



**Annual Town Meeting Minutes
June 20, 2020**

Held at the Middlefield Fair Grounds
In the Cow Barn, 7 Bell Rd.

Present: Selectboard: Chair David DiNicola and member Judith Hoag
Regrets: Albert Sirard

Moderator: Joseph Kearns
Town Clerk: Suzanne C. Lemieux

Moderator Joseph Kearns opened the meeting at 1:30 P.M. with a quorum present of 36 residents and warrant that was duly posted.

Residents registered with Assistant Town Clerk Lois Leonardo –Bell upon entrance to Town Meeting.

ARTICLE 1: This Article was to act upon the reports of the Selectboard, Treasurer, Tax Collector, Assessors and other elected or appointed officers or committees of the Town. This presents opportunities to question and interact with the residents.

ARTICLE 2: 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 FY2021, as provided in Section 108 of Chapter 41 of the Massachusetts General Laws, as amended, and raise and appropriate \$22,340 (from Selectboard's recommendation) for these salaries or compensations to be as of July 1, 2021. Motion passed unanimously at \$22,340.

ARTICLE 3: 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 FY2021 \$ 66,900. Motion passed unanimously at \$66,900.

ARTICLE 4: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$103,900 for General Government. Motion passed unanimously at \$103,900.

ARTICLE 5: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$46,907 for the Expense Accounts. An appraiser is hired during this revaluation year which increases line item \$3,500. Motion passed unanimously at \$46,907.

ARTICLE 6: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$485,526 for the Highways. Motion to amend to remove War/Memorials/Playground line item for \$2,000. After discussion, a nay vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously for \$485,526.

ARTICLE 7: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$18,576 to the Library, Veterans and Cemetery Accounts. It was recommended to increase \$2,500 line item cemetery expense to \$3,500 Mowing expenses and costs of replacing flags were noted. Line item Cemetery tree removal was questioned. Line item will remain the same. Total sum changed to \$19, 576. Motion passed unanimously at \$19,576.

ARTICLE 8: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$89,993 for Protection of Persons & Property Accounts. Line items Mass Chiefs' Assoc Dues \$600, Radar Expenses \$750, Police Uniforms \$900 and Police Supplies \$2,000 were eliminated as they are already included in the Police Dept. Operating Expense. Amendment was made to drop \$4,250 from \$89,993 = \$85,743. Motion passed. Motion to approve \$85,743 was approved unanimously.

ARTICLE 9: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to Raise and Appropriate \$10,000 to establish a Reserve Fund to provide for extraordinary or unforeseen expenditures, as provided by M.G.L. Chapter 40, section 6, as amended. Motion passed unanimously at \$10,000.

ARTICLE 10: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise the sum of \$33,443 for Health & Sanitation. Porchlight Visiting Nurses dissolved. Town switched to Berkshire Group resulting in \$360 increase. Motion passed unanimously for \$33,443.

ARTICLE 11: 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 \$9,290. Selectboard recommended level funding to encourage recreation projects. Motion passed unanimously for \$9,290.

ARTICLE 12: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to approve to replace the current Gateway Statutory Assessment in Article 13 with an alternative method of computing each of the six member town's assessment and payment of costs incurred by the Gateway Regional School district. School Superintendent David Hopson stated that the number voted on the next article will determine this assessment. A motion was made and seconded to pass over Article 12. Motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 13: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$494,778 for Middlefield's Statutory Assessment for the Gateway Regional School District. Motion passed unanimously at \$494,778.

ARTICLE 14: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000 for Vocational Education. Error noted on FY2020 adopted amount of \$120,000 was changed to \$100,000. Three students are attending Voce Ed. Motion passed unanimously at \$100,000.

ARTICLE 15: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to authorize revolving fund accounts for the receipt of inspection fees, pursuant to MGL Chapter 44, Section 53E1A, to be expended during FY2021 without further appropriation for the purpose of administrative duties, capped at amounts: Electrical Inspector: \$2,500; Conservation Commission \$2,000; Zoning Board of Appeals \$500; Plumbing Inspector: \$2,000. Motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 16: 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 FY2021. Collected Transfer Station fees may be used for the Transfer Station attendant's salary, for capital equipment, grounds improvement, or other related expenses to benefit the Transfer Station. The Selectboard may spend up to \$7,500 in revolving fund monies for the Transfer Station during FY2021 and retain in this account all collected fees. Motion passed unanimously for \$7,500.

ARTICLE 17: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of money for Debt & Interest \$1,000. Motion passed unanimously for \$1,000.

Article 18: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$3,400 for the Town's share of a multi-town appraisal of utility personal property accounts as now required by the State. State recommends hiring an expert to export more information from Eversource. We will join with five other towns in this endeavor. Motion passed unanimously for \$3,400.

ARTICLE 19. 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 to serve as the Assessors' Clerk at the salary fixed and voted on by the Town Meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 20: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to accept the Franklin Regional Transit Authority as the official transportation agent for the Council on Aging. Motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 21: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to accept Chapter 90 and all other Highway grant Funds from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, for the purposes of repair, construction, maintenance and preservation of the Town's roads and bridges and other related costs. Motion passed unanimously. -

ARTICLE 22: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$28,000 and transfer from free cash \$28,000 to purchase a new one ton 4x4 truck with plow and service body. Motion was made to amend 'to pass over raise and appropriate \$28,000' to 'to transfer \$56,000 from free cash'. Amendment passed unanimously at \$56,000. Certified free cash is \$197,547. Motion passed unanimously at \$56,000.

ARTICLE 23: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$26,000 to repave the town hall driveway. Motion passed unanimously at \$26,000.

ARTICLE 24: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town vote to transfer \$15,000 from the "Capping the Old Dump" and \$5,000 from the FY20 Transfer Station account to purchase from Anita and Daniel Myers a portion of land formerly used as a town landfill. \$15,000 was changed to \$10,000 and \$5,000 from the FY20 Transfer Station account was removed. DEP recommended that the Town purchase this land to prevent problems from future purchases which could result in water issues as land was used as a dump.\$10,000 will be taken from the purchase of the Slocum Lot. Motion passed unanimously at \$10,000.

ARTICLE 25: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to transfer \$21,655 from Free Cash to cover the overage in the snow removal account. Motion passed unanimously for \$21,655.

ARTICLE 26: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to transfer \$68,000 from Free Cash to offset the tax rate. Motion passed unanimously at \$68,000.

ARTICLE 27: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to carry over \$11,500 from the Audit account and raise and appropriate the sum of \$6,500 for the town fiscal audit. Town needs to be audited. Motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 28: A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to accept funds and gifts on behalf of the town. Motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 29: A motion was made and seconded to pass over Article 29. The \$45,000 is coming from the sale of the Slocum lot because we can't put it into free cash. Motion to pass over Article 29 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 30: To transact any other business to come before said meeting:

Acknowledgement of the presence of Natalie Blais, our State Representative

Difficulty of getting through to Town Staff during Covid 19 was noted and discussed. Several suggestions were made. The situation is evolving.

A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town would vote to transfer \$45,000 from free cash to stabilization fund. Motion passed unanimously.

An update on Comcast was requested. Comcast is expecting to begin building in the fall and hope to have the Town complete by the end of 2020.

Annual Town Report should be available next Saturday the 27th during the Town election from 12:00 to 5:00

Chair David DiNicola announced his retirement from the Selectboard. DiNicola spoke of his efforts to slow the increase of the tax rate. He feels that there is no sign of it leveling off.

A motion is made and seconded to dissolve town meeting 3:29. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne C. Lemieux Town Clerk