

## March 16 & 17, 2018 Annual Town Meeting Minutes

Voters met at the Whitefield Central Fire Station on the Sixteenth day of March, 2018, from 4-8 p.m. Ballot Clerks were Laurel Mullens and Darlene Beaulieu. Sandra Brown served as warden, and Aaron Miller served as Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters and Deputy Warden.

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

*Jeff Frankel was elected by written ballot, 3-0.*

Article 2. To elect by secret ballot municipal officers namely, one Select Board Member/Assessor/Overseer of the Poor for a three-year term; two RSU 12 School Board Members one for a two-year term and one for a one-year term; and two openings on the Planning Board for two-year terms.

### Results of the March 16, 2018 Election:

#### **Selectman/Assessor/Oversee of Poor – 3 year**

Lester Sheaffer Jr.      **182**

#### **RSU 12 School - 2 Year**

Keith B. Marple      **134**

Malinda Caron      **66**

#### **RSU 12 School - 1 Year**

Tara R. Deslisle      **165**

#### **Planning Board - 2 Year Term**

James R. Torbert      **182**

Jacob N. Mathews      **171**

*Town Meeting reconvened at approximately 10:10 a.m. to act on Articles 3 through 40 with 97 voters in attendance. After Moderator Frankel led the Pledge of Allegiance, Frank Ober presented Quinn Conroy and others with the Spirit of America Award for their efforts in establishing the Whitefield Library at Arlington Grange.*

*Joan Morin spoke to the crowd, noting that she set up a table in the gymnasium to allow people to receive information regarding the Whitefield School Improvement Project. She said the project is aimed at solving about 58 problems identified at the school.*

*Charlene Donahue asked residents to be aware of Browntail Moths that have infested apple and oak trees. She said the hairs cause a rash and respiratory stress. She recommended cutting branches with nests and burning them.*

*Tony Marple explained that the town has 88 days of operating capital in the town's coffers. Our auditor recommended having 60-90 days. He gave a general overview of the budget, noting that one of the bigger increases this year is due to salaries and benefits.*

*"A lot of towns are having difficulty recruiting," he said. "Our staff was determined to be well underpaid. We also moved from the Affordable Health Care Act and went to a regular commercial plan, which still has high deductions, but is a high increase."*

*He added that a new culvert will have to be installed on South Hunts Meadow Road and noted that voters can reduce the budget by \$20,000, due to a lesser amount anticipated for snow plowing. In addition, the town will be asking for a new generator for the town office since it was closed for the better part of a week in October, 2017.*

*Marple said the mil rate is \$13.80 now and we don't know the RSU budget and have been told that will be flat. In addition, he said we don't know the county budget.*

*Jeff Frankel give the ground rules, such as how to move motions, handle amendments and LD 1 needs to be determined by written ballot. He recommended that the town do it anyway, just in case we are NOT under the limit.*

Article 3. To see if the Town will fix dates when taxes shall be due and payable, and to see if the Town will fix an annual interest rate to be charged on unpaid taxes after said dates, and to allow the Tax Collector and Treasurer to accept the prepayment of taxes not yet committed pursuant to 36 M.R.S.A §506.

17/18 budget year interest rate 4%.

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS 4% November 30, 2018 and 4% April 30, 2019.

*Article was moved and seconded with the select board recommendation. The article passed with no discussion.*

Article 4. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from surplus funds to pay for tax abatements and any interest due thereon.

*Article was moved and seconded as written. The article passed with no discussion.*

Article 5. To see if the town will vote to authorize the Town Tax Collector to enter into a standard agreement with taxpayers establishing a "tax club" payment plan for property taxes, whereby:

- the taxpayer agrees to pay specified monthly payments to the town based on his/her estimated and actual tax obligation for the current year property taxes.
- the town agrees not to charge interest on timely payments made pursuant to the tax club agreement.
- the town authorizes the Town Tax Collector to accept tax club payments for current taxes which may be due prior to the commitment of those taxes.
- the agreement is automatically terminated if a scheduled payment is late, and the taxpayer then becomes subject to the same due dates and interest dates and rates as other taxpayers who are not participating in a tax club.
- only taxpayers who do not have any outstanding tax obligations for prior tax years are eligible to participate in the tax club program.
- taxpayers wishing to participate in a tax club for a particular property tax year shall enter into an agreement with the town by a publicly-advertised deadline determined by the Town Tax Collector.

*Article was moved and seconded. The article passed with no discussion.*

Article 6. To see if the town will authorize the Treasurer to waive the foreclosure of a tax lien mortgage pursuant to 36 M.R.S.A §944 upon finding by the Select Board that ownership of the property subject to the lien would be contrary to the Town's best interest.

*Article was moved and seconded. The article passed with no discussion.*

Article 7. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to enter into multi-year contracts to negotiate optimal value for the procurement of certain services necessary to the Town.

*Article was moved and seconded. Hilary Holm asked how this is different than the way we do things now. Tony Marple responded that this has been recommended by the Maine Municipal Association for plowing, etc.*

*Without further discussion the article passed.*

Article 8. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board on behalf of the Town to sell and dispose of any real estate acquired by the Town for nonpayment of taxes thereon, for such terms as they deem advisable and to execute quitclaim deeds for the same.

*Article was moved and seconded. Steve Smith asked how the board disposes of tax-acquired property. Aaron Miller explained that the town has a policy that provides such guidance. In the past five years, the town has sold only two properties (land-only) and they were both sold through a realtor. Article passed after a motion and second to move the question.*

Article 9. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to accept gifts of money or personal property to the Town and to appropriate and expend such gifts for such public purposes as the Select Board deem to be in the best interest of the Town.

*Article was moved and seconded. The article passed with no discussion.*

Article 10. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to apply for and accept state and federal grants and grants from nonprofit organizations on behalf of the Town for municipal purposes, including when necessary, the authority to sign the grant contract and accept the conditions that accompany grant funds, and to appropriate and expend grant funds for the authorized purposes.

*Article was moved and seconded. The article passed with no discussion.*

Article 11. To see if the Town will authorize the Select Board to dispose of town owned property valued up to \$1,000. Property valued over \$1,000 will be sold through auction or sealed-bid process.

*Article was moved and seconded. The article passed with no discussion.*

Article 12. To see what sum the Town will vote to raise and appropriate to provide compensation to the Select Board during the ensuing fiscal year.

17/18 Budget \$17,500

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS (2-2-1) \$18,500

BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SAME (3-1-1)

*Article was moved and seconded to approve the select board recommendation. The article passed after Frank Ober explained that this represents a \$200 a year increase per selectman.*

Article 13. To see what sum the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the purpose of providing compensation and employee benefits to Town employees during the ensuing fiscal year.

Amounts include salaries for the Administrative Assistant, Tax Collector, Office Assistants, and benefits for full-time town employees.

17/18 Budget \$133,739

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS (4-1) \$153,210

BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SAME (5-0)

Note: This includes salaries, insurances, Social Security (for all departments), retirement, etc.

*Article was moved and seconded to approve the select board recommendation. The article passed with no discussion.*

Article 14. To see what sum the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for general expenses associated with the operation of Town government.

17/18 Budget \$101,530

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS (5-0) \$102,239

BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SAME (5-0)

Note: Includes audit fees, assessing fees, Maine Municipal Association dues, travel, training, computer software, maintenance, utilities, supplies, equipment, liability/workers comp insurance, contracted services, etc.

*Article was moved and seconded to approve the select board recommendation. The article passed with no discussion.*

Article 15. To see what sum the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for elections expenses.

17/18 Budget \$2,300

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS (5-0) \$ 1,650

BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SAME (5-0)

*Article was moved and seconded. Glenn Angell asked how Ranked Choice Voting will effect this line. Town Clerk Aaron Miller said that he is waiting for more information from the Secretary of State's Office, however, believed that there would be enough money in the budget based on spending data. The article passed.*

Article 16. To see what sum the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for legal expenses.

17/18 Budget \$5,000

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS (5-0) \$5,000

BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SAME (5-0)

*Article was moved and seconded to approve the select board recommendation. The article passed with no discussion.*

Article 17. To see what sum the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for Planning Board expenses and Code Enforcement Officer expenses.

17/18 Budget \$10,000

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS (5-0) \$10,400  
BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SAME (5-0)

*Article was moved and seconded to approve the select board recommendation. One resident asked why there is an increase. Lester Sheaffer explained that more money was added for legal fees to handle such matters as a potential commercial marijuana ordinance or junkyard ordinance.*

Article 18. To see what sum the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for Townhouse (Historical Society) building expenses.  
17/18 Budget \$900

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS (5-0) \$1,800  
BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SAME (5-0)

*Article was moved and seconded to approve the budget committee recommendation. Frank Ober explained that a new deck will need to be installed at the Townhouse. The article passed.*

Article 19. To see what sum the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the operation of the Whitefield Fire Department.  
17/18 Budget \$82,000

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS (5-0) \$89,347  
BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SAME (5-0)

*Article was moved and seconded to approve the select board recommendation. Hilary Holm asked why there is an increase. Tony Marple noted that the fire department budget has been flat for five years. Fire Chief Scott Higgins said that he expects an increase in EMS supplies \$1,000; vehicle maintenance, \$2,000; communications equipment, \$700; SCBA maintenance, \$800, added stipends for the captains, \$1,800, and \$900 for lieutenants.*

*"They spend a lot of time in there," Higgins said. "We feel it's not much. We feel it's something to show our appreciation."*

*John Robbins expressed thanks for the service provided by the fire department, which was met by applause. The article passed.*

Article 20. To see what sum the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the Animal Control Contract.  
17/18 Budget \$5,000

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS (4-1) \$5,000  
BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SAME (5-0)

*Article was moved and seconded to approve the select board recommendation. The article passed with no discussion.*

Article 21. To see what sum the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for repair and maintenance of Town roads.

17/18 Budget \$435,341

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS (4-1) \$397,375

BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SAME (5-0)

*Article was moved and seconded to approve the select board recommendation. Melinda Caron asked why there was a decrease in the roads and asked why selectmen don't take out a loan to do more work sooner, rather than later. Frank Ober explained selectmen did look at that option, however, they decided not to. Frank invited Melinda to attend an upcoming Roads Committee meeting at 3 p.m. She recommended such meetings be held at a time people who work can attend. Article passed.*

Article 22. To see what sum the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for winter maintenance of Town roads.

17/18 Budget \$250,550

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS (5-0) \$290,682

BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SAME (5-0)

*Tony Marple made motion to amend the article to reduce by \$20,000, which was seconded. Angela Ross asked if this amount included sand. Town Clerk Aaron Miller confirmed that was included in this number.*

*Residents discussed the sand that is allowed for residents to use for their driveways. Lester Sheaffer told residents that he spoke with David Spicer who said about \$4,000 worth of sand was taken by residents to use.*

*Frank Ober said that it is illegal for the town to provide sand to a private individual. Phil Russell suggested putting up a fence to prevent people from loading up their pick-up trucks. Lisa Kalloch said that she didn't think it was a big deal, considering elderly in town.*

*Gigi Hutchins expressed concerns about the road plowing and sanding. Steve Smith said that we should hang on to Spicer, noting that the town should feel fortunate.*

*"I think we could talk all afternoon and not solve the problem," Phil Russell said. "In the winter months, you expect the roads to be slippery. You need to plan to leave early, etc. The contractor is trying his hardest."*

*A motion to move the question passed by 2/3 majority vote. The amended article, to raise and appropriate \$270,682 passed.*

Article 23. To see what sum the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the General Assistance Program.  
17/18 Budget \$5,000

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS (5-0) \$3,250  
BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SAME (5-0)

*The article was moved and seconded. One resident asked why there is a decrease. Lester Sheaffer noted that the Administrative Assistant has found creative ways to keep this cost down. The article passed.*

Article 24. To see what sum the Town will vote to raise and appropriate in support of the following outside services: Lincoln County Humane Society, \$ 2,300; Hatch Hill, \$ 23,000.  
17/18 Budget \$25,300

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS (5-0) \$25,300  
BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SAME (5-0)

*Article was moved and seconded to approve the select board recommendation. The article passed with no discussion.*

Article 25. To see what sum the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for salaries, utilities and maintenance for the Recycling Center.  
17/18 Budget \$3,750

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS (5-0) \$3,661  
BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SAME (5-0)

*Article was moved and seconded to approve the select board recommendation. The article passed with no discussion.*

Article 26. To see what sum the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for town office capital outlay.  
17/18 Budget \$29,000

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS (4-1) \$8,000  
BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SAME (5-0)

Note: the funds are for the installation of an electricity generator at the town office.



*Article was moved and seconded to approve the select board recommendation. Jim Torbert asked what this article was for. Lester Sheaffer noted the \$29,000 was used for improvements at the Town Office. He added that the Town Office lost power for a week and there was no business being done as a result. The \$9,000 would be used to install a new generator at the office.*

*Hilary Holm asked about installing solar panels and batteries. Steve Sheehy said he looked at this method, which is not cost effective.*

*Frank Ober gave an update to residents regarding the improvements at the Town Office which included new heat pumps, dehumidifier, mold remediated in the vault, insulation on the rim joists, LED lights and ceiling tiles. He noted that Erik Ekholm and Dennis Merrill saved the town money. He added that something must be done to divert the snow from the backside doors at the fire station. In addition, the selectboard is instituting a facilities committee to look at all buildings and is looking for volunteers. The article passed.*

Article 27. To see what sum the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the Fire Department capital outlay.  
17/18 Budget \$9,000.00

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS (5-0) \$9,000  
BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SAME (5-0)

*Article was moved and seconded to accept the select board recommendation. Scott Higgins told residents that this money is to be "put away" for purchasing air packs and hose. This is a yearly budget item, he said. One air pack costs \$7,000, he noted.*

*Article passed.*

Article 28. To see what sum the Town will vote to appropriate from surplus, effective immediately, to be expended for repairs of the Leonard's Bridge Culvert on South Hunts Meadow Road.

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS (5-0) \$50,000  
BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SAME (5-0)

*Article was moved and seconded. The article passed with no discussion.*

Article 29. To see if the Town will vote to lapse all balances into undesignated Fund Balance except those which must be carried forward by statute and the balances of the following accounts: Town Roads, Town House, Emergency Management Operations, Leonard's Bridge Culvert, Fire Department Capital Outlay and Coopers Mill Dam Repairs that will not lapse

and to allow the Select Board to expend from them in future years for their designated purposes.

*Article was moved and seconded to accept the select board recommendation. The article passed with no discussion.*

Article 30. To see what sum the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for Tax Anticipation Note.  
17/18 Budget \$600

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS (5-0) \$600  
BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SAME (5-0)

*Article was moved and seconded to accept the select board recommendation. The article passed with no discussion.*

Article 31. To see what sum the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for soldiers' graves.  
17/18 Budget \$300

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS (5-0) \$300  
BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SAME (5-0)

*Article was moved and seconded to accept the select board recommendation. The article passed with no discussion.*

Article 32. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate to support the debt service incurred for the Fire Department.  
17-18 Budget \$53,596

Fire Truck Principal	\$16,216
Fire Truck Interest	\$5,731
Fire Station Principal	\$18,272
Fire Station Interest	<u>\$12,982</u>
	\$53,201

*Article was moved and seconded. The article passed with no discussion.*

Article 33. To see what sum the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for donations to the following organizations:

	17-18 Budget	18-19 Budget Select Board	18-19 Budget Budget Comm.
American Red Cross	\$100	\$ 250 (3-2)	\$250 (5-0)

Midcoast ME Comm. Action	\$ 1,000	\$1,000 (3-2)	\$1,000 (5-0)
Maine General Hospice	\$ 1,137	\$1,137 (3-2)	\$1,137 (5-0)
Kennebec Behavioral Health	\$ 1,000	\$1,000 (3-2)	\$1,000 (5-0)
New Hope For Women	\$ 580	\$580 (3-2)	\$580 (5-0)
Spectrum Generations	\$ 500	\$500 (3-2)	\$500 (5-0)
Young at Heart	\$ 150	\$150 (3-2)	\$150 (5-0)
Children Center	\$1,115	\$1,115 (1-4)	\$1,115 (0-3-2)
Healthy Kids	\$1,000	\$1,000 (3-2)	\$1,000 (5-0)
LifeFlight Foundation	\$ 0	\$0 (5-0)	\$0 (5-0)
Whitefield Cemetery	\$3,000	\$3,000 (5-0)	\$3,000 (5-0)
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$9,582</b>	<b>\$9,732</b>	<b>\$9,732</b>

*Article was moved and seconded. There was no discussion on American Red Cross, Midcoast Maine Community Action, Maine General Hospice, Kennebec Behavioral Health, New Hope For Women, Spectrum Generations, and Young at Heart. Keith Marple asked why there were votes against the Children Center.*

*Bill McKeen said that there were no Whitefield residents served by the organization last year. Charlene Donahue said that this organization has helped Whitefield children in the past, however.*

*There was no discussion on Health Kids.*

*Gigi Hutchins asked what will happen if we don't support LifeFlight. Tony Marple said that LifeFlight is a multimillion dollar organization with assets over a billion.*

*"If we don't raise \$500 for them, it doesn't mean they won't serve us," Marple said. "We looked at their financial and felt it's not needed."*

*A motion was made to reduce the article from \$9,732 to \$8,617, to not support the Children's Center.*

*Melinda Caron said that she has served as a Special Education Teacher for 26 years.*

*"Not all children are funded through insurance," she said. "Just because they don't have a child in there now, doesn't mean they won't have one in the future. They will cover the bill, but that means their budget goes up and will not be able to afford services in the future. Studies have show that the earlier we 'hit' this, the better they are and it helps keep costs down."*

*Lester Sheaffer noted that the Children's Center received \$12,500 in federal funds and over \$2.5 million in state funds. Voters approved reducing the article to \$8,617. The amended article was moved, seconded and passed.*

Article 34. To see what sum the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the Whitefield Food Bank for the ensuing year.  
17/18 Budget \$4,500

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS (5-0) \$3,000.00.  
BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SAME (5-0)

NOTE: The Select Board will be using an additional \$3,000 from the Will Turner Charity Trust Fund for a total of \$6,000.

*Article was moved and seconded to accept the select board recommendation. The article passed with no discussion.*

Article 35. To see what sum the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the care and maintenance of cemeteries.  
17/18 Budget \$2,000

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS (5-0) \$3,500.  
BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SAME (5-0)

NOTE: This amount does not include care and maintenance for Coopers Mills Cemetery, which is paid through the Will Turner Cemetery Trust.

*Article was moved and seconded to accept the select board recommendation. The article passed.*

Article 36. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate all funds received by the Town from the State of Maine for snowmobile registrations to the Snowmobile Club for the purpose of maintaining their snowmobile trails and to authorize the municipal officers to enter into an agreement with the Club, under such terms and conditions as the municipal officers may deem advisable, for that purpose. These funds are to be used for the maintenance of snowmobile trails within the Town and will be open to the public at all times and free of charge.

*Article was moved and seconded to accept the select board recommendation. Chuck Vaughan said he spoke with one landowner who has concerns that these trails could be expanded for other use. The following amendment was moved, seconded and approved:*

*"These funds are to be used for the maintenance of snowmobile trails within the Town."*

Article 37. To authorize the Select Board to accept and expend any other revenue from State, Federal, local and private sources for the support of the Town.

*Article was moved and seconded. The article passed with no discussion.*

Article 38. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to move funds in the municipal budget from categories with balances to those with deficits.

*Article was moved and seconded. Hilary Holm said that when funds are moved, it "kind of" hides an over expenditure from the line.*

*"Is there a record," she asked.*

*Tony Marple said that there is a journal entry.*

*The article passed.*

Article 39. To be decided by written ballot:  
To see if the Town will vote to increase the property tax levy limit established for the Town of Whitefield by State Law in the event that the municipal budget approved under the preceding articles will result in a tax commitment that is greater than the property tax levy limit.

*Article was moved and seconded. The article passed by written ballot, 61-14.*

Article 40. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate, and to authorize the Select Board to expend from the following General Fund revenue sources to be used toward the July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019 budget appropriation, thereby decreasing the amount to be raised from property taxes:

Auto Excise	\$370,000
BMV Agent	\$6,800
Revenue Sharing	\$100,000
Homestead Exemption	\$50,000
Business Equipment Tax Exemption	\$5,000
Local Roads Assistance Program	\$46,000
Veterans' Exemption	\$2,000
Tree Growth	\$7,000
Interest on Taxes	\$2,300
Lien Cost	\$5,000
Other non-property	\$12,500
Unassigned surplus	\$50,000

17/18 Budget \$437,000.00

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS (5-0) \$656,600

*Article was moved and seconded to accept the select board recommendation. Tony Marple noted that the prior year number is incorrect. It should read \$752,000.*

*He recommended an amendment that voters increase unassigned surplus by \$100,000. Which would increase to total amount of article to \$756,600.*

*The amendment was moved and seconded and approved. The amended article was passed.*

*Moderator Jeff Frankel asked if there was any other business to be brought before the town.*

*Cathey Sell asked about any progress the town has made with cell towers. Tony Marple said that he called Black Diamond twice and they haven't gotten back to him.*

*Genevieve Keller thanked everyone's efforts at recycle center. Frank Ober noted that number one plastics will not be placed in a separate bin. David Hayden thanked the selectboard for their time.*

The preceding is a true and accurate account of the actions taken by the Town of Whitefield at the Annual Town Meeting, March 16 & 17, 2018.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aaron C. Miller', with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Aaron C. Miller

Town Clerk