

MINUTES

MARCH 2, 2015 AND MARCH 3, 2015

ANNUAL TOWN AND TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING

The legal voters of the Town of Springfield and Town of Springfield School District met at the Springfield High School Cafeteria in said Town on Monday, March 2, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. (7:30 o'clock in the afternoon) to act upon all matters which may be voted upon by acclamation and not otherwise to be voted by ballot, following which all articles to be voted by Australian Ballot on March 3, 2015, were discussed, and then adjourned to the Riverside Middle School Gymnasium at 8:00 a.m. (8:00 o'clock in the forenoon) on March 3, 2015, to vote by ballot for Town and Town School District Officers, for all appropriations to be voted by ballot, and all other items of business to be voted by ballot.

Moderator Patrick Ankuda called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and welcomed everyone. Opening ceremony was performed by Boy Scouts of America Troup 252 from Springfield who led the audience in pledge of allegiance. A moment of silence was held for members of our community who had passed this year, in particular civic leader Frederick Koledo. A round of applause was given for those new member who have joined our community. Appreciation was given to Town Clerk, Barbara Courchesne, Assistants Mary Perkins and Maxine Aldrich, the Board of Civil Authority, Town Constable and the Budget Advisory Committee for all their work.

State Representatives Robert Forguites, Alice Emmons and Leigh Dakin presented a Vermont House Resolution (see attached) directed by the Vermont Secretary of State honoring Bruce Johnson of Springfield for his dynamic leadership with Springfield Area Public Access Television and which was offered by Representative Emmons, Representative Forguites, Representative Leigh Dakin and also by Representative Mark Huntley of Cavendish, and had passed the Vermont Legislature a couple of weeks ago. Representative Emmons then proceeded to read the Vermont House Resolution which concluded in a long round of applause.

Moderator Ankuda recognized Robert Forguites for his past role as Town Manger and congratulated him on his new role as our Legislator.

Moderator Ankuda welcomed our new Town Manager, Thomas Yennerell.

Moderator Ankuda stated that rules of procedure that include Roberts Rules of Order and VT Law govern this meeting. Only registered voters of the Town of Springfield may speak during the meeting. Nonvoters were asked to stand for sense of how many were present. Moderator welcomed nonvoters and explained that they may not vote in any of the voice votes and cannot speak, with some caveats, and we would need to permit some members of the town and school administration and employees of the town to speak and answer questions by necessity. If no objection is raised by the crowd, the Moderator would permit non-voters to speak on a case-by-case basis, because some may be representing individual appropriation groups. Moderator Ankuda then gave instructions on of behavior and how questions and requests to speak were to be handled.

Moderator Ankuda informed the voters that the order of the 29 Articles presented at the meeting would be different than the order presented in the Warning. Articles 2, 6 and 12 are floor votes which will be done first. Articles 1, 3-5, 7-11 and 13-28 are informational meeting items for discussion only. Article 29 is for other business that may come before the body. Moderator Ankuda further explained the Articles 2, 6 and 12 each must be moved, seconded and restated before any discussion begins. Once discussion is over the question will be called and a voice vote taken at that time. Once results are announced a revote can be requested by any

member of the body and can be requested by dividing the house, show of hands or paper ballot. However, paper ballot must be requested by 7 people. An Article cannot be reconsidered in the same meeting once we have begun discussion of the next Article.

Moderator Ankuda then proceeded to the warned Articles.

ARTICLE 2: To receive and act on reports of the Town Officers, Town School District Officers and Committees.

MOTION: Jeff Mobus (19 Orchard Street) moved that the Town receive and act on reports of the Town Officers, Town School District Officers and Committees. Motion seconded by Scott Farr (15 Pleasant Street). No discussion on the Motion. Motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 6: Shall the Town authorize the Board of Selectmen to expend such grant monies, gifts, or bequests which may be received by the Town of Springfield in accordance with the terms of said grants, gifts, or bequests?

MOTION: Jeff Mobus (19 Orchard Street) moved that the Town authorize the Board of Selectmen to expend such grant monies, gifts, or bequests which may be received by the Town of Springfield in accordance with the terms of said grants, gifts, or bequests. Motion was seconded by Scott Farr (15 Pleasant Street).

Richard Hunter (29 Baker Road) Was reading last year's summary and he needed clarification.

Woody Bickford (Sunrise Terrace) asked if the motion covered Community Development Grant and includes \$2.5 million grant of tax money from state and federal government. Town Manager Yennerell agreed that this article includes the \$2.5 million grant of state and federal funds, however, he is not sure how the money is generated. Mr. Bickford asked if the town was equipped to handle this amount of money and should the town contract with a bank with greater success since the money seems to be going down a hole and requested comments to clarify.

Kristi Morris, Chairman Select Board, explained that money comes down from federal and state allocations to the town and that gets loaned and when the money comes back in, half of it goes back to the state and half of it remains here. We are talking about the Revolving Loan Fund and it gets lent out from there and replenished at certain times. The people that come to us are people trying to start a business in Springfield. It was agreed that it is factual that it is questionable at times but that these people are trying and if we didn't support them then that business wouldn't come to Springfield. A banking institution may not be so generous in lending to them. The Select Board reviews documents and plans presented for opening a business as well as does town attorney.

Woody Bickford (Sunrise Terrace) commented that there is no standard procedure for paying back each loan, in fact there are some that may be forgiven. Chairman Morris reminded that this is not Springfield taxpayer money and with that in mind there are conditions put on the repayment of those loans in accordance with Town Attorney advice. Mr. Bickford stated that we was suggesting we should consider some standard so that others can use it instead of going down a hole.

No further discussion was had on the Motion. Motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 12: Shall the voters of the Springfield Town School District authorize the Town Treasurer, subject to the direction and approval of the Board of School Directors, to borrow money to meet the requirements of the Town School District for the ensuing year, and also authorize the Town Treasurer, subject to the approval of the

Board of School Directors, to borrow money in anticipation of taxes rated to meet the requirements of the Town School District for the ensuing year?

MOTION: Jeff Mobus (19 Orchard Street) moved that the voters of the Springfield Town School District authorize the Town Treasurer, subject to the direction and approval of the Board of School Directors, to borrow money to meet the requirements of the Town School District for the ensuing year, and also authorize the Town Treasurer, subject to the approval of the Board of School Directors, to borrow money in anticipation of taxes rated to meet the requirements of the Town School District for the ensuing year. Motion was seconded by Scott Farr (15 Pleasant Street).

Wood Bickford (Sunrise Terrace) asked why there isn't a similar article for the town to borrow money. Comptroller Mobus explained that unlike the school district that receives their funds on a specific schedule from the state, the town receives its funds when we send out tax bills and we have enough cash to carry over to our operating expenses. We have not had to borrow money on a short term basis to cover our operating expenses since 2002, it's been twelve years since we have had to do that.

No further discussion was held on the Motion. Motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 1: To elect the following Town Officers and Town School District Officers for the ensuing year:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Cemetery Commissioner | Selectmen |
| First Constable | Town Agent |
| Library Trustees | Town Moderator |
| Lister | Town School District Moderator |
| School Directors | Trustee of Public Funds |

There was no discussion on Article 1.

ARTICLE 3: Shall the Town vote a salary of FIFTY and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$50.00) per meeting for the Town Moderator for the ensuing year?

There was no discussion on Article 3.

ARTICLE 4: Shall the Town vote to pay each Selectman the sum of FIVE HUNDRED and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$500.00) to help defray the costs and expenses incurred in serving the Town in that office?

There was no discussion on Article 4.

ARTICLE 5: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of TEN MILLION, SEVEN HUNDRED SIXTY SIX THOUSAND, SIXTY ONE and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$10,766,061.00) for the budget of the Town for salaries, incidental and necessary Town expenses, including highways, and for the purposes for which the law requires appropriations, and for which a Town may legally vote?

Thomas Yennerell, Town Manager, presented slide show with a brief overview of proposed budget for the next fiscal year. The amount on ballot tomorrow is \$10,766,061.00 subtracting out other revenues, that means we will have to raise \$8,780,931.00 by taxes. That amount increase for this budget is 2.71% over last year. This year's increase compares to last year's increase of 2.80% and the year before that 3.07%. The percentages have been relatively constant. This year was difficult because three line items which made the budget increase by 3.95%. Those items were first time \$190,000.00 bond payment for combined sewer overflow project,

completed three labor contracts and are negotiating the fourth now and the anticipated salary increase in those contracts is \$87,000.00. Next year anticipate increase in highway salt pricing and budgeting \$60,000.00 more. All line items were scrutinized and some projects were deferred to the future and result is 2.71% increase. Big items included in budget \$600,000.00 road construction, paving and possibly sidewalks. \$510,490.00 in capital expenses spread across departments, i.e. police car cameras, cameras for Main Street, energy saving items for the library, improvements to the swimming pool, three new highway trucks and a new loader.

Tax impact if this budget is approved \$36.60 increase on \$100,000.00 of appraised value, \$54.90 for \$150,000.00 of appraised value and \$73.20 for \$200,000.00 of appraised value, for the whole year.

Kristi Morris, Chairman Select Board, read a statement (see attached) regarding economic growth.

Everett Hammond, Chairman Budget Advisory Committee, stated that at one time they were looking at a 6% increase and they together with the Select Board and Town Manager worked to get it down to 2.71%. Budget Advisory Committee recommends this budget.

Alan Lockwood (Spencer Hollow Road) asked his first question about the last 2 to 3 years money put into fixing Spencer Hollow Road was then pull it back out and spent somewhere else. Road down to dirt money spent to patch, patch gets plowed into ditch, bucket loader hauls away and money is being wasted instead money should be spent for drainage. We pay as much money out in the country as they do in town and road should be fixed. Second question was why we can't use some of the prison money to fix roads rather than sit in bank.

Kristi Morris, Chairman Select Board, stated Budget Advisory Committee working with Select Board several years ago decided that we needed to come up with a road study. Road Surface Maintenance System (RSMS) was done to define best/worst roads and different types of surface treatments to get them back into good shape. We are looking at \$600,000 to get some of the roads identified fixed and RSMS is a plan for more than 20 years. We only have so much money to spend to fix what we have. This Board is reluctant to put bond payment on to the taxpayers. Roughly \$2.7 million is in the account set aside with agreement between state/town/recreation Center that the money remain in the bank and draw on dividends and interest, which would basically last forever that way in order to keep the facility functioning, so that is not money we have access to unless Select Board and Recreational Center Board agree to dissolve it.

Alan Lockwood questioned why the Recreational Center have access to the money. Chairman Morris reminded that this was the agreement at the time.

Michael Parker (111 Main Street North Springfield) questioned page 107 (Town Report) statement that we have over half million receivables of delinquent taxes and what we are doing about that.

Thomas Yennerell, Town Manager, stated that we continue to pursue those properties and do tax sales if necessary to acquire those funds. Recently we tried to sell properties to try to obtain revenue for the town.

Jeff Mobus, Comptroller, stated that on page 9 (Town Report) further discussion of delinquent taxes. Through tax sale process we do receive that revenue. The report is only until June 30 and by that date we are just entering the tax sale process and haven't received all of that money yet, however, by the end of December that number was down to \$171,719.73. Through the tax sale process we do receive most of that money.

Walter Clark (35 Cutler Drive) Stated that the parties to the original agreement regarding the Civic Improvement Fund have since changed and is now owned and operated by the Springfield Hospital and should this be revisited as to the money in the fund which was at the end of the year \$2,881,612.29. Voters voted that

the money be used and given to the Recreation Center at the time to specifically build a facility that had exercise, pool and a track. They did not do that, they made it through the first year with extensions but they never built the track. The hospital has also not built the track. This should be revisited because if we could get our hands on 2.7 million we could use some of it towards renovations, et cetera.

Woody Bickford (Sunrise Terrace) suggests the report Kristi gave be included in the town report. Mr. Bickford recalled for the audience some historical facts about Springfield. History is important to Springfield because it took one man to make Springfield what it was, Adna Brown who was astute, who knew that Springfield needed to grow. Back in 1800s he wanted to move J&L to Springfield he brought along his friend James Hartness who later became Governor of Vermont, brought his buddies like Mr. Bryant and others. If we want to get the machine going again, it doesn't take a committee it takes one person who knows another who has a good idea. Springfield was the envy of the world. If we have an Adna Brown in the house, please stand up, we need you.

Lynn Roberto (85 Fairground Rd) stated that when the prison money came in the town voted to use it for the recreational center. The town didn't vote for it to go to the hospital. Agreement should be renegotiated.

Kristi Morris, Chairman Select Board, reminded that the way the prison agreement is written is as long as the Recreation Center continues to operate the facility, with restrictions and parameters, the agreement is met and is in force. The facility is operated by the Recreation Center even though it's owned by the Hospital. It is not something that we can disregard.

Moderator Ankuda instructed that the discussion be brought back specifically to Article 6.

ARTICLE 7: Shall the Town vote to establish a reserve fund titled "Unsafe Building Reserve Fund" to receive appropriations and to be utilized to fund the enforcement of the Town's Unsafe Buildings Ordinance, Town Code, Section 5-26 to Section 5-40, the use of said funds shall include advances to demolish or otherwise remediate unsafe buildings, finance enforcement of actions against such properties and the owners thereof, including receiving revenues from fines, liens, legal actions, and donations?

Woody Bickford (Sunrise Terrace) Wants to know why we need a fund and why it's necessary.

George McNaughton, Selectman, stated that the purpose of the fund is so that it doesn't revert, in other words it's a standing fund. The monies that are recouped and payments made after demolitions, go back into that fund. The concept is that you don't appropriate it every year. This is a one-time shot so we can create a revolving fund to deal with this problem.

Woody Bickford (Sunrise Terrace) asked why don't we borrow money when you can borrow for nothing. Doesn't agree with having tax dollars lying around waiting to be spent.

ARTICLE 8: Shall the Town vote to appropriate the sum of ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$100,000.00) to be paid into the Unsafe Building Reserve Fund and to be utilized to enforce the Town's unsafe building ordinances?

Walter Clark (35 Cutler Drive) I believe to put \$100,000.00 into a fund and raze those buildings if the owners don't comply and just like with the delinquents we will chase money. Asked how are you going to get that money back.

George McNaughton, Selectman, stated that we have a long list of buildings. We got rid of one Friday night. We've had some buildings torn down. Town tore down one of those, the rest of them were torn down by the

land owners. The problem is the remainder are people don't have money or are not yet motivated. Those properties are devaluing neighborhoods and the grand list. In addition they attracted slum lords into those neighborhoods. \$100,000.00 was pulled out of a lengthy examination by myself of Bob Forguites experience as to the ones that that have been on the list since 2013 and nothing has happened. This is not a situation where you can take on one building at a time, go through the process to get a lien and then sell the property and get it back in a short period of time. If you go at it one building at a time it would take a decade to work on the current list. There will be attrition over time because in some cases the cost will be more than the lot is worth after demolition. If that weren't the case then it probably would have been demolished before if the person had the money to do it. There will be some attrition over time but if the town knows it has the money there, then it would not be reluctant to go after the houses. With regards to the list of 2013, the first few were shook out and the remaining were not motivated and the list doesn't cover all the others unsafe on the list. The \$100,000.00 is just for the list so far, it doesn't cover all of the unsafe buildings in town. If the town gets aggressive, has the money in the bank, then people will be motivated to get rid of the buildings on their own. That \$100,000.00 may inspire \$200,000.00 elsewhere in the town to get rid of unsafe buildings. The reasons for a separate fund is because there is a tendency to raid accounts, this is a dedicated fund to accomplish a mission. It in essence constitutes a referendum to the town that the voters are serious about cleaning up the town. I think town wants to return Springfield to its former glory.

Woody Bickford (Sunrise Terrace) stated that if my roof caved in because of snow, I don't have snow removal fund and what you do is go the bank and borrow the money.

Joseph Wilson (Breezy Hill Road) sits on Development Review Board and a lot of times cases comes before the board regarding zoning violations, the property owner doesn't agree, can't afford to make corrections, or just for spite doesn't want to or doesn't think town is serious about it. If we had to go for a loan on every issue to enforce it we would be tied up in paperwork and going to the voters constantly to borrow funds. This is a direct method of cleaning up dilapidated buildings in town. Once this process starts, property owners realize we are serious they would either take care of it or work with the town to resolve the problem if they don't have the funds. This fund allows something to get done without years of delay.

Richard Hunter (29 Baker Road) stated that when he gets a loan he has to pay back more than borrowed and doesn't sound like a good idea if you can appropriate it.

ARTICLE 9: Shall the Town vote to authorize the Select Board to enter into a long-term (up to 25 years in duration) contract prior to the 2016 Town Meeting to acquire electrical energy in relation to one or more solar electricity generating projects to be located within the Town of Springfield?

Woody Bickford (Sunrise Terrace) stated he is not in favor because the scheme of arrays going up is government subsidized and is unreliable source of energy. The town at one time owned a power generating facility in town and we lost our shirt. Doesn't think we ought to get into the business of buying power. Highly elevated power costs are passed on to you every month on your bill.

Thomas Yennerell, Town Manager, clarified that the town is not purchasing anything except electricity. Reason this Article is before the voters is that the Select Board does not have legal authority to enter into a contract for more than a year in most cases. We have proposals from companies at no cost to the town and we can purchase and save \$30,000.00 to \$40,000.00 a year. Again reason for the Article is to enable the town to get involved for up to 25-year long contract because solar companies are looking for long term not short term.

David Yesman, Selectman, stated that the article before you doesn't ask you to buy anything but asks your permission to enter into a contract with a solar generator to produce electricity at a certain fixed rate over a long

period of time. The town doesn't put in a dime. The companies put in the structure. Town's electric bill is approximately \$200,000.00 per year. Two solar arrays will save us about \$40,000.00 a year. This is not a typical contract, it is just to allow for a contract between the solar producers and the town for a long period of time.

Richard Hunter (29 Baker Road) requested clarification on how the rate at which you purchase electricity versus the rate at which you expect to be offered the same electricity by the power company.

George McNaughton, Selectman, stated the way it works is you have a land owner who builds solar array on their property, they sell that electricity to the utility company. The utility company doesn't pay the land owner in cash, they pay the land owner in a credit to their electric bill. But they don't have electric bill and in order to turn electric credit into money, they have to find someone who does have an electric bill. For the privilege of helping them turn that into cash, they give a discount. So you are looking at a 10% to 12% reduction in the electric bill. Basically what they are doing is paying you to convert that electric credit into cash. We may or may not enter into such an agreement and we want to negotiate the best terms we can get but we don't have another town meeting and the window of opportunity may close. Authorization is needed to negotiate the terms we want in an agreement and there is a good chance we could save of 10%-12% on our electric bill.

David Yesman, Selectman, added that if we are given permission to enter into an agreement, then very expensive solar arrays will get built on Springfield property that would be added to the Grand List, therefore the Grand List will increase by size of solar array. We win twice, once for the increase in Grand List and once with decrease in electric costs.

Richard Hunter (29 Baker Road) stated that in Springfield IVEK and Black River Produce have each built their own solar array and they considered it worth their while to do this in our climate and in our town. Government subsidy may speed up payback from 10 years to 6 years but the guarantee on solar panels is something like 25 years and will be producing power for a very long time.

John Hall (935 French Meadow Road) state he wears a dual hat and he works for WinStanly Enterprises and wants to point out a couple of key components. There is no upfront capital required of the town, no ownership or leasing or responsivity or operating responsibility for the array. The town would be signing on for power only and will generate tax revenue for town. These things do not come cheap it's an expensive proposal coming here. Building it and maintain it utilizes Vermont labor. Direct estimated savings on electricity \$15,000.00 to \$20,000.00 on a per year basis.

Bill Sheldon (Elm Hill) stated a word of caution. He put in solar for hot water and anticipated a 7 year payback but the State of Vermont felt that electric rates should go up and it now will take approximately 12 years to get investment back and the same can happen to you.

David Yesman, Selectman, stated that Mr. Sheldon made an expensive investment of buying solar equipment Town of Springfield doesn't spend a dime for equipment, installation, maintenance. We get reduction in electric rate and as state electric rates increase our reduction goes along with that. We save money and we are not buying anything. It doesn't raise taxes, it reduces our operating costs. This is a win/win.

Fredda Kischko (13 Baker Road) wondered if she understood that this Article gave the Select Board the right to enter into agreement without participation with discussion with citizens. What this is, is a gamble because we don't know what the future holds. There is a bit of a gamble and cautioned citizens and the board to not enter into agreement without citizen input.

George McNaughton, Selectman, stated that there is a negotiation process to the contract and that it's not very likely that this board would enter into an agreement without public agreement and without taking public comment. As to gamble issue, that depends on some of the issues to be negotiated. The gamble is not if the rates go up. If the rates go up, the more money we save. Not a comparable situation. For the first 10 years there is no gamble. After that there is a gamble on what is negotiated and that will get public input. This does appear, so far, to be win/win.

Woody Bickford (Sunrise Terrace) agreed it is a win/win if utility continues to pay the price. Public Service Board can decide whether they are going to buy power, or when they are going to buy power, or when it can go on line. They call up wind facilities and tell them to turn on or off. The whole situation is based upon a federal grant for green power. So the federal government could withdraw that at any time and you may have to use your funds to clean up the solar generators.

David Yesman, Selectman, stated that the system is owned locally not by the federal government. They build it and put the power into the grid and we get power.

Moderator Ankuda cautioned that conversations could be held elsewhere but if there are questions, ask them all and they we will get responses but questions were to go through the moderator.

George McNaughton, Selectman, stated if we don't get the power we don't pay.

Josephine Hingston (409 Highland Road) stated that federal tax credit is available for the next 6 months or so and then congress will decide if the tax credit will be renewed. Time is of the essence and town should go for it now.

ARTICLE 10: Shall the Town provide notice of the availability of the auditor's report to the voters of the town in lieu of mailing or otherwise distributing the report itself pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §1682? Upon request, the auditor's report shall be mailed. Notice of availability will be provided by publication in The Springfield Reporter and on the Town's website thirty days prior to the Annual Town Meeting. This Article is conditioned upon the passing of Article 11.

ARTICLE 11: Shall the Town School District provide notice of the availability of its annual report to the voters of the town school district in lieu of distributing the report itself pursuant to 16 V.S.A. §563(10)? Notice of availability will be provided by publication in The Springfield Reporter, on the Town's website and on the Town School District website thirty days prior to the Annual Town Meeting. This Article is conditioned upon the passing of Article 10.

Barbara Courchesne, Town Clerk, provided an explanation of Article 10 and Article 11 due to their statute specific language. The Town Audit and School Report are contained within Town Report so changing the distribution of those reports changes the distribution of the Town Report, which is currently mailed. In the interest of reducing waste and decreasing costs, these articles asks the voters if they want to receive these reports by Notice of Availability. Notice of Availability is a publication that will appear in the Springfield Reporter thirty days in advance of town meeting telling you where you can pick up the Town Report, i.e. Town Office, Town Library, School District Offices as well as town's website and school's website for digital format download, printing of pages, viewing for future reference. One will be mailed if you do not have access to internet or someone who can pick up a book for you. Cost savings \$1,500.00 without mailing. Production is about \$10,300.00 and anticipate about 30% savings first year and as population gets used to viewing online, anticipate further savings. Other towns have been doing this to save money and reduce waste.

Woody Bickford (Sunrise Terrace) questioned the requirement to send town reports.

Barbara Courchesne, Town Clerk, stated that there is a requirement for delivery of the information contained within the town audit and school report. This year the production cost was \$10,300.00, 30% reduction anticipated, despite efforts several hundred books are returned undeliverable each year.

Woody Bickford (Sunrise Terrace) agreed that we don't need waste but at one time all voters were taxpayers and that changed with the civil rights act which gave voting rights whether you had property or not. Previously, this paid for the record keeping, elections and all that stuff, but it was done away with. Perhaps most of the reports returned are from transient voters moving in/out of town. Property owners are the payers now for everything. Taxpayers deserve to receive report. They own the book, pay for the book and should receive the book.

Michael Parker (111 Main Street) stated he understands concerns but her plan is in our best interest because it saves money and won't leave piles at the post office and won't waste trees, is a win/win and cheaper.

Barbara Courchesne, Town Clerk, reminded that call if you don't have internet access or can't get out or don't have friend, family neighbor to pick up for you, otherwise, the idea is to get you to pick them up.

ARTICLE 13: Shall the voters of the Springfield Town School District approve a salary of FIFTY and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$50.00) per meeting for the Town School District Moderator for the ensuing year, the funds for which are included in the school budget?

Woody Bickford (Sunrise Terrace) suggest that town and school work together on one article and write one check.

Moderator Ankuda responded that the Secretary of State's Office has directed separation.

ARTICLE 14: Shall the voters of the Springfield Town School District approve the payment to each School Board member of FIVE HUNDRED and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$500.00) to help defray the costs and expenses incurred in serving in that office, the funds for which are included in the school budget?

No discussion.

ARTICLE 15: Shall the voters of the Springfield Town School District approve a total budget in the amount of TWENTY SEVEN MILLION, NINE HUNDRED TEN THOUSAND, ONE HUNDRED NINETY and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$27,910,190.00) to support its schools for the year beginning July 1, 2015?

Jeanice Garfield, Chairman School Board, stated that there have been 15 high school students who have registered to vote. The school budget is in two parts. The Springfield School District budget for the FY15/16 is \$28,742,934 of which the budget article is \$27,910,190 and the rest is voted in the regional RVTC budget. This is \$550,611 over the current school budget and represents a 2% increase. Two thirds of taxpayers pay based on income. Thank you to budget advisory committee members and others for their work on the budget.

Zachary McLaughlin, Superintendent, stated this is a tale of two different years. Last year's budget started with 22 people losing their jobs vs. this year balancing budget to service our kids. This budget overall is 2% increase from last year, however, a lot is offset by surpluses from two prior budget years that have rolled into this one. It

will be one third of taxpayers who are going to pay the full percentage of the tax rate increase. Most of our operation is people and costs are going up on an annual basis. We struggle around health insurance and benefit packages. 1.7% increase was just negotiated with teachers union. We have been putting off necessary upkeep of our buildings and have kicked can down the road and some of those things are coming up. Additional kids are tuitioning to technical center. We got a better interest rate on our anticipated bond and President Obama provided chunk on money for teachers and these two have built over time. Residential rate will go to 1.5 cents Nonresidential set by legislature is going up 1.8%. Two thirds taxpayers will pay based on income sensitivity and home value will be neutral unless their salary went up over the last year

Last year we thought our tax increase would be 1.58. The State Education Department puts out recommendation of what tax rate will be, budget is then formed, legislature makes changes. Last year on this night we voted on 1.58 rate and it went through then after town meeting the legislature cut the tax rate back to 1.55. This year we believe the rate will be set at 1.565 so what we ask for a year later, is less. We don't know what legislature will do but we believe it will stay the same.

Budget increase is 2% and in a position where we can provide for our kids and not overly burden the taxpayer.

Scott Frye (43 Olive Street) has three kids in schools now and asked what the average cost per student in Springfield is this year.

Steve Hier, Fiscal School Director, stated on page 180 of Town Report. \$16,143 FY15 and 16,265 FY16. A $\frac{3}{4}$ percent increase.

Scott Frye (43 Olive Street) stated Springfield pays somewhere in the top 3 or 5 position in entire country per public for student.

Zachary McLaughlin, Superintendent, stated per country rate is true. Families move here for quality education. However, there are not a lot of jobs here. Struggling to figure out how to provide quality of education for each kid. Four years ago the district was in top $\frac{1}{4}$ per pupil expenditures. Last year budget was flat. We now are dropping back into middle of pack in spending.

Scott Frye (43 Olive Street) asked if we pay same amount for an elementary student and a high school student.

Zachary McLaughlin, Superintendent, stated we weight kids. In this case elementary student counts less towards that weight than a high school age kid.

Michael Griffin (21 Douglas Street) is on Budget Advisory Committee and stated that everyone worked very hard. Saw a lot of good things going on in our school district. Consider voting yes.

Richard Hunter (29 Baker Road) stated that taxes hurt him a lot too but he substitutes in the schools sees dedication of staff and difficulties that the teachers face and will vote in favor, in spite of pocket pain.

Michael Parker (111 Main Street North Springfield) stated that we pay to send kids to River Valley Technical Center but we get money back as stated on page 180.

Steve Hier, Fiscal School Director, stated we pay the Technical Center tuition for students we send to the center and part of that money is a pass thru from the state which we record as revenue. We do pay a lot to the Technical Center but some comes to us as revenue from the state and then we pay it out to the Technical Center.

Michael Parker (111 Main Street North Springfield) asked why on page 179 is there a large jump in special education.

Zachary McLaughlin, Superintendent, stated that the primary difference is students who are tuitioned out for services. We had 2 additional students move into the district who required service. We anticipate another this year and have tuitioned 3.

Michael Parker (111 Main Street North Springfield) asked if we lost a lot of tuitioned students from surrounding towns.

Steve Hier, Fiscal School Director, stated we are down 10 students and have mostly moved out of the area.

Everett Hammond (5 Lincoln Street) stated a lot of state tax money comes in than goes out and wanted to know how much is federal money.

Zachary McLaughlin, Superintendent, stated Springfield throws money into a general fund. For every \$1 put into the pile and we pull \$3 out. For other communities it is reversed. We receive federal grants for special education and low socio-economic status services.

Steve Hier, Fiscal School Director, pointed to page 180 state and federal grants were estimated at \$1.8 million. About \$1.4 million is federal and the rest is state money.

Everett Hammond (5 Lincoln Street) asked if those project related grants.

Zachary McLaughlin, Superintendent, explained that grant money has specific requirements in order to use those funds.

Everett Hammond (5 Lincoln Street) asked if the board can push for country wide reimbursement for federal funds.

Zachary McLaughlin, Superintendent, stated we receive old federal money. The new federal money is concentrated on urban development. Competitive grants are going elsewhere and our Congressional delegation is aware that it's killing us.

Woody Bickford (Sunrise Terrace) offered congratulations on 80% graduation rate and having budget surplus of \$162,000.00. If last year was a teaching moment can you pass on advice to Select Board.

Zachary McLaughlin, Superintendent, stated we learned that we need to keep an eye 5 to 10 years out all the time and it can be painful to live here year to year.

Woody Bickford (Sunrise Terrace) asked if it is that we don't have control over special education.

Zachary McLaughlin, Superintendent, stated that by law we need to provide certain services and we cannot control that. We have to be precise through that process and will grow in handling those types of things. Every kid deserves a shot at education and we need to do what we need to make that happen. In the district expenditure budget it is not easy to see net out amount and that there is a large amount of money that comes back to us. Need to look at the net to see this.

Richard Hunter (29 Baker Road) stated basically all but \$10,000.00 is made up in state aid. The rest of federal money is returned to us. Kids need a lot, cost a lot but it's not costing us personally as much as what they are worried about and is worth it.

ARTICLE 16: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of TWO THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$2,000.00) to the Springfield Community Band for eight (8) concerts?

No discussion. No representation.

ARTICLE 17: Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of NINE THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$9,000.00) to Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) to assist Springfield in responding to the emergency needs of the community and to provide all available and applicable services to families and individuals in need?

Brandy Aldriedge (Valley Street) representing SEVCA's stated its mission to help individuals cope with existing difficulties and a reference to some specifics is found on page 60 in Town Report.

Woody Bickford (Sunrise Terrace) stated that these articles are requests the town has no obligation, no responsibility for human services which were taken over by the State many years ago. 60 years ago State took on responsibility and formed Human Services Department and they still cannot get it done and this is the reason we have special requests. It forms a safety net together or separately for vulnerable people who do not have a voice. Essentially replace overseer of poor, town farm and poor house. Some of these organizations get federal funds matched by what the town spends. Getting a good deal because a human services board in town would need \$500,000.00.

Stephen Geller (Summer Street) representing SEVCA stated \$850,000.00 in value provided in services. \$9,000.00 request is same last 4-5 years. 1.7 % of total services are brought to town. Springfield office has expanded because service need has increased. Thank you for support.

ARTICLE 18: Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of SIXTY THREE THOUSAND, FIVE HUNDRED and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$63,500.00) to help support the high-quality home health, maternal and child health, and hospice care provided in patients' homes and in community settings by the Visiting Nurse and Hospice for VT and NH? Care is provided regardless of ability to pay.

No discussion. No representation.

ARTICLE 19: Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of TEN THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$10,000.00) to help support outpatient, mental health and substance abuse services by the staff of Health Care and Rehabilitation Services, Inc.?

No discussion. No representation.

ARTICLE 20: Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of EIGHT THOUSAND, FIVE HUNDRED and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$8,500.00) for the support of Senior Solutions (formerly Council on Aging for Southeastern Vermont) for help to support seniors and their families who are trying to remain at home and not be placed in a nursing home?

No discussion. No representation.

ARTICLE 21: Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of FOUR THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$4,000.00) to help support the Valley Health Connections (formerly Precision Valley Free Clinic) to help the uninsured access health care?

No discussion. No representation.

ARTICLE 22: Shall the Town of Springfield appropriate the sum of TWELVE THOUSAND, FIVE HUNDRED and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$12,500.00) for the support of the Current operated by Connecticut River Transit, Inc., to provide transit services to the residents of the Town of Springfield?

Ted Reeves (Trombly Road) representing Connecticut River Transit, Inc. stated request for \$12,500.00 and would answer questions.

ARTICLE 23: Shall the Town of Springfield appropriate the sum of THREE THOUSAND, THREE HUNDRED and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$3,300.00) to Green Mountain RSVP & Volunteer Center of Windsor County to develop opportunities for people age 55 and older to positively impact the quality of life in the community of Springfield through volunteer service?

Judi Ragnarsson (117 Chester Road) stated new ownership and is sponsored by Southwest Council On Aging. Organization provides 19,000 hours in nonprofit positions and supports and develops programs and carries liability insurance. Some of the positions involve driving for meals on wheels and to doctor offices. Provide support to other agencies within community including companionship. Thank you for support.

ARTICLE 24: Shall the Town of Springfield appropriate the sum of TEN THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$10,000.00) to assist with the cost of operating the Meals on Wheels Program of Greater Springfield that provides daily hot & cold congregate and home delivered meals and other nutritional needs to the qualified residents of Springfield?

Woody Bickford (Sunrise Terrace) representative from Meals on Wheels and is member of RSVP. Asked for volunteer meals on wheels, there are currently 73 volunteers. One paid fulltime position and two part-time paid positions. They do all the work for congregate meal site and last year served 4,975 meals for those who cannot drive or walk. No charge, donation only open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday; and Wednesday was deleted due to lack of funding. Organization is essential and delivers to homebound and sometimes only person someone sees is Meals on Wheels volunteer.

ARTICLE 25: Shall the Town of Springfield appropriate the sum of THREE THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$3,000.00) to Windsor County Partners, for youth mentoring services provided to the children of Windsor County?

John Bastille (5 Dean Street) representative from Windsor County Partners stated that we all had mentors that have been good influence that have given an insight into a way to learn. Page 62 (Town Report) gives better comprehensive picture. Two employees. Nonprofit. \$3,000.00 is a small amount on our total budget.

ARTICLE 26: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of FIVE THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$5,000.00) to the Springfield Supported Housing to assist families and individuals find permanent housing and provide in home case management services for 6 months to two years after placement?

Christine Chapman (112 Main Street North Springfield) representing Springfield Supported Housing stated that it helps families homeless or in housing crises and work with them so that they don't become homeless again. 90% are Springfield residents. Report is found on page 56 (Town Report) and thank you for support last year.

Jeanice Garfield, School Board Director, asked how many of the homeless are children to which Ms. Chapman responded that she was unsure.

ARTICLE 27: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of FIFTY-FIVE THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$55,000.00) to the Springfield Family Center to assist with the cost of providing a free meal daily, a free food shelf, and other services related to hunger, homelessness and related social-service needs in the community?

William Sheldon (61 Elm Hill) representing Springfield Family Center quoted from John Westney to do all the good you can, any way you can, with as many people as you can, for as long as you can to promote community volunteerism. Volunteerism is essential to Family Center and the Family Center has been trying to do just that over the past 44 years. In 2014 the Family Center served 825 individuals or 298 households per month in their food shelf. Vermont Food Bank products have continued to decline. Family Center expenses have risen 53%. Family Center is assisted by Springfield area church association. Recited long list of many services provided to children and families in our community. Grateful to community for voting for them and for the children especially.

ARTICLE 28: Shall the Town of Springfield appropriate the sum of FOUR THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$4,000.00) to the Women's Freedom Center for general budget support to provide services to women and their children who are experiencing emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse and are residents of the Town?

Stephen Geller (Summer Street) not representing Women's Freedom Center but this organization is partner to SEVCA of which he is a representative and spoke on his own about the Women's Freedom Center's. State of Vermont pulled together task force to serve critical need for underserved population. Women's Freedom Center has been serving in Windham County for many years and agreed to expand into Springfield and have done a tremendous job and its incumbent upon us all to support them.

ARTICLE 29: To do any other business that can legally be done under this Warning.

Moderator Ankuda stated that we cannot take any binding action, however, is open discussion on topics concerning town.

Woody Bickford (Sunrise Terrace) Thanked to town officials, particularly Jeff Strong's crew, Fire, Police, Select Board and School Board doing best they can and I appreciate their efforts. Thank you to Barbara Courchesne for whittling down those back taxes. We have 59% of the subsidized housing in the whole county, we provide housing for poor people. Empty housing due to closing of industry and others have come to fill that housing. I don't know how we get out of it.

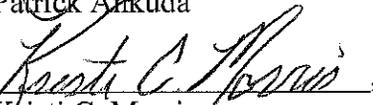
Moderator Ankuda adjourned the meeting at 10:25 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted:



Barbara A. Courchesne
Town Clerk/Treasurer

Attest: , Moderator
Patrick Ankuda

Attest: , Chairman of Springfield Select Board
Kristi C. Morris

State of Vermont
House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

Concurrent House Resolution

H.C.R. 22

House concurrent resolution honoring Bruce Johnson for his dynamic leadership of Springfield Area Public Access Television

Offered by: Representatives Emmons of Springfield, Forguites of Springfield, Dakin of Chester, and Huntley of Cavendish

Whereas, Springfield Area Public Access Television (SAPA-TV), headquartered at a broadcast center located in Springfield High School and serving viewers primarily in Springfield, Chester, and Weathersfield, has transmitted municipal government deliberations and a diverse schedule of public affairs, educational, entertainment, and religious programs on a two-station system, and

Whereas, from October 2001 until January 2014, Bruce Johnson served as the talented SAPA-TV Executive Director under whose leadership the organization evolved into a television service that is a central element of local civic life and facilitates the viewing of many interesting events ranging from yoga classes to high school sports to fascinating travelogues, and

Whereas, Bruce Johnson viewed SAPA-TV as a local asset that "could bring the community to people's living rooms," and

Whereas, at SAPA-TV's 2014 annual meeting, Jared Gunnell, the new Executive Director, presented his former boss with a lifetime achievement award in recognition of his predecessor's extraordinary service and dedication to the success of SAPA-TV, and

Whereas, presenting this award to Bruce Johnson was an emotional experience for Jared Gunnell, whom Bruce Johnson hired in 2008 as a production manager, and

Whereas, SAPA-TV has completed a number of technical improvements and hopes to inaugurate Internet streaming in the near future, and

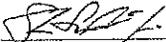
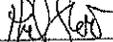
Whereas, the Johnson family remains actively involved at SAPA-TV as Bruce Johnson's wife, Marita, now serves as its board's vice president, and

Whereas, greater Springfield greatly appreciates Bruce Johnson's contribution to improving access to community events and broadening the personal horizons of SAPA-TV's viewers, now therefore be it

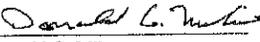
Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors Bruce Johnson for his dynamic leadership of Springfield Area Public Access Television, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Bruce Johnson in Springfield and to Springfield Area Public Access Television.


Shapleigh Smith, Jr.
Speaker of the House

Philip B. Scott
President of the Senate

Attested to:


Donald G. Milne
Clerk, House of Representatives



Town Meeting March 3, 2015

Selectboard Chairman's Report

In 2014, the Town of Springfield witnessed several changes and improvements throughout the year. Though no significant or single entity resulted in having a huge impact on the grand list, the downtown and surrounding districts did experience economic growth and neighborhoods are seeing improvements.

VTEL, Black River Produce, Jeld Wen, IVEK, Springfield GMC, 100 River St., HB Plumping, Winstanley Enterprises have expanded, continue to expand or are in the midst of growing. The two industrial buildings on Clinton St. owned by SRDC are now poised for action to develop. The east end of Bryant's is scheduled to be marketed this year and litigation for the Jones & Lamson building was resolved and plans for its removal appear to be within reach after all these years.

Through the efforts of SOM, several buildings downtown have experienced appearance improvements and they continue to work with others. SOM also advocates on behalf of the Town and building owners to increase commercial occupancy on Main St.

Several neighborhood associations or alliances have formed, or are meeting regularly, to discuss issues in their areas and advocate for self improvements. Thanks to Selectboard member George McNaughton for helping to coordinate some of these groups.

The Selectboard continues to act on local health and safety orders to remove or repair dilapidated buildings. Several have been demolished, including Elm Hill, Union St. Cottage Ave, Valley St. and most recently, Furnace St. Others have agreements or are waiting in the wings and some have appeals that are in process.

Our citizens continue to experience the highest property taxes in the State. Springfield struggles to see industrial growth for employment opportunities with higher paying skilled jobs. Property values have been declining and families are not buying real estate in large numbers. At least, not as fast as we would prefer.

For these seasons, and others, the Selectboard continues to recognize that our focus remains keeping the budget at an absolute minimum but necessary level. Under the review of the Budget Advisory Committee and the Selectboard, we ended up with an increase that resulted in a 2.7% increase for 2015 – 2016. The larger pluses for the budget included the principle for the last CSO project of \$191,000 and winter road materials increase of \$60,000 and some salary adjustments. The minuses included \$210,000 for revenues other than taxes and a decrease in salary adjustments in fixed charges. A large portion of the difference is because the capital equipment contribution is down \$329,860 from last year. This acts as income for the revenue other than taxes.

At past Town Meetings, some have criticized that we have Champagne taste on a beer budget or that we drive a Cadillac on a Chevrolet income. However, both the Selectboard and the BAC resisted the urge to add unnecessary expenditures. It is a fine line between affordability and providing the expected needs of our citizens. As with most previous years, the budget increase boils down to a few items that can have an impact on the bottom line. They typically include capital equipment and road paving.

Our roads, sidewalks, water and wastewater infrastructure fall far short of being Champagne or Cadillac. Certainly, we could spend millions more to improve each of them into good condition. Our emergency service providers including Highway, Police and Fire operate with lower staffing than other Towns having similar services. This is while we have 151+ miles of streets and roads to maintain, an escalating crime wave exceeding 540 criminal incidents and 8,000 complaints and over 2,200 combined fire and ambulance calls. These are services that we should be proud of, as they are all dedicated and highly trained individuals.

This past fall, we rolled out our Project ACTION group. This is an agency network program modeled after Rutland's Project VISION. It is focused on three committees; Crime & Safety, Housing & Neighborhoods and Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation. It uses a collaboration of resources to direct the right solution to the right problem at the right time. I have advocated for this focus group since the summer of 2012 following the first shooting on Main St. Thanks to the efforts of Selectboard member Stephanie Thompson, she has picked up the ball and is coordinating the many agencies' to meet regularly to identify our community issues and their solutions. Having all these agencies in the same room at the same time for the benefit of our Town is unprecedented.

The Selectboard and Schoolboard have met and have formed a committee consisting of two members each to determine what can happen with Park St. School. I would like to thank Selectboard member Dave Yesman for his efforts in his research and Schoolboard members Steve Karaffa and Ed Caron for their insight. Working together we can move toward a resolution of the property. The goal is to keep the expenses off the shoulders of the taxpayers and perhaps have the building somehow added to the grand list.

Our Town is not all doom and gloom. I am an optimist by character and believe we are poised for growth in economic development, uniting our neighborhoods and providing our citizens with a safe environment to raise and educate a family. I would advocate for approval of our Town and School budget. I would ask that if you have questions, regarding either budget, please ask them tonight.

Finally, please get involved with our community. Join a neighborhood association, participate in our community events. A healthy community is an active community. We don't always have to agree but we need everyone to be part of the solutions. Let's work together.

Respectfully,

Kristi C. Morris