

TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER
Annual Town Meeting
March 14, 2023

The Annual Bridgewater Town Meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer at approximately 7:30 pm. Present were Moderator Matthew Denton, Selectmen Terence Murphy, Selectmen Maurice Jenness, Selectmen P. Wesley Morrill and approximately 45 residents.

Article #1: “To choose a Selectman for three (3) years and all other necessary town officials”. This was done by town ballot of which there were 129 votes cast. Votes cast were as follows:

Selectman – 3 year term:
Maurice (Skip) Jenness – 116*
(6 Write-Ins)

Town Clerk – 3 year term:
Colleen Kenny – 129*

Supervisor of the Checklist – 6 year term:
Rose Williams – 128*

Trustee of the Trust Fund – 3 year term:
Karen Simula - 127*
(1 Write-In)

Trustee of the Trust Fund – 2 year term:
(13 Write-Ins)

Library Trustee:
Rose Williams – 123*

The results for Bridgewater of the SAU Ballot were provided as well. Moderator Denton reminded the residents that the results of Bridgewater would be combined with all other Towns in the SAU District for a final count to be determined.

Article #2: “To see if the Town will vote the following: Are you in favor of the adoption of amending the Flood Plain Ordinance as proposed by the Bridgewater Planning Board for the Town’s floodplain ordinance as follows: Amend APPENDIX A AND ARTICLE IV-F OF THE BRIDGEWATER ZONING ORDINANCE as necessary to comply with requirement of the National Flood Insurance Program.” (Majority Vote Required) Recommended by the Planning Board and Select Board.

Resident Ken Weidman moved this Article as written, which was seconded by resident Patrick Roach. Selectman Murphy spoke to this article explaining that if this Article is not voted in favor, flood insurance will not be effective for anyone who needs to obtain flood insurance in these areas.

All in favor, none opposed. Article #2 passed.

Article #3: “To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,750,000 which represents the operational budget. Said sum does not include amounts in separate or special warrant articles.” (Majority Vote Required)
Recommended by the Select Board.

Resident E. Wayne Thompson moved this Article as written, which was seconded by resident Warren Pezold. Selectman Murphy spoke to this Article stating the net impact of this budget will either hold the tax rate as is, or lower it.

Selectman Murphy further discussed the impact of the County tax on the Town tax bills. Expenses have increased due to the increases in all costs, however revenues are up as well.

All in favor, none opposed. Article #3 passed.

Article #4: “To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate sum of \$109,765 for the purchase of a new Highway Department truck and related equipment and to fund that appropriation by a transfer of that sum from the 2022 undesignated fund balance for that purpose. (Majority Vote Required). Recommended by the Select Board.

Resident Patrick Roach moved this Article as written, which was seconded by resident Warren Pezold. Selectman Morrill spoke to this Article stating the funds spent on repairs over the past years to the current truck is not worth spending any future funds on this vehicle. Selectman Murphy provided an explanation of ‘undesignated funds’ and the use of those funds. It was explained that the funds left over after expenses and revenues are allocated as undesignated funds.

All in favor, none opposed. Article #4 passed.

Article #5: “To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of \$500,000 for supplemental road resurfacing and to fund that appropriation by a transfer of that sum from the 2021 undesignated fund balance. (Majority Vote Required). Recommended by the Select Board.

Resident Ken Weidman moved this Article as written, which was seconded by Selectman Jenness.

Selectman Jenness spoke to this Article reminding residents that this was an Article last year that the Select Board recommended residents voting no on as the cost last year to do this road resurfacing was too high due to increased costs. It is believed that this year the cost will be lower and we should be able to more road resurfacing with the same amount of funds than we would have been able to do last year. It was confirmed that any dirt roads will remain as dirt roads and this resurfacing would occur on roads already paved.

All in favor, none opposed. Article #5 passed.

Article #6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$29,000 for the cost of upgrading and recompilation of the Town's tax maps including realigning the roads, parcels and surface water to match the physical evidence visible on the orthoimagery and generate new tax maps. Said sums shall be in addition to the 2023 operational budget. (Majority Vote Required). Recommended by the Select Board.

Selectman Murphy moved this Article as written, which was seconded by Selectman Jenness.

Selectman Murphy explained the issues with the current tax maps and the inconsistencies. This upgrade is intended to correct these maps for more accuracy. Selectman Murphy stated that if this upgrade is not done the information will be incorrect and residents will be unable to get a true and accurate map of their properties.

All in favor, none opposed. Article #6 passed.

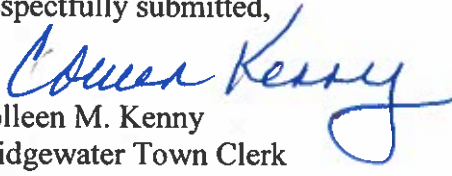
Article #7: To transact any other business that may legally become before this meeting.

Town Clerk Colleen Kenny introduced her new Deputy Town Clerk, Elizabeth Woolsey to the residents and introduced the Select Board and the Administrative Assistant to the Select Board, Julie Converse.

Selectman Murphy discussed the SAU and the BHVD District issue asking residents to pay attention to this matter. He further explained the current formula used for students in the Newfound Area School District and how the cost per student is passed on to all Towns. There is a proposal by the SAU to change this formula to reflect using property valuation with dissimilar costs per student per Town. There are seven towns in the District and it would be very difficult for the BHVD to remove itself from this SAU, but the Select Board is working hard with legislators now on this matter. The BHVD school building is owned by the Town with the SAU providing staff. With the issues involving middle schools across the State, having our students remain at BHVD until high school is a favored move. While this issue will need to move through several State hearings, the Select Board is hoping for a favorable outcome. Details still need to be worked out if this option is approved. The BHVD school building has the ability to expand and there is no intention of evicting any student who wants to attend.

8:34PM Motion to Adjourn: John Erickson made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by E. Wayne Thompson.

Respectfully submitted,


Colleen M. Kenny
Bridgewater Town Clerk