

TOWN OF EAST MONTPELIER ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

March 3, 2026

The legal voters of the Town of East Montpelier, Vermont we warned to meet at the East Montpelier Elementary School located at 665 Vincent Flats Road in said Town, on **Tuesday**, the **third (3rd)** day of **March, 2026** at **9:30 a.m.** to transact the following business and to vote by Australian Ballot from **7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.** on those Articles so noted. 146 registered voters were in attendance.

The meeting was called to order by Moderator Duane at 9: 44AM. Microphone Runners Julia Williams, Tavis Fisher and Penny Duane were recognized and introduced. The slate of those running for elected offices were introduced.

ARTICLE 1: To elect all necessary officers for the ensuing year. Officers elected are shown in bold along with number of votes received.

Town Moderator, 1-year term	Michael Duane	[774 votes]
Selectboard Member, 3-year term	Joe Brooks	[688 votes]
Selectboard Member, 2-year term	Seth Gardner	[736 votes]
Lister, 3-year term	Deborah Fillion	[714 votes]
Auditor, 3-year term	Carla Occaso	[716 votes]
Planning Commissioner, 3-year term	Clarice Cutler	[669 votes]
Planning Commissioner, 3-year term	Alexander Rob	[690 votes]
Planning Commissioner, 3-year term	Rebecca Schrader	[674 votes]

ARTICLE 2: To hear the reports of the several Town Officers and to act thereon.

Motion: To hear the reports of town officers. **Made:** Janice Waterman. **Second:** Bruce Chappell. **The motion passed unanimously.**

OVERVIEW

Seth Gardner reviewed the Town Report. He thanked all former town officials and thanked volunteers. The Town Garage project is scheduled to be ready for occupancy in May. Ann Stanton asked to recognize that Andy Shapiro has volunteered countless hours in support of this project.

HIGHWAY PROJECTS

This spring, lighted speed signs will be placed on Vincent Flats, Center Road, Gallison Hill Road and County Road. Bill Merrylees mentioned that there have been several crashes where Gallison Hill Road meets the Wheeler Road and suggested improving the signage there. Charles Johnson agreed that the line of sight on the curve is difficult. Kim Watson also noted that Google Maps often sends tractor trailers up Gallison Hill Road. Mr. Gardner continued with the report, stating there were some fleet and equipment updates and upgrades over the last year. Highway trucks have a planned life expectancy of roughly 10 years. These costs are covered by Capital Improvement Plan funding.

GRANTS & OTHER UPDATES

The Town Administrator is working with FEMA to get the final reimbursement. The Town has also secured some planning grants. Many other grants are also being applied for. Bill Heigis heads up the East Montpelier Trails System. We had a very successful Green Up Day, and our financial audit was completed with no audit findings. The Hudson House was sold, and someone is living there and fixing it up. The Town Office has been working to become more efficient. Jen Devine has been designated as the Town Emergency Preparedness Director.

Mr. Chappell asked about the location of the home that is applying for a FEMA buyout. It was explained that the property is in both East Montpelier and Plainfield, and we don't know if the buyout has been approved.

Mr. Merrylees asked about housing near Orchard Valley School. Mr. Gardner explained that the town does not own the property, and while it is part of the plan to encourage housing in that vicinity, that has not occurred yet.

ARTICLE 3: Shall the Town raise the sum of \$2,761,773 as proposed by the Selectboard, for laying out and repairing highways and for other necessary Town expenses for fiscal year 2027 (July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027)? **(To be voted by Australian Ballot).** There were no questions. **RESULTS: [Yes 770 No 133]**

ARTICLE 4: Shall the Town authorize all property taxes for the fiscal year 2027 to be paid to the Town Treasurer, without discount in two installments and received by the Treasurer at the East Montpelier Municipal Building as follows: The first installment will be due and postmarked on or before Monday, November 16, 2026 and the second installment will be due and postmarked on or before Monday, May 17, 2027? **Motion:** To adopt Article 4: **Made:** Ginny Callan. Second: Zachary Sullivan. **The motion passed unanimously by voice vote and the article was adopted.**

ARTICLE 5: Shall the Town, pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 1682(a)(2), provide notice of the availability of the annual town report by postcard mailed to all registered voters at least 30 days before the annual meeting, in lieu of mailing or otherwise distributing the report, with copies to be published on the Town website and mailed from the Town Office upon request? **(To be voted by Australian Ballot).** Ginny Callan asked how much money would be saved. Mr. Gardner responded here is a savings of roughly \$5,000. There is a perception that many of these books are discarded. There were several people who reported that the town report did not arrive much before Town Meeting, and several voters had concerns about delayed mail. The Clerk responded that just over 1100 books are mailed to registered voting households. Tracey Loysen asked if folks could opt out. The Clerk noted that you can opt-in but not opt-out based on the way the law is written. Kate Rumley appreciates the idea of allowing people to opt-in, stating the environmental advantages. Ms. Knoedler reiterated the concern about delayed mail, especially for those in the Montpelier zip code. Mr. Etnier suggested that the Clerk would keep a running spreadsheet from year to year for those who wish to permanently receive a printed copy. Marleen McCarty noted that they have lots of trouble with mail. Nona Estrin urged the group to consider waiting a few years before making this change. She gave kudos to the East Montpelier Postmaster for getting mail to people, even working after hours and on weekends. **RESULTS: [Yes 697 No 188]**

ARTICLE 6: Shall the Town raise the sum of \$56,195 for Kellogg-Hubbard Library for the support of the Kellogg-Hubbard Library? **(To be voted by Australian Ballot).** Sarah Swift, trustee representing East Montpelier, noted that the library serves more than 13,000 per year, circulating more than 200,000. Deborah Glottman stated that her non-profit uses the library for meeting space. Bruce Howlett asked about flood recovery progress. Ms. Swift responded that all work related to flooding has been completed. This includes moving mechanical equipment up to the first floor from the basement. **RESULTS: [Yes 682 No 225]**

ARTICLE 7: Shall the Town raise the sum of **\$3,700** for the Four Corners Schoolhouse Association for operating expenses during fiscal year 2027? **Motion to adopt Article 7:** Nora Duane. Second: Bruce Chappell. Hobie Guion reported that the mold remediation has been completed throughout. The building will be painted later this spring and all are welcome to use the space. There is a Four Corners School Facebook page that has information about rentals. **The motion passed unanimously by voice vote and the article was adopted.**

ARTICLE 8: Shall the Town raise the sum of **\$9,000** for the East Montpelier Signpost to provide for the production and mailing of six issues of the *East Montpelier Signpost* for each East Montpelier resident household and non-resident property owner during fiscal year 2027? **Motion to adopt Article 8. Made:** Ann Stanton. **Second:** Barry Rufenacht. The Signpost is 36 years old this year, and exists on a completely volunteer basis. Ms. Stanton requested new ideas, new writers and volunteers. Nona Estrin reminded those assembled

that while Jean Cate was the driving force behind the *Signpost*, she was also responsible for beginning the East Montpelier Trails System. **The motion passed unanimously by voice vote and the article was adopted.**

ARTICLE 9: Shall the Town raise the sum of **\$6,000** for East Montpelier Trails, Inc. for the enhancement, development, administration and maintenance of the trail network in East Montpelier during fiscal year 2027? Motion: To adopt Article 9. Made Sue Chickering. Second: Sarah Swift. Bill Heigis, President of East Montpelier Trails, reported that the boardwalk on the Sparrow Farm trail was completed, and the Sparrow Farm South trail was completed. Next year's projects include the re-routing of the Sparrow Farm South trail and fixing the bridge on the Mallory Brook trail. This year is an increase due to the increase in mileage of trail and supporting structures. Nona Estrin noted that Mr. Heigis is a builder, which has been very valuable. Deborah Glottman's dog is very grateful for the trail system. Sue Chickering commended Mr. Heigis as their new leader. Bruce Chappell encouraged everyone to take advantage of the trail system. Rubin Bennett saw an article online that Vermont is the healthiest state, and he feels that these trails are part of the reason for that. Tom Brandecker asked how to best access the trails. Mr. Heigis suggested the website emtrails.org to find a map that shows trailheads and where to park. Trail head signs are coming out this year with QR codes with links to maps or donations. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote and the article was adopted.

ARTICLE 10: Shall the Town raise the sum of **\$9,700** for the Montpelier Senior Activity Center for operating expenses during fiscal year 2027? Motion: To Adopt Article 10. Made: Miriam Hanson Second: Allison Underhill. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote and the article was adopted.

ARTICLE 11: Shall the Town raise the sum of **\$8,000** for Twin Valley Seniors, Inc. for operating expenses during fiscal year 2027? To Adopt Article 11. Made: Ginny Callan. Second: Bill Merrylees. Jennifer Zollner noted that Senior Centers support health for seniors. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote and the article was adopted.

ARTICLE 12: Shall the Town raise the sum of **\$6,500** for Central Vermont Home Health & Hospice for operating expenses during fiscal year 2027? Motion: To adopt Article 12. Made: Kim Watson. Second: Ellen Knoedler. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote and the article was adopted.

ARTICLE 13: Shall the Town raise the sum of **\$7,834** for the support of Rural Community Transportation, Inc. (RCT) to provide services to residents of the Town of East Montpelier, This appropriation funds a portion of the total cost of the service, which will also be supported by appropriations from other towns, State and Federal funds, and rider fares? Motion: To adopt Article 13. Made: Flor Diaz-Smith Second: Edie Miller. Ms. Miller asked for clarification of the difference between Article 13 and Article 14. Mr. Bennett noted that RCT and GMT team up to provide Route 2 bus service. Mr. Etnier provided clarification for Articles 13, 14 and 15. Douglas Kievit-Keylar noted that bicycles can be ridden to Towne Hill taken on the bus, ride to St. Johnsbury and back within the same day. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote and the article was adopted.

ARTICLE 14: Shall the Town raise the sum of **\$1,499** as its Green Mountain Transit portion of the fiscal year 2027 share of the annual ongoing cost of providing the commuter bus service along Route 2 with service into East Montpelier? This appropriation funds a portion of the total cost of the service, which will also be supported by appropriations from other towns, State and Federal funds, and rider fares. Motion to Adopt Article 14. Made: Rubin Bennett. Second: Nona Estrin. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote and the article was adopted.

ARTICLE 15: Shall the Town raise the amounts listed below as recommended by the Town's Funding Request Study Committee for the following organizations for fiscal year 2027?

Capstone Community Action	500
Central Vermont Adult Education	750
Central Vermont Council on Aging	1,875
Central Vermont Disaster Animal Response Team (CVDART)	200
Central Vermont Economic Development	450
Central Vermont Habitat for Humanity	500
Central Vermont Memorial Civic Center	1,000
Community Connections	2,500
Community Harvest of Central Vermont	750
Downstreet Housing & Community Development	150
Elevate Youth Services	500
Family Center of Washington County	500
Friends of the Winooski River	300
Good Beginnings of Central Vermont	400
Good Samaritan Haven	3,500
Green Mountain Transit (GMT)	1,500
Green Up Vermont	150
Homeshare Vermont	800
North Branch Nature Center	1,000
Onion River Food Shelf	1,000
OUR House of Central Vermont	400
People's Health & Wellness Clinic	1,000
Prevent Child Abuse Vermont	600
T W Wood Gallery	750
Vermont Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired	150
Vermont Center for Independent Living	400
Vermont Family Network	200
Washington County Diversion Program	350
Youth First Mentoring	1,000

TOTAL

\$23,175

Motion: To adopt Article 15. **Made:** Colin McCaffrey. **Second:** Alex Brown. Ginny Callan amended the Motion to decrease the \$450 amount for Central Vermont Economic Development since that is supported elsewhere as dues for a total of **\$22,725**. **Made:** Ginny Callan. **Second:** Paul Erlbaum. Ginny thanked the committee members. The Central Vermont Economic Development corporation applied to the fund inadvertently. They receive funding through municipal fees. **The amendment passed unanimously by voice vote and the article was adopted.** She also clarified the GMT funding request. Carol Dickson asked if there were new funding requests or any taken off. Ms. Callan responded that there were a few groups that did not reapply. She noted that some find the application too complicated and the group will work on changing the application. Nona Estrin praised the support of Community Harvest of Vermont. Mr. Hess spoke on behalf of that organization's board of directors. **Motion as Amended:** Shall the article as amended to \$22,725 be adopted. **The motion passed unanimously by voice vote and the article was adopted.**

ARTICLE 16: To transact any other business that may properly come before the meeting.

The moderator noted that other business needs to be relevant and must be non-binding.

- Tom Fisher, town representative for CVFiber, gave an update. The State has applied for and won a grant for \$93,000,000 to assist in the buildout of broadband. The last few years have been spent doing permitting, make ready and clean up. CVFiber

combined with the Northeast Kingdom Broadband in 2024, consisting of 72 different towns. East Montpelier is at the top of the list. There is a four-year buildout plan for service to all member towns. He reports that East Montpelier is at the top of the list. You can register online for service. They are also beginning an affordable drop program. They will be hiring new people in all areas and creating a workforce development program as well.

- Rebecca Shrader noted that the 2026 Town Plan has been submitted to the Selectboard. The next hearing will be held on April 6. Written comments can be sent prior to that. The public is encouraged to participate.
- Steve Kappel noted that we did not vote on Article 4. The moderator went back to Article 4 and asked for a vote.
- Andy Christiansen brought up a Resolution relating to the 250th Anniversary of the Constitution. Kim Watson asked if it was relevant to the business of the town. The Moderator responded in the affirmative. Mr. Christiansen noted that the resolution asks us to support bills in state legislature and congress that restrain ICE, and asking local and state government to protect us from federal encroachment. Ann Stanton read some of the relevant sections of the resolution. Miriam Hanson stated that the world is watching us and we should support this resolution. Renée Kievit-Kylar encouraged us to use more inclusive language and not be incendiary. Ed Deegan asked the moderator if he ruled that it was relevant and suggested that we stay optimistic. Marlene McCarty encouraged the community to band together. David Stratton encouraged the community to do more than ever before, since we are starting a war. Rubin Bennett noted that silence is complicity and he cannot be complicit therefore he will not be silent. **Motion to Amend:** To delete the fourth paragraph, making the language in the resolution less harsh. **Made:** Susan McKenney. **Second:** Steve Thompson. Mr. Christiansen opposed the amendment because the language and inflammatory words were used by historians when referencing the reign of King George over the colonies and the fascism of Hitler's leadership of Nazi Germany. In further support, Mr. Christiansen referenced President Trump's actions thus far and suggested that these actions could eliminate local and state government as we know it before the next General Election. **Motion** To make a "friendly" amendment to keep paragraph four. **Made:** Charles Wanzer suggested keeping paragraph four, amending it slightly to read, "killings" instead of "gangland style executions". **Second:** Ms. Callan. Susan McKenney agreed this would be a "friendly" amendment. Ellen Knoedler, Rick Barstow, Deb Glottman, and Mr. Deegan all spoke in support of keeping the word "Gestapo" in the resolution. Renée Kievit-Keyler again encouraged inclusivity in the discussion by using softer language. Mr. Deegan spoke in favor of the current language. **The amendment to the amendment failed under voice vote.**

The Moderator brought our attention back to the amendment striking paragraph 4. The question was called and **the amendment failed under voice vote.** The Resolution will not be amended. **Shall the resolution be adopted.** Charles Johnson asked what would make the Resolution binding. The moderator responded that an act of the state legislature would be required. Carol Johnson stated her pleasure in taking up this resolution during Town Meeting as global citizens. Mr. Etnier suggested that since this resolution is non-binding, everyone who supports it should personally send this resolution to the parties named. Allison Underhill supported the Resolution and suggested that softening the language would not change the minds of Trump supporters. Colin Blackwell asked for clarification regarding the non-binding status. Julia Barstow asked if the Resolutions brought forward last year were sent. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Resolutions were sent. Susan McKenney commended the Microphone Runners. Miriam Hensen noted that people in France saw last year's Resolution. She noted that a ripple creates a wave, then a tsunami. **The motion passed unanimously by voice vote and the resolution was adopted.**

- Nathan Phillips introduced the North Montpelier revitalization efforts and encouraged participation and input from townspeople. There will be a barbecue and fundraising on July 4th in the village. Celina Barton encouraged participation in the grant work.
- Mr. Erlbaum thanked Flor Diaz-Smith for her recent letter to the editor.

- Tom Barton, a senior at Brown university, asked for participation in his Capstone project survey.
- Members of the Emergency Preparedness Committee were introduced. Town Administrator Jen Devine encouraged participation in a survey regarding neighborhood groups.
- Paul Cate thanked everyone who came to Town Meeting.

Motion to adjourn. Made: Mr. Hess. Second. Mr. Cate. The meeting adjourned at 12:01 PM.

Dated at East Montpelier, this ___ day of _____, 2026.

Selectboard Member

Selectboard Member

Selectboard Member

Selectboard Member

Selectboard Member

Moderator

Attest: Rosie Laquerre, Town Clerk: _____

DRAFT

**Resolution Relating to the 250th Anniversary of the United States
and Protection of the Constitution**

WHEREAS, 2026 is the 250th anniversary of our country's Declaration of Independence from a tyrannical king which led to the Bill of Rights, enshrined in the Constitution in 1791; and

WHEREAS, the President of the United States has repeatedly violated his Oath of Office by attacking the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Separation of Powers, the Emoluments Clause (which prevents corruption), the War Powers Act, and International Treaties; and

WHEREAS, Members of Congress have violated their oaths of office by allowing the President to ignore Constitutional checks and balances, and the Republican-installed Supreme Court has granted unprecedented power and immunity to the President while using the Shadow Docket, without reason or explanation, to allow President Trump to eliminate agencies and programs established by Congress; and

WHEREAS, the President has established ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) and CBP (Customs and Border Patrol) as his own Gestapo with illegal, race-based kidnappings, deportations, and gangland-style executions of American citizens; and

WHEREAS, National Security Presidential Memorandum 7, known as "NSPM-7" signed on September 25, 2025, defines "domestic terrorist" as nearly everyone who disagrees with the President; and

WHEREAS, the present administration has worked to accelerate climate change, attacked science and medical research, and cut USAID, which is projected to kill millions of people; and

WHEREAS, the President has illegally withheld Congressionally allocated federal funds from Vermont as well as other Blue States, thus putting financial pressure on our local and state governments and endangering public safety, environmental protection, transportation, and assistance to those in need;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, we ask that our Governor and state and local officials refuse to provide any personal information about Vermont citizens, (such as SNAP recipients and voter rolls) to the federal government; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that our federal representatives in Congress vote to abolish ICE, restrict CBP to our borders, end dragnet arrest operations based on race, end military deployment to our cities, and prohibit the construction of new detention centers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we support bills in the Vermont Senate Judiciary Committee and the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions which would keep ICE out of schools, health facilities and libraries and guarantee legal counsel for people facing deportation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that on behalf of the people of East Montpelier this resolution be sent to our Congressional Delegation; to the Vermont Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House, and to our State Representative and State Senators.