

**TOWN OF MARLBORO, VERMONT**  
~ **MINUTES of the Non-binding Informational Meeting** ~  
**MARLBORO SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING ELECTION**  
**FEBRUARY 28, 2023 via video conference @ 6 PM**

Legal voters of the Marlboro School District, County of Windham, State of Vermont, are hereby warned and notified that per the Marlboro School District vote on December 18, 2021, all articles (1 – 10) 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 information meeting (discussion and information, no action) on Articles (1 – 10) will meet by ZOOM on Tuesday, February 28, 2022 at the hour of 6:00 o'clock in the evening. Voters and interested persons can access and participate in the meeting remotely by using this link: <https://zoom.us/j/5201609340> Meeting ID: 520 160 9340. The link and additional information will also be posted on the School District's website: [www.marlboroschool.net](http://www.marlboroschool.net)

**Present:** Marlboro School Board members Douglas Korb, Nelli Sargsyan, Daniel MacArthur, Jeremy Kirk & Celena Romo, Marlboro School Principal Wayne Kermenski, Town Clerk Forrest Holzapfel, Marcia Hamilton, Richard Hamilton, Kimi Hasegawa, Steven John, Jonathan & Charlene Morse, Edith Mas, Jean Boardman, Linda & Don Fuhrman, Suzanne & Dante Corsano, Lucy Gratwick, Irene Lutz, T Wilson, Bob & Nancy Anderson, Andra Horton, Augusta Bartlett, Susan Kundhardt, Woody Bernhard, Carol Ann Johnson, Nora Wilson, Lou & Nancy Tognan, Rachel Boyden, Pieter van Loon, Dana Gordon-Macey, Susan Solomon, Pam Maile, Beth & Staley McDermet, Jeff Bower, Lynna Jackson, Jeanine & Andrew Frost, Bruce & Barbara Cole, Adrian & Celia Segar, Carol Berner, Lynn Valente, Gussie Bartlett, Peggy Tiffany, Cherrie Corey, David & Michelle Holzapfel, Arne Hammarlund, Allan McLane, Aaron Betts, Ryan Williams, Jude Robinson, Ashley Nadeau, Carol Brooke-deBock, Peter Mauss, Francie Marbury, Brent Seabrook, Anastasia Houze, Lynn Lundsted, Amy Tudor, Erica Morse, Patricia Mangan, Windham Central Supervisory Union Treasurer Laurie Garland (at least 50 participants at peak, fluid participation)

Called to order at 6:04 PM by School Board Chair Doug Korb. Moderator Steven John will guide the discussion of the articles below.

**Article 1:** To elect -

One (1) School Director for a three-year term ending 2026.

Two (2) School Directors for one-year terms ending 2024.

Discussion: *Steven John asked those running for these positions to introduce themselves. Rachel Boyden is running for one of the 1 year terms. Dan MacArthur is running for the 3 year term. Andrea Burke is running for one of the 1 positions. Celena Romo is the incumbent running*

*for one of the 1 term positions.*

**Article 2:** To compensate the Directors of the Marlboro School District \$500 each.

**Discussion:** *None*

**Article 3:** To see if the voters of the Town School District will authorize the School Directors to borrow in anticipation of revenue.

**Discussion:** *None*

**Article 4:** “Shall the voters of the Marlboro School District approve the school board to expend \$3,920,171.00 which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year.”

**Discussion:** *Jonathan Morse asked if this figure amount includes the Junior High? School Board Chair Douglas Korb stated that yes it does as there is no predicting the outcome of the vote. Page 55 of the Town Report shows the long version of the budget. Nancy Anderson wondered about numbers on page 57. Susan Kundhardt wondered about budget numbers for 2024. Comments about the unwieldy display of numbers and the complex challenge of showing the budget in a way that is clear to voters. Wayne Kermenski answered questions regarding specific budget items supporting field research, and a half-time teacher in the Junior High. A question from Patricia Mangan regarding the percent increase in the budget, which this year is a 5.5% increase. Edie Mas asked the board to give an overview of the budget minus the details. Doug Korb said most of the increase has to do with health insurance premiums which have increased and are beyond our control, as well as providing some funding for school field trips. Wayne stated that this budget is for supporting the teachers to support the students. More questions about line items in the budget, which are all answered by the School Directors and Wayne Kermenski.*

**Article 5:** To see if the voters of the Marlboro School District choose to continue electing all officers by Australian ballot pursuant to 17 V.S.A. § 2680 in place of a floor vote.

**Article 6:** To see if the voters of the Marlboro School District choose to continue adopting all budget articles by Australian ballot pursuant to 17 V.S.A. § 2680 in place of a floor vote.

**Article 7:** To see if the voters of the Marlboro School District 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 5,6, & 7: *Celena Romo explained these articles are the same as on the town ballot. Nora Wilson pointed out that the article number order on the warning is different from the articles on the ballot as articles 6 & 7 are transposed. Steven John asked about what a public question is and Forrest Holzappel explained that a public question would be a town vote to the language comes directly from Vermont statute. Forrest further described the number of voters participating with ballots mailed to everyone versus an in-person town meeting. T Wilson spoke to the problem of getting both participation as well as having informed voters.*

**Article 8:** To see if the voters of the Town School District will authorize the School Directors to spend any grants or other funds received by the District for school purposes.

Discussion: *None*

**Article 9:** To see if the voters of the Marlboro School District authorize moving the operational surplus, if any, from FY 2023 to the Capital Reserve Fund.

Discussion: *A question from Nora Wilson regarding what this fund is, which was answered by Douglas Korb who detailed the need to have funds available in case of a structural emergency for example.*

**Article 10:** Shall the voters of the Marlboro Town School District, pursuant to Title 16 V.S.A. §822(a)(1), authorize the School Board to close the existing high school (Grades 7 & 8) and to provide for the high school education of the School District's secondary students by paying tuition to a public high school, an approved independent high school, or an independent school meeting educational quality standard pursuant to Vermont Statutes.

Discussion: *Steven John asked the Board to clarify what **yes** means versus what **no** means. Nora Wilson stated that the language as hse understands it authorizes the School Board to close the Junior High but does not require it. Doug talked about the intent of the Board and that the voters of the town decide the outcome. T Wilson agrees the wording is unclear. Jeremy Kirk spoke to the spirit of the article and that the board wanted the town voters to decide the outcome of their school, not just the 5 board members. Francie Marbury hoped the principal hired for the coming year would be instrumental in deciding where this vote goes and perhaps next year it is revisited. Further discussion. Celena Romo read a letter sent to the board by Linda Bourne which stated that the Junior High in Marlboro is deficient in meeting standards for equipment. Forrest spoke as a Lister and wondered if the town taxpayers can afford these increases, with no end in sight. Laurie Garland spoke to projections to the tax rate that potential bonds from \$3 to*

*\$9 million would have on taxpayers. She further answered questions from voters. Jude Robinson asked about funding from the federal government and if any is available for small, rural schools. Jeremy Kirk urged voters to resist simple narratives, and that retaining a good quality Junior High will certainly cost more money. Wayne Kermenski echoed Jeremy in that this will be a large cost for the town, and conflicting emotions exist about what is best. Celena Romo said the Junior High closing will allow more money to be put into the building improvements, she says further that the Marlboro School budget has increased 44% since 2015, while statewide average is 24%. This also works out to an average increase of 14% per year. Susan Kundhardt asked why the Jr High costs more, and Doug Korb responded that it has to do with licensure needed for Jr High teachers primarily. Wayne pointed out that enrollment is currently down, and is projected to not increase. Further, currently finding and hiring qualified teachers is very difficult. Further comments from Nelli Sargsyan, Jean Boardman, Robin MacArthur, Andrea Burke, Andrew Frost, Dante Corsano, and Nancy Tognan.*

Adjournment at 8:53 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Forrest Holzapfel, Marlboro Town Clerk