



GEORGIA VERMONT

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32

Town Meeting Tuesday, March 05, 2024 @ 10:00 a.m. Georgia Middle School Gym Minutes

Present: Devon Thomas, Chair: Shannon Jenkins, Vice Chair, Carl Rosenquist, Nicholas Martin, Jamie Comstock. April Edwards Treasurer and Cheryl Letourneau Town Clerk.

CALL TO ORDER at 10:00 a.m. by Carolyn Branagan

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE lead by Boy Scout Troop #

10:14 a.m. Carolyn Branagan, Town Moderator, reads the order for Town Meeting and then reads the Town Warning for the meeting.

Article 1: Jeanette Warn moves to accept the reports, Nancy Volatile-Wood seconded.

Ken Minck brings forward that page 35-36 of the budget does not show any entries for grants or capital expenses.

The selectboard asks for the treasurer to speak on this behalf. A motion is needed as the treasurer does not live in Georgia.

Terry Cleveland makes a motion to let the Treasurer speak. Ellen Hsieh seconds.

Gary Wright spoke up and said the Selectboard is financially responsible, and the treasurer should not answer.

Ken Minck called point of order as there is already a motion on the floor to approve the reports that has not been voted on and now there is another motion on the floor.

Carolyn Branagan said this is allowed because it supersedes the previous motion.

Kurt Waite just as a point of understanding, Ken Minck started speaking about the proposed budget. C. Branagan said the budget is a separate article. Kens question was non valid.

C. Branagan calls for the vote and the ayes have it. April can speak.

C. Branagan calls for Article 1 and yes's pass.

Article 2:

Greg Rainville makes a motion to accept article 2 Keith Hanf seconds.

P. Warn questioned changing the date, where is that. There was confusion about this being the question asked at the special meeting regarding the change from calendar year to fiscal year.

33 D. Thomas said this was a special meeting and did not pass.

34 P. Warn thought they were going to bring this back. D. Thomas said it did not pass. P. Warn said no
35 information on this today, D. Thomas confirmed.

36 G. Wright would like to have the taxes go to quarterly payments. Amendment made to the motion
37 to go to quarterly payments while in a calendar year to get ourselves in the position to get us into a
38 fiscal year. This would be a financial advantage for the town.

39 C. Branagan motion on the floor. Gary amends the quarterly giving board the choice of dates for the
40 payments. B. Dunsmore seconds.

41 B. Dunsmore says there is an advantage to having money come in throughout the year.

42 G. Rainville asked if this was doable with the escrow and banks.

43 G. Wright said you can send the bills to the bank, and they will make the payments.

44 S. Jenkins has two concerns about the amount of extra work for the office staff. N. Martins said the
45 second concern would be that the tax rate cannot be set until July. If this is approved this would not
46 be set until the third and fourth quarter of 2024.

47 Sean Senesac if we are voting on this quarterly, he would like to have it done by paper ballot. C.
48 Branagan asked for six other people that would agree with this. Received more than six approvals.

49 K. Waite if you look back historically the town rarely borrowed money.

50 K. Meilleur, has concerns that there is not a large amount of the community here to vote on the
51 motion. This should be pushed until there is further information and more people can vote.

52 F. Gore wants to hear from the treasurer what impact it would have on the total taxes paid
53 throughout the year.

54 A. Edwards answered with a question for Gary, when are you proposing the quarterly payments to
55 being.

56 G. Wright have the Selectboard make that decision.

57 K. Minck calls for a vote on amended motion with ballot vote. C. Branagan asked for a raise of
58 hands to go ahead with a vote on the quarterly motion by raised hands. Yes, have it.

59 C. Branagan 131 votes cast 102 no and 20 yes. Amended motion failed.

60 C. Branagan main motion of October 16th as Tax Day. Voice vote ayes have it.

61 Article 3

62 J. Cota motion to talk about the budget seconded by J. Nasca. Wanted to know about the blank
63 spaces in the 2024 budget lines, page 35.

64 D. Thomas, the blank spaces are from a financial audit so this budget will look a little different than
65 it has in the past. The intention was to improve the town's efficiency going forward.

66 A. Edwards, if you look on page 35 and look at what was budgeted in 2023 in that total grants and
67 capital in grants revenue you have 506,000.00 you spent 243,000. You are throwing off your budget
68 by 251,000. If you look at the capital expenses, when you are moving money from one fund to the
69 other it is in there. It should not be counted and that is the recommendation of the auditor and Chip
70 from NEMRC.

71 J. Nasca the blank spaces will not exceed the bottom figure of three million.

72 A. Edwards the blank spaces mean we are not budgeting for 2024 in those categories.

73 C. Branagan so we do not intend to fill those blank spaces. A. Edwards with a budgeted amount no,
74 with expenses yes.

75 D. Thomas this is just a different way of presenting the budget.

76 K. Waite is concerned because the budget is such a change from budgets in the past. The
77 Selectboard tends to spend more than what is shown in the budget. It is less transparent and
78 misleading. Once example is you intend to spend \$178,000 in ARPA funds for paving, yet you
79 show zero money coming in from ARPA in the budget. If you look at page 35, move to the highway
80 budget, you only show you are going to spend \$45,000 on paving. He believes that is \$45,000 in
81 addition to the \$178,000.00. So, you are spending over \$200,000.00 on paving when you only show
82 \$45,000.00. Budgets should show money in money out. N. Martin said they were faced with two
83 challenges this year, one being we had a new auditor and a more in-depth audit. As a result, there
84 were at least half a dozen things they had to change and in addition to that we hired a new treasurer.
85 The treasurer worked very closely with the auditor and with that came a very significant number of
86 things that needed to be changed. April did not shy away from telling the board the budget will
87 look different from previous years. There are very good reasons why she made the changes she
88 made. April will be able to address where the changes are. Moving forward year after year they will
89 look consistent.

90 K. Waite where is the \$178,000 coming into the budget and where it is going out.

91 A. Edwards, the money is still sitting in the ARPA fund, and this is a subset of the general fund, and
92 it is accounted for on your general fund budget sheet it is not accounted for on your proposed
93 budget and trial balance. If you look at page 35 where it shows total grant and capital expenditures
94 the number, you see budgets for 2023 is \$506,398.000. turn the page and see where it says total
95 impact fee and grant expenditures and it shows \$245,000.00. Where was the question when that
96 happened.

97 This budget shows what needs to be raised by taxes. The \$2.9 million dollars is the number that
98 balances your revenue and expenses.

99 G. Wright way are we asking voters to vote on a \$1.5 million dollar bond to repair a bridge when
100 we are offsetting the budget with ARPA funds. If we take the APRA money out of the budget it
101 goes from a 9.1% increase to 41% growth year to year.

102 S. Brown rewriting of the budget, we are not voting on the amount raised by taxes, what we are
103 voting on is operating expenses raised by taxes and non-tax revenue. The non-tax revenue at
104 \$398,856.59 does that include APRA, Grant, and Restricted fund spending? A. Edwards it would
105 not include the spending of the funds from the restricted funds.

106 K. Minck last year's revenue was than half of what we received last year.

107 K. Minck would like to amend Article 3 to apply the unassigned surplus on page 34 of \$120,736.46
108 to reduce the tax implication seconded by M. Coy.

109 N. Martin on the advisement of our Treasurer and county practices, there was a request to have a
110 minimal amount available should unforeseen things happen.

111 Grenier when he was on the Selectboard a fund was set up for this. A. Edwards stated that in 2021 it
112 was voted to set a reserve fund up, but it was never voted on how that fund would be funded. More
113 discussion was had.

114 C. Branagan, all those in favor of using \$120,736.46 to reduce the amount of taxes to be paid, all in
115 favor say I all opposed say nay. Aye's do have it.

116 Amended budget figure of \$2,800,995.83.

117 Motion to have this voted on by paper ballot. Seven people agree.

118

119 R. Nye wanted to know why we are switching Ambulance services. N. Martin we were working
120 with AmCare, and the cost increase was almost \$40,000.00 a year by the end of year 3. We reached
121 out to other communities to see if we could work with anyone else. Fairfax rescue was already
122 working with other communities and has done this before. They came in and met with us and gave a
123 very appealing proposal to help save the taxpayer money with only a \$2,000.00 year-to-year
124 increase. This would also allow them to get a third ambulance for coverage. They are a non for
125 profit and they offer a membership that will be extended to all households in Georgia. The
126 membership is \$65.00 one-time fee. If anyone in your home calls an ambulance they will not be
127 billed anything above the insurance payment. The Selectboard decided to move forward with
128 Fairfax. The contract with Fairfax allows for renewal annually. N. Martin says AmCare is still our
129 backup if Fairfax cannot make the call. R. Nye says there is a huge difference between the two and
130 if you are leaving AmCare for budgetary reasons that is a concern and there are other areas in the
131 budget where cuts could be made then peoples safety. N. Martins replies that both companies will
132 still be available to the community. Just as Fairfax is AmCares backup. R. Nye states this is ill-
133 advised and there are better places to make cuts.

134

135 Motion to accept an amended budget of \$2,800,995.83 by paper ballot.

136 Article 3 budget 35 yes and 88 no. budget failed.

137

138 Article 4 Motion to appoint Kristina Senna to the GIDC for a period of three years by T. Heinlein
139 all in favor.

140

141 Article 5: Shall the Town of Georgia vote on all public questions by Australian Ballot?

142 G. Wright motion to discuss seconded by B. Dunsmore.

143 Discussion was had about changing the date and time of the Town Meeting to a night or weekend.

144 K. Minck made an amended motion to have the budget voted on Australian ballot and other articles
145 on the floor. S. Shuttle seconded.

146 Article 5 by paper ballot 25 yes and 60 no. Motion failed.

147 Article 6: To transact any other business which may legally come before the meeting.

148 N. Lavallee Roads repaired.

149 K. Minck Local option tax – is this available to Georgia?

150 S. Brown – Thanked everyone that has served on any of the boards in Georgia.

151 K. Baker – Recognized R. Nye and M. Baker for 50 years of service and J. Cota retired after 30
152 years of service.

153 N. Gosselin- GFD is the best department around.

154 1:32 adjourn.

155

156

Town of Georgia
School Board Meeting

157

158

159 **Present:** Carl LaRoe Chair, Ben Chaipinelli, Jean-Charles Thouin, Steven Wry

160

161 **1:35 p.m. Carolyn Branagan, School Moderator, reads the order for School Meeting**

162

163 N. Volitale-Wood made a motion to suspend Robert's Rules, A. Milne seconded.

164 N. Volitale-Wood congratulated the school board for not inflating the budget.

165

166 **At 1:41 p.m.** – Meeting was adjourned

167

168 **Posted to the Town website, four designated places within the Town of Georgia (Town Clerk's**
169 **Office, Georgia Public Library, Maplefields & Georgia Market), and e-mailed to the local media.**

170 **Signed: Cheryl Letourneau, Town Administrator**

171 **Phone: 802-524-3524 | Fax: 802-524-3543 | Website: townofgeorgia.com**