

## 2024 Annual Town Meeting Minutes

Town Clerk Nancy Gove read the greeting and Article 1 at 8:00 a.m. on Friday, March 1, 2024. A motion was made and seconded to nominate Maddy Pierce as moderator. Three ballots were cast. Maddy Pierce was duly elected and sworn in. She recessed the meeting for all purposes except for voting. On Saturday, March 2, 2024, Town Clerk Nancy Gove called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Senator Russell Black spoke briefly to the governing body. The clerk then swore in Ernest Hilton as Deputy Moderator for the business portion of town meeting. Moderator began with Article 3.

### 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 Community Center** in said Town on **Friday, the 1<sup>st</sup> day of March, 2024**, at ten 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 10:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. and to reconvene on **Saturday, the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of March, 2024**, at five thirty o'clock in the afternoon (**5:30 p.m.**) then and there to act upon Articles 3 through 39, said articles being the following:

**ARTICLE 1:** To elect a moderator by written ballot to preside at said meeting.

**ARTICLE 2:** To elect three (3) Selectpersons, Assessors, and Overseers of the Poor all for one-year terms; one (1) Director of MSAD #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 two (2) Budget Committee members for a three-year term. **81 votes were cast and voting results were: Selectmen, Assessor & Overseers of Poor: Bruce Hurley 74; Gary Mosher 73; Mary Burr 77; SAD #54 Director: Sarah Bunker-Geyer 74; Trustee of Shaw Library: Roberta Goodwin 79; Planning Board: Geoffrey Nosach 71; Jeffrey Veilleux 79; Budget Committee: Elizabeth "Robin" Chamberlain 73, Alan Gove 73.**

**ARTICLE 3:** To nominate and elect from the floor one (1) Planning Board alternate member for a three (3) year term. **Moderator asked for nominations from the floor. Denis Culley was nominated and seconded. Elizabeth Padham was nominated and seconded. No other nominations were presented. A show of hands was taken for each candidate. Denis Culley was elected.**

**ARTICLE 4:** To see if the Town will vote (by secret Australian ballot) 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 written vote was taken. Article passes 38 yes votes; 12 no votes.**

**ARTICLE 5:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Municipal Officers to spend any amount not to exceed 3/12<sup>th</sup> of the current annual budget during the period from January 1<sup>st</sup> of the following year to the date of that year's annual town meeting. **A motion was made and seconded to recommend. Vote passes.**

**ARTICLE 6:** To see if the Town will vote to charge and collect interest of 8% on all taxes assessed in 2024 that are unpaid 30 days after the date of commitment.

Select Board recommends 8% (maximum allowed by state law is 8.5%)  
 Budget Committee recommends 8% vote 4-0-1

**A motion was made and seconded to recommend as written. A motion was made to amend the interest rate to 8.5%. Seconded. Motion failed. Original motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 7:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$121,566 for wages and benefits for Administration.** (Note: wages for all officials incl Library have increased 3.8%)

1 <sup>st</sup> Selectperson	\$ 6,000	Deputy	<u>\$ 6,000</u>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Selectperson	\$ 6,000	Sub-total	\$ 99,000
3 <sup>rd</sup> Selectperson	\$ 6,000	SS & Medicare	\$ 7,650
Clerk, Tax Collector, Treasurer	\$ 48,000	Health Insurance	<u>\$ 14,916</u>
Deputy	\$ 27,000	Total	\$121,566

Select Board recommends \$121,566 from Taxes  
 Budget Committee recommends \$121,566, vote 3-0-2

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 8:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$97,148 for Administration (Town Office, Mercer Community Center)** 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	\$ 7,000	Dues/Subscriptions	\$ 2,304
Elections	\$ 3,000	Postage	\$ 2,400
Registry of Deeds	\$ 2,000	Security	\$ 2,000
Town Report	\$ 2,000	Training/Travel	\$ 1,700
Supplies	\$ 2,900	Software/Equip/Furn	\$ 4,000
Trio software Maint.	\$12,500	Trio Web upgrade	\$ 4,600
Repairs & Maint.	\$ 7,900	Utilities	\$24,944
Insurance	\$11,050	Miscellaneous	\$ 1,350
		<u>Contract Svcs</u>	<u>\$ 5,500</u>
		Total	\$97,148

Select Board recommends \$97,148 from Taxes  
 Budget Committee recommends \$97,148, vote 4-0-1

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 9:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Surplus **\$8,000 for Contingency.** All use of funds to be reported in the 2024 annual report.

Note: No expenditures in 2023  
 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 recommended amount. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 10:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$8,970 for Assessing**; any remaining balance to be placed in the Assessing Revaluation Fund.  
Select Board recommends \$8,970 from Taxes  
Budget Committee recommends \$8,970, vote 4-0-1

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 11:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$500 for the Planning Board.**

Select Board recommends \$500 from Taxes  
Budget Committee recommends \$500, vote 4-0-1

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 12:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$10,107 for Special Officers.**

Addressing Officer	\$ 500	Travel/mileage	\$ 200
ACO	\$ 2,400	Training	\$ 1,000
CEO	\$ 3,500	Misc Exp:	
SS & Medicare	\$ 567	ACO,CEO,HO	\$ 500
WC/Unemployment	\$ 50	Animal Shelter	
		<u>Contract</u>	<u>\$ 1,390</u>
		Total	\$10,107

Select Board recommends \$10,107 from Taxes  
Budget Committee recommends \$10,107, vote 4-0-1

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 13:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$5,125 for Cemetery Maintenance** (\$4,625 from taxes; \$500 from Hampshire Hill Cemetery Maintenance fund).  
Select Board recommends \$5,125 from Taxes  
Budget Committee recommends \$5,125, vote 3-0-2

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 14:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$1,025 to supplement the three town scholarship awards (two \$500 high school awards & a \$25 elementary award).**  
Select Board recommends \$1,025 from Taxes  
Budget Committee recommends \$425, vote 3-1-1

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 15:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$73,883 for Public Safety – Fire (year 1 of 3-year contract), Traffic and Street lights.**  
Select Board recommends \$73,883 from Taxes  
Budget Committee recommends \$73,883, vote 4-0-1

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 16:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$4,343 for Public Safety - Mercer Rescue**; any unexpended balance to be placed in the Mercer Rescue Fund.  
Select Board recommends \$4,343 from Taxes  
Budget Committee recommends \$4,343, vote 3-0-2

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 17:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Surplus **\$10,000 for Public Safety – Mercer Rescue for a 12 lead EKG Machine.**  
Select Board recommends \$10,000 from Surplus  
Budget Committee recommends \$10,000, vote 3-0-2

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. It was noted that this machine is compatible to what the ambulance service uses. It requires partial funding by grant to purchase, cost estimated to be \$15,000. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 18:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$114,122 for Public Works - Summer Roads (\$113,705 from taxes, \$417 from Summer Rd Improvement Fund - closing out this fund); any unexpended balance to be placed in the Road Maintenance Fund.**  
Select Board recommends \$101,922 from Taxes  
Budget Committee recommends \$101,922, vote 4-0-1

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. The Select Board and Budget Committee recommendations were \$114,122 not what is listed above – that was a typographical error. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 19:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$235,130 for Public Works - Winter Road Maintenance (year 2 of 2-year contract extension) and Sand/Salt Shed (\$70,130 from Taxes, \$165,000 from Excise Taxes).**  
Select Board recommends \$235,130 from Taxes  
Budget Committee recommends \$235,130, vote 4-0-1

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount, taking \$165,000 from excise taxes. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 20:** To see if the Town will authorize the Municipal Officers to enter into a contract for a period of not more than 5 years for the purpose of winter roads maintenance on such terms as they deem to be in the Town’s best interest. This article to continue in effect from year to year until amended or revoked by Town Meeting.

**A motion was made and seconded to approve as written. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 21:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Surplus **\$750 for various Youth Leagues.**  
Select Board recommends \$750 from Surplus  
Budget Committee recommends \$750, vote 4-0-1

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 22:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$32,915 for Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling.**

Select Board recommends \$32,915 from Taxes

Budget Committee recommends \$32,915, vote 4-0-1

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 23:** To see if the Town will establish a non-lapsing Mercer Shaw Library Reserve Fund for the purpose of holding funds, including donations, for capital improvements and operating expenses, for the benefit of the Mercer Shaw Library and to appropriate to this fund all monies previously within the library's Special Revenue Fund \$12,074.16 that were transferred to the Town upon re-establishment of the library as a Town department in 2023; 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 yes

Budget Committee recommends yes, vote 4-0-1

**A motion was made and seconded to approve as written. Treasurer explained that the auditor said we needed approval to keep these funds separate from the general fund. MMA legal wrote the article for the town. This basically allocates these funds for library use only. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 24:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$11,359 for Mercer Shaw Library (\$6,359 from Taxes, \$5,000 from Shaw Library Reserve Funds).**

Select Board recommends \$11,359 from Taxes and Reserves

Budget Committee recommends \$11,359, vote 4-0-1

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 25:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Shaw Library Book Fund **\$780 for book purchases.**

Select Board recommends \$780 from Reserves

Budget Committee recommends \$780, vote 4-0-1

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 26:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Surplus **\$500 for Charity.**

Select Board recommends \$500 from Surplus

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

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. A question was asked why the decrease. We only gave a donation to Hospice of Somerset County in 2023. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 27:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Surplus **\$2,000 for General Assistance.**

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 recommended amount. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 28:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$2,500 for Mercer Historical Society.**

Select Board recommends \$2,500 from Taxes  
Budget Committee recommends \$2,500, vote 3-1-1

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 29:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$3,000 for Mercer Meeting House.**

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 recommended amount. A question was asked if this was for the building. Amy Tibbetts said the back support beam was all rotten from water damage and the bell tower needs a repair. The fund will be used for structural repairs; donation from town will not cover all repair work to be done this year. They will be doing some fundraising too. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 30:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$3,500 for North Pond Association.**

Select Board recommends \$3,500 from Taxes  
Budget Committee recommends \$3,500, vote 3-1-1

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 31:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$2,000 for 7 Lakes Youth Conservation Corp.**

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 recommended amount. It was noted that our funding helps keep phosphorus out of North Pond. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 32:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Surplus **\$4,216 for Legal Expense Reserve Fund.** (Funds to come from solar application fees)

Select Board recommends \$4,216 from Surplus  
Budget Committee recommends \$4,216, vote 4-0-1

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. Motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 33:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$5,800 for Town's share of FEMA December 2022 (Disaster DR#4696) storm repairs.**

Select Board recommends \$5,800 from Taxes  
Budget Committee recommends \$5,800, vote 4-0-1

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. It was noted**

that the town did \$115,000 in road work for a total cost to the town of \$5,800. Motion passes.

**ARTICLE 34:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$51,000 to fund the 2023-2024 Revaluation contract with RJD Appraisal (\$11,000 from Surplus, \$40,000 from Revaluation Fund).

Select Board recommends \$51,000 from Surplus/Reserves  
Budget Committee recommends \$51,000, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. A question was asked if it was a conflict to be assessor and perform revaluation. It is not, it's pretty common actually. However, the Select Board are the assessors not RJD Appraisal. Motion passes.

**ARTICLE 35:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Shaw Library Reserve Fund \$2,910 for library improvements.

Select Board recommends \$2,910 from Reserves  
Budget Committee recommends \$2,910, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. A question was asked as to the amount of the grants received. Treasurer Gove stated that we received an ARPA grant for \$24,999, a ST King Grant for \$10,000, a SEDC grant for \$1,200 and an ARSL grant for approx. \$11,000. A question was asked if library needed prior approval to purchasing from grant funds. It is not required. Motion passes.

**ARTICLE 36:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$25,000 from Surplus for Capital Improvement Project at Pattee Brook on Pond Road.

Select Board recommends \$25,000 from Surplus  
Budget Committee recommends \$25,000, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. The Board noted that we may get the bridge work covered from FEMA as it went out on 12/18/23 storm. If so, we could use these funds for towns 10% share of cost. Motion passes.

**ARTICLE 37:** To see if the town will vote to appropriate for Capital Improvement Projects \$55,329 to complete a section of Beech Hill Road from Corson Road to Sand Shed (\$21,005 from Surplus; \$34,324 from LRAP).

Select Board recommends \$55,329 from Surplus/LRAP  
Budget Committee recommends \$55,329, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. Motion passes.

**ARTICLE 38:** To see if the town will vote to sell a piece of property on Brown Road, identified on the Town of Mercer tax maps as Map 10, Lot 18-03 consisting of 5.15 acres by warranty deed, proceeds to be deposited into the Mercer Community Center Fund.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommended amount. A question was asked if it was tax acquired property. It is not. Another question was asked whether

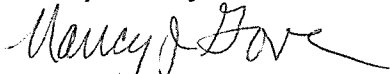
**we would use a realtor, auction company or do our own bidding. Resident thought realtor would reach a broader audience. An amendment was made to make the sale process public. It was noted that all decisions would be made at a Select Board meeting. Motion was withdrawn. Original motion passes.**

**ARTICLE 39:** 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 recommended amount. Motion passes.**

**A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:44 PM.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy J. Gove".

**Nancy J. Gove  
Town Clerk**