



Village of Wells River
P.O. Box 737
Wells River, Vermont 05081
802-757-3401

2022 Annual Village Meeting Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 7pm

Brian Emerson Welcomed all and thanked them for attending the meeting. There were approx. 40 people in attendance with 1 nonresident a Reporter from Journal Opinion

He also quoted: It takes a village to run a village “and assured the members that they would be kept posted of all actions done in the village. In addition, he thanked Mary Corey, Russ Robinson, Richard Roderick, Jason Winchester, Chip Conquest and Don Waterman for their assistance with committees and stepping in to fill vacancies within the village.

Article 1-

To elect Village President: Brian Emerson as Chair presided over this vote. Richard Roderick nominated Chip Conquest and Mike Thomas seconded it. Clerk cast 1 Ballot all in favor

Chip Conquest greeted everyone and asked for nonresidents to identify themselves there was 1 person present.

Three Village Auditors for a 1year term -

Beck Cassidy was nominated by Brian Emerson-Seconded by Mike Thomas

Jeff Morin was nominated by Tim Corey Seconded by Glen Godfrey

Lisa Stepanic nominated herself, Tim Corey seconded

Nominations were closed Don Waterman Motioned to accept, Tim Corey Seconded and the clerk cast 1 ballot

1 Blue Mountain Union School Board Director for 3-year term - Kelsey Root Winchester Richard Roderick Nominated Lisa Stepanic Seconded Clerk cast 1 Ballot

2 Baldwin Memorial Trustees for a period of 3 years Chip Conquest and Chris Buhner were nominated Richard Roderick moved Tim Corey Seconded 1 ballot cast by clerk

All Present voted Aye for Article 1

Article 2: To Hear and Dispose of Village Reports, Chip suggested we go over the Village reports and exclude the comparison pages 5,6,&7 to review later with Article 6



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In the reviewing of all the reports located in preceding pages starting on Page 8 and going through each page he opened the floor for discussion.

Upon reaching the **water report** a discussion ensued:

Judy Murray wanted to know who and when the meters were read. John Paye replied by him quarterly. Lisa Stepanic brought forward that she had been monitoring her own meter and had sent a bill to the village based on her reading. She had calculated what she felt was owed and had not received a reply. She stated that acceptance of the check meant that it was accepted. I (Mary Schilke) replied saying Partial payments were accepted and not an agreement that her calculations were correct. Mike Thomas asked if this discussion be tabled and presented to the Board at a Trustee Meeting to which Lisa Replied she had brought this to their attention and still wasn't resolved. Kelsey Root Winchester also stated her meter had not been read for years and wanted issues resolved. Brian Emerson replied that it is typical for utility companies to estimate billings, John Paye said winter readings are sometimes estimated due to snow. Trustees will discuss at a future Trustee meeting. Lisa Stepanic asked about the new meters and that too was tabled for the Arpa discussion on May 15th.

On the Revolving Loan Fund report - Richard Roderick Made mention that the report should be noted that this may also be referred as a grant in other areas of the report

Charter Revision Report – Mike Thomas asked for a brief synopsis of what the committee is doing. Richard Roderick stated an example of changing the verbiage in the report on 1 item that a resident must live in the village for 1 year before being allowed to vote, this is not legal to do. He expressed that the revisions had been sent to a lawyer for review. After his review info will be placed on the village website and there will be 2 public hearings for the village to vote on changes before sending to state legislation to approve.

After the review of all the reports a motion was made by Richard Roderick and seconded by Don Waterman that the report was missing the election results from 2021 and future reports should contain election information. Kelsey Root Winchester Made a motion to accept, Richard Roderick seconded, and all were in favor.

Article 3 – Allow trustees To Borrow Money in Anticipation of taxes Motion made to move by Lisa Stepanic Seconded by Kelsey Root-Winchester Discussion by Mike Thomas wanting to know if we should wait and was told it was a standard operating procedure to allow village trustees to borrow money as needed. All were in Favor except 1 (Lisa Stepanic)



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Article 4 –To see if the Village will authorize the trustees to borrow money in anticipation of taxes as follows:

½ payable by September 20,2022 & half payable by November 20,2022

And to set interest rate 1% per month for first 3 months or fractions thereof after November 20,2022,1 1/2%per month thereafter. Delinquent penalty of 8%after November 2022.;

Motion made by Lisa Stepanic Seconded by Richard Roderick All voted in Favor

Article 5 – Shall the Voters Authorize VOWR to raise and appropriate the sum of \$440,468 for the operating budget for 2022-2023 fiscal year

Discussion:

Richard Roderick made a move that that the trustee Compensation be removed from the budget and be discussed as a separate article, Don Waterman said this could not be done unless more than 10% of the budget was being affected. Richard then wanted to change his amendment to change the Trustee line item to be changed from \$15000 to \$7300 with \$3000 for the trustee stipend and adding \$4300 to the Library Budget so the Librarian could have a raise. During the discussion it was noted that the line item in the Village report was incorrect and that it s/b \$6600. It was also stated that even if Richard wanted to give the librarian a raise that just because more \$ were added to the library Line item it did not mean the library trustees would do that raise and not spend it elsewhere. Lisa Stepanic stated that the Board of Library could move line items around from their budget if they felt the librarian needed a raise. Tim Corey stated we should not even be discussing the 2-line items as 1 item.

In the ensuing conversation Richard Roderick stated he felt that the Trustees should be compensated. Brian stated Tim Corey was correct. Mike Thomas made a motion to consider Richards Second amendment of Increasing the Library budget from \$20,600 to \$24900, A vote was taken, and it was voted by the people to not grant the increase to the library Line item

Jeff Morin made a motion to change the trustee stipend to read \$6600 instead of \$15,000 on page 13 Steve Peck Seconded all voted in favor.

When asked why the budget was not decreased the amount of projected savings by Lisa Stepanic, Brian Emerson stated that should Article 6 pass the implementation of total subcontracted saving might be realized not immediately this first year.



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Motion was made to amend the budget amount to read \$432068.00 by Mike Thomas
Seconded by Richard Roderick , all voted in favor

Article 6- Shall the voters authorize the Highway Department to go from an in house position to a subcontracted position

Discussion : Some people thought it should be tabled, Mike Thomas thought it should not happen without further research. Brian Emerson stated that the trustees are listening to the Village and their need to lower taxes mean a lower budget, the trustees hired a municipal audit to be done and the results were clear that the size of our village does not warrant a full-time employee and would be better served by a subcontracted position. Cassidy Vanamee stated that she thought John was being defamed, Brian Emerson said that is not the case at all and John might apply to stay on as a subcontracted person. Richard Roderick asked what there is to do in 40 hours a week and could someone answer that, Chip asked John to answer, and he said there is mowing the Berry field, Pump house etc. and plowing. After the discussion a motion was made for a paper Ballot by Richard Roderick and the presiding president Chip Conquest confirmed a paper pallet would be done. Voters were asked to line up to vote, the checklist and ballot box were used. 40 voters cast ballots 26 yes, 13 no and 1 spoiled Article 6 passed

All Articles were voted and approved by the voters

At close of meeting - Don Waterman reminded attendees about Arpa Meeting on May 15th at Church, Childcare and free meal.

Tom Kidder spoke of Tucker Mountain trails

Richard Roderick moved to adjourn

Tim Corey Seconded

All in favor

Meeting adjourned 9:40PM

Respectfully submitted

Mary Schilke

Wells River Village Clerk