

approved

**Annual Town Meeting
Town of Ira
March 6, 2023**

The legal voters of the Town of Ira, Vermont are hereby warned and notified to meet at the Ira Town Hall on Monday, March 6, 2023, at 7:30 pm for an informational hearing and to act on Articles 2 -15 from the floor and to recess to Tuesday, March 7, 2023, between 10:00 am and 7:00 pm, to act on Article 1 by Australian Ballot at the Ira Town Office.

7:32 pm – Meeting opened by Moderator, Mary Mitiguy

Mary gave a brief statement of the rules and meeting expectations.

Article 1.	<p>To Elect all Town Officers as required by law .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Auditor for a term of three years• Delinquent Tax Collector for a term of one year• Lister for a term of three years• School Director for a term of three years• School Moderator for a term of one year• Select Board member for a term of three years.• Town Moderator for a term of one year <p>Mary read the article and reminded attendees to come out to vote on 3/7/23 from 10:00 am – 7:00 pm At the Ira Town office.</p>
Article 2.	<p>To hear the reports of the Town Officers Mary read the article and asked the Board to report. Motion made by Madeline Kerstetter, 2nd Cacky Ayer. Open for discussion. So voted. Nathan reported that the grader has had repairs, reviewed the road work completed, highway grant work, completing a road and culvert inventory and purchased an iPad to report the MRGP requirements. The board is working on improvements at the current town garage to build a new sand/salt shed using the ARPA funds.</p> <p>Mark FitzGerald asked for clarification on the location of the town garage. Nathan confirmed that they were looking at making improvements at the current location.</p> <p>Justin Turco said the salt at the garage is an issue for his spring, and industrial spills are a problem. He stated he does not like living next to the garage and feels the site is too small.</p> <p>Mark FitzGerald asked if the new garage building will contain the salt/shed and have be covered. Nathan confirmed the building will have walls, floor, and prevent run-off.</p>
Article 3.	<p>Shall the Town of Ira adopt all budget articles by Australian ballot pursuant to 17 V.S.A. § 2680(c)? Mary read the article. Motion made by Jeff Davis, 2nd Alan Peterson. Opened for discussion. So voted.</p> <p>Mark FitzGerald made the comment that he thinks this is a great idea. And asked if you can't attend the town meeting could you vote by absentee ballot. Karen Davis confirmed that is correct.</p> <p>Madeline Kerstetter asked if this was for next year. Karen Davis confirmed that it would be at the next town meeting.</p> <p>Amy Moore said why have a town meeting if we will vote by Australian ballot. Mary Mitiguy explained we would still need to have an informational hearing to discuss and answer questions about the items to be voted on.</p>
Article 4.	<p>Shall the Town of Ira vote on all public questions by Australian ballot pursuant to 17 V.S.A. § 2680(d)? Mary read the article. Motion made by David Kerstetter, 2nd Cacky Ayer. Open for discussion. So voted.</p>

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	<p>David Kerstetter asked the difference between public questions and budget questions. Karen explained the public questions are questions asking voters to approve an item.</p>
Article 5.	<p>Shall the voters authorize the Town Treasurer, pursuant to 32 V.S.A § 4971 to collect current taxes on or before October 24, 2023? Mary read the article. Motion made by Karen Davis, 2nd by Jerry Zieller. Open for discussion. So voted.</p> <p>David Kerstetter asked the advantages or disadvantages to having quarterly tax payments or more often. Deborah Perry explained that the only advantage would be for cash flow and having earlier payments will require tax due dates to be earlier in the year.</p> <p>Mark FitzGerald added that tax payments would not be refused throughout the year.</p>
Article 6.	<p>Shall the voters authorize the total expenditure of \$328,362 for the Town General Fund and Highway Fund for the fiscal year 7/1/23 -6/30/24, for which \$ 236,667 shall be raised by taxes and \$91,695 by non-tax revenue? Mary read the article. Motion made by Jerri Hoffman, 2nd by Jeff Barden. Open for discussion. So voted.</p> <p>David Kerstetter asked what the difference is between taxes raised and non-tax revenue. Deb Perry and Karen Davis explained non-tax revenue are anticipated funds coming to the town that are not raised by taxes, such as dog licenses, current use, civil fines, natural resources, PILOT, highway state aid funds.</p>
Article 7.	<p>Shall the voters appropriate \$12,221.60 to be raised by taxes for the Rutland County Sheriff's Department, in addition to \$12,000 included in the Town General Fund expenditures in Article 4 above for a total of \$24,221.60?</p> <p>Mary read the article. Motion by Bob Toppin, 2nd by Cacky Ayer. Open for discussion. So voted.</p> <p>David Fox, Sheriff explained our 4-town contract with Middletown Springs, Danby and Tinmouth. The sheriff spends 40 hours within the 4 towns. The sheriff varies his time in each town and time of day and break-in activity is down in the area.</p> <p>Bob Toppin asked David to explain the process when an Ira resident calls 911 and the sheriff is not available. David said if it is a non-emergent the call is transferred to the sheriff and when they are available they will pick up the call.</p> <p>Jeff Barden asked why the sheriff is short staffed. David stated they are not able to find people to fill open positions.</p> <p>Justin Turco stated the couple of times he has called the sheriff's department he is always referred to the State Police. He values what the Sheriff's Department offers but does not feel it is a useful use of money for the town of Ira.</p> <p>Mike Ryan asked what the amount of revenue is to the town. \$794 for fiscal year 2022.</p>
Article 8.	<p>Shall the voters appropriate the sum of \$48,550 for the support of the Ira Volunteer Fire Department to provide services to the residents of Ira?</p> <p>Mary read the article. Motion made by Mary Ann Black, 2nd by Madeline Kerstetter. Open for discussion. So voted.</p> <p>David Kerstetter stated the Fire Department has completed a feasibility study on the current fire house building. The building is not adequate for future fire trucks. The trucks are in good repair and new volunteers are going for EMS training. Volunteers are needed.</p>

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Article 9.	<p>There is an Open House on May 13th 9:00 am -11:00 am.</p> <p>Shall the voters appropriate \$15,000 to go into the reserve fund for the purpose of replacing a fire truck?</p> <p>Mary read the article. Motion made by Lance Jones, 2nd by Tim Perry. Open for discussion. So voted. Jeff Barden asked what the balance is in the reserve fund. \$60,000.</p> <p>Mary Mitiguy asked the cost of a new fire truck or the cost of truck to meet the needs for Ira. Tim Perry responded that a new truck would be half million. David Kerstetter said we most likely would not be looking for a new truck, but a secondhand truck in the \$175,000 price range. A neighboring town offered a truck that they are replacing, but Ira had to decline because our garage would not house it.</p> <p>Jerry Zieller asked if the department would add on to the garage or build a new fire house and are they looking for a new site or at the existing site. The department is looking to keep the cost down and would like to use the existing property if possible.</p>
Article 10.	<p>Shall the voters appropriate the sum of \$3,157 for the support of the Rutland Free Library to provide services to residents of Ira?</p> <p>Mary read the article. Motion by Mary Ann Black, 2nd Amy Moore. Open for discussion. Vote Failed.</p> <p>Randall Smathers spoke of the programs and services available at the library. All the library services are available to Ira residents at no extra cost. He explained the money received from Ira is used for staff salaries. Because of staff shortages the library has had to close early some days.</p> <p>Madeline Kerstetter stated that she felt the library held a Drag event that was not a good role model for children and therefore not a good use of the town's money. Amy Moore replied she felt different programs introduce inclusivity and acceptance of all people.</p> <p>Ben Kerstetter stated that to buy individual cards would be more revenue for the library.</p> <p>Janine Peterson asked if the article was voted down could Ira residents purchase a library card on their own. Randall confirmed they could purchase a card for \$45.00.</p> <p>Kerry Lane commented that there was free yoga at the library and the option to attend via zoom.</p> <p>Mary Ann Black commented that the library provided materials for home schoolers.</p> <p>Kay Jones commented that the library offered group community space.</p> <p>The floor vote was too close to call and the moderator called for a paper vote. 19 No and 18 yes</p>
Article 11.	<p>Shall the voters appropriate the sum of \$973 for the support of the VNA & Hospice of the Southwest Region to provide services to residents of the town?</p> <p>Mary read the article. Motion made by Bob Toppin, 2nd by Cacky Ayer. Open for discussion. So voted.</p> <p>Ben Kerstetter and Lynn Carter asked what they do for Ira. Deb Perry and Bob Toppin commented regarding the great services/programs that VNA offer to everyone. Mary read the annual report from VNA explaining the services they offer.</p>
Article 12.	<p>Shall the voters appropriate the sum of \$300 for support of Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging to provide elder services to residents of the Town?</p> <p>Mary read the article. Motion made by Kay Jones, 2nd by Mark FitzGerald. Open for discussion. So voted.</p>

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	Kay Jones shared the services that SWVCA offer.
Article 13.	Shall the voters appropriate the sum of \$375 to support RSVP? Mary read the article. Motion made by Jerry Zieller, 2 nd by Cacky Ayer. Open for discussion. So voted. Mary read the annual report from RSVP explaining the services they offer.
Article 14.	Shall the voters appropriate the funds of \$250 needed to support the Bird's Eye View? Mary read the article. Motion made by Bob Toppin, 2 nd by Bob Kirbach. Open for discussion. So voted. Members of the community shouted out thank you for the BEV and appreciation for the volunteers who pull the newsletter together.
Article 15.	To transact any other legal and proper business to come before this meeting. Mark FitzGerald thanked the town officers for their hard work and for volunteering. No other transactions brought forth, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm. Motion made by Bob Toppin, 2 nd by Jeri Hoffman.
	We certify that the above is a true and accurate copy of the approval minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on March 6, 2023.

Approval of minutes

Nathan S. Hewitt

Robert Toppin

[Signature]