

Selectboard Pre-Town Meeting Informational

February 26, 2024

Present: Tom Fitzgerald, John Gannon, Vince Rice, Sarah Fisher, Tony Tribuno

Others Present: Scott Tucker, Jessica DeFrancesco, Chris Lavoy, Christine and Dennis Richter, Marshall Dix, Bryce Boyer, Ann Manwaring, Bob Fisher, Matt Murano, Scott Moore, Randy Capitani, John Lazelle, John Boyd, Sharon Adams, Gretchen Havreluk, Nicki Steel, John Lebron, Therese Lounsbury, Kathy Larsen, Samantha Kondracki, Jessica Hammond, Barker Willard, Tony Lopez, Jessica Roberts, David Maynard, Hugo Gomes, Dawn Lowe, Will Galway, Melanie Lopez, Sheila Osler, Patti Vreeland, Michael Flannery, Jerry Osler, Christopher Verry

Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm

Fitzgerald thanked individuals who worked to publicize the Annual Town Meeting this year.

Article 1: To elect all Town and Town School District Officers required by law AND to authorize that the Town obtain either a general obligation bond or a loan, for the purpose of extending water and sewer infrastructure along Route 9 East. (Australian Ballot –Polls open 7:00 A.M. until 7:00 P.M.)

- David Maynard; what are the provisions for those who don't want to hook up? Current zoning? Havreluk; an informal survey was done and 13 properties that would connect, 4 maybes on sewer and 3 on water. There is no plan to force properties to connect.
- Streeter; is the projection for the bond vote in the general fund currently? No.
- Who will pay for this bond? Users or whole town? It will be applied in the regular tax rate. Usage fees will be on the users.

Article 2: To see if the Town will vote to accept the Town Report.

Article 3: Shall the Town adopt all budget articles by Australian ballot pursuant to 17 V.S.A. § 2680(c)?

- Sharon Adams; doesn't see much interest since last year only 120 more voted by ballot than on the floor on town meeting.
- David Maynard; shares the concern that many can't attend for various reasons. Feels that people won't gather information and the town will have budgets voted down.
- Meg Streeter; fears no one will show up to the informational meetings
- Fitzgerald and Fisher commented that after the survey went out, it appeared this needed to be visited again. And hopefully efforts work to increase participation.
- Barker commented that if Australian ballot happens, department budgets should be broken out as individual articles.
- Nicki has asked for Rice and Tribuno's thoughts on keeping town meeting. Rice would like to improve the reach of the voters. Tribuno feels it is his responsibility to represent the community and his opinion is his own.
- John Boyd asked if voter turnout would increase greatly? Can't be determined, but it would allow more to participate; those who are housebound, unable to take the time out of work...

Article 4: Shall the Town vote on all public questions by Australian ballot pursuant to 17 V.S.A. § 2680(d)?

Article 5: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,113,981 to care for the expenses and liabilities of the General Fund for fiscal year 2025 (7/1/24 to 6/30/2025)?

- Includes 5% raise for employees. COL was around 6 or 7%, the Board settled on 5%.

Article 6: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,625,039 to care for the expenses and liabilities of the Town Road Budget for fiscal year 2025 (7/1/24 to 6/30/2025)?

- A question of CDL training, Dix responded that we haven't had to yet (applicants held CDLs), but the town does have a training program for new employees who may need their CDL.
- Portions of Lake Raponda and Parsons Rd will be rebuilt.

Article 7: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$12,000 to Beaver Brook School whose purpose is to provide year-round childcare for 0-2-year-olds, and multiple preschool programs for 3-5-year-olds.

Article 8: Shall the town vote to raise and appropriate an additional \$1,500, for a total of \$2,500, to fund Grace Cottage whose purpose is to provide acute and rehabilitative care.

Article 9: Shall the town vote to raise and appropriate an additional \$250, for a total of \$1,000, to fund SafePlace whose purpose is to help children and their families begin the process of healing after a child has been a victim of sexual abuse or egregious physical abuse and conduct investigations.

Article 10: Shall the town vote to raise and appropriate an additional \$200, for a total of \$1,000, to fund Senior Solutions whose purpose is to promote the well-being and dignity of older adults, helping them to age in the place of their choice, with the support they need and the opportunity for meaningful relationships and active engagement in their community.

Article 11: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate an additional \$1,000, for a total of \$11,000, to fund Wings Community Programs whose purpose is to actively engage students in experiences to help them be successful in school and in life as they grow into productive adults

Article 12: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate an additional \$5,000, for a total of \$15,000, to SASH whose purpose is to coordinate the resources of social-service agencies, community health providers and nonprofit housing organizations to support Vermonters who choose to live independently at home.

Article 13: Shall the Town vote to allocate the State per parcel payment estimated to be \$26,792 to the Reappraisal Reserve Fund?

Article 14: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$200,000 to fund the Highway Town Road Equipment Capital Fund?

Article 15: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$160,000 to fund the Bridge Capital Fund?

Article 16: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$20,000 to fund the Highway Building Capital Fund?

Article 17: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$215,000 to fund the Fire Department Equipment Capital Fund?

- The newest truck just purchased was over \$700,000.

Article 18: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$35,000 to fund the Old Fire House Capital Fund?

Article 19: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$20,000 to fund the Memorial Hall Capital Fund?

- It's an old building that requires a lot of work. It is in the flood plain so we need to work on floodproofing it.
- John Boyd suggests putting in mini-splits so that the hall can be left open year-round.

Article 20: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$12,000 to fund the Library Capital Reserve Fund?

Article 21: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$20,000 to fund the Town Hall Capital Fund?

- It has been repainted with new windows. It is still in need of additional restoration.
- Ann Manwaring asked about the relocation of Town Offices. Gannon said the committee has started identifying properties. They need to do some feasibility on some of the sites. This is a long-term goal.

Article 22: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$50,000 to fund the Police Equipment Capital Fund?

Article 23: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$5,000 to fund the Transfer Station Capital Fund?

Article 24: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$5,000 to fund the Public Lands and Fences Capital Fund?

- It covers any town owned land that is not covered under another line item like fences and park areas.

Article 25: Shall the voters authorize payment of real property taxes in two installments, with the due dates being August 30, 2024 and February 28, 2025 by delivery to Town Hall by 4:30 p.m. on the due date or postmarked on or before the due date?

Article 26: To transact any non-binding business.

- David Maynard commented on the Selectboard candidate comment in the Reformer on the relationship between the Board and staff.

Australian Ballot:

Article 2: Shall general obligation bonds of the Town of Wilmington be issued in an amount not to exceed Three Million One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$3,100,000) for the purpose of making certain infrastructure improvements, namely, extending water and sewer infrastructure along Route 9 East, with new construction not to exceed beyond Ballou Hill and 100-foot south of the Health Center on Route 100 South, such improvements estimated to cost a total of Five Million One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$5,100,000)?

Article 3: As an alternative option to general obligation bonds, shall Town of Wilmington enter into a loan agreement with United States Department of Agriculture, but only if such a loan is offered by the United States Department of Agriculture, and acknowledging that such a loan has not been formally offered by the United States Department of Agriculture at the time this article is voted on, in amount not to exceed Three Million One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$3,100,000) for the purpose of making certain infrastructure improvements, namely, extending water and sewer infrastructure along Route 9 East, with new construction to Ballou Hill and 100-foot beyond the Health Center on Route 100 South, such improvements estimated to cost a total of Five Million One hundred Thousand Dollars (\$5,100,000) over a period not to exceed 30 years?

Meeting adjourned at 7:28 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jessica DeFrancesco

Approved by the Wilmington Selectboard:

Thomas Fitzgerald, Chair

John Gannon, Vice Chair

Vince Rice, Clerk

Sarah Fisher

Tony Tribuno