

Annual Town Meeting Minutes

Town of Westmore

March 3, 2026

The legal voters of the Town of Westmore, VT. met in the Fellowship Hall in said town on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at 10:00 AM to transact the following business from the floor.

Andrew Berley called the meeting to order at 10AM.

The citizens of the town stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Andy introduced Representative Ken Wells who focused on expenditures and revenue of the Vermont Department of Transportation, noting it is the 2nd largest employer in Vermont.

Andy introduced Sheriff Jennifer Harlow who noted her department's availability to the Selectboard and citizens. When asked about issuing a low number of tickets in town, she answered that mere police presence is a natural deterrent.

Andy recognized Peggy Zimmer from the RAMP group who invited all to their meetings the 2nd Wednesday of each month via Zoom. She noted the group is working on Route 5A Safety as well as management of moorings in the lake.

Andy then recognized Donna Dzugas as a representative of NEKCV Broadband who explained their expansion into Westmore.

Andy recognized Pam Kennedy who spoke for the CSA group whose focus began with things we could do as a community. She noted activities taking place in the Town Cottage and asked for ideas from residents.

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

Bill Perkins motioned to nominate Andy Berley. Meg Patton seconded. Motion passed by majority voice vote.

The Moderator asked for a moment of silence to recognize those in the community that have passed away in the last year. The Moderator reminded citizens that only articles that have been warned can be voted on. He added that Election nominations do not need a second, all discussion and any amendments should be germane to the article being acted upon. He noted that only residents of the Town of Westmore could vote, that civility is required, and that hopefully lunch would be at noon.

Article 2. To elect Town Officers as required by law:

To elect a Select Board member, by paper ballot, for the term of 3 years.

It was noted that Peter Hyslop is not running for re-election. Miriam nominated Bill Perkins. There being no further nominations, Andy directed the clerk to submit one vote for Bill Perkins. Passed.

To elect a Select Board member by paper ballot for the term of 2 years.

Scott Pepper nominated Jason Petrarca who accepted the nomination. Annette Parenteau seconded. There being no further nominations, Andy directed the clerk to submit one vote for Jason Petrarca. Passed.

To elect a Lister, by paper ballot, for the term of 3 years

John Zimmer stated he is not seeking re-election and moved to nominate Amanda Smith. There being no further nominations, Andy directed the Town Clerk to submit one vote for Amanda Smith. Passed.

To elect a Cemetery Commissioner for a term of 3 years.

Bill moved to nominate Miriam Simonds. Passed by majority voice vote.

To elect a Delinquent Tax Collector for the term of 1 year.

Greg Gallagher and Evelina Busby moved to nominate Annette Parenteau. Passed by majority voice vote.

To elect a Trustee of Public Funds for a term of 1 year.

Bill moved to nominate Elaine Cashin. Passed by majority voice vote.

To elect a Trustee of Public Funds for a term of 3 years.

Elaine moved to nominate Kalli Lefebvre. Passed by majority voice vote.

Article 3. Shall the town vote to authorize the payment of property taxes due on or before Tuesday, October 20, 2026, at 4 PM by physical or mail/delivery to the town office or by online payments via credit card or electronic check?

Elaine explained that at 4:01 PM, payments are considered late and an 8% penalty is assessed as well as interest.

The motion was made and seconded. Passed by majority voice vote.

Article 4. Shall the Town vote to authorize the Selectboard to use a portion of unspent General Fund surplus as needed during the year, to help offset the 2026 Municipal Tax Rate?

John moved and Kalli seconded. Motion carries by majority voice vote.

Article 5. Shall the Town vote to move an amount not to exceed \$20,000 to the Highway Operating Fund from the General Fund surplus to cover the 2025 operating deficit, thus reducing the tax expense for the year?

Kalli moved and Carol Casey seconded. Motion carries by majority voice vote.

Article 6. Shall the Town vote to authorize the Selectboard to use a portion of the unspent General Fund surplus, as needed during the year, to cover any deficit amounts?

Donna Dzugas asked how big the surplus is. John answered see page 17 amount of \$580,000.

Kristin moved and Carol seconded. Motion carries by majority voice vote.

Article 7. Shall the Town vote to move an amount not to exceed \$150,000 to the Emergency Reserve Fund from the General Fund surplus, thus reducing the tax expense for the year?

Kalli moved and Carol seconded, Motion carries by majority voice vote.

Article 8. Shall the Town vote to move an amount not to exceed \$50,000 to the Capital Infrastructure Fund from the General Fund surplus for the repair of the Municipal Hall floor joists, thus reducing the tax expense for the year?

John noted these funds were formerly known as the ARPA funds and this repair to the Municipal Building will be at no cost to the taxpayers.

Kalli moved and Carol seconded. Motion carries by majority voice vote.

Article 9. Shall the Town vote to move \$15,000 to the 2025 Westmore Fireman's Association Appropriation, conditional upon receipt of documents as stated by the town Appropriation Policy, from the General Fund surplus, thus reducing the tax expense for the year?

Kalli so moved and Elaine seconded. Motion carries by majority voice vote.

Bill Perkins introduced Meg Carter as the new Secretary for the Westmore Fireman's Association and noted the Board endorses the new leadership. Meg spoke noting the Department is all volunteers. She explained their response to all types of fires, as well as ice and water rescue, road obstructions, and smoke alarm warnings. She noted the need to keep equipment up to date and the increasing costs associated with this. She explained for people to dial 911 if they need help. Newport Dispatch will tone the department volunteers.

Article 10. Shall the Town vote to accept the proposed 2026 General Fund tax expense of \$215,770.

Kalli moved and Annette seconded. Motion carries by majority voice vote.

Ethan asked for an explanation how this was derived. John noted this covers the general operating costs for the Town being the Town Clerk, Listers, Insurance, Utilities, etc. He noted we also look at the revenues sources that may include fees and state funds and then offset the figure needed with property tax expense.

Article 11. Shall the Town vote to accept the proposed 2026 Highway Fund tax expense of \$358,650?

Kristin moved and Ellie seconded. Motion carries by a majority voice vote.

Erik asked if the Transfer Station was in this budget? John answered that it was in the General Fund.

Article 12. Shall the Town vote to add \$42,800 to the Highway - Paving Fund that will be included in the tax expense this year?

Ethan moved and Ellie seconded. Motion carries with a majority voice vote.

Deb Richards asked if there is a specific project. Isaiah answered Rte 16 this year. Erik asked about Rte 16 from the Town Line to the North Beach. Isaiah answered that it is State owned but Town maintained. Regarding Abbot Hill, Erik asked if there had been discussions about reciprocal work with adjoining towns. Gabe Harter asked if the paving is only in Westmore. Isaiah noted a State Grant will also help.

Article 13. Shall the Town vote to add \$50,000 to the Materials Fund that will be included in the tax expense this year?

Pam Kennedy moved and Kalli seconded. Motion carries by a majority voice vote.

Deb Richards asked what kind of materials. Isaiah answered sand, gravel, and salt. John noted that he is working to combine funds for reporting to get a true cost of maintaining the roads.

Article 14. Shall the Town vote to add \$20,200 to the Capital Infrastructure Fund that will be included in the tax expense this year?

Ellie moved and Kalli seconded. Motion carries by a majority voice vote.

When asked what is included in the fund, John responded that it was mainly repairs to the buildings, a past example - repairing roofs. John also noted the award of a MERP grant for \$460,000 and the renovations to both the old Town Clerk's building as well as the Municipal Building with these grant funds. The Municipal Building received a new boiler, new lighting, windows and insulation. The little building received energy updates. The Town Garage received a new roof, solar panels, new lightning and new garage door seals.

Article 15. Shall the Town vote to add \$120,000 to the Town Equipment Fund that will be included in the tax expense this year?

Carol moved and Kalli seconded. Motion carries by a majority voice vote.

Ron Holmes asked why there are still funds listed for the excavator to be repaired on the report since the Town sold it. Isaiah confirmed the Excavator had been sold and the point now was to upgrade equipment to take care of 22 miles of Town roads.

Article 16. Shall the Town vote to add \$5,000 to the Cemetery Fund that will be included in the tax expense this year?

Elaine moved and Evelina seconded. Motion carries by a majority voice vote.

Kelly Casey noted that when she first moved here, the cemetery was beautiful. She asked what can be done to make it look good again. Bill responded it needs water but irrigating the cemetery or drilling a well did not seem plausible. He noted that many cemeteries are letting the grass grow in response to climate change and extended periods of no rain. Mowing under these conditions can create a gravel surface. He noted adding fertilizer can damage the stones and caution must be taken not to have chemicals drain into the lake.

Article 17. Shall the Town vote to add \$1,000 to the Deed/Vault Restoration Fund that will be included in the tax expense this year?

Ethan moved and Ellie seconded. Motion carries by majority voice vote.

Erik Townsend asked about scanning maps and surveys. Elaine explained we did not have the equipment to scan surveys due to their size but that a scanner would be a possible purchase with this fund. The goal would be to have all of this information online so our older fragile records are not handled as much. She noted the historical documents stored in the Vault and the goal to preserve them.

Article 18. Shall the Town vote to add \$21,900 to the Milfoil/Boat Greeters Program Fund that will be included in the tax expense this year?

Ethan moved and Ellie seconded. Motion carries by a majority voice vote.

Susan asked if these funds cover just the greeter program. John noted this amount is the Town contribution after grants from the state which covers both the Greeter program and Milfoil Management. Susan also asked how we are managing the milfoil presence in the lake. Katherine Busby responded that each year is different so we have to keep up with it, continue our maintenance and educate the public.

Article 19 . Shall the Town vote to accept the proposed appropriation amount of \$44,660 to the Westmore Fireman's Association, conditional upon the receipt of documents as stated by the town appropriation policy?

Peter moved and Ellie seconded. Motion carries by a majority voice vote.

Kelly Casey asked about the boat and also about a recent incident where a tone was reportedly not responded to. Meg explained that the department did an after action review where they got together to ask critical questions, what was supposed to happen, what did happen, what worked...Through this process, they determined they had a communication issue and will

upgrade with radio based stations which have a stronger signal. She added that they have a clear protocol of action now.

Article 20: Shall the voters appropriate the total of \$12,480 to the following social service agencies, pursuant to 24 V.S.A. 2691?

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| \$2500 Barton Library | \$250 Vermont Family Network |
| \$700 NEK Human Services | \$250 Umbrella |
| \$250 American Red Cross | \$2500 Jones Memorial Library |
| \$50 Green Up | \$400 NEK Council on Aging |
| \$750 Northwoods Stewardship | \$1000 Old Stonehouse Museum |
| \$350 Rural Comm Transportation | |
| \$500 OCCA (ConnectABILITIES) | |
| \$500 Green Mtn Farm to School | |
| \$1000 NEK Learning Services | |
| \$80 Vermont Center for Independent Living | |
| \$900 O-E VNA & Hospice | |
| \$500 Pope Memorial Animal Shelter | |

Evelina moved and Elaine seconded. Deb Dorsett moved and Evelina seconded to amend Article 20 to increase the location to the NEK Council on Aging from \$400 to \$750 and to read Shall the voters appropriate the total of \$12,830 to the following social agencies, pursuant to 24 VSA 2691? Motion carries with a majority voice vote.

Andy recognized Ellie from the Westmore Association who noted the Association contributes to the Greeter Program, they award scholarships to local youths, they have Bruce Tanner helping with water quality in our lakes and streams, they have events planned for the summer and always welcome new members.

Article 21: Shall the Town of Westmore allocate the sum of \$200 to support the Rural Fire Protection Program (dry hydrants and rural water supply systems) through the Vermont Association of Conservation Districts?

Ethan moved and Kalli seconded. Motion carries by majority voice vote.

ries by majority voice vote.

Meg explained there are three dry hydrants not charged with water. It is PVC pipe into standing water. They are located at the Boat Launch, North Beach, and Peene Hill Road. This program helps to maintain these.

Article 22: Shall the town vote to assess a one percent meals and beverages tax pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §138(b)(2)?

Elaine moved and Kalli seconded. Motion carries by majority standing vote of 30 votes Aye to 11 votes Opposed.

Scott Pepper noted that this is a small town with only a few businesses here. Jason noted that this would be a tax affecting mostly locals for 6 months out of the year. Scott asked if permanent structures could be taxed differently than part-time venues. He asked if a license could be levied or fees increased? Elaine answered that yes, fees could be increased. Donna noted that

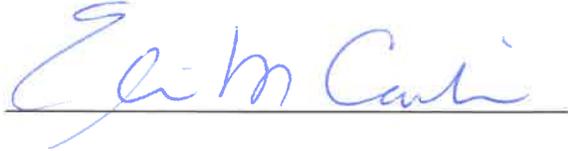
Airbnbs are required to collect the 1% Local Option tax for rooms and that a rental is now taxed at 14% in addition to the rental rate. Kathy noted that this does not affect purchases of bottled beer/alcohol as in six packs, etc - it affects a poured or served beverage or meal. Bob Kennedy noted that tourism is growing which stresses the town at the expense of the people. He added that the businesses are benefitting from tourism though the townspeople do not. Andy noted the year round presence of winter tourists and activities. John explained it affects the catered events- meals and beverages- at the wedding venues in town which are increasing each year.

Discussion of other non-binding business.

Discussion ensued about the North Beach, the possibility of a donation QR code, parking and charging for parking, resident versus non-resident, dogs and fires regardless of signs posted, and a walking corridor along Rte 5A.

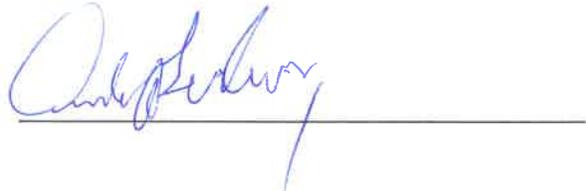
Andy motioned to adjourn at 12:07 PM

Attest: Elaine Cashin



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Elaine Cashin", written over a horizontal line.

Andrew Berley



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrew Berley", written over a horizontal line.

William Perkins



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "William Perkins", written over a horizontal line.