

Mason Town Meeting, March 15, 2014

Mason Elementary School, 13 Darling Hill Road

Moderator Catherine Schwenk came to the microphone at 8:55 am and requested that non-voters wear non-voter credentials and sit in the first row to the Moderator's left. There was no request for interpretive services. She indicated the fire and emergency exits and then introduced those sitting at the head table: Selectmen Bernard (Bernie) O'Grady, R. Peter McGinnity (Pete), Charles (Charlie) Moser and Town Clerk Debra (Deb) Morrison. Also present were State Senator Peggy Gilmour and State Representative Melanie Levesque.

The Moderator acknowledged that preparation for this meeting is a coordinated effort of many individuals, including Assistant Moderator Mary McDonald, Select Board Assistant Carlotta Pini, Town Clerk Debra Morrison and Supervisors of the Checklist Kathleen Wile, Dorothy Minior and Wallace Brown.

The Moderator then reviewed the procedure for voters. Voters wishing to speak should use the microphones and address any questions to the Moderator. All questions must be addressed to the Moderator and residents need to give their name at the microphone when recognized. All amendments and substantive motions must be in writing and signed by the maker and seconder; every voter is entitled to speak on a debatable motion unless the body, by a two-thirds vote, has ordered discussion stopped. A voter is entitled to speak a second time on the same question provided all voters who wish to speak have spoken.

The Moderator requested that audience remain seated after the meeting while the oath of office was administered to the newly elected officials.

The Moderator announced the results of the Town and School District elections. Total votes cast were 312 out of a total of 959. She declared the winning candidates elected to their respective offices.

Moderator: Catherine Schwenk 253

Selectman: Louise Lavoie 252

Trustee of Cemeteries: Jeannine Phalon 265

Library Trustee: Elena Kolbenson 18 (write-in)

Supervisor of the Checklist: Kathleen Wile 262

Trustee of Trust Funds: George Schwenk 255

The following articles were voted on at the polls on Tuesday, March 11, 2014.

The results of **Article 2** — To see if the Town will vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 40:13 (known as SB2) to allow official ballot voting on all issues before the Town. By petition. Requires a 3/5 vote to pass.

Yes 169 No 138 (needed 185 to pass / Article 2 fails)

Mason School District Results

Moderator: Catherine Schwenk 259

School Board Member: Robert Doyle 223
Timothy Leak 73 (write-in)

District Treasurer: Susan Schulman 251

The results of **Article 2** — To accept the reports of agents, auditors, committees or officers chosen as printed in the annual Mason School District Report.

Yes 256 No 27 Article 2 carries

The results of **Article 3** — Shall The Mason School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant, or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purpose set forth therein, totaling \$2,957,139.00? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$2,957,601.00 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Mason School District, or by law, or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13 X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. Note: This operating budget warrant article does not include appropriations contained in ANY other warrant articles. (School Board recommends this Warrant Article)
Yes 242 No 56 Article 3 carries

The results of **Article 4** — Shall we rescind the provisions of RSA 40:13 (known as SB2), as adopted by the Mason School District on 9-March 2010, so that the official ballot will no longer be used for voting on all questions, but only for the election of officers and certain other questions for which the official ballot is required by state law? (3/5 majority vote required, this is a Petition Warrant Article)
Yes 125 No 179 (needed 183 to pass / Article 4 fails)

Moderator Catherine Schwenk called the meeting to order at 9:05 am.

There were 959 voters and 5 non-voters present.

The colors were presented by Boy Scout Troop 264, which included scouts Jon Arsenault, Samson Hodges, Mikey McGuire, Max McDonald, Mason McDonald, Max Phalon, Daniel Schongar, Drewbie Hodges and scout leaders Mike McGuire and Donald Hodges.

The Pledge of Allegiance of the United States of America was led by Mikey McGuire.

The Moderator then offered this tribute to Selectman Pete McGinnity to thank him for his four years of service to the Town of Mason as Selectman. She spoke: "Four years ago, Pete McGinnity was appointed to the Financial Advisory Board which was interrupted by the resignation of Selectman Mark Richardson. Pete filled in for Mark and was elected to the position of Selectman in 2011. He brought contemporary financial and management skills to the position. During this period the Select Board faced many difficulties concerning the highway department, the condition of the roads and prickly communications with a town board. Pete researched and wrote job descriptions for various town departments, encouraged the Select Board to address salary and benefit issues and addressed recommendations of the town auditors."

There was no objection to waiving the reading of the warrant.

Moderator Catherine Schwenk asked the question, "Is there general consent to allow our State Senator and Representative to speak, as well as the Interim Administrative Assistant?" General consent was approved.

Article 3: Pete McGinnity moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One million, seven hundred thousand, two hundred forty-eight dollars (\$1,700,248) which represents the operating budget, or take any other action relative there. Said sum is exclusive of all Special or Individual Articles addressed.

Charlie Moser proposed an amendment on "Warrant Article 3, the operating budget, the selectmen move to strike from line 6005-03 (health and dental insurance) the stated amount of \$233,128 and to replace it with the amount of \$248,525, a difference of \$15,397 which will increase the total operating expenses from \$1,700,248 to \$1,715,645."

Charlie explained that they had inadvertently used a base holding dollar amount in the budget preparation. Barbara Milkovits had called and suggested "we adjust the line item to cover our existing contract." This then sparked conversation about the health care committee that was formed to research various possible alternate plans.

Donald Hodges wanted to know the results of the committee's research and the Moderator allowed road agent Fred Greenwood, who was on the committee, to discuss their findings. Residents were upset that there was no written report available by this committee.

Fred talked about the meetings they held to go over various plans. They decided to go with the Luminos plan, which still goes through Health Trust, but does not increase rates nearly as fast as other plans. This plan will save the town substantial money the first year and more money each

successive year thereafter, offering real savings to the taxpayers. Pete described it in further detail and mentioned it was similar to Hollis' plan for their employees. Health Trust needs a 60-day notice to change plans.

Walter Alford proposed an amendment to restore the original budget bottom line back to the original bottom line. Both motions by Alford and Moser were withdrawn by a vote of Town Meeting.

Anne (Nancy) Richards proposed an amendment to line item 6002-03 (Admin. Salary) to raise the amount of \$40,000 to \$40,384 to equal the other three percent raises. Pete spoke regarding this amendment saying that there was already an increase in place and since Barbara was out of work due to her accident in October, he did not feel that a raise of three percent was warranted. Amendment fails.

Walter Alford moved to strike line item 6002-19 (Advertising) to \$0. It was explained that the line item paid for our public notices, etc. Motion was withdrawn by vote of Town Meeting.

Barbara Milkovits asked why the actual amount in line item 6030-03 (Int. of Tax Anticipated Notes) was missing. Interim administrative assistant Carlotta Pini, who was given permission to speak, said the line was simply omitted. Treasurer Pat Letourneau said the interest paid was approximately \$5,000 and attempted to explain how the TAN loan works. Walter Alford wanted to know why we budgeted a higher amount if it was not needed. Pete said that the money not spent goes back to the general fund and we need a little buffer.

Jeannine Phalon asked about the increase in line item 6002-24 (Town Web Site). Pete replied, "We've spent two years trying to get the web site up to where it should be with the calendar, updates, etc. and people now have a reliable resource to go to for town information."

Walter Alford requested that the road agent address his plans for road repairs and maintenance expense. Fred Greenwood said that regarding maintenance, the highway department has very little new equipment and the trucks work a lot. When they break, they're going to be repaired. If a piece of equipment is unsafe, it will not leave the yard. Regarding plans for the roads, Mr. Alford is welcome to come to the highway barn and discuss them. They basically want to take care of the worst sections first. After they start to deteriorate, then they will address them. He said the tough winters are unpredictable and conditions cannot always be anticipated. Pam Lassen said she appreciates the health and wellness of the roads. Fred said he would give a very basic plan to the webmaster.

Jeannine Phalon asked what is considered hired equipment (line item 6018-24). Fred said that is for things like the crusher for gravel and heavy duty trucks for carrying the crushed stone which is cheaper than using our own trucks since we don't crush every year. He would like to bring in a real screener for sifting sand to eliminate the stones on the road in winter. In regards to paved road restoration (line item 6018-13), Fred said this amount only goes to "black and smooth."

Jeannine Phalon asked about line item 6014-27 for Fire Dept. physicals. Fire Chief Dave Baker said 2013 saw several people hurt and they have never checked for physical fitness in the past. He'd like to start with baseline physicals for about half the department with a price of \$465 per person. John Lewicke asked if it would make a difference and Dave said yes, it was recommended. Article 3 carries.

Article 4: Charlie Moser moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) for the repair and maintenance of the town's paved roads, or take any other action relative thereto. Recommended by the Selectmen.

Road Agent Fred Greenwood said that this goes for hot top only and there are two sections scheduled to be done this year: Wilton Rd. from Starch Mill to Pullman Rd. and Townsend Rd. between Morse Rd. and Ron Dube's. These sections are in terrible shape; they're unstable and breaking up.

Mike Goen requested a ballot vote (as per RSA 40:4-a) on Article 4, signed by Harry Spear, Wallace Brown, Bettie Goen and Constance LaCasse. Ballots were handed out, the polls were opened at 11:07 and closed at 11:15.

Leland Craig wanted to know why this is a warrant article and is not included in the budget. Charlie answered this amount is over and above what is in the budget and recommends it. Shawn Jodoin believes this should be a budget line item, and in addition thinks the new T intersections are more

dangerous and not wide enough. Much discussion followed about it not being a line item. Pam Lassen agreed that the new intersections are not wide enough to accommodate the large trucks.

Gary Elsworth said "nice work on the paved roads" but thinks the grading on the dirt roads is not very good. Too much material ends up on the sides and is wasted. Fred agreed and is trying to do better with the edges.

Jeannine Phalon made a motion to move the previous question which failed and discussion continued.

Andrew Hutchins endorsed spending the money to improve the roads. Garth Fletcher said, "\$173K just for those two sections of road?" Fred said yes. Bettie Goen stated she would like to encourage people to vote no. "The budget is too high and we should live with what we have."

Bryan Herrin noted with a smile that he was one of the younger residents in town and made a motion to move the previous question. The motion carries.
Yes 55 No 37 Article 4 carries

Charlie Moser acknowledged and congratulated Louise Lavoie on her elected position of Selectman and also noted that the planning board and finance committee is looking for members.

Police Chief Barry Hutchins moved "to advance Article 6 before Article 5." Motion carries.

Article 6: Pete McGinnity moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-seven thousand dollars (\$27,000) for a fully equipped cruiser for the Police Department, with Seventeen thousand dollars (\$17,000) to be withdrawn from the capital reserve fund established from the K-9 Expendable Trust Fund, or take any other action relative thereto. Recommended by the Selectmen.

Chief Barry Hutchins moved to withdraw Article 6 due to a typographical error. The amount of the warrant should be \$38,500 and he stated that the town is not in a position to see the increase this year.

Bettie Goen asked if this was a replacement cruiser or a third cruiser. Chief Hutchins said this is a third cruiser and explained that in 2008 he attempted to downgrade the cruiser, but it was totaled in an accident leaving the town with only one cruiser.

A motion was made to move the previous question. The motion carries. Another motion was made to withdraw the Article. The motion carries and Article 6 was withdrawn by a vote of Town Meeting.

Article 5: Bernie O'Grady moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ninety thousand five hundred dollars (\$90,500) to purchase the backhoe loader outfitted with a radio, lighting, associated equipment and two spare rims, or take any other action relative thereto. Recommended by the Selectmen.

Bernie spoke to the article stating that our current 15-year-old backhoe has about 10,000 hours and is showing significant wear.

Gary Elsworth requested a written ballot vote (as per RSA 40:4-a) on Article 5, signed by Harry Spear, Wallace Brown, Bettie Goen, Gary Elsworth and Constance LaCasse. Ballots were handed out, polls opened at 11:39 and closed at 11:44.

Walter Alford asked if leasing had been explored. Bernie said it had been discussed and it was decided to purchase to save the extra cost of leasing. Garth Fletcher said the way to flatten the spending spike is to put money away and he would have preferred to see this done as a capital improvement expense. Harry Spear asked if we have a highway department capital reserve fund, and if so, was there any money left in the account. There is \$3,000 left in the account. Harry said money should go into this account every year and the selectmen agreed completely. "We should be looking ahead."

Bettie Goen said she went to the last budget meeting and questioned why the backhoe had already been leased. "We should get capital improvements in place first. What will be the impact per household? This wasn't upfront and transparent. We want to trust the administrators but need the information to do that." Wally Brown asked if the selectmen had seen a written estimate to see what the repairs would cost for the old backhoe. Fred replied it would be between \$20,000 and \$63,000.

Article 7: Charlie Moser moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four thousand three hundred twenty dollars (\$4,320) for the purchase of SCBA bottles for the Fire Department, or take any other action relative thereto. Recommended by the Selectmen.

Fire Chief Dave Baker said these bottles have a 15-year non-extendable lifespan, and there are quite a few that need replacing this year because of their age. Article 7 carries unanimously.

Article 8: Bernie O'Grady moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Nine thousand dollars (\$9,000) to be added to the Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund, previously established and to authorize the transfer from the December 31, 2012 fund balance. Recommended by the Selectmen.

Garth Fletcher asked if there was \$27,000 currently in this fund. It was confirmed that there is. Article 8 carries.

Article 9: Pete McGinnity moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be added to the Fire Department Building Capital Reserve Fund, previously established. Recommended by the Selectmen.

Fire Chief Dave Baker said the present building was built in 1967 and there is a need for more space for storage and equipment. They would like to add an addition that is approximately 16 x 48 ft. There is \$20,000 currently in the fund. Article 9 carries.

Article 10: Charlie Moser moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote accept the reports of agents, auditor, committees or officers chosen as printed in the annual Mason Town Report.

The Moderator acknowledged the terrible accident Administrative Assistant Barbara Milkovits and her husband, Marty, were in this past October and wished them a speedy recovery. She welcomed them here today to much applause and Marty raised his crutch saying, "One more month!" The Moderator noted that during this busy last quarter of the year budgets are prepared, hearings are held and the many requirements of the Selectmen's office are met. Working with Martha Simmons, Deputy Town Clerk Suzanne Kelly, Town Clerk Deb Morrison and Interim Administrative Assistant Carlotta Pini, the office was held together.

Walter Alford said he was concerned about accepting the reports that contained so many errors. Article 10 carries.

On motion of Garth Fletcher and seconded by Michael Bromberg, Town Meeting was adjourned Sine Dai at 11:54 am.

At the conclusion of town meeting, Town Clerk Deb Morrison installed Moderator Catherine Schwenk, Catherine Schwenk installed Selectman Louise Lavoie, Charlie Moser installed Supervisor of the Checklist Kathleen Wile and Bernie O'Grady installed Trustee of the Trust Fund George Schwenk.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra A. Morrison
Town Clerk