

EDEN TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE  
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UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING  
Tuesday, March 5, 2024

Selectboard Present:

Ricky Morin  
Clayton Whittemore  
Tim Bullard

Board of Civil Authority Present:

H. Bruce Burnor  
Kelly Daige  
Leslie White

Town Clerk and Treasurer: Melissa Whitcomb

**There are 976 registered voters in the Town of Eden. 83 voters attended Town Meeting.**

Moderator H. Bruce Burnor opened the meeting at 9AM.

**Article 1: To determine whether Roberts Rules or other rules of order shall govern the parliamentary procedure of this meeting.**

George Sheldrick motioned to use Robert's Rules of Order for the meeting seconded by Tim Bullard. Approved by voice vote.

Bruce asked for the permission of the voters to allow Mark Higley, Eden's State Representative to speak. So, granted. Mark spoke of the large increase in the education property tax, in excess of 20% this year. Some of the reasons being the continuation of universal school meals, high student to staff ratios, special education spending that has not be fully funded for many years, increased pension costs and some of the financial incentives started by COVID that are scheduled to continue without the same influx of extra funding. There is a bill, H.850, that is looking to revamp the state school budget statewide with a possible revote in April. The current structure of how school budgets influence property taxes has some ongoing challenges including affordability, drugs and safety, staffing issues, low housing inventory and a backlog in the courts of 14,500 pending cases. Mr. Higley also spoke of the Salisbury fish hatchery that is permitted until 2027 but there is a question whether the hatchery will continue after that date. The severe rainstorms and flooding in recent years has taken a toll with 50-60% of the fish in our rivers and streams not surviving. Leslie White asked if Mark could provide the town with some regular update on the issues he sees and is working on in the State House. Mark mentioned the legislative breakfasts that happen around the county that he participates in and welcomes the community to attend.

**Article 2: To elect a moderator.**

Ricky Morin nominated H. Bruce Burnor. Leslie White seconded. Ricky motioned for the clerk to cast one unanimous ballot for H. Bruce Burnor as moderator. Approved by voice vote.

**Article 3: Presentation of the Bullard Award.**

Tim Bullard announced that the Bullard Award goes to Deborah Godin in honor of her many years of dedication, service to the community and contribution to the town as a business owner for many years. Deb's daughters, Kris and Elsie were at the meeting and accepted the brass plaque with Deborah Godin, Bullard Award, 2024 engraved on it. Deb's daughters asked that any award be a gift to the Lake Eden Association. Tim presented a check to Kris and Elsie for \$200 made out to the Lake Eden Association.

**Article 4: To see if the voters will accept the Town Report.**

Eric Hammond motion to accept the report as written, Bruce Shields seconded. Leslie White stated that there was a correction in Article 13. The date should be FY 24/25. Approved by voice vote with the correction.

**Article 5: Shall the Town vote to use the non-expended Selectboard Funds from the 2022-2023 fiscal year to reduce the amount required to be raised by taxes for the ensuing budget year? \$ 69,103.17**

Motion by Leslie White to approve, Faye Cochran seconded. Approved by voice vote.

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**Article 6: To elect all Town and School District Officers as required by law:  
Office to take effect after adjournment of Town Meeting.**

**a) Selectperson for three years**

Faye Cochran nominated Ricky Morin. Juli Morin seconded. There were no other nominations. Ed Debor motioned to close nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for Ricky Morin. Approved by voice vote.

**b) Auditor for three years**

Leslie White nominated Ronald Miller. There were no other nominations. Ron McLean motioned to close nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for Ronald Miller. Approved by voice vote.

**c) Cemetery Commissioner for five years**

Ricky Morin nominated Colleen Durivage. Ron McLean motioned to close nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for Colleen Durivage. Approved by voice vote.

**d) Cemetery Commissioner for three years**

Faye Cochran nominated Matt Mitchell. Leslie made the motion to close nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for Matt Mitchell. Approved by voice vote.

**e) First Constable for one year**

Leslie White nominated Matt Hill. Eric Hammond made the motion to close nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for Matt Hill. Approved by voice vote.

**f) Second Constable for one year**

Leslie White nominated Bert Manning. Ron McLean motioned to close nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for Bert Manning. Approved by voice vote.

**g) Grand Juror for one year**

Jeff Hunsberger nominated David Whitcomb. Eric Hammond motioned to close nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for David Whitcomb. Approved by voice vote.

**h) Town Agent for one year**

Ron McLean nominated Tracey Morin. Eric Hammond motioned to close nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for Tracey Morin. Approved by voice vote.

**i) Agent to convey Real Estate for one year**

Leslie White nominated Monique Morway. Eric Hammond motioned to close nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for Monique Morway. Approved by voice vote.

**j) LNMUUSD Board Member for three years**

David Whitcomb nominated Jeff Hunsberger. Eric Hammond motioned to close nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for Jeff Hunsberger. Approved by voice vote.

**k) Trustee of Public Funds for three years**

Leslie White nominated Melissa Whitcomb. Ron McLean motioned to close nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for Melissa Whitcomb. Approved by voice vote.

**Article 7: To see what sum of money the Town will raise on its grand list for the Highway Department? Budget Proposal \$ 655,055.00 4.98% Increase**

Ron McLean motioned to approve; Eric Hammond seconded. Approved by voice vote.

**Article 8: To see what sum of money the Town will raise on its grand list for the Selectboard Fund? Budget Proposal \$ 573,609.29 3.53% Decrease**

Eric Hammond made the motion to approve the budget as written. Matt Mitchell seconded. Ed Debor commented that he was impressed that the budget went down. Approved by voice vote.

**Article 9: Shall the Town create a separate Reserve Fund with the accumulated balance in the Lake Eden Recreation Area Fund to be used for future capital improvements or expenses related to LERA or Lake Eden? \$111,433.42**

Faye Cochran made to motion to accept the article. Leslie White seconded. Leslie then explained that the funds had accumulated over a period of years and had been kept separate from the Selectboard Funds as there had been many years when the Lake Eden Recreation Area did not pay for itself. Leslie also explained why the article was put in the warning before two other articles that are to follow that have a financial connection to the Lake Eden Recreation Area and Lake Eden in general. There was discussion on how these funds might be spent and who would have the authority to spend the money after it had been designated as a Reserve Fund. Warren Whitcomb and Bruce Shields commented on the benefits of such a reserve fund. Eric Hammond spoke of using some of the funds for the related articles to follow. It was stated that before we can designate how this money is to be spent, we need to create the Reserve Fund first. Approved by voice vote.

**Article 10: Shall the Town appropriate \$15,000.00 for the control of Eurasian Milfoil from Lake Eden?**

Bruce Burnor recognized Perry Thomas and Monica Wood as representatives of the Lake Eden Association that had a table set up with information on the Eurasian Milfoil Eradication project. Perry stated that milfoil was detected in 2022. In the summer of 2023, the Lake Eden Association spent \$23,000 in eradication procedures: diver assisted suctioning, placement of 27 smothering mats and 500 hours of volunteer time hand pulling 1-2x/week, June thru October. The goal is to keep the milfoil identified in isolated locations. The greeter program is helpful in informing boaters where the milfoil is so they can avoid those areas in the lake and prevent further spread. There was mention of the possibility of applying an herbicide targeted specifically on milfoil in the summer of 2025 but that would need a special permit available only after all other methods of eradication had been exhausted. Much more information is available on the Lake Eden website: *lakeeden.org*. The suggestion on holding some kind of a raffle for fund raising is also being considered. Matt Mitchel asked about a washing station. It has been considered but the space at the fishing access is very limited. Wendy Lane asked how the harvested plant material is disposed of. It is composted at the Boy Scout Camp property. Rueben Finkel asked about clam farming as an option but there is no plan to introduce a non-native species into the lake. Ed Debor compared the milfoil infestation in Belvidere Pond to the way it used to be and stressed the importance of managing the milfoil in Lake Eden now as without attention, the milfoil will completely cover the surface of the Lake. Ed Debor moved the question as written; Wendy Lane seconded. Eric Hammond asked to amend the motion to have the \$15,000 come out of the newly established Lake Eden Recreation Area reserve Fund. A paper ballot was called for after the voice vote was inconclusive. Results of the paper ballot voting on whether to accept the amended motion were; 63 votes cast, needed for majority, 32, yes-49, no- 15, blank-1. Amendment to the motion passed. Then the amended motion was passed by voice vote.

**Article 11: Shall the Town appropriate the following sums to be raised on its grand list for local organizations? \$23,000.00**

David Whitcomb motioned to approve all as one, Juli Morin seconded. Eric Hammond asked to amend the motion to remove 11e and 11f. Amended motion did not pass by voice vote. Motion returns to the original list of appropriations, a- f. Motion passed.

**Article 12: Shall the Town appropriate the following sums totaling \$11,587.99, to be raised on its grand list for other organizations?**

Michelle Cardinal motioned to approve all as one, Leslie White seconded. It was clarified that it was not actually a decrease in the total appropriation dollar figure as the Lamoille County Planning Budget has been moved to the Selectboard budget. Approved by voice vote.

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**Article 13: Shall the interest earned on the Sweep Account, the American Gift Fund and the Good Neighbor Fund be used to offset taxes in the FY 24-25?**

Leslie White motioned to approve as written, Clayton Whittemore seconded. Tim Bullard thanked the Trustees of Public Funds for their attention to investing funds. Article passed by voice vote.

**Article 14: Shall the Town vote to pay property taxes, municipal and school combined, to the Town Treasurer in three equal installments due on or before November 15, 2024, February 15, 2025, and May 15, 2025, with postmarks acceptable?**

Ron McLean motioned to approve; Michelle Cardinal seconded. Approved by voice vote.

**Article 15: To transact any other business proper at this time.**

- a) The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by the community.
- b) Michelle Cardinal asked why the sheriff was at the meeting. It was explained that due to some conflicts in town, it was determined by the Selectboard that it would be a safety feature for all.
- c) Faye Cochran asked about throwing up a road that has been the source of some issues. Tim explained that everyone on the road would need to agree to the change. A question on hiring a manager for the Lake Eden Recreation Area was posed. Interviews will be in early March.
- d) A resident of Cooper Hill asked if the road could be widened. Ricky said that the only maintenance the town is required to do on class 4 roads is the maintenance of the bridges and culverts and that there is no plan to widen Cooper Hill Road.

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H. Bruce Burnor, Moderator

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Melissa Whitcomb, Town Clerk and Treasurer

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Leslie White, Board of Civil Authority