

Results of the Annual Town Meeting

May 2, 2009

The Annual Town Meeting was opened on May 2, 2009 by Joseph Kearns, the moderator. He led the assembled in the pledge of allegiance the read the Town Meeting Warrant. There were approximately 45 people in attendance.

Article 2. Under this article, the various boards and committees gave their reports. Many of the reports are in the Annual Town Report. Larry Pease, chairman of the board, gave thanks to the people that have served on the various committees and boards.

Article 3. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to fix the salaries and compensation of all elected officers of the Town for fiscal 2010, as provided in section 108 of chapter 41 of the Massachusetts General Laws as amended, or take any other action relative thereto. A question was raised if we could raise or lower the salaries? The answer was "no." The vote was taken and the article passed with one negative vote.

Following are the salaries:

| | |
|-----------------|-------|
| Moderator | 100 |
| Town Clerk | 4,000 |
| Assessor Chair | 3,000 |
| Assessor 2nd | 3,000 |
| Assessor 3rd | 3,000 |
| Selectman Chair | 1,500 |
| Selectman 1st | 1,500 |
| Selectman 2nd | 1,500 |
| Constable 1st | 90 |
| Constable 2nd | 90 |

Article 4. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the salaries and compensation of appointed staff for FY 2010.

| | |
|-------------------------|--------|
| Treasurer | 7,000 |
| Tax Collector | 10,000 |
| Selectboard's Sec. | 7,500 |
| Selectboard's Rec. Sec. | 3,200 |
| Town Accountant | 11,000 |
| Assistant Assessor | 5,400 |

A motion was made and seconded to amend the article to remove 7500 at this time. This motion was passed unanimously. The Selectmen are going to have a Special Town Meeting in June to take up this matter. Another motion was made and seconded to see if the 3200 could be reduced to 1600. This motion to amend the 3200 to 1600 failed. A vote was taken and this amended article passed with two negative votes.

Article 5. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of money for general government, or take any other relating thereto:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| Elected Town Officers | 17,780 |
| Town Counsel | 7,500 |
| Election & Registration | 1,000 |
| Maint. of Public Buildings | 55,000 |
| Insurance and Bonds | 40,000 |
| Soc Sec/Medicare Town share | 6,500 |

There was a great deal of discussion generated by this article. Questions were raised about the maintenance of buildings; we have four buildings and this money pays for the utilities, fuel, telephone and repairs. Also, why so much for Town Counsel? The reply was that we've had special projects such as personnel policy, by-laws, and we are trying to spread out the load. A vote was taken and the article passed with one negative vote.

Article 6. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of money for the expense accounts, or take any other action relative thereto.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| Selectboard/printing | 3,500 |
| Copier expense | 1,000 |
| Assessors | 4,600 |
| Annual interim certification | 1,800 |
| Comm/open permit appraisals | 900 |
| Tax map update | 1,000 |
| Assessors software/support | 1,500 |
| CAMA data transfer/training | 1,000 |
| Treasurer | 1,500 |
| Tax Collector | 4,000 |
| Tax title & legal fees | 6,000 |
| Planning Board | 500 |
| Town Accountant | 1,500 |
| Town Clerk | 800 |
| Zoning Board | 300 |
| Payroll software support | 1,500 |
| Treasurer/Accountant Software support | 4,000 |
| Electrical inspections | 500 |
| Plumbing inspections | 100 |

| | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| Constable | 150 |
| Conservation Commission | 1,300 |
| Communication Committee | 300 |
| Web site expenses | 1,300 |
| Technology expenses | 500 |
| Board of Health | 500 |

After some discussion, the vote was taken and the article passed with two nays.

Article 7. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will to raise and appropriate the sum of money for the highways, or take any other action relative thereto:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| Highway Department wages | 105,000 |
| Holidays | 3,000 |
| Vacations | 6,000 |
| Unemployment insurance | 2,000 |
| Hampshire County retirement | 26,931 |
| Health insurance | 45,000 |
| Fuel | 30,000 |
| Snow removal | 35,000 |
| Town highway maintenance | 35,000 |
| Unpaved roads material | 15,000 |
| Machinery maintenance | 30,000 |
| Street lights | 500 |

This article also generated great deal of discussion. There were questions raised about some of the new machinery that we have such as the new grader. The money for that came from Chapter 90 money, also the new back hoe; that was a state bid. Some discussion was about maybe keeping having the road crew keep a fuel log; also, a question was raised about the money for insurance. Some thought that was a lot of money. A motion was then made to amend the article by tabling the amount for health insurance. The motion made to amend failed and the article passed with some nays.

Article 8. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of money to the Library, Veterans and Cemetery accounts, or take any other action relative thereto.

| | |
|--------------------------|-------|
| Library expenses | 2,500 |
| Veterans Agent expense | 100 |
| War memorials/playground | 3,500 |
| Cemetery expenses | 3,500 |

After some discussion, a motion was made and seconded to amend this article to remove the Veterans Agent expenses as it is his salary. A vote was taken on the amended article and it passed unanimously. After the vote, a question was asked if

there was any movement on getting some type of memorial for our war hero, Jeremy Bouffard. Our moderator told the questioner to check with the Selectmen at a later date.

Article 8. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of money for protection of persons & property accounts or take any other action relating thereto:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Police Chief's salary | 1,000 |
| Officers compensation | 1,400 |
| Police Dept. operating expenses | 7,700 |
| Fire Chief/Forest Warden salary | 500 |
| Fire Dept. operating expenses | 4,500 |
| Fire Dept. Inspections salary | 300 |
| Fire Dept. dispatch service | 6,400 |
| Forest fire | 10 |
| Civil Defense | 10 |
| Building Inspector salary | 14,801 |
| Electrical Inspector salary | 300 |
| Asst. Electrical Inspector salary | 100 |
| Plumbing Inspector salary | 300 |
| Dog Officer's salary | 400 |
| Dog Officer's expenses | 300 |
| Insect pest control expenses | 100 |

Being no discussion, a vote was taken and it was unanimous.

Article 10. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise the sum of money for health & sanitation or take any other action relative thereto.

| | |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Ambulance | 1,200 |
| Hilltown Resource Management | 1,780 |
| Disposal area | 30,000 |
| Bd of Health/insp agents | 600 |
| Health & sanitation | 10 |
| Lee visiting nurse | 1,050 |

Being no discussion, the vote was taken and it was unanimous. The article passed.

Article 11. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of money for debt & interest, or take any other action relative thereto

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| Interest on short-term debt | 5,000 |
| Building project loan | 25,000 |

Being no discussion, the vote was taken and it was an unanimous vote. Article 11 passed.

Article 12. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of money for the miscellaneous accounts, or take any other action relative thereto.

| | |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Council on Aging | 1,500 |
| Historical Commission | 500 |
| Pioneer Valley Planning | 85 |
| Recreation Committee | 500 |
| Hampshire Council of Govt | 682 |
| Reserve Fund | 5,000 |
| Agricultural Commission | 100 |

No discussion and article 12 passed. It was a unanimous vote.

Article 13. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$338,352 for Middlefield's minimum contribution of the budget for the Gateway Regional School District or take any other action relative thereto.

There was some discussion concerning this article and it was said that this article was like a bill. We had to pay it.

A vote was taken on this article and it was an unanimous vote. Article 13 passed.

Article 14. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of \$118,865 for Middlefield's share of the over-minimum contribution to the budget for the Gateway Regional School District, or take any other action relative thereto.

There was some discussion of this article and Dr. Hopson, Supt. of Schools explained this article. Following a bit more discussion, the vote was taken and Article 14 passed with two (2) negative votes.

Article 15. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$98,030 for Middlefield's share of the transportation and debt service (non-foundation budget) and construction for the Gateway Regional School District or take any other action relative thereto. Not much discussion and the vote was taken. It was a unanimous vote and Article 15 passed.

Article 16. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$70,000 for vocational education or take any action relating thereto. Being no discussion, article 16 passed. It was a unanimous vote.

At this time, a short break was taken and the meeting resumes 20-25 minutes later.

Article 17. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to accept Chapter 90 funds or take any other action relative thereto. Some discussion, as what is Chapter 90 money? Answer: State money to be used for roads. No more discussion and the vote was taken. Article 17 passed with a unanimous vote.

Article 18. To see if the Town will vote to request the Department of Revenue Division of Local Services/Technical Assistance Section to perform a free financial management review of all Town departments to further enhance efficiency and accountability while reducing future auditor's expenses, or take any other action relative thereto. There was quite a bit of discussion surrounding this article as to the whys and wherefores. A motion was made and seconded to table this article until a further date. 36 for and 0 against. The motion passed and Article 18 is tabled to a further date.

Article 19. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to petition the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court Assembled, and by the authority of the same enact a bylaw to enable a holder of an elected office in the Town of Middlefield to be recalled therefrom by the registered voters of the Town or take any other action relative thereto. (Refer to the attached document.) There was discussion of this article. It was mentioned that this was voted on last year but failed to get acted on by the Senate and House Representatives. After more discussion, the vote was taken and Article 19 passed with three (3) to four (4) negative votes.

Article 20. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to transfer from the Refunded Dog Tax Fund the sum of \$250 to the Library Account or take any other action relative thereto. The vote was taken and it was a unanimous vote. Article 20 passed.

Article 21. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to authorize a revolving fund under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 44, Section 53e1/2, which may be spent on the Transfer Station without further appropriation during FY 2010. Collected Transfer Station fees may be used for the Transfer Station, for capital equipment, grounds improvement or other related expenses to benefit the Transfer Station. The selectmen may spend up to \$5,000 in revolving fund monies for the program during FY 2010 and retain in this account all collected fees or take any other action relative thereto. The vote was taken and it was a unanimous vote. Article 21 passed.

Article 23. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to authorize a revolving fund account pursuant to MGL Chapter 44, Section 53 ½ to authorize the receiving of inspection fees to be expended during FY 2010 without further appropriation for the purpose of administrative duties or take any other action relative thereto. The following accounts will be capped at:

| | |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Board of health inspector | 5,000 |
| Electrical inspector | 5,000 |

After discussion, a motion was made to amend the article and reduce the caps and reduce them from \$5,000 to \$2,500. The amended article was voted on and it was an unanimous vote. Article 23(amended) passed.

Article 24. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the additional sum of \$5,000 to cap the old dump on skyline trail or take any other action relating thereto. The vote was unanimous and Article 24 passed.

Article 25. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 for Town's fiscal audit, or take any other action relating thereto. It was noted that the audit would go out to bid. The vote was unanimous and article 25 passed.

Article 26. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Assessors to appoint a member of the board or some other person, if the board so desires, to serve as the Assistant Assessor at the salary fixed and voted on by the Town or take any other relative thereto. Vote taken and it was unanimous. Article 26 passed.

Article 27. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of MGL Ch.59, Sec.5, cl.17d surviving spouse, minor child of a deceased, or elderly person tax exemption eligibility, provided the person's whole estate, real and personal, cannot exceed \$40,000 excluding the total value of the subject property, not to exceed three (3) dwelling units and any unpaid mortgage balance on that property. For a property containing four (4) or more dwelling units, the value of the portion exceeding three (3) units must be excluded or take any other action relative thereto. After discussion of this article and explaining, the vote was taken. It was unanimous and Article 27 passed.

Article 28. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to reduce the borrowing to \$175,000 for up to ten (10) years to replace the roof on the Town Hall, replace the heating controls, install a heat recovery ventilation system, and fire alarm system or take any other action relative thereto. The Moderator reminded the assembled that it would take a 2/3 vote for the article to pass. The vote was taken and Article 28 passed. It was a unanimous vote.

Article 29. A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will transfer \$20,000 from the transfer station revolving account to construct a building at the transfer station or take any other action relative thereto. It was a unanimous vote and Article 29 passed.

Article 30. Under this article to transact any other business, a motion was made and seconded to reconsider the board of health salary to reduce to \$0.00 pursuant to the earlier Article 10. It was a unanimous vote and Article 30 passed. A motion was made and seconded to dissolve the meeting. Meeting was dissolved at 5:06 pm.

Marjorie Batorski

Town Clerk