

Draft
Town of Panton
Town Meeting
March 3, 2015/10:00 A.M.

Diane Lanpher and Warren VanWyck were here at the start of the meeting so J Douglas Dows turned the meeting over to them for a short presentation and question/answer period after asking those present if there was any objections. There were no objections.

D Lanpher gave an update on what was going on in Montpelier. She stated that it was a theme of this year saying it is "All In". All in on the Lake, all in on the school and all in on the budget. People are serious working together in a way that she has not seen in the last six years. She said that they need to get three things right which are the budget, the lake and education. D Lanpher and W VanWyck brought some handouts that are available at Town Hall. They would like people to go over the handouts and then get back to them. D Lanpher said that there were some dramatic changes. They had heard from Vermont tax payers that where they were going with school funding and the structure of it were not working for Vermont anymore. Secondly D Lanpher has been asked if she would move from Transportation to the House Appropriations to take on the challenge of the budget. They are about to reset Vermont's financial picture. Growth has been at 2.5% to 3% and budgetary at 5% which is not sustainable anymore. All reserve funds have been used in previous years to help reduce the impact. Some suggestions have been made and they are asking agencies to come up with ideas to scrub their budgets and come back to them with what they can do for less money. Then there is H35 that is the water quality bill which is very in-depth. They are mandated by EPA to come up with something or EPA will do it for them.

W VanWyck started by saying that the State spending has been going up by 5% but that is not the same with the economy. Federal funding has been relied upon to help but this can't be relied upon anymore. There needs to be a drastic different budget in the next fiscal year. He said looking at New Hampshire the average income has increased year to year but it has not increased in Vermont. There are some serious economic problems, the cost of living in Vermont based on taxes, regulations for businesses and energy costs. There are some success stories but if you look at the overall economic picture one reason it is lagging in State revenue is the personal income tax which means that the jobs that are here are not the good paying jobs that so many people need. School enrollment is down but spending for education is not. Vermont has the highest per pupil spending in the Country and have the lowest pupil per staff ratio. There is a billing that is being worked on to address this but there is some concern if it will be effective and the bill is still being worked on. This term W VanWyck is working in the Natural Resources Energy Committee. One of the large bills that is coming out of it is increasing the number or renewables in the State of Vermont. For a lot of farmers and land owners there are generous incentives in investment tax credits. Out of state developers can come here and get a 30% decrease on their income. He said there is a distortion here and businesses must look at their bottom line and compare other States. Vermont cannot have increased energy costs and still be competitive for businesses.

The representatives were asked by D Rahpael if the Legislature were looking for ways of increasing Revenues without a payroll tax. Number two speaking of out of state developers a number of projects for biomass; wind energy and the like have been stopped in their tracks due to regulator or political issues. Is the Legislature looking at revisiting renewable energy, ridgeline energy and biomass notwithstanding? D Lanpher said Medicaid, sugar tax and a list of other ideas are being considered. Nothing has been ruled out at this time.

W VanWyck said that right now the State has 40% renewable energy, by 2017 the goal is to have 55% and by 2032 75% renewable energy. In Lowell ridgeline energy has brought the Town over \$600,000 in tax revenue. Biomass there is one in Ryegate. One in Springfield was not passed recently. There are concerns regarding the efficiency. Regarding biomass it is 50 years before you get the trees back and there are considerable CO2 emissions. The number 1 in Addison County is Solar. Land in Massachusetts and Connecticut is more expensive than in Vermont. Vermont is willing to hosting sites and then sells some of this energy out of State to Massachusetts and Connecticut.

D Brace voiced concerns regarding 911 cuts. D Lanpher said that the State Police are the ones who brought this forward and thought that they could save money with the changes. There are still concerns and nothing has been finalized.

Town Meeting
March 3, 2015
Page 2

P Bogan regarding increase on taxes for restaurants and lodging. She stated that the increase in taxes on her small one and two bedroom bed and breakfast would be 106%, where as a place with 50 bedrooms would be 56 to 59%. She said she is hoping they will look at these rates. D Lanpher said that is the Fees Bill. There was an amendment from the floor to readjust the fees for restaurants and bed and breakfasts.

If there are more questions please contact D Lanpher or W VanWyck.

Article 1: D Dows now open the nominations for moderator. J Viskup nominated D Dows. R Burt 2nd. There were no other nominations for moderator so D Dows asked that the nominations be closed. All those in favor signify by saying Aye. Those opposed say Nay. The Ayes have it. The Clerk was asked to cast ballot for D Dows for moderator.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was done. Pantons' deceased residents were named. There was a moment of silence for these residents.

Article 2: To elect the following officers:

Nominations for 3 year term for Select Board were opened. H Mahoney nominated H Hall. H Hall withdrew his name from the 3 year term. P Moore nominated B Tarallo for the 3 year term. J Viskup 2nd. There were no other nominations so nominations were closed. All those in favor signify by saying Aye. All opposed say Nay. The Ayes have it. The clerk was asked to cast one paper ballot for B Tarallo for 3 year term on the Select Board.

Nominations for 1 year term for Select Board were opened. H Mahoney nominated H Hall. J Viskup 2nd. There were no other nominations so nominations were closed. All those in favor signify by saying Aye. All opposed say Nay. The Ayes have it. The clerk was asked to cast one paper ballot for H Hall for a 1 year term on the Select Board.

Nominations for Lister for a 3 year term were opened. There were no nominations for Lister. Nominations were closed. The Select Board will make an appointment.

Nominations for Auditor for a 3 year term were opened. There were no nominations for Auditor. Nominations were closed. The Select Board will make an appointment.

Nominations for Auditor for a 1 year term were opened. There were no nominations for Auditor. Nominations were closed. The Select Board will make an appointment.

Nominations for Constable for a 1 year term were opened. J Viskup nominated D Palmatier. P Moore 2nd. There were no other nominations so nominations were closed. All those in favor say Aye. Those opposed say Nay. The Ayes have it. The clerk was asked to cast a ballot for D Palmatier for the position of Constable.

Nominations for Grand Jury were opened. There were no nominations for Grand Jury so nominations were closed. The Select Board will make an appointment.

Nominations for Town Agent were opened. J Viskup nominated Ted Boelens. B Howe 2nd. There were no other nominations so nominations were closed. All those in favor say Aye. Those opposed say Nay. The Ayes have it. The clerk was asked to cast a ballot for T Boelens for Town Agent.

Nominations for Water Commissioner for a term of a 3 year term were opened. C Cook nominated D Philbrook. M Peddie 2nd. There were no other nominations so nominations were closed. All those in favor

say Aye. Those opposed say Nay. The Ayes have it. The clerk was asked to cast a paper ballot for D Philbrook for Water Commissioner for a term of 3 years.

Town Meeting
March 3, 2015
Page 3

Nominations for VUHS Board of Directors for a 3 year term were opened. J Viskup nominated R Rathburn. C Cook 2nd. There were no other nominations so nominations were closed. All those in favor say Aye. All opposed say Nay. The Ayes have it. The clerk was asked to cast a ballot for R Rathbun for a 3 year term on VUHS Board of Directors.

Article 3: Town Officers reports. H Hall and B Tarallo gave presentations for the Select Board. The Select Board is trying to establish an Emergency/Rainy Day Fund at 7% of the budget so if the Town has an emergency or there is a short fall there will be money available. A Culvert Policy and a Cash Handling Policy have been developed. The Delinquent Tax Collector has done an excellent job on collecting delinquent taxes. The Road crew has been working with other Towns regarding mutual aid. This helps keep expenses down for each Town. A Personnel Manual has been developed that gives the Select Board and employees rules and regulations for employment. A new CDL Drug/Alcohol Policy has been developed. The Town has some new safety equipment. The Town is in compliance with FEMA and the State of Vermont so that if there is a disaster the Town would get the maximum dollar amount available. There is a Parking Ordinance for Town Beach. A long term equipment depreciation schedule was developed. A New truck with snowplow has been purchased. Some culverts have been replaced and roadside ditching has been done. D Raphael thanked the Select Board and Town employees for their work.

Article 4: Shall the Town vote to appropriate the following sums which shall be raised by taxes, to be placed in the Town Reserve Fund accounts as noted:

Highway Capital Equipment Fund	\$20,000
Highway Capital Project Fund	20,000
Grader Tire Fund	2,000
Town Hall Restoration Fund	15,000
Reappraisal Fund	2,000
Total	59,000

R Rathbun moved the article. B Tarallo spoke regarding the Capital Equipment Fund. She asked that the residents look at the Capital Equipment list so they would have an idea of the big ticket items and this would show why there was an ongoing need to fund this account. The list also includes items that have not been purchased yet but hope to be purchased in the future. H Hall wanted to interject that the Town did not always purchase new equipment but equipment that would fit the needs of the Town. The purpose of these accounts are for long term planning so funds can be accumulated for purchase and not create a big spike in one budget year. This would reduce the amount of money that would need to be borrowed. D Raphael moved the article for vote. All those in favor say Aye. Those opposed say Nay. The Ayes have it. The motion is carried.

Article 5: Shall the voters establish a reserve fund in an amount not to exceed 7% of the General budget and budget appropriations, to cover unanticipated revenue shortfalls and to pay non-recurring and unanticipated general and highway and other appropriated fund expenses, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 2804 (a)?

R Rathbun moved the article. B Tarallo explained this fund. It is a recommended best practice by VLCT and the External Auditors. G Bailey asked who decides when this fund is used? The Select Board has drafted a Reserve Policy with how it would be used. The Select Board would warn a meeting and it would state that the reserve fund was going to be discussed at this meeting giving notice to Town residents. D Palmatier asked if this meant that taxes would go up 7%? The answer is no. R Rathbun wanted to know where the 7% figure came from and what would be the maximum to fund this account. The minimum amount given to the Select Board to fund this account came from VLCT and the External Auditors in the amount of 5%. The Select Board felt more comfortable using 7% feeling this was not an excessive amount. All those in favor say Aye. Those opposed say Nay. The Ayes have it. The motion carries.

Article 6: Shall the voters authorize the transfer of \$47,216 from the June 30, 2014 undesignated fund balance of the General Fund to the Reserve Fund?

Town Meeting
March 3, 2015
Page 3

J Viskup moved the article. B Tarallo explained the figure being asked for was 7% of the current budget, not 7% of the proposed budget starting July 1, 2015. There was no discussion so a vote was asked for. All those in favor say Aye. Those opposed say Nay. The Ayes have it. The motion carries.

Article 7: Shall the voters authorize the transfer of \$50,000 from the June 30, 2014 undesignated fund balance of the General Fund to the Highway Capital Equipment Fund?

P Moore moved. J Viskup 2nd. B Howe asked what happens to the undesignated fund balance if it does not stay in the General Fund? The Town residents must vote on where this money goes and to what fund, otherwise the money would just sit there and not be used. C Bitler asked how much remains of the undesignated funds? B Tarallo told her there was \$123,867 to use. J Fisher asked where this money was sitting? D Merrill stated that the money was in an interest bearing account. There was no further discussion so it was moved to a vote. Those in favor say Aye. Those opposed say Nay. The Ayes have it. The motion carries.

Article 8: Shall the Town vote to adopt the proposed 2015 -2016 fiscal year General Fund Operating Budget in the amount of \$631,288, of which \$490,113 shall be raised by taxes and \$141,175 by non-tax revenues?

M Neel moved article 8. J Viskup 2nd. H Hall explained that if the budget is approved that on a \$250,000 home the increase in taxes would be \$43.75. This amount does not include the education tax. All those in favor say Aye. All those opposed say Nay. The Ayes have it. The motion carries.

Article 9: Shall the Town vote to authorize the renaming and repurposing of the Grader Tire Fund to be the Tire Fund, for the purpose of purchasing or repairing tires for all heavy equipment?

D Brace moved the article. J Viskup 2nd. This is just renaming the account so it can be used for all heavy equipment.

A vote was taken. All those in favor say Aye. All those opposed say Nay. The Ayes have it. The motion carries.

Articles 10 through 24 are being voted on by Australian Ballot. Residents were asked if they would like to comment on any of these articles. There were no comments.

Article 25: To transact any other non-binding business. H Hall gave a presentation of what roads would be worked on in the next five years. In 2016 repaving from the bridge on Pantan Road toward Jersey Street to Pease Road and to the split on Jersey Street. In 2017 Lake Road down Pease Road to Jersey Street is planned for repaving. Repaving is planned in 2018 Arnold Bay Road from Pease Road to Adams Ferry Road. In 2019 East Road from Atkins to the Town line and Hopkins Road to 22A and Bay Road to the Town line is planned to be repaved. In 2020 repaving is to finish up Lake Street from Town line to Spaulding Road. C Bitler asked how 22A was handled. Route 22A is a State Road maintained by the State. D Raphael asked what does retreatment of roads mean? Some of it is just applying a new topcoat and some is grinding up the surface and filling low spots depending on what the road needs.

Article 26: Shall the Town of Pantan ask our legislature to cap Education Property Tax rates at FY2015 levels for the next 2 years?

C Bitler moved the article. R McNamara 2nd. J Viskup said this would send a message to Montpelier stating that the Towns could no longer sustain the high increases in taxes that have been mandated each year. B Tarallo wanted the residents to know that some of the residents of Pantan had brought this before the Select Board. The Select Board felt more comfortable with warning it before the Town to let them make the decision if they wanted this sent to the Legislature. E Markowski said he was very supportive of the education spending. He thought that there was a ratio and that the ratio for the Towns had increased. H Hall reported that the letter was instructing the Select Board to say please be wary of our property taxes for school spending. C Bitler asked if this was asking legislature to step up and if they were making increases to

find another way to fund it other than education tax. H Hall state this is not what he said, but that property taxes were going up partial due to educational spending and the letter was asking the legislature to hold their spending. R Rathbun (VUHS Board of Directors) said there were three factors. Two factors that the Towns have no control over. One being

Town Meeting
March 3, 2015
Page 4

the teachers, staff and custodians which is collective bargaining and the second is the Education tax which is set by Montpelier. The only control that Towns have is the Municipal Tax. He said that the legislature passes what he called feel good laws and dangle some funding for the Towns and then after a few years take away their funding and then the Towns have to come up with a way to fund these out of the Town budgets. He stated that there was a lot of misrepresentation and inadequate accounting and poor supervision in the last few years which has caused a deficit. Some cuts will need to be made. They are trying to maintain a 17 to 1 ratio in the classroom. J. Fearon (VUES Board of Directors) wanted to follow up by saying the State does have a way of mandating things that are underfunded. He said for Panton or Vergennes that he did not see declining enrollment in the schools. He also said that budgets for different schools were done differently. One Town had a separate budget for technology to be voted on where Vergennes had it included in the budget with no separation. He also said that the Town should trust the people that they elected to do their job and rely on them. Last was when people look at different States per pupil spending that some State include their special education spending in their budgets but many do not. J Fearon is asking people to attend the board meetings so they will know what is going on. J Viskup said that this was a non-binding message that they were asked to send to Montpelier. He feels that the schools and teachers are very good. The new school board is trying to address the issues to the best of their ability. He feels that a different system is needed to fund education. It is not sustainable as it is. D Brace spoke regarding busing. She said that there were ways that spending could be cut, one buses are not full, buses follow each other around and that \$400 a day is spent on a taxi to take 4 children to Burlington every day. H Neel stated that a large number of parents who have children in school are not homeowners and do not pay property taxes. A student that is slow is transported to Middlebury there again paying additional transportation charges. A large number of property tax payers are elderly and they cannot continue to support the increases. At this time a vote was taken. All those in favor say Aye. All those opposed say Nay. The Ayes have it. The motion carries.

Senator Chris Bray representative for Addison County spoke. He serves on two committees. One in the morning is Natural Resources and Energy. The afternoon committee is Government Operations. The Natural Resources and Energy Committee is working on two large bills, clean water and Energy/Renewable energy. The clean water bill is addressing the decrease in water quality and how to address that. Everyone has a part in the clean water bill. Problems range from 14,000 miles of road in Vermont with the run off, parking spaces, tilled land, faulty septic systems and farms. The wisdom of the population and their input on what might be done is being asked so they can help be a solution to the problem.

J Viskup moved to adjourn the meeting. R Burt 2nd. All those in favor of adjourning say Aye. Those opposed say Nay. The Ayes have it. The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jean Miller, Clerk

