

**2024 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING & ANNUAL TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT  
MEETING MINUTES  
HELD MARCH 4, 2024**

Moderator - Frank Davis called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. Frank then introduced Senator Russ Ingalls. Senator Ingalls thanked everyone for coming to the meeting, announced the Towns that he represents. There are 25 Towns and encouraged everyone to vote tomorrow. Senator Ingalls then spoke about the government spending \$10 Billion in COVID funds, and they want to spend more, they want to raise our taxes, which we just can't afford. Russ then spoke about the families that are trying to make ends meet but never getting anywhere, the single parents struggling, the elderly getting social security, barely getting by, and the people just starting out trying to buy houses and having kids are struggling. Russ then spoke about the government spending \$700 million a year on Climate Change which makes taxes go up. The government is out of money and so taxes will be raised to adjust for the spending. Russ then spoke on what we should be spending money on to help keep Vermont more affordable, schools and towns need to have an honest conversation about where and what the money is being spent on and the best way to start saving money. The best way to do that is to get out there and vote.

Frank then introduced Brian Smith - our State Representative for 8 years. Brian said that they are working on a few house bills – House Bill 687 Changes to Act 250 they have been working on for 4 years, House Bill 289 – Climate Tax Increases – Electrifying Vermont - it will cost 10 billion dollars over a 10-year period it's a big concern. House Bill 48 – NE Kingdom – asking the State to pursue another land fill location. House Bill 345 – “Lake in Crisis”. Another big topic is Affordable Housing – no such thing as Affordable Housing. The cost will be taken out of taxpayers' pockets. There is a Bill that has been in progress on Drug Trafficking – 10 years in prison for dealing fentanyl, addictive drugs are getting out of hand.

Frank then asked the voters to show appreciation for the people who are elected, appointed and that work for the Town and School. A moment of silence, for all the loved ones that we lost and for everyone in need. Frank then stated that everything we go over tonight will be in the warning in the town report and to review and follow along and make this meeting a memorable one for everyone including the kids that were present.

Frank then read Article 1 and Article 2 which will be voted on tomorrow by Australian Ballot.

- Article 1.** To elect by the Australian Ballot System the following Town and Town School district officers for **one year**:
- (1) Town & School Moderator      (1) Delinquent Tax Collector      (1) First Constable
  - (1) Town School Board Director      (1) Second Constable
- To elect by the Australian Ballot System the following Town and Town School district officers for **two years**:
- (1) Select Board Member      (1) Town School Board Director
- To elect by the Australian Ballot System the following Town and Town School district officers for **three years**:
- (1) Lister      (2) Town School Board Directors
  - (1) Select Board Member      (1) Union School Board Director
- To elect by the Australian Ballot System the following Town and Town School district officers for **five years**:
- (2) Cemetery Commissioners

- Article 2.** Shall the voters of the Town of Derby School District approve the School Board to expend **\$8,014,798.00**, which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year?

**VOTING:** The polls for voting on the above said **ARTICLES 1 & 2** will be open at **8:00 A.M. and will close at 7:00 P.M. on TUESDAY, MARCH 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024, IN THE LOWER LEVEL OF THE DERBY MUNICIPAL BUILDING LOCATED AT 124 MAIN STREET, DERBY CENTER.** The polls shall be under the supervision of the Town of Derby Board of Civil Authority.

Faye Morin reminded Frank to ask for a motion to approve the minutes of the 2023 Annual Town and School Meeting. Karen Jenne made a motion to approve the minutes as written seconded by Allen Yale. All in favor. Motion passed.

- Article 3.** Shall the voters of the Town of Derby School District authorize the Board of School Directors to place the 2022-23 fund balance into three reserved funds: **\$210,000.00** into Building and Grounds fund, **\$29,000.00** Technology fund, **\$1,866.51** Equity fund?

Nikole Brainard – Chair of the School Board and Lyndsay Sykes will answer any questions the voters have. Nikole thanked Emily Micknak for 15 years of service to the school board she will not be running again this year. Emily, Michael Kiser and Robert Boskind were not present, they were on vacation.

Nikole stated that the education spending per pupil in Derby is now one of the cheapest currently at \$10,400 per pupil highest being \$16,000 per pupil in our area.

Nikole then gave a Power Point presentation to show the voters which will help explain the budget. The Power Point Presentation focused on – Factors Influencing the Budget, Supervisory Union – compacity increases, \$139,116.51 of the fund balance turned back into budget as revenue, 16.4% increase in health care costs, personnel Contracts 6% increase, School Counselor, Literacy Coach. Building and Grounds funds will be used to renovate washrooms, shower room, future leach field replacement project and painting. Karen Jenne asked if they looked into hooking up to the Village of Derby Line water & sewer department, Nikole said they hadn't looked into that yet. Technology Fund – Annual Chromebook replacement and renew and purchase new digital software. Equity Fund – Provide educational and cultural opportunities for all students. The Equity Fund currently has \$69,000 and will be used for Winter activity days, and Field Trips.

Gigi Gobeil-Judd made a motion to approve article 3 as written, seconded by Christine Moseley. No further discussion. Motion passed.

**Article 4.** Shall the voters of the Town of Derby vote to exempt the Village of Derby Center Municipal Forest on Hinman Settler Road from real estate taxes for a period of five years?

Allen Yale made a motion to approve Article 4, seconded by Karen Jenne. All in favor. Motion passed.

**Article 5.** Shall the voters of the Town of Derby vote to authorize the Select Board to purchase other land or real estate not to exceed a total purchase price of **\$30,000.00**?

Doug Spates made a motion to approve Article 5. Seconded by Elia Spates.

Discussion – Scott Boskind asked if there was any land that the Board intended to buy, Grant Spates said it is just in case the Town needs the funds. No further discussion. Motion passed.

**Article 6.** Shall the voters of the Town of Derby authorize payment of property taxes to the Town Treasurer on or before **Tuesday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 5:00 P.M.** without penalties. After that date the taxes shall be placed in the hands of the Delinquent Tax Collector with added penalties and interest.

Karen Jenne made a motion to approve Article 6. Seconded by Brian Smith. No further discussion. Motion passed.

**Article 7.** Shall the voters of the Town of Derby vote the sum of **\$200,000.00** for the rebuilding of roads in the Town of Derby, said monies to be raised by taxes?

Karen Chitambar made a motion to approve Article 7. Seconded by Bruce Penfield.

Discussion: Bruce Penfield asked the Board if that was going to be enough money Steve Gendreau said there is never enough money, but they do what is necessary to keep the taxes down. Scott Warthin asked what roads the Town was going to pave this year, Steve Gendreau said Bates Hill Rd, Bushey Hill Rd, Darling Hill Rd, 2 sections on Nelson Hill Rd & Beebe Rd are all on the wish list. Lisa Boskind asked what the progress was on Salem View Heights, Steve Gendreau said there is not enough money in the budget for paving that road the Town would need a big pot of money, that the \$200,000 would have to be about \$500,000 to pave Salem View Heights. Nancy Moore stated that Derby Pond Rd and Hinman Settler Rd properties currently get a reduction on their assessment that will be coming off now that the road is paved. Allen Yale asked how much damage the storm added to the budget, Bob Kelley said that FEMA pays 75%, the State 17.5% and the Town 7.5%. The one big thing is Hayward Road culverts, they have been washed out a couple of times. Bruce Penfield said that dirt roads are a much bigger problem this year due to the climate - warmer winters. Going forward will be a bigger problem, muddy roads earlier in the year creating big potholes on Bushey Hill Rd. No further discussion. Motion passed.

**Article 8.** Shall the voters of the Town of Derby appropriate \$55,952.00 for the care and up-keep of the Cemeteries in the Town of Derby, of which \$34,967.00 shall come from Cemetery revenues and \$20,985.00 shall be raised by taxes?

Lisa Boskind made a motion to approve Article 8. Seconded by Rocky Dagastino. No further discussion. Motion passed.

Karen Chitambar made a motion to combine Articles 9 thru Article 21 into a one motion vote noting that only Article 10 has a change in value from \$42,500 to \$46,000.00 that any discussion on any article can be heard. Brad Shattuck seconded. Discussion:

Jeannine Richards – Area on Aging Jeannine read a letter giving thanks to the Town for their support and to the volunteers for their hard work.

Michael Shick – Asked if the Haskell Library had any other support from other Towns since it's on the Border Karen Jenne believes they get money from the State, Grants, the Town of Holland and Village of Stanstead. Frank Davis said that they have an endowment, funds from the Canadian side, they have 5 American board members, 4 Canadian members, it's a private board that serves the public.

- Article 9. \$12,000.00 to support the **Haskell Free Library & Opera House.**
- Article 10. \$46,000.00 to support the **Dailey Memorial Library.**
- Article 11. \$3,300.00 to support the **Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging.**
- Article 12. \$2,000.00 to support the **Orleans County Citizens Advocacy.**
- Article 13. \$15,000.00 to support the **Town of Derby/Salem Lakes Preservation Association.**
- Article 14. \$10,000.00 for the **Removal of Eurasian Milfoil from Lake Derby (Derby Pond).**
- Article 15. \$13,600.00 to support the **Orleans Essex VNA & Hospice Inc.**
- Article 16. \$9,242.00 to support the **Northeast Kingdom Human Services, Inc.**
- Article 17. \$6,150.00 to support the **Umbrella.**
- Article 18. \$1,600.00 to support the **Orleans County Historical Society/Old Stone House Museum.**
- Article 19. \$2,500.00 to support **Rural Community Transportation, Inc.**
- Article 20. \$2,000.00 to support the **Pope Memorial Frontier Animal Shelter.**
- Article 21. \$1,500.00 to support the **Northeast Kingdom Learning Services Inc.**

Bill Gardyne made a motion to pass Articles 9 thru 21. Elia Spates seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

Frank Davis – Spotted Sheriff Jen Harlow in the back of the room and called her up to introduce her and asked her to say a few words Jen asked if the voters had any question for her, no one spoke up. Brian Smith thanked her and her department for their support and many hours of hard work.

**Article 22.** Shall the voters of the Town of Derby provide notice of the availability of the annual report by advertising in the Newport Dailey Express Newspaper & on our Town Website of pickup locations at least 30 days before the annual meeting instead of mailing or otherwise distributing the report to the voters of the Town pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 1682(a)?

Nikole Brainard made a motion to approve Article 22. Seconded by Christine Moseley.

Lori Halsey asked if we have the Town Report posted on the Town Website. Faye Morin said yes, we have all the Town Reports on our web including previous years. Faye also said that we always have 3 copies in our office if anyone wants to look at them prior to them coming out to the public.

Annette Valeries asked if the Town Reports are at the Libraries – Faye said yes at both Town Libraries. No further discussion. Motion passed.

**Article 23.** Shall the voters of the Town of Derby authorize the Select Board to expend **\$3,021,646.14** which is the amount the Select Board deems necessary for the ensuing years’ budget; which does NOT include the above articles appropriations?

Grant Spates made the motion to approve the budget of \$3,021,646.14 subject to audit, seconded by Elia Spates.

Discussion – Luke Bury wanted to take the opportunity to point out that in light of what other Towns are going through from reading the paper. Derby is a well-run Town for keeping the budget down, and for all the hard work they put into running the Town.

Grant thanked Karen Chitambar for her years of service on the Select Board, the Recreation Department and all her hard work on organizing the 4th of July parades, Karen will not be running again this year, and she will be missed.

Grant mentioned about possibly raising the Rooms & Meals Tax the State would get more funds from visitors, snowmobilers, skiers, vacationers, the Rooms & Meals Tax is currently 9% if tax is 25% education it would be nice to see that 9% go up to 15% and put 30% of those funds towards the education to lower our taxes. The people who come to visit usually don’t look at Rooms and Meals Tax, they just want to come to Vermont, that is where money should be coming from instead of raising our taxes. This would have to start with the Legislatives in Vermont, Brian will talk with Mike Conners and discuss the subject. No further discussion. Motion passed.

Bill Gardyne moved to adjourn the meeting; All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

SCHOOL BOARD DIRECTORS

ROBERT BOSKIND  
 NIKOLE BRAINARD  
 MICHAEL KISER  
 EMILY MICKNAK  
 LYNDSEY SYKES  
 (School Directors)

SELECT BOARD MEMBERS

KAREN CHITAMBAR  
 STEPHEN GENDREAU  
 BRAD SHATTUCK  
 BRIAN SMITH  
 GRANT SPATES (CHAIR)  
 (Select Board)

Attest: FAYE C. MORIN  
 Town Clerk