**WARNING**

**TOWN OF STARKSBORO ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

**March 1, 2025**

The Town of Starksboro met on Saturday March 1 at 9am 127 residents in attendance. We had 12 new residents in attendance and received maple syrup as an acknowledgement for attending. Our Representatives Mari Cordes & Herb Olson and Senators Steve Heffernan & Ruth Hardy were on hand to announce what they have been working on during the Legislature sessions. Health Care & Education Property Tax burdens were discussed along with a housing shortage. Drug pricing seems to be the leading cause of the increase in health care. Education taxes have increased due to the population decrease which puts more burden on the residents left.

Andy Weis is Robinson School’s principal and announced the fall academic assessments showed a special educator need for full time. By the winter assessment the school showed a 33% increase in growth. He also announced the retiring of a longstanding teacher – Jodi Lane.

**Article 1**: **To be voted by Australian Ballot on March 4, 2025.** To elect Town Officers and Mount Abraham Unified School District Officers for the ensuing terms:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Moderator, 1 year | Planning Commission, 3 years |
| Selectperson, 1 year | Library Trustee, 3 years |
| Selectperson, 2 years | Library Trustee, 3 years |
| Cemetery Commissioner, 3 years | Library Trustee, 1 year |
| Auditor, 3 years | First Constable, 1 year |
| Lister, 3 years | Second Constable, 1 year |
| Delinquent Tax Collector, 1 year | Mount Abraham Unified School Director, 3 years |
| Planning Commission, 3 years | Mount Abraham Unified School Director, 2 years |

**Ben Campbell made a motion to bring Article 1 to the floor, 2nd by Peter Ryersbach – no action taken – vote on Tuesday March 4, 2025**

**Article 2:** Shall the voters of the town accept the Auditors’ Report of the year ending June 30, 2024? **Nancy Cornell made a motion to bring Article 2 to the floor, 2nd by Rob Liotard.**

**Eric Hanson questioned the language of the financial statements of why we don’t follow theirs.**

**Robert Turner stated that Town Auditors don’t follow the normal guidelines, that would be the outside Auditors and their rules with the government. Koran Cousino stated that all FEMA damage has been reported and the totals of this has not been calculated. Amanda Vincent stated we have received a FEMA reimbursement of $178,000 from the 2019 storm.**

**Voice Vote called – Article 2 passed**

**Article 3**: Shall the voters of the Town of Starksboro vote the following sum of money for the proposed FY 25-26 General Fund Budget, being expenses of $1,215,919 less receipts of $257,524 for an amount of $958,395? **Alan Quittner made a motion to bring Article 3 to the floor, 2nd by Jeff Dunham**

**Louis Dupont questioned where the less receipts come from.**

**Robert Turner replied with PILOT payments, clerk fees**

**Voice Vote Called – Article 3 passed**

**Article 4**: Shall the voters of the town vote the following sum of money for the Fire Equipment Reserve Fund, being $67,689? **Norman Cota made a motion to bring Article 4 to the floor, 2nd by Mary O’Brien. Tom Estey spoke to the new fire truck arriving in April/May depending on final inspection. Robert Turner clarified the use of reserve funds, stating they are for anticipating payments for future expenses.**

**Ellen Kahler asked if we have any investment policies. Koran replied with those are being worked on. Tom Estey stated new VOSHA rules will be adding to the volunteer fire dept budget in the future. Equipment will be required to be replaced sooner than what is allowed now.**

**Voice Vote Called – Article 4 passed**

**Article 5:** Shall the voters of the town vote the following sum of money for the Road Equipment Reserve Fund, being $126,505? **Nancy Cornell made a motion to bring Article 5 to the floor, 2nd by Pete Antos-Ketcham.**

**No discussion – Voice voted called – Article 5 passed**

**Article 6**: Shall the voters of the town vote the following sum of money for the Starksboro Public Library to fund the costs of its operations for FY 25-26, being $51,958.83?

**Keith Drinkwine made a motion to bring Article 6 to the floor, 2nd by Eric Hanson**.

**Katie Antos-Ketcham spoke to the library budget and the increase in participation of patrons. 92% increase for materials being requested, attendance increased by 65%. Accessibility Lift is being constructed as we speak – thank you to Jeff Dunham, Alex Davis & Susan Thompson for their hard work in making this happen. The library board is made up of Emily Fisher, Christa Finnern, Leah Hamilton and the new Librarian is Cathy Townsend. A special Thank you to Laura Doyle & Jake Mendell for their past service of the Library Board.**

**Voice Voted Called – Article 6 passed**

**Article 7**: Shall the Town of Starksboro vote to raise, appropriate, and expend the sum of

$50,000 for the support of the STARKSBORO VILLAGE MEETING HOUSE AND STARKSBORO COOPERATIVE PRE-SCHOOL RENOVATION PROJECT to

provide service to residents of the Town.

**Keegan Tierney (Town Moderator) stepped down for this article due to being on the committee. Koran Cousino was nominated to announce and present the article for discussion.Ruth Beecher made a motion to bring Article 7 to the floor, 2nd by Nancy Cornell**

**Elsa Gilbertson stated that the building was built in 1838 and the preschool formed about 50yrs afterwards. Over $400,000 has been raised and still in need of approximately $100,000 to complete. Alexsys Thompson asked many does the preschool serve? Susan Pare stated approximately 20-25 kids each year. Ted Barrett asked why the preschool couldn’t be housed at Robinson? Andy Weis explained that there is not enough rooms available for them and they are 2 separate entities. ARPA funds were asked if available, all have been allocated to other committees.**

**Voice vote called – Article 7 passed**

**Article 8**: Shall the Town of Starksboro raise, appropriate, and expend the sum of $13,520 for

the support of Bristol Rescue Squad, Inc. to provide ambulance service to portions of the Town of Starksboro for the year 2025? **Robert Turner made a motion to bring Article 8 to the floor, 2nd by Peter Ryersbach.**

**Alexsys Thompson asked why such an increase?**

**Peg Casey stated the operating costs have increased substantially.**

**Voice Vote Called – Article 8 passed**

**Article 9:** Shall the Town of Starksboro raise, appropriate, and expend the sum of $5,000.00 for the support of the Starksboro food shelf to provide services to the residents of the town? **Luke McCarthy made a motion to bring Article 9 to the floor, 2nd by Jeff Dunham.**

**Lisa Daudon stated that the food shelf is strictly run by volunteers and services approximately 25 to 30 families per month. They are open on the 2nd Wednesday of the month. Voice Vote called – Article 9 passed**

**Article 10:** Shall the Town appropriate $700.00 to Bristol Have a Heart Food Shelf for providing food and essential items for free of charge, to any person in the Five-Town area of Addison County, (Bristol, Lincoln, Monkton, New Haven and Starksboro), in accordance with 24 V.S.A §2691.? **Alexsys Thompson made a motion to bring to the floor, 2nd by George Wyckoff. Ann Gibbons stated the organization has been in service for 30yrs and run by volunteers. 110 Starksboro households & 103 individuals use the service.**

**Article 11:** Shall the Town of Starksboro raise, appropriate, and expend the sum of $6,077.00 for the 911 ambulance service provided by the Richmond Rescue for the residents of Starksboro? **Kristen Toy made a motion to bring Article 11 to the floor, 2nd by Nancy Cornell. They service Shaker Hill, Mason Hill North, LazyBrook Park, Gore, Rounds Road, Route 17.**

**Voice Vote Called – Article 11 passed**

**Article 12:** Shall the Town of Starksboro appropriate the sum of $5,000.00 for the support of the Green Mount Cemetery? **Ben Campbell made a motion to bring to the floor, 2nd by Norman Cota. Norman Cota stated the only source of income for the cemetery comes from selling plots. The cemetery is in need of repairs such as normal maintenance of mowing and trimming of trees, removing trees for more room of selling of plots.**

**Voice Vote Called – Article 12 passed**

**Article 13**: Shall the voters of the town vote the following sums of money for the listed In-Town requests? **Rob Liotard made a motion to bring to the floor, 2nd Peter Ryersbach. Each member of the committee thanked the residents for their continued support.**

**Erin Buckwalters made a motion to amend the Starksboro Sports Program from $3,500 to $6,000. Jared Hamilton 2nd the motion.**

**Discussion of use and sustainability for future use. VT Land Trust and the Conservation Committee have given their recommendations from a study that was conducted, and the town will be working on those. The berm that was put in years earlier will be fixed this summer to help lessen the damage of any future flooding. The SSP talked about moving the fields of baseball/softball to Robinson School.**

**The new article shall read – Shall the voters of the town vote the following sums of money for the listed In-Town requests of $57,200? Voice Vote called – Article 13 passed.**

|  |  |
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| Project READ | 3,000 |
| Robinson Mentoring Program | 2,000 |
| Starksboro Cooperative Preschool | 6,000 |
| Starksboro Sports Program | 3,500 |
| Starksboro Four Winds Nature Program | 1,200 |
| Starksboro Rescue Squad | 12,000 |
| Starksboro Village Meeting House | 3,000 |
| Starksboro Volunteer Fire Department | 24,000 |
| **TOTAL IN-TOWN REQUESTS $54,700**  **Article 14:** Shall the voters of the town vote the following sums of money for the listed Out-of- | |

Town requests? **Norman Cota made a motion to bring Article 14 to the floor, 2nd by Kirsten Toy – Voice Vote called – Article 14 passed**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| AC Home Health & Hospice | 1,964 |
| AC Parent/Child Center | 1,600 |
| AC Readers | 350 |
| Addison Co. Restorative Justice | 800 |
| Age Well | 2,500 |
| American Red Cross | 500 |
| Atria Collective (formerly WomenSafe) | 1,250 |
| Bristol Family Center | 500 |
| Bristol Recreation Dept. | 2,500 |
| Counseling Service of Addison County | 2,200 |
| Elderly Services, Inc | 900 |
| Green Up Vermont | 100 |
| Homeward Bound | 500 |
| HOPE | 1,750 |

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| --- | --- |
| John W. Graham Emergency Shelter Services, Inc | 970 |
| Lewis Creek Assoc. | 550 |
| Open Door Clinic | 250 |
| Otter Creek Natural Resources Conservation District | 176 |
| RSVP/Green Mtn Foster Grandparent Program | 370 |
| Tri Valley Transit (formerly ACTR) | 2,106 |
| Turning Point Center | 1,000 |
| Vermont Adult Learning | 700 |
| Vermont Assoc. for the Blind & Visually Impaired | 500 |
| Vermont Center for Independent Living | 250 |
| Vermont Family Network | 250 |
| **TOTAL OUT-OF-TOWN REQUESTS** | **$24,536** |

**Article 15:** Shall the voters of the town vote the Real Estate taxes to be paid, without discount, to the Treasurer on or before Tuesday, October 15, 2025, at 4:30 pm becoming delinquent after October 15, 2025, at 4:30 pm? Real Estate taxes must be received by this time, postmarks are not considered receipt. **Denny Casey made a motion to bring Article 15 to the floor, 2nd by Peter Ryersbach – no discussion.**

**Voice Vote called – Article 15 passed**

**Article 16:** To transact, vote and act upon any further non-binding business which may legally come before this meeting. **Mike Shepard made a motion to bring Article 16 to the floor, 2nd by Eric Hanson.**

**Koran Cousino Thanked committee and staff members that have stepped down or moved on from working for the Town.**

**Rebecca Elder, Nancy Boss, John Painter, Dan Nugent, Robert Turner, Barbara Herrington – thank you for your service and hard work in making Starksboro a better community. Also a special thank you to the Road Crew, Fire Dept, Rescue Squad, office staff & volunteers who helped with the flooding of Hurricane Beryl for our residents that were affected.**

**Ruth Beecher Thanked Elsa Gilbertson for her writing of the Town Dedication Theme and the pictures provided.**

**Margi Gregory spoke about the new changes to the Planning Commission by laws.**

**Natasha Simon announced the passing of a Starksboro Resident Dean Marchacos and his dedication to maintaining Rounds Road for the residents that live there.**

**Dan Yonkovig announced the death notices listed in the Town Report for Starksboro Residents.**

**Carin McCarthy thanked the Jerusalem School House Committee for their dedication in restoring the school and fire station through grants, ARPA funds and a loan to be able to finish the project.**

**Pete Antos-Ketcham & Celina Aiguier spoke about the Community Garden plots located behind the Town Office – the fees, sizes and who to contact to purchase one.**

**Dan Kuzio spoke about the 211 Alert system through the State for residents. By signing up the resident will be notified of weather alerts and emergency situations.**

**Cecilia Elwert talked about all the programs and activities the Library provides for the public.**

**Norman Cota made a motion to adjourn Town Meeting 2nd by Luke McCarthy. Motion passed to adjourn at 12:39**

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Keegan Tierney

Moderator

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Amy McCormick

Town Clerk