

**2023 Town Meeting
Willey Building Auditorium
March 7, 2023**

The meeting was called to order by Mike Hogan at 10:03 a.m.

Art. 1. To elect a Moderator for the ensuing year.

A motion was made by RD Eno with a second by Fred Ducharme to nominate Jeanne Johnson. Karen Larsen was nominated but respectfully declined, there were no other nominations. Jeanne was elected unanimously.

Attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Jeanne then honored Ed Smith for his 26 years of being a moderator. She asked everyone to please silence their phones and went over housekeeping rules.

Art. 2. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot vote to accept the Town Report as printed for FY22?

A motion was made by Rory Thibault with a second by Brittany Butler. Motion carried. Mike commented that the selectboard's article is on page 16, all are welcome to meetings. We did receive funds from ARPA to be disbursed, please refer to page 19. He thanked the highway crew for the great job they had done, and for Betty and Michelle. He encouraged younger people to step forward to participate in selectboard meetings. Jeanne asked if there were any questions, there were none.

Art. 3. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot authorize payment of real and personal property taxes on August 17, 2023, and November 16, 2023, by delivery to Cabot Town Hall postmarked on or before that date; and, Establish that overdue taxes will bear interest at a rate of one percent per month or fraction thereof for the first three months and thereafter one and one-half percent per month or fraction thereof from the due date of such tax pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5136; and,

Establish the amount of the penalty charged by the collector of delinquent taxes for payments made after the due date for payment to 8 percent of the tax collected pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1674(3)(A)? **A motion was made by Will Ameden with a second by Rory Thibault. Motion carried.**

Art. 4. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot elect all Town Officers required by law, according to law? **A motion was made by Fred Ducharme with a second by Will Ameden. Motion carried.**

The Town Clerk will cast one vote for each office unless there is more than one candidate.

Listers (2 positions)

Brittany Butler was nominated by Ruth Goodrich for a three-year term with a second by Connie Hourihan. Jacqueline Lumbra was nominated by Roz Daniels for a three-year term with a second by Melvin Churchill. The Town Clerk cast one vote for each.

Delinquent Tax Collector – Ellen Cairns nominated Susan Carpenter, with a second by Cedric Alexander. There were no other nominations. The Town Clerk cast one vote for Susan Carpenter.

Grand Juror – Rose Bothfeld nominated David Pike for a 1-year term with a second by Cedric Alexander. There were no other nominations. The Town Clerk cast one vote for David Pike.

Cemetery Commissioner – Melvin Churchill nominated Ruth Goodrich with a second by Cedric Alexander for 3-year term. There were no other nominations. The Town Clerk cast one vote for Ruth Goodrich.

Library Trustees (2 positions) Beth Wade nominated Angela Ogle with a second by Kirk Steinert. There were no other nominations. Kirk Steinert nominated Erin Ruddell with a second by Beth Wade for Library Trustee. There were no other nominations. The Town Clerk cast one vote for Angela Ogle and Erin Ruddell.

CCIF – Melvin Churchill nominated Jason Monaco with a second by RD Eno. There were no other nominations. The Town Clerk cast one vote for Jason Monaco.

Willey Building Committee – There are three openings. A motion was made by Fred Ducharme with a second by Mike Hogan to nominate Betty Ritter for three years. There were no other nominations. The Town Clerk cast one vote for Betty Ritter. A motion was made by Fred Ducharme with a second by R.D. Eno to nominate Brad Alexander. There were no other nominations. The Town Clerk cast one vote for Brad Alexander. We still have one vacancy with no nominations.

The following Articles will be voted on by Australian Ballot and may be discussed on the floor except for Articles 5 through 8 as you cannot discuss elected positions.

Art. 5. To elect a Selectperson for a term of two years. **[Australian Ballot]**
Karen Larsen: 232; Larry Gochey: 156; Write-in: 10; Undervotes: 20 for a total of 418

Art. 6. To elect a Selectperson for a term of three years. **[Australian Ballot]**
Fred Ducharme: 304; Shannon L. Smith 84; Write-in 2; Undervotes: 27 for a total of 418

Art. 7. To elect a Town Clerk for a term of three years. **[Australian Ballot]**
Betty Ritter: 324; Write -in: 20; Undervote: 74 for a total of 418

Art. 8. To elect a Town Treasurer for a term of three years. **[Australian Ballot]**
Betty Ritter: 329; Write-in: 17; Undervote 72 for a total of 418

Art. 9. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot appropriate the sum of \$701,629 to defray the General Expenses of the Town, with an estimated \$82,100 to come from income and \$619,529 from local taxes? **[Australian Ballot]**
336 yes; 72 no; 10 blanks for a total of 418 votes

This article can be discussed, and RD Eno explained that we have a very tight budget this year with an increase of \$7,800, which includes adjustments to the cost of living in the Town payroll. NEKWM reported that our Recycling Center is the most active one in the area. Heat pumps were installed in the Willey Building hoping that it will cut fuel costs. Roz Daniels wanted to know where income comes from. RD Eno stated it is listed on page 22 and includes interest on deposits and tax anticipation note, Cabot Arts makes donations when they have an event and that goes to the Willey Building. PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) the state does not pay taxes for property they control in town, such as Molly's Falls Pond State Park and all fishing areas in Town. Karen Larsen wanted to know about the sale of the Masonic Hall. We have a Purchase & Sales agreement with Neighbors in Action, and if this sells, it will go into the general fund. Rory Thibault asked since Cabot is rich in land, have we considered any investments for housing in Cabot? RD Eno did participate in the American Institute of Architects Charrette. Currently, Cabot Creamery has not made any decisions to go forward. The Selectboard would welcome any ideas. Someone asked if the Trails Committee grant has been awarded, and has not been received yet, why are they spending money now? The Selectboard advised they are using money appropriated in the Town budget. There was no more discussion.

Art. 10. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot appropriate the sum of \$925,863 to repair and maintain the Highways of the Town including summer, winter, and special treatment, of which an estimated \$159,100 is to come from income and \$766,763 from local taxes? **[Australian Ballot]**
361 yes, 52 no, 5 blanks. for a total of 418 votes

Is there any discussion – Ama Peyman wanted to know why there are no new trucks in the upcoming budget. Ian stated we did not need a new truck, the next one is planned around 2027. Most of the increase is due to inflationary costs such as sand and gravel.

Art. 11. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot appropriate the sum of \$25,000 to the Cabot Public Library, to support the continuation of a part-time Youth Librarian position and maintain existing, youth-oriented library programming in the Town of Cabot? This would supplement the \$78,344 in the general budget submitted by the Selectboard, resulting in an increase over the prior year's budget allocation of \$16,092 and would cost taxpayers an additional \$8.90/\$100,000 household worth. A vote against the measure will result in the elimination of most current programs geared toward children and youth at the Cabot Library. The total amount (\$103,344.31) has been approved by the Library Trustees. **[Australian Ballot]**

293 yes; 124 no, 1 blank, for a total of 418 votes

Comments: Kirk Steiner explained in the past we were able to secure grants thanks to Beth Wade, and the Selectboard allocated ARPA funds for 2022.

Art. 12. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot exempt the Cabot Historical Society buildings owned by the Cabot Historical Society, Inc., (501C-3) a non-profit organization, and used exclusively for the purposes of the Cabot Historical Society, from real property taxes for a period of five (5) years, pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 3840. **[Australian Ballot]**

328 yes; 84 no, 6 blanks, for a total of 418 votes

Comments – Rory Thibault – can it be open to the public more often. Ruth Goodrich stated that it will be open this 4th of July and COVID-19 has shut it down for some time. We need volunteers to help make improvements. Karen Larsen asked can it be open at other times; Ruth Goodrich said if we are available. She also said they are looking for help identifying subjects in old historical photos. She said to feel free to contact her. Brittany Butler is working with the school; looking for volunteers to do a lot of activities. Melvin Churchill said he believed proceeds from the Apple Pie festival go to heating the building.

Art. 13. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot appropriate \$20,000 to match funds raised by the 3rd/4th grade class at Cabot School for the purpose of building a new playground on the Cabot School premises. **[Australian Ballot]**

285 yes, 130 no, 3 blanks, for a total of 418 votes

Comment – – Rory Thibault would like to give Rebecca, the Principal, not a resident of Cabot, the opportunity to speak. There was no objection. Rebecca Tatistcheff gave an overview of the playground. Someone wanted to know how to access the Go Fund Me building fund for the playground (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/cabot-school-3rd-and-4th-grade-natural-playground>). Lynn Rockwell asked what happens to the playground plan if we don't raise enough money? Rebecca Tatistcheff said it will be done piecemeal; Judy Pransky noted they have raised over \$50,000. Connie Hourihan said it sounds like a major project for the children; Richard Hourihan thought it was not much to ask for (less than a Happy Meal at McDonalds); Ellen Cairns wanted people to know that this was not a petition from the School Board but from individuals. Judy Pransky asked if \$20,000 is enough and Connie Hourihan wanted to know if it would be safe if only half-built. The Principal assured the town that it would be safe, it can be built component-by-component, and the total cost would be \$115,000 if it were totally hired out. She expects the cost to be closer to \$75,000 with donated materials and labor.

Aedan Scribner asked if there would be a swing, and was told there would not be swings; they require too much space. Richard Hourihan offered rocks from his property. Amy Hornblas said that a playground is essential to a school and was concerned at the slowness of the process and is worried that we are losing our focus on kids. She feels a playground should have been a first concern a few years ago. Rory Thibault explained the school has numerous priorities for staffing, equipment, and repairs. At the budget meeting last night, fewer than a dozen people attended. No-one attended any budget development meetings. And yet some people will vote "no" to

passing the budget. David VanDuesen stated that if we would have a floor vote, people could adjust the budget right there. Ellen stated it takes a lot of time to hear from subject matter experts and develop the budget. Point of order brought up by resident –this discussion is invalid with town business. Richard Hourihan stated that you can never plow a straight line looking behind you – let’s move forward.

Art. 14. Resolved: That no disbursements from the Town Cabot Community Investment Fund (CCIF), UDAG Fund, or the Town of Cabot (CCIF) Scholarship Fund shall be made for two (2) years except: a) to pay current obligations; b) to meet administrative expenses, or c) to make Education Grants, under the rules of the 2019 CCIF Plan in order to allow the funds to recover previous losses. **[Australian Ballot]**

311 yes; 68 no; 39 blanks, for a total of 418 votes

Comments from Chris Tormey - It really needs to receive more interest from the investments account. If we get too low, we need to pause on using funds so we can build it up to be available for future use. Cedric Alexander – wanted to know what kind of growth – Chris Tormey we would like to see it grow substantially more. The Wastewater money will be coming back to CCIF fund in 2029.

Art. 15. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot approve the addition of a Fences section to the Town of Cabot Zoning Regulations providing residents a clear understanding of the guidelines for Fences. **[Australian Ballot]**

256 yes; 117 no; 45 blanks, for a total of 418 votes

Comment – Brittany Butler (Zoning Administrator and member of Planning Commission) explained that the Planning Commission is going through the regulations piece by piece, rather than submitting all recommended modifications at once. This change is to make it easier to put a fence on property in every district. Agricultural fences are exempt; picket and rail and under 4’ high fences will not need a permit and Route 2 will still require 50’ setback because of State regulations.

Art. 16. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot approve the following amendment to the Town of Cabot Zoning Regulations to remove the following sections from Article 3 Parking Standards, Section 3.6: remove (c) “Places of public assembly, restaurants; (d) Office, Business services and clinics; and (e) Commercial business and unspecified uses.” **[Australian Ballot]**

246 yes; 99 no; 73 blanks, for a total of 418 votes

Comments - Brittany reported that state regulators are in the process of relaxing parking standards for densely populated areas. This recommendation would remove barriers to developing businesses in the village district. Marion Morrison asked– what does it mean? Brittany replied this means that people will have access to parking in the Willey Building, Masonic Hall, the Rec Field, and the school. Municipal parking created since the previous rewrite of regulations makes it possible to ease restrictions.

Art. 17. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot approve the Village Center Designation Map to be added to the current Town Plan which will include Agri-Mark (dba Cabot Creamery) and the Recreation Field. **[Australian Ballot]**

299 yes, 84 no; 35 blanks, for a total of 418 votes

Comments – Brittany explained Cabot had a Village Center Designation which was never used, and we lost it because the map was not added to the plan, after which there was interest in the benefits of having that designation. This gave us the opportunity to include the Creamery and Rec field pavilion. This is not making a new district, it is a village center designation, allowing businesses to qualify for grants and funds. This will not be used if the Creamery develops property outside of the village center. It is only part of Creamery that is developed. Dan Dunham asked how we are affected? He is not in the village. There may be some room for those close to the VCD. The letters on the map have nothing to do with the VCD, it only links some photos taken in support of the application.

Art. 18. Shall the voters of the Town of Cabot authorize the Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District to appropriate and expend a budget of \$885,180, at no expense to the Town of Cabot? **[Australian Ballot]**
360 yes; 29 no; 29 blanks, for a total of 418 votes

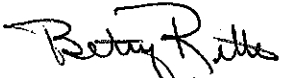
RD commented that this will be the last year that this will be on the ballot.

Art. 19. To transact any other non-binding business that may come before said meeting.

There was no non-binding business. The NEKWMD charter has been changed so the NEKWMD Board of Supervisors will be able to approve their own budget in the future.

Art. 20. To adjourn this meeting. **A motion was made by Fred with a second by Ian. Motion carried.** We adjourned at 11:43 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Betty Ritter, Town Clerk



Michael Hogan, Chair of Selectboard



Jeanne Johnson, Town Meeting Moderator