

Concerned Guilford Town Residents  
C/O Patricia Bullock  
1045 Guilford Center Road  
Guilford, Vermont 05301

December 12, 2023

Guilford Elected Town Moderator, Rick Zamore and  
Guilford Selectboard Members, Zon Eastes, Verandah Porche,  
Knutte Marine, Tara Cheney and Michael Becker  
236 School Road  
Guilford, Vermont 05301

**Re: 2023 Guilford Town Meeting**

Dear Moderator Zamore and Guilford Selectboard Members,

We are writing to follow up after reading Moderator Zamore's September 21, 2023 Letter to the Guilford Selectboard Members on the subject of Guilford's 2023 Town Meeting.

Patricia Bullock first communicated with Moderator Zamore back in June of this year to ask for his acknowledgement of mistakes and omissions that were made as he moderated Guilford's 2023 Town Meeting. As a group of Concerned Guilford Residents, we also sent a letter to Vermont State Officials detailing the mistakes and omissions we experienced at the 2023 Town Meeting. We were seeking a solution to the situation.

State Officials responded to our group letter pointing out a specific Vermont State Statute that if followed, provides acknowledgement and remedy for errors and omissions at municipal meetings. That Vermont Statute is: Validation of Municipal Meetings 17 V.S.A. § 2662.

These actions were not taken by us as Guilford Citizens to persecute Moderator Zamore personally, but to have him recognize and resolve the problems that occurred so they will not be repeated at future Town Meetings. An important function is given to us as the Vermont Citizenry in the State Constitution; we are directed to hold our elected officials legally accountable. There are specific rules, laws and procedures designated for Town Meetings. All Guilford Voters will be able to freely engage and participate with equal and fair access if they are followed.

A written request was made to Moderator Zamore to follow the applicable Vermont Statute to recognize and remedy the mistakes and omissions made at the 2023 Town Meeting. A copy of that specific Vermont State Statute was included with a previous letter to Moderator Zamore to give him understanding of the resolution process that is provided in Vermont Law. We were disappointed to read Moderator Zamore's response in his September 21<sup>st</sup> Letter stating that, "he would decline the opportunity" to follow the Vermont State Statute.

Our question is: Why is Moderator Zamore declining to follow a Vermont State Statute? The mistakes and issues we have outlined can clearly be seen by anyone who chooses to view the video of Guilford's 2023 Town Meeting. It was recorded by BCTV and is available for viewing on the BCTV Website.

We appreciate that Moderator Zamore did recognize and apologize in his September 21<sup>st</sup> Letter for two of the specific Robert's Rules of Order Mistakes that were communicated to him through letters. However, he did not acknowledge or recognize several other important issues and mistakes concerning his facilitation of Guilford's 2023 Town Meeting.

As we have stated previously, our ultimate goal is to have future Guilford Town Meetings facilitated and led correctly, impartially and fairly for all attendees in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order and/or other applicable laws. There is a Vermont Town Moderator Handbook readily available for all to read to better understand the responsibilities and role of a Vermont Town Moderator. A copy of the Moderator Handbook was sent to Moderator Zamore with one of the previous letters mailed to him.

Moderator Zamore has accepted his election by Guilford Voters to be Guilford's Elected Town Moderator. Therefore, he has a responsibility to receive the necessary training and any other assistance needed to rightly perform his elected role. If needed, Moderator Zamore should request town funds for any training, classes and/or legal assistance he needs to be fully prepared to fulfill his role as Guilford's Elected Town Moderator.

The following issues were communicated to Moderator Zamore in a previous letter. Our hope in repeating them is to have him acknowledge and learn from the mistakes and omissions made at the 2023 Guilford Town Meeting, so they will not be repeated at future meetings.

1. **Robert's Rules of Order and Town Meeting Parliamentarian**

**Problem:** Moderator Zamore did not know many aspects of Robert's Rules of Order. Moderator Zamore did not designate a parliamentarian for the 2023 Guilford Town Meeting to handle questions arising about parliamentary procedure.

**Solution:** To correctly fulfill his elected role, Moderator Zamore needs training to better understand Robert's Rules of Order. He also needs to seek out and designate a trained and knowledgeable parliamentarian for Town Meetings. If necessary, Moderator Zamore should request town funds to pay for a Guilford Town Meeting Parliamentarian and/or for his Robert's Rules Training.

2. **Town Meeting Participation**

**Problem:** Moderator Zamore did not provide a clear designation of Guilford Town Meeting Attendees; to know the difference between the Guilford Legal Town Voters and others in attendance. This information is necessary to rightly moderate the meeting. It is unknown if all who spoke, voted and participated were Guilford Legal Town Voters.

**Solution:** Moderator Zamore needs to coordinate with the Guilford Town Clerk and Selectboard to put in place a clear system designating Guilford Voters and Non-Voters that are in attendance at Town Meetings. All in attendance should be able to clearly know who the Legal Voters and Non-Voters are during the entire Town Meeting.

### 3. **Town Meeting Order**

**Problem:** Moderator Zamore did not exercise the authority of his elected role as the meeting facilitator. He did not maintain order and his actions did not follow his words. Examples: He stated that no one could speak unless they were identified by him and had the microphone to be able to speak for all to hear. He did not follow through with this consistently or impartially. Moderator Zamore stated that a person could only speak a second time, after all who wanted to speak a first time were heard. He did not follow through with this consistently or impartially for all meeting attendees.

**Solution:** Moderator Zamore needs to exercise the authority and function of his elected position. It is his job to maintain order as he facilitates the agenda of Town Meetings. He needs to act to follow the rules and directives he gives to the meeting attendees. Moderator Zamore needs to say what he means and mean what he says.

### 4. **Serve the Guilford Voters**

**Problem:** As an Elected Town Official, Moderator Zamore is supposed to serve the Guilford Voters. He did not facilitate communications to receive answers to questions asked by the voting attendees. Since the meeting is mostly about town monies and spending, the town treasurer should be present and ready to answer questions along with others in Guilford's Government who spend taxpayer monies. Since Selectboard Members are ultimately responsible for the proposed budget and spending, they should be ready to answer questions as well. Since a moderator is tasked to lead the will of town voters through the decision-making process of a Town Meeting Agenda, a moderator's ability to clearly communicate, facilitate answers, and treat all persons in attendance fairly and impartially is essential.

**Solution:** Communicate clearly, seek understanding, invite and provide opportunities for attendees to ask questions. Facilitate answers to the questions of meeting attendees. The questions asked should be directed to the appropriate person(s) in town government who would have the answers.

### 5. **Town Meeting Minutes**

**Problem:** The 2023 Guilford Town Meeting Minutes filed and attested to by Moderator Zamore in the Guilford Town Records do not document the factual happenings and details of what actually took place at Guilford's 2023 Town Meeting. For those in attendance and/or those who choose to view the recorded Town Meeting, it is reasonable to conclude that the disorder of the Meeting overall and the lack of following Robert's Rules correctly, made it very difficult to document accurate Minutes.

**Solution:** With better training on Robert's Rules along with words and actions to maintain order, Moderator Zamore would rightly facilitate Town Meetings. He should not blindly verify and attest to Town Meeting Minutes. He should verify the accuracy of the Minutes before signing and attesting to them. A signature attestation of a document is "an official verification that the document is true and authentic." Therefore, signing and attesting to documents for permanent Guilford Town Records should not be performed casually or without due diligence.

A copy of this letter has been sent to Moderator Zamore as well as each individual Guilford Selectboard Member. We are asking the Guilford Selectboard to receive this letter as Official Guilford Selectboard Correspondence; to read this letter in its entirety into the Public Record and Minutes of the next Guilford Selectboard Meeting.

We are asking you all as our elected town selectboard members and our elected town moderator to please help to better serve the best interest of Guilford's Residents, Taxpayers and Voters and the Town of Guilford overall. Please do all you are able to acknowledge and correct these issues we have communicated, so future Guilford Town Meetings will be facilitated fairly, impartially, and legally in the good order of doing Guilford Town Business.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Concerned Guilford Town Residents  
of Guilford, Vermont