

# Minutes of Mendon Special Town Meeting

Monday, August 28, 2017

## Mendon Town Office

Dick Wilcox, Chair of the Selectboard called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and explained that Christopher Corsones, Town Moderator was unable to moderate this evening's special meeting. Following the Pledge Allegiance to our Flag, Dick asked for nominations for the meeting moderator. Sara Tully moved to nominate Jack Kennelly and Phil Douglas seconded the motion. There being no discussion nor objection, the motion was unanimously carried.

Jack Kennelly introduced himself and noted that following this Special meeting, there will be a Selectboard Meeting. Jack invited anyone to stay for the Selectboard Meeting, if they so choose; but if not, asked that at the conclusion of the Special Meeting all assembled participants depart as quickly and quietly as possible.

Jack explained that the Special Meeting was called to handle only one issue as noted in the Town Warning:

**Shall the Town in accordance with 17 VSA 2651(e-f) authorize the Selectboard to appoint the Town Clerk and the Town Treasurer?**

The Governor of Vermont signed article H 42 on May 10, 2017, which now authorizes Selectboards to appoint a Town Clerk and Town Treasurer, as opposed to the earlier method of election.

Dick noted that Marie Conway, the current Town Clerk and Treasurer, advised that she will retire at the end of her term in March, 2018. Consequently, if passed, this Act will allow us to fill these positions from a wider pool of qualified candidates, not just from within the Town. In small towns such as Mendon, it is difficult to find qualified candidates.

Additionally, this will also give the Selectboard more control over the person handling the town's finances. Until now, neither the Clerk nor the Treasurer could be removed from office, due to the fact that they were elected officials. If this Act is approved, the Selectboard will have authority to remove those officials, if necessary, due to any malfeasance.

If the Town decides it does not want to continue in the new process, the Act can be reversed and returned to Town election at another Town Meeting.

It is the recommendation of the Selectboard and the office staff to support this action.

Justin Lindholm questioned whether the amount paid for salaries would increase.

Dick noted that this evening's vote is just to pass this recommendation. The plan is to bring a new person on for 32 hours a week. Money has already been budgeted for this fiscal year and has been set aside. In the 2018-2019 budget, increased hours will result in no more than .02 cents on the tax rate for this person. There will be an increase of 15-17 hours a week for a bookkeeper at approximately \$18.00 an hour plus benefits. Sara Tully advised that we do not have an exact figure at this time. The hours the office will be open will increase from 3 days to 4 day a week. Additionally, Dick advised that we are fortunate to already have a certified clerk and treasurer in the office in the person of Nancy Gondella, who will be appointed as the new Clerk and Treasurer. Nancy is not a resident of Mendon.

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Ann Singiser noted certain statutory requirements would remain in effect according to law, for the Clerk and Treasurer. Larry Courcelle noted the lack of small town applicants and indicated that he supported this act. Neil Langer asked if Nancy Gondella became Clerk what would the back-up person do? Dick advised that would be a bookkeeper position, as well as be Nancy's assistant clerk. A bookkeeper position will be advertised, and hopefully the new person would start at the beginning of the new year (2018). Sara indicated that there are job descriptions which will be followed. Currently each member of the office staff helps anyone who comes in with whatever they need.

Harold Rosenzweig felt that basically this meeting is to vote on the proposed Act. Harold made a motion to authorize the Selectboard to appoint the Town Clerk and Treasurer. Amy Merrill seconded the motion and the floor vote agreed by voice vote, unanimously.

There being no further business to conduct, the meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Dick Wilcox, Selectboard Chair

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Jack Kennelly, Town Moderator

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Marie E. Conway, Town Clerk

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