2020 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES
HARTFORD HIGH SCHOOL
37 HIGHLAND AVENUE
WHITE RIVER JUNCTION VERMONT 05001
FEBRUARY 29, 2020

Present: Town Moderator, Chuck Wooster; Selectboard Chair, Simon Dennis; Selectboard Vice-Chair, Richard Grassi; Selectboard Clerk, Dennis Brown; Selectboard Members, Kim Souza, Dan Fraser, Jameson Davis; Town Manager, Brannon Godfrey; School Board Chair, Kevin Christie; School Board Clerk, Russell North; School Board Members, Peter Merrill, Nancy Russell, Michelle Boleski; School District Assistant Superintendent, Noel Bryant; Town Clerk, Lisa O’Neil; Town Staff: Paula Nulty, Hannah Tyler, Dillon Walsh, Scot Hausler, Lori Hirshfield; Representatives from Town Committees; Hartford School District Staff; Members of the general public

Absent: Selectboard Member, Alan Johnson

Town Moderator, Chuck Wooster, opened the Annual Town and School Meeting at 10AM, preceded by the Hartford Middle School Glee Club singing the National Anthem. Mr. Wooster shared the rules and procedures to be followed.

Motion was made by Richard Grassi, seconded by Dennis Brown, to immediately recess the Selectboard meeting. All were in favor; motion passed.

Immediately following the School Board Meeting, the Moderator called the Town Meeting to order.

Motion was made by Richard Grassi to receive report of Town Officers, seconded by Dennis Brown.

Judith Bettis raised concerns regarding appropriate versus authorize, where was the information about the Local Option Tax in the Town Report, the listing of some articles which were specifically specified “by Australian Ballot” while others were not, and asked the Board to acknowledge the contingency in the audit regarding the Welcoming Hartford Ordinance (WHO).

Lannie Collins addressed Fairview Terrace landlord concerns about access. Moderator ruled out of order with regard to the motion on the floor.

Lori Dickerson questioned what a yes or no vote on the motion means.

The motion was called to question by the Moderator. The majority voice vote was aye; motion carried.
Dennis Brown made a motion to vote to collect Town General and Highway Tax and the Town School District’s Tax on real estate in two installments, the first being on or before August 164, 2020, and the second installment being on or before February 5, 2021, through the Treasurer. Jameson Davis seconded the motion.

The motion was called to question by the Moderator. The majority voice vote was ave; motion carried.

Jameson Davis made motion to vote what compensation the Town will pay its Town officers from the General Fund, effective July 1, 2020, pursuant to 24 V.S.A., Section 932.

That the Moderator be paid $100 per meeting; That the Board of Civil Authority be paid $50 per four hour shift or any part thereof; That the Treasurer be paid $16,000 per annum; That the Selectboard be paid $75 per meeting, with the Chair receiving $300 additional per annum, and the Vice-Chair receiving $150 additional per annum; such officials will receive mileage reimbursement in the amount authorized by the IRS when a Town vehicle is not available to them. Dan Fraser seconded the motion.

The motion was called to question by the Moderator. The majority voice vote was ave; motion carried.

In other business:

Lannie Collins: Landlord on Fairview Terrace having problem renting because of transportation access; can we bond for the construction repairs to the street? Simon Dennis states timeline has been delayed due to competing designs; new information will inform decision; moving forward on that.

Marcie Bartlett: There was no Luna Ricker acknowledgement in the Town Report; Richard Grassi apologizes and states Dennis Brown did bring it up at a Selectboard meeting.

Marcie Bartlett: Questions regarding voting days and ordinance about campaign signage; Lisa O’Neil references state statute – one may not promote particular article or candidate at polling place.

Lori Dickerson: Voiced concern about deadline on carbon neutrality article, verbiage, some buildings have received more recent energy upgrades, concerned about tax burden; Simon Dennis responded that system as whole needs to achieve carbon neutrality; offsets may be purchased.

Sandy Salazar: Asked if 17 year old may vote in Presidential Primary; Lisa O’Neil stated yes if 18 by Presidential Election, cannot vote in local election.

Ken Parker: Concerned with Welcoming Hartford Ordinance, lack of investigation of insurance implications, Town may be without coverage due to exclusion in liability, shared VLCT opinion.
provided to Town Manager. Kim Souza stated taking risks is a way to effect change, ACLU and lawyers group wiling to represent Town in legal proceeding. Peter Merrill stated if Welcoming Hartford Ordinance passes, it is binding on Town and not on School.

John from WRJ: Energy matters should be handled as they come up, concerned with parking issues on South Main Street. Simon Dennis stated Town was moving forward on complete overhaul of South Main Street. Richard Grassi stated parking will be more of an issue as South Main Street repairs done, along with Sykes Mountain Avenue construction, and other projects, there will be travel issues. He said be forewarned, the end result will be worth it.

Joseph Trottier: Stated need to respect rule of law, concern about Welcoming Hartford Ordinance.

Sandy Mariotti: Polled the Board on Welcoming Hartford Ordinance, time spent and money spent on legal counsel

Jameson Davis discussed Board process, requested action

Lannie Collins requested point of order questioning time limit for response to questions. Moderator stated goal is to be sure all speak and are heard; also mindful meeting can be called to close at any time

Dennis Brown discussed his process, advised caution. Ricard Grassi doesn’t believe this is proper vehicle to accomplish what people are looking to do. Dan Fraser will respect the vote of the Town. Kim Souza stated attorneys advise the path of least resistance and stands with the correctness of mission. Simon Dennis shared the Board process to ask the voters, not the attorneys.

Scott Farnsworth: Spoke in support of Hartford Community Coalition appropriation

Megan Culp: Spoke in support of Windsor County Partners appropriation

David Briggs: Spoke in support of Welcoming Hartford Ordinance

Alice Ely: Spoke in support of Public Health Council of Upper Valley Appropriation

**Motion was made by Carol Lane to adjourn the meeting, seconded by members of public. The motion was called to question by the Moderator. The majority voice vote was nay; motion failed.**

Simon Dennis recognized Jameson Davis and makes proclamation to be recorded in Town Records.

Jameson Davis thanks Board and public, requests everyone read is open letter to the Town published in the Valley News this day
Motion was made by Jim Dowd to close the meeting, seconded by members of the public. The motion was called to question by the Moderator. The majority voice vote was aye; motion carried.