

**Town of Ira**  
**Select Board Informational Meeting Minutes**  
**Date: March 4, 2024**

Present: Nathan Hewitt, Jim Genovesi, Darin May, Mary Mitiguy

Recording: Karen Davis/Jerri Hoffman

TOPIC	DISCUSSION
Call meeting to order	Nathan called the meeting to order at 7:29 pm.
Review and accept agenda	Nathan made a motion to approve the agenda. Darin 2 <sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously.
Introduction of Mary Mitiguy, meeting facilitator	Nathan gave an introduction of the meeting and introduced Mary Mitiguy to facilitate the meeting.
a. Meeting Guidance/Rules	Mary reviewed the expectation of this informational only meeting and provided guidance on how to ask questions during the meeting.
Article 1: To elect town officers as required by law	Mary read the article and reminded the meeting participants to come out to vote tomorrow. Nathan gave a thank you to all people that told an office and thanked Bob Toppin for his service on the select board.
Review and Discuss Article 2: Shall the voters authorize payment of real and personal property taxes to the Town Treasurer on or before October 22, 2024?	Mary read the article and asked for questions or comments. No comments.
Review and Discuss Article 3: Shall the voters authorize the total expenditure of \$332,171 for the Town General Fund and Highway Fund for the fiscal year 7/1/24– 6/30/25, for which \$246,335.13 shall be raised by taxes and \$85,835.87 by non-property tax revenue?	Mary read the article and invited comments from the select board. Dick Pietryka asked why the highway budget was up and if there were any special projects planned. Dick commented on the D box at the West Road and Route 133 intersection and its purpose. Nathan responded that we have submitted for grant funds for special projects and we have been talking with VT Trans about work on the intersection of West Road and Route 133. Mark FitzGerald asked if the increase in the gravel line was for resurfacing the road. Nathan responded that the town is working to get crowns back on roads.
Review and Discuss Article 4: Shall the voters appropriate \$13,917.11 to be raised by taxes for the Rutland County Sheriff’s Department, in addition to \$12,000 included in the General Fund expenditures in Article 4 above for a total of \$25,917.11?	Mary read the article and asked for questions or comments. Jeff Davis asked why no one from the Sheriff’s department is available when they are called. Dave Fox responded they only answer a call when they are in one of the towns (4 town agreement), otherwise the call goes to the State Police and they will respond if it’s an emergency. If it is a non-emergency call, State Police will hold it and forward it to the sheriff’s department the following day. Ellen Lloyd commented, or they call the constable. Ted Sheloski asked where the money goes when a ticket is written. Dave Fox explained the breakdown of the funds between the town and state. Jeff Barden asked if the 10 hours was offering the protection to the public that Ira needs. Dave responded he did not think we would need to increase our hours. Allyn Kahle asked what would happen if the article was voted down; would we still be part of the 4 town agreement. Dave responded that we would still be part of the agreement but it would only be for approximately 5 hours a week. Justin Turco questioned how long the \$12,000 had been included in the General Fund. It has been several years. Bob Toppin stated that the State Police are not responding to break-ins likely due to lack of staffing.

<p>Review and Discuss Article 5: Shall the voters appropriate \$39,750 to the Ira Volunteer Fire Department to provide services to the residents of Ira?</p>	<p>Mary read the article and asked for comments from the Fire Department. Dave Kerstetter represented the fire department and talked about their budget and the need for volunteers. No other comments</p>
<p>Review and Discuss Article 6: Shall the voter appropriate \$15,000 to the Ira Volunteer Fire Department to go into the reserve fund for the purpose of replacing a fire truck?</p>	<p>Mary read the article and asked for questions or comments. Dave Kerstetter commented on the current truck and the need to continue to save for the future purpose of replacing the truck; <u>the fund currently is at \$65,000.</u> Mark FitzGerald questioned if it would make more sense to purchase a new truck that would meet the needs of the town using a low interest loan. Fire Department members replied that the current building is not large enough to house a new truck, and the next article will address the department's fire house issues.</p>
<p>Review and Discuss Article 7: Shall the voter appropriate \$15,000 to the Ira Volunteer Fire Department to be used toward the civil and architectural engineering options for the replacement of the fire station?</p>	<p>Mary read the article and asked for questions or comments. Dan Perry explained this will allow the department to pull together the building design and cost to present to the voters at the next town meeting. At that time, they would be able to ask for a bond vote to cover the cost. Jerry Zieller asked if there was other land available to put a new fire house on. Members replied there was, but then there would be the added cost of purchasing the land to the cost of the building. The land next to the current location is in the land trust and there are many obstacles to pull land out of the land trust. Jeanne Kirbach questioned a \$40,000 surplus she recalled from a few years ago. It was felt that this was a Town surplus, not the fire department and Mark Fitzgerald questioned whether the funds were still there; funds used for the town garage lot.</p>
<p>Review and Discuss Article 8: Shall the voters appropriate \$3,284 to the Rutland Free Library to provide services to the residents of Ira?</p>	<p>Mary read the article and asked for questions or comments. Allyn Kahle, Ira Library Representative, listed the services offered at the library. She spoke about the grant the library is applying for to renovate the building. Madeline Kerstetter asked whether the special events include the Drag Story Hour. Allyn thought it wasn't planned, but maybe in the future. She reminded everyone that all children's events require an adult to accompany the child and one can choose to attend an event or not. Madeline replied she felt it was an inappropriate use of town funds. Ted Sheloski asked how many Ira residents have cards; Allyn replied 110. Ben Kerstetter replied the library would earn more income if each person purchased a card using their own money. Allyn noted there may be those who don't have the financial discretion to do so.</p>
<p>Review and Discuss Article 9: Shall the voters appropriate \$973 to the VNA &amp; Hospice of the Southwest Region to provide home care and hospice services to the residents of Ira?</p>	<p>Mary read the article and asked for questions or comments. Kay Jones listed the services provided by VNA. No other comments.</p>
<p>Review and Discuss Article 10: Shall the voters appropriate \$300 to the Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging to provide elder services to the residents of Ira?</p>	<p>Mary read the article and asked for questions or comments. Kay Jones, Ira representative, listed the many services SWCOA offers to elderly residents. Madeline Kerstetter asked if other towns also vote to support SWCOA. Kay replied they do and they also receive grant funds.</p>
<p>Review and Discuss Article 11: Shall the voters appropriate \$375 to the RSVP &amp; Volunteer Center to provide services to the residents of Ira?</p>	<p>Mary read the article and asked for questions or comments. Kay Jones explained this program helps match seniors with special skills to jobs.</p>

Approved 3-26-24

<p>Review and Discuss Article 12: Shall the voters appropriate \$250 to support the Bird's Eye View?</p>	<p>Mary read the article and asked for questions or comments. Allyn Kahle explained the money is only used for postage and printing. The newsletter is pulled together by volunteers. The room all said a huge Thank You to the ladies who work on the newsletter.</p>
<p>Review and Discuss Article 13: Shall the voters appropriate \$400 to support the non-profit organization named Rutland County Parent Child Center?</p>	<p>Mary read the article and asked for questions or comments. Mary comments that this group assists young families with day care and supports families.</p>
<p>Review and Discuss Article 14: Shall the voters appropriate \$100 to support the Vermont Farmers Food Center to provide services to residents of Ira?</p>	<p>Mary read the article and asked for questions or comments. Sara Meling gave a history of the VT Farmers Food Center, winter/summer farmers market and what it offers local farmers, and benefits to families in our area. The amount requested will assist with the administrative cost. Ellen Lloyd asked if the greenhouses were being used. Sara explained the education activities were held in the past and will hopefully resume in the future.</p>
<p>Discussion of other non-binding business (if applicable)</p>	<p>Mary read and asked for comments. Richard Weinhagen spoke to the group about a bill being proposed regarding education on the US Constitution.</p>
<p>Adjourn</p>	<p>Nathan made a motion to adjourn at 8:35 pm. Jim 2<sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously.</p>
<p>I certify that the above is a true and accurate copy of the approval minutes of the board meeting held on March 4, 2024.</p>	