

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 7, 2023 - Woodbury Elementary School Gym

Town Moderator Stephen Murphy calls the meeting to order at 10:06 am. We recite the Pledge of Allegiance, then hold a moment of silence to remember neighbors, friends, and family who died this past year. Moderator introduces four points of order based on Vermont Law and Robert's Rules of Order — rules, articles, debate, voting — including, without objection and by unanimous consent, that a vote by paper ballot may be called by seven voters before or after a voice vote or a vote by division of the house. We have one non-registered voter (Neil Green) whose dad owns a camp in Woodbury and wants to get knowledge of Woodbury.

Article 1: Who shall be elected moderator to govern the Town meetings for the ensuing year?

Stephen Murphy is nominated. By unanimous consent, nominations close. Stephen Murphy is elected by voice vote.

Article 2: What action will the voters take in regard to the printed report of the Town Officials for the year ending December 31, 2022?

Chance Payette makes a motion to accept the report as printed, Paul Cerutti seconds. Diana Peduzzi states that on page 30 the right hand column should be proposed budget FY2024, not FY2023 as printed. Susan Elliot appreciates the pictures and the easy reading of the report. Ron Wells states on page 42 Property Sales, McGlynn, Michael to Reynolds, Elizabeth should be 2.8 acres not 28 acres. Ellie Hayes makes a motion to amend the article to accept the printed report with corrections, and Paul Cerutti seconds. Without discussion the motion to amend passes by voice vote. Then without discussion the amended article passes by voice vote.

Article 3: Who shall be elected to fill the following positions as Town Officers?

Town Treasurer - 3 years: Ron Wells nominates Brandy Smith, Merry Gangemi seconds. By unanimous consent, nominations close. Brandy Smith is elected by voice vote.

Select Board Member - 3 years: Robert Blake nominates Monty Shatney, Robin Durkee seconds. Norman Etkind nominates Elizabeth Higgins, Laura Murphy seconds. Ken King nominates Chuck Batchelder. Moderator directs Board of Civil Authority to conduct a vote by paper ballot. By unanimous consent, polls close. Town Clerk reports the result: Of the 86 votes cast, Elizabeth Higgins receives 67, Monty Shatney 12, Chuck Batchelder 6, Blank 1. Elizabeth Higgins is elected. Diana Peduzzi thanks Michael Gray for his years of service on the Select Board. Voters applaud.

Lister - 3 years: Bill Condon nominates Ron Wells, one voice objection. By unanimous consent, nominations close and Town Clerk casts 1 ballot for Ron Wells who is elected.

Lister - 2 years: Jayne Nold-Laurendeau nominates herself, Gary Smith seconds. By unanimous consent, nominations close and Town Clerk casts 1 ballot for Jayne Nold-Laurendeau who is elected.

Auditor - 3 years: Paul Cerutti nominates Retta Dunlap, Jayne Nold-Laurendeau seconds. By unanimous consent, nominations close and Town Clerk casts 1 ballot for Retta Dunlap who is elected.

Auditor - 1 year: No nominations are made. Position is not filled.

Collector of Delinquent Taxes - 1 year: Bill Condon nominates Ron Wells. Robin Durkee nominates Brandy Smith. Moderator directs Board of Civil Authority to conduct a vote by paper ballot. Merry Gangemi asks if we can discuss the candidates. Moderator says no, but nominees can say a few words on their own behalf as permitted by the voters. Voting proceeds, then by unanimous consent polls close. Town Clerk reports the result: Of the 87 votes cast, Ron Wells receives 35, Brandy Smith 49, Blank 2, and Spoiled 1. Brandy Smith is elected.

Cemetery Commissioner - 5 years: Carolyn Stewart nominates Bill Condon. Patti Garbeck nominates Jamie Dutil. Diana Peduzzi and at least six other voters request a vote by paper ballot. Moderator directs Board of Civil Authority to conduct a vote by paper ballot. By unanimous consent, polls close. Town Clerk reports the result: Of the 85 votes cast, Bill Condon receives 18, Jamie Dutil 66, Spoiled 1. Jamie Dutil is elected.

Library Trustee - 3 years: Sara VanHof nominates Terri Eldred. By unanimous consent, nominations close. Terri Eldred is elected by voice vote.

Library Trustee - 2 years: Sara VanHof nominates Stephen Murphy. By unanimous consent, nominations close. Stephen Murphy is elected by voice vote.

Library Trustee - 1 year: Mark Johnson nominates Susan Elliott. By unanimous consent, nominations close. Susan Elliott is elected by voice vote.

Hazen Union School District Director - 3 years: Chance Payette nominates Steven Freihofner. By unanimous consent, nominations close. Steven Freihofner is elected by voice vote. Stephen Murphy thanks Steven Freihofner for his years of service as Town Moderator. Voters applaud.

Article 4: Shall the Town have its taxes paid to the Town Treasurer, as tax receiver, 60 days after tax bills are mailed (estimated due date to be Oct. 26, 2023)? Taxes would then become delinquent and be turned over to the Collector of Delinquent Taxes for collection with a penalty that increases by 1/2 % per month of delinquency to a maximum of 6% for one full year or more of delinquency, and interest of 6% per year or 1/2% per month.

Chance Payette moves the article, Bill Condon seconds. Without discussion the article passes by voice vote.

Article 5: Shall the voters appropriate \$18,000 for the support of the Woodbury Community Library?

Ginger Etkind moves the article as written, Bill Condon seconds. Without discussion the article passes by voice vote. Ginger states the Library is doing a great job and the programs are great.

Article 6: Shall the voters appropriate \$13,000 for the support of the Woodbury Cemeteries?

Chance Payette moves the article as written, Ellie Hayes seconds. Without discussion the article passes by voice vote.

By unanimous consent, our State Representatives Saudia LaMont and Avram Patt are allowed to address the assembly and describe their activity in the Legislature. Reps. LaMont and Patt respond to questions regarding the Clean Heat Standard, tax credits for undeveloped land, and deployment of high-speed internet service.

At approximately 11:50 am, by unanimous consent, the meeting recesses for lunch. At approximately 12:25 pm, the Moderator calls the meeting back to order.

Article 7: Shall the voters appropriate \$17,850.00 to the Woodbury Volunteer Fire Department to be added to the truck replacement fund, paid July 01, 2023?

Goddard Graves moves the article, Sara VanHof seconds. Merry Gangemi asks about the July 1st date. Fire Chief Paul Cerutti answers that July 1 is the date the check is to be written. Discussion ends. The article passes by voice vote.

Article 8: Shall the voters appropriate \$114,576.44 to fund the operations of the Woodbury Volunteer Fire Department? The Capital Replacement Fund paid in full by January 01, 2024, in the amount of \$31,000.00, and the Operating Expenses of \$83,576.44, paid in quarterly installments (\$20,894.11) starting July 01, 2023.

Diana Peduzzi moves the article, David Barnowski seconds. Without discussion the article passes by voice vote.

Article 9: Shall the voters appropriate up to \$85,000.00 to the Woodbury Volunteer Fire Department for the purpose of financing the cost for construction of a new Fire and Emergency Operations center at a total cost of \$1,300,000.00 due Jan 1, 2024?

Goddard Graves moves the article, Angie Grace seconds. Ginger Etkind asks if the article should read “up to 1.3 million” – is the 1.3 million a set price? Paul Cerutti says they will be getting cost prices soon. Ken King asks how much does the Fire Dept. have in the bank for the project. Paul says \$85,000.00 (appropriated last year) and about \$35,000.00 from fundraising. The \$35,000.00 is spoken for with the permits to get started. Ken asks about full-time staffing and Paul states there is no intention of full-time staffing. David Barnowski mentions there is a Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting March 29th to talk about the setback. Paul explains that the Fire Dept. wants to move the building closer to the road so they can use the well that is there and they will not have to have a retaining wall. Diana Peduzzi asks if construction will begin this year. Paul states that he is uncertain due to fluctuation in the market for materials and labor. Retta Dunlap asks about the Firefighters getting a stipend. Paul says they get a \$10.00 per call stipend now. They could go to hourly pay for the time at a call but have not yet done that. Robin Durkee asks if they went with hourly pay would they still be volunteer, and Paul answers yes. Discussion ends. The article passes by voice vote.

Articles 10 - 31 include proposed appropriations for Social Services Agencies.

Sara VanHof asks if the Social Services Agencies articles can be combined into one article. Moderator explains that under Robert’s Rules a series of unrelated articles can be combined and moved by a single motion, but any article in the series must be removed and dealt with separately at the request of one voter. Norman Etkind moves Articles 10-31. Amy Eldred seconds. Without discussion the articles pass by voice vote.

Article 32: What amount shall be budgeted to meet the expenses and liabilities of the Town for general purposes for the period from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 and shall the Select Board be authorized to set a tax rate sufficient to provide the same?

Diana Peduzzi moves the article including the amount \$476,851.44. David Barnowski seconds. Patrick Flood questions why there are two lines for Delinquent Taxes on page 22 of Town Report. Brandy explains because the Town changed to a Cash basis accounting system. Also on page 22, Patrick asks about insurance for \$9,393.00 that the Town paid. Brandy answers that the Town pays it then the School District reimburses the Town. Discussion ends. The article passes by voice vote.

Article 33: What amount shall be budgeted to meet the expenses and liabilities of the Town for highway purposes for the period from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 and shall the Select Board be authorized to set a tax rate sufficient to provide the same?

Diana Peduzzi moves the article including the amount \$644,427.00. Ginger Etkind seconds. Without discussion the article passes by voice vote.

Article 34: Shall the voters of the Town be empowered to approve any amendments, additions or revisions to the Woodbury Zoning Bylaw, by Australian Ballot at a regular or special Town Meeting? (Otherwise, the Select Board has the authority to adopt any such changes.) See 24 VSA Chapter 117,4442(c)(2)

Diana Peduzzi moves the article, John Reid seconds. Merry Gangemi asks if all voting will be done by Australian ballot. Zoning will be making changes, there will be Public hearings as the process goes along. Heather Winkler states that special meetings cost a lot of money. Michael Sadler states that this is just for Zoning bylaws. Elizabeth Higgins encourages people to vote on this so all people can have a say. David Barnowski says there will be many meetings so people will get the information. Meetings are open to the public. Zoning meets on the third Monday of every month. Bob Martin says the voters can petition for a special meeting at any time. Discussion ends. The article passes by voice vote.

Article 35: Shall Woodbury hold its future annual Town Meetings on the Saturday preceding the first Tuesday in March?

Chance Payette moves the article, Paul Cerutti seconds. John Reid states that the Town Meeting Committee study shows people are in favor of a Saturday meeting. Norman Etkind does not like the idea of Town Meeting being held in February some years. Patrick Flood thanks the committee for their work. Heather Winkler states that the Town Meeting study also stated about looking into child care. John Reid states the study also shows in favor of a town user's guide, child care, and Saturday Town Meeting. Laura Murphy likes the idea of a Saturday meeting and states that the weekend before Town Meeting is the last weekend of winter break and families could be on vacation. Discussion ends. The article passes by voice vote.

Article 36: To transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

Moderator explains that nothing binding can be voted on. Chance Payette moves the article, Paul Cerutti seconds. Ken King suggests that the money articles be moved up in the warning so more people will be there to vote on those articles. Paul Cerutti states that the Fire Dept. is selling E911 signs for \$20.00. Norman Etkind suggests that people contact their representative to request that the statute be changed to state that Town Meeting may be held anytime from the Saturday immediately preceding, through the Saturday immediately following, the first Tuesday in March. Norman makes a motion to conduct a straw poll on whether the Town should request that our representatives make this change to the statute. The motion passes unanimously by raised hands. Jayne Nold-Laurendeau states that Planning Commission is trying to figure out how many home businesses are in Woodbury. Discussion ends.

Article 37: To adjourn the meeting.

Roy Demers makes a motion to adjourn, Chance Payette seconds. The article passes by voice vote. Meeting adjourns at 1:33 pm.