TOWN OF VOLUNTOWN

TOWN BUDGET MEETING

# June 6, 2018

The electors and citizens qualified to vote in the annual budget meeting of the Town of Voluntown are hereby warned that the annual budget meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 6, 2018 at the Voluntown Elementary School, 195 Main St, in Voluntown, Connecticut, at 7:00 pm for the following purposes, to wit:

The meeting was called to order by Tracey Hanson with the reading of the Notice of Town Budget Meeting.

Pamela E. Theroux, Town Clerk served as clerk for the meeting.

Call for the moderator by the Clerk. Motion by Judith Allik to nominate Tracey Hanson as moderator, which was seconded by Jack Wesa. No other nominations were made. All were in favor of Tracey Hanson serving as moderator.

Louis Gardella made a motion to dispense with the reading of the call of the meeting again. David Blanchette seconded it and all were in favor. Town Attorney Michael Carey explained that a petition had been filed with the Town Clerk, but it did not meet the statutory requirements to move the meeting to a referendum due to the following reasons:

1. There were not enough signatures to meet the requirement.
2. The petition was too vague in terms.
3. There was no reference to this meeting at all.

Due to this the vote will take place tonight on all items.

Item#1: To appropriate the funds necessary for the Board of Selectmen’s Budget for the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 in the amount of $1,819,426 (one million, eight hundred nineteen thousand, four hundred twenty six dollars).

Jack Wesa made a motion to approve Item #1 and David Blanchette seconded it. Item #1 was opened for discussion. First Selectman Tracey Hanson showed a power point presentation with the changes in this year’s budget. There was a lot of discussion regarding the solar panels and at this point the town is still not seeing any benefit from them. There is a committee working to do a study to hopefully lower costs and see some benefit from them. There was also discussion on leased versus own, and the discussion on solar panels was moved to the Board of Ed portion of the budget hearing. There was also discussion on whether or not we need to raise the budget to add more people to the maintenance crew.

Ronald Millovitsch made a motion to close discussion and David Blanchette seconded it. All were in favor. A motion was made by Belinda Weise to vote by paper ballot. Julie Zelinsky seconded it and all were in favor.

The ballots were counted by Belinda Weise and Suzann Miller.

**YES** **NO**

61 16

The Board of Selectmen’s budget for the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 in the amount of $1,819,426.00 **PASSED.**

Item#2: To appropriate the funds necessary for the Board of Education Budget for the fiscal year 2018-2019 in the amount of $6,889,819 (six million, eight hundred eighty nine thousand, eight hundred nineteen dollars).

James Thevenet made a motion to accept Item #2 and David Blanchette seconded it. Item #2 was opened for discussion. BOE Chairman Diana Ingraham explained that the solar panels were voted on by the town and that they are working, but the Eversource rates are driving the increase in costs. The question was brought up about leasing versus buying the panels and this is also being looked into by the committee. There were questions regarding where the money returned by the school comes from and where it shows up on the budget. School Board member Skart Paul questioned the boards handling of special needs students as this is the largest portion of the budget. There was a great deal of discussion and explanation on this, and it was stated that this discussion belongs at a BOE meeting not a town budget meeting. Mr. Paul was asked to please bring this up at the next BOE meeting. A motion was made by Louis Gardella to close discussion seconded by David Blanchette. All were in favor, so carried. Chelsea Weise made a motion to vote by paper ballot. David Blanchette seconded the motion and all were in favor.

The ballots were counted by Belinda Weise and Suzann Miller.

**YES NO**

**52 25**

The Board of Education budget for the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 in the amount of $6,889,819.00 **PASSED.**

Item #3: To set a tax rate and collection period for Fiscal Year 2018-2019.

Ronald Millovitsch made a motion to accept Item #3 and set the mil rate at 28.92 and Richard Osga seconded it. Item #3 was opened for discussion. First Selectman Tracey Hanson showed a power point explaining how the mil rate was calculated. A question was asked regarding the current level of the undesignated fund and Tracey Hanson explained that at the end of the fiscal year the undesignated fund will be at 13% and that this is where it should be. Louis Gardella made a motion to close discussion seconded by Joseph Miller. The original motion was amended by Ronald Millovitsch to set the collection period for July 1, 2018 and January 1, 2019. Richard Osga seconded it. The majority were in favor with 2 opposed. So carried.

Item #4: To consider and act on an Ordinance Authorizing the Appointment and Setting the Term of the Town Clerk. A copy of the proposed ordinance is available for review in the Town Clerk’s Office and the Town Website.

Chris Wilson made a motion to accept Item #4 and Suzann Miller seconded it. Item #4 was opened for discussion. First Selectman Tracey Hanson opened with a power point showing the benefits to the town of having the Town Clerk appointed. One citizen spoke asking to keep the position elected. A motion was made by Joseph Miller to wave the reading of the ordinance and seconded by Troy Jones. Skart Paul made a motion to close discussion and David Blanchette seconded it. All were in favor. David Blanchette made a motion to vote by paper ballot which was seconded by Jennifer Panko.

The ballots were counted by Belinda Weise and Suzann Miller.

**YES NO**

**32 34**

The ordinance Failed.

Item #5: To consider and act on the Voluntown Dairy Farm Tax Abatement Ordinance. A copy of the proposed ordinance is available for review in the Town Clerk’s Office and on the Town Website.

Louis Gardella made a motion to approve Item #5 and open for discussion Suzann Miller seconded it. Louie Gardella made a motion to dispense with reading the ordinance and Joseph Gileau seconded it. There were questions asked regarding the necessity of this ordinance and how we will decide who receives it. Tracey Hanson explained that the dairy farms have been hit hard lately and are at risk of going out of business. Further questions were asked on how the abatement is figured and also why this is only covering dairy farms. David Blanchette made a motion to close discussion which was seconded by Jack Wesa. All were in favor. Chelsea Weise made a motion to vote by paper ballot and Jack Wesa seconded it.

The ballots were counted by Belinda Weise and Suzann Miller.

**YES NO**

**62 12**

The ordinance Passed.

Joseph Miller made a motion to close the meeting. David Blanchette seconded it and all were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:55 P.M.

Attest:

Pamela E. Theroux, Town Clerk