

## TOWN OF MONTGOMERY - ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES – 2024

Morgan Daybell called the meeting to order at 9:00 am on Tuesday, the 5<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2024. Morgan began with article 1, to elect a moderator for the ensuing year. Charlie Hancock nominated Jacob Racusin. Pat Farmer nominated Morgan Daybell, Morgan declined the nomination, hearing no other nominations on the floor Jacob Racusin was elected Moderator by voice vote. Jacob recognized there were non-voting members present at the meeting, Charlie moved to suspend the rules and allow the non-voting members to address the body, seconded by Leanne Barnard. Discussion, Barry Kade suggested the electorate consider this as a ‘blanket request’ for the meeting. Body voted to allow non-voting members to speak, passed by voice vote. Charlie moved to allow our Representative Allen “Penny” Demar the opportunity to speak, Penny addressed the body, and gave an update of the current session in Montpelier.

Merle Van Gieson moved to take Article 7 out of order for consideration, motion was seconded. Discussion took place, Jacob read the petition language of Article 7a & b as shown on the warning. Charlie clarified how items get added to the warning binding versus advisory articles. Carol Farmer stated it would be best to address binding articles first, motioned to maintain published order of the Warning. Body voted nay, by two-thirds voice vote, to take Article 7 out of order; a voice vote to maintain the order of the warning and continue the meeting agenda as published passed.

### **2. Elect the remaining Town Officers as required by law:**

- a. **Selectperson- two (2) year term by ballot (Leanne Barnard - term expires.** Paul Nichols nominated Merle Van Gieson. Charlie Hancock nominated Leanne Barnard. Candidates were afforded the opportunity to speak. Hearing no other nominations, Jacob directed the voters to assemble in a line to conduct the vote by ballot. Jacob called the voting to close. Tim Murphy acknowledged the cover of the Town Report, Charlie thanked Wendy Howard and Jim Abbott who were presented on the report this year. Ballots were counted: Merle had 20 votes, Leanne had 77 votes. Leanne Barnard was re-elected to a two year term.
- b. **Selectperson- three (3) year term by ballot (Mark Brouillette - term expires).** Carol Farmer nominated Mark Brouillette. Hearing no other nominations and without objection, Jacob directed Charlie Hancock to cast one ballot to re-elect Mark Brouillette for a three year term.
- c. **Lister- three (3) year term by ballot (James Walsh - term expires).** Charlie nominated James Walsh. Deanna Robitaille indicated that James was not present however he gave his intent to not decline a nomination, hearing no other nominations and without objection, Jacob directed Charlie Hancock to cast one ballot to re-elect James Walsh for a three year term.
- d. **Lister- remainder of a three (3) year term to expire 2026 by ballot (Merle Van Gieson- appointed).** Titus Presler nominated Merle Van Gieson, hearing no other

nominations and without objection, Jacob directed Charlie Hancock to cast one ballot to elect Merle Van Gieson for the remainder of a three year term expiring 2026.

- e. **Lister- remainder of a three (3) year term to expire 2025 by ballot (Vacant seat).** No nominations were given. Seat remains vacant. Selectboard will appoint a Lister in the absence of a nomination.
- f. **Collector of Delinquent Taxes- remainder of a three (3) year term to expire 2026 (Rob Barnard III- appointed).** Lynda Cluba nominated Robert Barnard III. Hearing no other nominations Robert Barnard III was elected by unanimous voice vote for the remainder of a three year term to expire 2026.
- g. **Village Cemetery Commissioner- five (5) year term (George Gabuzda - term expires).** Brent Godin nominated George Gabuzda. Hearing no other nominations, George Gabuzda was re-elected to a five year term by unanimous voice vote.
- h. **Village Cemetery Commissioner- four (4) year term (Sheila Marshia - term expires).** James Marshia spoke on behalf of Sheila, indicating she will decline a nomination due to personal reasons. No nominations were given. Seat remains vacant. Selectboard will appoint a Commissioner in the absence of a nomination.
- i. **Center Cemetery Commissioner- five (5) year term (Annie Purrier- term expires).** Jade Dixson-Boles nominated Cindy Gilchrist. Hearing no other nominations, Cindy Gilchrist was elected to a five year term by unanimous voice vote.
- j. **Library Trustee- three (3) year term (Patty Perl - term expires).** Marijke Dollois publicly acknowledged and thanked the three retiring Trustees for their years of dedication and service. Marijke Dollois nominated Remi Gratton. Daniel Khan nominated Nicole Landreman. Acceptance from Nicole was withdrawn and clarified in favor of the next trustee seat. Hearing no other nominations, Remi Gratton was elected to a three year term by unanimous voice vote.
- k. **Library Trustee- three (3) year term (Claire Draper - term expires).** Daniel Khan nominated Nicole Landreman. Hearing no other nominations, Nicole Landreman was elected to a three year term by unanimous voice vote.
- l. **Library Trustee- three (3) year term (Rita Kalsmith - term expires).** Esther Litchi nominated Carmen Carroll. Hearing no other nominations, Carmen Carroll was elected to a three year term by unanimous voice vote.
- m. **Fire Commissioner- two (2) year term (William Baker Sr - term expires).** William “Billy” Baker Sr, withdrew his name, indicating he has held this position for over 35 years, it is his wish to pass it on. Billy Baker Sr nominated Doug Kopacz. Hearing no

other nominations, Doug Kopacz was elected to a two year term by unanimous voice vote.

- n. **Planning Commission- three (3) year term (Barry Kade - term expires).** Lynn Locher acknowledged and thanked Barry for his 30 years of service. Merle Van Gieson nominated Barry Kade. Barry declined. John Kuryloski nominated Patrick Calecas. Hearing no other nominations, Patrick Calecas was elected to a three year term by unanimous voice vote.
- o. **Planning Commission- three (3) year term (Vacant seat).** Brent Godin nominated Charles Snedikor. Peter Locher nominated Kim Morrill. Candidates were afforded the opportunity to address the body. Karie Quintin asked whether the candidates would like to speak more on their future visions for the Town, both declined further discussion. Body began with voice vote, this was inconclusive, Jacob indicated the body would move to vote by show of hands. Show of hands was inconclusive. Jacob directed the body to move to conduct by ballot vote. Ballots were counted, Charles Snedikor had 40 votes and Kim Morrill had 58 votes. Kim Morrill was elected to a three year term.

**3. Shall the voters authorize the Treasurer, pursuant to 32 VSA 4791, to collect Current Taxes?** Morgan Daybell nominated the Treasurer to collect current taxes seconded by Esther Litchi, moved as written. Passed by unanimous voice vote.

**4. Shall the town vote to approve a half-cent increase in the tax rate to be allotted to the Conservation Reserve Fund (established by the voters in 2018) in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2804?** Sue Wilson motioned to accept as written, seconded by Pat Farmer. Charlie Hancock clarified what the Conservation Reserve Fund is and why it was established to provide context to the body for consideration. Discussion ensued. Motion was passed by two thirds voice vote.

**5. Shall the Town authorize the Selectboard to borrow up to \$250,000 for a term of 5 years for the installation of a fireproof vault, pursuant to 24 VSA § 1178, inside the Municipal Offices?** Lynda Cluba motioned as written, seconded by Marijke Dollois. Charlie clarified where the records are currently stored, in gun safes, and that the requirements based on statute are to house permanent archival town records in a fireproof vault. Discussion ensued. Marijke Dollois called the question, seconded by Pat Farmer. Motion passed to cease debate. Motion to accept article as written passed by two thirds voice vote.

**6. Shall the voters accept a fiscal year 2025 Budget of expenditures not to exceed \$1,330,002.00 of which an estimated \$1,019,445.65 shall be raised by taxes, and authorize the Selectboard to set a tax rate sufficient to provide the same?** Mark Brouillette moved to accept the article as written, seconded by Emily Kimball. Passed by two thirds voice vote.

**7. To do any other business proper to be done at said meeting:**

- a. **Shall the Town vote to install roadside curbs and raised sidewalks along VT Route 118 in Montgomery Center? (Advisory – added by petition).** Charlie Hancock clarified

the current engineering plans outlining the location of the sidewalk installation will be on the south of Main street as well as down the north side of Main street to the Recreation Center with additional street parking built in at the Recreation Center. Discussion ensued at length. Larry Letourneau called the question. Motion for discussion to cease passed by voice vote. Motion to approve 7a passed by two thirds voice vote.

- b. **Shall the Town vote to restore and maintain the Town Office building located on VT Route 118 in Montgomery Center? (*Advisory – added by petition*)**. Patrick Calecas so moved, seconded by Pat Farmer. Charlie clarified for the body what the current plan is for the old Town Office building located at 98 Main street on Route 118. Plans are currently to remove the building, remediate the area to create a parking lot with roughly 28+/- new parking spaces. With the intent to have an ATM kiosk available and continue discussions with the US Postal Service to secure a potential location at another building in the Center. Charlie clarified the language of the article for voting context. Discussion took place. Mark Brouillette called the question, motion passed by voice vote to cease debate. Motion to approve article 7b failed by two thirds voice vote.

Barry Kade presented a non-binding resolution for the body to consider: Be it resolved, that the voters of the Town of Montgomery call for an immediate permanent ceasefire between Israel and Palestine, release of all hostages, and an end to U.S. Military assistance to Israel, seconded. Voice vote inconclusive. Motion presented by show of hands, 28 yay and 21 nay. Motion for the non-binding resolution passed by show of hands. Mark Brouillette acknowledged and thanked town employees and volunteers. Charlie clarified the municipal tax rate and Education rates are separate rates. Morgan Daybell spoke on behalf of the School District.

Tim Murphy motioned to end the meeting, seconded, body moved to adjourn this passed by voice vote at 11:39AM

Dated at Montgomery, Vermont this 12th day of March 2024

Selectboard Chair, \_\_\_\_\_

Town Moderator, \_\_\_\_\_

Attest: Elizabeth Reighley, Municipal Clerk, Town of Montgomery

\_\_\_\_\_ March 12th, 2024

*\*signatures on file at the Town Office\**