

Grafton, Vermont
Results of Town Meeting
March 5, 2024

Pursuant to a warning duly posted and recorded, the legal voters of the Town met at the Grafton Elementary School in Grafton, Vermont on March 5, 2024 and took action on the following articles with these results (polls open from 9 am to 7 pm). Moderator David Ross called the 241st recorded Grafton Town Meeting to order at 10 am and invited the meeting to join GES students in the Pledge of Allegiance. He asked for a moment of silence to remember those no longer with us. He said that Stephen Nolan would be passing portable microphones to those who wished to speak. He announced that the Grafton PTG had food for sale in the lobby to benefit the “Girls on the Run” program.

There being no objection, he asked Grafton’s Legislative Representative Heather Chase to address voters and discuss what was happening in Montpelier. He recessed the meeting at 10:03 am. Chase discussed these topics: stabilizing school funding; universal school meals; workforce development; data privacy, and; offsets for flood costs (with regard to the July 2023 flooding). She said she would be at the Grafton Library on April 13 from 11 to noon to meet with voters.

The Moderator reconvened the meeting at 10:12 am.

The Moderator said that various town officials had been working for many weeks to prepare for this meeting and that various reports, including the Town Report, were located in the back of the room. He noted that Australian Ballot voting for town officials and school budgets were going on at the back of the room and until 7 pm that evening.

The Moderator said that he was privileged to serve as the meeting Moderator and that his role was to conduct a fair and orderly meeting and accomplish the business voters intended. He said that the meeting would be conducted in accordance with the laws of the State of Vermont and Robert’s Rules of Order. He noted that voters may vote to overrule Robert’s Rules and the Moderator, but not state law. The Moderator asked non-voters to stand and be recognized. He said that if anyone wished to speak, they should raise their hand, and be recognized, state their name for the record, and wait for Steve Nolan to pass the microphone. The Moderator said that with no objection, speakers would be limited to five minutes, a person could speak once on an article and a second time after all others have spoken. He said that reading of short quotes was allowed but any lengthy reading would require special action by the body.

There were no suggestions or questions. There being no objection, the Moderator dispensed with the reading of the entire Warning.

ART. 1 It was moved by Liisa Kissel, seconded by Andrea Turner, to choose all Town Officers and to vote on each and every Article proposed at this Town Meeting; voting shall be by Australian ballot on Tuesday, March 5, 2024; polls open from 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

Results of Australian Ballot:

David Culver, elected Moderator, one year

John Gregory, elected Selectboard member, two years

Cathy Siano-Goodwin, elected Selectboard member, three years
Stephen Sargent, elected Selectboard member, two years
Arlene Carey, elected Auditor, three years
Nancy Merrill, elected Lister, three years
Kimberly Record, elected Trustee of Campbell, Woolson Funds, three years
Kimberly Record, elected Trust of Public Funds, three years
Mary Howard Feder, elected Union High School District No. 27 Director, two years
Hardy Merrill, elected Grafton-WNUESD School Director, two years

ART. 2 It was moved by Chris Wallace, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, that the Town of Grafton receive and accept the Auditor's Report.

The Moderator offered the opportunity for discussion, and there was none. He reread the article and called for a vote. Motion passed by voice vote.

ART. 3 It was moved by Joe Pollio, seconded by Sam Battaglino, that the Town of Grafton authorize the Selectboard to borrow money, respectively, if necessary, for current expenses in anticipation of collection of taxes.

The Moderator offered the opportunity for discussion and there was none. He reread the article and called for a vote. Motion passed by voice vote.

ART. 4 It was moved by Mary Beth Culver, seconded by John Turner, that the Town of Grafton raise seven hundred seventeen thousand eighty-six dollars (\$717,086.00) for the maintenance of highways and bridges.

The Moderator offered the opportunity for discussion. Cynthia Gibbs asked in reference to the balance sheet, for the Selectboard to explain what it was going to do for retreatment of roads. Selectboard chair Joe Pollio said that there would be no repaving because there was only \$105,000 in the budget and the board needed to wait for that amount to be over \$200,000. Gibbs asked why it was in the fund balances as \$145,000. Town Treasurer Kim Record said that the amount was explained on page 13, where the proposed budget appeared; she said that on page 16, the highway department expenditures were broken out to add up to the \$717,086 or amount requested.

There was no further discussion. The Moderator reread the article and called for a vote. Motion passed by voice vote.

ART. 5 It was moved by Joe Pollio, seconded by Bill Kearns, the Town of Grafton raise two hundred forty-two thousand four hundred forty-four dollars (\$242,444.00) for the Selectboard's Budget.

The Moderator offered the opportunity for discussion and there was none. He reread the article and called for a vote. Motion passed by voice vote.

ART. 6 It was moved by Jean Lix, seconded by Bob Donald, that the Town of Grafton raise nine thousand dollars (\$9,000.00) for ambulance service.

The Moderator offered the opportunity for discussion and there was none. He reread the article and called for a vote. Motion passed by voice vote.

ART. 7 It was moved Pat Mack, seconded by Terry Pollio, that the Town of Grafton raise twenty-nine thousand nine hundred fifty dollars (\$29,950.00) for the Grafton Firefighters Association operating expenses.

The Moderator offered the opportunity for discussion. Fire chief Robbie Sprague thanked the town for its continuing support over the past 100 years and that the proposed budget represented an operating budget that was level funded for the third year in a row. He said that there would be more fundraising to raise funds for a ladder truck.

There was no further discussion. The Moderator reread the article and called for a vote. Motion passed by voice vote.

ART. 8 It was moved by Margo Matt, seconded by David Hall, that the Town of Grafton raise four thousand five hundred dollars (\$4,500.00) for Grafton Rescue Squad operating expenses.

The Moderator offered the opportunity for discussion. Rescue Squad president Keith Hermiz said that that in terms of budget, the Rescue Squad had been able to level fund once again this year. He said that the squad had picked up coverage for Athens and had been able to absorb the town nicely, with a per capital allocation and breakdown of population. Hermiz said that the squad was hitting the 15-year anniversary mark for its emergency vehicle and would be embarking on fundraising for that; he said there would be a shortfall but hoped to obtain grants and not come back to the town with a request. Sally Warren thanked the Rescue Squad for its service to her family in the past year.

There was no further discussion. The Moderator reread the article and called for a vote. Motion passed by voice vote.

ART. 9 It was moved by Mary Beth Culver, seconded by Joe Pollio, that the the Town of Grafton approve expenditures of any grant monies awarded for purposes named in such grant or grants for fiscal year 2024/2025.

The Moderator offered the opportunity for discussion and there was none. He reread the article and called for a vote. Motion passed by voice vote.

ART. 10 It was moved by Jean Lix, seconded by Lucia Corwin, that the Town of Grafton raise twelve thousand eighty-one dollars (\$12,081.00) for Humanitarian expenses (Bellows Falls Senior Center - \$674; Grafton Cares - \$1,000; Grafton Church (Food Pantry) - \$1,000; HCRS - \$600; VT Rural Fire Protection - \$100; Senior Solutions - \$650; SEVCA - \$650; The Current - \$250; Valley Cares - \$1,052; Visiting Nurse Association - \$2,300; VCIL - \$105; Women's Freedom Center - \$600; Youth Services - \$100; The Gathering Place - \$500; Grace Cottage Foundation - \$2,500).

The Moderator offered the opportunity for discussion. Sam Battaglino queried SEVCA's request and wondered if there were Grafton residents who benefited from this organization directly. Barbara Carey Lake said that as a community wellness nurse, she knew many folks who had

benefited with tax prep services and the organization also does case management to allow people to stay in their homes. Thomas Toscano said that SEVCA insulated his cabin and provided a stove from the State of Vermont for free.

There was no further discussion. The Moderator reread the article and called for a vote. Motion passed by voice vote.

ART. 11 It was moved by Bill Kearns, seconded by Dottie Cannon, that the Town of Grafton raise two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000.00) for the Capital Budget? (\$45,000 for Highway Structures Program, \$170,696 for Highway Equipment, \$10,000 for the Guardrails Program, \$17,000 for Fire Truck Fund, and \$7,304 for Town Hall Requirements).

The Moderator offered the opportunity for discussion and there was none. He reread the article and called for a vote. Motion passed by voice vote.

ART. 12 It was moved by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, seconded by Lucia Corwin, that the Town of Grafton raise one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00) for the support of Parks Place.

The Moderator offered the opportunity for discussion and there was none. He reread the article and called for a vote. Motion passed by voice vote.

ART. 13 It was moved by Maryann Donald, seconded by Thomas Toscano, that the Town of Grafton grant tax exemption to the Brick Meeting House Foundation for their property identified as Parcel Number 008141, located at 2 Main Street.

The Moderator offered the opportunity for discussion and there was none. He reread the article and called for a vote. Motion passed by voice vote.

ART. 14 It was moved by Margo Matt, seconded by David Hall, that the Town of Grafton grant tax exemption to the Grafton Improvement Association for their properties identified as Parcel Number 008144 and 009056, located at 50 Townshend Road and 877 Kidder Hill Road.

The Moderator offered the opportunity for discussion and there was none. He reread the article and called for a vote. Motion passed by voice vote.

ART. 15 It was moved by Kim Record, seconded by Bob Donald, that the Town of Grafton pay its property taxes to the Treasurer in Quarterly installments, with the due dates being August 15, November 15, February 17, and May 15, with no postmarks accepted.

The Moderator offered the opportunity for discussion and there was none. He reread the article and called for a vote. Motion passed by voice vote.

ART. 16 It was moved by Bill Kearns, seconded by Norm Robertson, that the Town of Grafton levy an interest charge on all delinquent taxes on real and personal property of one (1) percent per month or fraction thereof from the due date of each installment for the first three months, and one

and one-half (1½) percent per month or fraction thereof for every month thereafter, as provided for in 32 VSA 5136.

The Moderator offered the opportunity for discussion and there was none. He reread the article and called for a vote. Motion passed by voice vote.

With no objection, at 10:47 am the Moderator called for discussion of non-binding business.


- Pat Mack said that there had been over 30,000 primary care visits to Grace Cottage Hospital in the past year, and the hospital was having a large campaign with great need. She asked voters to speak with her or Terry Pollio about how they could help.
- Margo Matt told voters that the Village Park volunteers had received a \$30,000 grant to aid in accessibility to the park. She thanked the Grafton Improvement Association for providing porta-potties to that park and Winnie Park.
- Keith Hermiz thanked David Ross for his work as Town Moderator over the past nine years. Wendy Martin presented him and Judy Ross with flowers as thanks and good wishes for retirement. The Moderator said that he and Judy were leaving Grafton with a lot of sadness and that it had been his honor to serve as Town Moderator.
- Joe Pollio thanked Rich Thompson for his service on the Selectboard.
- Dottie Cannon thanked all of the boards and organizations that keep the town running smoothly.

At 10:56 am, a motion was made by Judy Ross, seconded by David Culver, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed by voice vote.


Respectfully submitted,



Wendy Martin, Assistant Town Clerk



David Ross, Town Moderator



Selectboard member