

# **TOWN OF FRANKLIN**

## **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MARCH 4, 2025**

Tim Magnant called the meeting to order at 10:05 am. The pledge of allegiance was recited and led by Eric Bushey

### **To elect a moderator for the ensuing year.**

- Tim Magnant was nominated by Jean Richard seconded by Bryant Reynolds all in favor; motion passed. George Godin made a motion to close the nomination. All in favor; Tim Magnant was elected moderator for one year.

### **To receive and discuss the reports of the town officers.**

#### **• Auditor's page 6-**

Jean Richard/George Godin made a motion to accept the auditor's report.

#### **• Selectboard, Road Commissioner, Paving Progress, equipment repair/maintenance and road maintenance reports pages 7-10**

Jean Richard/George Godin made a motion to accept.

- Kim Gates Maynard- Town purchased the property on Main St. and looking for more info? Dave Bennion- purchased with the plan to be the future town office. This will be a long-term process, 3-5 year plan. Will do as much work as possible with grants; will seek the appropriate grants needed for repairs. Architect has gone through building, but have not received the final report yet. Already received one grant to repair the porch; \$20,000 with a 50% match. The Town has until 12/31/26 to complete the project. Vision for the building- will expand the parking in the back for the office and library, make it handicap accessible, have a larger meeting space.
- Kim Gates Maynard- North end of Main St./Morses Line Rd intersection plans? Adam Kane- lining/stripping, signage planned to be done this spring. This timeline was pushed back from last year.  
Kim Gates Maynard- Beaver Meadow Rd? Adam Kane- There was a collapsed culvert, and it is not safe for vehicles to pass over. Crew put steel plates in for a temporary fix. The road is currently closed until a solution is in place for the best and economical fix.
- Mike Lawyer- Did town spend tax-payer money on the Luce house purchase? Doesn't see how the ARPA spending info matches the Luce house purchase price. If this was town tax-payer money it should have gone to voters? Gregg Machia agrees. Lisa Larivee- the extra funds came from the interest earned with the invested ARPA fund with Ed Jones; Mike- what is the break-down of interest and ARPA money? Lisa Larivee will gather the breakdown info during the lunch break to present later.
- Peter Magnant- What is the plan for the safe in the Luce house? How will that be paid for? Dave Bennion- the idea is to put the safe in the garage space, raise the floor. No estimated cost yet. Could potentially transfer the current safe door to save money.

- Wayne Laroche- What are the plans for an elevator in new office? Dave- the second floor will not be used for the public, so there is no need for an elevator.
- Marilyn Hackett- Will there be much grant money in the future due to federal government changes?
- Wesley Kempton- Updates from the Community voices meetings; expand childcare, improve communications, and the health of the Lake. Wesley is on the Childcare committee; currently identifying locations and addressing the issue. Jen Raynak- Communication committee; emergency/town postcards were made and sent out to everyone in town, has also started a monthly newsletter that gets emailed out and posted on the Town website. Lake Quality; Information on the alum treatment will be presented by Rob Evans at 11:30.

Adam Kane/Mike Lawyer made a motion to table the ARPA discussion until the end of town meeting. All in favor.

- **Zoning Administrator, Zoning Board of Adjustment and Planning Commission pages 11-12**

Jean Richard/George Godin made a motion to accept.

- Kim Gates Maynard- Converting camps from seasonal to year-round? Bryce Bachelder- In the past there hasn't been a clear process in the regulations for converting from seasonal to year-round. PC has pursued an amendment to make this process easier. The ZBA can waive the minimum lot size (under 40,000 sq. ft.) as long as there is potable water, a state approved septic, and parking for 2 vehicles. This is still waiting for SB approval to continue the process.

- **Enhanced 911, Cemetery Commissioner's, Franklin Center Cemetery, Health Officers, pages 12-13**

Jean Richard/George Godin made a motion to accept.

- **Franklin Homestead Inc. page 14**

Jean Richard/George Godin made a motion to accept.

- Mike Lawyer- questions renovations in carriage house. Jean Richard- most applicants are looking for a one-bedroom model, converting a few to be such. Project will be done soon. They did lose one unit.
- Wayne Laroche- homestead may want to contact VHCB.
- Marilyn Hackett- does the service package provide nursing home duties? Jean- No, the homestead/carriage house cannot provide nursing home duties because they are not a level 3 care service.
- David Pratt- Wants to give a shout out to the board on always being flexible. It's a great community at the carriage house/homestead.
- Andy Godin- Remembers insurance with the homestead being an issue. Increasing insurance rates? Jean Richard- they have found an insurance provider who does not see them as a level 3 care service. This has lowered the insurance cost by nearly half.
- Adam Kane- Solar panels? Jean Richard- Received a \$100,000 grant from Felco Foundation. Homestead/Carriage house out of pocket cost should hopefully be \$50,000 or less.

- Sam Gervais- Need for capital investments? Jean Richard- They put aside money every year for future projects. Looking for grants. Plan to do some paving, drainage issues in back, moving dumpsters. Looking for grants as they are now available for non-profits.
- **Franklin Historical Society and Lake Carmi Campers Association pages 15-16**  
Jean Richard/George Godin made a motion to accept.
  - Marilyn Hackett- What is the clean water revolving loan fund and how does this get paid back? Wendy Sargeant- this is state money because Lake Carmi is a state lake. The town is just a pass through for funding; any money the town spends on this will be reimbursed by state grants.
  - Wayne Laroche- Why did the town apply for the alum permits? Lisa Larivee- The town had to apply for the permits because the state cannot apply for their own permits.
  - Andy Godin- Are the aerators in lake, and what's the plan? Polly Gadbois- They are still in the lake, and the state will be removing them this spring, also paid for by the state.
- **Franklin Watershed Committee and financial report pages 17-18**  
Jean Richard/George Godin made a motion to accept.
  - Adam Kane- What is the \$10,000 town of franklin donation, where did this come from? Lisa Larivee- This is the two \$5000 amounts combined from 2023 and 2024 because they are an annual report vs. or fiscal. Adam Kane K-Will this be an ongoing contribution from the town? Lisa Larivee- this has been in the budget to support their efforts for lake quality for years. Working to make a cleaner lake. Adam Kane K- should this be money coming from the town? Shouldn't this be money from the state because this is a state lake?
  - Pierrette Bouchard- camp owners bring in property taxes. By the town contributing to keeping the lake clean, this keeps people coming to the lake and it helps with the tax income.
  - Peter Magnant- once voters have approved this after 3 consecutive years, it automatically goes into the budget. Someone would have to amend the budget by \$5,000.
- **Library trustees report, Haston library treasurers report and budget, Haston Library & Eben Racine Memorial funds, pages 19-21**  
Jean Richard/George Godin made a motion to accept.
  - Mike Lawyer- Budget increase? Library has run out of carryover money from previous years. Also, health insurance has gone up, and they added a pension for the librarian. Deb Grenon- Josh has hosted statewide gatherings, putting Franklin "on the map". Emma Gerard- the library is more than just books, the library is a great place for children and families to go for programs, and community events.
  - Denise Cote- The library does more for people than others realize.

- Marilyn Hackett - Is there a financial plan for when clerk's office moves out? Deb Grennon- have no financial plans yet, still working on budget. This is not being done for a few years.
- Dianna Kittell- The library has been a great partner for the Rec dept. to work with while planning events.
- Michelle Beaulieu- Library does some fundraising which helps with some cost, but not all. Surrounding town libraries are also raising their cost.
- Josh Worman- Gives town a huge thanks for all the support.

- **Franklin Water District and financial report pages 22-23**

Jean Richard/George Godin made a motion to accept.

- Peter Magnant- still not hooked up to the new well, which is not the water dept. fault, but what is the plan and timeline? Mike Lawyer- Currently have two very good funding options. Have already spent 100,000. There has been a state delay in funding though. Project total is \$890,000 with USDA due to requirement of installing meters on every user, the town is responsible for \$490,000, the remainder \$400,000 will be forgiven. The other option is the Bernie Sanders (CDS) funding of \$595,000, working on this option, as meters are not needed so cuts the cost. This is a water user expenses, other tax payers are not responsible for this dept. Funding is coming through the EPA.
- Bryce- Will the water user rates ever go down? Mike Lawyer never know what could come next financially.
- Jes Alexant- Will our older system still be used? -After the new well is hooked up; it will be a backup system. Is there a corrosion factor issue with the new water well?
- Mike Lawyer- all tests on existing spring are up to date and meters have been put on. The well testing has been done and there are no issues, all tests are good. The yield is approx. 295 gal/minute. There will be a standby chlorination system.
- Peter Magnant-what are the State rules on use of the new well? Mike Lawyer, not sure at this time, suspect we will need to use occasionally to keep water fresh.

**Rob Evans- presenting on the alum treatment.** Tim asked if there were any objections on Rob speaking as a non-Franklin voter.

- He is a camp owner on Lake. Not a water specialist. Aeration system- state installed the system, did not provide the results they had hoped for. The system will be removed this year. Should not disturb the bottom of the lake, or any recreational activities. This will be warned before it happens.
- Alum application should be the best option for the future of the lake quality. Barr Engineering will be doing the treatment. Currently on the permitting process. Treatment process should be done in 5 weeks total. This may now be done in two parts; one application in fall '25 and spring '26. This should leave the lake with 15-20 year results. Have seen very successful results in other lakes. There should be no harm to the ecosystems. There will be significant inspections and

monitoring throughout the process. Permit process should be done by September for a fall application.

- Peter Magnant- phosphorus coming into the lake after the treatment? Rob Evans- work being done in the watershed continues, to prevent phosphorus coming into lake, everyone is working in the right directions. Reductions in phosphorus has been successful.
- Marilyn Hackett- Has there been testing done, and what was found for side effects? Effects on real estate? Rob Evans- No or minimal impacts on humans and ecosystems. There will be opportunities to speak with professionals on the topic at a later date. Michaela Bushey (former lister)- did not see any negative impacts on camp sales/prices around the lake due to algae.
- Rob thanks Lisa Larivee, Jordan, and Selectboard for all their help.

**Wayne Laroche-VT Representative** - Gained 20 seats on Republican side. Lisa Larivee Hango is now the vice chair of Gov Opts Committee. Federal changes, money has been put on pause, but concerned it may stop flowing. If that's the case, the whole budget would need to be readjusted. No concrete decision on the 5 school districts, but there has been a lot of discussion.

- Adam Kane- Will there be a tax increase coming? Wayne- There were state grants, not just federal grants.
- Jay Daneault- Town should have a say in whether Franklin school would be closed. Burlington and Franklin County merging is a big deal. What are Wayne's thoughts? Wayne Laroche- cannot answer a question to a bill that he has not read.
- Peter Magnant- would not want to merge with Chittenden County. What's the process on that? Wayne Laroche- That is hard to predict. Things have not been moving quickly.
- Bryce Bachelder- school board changes, turning into part time paid positions? The teacher pay difference between Franklin County and Chittenden County is big, will there be a closer pay? Wayne L- In the end there should be better equitability through the state. Hopefully the pay should improve.
- Wayne L- We all pay taxes, bothers him that tax payers won't really have a say to what happens in the public schools.

Break for lunch at 12:30. Back at 1:30

- **Franklin Recreation and financial report pages 24-25**

Jean Richard/George Godin made a motion to accept.

- Marilyn Hackett- What is the new mountain bike trail? -The boy scouts made a trail that goes around rec fields behind the school.
- Kim Gates Maynard- Bids on rec fields? Dianna Kittell- extended the bid process, not sure on the cost yet. Lissy Bachelder- field maintenance is cost for the lime and equipment for the fields. Still looking for bids.
- Mike Lawyer- Where is money coming from for the bids? Dianna Kittell- Rec has excess funds to put towards this and also will be doing some fundraising.

- Adam Kane- Rec has \$17,000 in unrestricted funds. Is there a plan to have that extra money fundraised? Dianna- hoping to not pay more than \$17,000.
  - George Godin- restricted vs unrestricted? Lisa Larivee- unrestricted money can be used for whatever. Restricted is for a specific purpose.
  - Allison Franklin- Doesn't want to see programs cut, or have to charge families more for programs/events. Want kids to have good memories of the town and want them to stay in Franklin.
- **Lake Carmi Project & Center cemetery funds page 26**  
Jean Richard/George Godin made a motion to accept.
- **Equipment fund and dog licenses page 27**  
Jean Richard/George Godin made a motion to accept.
- **ARPA funds page 28**  
Jean Richard/George Godin made a motion to accept.
    - Lisa Larivee- new spreadsheet of ARPA expenses; sidewalk, didn't use ARPA money for that project. Total left of ARPA funds \$272,316.59 and interest of \$19,027 totaled \$291,342. After the house purchase the small balance was allocated for the renovation of the house.
    - Mike Lawyer- Did the interest earned and spent on the Luce house purchase have to come back to the town for voter approval? Lisa Larivee- This was ARPA money that was invested, were allowed to do that. It was put into Ed Jones. Wendy S- we would not have the interest without ARPA money, so doesn't think this needs to be voted on, due to not being tax payer money.
    - Peter Magnant- purchases like this should go back to voters, would like more openness.
    - Adam Kane- purchase was not a good decision. Would like this to be reviewed by a lawyer to make sure this was all legal.
    - Dianna- There was a non-binding vote before the purchase was done.
- **Treasurer's report, comparative balance sheet, Reserve/Liabilities account changes, and Long-term debt, pages 29-33**  
Jean Richard/George Godin made a motion to accept.
    - Kim Gates Maynard- Surcharge restoration? Lisa Larivee- these are fees collected from land record recording, and the money is put towards vault supplies; record books, paper, shelving, etc. Could be put towards new vault for new office.
- **Statement of Taxes Raised & Delinquent tax collectors report page 40-41**  
Jean Richard/George Godin made a motion to accept. No discussion
- **Franklin Fire Department and financial report pages 42-43**  
Jean Richard/George Godin made a motion to accept. No discussion

**Will the voters of the Town of Franklin appropriate a sum of not more than \$60,000 for sidewalk snowplow equipment to be repaid over 5 years?**

Jean Richard/George Godin made a motion to move question.

- Wayne Fiske- requested a paper ballot
- Justin Rainville- This VENTRAC is a multi-use machine. There are options for other attachments if needed in the future. Quote includes v-blade for plowing sidewalks, and a broom for spring/fall cleanup and more. Typically hire-out spring/fall cleanup.
- Mike Lawyer- Supports replacing the current piece. But the VENTRAC may be more than the town needs. Justin Rainville- He priced out other options, but this fits the needs best.
- Peter Magnant- sidewalks are usually the last part of town to get addressed. Will the v-blade be able to handle all the snow pushed on. Jeremy- other towns that use v-blades vs snowblowers have good results.
- Johanna Crane-Godin- call the question

Voted by ballot- 31 yes, 33 no, 1 abstained. Article 3 does not pass.

**Shall the voters authorize total fund expenditures for operating expenses, deficit reduction, and debt repayment of the town, as indicated in the proposed municipal budget of \$ 1,079,572?**

Jean Richard/George Godin made a motion to move question.

- Johanna Crane-Godin- This is a 21% increase from last year and with uncertainty of the future, something to think about.
- Peter Magnant- There is a big salary jump under general. Lisa Larivee- All salaries went up, but the biggest increase is in the lister salaries due to the reassessment coming up, with more hours needed. Will come out of general fund but be paid back from reappraisal reserve depending on the final contract amount. Added 1000 hours to the lister budget.
- Carole Richard- Salaries aren't listed individually anymore? Lisa Larivee- Did away with those pages due to cost, auditors and treasurer time and cost to print in town report. Polly Gadbois- wants this put back in the report. Carole Richard- Ambulance service choices? Dave Bennion- Checked with other services for bids, and Enosburg was the best option.
- Mike Lawyer- Culvert repair, Beaver Meadow Rd. Is there a need to replace this? Make this a dead end in the middle to save on the cost? Adam Kane- not able to answer right now. Will need the approval from the homeowners on Beaver Meadow Rd to make this a dead end. Have asked a few contractors on a price. If this doesn't get fixed right now, it will get more costly with State grants and will need state testing. Cost right now would be \$50,000.
- Peter Magnant- Can VTRANS help with this? Adam Kane- have not looked into it. Looking for the least expensive way to go about this. Bringing the state into it will be pricey.

-Kim Gates Maynard/Johanna Crane-Godin made a motion to reduce the budget by \$50,000.

- Peter Magnant- Where should this be cut? Kim Gates Maynard- no comment, just 50,000 in general.

- George Godin- how would this cut affect the taxes? Lisa Larivee- 3 cents on tax rate. This would be \$30 less on a \$100,000 house.
- 7 standing call for a ballot vote.

**Voted by paper ballot- 16 yes, 35 no. Motion to amend by a \$50,000 reduction does not pass.**

- Pierrette Bouchard- school tax rate is going down .6 cents.
- Jay Hartman- There is only a \$25,000 increase from the actual money spent in FY24. Gravel cost has gone way up.
- Mike Lawyer- budget will just continue to grow each year.
- Marc Racine- Was there an impact on delinquent taxes this year? Johanna- no, they are usually the same every year.
- Peter Magnant- what happens if the budget doesn't pass? -The floor meeting cannot end until a budget has been passed (per conversation between Lisa Larivee and Dan from the Secretary of State)
- Pierrette Bouchard- calls the question- standing vote 21 yes 28 no.

-Kim Gates Maynard/Peter Magnant made a motion to reduce the budget by \$30,000. No by floor vote; Kim withdrew her motion. Peter withdrew his second.

-Adam Kane/Wayne Fiske made a motion to reduce the budget by \$100,000

- Johanna Crane-Godin requested paper ballot.
- Linda Hartman- where do you want to cut on the budget? Adam Kane- could cut paving, get a match/grant for that? Salary could get cut. Andy Godin- can skip a year for paving, and get matching funds to do twice as much next year.
- Justin Rainville- Thinks it is unfair to on-the-spot answer questions about a \$100,000 cut.
- Allison Franklin-not fiscally fair to make a huge cut as this.
- Mike Lawyer- call to question and request paper ballot.

**Voted by paper ballot- 25 yes, 43 no. Motion to amend by a \$100,000 reduction does not pass.**

-Mike Lawyer/Johanna Crane-Godin made a motion to reduce the budget by \$60,000. Peter Magnant- move the question. Jean Richard requested paper ballot.

**Voted by paper ballot- 34 yes, 30 no, 1 abstain. Motion to amend budget by a \$60,000 reduction has passed.**

Motion on the floor by Moderator; Proposed budget is now \$1,079,572 to be reduced by \$60,000 to \$1,019,572.

- Dave Bennion- not sure where the cut can really come from. Gravel and salt have gone up for the roads, and it's important that the town maintains good roads. Salaries are important for employee retention.
- Andy Godin- cutting now may lead to future problems, and higher budgets.
- Matt Grant- will taxes be higher after reappraisal? Jean Richard- this won't affect taxes until 2028. The tax rate generally doesn't change much as grand list values may increase keeping the rate balanced.
- Wendy Sargeant- thanks Selectboard for all the hard work to make a budget. Believes they are doing what they can to keep this low.
- Johanna Crane-Godin- call the question. Paper ballot is requested.

**Voted by paper ballot- 27 yes, 40 no. Motion for the amended budget of \$1,019,572 does not pass.**



-Jean Richard/Denise Cote made a motion to amend the current amendment and increase the budget by \$60,000, back to \$1,079,572.

- Bryant R- call the question. Mike Lawyer requested paper ballot

**Voted by paper ballot- 50 yes, 16 no. Motion to amend budget back to \$1,079,572 passes.**

Motion on the floor by Moderator- for approval of the budget in the amount of \$1,079,572.

- Peter Magnant- call the question. Withdrawn

-Mike Lawyer/Kim Gates Maynard made a motion to reduce the budget by \$40,000.

- Bryant Reynolds- call the question. Paper ballot is requested.

**Voted by paper ballot- 20 yes, 43 no. Motion to amend budget by a \$40,000 reduction does not pass.**

-Kim Gates Maynard/Wesley Kempton made a motion to reduce budget by \$25,000.

- Peter Magnant- move the question. Paper ballot requested.

**Voted by paper ballot- 31 yes, 31 no. Tie vote, another paper ballot to revote.**

**Voted by paper ballot- 23 yes, 37 no. Motion to amend by a \$25,000 reduction does not pass.**

- Jean Richard- call the question on original budget. Paper ballot is requested.

**Voted by paper ballot- 49 yes, 13 no. Motion to accept the budget of \$1,079,572 passes.**

**To elect the following town officers:**

**Town Clerk for a term of three years (by ballot)**

Brooks Sturtevant/George Godin nominates Lisa Larivee. Bryant Reynolds close and cast 1 ballot. All in favor. Lisa Larivee elected.

**One selectboard member for a term of three years. (by ballot)**

Peter Magnant/Bryant Reynolds nominates Brooks Sturtevant. Bryant Reynolds close and cast 1 ballot. All in favor. Brooks Sturtevant elected.

**One selectboard member for a term of two years. (by ballot)**

Marshall Ploof/Bryant Reynolds nominates Justin Rainville. Jean Richard close and cast 1 ballot. All in favor. Justin Rainville elected

**One lister for a term of three years. (by ballot)**

Jean Richard/Bryant Reynolds nominates Pierrette Bouchard. Jean Richard close and cast 1 ballot. All in favor. Pierrette Bouchard elected.

**One lister for an unexpired term of two years. (by ballot)**

No nominations. Selectboard will appoint at a later date.

**One auditor for a term of three years. (by ballot)**

Jean Richard/Bryant Reynolds nominates Pierrette Bouchard. Jean Richard close and cast 1 ballot. All in favor. Pierrette Bouchard elected.

**Trustee of public monies for a term of one year.**

Jean Richard/Linda Hartman nominates Lisa Larivee. All in favor. Lisa Larivee elected.

**Trustee of the Haston Library Fund for a term of one year.**

Jean Richard/Bryant Reynolds nominates Kim Gates Maynard. All in favor. Kim Gates Maynard elected.

**Two Haston Library trustees for a term of three years.**

Corrina Stanley nominates Lissy Bachelder and David Pratt. All in favor. Lissy Bachelder and David Pratt elected.

**Collector of delinquent taxes for a term of one year.**

Andy Godin/Denise Cota nominates Johanna Crane-Godin. All in favor. Johanna Crane-Godin elected.

**Constable for a term of one year.**

George Godin/Wesley Kempton nominates Burt Maynard. All in favor. Burt Maynard elected.

**One representative to serve on the Franklin Homestead, Inc. Board of Directors for a term of three years.**

Jean Richard/Jay Hartman nominates Patricia Whittemore. All in favor. Patricia Whittemore elected.

**To elect a person, or persons, to act as cemetery commissioner(s) to care for the cemeteries in town where there is no one responsible to act in such a capacity.**

Jean Richard/Bryant Reynolds made a motion to reinstate Nancy Wilson, Jennifer Dewing, Howard Vanselette, Dwight Tatro. All in favor by voice vote; Nancy Wilson, Jennifer Dewing, Howard Vanselette, and Dwight Tatro elected.

**Will the voters set the date of payment of property taxes paid to the treasurer to be October 16, 2025 before close of business?**

George Godin/Jean Richard made a motion to approve the article. All in favor.

**To elect any town officers to fill any town office that may be vacant at this time.**

Corrina Stanley/Bryant Reynolds nominates Linda Hartman to fill the position of Melissa Richard who has resigned. All in favor. Linda Hartman elected.

**To transact any other non-binding business thought proper when met.**

Marc Racine- thanked Jordan and Lisa Larivee.

Kim Gates Maynard- This town meeting had a great turnout. Could this be moved to a Saturday to have more people attend?

Polly Gadbois- auditors report- detailed info regarding expenditures would be appreciated in future reports.

Pierrette Bouchard- Including expenditures takes a long time to gather this info, cost \$600 to include this; paying auditors time, extra pages in the report. Could bring it back but it will cost more.

**Adjourn:** Brooks Sturtevant/Tim Magnant made a motion to adjourn at 4:38 pm.

Selectboard members

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David Bennion

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Brooks Sturtevant

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Justin Rainville

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Jay Hartman

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Michael Grant

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

Lisa A Larivee, Town Clerk