

**TOWN OF MARLBORO, VERMONT**  
~ **MINUTES of the Non-binding Informational Meeting** ~  
**MARLBORO TOWN MEETING ELECTION**

**February 25, 2023 @ 2 pm in the**  
**Marlboro Community Center & video conference**

Legal voters of the Town of Marlboro, County of Windham, State of Vermont, are hereby warned and notified that per the Town vote on December 18, 2021, **all articles (1 - 20)** below will be voted by Australian ballot. A ballot and voting instructions were mailed to all active voters of this municipality on February 9, 2023. Additionally, the polls will be open for in-person voting on Tuesday, March 7, 2023, from **9:00 A.M. – 7:00 P.M.** in the Marlboro Town House.

Informational meeting:

The legal voters and interested persons are further warned and notified that an Informational Meeting (discussion and information, no voting) on Articles 1 - 20 will meet in-person & via ZOOM on **Saturday, February 25, 2023**, from 2:00-4:00 pm at the Marlboro Community Center (In-person) or for those who prefer joining remotely via ZOOM, can use the following link and/or phone number:

Link: <https://Us02web.Zoom.us/j/89755939733> Meeting Id: 897 5593 9733

To Join by Phone: 1-646-558-8656

**Present:** Moderator Steven John, Marlboro Select Board members Molly Welch, Aaron Betts & Jim Agate, Town Clerk Forrest Holzapfel, Town Treasurer Linda Peters, State Senator Nader Hashim, Nancy Anderson, Robert Anderson, Patricia DeAngelo, Ryan Williams, Andrew Frost, Jason MacArthur, Kimi Hasegawa, Patty Webster, Staley McDermet, Tim Segar, Jeff Skramstad, T. Hunter Wilson, David Holzapfel, Lucy Gratwick, Louis Tognan, Nancy Tognan, Assistant Town Treasurer Andrea Howe, Jessica Weitz, Will Shakespeare, Michelle Holzapfel, Keely Eastley, Kathryn Kirkwood (non-voter), Barbara Wright (non-voter), Michael Boylen, Loren Smith, Carol Ann Johnson, Catharine Hamilton, Rachel Boyden, Eva Grimaldi & on Zoom: Nora Wilson, Don Fuhrman, Linda Fuhrman, Auditor Andy Reichsman, Tim Whitney, Jonathan Morse, (35 participants on Zoom, fluid participation) Approximately 70 participants total.

Select Board Chair Aaron Betts opened the meeting at 2:01 PM. Aaron made a statement regarding how the meeting will be conducted.

Moderator Steven John said we will follow the articles to guide our discussion.

**Article 1:** To act upon the Auditors' Report.

*Discussion: Correction suggested by Lucy Gratwick, she is not a representative of Senior Solutions and has not been for a number of years.*

**Article 2:** To elect all town officers required by law to be elected at the Annual Town Meeting: Select Board, one three-year term; Town Clerk, one three-year term; Lister, one three-year term; Auditor, one three-year term; Constable, one one-year term.

*Discussion: Candidates who are on the ballot and present in the room introduced themselves, including Jeff Skramstad for Select Board. Outgoing Select Board Chair Aaron Betts was given an ovation for his 3 years of service through a very challenging time of change in Marlboro. Catharine Hamilton asked what the duties of the Constable are...*

**Senator Nader Hashim spoke to those in attendance, to provide information on what he has been working on in Montpelier on our behalf...**

- 80 new legislators now at work, so decision making is a bit slower as everyone learns on the job
- He is on the Judiciary Committee & Education Committee
- He described some of the upcoming bills
- No new school has been built in Vermont in 20 years, discussed lunch programs
- Improvements to Child care and Housing also being worked on
  - Nora Wilson asked Senator Hashim questions about school choice
  - Carol Ann Johnson asked about unfunded mandates which have an oversize impact on small communities such as Marlboro
  - Catharine Hamilton spoke about waste in the free meal program
  - Tim Whitney asked a question about a specific bill in the House about reproductive rights
  - Jonathan Morse asked what the legislature might do to help town preserve the in-person Town Meeting tradition

### **Return to the Articles**

**Article 3:** To see if the town will vote to appropriate and expend \$3,600.00 to pay the yearly stipend for the Town's three member Select Board.

*Discussion: Clarification that this means \$1,200 per member.*

**Article 4:** To see if the town will vote to set Friday October 6, 2023, as the due date for property taxes, payable to the Treasurer.

*Discussion: None*

**Article 5:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate \$420,000.00 for the General Fund.

*Discussion:* The Select Board pointed to page 15 of the Auditor's Report, Forrest pointed out that the budget is level funded from 2022. Some discussion of numbers in the budget having to do with expenses and income projected. A few further questions regarding the General Fund.

**Article 6:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate \$624,000.00 for town highways, summer and winter maintenance.

*Discussion:* New Road Foreman Andrew Richardson spoke regarding how happy he is to be in the position. He stated that he instantly has seen the major deferred maintenance including lack of ditch depth and lack of road crown on all the gravel roads. Washouts have been happening more frequently, due to wild weather fluctuations but also the lack of maintenance. Nancy Anderson asked about the increase in the purchase of gravel. Andrew spoke about the need for additional gravel to catch up on deferred maintenance and to do more culvert replacements. Discussion of stone-lined ditches and the materials used, as well as a question about preserving old maple trees in the town right-of-way. Andrew spoke about the State regulations regarding hydrologically connected roadways and protecting aquatic wildlife. Discussion of the creation of a strategic plan for town roads. Praise from many townspeople on the work the new Road Crew is doing. Increases in the budget detailed to provide for: road signs, additional liquid calcium chloride, and road salt. Discussion of the equipment account balance which was negatively affected by the pandemic and the times of having only one to two working members of the Road Crew during that period of time.

**Article 7:** To see if the voters of the Town of Marlboro choose to continue electing all officers by Australian ballot pursuant to 17 V.S.A. § 2680 in place of a floor vote.

**Article 8:** To see if the voters of the Town of Marlboro choose to continue adopting all budget articles by Australian ballot pursuant to 17 V.S.A. § 2680 in place of a floor vote.

**Article 9:** To see if the voters of the Town of Marlboro choose to continue adopting all public questions by Australian ballot pursuant to 17 V.S.A. § 2680 in place of a floor vote.

*Discussion of Articles 7, 8, & 9:* T. Wilson approves of voting town officers by Australian ballot but not for articles 8 & 9. Michelle Holzappel spoke in favor of yes for 7,8,& 9. Carol Ann Johnson spoke about the book "All Those in Favor", and noted that engagement with town government is the most important involvement a citizen can make. Town Administrator Nick Morgan spoke about creating a series of Select Board meetings throughout the autumn to allow voters to ask questions, understand what decisions the Select Board are making to bring more clarity to the process for the voters. Carol Brooke-deBock enjoys the Zoom aspect of this informational meeting and wanted to know the process to potentially change the vote in the

future. Nora Wilson asked about the timing of the ballots being released and the informational meeting. Adrian Segar questioned our inability to change and amend articles with the Australian ballot method. Select Board member Jim Agate spoke to working for the people as a Select Board member and that the Select Board needs to hear more from the voters throughout the year. Andy Reichsman spoke about the difficulty with Australian ballots of not knowing from the votes why a budget is voted down, and therefore how to amend a subsequent vote other than reduce the total amount of money. Jean Boardman spoke about the advantage of technology for having these meetings as the hybrid approach brings more participants and that she prefers the in-person vote. Trevor Wentworth spoke to the lack of access for so many people for the traditional Town Meeting in-person floor vote. Linda Fuhrman spoke to the articles and her hope of making a hybrid version of voting which works for more townspeople. Aaron Betts thanks all those present for their passionate discussion of these articles but suspends discussion as we are already 25 minutes over the meeting end time.

**Article 10:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate \$38,500.00 to the Marlboro Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. to help defray operating expenses.

*Discussion: None*

**Article 11:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate \$25,000.00 to the Marlboro Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. for capital improvements for firehouse, trucks, and fire gear.

*Discussion: MVFC President Will Shakespeare spoke to the article, and noted this is half the amount that was requested in the prior year. Carol Ann Johnson spoke to the donation drive which further supports the Fire Company.*

**Article 12:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate \$408.00 to support the Animal Resource Fund (ARF).

*Discussion: None*

**Article 13:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate up to \$3,000.00 to support the production of the Marlboro Mixer newsletter.

*Discussion: None*

**Article 14:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate \$5,000.00 to the Marlboro Community Center in support of its mission to support, nurture, and enrich the Marlboro community through its programs.

*Discussion: None*

**Article 15:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate \$500.00 to support the Marlboro Town Library in their efforts toward purchasing books and providing reading related opportunities for the community.

*Discussion: None*

**Article 16:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate \$20,887.86 to Rescue, Inc. for services.

*Discussion: Town Administrator Nick Morgan clarified this amount is approximately \$100 more than the prior year.*

**Article 17:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate \$5,000.00 to Deerfield Valley Rescue, Inc. for services.

*Discussion: Town Administrator Nick Morgan spoke to this increase which is \$3,000 over last year's request and their operation is very small but our town needs their service.*

**Article 18:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate \$3,234.00 for the support of Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies (SeVEDS) to provide workforce and economic coordination services to residents of the town.

*Discussion: Ryan Williams asked what benefit they have had in Marlboro. Forrest and Carol Ann Johnson spoke to specific cases in which they have helped out townspeople.*

**Article 19:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$12,929.00 for the following agencies:

Brattleboro Area Hospice, Inc	\$250.00
The MOOver	\$250.00
Deerfield Valley Food Pantry	\$500.00
Gathering Place for Adult Day Services	\$500.00
Green Mountain RSVP & Volunteer Center	\$230.00
Health Care and Rehabilitation Services of Southeastern Vermont	\$1,050.00
Marlboro Cares	\$1,800.00
Senior Solutions	\$400.00
Southeastern Vermont Community Action, Inc	\$970.00

Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice of VT and NH	\$3,179.00
Women's Freedom Center	\$1,200.00
American Red Cross Green Mountain	\$500.00
Green Up Vermont	\$100.00
Grace Cottage Hospital	\$1,000.00
Youth Services	\$1,000.00

*Discussion: Jim Agate spoke to the fact that all these are lumped together for convenience. It was noted that all these could be contained within the Select Board budget and not shown individually.*

**Article 20:** To see if the voters of the Town will vote to authorize the town to borrow funds in anticipation of tax revenue.

*Discussion: None*

Adjournment at 4:42 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Forrest Holzapfel, Marlboro Town Clerk