

Mason Town Meeting

March 13, 2021

Held at the Mason Elementary School
13 Darling Hill Rd., Mason, New Hampshire

The 2020 Town Report was dedicated to the volunteers of the Mason Broadband Committee who worked tirelessly to bring high-speed internet to the residents of Mason.

Moderator Catherine Schwenk came to the microphone and called the 2021 Town Meeting to order at 9:00 am. She requested that nonvoters wear nonvoter credentials and sit in the first row to the Moderator's left. There was no request for interpretive services. She indicated the fire and emergency exits and then introduced those sitting at the head table: Select Chair Louise Lavoie, Selectman Charles (Charlie) Moser, Selectman R. Peter (Pete) McGinnity and Town Clerk Debra (Deb) Morrison.

There were 43 voters and 1 nonvoter present with 1,124 names on the checklist, representing a four (4) percent turnout.

The Moderator acknowledged that preparation for this meeting is a coordinated effort of many individuals and requested a round of applause for their efforts.

The Moderator then reviewed the procedure for voters. Voters wishing to speak should use the microphone and address any questions to the Moderator. Residents need to give their name at the microphone when recognized. All amendments and substantive motions must be in writing (please also print your name) and signed by the maker and seconder.

Five voters may make a written request for a secret ballot vote prior to a voice vote or division vote per RSA 40:4A. Voters and seconders must be present at the meeting to request a secret ballot vote.

Every voter is entitled to speak on a debatable motion unless the meeting, by a two-thirds vote, has ordered discussion stopped. A voter is entitled to speak a second time on the same question provided all voters who wish to speak have spoken.

The Moderator then announced the results of the Town and School District elections held on March 9. Total votes cast were 165 out of a total of 1,124, representing a 15 percent turnout. She declared the winning candidates elected to their respective offices.

Selectman: Charles V. Moser 126

Town Clerk/Tax Collector: Debra A. Morrison 164

Treasurer: Dee Mitchell 154

Trustee of Cemeteries: Robert B. Larochele 153

Library Trustee: Lynn McCann 150

Trustee of Trust Funds: Constance E. Lacasse 127

The following articles were voted on at the polls on Tuesday, March 9, 2021.

Mason School District Results

School Board Member: Jason Iannuzzo 141

School District Clerk: Rebecca L. Partridge 143

Results of **Article 2** — Shall the Mason School District accept the reports of agents, auditors, committees, or officers chosen as printed in the Annual Mason School District Report?

Yes 154 / No 7 / Article 2 carries

Results of **Article 3** — Shall The Mason School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant, or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purpose set forth therein, totaling Three Million Two Hundred Fifty Three Thousand Six Hundred Twenty Seven Dollars (\$3,253,627.00)? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be Three Million One Hundred Ninety Four Thousand Eighty Three Dollars (\$3,194,083.00) which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Mason School District, or by law, or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13 X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. **NOTE:** This operating budget warrant article does not include appropriations contained in ANY other warrant articles. The School Board recommends this article 5–0.

Yes 111 / No 51 / Article 3 carries

Results of **Article 4** — Shall The Mason School District raise and appropriate the sum not to exceed Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) to be added to the previously established Educating Educationally Disabled Children Capital Reserve Fund (established in 2010), with such amount to be funded from the June 30, 2020 unreserved fund balance available for transfer on July 01? No amount to be raised from taxation. The School Board recommends this warrant article 5–0. (Majority vote required.)

Yes 130 / No 33 / Article 4 carries

Results of **Article 5** — Shall The Mason School District raise and appropriate the sum not to exceed Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) to be added to the previously established School Building and Grounds Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund (established in 2010), with such amount to be funded from the June 30, 2020 unreserved fund balance available for transfer on July 01? No amount to be raised from taxation. The School Board recommends this warrant article 5-0. (Majority vote required.)

Yes 130 / No 31 / Article 5 carries

Results of **Article 6** — Shall The Mason School District vote to establish a Healthcare Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of paying unanticipated healthcare expenses, and to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) to be placed in this fund; and further designate the school board as agents to expend from the healthcare capital reserve fund? Such amount will be funded from the June 30, 2021 unreserved fund balance available for transfer on July 1? No amount to be raised from taxation. The School Board recommends this warrant article 5-0. (Majority vote required.)

Yes 100 / No 47 / Article 6 carries

Results of **Article 7** — Shall The Mason School District vote to authorize, indefinitely until rescinded, to retain year end unassigned general funds in an amount not to exceed, in any fiscal year, five (5) percent of the current fiscal year's net assessment, in accordance with RSA 198:4-b, II? Such fund balance retained may only be used to reduce the tax rate or for emergencies to be approved by the Department of Education under RSA 32:1. The School Board recommends this warrant article 5-0. (Majority vote required.)

Yes 115 / No 28 / Article 7 carries

Results of **Article 8** — Shall The Mason School District accept the provisions of RSA 198:20-b providing that any school district in an annual meeting may adopt an article authorizing indefinitely, until specific rescission of such authority, the school board to apply for, accept and expend, without further action by the school district, unanticipated money from state, federal or other government unit or private source which becomes available during fiscal year? The School Board recommends this warrant article 5-0. (Majority vote required.)

Yes 107 / No 33 / Article 8 carries



The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Retired Fire Chief Fred Greenwood. Afterwards, the Moderator acknowledged Louise Lavoie, who asked Fire Chief Philip (Flip) Phalon to present Fred with a beautiful clock in recognition of his 34 years of dedication and service to the Mason Fire Department and the residents of this town.

Next, the Moderator recognized Carol Iodice, who presented the Boston Post Cane to Anne (Nancy) Richards in honor of being the oldest resident in town at the age of 96.

There was no objection to waiving the reading of the Warrant.

In regards to voting by ballot, it was clarified “to please come out of your seats to the center aisle and receive a yes/no ballot. Come down the center aisle to the ballot box. It is your responsibility to place your vote in the box. You may pocket the other half of the ballot or put it in the wastebasket. Please return to your seat by the side aisle.”

Article 2: Charlie Moser moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to accept the reports of its agents, auditors, committees or officers chosen as printed in the Mason Annual Report.

Article 2 carries unanimously.

Article 3: Louise Lavoie moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Million, One Hundred Sixty Thousand, Eight Hundred and Forty-Nine Dollars (\$2,160,849) for general municipal operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. (Majority vote required.) (Recommended by the Selectmen.)

Pete McGinnity, on behalf of the Board of Selectmen, seconded by Louise Lavoie, made a motion to see if the town will vote to amend line 4150-22 of the proposed 2021 budget to add Six Thousand Five Hundred dollars (\$6,500), bringing the total amount of line 4150-22 [Town Website] up to \$9,500, the added funds being for the purpose of a one-time website design cost of \$7,500, with a yearly maintenance cost of \$2,000.

Pete said that after the budget was proposed, the current webmaster resigned. The website is currently unable to go across platforms. The new one will include all departments and we will be able to update it ourselves.

The motion to amend line 4150-22 carries.

Trish Cross questioned the increase in line 4199-02 [Maintenance Wages] under Buildings & Grounds. Louise explained it was to replace a part-time person.

Pete McGinnity, on behalf of the Board of Selectmen, seconded by Louise

Lavoie, made a motion to see if the town will vote to amend line 4199-03 of the 2021 proposed budget [Technology Support and Equipment] to add One Thousand One Hundred Dollars (\$1,100), bringing the total amount of line 4199-03 up to \$19,080, the added funds being for the purpose of email maintenance, security protocols and archival. The new town email accounts will bring the town into compliance with state rules for email security. Microsoft 365 Business will be used as the platform.

The motion to amend line 4199-03 carries unanimously.

Under the Police Department budget, Louise said we're adding one full- and one part-time officer.

Mike Bromberg questioned lines 4210-04 and -05 [Part-time and Overtime Wages] under Police with a quarry parking tickets notation. Louise said that [due to Covid] there were lots of problems with crowds at the quarry, garbage and too many cars parking on the roads. Mike: "So we're closing the nicest place in town?" Pete explained it had to be done, it was out of control. More discussion ensued with several people unhappy that not even townspeople can park in the parking area on Scripps Lane.

On line 4220-04 [Assistant Fire Chief], Louise said this new line item is to add a paid position for an Assistant Fire Chief, with the intention of training this person for eventual Fire Chief. This will end up being a hybrid fire department with paid and volunteer members.

Charlie Moser, on behalf of the Board of Selectmen, seconded by Louise Lavoie, made a motion to see if the town will vote to amend line 4311-15 of the proposed 2021 budget to add Seventeen Thousand dollars (\$17,000), bringing the total amount of line 4311-15 up to \$23,400, the added funds being for the purpose of funding engineering for the repair or replacement of the bridge on Jeds Lane across Mason Brook.

Charlie said there are 10 families on Jeds Lane and the bridge over Mason Brook gets a lot of water that goes under there. Repeated floods have washed out this bridge over the years and one of the abutments is collapsing. Road Agent Dave Morrison went underneath to get pictures and it has been temporarily stabilized with steel plates. Wetlands permits are required along with the engineer's approval.

The motion to amend line 4311-15 carries unanimously.

Louise Lavoie explained new line item 4312-17 [Vehicle Lease]. "After five years, the town will own this leased dump truck outright. We need to break the cycle of acquiring older vehicles that don't last."

John Suiter: "Will this truck be the same size or bigger?" Pete McGinnity: "This truck is actually bigger. We had two companies come out and evaluate

our needs based on the roads. This should reduce vehicle maintenance and it has a three-year warranty. It also has a new plow setup.”

The new budget total with amendments is now \$2,185,449.38.

Article 3 carries as amended unanimously.

Article 4: Pete McGinnity moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) for the purpose of repair and maintenance of the Town’s paved roads, or take any other action relative thereto. (Majority vote required.) (Recommended by the Selectmen.)

Pete spoke on the article saying that we had a survey done for free by the NRPC which was an extensive evaluation on each road.

Louise said that they hope to complete and repave the multi-year project on Russell Rd. this year. There are still some wetlands issues to be addressed.

Article 4 carries unanimously.

Article 5: Charlie Moser moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000) to be added to the Highway Department Equipment Reserve Fund previously established. (Majority vote required.) (Recommended by the Selectmen.)

Charlie explained that they’re planning for the future. One of the greatest needs is a new grader for the dirt roads that require so much maintenance. This will go a long way towards that goal.

John Suiter: “I agree that we need to get Dave and the crew better equipment. Is there any help for the state or federal government?” Louise: “We’ve tried to find grants in the past, but we’re too small and spread out so we don’t qualify.” Charlie: “We’re working on a capital improvement plan to discuss that.”

Jack Flanagan: “There is money available at times. For instance, the fiber installed in town. It’s important to keep a dialog with Concord. We need to get in line like every other town.”

Article 5 carries unanimously.

Article 6: Louise Lavoie moved and it was seconded to if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) to be added to the Fire Department Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund previously established. (Majority vote required.) (Recommended by the Selectmen.)

Louise said this is another one of our rainy-day funds. Fire Chief Flip Phalon said a new truck can cost \$700,000. “Our trucks are getting old and one will need to be replaced in about two years.”

Article 6 carries unanimously.

Article 7: Louise Lavoie moved and it was seconded to see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty-Four Thousand Dollars (\$54,000) for the purpose of purchasing and equipping a new police cruiser with funding as follows: Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) to come from the Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund and the balance of Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000) to come from the trade-in of our currently owned police cruiser, or take any other action relative thereto. (Majority vote required.) (Recommended by the Selectmen.)

Chief Kevin Maxwell spoke on this article and said there will be zero impact on taxpayers.

Article 7 carries unanimously.

Article 8: Charlie Moser moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of Eight Thousand Four Hundred Forty-Two Dollars (\$8,442) for the purpose of purchasing upgrades to the Police Department's communication system. (Majority vote required.) (Recommended by the Selectmen.)

Charlie said the police transmitter on the town tower has aged out and requires replacement.

Article 8 carries unanimously.

Article 9: Louise Lavoie moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$1,500) for the purpose of maintenance on the rail trail, and further to authorize withdrawal of said sum from the Forestry Maintenance Fund. (Majority vote required.) (Recommended by the Selectmen.)

Article 9 carries unanimously.

Article 10: Pete McGinnity moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to urge that the New Hampshire General Court, which is obligated to redraw the maps of political districts within the state following the federal census, will ensure fair and effective representation of New Hampshire voters without political party influence.

Additionally, these voters ask the Town of Mason, NH to urge the NH General Court to carry out the redistricting in a fair and transparent way through public meetings, not to favor a particular political party, to include communities of interest and to minimize multiseat districts.

The record of the vote approving this article shall be transmitted by written notice from the Selectmen to Mason's State Legislators, informing them of the demands from their constituents within 30 days of the vote. By petition.

After lengthy discussion, Charlie Moser made a motion to move the question. Motion carries and discussion is stopped.

Article 10 fails.

On motion of Michael Bromberg and duly seconded, Town Meeting was adjourned Sine Dai at 10:39 am.

Following Town Meeting, Moderator Catherine Schwenk administered oaths of office to Charles Moser and Debra Morrison.

Debra A. Morrison

Mason Town Clerk