

**Dover Select Board
Pre-Town Meeting Minutes
Dover Town Hall
February 27, 2024
6pm**

These minutes are not official until approved by the Dover Select board
A video of the meeting will be available for viewing on YouTube

Select Board in person: Victoria Capitani, Sarah Shippee, Joe Mahon, Scott Salway, Dan Baliotti**arrived at 6:24pm during article 8 discussion

Also, present in person: Moderator Rich Werner, Office Manager, Jeannette Eckert

Public present in person: Tabi Freedman, Andy McLean, Travis Briggs, Mike Arbogast, Becky Arbella, Geraldine Golet, Dana Sorice, Jim McDevitt, Eric Durocher, Marco Tallini, Randy Capitani, Linda Sherman, Lauren Harkawik

Meeting Called to Order at 6:00pm by Chair Vicki Capitani who turned the meeting over to Moderator Rich Werner

Rich Werner thanked everyone for coming and for having a voice in Town decisions. Select board has done a great job in preparing for the meeting.

There are no contested races this year. However, Dan Baliotti and Sarah Shippee have exchanged Select board terms: Sarah's term will be the 3-year term and Dan's will be the 2-year term.

Any questions being asked at Town Meeting by the public must pertain to the Article being discussed. Please state your name before asking your question or making a comment.

Note from training, Articles do not have to be read out loud by the public, the moderator will read them. Also, the voters would need to approve any non-Dover resident who requests to speak

ARTICLE 1: To choose all Dover town officers for the following positions required by law to be elected at the annual meeting:

Auditor	3-year term
First Constable	1-year term
Library Trustee	5-year term – no name is on the ballot, a write in campaign could take place with 14 votes needed to win the election
Library Trustee	5-year term (2 remaining)
Library Trustee	5-year term (4 remaining)
Town Moderator	1-year term
Select Board Member	3-year term
Select Board Member	2-year term
Trustee of Public Funds	1-year term

TOWN MEETING

ARTICLE 2: Shall the voters accept the annual report of the auditors and other town officers? No comments/questions

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ARTICLE 3: Shall the voters compensate town officers as follows: Select Board Chair \$3,000 annual stipend, Select Board members \$2,500 annual stipend, Town Treasurer \$5,000 annual stipend, Town Clerk \$76,483.25 Town Auditors \$21.40/hr., all others – chairmen Vermont minimum wage plus \$1.50/hr., members Vermont minimum wage, and mileage based on the Federal reimbursement rate for the month in which the mileage occurred?

Vicki Capitani: In general, salaries are up 5% with the exception of the highway department which will be discussed during highway budget

ARTICLE 4: Shall the voters authorize general fund expenditure for operational expenses of \$2,594,444.37 for the coming year?

Vicki Capitani: Operational budget starts on page 24 and ends on page 34 of the Town Report. If all appropriations are voted in the affirmative the operational budget will be up 4.5%

Randy Capitani: What are the cost drivers for the increase?

Vicki Capitani: wages, health insurance, services, fuel

Dana Sorice: On page 31, recycling costs are up 135%, is that correct?

Travis Briggs: Costs are up and Casella is the only carrier; trying to lower the costs by introducing cardboard as a separate recycling item in which we can make some money back

Vicki: single stream recycling is almost double the other costs

Scott Salway: Want to make the cardboard aspect known, will be going public with it when ready

Sarah Shippee: By pulling out the cardboard of the single stream, we will have a smaller volume going in to single stream and what we pull out could help us break even or bring in a little bit of revenue. This is not reflected in the budget numbers

Rich Werner: Fluctuating service; Important to keep recycling and unfortunately sometimes it costs to be green

ARTICLE 5: Shall the voters authorize highway fund expenditure for operational expenses of \$1,802,926.47 for the coming year? Pages 33-34

Vicki Capitani: Highway crew salaries are up due to attrition on the staff; Trying to stabilize and keep the crew we have

Travis is now certified in CDL training instruction, which can be done in house now

Geraldine Golet: Highway costs have gone up? Percentage changes are up, is it due to cost of supplies

Travis Briggs: Yes, tried to

Geraldine Golet: Solar panels at Transfer Station, what do they power? What is the electric and heating costs for the garage?

Vicki: They do not power anything; The Town was already committed to the solar panels at the School and as such could not take advantage of any power at the TS; Town gets a payment for rent on the TS panels

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Marco Tallini: \$5,800 is an expense which is net after the solar credit for the highway; fuel heating costs are \$17,000; Transfer Station expenses are separate line items

ARTICLE 6: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$600,000.00 for the Capital Paving Fund? Page 36 of Town Report

Sarah Shippee: Trying to level fund the Capital funds, \$600,000 is being asked for; paving expenses have gone up a bit and shifted some roads Bluebrook Rd – ½ mile each year will be paved South Access Rd – was going to be taken care of during Snow Lake restoration but that is running slower than anticipated – so paving will need to be done Small surplus at the end of the year

ARTICLE 7: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$600,000.00 for the Capital Equipment Fund? Pages 38-39

Sarah Shippee: Capital equipment for highway is basically staying the same; some have shifted in different categories; costs on vehicles are going up; Last year estimated \$650,000 and brought it down to \$600,000 for this year

ARTICLE 8: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$120,000.00 for the Capital Building Improvement Fund? Page 37

Sarah Shippee: Projected \$80,000 and asking for \$120,000 this year; a number of building expenses have come up

\$20,000 for Brick Building – new carpet/flooring daycare; ongoing well expenses

\$68,000 for Garage – overhead doors, retaining wall

\$21,000 for Town Office – installing central air in effort to cut down on cooling expenses eliminating multiple window units

\$5000 for Town Hall – trim paint

\$15,000 for WD Fire Station – mold issues

**Note from training, Articles do not have to be read out loud by the public, the moderator will read them

ARTICLE 9: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$243,742.00 for The Dover Free Library? Page 77

Geraldine Golet: Questions on the Library budget: HRA expenses, Staff development, Online services, Cleaning services, Honoraria & Professional services – some items are new or expenses have increased and/or doubled over last year

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Joe Mahon is the liaison to the Library; a representative is planning to be at Town Meeting to speak to any comments or questions; some line items have been renamed to be more specific; offering more services to the public – inter library exchange

ARTICLE 10: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$30,000.00 for Deerfield Valley Rescue Inc.? Pages 104-105

Scott Salway: Made over 240 calls in Dover; They have been there to respond; Volunteer numbers have gone down – reach out if interested they are in need; Staffing 5 full time employees, 24-7 coverage; gas and fuel costs have gone up

Appropriation requests:

Wilmington & Dover: \$30,000

\$20,000 is being asked for Halifax and Whitingham this year (previously \$15,000)

\$5000 Marlboro

\$2000 in Stratton and Searsburg

ARTICLE 11: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$25,000.00 for Support and Services at Home (SASH)? Pages 101-102

Scott Salway: Outlines all the services that are offered to help folks aging in Dover; not currently a wait list, 2 openings at present. Butterfield Common – focusing on preventative care, elderly care, regular check ins
Sept 14: celebrating 10 years; Becky Arbella is the director. She is a supervisor of the health care community workers, has trained her staff as well; providing much needed services to many families
Serving 79 Dover residents on SASH; at least another 5 also being served

ARTICLE 12: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$20,000 for Dover Historical Society?
Page 94

Dan Baliotti: Two issues to work on: new windows to be installed by Home Depot and senior access to get downstairs to see exhibits – concrete steps on the side entrance that will be installed; landscaping and plowing and painting to continue

Becky Arbella: What to do with old windows? Wilmington Historical Society had an auction with its old windows and did very well

Dan Baliotti: These were installed in 1995 so not in good shape to restore or reuse

Vicki Capitani: Town Hall now has new windows that can be opened and closed easily, also done by Home Depot

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ARTICLE 13: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$3,372.00 for Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies (SeVEDS) activities? Page 98

Vicki Capitani: Thankful that SeVEDS is still using the 2010 census numbers to base this appropriation on - \$3.00 per person; a representative usually attends on Town Meeting day

ARTICLE 14: Shall the voters exempt the property of the East Dover Volunteer Fire Co., Inc. from property taxes for five years in accordance with V.S.A. Title 32 Se. 3840?

Vicki Capitani: This is done every 5 years; exception is for fire and rescue squads; came about the time when Act 60 was being proposed

ARTICLE 15: Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to apply any surplus from the current fiscal year to reduce taxes in the next fiscal year?

Vicki Capitani: Every year, if there is a surplus, it is applied

ARTICLE 16: Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to sell properties, which the Town has acquired by gift or through tax sales?

Marco Tallini: There was a small tax sale planned but all the properties were redeemed prior to the sale

Geraldine Golet: If the Town was gifted with a large parcel of land for example, what would you do with it? Seek professional advice?

Vicki Capitani: Would call in professionals to advise and get the public voters' feedback – discuss in regular meeting

Rich Werner: Believe the Town was gifted with a parcel because it was not redeemed; boilerplate article

Andy McLean: Typically, a parcel is unbuildable or unvaluable when it is gifted or at tax sale; sealed bid auction can be conducted for anything that may be a liability as opposed to something that may be used for a park or trail; this article allows the Town to hold that auction

Tabi Freedman: Some properties may be in a flood zone or river corridor that would make a property more challenging to maintain

ARTICLE 17: Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to set the tax rate sufficient to cover the approved expenses of the Town of Dover and the Town of Dover Highway for taxes due on September 15, 2024 and February 15, 2025?

No comments/questions

ARTICLE 18: Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to borrow money in anticipation of taxes?

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Rich Werner: Anyone remember the last time the Town borrowed money?
The Town Forest land and the Fire house had a bond on it
Andy McLean: Proposed to purchase land on Handle Rd for \$1 million but
that was voted down

ARTICLE 19: To discuss any items that the voters would like to discuss, and to conduct
any other business that may legally come before the voters.

Rich Werner: non-binding discussion

Vicki Capitani: prepared a summary of the budget if all items are
approved; total increase of 4.5% and over \$6,000,000 for the first time;
budget appears to be down but need to look at the whole picture; State
makes it hard to know what the school side is; Town side is pretty
concrete

Linda Sherman: School tax increase could be significant and that is the
biggest part of the taxes

Randy Capitani: if there is a surplus or grand list changes – won't
necessarily be a 4.5% increase

Andy McLean: if Capital budgets and appropriations are all voted in the
affirmative it would be a 4.5% as opposed to what the budget indicates as
a decrease – will have copies of the summary to hand out at Town
Meeting

Vicki: Capital plans are \$1.32 million and appropriations are \$322,000
plus

Rich Werner: Worry about the school tax in April and May when the
legislature makes decisions; big problem is not knowing until the State
sets the rates; would have to guesstimate in March; a lot of balls in the air
on it; School district meeting is the last Tuesday in April this year (30th) in
Dover; voting for school board members is Monday the 29th

Linda Sherman: suggest listening to the House Ways and Means
committee on YouTube as they are trying to educate people

Rich Werner: Always a moving target; the percentage paid of your income
to taxes on the school side goes up as income goes up; every time we
move further away from the voters, it gets easier and easier for the State
to spend money; having ballot votes on school budget items doesn't give
any direction on why you are voting the way you are; eventually things
may change

ARTICLE 20: Adjournment at 7:08pm by Chair Capitani

Respectfully submitted by Jeannette Eckert

Public notices of these minutes have been posted at the following locations: Dover Town Clerk's
Bulletin Board, Dover Town Meeting Bulletin Board, Dover School, Dover Free Library, East
Dover Post Office, Town of Dover Website: www.doververmont.com