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Panton Town Meeting Minutes
March 2, 2026

Present: Selectboard members Zachary Weaver, chair; Teresa Boucher, vice chair; Robert DeGraaf; Reece Jaring; Moderator Martha DeGraaf; Representative Matt Birong; Town Clerk/Treasurer Kyle Rowe; Assistant Town Clerk and Assistant Clerk Donna Oliver; approximately 45 citizens; with several on Zoom

1. Zachary welcomed everyone to Town Meeting 2026 at 7:00 p.m.
2. Martha reviewed some housekeeping items, thanked those who organized the potluck, and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Representative Matt Birong introduced himself.
    a. His town meeting report and that of Rob North, the other representative for this district, was available.
    b. Matt is in his fourth term having served eight years and he thanks those who elected him in this post.
    c. Matt chairs the Government Operations & Military Affairs committee and he reviewed the areas that this committee oversees. An election was held almost two weeks ago to elect the new Adjutant General overseeing the National Guard. They elected General Hank Carter as the new Adjutant General.
    d. He also reviewed some of the legislation his committee has been working on.
        i. They recently voted on a government accountability bill they have been working on for the past two years. This bill is a collaborative effort between the legislature, the administration and the state auditor's office to create a panel of legislators to work to regularly review legislation on the progress and effectiveness of laws passed.
        ii. Another bill is regarding Emergency Management and Disaster Relief which provides funding for training and specialty equipment. There has also been much change in FEMA. They will now be giving money to the state to disperse the funding.
        iii. Housing is also a big issue now. They are working on a bill related to manufactured housing. This will make these homes more attractive to lenders and allow for more reasonable interest rates for buyers.
    e. He opened the floor for questions.
        i. Ed Brennan asked about the state of education funding.

1. Matt explained that the Education Committee needs to figure out how many districts to support. The districts then must be built and work can move forward. When asked when this might be done, he said it may be in the next month.

ii. Kathy Kennett asked about how the funding will affect voters.
1. Matt explained that we need to set an amount for per pupil spending. Local spending would be on top of that.

iii. Eileen Brennan asked what has been happening with water quality. This issue was raised last year and there has been no movement. It doesn't seem that anyone is concerned about this very important issue.
1. Matt said this would be a big budget conversation at the state.

f. There were no further questions.

4. Martha then introduced the Selectboard members present:
   a. Zachary Weaver, chair;
   b. Teresa Boucher, vice chair;
   c. Robert DeGraaf,
   d. Reece Jaring;
   e. Town Clerk/Treasurer Kyle Rowe and Assistant Clerk Donna Oliver.
   f. Selectboard member Kirsten de la Cruz couldn't be here.
   g. Ric Plaisance, Tree Warden, also introduced himself.
   h. Martha noted the Town Report was dedicated to all the volunteers who keep this town running.
5. Martha then read the Articles on the Warning.
   a. ARTICLE 1: To hear the reports of the Town Officers.
      i. Teresa provided a report of the Selectboard and reviewed some items in the Town Report. **(The full report as presented will be available on the Town website.)**
      ii. Kyle also commented that the survey for the Town Plan has been launched and can be found on the Town website and on the postcards that are being mailed to every household. The survey is also available in hard copy on the back table. If the hard copy is completed, please return it to the Town office. It will be delivered to the Addison County Regional Planning Commission where it will be entered into the database.
   b. ARTICLE 2: To elect the following officers by Australian Ballot:
      i. Moderator (1-year term)
      ii. Selectboard Member (3-year term)
      iii. Selectboard Member (2-year term)
      iv. Constable (1-year term)
      v. Dog Warden (1-year term)
      vi. Vergennes-Panton Water District Representative (3-year term)
      vii. ACNWSD Representative (3 Year Term)
   c. ARTICLE 3: Shall the voters adopt the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 (July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027) General Fund Operating Budget in the amount of $1,120,912.46 of which $948,188 shall be raised by taxes and $172,724.81 by non-tax revenue, excluding any other amounts authorized by the voters?
   d. ARTICLE 4: Shall the voters appropriate the following sums which shall be raised by taxes, to be placed in the Town Reserve Fund accounts as noted:
      i. Highway Capital Equipment Fund $10,000
      ii. Reappraisal Fund $2,000
      iii. Total: $12,000
   e. ARTICLE 5: Shall the voters appropriate $11,201 of Town Funds to the following organizations in the amounts listed?

Organization	Amount
Adams-Kent Cemetery Association	$2,500.00
Addison County Court Diversion	$210.00
Addison County Home Health Hospice	$800.00
Addison County Parent Child Center	$800.00
Addison County Readers	$250.00
Agewell (CV Agency on Aging)	$650.00
Atria Collective (formerly WomenSafe)	$600.00
Counseling Service of Addison County	$500.00
Elderly Services	$850.00
Green Up Vermont	$50.00
Homeward Bound	$500.00
HOPE	$500.00
John Graham Shelter	$450.00
Open Door Clinic	$500.00
RSVP	$350.00
Tri-Valley Transit	$691.00
Turning Point Center	$1,000.00

f. ARTICLE 6: Shall the voters re-appropriate the $1,000 designated for the Boys and Girls Club, approved for Fiscal Year 2026, to the Vergennes Commodore Club?
g. ARTICLE 7: Shall the voters appropriate $1,500 of Town Funds to the Vergennes Commodore Club for Fiscal Year 2027?
h. ARTICLE 8: Shall the voters approve the following definition for the Reappraisal Reserve Fund;
    i. "The Reappraisal Reserve Fund shall be used to offset expenses related to Townwide Reappraisals"
i. ARTICLE 9: Shall the voters approve the following definition and re-naming for the Digitization/IT fund;
    i. "The Digitization/IT shall become the Digitization Fund, and shall be used to offset the cost of digitizing Town records, and when depleted, retired."
j. ARTICLE 10: Shall the voters approve the following change to the Tire Reserve Fund;
    i. "The Tire Reserve Fund shall be retired, with all remaining funds re-allocated to the Highway Capital Equipment Fund."
k. ARTICLE 11: Shall the voters approve the following definition for the Emergency Reserve Fund;
    i. "The Emergency Reserve Fund shall be used to offset expenses from non-recurring, unanticipated catastrophic events and issues outside the control of the Town. This fund is not intended to cover normal budgetary expenditures, overruns or unanticipated revenue shortfalls. The target shall be 15% of the Total Operating Budget to be raised by taxes (excluding appropriations to community organizations, special revenue and reserve funds) for the year the proposed budget is presented."
l. ARTICLE 12: Shall the voters approve the following definition and name change for the Town Building Maintenance Fund;
    i. "The Town Building Maintenance Fund shall be re-named the Town Building Improvement Reserve Fund and shall be used for renovations, and upgrades to any Town Building including major repairs that extend the useful life of the building, such as roof replacements, HVAC system overhauls, or structural enhancements.

This fund shall not be used for routine upkeep or minor repairs that are part of the regular/annual Town Building Maintenance budget."

m. ARTICLE 13: Shall the voters re-allocate $90,000 from the Town Building Maintenance Fund to the Highway Capital Equipment Fund?
n. ARTICLE 14: Shall the voters approve the following definition for the Highway Capital Equipment Fund;
    i. "The Highway Capital Equipment Reserve Fund shall be used to purchase, or offset the purchase, or perform major repairs to extend the useful life, of capital equipment. For the purposes of this fund, capital equipment shall mean items with a replacement cost exceeding $5,000 and a useful life of more than 3 years."
o. ARTICLE 15: Shall the voters approve the following definition for the Highway Capital Project Fund;
    i. "The Highway Capital Project Fund shall be used for the planning, design, construction, and major rehabilitation of long-term highway infrastructure, including road expansions, bridges, and safety enhancements. The purpose of this fund is for planned projects and does not include Paving or Re-paving."
p. ARTICLE 16: Shall the voters approve the transfer of all but $50,000 from the Highway Capital Project Fund to the Highway Capital Equipment Fund?
q. ARTICLE 17: To transact any other non-binding business.

6. Kyle commented that the goal for these changes to reserve funds is to make the money more useful. It will allow us to offset the cost of new purchases while taking on a reasonable amount of debt.
7. Howard Hall asked what percentage of the budget will be put into the emergency reserve fund each year.
    a. Teresa responded that we need to pass it and then determine.
8. There were no other questions and no other business to transact.
9. Paula Moore spoke on behalf of Green Up Day. There is a clipboard on the back table to sign up. Bags will be available in mid-April. May 2nd is this year's Green Up Day.
10. With no other questions or comments, Martha stated the meeting had concluded at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Oliver
Assistant Town Clerk