

Town of Mechanic Falls

Special Town Meeting

October 16, 2018

A special town meeting was called to vote on the following Warrant Articles:

1. Elect a Moderator
2. Shall the Town of Mechanic Falls (1) authorize the Town Council to enter into a lease agreement for the purpose of relocating the Library to the prior Railroad Depot Building located next to the Post Office in the Depot Square Plaza and (2) delegate, to the Town Manager and Council Chair, the authority and discretion to fix the dates, including authority to execute and deliver such agreements on behalf of the Town?

Chief of Police, Jeffrey Goss, posted notice at Future Foods, the Town Clerk's Office, and the Post Office (as is customary) on March 6, 2018. Notice was also posted to the Town Website, Facebook Page, and on the sign in front of the municipal Building.

Attendees:

Zakk Maher, Town Manager Miranda Hinkley, Town Clerk

44 Voters (see attached Incoming Voters List) & Autumn Frechette

The Town Clerk opened the meeting at 7:07pm.

The Town Clerk advised that a Moderator would need to be elected for this meeting only. Lou Annance was nominated as Moderator, however he was not in attendance. Cathy Fifield then nominated Jacques Wiseman as Moderator, seconded by Steve Bolduc. All registered voters in attendance voted unanimously to elect Jacques Wiseman as Moderator for this meeting.

Jacques Wiseman was sworn in as Moderator by the Town Clerk.

Mr. Wiseman read the Article in question:

1. "Shall the Town of Mechanic Falls (1) authorize the Town Council to enter into a lease agreement for the purpose of relocating the Library to the prior Railroad Depot Building located next to the Post Office in the Depot Square Plaza and (2) delegate, to the Town Manager and Council Chair, the authority and discretion to fix the dates, including authority to execute and deliver such agreements on behalf of the Town?"

Carl Beckett moves to approve the article as written, seconded by Charles Bouchles. Open for discussion.

The Town Manager explained the intent for leasing space for the Library is to save money on larger than expected renovation costs for the new municipal building. The Council had discussed as well as the Library board of trustees. The Towns people voiced concerns of trust as they feel that the Council and previous Town Manager knew in advance that not all three departments would fit into the purchased medical building. Zakk explained that the three will fit, tightly, and the question is not if they will fit, but how we can save money. Having to completely gut the interior of the building is proving to be pricey, not having to remove walls and rewire and replace ceilings would substantially reduce construction costs. The Townspeople felt that paying for the cost to maintain and manage two buildings, plowing, utilities, etc., rather than one was not a savings in the longer term. They also felt that the cost to lease would not be money well spent. Mr. Collins wondered if the group that was interested in buying the current building for elderly housing is still interested. Zakk states that Avesta is interested and is still awaiting for money to be released by the Governor's Office. This would be at least 2 years before completed. It was asked if the building would then be tax exempt. It would not qualify as tax exempt as the owner is not municipality. At this point, there were no new remarks. The Moderator asked for a vote regarding the motion on the table. All in favor, the Town Clerk and moderator counted and reached 22 votes. Those opposed, the Town Clerk and Moderator counted and reached 22 votes. At this point, we had a tie. To verify count, the room was asked again to cast votes. All in favor, 21. Those opposed, 23. The Article fails.

Steve Bolduc moves to adjourn. Paula Stotts seconds motion. Unanimous vote to adjourn; meeting adjourned at 7:58pm