2012

Town of Northport Annual Town Meeting Minutes 2012

Northport, Me.

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OFFICIAL WARRANT FOR THE TOWN OF NORTHPORT
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
To be held on June 2, 2012 and June 4, 2012

To: Jeanine Tucker, Town Clerk of the Town of Northport in the County of Waldo, State of Maine.

GREETINGS:
In the name of the State of Maine, you are hereby required to notify and warn the inhabitants of the Town of Northport in said County and State, qualified by law to vote in Town affairs to appear at the Northport Town Hall on Saturday, June 2, 2012 at 8:00a.m., then and there to act upon Articles 1 and 2,
AND
To notify and warn said voters to meet at the Blue Goose Center on Monday, June 4, 2012 7:00p.m. then and there to act upon Articles 1; then 3 through 24 inclusive.

Article 1. To Choose a Moderator to preside at said Town Meeting.

*Under motion by Jeanine Tucker and seconded by Mark Humphreys*
*Dee Reid was elected Moderator of the Town Elections on Saturday June 2, 2012.*

*The Annual Town Meeting was called to order by Town Clerk Jeanine Tucker at 7 p.m. Tucker read the opening of the Warrant and then opened the floor to nominations for Moderator.*

*Under motion by John Bryant and seconded by W. Reeves Gilmore Lee Woodward was elected Moderator of the Annual Town Meeting on Monday June 4, 2012.* Woodward then read aloud the results of voting on Saturday June 2, 2012.

Article 2. To elect by secret ballot:

A. One (1) Selectman, Assessor and Overseer of the Poor for a three (3) year term.

*Drexell White ran unopposed and received 67 votes*
*Cecil Wood received 1 write in vote*

B. One (1) Regional School Unit 20 Board Member for a three (3) year term.

*Peter Dalton received 24 votes*
*Debora Riley received 42 votes and was re-elected.*
*David Crofoot received 1 write in vote.*

*Once the results of votes cast were read into the record Moderator Lee Woodward turned the floor over to Administrator Barbara O’Leary so that she could present Cleo Alley with a certificate of appreciation for the many years of dedicated service he has provided to the community while operating the Northport Food Pantry. O’Leary explained to those present that Alley has been nominated, and approved, for an award that will be presented to him in the fall from the Spirit of America Foundation for outstanding volunteerism.*
Woodward then asked those present if they would allow candidates Erin Herbig and Donna Hopkins to speak for no more than two minutes to speak on behalf of their campaign. The attendees consented, allowing both individuals the opportunity to speak.

**Article 3.** To see what amount of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate to pay the Selectman/Assessors for the ensuing year. (Current salary – Selectmen $3,500.00 – Selectman Chair $4,000.00) Selectmen recommend no change.  
*Motion was made and seconded to approve as written. No discussion, all in favor–none opposed Article passed.*

**Article 4.** To choose Assessors for the ensuing year.  
*Motion was made and seconded to approve as written. No discussion, all in favor–none opposed Article passed.*

**Article 5.** To choose one or more Overseers of the Poor and establish pay for the same.  
*Motion was made and seconded to approve as written. No discussion, all in favor–none opposed Article passed.*

**Article 6.** To see what amount of money the Town will vote to pay the Road Commissioner, Road Workers, Trucks and Equipment for the ensuing year. (Selectmen recommend State Rates plus 10% for routine road maintenance. Major road reconstruction to follow the competitive bid process.)  
*Motion was made and seconded to approve as written. A request for explanation of ‘Major’ came from the public. Chairman Rooney explained that it would consist of any work that does not involve routine maintenance. Another question arose as to why the rate would be 10% above State Rates. Rooney spoke again by stating the Town has a history of paying above State minimum and has done so for many years. With no further discussion the Article was moved and passed with all in favor–none opposed.*

**Article 7.** To see what amount of money the Town will vote to pay members of the Planning Board. (Current pay $27.50 for each member per meeting attended; and $32.50 for the Chairman for each meeting attended.) Selectmen recommend no change.  
*Motion was made and seconded to approve as written. No discussion, all in favor–none opposed Article passed.*

**Article 8.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate $5,000.00 for the Northport Scholarship Fund for second semester Northport college freshman.  
*Motion was made and seconded to approve with the correction of the wording ‘Freshman’ to ‘Freshmen’. An inquiry was made as to how the scholarship is awarded. Chairman Rooney explained that second semester freshmen would forward a copy of their tuition bill to the Town Office and a payment of up to $500.00 would be sent to the school.*
With no further discussion the Article was moved and passed with all in favor-none opposed.

Article 9. To see if the Town will vote to enact an ordinance titled ‘Town of Northport Ordinance Prohibiting the Use and Sale of Consumer Fireworks’.

Motion was made and seconded to approve as written. Discussion arose as to what types of fireworks were included in the ban, Chairman Rooney stated the same fireworks that are permitted by State Law are the ones being prohibited in the Village area.

Another resident asked why the ordinance was being considered, Rooney explained that this ordinance was originally drafted by the Overseers of the Northport Village Corporation as an effort to thwart any potential danger due to the close proximity and density of buildings in the Village area.

One resident asked if this ban covered the entire Town, Rooney informed them that it is just for the Northport Village, Bayside, area. Another resident noted that the Fire Department had managed to control and contain a structure fire in the Village in recent years without incident and wanted to know what the restricted use of fireworks was based on. Rooney re-iterated that this is at the request of the Overseers.

Dan Andrews, owner of the Blue Goose Event Center, commented on how he would not be allowed to discharge fireworks because the business is inside the Northport Village Corporation but not in the Village area. Board member Drexell White stated that the ordinance would prohibit personal use, adding that it does not restrict commercial use.

Two residents, both living in the Village are, spoke in favor of the Ordinance stating concerns for noise and the close proximity of the houses.

Moderator Woodward then moved the Article to vote. The Ordinance was adopted with a majority in favor-four opposed.

Article 10. To see what amount of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the following accounts. Selectmen recommend:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Account</th>
<th>Appropriation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Ambulance</td>
<td>$ 11,170.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Animal Control</td>
<td>$ 8,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Assessing Contract</td>
<td>$ 22,400.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Belfast Free Library</td>
<td>$ 3,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Cemeteries</td>
<td>$ 15,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Code Enforcement Office</td>
<td>$ 18,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Contingency Fund</td>
<td>$ 10,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Emergency Management</td>
<td>$ 2,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Employee Benefits</td>
<td>$ 22,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J First Responders</td>
<td>$ 18,225.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K General Assistance</td>
<td>$ 2,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
L Insurance $15,000.00
M Legal $8,000.00
N Northport Vol. Fire Dept. $35,000.00
O NVFD Fire Chief Stipend $20,800.00
P NVFD Truck Replacement $20,000.00
Q Administration $148,615.88
R Payroll Taxes $23,500.00
S Planning Board $1,000.00
T Roads & Bridges $125,000.00
U Sand/Salt Shed Loan $34,055.88
V Septage Contract $4,000.00
W Snow Removal/Sanding $200,000.00
X Social Services $7,000.00
Y Office Operations $30,500.00
Z Town Hall Operations $22,000.00
AA Transfer Station $35,000.00

Total: $862,767.26

Motion was made and seconded to approve as written. Discussion followed with a request for explanation of General Assistance funds. The resident asked why the Board would only appropriate $2,000.00 to the fund; Chairman Rooney explained that the current balance in that line is $9,558.37. Rooney went on to explain that this is a fund that carries forward any unexpended funds year after year and that adding $2,000.00 to the current balance should cover the program for the ensuing year.

Resident Paul Sheridan spoke to members of the community in an effort to point out the affordability of the E.M.S. (Fire Dept. & First Responders) budgets this year as he is concerned about massive increases in the future should an L.N.G. Tank be built in Searsport. Sheridan stated that the cost to train and equipment needed for our departments to respond, to any emergency arising from an incident with the L.P.G. terminal, could be a surmountable amount higher than what people are used to funding for now.

Another resident asked for clarification on the General Fund and Social Services. Board member Denise Lindahl explained that every year the Town gets requests from more and more agencies for funding, adding that this year the requests totaled over $20,000.00. Lindahl continued by informing those present that the Board chose to fund the same agencies as was approved last year, those being the Waldo Community Action Partners for $4,000.00; the Northport Food Pantry for $2,500.00 and Senior Spectrum for $500.00. General Fund was explained as being the fund where all unused lapsed funds are placed at the end of the year.

A question was then asked as to who the Assessors are for the Town, Rooney stated that the Town uses and assessing firm by the name of RJD.
With no further discussion the Article was moved and passed with all in favor—none opposed.

Article 11. To see if the Town will vote to carry forward the balances of the following accounts, and allow expenditures of the same:
A Animal Control
B Cemetery Maintenance
C Cemetery Development
D Code Enforcement Officer
E First Response Medical Team- Operating & Equipment
F General Assistance
G Harbor Fund
H Insurance
I Legal
J Northport Needy Families
K Northport Volunteer Fire Dept.
L Northport Warm Neighbor Fund
M Payroll Tax Expense
N Planning Board
O Roads & Bridges
P Snowmobile Reimbursement
Q Town Hall Maint/Repairs
R Transfer Station

Motion was made and seconded to approve as written. No discussion, all in favor—none opposed Article passed.

Article 12. To see if the Town will vote to use $250,000.00 from the Undesignated Fund Balance to reduce the tax commitment.

Motion was made and seconded to approve as written. Discussion followed with a request for explanation of what the 'Undesignated Fund' is. Chairman Rooney explained that the undesignated fund is surplus money that comes from the collection of taxes. Rooney continued by explaining that use of some of the existing funds to offset appropriations previously approved in Article 10 would help offset the mil rate increase when taxes are committed.

With no further discussion the Article was moved and passed with all in favor—none opposed.

Article 13. To see if the Town will vote to allow the transfer of $20,000.00 out of the Harbor Fund to be placed into the Marine Reserve Fund. Harbor Fund balance as of March 31, 2012 is $39,542.15

Motion was made and seconded to approve as written. Discussion followed with a request for explanation of what the Marine Reserve Fund serves. Chairman Rooney explained that the Marine Reserve Fund is used for replacement of things like the $40,000.00 Bayside Wharf and that the Harbor Fund is a day to day working fund that comes from boat excise taxes and mooring fees.
With no further discussion the Article was moved and passed with all in favor-none opposed.

Article 14. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen, on behalf of the Town, to dispose of Real Estate acquired by the Town for non-payment of Taxes thereon, on such terms as they deem advisable and to execute Quit Claim Deeds on same.

Motion was made and seconded to approve as written. Discussion followed with a question as to where the money goes when property is sold. Chairman Rooney stated that funds are placed in the ‘Undesignated Fund’. Rooney also wanted residents to understand that the Town does not take property and that it has been a long time since a property has been sold for tax sale.
With no further discussion the Article was moved and passed with all in favor-none opposed.

Article 15. To see if the Town will vote to fix a rate of interest on taxes delinquent after September 30, 2012 and March 1, 2013. (Selectmen recommend State authorized rate of 7%)

Motion was made and seconded to approve as written. A resident asked why a 7% interest rate and not something lower. Chairman Rooney explained that the Town had always gone with the State recommendation with an understanding that if the interest rate is set too low may encourage non-payment of taxes.
With no further discussion the Article was moved and passed with all in favor-none opposed.

Article 16. To see if the Town will set a rate of interest for refunded taxes due to over assessments. (Selectmen recommend rate of 7%)

Motion was made and seconded to approve as written. One resident asked the Board when an over assessment gets refunded, Chairman Rooney stated that every time an over assessment is discovered it is refunded.
With no further discussion the Article was moved and passed with a majority in favor-one opposed.

Article 17. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to expend overlay money to pay tax abatements and applicable interest granted during the fiscal year.

Motion was made and seconded to approve as written. A resident requested an explanation of what overlay is and how it is used. Chairman Rooney informed those present that overlay is a percentage that the State allows to come from the property tax assessment in anticipation of abatements or overages in General Assistance.
With no further discussion the Article was moved and passed with all in favor-none opposed.

Article 18. To see if the Town will vote to enter into an Alewife (River Herring) Harvesting Program, with or without the Town of Lincolnville, for the 2012-2013 season.
**Motion was made and seconded to approve as written. No discussion, all in favor–none opposed Article passed.**

**Article 19.** To see if the Town will vote to accept the following grants and revenue from the State of Maine and allow the Selectmen to use them as they deem necessary.

| Grant                          | Amount       |
|                               |             |
| State Revenue Sharing         | $71,804.37  |
| Veterans                      | $1,112.00   |
| Snowmobile Registrations      | $304.52     |
| Local Road Assistance         | $31,608.00  |
| General Assistance            | Unknown     |
| Civil Emergency Funds         | Unknown     |
| Land Grants                   | Unknown     |
| Tree Growth                   | $1,323.54   |
| All Other Funds Available     | Unknown     |

All dollar amounts are estimates.

**Motion was made and seconded to approve as written. No discussion, majority in favor–one opposed Article passed.**

**Article 20.** To see if the Town will vote to give the Northport Ridge Riders (a snowmobile club) funds that the State of Maine returns to the Town from snowmobile registrations, to be used to maintain snowmobile trails in Northport.

**Motion was made and seconded to approve as written. No discussion, all in favor–none opposed Article passed.**

**Article 21.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate funds for the Northport Village Corporation an amount of $25,000.

**Motion was made and seconded to approve as written. A request for explanation was raised. Chairman Rooney explained that the $25,000.00 was an additional amount requested by the Northport Village Corp. to help fund Village expenses. With no further discussion the Article was moved and passed with all in favor–none opposed.**

**Article 22.** To see if the Town will authorize the Selectmen to transfer monies received from Auto Excise Tax to the Roads & Bridges account at the close of the 2012-2013 fiscal year.

**Motion was made and seconded to approve as written. No discussion, all in favor–none opposed Article passed.**

**Article 23.** To see if the Town will vote to allow the Selectmen to use educational and other grants and donations for the reason specified in the grant or donation.

**Motion was made and seconded to approve as written. No discussion, all in favor–none opposed Article passed.**

**Article 24.** To see if the Town will vote to increase the property tax levy limit of $1,047,323.38 established for the Town of Northport by State law, in the event that the municipal budget approved under the preceding articles will result in a tax commitment that is greater than that property tax levy limit. (Written ballot required by statute.)
Since the budget and expenses approved in the warrant do not exceed the Tax Levy Limit the motion was made to table the Article. It was asked for how long Article is tabled, the response from Administrator O’Leary was that it is tabled until the next Town Meeting. Before the Article was moved to vote a resident stood up and expressed his appreciation and complimented the Board for providing a clear and precise budget. With no further discussion the Article was moved and passed with all in favor-none opposed.

The Annual Town Meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

ATTEST, A True Copy

_________________________________________
Jeanine Tucker, Town Clerk