

Town Meeting Minutes

March 7, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 AM by Gary Apfel, town moderator. Rick Cawley led with the Pledge of Allegiance, and Marian Cawley and John Conner led us in America the Beautiful.

Tim O'Dell spoke on community and communication. Zachary Lea-Saken was announced as acting as microphone runner. Gary Apfel explained Robert's Rules.

Article 1. To elect the following by Australian ballot. For the purpose of this article, the polls will be open from 8:30 AM to 7:00 PM. Moderator for 1 year, Town Clerk for 3 years, Selectboard member for 3 years, Lister for 3 years, Lister for 2 years, Lister for 1 year, Collector of Delinquent Taxes for 1 year, Constable for 1 year, Cemetery Commissioner for 3 years, WRVS School Director for 3 years, WRVS School Director for 1 year

No action necessary.

Article 2. To see if the voters will accept the various Officers' Reports as presented in the Town Report. Jeff Spiegel moved the article. Chris Groschner seconded.

Dick Kelly pointed out a correction on page 22 of the annual report – The Emerald Ash Borer fund balance for 2021 should read \$8,000 and the 2022 balance should read \$13,000.

There was some discussion on budget increases.

Gary called for a vote to accept the reports, the ayes have it.

Article 3. To see if the voters will vote \$883,225, of which \$658,725 to be raised by taxes, to support the Highway Fund.

Chris Groschner moved the article. Kelly Donahue seconded.

Lee Porter thanked the selectboard and townspeople for their support of the highway crew. Holly Groschner led a round of applause for the hard work of the road crew.

Lee Porter and Joe Blodgett discussed budget increases due to inflation and supply-chain issues.

Gary called for a vote, the ayes have it.

Article 4. To see if the voters will vote \$88,558, of which \$88,558 to be raised by taxes, to support the Highway Capital Equipment Fund.

John Saken moved the article. Jeff Spiegel seconded.

Joe Blodgett spoke about supply-chain shortages and a truck they ordered and are waiting to see if they will receive.

Gary called for a vote, the ayes have it.

Article 5. To see if the voters will vote \$15,000, of which \$15,000 to be raised by taxes, for the Bridge Reserve Fund.

Kerry DeWolfe moved the article. Chris Groschner seconded.

Joe Blodgett explained the fund and discussed plans for work on a bridge in the village in the coming year.

Gary called for a vote, the ayes have it.

Article 6. To see if the voters will authorize the town to use funds received from the Better Back Roads grant program.

Chris Groschner moved the article. Jeff Spiegel seconded.

Joe Blodgett explained the program.

Gary called for a vote, the ayes have it.

Article 7. To see if the voters will fix the compensation for the Selectboard members for the coming year at \$1,200 each.

Sue Parmenter moved the article. Louis Graff seconded.

Holly Groschner moved to amend the article to read: "To see if the voters will fix the compensation for the Selectboard members for the coming year at \$2,000 each."

Margaret Loftus seconded the amendment.

There was discussion if this would be a one-time increase or on a continued basis and the legal/procedural ability to vote to amend it on a permanent basis without due warning. Chris and Holly Groschner and Liz Davis spoke in favor of the increase. There was question about what the compensation is in other towns and how we compare.

Gary called for a vote on the amendment, the ayes have it.

Gary called for a vote on the amended article, the ayes have it.

Gary called for a non-binding motion to get a sense of the town's desire to increase the selectboard compensation to \$2,000 going forward. John Conner moved the non-binding motion. Katharine Lea seconded. The ayes have it.

Article 8. To see if the voters will vote \$2,000, of which \$2,000 to be raised by taxes, for the Emerald Ash Borer Fund.

John Saken moved the article. Kelly Donahue seconded.

An update of the problem was given and it was discussed that while the Emerald Ash Borer has not yet been sighted in Corinth, funding is needed for preventative tree work and to build up a reserve for when they do arrive and need a quick response.

Gary called for a vote, the ayes have it.

Article 9. To see if the voters will vote \$500, of which \$500 to be raised by taxes, to support the Planning Commission.

Kerry DeWolfe moved the article. Chris Groschner seconded.

Kerry DeWolfe explained the planning commissions recent focus on bylaw updates and preparing for increasing property sales. She explained that town support is needed for grant funding.

Gary called for a vote, the ayes have it.

Article 10. To see if the voters will vote \$2,100, of which \$600 to be raised by taxes, to support the Conservation Commission.

John Saken moved the article. Kerry DeWolfe seconded.

Glynn Pellagrino explained \$400 of the budget is for Green Up Day and \$200 is to show town support for grant funding. Glynn gave an update of the new FX Shea Town Forest parking lot, which was paid for with grant funding. He also mentioned the Town Orchard's progress and future plans for events there. The commission is discussing climate change and ways to preserve important forest blocks. Anne McKinsey, new Green Up Day Coordinator, thanked Ken Arkind, retiring coordinator, for his work and gave an update on the success of the prior year as well as upcoming year plans.

Gary called for a vote, the ayes have it.

Article 11. To see if the voters will vote \$5,000, of which \$5,000 to be raised by taxes, to support the Town Hall Capital Improvement Fund.

Irene Mann moved the article. Louise Graff seconded.

Carl Demrow explained the fund is used for maintenance of the hall and the anticipated \$30k roof replacement that will be needed in the upcoming year. There was discussion on the difference between maintenance projects funded with this fund versus ARPA funding used for new projects.

Gary called for a vote, the ayes have it.

Article 12. To see if the voters will vote \$500, of which \$500 to be raised by taxes, to support the computer equipment reserve fund.

John Saken moved the article. Kelly Donahue seconded.

Nick Kramer explained the fund and said there is a decrease in current request because of the established healthy fund balance.

Gary called for a vote, the ayes have it.

Article 13. To see if the voters will vote \$456,482, of which \$239,742 to be raised by taxes, to support the General Fund.

Kelly Donahue moved the article. Chris Groschner seconded.

Kelly Donahue explained what sort of items make up the General Fund. There was discussion about the County Tax and how that is charged per capita and covers the county courthouse and admin services. There was then discussion about the sheriff's office budget vs actual cost and the current staffing shortages. There was concern expressed about the amount of service we receive from the sheriff's office and the ability to control what level of service we receive.

Jeff Spiegel moved to amend the article to decrease the sheriff's office budgeted amount from \$11,590 to \$9,500. The amended article reads: "To see if the voters will vote \$454,392, of which \$237,652 to be raised by taxes, to support the General Fund."

John Melquist seconded the amendment.

There was further discussion about the proposed decrease. John Melquist expressed support for the amendment while Lee Porter spoke against the decrease. John Saken and Holly Groschner expressed concern that decreasing the budget would impact the perception of the level of service the town would like to see from the sheriff's office.

Susan Fortunati moved to amend the amendment so it includes not only the proposed decrease to the sheriff's budget but also the increase to the selectboard compensation from Article 7. The amended amendment reads: "To see if the voters will vote \$456,792, of which \$240,052 to be raised by taxes, to support the General Fund."

Holly Groschner seconded the amendment to the amendment.

Further discussion was had around the constable position and the challenges of reduced legal enforcement ability of that position. There was discussion around the ability to negotiate and enhance communication with the sheriff's office to advocate for town needs.

Margaret Loftus moved to call the question. Sue Parmenter seconded. Gary called for a vote by hand. A 2/3 vote was achieved, the ayes have it and the call passed.

Gary called for a vote to amend the amendment to read: "To see if the voters will vote \$456,792 of which \$240,052 to be raised by taxes, to support the General Fund."

Voice vote was unclear so a vote was done by hand. 40 ayes, 22 nays. The ayes have it and the amended article passed.

Gary called for a vote on the amended article, the ayes have it.

At 12:12pm, Robert Fortunati made a motion to recess the meeting for lunch until 1pm. John Conner seconded.

Gary called for a vote on the recess, the ayes have it.

Gary called the meeting back to order at 1pm.

Carl Demrow gave a State Representative update.

Article 14. To hear a report from the selectboard on planned expenditures of ARPA funds.

Liz Davis moved the article. John Saken seconded.

Rick Cawley gave an update on current ARPA funding plans included: the purchase of jaws of life for the fire department, a study of sewage and septic in the village, an update to the town hall entrance and accessibility ramp, and the building of a town garage to house equipment. The selectboard explained that they relied on suggestions from the ARPA committee as well as considerations of town resource capabilities and state and federal grant opportunities to make their decisions.

Gary called for a vote to accept the report, the ayes have it.

Article 15. To see if the Town will vote to have the taxes collected by the Treasurer and to fix the dates for payment of the same.

Sue Parmenter moved the article. Dick Kelly seconded.

Dick Kelly moved to amend the motion to read: To see if the Town will vote to have the taxes collected by the Treasurer on September 12, 2023 and February 6, 2024, postmarks not accepted."

Susan Fortunati seconded.

Gary called for a vote on the amendment, the ayes have it.

Gary called for a vote on the article, the ayes have it.

Article 16. To recommend members-at-large for the Budget Committee for 1 year.

Chris Groschner moved the article. Lee Porter seconded.

The recommendations included: Lee Porter, Amy Peberdy, Liz Davis, Raymond Moulton, and Mike Pittman.

Gary called for a vote to close nominations performed by raise of hand, 2/3 vote achieved and the ayes have it.

Gary called for a vote on the article, the ayes have it.

Article 17. In case of unanticipated State Aid Funds (funds not included in the budget) for specific highway and bridge projects applied for and received during the fiscal year, shall the Town allow expenditure of such funds for those projects?

TR Jackson moved the article. Chris Groschner seconded.

No discussion had.

Gary called for a vote, the ayes have it.

Article 18. To transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

The Corinth Historical Society expressed thanks for the town support of the luncheon, and Gary thanked the Corinth Historical Society in return and further thanked the town volunteers and staff.

Dina Dubois expressed thanks to Norm Collette for his historical knowledge of the town and all of his efforts.

Anne McKinsey discussed the tragic death of her dog due to trapping and shared some information about trapping in the state.

Jeff Spiegel invited people to join the upcoming selectboard meeting to discuss a Corinth village beautification project.

Katharine Lea moved for: "The town to create a study committee to review the law enforcement needs of Corinth." John Saken seconded. Rick Cawley said the details of the committee could be discussed at an upcoming selectboard meeting. Gary called for a vote, the ayes have it.

Ed Pospisil expressed concern about a request for three generators to be used for town folk during emergencies that went unanswered by the selectboard. Nick Kramer and Rick Cawley expressed the apologies for the miscommunication and encouraged further discussion to make sure the request was resolved.

Irene Mann asked about the increase in town office salaries. Rick said it was a consensus made by the budget committee and was needed to keep up with inflation.

Sue Parmenter moved to adjourn the meeting. Chris Groschner seconded. Gary called for a vote to adjourn, the ayes have it. Meeting adjourned at 2:20pm.

Respectively Submitted By



Christiane Carroll, Town Clerk



Approved by

SELECT BOARD CHAIR

Office held



Approved by

Town Moderator

Office held