

**TOWN OF MARLBORO, VERMONT**  
**~ Minutes of the Non-binding Informational Meeting ~**  
**MARLBORO PRE-TOWN MEETING ELECTION : Meeting 4 of 4**

**January 6, 2024 @ 2 pm in the  
Marlboro Community Center & by video conference**

Legal voters and interested persons are further warned and notified that an Informational Meeting (discussion and information, no voting) to prepare for the 2024 Town Meeting Election will meet in-person & via ZOOM on **Saturday, January 6, 2024**, from 2:00-4:00 pm at the Marlboro Community Center (in-person) or for those who prefer joining remotely via ZOOM, below is 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:** Marlboro Select Board members Jim Agate, Molly Welch, Jeff Skramstad, Select Board Assistant & Town Administrator Nick Morgan, Town Clerk Forrest Holzapfel, Treasurer Linda Peters, Assistant Treasurer Rebecca Sevigny, Road Foreman Andrew Richardson, Clarence Boston, Marcia Hamilton, Gail MacArthur, Nancy Anderson, H Paul Love, Jerry Lundsted, Andrea Howe, Michelle Holzapfel, Nancy Tognan, Lou Tognan, Steven John, Carol Ann Johnson

online: Don & Linda Fuhrman, Peggy Tiffany, David Holzapfel, Lynna Jackson, Sylvia Johnson, Lindy Corman, Paul Butler, Aaron Betts, Francie Marbury, Andy Reichsman, Annie Bartlett

Called to order at 2:06 pm by Chair Jim Agate

- Town Administrator Nick Morgan let the public know the meeting will be recorded and available on the Select Board's Soundcloud account.
- Chair Jim Agate welcomed everyone.
- Select Board member Molly Welch started into the changes to the Warned articles since we last met on December 16, 2023.
- Questions from the public regarding the location of a potential Town Meeting lunch. To be determined... H. Paul Love and Clarence Boston asked about how the proposed zoning amendments and will the article show all changes to zoning? Forrest replied we will be finding out exactly what is proscribed by law and will check with town attorney Bob Fisher. Marlboro has voted zoning amendments by Australian ballot since the 1990's and will most likely continue. The language of the zoning amendments are too long and complex to include on the Warning and ballot, so the article will make reference

to the language which will be posted publicly in numerous places and on the town website.

- Questions regarding Australian ballot voting methodology and a petition presented by Gail MacArthur which Forrest Holzapfel explained didn't have the correct article language to do what was intended: to move the annual Town Meeting back to a floor vote.
- The petition may be resubmitted. Forrest Holzapfel spoke to the form of three articles needed to address the election law 17 V.S.A. § 2680 which states voters must decide the method of voting for officers, budget articles, and public questions. Further, the same 3 petitions would need to be submitted for the School warning simultaneously.
- Marcia Hamilton asked about the cemetery budget.
- Molly Welch continues into the Town budget and detailed ARPA spending again, which does not appear in the budget.
  - Nick Morgan talked about the \$40,000 line item in Plant Operations Expenditures “unforeseen building maintenance” to address the black mold growing on the walls in the Town Garage. We will need to find funding to address the mold for the health of the road crew. ARPA funding could be used but this is a moving target. MERP funding could also be a possibility depending on the parameters of the grant.
- Highway Department budget preamble from Molly Welch:
- Discussed historic deferred maintenance on the road department equipment generally and how many of the pieces of equipment in the past have had safety issues and needed replacement. The highway budget was level funded for many years, but costs have risen sharply.
- Several large purchases were made including a new truck, a small excavator with a transport trailer, and most expensively, a new \$400,000 road grader, the prior one was over 20 years old and in danger of complete breakdown. Lease or the used market did not appear feasible for the grader.
- Increase in pay for Gordon Turner Sr who has done road-side mowing for decades.
- Andrea Howe asked how this 2024 budget compares with 2023 expenses?

- Road Foreman Andrew Richardson spoke:
- explained the increase in equipment and material expenses for magnesium chloride which is sprayed on the roads to maintain the road's integrity and keep dust down.
- he spoke about stopping the service contract with the uniform company and instead giving a stipend to each road employee for clothing and boots and thereby saving \$4,500 per year.
- he discussed gravel costs as well as some details about different sizes of gravel and their different uses on the roads.
- Molly Welch detailed the Equipment Account, which pays back to ourselves per hour for each piece of equipment.
- Jeff Skramstad detailed the Board's decision to purchase a new grader rather than repair the 20+ year old one or lease one at great expense. The old machine was in dire condition and we got \$30,000 for it but purchased a new grader for \$400,000.
- H. Paul Love asked about the equipment that was sold. The Road Foreman did auction the equipment which was worn and broken.
- Andrea Howe asked about any upcoming purchases, including the need to replace dump trucks on a rotating basis. Andrew said we need to keep costs realistic and this current budget is a big ask of the town. A longer term equipment rotation is a target.
- Steven John asked about where costs might go over five years? The hike in budget of \$400,000 in a single year is substantial for the taxpayers. Andrew spoke about his plan for tracking expenses.
- Forrest Holzapfel spoke to the increases coming in the tax rate, currently the town will be up \$0.40 on the municipal tax rate. The Common Level of Appraisal (sales vs value sold at) is jolting us with the pandemic sales frenzy which is now affecting us greatly. The tax rate increases on the town side are not softened by the education rebate program enjoyed by the education tax.
- Paul Butler (on Zoom) spoke about the equipment account which helps us finance future purchases.
- Nancy Anderson asked about the highway department debt level and does it appear in the

town report typically? Former Assistant Treasurer Andrea Howe spoke to the line “Town Indebtedness” which does appear in the report.

- Andrew Richardson said that all of the town officials who have worked to create this Road budget have done their best effort to curb costs, but “it is what it is”...
  - Nick Morgan talked about how the road system is a benefit to all taxpayers of the town and so ARPA money for the roads was seen by the Select Board as the best way to care for the town.
  - Steven John asked about how the town plans to address the beaver / human conflict happening around Marlboro. Nick Morgan spoke to the complexity of the issue and keeping both species happy. Balance is key. The Conservation Commission is looking into conducting a beaver inventory. Jeff Skramstad said that after a year on the Select Board, beaver conflict is the most commonly discussed item.
  - Steven John thanked Jim Agate for his three years of service to the Select Board. Forrest interjected that Jim is the only Select Board candidate in the last decade who asked to be on the board and thanked him for his service.
  - Nick Morgan detailed the dates for the next Select Board meetings as well as the Informational Meeting coming up on February 24, 2024. The Marlboro Alliance and the Select Board may organize a lunch before the meeting, final details to be determined.
  - Lastly, a return to the town’s voting methodology debate, Clarence Boston wants to see floor vote Town Meeting back. Gail MacArthur is checking with the Secretary of State on language for the three potential articles. Carol Ann Johnson and Nancy Anderson voiced that they do not want to change back to a non-inclusive floor vote town meeting. Aaron Betts and Paul Butler (on Zoom) agreed that keeping the current Australian ballot method is best for the town.
- Meeting adjourned at 3:59 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Forrest Holzapfel, Marlboro Town Clerk