

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

**February 24, 2024 @ 2:30 pm in the  
Marlboro Community Center & by video conference**

Legal voters of the Town of Marlboro, County of Windham, State of Vermont, are hereby warned and notified that **all articles (1 - 38)** will be voted by Australian ballot. A ballot and voting instructions were mailed to all active voters of this municipality on February 14, 2024. Additionally, the polls will be open for in-person voting on Tuesday, March 5, 2024, 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 - 38 will meet in-person & via ZOOM on **Saturday, February 24, 2024**, from **2:30-4:00pm** 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:** Marlboro Select Board members Molly Welch, Jeff Skramstad, Road Foreman Andrew Richardson, Town Clerk Forrest Holzapfel, Town Treasurer Linda Peters, Assistant Town Treasurer Rebecca Sevigny, Patty Webster, Beth McDermet (zoom), T. Hunter Wilson, David Holzapfel, Lucy Gratwick, Louis Tognan, Nancy Tognan, Michelle Holzapfel, Kathryn Kirkwood, Marianne Smith, Eva Grimaldi (zoom), Don Fuhrman (zoom), Linda Fuhrman (zoom), Jonathan Morse, Bill Sevigny, Rachel Boyden (zoom), Daniel MacArthur, Megan Littlehales (zoom), Keely Eastley (zoom), Nancy Anderson (zoom), Andra Horton (zoom), Lauren Poster, Eva Kopacz, Fred Kopacz, Carol Ann Johnson, Staley McDermet, T Hunter Wilson, Philip Johansson, Jeremy Kirk, Jude Robinson, Marcia Hamilton, Steven John (zoom), Catharine Rhodes, Gussie Bartlett (zoom), Peggy Tiffany (zoom), Edith Mas (zoom), Jean Boardman (zoom). Approximately 70 participants total.

Select Board member Molly Welch and Jeff Skramstad opened the meeting at 2:55 PM and made a statement regarding how the meeting will be conducted, following the articles to guide our discussion.

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

Discussion:

- Auditor Gail MacArthur apologized regarding their errors and the scramble to meet the deadline for the Town Report. She pointed out the updated Treasurer reports, and the omitted reports will appear on the town website as soon as possible.

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

Discussion:

- Kate Kirkwood who also serves on the Energy Committee is running as a write-in candidate for Select Board and introduced herself.
- Forrest Holzapfel spoke about Treasurer Linda Peters who is retiring from Marlboro town government this spring, and that Linda has been a cornerstone for decades: 1 year as Auditor in 1992, 1993-1998 Assistant Treasurer, 1998-2024 33 total years as a Treasurer, Justice of the Peace 1998-2022 (24 years), Trustee of Public Funds 1998-2024 (26 years) Delinquent Tax Collector 2005-2024 (19 years) 109 years total, to a sustained, standing ovation.

**Article 3:** To see if the town will vote to change the term of office for Constable from a 1-year term to a 2-year term per 17 V.S.A. § 2646(7).

Discussion:

- *Marcia Hamilton asked why this article was put forth. Forrest stated the terms in law and that the current Constable has run many consecutive one-year terms and would like the honor of a two-year term.*

**Article 4:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$3,600.00** to pay the yearly stipend for the Town's three member Select Board.

Discussion: *None*

**Article 5:** To see if the town will vote to set Friday **October 4, 2024**, as the due date for property taxes, payable to the Treasurer.

Discussion: *None*

**Article 6:** To see if the voters of the Town of Marlboro choose to return to an in-person Town Meeting pursuant to 17 V.S.A. §2640 for the purpose of adopting all budget articles by a floor vote in place of by Australian ballot.

Discussion:

- *Jude Robinson discussed that in-person Town Meeting is great but she prefers the many meetings and information that this current format presents – many people can not be at the in-person meeting.*
- *Jonathan Morse, David Holzapfel, and T. Wilson spoke to the complexity of the article and how we proceed with the two ways to conduct town business should the Town and School ballots yield different results.*
- *Jeff Skramstad spoke to the new four meeting format the Select Board is conducting. Over months, he hopes to refine this format to engage voters so that the articles are well understood by the time the voters make their choices on the ballot.*
- *Andrew Richardson spoke about the emotional aspect of the tradition of Town Meeting and that change is happening and change is uncomfortable.*
- *Carol Ann Johnson spoke to the depth of participation with this new process and that spreading the work out over time makes much more detail available and understandable.*
- *Lauren Poster asked about attendance with the new format of multiple meetings, Nick spoke about attendance.*
- *Peggy Tiffany stated that she feels much more informed with this current format and hopes that in subsequent meetings diverse points of view can be expressed.*
- *Molly Welch spoke about the inclusivity of the new format and that more can be done to bring more people into our work.*
- *Susan Kundhardt asked about the decision-making process in creating articles and how to solicit more participation in what is put on the ballot.*

**Article 7:** To see if the voters of the Town of Marlboro choose to return to an in-person Town Meeting pursuant to 17 V.S.A. § 2640 for the purpose of adopting all public questions by a floor vote in place of by Australian ballot.

Discussion: *See above*

**Article 8:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$570,400.00** for the General Fund.

Discussion:

- *Staley McDermet asked about the addendum handout for the budget. Confusion over which handout is the right one.*
- *Forrest Holzapfel talked about the budget for the town increasing from \$420,000 up to \$570,400. The budget includes \$40,000 for an issue with mold in the Town Garage, health insurance premium with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont is up 16% , and new staff will be hired in the coming year. Jeff Skramstad also spoke about the First Aid Building on the town-owned Hogback Mountain and that we can't continue deferring this cost and must act now.*

**Article 9:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$1,050,545.64** for Town Highways, summer and winter maintenance.

Discussion:

- Molly Welch spoke about the deferred maintenance in the past which is now costing us more, prioritizing increasing the safety of equipment and maintenance, hiring an extra man so that it is a 5 person crew, the purchase of a new road grader, and the other equipment necessary to bring roads up to standard. Culvert replacement and the ravages of climate change which will continue to be a rising cost.
- Discussion of MERP program for municipal buildings which comes from the federal ARPA money and is distributed through the Windham Regional Commission. Kate Kirkwood writes grants professionally and hopes to help the town as a new Select Board member.
- Megan Littlehales asked if cost for road maintenance will go down over time, and Jeff Skramstad replied that hopefully yes by 2026-7 – the new equipment purchases are partly responsible for this steep change this year.
- Andrew Richardson stated that the Equipment Account is not generating enough money to buy new machines but only to sustain maintenance.
- T Wilson asked about how the Equipment Account is faring.
- Forrest Holzapfel spoke about the Equipment Account, with which the town pays for the use of each piece of equipment which accrues and can be used to replace machines. During the COVID pandemic, the fund got badly depleted as little road work was done and our Road Foreman had a prolonged illness.
- Nick spoke about the past July rain event and the FEMA money which should be forthcoming for washout events on Shearer Hill and North Pond Roads.

**Article 10:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$55,000.00** to the **Marlboro Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.** to help defray operating expenses.

Discussion: Articles 10-11 together discussed.

- Carol Ann Johnson of the MVFC spoke to the articles, and the increasing expenses they are experiencing. She detailed the work they are undertaking on the firehouse building and the need to expand their parking lot. The MVFC meets next in March. Will Shakespeare has stepped down as President and Michael Schneider is ill and will no longer be Treasurer. New volunteers are sought.

**Article 11:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$50,000.00** to the **Marlboro Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.** for capital improvements for essential vehicles, facility, and equipment repairs and upgrades.

Discussion: None

**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 **\$5,000.00** to the **Marlboro Meeting House** for the partial operation and maintenance of the premises in support of the variety of municipal and community programs held therein.

*Discussion:*

- *Marcia Hamilton spoke about the building expenses which accrue including increasing insurance premiums. The Community Center does pay rent to the Meeting House. Lauren Poster thanked the Meeting House for providing the space for the Community Center for nominal rent.*

**Article 17:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$1,800.00** to **Marlboro Cares** for services.

*Discussion:* None

**Article 18:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$1,000.00** to **Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District**, in support of a greeter program to help prevent aquatic invasives at South Pond.

*Discussion:*

- *Catharine Rhodes spoke to the article and explained that aquatic invasives put South Pond in danger. The greeter program is staffed at the water's edge, and the screening helps watercraft not bring invasives stuck to their hull into South Pond at the State's public boat landing.*

**The following articles elicited no discussion**

**Article 19:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$21,904.50** to **Rescue, Inc.** for services.

**Article 20:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$5,000.00** to **Deerfield Valley Rescue, Inc.** for services.

**Article 21:** 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.

**Article 22:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$250.00** to **Brattleboro Area Hospice, Inc.** for services.

**Article 23:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$250.00** to **The MOOVER** for services.

**Article 24:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$500.00** to **the Deerfield Valley Food Pantry** for services.

**Article 25:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$500.00** **Gathering Place for Adult Day Services** for services.

**Article 26:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$230.00** to **Green Mountain RSVP & Volunteer Center** for services.

**Article 27:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$1,050.00** to **Health Care and Rehabilitation Services of Southeastern Vermont** for services.

**Article 28:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$400.00** to **Senior Solutions** for services.

**Article 29:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$970.00** to **Southeastern Vermont Community Action, Inc.** for services.

**Article 30:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$3,179.00** to **Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice of VT and NH** for services

**Article 31:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$1,200.00** to **Women's Freedom Center** for services.

**Article 32:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$500.00** to **American Red Cross Green Mountain** for services.

**Article 33:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$100.00** to **Green Up Vermont** for services.

**Article 34:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$1,000.00** to **Grace Cottage** for services.

**Article 35:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$1,000.00** to **Youth Services** for services.

**Article 36:** Shall the Town of Marlboro vote to raise, appropriate, and expend the sum of **\$1,500.00** for the support of **Groundworks Collaborative** to provide services to the residents of the Town.

**Article 37:** Shall the voters of the town of Marlboro approve the **Zoning Regulation Amendments** as accepted by the Marlboro Select Board (12/28/2023). The entire text of said *Amendments* is on file with the Town Clerk and posted on the Town Website at [marlborovt.us](http://marlborovt.us).

**Discussion:** *The Select Board process removed some of the articles originally presented by the Planning Commission through their public hearing process, and the entire language appears on the ballot on the back of page 4.*

**Article 38:** To see if the voters of the Town will vote to authorize the town to borrow funds in anticipation of tax revenue.

**Discussion:** *None*

Discussion ends, to a round of applause. Town Administrator Nick Morgan asked that more people come to the regular Select Board meetings, and that it is an excellent opportunity to speak with the people who are making policy for the town. The Select Board thanked Jim Agate for his service to the town.

Adjournment at 4:17 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Forrest Holzapfel, Marlboro Town Clerk