

# Greensboro Selectboard

## January 30, 2025 Special Meeting – Minutes

[ This was a hybrid meeting held in the Collier Room at the Town Hall ]

**SELECTBOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ellen Celnik, MacNeil, David Kelley, Eric Hanson, Bobbie Nisbet

**SELECTBOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT in person:** Davis Barnett, Lise Armstrong, Jan Terwiesch, Tom Guare, Meaghan Meachem, Beth Meachem, Tim Nisbet, Tim Brennan, Josh Karp, Kim Greaves, Naomi Ranz-Schleifer, Jan Travers, Peggy Lipscomb, Warren Hill Jr, Terry O'Connor, Janet Hill, Stefanie Ayers Cravedi, Liz Steel, Karl Stein, Fran Recchio, Sara Slater

**OTHERS PRESENT remote:** Andrea MacLeod, Anne Stevens, BJ Gray, Dede Stabler, Diane Irish, Gary Circosta, Glenn Olds, Hugh Knox, Brian Kelly, Janet Long, June Bascom, Kathy Watson, Kent Hansen, Mike Lammert, Nancy Lammert, Richard Ely, Rick Lovett, Liz Baum, Nancy Hill, Vince Cabbage, Elaine Cole-Kerr, Rod Kerr, Elissa Mackin, Ila Hunt, Jane Mercaldi, June Bascom, Michael Porrazzo, Anthony Acheson, Deb Favreau, Elisabeth Donlon, Nathaniel Smith, Steve Kirby, Alison Gardner, William Scollon, Steve Kirby, Nancy Riege, Lisa Sartorius, Elizabeth Donlon, Christine Armstrong, Bill Rogers, Brittany Butler

**CALLED TO ORDER:** Selectboard vice chair MacNeil called the meeting to order at 6 PM.

### **ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

The board unanimously agreed there will be a public comment period after the two votes are held.

Bobbie read a statement acknowledging public frustration about Town Hall/RuralEdge process, and asked those present to listen and comment respectfully.

### **RESCIND VOTE FROM 1/27/25 MEETING**

David made the following motion:

*The board will rescind its 1/27/25 vote that stated “The selectboard will warn that the vote on the proposed conveyance of the Town Hall building to RuralEdge is to take place at Town Meeting on March 4, 2025.”*

Ellen seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

### **NEW ARTICLE FOR 2025 TOWN MEETING WARNING**

David made the following motion:

*The board approves adding the following language to the 2025 Town Meeting warning: “Shall the voters of Greensboro, Vermont authorize a vote by Australian Ballot on the question of whether to transfer ownership of the Town Hall to Gilman Housing Trust Inc., DBA RuralEdge?”*

Bobbie seconded the motion. David and Bobbie explained that VSA Title 17 Section 2680 requires voters to affirmatively decide to use an Australian Ballot vote to answer a specific “public question”. If this initial vote passes, the board is planning to schedule the vote on the proposed conveyance for April. A public informational hearing must be held within 30 days of this Australian Ballot vote.

The board voted and the motion carried unanimously. This language will become Article 11 on the warning.

Ellen apologized that the 1/27/25 vote (rescinded earlier) was rushed and held with incomplete information from the town attorney. She said the board has received a lot of public input asking us to rethink this vote, and I've learned we shouldn't rush special meetings.

Gary said the board had all the information it needed at the time of the vote, and he felt the motion was strongly pushed for by the three board members who voted in favor. David said the board heard from many citizens who did not support their 1/27/25 vote.

Naomi asked if the town could vote to make all public questions approved by Australian Ballot in the future. David said the statute does allow for this. Town Moderator Tim Nisbet said if all public questions were voted on by Australian Ballot, traditional Town Meeting would be no more.

Tim added that if Article 9 on the warning passes and town officers are elected by Australian Ballot going forward, statute requires this vote to be held on the first Tuesday in March, the traditional Town Meeting Day. This is still the case even if Town Meeting is changed to a different day.

However, for public questions other than electing officers, Australian Ballot votes can be held anytime with a proper warning and public informational hearing.

Warren said some towns use Australian Ballot votes for both the town budget and town officers, with everything else still discussed at Town Meeting. This keeps Town Meeting alive while widening the opportunity for residents to vote on the very important things. Warren felt that residents who don't come to town meeting are likely to take part in Australian Ballot votes, leading to more public participation overall.

MacNeil said the state legislature is currently discussing Act 78, which would require all town officers to be elected by Australian Ballot.

Vince thanked the board for its actions today and wanted to clarify if the new Article 11 is asking whether to convey the Town Hall property to RuralEdge. Kim said no, the article is asking that voters to approve that the conveyance be voted on using Australian Ballot. MacNeil said the specific language of the proposed conveyance will be presented at the future informational meeting, assuming Article 11 passes.

Davis asked if Article 11 is voted down, will the voters then be asked to vote on the proposed conveyance at Town Meeting? David said this would not happen, as that specific question is not included in the warning.

Discussion of what time Article 11 would be considered. Residents who are unable to attend all of Town Meeting may be able to come for this specific vote if they knew when it would be held. Tim Nisbet said someone could move to suspend the rules at any time during Town Meeting, and if approved by 2/3 of those present, discussion can jump ahead to Article 11.

Karl said he might make the motion to suspend the rules towards the beginning of Town Meeting, meaning folks who come at 10AM would be able to vote on Article 11 and then leave. One caveat is that discussion could go on for a while prior to the vote.

Gary asked why earlier versions of the Town Meeting Warning had more articles than this latest version. Bobbie said it was because these older versions were misnumbered.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7 PM.

*Respectfully Submitted: Josh Karp, Selectboard Clerk*