

**TOWN OF WEST WINDSOR
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
OCTOBER 14, 2014**

Moderator Matthew Birmingham announced that he knew what time it was but there is a line all the way down into the parking lot so I'm going to do what I can to get those people into the building before we start.

The Moderator called the meeting to order at 6:50 PM. The warning in part says the legal voters of the Town of West Windsor are hereby notified and warned to meet at Story Memorial Hall in said Town of West Windsor on Tuesday, October 14, 2014 at 6:30 PM to consider the following articles. I would take a motion and a second to not read all the articles to you now. A motion was made and seconded and passed by a voice vote.

Matt continued saying in order to speak or to vote you have to have the little yellow sticker. You have to be a registered voter in the Town of West Windsor. With the consent of the assembly we might have Kate speak at some point from the Public Land Trust but other than that you need to be a registered voter in the Town.

Matt said we had two informational meetings and many of you were here for those meetings. We have a time factor that concerns me so let me share it with you. We potentially have five paper ballots and more than two hundred people in the hall. We also have a group of younger parents who have children at the school and the babysitting runs out at eight o'clock. We're also twenty-five minutes behind schedule. Do you see where I'm drifting to?

Rudy Gross yelled so let's not waste any more time.

Matt said so what I'm going to do as we discussed last night we are going to take the articles a la carte which is to say one at a time. I am going to do something different that I did not say I would do. I'm going to put each article to a voice vote first. If I have any doubt we will do a ballot vote. If any seven people who feel that my ears are not tender enough to recognize aye and nay can stand up and ask for a paper ballot. The reason I'm doing it this way is if we do five paper ballots we'll be here until midnight. If I have any doubt I will call for a paper ballot. The paper ballots look like this and if you don't have one you will need one. I will tell you the colors for each article. Mr. Burke is covering the box and the first article is yellow. When you deal with the first article only use yellow! When we get to article two I will tell you the color for that article. When you vote you're saying yes or no.

The people that spoke at the informational meetings like Glenn, Kate and a couple of other people are not going to make a presentation tonight on the theory that they would rather reserve the time for any questions or comments that you have. If you have a comment or question would you please try to put it on the table in three or four minutes instead of ten or twenty minutes. We just don't have time.

ARTICLE 1: Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to acquire approximately +/- 469 acres of the former Ascutney Mountain Resort to be added to the West Windsor Town Forest for the purpose of protection of recreation opportunities, public access, open space, scenic values, forestry, wildlife habitat and water quality, in an amount not to exceed \$50,000.00, to be raised from donations, grants, surplus, conservation and town forest funds, if matched by approximately \$550,000.00 from other public and private sources provided the voters authorize the Selectboard to convey a conservation easement to a non-profit conservation organization or other qualified agency on the existing and expanded town forest to protect public values outlined above and to prohibit subdivision or commercial development? Matt said in order to discuss this article I need a motion and a second. A motion was made and Stephen Ott seconded the motion.

Several people in the assembly yelled to put the article to a vote.

Christopher Callahan asked if the Selectboard have taken a position on this.

Glenn Seward said we are very supportive of this measure.

Matt said I might call on Ted Siegler from the Conservation Commission.

Ted stood and said we also support it by a vote of 6 to 1 and most of the money is coming out of the Conservation Fund and we endorse it. We think it's really important for the Town for many purposes.

Matt asked if there were any more comments or thoughts. Do you want to vote this article?

The assembly yelled yes.

Matt put this to a voice vote. After the vote Matt said I can't call that and I'm not going to call that. We have to do a paper ballot on the first article. You're writing yes or no.

Matt said the Board of Civil Authority will now count the ballots and bring the results to me and my only job is to announce the results to you. We're going to get a third ballot box and put it downstairs so people in the balcony and the people in the back can go downstairs and cast your ballot and come up these the back stairs and we'll see if that's not better. I can't go to article 2 until the Board of Civil Authority tells me the result of the vote.

Matt said okay the numbers work. There were 334 people that came into the hall to vote and 333 people voted. The vote was 254 yes and 79 no.

Matt said we are going to do voice vote again. Remember that seven people can challenge me if you wish. We are doing these article by article because the law requires us to do it that way. Some of you came up and asked if we could vote them all at once. I can't do that. I have to go article by article according to the law.

ARTICLE 2: Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to acquire the former Ascutney base lodge and other buildings, and associated 4 acres, of the former Ascutney Mountain Resort for \$1.00 and other considerations? Matt said I need a motion and a second to adopt that article. Phil Arvidson made a motion to adopt the article and Ashley Pakenham seconded the motion.

Ken Burke asked what the other considerations were.

Glenn said I believe the other considerations for this particular article maybe a cup of coffee involved. There are no other real considerations what so ever. \$1.00 is a legal term.

Matt asked if there were any other discussion or questions for the Selectboard. Hearing none I'm going to put this to a voice vote. Matt declared that the aye's have it. Matt said now those of you that are nay's if seven of you want to put up your hand or stand up and challenge me you may do it and we'll go to a ballot vote. Matt said he does not see a challenge anywhere. Matt declared article 2 was adopted by a voice vote.

ARTICLE 3: Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to acquire the so-called Summit Water Company for \$1.00 and other considerations? Matt said you might also want to look – I'm not going to put it to a vote yet but article 4 assumes that the system will then be transferred out either to a co-op, a non-profit or some other agency. So article 3 and 4 sort of read together but the only article 3 that's for your consideration is the Summit Water Company for \$1.00 and other considerations. I need a motion and a second. A motion was made to adopt this article by Shelley Seward and a second was made by Merle Bushkin. Matt asked if there were any questions.

Dale Abramson asked what the other considerations were.

Glenn said the other considerations in this particular case is that we are discussing at this point an arrangement whereby 85% of the receivables from the water system would go to the current owner and 15% would go to the Town. Those percentages are still being negotiated at this point.

Dale said because we're voting yes this evening does that mean the other things are okay.

Glenn said I don't follow you. Basically if it goes through this evening it just provides us authorization for us to continue the negotiation with regard to those percentages and if in fact we're satisfied with those percentages we would move forward and acquire the system for \$1.00. I would just throughout that a recent valuation for that water system placed the value in excess of \$500,000.00.

Charles Weld said if the current owner is going to get 85% of the income from it is he going to pay 85% of the repairs.

Matt said Glenn will explain it but it's not income it's currently past due bills.

Glenn said its past due bills Charlie that is currently \$56,000.00 owed to the water company at this point. People really haven't been so good about paying so the owner would like to get 85% of that \$56,000.00 paid to him to reimburse him for past operating expenses and repairs. It has nothing to do with future income.

Matt asked if there were any other questions or comments on the article. Seeing none and since I have a motion and a second I am going to do a voice vote. Remember again if seven of you think that I'm not reading this correctly let me know. There's nothing embarrassing about saying let's put it to a paper ballot. This was put to a voice vote and Matt declared the aye's have it. Nays if you wish you can challenge. I see no challenge so I'm going to declare that article 3 was adopted.

ARTICLE 4: Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to transfer the so-called Summit Water System to a yet to be determined party at a date uncertain, if deemed to be in the best interest of the town by the Selectboard? A motion was made by Rudy Gross and this motion was seconded.

Glenn said the reasoning behind this was basically to give the Selectboard authorization to transfer it to an entity if we deem it appropriate. It just eliminates the need for us to come back to you for authorization to transfer. There may be some interest in a property owners group purchasing it or some other entity that is out there. We have no contact with anybody at this point but at least it covers the base for us if in fact we want to transfer that.

William Yates said so basically what I am hearing is that we should leave it open so that you can set up an organization to manage it if it was in the best interest of the Town. Voting yes would allow me to set up a co-op for example to manage the water system.

Glenn said no basically we are asking authorization to sell it.

William Yates said okay.

Matt asked if there were any further questions for Glenn.

Hearing none Matt put this article to a voice vote. Matt declared the aye's have it. Nays if you want to challenge it seven people put up your hands or stand up. Seeing none Matt declared article 4 was adopted.

ARTICLE 5: Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to acquire the so-called Hotel Road for \$1.00 and other considerations? A motion was made by Shelley Seward and this motion was seconded. This article was opened up for discussion. Matt asked if there were any questions comments or thoughts. Hearing none Matt put this article to a voice vote. Matt declared the ayes have it and you have adopted article 5.

ARTICLE 6: To do any other business that can legally be done at this meeting.

Mary Anne Boyce spoke saying that this Sunday, October 19th is the annual meeting of the West Windsor Historical Society. We gather at 4:00 PM for cider and a potluck.

Around 5:15 PM we have a business meeting and at 5:30 PM we have a presentation by Adam Boyce.

Matt said he wanted to thank everyone for their patience's tonight. I'm sorry that it didn't run well in the beginning maybe through the whole thing. I apologize, however I've been doing this for 25 years now and we have never had 334 registered voters in this hall before. A round of applause was given.

A member of the assembly said maybe we should have our town meetings in the evening.

Matt said well we're not going to do that tonight but I would suggest to you before you start moving your town meeting around go talk to the folks in Reading about what happened over there. They moved it to a Saturday and they lost about half of their attendance.

Matt asked if anybody had anything else they wanted to comment on.

Matt said the other thing that I will say is and I have said it before but it's absolutely true. You have never and I've been in West Windsor since the early seventies you have never had a Selectboard work as hard as this board has.

A round of applause was given.

A motion to adjourn was made at 7:45 PM. This motion was seconded and passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Archibald

