



Annual Town Meeting Minutes

May 07, 2022

MIDDLEFIELD TOWN HALL

Present:

Selectboard Chair Ann Marie Visconti, Members Tonya Santaniello & Curt Robie
Moderator, Joseph Kearns; Town Clerk Suzanne C. Lemieux

Moderator Joseph Kearns opened the meeting at 1:30 P.M. with a quorum present of 40 residents and warrant that was duly posted.

Joseph Kearns was honored for his 50 years of service to the Town of Middlefield. The Selectboard presented a cake and a bouquet of flowers to his wife Mary Lou Kearns.

ARTICLE 1: To act upon the reports of the Selectboard, Treasurer, Tax Collector, Assessors, and other elected or appointed officers or committees of the Town. The Chair reported that the Town has a clean report on the audit.

ARTICLE 2: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the salaries and compensation of elected officers; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to accept the SB & FC recommendation of \$24,300. Discussion on 5% increase request. Motion passed unanimously at \$24,300.

ARTICLE 3: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the salaries and compensation of appointed staff; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to accept the SB & FC recommendation of \$71,049 passed unanimously at \$71,049.

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of money for General Government; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to accept the FC & SB recommendations of \$115,000 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 5: 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:

A motion was made and seconded to accept the FC & SB sum of \$56,927. Discussion on the QDS software. Motion passed unanimously at \$56,927.

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ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of money for the Highways; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to accept the FC & SB sums \$531,227 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 7: 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:

A motion was made and seconded to accept the FC & SB recommendation of \$19,305. Motion made and seconded to amend the cemetery tree removal account to cemetery maintenance account passed unanimously. Original motion of \$19,305 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 8: 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 relative thereto:

A motion was made and seconded to accept the FC & SB sums of \$122,154. Long discussion of Police Chief's salary increase & Department operating expenses. Motion passed unanimously at \$122,154.

ARTICLE 9: To see if the Town will vote to Raise and Appropriate the sum of money to establish a Reserve Fund to provide for extraordinary or unforeseen expenditures, as provided by M.G.L. Chapter 40, section 6, as amended; or take any other action in relation thereto:

A motion made and seconded to accept the FC & SB recommendations Discussion on reason for establishing the reserve fund. Motion passed unanimously at \$10,000.

ARTICLE 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of money for Health & Sanitation; or take any other action relative thereto:

Motion made and seconded to accept the FC & SB recommendations of \$41,700. Discussion on current bridge contract. Motion passed unanimously at \$41,700.

ARTICLE 11: 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:

Motion made and seconded to accept the FC & SB recommendations of \$8,750. Discussions included dues increases and communication systems. Motion passed unanimously at \$8,750.

ARTICLE 12: To see if the Town will vote to approve to replace the current Gateway Statutory Assessment of \$330,085 in Article 14 with an assessment of \$390,528 by adopting the Alternative method of computing each of the six-member town's assessment and payment of costs incurred by the Gateway Regional School district; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to adopt the Alternative method of computing the Gateway Statutory Assessment. After a lengthy discussion, the article was voted down, as per the recommendation of the FC & SB. The need for two members for the school committee was addressed.

SB: Selectboard

FC: Finance Committee

ARTICLE 13: To see if the Town will vote to approve the agreement among the towns of Blandford, Chester, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, and Russell with respect to the formation of the Gateway Regional School District, or take any other action relative thereto:

Sponsor: Gateway Regional School District

Please refer to the separate document: "Agreement among the towns of Blandford, Chester, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, and Russell" for full text of this article.

A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to adopt the Agreement, motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 14:

: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the following sum for Middlefield's Statutory Assessment for the Gateway Regional School District; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion was made and seconded to accept the FC & SB recommendations of \$330,085. Motion passed unanimously at \$330,085.

ARTICLE 15: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the following sum for vocational education; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to accept the FC & SB recommendations of \$100,000 passed unanimously.

State Representative Natalie Blais, in attendance, spoke of the importance of funding for Western Mass concerning dirt road maintenance. Blais requested that people send in pictures of road conditions. She was applauded for her efforts and was sent off with a bouquet of flowers from Mary Lou Kearns.

3:00: 15 minute break

ARTICLE 16: To see if the Town will vote to authorize revolving fund accounts for the receipt of inspection fees, pursuant to MGL Chapter 44, Section 53E½, to be expended during FY2023 without further appropriation for the purpose of administrative duties, capped at the amounts in the warrant; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion was made and seconded to accept the FC & SB recommendations for inspection fees Electric \$2, 500 Conservation Commission 2,000, Zoning Board of Appeals 500 and Plumbing 2,000 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 17: 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 FY2023. 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

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Transfer Station during FY2023 and retain in this account all collected fees; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to approve the article as sponsored by the SB and recommended by the FC passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 18: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the \$1,000 for Debt & Interest; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to accept the FC & SB recommendations of \$1,000 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 19: 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; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to accept the article as per the FC & SB recommendations passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 20: To see if the Town will vote to accept the Franklin Regional Transit Authority as the official transportation agent for the Council on Aging; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to approve the article as sponsored by the SB and recommended by the FC passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 21: 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; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to approve the article as sponsored by the SB and recommended by the FC passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 22: To see if the Town will vote to transfer \$8,000 from FY22 Fuel Account and \$10,000 from free cash to cover the overage in the snow removal account; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to approve the article as sponsored by the SB and recommended by the FC passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 23: To see if the Town will vote to allow the Selectboard accept funds and gifts on behalf of the town; or take any other action relative thereto: motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to allow the Selectboard to accept funds and gifts on behalf of the Town.

Motion made and seconded to approve the article as sponsored by the SB and recommended by the FC passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 24: To see if the Town will vote to transfer \$25,000 from free cash to put towards the purchase of a new 2022 Western Star Chassis approved in 2021 to replace the 2012 International

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tandem plow truck, including a new plow frame, hydraulic system and controls, along with blasting and painting the sub-frame on the old body; or take any other action relative thereto.

Motion made and seconded to approve the article as sponsored by the SB and recommended by the FC passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 25: To see if the Town will vote to establish a new Capital Stabilization Account to be used to pay for future Town Capital equipment purchases and capital projects or take any other action thereto:

Motion made and seconded the article as sponsored by the SB and recommended by the FC.
Discussion on the importance of setting aside money as needed. Motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 26: To see if the Town will transfer \$60,000 from free cash to the Capital Stabilization Fund; or take any other action relative thereto:

Motion made and seconded to approve the article as sponsored by the SB and recommended by the FC passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 27: To see if the Town will vote to establish a new School Stabilization Account to help defray future Town Costs to support the Gateway Regional School System or take any other action thereto:

Motion made and seconded to approve the article as sponsored by the SB and recommended by the FC
Discussion on setting aside money for possible future increases. Motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 28: To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$61, 250 from Free Cash to School Stabilization Account to help to defray the future cost of Town expenses to support the Gateway Regional School District or take any other action relative thereto.

Motion made and seconded to approve the article to transfer the sum of \$61,250 from Free Cash to the School Stabilization Account as sponsored by the SB and recommended by the FC passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 29: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$6,000 to help defray the cost of services provided by the Hinsdale, Hil Itown, and Becket Ambulance Services. Each ambulance service to receive \$2,000 or take any other action thereto:

Motion made and seconded to approve the article to raise and appropriate the sum of \$6,000 as sponsored by the SB and recommended by the FC. Long discussion on reason for this appropriation. Motion passed unanimously at \$6,000.

ARTICLE 30: To transact any other businesses to come before said meeting. Residents expressed appreciation for the Selectboard's tribute to Joseph Kearns, and for their hard work and dedication to the town. Discussion on disposal area issues such as, absence of redemption area for bottles and cans and increasing the amount of vehicles allowed at one time.

Meeting dissolved at 3:54.

Respectfully submitted by Suzanne C. Lemieux, Town Clerk

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