

TOWN OF WILLIAMSTOWN

2023 TOWN MEETING

MARCH 7, 2023

The legal voters of the Town of Williamstown, in the County of Orange, in the State of Vermont, are hereby warned and notified to meet at Williamstown Middle High School on Tuesday, March 7, 2023 at 10:00 o'clock in the morning (A.M.) to act upon the following articles, viz:

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 A.M. by Matthew Powell, Moderator, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Matthew Powell read the warning.

Town Meeting called back to order at 10:45 A.M.

Rodney Graham, State Representative from Orange 3 and Topper McFaun and Gina Galfetti, State Representatives from Washington/Orange spoke as to what has been happening at the State House. State Senator, Mark MacDonald spoke as well on the Affordable Heat Act.

ART 1: To elect all necessary Town and Town School District Officers for the ensuing year by Australian Ballot. For the purpose of Article 1, the polls will open at 10:00 A.M. to act upon the following article, viz:

The total votes cast were 371. The results were as follows:

Moderator, 1 year

Write-In: Matthew Powell.....	28
Write-In: Miscellaneous.....	21
Blank.....	322
Total.....	371

Selectman, 3 years

Jasmin Couillard.....	94
Scott McCarthy.....	176
Rama Schneider.....	88
Write-In Miscellaneous.....	2
Spoiled.....	2
Blank.....	9
Total.....	371

Selectman, 2 years

Laurence Hebert.....	284
Write-In: Miscellaneous.....	30
Blank.....	57
Total.....	371

School Director, 3 years (vote for not more than 2)

Joshua Dobrovich.....	199
Danielle Moffatt.....	262
Write In: Miscellaneous.....	6
Blank.....	275
Total.....	742

Lister, 3 years

Gordon A. Murray.....	345
Write-In: Miscellaneous.....	2
Blank.....	24
Total.....	371

Trustee of Public Funds, 3 years

Gary Storrs.....	331
Write-In: Miscellaneous.....	2
Blank.....	38
Total.....	371

Trustee of Public Funds, 2 years remaining of a 3 year term

Philip Winters.....	337
Write-In: Bob Chappelle.....	1
Blank.....	33
Total.....	371

Cemetery Commissioner, 5 years

Write-In: Miscellaneous.....	37
Blank.....	334
Total.....	371

Library Trustee, 5 years

Jill McGlynn Plastridge.....	322
Write In: Miscellaneous.....	6
Blank.....	43
Total.....	371

Library Trustee, 1 year remaining of a 5 year term

Write In: Miscellaneous.....	54
Blank.....	317
Total.....	371

Library Trustee, 3 years remaining of a 5 year term

Russ Hotchkiss.....	303
Write-In:.....	0
Blank.....	68
Total.....	371

Trustee for the Henry S. Baker Fund, 3 years

Write-In: Miscellaneous.....50
Blank.....321
Total.....371

- ART 2: To hear and act upon the reports of the Town Officers.**
The motion was made by Jasmin Couillard and seconded by Jamey Laird to approve the article as written. Jackie Higgins, Town Manager was given permission to speak as she is not a town resident. Jackie Higgins asked for a moment of silence for Milo Winters who recently passed away on March 2, 2023. Milo Winters served our community for decades with dedicated service, Town Auditor, part time Town Clerk/Treasurer, 14 years volunteer fireman as well as the Clerk- Treasurer of the department, School Director, and Cemetery Commissioner. With there being no further discussion, the motion passed by voice vote.
- ART 3: To see if the Town will pay it's Real and Personal Property taxes to the Treasurer on or before November 15, 2023, with delinquent taxes and assessments having charged against them an eight percent (8%) penalty and interest charges of one percent (1%) per month, or fraction thereof, from the due date, as provided for in 32 V.S.A. § 4773 and 5136.**
The motion was made by Winston Chambers and seconded by Marion Powell to approve the article as written. There was no discussion and the motion passed by voice vote.
- ART 4: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectboard to take advantage of any State or Federal monies available.**
The motion was made by John Perkins and seconded by Richard Powell to approve the article as written. There was no discussion and the motion passed by voice vote.
- ART 5: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectboard to borrow money to pay the current expenses of the Town in anticipation of money to be received from taxes and the State of Vermont.**
The motion was made by John Perkins and seconded by Jill McKeon to approve the article as written. There was no discussion and the motion passed by voice vote.
- ART 6: To see if the voters authorize the Town to pay its Selectboard members \$750.00 and Chairman \$1000.00. and all other Elected Officers \$13.18 per hour and Chairman \$14.18 per hour, except the Town Clerk.**
The motion was made by John Perkins and seconded by Winston Chambers to approve the article as written. There was no discussion and the motion passed by voice vote.
- ART 7: To see if the voters authorize to have the names of all delinquent taxpayers, including water and sewer users, with total amount of delinquencies printed in the Town Report as of December 31, 2023.**
The motion was made by Karla Perkins and seconded by Richard Powell to approve the article as written. There was no discussion and the motion passed by voice vote.

ART 8: **To see if the Town will vote to approve the sum of \$1,280,458.96, to support the General Budget of which includes Fire Department and Ambulance.**

The motion was made by Larry Hebert and seconded by Winston Chambers to approve the article as written. Jasmin Couillard, Board Chair, gave a brief breakdown of the budget with included increases and decreases in the general fund, salaries, planning commission, BCA, Town Manager's health insurance. With there being no discussion, the motion passed by voice vote.

ART 9: **To see if the Town will vote to approve the sum of \$1,015,513.72 to support the Highway Budget.**

The motion was made by Richard Powell and seconded by Larry Hebert to approve the article as written. With there being no discussion, the motion passed by voice vote.

ART 10: **To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$88,571.90 from the 2022 General Fund Surplus to reduce the 2023-2024 taxes.**

The motion was made by Winston Chambers and seconded by Barbara Mitchell to approve the article as written. With there being no discussion, the motion passed by voice vote.

ART 11: **To see if the voters will appropriate the sum of \$54,000.00 or some other amount to support Williamstown Cemeteries.**

The motion was made by John Perkins to change the appropriation amount to read \$46,500 and seconded by Orvil Lasell. John Perkins, cemetery commission chair, explained that the cemetery commission is asking \$46,500 to be raised by taxes, the total budget is \$54,000. With there being no discussion, the motion passed by voice vote.

ART 12: **To see if the voters will appropriate the sum of \$111,054.97 or some other amount to support the Ainsworth Public Library.**

The motion was made by Helen Duke and seconded by Barbara Mitchell to approve the article as written. Helen Duke, Chairperson of the Library Trustees with trustee members, Jill Plastridge and Russell Hotchkiss spoke in favor of this article with some changes. Moderator, Matthew Powell stated that would need to be discussed in Article 16 as we would be voting on the library's proposed budget amount in this article. Christopher Dessureau asked what line item the Attorney fees from the library who sought mitigation fall. Helen Duke stated under their fundraising. Matthew Powell stated that it looked as if the library had two separate financial accounts. Helen Duke replied that the library did. Orvil Lasell stated that all money that the library has whether it is fund raising or whatever needs to show up in the budget. With there being no further discussion, the motion passed by voice vote.

ART 13:

Shall the voters appropriate the sum of \$45,072.00 in support of Orange County Parent Child Center \$750.00, Barre Area Senior Center \$1500.00, Orange County Restorative Justice \$500.00, Washington County Youth \$250.00, Central Vermont Home Health & Hospice \$6700.00, Central Vermont Council on Aging \$1750.00, People's Health & Wellness \$1000.00, Central Vermont Adult Basic Education \$1500.00, Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation \$500.00, GMTA \$2004.00, Williamstown Food Shelf \$5000.00, Williamstown Beautification \$1500.00, Williamstown Youth Sports \$8500.00, Good Beginnings \$300.00, Vermont Center of Independent Living \$400.00, American Red Cross \$1500.00, Central Vermont State Police Advisory \$100.00, Historical Society \$5000.00, Safeline \$1200.00, Clara Martin Center \$4968.00, Green Up \$150.00.

The motion was made by Larry Hebert and seconded by Rama Schneider to approve the article as written. John Perkins mentioned that this budget increases more every year. Either make it a single line item so you have that opportunity to vote on the ones you feel are necessary. Moderator, Matthew Powell stated that this had been done in the past and always seems to get voted on to lump them together. Matthew Powell also stated that this issue could be discussed in Article 16. With there being no further discussion, the motion passed by voice vote.

ART 14:

Shall the voters of the Town of Williamstown adopt all budget articles by Australian ballot pursuant to 17 V.S.A. Section 2680(c)?

The motion was made by Barbara Graham and seconded by Rama Schneider to approve the article as written. Milan Miller spoke, that if I understand what this means, it means we will no longer be doing this. Moderator, Matthew Powell stated that we would be doing what we did earlier with the school meeting, that we would have a meeting to discuss but all issues would be voted on Australian ballot. Phil Winters spoke that he would hope that the voters here would vote this article down. Rama Schneider spoke that he was in favor of this article as he was for when the school district chose to go Australian ballot. More voter participation is needed in deciding the budget. Cote Griggs spoke that more young people need to come out and be more involved. Charlotte Mills speaking as a true Vermonter said she would like for us to keep Town Meeting and not give it up. Moderator, Matthew Powell remembers coming to our Town Meeting as a teenager and he believes this is what got him involved in Town Government. With there being much more discussion on this article a paper ballot was called. Results of paper ballot vote: YES 14, NO 52. Motion failed.

ART 15:

Shall the Town of Williamstown provide notice of availability of the annual report by Town of Williamstown website at least 30 days before annual meeting instead of mailing or otherwise distributing the report to the voters of the town pursuant to 24 V.S.A. Section 1682(a)?

The motion was made by Jasmin Couillard and seconded by Helen Duke to approve the article as written. John Taylor wanted to know how many people received their information regarding the Town on the Internet. With the show of hands, not many. Christopher Dessureau wanted to know the cost. Jackie Higgins, Town Manager, stated 1400 are printed and the cost for the printing and postage was just under \$5000. The actual cost of the postage alone would be \$500. Heather King mentioned sending out postcards to pick up the Town Reports at Town Hall. Jennifer Cummings made the motion to amend the article to read the Town of Williamstown would make the annual report available on the Town of Williamstown website and a mailing stating that the annual report would be available at Town Hall in lieu of mailing a report to every physical address, seconded by Heather King. John Perkins spoke that he was against this motion. Charlotte Mills stated that we all agreed to spend nearly \$2.5 million without any discussion today, I don't think we need to quibble over \$500. to mail out the Town Reports. With there being no further discussion, Moderator, Matthew Powell, stated that we would voting on the amendment first, the amendment failed. The original motion was read, motion failed.

ART 16:

To transact any other business deemed necessary and proper.

Jackie Higgins mentioned that there was survey in the lobby on a clock tower, that would stand where the church once stood as they will not be rebuilding. Helen Duke thanked the voters for their support of the library. Larry Hebert would like to see if Town Meeting next year could be held in the evening, maybe more people would attend.

Motion was made by Barbara Graham and seconded by Marion Powell to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed by voice vote and adjourned at 12:45 P.M.

/s/Matthew Powell, Moderator

/s/Barbara Graham, Town Clerk