

2025 Annual Town Meeting Minutes

To, Dari Hurley, 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 Community Center** in said Town on **Friday, the 28th day of February, 2025**, at Eleven 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 11:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. and to reconvene on **Saturday, the 1st day of March, 2025**, at five thirty o'clock in the afternoon (**5:30 p.m.**) then and there to act upon Articles 3 through 37, said articles being the following:

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

A motion was made and seconded to nominate Tammy Lamphere. Three ballots were cast. Tammy Lamphere was elected as moderator/election warden and was sworn in.

The moderator declared the polls open at 11:00 a.m. and recessed the meeting for all purposes except for voting.

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.

Gary D. Mosher was elected as 1st Selectperson; Matthew J. Fortunato was elected as 2nd Selectperson; Karen A. Martin was elected as 3rd Selectperson; Lauren B. Fox was elected as MSAD #54 Director; Alan T. Gove was elected as Trustee of Shaw Library; Jason R. Juskewitch and Elizabeth A. Padham were elected to the Planning Board; and Joel R. Hooper and Todd J. Martin were elected to the Budget Committee.

Town Clerk Nancy Gove reconvened the meeting on Saturday, March 1, 2025 at 5:35 p.m. at which time she swore in Ernest Hilton as (deputy) Moderator for the business portion of the meeting.

Moderator Hilton asked the governing body to create an article 1A to adopt the Maine Moderators Manual. A motion was made and seconded to adopt the manual. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 3: Shall an ordinance entitled "Town of Mercer, Maine Solar Energy Systems Ordinance" be amended? **A motion was made and seconded to approve the draft ordinance as presented. Planning Board members discussed the reason for the amendment. A citizen asked why dropping the residential area to 10,000 square feet? One acre was too generous, at that point it would definitely be considered commercial. 10,000 square feet is more than sufficient for residential use. Motion carried.**

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 as written. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 5: To see if the Town will vote to charge and collect interest of 7.5% on all taxes assessed in 2025 that are unpaid 30 days after the date of commitment.

Select Board recommends 5%

Budget Committee recommends 7.5% vote 5-0

Selectperson Bruce Hurley explained that the reason for the difference in the interest rate was because at the time of the Budget meeting, the interest rate wasn't known so committee recommended the maximum allowable which is 7.5%. A motion was made and seconded to recommend a 5% interest rate on delinquent taxes. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will vote to set the date that property taxes shall become due and payable as August 15th annually or 30 calendar days from commitment, whichever date is greater.

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

ARTICLE 7: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$131,984 for wages and benefits for Administration.**

1 st Selectperson	\$ 6,000	Part-Time	<u>\$ 6,000</u>
2 nd Selectperson	\$ 6,000	Sub-total	\$106,792
3 rd Selectperson	\$ 6,000	SS, FICA, FMLA	\$ 8,934
Clerk, Tax Collector, Treasurer, Admin	\$ 54,400	Health Insurance	<u>\$ 16,258</u>
Deputy	\$ 28,392	Total	\$131,984

Select Board recommends \$131,984 from Taxes

Budget Committee recommends \$131,984, vote 3-1-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve as written. A motion was made and seconded to amend this article as follows: change Clerk, Tax Collector, Treasurer, Admin Assistant 's salary to \$49,200; Deputy's wages to \$27,675 and Part-time wages to \$0. Total reduction to be \$11,917. Motion Failed. A motion was made and seconded to reduce this article by the part-time position funding of \$6,000. Motion failed. Renaming the Select Board Secretary to Administrative Assistant was discussed, questioning whether the board could change without town meeting approval. Original motion carried.

ARTICLE 8: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$98,580 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	\$ 8,750	Dues/Subscriptions	\$ 2,400
Elections	\$ 2,500	Postage	\$ 2,000
Registry of Deeds	\$ 2,000	Security	\$ 2,000
Town Report	\$ 2,000	Training/Travel	\$ 1,950
Supplies	\$ 1,950	Software/Equip/Furn	\$ 3,000

Trio software Maint	\$22,000	Utilities	\$20,800
Repairs & Maint	\$ 8,100	Contract Svcs	\$ 6,000
Insurance	\$11,830	Miscellaneous	\$ 1,300
		Total	\$98,580

Select Board recommends \$98,580 from Taxes
 Budget Committee recommends \$98,580, vote 5-0

A motion was made and seconded to approve as written. Trio software maintenance was questioned. It is the cost to renew current modules in the web environment. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 9: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Surplus **\$4,000 for Contingency.**
 All use of funds to be reported in the 2025 annual report.

Note: No expenditures in 2024
 Select Board recommends \$4,000 from Surplus
 Budget Committee recommends \$4,000, vote 5-0

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

ARTICLE 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$12,875 for Assessing;** any remaining balance to be placed in the Assessing Revaluation Fund.

Select Board recommends \$12,875, \$10,000 from Taxes; \$2,875 from Surplus
 Budget Committee recommends \$12,875, vote 5-0

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

ARTICLE 11: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$1,060 for the Planning Board.**

Select Board recommends \$1,060 from Taxes
 Budget Committee recommends \$1,060, vote 5-0

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

ARTICLE 12: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$13,738 for Special Officers.**

Addressing Officer	\$ 500	Travel/mileage	\$ 200
ACO	\$ 2,400	Training	\$ 500
CEO	\$ 7,000	Misc Exp:	
SS, FICA, FMLA	\$ 825	ACO,CEO,HO	\$ 500
WC/Unemployment	\$ 152	Animal Shelter	
		<u>Contract</u>	<u>\$ 1,461</u>
		Total	\$13,738

Select Board recommends \$13,738 from Taxes
 Budget Committee recommends \$13,738, vote 5-0

A motion was made and seconded to approve as written. A resident asked where the LPI's pay is? He receives his pay from his fees. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 13: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$6,173 for Cemetery Maintenance.**

Select Board recommends \$6,173 from Taxes

Budget Committee recommends \$6,173, vote 4-0-1

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

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 \$1,025, vote 5-0

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

ARTICLE 15: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$80,531 for Public Safety – Fire (year 2 of 3-year contract), Traffic and Street lights.**

Select Board recommends \$80,531 from Taxes

Budget Committee recommends \$80,531, vote 5-0

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

ARTICLE 16: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$6,150 for Public Safety - Mercer Rescue**; any unexpended balance to be placed in the Mercer Rescue Fund.

Select Board recommends \$6,150 from Taxes

Budget Committee recommends \$6,150, vote 4-0-1

A motion was made and seconded to approve as written. A question was asked as to what funds will be used for. Brian Breton responded that it was for recruitment, training and advanced EMT status. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 17: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$88,990 for Public Works - Summer Roads**; any unexpended balance to be placed in the Road Maintenance Fund.

Select Board recommends \$88,990 from Taxes

Budget Committee recommends \$88,990, vote 5-0

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

ARTICLE 18: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$192,390 for Public Works - Winter Road Maintenance (year 1 of 3-year contract) and Sand/Salt Shed** (\$9,390 from Taxes, \$183,000 from Excise Taxes).

Select Board recommends \$192,390 from Taxes (Property/Excise)

Budget Committee recommends \$192,390, vote 5-0

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

ARTICLE 19: 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 5-0

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

ARTICLE 20: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$27,916 for Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling.**

Select Board recommends \$27,916 from Taxes
Budget Committee recommends \$27,916, vote 5-0

A motion was made and seconded to approve as written. A question was asked on how the base charges are calculated. It's based on number of area vehicles divided by the total tonnage for the day. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 21: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$12,493 for Mercer Shaw Library** (\$10,993 from Taxes, \$1,500 from Shaw Library Reserve Fund).
Select Board recommends \$12,493 from Taxes and Reserves
Budget Committee recommends \$12,493, vote 5-0

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

ARTICLE 22: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from **Shaw Library Book Fund \$900** for book purchases.
Select Board recommends \$900 from Reserves
Budget Committee recommends \$900, vote 5-0

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

ARTICLE 23: 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 5-0

A motion was made and seconded to approve as written. It was recommended that charity funds stay in this town. Funds were spent on Hospice and Bikes for Books which goes to Mercer folks and others in this area. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 24: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Surplus **\$2,500 for General Assistance**.
Select Board recommends \$2,500 from Surplus
Budget Committee recommends \$2,500, vote 5-0

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

ARTICLE 25: 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 5-0

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

ARTICLE 26: 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 5-0

A motion was made and seconded to approve as written. A resident asked how funds were to be used. The bell tower needs work as it is leaking into the building. Clapboard

siding needs to be repaired and then painted. Amy Tibbetts encouraged residents to use the building for functions or to visit during an open house. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 27: 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 \$2,000, vote 5-0

A motion was made and seconded to approve as written. A resident read a funding letter from North Pond to the governing body. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 28: 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 5-0

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

ARTICLE 29: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$21,530 for Town's share of FEMA May 2023 (Disaster DR#4719) storm repairs.

Select Board recommends \$21,530 from Taxes

Budget Committee recommends \$21,530, vote 5-0

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

ARTICLE 30: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Surplus \$11,000 for Capital Improvement Project at Pattee Brook on Pond Road.

Select Board recommends \$11,000 from Surplus

Budget Committee recommends \$11,000, vote 5-0

A motion was made and seconded to approve as written. Why is this necessary. Selectperson Gary Mosher explained that this is to complete the engineering work. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 31: To see if the town will vote to appropriate \$85,700 for Capital Improvement Project to complete a section of Elm Street (from Main Street to beyond the culverts at the former True place) \$50,940 from Surplus; \$34,760 from LRAP).

Select Board recommends \$85,700 from Surplus/LRAP

Budget Committee recommends \$85,700, vote 5-0

A motion was made and seconded to approve as written. A resident asked if this road will be paved. Selectperson Gary Mosher indicated that it would. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 32: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Surplus \$12,000 as the local match to purchase a generator to power the Mercer Community Center.

Select Board recommends \$12,000 from Surplus

Budget Committee recommends \$12,000, vote 5-0

A motion was made and seconded to approve as written. A resident asked if FEMA funds will be available for reimbursement of the project. Selectperson Mary Burr assured the group that FEMA funds would be available. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 33: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate **\$46,000 to repair the parking lot at the Mercer Community Center**, \$12,000 from Surplus, \$34,000 from MCC Reserve Fund. Select Board recommends \$46,000 from MCC Reserves/Surplus
Budget Committee recommends up to \$46,000 from MCC Reserves/Surplus

A motion was made and seconded to approve as written. A resident asked if this will be paved. Selectperson Gary Mosher indicated that yes it would be paved and will include the area over by the gym entrance. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 34: To see if the town will vote to **sell excess acreage** (approximately 81 acres more or less) from a piece of town-owned property formerly known as the Capped Landfill and Transfer Station Site (retaining said Landfill and Transfer Station consisting of approximately 10 acres more or less) on East Sandy River Road identified on the Town of Mercer tax maps as Map 09, Lot 14, said parcel consisting of 91 acres more or less, proceeds to be deposited equally into the Road Maintenance and MCC Funds.

A motion was made and seconded to approve as written. A resident asked if this property was surveyed? "No" Another wanted to know why we're selling it. Selectperson Gary Mosher stated that now that the transfer station is closed, the town doesn't need this land. We have the town forest to use. A resident was concerned about road access (culverts on East Sandy River Road). Selectperson Gary Mosher stated that we're working on the lower end of ESRR where it meets WSRR and access can go that way if necessary. If culverts go out, residents won't be trapped. Road not open to winter maintenance but we can change that if necessary. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 35: To see if the town will vote to **increase the length of the terms of the Municipal Officer, Assessor, and Overseer of the Poor** from a 1-year term to 3-year staggered terms to be phased in beginning with the 2026 Annual Town Meeting and Election. The initial term of the three Municipal Officers will be as follows: 1st Selectperson 3-year term; 2nd Selectperson 2-year term; and 3rd Selectperson 1-year term. Annually thereafter, each position which is due to expire shall be elected for a 3-year term.

A motion was made and seconded to approve as written. A resident asked to hear from the board members. Each Selectperson spoke to the need to change the current length of the term. Continuity, the ability to recall and the value of their experience after a couple years were among the reasons. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 36: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the municipal officers to **dispose of tax-acquired property** as they deem in the best interests of the Town, except that the municipal officers shall first use the sale process in 36 M.R.S. § 943-C if they choose to sell property to anyone other than the former owner. For sales to someone other than the former owner, excess sale proceeds, as defined in 36 M.R.S. § 943-C, shall be returned to the former owner.

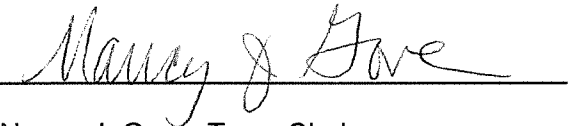
A motion was made and seconded to approve as written. The new process was briefly discussed. Motion carried.

ARTICLE 37: 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 as written. Motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:41 P.M.

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy J. Gove". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a solid horizontal line.

Nancy J. Gove, Town Clerk