

Town of Lincoln  
MINUTES

Annual Town Meeting and Lincoln School District Meeting

Moderator, Paul Forlenza, called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. and briefly reviewed the rules of the meeting.

Approximate attendance: 130 people at the start

The legal voters of the Town of Lincoln and the Lincoln School District are hereby warned and notified to meet at Burnham Hall on Monday, March 3, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. to discuss and transact business, and on Tuesday, March 4, 2025, at Burnham Hall, the polls to open 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. for voting by Australian ballot.

Agenda for Meeting at Burnham Hall on Monday, March 3, 2025, at 6:00p.m.

Article 1: To elect all town officers as required by law, by Australian ballot, voting to be held at Burnham Hall, polls to be open from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m., Tuesday March 4, 2025.

Offices for Election on Tuesday, March 4, 2025

Office	Term Length
Selectboard	3 years
Selectboard	2 years
Selectboard	1 year remaining of a 2-year term
Town Clerk	1 year
First Constable	1 year
Second Constable	1 year
Collector of Delinquent Taxes	1 year
Town Meeting Moderator	1 year
Lister	3 years
Lister	2 years remaining of a 3-year term
Lister	1 year remaining of a 3-year term
Lincoln Library Trustee	3 years (2 positions)
Lincoln Library Trustee	2 years remaining of a 3-year term
Lincoln Library Trustee	1 year remaining of a 3-year term

No action needed. None taken.

Article 2: To act upon the reports of the Town Officers and the Lincoln School District Officers.

Motion: Bill Finger, Second: Sally Taylor

Discussion: It was noted that the Town Report had no audit report. Our Interim Town Treasurer, Trish Waugh, informed us that the 2023 audit is available on our website. The 2024 audit is being worked on, and it will go online when it is done.

Passed by voice vote.

**Article 3:** Shall the Town authorize the payment of real property taxes to the Town Treasurer, in two equal installments, with the due dates being the second Wednesday of October [October 8, 2025] and the second Wednesday of March [March 11, 2026], per 32 V.S.A. 4871?

**Motion:** Nancy Stevens, **Second:** Christie Sumner

**Discussion:** An opinion was expressed that taxes should be due before Town Meeting, so people can feel the “joy” of making that payment before they vote.

**Passed by voice vote.**

**Article 4:** Shall the Town collect interest on overdue taxes from the due date of each installment in the amount of 0.5% (half of one percent) per month or fraction thereof, in accordance with 32 V.S.A 4873?

**Motion:** Sally Taylor, **Second:** Mike Fisher

**Discussion:** none

**Passed by voice vote.**

**Article 5:** Shall the voters authorize a total Highway Fund expenditure for operating expenses of \$1,157,856 of which \$939,568 shall be raised by taxes and \$171,650 by non-tax revenues and \$46,638 is surplus revenue?

**Motion:** Dave Wetmore, **Second:** Roger Rood

**Discussion:**

- Selectboard member, Ken Stockman, introduced himself and the other Selectboard members present: Joe Martell, Lisa Sargent, and Victor Atkins. Absent was Tim McGowan. Our new Town Administrator, Trish Waugh, was also present. Joe Martell reported that our Highway Department is working well together. They are Will Mathis, Geoff Booth, Dan Cram, and Gary Smith. Ken gave a presentation highlighting the major budgetary increases (inflation, wages, gravel, and guardrails) and savings (contracted labor, work efficiencies, and canopy maintenance). Overall, the board is expecting a 0.8% decrease in the tax rate.

**Questions:**

- Is there money in the budget for the slope that is failing on River Road? **Answer.:** We will start with a temporary fix this spring, and work on finding funding for this as a larger project after that. If River Road needs to be closed, voters asked if we could minimize the impact on Bill and Dale’s Farmstand, and if the detour could be better maintained than when the Bristol section of River Road was closed last summer.
- Are we worried about future grants with the new Federal Administration? **Ans:** Yes.
- A big project for FY2025-26 includes Gap Road repaving, culverts, and drainage. Mike Fisher asked about getting a better parking area at the bottom of the gap where the plow turns around in the winter. Many people recreate up there and parking is challenging during storms. Jan Buker asked if the overgrown scenic vista near the top of the gap could be opened up again.
- Jonathan Johnson expressed appreciation that salt use and spending are going down.
- What about a bridge fund? **Ans:** There is a \$10,000 transfer into the Bridge Fund in the budget.
- Why hasn’t our fuel cost changed much after getting material from our local sand pit? **Ans:** With flooding and recent storms, we have been moving more gravel to repair our roads. Also, we have a full crew now and all the trucks are being driven more. Concern was voiced that we might be plowing too often, even with ¼ or 1/2 inch of snow. **Ans:** sometimes the trucks are just spreading salt or sand, or cleaning up after storms where needed.

- *How do paving projects get decided? Downingsville Road needs to be paved. Ans: We pave when we can get grants to help pay for the work. It helps for people to let the Selectboard know their concerns, so they can prioritize the spending on paving. We can't necessarily get paving grants from the State each year.*

**Passed by voice vote.**

**Article 6:** Shall the voters authorize a total General Fund expenditure for operating expenses of \$672,065 of which \$309,813 shall be raised by taxes, \$199,516 by non-tax revenues and \$162,736 by surplus revenue?

**Motion: Jan Buker, Second: Christie Sumner**

- **Discussion:** *Ken Stockman presented some information about this article, which represents an increase of 7.8% over last year. The biggest cost drivers are wages and benefits, upgrades to our IT infrastructure, and we contracted with a new auditing firm. Savings have come from efficiencies due to re-organizing our staff. Trish Waugh highlighted accomplishments from this past year, of which a fun one was when the Lincoln Community School students voted to name one of our plow trucks, "Frosty the Snowplow". We now have a new Town Administrator here to support the board and our townspeople; many vacancies on various boards have been filled; quarterly meetings with all of the boards have opened communications; we upgraded our wireless networks and installed Microsoft Office 365 on all of the town computers. ARPA funds have been fully distributed; we are now using a remote deposit system for checks; we hired new auditors; and the personnel policy has been revised and adopted. We are currently recruiting for a new Selectboard Assistant if anyone is interested, contact Trish.*

**Questions:**

- *Christie Sumner said that Jessica Erwin is interested in being written in for the one-year Selectboard position.*
- *What is the breakdown of employer/employee contributions toward health insurance premiums? Ans: 90% employer/10% employee. An opinion was expressed that the employee should pay a greater share.*
- *What about the administration wage increases on lines 30 and 31 on page 17? Ans: The Town Administrator did not get a \$24,000 salary increase. Her first year of work was only a partial year. The Selectboard Administrative Assistant is a different position.*

**Passed by voice vote.**

**Article 7:** In addition to this General Fund expenditure, shall the voters authorize the Town Clerk's salary to be raised by \$10,123 plus \$1,382 in associated taxes and benefits?

**Motion: Jan Buker, Second: Fred Danforth**

**Discussion:** *Comments were made that it is awkward to vote this way, why not put it in the budget like all other salaries? The Selectboard felt it was a large change and wanted the voters to weigh in on the pay for this elected position.*

***Todd Curtis made a motion to increase the clerk's salary to reflect an additional amount of \$14,636.60, plus \$1,924.71 in associated taxes and benefits. Erika French seconded. This change would make the Clerk's salary \$63,170. Oakley Smith called the question on the amendment. Voice vote wasn't clear, but division of the house showed it was obviously at least 2/3 YES to call the question. Roger Rood asked for a paper ballot to vote on the amendment. Six others agreed. **Todd's amendment passed by a paper ballot vote of 84 YES and 56 NO.*****

***The main motion as amended now reads: In addition to this General Fund expenditure, shall the voters authorize the Town Clerk's salary to be raised by \$14,636.60 plus***

### **\$1,924.71 in associated taxes and benefits?**

- Comments and questions: One person wanted to see more open hours at the Clerk's Office. Sally Ober responded that she is there many more hours than are posted on the door, but she needs quiet time to focus on important tasks. She helps many people outside of regular office hours, and also makes appointments, even on weekends.
- What if this doesn't pass? Ans: The clerk would get just a 4% cost of living increase.
- People were encouraged to de-personalize this vote, and think of it as the position, not the person in the position. Do we need to clarify that this amount is for a 40-hour work week? Ans. From Trish Waugh: the Selectboard has already changed this to a 40-hour per week position.

**Article 7, as amended, passed by a paper ballot vote of 107 YES and 36 NO.**

**Article 8:** Shall the Town of Lincoln vote to authorize the elimination of the Office of Lister and replace it with a professionally qualified contracted assessor appointed by the Selectboard who shall have the same powers, discharge the same duties, proceed in the discharge thereof in the same manner, and be subject to the same liabilities as are prescribed for listers or the board of listers under the provisions of Title 32?

[Note: This article requires a ballot vote. 17 V.S.A. § 2651c (b)(1)]

**Motion: Nancy Stevens, Second: Amy Mayer**

**Discussion:** Ken Stockman made a motion for the Clerk to cast one ballot based on a voice vote. Trish Waugh explained that nobody has run for these highly specialized positions. Now we are contracting with the NEMRC company for assessment services and we have hired an assessor to keep up with the administrative work required. We budgeted \$30,000 last year and didn't use it all. A voice vote was in favor of Article 8, so Sally Ober, Town Clerk, cast one ballot in favor of Article 8.

**Passed by a paper ballot vote of 1 Yes and 0 No.**

**Article 9:** Shall the Town of Lincoln vote on all money articles by Australian ballot beginning in 2026? [17 V.S.A § 2680(c)(1)]

**Motion: Mark Mulqueen, Second: Ari Kirshenbaum**

**Discussion:** Comments: Much discussion in favor of this article for these reasons: not enough people come to vote and Burnham Hall has limited space; also, Australian ballot voting is more accessible to voters. Many were opposed because it would essentially kill our Town Meeting; we would give up the ability to amend articles; it would about double the cost of running an election; people said they love town meeting. Changing the voting method won't necessarily change the outcomes. Questions: Could we do a Zoom meeting? Ans: there is no provision in the law yet, to be able to vote remotely. Could we move town meeting to a different day and time, so it's not so late? Jericho, VT does a hybrid-type town meeting which is not supported by law, but they are trying it. **Bill Finger made a motion to table this article, to allow the Selectboard time to form a committee to come up with a proposal for next year, perhaps in some hybrid form. Oakley Smith seconded.**

**Discussion:** Democracy is messy but we love it; Lincoln does Town Meeting well and gets better turnout than many other towns; hearing other perspectives during town meeting opens us up to new ideas and might change our minds; could we vote on money articles over \$10,000 by Australian ballot? **Sally Taylor called the question, Ari Seconded.**

**Motion to call the question passed by voice vote.**

**In favor of tabling: 85 YES and 48 NO, by division of the house. Article 9 is tabled.**

**Town Clerk, Sally Ober, gave thanks to outgoing town officials.**

1. Lisa Truchon- Lister for 22 years, Treasurer for 10 yrs.
2. Van Talmage- Treasurer
3. Selectboard-Conor McDonough & Amanda Allen
4. Planning Commission- Matt Atkins, Spencer Prescott, Barbara Murphy-Warrington, Serena Fox
5. Highway Supervisor- Dave Cavoretto
6. Wayne Preston-Highway Crew
7. Ann Pollender- Justice of the Peace for 24 years!
8. Library Trustees- Ruth Shepherd (10 years), Sally Baldwin, Grace Freeman, Deb Heleba.
9. Kristyn Brady- Selectboard Assistant, she is about to leave.

**RECESSED TOWN MEETING & OPENED LINCOLN SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING at 9:16 p.m.**

**ADJOURNED LINCOLN SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING & RE-OPENED TOWN MEETING at 10:30 p.m.**

**Article 10: Shall the Town of Lincoln vote to authorize a sum of \$10,000 for contracted law enforcement services?**

**Motion: Sally Taylor, Second: Nancy Stevens**

**Discussion: Comments and questions:** Flashing signs have not changed people's driving habits in Lincoln. In other communities the signs work, because they are backed up by occasional law enforcement appearing to stop the speeders. We need law enforcement officers to carry Narcan and give people second chances when overdosing on drugs. We won't have patrolling at 2 a.m. for this amount of money. How did we come up with this amount? What would we do with this if it passes? Ken Stockman indicated that it wouldn't be spent immediately. The Selectboard would have to involve townspeople to help shape a contract. **Sarah Janson made a motion to amend this to read: Shall the Town of Lincoln vote to authorize a sum of "up to" \$10,000 for contracted law enforcement services? Seconded by Don Gale.** More discussion: Bill Finger had a car go airborne and land in his living room, years ago. That was when we had a sheriff. People on the main roads have different experiences than those on the ends of roads. There were more comments, both opposed to this and in favor of Article 10. Law enforcement can deter more than just speeding. Some people are concerned about break-ins and personal safety. One person expressed an opinion that speed bumps would be better than law enforcement, because they appear to be effective in other towns. **Sarah Janson's amendment passed by voice vote, adding the words "up to".** Questions and comments: Is this just a one-year expenditure, or would it be year after year? What about the traffic calming study? What's the cost of installing a speed bump? Speeding tickets for young drivers would be good lessons.

**Article 10, as amended, passed by division of the house with 37 YES and 26 NO.**

**Article 11:** Shall the Town of Lincoln vote to authorize a sum of \$175,000 for further restoration and improvement of existing Class 2 asphalt surface town highways, to be deposited in the paving reserve fund?

**Motion:** *Christie Sumner*, **Second:** *Alison Parker*

**Discussion:** *What is this about? Trish Waugh explained it is to put money away for paving projects.*

***Passed by voice vote.***

**Article 12:** Shall the Town of Lincoln vote to appropriate the sum of \$5,500 to help support the Lincoln Cooperative Preschool?

**Motion:** *Nancy Stevens*, **Second:** *Sally Taylor*

**Discussion:** *Rebecca Ford, President of the Lincoln Preschool, thanked us all for past support. The preschool is fully enrolled and serves 29 Lincoln families. They provide fun events during Hill Country Holiday, including the parade and spaghetti supper. Ken Stockman announced that there will be a special town meeting on March 27<sup>th</sup> [at 5:00 pm, at the Lincoln Town Office], to vote on whether to exempt the Lincoln Preschool and Lincoln Fire Company from property taxes. These were two questions which missed getting on the warning for tonight's meeting.*

***Passed by voice vote.***

**Article 13:** Shall the Town of Lincoln vote to appropriate the sum of \$44,000 in support of the Lincoln Library?

**Motion:** *Sally Taylor*, **Second:** *Judi Danforth*

**Discussion:** *Their request hasn't gone up and they work hard to help children discover books.*

***Passed by voice vote.***

**Article 14:** Shall the Town of Lincoln vote to appropriate the sum of \$4,000 to help support Lincoln Sports, Inc.?

**Motion:** *Jan Buker*, **Second:** *Patty Schoenhuber*

**Discussion:** *Lincoln Sports Board Member, Christie Sumner, explained that this covers ongoing costs for summer camp and the youth sports programs. Lincoln Sports has gotten grants to work on building a trail system.*

***Passed by voice vote.***

**Article 15:** Shall the Town of Lincoln vote to appropriate the sum of \$56,000 to the Lincoln Volunteer Fire Company?

**Motion:** *Co'Relous Bryant*, **Second:** *Bill Perta*

**Discussion:** *Matt Atkins, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief, pointed out that they provide 100% volunteer services. The Fire Company also handles first response for medical calls and other emergencies when people need help.*

***Passed by voice vote.***

**Article 16:** Shall the Town of Lincoln vote to appropriate the sum of \$13,230 to Bristol Rescue?

**Motion:** *Patty Schoenhuber*, **Second:** *George Dunne*

**Discussion:** *This was an increased request submitted by petition, based on a charge of \$10 per capita of our current population.*

***Passed by voice vote.***

**Article 17: Shall the Town of Lincoln vote to appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to the Lincoln Cemetery Association?**

**Motion: Su White, Second: Nick McDougal**

**Discussion:** *David Wood, Cemetery Trustee, said they are hoping to get this amount to maintain and improve the cemetery. Ken Stockman said this was an increase over last year, and it was submitted to the Selectboard by petition.*

***Passed by voice vote.***

**Article 18:** Shall the Town of Lincoln vote to approve the following agency requests?

\$ 300	Addison Allies Network
\$ 500	Addison County Economic Development Corporation
\$1,250	Addison County Home Health and Hospice, Inc
\$1,300	Addison County Parent/Child Center
\$ 600	Addison County Readers
\$ 200	Addison County Restorative Justice Services
\$400	Addison County River Watch
\$ 1,100	Age Well (formerly CVAAA)
\$1,250	Atria Collective (formerly WomenSafe)
\$2,500	Bristol Recreation Department
\$ 1,000	Charter House Coalition
\$ 750	Comm. Health Svcs of Addison Cty - Open Door Clinic
\$1,600	Counseling Service of Addison County, Inc.
\$ 700	Elderly Services, Inc
\$ 800	Have-A-Heart Food Shelf
\$2,000	HOPE (ACCAG)
\$ 250	Homeward Bound
\$1,000	John W Graham Emergency Shelter
\$490	Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)
\$1,170	Tri-Valley Transit (formerly ACTR)
\$1,000	Turning Point Center of Addison County
\$ 500	Vermont Adult Learning
\$20,660.00	Total

**Motion:** Jan Buker, **Second:** Sally Taylor

**Discussion:** none

**Passed by voice vote.**

**Article 19:** To transact any other legal and proper business when met.

**Discussion:** Ken Stockman thanked Victor Atkins for his service to the Selectboard during the past year. Victor decided not to run again at the end of his term. Sally Ober thanked our microphone runners, Erika French and Mark Mulqueen. Also, thank you to Mark Mulqueen for setting up the sound system. Thank you to Paul, for running these two big meetings!

**Time adjourned: 11:14 p.m.**

**Minutes respectfully submitted by Sally Ober, Town Clerk:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Minutes approved by Paul Forlenza, Moderator:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Minutes approved by Joe Martell, Selectboard Vice Chair:** \_\_\_\_\_