

2022 Annual Town Meeting Minutes

To Tammy Lamphere, a resident of the Town of Mercer, in the County of Somerset, State of Maine,

GREETINGS:

In the name of the State of Maine, you are hereby required to notify and warn the inhabitants of the Town of Mercer in said county and state, qualified to vote in town affairs, to meet at the **Mercer Town Office/Community Center** in said Town on **Friday, the 4th day of March, 2022**, at eight o'clock in the forenoon then and there to act upon Article 1 and by secret ballot on Article 2 as set out below, the polling hours therefor to be from 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. and to reconvene on **Saturday, the 5th day of March, 2022** at five thirty o'clock in the afternoon (**5:30 p.m.**) then and there to act upon Articles 3 through 42 being the following:

ARTICLE 1: To elect a moderator by written ballot to preside at said meeting. **Town Clerk Nancy Gove asked for nominations for moderator. A motion was made and seconded to nominate Philip Curtis. No other nominations presented. Town Clerk Gove ceased nominations. A written ballot was provided to three citizens who voted for Philip Curtis. Philip Curtis was sworn in as moderator of this meeting. He deputized Nancy Gilman to moderate the remainder of the secret ballot portion of town meeting.**

ARTICLE 2: To elect three (3) Selectpersons, Assessors, and Overseers of the Poor all for one-year terms, one (1) Director of SAD #54 for a three-year term; one (1) Trustee of Shaw Library for a five-year term, two (2) Planning Board members for a three-year term, and five (5) Budget Committee members, two (2) three-year terms, two (2) two-year terms, and one (1) one-year term. **Deputy Nancy Gilman declared the polls closed at 8:00 p.m. She then recessed the meeting until March 5th at 5:30 p.m.**

The meeting reconvened at 5:30 pm, Saturday, March 5, 2022. The governing body recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Town Clerk Gove then read the results of Article 2 as follows:

1st Selectman – 1 year term:

Ricky J Parlin – 146; Wanda Fortin – 1; Yolanda Violette – 1; Virginia Worthen – 1; Anne Worther – 1; Blanks – 15

2nd Selectman – 1 year term:

Christopher P Dutil – 50; Gary D Mosher – 114; Blank – 1

3rd Selectman – 1 Year term:

Mary E Burr – 136; Dan Charles – 1; Chris Dutil – 5; Jesse Crandal – 2; Chris Tibbetts – 1; Lisa Murch – 1; Anne Worther – 1; David Welch – 1; Yolanda Violette – 1; Virginia Worthen – 1; Blanks – 15

Shaw Library Trustee – 5 year term:

Iva Jane Wallace – 152; Blank – 13

Planning Board – 3 year term (vote for 2):

Hillel Weisel – 36; Jason Juskewitch – 24; Terry Warren – 2; Christopher Leo – 1, Myke Bartholf – 1; Chris Holt -1; Yolanda Violette – 2; Joan Nunnally – 2; Fred LaPlante – 4; Brian Breton 1; William True – 1; Merrill Shields – 1; Mike Fortin – 1; Charles Harvey – 1; Denis Culley – 3; Robert Burr – 1; Fran Varney – 1; Joel Hupper – 1; Alan Gove – 1; Brenton LaMarre – 1; Emma Gierczak – 1; Donna Parlin – 1; James Wilson – 1; Wanda Fortin – 2; Dari Hurley – 1; Brad Hager – 1; Danielle Tibbetts – 1; Blank – 236

SAD #54 Director:

Bruce E Hurley – 141; Jerry Redlevske – 1; Chris Tibbetts – 1; Virginia Worthen – 1; Dennis Culley – 1; Lacey Cormier – 1; Blank – 19

Budget Committee – 3 year term (vote for 2):

Robert A Burr – 109, Joel R Hooper – 89; Yolanda CR Violette – 82, Jesse Crandell – 1; Blank – 49

Budget Committee – 2 year term (vote for 2):

Muriel J Armstrong – 123; Alan T Gove – 114; Yolanda Violette – 2; Chris Tibbetts – 1; Jesse Crandall – 3; Mary Ellen Charles – 1; Blanks – 86

Budget Committee – 1 year term:

Tammy H Lamphere – 134; Yolanda Violette – 4, Hillel Weisel – 1; Jeff Ryder – 1; Anne Worthern – 1; Blank – 24

The meeting was turned over to Moderator Philip Curtis who discussed that the meeting would be conducted in accordance with Robert’s Rules/Maine Moderator’s Manual.

ARTICLE 3: To see if the Town will vote to increase the property tax levy limit established for Mercer by state law, in the event that the municipal budget approved under the following articles results in a tax commitment greater than that limit. **A motion was made a seconded to approve as written. A written ballot was voted, 45 yes, 11 no. Article passes.**

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Municipal Officers to spend any amount not to exceed 3/12th of the current annual budget during the period from January 1st of the following year to the date of that year’s annual town meeting. **A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 5: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$107,143 for salaries, stipends, wages and benefits of all Town Officers** (\$106,143 from Taxes; \$1,000 from Surplus).

		Requested	
1 st Selectperson	4,000	Addressing Officer	500
2 nd Selectperson	4,000	Code Enforcement	2,600
3 rd Selectperson	4,000	Cemetery Sexton	500
Clerk, TC, Treasurer	36,795	Planning Board	<u>500</u>
Deputy Ck,TC,TR	18,444	Sub-total	86,643
Deputy Ck,TC	6,216	SS & Medicare	6,800

Trans Sta Attendant	7,488	Health Insurance	<u>13,700</u>
Animal Control Officer	1,600	Total	107,143

Note: 2021 budget was \$91,878 (Art 3, 7,12, and part of 13)
 Select Board recommends \$107,143 (\$106,143 from Taxes; \$1,000 from Surplus)
 Budget Committee recommends \$107,143, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. It was noted that the pay for the clerk, tax collector and treasurer increased because of taking on the treasurer position. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$89,290 for Administration - Town Office, Mercer Community Center (\$84,040 from Taxes and \$5,250 from Surplus)** plus expend any revenues and donations generated by the community center; any unexpended balances in the Administration budget and the Community Center revenue accounts to be placed in the Community Center Reserve Fund.

Audit	\$ 5,250 (Surplus)
Dues/Subscription	\$ 2,140
Operating Costs	\$35,400
Trio new modules	\$ 3,120
Trio renewal	\$ 9,700
Insurance-Gen Liability, P&C, Pub Officials, Vehicle, Bonds, WC/Unemployment	\$19,180
Utilities	<u>\$14,500</u>
Total	\$89,290

Note: 2021 budget was \$78,556 (Art 5, 6, 8, 9, 15)
 Select Board recommends \$89,290 (\$84,040 from Taxes; \$5,250 from Surplus)
 Budget Committee recommends \$82,290, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. It was noted that this article has increased from what was printed in the town report by \$7,000 due to increased cost of electricity and repairs to heating circulators in the building. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 7: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Surplus **\$8,000 for Contingency**. All use of funds to be reported in the 2022 annual report.
 Note: 2021 Budget was \$8,000; spent \$1,050 Trio new chart of accounts; \$273.66 overage in Transfer Station resulting from cost to remove electronics)
 Select Board recommends \$8,000 from Surplus
 Budget Committee recommends \$8,000, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 8: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$17,500 for Assessing**; any remaining balance to be placed in the Assessing Revaluation Fund.

Note: 2021 budget was \$5,000; 2020 budget was \$9,000

Select Board recommends \$17,500 from Taxes

Budget Committee recommends \$17,500, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 9: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Surplus **\$20,000 to be deposited into the Assessing Revaluation Fund for RJD Appraisal's revaluation in 2024/2025.**

Select Board recommends \$20,000 from Surplus.

Budget Committee recommends \$20,000, vote 3-1-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. The cost of the revaluation was reported to be approximately \$85,000. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$1,750 for the Animal Shelter and ACO expenses.**

Note: 2021 budget was \$4,100 (ACO wages is included in Article 5)

Select Board recommends \$1,750 from Taxes

Budget Committee recommends \$1,750, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 11: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Surplus **\$500 for Health Officer, Code Enforcement Officer and Local Plumbing Inspector training.**

Note: 2021 budget was 500

Select Board recommends \$500 from Surplus

Budget Committee recommends \$500, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. Heidi Dubois is the Health Officer; she introduced herself and talked about her role as health officer. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 12: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Surplus **\$3,500 for Cemetery Maintenance.**

Note: 2021 budget was \$5,500

Select Board recommends \$3,500 from Surplus

Budget Committee recommends \$3,500, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 13: To see if the Town will authorize the selectboard to pursue transfer of the Hampshire Hill Cemetery Association's assets to the town; to authorize the selectboard to execute documents and finalize agreements for the town to take ownership of the Hampshire Hill Cemetery land located at Hampshire Hill Road, Town of Mercer tax map 3, lot 11 and to accept transfer of trust funds and other assets held by the association if, after investigation, the selectboard is satisfied that these transfers are in the best interests of the town and can be satisfactorily completed; and to appropriate up to **\$3,000 from Surplus for legal and financial services** to accomplish said transfer.
Note: Hampshire Hill Cemetery Association has perpetual care funds of \$5,871
Select Board recommends Yes, \$3,000 from Surplus
Budget Committee recommends \$3,000, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. It was noted that the association has either moved away or passed away and they don't have the ability to care of this cemetery. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 14: To see if the Town will establish a non-lapsing "**Legal Expenses Reserve Fund**" to be used to pay for legal expenses incurred by the town; to raise and appropriate **\$3,000** to be deposited into the fund; and to provide the selectboard with continuing authority to spend from the account for the purposes stated above without further vote of the town meeting, this authority to remain in force from year to year until rescinded by the town meeting.
Select Board recommends \$3,000 from Taxes
Budget Committee recommends \$3,000, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 15: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$425 to supplement the three town scholarship awards.**
Note: 2021 budget was \$425
Select Board recommends \$425 from Taxes (\$200 for each high school award and \$25 for elementary award)
Budget Committee recommends \$ 425, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 16: To see if the Town will vote to charge and collect interest of 4% on all taxes assessed in 2022 that are unpaid 60 days after the date of commitment.
Note: 2020 interest was 8%, 2021 interest was 6%
Select Board recommends the maximum allowed by state law (2022 is 4%)
Budget Committee recommends 4%, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 17: To see if the Town will vote to deduct 2% on all taxes assessed in 2022 that are paid in full on or before the 30th day after the date of commitment.

Note: 2022 budget is \$16,000, funds to come from taxes (2021 actual - \$15,777)

Select Board recommends 0%

Budget Committee recommends 1% from taxes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. A motion was made to amend this article to 0%. Motion seconded. Discussion followed. The amendment was approved by a counted show of hands: 40 yes, 34 no. The article as amended was then voted on. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 18: To see if the Town will vote to dissolve the Mercer Rescue for and within Mercer.

Note: 2021 budget was \$5,240; balance in fund is \$3,248.65

Select Board recommends Yes

Budget Committee makes no recommendation, vote 3-1-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. EMA Director Adam Keene was present. The voter voted to allow Adam to speak. He indicated that all members are volunteers and have one, sometimes two other jobs.

Supplies for EMT's are purchased with funds provided by the town and the town paid for Tanisha Corson to become licensed in 2021. Adam said that \$4,000 to \$5,000 is needed to run the rescue service. There were questions on the number of calls Mercer Rescue actually responded to and whether they arrived on the scene first, second or third. Lack of funding in 2022 was noted. There are funds in the Mercer Rescue Reserve Fund as noted above. Motion failed.

ARTICLE 19: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$52,800 for Public Safety (Fire – year 2 of 3-year contract , Traffic and Street lights).**

Note: 2021 budget was \$51,100

Select Board recommends \$52,800 from Taxes

Budget Committee recommends \$52,400, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. It was noted that there is a slight increase in this article (\$400) over what was printed in the town report due to an increase in the cost of electricity. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 20: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$78,000 for Public Works - Summer Roads.**

Note: 2021 budget was \$125,000

Select Board recommends \$78,000 from Taxes

Budget Committee recommends \$78,000, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 21: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$210,000 for Public Works - Winter Road Maintenance – year 3 of 3-year contract and Sand/Salt Shed (\$55,000 from Taxes, \$155,000 from Excise Taxes).**

Note: 2021 budget was \$210,000

Select Board recommends \$210,000 (\$55,200 from Taxes; \$155,000 from Excise Taxes)

Budget Committee recommends \$210,000, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. A resident asked if the snow banks could be pushed back on the Decker Road. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 22: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Surplus **\$750 for various Youth Leagues.**

Note: 2021 budget was \$750

Select Board recommends \$750 from Surplus

Budget Committee recommends \$750, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. The funds are used to support Mercer children who want to participate in Norridgewock recreation. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 23: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$37,320 for Solid Waste Disposal, Recycling and Blue Bag purchase.**

Note: 2021 actual was \$33,181

Select Board recommends \$37,320 from Taxes

Budget Committee recommends \$37,320. Vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. Use of blue bags were discussed. The Board indicated that they have expressed interest in using the back gate at Waste Management and will continue to pursue this. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 24: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Surplus **\$1,000 for Charity, 50% of this budget to be spent in the Town of Mercer.**

Note: 2021 Budget was \$1,000

Select Board recommends \$1,000 from Surplus

Budget Committee recommends \$1,000, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. Funds spent in 2021 were to Hospice. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 25: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Surplus **\$2,000 for General Assistance.**

Note: 2021 Budget was \$5,000

Select Board recommends \$2,000 from Surplus

Budget Committee recommends \$2,000, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 26: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$500 for Mercer Historical Society.**

Note: 2021 Budget was \$500.

Select Board recommends \$500 from Taxes

Budget Committee recommends \$500, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 27: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$500 for Mercer Meeting House.**

Note: 2021 Budget was \$500.

Select Board recommends \$500 from Taxes

Budget Committee recommends \$500, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 28: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$3,500 for North Pond Association.**

Note: 2021 Budget was \$2,000.

Select Board recommends \$2,000 from Taxes

Budget Committee recommends \$2,000, vote 3-1-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. A motion was made and seconded to amend this amount down to \$2,000. Discussion on the quality of the lake and the services provided by 7 Lakes Alliance. Amended motion failed. The original motion was then voted on. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 29: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$9,325 for Mercer Shaw Library.**

Note: 2021 Budget was \$9,325; spent \$8,682.75

Select Board recommends \$8,000 from Taxes

Budget Committee recommends \$8,000, vote 3-1-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 30: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for **Capital Improvement Projects \$2,000 for the Mercer Road Maintenance Fund.**

Note: 2021 budget was \$2,000

Select Board recommends \$2,000 from Taxes
Budget Committee recommends \$2,000, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 31: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for **Capital Improvement Projects \$10,000 for Ditching and Berm Removal.**

Note: 2021 Budget was \$10,000
Select Board recommends \$10,000 from Taxes
Budget Committee recommends \$10,000, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 32: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate for **Capital Improvement Projects \$40,000 to repair a section of Main Street (\$10,072 from Surplus, \$29,928 from 2021 LRAP funds).**

Note: 2021 budget was \$30,000 plus LRAP
Select Board recommends \$40,000 (\$10,072 from Surplus; \$29,928 from 2021 LRAP)
Budget Committee recommends \$40,000, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. The section of road to be repaired is from Dennis Obert's driveway down to Elm Street. It was noted that FY21 LRAP received in December was not spent but carried over to do this project. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 33: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate for **Capital Improvement Projects \$45,000 to complete a section of Pond Road and Bacon Road (\$25,000 from Taxes; \$20,000 from Surplus) with 50% matching funds from 7 Lakes Alliance Grant.**

Note: Total cost is \$90,000
Select Board recommends \$45,000 (\$25,000 from taxes, \$20,000 from Surplus, \$45,000 from 7 Lakes Alliance)
Budget Committee recommends \$45,000, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. There are a few areas that still need attention; there's wasn't enough funding to take care of it in FY 21. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 34: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate for **Capital Improvement Projects \$3,000 for engineering work at Pattee Brook with 50% matching funds from 7 Lakes Alliance Grant.**

Note: Total engineering costs is \$6,000
Select Board recommends \$3,000 from taxes and \$3,000 from 7 Lakes Alliance
Budget Committee recommends \$3,000, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 35: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate for **Capital Improvement Projects \$18,000 to improve Rome Road Extension.**

Select Board recommends \$18,000 from taxes

Budget Committee recommends \$18,000, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. The Board intends to put down 4" of surface gravel. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 36: To see if the town will vote to appropriate approximately \$67,316 from Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (aka American Rescue Plan Act or ARPA) funds received by the Town from the federal government for the Municipal Building/Community Center Roof Repair/Replacement Project.

Select Board recommends yes

Budget Committee recommends yes, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. The costs to maintain the Mercer Community Center/Town Office building was discussed. Perhaps there would be other more feasible alternatives/locations for our town office and town meeting needs. Using grant money for this purpose is an approved use of these fund. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 37: To see if the town will vote to appropriate \$64,000 from Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (aka American Rescue Plan Act or ARPA) funds received by the Town towards a proposal developed by the Somerset Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) to install broadband fiber optic internet throughout the Town of Mercer. If the SEDC proposal is not funded within the next fiscal year, the funds will be spent for the Municipal Building/Community Center Roof Repair/Replacement Project. Budget Committee does not recommend, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. Motion failed. It was noted that although this article was not considered tonight, the committee is still pursuing this project and potential funding and may ask for a special town meeting at some point in the future.

ARTICLE 38: To see if the Town will vote to disburse the balance in the CERT Fund account over to a sponsor of the CERT program.

Note: Balance as of 12/31/2021 is \$3,157.42

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. CERT stands for Community Emergency Response Team, a project founded just after 9/11/01 when homeland security wanted local residents to become prepared with training and supplies offered through grants. Jesse Crandall headed up this program.

Equipment was purchased and then reimbursed through grants. We have no equipment (generators) that were purchased through CERT. Any inventory is still with the CERT organization. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 39: To see if the Town will vote to disband the five member Town Charter Research Committee appointed at the 2020 Annual Town Meeting after hearing their report and recommendations to Town Meeting 2022.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. It was noted that shortly after the committee was formed, COVID hit. When trying to reconnect after FY21 town meeting, some members no longer had the time to pursue this charge. If the need for a town charter should develop, a new committee should be formed. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 40: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to carry forward funds that have been obligated by contract into the new fiscal year. The authority granted herein shall continue until amended or revoked.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 41: To see if the Town will vote to accept and expend any or all donations received from the public, any state, federal, or other governmental agency funds not explicitly allowable by state law, and all grants received in accordance with the intended purpose of the donation, grant or other funds as they are received.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 42: To see if the Town will vote to prohibit a former elected official, employee or subcontractor, who does not complete the term of their agreement (excused or otherwise) from running for any town position elected or hired; therefore, becoming ineligible to be employed or elected for no less than (10) years.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the article as written. A motion was made and seconded to amend the article to two (2) years. The legality of such an article came into question. The author of the article was questioned. The amendment failed. The original motion failed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**Nancy J. Gove
Town Clerk**