

DRAFT – Robin Durkee, Town Clerk

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Saturday, February 28, 2026 – Woodbury Elementary School

Town Moderator Stephen Murphy calls the morning to order at 10:15 A.M. We recite the Pledge of Allegiance, then hold a moment of silence to remember our neighbors, friends, and family who passed away this past year. Moderator reviews four points of order – rules, articles, debate, voting – based on Vermont Law and Robert’s Rules of Order. Four attendees who were not Woodbury registered voter identified themselves; voters welcomed them; Moderator reminds them that they are not allowed to vote, and unless permitted by the assembly, may not speak in debate.

Moderator states that he has previously publicly announced that he would accept a nomination to be reelected moderator; therefore, to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest, he yields the podium to the Select Board to preside over Article 1. Chris Casey (Select Board Chair) presides.

Article 1: Who shall be elected moderator?

Paul Cerutti nominates Stephen Murphy. No other registered voter was nominated. By unanimous consent, nominations close then Chris declares that Stephen Murphy is elected. Voters applaud. Stephen returns to moderate the meeting.

Article 2: To consider the printed Woodbury Town Report for the year ending December 21, 2025.

Ward (Skip) Marchesani moved the article; Paul Cerutti seconds. Paul gives a thank you to whoever worked on the Town Report. John Reid states that three items need to be amended.

I (John Reid) moved to amend Article 2 to make these corrections to the Town Report be noted in our Town Meeting Minutes, and that the corrections be made in the official digital version of the Town Report on the town's website:

On Page 58, add the names of Cemetery Commission Secretary Stephanie Appleton and Cemetery Commission Member Amy Eldred.

On Page 79, correct the amount requested by the Vermont Rural Fire Protection Task Force to \$200.

On Page 82, in the photo caption for the back cover, add Stephanie Appleton to ban members, not in the photo.

Mary Clark asked about year 2025, that it should be year 2026.

Robin Durkee stated that 2025 is the calendar year.

Merry Gangemi asked why the school report was not in the Town Report. She got the post card from the school district but stated that with spotty cell service it is difficult for some people to access the reports.

Retta states that OSSU is their own entity.

Ward (Skip) Marchesani states that the question should be asked of the School Board.

Article 2 called and passed.

Article3: Who shall be elected to fill the following positions as Town Officers?

Town Treasurer – 3-year term

Elizabeth (Lizzy) Higgins nominates Lillian (Lilly) Baron. Michael Gray seconds. Lillian introduces her candidacy.

Amy Eldred Hunt nominated Brandy Smith. Merry Gangemi seconds. Brandy introduces her candidacy.

Patrick Flood requests a paper ballot. More than 7 registered voters rise their hands for a paper ballot. Moderator directs Board of Civil Authority to conduct a vote by paper ballot. By unanimous consent, polls close. Town Clerk reports the results: 116 votes cast, Lillian Baron receives 98, Brandy Smith receives 18. Lillian Baron is elected. Voters applaud.

Select Board Member – 3-year term

Paul Cerutti nominates John Gordon. Phil Nold-Laurendeau seconds. John introduces his candidacy.

Paul Cerutti moves to direct the Town Clerk to cast one ballot for John. Merry Gangemi seconds. Moderator conducts a voice vote then declares that the motion is passed. The Clerk casts one ballot for John. John Gordon is elected for a 3-year term as Select Board Member. Voters applaud. Diana Peduzzi thanked Lizzy for her years of service on the Select Board. Voters applaud

Lister – 3-year term

Bonnie Collins nominates Ronald (Ron) Wells. William (Bill) Condon seconds. Paul Cerutti moves to direct the clerk to cast one ballot. Chris Koteas seconds. Moderator conducts a voice vote then declares that the motion is passed. The Clerk casts one ballot for Ron who is elected. Voters applaud.

Auditor – 3-year term

Robert (Bob) Martin nominates Susan Martin. Merry Gangemi seconds. Paul Cerutti moves to direct the clerk to cast one ballot. Jayne Nold-Laurendeau seconds. Moderator conducts a voice vote then declares that the motion is

passed. The Clerk casts one ballot for Susan Martin who is elected. Voters applaud.

Collector of Delinquent Taxes – 1-year term

Carolyn Stewart nominates Ronald (Ron) Wells. Jayne Nold-Laurendeau seconds. Amy Hunt nominates Brandy Smith. Brandy declines. Ron introduces her candidacy. By unanimous consent, nominations close then Moderator declares that Ronald is elected. Voters applaud.

Cemetery Commissioner – 5-year term

Carolyn Stewart nominates Susan Stitely. Carol Ray seconds. Susan introduces her candidacy. By unanimous consent, nominations close then Moderator declares that Susan is elected.

Cemetery Commissioner – 2-year term

Susan Stitely nominates Cathrine (Cacky) Peltz. Carol Ray seconds. Cacky introduces her candidacy. By unanimous consent, nominations close the Moderator declares that Cacky is elected.

Library Trustee – 2-years

Deanna (DeeDee) Avery nominates Allison Schmitt. David (Dave) Barber seconds. Allison introduces her candidacy. By unanimous consent, nominations close the Moderator declares that Allison is elected.

Hazen Union School District Director – 3-year term

Chris Casey nominates Steven Freihofner. Chris confirms that Steven Freihofner said he will take the Hazen Union School District Director for the 3-year term. No other candidates are nominated. By unanimous consent, nominations close then the Moderator declares that Steven is elected.

Article 4: Shall the Town have its taxes paid to the Town Treasurer, as Tax Receiver, sixty days after tax bills are mailed? (Estimated due date will be Oct 29, 2026.) After the due date, taxes will become delinquent and be turned over to the Collector of Delinquent Taxes for collection with a penalty of one-half percent per month, that increases by one-half percent per month of delinquency up to a maximum of six percent if delinquent for one full year. Interest of one-half percent per month will also be charged. All of this revenue goes to the town.

Paul Cerutti moves the article. Ward (Skip) Marchesani seconds. No discussion the article passes by voice vote.

Article 5: Shall the Town vote to exempt property owned by and used for the purposes of our non-profit volunteer fire, rescue and ambulance services? If so voted, such property also will be exempt from the education grand list and the equalized education grand list.

Ward (Skip) Marchesani moves the article. Susan Martin seconds. Susan Stitely wondering what this means. Paul Cerutti says he is not a lister, but his understanding of this article is that the volunteer fire dept is private nonprofit corp. so our property is not exempt from property taxes so when they do the grand list for education funds the fire dept would have to include that cost in their budget than would be passed on to the voters. Paul says he believes that it needs to be done every ten years. Robin Durkee (Town Clerk) researched after this question was raised at the pre-town meeting about the number of years in-between having the article voted on. Research shows that after the

original exemption it needs to be redone every 5 years. The time it was last voted on was 2017. Moderator asked is their future debate, hearing none will close the debate by unanimous consent. Article passes with voice vote.

Article 6: Shall the Town appropriate \$25,888.00 to the Woodbury Volunteer Fire Department to fund the truck loan payment in the amount of \$23,888.00 and to fund the truck maintenance reserve in the amount of \$2,000.00, both to be paid in full by July 01, 2026?

Ward (Skip) Marchesani moved the article. Susan Martin seconds. No debate. By unanimous consent debates end. Move to the vote. Article passes with a voice vote.

Article 7: Shall the Town appropriate \$134,990.88 to fund the operations of the Woodbury Volunteer Fire Department? The Capital Replacement Fund to be paid in full by January 1, 2027, in the amount of \$35,000.00 and the Operating Expenses of \$99,990.88 paid in quarterly installments of \$24,997.72 starting July 1, 2026.

William (Bill) Condon moves the article. Sara Vanhof seconds

William (Bill) Condon states that they have saved his life again as they did last year and they deserve every last penny they get. Voters applaud. Elizabeth (Libby) Case is Calais paying per call. Paul said that Calais is paying Woodbury 50% of capital, operating they paid 1/3 the cost. Calais also pays East Montpelier 50% of their capital and 1/3 of their operating expenses. Majority of calls in Calais are EMS calls because of older population. Libby asked if Paul thinks it is fair – Paul answered yes for the time being. Operating is what they pay if you go on a one-hour call, a stupid of \$12.50 is paid if you go on a 14-hour call, they get \$12.50. That's all the money they will ever get. The stipend is to cover clothes that get damaged, gas. Paul does not see the operation of the fire dept changing in the near future. No major changes are coming. Bruce Tucker – where are you heading. You are adding onto the

station just want to know where you are heading. What are they planning to add for services to what they already have for the addition they are putting on. Woodbury is not a huge town and other towns around are part of mutual aid. Mutual aid is to keep costs down. Paul state if everyone remembers the original station was going to 7000 square feet because of cost the project went down to 4100 and was going to keep the original fire station but then it got flooded out in 2023 again in 2024. The building could not be saved so the addition is needed for the equipment that was housed in that building. This winter the furnace in the annex stopped working so that equipment had to go somewhere. Ron Wells calls the question. Kari Hooper seconds. Calling the question means that debate will end and move directly to the vote. Will need 2/3 of voters to pass to move on. Clear to the moderator that the motion passes and will move to the vote. Article is passed.

Motion to break for lunch while the Representatives speak. John Gordon would like article 8 voted on before they speak. Paul agreed. Put before the registered voters. Voter agreed to vote on article 8 then have the rep. speak.

Article 8: Shall the Town appropriate \$100,100.00 to the Woodbury Volunteer Fire Department to fund the loan payment for the Fire and Emergency Operations Center, paid November 1, 2026.

Patrick Flood moved the article. John Gordon seconds. Article 8 passes. Voters applaud.

Paul stated that the drug issues are not over. Looking for non-voting members to help with truck checks, shoveling snow.

12:15 break for lunch and for representatives to talk about what they have been working on this session. Ann Peltz asked if the noise level be kept low so the rep could be heard.

Article 9: shall the voters appropriate \$26,987.00 for the support of the Woodbury Community Library?

Ward (Skip) Marchesani moved the article. Chris Koteas seconds. Jayne Nold-Laurendeau thinks it needs to be voted on because they do so many wonderful things. No further questions or comments. By unanimous consent, discussion ends. Moderator conducts a voice vote then declares the article passed. Voters applaud.

Article 10: Shall the voters appropriate \$17,300.00 for the support of the Woodbury Cemeteries?

Ward (Skip) Marchesani moves to consolidate the voting for Articles 10-32. Sara Vanhof seconds. Moderator states, regarding Article 32, he is an employee of Washington County Mental Health Services, he was informed that the annual budget for Washington County Mental Health Services FY 26 budget is \$78.9 million. Stephen states that he is an employee of Washington County Mental Health, does not feel that the \$1,000.00 would be a conflict of interest with the size of their budget and would turn over the running of this article to the select board if anyone has an issue. Hearing no objection. By unanimous consent, discussion on the amendment ends. Moderator conducts a voice vote then declares the motion is amended. Susan Stitely – I'm a member of the Woodbury Cemetery Commission which is part of the amendment, and I would be hesitant to approve this not knowing what will come up in the future. I would like to thank Jamie Dutil for her years of service also would like to thank Patti Garbark for the sign she made for the South Woodbury Cemetery. She will also make signs for the other cemeteries; we also have green burial section. For those of you who do not know what green burial is, you are buried in a biodegradable box which is much cheaper. Last year we got quotes for a new road that would make it easier for people to get into the cemetery. Does anyone have any questions. Hearing no other debate on the combined articles we will close debate. By unanimous consent, discussion on the amendment ends. Hearing none, will close

debate on series of articles and will move to the vote. Articles 10 -32 are passed.

Article 10: Shall the voters appropriate \$17,300.00 for the support of the Woodbury Cemeteries?

Article 11: Shall the voters appropriate \$2,500.00 to the Woodbury/Calais Food Shelf?

Article 12: Shall the voters appropriate \$75000 to Aid to Women, Men and Children in Abuse and Rape Emergencies (A.W.A.R.E.)?

Article 13: Shall the voters appropriate \$250.00 to the American Red Cross of NH/VT?

Article 14: Shall the voters appropriate \$600.00 to Central Vermont Adult Basic Education?

Article 15: Shall the voters appropriate \$750.00 to the Central Vermont Council on Aging?

Article 16: Shall the voters appropriate \$300.00 to the Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation?

Article 17: Shall the voters appropriate \$2,000.00 to Central Vermont Home Health & Hospice Inc.?

Article 18: Shall the voters appropriate \$650.00 to CIRCLE (Battered Women's Services)?

Article 19: Shall the voters appropriate \$500.00 to Elevate Youth Services (Washington County Youth Services)?

Article 20: Shall the voters appropriate \$100.00 to the Family Center of Washington County?

Article 21: Shall the voters appropriate \$484.00 to Green Mountain Transit?

Article 22: Shall the voters appropriate \$50.00 to Green Up Vermont?

Article 23: Shall the voters appropriate \$750.00 to Hardwick Community Television?

Article 24: Shall the voters appropriate \$200.00 to Mosaic VT (Sexual Assault Crisis Team)?

Article 25: Shall the voters appropriate \$200.00 to the Our House of Central Vermont?

Article 26: Shall the voters appropriate \$100.00 to People's Health and Wellness Clinic?

Article 27: Shall the voters appropriate \$500.00 to Rural Community Transportation?

Article 28: Shall the voters appropriate \$200.00 to Salvation Farms?

Article 29: Shall the voters appropriate \$2,500.00 to Twin Valley Senior Center?

Article 30: Shall the voters appropriate \$210.00 to Vermont Center for Independent Living?

Article 31: Shall the voters appropriate \$200.00 to the Vermont Rural Fire Protection Task Force?

Article 32: Shall the voters appropriate to \$1,000.00 to Washington County Mental Health Services?

Article 33: Shall the voters authorize General Fund expenditures of \$639,081 for operating expenses for the period of July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027?

Paul Cerutti moves the article. David Barber seconds.

Paul would like to thank the select board and people doing this tuff job. Voters applaud.

Amy Hunt why did the Treasurer's salary increase so much? Lizzy Higgins, the Treasurer increased twofold reasons 1) we have not been paying our Treasurer a competitive rate, a pretty low rate and when our old Treasurer (Brandy) left

we needed to get somebody and be able to retain Lilly, who has done an awesome job. We need to pay the person a rate that allows them to be in the position. 2) We have increased the hours we have been asking for work to be done and that there is really no other person to do and the select board has also given her some tasks so between those two things that is the increase in the amount. Chris Casey would like to speak – would like to add that she has updated reports – for instance last week a formal acceptance letter. When we offer someone a job, we will give the acceptance letter that will be put in the permanent files. This is something that we have not had before, it is something that will put Woodbury on a more sure footing. Moderator asked the people in the back of the room to please be quiet when others have the floor. Thank you and that goes to all of us – to respect the person speaking. Patrick Flood when I was going through the town report, it appears that many got increase in compensation. He believes the road crew got an increase that he believes is well deserved, believes the Town Clerk got an increase, and just voted for this budget that gives the Librarian an increase. Just a reality, the world has changed it is not 1975 if we want to be competitive, we will have to spend a little bit more and it is really not that much for what we are getting in return. Voters applaud. Deborah LaRose my question – she is getting paid more than the Town Clerk why the Town clerk has a lot more responsibility. Diana Peduzzi from the select board. Hi, I was the town clerk for 10 years and I was never the town treasurer, thank goodness. The jobs are not equivalent, the treasurer is not only a bookkeeper, only accountant, is someone that tracks money and personally I think it is a more responsible, more difficult position. Have state standards that have to be applied, and all jobs get more complicated – I'm sure Robin's has. My opinion. Robert (Bob) Martin I cannot understand why select board members are paid so little. Voters applaud. Lizzy Higgins when budgeting we looked at what other Treasurers/clerks are getting, our Treasurer is making less, and our Clerk is getting a little bit more. Amy Hunt, why are we paying Lilly an hourly wage when she is taking a course, I can see paying a reimbursement when she passes the course. Why are we paying her to take the course. Most places like the state reimburses the cost

of the course when passed. They don't reimburse the hours for taking the course – they reimburse the cost of the course so why are we paying for the hours to take the course? Marcial Rodriguez-Arenal says it is common practice that he gets paid to train. His take on is that it is no big deal. Ward (skip) my whole working career for a Fortune Four sent me for training they paid for the training, meals and living expenses. Rebecca (Becky) Browning I will say that the salary is a modest amount and that this is person in charge for handling our money, so it is a very small amount to pay. Chris Casey, select board, was asked for permission to take the courses and the select board felt that taking the initiative to take courses on their own was a plus for the town. It's important to pay for new skills that will benefit us, yeah, we made that decision. Graham Christie I was a municipal inspector in Florida for 16 years we were always paid for training because you want your staff up to date. David Barber understanding that Town employees are part-time with no medical benefits, no paid time off. It's difficult to find time outside of your bread and butter to find time to volunteer. Think it's common practice these days to pay for the training. Diana Peduzzi just wanted to mention that we do pay the others that want to take training. I'm sure that if Ron was here, he would say how frustrated he is with all the training that is required now. Robin gets paid when she goes to training that the state puts on. Listers get paid even if they are sitting doing zoom training. Part-time employees get some benefits; they get paid time off. Lilly – wants to clarify that my time paid is spent in front of an instructor does not include study time, review and do assignments. Robin Durkee – on page 29 under payroll expenses why didn't the Delinquent Tax Collector get the 3% increase that the rest of us got? Bonnie Collins page 27, we are paying the Treasurer \$31.50 an hour. We are paying our Asst. Treasurer \$45.00 an hour, Delinquent Tax Collector \$35.44 an hour both of those positions are paid more than our Town Treasurer. Lizzy wants to know if this is relevant to the question. Diana Peduzzi that amount is because we were paying Brandy as Assist. Treasurer while she was training Lilly so that is why that is a little over inflated. We paid her \$45.00 per hour. As Moderator I remind you that we stayed focused on the position not the

person in that position. Lilly just to notice Robin's question quick clarification these figures are just estimates. Next year the Delinquent Tax Collector will have that 3 % if you look at FY 2025 if had \$2,843.53 was spent for the year and this year's budget is \$5,000.00 so looking at what was spent plus the 3% increase the \$5,000.00 look sufficient. With unanimous consent, discussion ends. Moderator conducts a voice vote then declares that the article is passed.

Article 34: shall the voters authorize Highway Fund expenditures of \$864,599 for the period from July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027?

Paul Cerutti moves the article. Ward (Skip) Marchesani seconds.

Paul Cerutti says good job. Voters applaud. Chris Casey, increase to the HERF fund annually we put \$90,000.00 in that fund. It is pretty clear that after the purchase of our new truck that is not even for future purchases. It was recommended that \$150,000.00 be put in the HERF but as a board we decided that we could not do that much so went with \$125,000.00. Will have to increase that amount going forward will have to be increased. We need to keep our roads in good condition so that amount will have to be increased. By unanimous consent, discussion ends. Moderator conducts a voice vote then declares that the article is passed.

Article 35: To transact any other non-binding business that may legally come before the meeting.

Ward (Skip) Marchesani moves the article. Gayle McFarland seconds. Eve Gordon (non-registered voter) without adjusting, with unanimous consent Eve can speak. Notice that the flag by the Post Office steps has some wear, is there anything the Town can do to help replace it. Robin Durkee will talk with the manager of the Post Office (which is in Hardwick) to get the flag replaced. Voters applaud. By unanimous consent, discussion ends.

Article 36: To adjourn the meeting.

Roy Demers makes a motion to adjourn. Jayne Nold-Laurendeau seconds.

Moderator conducts a voice vote then declares that the meeting is adjourned at 1:47P.M. Voters applaud.