

## Town Meeting Pandemic Style

Ten days after last year's Town Meeting, Governor Scott declared a statewide emergency due to the coronavirus pandemic. Now, almost a year later, the virus continues to threaten public safety. For that reason, the Selectboard has determined that Town Meeting 2021 will take place through Australian balloting on the traditional first Tuesday of March—March 2. This decision was not made lightly, and we all look forward to a traditional Town Meeting with discussion, floor voting, and a fabulous lunch in 2022. There will be an online informational session the evening before when items will be discussed and questions answered.

**In-person voting** will be available on Tuesday, March 2, 2021, at the East Montpelier Elementary School from 7 am–7 pm. Covid-19 safety precautions will be in place, and curbside voting will be available for those who wish to vote in person but do not want to enter the building. School restrooms will not be available for public use.

**In addition, town and school ballots will be mailed to ALL registered active voters.** Articles that would normally be voted from the floor will be included on the paper ballot. If you have not received your ballots in the mail by Tuesday, February 16, please contact the Town Office. Completed ballots may be mailed back to the Town Office, dropped in the secure dropbox outside of the Town Office, or brought to the polls on Town Meeting Day. If you come to the polls on March 2, please bring your ballot with you. You may simply hand it in, complete it there, or we'll trade you for a fresh ballot. If you forget to bring your mailed ballot with you, we will have you sign a form stating that you have not voted before giving you another ballot.

You may register to vote or check your registration status from the town website at: [eastmontpeliervt.org/town-meeting/2021-town-meeting](http://eastmontpeliervt.org/town-meeting/2021-town-meeting)



Alex Brown

Traditional Town Meeting, 2018

### Informational Meetings

The Washington Central Unified Union School District (WCUUSD) will hold a virtual informational meeting on Monday, March 1, at 6:30 pm at which time the School Board will review the ballot articles and respond to questions. You may participate online or by phone. Please visit the school district website at [wcsu32.org](http://wcsu32.org) to access meeting documents and participation options.

The Selectboard will hold this year's informational meeting on Monday, March 1, at 7:30 pm via Zoom to review the ballot articles and respond to questions. You may participate online or by phone. Meeting documents and meeting access options are found on the Town's website at [eastmontpeliervt.org](http://eastmontpeliervt.org).

Problems accessing the meeting should be addressed to Town Administrator Bruce Johnson at 802-223-3313, x204 or at [manager@eastmontpeliervt.org](mailto:manager@eastmontpeliervt.org).

# Thoughts on Town Meeting

East Montpelier held its first Town Meeting on March 6, 1849, one year after East Montpelier was created by dividing the Town of Montpelier into two separate towns. As far back as 1792, most of Montpelier's town meetings were held in what is now East Montpelier Center.

For 171 years, East Montpelier citizens have met in person at Town Meeting to discuss and vote on town and school business and to elect local officers. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, there will be no in-person 2021 Town Meeting; instead, all voting will take place by ballot.

The Vermont Town Meeting has been described as one of the most authentic and meaningful forms of direct democracy still in existence. Attendance has declined over recent decades, although I can remember Town Meetings as recently as the early 2000s that hosted large crowds, with citizens actively discussing town and school business.

Studies by Vermont historian Paul Gillies and others have attributed the decline in attendance over time to changes in work and family commitments, the use of the Australian ballot, and the undercutting of town authority by the state.

UVM professor Frank Bryan's research shows that the best-attended Vermont Town Meetings occur when annual town and school meetings are held together. With the forced dissolution of our school district in 2019, East Montpelier's Town Meeting now includes only town business. In a 2020 decision by the Vermont Supreme Court regarding Vermont school governance, Justice Eaton wrote in dissent speaking

of the effects of losing local control through the dissolution of local school districts. He ended by quoting Joni Mitchell: "Don't it always seem to go/That you don't know what you've got/'Til it's gone."

Although the more than 200-year-old tradition of the Vermont Town Meeting may be seen by some as outdated in our modern world, recent events may cause us to reevaluate the importance of this unique democratic institution. The restrictions of the pandemic have made many of us more appreciative of our local Vermont state and municipal government bodies and of our local economy.

On January 6, 2021 we also learned how fragile our precious American democracy itself is when a seditious mob stormed the U.S. Capitol in an attempted coup. By the end of that same day, we also learned how strong our democracy is.

With these current challenges to our liberty in mind, Calvin Coolidge's words of nearly 100 years ago still seem apt: "If the spirit of liberty should vanish in other parts of the Union, and support of our institutions should languish, it could all be replenished from the generous store held by the people of this brave little state of Vermont."

Perhaps it is again time for us to discuss how to increase Town Meeting participation. Should we hold the meeting in the evening? Or on a Saturday? How do we balance the voting rights of citizens with floor and ballot voting? There may be a number of options to consider.

See you next year.

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### www.emSignpost.com

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# They Want Your Vote

## Town Moderator: one 1-year term

*The moderator is the presiding officer of municipal meetings and shall decide questions of votes taken, except if Australian ballot is used. The moderator shall preserve order in the conduct of business and meetings. (Descriptions taken largely from the VLCT Resource Manual and Vermont Law.)*



**Michael Duane:** My wife Ellen Knoedler and I have lived in East Montpelier for the past 38 years. We raised our three children in East Montpelier, and we now have two grandchildren who reside here as well. I retired from practicing law after 35 years and now spend my days babysitting, skiing, hiking, traveling, and cutting wood.

I have been the town moderator since 2015. As

moderator, it has been my practice to attend the Selectboard meetings when the annual Town Warning is being prepared so that I have an understanding of what issues may arise at the upcoming Town Meeting. I believe I have a pretty good grasp of Robert's Rules of Order and Vermont state laws as they pertain to Vermont Town Meeting procedures. It would be my honor to serve as East Montpelier's town moderator for another term.

## Selectboard Member: one 3-year term; one 2-year term; two years of a 3-year term

*Selectboard members are responsible for general supervision of the affairs of the town and are responsible for seeing that all duties, not assigned by law to any particular officer, are carried out. The Selectboard convenes town meetings and may enact ordinances and rules that regulate areas such as roads, traffic, waste disposal, animals, and nuisances.*

**Gene Troia,** two years of a 3-year term: I have been a resident of East Montpelier, residing on Vincent Flats Road, since 1986. My wife Anne and I have raised two sons here, and we are active community members. I ran my own small construction firm, Quaker Hill Building, specializing in energy-efficient new home construction with an emphasis on using native wood species, local suppliers and craftsmen, and custom woodworking to produce our homes until retir-

ing a little over a year ago. Through my business, I regularly had the experience of being an applicant in the permitting process.

In the past, I have served on the East Montpelier Board of Adjustment and served as the Town Zoning Administrator. I have also served as the chair of the zoning board. I have been an active member of our Planning Commission for eight years before being elected as a Selectboard member. I served as a board member for a number of years prior to taking the past year off. While on the Selectboard, I served as its representative for the Capital Improvement Committee and have continued to chair this committee.

Through my work on the Capital Improvement Committee and Selectboard it has been my endeavor, as well as the Selectboard's, to help provide a vision for East Montpelier's future as well as a stable town tax rate. I would like to continue on the Selectboard in order to continue with this pursuit. It is my view that to be a self-determinate individual, one must put the time into the local community to help make the decisions that allow us to be free. I wish to return as your representative to the town Selectboard.



**Judith Dillon,** two years of a 3-year term: I was appointed a member of the Selectboard this past summer and am now running for a position so I may continue serving our community in this role.

My daughter Nora and I have lived in East Montpelier for almost six years. We moved to East Montpelier so Nora could attend

U-32 and participate in its many academic, art, and theater opportunities. Now that she has graduated and entered college, I have more time and energy to serve my neighbors and town. I have worked as an attorney in Vermont for over 25 years in both public and private practice and hope to use my experience and training to help promote fairness, equity, and transparency in governing our special town. My background and experience in environmental, land use, and employment law will help me identify and resolve issues and challenges that come before the Selectboard. I currently serve as a board member of the Vermont Bar Foundation, which works to support programs designed to increase access to justice for low-income Vermonters. I also serve on the Vermont Bar Association, where I chair the Workforce Development

*continued on p. 4*



Committee, working to address the demographic and other challenges to the legal profession and the provision of legal services to Vermonters. You can find me walking our dog Tessa along North Street, picking up groceries from the Ad-  
amant Co-op, or skiing the respectfully maintained ski trails in the community. Thank you for considering my candidacy.



**Seth Gardner, 3-year term:**

Hello East Montpelier townspeople. I've been on the Selectboard for about 12 years and have seen and overseen many changes in that time.

I own and operate an organic dairy and beef farm—the McKnight Farm on Snow Hill Road. To prosper and to be progressive as a farmer requires a strong manage-

ment skill set which I bring to the Selectboard. My common sense and frugality have been strong assets in conducting town affairs. My goal as a Selectboard member is to help make decisions and to set policy that benefit the majority of townspeople. It's always a challenge to navigate the many regulations and legalities that exist in our world, but I feel that in our grass roots democracy I have been a strong and effective voice representing East Montpelier's best interests. I know this past year has been challenging for many of us, and I can assure you the East Montpelier Selectboard is doing its best to support the democratic process and to keep the townspeople as safe as possible.

I appreciate the support and trust I've received from the citizens of East Montpelier. I've enjoyed serving you, and though challenging, it has been very rewarding also. It has been an honor and a wonderful experience. Thank you.



**Amy Willis, 2-year term:** I'm pleased to be running for a third term on the Selectboard. Over the last four years, I've been fortunate to meet the people involved with making the town better. We not only have excellent and committed town employees, but dozens of volunteers ready to roll up their sleeves and serve on boards and committees, improve

our trails and conservation efforts, and raise money and awareness for interests ranging from upgrading the recreational field to helping out neighbors in need. I love not only knowing what's going on in East Montpelier, but also supporting people who make things happen here.

It's been an interesting year. The town has had to make adjustments to the office itself, the procedures for conducting town business, our elections (Town Meeting included), and the way we manage relationships with vendors and organizations. Things will likely be in flux for a while. On the positive

side, a slightly slower pace has given the Selectboard time to discuss projects and ideas that have long been on the back burner.

I come to you with a professional background in finance and economics. In addition to the Selectboard, I serve on the boards of both Montpelier Alive (the downtown promotional and development organization) and Eleva Chamber Players.

**Lister: one 3-year term**

*Listers are responsible for determining the value of the real and personal property in town. This is the value the Selectboard or the Town will use to set a tax rate necessary to raise the money to operate the town in the next year. It is also the basis for the determination of the property wealth of the municipality for purposes of setting state education property taxes.*



**Ross Hazel:** I have been a resident here in East Montpelier since 1991 and have been a Lister since 2003. I have enjoyed the work and challenges of keeping up the Grand List and working with the residents to help keep our town government functioning at its best.

**Town Auditor: one 3-year term**

*Town auditors are responsible for examining and adjusting the accounts of all town and school district officers and all other persons authorized by law to draw orders on the town treasurer. Secondly, they are to report their findings in writing to the legal voter of the town presenting an easy-to-understand picture of the town's finances.*



**Ed Deegan:** I've lived in East Montpelier for nearly 30 years with my wife Keri-Ann Black-Deegan and we raised our four children in town. I've served on many town committees, including many years on the Recreation Committee as well as the Charter and Capital Budget Committees. I am also a member of the Board of Civil

Authority as a justice of the peace. I work for the Vermont Department of Taxes as an auditor/analyst after spending most of my career working with my wife's public accounting firm, KABDCPA, and have experience in auditing as well as tax and general accounting services. The town auditors have done a great job, and I hope to continue that tradition. I think my background will be an asset for the position.

**First Constable: one 1-year term**

*EM has voted to prohibit constables from exercising any law enforcement authority. They serve as animal control officers and may be called on to serve civil or criminal process and to aid first responders when necessary.*

**Jonathan Boucher:** no statement

**Planning Commissioner: three 3-year terms**

*The Planning Commission is responsible for preparing and maintaining a current Town Plan and Zoning Regulations. It reviews significant developments and makes recommendations on issues including land development, transportation, economic and social development, historic, wetland and scenic preservation.*



**Richard Hall:** I reside on Lyle Young Road with my wife, Bonnie, and our youngest daughter, Isabel. I am part owner in our dairy operation, Fairmont, LLC along with Bonnie, our nephew Tucker Purchase, and my two oldest children, Clara Ayer and Ricky Hall. I was born and raised in East Montpelier. I attended the

East Montpelier Elementary School, U-32 High School, and received an associate's degree from SUNY Cobleskill in agricultural science. I developed an interest in farming through growing up on my parents' dairy farm, Hallmark Farm. Shortly after my graduation from college, Bonnie and I purchased what is now McKnight Farm, owned by Seth Gardner. From there, we moved and grew our business to accommodate our growing family and provide an exit plan for the seniors in the business, John and Donna Hall and Austin Cleaves.

I have a strong passion for my family, our community, the land, and our dairy business. With the blessing of having the next generation joining our farm, I now have the time and ability to serve the town on the Planning Commission. I look forward to learning from the current members and giving back to a town that has continuously given to me.

**Mark Lane:** no statement

**No candidate for third open position.**

**Washington Central Unified Union School District**

*The relatively new WCUUSD consists of the elementary schools of the five towns of the former Washington Central Supervisory Union (Berlin, Calais, EM, Middlesex, and Worcester) and U-32 Middle/High School. A single school board with representatives from the five towns is responsible for the entire pre-K through 12 school system. Now, all voters from the five towns elect all members of the board as well as a moderator, clerk, and treasurer for the school district.*

*In keeping with space limitations, the Signpost will continue to publish statements from those running as board members from East Montpelier, as well as the non-town-affiliated positions of moderator, clerk, and*

*treasurer. It is hoped that information on other candidates will be available on the WCUUSD website.*

**WCUUSD School Director: one 3-year term**

*School directors are responsible for managing the general affairs of the School District by developing policies and hiring able administrators to assure the soundness of the physical assets as well as the educational content and methods presented in student classrooms. They are responsible for convening School District Meetings.*



**Lindy Johnson,** 3-year term: I am seeking re-election as a WCUUSD school director because I am interested in continuing my participation on the board and supporting our town. It has been a year of many challenges as we addressed hiring a new superintendent and dealing with a pandemic. I believe my expertise as an educator helps me understand the issues not only

as a professional in the field but also as a citizen. It is good to have a diverse board so that discussions can include people who currently have children in the school, who have had children in the school, and who come from various occupational backgrounds. I feel I am a good listener, and I'm not afraid to ask questions and request more information when needed. I'm not interested in micromanaging, but I do want to be informed on matters related to how our schools are operated and at what cost.

I live on Sodom Pond Road with my husband Bruce. Our sons, R.B. and Will, both graduated from U-32 and have fond memories of their time in school. I believe our schools did a good job educating them, and I want to ensure that other families will want to settle in our region and add to our student population! I am honored to serve on the board and hope to continue.

**WCUUSD Clerk: one 1-year term**



**Rosie Laquerre:** I have been serving the Town of East Montpelier as its appointed town clerk for the last three and a half years. I had the pleasure of serving as school clerk for East Montpelier before the merger and assisting the WCSU Central Office during the multiple merger elections in 2019. With your vote, I will work to continue

fostering the relationships between the district's town clerks and the unified school district to ensure fair, accurate, and accessible school elections.

After living in East Montpelier for almost 13 years, I now

*continued page 6*



*Candidates, continued from p. 5*

claim “dual citizenship” as a resident of Berlin. It’s been interesting to participate in local elections both as an election official and as a voter in another town. In my spare time, I enjoy reading books on my Kindle, spending time with my family, and getting outdoors.

**WCUUSD Moderator: one 1-year term**  
**No Candidate**

**WCUUSD Treasurer: one 1-year term**  
**Mary Ormsby: no statement**

### Thanks to our donors:

- Richard & Alice Angney
- Maurice & Barbara Brown
- Michael Duane & Ellen Knoedler
- Martha Haynes
- Patricia Woodward

## Storm Smart: Protect and Preserve Our Waters

“**R**aindrops on roses may be one of our favorite things, but when lots of raindrops flow together, they can become a powerful force that washes out driveways, rips apart stream banks, and carries pollution into our rivers and

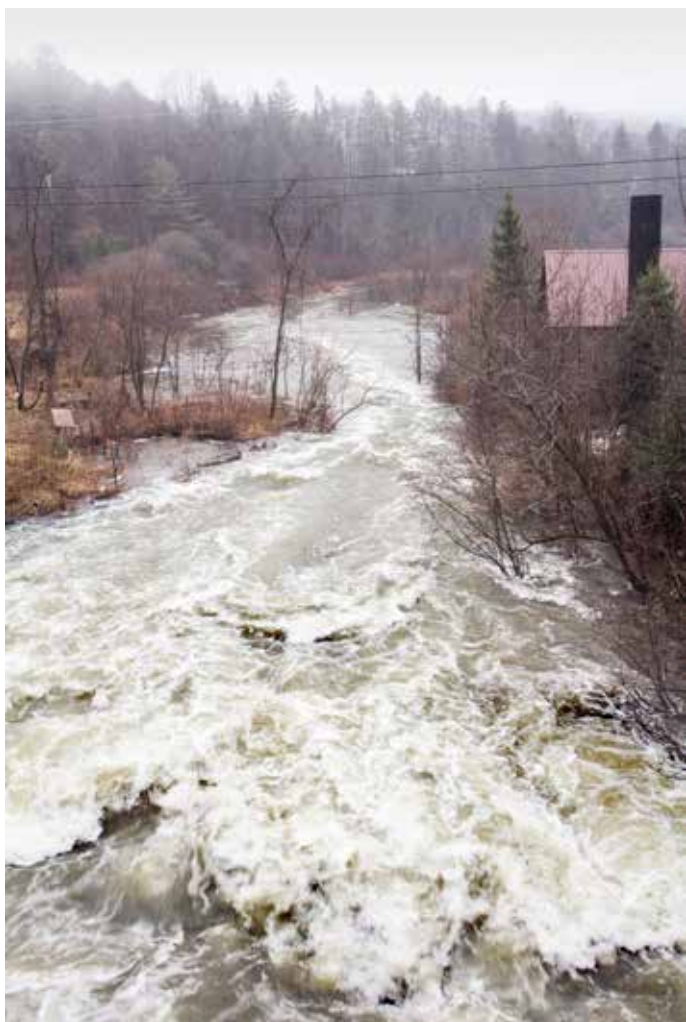
lakes,” explains Gianna Petito, East Montpelier resident and current district manager of the Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District (Winooski NRCD). “A combination of more frequent and intense storms, as well as more developed land, roofs, and compressed lawns that shed water more quickly have made Vermont’s raindrops a real challenge for clean water and flood resilience.”

Keeping rainfall onsite can help stop driveways from eroding, keep rivers clean and clear, minimize flooding, and replenish groundwater. “It’s not always easy to know how to start, though,” admits Petito, a new homeowner herself. “That’s why we’re promoting Storm Smart, as a way for East Montpelier residents to get free assistance to figure this kind of stuff out.” Storm Smart is a free program that helps people make their homes, driveways, and yards better able to “soak up the storm.” Each property, therefore, builds flood resilience, protects biodiversity, and keeps rivers clean. In addition, most of the Storm Smart recommendations, like planting trees, converting lawns to wildflowers, or repairing riparian buffers, improve wildlife habitat as well.

The developer of Storm Smart, Friends of the Mad River, is partnering with the Friends of the Winooski River and the Winooski NRCD to encourage residents of the Winooski watershed area to sign up for a free Storm Smart assessment. After an in-person assessment (provided outdoors under Covid-19 guidelines), the program provides written water management recommendations specific to each home. Assessments for 2021 will begin as soon as the snow is gone, but we’re encouraging interested residents to sign up soon.

To learn more or participate, contact Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District at [winooskinrkd.org/stormsmart](http://winooskinrkd.org/stormsmart), 802.828.4493 x3178, or [info@winooskinrkd.org](mailto:info@winooskinrkd.org). You can also find out more at Friends of the Winooski River, [winooskiriver.org/storm-smart](http://winooskiriver.org/storm-smart).

—Gianna Petito is district manager of Winooski NRCD.



Terry J. Allen

*Flooding, seen from VT14 “Singing Bridge,” April 2014.*

## Town Offices

PO Box 157, East Montpelier, VT 05651  
Phone: 802-223-3313  
Office Hours: Mon–Thurs 9 AM–5 PM

### Town Clerk

Rosie Laquerre  
clerk@eastmontpeliervt.org

### Town Treasurer

Don Welch  
treasurer@eastmontpeliervt.org

### Town/Zoning Administrator

Bruce Johnson,  
manager@eastmontpeliervt.org

### Fire Permits

EMFD 225-6247

### First Constable

Jon Boucher 917-4855

### Animal Control Officers

Lead: Carl Etnier 552-4343  
Assistant: Amber Perry 498-5140

### Listers

Rob Chickering,  
Ross Hazel, Chris Racanelli  
223-3313 x206,  
listers@eastmontpeliervt.org

### Health Officer

Ginny Burley 272-4045

### Service Officer

Rachael Grossman 223-3177

### Selectboard

Seth Gardner, Chair  
sethbgardner@hotmail.com  
Judith Dillon Carl Etnier  
Jon Jewett Amy Willis

### Planning Commission

Julie Potter, Chair, 262-6119

### Development Review Board

Steve Kappel, Chair  
sjkappel@gmail.com

### WCUUSD Board

Flor Diaz Smith, fdiazsmith@u32.org  
Lindy Johnson, lindyjvt@gmail.com  
Stephen Looke, stlooke@u32.org

### State Representative

Kimberly Jessup, 249-9306  
jessupkimberly@gmail.com

## Everyone's on the Trails

Look who's on East Montpelier's trails! With the pandemic keeping everyone distant from one another, the EM trail system has been a welcome outlet for many and is seeing heavy use. Yes, everyone's there! How did we wind up with this incredible resource? It took the vision and hard work of the following people over 30 years. Asterisks indicate current board members. Please thank:

Chris Abrams, Sue Batchelder, \*Jennifer Boyer, \*Richard Brock, Jody Brown, Ginny Burley, Bruce Chapell, Carley Claghorn, Diana Chase, \*Sue Chickering, Carol Dickson, \*Nona Estrin, Apple Faulkner, Joe and Tina Feeny, Hobie Guion, Kris Hammer, \*Rick Hopkins, Kim Kendall, Kevin McCollister, Laura Medalie, \*Madeleine Mongan, Patrick O'Donnell, \*Lauren Padilla, Sue Rikken, Alex and Kate Robb, \*Josh Ryan, Jamie



Shanley, Jim Shea, Loring Starr, \*Mary Stone, Chip Stone, Dan Vanderlip, Jean Vissering, \*Dave Webb, Carroll Witham, Sandy Woodbeck, and Erica Zimmerman.

You'll be hearing a lot more about this topic as the *Signpost* celebrates the 30th anniversary of EM Trails, Inc. this coming year. Stay tuned.

## Is Your Dog EM's #1 Pooch?



Terry J. Allen

Is Your Dog #1? This Could be the Year! Final Date: April 1, 2021

It's time for the Third Annual East Montpelier #1 Dog Tag Drawing. Every dog licensed between January 4 and April 1 will be automatically entered to win a prize package including the #1 tag, bragging rights, and a treasure trove of canine loot.

The winning pooch's photograph will be posted in the Town Office reception area, with a mention in the *Signpost*.

# Town Weathervane

## BIRTHS

- Merlin Orion Shapiro Neddo, a son, born to Sarah Shapiro & Nicholas Neddo
- Emmett Westly Sayers, a son, born to Carley & Justin Sayers in December

## MARRIAGES *(as names appear on licenses)*

- Paula A. Lopez & Matthew N. Kancewick Smith married in December

## DEATHS *(Survivors living in East Montpelier are listed, when known.)*

- Shirley M. King, wife of Clifton King, died in January

## LAND TRANSFERS *(Transfers relative to estate planning or corrective deeds are not included in listing.)*

- Jonathan Flanders, et al. to Greg Bauman & Deana Hawk, 1.30 acres & dwelling on Brazier Rd.
- Mark & Hunter Lane to John Lane, 2.24 acres on Gould Hill Rd.
- Mark & Hunter Lane to Mark Lane, 24.9 acres on Gould Hill Rd.
- Terri Blaisdell to Megan Seaver, mobile home on Sandy Pines Rd.
- Martha Israel to Nancy Weinstein, 4.98 acres & dwelling on Barnes Rd.
- Big Sky LLC to Terrence Youk & Ann Armbrrecht, 8.62 acres & dwelling on County Rd.
- Big Sky LLC to Joseph Kiefer & Amy Goodman-Kiefer, 15.18 acres of open land on Morse Rd.
- Ernest A Keough Estate to Michael D. Keough, 0.75 acres & dwelling on County Rd.
- Robert & Diana Fusco to Win Turner, et al, restrictive covenant on 9.20 acres
- Steven Gilman to Steven & Linda Gilman 0.48 acres & dwelling on VT148
- David Martin to Anna Martin, 2.20 acres & dwelling on Barnes Rd.
- WanLing Jollota to Brian Jollota, mobile home on Sandy Pines Rd.
- Alice Mosely to Darien McElwain, 0.21 acres & dwelling on Factory St.

*The following are excerpts from minutes of EM's governing boards. Complete minutes are on the town and school websites. All meetings were held online using virtual conferencing platforms with public participation options provided.*

## SELECTBOARD

### December 3, 2020

- Discussion of the proposed FY22 Ambulance & Emergency Services budget by the East Montpelier Fire Department (EMFD)
- Motions Passed to authorize Chair Gardner to sign the letter requesting a 30-day extension of the advance notice period [for AT&T Cell Tower proposal on Jacobs Rd.]

### December 7, 2020

#### Discussion

- Update on Proposed AT&T Cell Tower Facility
- Special joint meeting with the Calais Selectboard on EMFD FY22 Ambulance & Emergency Services budget request
- Conversation with town moderators of EM and Middlesex on Town Meeting during the pandemic
- 2021 Town Meeting Warning
- FY22 budget development

#### Motions Passed:

- to authorize TA Johnson to complete the Shade Tree Preservation Plan agreement with the VT Urban & Community Forestry Program
- to authorize the limited use of town roads as requested by the East Montpelier Gully Jumpers

### December 21, 2020

#### Discussion

- articles on TM Warning for Green Mountain Transit (GMT) and Rural Community Transportation (RCT) Commuter Bus Routes; Central VT Home Health & Hospice; Montpelier Senior Activity Center; Kellogg-Hubbard Library; and Twin Valley Seniors, Inc.
- Funding Request Study Committee Report
- FY20 Financial Audit  
*[All of the above were placed on the Warning by consensus; and Audit was also accepted by consensus.]*
- FY22 Budget development
- Town Meeting Warning
- Recreation Field Ice Rink Operations Policy

#### Motions Passed

- to adopt the FY22 Capital Improvement Plan as presented

- to accept the 2021 Ash Tree Management Grant and authorize TA Johnson to complete the necessary paperwork
- to authorize TA Johnson to make the minimum bid on the Thomas property at the January 7, 2021 tax sale if there are no other bidders
- to approve Access Permit 20-053 as presented and authorize Chair Gardner to sign the permit on behalf of the board for a curb cut, Brown Subdivision Lot 2, Factory St.

### December 29, 2020 Emergency Meeting

**Motion Passed** to approve the purchase of the 2012 Freightliner from Barre Town at a price of \$38,000 using capital reserve funds

### January 11, 2021

#### Motions Passed

- to include in the town's FY22 general fund budget the EMFD operating budget requests of \$122,076 for the fire service and \$223,159 for the ambulance service
- to approve the FY22 Selectboard budget as presented, setting the to-be-raised-by-taxes figure for the 2021 Town Meeting Warning at \$1,927,032
- to cancel the 2021 in-person town meeting in light of COVID-19 health and safety concerns, and to allow Australian ballot voting for all town meeting items

## PLANNING COMMISSION

### December 3, 2020

#### Discussion of Village zoning

**Motion Passed** to authorize the chair to sign the letter as written to the Public Utility Commission (PUC) requesting a 30-day extension [for AT&T Cell Tower proposal on Jacobs Rd.]

### December 17, 2020

#### Discussion

- Update on Proposed Jacobs Rd. cell tower
- Zoning for cell towers
- Village zoning

### January 7, 2021 (U)

Discussion of cell tower and Town Plan with Jacobs Rd. residents

## DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD

### December 1, 2020

#### Discussion

- Zoning regulation of modern stormwater management practices



- Sketch plan review of McCall subdivision located at 150 Stoney Corners Rd.

**Motion Passed**

- to approve the amendment to Conditional Use Permit #03-126 as presented for Orchard Valley Waldorf School at 2290 VT14N

January 5, 2021 (*Unapproved*)

**Discussion**

- Sketch plan review of Messier subdivision at 440 East Hill Rd.

**Motion Passed**

- to waive sketch plan review for application #20-052 submitted by Laura R. Brown Revocable Trust located at 3205 VT14N and to approve application as presented

**WCUUSD**

December 2, 2020 (*Unapproved*)

Community Forum on budget

**Motions Passed:**

- to offer contract to Curriculum Management Solution, Inc. for curriculum review in the amount of \$36,250

- to approve the long-term substitutes Jenna Dufford and Colleen Dunn
- to enter executive session at 8:17 for the purpose of discussing legal issues, negotiations, personnel issues, and superintendent evaluation. The board exited executive session at 10:46
- to approve the MOUs as presented in the executive session packet, and to authorize the superintendent to sign the agreements

December 16, 2020

**Discussion**

- Budget draft 2

**Motions Passed:**

- to enter executive session at 5:04 for the purpose of superintendent evaluation. The board exited executive session at 5:53
- to approve the superintendent evaluation process as discussed during executive session
- to authorize the creation of the Coordinator of Early Education and Expanded Learning Opportunities position

- to accept Winooski Valley High School Choice agreement and to authorize the superintendent to sign on the board's behalf
- to enter executive session at 8:39 for the purpose of discussing personnel and negotiations. The board exited executive session at 10:00

January 5, 2021 (*Unapproved*)

**Motion Passed** to enter executive session at 5:09 for the purpose of discussing superintendent evaluation. The board exited executive session at 6:06

January 6, 2021 (*Unapproved*)

**Motions Passed**

- to approve the budget for FY22, as presented in the amount of \$34,984,949

January 13, 2021 (*Unapproved*)

**Discussion**

- Draft 3 of the board presentation of the WCUUSD FY22 budget

## School Taxes Expected to Decrease

The education and general needs of our children have become even more important during the current pandemic. Inequities—food insecurity, limited mental health access, health care, homelessness, access to broadband, income inequality, and more—have become more apparent than ever. We need to continue to prioritize equity in our communities and the common good as the bases for the wellbeing of all our children.

Engaging all of you is key to the School Board's work, assuring that that the community voice is at the heart of our decisions. Investing in that most precious resource, our kids, is the most significant action we can take.

Good school budgets don't happen by accident. They are policy documents that express and further our goals. Planning and collaboration are key components of writing a budget that is grounded and driven by data.

The school board objectives for the budgeting process this year are as follows:

- To support a strong multi-tiered system of support in all schools
- To fund key initiatives: strategic planning process, hiring of a facilities director and health instructors
- To have our spending reflect less than the "excess spending threshold amount per equalized pupil"
- To have a bottom line with less than 3% "net impact on taxes"

The FY22 proposed budget is just under \$35M, down \$450,000 (1.26%) from the current year. Using state figures which came out AFTER the annual report was printed, school taxes across the district are expected to decrease as follows: East Montpelier -8.3¢, Berlin -15.5¢, Calais -4.3¢, Middlesex -1.7¢, and Worcester -5.7¢.

This budget preserves programs that meet the needs of students, right-sizes school personnel through early retirement, reassignments, and minimal staff reductions, and reduces expense, including contracts.

I hope that the financial challenges that will continue to face us will not negatively impact our underlying goals but rather transform our methods. We will continue to collaborate with the superintendent and the leadership team as we monitor programs and use findings from the upcoming curriculum evaluation to refine our continuous improvement plan and our strategic plan.

Please join me in thanking our amazing WCUUSD team, administrators, teaching staff, cooks, custodians, bus drivers, and all who keep our schools functioning effectively and safely. Thank you for continuing to be the heart of our communities; thank you for all you are doing for our children during these challenging times.

We know it is not easy, but your efforts don't go unnoticed. We are grateful!

—Flor Diaz Smith is Finance Committee chair for the WCUUSD.



## Ginny Callan's Recipe for the Potluck That Wasn't

### Southwest Avocado Potato Salad

We've all done a lot of pivoting and making do since late March 2020. Losing the opportunity to eat the delicious offerings of our neighbors at the Town Meeting potluck is only one more. In response, *Signpost* staff asked Ginny Callan what she would bring if the potluck were on. As many know, Ginny started Montpelier's first vegetarian restaurant in Montpelier—Horn of the Moon—in 1977, where she provided wonderful food with a smile for the next twelve years. Make her special salad while picturing the school lunchroom in your mind's eye. Who are you sitting with? Eat, enjoy!

6 cups red potatoes (2 lbs.) cubed  
 1 Tb canola or sunflower oil  
 4 cloves garlic, peeled and minced  
 1 small to medium jalapeno pepper  
 2 stalks celery, chopped  
 1 bunch scallions, (5-6) sliced thinly  
 1 medium green pepper (3/4 cup) chopped  
 2-3 plum tomatoes, coarsely chopped  
 1/2 cup fresh cilantro, chopped  
 1/2 cup fresh basil, chopped  
 1 ripe avocado, chopped, add as final step

#### Dressing

1/3 cup Greek yogurt  
 1/3 cup lite or nonfat sour cream  
 1/3 cup light mayonnaise  
 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice  
 1 teaspoon salt

#### Directions

Cook the potatoes in boiling water to cover until just tender, about 10 minutes. Drain and set aside to cool. Set a small skillet over medium heat, turn overhead fan on, add the oil, when hot add the garlic and jalapeno pepper and sauté until just tender, 3-4 minutes.

In a medium sized bowl add the potatoes, sautéed garlic and jalapeno pepper, along with celery, scallion, green pepper, tomatoes and herbs. Toss gently.

In a small bowl whisk together the salad dressing ingredients. Pour over salad and mix gently. Add the avocado just before serving and stir gently. Garnish with basil and cilantro leaves.

Serves 8.

## Twin Valley Tax Assistance and More

While the Twin Valley Senior Center (TVSC) remains closed due to Covid-19 restrictions, we continue to encourage seniors to stay in touch through our virtual and at-home services. Emails and phone calls are welcome.

We are planning new ways to provide our important tax preparation services this year which means minimizing face-to-face time. There will be two options:

**Option 1** You may bring your tax documents to TVSC and leave them with the volunteer preparer. When the tax return is completed by the volunteer, you will return to TVSC for a short appointment when we will give you a printed copy of your return, return your tax documents, answer any questions, and electronically file your return if you authorize us to do so.

**Option 2** If you are uncomfortable with leaving your tax documents with the tax volunteer, we will scan the documents when you come for your appointment at TVSC and return the originals to you. When the tax return is complete, you will return to TVSC for a short appointment when we will give you a printed copy of your return, answer any questions, and electronically file your return if you authorize us to do so.

Our goal is to start tax assistance service the last week in February.

Please keep in touch with us during the temporary closure which we hope will end soon. We may be reached at 223-3322 or [twinvalleyseniors@myfairpoint.net](mailto:twinvalleyseniors@myfairpoint.net). If you participate in a Bone Builders class, and there are weights here at the center that you would like to pick up for home use, please call to arrange a pick-up time.

Lastly, did you know that you can receive the monthly newsletter in an electronic version? Email us if you'd like to receive this format.

—Rita Copeland is executive director of TVSC.

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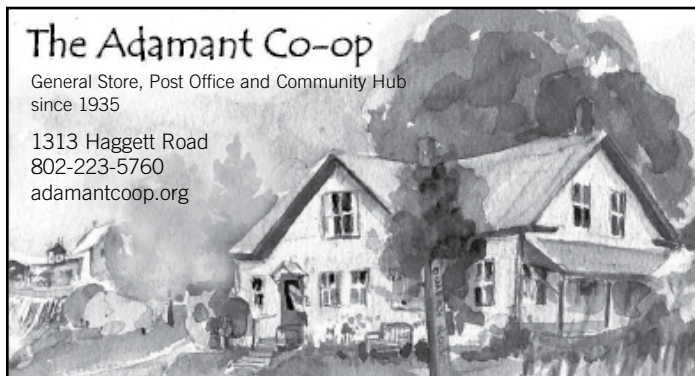
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### CALENDAR

**Mon. March 1**, School District Meeting virtual informational session, 6:30 pm, link available at [wcu32.org](http://wcu32.org)

**Mon. March 1**, Town Meeting Informational Session via Zoom, 7:30 pm, link available on town website: [eastmontpeliervt.org](http://eastmontpeliervt.org)

**Tues. March 2**, Town Meeting Australian voting, 7 am-7 pm, EMES, curbside service available, masks & distancing required

**Thurs. April 1**, Town Office, new dog licenses due

**Contributions for May-June Signpost due:  
 Monday, March 29, 2021**



Terry J. Allen

### COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Conservation Fund Advisory Committee  
 Development Review Board (DRB)  
 East Montpelier Fire Department (EMFD)  
 East Montpelier Senior Living Initiative  
 Four Corners Schoolhouse Assn  
 Planning Commission (PC)  
 Recreation Board  
 Selectboard  
 WCUUSD Board Meeting  
 East Montpelier Historical Society

as needed  
 1st Tues. 7 pm  
 every Tues. 7 pm  
 as needed  
 2nd Wed. 7 pm  
 1st & 3rd Thurs. 7 pm  
 2nd Mon. 7:15 pm  
 1st & 3rd Mon. 6:30 pm  
 3rd Wed. 5:30 pm  
 SUSPENDED for now

contact: [blusig@aol.com](mailto:blusig@aol.com) / 229-5441  
 Town Office Building  
 EMFD Community Room  
 contact: [rhazel@ezcloud.com](mailto:rhazel@ezcloud.com)  
 Four Corners Schoolhouse  
 Town Office Building  
 Elementary School  
 Town Office building  
 one of the district elementary schools  
 Four Corners Schoolhouse/E. Calais