



NEWSLETTER

June 2022 *Edition #4*

WARRANT ARTICLE EDITION

Editorial Opinion:

This month is a very important one for the Town of Brownfield. It is when all residents get the opportunity to vote – for town leadership, and for warrants that will determine where the town will be headed in the next year.

DID YOU KNOW?

Last year, only 267 votes were cast on Election Day. Only 98 votes were cast during Open Town Meeting. That means that the direction of our town could be decided by 50 people. Are you OK with that? We are not.

Many people look admiringly at towns that have an annual town meeting where the residents get to

decide everything of importance for the direction of the town and its governance. It is a slightly romanticized version of what a true democracy should be. That is only true if the citizenry shows up to VOTE – and does their own due diligence regarding who is on the ballot and what is in the warrants. It is the responsibility of every one of us to do so.

Don't vote for someone because they are your friend, or you like their name, or their picture, or their sign. Learn about who the candidates are, and what their knowledge, skills, and abilities are related to how they intend to serve the Town of Brownfield. Our town deserves the best. Let's elect the best people for the job, and let's vote for warrants that are good for the Town of Brownfield, not just for those that may benefit us personally.

PLEASE SHOW UP!!!

Articles to be considered and voted on at Town Meeting. Please note that these are very brief descriptions and some notes of interest. The full text of all articles can be found in the Town Warrant book available at the Town Office.

Articles 02 and 04 – Lists proposed salaries for town employees.

Article 08 includes a cost of living adjustment of 5% for all of these salaried town employees.

Articles 05 and 07 – Includes long-overdue increases to salaries for the Transfer Station and Public Works employees. This is important to offer living wages that will help the Town of Brownfield to remain competitive with other towns offering higher salaries to similarly skilled workers.

Article 06 – Proposes an additional seasonal employee be hired for the Transfer Station.

Articles 08 through 25 - Address all Town costs for Administrative expenses, Town services for all Boards and Departments, and for maintenance and/or upgrading of Facilities, including road improvements and safety gear.

Article 26 – Asks whether the Town should purchase the 1.5 acre lot behind the existing fire station for \$65K to be used as the site of a future Public Safety Building. Of note: The Town does not own the Fire Station nor the property where the Fire Station is located.

Dates to Remember

June 6th- 6:00PM @ Library
Gravestone Preservation
Part 1

June 7th- 6:00PM @
Pine Hill Cemetery
Gravestone Preservation
Part 2

***June 14 - 8 AM-8 PM:**
Election of Officers
& Referendum Voting

***June 15- 7 PM BCC**
Open Town Meeting

TOWN WARRANT ARTICLES CONT:

Article 27 – Should the Town appropriate \$125K to hire an assessing firm to conduct a market-based adjustment? The purpose of property assessments is to distribute the burden of taxes according to the value of each lot. This article would fund the review and updating of all property assessments in Brownfield to ensure equality of taxation among owners. Property valuations have not been reviewed in 20 years, leading to inequities among taxes assessed.

Articles 28 through 45 – Town support for in-town and out-of-town organizations.

Article 46 – Appropriate \$16K to match a grant for a generator at the Town Garage.

Article 47 - Appropriate \$57,616 to make financing payments for new fire engine.

Article 48 – Appropriate \$360K for paving of roads and bridges.

Article 49 – Appropriate \$140K for gravel to maintain gravel roads.

Article 50 – Appropriate \$30K to be divided into 3 Capital Improvement Accounts.

Article 51 – Appropriate \$12K to create, facilitate and expedite a Zoning Ordinance. Of note: In all four town surveys conducted over the last four years, the majority of respondents responded “yes” to zoning in Brownfield.

Article 52 – Appropriate \$180K for an excavator with a mower/mulcher and trailer.

Article 53 – Should the Town charge 7% interest annually on unpaid taxes.

Article 54 – Should the Town pay 3% interest on abated taxes.

Article 55 – Annual Town Meeting Tuesday, June 13, 2023 and Wednesday, June 14, 2023.

Article 56 – Increase levy limit established by State law in the event that municipal budget results in a tax commitment greater than this property tax levy limit.

Article 57 and 58 – Appropriate \$2500 for Friends of Brownfield Recreation and \$2500 for Brownfield Old Home Day.

Articles 59 and 60 – Authorize Selectmen to accept and expend any grants and/or donations, and authorize Selectmen to sell and dispose of property acquired by tax process at public sale.

Article 61 – Transfer \$325K from surplus to offset the tax rate.

Article 62 – Amend Shoreland Zoning Ordinance so that permit applications include pre-construction photographs, and post-construction photographs 20 days after completion. Of note: Revised Shoreland Zoning Ordinance was presented at a Public Hearing on March 8th, 2022.

Article 63– Amend Land Use Ordinance re: campers, RV and travel trailers (see full description in warrant book). Of note: Land Use Ordinance was presented at Public Hearing on April 26, 2022.

Article 64 – Enact a *Short-Term Rental Ordinance* (see full text in warrant book and in full ordinance posted on the Town website)

Of note:

- 1)** Will require that all short term rentals (STRs) be licensed by the Town of Brownfield with an associated graduated licensing fee beginning at \$150 and based on the number of occupants;
- 2)** Owner contact information and emergency contact information must be provided;
- 3)** Proof of insurance must be provided as described in the ordinance;
- 4)** Occupancy limits and noise limits as addressed in the ordinance;
- 5)** Premises listed as “disorderly buildings” will not be permitted as STRs;
- 6)** STR must be code compliant (see full text of ordinance), and must have a building evacuation plan posted;
- 7)** No large gatherings (as further defined in full text of the ordinance);
- 8)** No serving of food by owner without an eating establishment license;
- 9)** Must submit evidence of adequate sanitary waste disposal.

THIS ORDINANCE WILL NOT PROHIBIT SHORT-TERM RENTALS.



Mountain Division Rail Trail

The Mountain Division Rail Use Advisory Council has submitted their recommendation for the future use of the Mountain Division Rail Line to the Commissioner of the Department of Transportation for the State of Maine. The Council's decision is to recommend the conversion of the rail bed to a paved trail for non-motorized use – pedestrians and bicycles.

The exception to this use will be for snowmobiles during the winter months when there is a sufficient amount of snowfall to cover the

track for safe use. If there is a future need to re-establish rail use on this line, that will be planned for as needed. Thus, the official designation (if the recommendation is accepted) will be "Trail Until Rail."

For the full report, please see: https://www.maine.gov/mdot/ofps/docs/mdrcc/Mountain%20Rail%20Use%20Advisory%20Council%20Summary%20and%20Recommendations%20Final%205.26.22.pdf?fbclid=IwAR09oDGt-8MtwZSI59nLXppSNCV217drZ-KO8_rdEW8S1SSkAJFEn-rQKw5u0

MSAD #72 School Board Budget

The Annual Budget Meeting for the MSAD #72 School District (of which Brownfield is a part) was held on Wednesday, May 25, 2022 at the Molly Ockett School in Fryeburg. The FY2023 budget of \$21,729,644 was voted on and passed unanimously. The Town of Brownfield had five residents who attended and voted on the budget. The Brownfield contribution was reduced by 4.01% (\$78,909) from last year's budget contribution. The detailed budget is available online at the District website: www.msad72.org

WHERE HAVE ALL THE TREES GONE?

Many Brownfield residents are wondering what is going on with all of the tree removal on Main Street. What was once a beautiful stand of mature trees now looks like a wasteland. This first photo is of a 39-acre parcel owned by Dana Forcier. It is bordered by Main St., Pig St. and Ryefield

Road. Mr. Forcier presented a proposal to the Planning Board at the April 5th meeting to subdivide the parcel into seven lots. Four of the parcels would be two-acre lots intended for single-family residences. Three of the parcels are intended for approximately seven townhomes and retail/commercial space. The remaining acreage (approximately 14 acres) is intended to be set aside as a park with a small performance stage. You can learn more about this project by either attending the public Planning Board meetings or by reviewing the Planning Board minutes – all of which are posted on the Town's website.



The second photo shows the Brownfield Community Center with a field of dirt where the trees used to be. The trees were removed because of concerns about the roots encroaching on the building's foundation and asphalt surfaces. They were also at a height where they threatened the buildings nearby and power lines. The town had wanted to cut them for well over a decade and it was at far less cost to take them all. Once cut, Heart & Hand removed the stumps at no cost to the town. The plan is to replant the area with a garden and new trees.



FRYEBURG MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

The annual Memorial Day parade was held in Fryeburg on May 30th, and the Town of Brownfield was represented by attendees as well as Dick Perreault, the Town's Fire Chief.



Library Genealogy Classes

The free Genealogy workshops offered at the Brownfield Library have been very successful, with Jess Davis providing a wealth of information and interesting resources for many hours of interesting

exploration. Thanks to our librarian, Judi Tordo, for obtaining the grant for this free offering. The grant also provided the new screen and projector used during the workshop.

Several historians of neighboring towns (Hiram and Denmark) attended the workshops and offered information on each of their town's historical efforts. A welcome sharing of ideas!

There are two remaining workshops in the series:

June 6th – 6:00 p.m.

Gravestone Preservation Part 1 (at the library) – Learn about basic gravestone care as well as common symbolism, carvings and materials used on graves throughout American history.

June 7th – 6:00 p.m.

Gravestone Preservation Part 2 – Hands-on workshop at Pine Hill Cemetery. See examples of topics presented the day before.

It is not too late to sign up! Stop by the library or call (207) 935-3003.



The Brownfield Newsletter can be found at many locations including the Public Library, Heart and Hand, S Mart, Historical Society, Spice & Grain, Post Office, the Back Burner and of course Town Office

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