

TOWN OF VOLUNTOWN

TOWN BUDGET MEETING

May 24, 2022

The electors and citizens qualified to vote in the annual budget meeting of the Town of Voluntown are hereby warned that the annual town meeting will be held on Tuesday May 24, 2022 at the Voluntown Elementary School, 195 Main St, in Voluntown, Connecticut, at 7:00 pm for the following purposes. Items 2-6 will be adjourned to a referendum vote on June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at the Voluntown Town Hall, 115 Main Street between 12pm-8pm.

1. To consider and act on the following resolution:
  - (a) BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE TOWN OF VOLUNTOWN shall repeal the Referenda Ordinance 7-1.
2. To appropriate the funds necessary for the Board of Selectmen's Budget for the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 in the amount of \$2,383,418 (two million, three hundred eighty-three thousand, four hundred eighteen dollars).
3. To appropriate the funds necessary for the Board of Education Budget for the fiscal year 2022-2023 in the amount of \$6,850,333 (six million, eight hundred fifty thousand, three hundred thirty-three dollars).
4. To appropriate the funds necessary for the Capital Projects Budget for the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 in the amount of \$273,000 (two hundred seventy-three thousand dollars) from the unassigned fund.
5. To enter into a two-year contract for a seasonal resident state trooper service for fiscal years 22/23 and 23/24?
6. To have a special appropriation in the amount of \$93,000 from the undesignated fund balance to cover the estimated cost of a seasonal resident state trooper contract for the fiscal years ending on June 30, 2023?

The meeting was called to order by Tracey Hanson with the reading of the Notice of Town Budget Meeting.

Pamela E. Theroux, Town Clerk served as clerk for the meeting.

Call for the moderator by the Clerk. Motion by Jack Wesa to nominate Tracey Hanson as moderator, which was seconded by Matthew Hanson. No other nominations were made. All were in favor of Tracey Hanson serving as moderator.

The moderator asked for a motion to dispense with reading the call of the meeting again. Edward Delsanto made a motion to dispense with the reading of the call of the meeting again. Arthur Nieminen seconded it, and all were in favor.

Item#1: To consider and act on the following resolution:

- (a) BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE TOWN OF VOLUNTOWN shall repeal the Referenda Ordinance 7-1.

Susan Choquette made a motion to accept Item #1 and Edward Delsanto seconded it. Item #1 was opened for discussion. Tracey Hanson read the ordinance being repealed “7-1 **Time and date.** All referenda held in the Town of Voluntown shall be held during the period of 12:00 noon to 8:00 p.m., on a Tuesday, such date to be set by the Board of Selectmen.” Tracey explained that this is very limiting at budget time and only allows 2 dates to use for the referenda. Diana Ingraham made a motion to close discussion and James Anderson seconded it. All were in favor.

Tracey Hanson called for a vote on item #1. All were in favor. Ordinance 7-1 is repealed.

Item#2: To appropriate the funds necessary for the Board of Selectmen’s Budget for the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 in the amount of \$2,383,418 (two million, three hundred eighty-three thousand, four hundred eighteen dollars).

Edward Delsanto made a motion to accept Item #2 and Ralph Lafrazza seconded it. Item #2 was opened for discussion. Tracey Hanson showed a presentation of the year in review and the current budget. She went over the grants that have been received totaling \$2,955,966.00 and the added revenue through the increase in PILOT funding and the assessment. She spoke about the many improvements and programs that the Town hall and Public Works have done this year. She then explained why there is a requested increase in the First Selectman salary. It is not a raise, it is a change in the position to full time. The workload of the First Selectman cannot be completed on a part time basis. A full time First Selectman is necessary, they need to be available for office hours, grant writing, and emergency needs 24 hours a day as well as also being the Road Foreman. A question was asked whether Tracey also draws a salary as the Road Foreman, and she explained that she does not. Several other citizens spoke as to how much the current First Selectman, Tracey Hanson, has done for the Town, the amount of time she spends, the relationships that she has forged, and how dedicated and responsive she is. Other questions were asked as to why we need a full time Selectman and the amount of the salary change. Julie Zelinsky, the Assistant to the First Selectman and Director of Finance explained that she brought this position change to the Board of Selectman and requested this increase. She explained that if we were to go back to a part time First Selectman, we would need to hire staff to support this person. A Road Foreman, a grant writer, and more then likely someone to cover office hours. It is imperative that any future First Selectman understands before they run for office that this is a full-time position. Tracey continued with the budget presentation going over the grants that have been received and the ones that are in process now. A question was asked as to why

the library roof repair wasn't paid for with the grant funds they received, and Tracey explained that the grant funds are for specific items and must be used for those items and nothing else. There were further questions and comments regarding the bottle bill "nip tax", Wylie School flagpole and bell being repaired and put back in place, the traffic issues at Beach Pond and on Main Street, the clock being repaired, the flashing school zone signs, and the budget increase in the Transfer Station. A motion was made by Robert Sirpenski to close discussion seconded by Ralph Lafrazza. All were in favor, so carried.

In accordance with section 7-7 of the CGS, the Selectmen have elected to move item #2 to a referendum vote, and the question will read, "SHALL THE TOWN OF VOLUNTOWN APPROVE A FY 2022-2023 BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S BUDGET IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,383,418.00."

Item #3: To appropriate the funds necessary for the Board of Education Budget for the fiscal year 2022-2023 in the amount of \$6,850,333 (six million, eight hundred fifty thousand, three hundred thirty-three dollars).

Susan Choquette made a motion to accept Item #3 and Jack Wesa seconded it. Item #3 was opened for discussion. Kate Beauparlant the Board of Education Chairwomen went over the budget and explained that the main increases were for fuel and electricity. A question was asked regarding the plans for Veteran's Day, and that will depend on the current COVID numbers and recommendation from Uncas Health. Adam Burrows, Superintendent of Schools, thanked the BOE for working so hard to come up with a budget that works for the Town and the students as well. He also asked for help contacting legislators to keep our ECS grant at the current funding level. Joe Miller made a motion to close discussion seconded by Lars Rafeldt. All were in favor, so carried.

In accordance with section 7-7 of the CGS, the Selectmen have elected to move item #3 to a referendum vote, and the question will read, "SHALL THE TOWN OF VOLUNTOWN APPROVE A FY 2022-2023 BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET IN THE AMOUNT OF \$6,850,333.00."

Item #4: To appropriate the funds necessary for the Capital Projects Budget for the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 in the amount of \$273,000 (two hundred seventy-three thousand dollars) from the unassigned fund.

Edward Delsanto made a motion to accept Item #4 and Robert Sirpenski seconded it. Item #4 was opened for discussion. Tracey Hanson went over the items in the Capital Projects Budget. There were no further questions. Jack Wesa made a motion to close discussion seconded by Sandra Pellinen. All were in favor, so carried.

In accordance with section 7-7 of the CGS, the Selectmen have elected to move item #4 to a referendum vote, and the question will read, "SHALL THE TOWN OF VOLUNTOWN APPROVE A FY 2022-2023 CAPITAL PROJECTS BUDGET in the amount of \$273,000.00."

Item #5: To enter into a two-year contract for a seasonal resident state trooper service for fiscal years 22/23 and 23/24?

Diana Ingraham made a motion to accept Item #5 and Ralph Lafrazza seconded it. Item #5 was opened for discussion. Many questions were asked regarding the coverage, hours, additional resources having a resident trooper adds, response time, and what happens with coverage for sick, vacation, and court time. Sargent DeAngelo, from State Police Troop E and a former six year resident trooper in Haddam, explained that the most significant benefit to having a resident trooper is the relationships. That trooper knows the Town and the individuals well and responds accordingly, and that people have a person to reach out to when they have a problem. The response time will be much quicker when the trooper is on duty, but the same when they are not. The hours are flexible and will be negotiated and set up with the town. If the resident trooper is out for more than two weeks, or it is known ahead of time a replacement is sent. A suggestion to put together a committee to research whether a resident trooper is really needed at this time was made, and Tracey explained that the purpose of bring this to referenda is to decide what the Town wants at this time. A suggestion was made to bring a neighborhood watch back and Tracey responded that it will be looked into if the Town would like to do this. It was also asked if the trooper could actually be on Beach Pond, and Sargent DeAngelo stated that this would have to be negotiated but could probably happen. Robert Sirpenski made a motion to close discussion seconded by Ralph Lafrazza. All were in favor, so carried.

In accordance with section 7-7 of the CGS, the Selectmen have elected to move item #5 to a referendum vote, and the question will read, "SHALL THE TOWN ENTER INTO A TWO-YEAR CONTRACT FOR SEASONAL RESIDENT STATE TROOPER SERVICES FOR FISCAL YEARS 22/23 and 23/24?"

Item #6: To have a special appropriation in the amount of \$93,000 from the undesignated fund balance to cover the estimated cost of a seasonal resident state trooper contract for the fiscal years ending on June 30, 2023?

Ralph Lafrazza made a motion to accept Item #6 and Try Jones seconded it. Item #6 was opened for discussion. Tracey Hanson explained that this was to approve the monies for the seasonal state trooper and that a year-round resident trooper would be double this. Susan Choquette made a motion to close discussion seconded by Robert Sirpenski. All were in favor, so carried.

In accordance with section 7-7 of the CGS, the Selectmen have elected to move item #6 to a referendum vote, and the question will read, "SHALL THE TOWN APPROVE A SPECIAL APPROPRIATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$93,000 FROM UNDESIGNATED FUND BALANCE TO COVER THE ESTIMATED COST OF THE SEASONAL RESIDENT STATE TROOPER CONTRACT FOR THE FISCAL YEARS ENDING ON JUNE 30, 2023?"

The referendum was held on Tuesday, June 7, between the hours of 12:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M. and the Moderator announced that the questions had been approved by the following votes:

2. “To appropriate the funds necessary for the Board of Selectmen’s Budget for the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 in the amount of \$2,383,418 (two million, three hundred eighty-three thousand, four hundred eighteen dollars).

Number of “Yes” votes            135

Number of “No” votes            108

Item #2: Passed

3. To appropriate the funds necessary for the Board of Education Budget for the fiscal year 2022-2023 in the amount of \$6,850,333 (six million, eight hundred fifty thousand, three hundred thirty-three dollars).

Number of “Yes” votes            161

Number of “No” votes            82

Item # 3: Passed

4. To appropriate the funds necessary for the Capital Projects Budget for the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 in the amount of \$273,000 (two hundred seventy-three thousand dollars) from the unassigned fund.

Number of “Yes” votes            157

Number of “No” votes            85

Item #4: Passed

5. To enter into a two-year contract for a seasonal resident state trooper service for fiscal years 22/23 and 23/24?

Number of “Yes” votes            93

Number of “No” votes            158

Item #5: Failed

6. To have a special appropriation in the amount of \$93,000 from the undesignated fund balance to cover the estimated cost of a seasonal resident state trooper contract for the fiscal years ending on June 30, 2023?

Number of "Yes" votes            91

Number of "No" votes            152

Item #6: Failed

Tracey Hanson made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Skipp "Mark" Oulton. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 P.M., June 7, 2022.

Attest:

Pamela E. Theroux, Town Clerk