

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 25, 2023  
MIDDLEFIELD TOWN HALL

Present:

Selectboard: Chair Ann Marie Visconti, Members Tonya Santaniello & Curt Robie  
Moderator, Joseph Kearns; Town Clerk Suzanne C. Lemieux  
Guests: Architect Brett Thilbault & Consultant Ken Walls

Moderator Joseph Kearns opened the meeting at 10:00 am with a quorum of 77 residents and a warrant that was duly posted.

**ARTICLE 1:** To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$6,390.00 from Free Cash to cover the actual cost of county retirement for FY 2023 ; or take any other action relative thereto.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the SB sponsored & FC recommendation of \$6,390.00. Discussion on clerical error that was adjusted to current figure. Motion 1 passed unanimously at \$6,390.00.

**ARTICLE 2:** To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$69,912.00 from Free Cash to be applied toward the cost of repairs to the Town Senior Center; or take any other action relative thereto.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the SB sponsored & FC UN-recommendation of \$69,912.00.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the MLP proposed amendment as read: To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$69,912.00 from Free Cash to the Stabilization Fund, with the stated intention that the money can remain available past June 30<sup>th</sup> to provide a grant match if a grant for the Senior Center Building Repairs is awarded to Middlefield. Motion did not pass with an overwhelming Nay vote.

Motion on Article 2 passed at \$69,912.00.

**ARTICLE 3:** To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$49,000 from free cash to be applied toward the cost of removing and replacing asbestos floor tile in the Town Hall and the replacement of library shelving as necessary; or take any other actions relative thereto.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the SB sponsored & UN-recommendation of \$49,000.00.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the MLP amendment as read: To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$49,000 from Free Cash to fix the Town Hall flooring. It was requested to include: that the minutes reflect that these were votes for a ten percent match for grants and that the money would go back into general funds if not used, because it is not said in the article. Motion did not pass with an overwhelming Nay vote.

Motion on Article 3 passed unanimously at \$49,000.00

**ARTICLE 4:** To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$5,000.00 from Free Cash to pay the MVP Dirt Road Grant Town Liaison to be reimbursed by the state; or take any other action relative thereto.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the SB sponsored & FC recommendation of \$5,000.00.

Announcement was made that a general information hearing will be held at the town hall on April 17 and also at the Senior Center on April 19.

Motion passed unanimously at \$5,000.00.

**ARTICLE 5:** To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$7,500.00 from Free Cash to pay the town share of grant expenses for the three-town MVP Dirt Road Study being conducted by the towns of Middlefield, Chester, and Blandford and coordinated by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission; or take any other action thereto.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the SB sponsored & FC recommendation of \$7,500.00 Discussion on the grant that has already been awarded to the town.

Motion passed unanimously at \$7,500.00.

**ARTICLE 6:** To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum not to exceed \$2,500.00 out of the Sale of Land Account to have town counsel perform a title search to determine if the Middlefield Congregational Church is on Town owned property; or take any other action thereto.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the SB sponsored & FC recommendation of \$2,500.00.

Discussion on statement by MLP that she received an email from church representative Mark Doane, stating that the church is willing to pay for the title search. Motion passed at \$2,500.00.

**ARTICLE 7:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$1,300 from the Town Sale of Land Account to pay for the cost of additional survey work needed to close the former town Skyline Trl dump; or take any other action thereto.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the SB sponsored & FC recommendation of \$1,300.

Motion passed unanimously at \$1,300.

**ARTICLE 8:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$10,000 from the Town Sale of Sand Account to pay for half the cost of \$20,000 to purchase from Anita Myers a portion of land formerly used as a town landfill on Skyline Trail; or take any other action thereto.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the SB sponsored & FC UN-recommendation of \$10,000.00. Discussion on a clarification of events. Motion passed unanimously at \$10,000.00.

**ARTICLE 9:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$30,000.00 from Free Cash to pay the estimated cost of labor and materials for the construction of the Town Park in the center of town excluding the cost of park benches which is hoped can be funded through donations; or take any other action therein.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the SB sponsored & FC recommendation of \$30,000.00.

Discussion on statement made by landscape designer Carol Waag, that it was expeditious that the town votes to start now. Motion passed at \$30,000.00.

**ARTICLE 10:** To see if the Town will vote to amend the vote under Article 23 of the 2020 Annual Town Meeting, where \$26,000 was appropriated for repaving the Town Hall driveway and where such funds were not needed for that purpose, to authorize the use of such funds for other paving projects (basketball court and Highway Department facility); or take any other action related thereto.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the SB sponsored & FC UN-recommendation of \$26,000.00. Discussion on clarification that the \$26,000 was spent to pave the Highway department. Motion passed unanimously at \$26,000.00.

**ARTICLE 11:** To see if the Town will vote to affirm the decision of the Select Boards of Middlefield and Washington to re advertise the position of shared Town Administrator with an annual salary of up to eighty thousand dollars to include the additional cost of benefits and with an appointment by said boards for up to three years as provided for pursuant to Massachusetts General laws Chapter 41 Section 23A; or take any other action in relation thereto.

A motion was made and second to approve the Article as sponsored by the SB and the FC UN-recommendation. Discussion on Ken Walls explanation that the search for an administrator was advertised internationally and only produced 5 applicants. Ken advised both Selectboards to increase the salary to \$80,000. The person hired should expect to work 50 to 55 hrs to satisfy each town's needs. The grant will cover the increased salary. Motion was passed . One nay vote was recorded.

Meeting dissolved at 12:22

Respectfully submitted by Suzanne C. Lemieux, Town Clerk