

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING
March 4, 2019

The Annual Town Meeting was held at the Westford Elementary School on Monday, March 4, 2019. Approximately 35 registered voters were present. Moderator Edward Chase called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He reviewed Roberts Rules of Order procedures, made several announcements and recognized nonresidents. The Town Clerk led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Moderator then read the warning.

Article 1 To act upon the reports of the Town Officers.

There was no discussion.

Article 2 Shall the Town of Westford collect its real estate and personal property taxes in four equal installments due on August 15th, November 15th, March 15th and May 15th, commencing with the fiscal year that begins on July 1, 2019, with postmarks being acceptable?

Frank Howrigan made a motion to accept Article 2, seconded by Millie Therrien.

There was no discussion.

Article 2 was voted in the affirmative as written.

Article 3 Discussion of other nonbinding business.

Nanette Rogers thanked Grant Thomas for his service as a member of the Selectboard.

There was no more discussion.

Town Meeting adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING

The Public Hearing for Australian ballot articles was called to order at 7:11 p.m.

Article 4 Shall the voters of the Town of Westford accept the Selectboard's budget of \$2,009,198 to defray the expenses for the ensuing year?

Selectboard Chair, Allison Hope, provided a brief review of FY'18. The Town has seen changes in the Road Crew, Assistant Town Clerk and Rec Coordinator positions. Allison thanked the Road Crew on behalf of the Selectboard for their hard work and dedication during some very difficult circumstances. The Town completed projects as formally laying out Common Road and have been working on the Management Plan for the Town forest that was part of the Jackson farm. The closing for the sale of the Spiller lot is scheduled to occur this Spring.

The total proposed budget is \$2,009,198. After factoring in anticipated revenue and using \$35,000 from the Contingency Fund, the amount to be raised by taxes is \$1,694,998. Based on the amount to be raised by taxes and the estimated Grand List, the tax rate will increase

by approximately 3.723% or \$50.60 for property valued at \$200,000 or \$101.20 for property valued at \$400,000.

The highway budget is increasing by approximately 6%. Major increases include building improvements, an increase in funds being put in the Equipment Reserve Fund and \$55,000 toward reducing a \$271,774 deficit in the highway budget. The Town will budget funds accordingly until such time the deficit has been eliminated. Revenue is increasing by approximately 20%, mainly due to funds being moved from the Equipment Reserve Fund to be used as a down payment for a new truck and excavator. Factors driving the increase include improvements to the building and budgeting \$55,000 toward the recovery of a deficit.

Major increases include funds for the Admin. Capital Budget Reserve, building improvements, the pumper truck loan payment and trash and recycling collection services. Revenue is increasing by approximately 7%.

There was no discussion on the proposed budget.

Dave Gauthier made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Andre Roy.

The public hearing adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

**Results of Australian Ballot Articles
Voted on March 5, 2019**

Article 4 Approved the Selectboard's budget of \$2,009,198 for FY'19.

Total ballots cast: 273

199 Yes

59 No

15 Blanks

Article 5 To elect all officers required by law.

Town Moderator - one year – Edward Chase

Town Clerk – three years – Nanette Rogers

Selectboard - three years – Bill Cleary

Library Trustee - five years – Peggy Rodgers