvements were not itemized. Dori Barton stated support of the improvements, but said, "I feel like I'm writing a blank check."

The walk-through of the proposed expenses include woodchips (\$2000), duct work (\$2100), light fixtures (\$1500), eight windows (\$2600 apiece; total \$20,800), a carbon dioxide demand-base ventilation system (\$7450). After a couple more statements of opposition, Duncan Keir stated he had a problem with the wording of the article that grouped everything; he asked for specific articles in the future. Harry Frank opposed the amendment, saying the Board had given a message about its highest priority. Aaron Worthley said he felt the Board should not have to ask for a small expense for a safety upgrade as a separate article that should be in the general budget.

POINT OF CLARIFICATION: Michele Cummings asked if the amendment or article was being discussed.

After more discussion on the article and a question on the effect on the taxes, Joanne Russell said that \$33,000 meant \$.01 on the tax rate.

Discussion then moved on to questions about the budget, mainly about the \$100,000 deficit from last year. Russell explained that a deficit carries forward in revenues or property taxes that need to be collected. It “filtered out” to \$66,000 in property taxes to be collected.

RESOLUTION: The amendment was defeated on a voice vote.

There was more discussion on the windows with suggestions to get another price.

RESOLUTION: Article 4 passed on a voice vote.

ARTICLE 5: To transact any other school business thought proper when met.

1. Harry Frank asked about the tax rate on page 56, pointing out that it would change.
2. Gail Conley talked about Article 8, passed earlier, which changes the times of the school meeting to 9 am.
3. Jim Christiansen asked whether there was a plan or strategy to address gender equity in the building. He pointed out that there is no full-time male staff person in the school.
4. Heidi Racht pointed out that the educational tax rates for residential and nonresidential properties are the same. At the MMU meeting, a state representative stated that there are formulas in place to drop the residential and raise the nonresidential rates when they get too close. Thus, the tax rate will probably go down by the end of the Legislative session.
5. Helen Keith talked about two bills in the Legislature. She said someone from the tax department develops the education finance systems and it is “removed from the towns.” She suggested contacting legislators, who “need to be more assertive about this.”
6. Dori Barton asked about the RED (Regional Education District) discussion. Huntington’s two representatives (Megs Keir and Harry Frank) and alternate (Breck Knauft) each spoke individually. Salient points include:
 - a. Knauft: the pursuit of the RED was a collective decision; important to know it’s a voluntary merger; committee is moving forward and developing a timeline.
 - i. Pros: opportunity for curriculum and innovation; specialized elementary like a magnet elementary school for the arts; consolidate expenses; larger tax base; high turnover of school leaders and superintendents across the state; accountability (superintendent is more accountable).
 - ii. Cons: loss of local control – actual, not perceived; new governance might not drive down costs, which will be equalized throughout the district.
“Winds of change are blowing strong in Montpelier.” There may be a merger mandate by 2018.
 - b. Keir: spent a good deal of time explaining the current structure of the entire CESU: five towns with 6 elementary boards and the MMU Board, each of which has a budget.
 - i. Central Office thinks that is a lot of budgets.
 - ii. Cost of education – Some people sense that by merging the district, costs can be cut, but costs more likely will be cut by closing schools after merger..

- iii. Law changed after the RED went down, revised so only a majority of towns are needed to form merged district. Those choosing not to merge will keep own elementary district. There are unresolved questions and the law is untested.
- iv. Law allows for a couple of merger options, including a Unified Elementary District, which is currently (unfortunately) not under consideration by the CE Merger Committee.
- c. Frank: gave his professional education background, as an educator, administrator, school board member and current position on staff of the Vermont School Board Association. Explained Act 60 and Act 68 and equity for education funding. "We want to be at the table to be involved with what affect our kids, to help build a system that offers more to our kids." Right now, the Superintendent has the majority of his time occupied with governance, not leadership and management of an educational program."

Some comments:

Ken Wyman said "the RED proponents were not interested in dealing with our concerns." He then talked about how this was handled by CVU (Chittenden South). Others in the audience said that their questions had not been answered and asked the Committee representatives how to do this and Knauft suggested putting questions in writing. There was concern with the loss of community.

Helen Keith, stating that Huntington's previous vote was overwhelming, asked, "Why is this good for kids?" She then noted that the CE merger committee is going to make this happen and wanted the plan for benefits to children. The committee needs to come to the people.

Keir noted that there is a draft plan being made up by "folks who want to get it written." It will be submitted to the Department of Education later in the spring. She said she will continue to ask questions. She suggested that people go online to the CESU website and read the section on merger. The committee's meetings are on Mondays at 4:30 pm. She asked Ken Wyman to "let us know how, as a member of a new unified board that was about the same size as the current MMU Board, how you would deal with all the issues of Pre-K through grade 12." Is it possible?" she asked. "There could be a real value to education with board members that have a wide variety of backgrounds and skills."

Debbie Worthley asked, "What are the drivers? Where did this originate in Chittenden East?" Keir said, "The Executive Board chose to pursue this."

Dori Barton observed, "A lot of working is being done to draft articles rather than address the concerns of the towns that won't participate."

Helen Keith asked if the draft plan could be shown to the voters before it is submitted to the Education Department. It will be put up on the CESU website.

Gail Conley said he has been observing the House Education Committee in Montpelier and an idea for a single Superintendent for the State of Vermont has also been put forth.

Mark Smith said the concept needs a "road map. It is a very incomplete picture at this time."

Keir stated that Brewster-Pierce's per pupil spending is lower than the other districts in Chittenden East, and is safely under the state threshold for now.

Frank talked about the health of a system where the leaders leave.

Kerry Walker, a teacher in the CSSU, noted that some beneficial changes can happen without going to a RED structure. She talked about a caution about moving teachers and kids – this is a problem when it is done by someone who hasn't spent time in the school.

Andrea Ogilvie talked about looking at the “the nuts and bolts” and not just the broad ideas of merging. With each town's Grand List, is it expected that there will now be a single Grand List for education funding?

7. Breck Knauft recognized Board member Diana Lesko, who is not running for re-election. He also recognized Principal Sally Hayes for her contributions to the school.

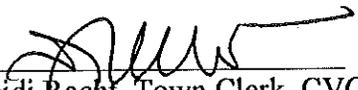
ADJOURNMENT: Heidi Racht moved to adjourn, seconded by Ken Wyman. The annual school meeting adjourned at 5:51 pm.

Australian Ballot Questions

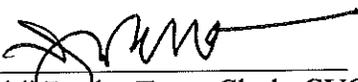
- Article 6** To elect a Moderator for a period of one year.
- Article 7** To elect a School Director for a period of three years.
- Article 8** To elect a School Director for a period of two years.
- Article 9** To elect a School Director for a period of three years for Mt. Mansfield Union School District #17, term to begin day of election.

Minutes prepared by Heidi Racht.

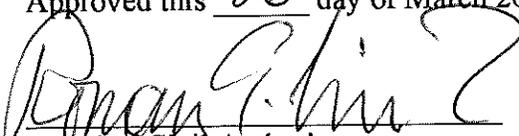
Draft submitted this 12 day of March 2014

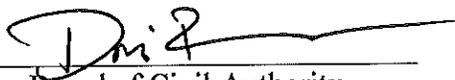

Heidi Racht, Town Clerk, CVC
Huntington, Vermont

Submitted this 26 day of March 2014

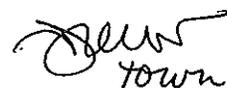

Heidi Racht, Town Clerk, CVC
Huntington, Vermont

Approved this 26 day of March 2014


Board of Civil Authority


Board of Civil Authority

Recorded March 27, 2014


Town Clerk

March 4, 2014 Town Election Results

338 people voted

1453 people are registered to vote in Huntington

Auditor; 3 years: Patricia Q. Baumann, 303

Cemetery Trustee, 5 years: Pam Alexander, 309

Library Trustee, 3 years: Paula Kelley, 308

Lister, 3 years: Don Dresser, 255 (elected) / Gordon Miller, 43

Planning Commissioner, 2 years (two positions):

Beverly Little Thunder, 23 (write-in)

Planning Commissioner, 3 years (three positions):

Mark Smith, 272

Selectboard member, 3 years: Dori Barton, 294

Selectboard member, 2 years: Everett Lewis Jr., 85 / Nancy Stoddard, 236 (elected)

Town Agent, 1 year: Mary Taft, 311

Town Grand Juror, 1 year: no one elected

Town Moderator, 1 year: Dana Cummings, 311

March 4, 2014 School Election Results

BPMS Board, 3 years: Deanna Emberley Bailey, 279

BPMS Board, 2 years: Breck Knauft, 40 (write-in)

MMU School Director, 3 years: Dave Clark, 282

Moderator, 1 year: Dana Cummings, 306