

WARNING/MINUTES

The legal voters of the Town of Morgan and School District are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Morgan Elementary School in said Town on Monday, evening March 6th 2023, at 6:00 p.m. to transact the following business:

The meeting was opened with a Pledge of Allegiance.

Kathryn Austin welcomed everyone and asked all to take a moment to reflect and remember those from our community that we have lost and also in gratitude for this opportunity for self governments and our freedom, safety with a moment of silence.

Kathryn stated the Roberts Rules of Order will be followed and only registered voters will be allowed to vote. Non registered are welcome to attend but have no vote.

All motions and remarks should be addressed to the moderator and all articles will be read and must be moved and seconded from the floor and the article will be read again.

Kathryn announced and recognized that the Circle of friends were selling raffle tickets for their Annual Quilt raffle.

Kathryn mentioned that there was a couple corrections to the Town Report.

- a. Page 4 for North Country School Director: Reads "Vacant" and should read Meghan Dubois and also in Page 5 Planning Commission "Megan Dubois" should read Meghan Dubois.
- b. Under Article 14 should read preceding not proceeding.

The rules were suspended to allow State Representative Larry Labor to speak before continuing with the Articles.

Representative Larry Labor said that he was going to address a few bills:

1st bill is (H21) if you are a landlord is posting a notice from the Utility Companies to the landlords when they are going to shut the power off. Tenants have been know to move and leave the landlord with outstanding electric bills. This bill will allow the Electric Companies to notify the landlord as well as the tenant before shutting off electricity.

2nd bill (H332) if you have heavy equipment and it is relatively new, run by a computer chip and has just fallen off warranty, This bill gives the right to repair to a free standing, non affiliated, non dealership to repair it. What has been happening is the large corporations have been destin to distribute the information so you can fix your own because it is not always microchip. This bill is in the works.

3rd bill (S5) Clean Heat Standard is in the senate and will have a substantial financial impact on all of us if this goes through. If its made from fossil fuel, increase in rates are just a clean word for carbon tax. Low end is .70 per gallon and high end is up to\$4.00 a gallon. There have been negotiations, public hearings etc... Larry votes "NO" to this. This bill has been pushed forward for 2 years for a study.

Mail in ballots "what a pain" Larry said. You have stovepipes involved with mail in ballots: Town Clerk, Postal person, and the Secretary of State. Normally you would get your addresses through the Secretary of State via direct mailings because that is what they use for the ballots. "But" there is no law that says when a person or resident of your town leaves they have to tell the Town Clerk. Larry stated that out of his 2800 direct mail post cards 500 came back undeliverable. This bill will correct this.

Larry mentioned that he was serving the balance of Lynn Batchelders term and she was on Corrections Committee. He followed that through the summer and went to the Governor's office with a letter written by one of his constituents and the correctional institute now has 6 new employees and a new Superintendant.

Larry Thanks everyone for their support.

Kathryn Austin then introduced Sheriff Jennifer Harlow. Jennifer said she was there to answer any questions or concerns.

Meghan asked about speed signs and that she had heard that the Town was getting these. This question was for the Select Board not the Sheriff. Selectman Eric Pope spoke up to say that the signs are intended to be installed in May and that the Permit Application has been submitted to VTrans and are hoping to be approved shortly. Four radar speed feedback signs are expected to be installed by Chris Quinn of New England Signal Systems (also a town resident).

1. To elect a moderator for the ensuing year for the Town.

A motion was made by Eric Pope and seconded by Larry Labor to nominate Kathryn Austin as Town Moderator.
(Clerk cast 1 ballot)

2. To elect a moderator for the ensuing year for the Town School District.

A motion was made by TammyLee Morin and seconded by Jane Malgeri to nominate Kathryn Austin as School District Moderator.
(Clerk cast 1 ballot)

3. To hear and dispose of the reports of the Town and School District Officials as required by law.

A motion was made by Deanna Keenan and seconded by Eric Pare to move the question.

Discussion: Donna Young asked about an entry on page 14 of the Town report for account #10-07-7-27.02 ARPA in the amount of \$30,057.88. Wanting to know what this was. Selectman Eric Pope answered it is the American Recovery Plan Act and the expenses were for the water quality issues at the School.

A motion to accept Article #3 with "Ayes" to accept the reports and "Nays" is to reject then.
(Ayes have it.)

4. To Elect all Town officers as required by law. (Newly elected officers will be sworn in at the close of Town Meeting).

Town Clerk: (3 year term) (TammyLee Morin)

Jane Malgeri nominated TammyLee Morin. No other nominations. Nominations closed.
(Clerk cast 1 ballot)

Town Treasurer: (3 year term) (TammyLee Morin)

Jane Malgeri nominated TammyLee Morin. No other nominations. Nominations closed.
(Clerk cast 1 ballot)

Town School district treasurer: (1 year term) (Janet Selby)

Eric Pare nominated Janet Selby. No other nominations. Nominations closed.
(Clerk cast 1 ballot)

Selectman: (3 year term) (Eric Pope)

Shawn Austin nominated Eric Pope. No other nominations. Nominations closed.
(Clerk cast 1 ballot)
North Country Union School Director: (3 year term) 2 years remaining. (Vacant)

TammyLee Morin nominated Meghan Dubois. No other nominations. Nominations closed.
(Clerk Cast 1 ballot)

School Board Director: (3 year term) (TammyLaCourse)

Sean Selby nominated Tammy LaCourse. No other nominations. Nominations closed.
(Clerk cast 1 ballot)

1st Constable: (1 year term) (Robert Cain)

Eric Pare nominated Robert Cain. No other nominations. Nominations closed.
(Clerk cast 1 ballot)

2nd Constable: (1 year term) (Eric Pare)

Jim Judd nominated Rick Pare. No other nominations. Nominations closed.
(Clerk cast 1 ballot)

Road Commissioner (3year term)

Eric Pope nominated Shawn Austin. No other nominations. Nominations closed.
(Clerk cast 1 ballot)

Delinquent Tax Collector: (1 year term) (James Judd)

Donna young nominated James Judd. No other nominations. Nominations closed.
(Clerk cast 1 ballot)

Cemetery Commissioner: (5 year term) (Rick Pare)

Doug Garon nominated Eric (Rick) Pare. No other nominations. Nominations closed.
(Clerk cast 1 ballot)

Community House Committee: Jane Malgeri, Chair, Deanna Keenan, Treasurer, Eric (Rick) Pare, Tamara Pare, Robert Cain, Julia Norton, Libby Jacobs, & Lynda Chaffee.

A nomination to keep as a slate. No other nominations. Nominations closed.
(Clerk cast 1 ballot)

**ARTICLE 5 & 6 TO BE VOTED ON FROM 8:00 AM TO 7:00 PM ON MARCH 7TH 2023
AT THE MORGAN TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE.**

5. (Australian Ballot) To cast ballots on the North Country Senior High School Budget.
6. (Australian Ballot) To cast ballots on the North Country Junior High School & Career Center Budge
7. Shall the voters of the Town of Morgan vote a budget to meet the expenses and liabilities of the Town and authorize the Select Board to set a tax rate sufficient to provide the same?

A motion was made and seconded. No discussion. (Ayes have it)

8. **Shall the voters of the Town of Morgan vote to have the Town Treasurer accept and collect regular taxes each year, and this year being October 26th 2023 no later than 4:00 p.m.**

A motion was made and seconded. No discussion.

(Ayes have it)

9. **Shall the voters of the Morgan Town School District approve the School Board to expend \$679,622.00 which is the amount the school Board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year?**

A motion was made and seconded. No discussion.

(Ayes have it)

10. **Shall the voters of the Town of Morgan School District approve the school board to transfer from the tuition reserve fund \$ 87,500.00 of unallocated, unaudited fund balance from 2021-2022 school year to be used to reduce taxes in the 2023-2024 school budget?**

A motion was made and seconded. No discussion.

(Ayes have it)

11. **Shall the voters of the Town of Morgan vote the sum of \$24,128.00 to the Orleans County Sheriff's Dept. for law enforcement services and to direct the Select Persons to assess a tax over and above the budget sufficient to meet the same? (This will be used for routine patrols, answering complaints, and investigating incidents. It will also cover administrative expenses, including salaries, vehicle, benefits, liability insurance, maintenance, gasoline, supplies, telephone costs, and crime prevention programs).**

A motion was made and seconded.

JT Turner asked an informational question about the past allocations to the Sheriff's Department and wondered why the amount last year of \$17,194.00 was budgeted but only \$15,555.23 was spent. Town Clerk & treasurer answered tht the Town fiscal year is July 1st to June 30th and that being on a cash basis the year end billings can get crossed over to the next year because of billing and timing. Eric Pope guaranteed that the contract was for filled and that the Sheriff Department provides the Town with quarterly reports of the enforcement that have been done with in the Town limits and is invited about 3 times a year to discuss their strategies and give her our feedback (which is usually about speeding) and that there is a good recurring relationship with the Sheriff.

(Ayes have it)

12. **Shall the voters of the Town of Morgan vote to appropriate the sum of \$9,948.00 to be raised by taxes to the following organizations as shown?**

Orleans Essex VNA and Hospice, Inc.	\$ 3,000.00
Daily Memorial Library	\$ 1,200.00
Morgan Historical Society	\$ 1,000.00
Northeast Kingdom Human Services	\$ 1,498.00
Old Stone House Museum	\$ 650.00
The Pope memorial Frontier Animal Society	\$ 500.00
Orleans County Citizen Advocacy	\$ 500.00
North Woods Stewardship Center	\$ 500.00
Umbrella	\$ 500.00
Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging	\$ 300.00
Orleans County Child Advocacy	\$ 200.00
Rural Community Transportation, Inc. (RCT)	\$ 100.00

A motion was made and seconded.

Discussion: Heather Webster asked If the RCT bus actually came to the Town of Morgan.
A pamphlet is in the back of the room with all appropriations and what each appropriation does.

(Ayes have it)

13. Shall the voters of the Town of Morgan vote to start its Annual Meeting on the Monday evening preceding the 1st Tuesday of March at 6:00 p.m. 2024?

A motion was made and seconded. No discussion.

(Ayes have it)

14. To transact any other business that may legally come before said meeting.

Eric Pope mentioned that there had been some discussion about moving Town meeting back to Tuesday for a daytime more traditional type meeting where we can gather as done historically and to possibly have it back at the Community House. This move could not to happen until the year 2025 for time to get some renovations done to the Community House that are in the works providing we get some grant findings and such. Eric said he was mentioning this to just get feedback and interests.

Discussion: Roger Stoddard expressed that the night time meetings are much easier for him others agreed. It appeared that the majority of those speaking were not interested and the Select Board Chair noted that the feedback was respected.

Robert Guyer said the traditional way was more or less for the farmers back in the day.

Sean Selby voiced his opinion on the hours at the Town Clerk's Office and suggested that maybe one night a week or one Saturday a month to be open for a few hours. The Select Board and Town Clerk & Treasurer TammyLee Morin will discuss at a future Select Board meeting.

Meghan Dubois asked if Turning Points were moving or if it was just a rumor?
Selectman Eric Pope answered that "Yes" they are moving and that their last day will be the end of August.

Eric mentioned that this brings up a lot of open questions as to what to do with the building. The Board has not had a lot of time for discussion and will be doing this in a near meeting and more likely will have a meeting to bring the Town in to get some feedback to be transparent about the process. The news of Turning Points moving is very new and the Select Board hasn't had the opportunity to discuss in detail. The Select Board will need to consider the impact of Turning Points leaving the school on the water quality issues and operating the building with no revenue from a tenant. (costs are roughly \$30,000.00 a year to maintain the building).

Robert Guyer asked what the plans were going forward for the PFAS water quality issues?

Eric Pope indicated that we have applied for a forgivable loan to develop a water source for this building and some of the surrounding properties that have been found to be contaminated by PFAS.

The application we submitted has not been approved or denied and is still in the review process. We have asked our Otter Creek Engineer to attempt to determine the status of the forgivable loan. The state is aware that the school is leaving, though we're not sure that the division that approves the loan is aware.

Eric expressed that the PFAS issue had been a long process and has been the largest focus of the Select Board for the last 3 years. Once we have a status of the forgivable loan, and some of the surrounding properties that have been found to be contaminated, the Select Board will have further discussions about whether to develop a filtering plan or proceed with a new water source on our own. Chairman Eric Pope invited all town residents to attend a Select Board meeting if they are interested in the ongoing discussions.

Rick Pare asked about PFAS contamination at the Morgan Church and Eric Pope indicated that the Church waster was tested and it was contaminated, but was under standard. Our Engineer from Otter Creek Engineering is preparing a report that was expected to be submitted February 20th but has not been submitted yet. That report will include the second round of PFAS sampling and will have a comprehensive explanation of what the scope is of the contamination. Once we get that report the board will probably start reaching out to residents again.

A question was asked about what PFAS is? Eric answered that PFAS are forever chemicals that is found in fire retardants and is typically found in manufacturing byproducts that we do not have in Morgan.

Our PFAS contamination levels are low compared to other towns in the state that have widespread contamination but are over state and federal standards so we still have to resolve the issue. The state of Vermont has not yet identified the Town of as the Responsible Party for the contamination, but we expect that in the absence of an identified source, it is likely the town will be designated the Responsible Party. Eric said the Town is prepared to be identified as the Responsible Party and are paying for all the testing, sampling and providing bottled water to all the neighboring properties that are affected. The Select Board is trying to balance the public health and the costs to find the best solution for the Town.

Meghan Dubois asked if the Select Board knew what its costs to the Town to supply the bottled water to the School, Morgan Store & the Guyer household etc...and Town Clerk & Treasurer TammyLee Morin answered off the top of her head approximately, \$400 to \$450 per month. Eric mentioned that we are using ARPA money for this and that there is no tax impact.

Selectman Bruce Remick commented that the Board also was not ready to give up on the Facility and that there are a lot of purposes out there to look into.

15. To swear in newly elected officers.

Town Clerk & Treasurer to swear in newly elected officers.

16. To adjourn the meeting, except the Australian Balloting to begin on Tuesday March 7th , 2023 from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Select Board

Eric Pope, Chair

School Board

Danielle Blake, Chair

Larry Labor

Tammy LaCourse

Bruce Remick

Sean Selby