

Jamaica Town Meeting Minutes

March 3rd, 2026

Tom Tolbert read the following:

“The legal voters of the Town of Jamaica, in the County of Windham and the State of Vermont are hereby notified and warned to meet at 10:00am at the Town Hall in said town of Jamaica, on the first Tuesday of March, March 3rd, 2026, to transact the following business and to act upon the following articles:”

Laura Sibilia read a statement for Lexa and Steve Clark award of citizenship and presented them with their citation.

Chuck Bosworth read Speech written by Scott Gordon fire chief for Steve & Lexa Clark

Laura updated the town on her activities at the state level and left us a written statement about her progress.

Laura stated this was her 6th term. Big issue for her has been Act 250 reform. Act 181 was passed in 2022 which was major reform in Act 250. Mapping and rulemaking is happening across state. Work is happening in senate.

Also working on when copper land lines are changed to fiber. There is a difference in emergency response between the technologies.

There is a surplus in Option taxes at state level. There is \$8M surplus. Looking to change the law to what dollars can be used for.

Working on citing of datacenters in VT. They consume a lot of electric, water, and create noise. Committee is working on guidelines for incoming datacenters.

State is still working on education reform. There are currently two maps to consolidate boards. These are government maps.

Questions or statements for Laura:

Kate Harris asked about fiber optics in Jamaica, Jessica talked about DV fiber not in Jamaica and retirement of representative. Laura continued to discuss. Board said we have pulled out and moving to be an affiliate status as we are not going to be part of the CUD anymore.

John Beagan asked about deployment to middle east and what is going on. Laura responded federal deployment is legal for Vermont National guard. Jets were deployed to Caribbean and then to the Middle East. There is an active effort called DEFEND would require governor to assess if orders are legal and then he could prevent them from being deployed if they are not legal.

Mary Parlman asked about affordable housing in rural parts of the state, Chip program passed which is a community program to finance for infrastructure for developments. The language used in the legislature is “we have decided we want housing in downtowns and villages”. That is how land use policy is designed. Any environmentally sensitive areas will have increased regulation. Increase village downtown and increase outside of that

Kia Cating asked Laura what did she think of tax reform bill. Laura said it is still planning stages. She does not think it will pass.

Patti Bursten Act 250 – We are outside of the infrastructure thus Jamaica is in more regulation not less for Act 250/181.

Tini Henrich-Dredging River question but for town board not a state question

Erica Bowman Poet Laureate of Jamaica read her poem “Kitting in the Round”

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

Jessica Pollack nominated Tom Tolbert, seconded by Patrick McQuillan - Tom Tolbert was elected moderator.

Tom read rules guidelines for the meeting.

Article 2: To review the town report.

Olivia Hamilton made motion to review the town report, Andy Coyne seconded Jessica Pollack called the question.

Unanimously passed via voice vote

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

a. Select person for term of three years- Karen Ameden nominated Robert Brooks - Terry Latelle second. Robert was elected unanimously elected via voice vote.

b. Select person for term of one year- Rob Willis nominated Kate Ullman, seconded by CJ King.

Kate was elected unanimously elected via voice vote.

c. Select person for term of one year – Chrissy Haskins nominated Jason Kass, Patrick McQuillian second.

Jason was elected unanimously elected via voice vote.

d. Lister for term of three years- Karen Ameden nominated Pat Meulemans.

Pat was elected unanimously elected via voice vote.

e. 1st Constable for term of one year. Siobhan McDermott nominated Rob Willis. Erica Bowman seconded

Rob was elected unanimously elected via voice vote.

f. 2nd Constable for term of one year- Rob Willis nominated Ben Williams. Nomination was declined by CJ King. Rob Willis nominated Erica Bowman. She declined. Erica Bowman nominated Andrew Schmid. Rob Willis seconded.

Andrew was elected unanimously elected via voice vote.

- g. Trustee of Public Funds for term of one year. Erica Bowman nominated Rob Willis.

Rob was elected unanimously elected via voice vote

- h. Agent to Deed Land for term of one year. Jessica Pollack nominated Andy Coyne. Chris Healey seconded.

Andy was elected unanimously elected via voice vote.

- i. For Library Trustee for two years of a five-year term – Patti Bursten nominated Siobhan McDermott and Becky Antel seconded.

Siobhan was elected unanimously elected via voice vote.

Tom mentioned there is another Library Trustee position that is open but because it was not warned we cannot vote on it. Please contact the board or Madeline Helser if you want to be appointed to the position.

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

Bonnie West made a motion that we spend a total \$2,221,138.13 of which \$1,604,873.17 will be raised by taxation for the running expense of the town, and thus with the anticipated revenue of \$616,264,96 equals the total budget of \$2,221,138.13. And payment will be due on or before 10/1/2026 and all unpaid taxes will be delinquent on 10/2/2026 with an 8% penalty and starting on Dec 1 being charged interest at a rate of 1% per month until paid in full.

Seconded by Greg Joly.

Patti asked what the statement was. Jessica responded they were the numbers that were proposed in the town report.

Olivia Hamiton asked who decides the 8% fee. This is controlled by the state.

Jean Golrick asked is there a hired firm to validate the numbers. Board answered there is an outside auditor.

Greg Joly moved the questioned

The Article passed unanimously by voice vote.

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

Greg Joly made a motion and Rob Willis seconded.

The Article passed unanimously by voice vote.

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

Dana West made a motion and CJ King seconded.

Patti wanted to define can they get any grant, and it seems open ended.

Jessica stated it comes from the statues. We need to follow the statute.

If we do not approve at town meeting, we cannot apply for grants and spend the money. Come to selectboard meeting to see what grants are being sought.

Jean made a motion to amend the article in a way that the select board will list the priorities clarify the unanticipated funds and grants. The motion was seconded by Mike Molloy.

CJ King said that if we pass amendment than we may not be able to apply for grants that we did not anticipate.

Tini Henrich said as long as the grants were warned then we would not have to do this amendment. Jessica Pollack said that all grants would be warned on the select board agendas.

Greg Meulemans said there are often grants available for the roads, but we cannot anticipate what grants will be received to fix what roads.

Tom Tolbert called the amendment.

Amendment fails unanimously by voice.

Chrissy Haskins called the vote.

Article passed by unanimous voice vote.

Article 7: To set the time for the opening of the next Annual Town Meeting, to be held on the first Tuesday in March 2027.

Madeline Helser made motion and seconded by Drew Hazelton. March 2, 2027, at 10 am. Paul Fraser wanted to include the time being 10 am. Susan Stomski asked what the process is to change the dates. Tom Tolbert explained that this is the time to change it right now. Benzi Ross said some towns do evening meetings.

The Article passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 8: To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting.

Motion made by John Beagan and seconded by CJ King.

Nelson Coleman question about deficit we had a couple of years ago, Jessica Pollack explained the vote for last year about half a million dollars. Will see amount after the audit. We are budgeting \$25,000 per year. Sara Wiswall explained, we are working on it.

Nelson asked about the budget of \$95K for Transfer Station and Tom Tolbert said project work will be done by Hunter this Spring.

Tini Henrich asked about dredging the river, as Hunter said there's no access to that part of brook. She is willing to give access on her property to access the river. She explained the issues past the bridge on Depot Street.

Greg said we were able to do this as part of FEMA project. Funding is challenging, and we can look for grants and funding and are willing to continue looking for money. Tom will look at grants as Town Administrator. Jessica said Scott Jensen said the work already done will improve Meadows Road issues.

Greg said we can't sell materials, but we can reuse it on our streets. Tom will follow up.

Barb Daily thanks for redoing West Jamaica Rd with those materials.

Mary Parlman – Questions about dump changes what we are changing regarding bags and tokens.

Kate no more bags, tokens will be used - green and yellow will correspond to same color bag. No prices set yet.

Betsy Thomson concerned about Ernie's health in the cold, Kate Ullman said there is heat in his shed, the Swap Shop shed is larger.

Erica Bowman asked if you could bring a trash can and dump it into the compactor? Answer is yes.

Karen Ameden. JCAC is providing yoga and exercise activities and is looking to do a lot more at Town Hall as well as the library having movie nights.

Jamba is putting in new trails in Ball Mtn Dam area.

New town calendar maintained by Tom at Town Office.

Rawsonville school Committee is working on getting better access to the building. There will be an open house in May.

Jamaica historical mid-May to mid-October. Tons of donations are coming in.

Jamaica day is Saturday Aug 15th, 2026. Come out and volunteer. Many young people moving in, how do we keep the young people in town – what does the town need for the next 20-25 years to keep people here.

Andy Coyne asked can we use bags? Yes, bags will be good until they are gone.

Debris removal has been good in terms of controlling the flood. Tom Tolbert explained how he rests easier. Andy thanked Greg Meuelemans for doing everything that was needed and getting last bit of funding.

CJ King asked about tokens timing. Kate says they were ordered, please use the bags up first.

CJ King asked can you buy them same place. Answer is yes at Town Office, West River Provisions, and Rawsonville Market.

Barbara Daley asked are we raising price for token. No decision made on that.

Kate Ullman also said construction bags not allowed

Rob Willis asked could you dump construction bag on site. Kate said yes.

Jean Golrick asked when will the discussion on trash be warned for the Selectboard meeting. Tom Tolbert said agendas are posted on Thursday before the meeting.

Patti raised the issue of price increase for trash removal and asked if there are grants for low-income people who can't afford to use the transfer station. Jessica said we look into some sort of discount program as we don't want people to be illegally dumping.

Chris Healey - Asked for volunteers for Jamaica Day - please get in touch with Karen Ameden.

Becky Antel asked about compost bins. Why can't we go get that soil. Kate says Windham Solid Waste in Brattleboro sells the compost and you can get it. She did not know the cost.

Clara Robinson – Depot Street project for Green Mountain Power (GMP) putting in new poles. How are the campers going to get through. Jessica and the board work with GMP representation and there will be notifications. Tom said we had a general meeting. Tom will contact GMP to get morning information.

John Beagan considered supporting two resolutions.

Tom we cannot vote because not warned...he corrected it will not be binding.

John read the first Voters of the Jamaica Voters condemn the current activities of ICE operating call on congress to defund and abolish ICE as it now exists.

Passed by voice vote

John read the second Voters of Jamaica Vermont condemn the war against Iran and call on congress to invoke the war powers act and bring our troops back home.

Passed by voice vote

Heather Bartels talked about meeting in Townshend for Hamilton falls on 3/4/26.

Amos Newton has been in contact with the state, and they have no long-term plan for Hamilton Falls. The meeting is not about that.

Madeline Helser – Budget that was passed will allow library to open longer and this summer they will have three bicycles to check out with library card.

She is also applying for large grant for library to insulate the building and use the downstairs and install a new HVAC and accessibility.

Chuck Bosworth question for the road crew, from the fire department about Pikes Falls Rd first bridge. Cars have hit guardrail six times. Is there a plan for more visibility?

Greg Meulemans said there is no plan yet, but we can put a new sign.

Could we put up a strobe?

Rob Willis reminded people that dog licenses are due April 1st.

Karen Ameden requested a discussion on education. Jessica explained about warned information session about the vote to close the school and buy it back. April 8th vote and an informational meeting on March 31st at the Town Office. There is subcommittee that has been formed.

Robert Brooks & Jason Kass and others are the subcommittee for if it closes, what should we do with the building. The more ideas we have the better.

Kia Caiting asked when was the meeting time.

Jean asked about value of the school from Select Board meeting. Number can be gotten with listers tomorrow 10am-3pm at Town Office.

Chuck asked status on the wastewater project. Chrissy Haskins explained Londonderry money -- all the money was given out in the first round we were in the second round so we didn't get any funding. Study is done and she needs to schedule final presentation. There may be some money will be left over.

Jessica said because there are not federal funding options in the current administration. There are always options. Potentially a bond. Chrissy explained when funding comes up it is important for us to keep moving forward so we are ready for the funding.

Mary Parlman asked about water. The plan was to get a shared septic, not water.

Peter Golrick asked if the board is asking all people to fund just downtown. Other towns do a water district that would only have people who use it pay for it.

Chrissy said the Town could take out a loan. Loans can be paid by town or have just the users to pay it back. Manchester has projects where just the users pay, Londonderry with new wastewater system the entire town will pay for loan cost and users pay for usage. Those decisions have not been made.

Tom explained Town Office office hours. Town Office hours are now 7:30am to 4:30 M-Th

Erica, Fun event March 15th activity, Tom explained there was a conflict.

Drew Hazelton explains education changes, over the years Jamaica decided to become one of the Leland and Gray towns, fast forward a few years we had the chose to get out but Jamaica chose to stay in , fast forward to the merger of the district.

West river education district is also part of the district Windham Central supervisory union. Marlboro is being asked to close today. River Valley and Statton and Windham are also part of WCSU.

More responsibilities have shifted from the school board to the superintendent's office. That number we have no power over went up by \$700K on the assessment side. Tax rates have been bought down by fund balances – \$1.1M this year alone. To keep things the same in terms of education it would be a 30 % tax increase. Ultimately came back to Jamaica to close to bring down the total cost. Lower costs in local budget were made but the total cost is not going down because the increase from the supervisory union.

We bought down our own tax rate using \$350 fund balance, but we don't have an exact number yet. I want to bring this up because this is the last year of fund balance, no other way to reduce the education tax.

Public transparency the drafts are on the Windham Central Website.

Tom will put a link from our town page

Drew asked please come to board meetings

Dana West said we can go to Youtube to watch statehouse redistricting discussions.

Discussing regional changes and regional high schools that around career centers high school. There is a big push for that.

Jean Golrick - Thank you for your time do we have an attorney to get us out.

Drew explained the process of getting out of the union. The town would need to vote out and then we other communities would need to vote us out.

Legislature may change so we can dissolve more easily.

Mary Parlman, so many students going into each school district state regulations Drew explained we are not even close to the minimum numbers of students they wanted.

Drew explains state wanting kids to move into urban areas not rural. Said bus rides of 1 hour for elementary and 90 minutes for Middle and High school.

Danna explained the state is also looking to get rid of school choice. They may abolish that.

Siobhon asked what we can do.

Drew explains that there is not a lot. The choices are out of our hands. Contact state representatives (Emily Long) about your concerns, explains smaller grades coming in than going out. Per public spending per year went up this year. We have 100% penalty. The policies are hurting rural communities

Used to have bond payments and infrastructure that was not counted. Now it is.

We also have a CLA of .48 which is very low which is bad for tax rate.

Patti Bursten – Do we want more fake kids or less fake kids. We want more.

Drew will go through number with all with people. Come to meetings to vote and learn about everything.

Chrissy Hasktins said the informational meeting was a great meeting on all the details. She encouraged everyone to get involved, start following things. She and friends started Facebook page- Southern Vermont and Rural Communities School Forum. Getting the information out there.

Sue Stomski said supervisory union is hands off. How do we change this, is this done all over the state? Drew said district is run the same as all over the state.

Drew said SU budget is approved by representatives of the school boards. Did not give enough time to let them analyze the budget before vote.

There are 4 superintendents in Windham County. There are 89 full time employees in supervisory union. They are not the classroom teachers.

Greg Joly made motion to close Article 8 seconded by Peter Golrick.

Approved unanimously by voice vote.

Article 9: To Adjourn.

Greg Joly made motion to Adjourn seconded by Peter Golick.

Approved unanimously by voice vote.