

**TOWN OF CHARLESTOWN
BOARD OF SELECTBOARD
PUBLIC HEARING
APRIL 12, 2017**

Selectboard Present: Art Grenier (Chair); Steven Neill, Thomas Cobb

Staff Present: David Edkins – Administrator

Others Present: See attached list

Call to Order: Mr. Grenier called this Public Hearing to order at 4:32 PM in the Community Room and welcomed everyone. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Mr. Grenier advised that meetings are recorded and asked anyone wishing to speak to identify themselves for the record. Comments should be addressed to the Chair.

The following notice was duly advertised and posted.

“The Selectboard of the Town of Charlestown, NH, will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday, April 12 at 4:30 P.M. in the Community Room at the Silsby Library, 26 Railroad Street, Charlestown, NH to explain and hear public comment on the necessity for a Special Town Meeting on April 21, 2017 to correct a procedural defect in the posting of the Warrant and Budget for original Town Meeting.”

Any and all persons wishing to be heard on this matter are invited to attend the hearing and make their opinions know. Written comments may be submitted to the Office of the Selectboard, 233 Main Street, PO Box 385, Charlestown, NH 03603.”

Mr. Edkins explained the reason for the Special Town Meeting is because we posted the Town Meeting Warrant and Budget a day late for the Annual Town Meeting. The Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) has a relatively new system to enter the budget and warrant called the “Portal”. This was the current Town staff’s first time doing this as Miss Dennis had taken care of it in the past. As a result the signed warrant and budget documents were posted a day late and the DRA disallowed all money articles. A Special Town Meeting must be held on Wednesday May 3, 2017, at 6:00 PM in the Silsby Library Community Room, 26 Railroad Street. There will be one Warrant Article:

Article 1. “To see if the Town will vote to ratify the results of March 14th annual meeting even though the posting requirements were not met”.

A simple majority voice vote is required unless the voters request ballots. This does not affect the elections or other Warrant Articles only the money Articles. At this time the DRA has disallowed all the Articles that were money related so we need to fix that.

Charlestown is not the only Town in this position and we would be in an even worse condition if Mr. St. Pierre made a decision to postpone the Town vote due to the snow storm on March

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14th. Any town that had a Bond issue on their Warrant will have to get a Bond Counsel to say they did everything right and that may prove difficult. Those towns may not be able to issue their Bonds.

Mr. Albert St. Pierre, Moderator, noted we made the right call by not postponing the election because of the blizzard. Postponing a meeting is different than postponing an election. He asked about posting before the Deliberative Session. Mr. Edkins replied it had to be posted before the Deliberative Session; we were a day late. They had to wait for a letter from the DRA before they could initiate the process for the Special Town Meeting.

On May 3, 2017, at the Special Town Meeting, the Selectboard, Moderator, Town Clerk and Supervisors of the Checklist will need to be present.

Mr. Beaudry pointed out they will not get the same people at the Special Meeting as they did on voting day. There is the possibility the voters present could turn this vote around.

Mr. Aare Ilves questioned if this was the result of posting or getting it on the DRA computer web site. Mr. Edkins said it was both. It also needed to be posted in the Selectboard office, Town Clerk's Office and at the polling place (Senior Center). They were all done one day late. Mr. Edkins noted this is the process they have to follow to correct it. The revised Warrant for the Special Meeting was signed by the Selectboard tonight and it will be posted tomorrow. It has to be published in the Eagle-Times at least seven days before the Town Meeting and posted at the location of the meeting, the Selectboard office and Town Clerk's Office. The Supervisors of the Checklist will be open on April 25 to register new voters.

If this Warrant Article is defeated the Selectboard can go to the Court or accept the Default Budget. Mr. Grenier mentioned it does not seem fair that 594 people had voted and only 25 people might show up for the Special Meeting. New voters who did not vote in the previous vote will be allowed to vote at the Special Town Meeting.

Mr. Albert St. Pierre will be the Moderator. It will be run like a regular Town Meeting. Ms. Patricia Chaffee, Town Clerk, will do the Minutes of the Special Meeting and they need to be sent to the DRA. People can speak and ask questions but the Warrant Article cannot be amended. There will be no Other Business. Ten or more registered voters can request a ballot vote.

Mr. Ilves mentioned departments cannot spend any money now. Mr. Edkins replied they can only spend to maintain routine operations. Mr. Grenier pointed out the \$7,500 for the cemetery bank stabilization project will have to wait until the budget and appropriations articles are ratified. Mr. Ilves requested a copy of the notice that had been issued on employees' pay-raises being delayed pending the ratification.

There were five members of the public in attendance.

Adjournment: Mr. Grenier closed this Public Hearing at 4:55 PM.

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Respectfully submitted,
Regina Borden, Recording Secretary

Approved,

Art A. Grenier, Chair

Steven A. Neill

Thomas O. Cobb

(Note: These are unapproved Minutes. Any corrections will be found in the Minutes of the April 19, 2017, Selectboard meeting.)