

TOWN OF WILLIAMSTOWN
2025 TOWN MEETING
MARCH 4, 2025

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 4, 2025 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 Heather King, Moderator, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

At this time, we allowed our State Representatives, Topper McFaun, and Gina Galfetti representing Washington/Orange and Jayden LaVecchia, who was asked to speak on behalf of Joshua Dobrovich representing Orange 3, as he was unable to attend. They discussed what was happening in Montpelier.

The Town meeting came back to order at 10:33 A.M.

There were no objections to allowing the Town Manager, Jackie Higgins, to speak if called upon, as she is not a town resident.

Barbara Graham, Town Clerk read the warning.

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 & 2, the polls will open at 10:00 A.M. to act upon the following article, viz:

The total votes cast were 367. The results were as follows:

Moderator, 1 year

Write-In: Miscellaneous.....	56
Blank.....	311
Total.....	367

Town Clerk, 3 years

Barbara C. Graham.....	336
Write-In: Miscellaneous.....	5
Blank.....	26
Total.....	367

Selectman, 3 years

Cote Griggs.....	280
Write-In: Miscellaneous.....	9
Blank.....	78
Total.....	367

Selectman, 2 years

Laurence Hebert.....	194
Micheal MacAskill.....	140
Write-In: Miscellaneous.....	3
Blank.....	30
Total.....	367

School Director, 3 years

Horace Duke, Jr.....	317
Write In: Miscellaneous.....	2
Blank.....	48
Total.....	367

Trustee of Public Funds, 3 years

Gary Storrs.....	324
Write-In: Miscellaneous.....	2
Blank.....	41
Total.....	367

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

Orvil Lasell.....	308
Write-In: Miscellaneous.....	1
Blank.....	58
Total.....	367

Cemetery Commissioner, 5 years

Matthew Couillard.....	329
Write-In: Miscellaneous.....	1
Blank.....	37
Total.....	367

Cemetery Commissioner, 4 year remaining of a 5 year term

Matthew Walker.....	319
Write-In: Miscellaneous.....	2
Blank.....	46
Total.....	367

Cemetery Commissioner, 3 year remaining of a 5 year term

Write-In: Miscellaneous.....	33
Blank.....	334
Total.....	367

Library Trustee, 5 years

Helen Duke.....	306
Write-In: Miscellaneous.....	6
Blank.....	55
Total.....	367

Library Trustee, 1 year remaining of a 5 year term

Sam Planck.....	303
Write-In: Miscellaneous.....	2
Blank.....	62
Total.....	367

Trustee for the Henry S. Baker Fund, 3 years

Write-In: Miscellaneous.....	41
Blank.....	326
Total.....	367

Trustee for the Henry S. Baker Fund, 2 year remaining of a 3 year term

Susan K. Lyons.....336
Write-In: Miscellaneous.....2
Blank.....29
Total.....367

ART 2:

Shall the voters authorize the elimination of the office of Town Lister in accordance with 17 V.S.A. Section 2651(b)(1) and replace it with a professionally qualified Assessor who shall have the same powers, discharge the same duties, proceed in the discharge thereof in the same manner, and be subject to the same liabilities as are prescribed for listers or the board of listers under the provisions of Title 32?

There was no discussion on Article #2.

The total votes cast were 367. The results were as follows:

YES.....168
NO.....122
Blank.....77
Total.....367

ART 3:

To hear and act upon the reports of the Town Officers.

The motion was made by Winston Chambers and seconded by John Pepin to approve the article as written. Charlotte Mills mentioned that when formatting next year's Town Report, that each page has a header over the budget columns as it would make it easier to follow. Winston Chambers spoke of increases, the health insurance has almost doubled. Jackie Higgins, Town Manager, said that the Town offers 100% health insurance to employees. The cost for a single person plan is \$1300 a month and the 2-person plan is \$2600 a month. Danielle Moffatt spoke regarding Orange County Sherriff's budget saying that we spend \$100,000 for 30 hours and stating that you could have a local sheriff for \$60,000 for 40 hours. Jackie Higgins said that she had looked into having our own police department and the cost would be over \$500,000 a year. The reason is that the figures went from \$70,000 to \$101,400 as the hours went from 20 hours to 30 hours. There was no other discussion, and the motion passed by voice vote.

ART 4:

To see if the Town will pay it's Real and Personal Property taxes to the Treasurer on or before November 15, 2025, 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 Ben Moffatt and seconded by John Pepin to approve the article as written. There was no discussion, and the motion passed by voice vote.

- ART 5: **To see if the voters authorize the Selectboard to take advantage of any State or Federal monies available.**
The motion was made by Horace Duke and seconded by Charlotte Mills. There was no discussion, and the motion passed by voice vote.
- ART 6: **To see if the voters 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 Barbara Mitchell 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 the Town to pay its Selectboard members \$1000.00 and Chairman \$1500.00 and all other Elected Officers \$14.01 per hour and Chairman \$15.01 per hour, except the Town Clerk.**
The motion was made by Barbara Mitchell and seconded by Ben Moffatt to approve the article as written. There was no discussion, and the motion passed by voice vote.
- ART 8: **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, 2025.**
The motion was made by John Pepin and seconded by Barbara Mitchell to approve the article as written. There was no discussion, and the motion passed by voice vote.
- ART 9: **To see if the voters will vote to approve the sum of \$1,477,834.30 to support the General Budget of which includes the Fire Department.**
The motion was made by Larry Hebert and seconded by Mike Sprano to approve the article as written. Barbara Mitchell asked why the ambulance was not included in this article. Jackie Higgins said that the ambulance is now a contracted service. Danielle Moffatt would like to see the Fire Department budget be voted on separately. Charlotte Mills wanted to know if the Town should be paying 100% of health insurance to employees. Larry Hebert said that if you have good employees you need to treat them well so they will stay. Winston Chambers said that no employer pays their employees 100% of their health care anymore. Danielle Moffatt made the motion to amend the article to extract the fire department from the General Budget, seconded by Shannon Sweet. Jayme Laird wants to know the numbers of just the Fire Department. Jackie Higgins explained where in the Town Report that you would find that information. Jackie Higgins explained that the Fire Department has been overseen by the select board since the late 1990s. Barbara Graham explained it was a town vote in the 1990s to dissolve the Prudential Committee and have the fire department overseen by the select board and Town Manager. Larry Hebert and Rama Schneider weren't sure if that was legal to do. Rama Schneider said that he didn't feel it was a good idea to pull numbers out of the general budget at this time adding that this is something that you would do prior to the Town Meeting. Steve Hardaker said more people need to attend select board meetings and you will be aware of what is happening and express your concerns to the select board. Danielle Moffatt wants transparency, cost of repairs on each fire truck, fire chief's salary, etc. There was some more discussion and Monique Hayden called for the vote on the amendment. Phil Winters requested a paper ballot with a show of 7 hands a paper ballot was used. The amendment to withdraw the fire department out of the general budget results of paper ballot: 57 NO 25 YES, amendment failed. On the original motion to approve the article as written, Winston Chambers called for a paper ballot, with a show of 7 hands a paper ballot was used. Results of the paper ballot: 56 YES 24 NO, original motion passed.

- ART 10: **To see if the voters will vote to approve the sum of \$1,370,885.00 to support the Highway Budget.**
The motion was made by Larry Hebert and seconded by Clayton Woodworth to approve the article as written. Winston Chambers said if this article passed it would be a 10% increase to the voters. With there being no further discussion, the motion passed by voice vote.
- ART 11: **To see if the voters will approve transferring the 2024 General Fund Surplus in the amount of \$161,454.50 to the Tax Stabilization Fund.**
The motion was made by Winston Chambers and seconded by John Pepin to approve the article as written. Winston Chambers wanted to know how much is in the Tax Stabilization Fund. Jackie Higgins replied that there was roughly \$62,000. There was no further discussion, and the motion passed by voice vote.
- ART 12: **To see if the voters will appropriate the sum of \$100,000 from the Tax Stabilization Fund to reduce the 2025-2026 taxes.**
The motion was made by Winston Chambers and seconded by Bradley Kreis to approve the article as written. Monique Hayden questioned as to how we had \$100,000 from article 11 which was just voted on and then removed it. Jackie replied that after the audit, the surplus rolls into the tax stabilization fund. If the prior article had not passed this article would have needed to be amended. There was no further discussion, and the motion passed by voice vote.
- ART 13: **To see if the voters will appropriate the sum of \$51,273.20 or some other amount to support Williamstown Cemeteries.**
The motion was made by Ben Moffatt and seconded by Conrad Beattie to approve the article as written. There was no discussion, and the motion was passed by voice vote.
- ART 14: **To see if the voters will appropriate the sum of \$129,490.20 or some other amount to support the Ainsworth Public Library.** The motion was made by Charlotte Mills and seconded by Evalyn Goodrich to approve the article as written. Danielle Moffatt said that we were one of four libraries that had received funds from the State and was wondering what the library was planning to use the funds for. Dusty Mills said at this time he wasn't sure what those funds would be used for but that it is on the next agenda. Helen Duke and Dusty Mills spoke on behalf of the library and explained everything that they did this past year and thanked everyone for their support. Danielle Moffatt requested a paper ballot, but there was not enough show of hands to vote for a paper ballot and the question was called. Motion passed by voice vote.

ART 15:

To see if the voters will appropriate the sum of \$56,772.00 in support of Orange County Parent Child Center \$750, Barre Area Senior Center \$1500, Orange County Restorative Justice \$500, Washington County Youth \$250, CV Home Health & Hospice \$6700, CV Council of Aging \$1750, CV Adult Basic Education \$1500, CV Economic Development Corp \$500, GMTA \$2004, Williamstown Food Shelf \$12,500, Williamstown Beautification \$1500, Williamstown Youth Sports \$8500, VT Center of Independent Living \$500, American Red Cross \$1500, Historical Society \$5000, Safeline \$1200, Clara Martin Center \$4968, Green Up \$150, Family Center of Washington County \$500, Henry S. Baker Fund \$5000.

The motion was made by Conrad Beattie and seconded by Shannon Sweet to approve the article as written. Charlotte Mills said that at last year's Town Meeting, Marie Graham was so passionate about resurrecting this fund, and was wondering how this fund is going a year later. Marie Graham thanked everyone for their support and with the \$1000 in donations that were received within the past year. The Henry S. Baker Fund was able to provide Christmas presents to a family in need. Orvil Lasell said he knew of an elderly couple who couldn't afford their taxes and lost their home in a tax sale. This shouldn't be happening and something needs to be done with this continuing to ask for more money. There was no further discussion, the motion passed by voice vote.

ART 16:

To see if the voters will vote to exempt from taxation, the property owned by Billtown Moonshiners, for a period of 5 years, as provided for in 32 V.S.A. Section 3840. This vote shall first effect the April 1, 2025 Gand List.

The motion was made by Larry Hebert and seconded by Scott McCarthy to approve the article as written. Jimmy Hebert, President of the Billtown Moonshiners thanked the volunteers, and everyone for their support the past 10 years, and said the \$3000 from VAST, along with TMA sales and 75% funding comes from fundraising goes towards the upkeep of the trails. There was a little discussion. A paper ballot was called and with a show of 7 hands a paper ballot was used. The results of the paper ballot: 45 YES 27 NO, motion passed.


ART 17:

To transact any other business deemed necessary and proper.

Jennifer Cummings thanked everyone for their support with the food shelf and added that last year it benefited 98 households. Cote Griggs thanked everyone for their support for Williamstown Youth Sports, and the donations for lighting on Saldi Field. Jackie Higgins said before you leave that there are a couple of designs up back as you walk out, one of them being a new highway garage and the other a clock bell tower to house the clock and bell that was saved from the church fire in April of 2021. Jackie Higgins mentioned that this year's Town Report is dedicated to Richard Dick Powell. The motion was made by Russ Hotchkiss and seconded by Barbara Graham to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed by voice vote and adjourned at 12:35 P M.



/s/Heather King, Moderator



/s/Barbara Graham, Town Clerk

/s/Laurence Hebert, Chair

/s/Clayton Woodworth

/s/Christopher Wade

/s/Scott McCarthy

/s/Tyler Mitchell