

Annual Town Meeting Minutes
May 17, 2018

Prior to calling the Town Meeting to order, Steven Mattson introduced Tom Darna and Andrew Smith for a presentation from the Lyme Ambulance Association. Carter Courtney, EMT, was recognized for serving for over thirty years for the completely volunteer Ambulance Association, responding to over 2,000 emergency calls, the top responder every year. Carter received a rousing round of applause and a standing ovation.

The Town Meeting was called to order at 7:31 PM by Steven Mattson with approximately 70 in attendance. The Meeting was then organized by the selection of Rowland Ballek as Moderator. The Moderator asked Linda Winzer, Town Clerk, to read the Call to the Meeting:

“Electors and citizens eligible to vote in Town Meeting are hereby warned and notified that the **ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING** will be held Thursday, May 17, 2018, 7:30 PM EDT at the Lyme Town Hall, 480 Hamburg Road, Lyme, CT for presentation of the following agenda:

1. Acknowledge receipt of the Town of Lyme Annual Report for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2017.
2. Acceptance of the Emerson Cemetery property from the Jewett family to the Town of Lyme.
3. Consider and approve the Town joining an approved Connecticut Health Department or approved Connecticut Health District.
4. Consider and repeal of the 1968 ordinance relating to Public Health in the Town of Lyme.
5. Consider and act on estimates and recommendations of the Board of Finance for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2019.

Please remember to license your dog(s) in June.

Steven Mattson
For the Board of Selectmen”

The first order of business to come before the Meeting was to acknowledge receipt of the Town of Lyme Annual Report for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2017.

Moved and seconded. Voted: affirmative.

The second order of business to come before the Meeting was to accept the Emerson Cemetery property from the Jewett family to the Town of Lyme.

Emerson Cemetery Resolution

Whereas: The Jewett family, as owners of the parcel, desire to transfer ownership of the parcel to the town at no cost as they depart the town, and

Whereas: The Town of Lyme is ultimately responsible for cemeteries that become abandoned within the borders of the town, and

Whereas: The Board of Selectmen have endorsed the acquisition of the parcel,

Now Therefore: Be it resolved by the Town of Lyme, in Town Meeting convened, that the Board of Selectmen, acting on behalf of the Town of Lyme, be authorized to accept the Emerson Cemetery parcel.

Moved and seconded. Voted: affirmative.

The third order of business to come before the Meeting was to consider and approve the Town joining an approved Connecticut Health Department or approved Connecticut Health District.

Connecticut Health Department or District Resolution

Whereas: The Town of Lyme has operated a health department since its creation by ordinance in 1968 to administer the state public health code, and

Whereas: The administration of the state health code has become more involved and burdensome to the point that the town cannot adequately staff for the requirement, and

Whereas the state encourages the towns to merge the public health code administration into state health departments or districts, and

Whereas: The Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance have endorsed joining such a health department or district,

Now Therefore: Be it resolved by the Town of Lyme, in Town Meeting convened, that the Board of Selectmen, acting on behalf of the Town of Lyme, be authorized to enter into agreements and contracts for joining an approved Connecticut Health Department or an approved Connecticut Health District.

Moved and seconded.

Michael Cathcart expressed concern about continuity and consistency, loss of institutional knowledge, and not having an experienced person serving Lyme. Steven Mattson responded that by joining a Regional Health District, we are hiring the State to administer the health code. Steve Mansfield, the Director of Ledge Light Health District, has many years of experience in public health, as does the rest of his staff. The Town will have one representative on the Board of Directors of Ledge Light. John Kiker, Third Selectman, will be appointed to that position. John has a master's degree in public health and has much experience in this field. Also, George Calkins, our current Sanitarian, will continue working for Ledge Light in town hall, still doing all the duties he has always done for the town.

Edward Rodriguez stated that while he feels this is well intentioned, he expressed concern regarding the loss of local control, the ability of the Health District to institute regulations, the fact that other towns in Ledge Light Health District have very different demographics than Lyme, and that the Health District provides many services that we do not need such as restaurant inspections. He stated that enforcement of the public health code is not necessarily a good thing; that variations in the code depending on the different towns would be better. He believes Lyme has been wise as a town not hiring a lot of full time people and preserving our independence from the rest of the state.

Kiernan Wholean stated that he agreed completely with the previous speaker and emphasized concerns about the Health District being able to enact regulations. He also stated that if regionalization is a good thing, then maybe we should have county government in Connecticut.

Carter Courtney stated that at the public hearing, individuals from the Public Hall expressed issues with the health code and joining a Health District. He questioned whether those issues had been resolved. Steve Mattson replied that the people from the Public Hall have met twice with the food service director from Ledge Light, who also invited all the other nonprofits in town to come to the meeting. Bill Denow from the Public Hall stated that while they thought they had some serious issues going forward, that is not the case. While they do have to make some changes, they will get through it.

James Miller asked the question that if the Town were to decide that this is not working, what steps could we take to undo this choice. Steven Mattson replied that the Selectmen will continually review how things are working with Ledge Light. We are entering into a two-year contract with Ledge Light. There would be penalties if the Town withdrew early, however the penalty would not be greater than what we would be paying Ledge Light for their services, which is approximately \$17,000 annually. After two years, we could remove ourselves from the relationship without penalty. He added that whether it is now or two years from now, the Town cannot staff our Public Health Department to provide the ten services that are required by the State Public Health Code. George does a great job with the two environmental services, and we have already contracted with Ledge Light for food services. Currently the Town does not provide the other seven services, some of which are needed, some are not. If we pulled out of the Health District, we would have to find a handful of people to hire costing multiples of what it is costing us now. Moving to Ledge Light will actually be saving the Town approximately \$10,000 per year for Public Health.

Voted: affirmative.

The fourth order of business to come before the Meeting was to Consider and repeal of the 1968 ordinance relating to Public Health in the Town of Lyme.

Repeal of the Ordinance Relating to Public Health in the Town of Lyme

Whereas: The Town of Lyme is required to administer the Public Health Code of the State of Connecticut, and

Whereas: The Town of Lyme adopted an ordinance in 1968 for this administration, and

Whereas: The Town of Lyme has approved the joining of an approved Connecticut Health Department or an approved Connecticut Health District to administer the Public Health Code, and

Whereas: This ordinance is no longer required,

Now Therefore: Be it resolved by the Town of Lyme, in Town Meeting convened, that The Town of Lyme repeals the Ordinance Relating to Public Health in the Town of Lyme.

Moved and seconded.

Edward Rodriguez questioned whether it would make more sense to suspend the ordinance in case we decide to pull out of the Health District after two years. Steven Mattson replied that the 1968 ordinance contains two statements that we cannot continue with right now. The first statement is that we are a single town public health department. If we join the Ledge Light, we are not. The second statement is that the public health director will be a doctor, something that

even the State does not want in the future. The public health director for the town will be the public health director for Ledge Light, Steve Mansfield. We have to repeal the ordinance to be able to fit the work. Rowland Ballek stated that if the Town pulls out in two years, another ordinance could be drafted at that time.

Voted: affirmative.

The fifth order of business to come before the Meeting was to consider and act on estimates and recommendations of the Board of Finance for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2019.

Moved and seconded.

James Miller stated that he noticed the General Government category increased by 24%, led by a 53% increase in health insurance. Steven Mattson replied that there are two impacts. First, everyone knows health insurance costs are going up like crazy. The town is actually changing its health insurance plan to save money. The current carrier would not agree to anything less than a 36% increase in their rates. Second, part of the jump is that the library health benefits line has been combined with the general government health benefits line, thus creating a single health benefits line with the previous library benefits line being zeroed out. Steven Mattson also stated that this budget reflects the change in costs of joining the health district. The cost to be in the health district are \$17,000. The cost in the sanitarian line before is higher, which we will no longer be paying.

Sue Hessel noticed that the Eight Mile Cemetery line has no money budgeted. Steven Mattson replied that the Eight Mile Cemetery line and the Lyme Cemeteries line have been combined.

David Roberge stated that he attended more than one Board of Finance meeting in this budget cycle and wanted to commend the Board for their give and take during the process.

Voted: affirmative.

Prior to adjourning the meeting, moderator Rowland Ballek stated that he has been moderating these meetings for 46 years and that it is time to turn it over to someone else. At the next meeting, the legislative body, those present at Town Meeting, will make a motion to nominate someone else as moderator, and assumes the Board of Selectmen will recommend someone to fill that role at the time. Mr. Ballek received a tremendous round of applause for his years of service as moderator.

The moderator announced that the Board of Finance would meet immediately following the meeting to set the mil rate. There being no further business to come before the Meeting, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the Meeting. Voted: Affirmative. The Meeting was adjourned at 7:59 PM.

The Board of Finance met immediately after the meeting and set the new mil rate at 18.60.

Recorded by: Linda Winzer, Town Clerk