

Town Meeting March 5, 2024

Greg Joly called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Greg read the warning:

The legal voters of the Town of Jamaica, in the County of Windham and State of Vermont, are hereby notified and warned to meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Town Hall in said town of Jamaica, on the first Tuesday of March, March 5th, 2024, to transact the following business and act upon the following articles:

Article 1: To elect a Moderator for a term of one year.

Jessica made a motion to elect Greg Joly for moderator, seconded by Rob Willis.

Ed Dorta-Duque asked the clerk to cast one vote being no other nominations.

Greg turned the meeting over to our state representative Laura Sibia. Her mailing address is:

Laura Sibia

PO Box 2052

West Dover, VT 05356

Wendy Harrison, Vermont Senator, spoke next.

Mary Parlman asked about water coming off the mountain and turning land into swamp.

DEC- Department of Environmental Conservation may be able to help.

Article 2: To review the town report.

Dana West made a motion to review the town report, seconded by Ed Dorta-Duque.

Dana West made a motion that we do not accept the Town Report as presented. He said there are errors in the town report.

Greg Joly said we do not accept the Town Report since we have outside auditors. We can review the Town Report.

Jessica spoke of Terri passing and how things had always been done by Terri, and we are all just trying to fill in the gap.

There has always been a letter from the auditors. Ed Dorta-Duque would like the audit letter to be included in the Town Report, seconded by Jennifer Dorta-Duque.

Lexa said that the audit should be posted on the website or distributed to the residents.

A floor vote to close the question.

Vote on Ed's motion. Affirmative.

Jessica spoke about the outside audit. We are chipping away at all of them. Our role is to correct every single one of them. The deficiencies are being addressed.

The deficit of 1 million dollars, over \$700,000 is from Irene. We have budgeted \$75,000 this year in hopes to have it paid back in 10 years. We are still eligible for FEMA funds from the July 2021 Rainstorm.

Clara asked Mike Tuller, Town Administrator, how many grants he was able to obtain last year. Mike has done the MERP grant and another one. Mike has been working on flood damage and with FEMA since July.

Drew Hazelton asked about the \$501,719 deficit in the General Fund.

Bonnie West said that the amount that was passed at last year for \$1,336,558 when the budget is \$1,432,858 with a difference of \$96,300.

Ed Dorta-Duque asked about the grant for the wastewater. Chrissy Haskins said it is listed on page 29 under Wastewater Study Grant income.

Lexa Clark brought up the Selectboard stipend. They cannot raise their own stipend; it needs to be an article on the Warning. Jessica agreed and said it needed to be voted on. It will go on next year's Town Meeting warning.

Jennifer Dorta-Duque called the question, seconded by Dana West.

Article 3: To elect the following officers as required by law.

- a. *Select person for a term of three years (by ballot)* Ed Dorta-Duque nominated Jessica Pollack, seconded by Kate Ullman. The clerk cast one ballot for Jessica Pollack.
- b. *Select person for a term of one year (by ballot)* Tom Tolbert nominated Greg Meulemans, seconded by Patrick McQuillan. No other nominations. The clerk cast one ballot for Greg Meulemans.
- c. *Select person for a term of one year (by ballot)* Tom respectfully declined. Stewart Barker declined. Greg Meulemans nominated Len Beman, seconded by Ed Dorta-Duque. No other nominations, the clerk cast one ballot for Len Beman.

- d. *Lister for a term of three years (by ballot)* Jessica Pollack nominated Ed Dorta-Duque, seconded by Andy Coyne. The clerk cast one vote for the Ed Dorta-Duque.
- e. *1st Constable for a term of one year*- Dana West nominated Rob Willis, seconded David Marx. The clerk cast one ballot for Rob Willis.
- f. *2nd Constable for a term of one year*- Greg Meulemans nominated Ben Williams, seconded by CJ King. The clerk cast one ballot for Ben Williams.
- g. *Trustee of Public Funds for a term of one year*- Jessica Pollack nominated Rob Willis, seconded by Dana West. The clerk cast one ballot for Rob Willis.
- h. *Agent to Deed Land for a term of one year*- Patrick McQuillan nominated Rob Willis, seconded by Dana West. Greg Meulemans nominated Andy Coyne, seconded by Kate Ullman.

Paper ballot results:

Andy-41

Rob-30

Andy Coyne was elected as Agent to Deed Land.

- i. *Library Trustee for a term of five years*- Keighan Eaker nominated Greg Joly, seconded by Michael Connor. Greg Joly was elected Library Trustee for five years.
- j. *Library Trustee for a term of one year*- This position was Janet Hamilton's. Keighan Eaker nominated Dana Capalupo, seconded by Michael Connor. Danielle Witham was nominated by Keighan Eaker. Danielle withdrew her nomination. Dana Capalupo was elected library trustee for a term of one year.

Article 4: To see what sum of money the Voters will vote to pay the Town's running expenses, and how it will be collected.

Dana West moved the motion.

Jesica made a motion to raise \$1,432,858 for the tax year 2025, seconded by Tom Tolbert.

Bonnie West made a motion to raise \$1,443,210 with a total budget of \$1,830,697 including revenue. With the payment due the first business day on October, with an 8% penalty the next day and 1% interest added monthly starting December 1st. Seconded by Jessica.

Lexa Clark would like to take \$2500 from the budget for the increase of the Selectboard stipend. She suggested it go back to \$5500. Seconded by Joel Katz.

It was never voted on last year and Lexa would like it to go back to what it was in 2023.

Rebecca Antel made a motion to approve the \$8,000 for the Selectboard stipend.

We will have a Special Meeting for the school board member, and we can vote on the Selectboard stipend as well.

Drew Hazelton recommended we vote down both motions and vote on this at a Special Meeting.

Keighan Eaker called the question.

Voice by vote to approve \$8,000 for the Selectboard Stipend. Motion passed.

CJ King called the question, seconded by Ed.

The amount set for \$8,000 passed by vote voice.

Ed asked why Green up had two line items? If one is for the town and one state, it should be listed that way.

Ed asked about the mud season expense.

Ed Dorta-Duque moved the question, seconded by CJ King.

Bonnie West made a motion we raise by taxation \$1,443,210 and that with other revenue of \$387,487 for a total of \$1,830,697 with taxes due on the 1st business day of October, with an 8% penalty the next day and 1% interest added monthly starting December 1st. Seconded by Jessica Pollack.

Motion passed by voice vote. 1 opposed.

Article 5: To see if the Voters will authorize the Selectboard to borrow money in anticipation of taxes.

Kate Harris made a motion to accept the article, seconded by Patrick McQuillan. Motion passed by voice.

Article 6: Shall the Voters authorize the Selectboard to spend “unanticipated funds such as grants, gifts and/or interest”?

Cj King made a motion to approve the Selectboard to spend unanticipated funds, seconded by Dana West. Keighan Eaker called the question, seconded by CJ. Motion passed by voice.

Article 7: Shall the Voters exempt the Masonic Lodge Mt. Lebanon #46 land and building from taxation for a period of five years as provided in Title 32 Section 3840 V.S.A.?

CJ King made a motion to approve, seconded by Dana West.

Raymond Ballantine spoke about the Masonic Hall; they open it in emergencies and have a generator.

Tom Tolbert called the question, seconded by Ed Dorta-Duque. Passed by voice vote, 1 opposed.

Article 8: To set the time for the opening of the next Annual Town Meeting, to be held on the first Tuesday in March 2025.

Tom made a motion to set the date for Town Meeting for 2025 on Tuesday, March 4th at 10 a.m. seconded by Ray Ballentine.

Kayla Anthony asked if we could have Town Meeting at night so more people could attend.

Keighan Eaker made a motion to set the time of town meeting on March 4, 2025 to 6 p.m. Seconded by Kayla Anthony.

Motion failed by voice vote.

Ben Williams made a motion to move Town Meeting to the 2nd Saturday of March, which would be March 8th. Seconded by CJ King. Ed called the question.

Motion failed by show of hands.

Jacki Brown made a motion to have Town Meeting at 4 p.m., on Tuesday, March 4, 2025.

Drew called the question. Voice vote passed the motion.

Town Meeting will be Tuesday, March 4, 2025 at 10 a.m.

Article 9: To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting.

Carlotta Woodruff asked who decides who goes on the front page of the Town Report.

Greg Lakis is doing update for Local Emergency Management. There is a program called CARE where they can check up on you. If you need help registering for the program, reach out to Greg for help.

Raymond Ballantine asked if there is a law about parking on the sidewalks? He would like to see this enforced.

Drew Hazelton and Dana West (school board members) The annual report has a lot of information including how the tax rate is set. The student enrollment has been significantly dropping. The projected enrollment for Jamaica School next year is 9 students.

Karen Ameden spoke about the school and the Pre-K license. It had not been renewed. They are trying to renew it. 60% of Jamaica students are going to different schools.

Jennifer Dorta-Duque said this year is 100th year anniversary of our library. They are doing a dedication ceremony of the children's library to Janet Hamilton. We have a new librarian, Madeline.

Alice Abraham, with the Jamaica Historic Foundation, said that on page 44 of Town Report it has their website. They always welcome more people to join.

Jamaica was founded in 1780. They are looking for people to help at Jamaica Day.

Karen Ameden said that we lost both Janet Hamilton and Patti Dickson. They have both done a lot for the town.

Karen Ameden is doing a cemetery walk with the high schoolers.

JAMBA- They have done incredible trails for mountain biking. They have put some in and others are in the process.

Erica Bowman, Jamaica's Poet Laurette read a poem.

Article 10: To Adjourn.

Tom Tolbert made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Dana West.

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Wiswall, Town Clerk