EDEN TOWN CLERK’S OFFICE

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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Tuesday, March 7, 2023

Selectboard Present: Board of Civil Authority Present:

 Ricky Morin H. Bruce Burnor

 Clayton Whittemore Kelly Daige

 Tim Bullard Amy Fitzgerald

 Deborah Godin

 Tracey Morin

 Leslie White

Moderator H. Bruce Burnor opened the meeting at 9AM.

Ron McLean offered a salute to the flag.

Bruce led a moment of silence for our Town Clerk of 26+ years, Candace Vear, who passed away in December. A bouquet of red roses was on the head table and a chair was kept open for her to be with the town in spirit for Town Meeting.

Bruce asked for the permission of the voters to allow Mark Higley to speak. So granted. Mark spoke about the many bills now in the legislature including S-5, the affordable Heat Act which would put a surcharge on existing fuels with a wide discrepancy of possible costs. He does not support this bill. A Paid Family Leave bill is also in discussion. If approved, the bill would provide 12 weeks of fully funded wages, first to state employees and then expanding to others. The Child Care Bill and the Free School Lunch Program are also in debate. Mark mentioned that approval could raise taxes between 3.7% to 8%. The Cannabis Control Board has had to make some changes after product was found to be contaminated with herbicides.

Sports betting is also on the floor for discussion as well as an elections bill and ARPA funds still available.

**Article 1: To determine whether Roberts Rules or other rules of order shall govern the**

 **parliamentary procedure of this meeting.**

Motion by Bert Manning, seconded by Michelle Cardinal, so approved.

**Article 2: To elect a moderator.**

Ricky Morin stepped forward to act as interim moderator to conduct the vote for moderator. Ron McLean nominated H. Bruce Burnor. Ricky motioned for the clerk to cast one unanimous ballot for H. Bruce Burnor as moderator. Approved by voice vote.

**Article 3: Presentation of the Bullard Award.**

Tim Bullard presented the Bullard Award to Jerry White in honor of the late Candace Vear for her many years of dedication and service to the community. The award was a framed photo taken from the dock at their camp on Lake Eden, a favorite place to spend time with family.

**Article 4: To see if the voters will accept the Town Report.**

Leslie White pointed out 2 mistakes in the report. On page 4 Eurasian Milfoil was spelled incorrectly and on page 37, Donna Whitcomb was listed incorrectly as Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer. That should have read Beth Spaulding.

Motion by Bruce Shields to accept the report with corrections, Ron McLean seconded. Approved by voice vote.

**Article 5: Shall the Town vote to use the non-expended Selectboard Funds from the 2020-**

 **2021 fiscal year to reduce the amount required to be raised by taxes for the**

 **ensuing budget year? $ 33,335.00**

Motion by Ed Debor to approve, Leslie White seconded. The question was asked if the money was needed for any existing town funds. Tim stated that all accounts were fully funded and in good shape. Michelle Cardinal asked if not used for taxes, can it be used for another purpose. Ricky stated that the law requires that excess Selectboard funds be returned to the taxpayers or the taxpayers may vote to use the funds for other purpose. Approved by voice vote.

**Article 6: To elect all Town and School District Officers as required by law:**

 **Office to take effect after adjournment of Town Meeting.**

**a) Town Clerk for three years**

Leslie White nominated Melissa Whitcomb. There were no other nominations. Tim Bullard motioned to close nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for Melissa Whitcomb. Ron McLean seconded the motion. Approved by voice vote.

**b) Town Treasurer for three years**

Leslie White nominated Melissa Whitcomb; Amy Fitzgerald seconded. There were no other nominations. Ed Debor motioned to close nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for Melissa Whitcomb. Tim seconded the motion. Approved by voice vote.

**c) Selectperson for three years**

Juli Morin nominated Clayton Whittemore; Faye Cochran seconded. Ron McLean motioned to close nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for Clayton Whittemore. Approved by voice vote.

**d) Auditor for three years**

Leslie White nominated Tracey Morin; Clayton Whittemore seconded. Leslie made the motion to close nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for Tracey Morin. Approved by voice vote.

 **e) Cemetery Commissioner for five years**

Faye Cochran nominated Jubal Durivage; Tim Bullard seconded. Leslie White made the motion to close nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for Jubal Durivage. Approved by voice vote.

 **f) Road Commissioner for 3 years**

Faye Cochran nominated Ricky Morin. Ron McLean motioned to close nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for Ricky Morin. Approved by voice vote.

**g) First Constable for one year**

Faye Cochran nominated Matt Hill. Leslie White motioned to close nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for Matt Hill. Approved by voice vote.

**h)** **Second Constable for one year**

Takoda Whitcomb nominated Jared Lilly. Deb Godin nominated Bert Manning. Bruce Burnor called for a paper ballot. Total ballots cast 62, needed for majority 32. Bert Manning had 42 votes, Jared Lilly 15 with five spoiled ballots.

 **i) Grand Juror for one year**

Faye Cochran nominated David Whitcomb, Michele Cardinal seconded. Eric Hammond motioned to close nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for David Whitcomb. Approved by voice vote.

**j) Town Agent for one year**

Leslie White nominated Tracey Morin, Faye Cochran seconded. Amy Fitzgerald made the motion to cast one unanimous ballot for Tracey Morin. Leslie White seconded. Approved by voice vote.

**k) Agent to convey Real Estate for one year**

Leslie White nominated Monique Morway; Michele Cardinal seconded. Matt Hill made the motion to close nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for Monique Morway. Approved by voice vote.

**I) Trustee of Public Funds for three years**

Leslie White nominated Tracey Morin. Amy Fitzgerald seconded. Amy Fitzgerald made the motion to cast one unanimous ballot for Tracey Morin. Approved by voice vote.

 **m) Trustee of Public Funds for one year**

Leslie White nominated Melissa Whitcomb; Amy Fitzgerald seconded. Eric Hammond made the motion to cast one unanimous ballot for Melissa Whitcomb, Leslie White seconded. Approved by voice vote.

 **n) LNMUUSD Board Member for three years**

Jeff Hunsberger nominated David Whitcomb. Matt Hill motioned to close nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for David Whitcomb. Approved by voice vote.

**Article 7: To see what sum of money the Town will raise on its grand list for the Highway**

 **Department? Budget Proposal $ 623,970.00 8.76% Increase**

Leslie White motioned to approve; Michele Cardinal seconded. There was discussion about the increase in budget. Ricky explained that sand cost is up 26%, culvert costs have tripled, and fuel prices have increased. The question was asked as to whether the labor cost included a third person, Ricky answered no. Wendy Lane asked for a paper ballot. Total votes cast 78, Yes 65, no 13. Article passed.

**Article 8: To see what sum of money the Town will raise on its grand list for the Selectboard**

 **Fund? Budget Proposal $ 580,030.00 2.44% Increase**

Matt Hill made the motion to approve the budget as written. Approved by voice vote.

**Article 9: Shall the Town appropriate $15,000.00 for the control of Eurasian Milfoil from**

 **Lake Eden?**

Gary Durett made the motion to accept the article as written, Mary Lou Durett seconded. Gary Durett asked permission for Vinny Brennan to speak on behalf of the Lake Eden Association. Voters agreed. Vinny gave a presentation that milfoil was detected in the Spring of 2022. The Lake Eden Association immediately contacted the state and was given a Rapid Response Grant. The grant provided funds for a complete survey of the lake, divers and hand harvesters. Smothering blankets were purchased with money from the Lake Association. Any grants or money received from the town would go to eradication and future prevention of any contamination. Questions were raised about the Greeter Program and who owns the lake and is responsible for it. Suggestion was made to close off the access when no greeter is present. The State had been contacted and limiting access is not a possibility. Greeters are trained to identify, educate, and suggest removal of milfoil but cannot prevent boaters from entering the lake. In the 14 years of the Greeter Program, they have never detected milfoil during inspections. Greeters can contact the Game Warden if they see a violation of any sort such as a visitor wanting to use a jet ski. The use of herbicides as an option was not looked upon favorably by those present. There are many steps to take before herbicides are considered. Bruce Burnor called for paper ballot. Total votes cast 77, 65 yes, 12 no. Article passed.

**Article 10: Shall the Town authorize the expenditure of an amount not to exceed $89,000.00**

 **from existing funds to establish a solar generating system on LERA property on**

 **the west side of Route 100?**

Deb Godin motioned to approve as written, Leslie White seconded. Matt Mitchell and Craig Kneeland gave a brief presentation on the installation of a solar array at the Lake Eden Recreation Area property across from the beach entrance. The Energy Committee felt it would be a good use of the property and the energy produced would generate credits to offset the cost of electricity for the Beach, Town Office, and Town Garage. All energy produced would come back to the town as a credit. Craig estimated a 10 year payback on the project. Questions were presented on the maintenance and upkeep of the array and surrounding lot, if leasing panels was a better option, the cost of disposal at the end of their life, and whether the panels would be new or used, and if the possibility of storage was considered. Bruce Burnor called for paper ballot. Total ballots cast 77, yes 24, no 53. The article did not pass.

**Article 11: Shall the Town appropriate the following sums to be raised on its grand list for**

 **local organizations? $23,000.00**

Gary Durett motioned to approve all as one, Eric Hammond seconded. Approved by voice vote.

**Article 12: Shall the Town appropriate the following sums totaling $12,431.99, to be raised**

 **on its grand list for other organizations?**

Leslie White motioned to approve all as one, Matt Mitchell seconded. Approved by voice vote.

**Article 13: Shall the Town vote to pay property taxes, municipal and school combined, to the**

 **Town Treasurer in three equal installments due on or before November 15, 2023,**

 **February 15, 2024, and May 15, 2024, with postmarks acceptable?**

Ron McLean motioned to approve; Amy Fitzgerald seconded. Approved by voice vote.

**Article 14: To transact any other business proper at this time.**

1. **Presentation on the Memorial Fund Project Completion.**

Leslie White explained that the Memorial Fund was an idea dating back to 1946, to erect a monument honoring those in Eden who have served our country. After many years, the Eden Cemetery Committee commissioned a granite bench to be placed at the Eden Corners Cemetery with all of the branches of the military engraved on it. This was paid for with the Memorial Fund and monies from the American Gift Fund.

**b) American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds received and potential projects.**

Leslie White explained that the previous plans to construct a new Town Office have been reconsidered. After the review of retention requirements, reorganization, and consolidation over the last few months, it was determined that the current office was sufficient. The addition of a new meeting room to the current location as well as energy improvements are the plans moving forward. Also discussed were energy improvements at the Town Garage.

**c) Blakeville Road Bridge completed.**

Ricky Morin said that the bridge that went out during the Halloween Storm in 2019 was completed by CCS Constructors Inc. and opened on the anniversary date in 2022. There is a little bit of clean up to be completed this Spring. This project was paid for with FEMA funds. Ricky Morin added that the Paronto Road box culvert replacement will start this year, also paid for with FEMA funds.

 **` d) Betzi Goodman, ECS principal on the school addition and services.**

Betzi Goodman gave an update on the school addition which was paid for with Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds.

Construction is not complete because of difficulty accessing materials and other construction snags. The Fire Marshall has given an Occupancy Permit for adults. The space will be used for a music room, an art room as well as small group special education spaces. An open house is scheduled for late March or early April and the public will be invited to tour the new facility.

**Further Comments from the floor:**

1. One suggestion would be for some or all of the money generated at the Lake Eden Recreation Area above costs could be contributed to the milfoil eradication project as the beach would greatly benefit.

2. Eric Hammond asked that when an article is included in the warning, that there be a page in the Town Report that provides additional information so the proposal can be reviewed before Town Meeting.

3. A request was made to consider videotaping Selectboard Meetings so that more people could see the meetings if they are not able to attend in person. Cable is being installed down Route 100 and could possibly make this request more feasible.

March 9, 2023

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 H. Bruce Burnor, Moderator

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 Tracey Morin, Presiding Officer

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 Leslie White, Board of Civil Authority