

Windham VT Selectboard Meeting Minutes
October 31, 2019 Emergency Meeting

Present:

Maureen Bell, Selectwoman
Peter Chamberlain, Selectman
Tom Johnson, Energy Commission
Kathy Scott, Treasurer

Kord Scott, Selectman
Joyce Cumming, Selectboard Clerk
Louise Johnson, Windham Meetinghouse Committee

Call to order

Maureen called the meeting to order at 5:14 p.m.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Discuss/Sign special Town Meeting warning which has to be posted by November 2

Maureen explained the purpose of the emergency meeting was to discuss the Warning for the Special Town Meeting slated for December 3, 2019. The Special Town Meeting is being called as a result of petitions received by the Selectboard: (1) to increase the membership of the Selectboard from 3 to 5 members; and (2) to vote by Australian ballot on all public questions.

The petition requested that the term of office for the additional Selectboard members be two years. Maureen reviewed action by the Selectboard in appointing Peter Chamberlain to fill the vacancy created by the passing of Hal Wilkins. Peter agreed to serve on the Selectboard until the next Town Meeting in 2020. Vermont State Statutes provide that the appointment is valid until the next Town Meeting, which in this case would be the Special Town Meeting on December 3. At that meeting, an election will be held to fill Hal's seat through the remainder of his term (until Town Meeting 2021).

Maureen distributed two versions of the Warning for the Special Town Meeting (see attached). Article 1 was identical in both versions: "Shall the Town of Windham increase the total membership of the Selectboard from three members to five members, with the term of office for the additional Selectboard members being two years."

If Article 1 were to pass, the Selectboard would be considered a 5-member board effective December 3, 2019-- but with just three elected members. As such, all three members would need to be present at meetings in order to constitute a quorum, and all three members would need to vote unanimously in order for any motions to pass. For this reason, Garrett Baxter at VLCT suggests electing the two additional members at the December 3 Special Town Meeting. One version of the warning provided for this approach by including the election of the two additional Selectboard members on December 3. The term for one of the additional seats would expire at Town Meeting in 2020; and the term for the other seat would expire at Town Meeting 2021. Both versions of the warning provided for electing a member to fill Hal's seat through Town Meeting 2021.

Kathy asked whether the petition could be amended. She said the intent behind the petition was to wait until Town Meeting 2020 to fill the two additional seats. Brief discussion followed re: withdrawing the original petition and re-submitting it. Maureen will discuss this with Garrett at VLCT.

Article 3 was identical in both versions of the warning: "Shall the Town of Windham vote on all public questions by Australian ballot?" Brief discussion followed on the timing of informational sessions to be held prior to Town Meeting on issues being voted by Australian ballot.

Discussion returned to the question of the date for the election of two additional Selectboard members (should Article 1 pass). A suggestion was made to re-word Article 1 to specify that the two additional seats would be filled by election at Town Meeting in March 2020. Maureen agreed to call Garrett again and offer this suggestion for consideration.

Brief discussion followed on the wording for the term of office for elected officials which reads "effective until next annual Town Meeting **or** Special Meeting" and whether "or" meant that the Selectboard has the option to decide between the two. Maureen will also run this by Garrett when she calls.

By consensus, the Selectboard agreed to delay signing and posting the Warning for an additional day in order to allow Maureen to again contact Garrett at VLCT.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the Emergency Selectboard meeting at 5:55 p.m.—moved by Kord—all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Cumming
Selectboard Clerk

Attachments:

-- Two Versions of the Warning for the Special Town Meeting on December 3, 2019 (Article 2 differs)