



Annual Town Meeting Minutes

June 26, 2021

Held at the Middlefield Fair Grounds

Present:

Selectboard Chair Judith Hoag and Member Ann Marie Visconti; Regrets, Tonya Santaniello
Moderator, Joseph Kearns; Town Clerk Suzanne C. Lemieux

ARTICLE 1: To choose on one ballot:

For the term of three years:

Selectboard	Finance Committee (2)	Assessor	Planning Board (2)
School Committee (2)	Library Trustee	Cemetery Commission	

For the term of one year:

Moderator

Polls will open at 8 am -1 pm at Town Hall

The elections were duly held at the Town Hall

Moderator Joseph Kearns opened the meeting at 2:00 P.M. with a quorum present of 55 residents and warrant that was duly posted.

ARTICLE 2: To act upon the reports of the Selectboard, Treasurer, Tax Collector, Assessors and other elected or appointed officers or committees of the Town.

There were no discussions on this article.

ARTICLE 3: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the salaries and compensation of elected officers; or take any other action relative thereto:

(AI) Tax will increase .88 per thousand if budget is approved as is. Assessors Clerk increase was clarified; Stabilization was quoted as a little over \$240, 000 and Free Cash was \$156,000. A motion made and seconded to accept FC & SB recommendations of \$23,110 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the salaries and compensation of appointed staff; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to accept the requested amount of \$68,776 (after the SB recommended that the Assessors' Clerk compensation be corrected to \$7,000 because of error) passed unanimously.

SB: Selectboard

FC: Finance Committee

AI: Audience Input

ARTICLE 5: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of money for General Government; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to accept the FC & SB recommendations of \$108,000 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 6: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of money for the Expense Accounts; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion was made and seconded to accept the FC & SB sums of \$51,869. AI: Assessors' expenses, including Software/Support, Treasurer's Tax Title were justified. Motion passed unanimously at \$51,859.

ARTICLE 7: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of money for the Highways; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to accept the FC & SB sums \$507,905 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 8: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of money to the Library, Veterans and Cemetery Accounts; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to accept the FC & SB recommendations \$19, 839 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of money for Protection of Persons & Property Accounts; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion was made and seconded to accept the FC & SB sums of \$95,467. AI: Police Officers' Compensation increase was justified. More patrol hours are needed to handle residents' concerns about the increased speeding on Skyline Trail and the increase in calls. Speeding deterrents were discussed. EMS education and Board of Health Agent Compensation were explained. Motion passed unanimously at \$95,467.

ARTICLE 10: To see if the Town will vote to Raise and Appropriate the sum of money to establish a Reserve Fund to provide for extraordinary or unforeseen expenditures, as provided by M.G.L. Chapter 40, section 6, as amended; or take any other action in relation thereto:

A motion made and seconded to accept the FC & SB recommendations \$10,000 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 11: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of money for Health & Sanitation; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to accept the FC & SB recommendations of \$33,568 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 12: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of money for the Miscellaneous Accounts; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to accept the FC & SB recommendations of \$8,500 passed unanimously.

SB: Selectboard

FC: Finance Committee

AI: Audience Input

ARTICLE 13: To see if the Town will vote to approve to replace the current Gateway Statutory Assessment of \$387,592 in Article 14 with an assessment of \$503,566 by adopting the Alternative method of computing each of the six-member town's assessment and payment of costs incurred by the Gateway Regional School district; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to adopt the Alternative method of computing the Gateway Statutory Assessment. It was explained that if any one of the six Gateway member towns vote the article down as per the recommendations of the FC & SB, the district will revert to Alternative Assessment based on student population in ARTICLE 14 which will save the town \$115, 974. After a lengthy discussion, the article was voted down, as per the recommendation of the FC & SB.

ARTICLE 14: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the following sum for Middlefield's Statutory Assessment for the Gateway Regional School District; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion was made and seconded to accept the FC & SB recommendations of \$387,592. (AI) Sarah Foley served for many years on the School Committee and is not seeking a new term. The Town showed appreciation for her service. Two positions are now vacant. The motion passed unanimously at \$387,592.

ARTICLE 15: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the following sum for vocational education; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to accept the FC & SB recommendations of \$100,000 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 16: To see if the Town will vote to authorize revolving fund accounts for the receipt of inspection fees, pursuant to MGL Chapter 44, Section 53E½, to be expended during FY2021 without further appropriation for the purpose of administrative duties, capped at the amounts in the warrant; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion was made and seconded to accept the FC & SB recommendations for inspection fees passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 17: To see if the Town will vote to authorize a revolving fund, under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 44, Section 53E1/2, which may be spent on the Transfer Station without further appropriation during FY2022. Collected Transfer Station fees may be used for the Transfer Station attendant's salary, for capital equipment, grounds improvement, or other related expenses to benefit the Transfer Station. The Selectboard may spend up to \$7,500 in revolving fund monies for the Transfer Station during FY2022 and retain in this account all collected fees; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to approve the article as sponsored by the SB and recommended by the FC passed unanimously.

SB: Selectboard

FC: Finance Committee

AI: Audience Input

ARTICLE 18: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of money for Debt & Interest; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to accept the FC & SB recommendations of \$1,000 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 19: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Assessors to appoint a member of the Board to serve as the Assessors' Clerk at the salary fixed and voted on by the Town; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to accept the article as per the FC & SB recommendations passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 20: To see if the Town will vote to accept the Franklin Regional Transit Authority as the official transportation agent for the Council on Aging; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to approve the article as sponsored by the SB and recommended by the FC passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 21: To see if the Town will vote to accept Chapter 90 and all other Highway grant Funds from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, for the purposes of repair, construction, maintenance and preservation of the Town's roads and bridges and other related costs; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to approve the article as sponsored by the SB and recommended by the FC passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 22: To see if the Town will vote to transfer \$13,130 from FY21 Fuel Account to cover the overage in the snow removal account; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to approve the article as sponsored by the SB and recommended by the FC passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 23: To see if the Town will vote to transfer \$68,000 from free cash to offset the tax rate; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion made and seconded to approve the article as sponsored by the SB and recommended by the FC passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 24: To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$27,894 to purchase an off-road rescue vehicle for the Fire Department; or take any other action relative thereto:

AI: Several issues such as necessity, storage and grant funding were discussed. Motion was made and seconded to approve the amendment "that the contract not be executed before the Town has explored the possibilities of grant funding, not to exceed six months." A hand count was taken, with eight residents in favor and thirteen were opposed. Motion failed. Motion made and seconded to approve the article as recommended by the FC & SB passed unanimously.

SB: Selectboard

FC: Finance Committee

AI: Audience Input

ARTICLE 25: To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000, transfer \$50,000 from free cash, and borrow up to \$75,000 to purchase and install a replacement Western Star chassis for the 2012 International tandem axle plow truck, including a new plow frame, hydraulic system and controls, along with blasting and painting the subframe on the old body; or take any other action relative thereto:

AI: Discussion ensued on the benefits of this action compared to purchasing a new truck.

Motion made and seconded to approve the article as recommended by the FC & SB passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 26: To see if the Town will transfer \$40,000 from free cash [to] the Stabilization Fund; or take any other action relative thereto:

Motion made and seconded to approve the article as sponsored by the SB passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 27: To see if the Town will vote to allow the Selectboard accept funds and gifts on behalf of the town; or take any other action relative thereto: motion was made and seconded to see if the Town will vote to allow the Selectboard to accept funds and gifts on behalf of the Town.

Motion made and seconded to approve the article as sponsored by the SB and recommended by the FC passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 28: To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to repair cracks in the surface of the Town Hall basketball court, apply a new one-inch asphalt top court, and line the court to meet current NCAA guidelines; or take any other action relative thereto:

AI: This Article was submitted to be placed on the 2020 warrant and subsequently removed by the Selectboard. In 2021, a Citizen's Petition was signed to place this on the 2021 warrant. The Town will include this as part of the Franklin County Bids for asphalt financed with Chapter 90 money for repair of the roads. Chair of SB spoke in favor of this Article. FC seeks to table until FY 2023.

A hand count was taken with 15 residents in favor, 5 against. Motion passed.

ARTICLE 29: To see if the Town will have an open discussion and vote on the decision of which ambulance service will be the town of Middlefield's primary ambulance. Hinsdale fireman's association ambulance or Hilltown community ambulance; or take any other action relative thereto:

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to have the open discussion as sponsored by the Citizens Petition.

AI: Selectboard Ann Marie Visconti clarified her intent to provide Middlefield with the best care available for people. Hilltown has rescinded their offer to enter into contract with Middlefield. Confusion over wording of article in light of Hilltown's action ensued. A straw poll was taken on whether to keep Hinsdale as our ambulance service. The Straw Poll results was unanimous to keep Hinsdale as our ambulance provider.

SB: Selectboard

FC: Finance Committee

AI: Audience Input

ARTICLE 30: To see if the Town will vote to authorized the Select Board to petition the General Court for the enactment of special legislation entitled "An Act Authorizing the Town of Middlefield to Continue the Employment of Fire Chief Ronald Radwich" as set forth below, provided however, that the General court shall be authorized to make ministerial, clerical and editorial changes of form only to said bill, unless the Select Board approves amendments to the bill before enactment by the General Court; and to authorize the Select Board to approve such amendments, or take any other action relative thereto:

AI: A motion was made and seconded to amend the last sentence in SECTION 2 "To see if the Town will vote to change the Regular By-laws by changing Selectmen to Selectboard wherever it appears in the Regular By-laws; or take any other action relative thereto:" because it is a repeat of Article 31. Motion to amend passed unanimously.

Article 30 was brought to a vote and passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 31: To see if the Town will vote to change the Regular By-laws by changing Selectmen to Selectboard wherever it appears in the Regular By-laws; or take any other action relative thereto:

Motion made and seconded to approve the article as sponsored by the SB passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 32: To transact any other businesses to come before said meeting.

Selectwoman Judith Hoag was thanked for her service to Middlefield. Judith thanked the residents for their participation in Town Meeting and their contribution as a community; the Middlefield Fair for hosting the Annual Town Meeting; Noreen Suriner and Donald Miller for supplying the amplifying system; Skip Savery for supplying the chairs and tables and for everyone who contributed to this event.

The importance of updating our War Memorials was discussed. Conflicts after World War II have not been honored.

An update on the progress of the Town center was requested. The gazebo is scheduled to be received mid-July.

A motion is made and seconded to dissolve town meeting 4:38. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Suzanne C. Lemieux

Town Clerk

SB: Selectboard

FC: Finance Committee

AI: Audience Input