##### **Town of Hartford**

## **Annual Town Meeting**

## **For Fiscal Year**

## **July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024**

## **Minutes**

June 13, 2023 8am: Town Clerk, Lianne Bedard opened the annual town meeting by reading the greetings: In the name of the State of Maine, you are hereby required to notify and warn the voters of Hartford, in said County, qualified to vote in Town affairs to meet at the Hartford Town Hall on the 13th day of June, 2023 at 8:00 a.m. to act on Articles 1, 2, and 3. The polls will open at 8:00 a.m. and close at 8:00 p.m. and the Moderator will recess the meeting until Saturday, the 24th day of June, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. at the Hartford Town Hall to act on Articles 4 through 44.

Lianne read Article 1.

Article 1: To elect a Moderator to preside at said Meeting. Carole Perry nominated Daryl Boness as Moderator. There were no other nominations. Vote by secret ballot for Moderator=3 votes for Daryl Boness. Daryl took the oath of office.

Daryl read Articles 2 and 3, showed that the ballot box was empty and opened the polls to voting.

Article 2: To elect by secret ballot one Selectman for a term of three (3) years:

**Selectman-Lowe, Cathy 66**

 **Write Ins 4**

 **Blank 2**

Article 3: To elect by secret ballot one Road Commissioner for a term of two (2) years.

**Road Commissioner-McNeil, Alan 61**

 **Write Ins 6**

 **Blank 5**

The moderator closed the polls at 8:00pm.

The Moderator recessed the meeting until 9am on June 24, 2023.

June 24, 2023

60 people present

The Moderator opened the meeting at 9am and read the results of the Election.

The Hartford Spirit of America Award was presented to Lorraine Parsons by Selectmen Susan Goulet. Lorraine was presented with a certificate and a portrait by Conrad (Alan) Ray which will be on display at the town hall for a period of time and then given to Lorraine Parsons.

The Maine Spirt of America Award was presented to Lianne Bedard by Selectmen Cathy Lowe. Lianne was presented with a certificate from the State of Maine.

The Moderator appointed Terry Hayes as Deputy Moderator to convene over the remainder of the meeting. Terry took the oath of office.

Article 4: To elect and/or appoint the following Town Officers for the ensuing year or to take any other action thereto:

A motion was made to elect the Board of Selectmen as General Assistance Directors. This motion was seconded by Christine Mumau.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes**

##### A motion was made to elect the Board of Selectmen as Board of Assessors. This motion was seconded by Leslie Boness.

**Vote by show of hands: yes**

### A motion was made by Doreen Maxwell to elect Christine Mumau as Budget Committee member. This motion was seconded by David Bowen. Christine declined.

A motion was made by David Bowen to elect **Kenneth Violette** as Budget Committee member. This motion was seconded by Theresa Bennett.

A motion was made by Daryl Boness to elect **Albert Borzelli** as Budget Committee member. This motion was seconded by Marguerite Dudley.

A motion was made by Alan McNeil to elect Robert L’Heureux as Budget Committee member. This motion was seconded by Leslie Boness. Robert declined.

A motion was made by Lee Holman to elect **David Bowen** as Budget Committee member. This motion was seconded by Jane Adams.

A motion was made by Alan McNeil to elect **Michael McCarron** as Budget Committee member. This motion was seconded by Lee Holman.

A motion was made by Christine Mumau to elect **Cynthia McNeil** as Budget Committee member. This motion was seconded by Lennie Eichman**.**

**Vote by show of hands on all five: Yes.**

A motion was made by David Bowen to elect the Board of Selectmen as Fire Warden (pursuant to MRSA 25, Part 6, Chapter 315, subsection 2391). This motion was seconded by Michael McCarron. David Bowen withdrew this motion.

A motion was made by Lee Holman to elect **Baxter Tardif** as Fire Warden. This motion was seconded by Susan Goulet.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

Article 5: A motion was made by Lorraine Parsons to see if the Town will vote to appropriate up to **$5,050.66** from Fund Balance to cover the over expenditure of the Sanitation Account for FY22. This motion was seconded by David Bowen.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

Article 6: A motion was made by Lee Holman to see if the Town will vote to appropriate up to **$12,500.00** from Fund Balance to cover the over expenditure of the Capital Outlay CD for FY19. This motion was seconded by Lee Fernald.

Discussion: This amount was approved by the Board in 2019 for the engineering cost of the Pratt Hill Road culvert project but it was discovered by the auditor that the money was never withdrawn from the CD.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

Article 7: A motion was made by Susan Goulet to see if the Town will vote to raise and/or appropriate **$472,670.00** for the Winter Roads Account. This motion was seconded by Alan Ray.

**Vote by show of hands=Yes.**

Article 8: A motion was made by Lee Holman to see if the Town will vote to raise and/or appropriate **$402,364.00** for the Summer Roads Account which includes $155,183.00 for the FY 2023-2024 principal and interest payment on the Maine Bond Bank loan dated November 1, 2021. Total amount borrowed equals $1,400,000.00. This motion was seconded by Alan Ray.

Discussion: We should be leaving money in the budget for the spring road management including culvert cleaning, increase is due to rising costs, we plan to work on the Pratt Hill road project, culverts such as the one at Pine Shores is too small and the storm we were hit with in May carried leaves, etc. which clogged several culverts in town, most of culverts were fairly clean, we had money set aside for spring but the rain storm in May used a lot of it up, we will be reimbursed in the next fiscal year, we will be receiving a small reimbursement grant for Darrington Road in the next fiscal year also, a culvert on Tucker Road has a 8x10 beam blocking the culvert, and infrastructure grants are being applied for with help from Jeff Sterns but will take time.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

Article 9: A motion was made by David Bowen to see if the Town will vote to raise and/or appropriate **$280,951.00** for the Administration Account. This motion was seconded by Christine Mumau.

Discussion: The Budget Committee recommended $280,951.00. The Board of Selectmen recommended $279,951.00 due to the Board’s plans to apply for a grant in the future for a town office door.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

Article 10: A motion was made by David Bowen to see if the Town will vote to raise and/or appropriate **$104,241.00** for the Public Safety Account. This motion was seconded by Christine Mumau.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

Article 11: A motion was made by Lorraine Parsons to see if the Town will vote to raise and/or appropriate **$121,917.00** for the Sanitation Account to include one Bulky Waste Collection Day per year. This motion was seconded by Alan Ray.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

Article 12: A motion was made by Lorraine Parsons to see if the Town will vote to raise and/or appropriate **$3,000.00** for the Contingency Account. This motion was seconded by Alan Ray.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

Article 13: A motion was made by Lorraine Parsons to see if the Town will vote to raise and/or appropriate **$1,000.00** for the General Assistance Account. This motion was seconded by Alan Ray.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

Article 14: A motion was made by Lorraine Parsons to see if the Town will vote to raise and/or appropriate **$3,500.00** for a new Veteran’s Monument to be placed in the reserve account. This motion was seconded by Alan Ray.

Discussion: The word Reserve was left out of the article but the amendment was allowed by the Moderator, a new monument is needed to place future veteran plaques, could use a granite slab instead of constructing another stone monument, a contractor offered to donate time and equipment for the monument.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

Article 15. A motion was made by Lorraine Parsons to see if the Town will vote to appropriate **$30,000.00** from Fund Balance to reduce the 2023-2024 Tax Commitment. This motion was seconded by Leslie Boness.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

Article 16: A motion was made by Lorraine Parsons to see if the Town will vote to raise and/or appropriate $10,000.00 for the Revaluation Reserve Account for future use. This motion was seconded by Alan Ray.

Discussion: The Budget Committee had suggested holding a revaluation later than the 10 year recommended time frame, a Board member stated that if we had the revaluation more often than 10 years it would be cheaper, a resident stated it would not be cheaper if we had it done more often,

Vote by show of hands: No.

A motion was made by Daryl Boness to raise **$5,000.00** for the Revaluation Reserve Account. This motion was seconded by David Bowen.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

Article 17: A motion was made by Daryl Boness to see if the Town will vote to amend the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance for the Town of Hartford as written in Attachment A. This motion was seconded by Lorraine Parsons.
**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

Article 18: A motion was made by Daryl Boness to see if the Town will vote to amend the Administrative Ordinance Part II for the Town of Hartford as written in Attachment B. This motion was seconded by Lennie Eichman.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

Article 19: A motion was made by Lennie Eichman to see if the town will vote to approve the order to alter the order to close the road, Darrington Road from 298 Darrington north to the end of the road, to winter maintenance that was filed with the clerk on March 16, 2023; and to raise and appropriate $7,100.00 from taxation to cover the additional cost to plow the road listed in the order, Darrington Road from 298 north to the end of the road; and to raise and appropriate $70,000.00 from taxation to cover the road construction costs to upgrade the road listed in the order as necessary to support winter travel and maintenance; and to authorize the municipal officers to execute an easement for a turnaround on abutting landowners property (Daniel and Claire Riley) for snow removal purposes. Note: This article is to authorize the opening of winter plowing on the section of Darrington Road from 298 Darrington Road north to the end of the road. This motion was seconded by Alan Ray.

Discussion: Winter maintenance is necessary to get to properties, residents are not allowed to plow town roads, resident has owned property for 17 years and lives there year round, should not raise the mil rate for one person, cost to rebuild Gurney Hill Road was $40,000.00 or more, the road has never been discontinued-only for winter maintenance, emergency vehicles have to be able to access homes on the road, in prior years the town voted to close the road to winter maintenance since there were not year round residents but now there are and they pay taxes like everyone else, mil rate would increase to approx. 20.1 of all articles pass today, many roads in town are plowed even though they are not throughways, we should discontinue road and they can create an association to pay for the plowing, the road is not the same as a subdivision which is required to have an association, opening the road to plowing would encourage new people to come to Hartford, we are not setting a good example, they knew the road was not plowed when they purchased the property, the cost is based on ditching-gravel-excavator rates, rescue has machinery to get to people on unplowed roads, and paving is not planned for the portion of road.

**Vote by show of hands: No.**

Article 20: A motion was made by David Bowen to see if the Town will vote to allow the Board of Selectmen to enter into multi-year contract for the mowing of town cemeteries and municipal properties. This motion was seconded by Alan Ray.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

**Social Service Articles**

Article 21: A motion was made by Lorraine Parsons to see if the Town will vote to raise and /or appropriate **$600.00** for the Hartford Heritage Society. This motion was seconded by Susan Goulet.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

A motion was made by Leslie Boness to vote on articles 22-34 as one. This motion was seconded by Lennie Eichman.

Sybilla Pettingill motioned to amend the motion to exclude article 33. This motion was seconded by Alan Ray.

Vote by show of hands: Yes.

**Vote on Articles 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, & 34: Yes.**

Article 22: To see if the Town will vote to raise and /or appropriate a sum of money for the area Snowmobile Clubs.

The Budget committee and Board of Selectmen recommend raising **$1,012.00**

Article 23: To see if the Town will vote to raise and /or appropriate a sum of money for the Bear Pond Association. **$300.00** has been Requested

Article 24: To see if the Town will vote to raise and/or appropriate a sum of money for the Hartford/Sumner Food Bank. **$1,000.00** has been requested

Article 25: To see if the Town will vote to raise and /or appropriate a sum of money for the Increase Robinson Library. $**300.00** has been Requested

Article 26: To see if the Town will vote to raise and /or appropriate a sum of money for the Zadoc Long Free Library. **$1,200.00** has been Requested

Article 27: To see if the Town will vote to raise and /or appropriate a sum of money for RCAM. **$2,500.00** has been Requested

Article 28: To see if the Town will vote to raise and /or appropriate a sum of money for Life Flight. **$602.00** has been Requested

Article 29: To see if the Town will vote to raise and /or appropriate a sum of money for Sexual Assault Prevention. **$400.00** has been Requested

Article 30: To see if the Town will vote to raise and /or appropriate a sum of money for Seniors Plus. $**1,000.00** has been Requested

Article 31: To see if the Town will vote to raise and /or appropriate a sum of money for the Hope Association. **$300.00** has been Requested

Article 32: To see if the Town will vote to raise and /or appropriate a sum of money for the Cancer resource of Western Maine. **$100.00** has been Requested

Article 33: A motion was made by Leslie Boness to see if the Town will vote to raise and /or appropriate. **$100.00** for MPBN TV. This motion was seconded by Christine Mumau.

Discussion: A resident stated that she supports god, our country, rural small town values and the programming is not in line with 50% of Hartford resident’s beliefs, some shows are just like other channels but there are many educational programs, and the station was formed by colleges and other educational systems.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

Article 34: To see if the Town will vote to raise and /or appropriate a sum of money for Androscoggin Home Health. **$500.00** has been Requested

Article 35: A motion was made by Morrill Nason to see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to use Overlay for accounts exceeding appropriated amounts, including tax abatements and applicable interest and to set the amount of overlay at no more than 2.5% of the Tax Commitment.

Explanation: The Selectmen, as Assessors, are authorized to raise Overlay under Title 36 MRSA section 710 but require your authorization to spend Overlay. Overlay cannot be more than 5% of the Tax Commitment. This motion was seconded by Leslie Boness.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

Article 36: A motion was made by Morril Nason to see if the Town will authorize the Board of Selectmen on behalf of the Town to sell and dispose of any real estate acquired by the Town for non-payment of taxes. Sale or sales of said properties is to be by sealed bid and advertised seven (7) days in advance by posting in two conspicuous public places and by placing an advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation, and to execute Municipal Quit Claim Deeds for such property. The Board of Selectmen may, without auction or advertisement, sell to the person or persons to whom a property was taxed at the time the property was acquired by the Town or to their heirs or assigns, such property at the amount of the accrued taxes, interest, lien costs and administrative fees as determined by State Law and the Board of Selectmen and therefore shall execute and deliver a Municipal Quit Claim Deed for such property. This motion was seconded by Christine Mumau.

Discussion: A question of why this has to be voted on each year, some towns have charters to include items as this, and a resident stated that our Administrative Ordinance Part II does require town meeting vote on this article.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

Article 37: A motion was made by Morrill Nason to see if the Town will vote to fix the following dates on which real and personal property taxes shall be due and payable: one half of the tax shall be due and payable on December 1, 2023 and one half of the tax shall be due and payable on May 1, 2024. This motion was seconded by Leslie Boness.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

Article 38: A motion was made by Leslie Boness to see if the Town will vote to fix an annual interest rate of the maximum allowed by State Law (currently 8%) on real and personal property taxes not paid on or before December 1, 2023 and May 1, 2024. This motion was seconded by Morrill Nason.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

Article 39: A motion was made by Morrill Nason to see if the Town will fix an annual interest rate of four percent (4%) on excess taxes paid when tax abatements are issued by the Board of Assessors (M.R.S.A. 36, Section 506A, as amended). This motion was seconded by Leslie Boness.

Article 40: A motion was made by Morrill Nason to see if the Town will vote to authorize the Tax Collector or the Deputy Tax Collector to accept prepayments of property taxes not yet due or assessed and to fix an annual interest rate of zero percent (0) on taxes paid prior to the due date. (M.R.S.A. 36, Section 506, amended). This motion was seconded by Lennie Eichman.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

##### Article 41: A motion was made by Morrill Nason to see if the Town will vote to accept all revenues from Cost Sharing Projects and from State and Federal agencies. This revenue will be distributed to the appropriate accounts as intended by said agencies. This motion was seconded by Leslie Boness.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

Article 42: A motion was made by Morrill Nason to see if the Town will vote to accept the categories of funds listed below as provided by the Maine State Legislature and appropriate and apply the total estimated amount of **$436,935.00** against the total amount authorized to be raised by taxation.

Fund category Estimated Amount

##### State Municipal Revenue Sharing……………………… $241,674.00

##### Local Road Assistance Program……………..................... $ 36,644.00

##### Tree Growth Reimbursement………….……….……...... $ 25,988.00

Veterans Exemption Return …………………………..... $ 817.00

Snowmobile Registration Refund…………….………… $ 1012.00

Homestead Exemption Return…………………................ $130,800.00

 Total $ **436,935.00**

This motion was seconded by Alan Ray.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

Article 43: A motion was made by Leslie Boness to see if the Town will vote to apply the local revenue amount of **$243,666.00** against the total amount authorized to be raised by Taxation to reduce the FY23 Tax Commitment. This motion was seconded by Morrill Nason.

**Vote by show of hands: Yes.**

Article 44: A motion was made by Morrill Nason to see if the Town will vote to increase the property tax levy limit established for Hartford by State Law in the event that the municipal budget approved under the preceding Articles will result in a tax commitment that is greater than that property tax levy limit. This motion was seconded by David Theriault.

**Vote by secret ballot: Yes=19, No=8 Article Passes**

***Minutes Prepared by***

 Lianne M. Bedard, Town Clerk

June 26, 2023