

Selectboard Town Informational Meeting
Grand Isle School 224 US-2 Grand Isle, Vermont
Minutes of the Meeting for Saturday, March 4, 2023

The 2023 Informational Meeting was called to order at 10:04 A.M. by the Town Moderator, Ron Bushway, on March 4th, 2023.

Ron Bushway welcomes those joining the meeting and asks attendees to mute their phones. Ron Bushway asks the selectboard members to introduce themselves.

Selectboard members present: Adam White- Chair, Couper Shaw, Josie Leavitt- Vice Chair, Jeff Parizo, Eric Godin

Ron Bushway explains that this is the Annual Informational Meeting to review the warning and all questions going before the voters on Tuesday, March 7th, 2023. Ron Bushway explains that any questions need to be directed to the moderator or the selectboard, that attendees should raise their hands to be recognized and step forward to the microphone to speak, and that they should state their name and speak loudly. Ron Bushway asks everyone to be respectful of each other. Ron Bushway begins to read the Official Warning.

Official Warning

The legal voters of the Town of Grand Isle are hereby warned to meet at the Grand Isle School in-person and via Zoom on Saturday March 4, 2023 at ten o'clock in the morning (10:00 A.M.) for a public informational hearing on the following business:

1. To transact any business proper to come before this meeting and to discuss any questions which shall arise concerning the issues to be voted upon by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 7th, 2023.

Ron Bushway asks if anyone would like to add anything to this meeting. Ellen Howrigan (fna Paradee) asks about errors on the first warning that was included in the Town Report she received, and noted that she was since given a corrected version by Melissa Boutin. Ellen Howrigan asks why and how this happened and what about the people who not aware of the errors. Jeff Parizo asks whom she is directing the question to, Ellen Howrigan says she's directing it to whomever can answer it. Adam White says he can't speak to how or why it happened. Adam White says he can clarify that the first version of the Town Report that went up on the website and about 60 printed copies given out had errors within the warning. Adam White says that in Article 5, it had last year's number which is about \$98,000 less, that it had two number elevens, and for Article 10 the highway department budget had a difference of about \$30. Adam White says they notified the Town attorney, who said it's not a legal issue because the Town Warning does not need to be in the Town Report. Adam White says that once the errors were discovered, the town clerk made corrections and updated the electronic version on the website and that

all printed versions of the report were updated. Adam White says they also posted the corrections to Front Porch Forum. Jeff Parizo says that the dates in Article 4 were also incorrect and have since been corrected.

Ron Bushway continues to read the warning.

The legal voters of the Town of Grand Isle are hereby warned to meet at the Grand Isle Municipal Offices located at 9 Hyde Road on Tuesday March 7th, 2023, beginning at seven o'clock in the morning (7:00 A.M.) when the polls will open and continuing until seven o'clock in the evening (7:00 P.M.) when the polls will close, to vote by Australian ballot on the following articles:

1. To elect all Town Officers as required by law.

Ron Bushway asks the candidates running for positions in Grand Isle to introduce themselves, state their name and the position they are running for.

Ellen Howrigan- Two year term, Selectboard

Jeff Parizo- Three year term, Selectboard

Diane Cota- Three year term, Lister

Ron Bushway- One year term, Town Moderator

Karen Allen- Five year term, Library Board Trustee

Jonathan Debono- Two year term, Selectboard

(As stated by Ron Bushway) Brian Allen- as a write-in candidate- five year term, Cemetery Commissioner

2. To elect all Unified Union School District Officers as required by law. No questions.

3. Shall the legal voters of the Town vote to have the full details of the delinquent tax list printed in the Town Report? No questions.

4. Shall the legal voters of the Town vote to pay to the Treasurer, Real Property Taxes in three installments with due dates of October 31, 2023, January 31, 2024 and April 30, 2024, (32 V.S.A. § 4762) with an interest charge 1% per month added if each installment is not paid by the due date (32 V.S.A. § 5136); after April 30, 2024, and unpaid taxes would be charged an 8% collection fee (32 V.S.A. § 1674) plus the interest fees? Only official U.S.P.S. cancellation marks will be accepted if postmarked on or before the due date (32 V.S.A. § 4773). No questions.

5. Shall the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$1,100,764 as proposed by the Selectboard to meet the expenses of the Town General budget?

Adam White gives an overview of the Town General Expense Breakdown:

General Town Expenses \$ 530,350.00

Clerk/Treasurer Expenses 138,281.00

CIUUSD/GISU Expenses 2,750.00
Historical Buildings Operations 11,260.00
Election Expenses 6,068.00
Zoning Office Expenses 36,643.00
Planning Commission Expenses 8,553.00
Development Review Board Expenses 34,214.00
Solid Waste Operations 52,704.00
Solid Waste Disposal 46,200.00
County Tax 143,903.00
Insurance Expenses 46,750.00
Total Town General Budget \$1,100,764.00

Adam White addresses a question via Zoom regarding the Fish Hatchery budget. Adam White says this is an expense, but also is revenue. Adam White explains that they are currently working on an MOU with the Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife. Adam White explains that the Department of Fish & Wildlife does pay for expenses the town incurs. No questions.

6. **Shall the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$20,450 to meet the expenses of the Cemetery Commission budget?** No questions.
7. **Shall the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$73,000 for the Grand Isle Rescue, Inc., budget?**

Davie Leake of Grand Isle Rescue thanks residents for helping to fund Grand Isle Rescue. David Leake says they fund everything themselves with the help of residents. David Leake gives an overview of the needs and expenses of Grand Isle Rescue. David Leake says that they need more help and to please volunteer if you can. David Leake says that anyone with questions about the breakdown of their budget is encouraged to ask and they would be happy to provide details to them. No questions.

8. **Shall the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$10,500 to defray expenses of the Grand Isle Rescue, Inc. and Grand Isle Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. dispatching services?**

Adam White gives a quick overview of the expenses for dispatching services. No questions.

9. **Shall the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$90,000 for the Grand Isle Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. budget?**

Adam White gives an overview of the expenses of the Grand Isle Volunteer Fire Department. Adam White explains a \$15,000 increase for retaining volunteers for an on-call payment incentive. Ellen Howrigan asks for a balance sheet to look over their budget. Adam White says that they can see about adding it to the Town Report. No further questions.

10. Shall the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$485,670 to meet the expenses of the Highway Department budget?

Ron Bushway gives an overview of the highway department budget and directs people to look at page 33 & 34 of the Town Report to view the proposed budget. Ron Bushway goes over the details of the department's expenses. No questions.

11. Shall the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$60,000 to meet the expenses of the Highway Department Road Materials Budget?

Ron Bushway explains that the expenses for the Road Materials Budget are used for. No questions.

12. Shall the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$71,032 to meet the expenses of the Library Commission budget?

Colleen Bushway directs people to page 57 of the Town Report to view the Library budget. Colleen Bushway explains that this year was difficult for the library and they asked for a little more this year. Colleen Bushway gives details on how and why their expenses have gone up. No questions.

13. Shall the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$16,120 to meet the expenses of the Recreation Committee budget? No questions.

14. Shall the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$10,000 to be raised by taxes for removing the invasive Emerald Ash Borer trees in the Town Right-of-ways as needed? No questions.

15. Shall the legal voters of the Town approve the amount not to exceed \$100,000 to be raised by taxes, subject to reduction from available state and general grants in aid and other funding sources, for the costs of demolition of the structure known as Old Town Garage located at 13 Hyde Road?

Jeff Parizo explains why the Old Town Garage needs to be demolished. Jeff Parizo says that there is asbestos in the vermiculite insulation and that a majority of the \$100,000 will be used for the proper removal of that material. Jeff Parizo explains that this a one-time expense and that once approved, this will go out to bid. No questions.

16. Shall the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$7,500 to be raises by taxes for the UVM Home Health & Hospice f/n/a/ VNA? No questions.

17. Shall the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$1,500 to be raised by taxes for the Champlain Islands Parent Child Center? No questions.

18. Shall the legal votes of the Town approve the sum of \$1,950 to be raised by taxes for the Island Arts?

Doug Disabito speaks, stating he is on the board of Island Arts. Doug Disabito thanks everyone who supports Island Arts. No questions.

The legal voters of the Town of Grand Isle are further notified that the voter qualification, registration, and absentee voting relative to said meeting shall be as provided in Chapters 43, 51, and 55 of Title 17, Vermont Statutes Annotated.

Adam White asks that their local representatives, Josie Leavitt and Michael Morgan, to have a moment to speak. Josie Leavitt explains that she is on the Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry Committee. Josie explains that they have been working on Universal School Meals and gives an overview on why it's important to our community. Josie Leavitt says she's not ready to speak on S5 other than, as it stands now, she's not in favor of the bill because it doesn't address the needs of low or middle income families. Josie Leavitt asks anyone who would like to give feedback on that issue to reach out to her. Michael Morgan explains that he is on the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs. Michael Morgan explains they are working on continuing hybrid meeting models for at least the next two years. Michael Morgan explains that there have been over 500 bills brought to the House and the Senate in this session. Michael Morgan explains the process of crossover and the status of bills. Michael Morgan brought books to give out to children from the Secretary of State. Michael Morgan speaks on S5, explaining that he feels that it's structurally a bad bill and a regressive tax on low and middle income families.

Ron Bushway asks Michael Morgan if citizens should reach out to them about S5. Michael Morgan says yes, absolutely reach out to he and Josie Leavitt with their feedback. Josie Leavitt says that reaching out by email, if possible, is beneficial because it helps them to have feedback in writing. Josie Leavitt says that she and Michael Morgan give weekly updates and that residents can follow the updates of the S5 bill with their updates.

Jeff Parizo takes a moment to thank Adam White for his years on the selectboard.

Jonathan Debono takes a moment to say thanks for the support he's received while campaigning for the selectboard.

Josie Leavitt makes a motion to adjourn, Kate O'Neill seconds. No further discussion. Ron Bushway calls the vote, which passes unanimously.