

Mason Town Meeting

March 12, 2022

Held at the Mason Elementary School
13 Darling Hill Rd., Mason, New Hampshire

Moderator Catherine Schwenk came to the microphone and called the 2022 Town Meeting to order at 9:04 am. She requested that nonvoters wear nonvoter credentials and sit in the first row to the Moderator's left. There was no request for interpretive services. She indicated the fire and emergency exits and then introduced those sitting at the head table: Select Chair R. Peter (Pete) McGinnity, Selectman Charles (Charlie) Moser, Selectman Kate Batcheller and Town Clerk Debra (Deb) Morrison.

There were 72 voters and 2 nonvoters present with 1,039 names on the checklist, representing a seven (7) percent turnout.

The Moderator acknowledged that preparation for this meeting is a coordinated effort of many individuals and requested a round of applause for their efforts.

The Moderator then reviewed the procedure for voters. Voters wishing to speak should use the microphone and address any questions to the Moderator. Residents need to give their name at the microphone when recognized. All amendments and substantive motions must be in writing (please also print your name) and signed by the maker and seconder.

Five voters may make a written request for a secret ballot vote prior to a voice vote or division vote per RSA 40:4A. Voters and seconders must be present at the meeting to request a secret ballot vote.

Every voter is entitled to speak on a debatable motion unless the meeting, by a two-thirds vote, has ordered discussion stopped. A voter is entitled to speak a second time on the same question provided all voters who wish to speak have spoken.

The Moderator then announced the results of the Town and School District elections held on March 8. Total votes cast were 598 out of a total of 1,038, representing a 58 percent turnout. She declared the winning candidates elected to their respective offices.

Moderator: Dotsie Millbrandt 333

Selectman (3 year): John Suiter 330

Selectman (1 year): Kate Batcheller 473

Supervisor of the Checklist: Dane Rota 451

Library Trustee: Robin Smith 482

Trustee of Cemeteries: Ken Spacht 13 [*write-in votes*]

Trustee of Trust Funds: Martha Ward 451

The following articles were voted on at the polls on Tuesday, March 8, 2022.

Mason School District Results

School Board Member (3 year): Colin Robinson 282

School Board Member (3 year): Dr. Christopher Guiry 277

School District Treasurer: Christine Irlbacher 415

Results of **Article 2** — Shall the Mason School District accept the reports of agents, auditors, committees, or officers chosen as printed in the Annual Mason School District Report?

Yes 415 / No 94 / Article 2 carries

Results of **Article 3** — Shall The Mason School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant, or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purpose set forth therein, totaling Three Million Two Hundred Nineteen Thousand Seventy Dollars (\$3,219,070.00)? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be Three Million One Hundred Seventy-Five Thousand Thirteen Dollars (\$3,175,013.00) which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Mason School District, or by law, or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13 X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. **NOTE:** This operating budget warrant article does not include appropriations contained in ANY other warrant articles. The School Board recommends this article 5-0.

Yes 332 / No 209 / Article 3 carries

Results of **Article 4** — Shall The Mason School District raise and appropriate Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) to be added to the previously established Educating Educationally Disabled Children Capital Reserve Fund (established in 2010), with such amount to be funded from the June 30 unreserved fund balance available for transfer on July 01? No amount to be raised from taxation. The School Board recommends this warrant article 5-0. (Majority vote required.)

377 / No 165 / Article 4 carries

Results of **Article 5** — Shall The Mason School District raise and appropriate Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000.00) to be added to the previously established Healthcare Capital Reserve Fund (established in 2020) with such amount to be funded from the June 30 unreserved fund balance available for transfer on July 01? No amount to be raised from taxation. The School Board recommends this warrant article 5–0. (Majority vote required.)

Yes 343 / No 199 / Article 5 carries

Results of **Article 6** — Shall The Mason School District raise and appropriate Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) to be added to the previously established School Building and Grounds Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund (established in 2010), with such amount to be funded from the June 30 unreserved fund balance available for transfer on July 01? No amount to be raised from taxation. The School Board recommends this warrant article 5–0. (Majority vote required.)

Yes 358 / No 164 / Article 6 carries

Results of **Article 7** — Shall The Mason School District raise and appropriate Twenty Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00) to be added to the previously established Unanticipated Tuition Cost Capital Reserve Fund (established 2010), with such amount to be funded from the June 30 unreserved fund balance available for transfer on July 01? No amount to be raised from taxation. The School Board recommends this warrant article 5–0. (Majority vote required.)

Yes 320 / No 204 / Article 7 carries



The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Catherine Schwenk. Afterwards, Charlie Moser acknowledged Catherine for her 36 years acting as the Town Moderator. Catherine is also a certified parliamentarian. She was presented with a certificate of appreciation, flowers and a beautiful little gold gavel necklace.

There was no objection to waiving the reading of the Warrant.

In regards to voting by ballot, it was clarified “to please come out of your seats to the center aisle and receive a yes/no ballot. Come down the center aisle to the ballot box. It is your responsibility to place your vote in the box. You may pocket the other half of the ballot or put it in the wastebasket. Please return to your seat by the side aisle.”

Article 2: Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 1 as proposed by the Planning Board for the town of Mason Planning Ordinance as follows?

Amend Article XVI: Wetlands Conservation District Ordinance to implement a fifty-foot buffer around delineated wetlands, to define certain fertilizer use limitations within the wetlands buffer; to address wetlands and wetlands buffer performance standards; to address what wetlands areas or buffers are exempt from the wetlands district ordinance; and to confirm that legally pre-existing uses in the Wetlands Conservation District shall not be prohibited from continuing, and how such uses may be expanded.

Yes 127 / No 461

Article 2 fails.

Article 3: Kate Batcheller moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to accept the reports of its agents, auditors, committees or officers chosen as printed in the Mason Annual Report.

Article 3 carries unanimously.

Article 4: Pete McGinnity moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will raise and appropriate the Selectmen's recommended amount of Two Million, Two Hundred Seventy-Two Thousand, Nine Hundred Twenty Dollars (\$2,272,920) for general municipal operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. (Majority vote required.) (Recommended by the Selectmen.)

Jack Flanagan questioned line item #4191-12 [Planning Board new equipment] amount of \$4,500. Will it allow the Planning Board to digitize documents? Dane Rota: The Mann House is currently storing records and it's an issue the town needs to address. There's a potential fire hazard. The town has a new website which can also hold these documents, but records are scattered all over. Jack: Are other departments using this? Yes.

Jack Flanagan: Dave did a great job with the highway budget but we underspent it. Pete: There are a number of factors that contribute to not spending the whole amount like covid, extremely wet weather, etc. This year will increase because of gas with other increases coming. By law we cannot overspend our budget so we need to overbudget just a little. The town got more than \$220K back which went to reduce the tax rate.

John Lewicke: The state's rainy-day fund has a surplus and some of that will come back to the towns.

Pete: Our total operating budget with a 4% increase is lower than other towns around us.

Jack Flanagan recognized Pete's service to the town as selectman since his term expired this year.

Article 4 carries.

Ann Moser wanted to note that April 23 is town cleanup day and to meet at the church at 9 am. Blue bags can be picked up at Charlie Lanni's shop and the highway department will pick them up on the roads.

Article 5: Charlie Moser moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote, pursuant to RSA 154:5, to establish a 3-year term for the position of Mason Fire Chief, who shall be appointed by the Board of Selectmen. (Majority vote required.) (Recommended by the Selectmen.)

Charlie said that over the last several years other towns have discussed the need for a full-time chief due to various reasons. In Mason no one wanted to come up the ranks and take the position. He introduced Tony Burns, the new fire chief, who will also be serving as the emergency management director.

Article 5 carries.

Article 6: Kate Batcheller moved and it was seconded to if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) to be added to the Fire Department Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund previously established. (Majority vote required.) (Recommended by the Selectmen.)

Chief Burns: The average truck starts at \$300K unequipped. Grants will be explored and will help defray costs. Trucks are now required to be less than 20 years old with enclosed cabs, which can cost \$700K to a million dollars. Let's do this incrementally. The new trucks will be all-wheel or four-wheel drive.

Article 6 carries unanimously.

Article 7: Pete McGinnity moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) to be added to the Highway Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund previously established. (Majority vote required.) (Recommended by the Selectmen.)

Mike Bromberg asked how much a new grader would cost. Pete: Between \$350-\$400K.

Article 7 carries unanimously.

Article 8: Charlie Moser moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) for the purpose of repair and maintenance of the Town's roads, or take any other action relative thereto. (Majority vote required.) (Recommended by the Selectmen.)

Charlie said that this has been a recurring warrant article for several years. A couple of years ago a five-year plan was developed which was quite successful. We're going to concentrate a little more on our dirt roads.

Article 8 carries unanimously.

Article 9: Kate Batcheller moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000) to be added to the Fire Equipment Capital Reserve Fund previously established. (Majority vote required.) (Recommended by the Selectmen.)

Article 9 carries unanimously.

Article 10: Pete McGinnity moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000) to be added to the Fire Station Capital Reserve Fund previously established. (Majority vote required.) (Recommended by the Selectmen.)

Article 10 carries unanimously.

Article 11: Charlie Moser moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$1,500) for the purpose of maintenance on the rail trail and to further authorize withdrawal of said funds from the Forestry Maintenance Fund. (Majority vote required.) (Recommended by the Selectmen.)

Article 11 carries unanimously.

Article 12: Kate Batcheller moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$35,000) to be added to the Town Hall Renovation Capital Reserve Fund previously established. Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) revenue to come from the NH Moose Plate Grant and Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) revenue to come from a private citizen donation. This article would be non-lapsing. No monies to come from taxation. (Majority vote required.) (Recommended by Selectmen.)

Article 12 carries.

The Moderator reminded everyone of town cleanup day and then added, “Thank you for electing me for the last 36 years. I’ve enjoyed teaching you parliamentary procedure. You’ve all graduated.”

On motion of Michael Bromberg and duly seconded, Town Meeting was adjourned Sine Dai at 9:54 am.

Following Town Meeting, Moderator Catherine Schwenk administered oaths of office to Dotsie Millbrandt, John Suiter, Martha Ward and Kate Batcheller.

Debra A. Morrison

Mason Town Clerk