

ANNUAL REPRESENTATIVE
TOWN AND TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING

March 21, 2015

Pursuant to the Warning for the Annual Town and Town School District Meeting recorded in the Town Records Volume 20, page 357, the legal voters qualified to vote, met at the Brattleboro Area Middle School Multi-purpose room on March 21, 2015 at 8:30 A.M.

At 8:37 A.M. Moderator Lawrin Crispe called the meeting to order.

Checklist attendant and Assistant Town Clerk Jane Fletcher reported that 115 Town Meeting Members were present. Moderator Crispe announced that 78 members constitute a quorum. A total of 134 members were present at various times of the day.

The moderator called upon Prudence MacKinney to lead the meeting with an opening convocation.

The moderator led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Town Clerk Annette Cappy read the opening and closing paragraphs of the Warning for the record.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: The Moderator announced procedural rules of the meeting; that the meeting was being broadcast by Brattleboro Community Television (BCTV) – Channel 10, with audio coverage by First Choice Communication; and interpretation for the deaf and hard of hearing was being provided by Cory Brunner and Elizabeth Bjerke.

The moderator also announced that Ivan Bruneau, a political science professor at the University of Lyon, France, would be observing the meeting and as part of his research, had prepared a brief questionnaire for members to complete.

Moderator Crispe called for a moment of silence for two of Brattleboro's leaders: Jesse Corum who passed away on June 27, 2014. He noted that Mr. Corum had served the Town in many ways, including his work on the Planning Commission, member of Representative Town Meeting and member of the Selectboard. He also was a member of Representative Town Meeting for many years.

And also, for Richard Guthrie who joined the Brattleboro Police Department in 1961, eventually becoming Chief of the department. Among Dick's many contributions to this community, he also served as a town meeting member for several years.

PRELIMINARY MOTIONS: Selectboard Chair David Gartenstein moved: That the following persons be authorized to sit in the reserved section with the Selectboard and School Directors: Town Manager Peter Elwell, Assistant Town Manager Patrick Moreland, Town Attorney Robert Fisher, School Superintendent Ron Stahley and Business Administrator Frank Rucker.

The motion was seconded and, with no discussion, unanimously carried.

Selectboard member Donna Macomber moved: That the electronic media be permitted to remain in the reserved section.

The motion was seconded and, with no discussion, unanimously carried.

ARTICLES: Prior to any action, the Moderator read each article and asked the pleasure of the meeting.

SCHOOL DIRECTORS' SALARIES: Under **Article 1**, Town School Director Mark Truhan moved: That the legal voters of the Town of Brattleboro School District authorize its Board of School Directors to pay the following amounts for the ensuing fiscal year: to its school directors the sum of \$2,000 each, except that the chairperson shall be paid the sum of \$3,000.

The motion was seconded. There was no discussion and on a standing-voice vote, the article was overwhelmingly adopted.

AUTHORIZATION TO BORROW: Under **Article 2**, Town School Director Kim Price moved: That the legal voters of the Town of Brattleboro School District authorize its Board of School Directors to borrow money pending the receipt of taxes, and not in excess of anticipated revenue for the school year, by the issuance of its notes or orders payable not later than one year from the date thereof.

The motion was seconded. There was no discussion and, on a standing-voice vote, the article was unanimously adopted.

FEDERAL AND STATE GRANTS: Under **Article 3**, Todd Roach moved: That the legal voters of the Town of Brattleboro School District authorize its Board of School Directors to accept and expend categorical grants and aid received from the State of Vermont and the United States Government.

The motion was seconded. There was no discussion and, on a standing-voice vote, the article was unanimously adopted.

TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT APPROPRIATION: Under **Article 4**, Jill Stahl-Tyler moved: That the legal voters of the Town of Brattleboro School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **Three Million, Two Hundred Six Thousand, Seven Hundred Fifty-Six and 00/100 Dollars (\$3,206,756)** as its share of salaries and expenses of the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union; the sum of **Two Hundred Twenty-One Thousand, Two Hundred Eighty-Eight and 00/100 Dollars (\$221,288)** as its share of bonded indebtedness; and **Eleven Million, Nine Hundred Seventy-Four Thousand, One Hundred Thirty-Four and 00/100 Dollars (\$11,974,134)** for current and other expenses for the support of the schools within the District, making in all the sum of **Fifteen Million, Four Hundred Two Thousand, One Hundred Seventy-Eight and 00/100 Dollars (\$15,402,178)**. If adopted the portion of this total sum to be raised by taxes to be only that portion not received from revenues from other sources; and that interest at the rate of one (1%) percentum per month be charged on overdue taxes from the due date of payment of town tax, school tax, installment portion thereof; and the town and town school district taxes assessed on the Grand List as of April 1, 2015 shall be due and payable in four (4) equal installments, payable to the Town Treasurer, until overdue, then the Collector of Taxes; and that such payment of installments shall be made on or before 5:00pm on the afternoons of August 17, 2015, November 16, 2015, February 16, 2016, and May 16, 2016.

The motion was seconded. Ms. Stahl-Tyler noted that this year's proposed budget represented a 2.6% increase in taxes. The actual operating budget of the Town school District was down .36% (approximately \$55,000), yet was still able to deliver the programs that parents and students had come to expect. However, after calculation of the State School Tax Rate, of which there is no local control,

the final budget reflects a 2.6% tax increase.

Following a lengthy discussion, the article was overwhelmingly adopted.

INTRODUCTION AND THANKS: Prior to taking up Article 5, Selectboard Chair David Gartenstein introduced new Town Manager Peter Elwell and offered thanks to Assistant Town Manager Patrick Moreland for his lengthy leadership during the search for a new town manager. Mr. Moreland received a standing ovation of thanks.

AUDITORS' REPORT: Under **Article 5**, Selectboard member Kate O'Connor moved: That the auditor's reports be accepted as printed. (Town and Town School District)

The motion was seconded. There was no discussion and on a standing-voice vote, the article was unanimously adopted.

EMPLOY CPA: Under **Article 6**, Selectboard Chair David Gartenstein moved: That the Town and Town School District authorize its Selectboard and School Directors to employ a certified public accountant or public accountants.

The motion was seconded. There was no discussion and on a standing-voice vote, the article was unanimously adopted.

TOWN CLERK: Under **Article 7**, Jon Allen moved: That the appointment of Annette Cappy as Town and Town School District Clerk for a term of one year from March 22, 2015, be ratified, approved and confirmed.

The motion was seconded. There was no discussion and on a standing-voice vote, the appointment was unanimously approved.

TOWN TREASURER: Under **Article 8**, David Schoales moved: That the appointment of John O'Connor as Town and Town School District Treasurer for a term of one year from March 22, 2015 be ratified, approved and confirmed.

The motion was seconded. There was no discussion and on a standing-voice vote, the appointment was unanimously approved.

TOWN ATTORNEY: Under **Article 9**, Donna Macomber moved: That the appointment of Fisher and Fisher Law Offices, P. C., as Town Attorney for a term of one year from March 22, 2015 be ratified, approved, and confirmed.

The motion was seconded. There was no discussion and on a standing-voice vote, the appointment was unanimously approved.

CAPITAL GRANT REVIEW BOARD: Under **Article 10**, the Moderator sought volunteers from the floor for the Capital Grant Review Board.

Georges Herzog and John Wilmerding volunteered to be members.

Kate O'Connor moved: That Georges Herzog and John Wilmerding be appointed to serve on the Capital Grant Review Board for a term of one year from March 22, 2015.

With no discussion, both were unanimously appointed to the Capital Grant Review Board.

TOWN FINANCE COMMITTEE: Under **Article 11**, the Moderator sought volunteers from the floor for the Town Finance Committee.

The following members volunteered: Franz Reichsman, Paula Melton, John Wilmerding, Katherine Turnas and Jackie Stromberg.

David Schoales moved: That the nominees be appointed to serve on the Representative Town Meeting Finance Committee for a term of one year from March 22, 2015.

With no discussion, all were unanimously appointed to the Town Finance Committee.

LIBRARY TRUSTEES: Under **Article 12**, John Allen moved: That the following people be appointed to serve on the Board of Trustees for the Brooks Memorial Library: Adam-Franklin-Lyons, Robert Stack, and Susan Troy for three-year terms (2015-2018), and Debra Loevy-Reyes for the unexpired term (2015-2017).

The motion was seconded. There was no discussion and on a standing-voice vote, the nominees were unanimously elected.

SELECTBOARD SALARIES: Under **Article 13**, David Gartenstein moved: That the salaries of the Selectboard be set at \$3,000.00 each; that the salary of the Chairperson be set at \$5,000.00, and that the Selectboard be authorized to fix the salaries of all other town officers for fiscal year 2016.

The motion was seconded. There was no discussion and on a standing-voice vote, the article was unanimously adopted.

AUTHORIZATION TO BORROW: Under **Article 14**, Donna Macomber moved: That the Selectboard be authorized to borrow money on its notes in anticipation of taxes, grants and other revenue.

The motion was seconded. There was no discussion and on a standing-voice vote, the article was unanimously adopted.

DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT: Under **Article 15**, Kate O'Connor moved: That the Town raise and appropriate the sum of \$78,000.00 through special assessments on properties within the Downtown Improvement District (as approved by Town Meeting March 19, 2005 and as delineated in the town ordinance entitled "Municipal Act to Establish and Regulate the Downtown Improvement District") to be used for capital and operating costs of projects of the Town's duly designated downtown organization.

The motion was seconded. Tom Franks commented that in recent years, the District's annual report had not been included in the Town's Annual Report and he urged that in future years it again be included.

Orion Barber concurred with Mr. Franks and suggested that a map of the District also be included in the Annual Report.

Stephen Phillips suggested that the map of the Downtown Improvement District be reviewed and perhaps enlarged to include what most residents believed should be our downtown area.

Rod Francis, Brattleboro Planning Director, replied that over the years, the District's boundaries had undergone revisions; However, they could also be revised at any time.

Following a very brief discussion, on a standing-voice vote, the article was overwhelmingly adopted.

MOUNTAIN HOME PARK SPECIAL BENEFIT ASSESSMENT TAX DISTRICT:

Under **Article 16**, David Schoales moved: That the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$223,276.48 through special assessments on property within the "Mountain Home Park Special Benefit Assessment Tax District" (as approved by Town Meeting, March 24, 2007 and as delineated in the Town Ordinance entitled, "Municipal Act to Establish and Regulate the Mountain Home Park Special Benefit Assessment Tax District") for the purpose of paying debt service on the capital improvements to the water and sewer lines serving the Mountain Home and Deepwood Mobile Home Parks.

The motion was seconded. There was no discussion and on a standing-voice vote, the article was unanimously adopted.

BRATTLEBORO CLIMATE PROTECTION: Under **Article 17**, John Allen moved: That the Town raise and appropriate a sum not to exceed \$10,000 to assist in funding Brattleboro's Climate Protection for Fiscal Year 2015. (July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016).

The motion was seconded. With little discussion, and on a standing-voice vote, the article was overwhelmingly adopted.

HUMAN SERVICE PROGRAMS: Under **Article 18**, David Gartenstein moved: That the Town raise and appropriate the sum of \$120,000 to support human service programs and facilities for the residents of Brattleboro to be allocated among service providers in the following manner:

AIDS Project of Southern Vermont - \$2,000
American Red Cross – VT and NH Upper Valley Region - \$4,000
Boys & Girls Club - \$13,220
Brattleboro Area Adult Day (Gathering Place) - \$2,000
Brattleboro Area Drop-In Center - \$9,600
Brattleboro Area Hospice - \$1,700
Brattleboro Senior Meals - \$7,000
Family Garden - \$2,000
Green Mountain RSVP - \$700
Health Care & Rehabilitation Services (HCRS) - \$2,000
KidsPLAYce - \$3,500
Meeting Waters-YMCA - \$5,000
Morningside House - \$9,000
Phoenix House RISE - \$3,000
Prevent Child Abuse Vermont - \$1,000
Senior Solutions - \$2,800
Southeastern Vermont Community Action, Inc. (SEVCA) - \$9,000
Turning Point - \$6,500
Vermont Adult Learning - \$700
Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired - \$680
Vermont Center for Independent Living - \$1,600
Visiting Nurse & Hospice of VT & NH - \$10,000
Windham Child Care Association - \$5,500
Windham County Safe Place Child Advocacy Center and Southeastern Unit for Special Investigations - \$1,500
Brattleboro Town School District (c/o Windham Southeast Supervisory Union) Summer Lunch Program - \$6,000
Youth Services - Big Brothers/Big Sisters - \$10,000.

The motion was seconded and a brief discussion followed. On a standing voice-vote, the article was unanimously adopted.

UNASSIGNED FUND BALANCE – GREEN STREET RETAINING WALL, ELLIOT STREET BRIDGE, MUNICIPAL CENTER LIFE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS Under **Article 19**, Donna Macomber moved: the Town appropriate the sum of \$375,000 from the Unassigned General Fund Balance as of June 30, 2014 to fund in-whole or in-part the following capital projects: Green Street retaining wall, Elliot Street bridge, Municipal Center life safety improvements, and Union Street/Western Avenue intersection improvements.

The motion was seconded, and to include revisions adopted at the March 3 Selectboard meeting and a subsequent revision to correct the procedure, Ms. Macomber moved to amend Article 19 to increase the appropriation from the Unassigned General Fund Balance by \$110,000 - to a sum of \$485,000.

Board Chair David Gartenstein explained that three years ago, as recommended by the Town Finance Committee, a policy to maintain a sum equal to 10% of the operating budget in the Town's Unassigned General Fund Balance was established. Currently the amount available in excess of the recommended reserve was approximately \$580,000. Mr. Gartenstein stated that this article could alleviate the stress of several unanticipated capital projects. While the request was in no way the entire cost of the projects, this request would assist in the total costs.

Town Manager Peter Elwell added that he believed the request for funds for these items represented a responsible manner for use of this account and in practice should be utilized primarily for one-time, unexpected expenses and the reliance of its use for daily operations should be avoided.

Following a lengthy discussion, on a standing, voice vote, the amendment was unanimously adopted.

With no further discussion, the main motion as amended by Ms. Macomber was on a standing voice-vote, unanimously adopted.

UNASSIGNED FUND BALANCE – SKATEPARK: Under **Article 20**, John Allen moved: That the Town appropriate \$20,000 from the Unassigned General Fund Balance to assist with investigating feasibility and assist in development of a skatepark at Living Memorial Park.

A lengthy discussion ensued. While most agreed that a proposed skatepark has been under discussion for several years and a park would be welcomed, many objected to the use of the Unassigned Fund Balance for the project. Others were concerned that if the feasibility of building the project at Living Memorial Park disintegrated, the inclusion of the location 'Living Memorial Park' in the article, could potentially affect the outcome if the language remained unchanged. Town Manager Peter Elwell added that while the process to approve the site location was not complete, the prospects of locating the park at the upper level of Living Memorial Park were good.

Hyam Siegel moved to amend the motion by removing the language *at Living Memorial Park*. The motion was seconded and generated little discussion.

On a division of the meeting, with 66 in favor and 55 opposed, Mr. Siegel's motion to amend was adopted.

With only a brief discussion following, the main motion, as amended by Mr. Siegel was adopted.

RECESS: At 12.40 p.m., the Moderator declared a recess.

At 1:49 P.M, after confirming the presence of a quorum, the Moderator reconvened the meeting.

ACQUISITION OF CAPITAL ASSETS – POLICE CRUISER, GRADER, DUMP TRUCK: Under **Article 21**, Kate O'Connor moved: that the Town authorize the following acquisition of capital assets, to wit: (a) replacement of a 2008 Police cruiser and a 2011 Police cruiser (combined cost of approximately \$84,000), (b) replacement of a 1995 726A grader (approximately \$340,000), and (c) replacement of a 2003 dump truck (approximately \$208,000), at an estimated total cost of \$632,000, and to finance the same through debt instruments other than bonds for a term not to exceed five (5) years.

The motion was seconded. Following a brief discussion, on a standing voice-vote, the article was overwhelmingly adopted.

ONE PERCENT LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX – Under **Article 22**, David Schoales moved: That the Town assess a one percent (1%) local option sales tax in accordance with 24 V.S.A. Section 138.

Immediately following the reading of the article and subsequent motion, Kurt Daims moved to cease debate. The motion was seconded and on a standing, voice-vote, overwhelmingly defeated.

A lengthy debate ensued. Paramount to the discussion was concern for area merchants whose businesses might be adversely affected by the implementation of an additional tax. There was also much concern regarding the extent to which property taxes would continue to rise without implementation of a 1% option sales tax to help defray the Town's expenses and liabilities.

Also of concern, was that the question had been on the March 3, ballot as an advisory question for town-wide consideration. The article had been defeated with 361 in favor and 672 opposed and several members believed that the meeting should honor the vote of the citizens.

The administration was asked "If the options tax was passed, would the Town have the ability to administer it rather than sending the revenue to the state for administration and then Brattleboro's share returned?" Town Manger Elwell explained that State Statute did not allow for the Town to administer the revenue.

Dwight Holmes moved to cease debate; With well-more than the required two-thirds majority reached, debate ceased.

The motion was, on a standing division of the meeting, defeated, with 44 in favor of the article and 78 opposed.

TOWN APPROPRIATION: Under **Article 23, (REVISED to include revisions adopted at the 3/3 Selectboard meeting and subsequent revisions made prior to the 3/17 SB meeting):**

I move that the Selectboard be authorized to raise, appropriate and expend the sum not to exceed \$15,307,899 (fifteen million, three hundred seven thousand, eight hundred nine-nine dollars) in order to defray to that extent all general fund expenses for the period of July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016, including all highway and Windham County taxes, and that the Selectboard be authorized to expend, in addition, any sum authorized for special purpose under any article contained in the warning for this meeting or any special Representative Town Meeting. This motion includes the following funding sources: \$96,265 (ninety-six thousand, two hundred sixty-five dollars) to be appropriated from the Unassigned

General Fund Balance, \$13,473,675 (thirteen million, four hundred seventy-three thousand, six hundred seventy-five dollars) to be collected in property taxes, and the balance to be comprised of all other sources of revenue collected by the Town. This motion also provides that the Town taxes assessed on the Grand List as April 1, 2015, shall be due and payable in four (4) equal installments payable to the Town Treasurer until overdue, then to the Collector of Taxes; that such payment of the installments shall be made on or before 5:00pm on August 17, 2015, November 16, 2015, February 16, 2016, and May 16, 2016; and that interest at a rate of one percent (1%) per month be charged from the due date of payment on any overdue payment of the town tax, installment, or portion thereof; and that a penalty of eight percent (8%) be charged on any overdue payment that remains due and owing on May 17, 2016.

The motion was seconded. Mr. Gartenstein stated that the goal of the selectboard was to provide a responsible, level funded budget that would provide the services that the town had come to expect. He added that the Board had looked forward to the arrival of a new town manager and a comprehensive review of town services in order to ascertain that those services were being delivered in the most cost-effective way possible: that 65% of the operating budget was personnel; that Pay-As-You-Throw trash disposal would take effect on July 1 and significant budgetary changes had been required in order to enact the State mandated program. Salaries were also slated to increase by approximately \$200,000. He noted that the original budget approved by the Selectboard included \$140,000 interest for new borrowing for the Police/Fire Facility Project; however, the revised budget being presented at the meeting reflected removal of that amount, since there was a likelihood of significant changes to the project, and the town would not be able to borrow additional funds until Representative Town Meeting re-voted the issue. Another factor in maintaining the level funded budget was securing fuel costs at a significantly lower amount than originally anticipated.

The above items, combined with \$96,265 from the Unassigned General Fund Balance resulted in a level service, level funded budget. Mr. Gartenstein ended by urging the meeting to approve the proposed budget.

Walter Slowinski moved to amend Mr. Gartenstein's motion by removing \$96,265 of proposed funding to be taken from the Unassigned General Fund Balance. He clarified that he was not reducing the original budget amount of \$15,307,899, only the source of the \$96,265. The amount of \$96,265 would then be added to that portion to be raised by property taxes, increasing the amount to be raised from \$13,473,675 to \$13,569,940.

Following a brief discussion, on a standing voice-vote, Mr. Slowinski's motion to amend was defeated.

On a standing voice-vote, the main article, as presented, was overwhelmingly adopted.

CHARTER AMENDMENT – CANDIDATE DEADLINE: Under **ARTICLE 24**, Donna Macomber moved: move that the Town adopt a resolution to amend the Brattleboro Town Charter Addendum A, Acts of 1959, No. 302, Section 4a to change the deadline for incumbent Town Meeting members to submit their notice of intent to have their name placed on the ballot to the 6th Monday preceding the election, as presented on page 12 of the Town Report.

ADDENDUM A, ACTS OF 1959, NO. 302, SECTION 4 a.

Section 4. Nomination of candidates; preparation of ballots; return of unused ballots.

~~a. Nomination of candidates for town meeting members shall be made by certificates of nomination to be prepared by the town clerk which shall bear no political designation, shall be signed by not fewer than ten voters of the district in~~

~~which the candidates live, and shall be filed with the town clerk no later than 5:00 p.m. on the sixth Monday preceding the election; provided that any town meeting members may become a candidate for re-election solely by giving written notice thereof to the town clerk no later than 5:00 p.m. on the seventh Monday preceding the election. No certificate of nomination shall be valid in respect of any candidate whose written acceptance is not endorsed thereon or attached thereto when filed.~~

a. Nomination of candidates for town meeting member shall be made by:

1. certificate of nomination to be prepared by the town clerk which shall bear no political designation and shall be signed by not fewer than ten voters of the district in which the candidates live.

2. any town meeting member solely by giving written notice thereof to the town clerk.

Certificates of nomination or notices of intent shall be filed with the town clerk no later than 5:00 p.m. on the sixth Monday preceding the election. No certificate of nomination or notice of intent shall be valid in respect of any candidate whose written acceptance is not endorsed thereon or attached thereto when filed.

Town Clerk Annette Cappy explained that as of 2015, Town administration began observing Martin Luther King holiday which in most years will fall on the seventh Monday prior to annual elections. The seventh Monday is also the deadline for incumbent town meeting members to submit written notice of intent to have their name placed on the ballot for re-election. The intent of the amendment would move the incumbent's deadline to the following Monday which would coincide with the deadline for non-incumbent candidates to submit their petitions.

Following brief discussion, on a standing-voice vote, the article as presented, was unanimously adopted.

CHARTER AMENDMENT – EARLY VOTING USE OF TABULATOR: Under **ARTICLE 25** Kate O'Connor moved: that the Town adopt a resolution to amend the Brattleboro Town Charter Article II, Section 3 to allow mechanical tabulation of ballots from citizens that use early voting, as presented on page 12 of the Town Report.

ARTICLE II, SECTION 3 - MANNER OF ELECTION

E. *Early voting in person when tabulators are used for voting, whether it be for Town, State or Federal voting.*

Voters choosing to vote early by Australian ballot in the town clerk's office shall vote in the same manner as those voting on election day provided that the voter completes a 'Request for Early Ballot and Certification' form stating the following:

1. That the person is a legal voter on the voter registration list for Brattleboro.
2. That the person is a U.S. citizen and will be at least 18 years of age by the date of the election.
3. That the person is not registering, requesting a ballot or voting in any other jurisdiction except Brattleboro.
4. That the information provided is true, accurate, and complete to the best of the voter's knowledge.

The certificate must be signed and dated by the voter.

The voter will mark the ballot and deposit it into the vote tabulator.

During business hours in the Town Clerk's office, the vote tabulator and ballot bin shall be in a secured area and accessible to election officials and voters only. The tabulator unit shall be secured with an identifiable seal and the ballot box containing voted ballots shall remain locked at all times and secured with an

identifiable seal. Neither seal shall be broken prior to the time of closing the polls on election day. Ballots shall be comingled with those voted at the polls on election day prior to being examined for the purpose of identifying write-in votes.

Once early voting has commenced in the town clerk's office, the clerk or his/her designee shall certify each day in a record prepared for this purpose, that the seal on the vote tabulator and ballot box are intact.

When an election official is not present or times other than business hours, the sealed tabulator and ballot box shall be secured in the Town Clerk's office vault. Sealed tabulator and sealed ballot box(s) will be transferred to the polling place on election day by two election officials and not opened until the polls have closed on election day.

A record of those voting in person shall be maintained. Prior to opening the polls on election day, the number of early voters who voted in person shall match the number of voted ballots displayed on the tabulator.

All provisions regarding early voting, including other methods of early voting, and those not addressed in this section shall be as prescribed by 17 V.S.A., §2531-2547.

Town Clerk Annette Cappy explained that the article was intended to increase voter participation, allow greater voter privacy and expedite the voting process for early, in-person voters.

Following a very brief discussion, on a standing voice-vote, the article was unanimously adopted.

ESTABLISH COMMITTEE OF THE FUTURE. Under **ARTICLE 26** David Schoales moved: move that the Town establish a committee of Representative Town Meeting to be known as the Committee of the Future.

Rod Francis, Brattleboro Planning Director addressed issues of potential conflict and duplication between the Brattleboro Town Plan and the Committee of the Futures. He cautioned that if the committee were to go forward their scope and range of activities should not overlap or compromise the role of the Planning Commission as established under State Statute.

Spoon Agave explained that the role of the committee would address such issues as dependency on natural resources, level of citizen participation with regard to volunteerism and local government involvement and lack of community.

Members speaking in favor of the committee, stressed that it would add no additional burden or expense to town staff and no harm would be done to give it a chance.

Others opposed the committee for lack of a definite role with no particular guidelines.

Others questioned that while the committee might offer beneficial insight to current social issues, perhaps it would be better served to function as a private group rather than a Town appointed committee.

Ralph Meima moved that the name of the group be changed from Committee to Conversation. The moderator noted that the article was written as a committee and therefore ruled the amendment out of order.

Following a lengthy debate, Steven Rowell moved to cease debate. On a

standing voice vote, the meeting overwhelmingly voted to cease debate.

On a standing, voice-vote, the article was defeated with 52 voting in favor and 67 opposed.

OTHER BUSINESS: Under **Article 27**, the following items were brought before the assembly

Brattleboro Town School District Resolution – David Schoales offered the following:

Resolve that members of Brattleboro Representative Town Meeting do not support efforts by the Vermont State Legislature to empower the State Board of Education to determine the existence of the Brattleboro Town School District.

The resolution was overwhelmingly adopted.

I-91 Arts Corridor - Tad Montgomery informed the meeting that he was working with the Brattleboro Arts Committee in creating a proposal to establish an art corridor along Interstate 91 that would encompass 6 miles of highway. The intention being to generate a creative experience for travelers as they pass through Brattleboro.

Thanks to Brattleboro Police – Emily Megas-Russell offered thanks and appreciation to newly appointed Chief Michael Fitzgerald and the Brattleboro Police Department. She praised their remarkable approach when working with mental health care providers and their willingness to take feedback and direction from those they are serve within the community.

Police/Fire Facility Project – David Gartenstein, upon request, gave a brief overview of the progress and issues regarding the proposed facility. Judy Davidson suggested that prior to an additional Representative Town Meeting, the Selectboard conduct a series of informational meetings to explain the process, where we are in that process and how we plan to proceed.

Town Meeting District Divisions Resolution – John Wilmerding offered the following: That the Town should study the possibility and ramifications of subdividing our existing election districts into significantly smaller election wards or precincts, such that Town Representative would be elected by, and represent, much smaller neighborhood areas rather than entire legislative districts at large.

Following a brief discussion, on a standing voice-vote, the resolution was overwhelmingly defeated.

Community Foundation for Human Resources Resolution – John Wilmerding offered the following: That the Town should consider the possibility of helping to establish a community foundation or consolidated fund to which we would gradually devolve our current practice and responsibility of supporting local human services and/or other non-profit organizations.

Following a brief discussion, Don Webster moved to cease debate. On a standing voice-vote, debate ceased.

The resolution was overwhelmingly defeated on a standing voice-vote.

Daycare for Town Meeting – Stuart Copans suggested that the Selectboard and School Board consider the possibility of providing daycare for members attending town meeting.

Police/Fire Facility Resolution – Eli Gould offered the following: Be it resolved that the members of the Representative Town Meeting are doing their civic duty by providing policy direction to the selectboard and new town manager in regards

to the next steps in our plan to provide police and fire upgrades.

Specifically the district 1 representatives would like to offer the following design and process guidelines.

1. Prove that some combination of existing land cannot be used before major new sites are considered.
2. This planning process may need a higher level of transparency and documentation, i.e. new RFP.
3. Don't separate police and fire
4. Set a budget that we can manage so that this body can see it returned for approval without the sort of reversals that the last few years have called this form of government into question.

Following a moderate discussion, the resolution was overwhelmingly defeated.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 5:51 P.M.

Attest:

Annette L. Cappy
Town Clerk

David Gartenstein
Selectboard Chair

Lawrin Crispe
Moderator