

**TOWN OF UNDERHILL
SELECTBOARD SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Underhill Town Hall
Tuesday, February 27, 2018, 5:30 p.m.**

Selectboard: Rick Heh, Kurt Johnson and Pat Sabalis (via Skype)

Town Staff: Andrew Strniste, RaMona Shepard

Public: Ruth Miller (MMCTV), Stacey Turkos, Cynthia Seybolt, Catherine Kearns, Linda Lewellen, Phil Lewellen

5:30 p.m. The Chair called the meeting to order and noted that this special meeting was the hearing provided for in 17 V.S.A. § 2680(g).

5:31 p.m. General Public Comment Period. No comments were offered.

5:31 p.m. Discussion of Town Meeting Ballot Items. The Chair solicited questions pertaining to the Australian ballot items that were the subject of the hearing. Both Linda & Phil Lewellen inquired about Article 13, which states “*Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to appoint a first constable, and if needed a second constable, in accordance with 17 V.S.A. §2651a?*” Specifically, the Lewellens asked what the role of the constable is and the implications of the ballot measure. Selectboard Member Sabalis read the corresponding statute, which explained the duties and responsibilities of the constable position. Selectboard Members Sabalis and Heh confirmed that last year’s constable was Kevin King; however, the position is currently vacant. Selectboard Heh then answered Mr. Lewellen’s question that, if approved, the ballot measure would allow the Selectboard to appoint a constable in the event the position remained vacant. Ms. Lewellen inquired about the constable’s authority to handle different types of animals. The Board, and Ms. RaMona Shepard, advised that animal control only deals with domestic animals.

5:37 p.m. Discussion ensued about Article 11, which states:

Shall the voters authorize the elimination of the Town Listers and replace in accordance with 17 V.S.A. §2561c(b)(1) a professionally qualified assessor who shall have the same powers, discharge the same duties, proceed in the discharge thereof in the same manner, and be subject to the same liabilities as are prescribed for a lister or the board of listers under the provisions of Title 32?

Chair Heh advised that the Town has had trouble retaining Listers, and explained that the Town currently has one lister who is looking to retire, while another lister is employed by another Town, and the other lister position is currently vacant. He continue to explain that the some towns are moving towards a professional assessor. Ms. Lewellen asked if the approval of the Article would allow the Selectboard to search for, and hire, a candidate to fill the vacancy rather than elect an individual. Chair Heh answered in the affirmative. In response to Mr. Lewellen’s question, Ms. Sheppard advised that there are no professional qualification requirements for a Lister (though there are recommendations), while an Assessor requires certain qualification requirements. The adoption of the Article would imply that there would be a professional assessor. Board Member Sabalis advised that people are choosing not run for the Lister’s positions, and that most agree that a good Lister takes up to three years to train and become knowledgeable. The counter argument to eliminating the Lister positions, as Board Member

Sabalis informed, is that by eliminating the positions, you may be eliminating the “personal touch.” She did advise, however, that there would be no favoritism or perception of favoritism by eliminating the position and hiring a professional appraiser. Ms. Sheppard advised that a similar procedure happened with the finance department where by the town auditors were replaced with a professional auditing service, which has been successful.

5:43 p.m. No additional comments were provided. Chair Heh informed the Board and other members of the public that the hearing would remain open for five or so more minutes to allow other members of the public to attend in case they were running late.

5:51 p.m. Chair moved to close and adjourn the Public Informational Hearing. Pat Sabalis seconded and the motion passed by a roll call vote of 3-0 (Chair Rick Heh vote Yay; Selectboard Member Kurt Johnson vote Yay; and Selectboard Member Pat Sabalis vote Yay).

Read and Approved as submitted/amended.



Rick Heh, Chair


3-13-18
Date