

Marlow voters approve money to plan for town's future

- By Matt Nanci Sentinel Staff
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MARLOW — Voters at Saturday's annual town meeting approved a budget and took the first step to what could lead to the revitalization of Marlow.

Voters at John D. Perkins, Sr. Elementary School agreed to raise \$8,000 to allow Marlow to participate in Plan NH. The effort will yield a community design for the town that will also provide incentives for economic development while staying consistent with Marlow's rural character.

Plan NH is an organization of architects, land planners, legislators, bankers, Realtors, engineers, and construction companies that have come together to assist towns in their development, according to Victor Reno, Marlow resident and a member of Plan NH's board of directors. Plan NH is based in Portsmouth.

Marlow Board of Selectmen Chairman Robert Allen said the board met with the Monadnock Economic Development Corporation — the Keene-based not-for-profit development investment firm — and it recommended the town participate in Plan NH.

Allen said the board would like to chart a direction for the town, but the plan needs to be thought out and include input from experts.

To provide more information on what Plan NH does, Reno, who is also in charge of the fellowship and scholarship program for Plan NH, spoke to the 25 or so attendees at Saturday's meeting.

Plan NH offers a charrette, which involves a multi-day process where Plan NH members will meet with community members including residents and town officials, Reno said.

“We thought that this might give us all an opportunity to talk about the best way to move forward,” Allen said.

Then Plan NH will put together a plan for the town based on the feedback it receives, according to Reno.

The rest of Saturday's three-and-a-half hour meeting went smoothly, with voters quickly passing each article unchanged.

Voters approved an operating budget of \$629,461, which is down \$5,209, or 0.8 percent, from the \$634,670 operating budget voters approved at last year's town meeting.

Another article voters passed Saturday authorizes the Marlow tax collector to give a two percent discount to residents who pay their property taxes in full within 10 business days after they're issued.

Attendees also voted to change the way the town selects its welfare officer from being elected to appointed. The article will take effect starting at next year's town elections.

Allen said the position should be appointed because some welfare cases can last years and people's information will remain more confidential if they must deal with only one person instead of potentially multiple people across election cycles.

Voters approved raising \$7,000 to pay a firm to conduct groundwater monitoring, data submission, an annual report and technical support for the town's former landfill in 2015.

In addition, voters passed an article to raise \$13,000 to cover the cost of the town's cyclical revaluation of property.

Marlow voters also backed an article that will authorize the town's trustees of trust funds to pay for professional banking or brokerage assistance for the town's capital reserve funds.

Voters passed every article pertaining to raising money to place in various funds, with \$5,000 for the government building capital reserve fund; \$15,000 to the heavy highway equipment capital reserve fund; \$25,000 for the road improvement expendable trust fund; \$25,000 for the fire truck capital reserve fund; \$1,000 for the fire equipment replacement expendable trust fund; \$5,000 for the police cruiser capital reserve fund; and \$2,500 for the ambulance and paramedic expendable trust fund.

Voters passed two other articles Saturday that will appropriate \$10,000 to the fire uniform and protective equipment expendable trust fund and appropriate \$2,500 to the transfer station expendable trust fund. The money for those articles will come from the unassigned fund balance.

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