

MINUTES FOR MARCH 4, 2019

ANNUAL TOWN AND TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING

The legal voters of the Town of Springfield and Town of Springfield School District were notified and warned to meet at the Springfield High School Cafeteria in said Town on Monday, March 4, 2019 at 7:30 p.m. (7:30 o'clock in the afternoon) to act upon all matters which may be voted upon by acclamation and not otherwise to be voted by ballot, following which all articles to be voted by Australian Ballot on March 5, 2019, were discussed, and then to adjourned to the Riverside Middle School Gymnasium at 8:00 a.m. (8:00 o'clock in the forenoon) on March 5, 2019, to vote by ballot for Town and Town School District Officers, for all appropriations to be voted by ballot, and all other items of business to be voted by ballot.

Moderator Patrick M. Ankuda called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with the presentation of the Colors and Pledge of Allegiance lead by Springfield Area Boy Scouts of America Troop #252. A moment of silence was held for members of the community who have passed. Applause was given for new members of the community. Thank you to Town Clerk Barbara Courchesne and Assistants Maxine Aldrich and Sara Allen, the Board of Civil Authority and the Town Constable, Paul Stagner.

Moderator Patrick M. Ankuda explained procedure and that Roberts Rules of Order and Vermont Law govern this meeting. Only registered voters of the Town of Springfield may speak during the meeting under rules of Vermont Law. Non-registered voters are welcome but they have limited participation and cannot vote. As a practical matter town and school district officials who are not Springfield residents who need to speak and answer questions will be allowed to do so unless someone objects. The special appropriation representatives, who are not Springfield registered voters, will be allowed to speak on their articles on a case-by-case basis. All questions and comments must be addressed to me as the Moderator unless indicated otherwise. Raise your hand, wait to be recognized by me, come to microphone to speak, clearly state your name and address. Broadcast on SAPA TV. Expectations of conduct were further explained regarding multiple questions and accommodation of disabilities.

Moderator Patrick M. Ankuda explained that there are 29 Articles in the Warrant and will be presented out of order. Articles 2, 6, and 10 are floor votes, that require a vote by those who are present, will be taken up first, then Articles 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11-28; and Article 29 will be taken up to open the floor to citizen concerns that were not already discussed in the other articles, however, we cannot vote on anything discussed under Article 29. Articles 2, 6 and 10 floor articles must be moved, seconded, restated by the Moderator before discussion. Once discussion is over, question will be called, question restated and a voice vote taken of only registered voters. A revote of a floor vote can be requested by one voter which will divide the house by chairs or will take a paper ballot, which needs to be requested by 7 people. Once decided, an article cannot be reconsidered in the same meeting once consideration of the next article begins.

ARTICLE 2: To receive and act on reports of the Town Officers, Town School District Officers and Committees.

Motion: Charles B. Gulick, III – 376 Parker Hill
Second: Scott D. Farr - 190 Fairground Heights

Discussion: Elwood D. Bickford – 11 Sunrise Terrace.

Sees a glimmer of hope getting the grand list up. Joins in recognition to town employees especially Kristi Morris w 45 years of service as an on-call firefighter. Dust is collecting on the State's Corrections Facility Agreement. Town Attorney, Stephen Ankuda, has reported that we own the Armory which may be a good fit

for town garage and well fields. Bob Flint's computer science and manufacturing initiative is essential to future of Springfield. Edgar May needs a new business plan been losing over \$200,000 per year for past three years.

Vote: All in favor.

ARTICLE 6: Shall the Town authorize the Board of Selectmen to expend such grant monies, gifts, or bequests which may be received by the Town of Springfield in accordance with the terms of said grants, gifts, or bequests?

Motion: Charles B. Gulick, III – 376 Parker Hill

Second: Scott D. Farr - 190 Fairground Heights

Discussion: None

Vote: All in favor with one nay.

ARTICLE 10: Shall the voters of the Springfield Town School District authorize the Town Treasurer, subject to the direction and approval of the School Board, to borrow money to meet the requirements of the Town School District for the ensuing year, and also authorize the Town Treasurer, subject to the approval of the School Board, to borrow money in anticipation of taxes rated to meet the requirements of the Town School District for the ensuing year?

Motion: Charles B. Gulick, III – 376 Parker Hill

Second: Scott D. Farr - 190 Fairground Heights

Discussion: None

Vote: All in favor.

ARTICLE 1: To elect the following Town Officers and Town School District Officers for the ensuing year:

Cemetery Commissioner	Selectmen
First Constable	Town Agent
Library Trustees	Town Moderator
Lister	Town School District Moderator
School Directors	Trustee of Public Funds

Discussion: None

ARTICLE 3: Shall the Town vote a salary of FIFTY and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$50.00) per meeting for the Town Moderator for the ensuing year?

Discussion: None

ARTICLE 4: Shall the Town vote to pay each Selectperson the sum of FIVE HUNDRED and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$500.00) to help defray the costs and expenses incurred in serving the Town in that office?

Discussion: None

ARTICLE 5: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of ELEVEN MILLION, EIGHT HUNDRED SEVENTY SEVEN THOUSAND, TWO HUNDRED SEVEN and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$11,877,207.00) for the budget of the Town for salaries, incidental and necessary Town expenses, including highways, and for the purposes for which the law requires appropriations, and for which a Town may legally vote?

Selectboard Chairman, Kristi Morris - 59 Coolidge Road

Selectboard Chairman Morris first explained how the reappraisal process affected property values by using his property as an example. See the full text of Chairman Morris' presentation attached hereto and made a part hereof.

During the workshops, the Selectboard and Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) went over the budget, reviewed and scrutinized all expenditure projections, department capitals and related revenues. Some minor adjustments were made in some departments for support of the final budget that is set for tomorrow's vote. The Selectboard and BAC agreed, it is difficult to trim an already skinny operational budget without affecting our level of services. There are very few places major cuts can be made or lumping several smaller cuts together that would impact the bottom line. We want to recognize the efforts of the Budget Advisory Committee and thank them for their dedication, tours of the various departments, attending the many meetings and countless questions during the budget review process. Citizen input is critical for maintaining transparency of the budget and leads to a cooperative support for the final version. The Town budget, represented by Article 5 on the ballot, does include the smallest increase in an annual operating and capital budget that we have experienced in many years. The modest \$45,000 increase represents less than one-half cent on the tax rate. Please believe me when I say a strong effort was put forth in an attempt to accomplish a zero-dollar increase. We were unsuccessful in obtaining that goal. However, the fact that this is the lowest margin of increase seen in many years, it was determined that no other significant cuts could be made without affecting services and it was adopted for the public vote.

Selectboard Chairman Morris' presentation naturally flowed into the issue of paving, which was warned as Article 7. Moderator Ankuda stopped the presentation and invited Chairman Morris to come back and continue with that portion of his presentation that dealt with Article 7 at the appropriate time for that discussion.

Selectboard Chairman Morris continued with his presentation regarding those agencies that provide economic development services to Springfield and then further discussed Springfield's emergency services and that the current Selectboard is unwilling to consider reducing services. See the full text of Selectboard Chairman Morris' presentation attached hereto and made a part hereof.

Town Manager, Tom Yennerell – 222 Park Ridge Road

In addition to services, the town budget was used for the following \$2,559,498.00 worth of large purchases/improvements as of June 2018 (\$1million was done with grant money):

Elevator Updates – Springfield Town Library

LED Light Fixtures – Police Dept.

County Road Culvert – Public Works

2017 Ford Explorer – Police Dept.

2018 Ford Explorer – Police Dept.

2018 Chevy P/U Dump Truck – Public Works

2018 Vacuum Truck – Public Works

*Grant Funded

2018 International Truck, Body & Plow – Public Works

John Deere Tractor – Public Works

AFG Gear Dryer – Fire Dept.

*Grant Funded

Thermal Imager – Fire Dept.

*Grant Funded

2018 Typhoon Pumper Truck – Fire Dept.

Paving – 4.7 Miles

The 2019/2020 proposed budget is \$11,877,207.00 taxes to be raised are \$44,968.00, which is less than ½ of one percent over last year's taxes and well under previous years' increases. Impact on individual tax bill is for assessed value of \$100,000.00 = \$8.22; assessed value of \$150,000.00 = \$12.33. Unavoidable increases in routine pay due to the four unions. Increase in highway winter materials due to ice storms. These drive an increase in budget and it's nearly impossible to keep cutting costs. This year's approach is to increase revenues by \$182,900.00 to keep the tax rate down in addition to other line item cuts.

Budget Advisory Committee Chairman, John Bond – 1809 Connecticut River Road

The BAC completed review of the budget as proposed. Town Manager, Tom Yennerell submitted a tight with suggested increase of .5%. Our efforts thru line by line analysis and discussion with department heads yielded just a few additional items for savings. Articles 7 and 8 will keep us moving forward; Chairman Bond was instructed by Moderator Ankuda to only discuss Article 5. Budget Advisory Committee supports proposed town budget.

Michael Tennis - 16 Leonard Avenue

Way too much salt laid on the side streets and suggests savings could be found by not salting streets with ½ inch of snow.

Elwood D. Bickford – 11 Sunrise Terrace

First time in 26 years with smallest increase. Town Manager reduced his budget the most. Thank you for holding down budget; it's not easy. Town increases with impoverished people each year.

Steve Geller – 152 Summer Street

Questions the adequacy in road maintenance budget. Summer Street is horrendous, and travel along it is jarring. It's been a terrible winter and there are challenges every winter. Wants to know what consideration was given in the budget due to this need. Town Manager, Tom Yennerell responded that we cannot react that rapidly. Tomorrow's budget is for year starting July and we could not have anticipated this winter. Routine paving/road maintenance line item in the budget \$300,000.00 line item in budget and asking for additional \$700,000.00 for road maintenance and paving. Last year's \$900,000.00 has all been spent. Hot mix asphalt in summer will be done, unfortunately Summer Street is not on list.

Alan Lockwood – 89 Spencer Hollow Road

There aren't that many businesses in town and it's up to the property owners to support the town and people are moving out. Need jobs in town to support town and school budgets. Lovejoy is the only shop left. Wants to know where the money for the water supply on Reservoir Road is. Town Manager, Tom Yennerell explained that the money is still in a special account for the Weathersfield Reservoir and its balance is approximately \$150,000.00 and that the dam is unsafe and the funds would probably be used to breach it in the near future. Mr. Lockwood acknowledged that even though it took 26 years, the town did a good job on the paving of Spencer Hollow Road.

ARTICLE 7: Shall the Town vote to appropriate the sum of SEVEN HUNDRED THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$700,000.00) for repaving, road construction, gravel road improvements, and ancillary professional services for the projects specified in the Road Surface Management System Report dated March 2015 or other duly warranted sidewalk improvements?

Selectboard Chairman, Kristi Morris – 59 Coolidge Street

In the proposed 2019/2020 budget there is only \$300K for maintenance, paving, gravel, and occasional sidewalk repairs. Road Surface Management Study (RSMS) identified that \$1M is needed annually to maintain

roads. Selectboard is sensitive to increases to the taxpayer. When an operating budget is skinny decreases are found in capital improvements and paving to make a significant impact. A few years ago the Selectboard wanted to gauge public impression by adding a separate article on the ballot. The first year the article was for \$500K, current year \$600K and proposed this year \$700K when added to the plus \$300K in the budget gets us to \$1M. Freezing water on roads pops off tar and water goes down into layers to create some deep pot holes. Article 7 is important to give at least some opportunities to fix the roads. Warm temps pop out cold patches that Public Works applies thru the winter. Hot mix plant doesn't open until April. Without Article 7 our roads are not going to improve and encourage support of this article. See the full text of Chairman Morris' presentation attached hereto and made a part hereof.

Kenneth M. Vrandenburgh – 11 Elm Street, North Springfield

What is the number that would add one cent to the tax rate? Town Manager, Tom Yennerell responded that it's about \$60K.

Elwood D. Bickford – 11 Sunrise Terrace

Reaffirmed that the \$700K will be added to the \$300K to take care of roads.

Selectboard Chairman, Kristi Morris – 59 Coolidge Street

Article 7 is additional \$100K over last year's \$600K which we are already paying for, the difference is about \$.0147.

Richard Andrews - 12 Center Street

We are not alone and even people with money have been having a difficult time with roads in one piece this winter. RSMS was created by a professional engineer and the heart of an engineering analysis is an economic analysis/cost analysis. The fact that you have a professional analysis that includes a cost analysis means that this is the most economical way of addressing this project; the cheapest way. There is no alternative that won't cost more.

Joseph Wilson – 866 Breezy Hill Road

Property value declined 5% and property taxes increased 15%. When you add this warrant in his taxes go up another 5%. Concerned that those who can afford to are leaving and those who cannot leave are in need of help all the time. Shuffling money is the same pair of pants but different pockets that money comes out of.

ARTICLE 8: Shall the Town of Springfield appropriate the sum of FIFTY THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$50,000.00) to replenish the Springfield Revitalization Fund to cover the costs of implementing the current and future plans for the revitalization and redevelopment of the Town of Springfield, with emphasis on the downtown; including, but not limited to, assistance for the following tasks: seeking qualified private investors, completing specific action strategies for the redevelopment of underutilized buildings/market analysis, preparing applications and pursuing the creation of tax incentive districts and development districts, obtaining private and public funding for revitalization, writing grants, supporting non-governmental partners, preparing engineering specifications/construction drawings for the demolition of certain buildings/sites and redevelopment of certain transportation corridors, and the general marketing of the Town?

Selectboard Chairman, Kristi Morris – 59 Coolidge Street

Springfield Regional Development Corporation concentrates on Springfield and North Springfield industrial park and Springfield On The Move concentrates on downtown and the funding in the budget goes to their efforts. Article 8 was added as an economic development initiative of the Selectboard for the purpose of developing downtown area; 2019/2020 budget doesn't have extra revenue within it to budget for this purpose. Shops are gone and until we can put them behind us, cleanup sites, fix our roads, support our hospital we are in

between a rock and a hard place. Selectboard recognizes that should opportunities come along, the Selectboard can act to become more business friendly. This is the goal of that seed money. See the full text of Chairman Morris' presentation attached hereto and made a part hereof.

George T. McNaughton – 408 South Street

Several speakers have alluded to a demographic problem. We're getting more impoverished and losing middle class. To reverse that trend it is going to cost money and even if this is inadequate, this is necessary. Need to improve grand list, improve roads to get middle class back who are looking for nice looking neighborhoods, good schools, good roads, and a good hospital. We've made some steps cleaning up areas around our schools. Those areas that had drastic rate drops in grand list need to be brought back up. We have to invest in economic development. Austerity mode will not bring in middle class. This is probably not enough money but we need at least this money to continue to fight. Selectboard has become more engaged than it has in decades and encourages support of Article 8.

Elwood D. Bickford – 11 Sunrise Terrace

What are the plans for marketing Springfield? Nineteenth century store fronts are only good for niche not national stores. Town Manager, Tom Yennerell responded that Revitalization funds established earlier were used to create videos to market Springfield and they are on the town's website. Videos were used in select markets in CT and NY from which data was retrieved and will be used for phase II. BRIC project has done some videos as well to promote that project.

Selectboard Member, Walter Martone - 1919 Connecticut River Road

Selectboard member Peter MacGillivray and I have toured towns together to learn how other towns market and redevelop and as a result have formed a downtown committee to address these issues. Old storefronts don't work in any downtown. Learned a lot SOM has been doing outreach to businesses. Woolson Block generating interest which will not be ready for another year. We have a lot of empty store fronts that are not rentable right now. We are learning to build on what other successful towns have done and are generating a lot of interest and hope within a year you will see results.

Stephen Geller – 18 Summer Street

Agrees with others this is an investment in the community and not an expense just like we invest in our homes. The pain will get worse if we don't invest in our community. Part of the effort is to leverage funds to get grants, etc. Article 8 is a wise investment for greater leverage.

A. Richard Hunter – 10 Pine Brook Lane

Thinks downtown has improved lately. We need private businesses. What large businesses would be marketed to, to bring them here? Selectboard Member, Walter Martone responded that our greatest resource is that we have the fastest internet service in the country and the videos market this. Businesses are interested when they hear they can get up to 10 gigabytes. High tech markets are being targeted so that employees can have a better life style. Google is established in White River Junction and we should be able to do this in Springfield.

ARTICLE 9: Shall the Town vote to exempt from taxation the premises at 15 Pine Street (Parcel 26-1-23) owned by Southeastern Vermont Community Action, the exemption for such period of time as long as said premises are not used for any private use, or any use inconsistent with its present charitable use? Such exemption shall be limited to FIVE (5) years, as is required by Section 3840 of Title 32 of Vermont Statutes Annotated.

Representative Steve Geller – 152 Summer Street

Mr. Geller is the Director of SEVCA who is the owner of 15 Pine Street that operates Headstart pre-school and childcare. Been operating as tax exempt since 2000 and every 5 years since and is request. Child development of low income families. Lack of resources for some children and Headstart allows them to compete in school at local level. Respected and tested program helps children and families overcome multi-generational barriers to move into society.

Discussion: None

ARTICLE 11: Shall the voters of the Springfield Town School District approve a salary of FIFTY and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$50) per meeting for the Town School District Moderator for the ensuing year, the funds for which are included in the school budget?

Discussion: None

ARTICLE 12: Shall the voters of the Springfield Town School District approve the payment to each School Board member of FIVE HUNDRED and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$500.00) to help defray the costs and expenses incurred in serving in that office, the funds for which are included in the school budget?

Discussion: None

ARTICLE 13: Shall the voters of the Springfield Town School District approve the School Board to spend THIRTY MILLION, NINE HUNDRED FORTY THOUSAND, NINE HUNDRED SIXTY FOUR and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$30,940,964), which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$18,651 per pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 10.72 % higher than spending for the current year.

School Board Chairman, Edward Caron – 138 Sunny Hill Road.

Due to partial retirement, Steve Hier not appearing first time in 40 years and introduced Rick Pembroke as the new Finance Director. Since last year District has gotten computers via grant for one-to-one computing. Test scores have increased. Acquisition and demolition of 33 Union Street has been accomplished and Mr. Pembroke is working on a project for the lot. Purchase and Sales Agreement is in place with SRDC to transfer ownership of Park Street School to them, which will hopefully take place this summer. 2019/2020 total budget is \$31,800,964 of which \$7,852,398 in taxes to be raised. Springfield District School Report is available on its website. \$100K assessment = \$29.70 increase, unless you have property tax adjustment. Budget increase this year is \$1,365,225 which is 4.48% increase due to inflationary increases for salaries and benefits, rising special education costs and fuel oil. No budget committee this year, however, school board members are behind the proposed budget.

Elwood D. Bickford – 11 Sunrise Terrace

Spending per pupil went up a little over 10% and that seems high and curious to know why that is? 263 special education students costs more than Riverside Middle School and Springfield High School combined. Someone needs to reconcile this.

Superintendent, Zachary McLaughlin – Non Resident

Two parts to the increase, one is \$1M increase and second is the question of how many kids do we have which is 46.70 reduction in weighted kid count according to state of Vermont. Combine that with inflationary cost and that's how you end up with the percentage. At the moment you are correct we have some expensive students with approximately 20 students in out of district placements which costs not only in tuition but also transportation. Done a lot of work to bundle that transportation. Moved from Thomas Transportation to using a

district bus. On some of those students the district receives a fair amount of reimbursement from the State of Vermont but that doesn't net out in our request.

Robert J. Farnsworth - 710 Massey Road

His graduation class at SHS in 1977 had 220 kids. He hears 65 students graduating this year. Park Street School was voted to close along with East Street School and then voted to appropriate construction costs for Elm and Union. We have more real estate with less kids, what is going on and spending is way out of hand. Steam comes out of windows in winter on Park Street School and why are we still heating that building. School Board Chairman, Edward Caron responded that 68 students are graduating this year. Park Street is headquarters for administration and not used as a school and the School Board has been trying to come up with other uses of building. Upcoming deal with SRDC is the best plan in years looking at renovating the building for a nonprofit that can take advantage of tax credits. Administration will then become tenant of new owner.

Robert J. Farnsworth – 710 Massey Road

Why can't the Park Street administration be moved up to SHS. In the 1960s SHS was built because Park Street was structurally unsafe. Urges voters to vote budget down.

Superintendent, Zachary McLaughlin – Non Resident

School Boards original intent was to vacate Park Street. SRDC and now Black River Innovation Campus (BRIC) with Matt Dune and Bob Flint looking to create a regional hub for tech jobs. SRDC will buy for \$1.00 to assume ownership and district would leave. There isn't enough room at Riverside Middle School or Springfield High School for administration. Once SRDC takes ownership, renovates for economic development, it's at least worth kicking tires to remain as tenant. District has 60 days to come up with a lease agreement or exit building, however, the District would rent anyways elsewhere but wants to be contributing to a project that redevelops Springfield.

Charlotte Osterlund – 108 Summer Street

Urges positive vote for school budget. School should be the center and heart of the community. What kind of message does it give if Springfield doesn't support its schools? School investment is imperative.

A. Richard Hunter – 10 Pine Brook Lane

Does anyone on the school board want to comment on what affect, if the deal is made within 60 days to give ownership and lease, does this have on the budget we are voting on. As a substitute teacher recognizes that education is our greatest responsibility and don't want to abandon the neediest kids and we want all the other kids to have the best education possible so that they will bring prosperity to our town.

Superintendent, Zachary McLaughlin – Non Resident

Under terms of the agreement the first year would be a wash and next fiscal year 2020/2021 District would be paying a lease. Agreement is in concept, contingencies surround agreement and have 60 days to come to final agreement.

George T. McNaughton – 408 South Street

Park Street project can improve the grand list and make Springfield attractive to the middle class. BRIC project associated with redevelopment of Park Street School is the only game changing project currently pending, which is critical. Let us hope that nothing will stand in the way of closure on the deal within 60 days. Matt Dunne was heavily involved with the movers and shakers of Silicon Valley, cascading effects and critical project. Essential in bringing back the middle class.

Steven Geller – 152 Summer Street

He is a former school board member from Maine. Any school board's mission is to provide quality education, cutting personnel risks that mission. The increase is tied up with negotiated increases that the school board has no control over in any year. Suspects a lot of increases are not within control of school board. Cost of sending special education kids out of district for placement due to the district not being able to provide those education for students with specific disabilities. Determination of this cost is a crap shoot and can bust budget open. Schools send messages to families considering moving here. Has concerns regarding the chopping away at those things that contribute to the quality of education.

School Board Chairman, Ed Caron – 138 Sunny Hill Road

Responded that 80% of budget is personnel and bargaining agreements lock in at a couple of years at a time; 12% insurance increase due to a locked in plan; 19 employees were anticipated in cuts. Funding from Montpelier allowed those employees to be worked back into budget. Teachers Association is good to work with and doesn't ask for anything out of this world. Fuel reserve fund may help in the end.

School Board Member, Jeanice Garfield – 555 Highland Road

Elm Hill and Union heated by pellets not oil. Two schools were renovated because they were falling apart due to prior school boards not funding capital for years.

Jade Costello – 2 Beechwood Lane

Employee of the school district. Declining enrollment vs climbing rates per pupil and how can we understand this as a tax base. She was at Springfield High School when the current graduation class of 68 kids entered as a larger group. It's terrifying how many have left and she knows personally that it was that result of great domestic turmoil and addiction and that cohort is still suffering from those issues. Offered a different way to look at those 68 students in a different way to avoid this outcome for future classes. Riverside currently has cohorts above 100 students. If budget isn't passed we will lose the personnel and services needed to help remedy those challenges the school and community face.

School Board Member, Michael Griffin, Jr. – 21 Douglas Street

World and education system is evolving with higher tech and all districts are on a dead run to keep up with changes in technology and laws with State and Federal governments. Been to the bottom and are rising up. Impressed with teachers and fair negotiations over the years to protect the taxpayers along with themselves. Governor took away the district's saving in healthcare to use at the state level. Fuel lock-in rate may come down and savings can go into surplus fund. One-on-one computer initiative is slow and methodical to roll out to protect equipment. First in state to have "coding day" wherein all students from Riverside Middle School went to Springfield High School to understand computer coding and build websites, et cetera. Trying to protect taxpayers from pain and lead charge to not spend unless we need to.

Robert J. Farnsworth – 710 Massey Road

Middle class is leaving and cannot afford to live in Springfield because budgets rise over \$1M we need to cut somewhere or it's just going to get worse. Wanted to know if trades were still being taught

Superintendent, Zachary Mclaughlin – Non Resident

Reminded everyone that trades are taught through River Valley Technical Center, which is a separate district.

ARTICLE 14: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of TWO THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$2,500.00) to the Springfield Community Band for eight (8) concerts?

Representative Barbara Rodgers – 224 Boedtger Road

Eight concerts late June thru August for 73 years. Appropriation pays conductor, insurance and band trailer. Invite new adults and youth to play and to come hear music. Facebook and website presence. Thank you to citizens for support and the Hartness House for free space. Riverside space is no longer viable. Organization provides social, educational and musical presences for the community.

ARTICLE 15: Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of NINE THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$9,000.00) to Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) to assist Springfield in responding to the emergency needs of the community and to provide all available and applicable services to families and individuals in need?

Representative Steve Geller – 152 Summer Street

Thank you for past support. Detailed services reports is on page 32 of Annual Report. Agency provides \$90,000.00 worth of services to 540 Springfield households including basic and emergency needs and necessities provided from Good Buy store, etc. New community solar project to provide solar energy credits. For every \$1 the town provided to support SEVCA, Springfield gets \$108 back. Springfield residents have advantage of having in town Headstart center, Good Buy store, and outreach SEVCA service center in their town. Community funds due to their flexibility are necessary to add to decreasing state and federal funds.

A. Richard Hunter – 10 Pine Brook Lane

The weatherization services more than covers the cost of this service.

ARTICLE 16: Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of SIXTY THREE THOUSAND, FIVE HUNDRED and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$63,500.00) to help support the high-quality home health, maternal and child health, and hospice care provided in patients' homes and in community settings by the Visiting Nurse and Hospice for VT and NH? Care is provided regardless of ability to pay.

Representative James E. Rowland, III – 111 Carley Road

For the amount of service provided for in southeast region of Vermont, \$63,500.00, is nothing; we turn no-one away. HOSPICE helps these people in need of help in desperate health situations. Its difficult work, unlike standard hospital care, to make patients comfortable. Springfield's per capita on 9K residents is \$6.70. \$63,500.00 is 18% of Springfield's reimbursement share. Helps to insure all have quality care when and where needed most.

ARTICLE 17: Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of EIGHT THOUSAND, FIVE HUNDRED and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$8,500.00) for the support of Senior Solutions (formerly Council on Aging for Southeastern Vermont) for help to support seniors and their families who are trying to remain at home and not be placed in a nursing home?

Representative Carol Stamatakis – Non Resident

Serving Springfield since 1973. Gratitude for past support that has made an enormous difference in supporting older adults. Significant demographic changes in more older adults which is a positive change in the ways of contribution to community. Redefining what it means to grow older and addressing those needs. In second year of a major grant thru US Department of Justice to help victims navigate criminal justice system to access safe living. Help dealing with medication needs, interactions, side effects and co-pay. Friendly visitor program helps seniors stay connected. There is an advisory position available in Springfield.

ARTICLE 18: Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of FOUR THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$4,000.00) to help support the Valley Health Connections (formerly Precision Valley Free Clinic) to help the uninsured access health care?

Representative Lynn Raymond-Empey – Non Resident

Report is in annual report. Any questions call 885-1616. Contact us for any access to care issues no matter what income level you are at so that agency will attempt to problem solve.

ARTICLE 19: Shall the Town of Springfield appropriate the sum of TWELVE THOUSAND, FIVE HUNDRED and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$12,500.00) for the support of the Current operated by Southeast Vermont Transit, Inc., to provide transit services to the residents of the Town of Springfield?

Representative Mr. Tarvit – Non Resident

Thank you for past funding. Last year Springfield received 7,206 rides at a cost of \$224,000.00 for elderly, disabled and non-emergency; fixed all day town route 10,903 rides at a cost of \$125,000.00. Fixed route services 26,357 rides connecting Ludlow, Chester, Bellows Falls and Lebanon/Hanover area at a cost of \$224,000.00. Contribution critical in drawing down state/federal funds.

ARTICLE 20: Shall the Town of Springfield appropriate the sum of TWO THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$2,500.00) to Green Mountain RSVP & Volunteer Center of Windsor County to develop opportunities for people age 55 and older to positively impact the quality of life in the community of Springfield through volunteer service?

Representative: None

ARTICLE 21: Shall the Town of Springfield appropriate the sum of TEN THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$10,000.00) to assist with the cost of operating the Meals on Wheels Program of Greater Springfield that provides daily hot & cold congregate and home delivered meals and other nutritional needs to the qualified residents of Springfield?

Representative Elwood D. Bickford – 11 Sunrise Terrace

Serves 5 days a week hot meals as well as some weekend frozen food and breakfast. Most served are homebound or don't have relatives left. Sometimes meeting is tragic and need to call in health services or an ambulance. Delivery personnel watch for self-neglect and help to get appropriate services to people. Grateful to town for appropriation. Malnutrition causes other organ failure. Senior Help Line 1-800-642-5119.

ARTICLE 22: Shall the Town of Springfield appropriate the sum of THREE THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$3,000.00) to Windsor County Partners, for youth mentoring services provided to the children of Windsor County?

Representative John Bastille – 5 Dean Street

Taxes is an investment in ourselves. Windsor County Partners is in its 45th year changing to Windsor County Mentors. Check Town Report page 29 or go to website is in progress and Facebook. Consider becoming a mentor to change the direction of a child's life. There are 1000 kids in Windsor County that could use a mentor. Agency has a new executive director and three regional coordinators. Town appropriation is 10% of total budget.

ARTICLE 23: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of FIVE THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$5,000.00) to the Springfield Supported Housing to assist families and individuals find permanent housing and provide in home case management services for 6 months to two years after placement?

Representative Carla J. Kamel – 4 Hill Place

Springfield Supported Housing is a private non-profit agency that helps families and individuals who are homeless or potentially homeless locate and secure permanent affordable housing along with other services that lead to productive living.

ARTICLE 24: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of FIFTY-FIVE THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$55,000.00) to the Springfield Family Center to assist with the cost of providing a free meal daily, a free food shelf, and other services related to hunger, homelessness and related social-service needs in the community?

Representative Michael Wiese – 107 Baker Road

Local food shelf and pantry and daily meal M-F. Last year over 4000 individuals utilized the food shelf and served of 6100 meals out of kitchen. Provide day shelter services and work closely with North Springfield warming shelter. Try to get to know people and get them to other agencies and fill gaps in resources. Serve a lot of working people who are underemployed and seniors just over the threshold of qualifying for other services as well as military. Humbled by and appreciates the support of the community.

ARTICLE 25: Shall the Town of Springfield appropriate the sum of FOUR THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$4,000.00) to the Women's Freedom Center for general budget support to provide services to women and their children who are experiencing emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse and are residents of the Town?

Representative Ms. Kelly – Non Resident

Thanks the town for continued level funded support. Statistics and information about organization are on page 33 and there is an office in town. Meet with survivors with domestic and sexual violence. Nonprofit and relies heavily on community support.

ARTICLE 26: Shall the Town of Springfield appropriate the sum of NINE THOUSAND, FIVE HUNDRED and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$9,500.00) to the Springfield Art and Historical Society to assist in preserving, maintaining, and displaying, for the public, the history and art of the Town of Springfield, Vermont?

Representative Roseanne "Bunni" Putnam – 29 Meadow Drive

Society thanks Springfield voters for past support and looks forward to continuing to be the caretaker of Springfield's history and treasurers. Programs are free and open to the public; open year round Saturdays 1-4 p.m. Involved with community thru outreach projects. Society has the only high school intern project in the state. Local visitors bring amazing artifacts. Donations come from near and far. Completely volunteer and every penny is used to preserve and maintain history of Springfield.

ARTICLE 27: Shall the Town of Springfield appropriate the sum of NINE THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$9,000.00) to Turning Point Recovery Center Drop-In Center and Transition House to help with the everyday cost of providing recovery services and housing for men and that are in recovery from alcohol, substance abuse and co-occurring disorders?

Representative Michael Johnson – 103 South Street

Recovery housing is a need. Transition house provides a way for those in need to get back on their feet. Foundations of recovery and requirements to live there include volunteering, attending recovery meetings. Recovery has to happen before someone can get to work to get back on their feet. He sees a lot of people surviving and recovering. \$9,000 appropriation is to help those people get back on their feet, take shower and use facilities. Thank you for support.

ARTICLE 28: Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of TEN THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$10,000.00) to help support outpatient, mental health and substance abuse services by the staff of Health Care and Rehabilitation Services, Inc.?

Representative Jeffrey Mobus – 19 Orchard Lane

Health Care & Rehabilitation Services (HCRS) is a 501C3 non-profit to support mental health programs. Provide walk in mental health access. Urgent access wait time is down to 24/48 hours. Last year HCRS served 712 residents at a value of \$37,700.00 Thank you for past support.

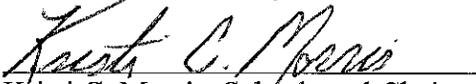
ARTICLE 29: To do any other business that can legally be done under this Warning.

Moderator Patrick Ankuda stated that we cannot take up binding issues under this article, however, it is an opportunity to bring up issues not previously covered.

Elwood D. Bickford – 11 Sunrise Terrace

Special requests have to be paid for. Town has no responsibility for any person within the township. Human Services of Vermont uses ½ of the state's budget and still cannot get the job done and so the special requests is the only way we can respond to the need which is growing every year. Thank you to the town manager, the selectboard and school board for keeping place alive day to day and Jeff and his crew for clearing the snow to get to the places we need to go.

Moderator Patrick Ankuda adjourned the meeting at 10:42 p.m. to Riverside Middle School on March 5, 2019 at 8:00 a.m. to vote by ballot.



Kristi C. Morris, Selectboard Chair



Patrick M. Ankuda, Moderator

Attest: 

Barbara A. Courchesne
Town Clerk

Town Meeting March 4, 2019
Selectboard Chairman's Report

Property reevaluation and the subsequent 2018 tax appraisal adjustments caused concern for many of our residential and commercial property owners. Reappraisals, in themselves, can be scary especially when property values decrease. This is certainly emphasized when newer property owners have outstanding loans that approach the appraisal value or could even be higher than the new appraisal.

Lower property values can be misleading with the perception that taxes would also decrease. We all know that this isn't the case. For example, the home my wife and I own on Coolidge Rd was reevaluated from \$128,700 down to \$108,500 or a 15.6% reduction. One would logically think the property taxes would also have decreased proportionally.

However, to pay our same share of taxes, the tax rate itself would need to increase by 15.6% just for us to pay the same amount of tax, and that is if the Grand List remained the same. Other properties had their values adjusted similarly while other owners saw a higher or lower percentage difference and some even had their appraisals increase, which compounded their new tax assessment.

The new tax rate needed to increase accordingly just to generate the same amount of tax revenue for the same budget. The initial goal for the 2019 -2020 budget was to flat-line the operational and capital expenditures over the current year. With this goal in mind, the Town Manager worked with each department head while putting together their draft operating budgets, which was submitted to the Selectboard. You will hear him explain how the uncontrolled fixed costs impacted the budget and how revenue adjustments were made to offset budget increases to keep them at a minimum. Further he will touch on other expenditures that were adjusted to be more in line with actuals.

During the workshops, the Selectboard and Budget Advisory Committee went over the budget, reviewed and scrutinized all expenditure projections, department capitals and related revenues. Some minor adjustments were made in some departments for support of the final budget that is set for tomorrow's vote. The Selectboard and BAC agreed, it is difficult to trim an already skinny operational budget without affecting our level of services. There are very few places major cuts can be made or lumping several smaller cuts together that would impact the bottom line.

We want to recognize the efforts of the Budget Advisory Committee and thank them for their dedication, tours of the various departments, attending the many meetings and countless questions during the budget review process. Citizen input is critical for maintaining transparency of the budget and leads to a cooperative support for the final version

The Town budget, represented by Article 5 on the ballot, does include the smallest increase in an annual operating and capital budget that we have experienced in many years. The modest \$45,000 increase represents less than one-half cent on the tax rate. Please believe me when I say a strong effort was put forth in an attempt to accomplish a zero-dollar increase. We were unsuccessful in obtaining that goal. However, the fact

that this is the lowest margin of increase seen in many years, it was determined that no other significant cuts could be made without affecting services and it was adopted for the public vote.

I have heard that I cast my vote in the negative for support of the proposed budget at a January board meeting. I would like to clarify that misconception and say I am 100% in support of this budget and that I did vote in the affirmative for it.

The “nay” vote that I did cast was for adding an additional \$100,000 contribution to the current \$600,000 paving special appropriation. My initiative was an attempt to keep increases at an absolute minimum for the overall tax base. I advocated to maintain the same \$600,000 level for the 2019 – 2020 article that is in the current budget.

Also, in the budget is a contribution for our economic development partners Springfield Regional Development Corporation (SRDC) and Springfield on the Move (SOM). SRDC works on our behalf for economic development in Springfield, including No. Springfield and the industrial park. SOM concentrates on the Downtown District. Together, these organizations, along with the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission and the Town, collaborate for development in many areas.

The Town of Springfield does not have unlimited resources and monies for economic development. Expecting us to initiate development ourselves would add an enormous burden on the taxpayers. The Selectboard is sensitive to our already burdensome tax rate and we recognize we can't do it alone. We must partner with public and private enterprise and funding opportunities collectively for the development of our town. Repeating, if the Town is expected to take the lead on our own, large amounts of capital would be required and it would add to the already high tax rate.

Look to the Bank Block, former Furman's building and the Masonic Building for the result of private enterprise. Similarly, the Winstanley Building, 100 River St, Black River Produce (Reinhart), Springfield GMC and the Jones Center of J&L are other examples.

When considering our emergency services, the Police Department responded to 8,721 calls for service in the 2017 – 2018 year. The Fire Department responded to over 2300 fire and EMS calls, Highway responded to 23 weather related events and many other road repair and maintenance projects. We have the second highest number of road miles in the State and our hilly terrain is nearly unprecedented, plus we have a regional hospital receiving emergency vehicles and patients. Reducing services is an undertaking that the Selectboard is unwilling to consider and we believe most residents would not like the result.

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the citizens for approving past budgets and hope you will consider supporting the 2019 – 2020 budget tomorrow. We encourage everyone to become active by following our efforts thru SAPA TV, reading newspapers and following our progress. Please ask questions and become informed.

Respectfully submitted.

Kristi C. Morris - Selectboard Chairman

Article 7

As a reminder to the citizens, the 2019 – 2020 budget includes only a \$300,000 contribution for paving. Without the support of the paving special appropriation, very little work would be accomplished this coming summer. Certainly, we can all agree that our paved roads, gravel roads and sidewalks remain in very poor condition. The freeze-thaw weather experienced this winter has not helped us in any way. It serves as a reminder that it takes an enormous effort to maintain the roads even those that have received past upgrades.

The \$300,000 paving contribution, contained within the budget alone, would accomplish very little for improving paved or gravel roads and we would continue to see their further decline. Article 7, for \$700,000, is essential for combining with the budgeted amount to continue the efforts for improving our road infrastructure and I support it 100%.

The Selectboard added the paving special appropriation article to the ballot three years ago to gauge the community for support of added infrastructure funds for road improvements. It has been very well received in the past and the Selectboard would ask for your support again this year.

Article 8

The Selectboard has also added an additional economic development initiative of our own, on Article 8, requesting \$50,000 for funding revitalization opportunities. If matching grant funds or other monies are needed for the purpose of developing the downtown area, the proposed budget does not have any revenues to support those efforts.

You may remember a similar article a couple of years ago that aided our efforts for various development projects and revitalization efforts. Several dilapidated and unsafe structures were demolished with others were purchased for marketing opportunities. We also were able to match our share of grant funding for other improvement projects.

The Woolson Block is scheduled for rehabilitation starting this April by Vermont Housing Authority (VHA) and Springfield Housing Authority (SHA), the Black River Comtu Falls park project and the sidewalk project between Summer Hill and Valley St is scheduled for this summer funded by Town initiatives.

We hope our citizens will recognize past improvement efforts and will support this article to continue the progress made to date. There is significant energy and collaboration with several projects in the que and we must be prepared to act and help ourselves when other opportunities present themselves.