

1 **Special Selectboard/Town Informational Meeting**  
2 **Monday, August 30, 2021**

3 **Meeting Minutes**

4 **\*\*These minutes are subject to review and approval by the**  
5 **Selectboard at a future meeting.\*\***  
6

7 **NOTE: The meeting was held both remotely via video conferencing and with**  
8 **some in the Town Office Conference Room.**  
9

10 Members Present: Brian Carpenter, Heather Seeley, Dan Brown, Esther Thomas. Nick  
11 Artim, Lindsey Fuentes-George and Farhad Khan were absent.  
12

13 Staff Present: Town Manager Kathleen Ramsay and Town Clerk Ann Webster  
14

15 Also Present: Town Moderator Susan Shashok, Joanna Doria of the Ripton School  
16 Board, Howard Widelitz of the Middlebury Energy Committee, and residents Victoria  
17 DeWind, Michelle Brown and Richard Carpenter.  
18

19 **Call to Order**  
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21 Town Moderator Susan Shashok called the Special Town Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.  
22 and read the Warning, which stated this was an informational meeting on Articles 1 and  
23 2 that would be voted on by Australian ballot on Tuesday, August 31, 2021, and  
24 explained the meeting procedure for asking questions.  
25

26 Shashok introduced the Selectboard members that were present and asked if there  
27 were any objections to the two out-of-town residents (Kathleen Ramsay and Joanna  
28 Doria) participating, and there were no objections.  
29

30 **Article I**  
31

32 Shashok then read Article I asking if voters will approve the proposed financial plan for  
33 the withdrawal of the Town of Ripton from the Addison Central School District (ACSD)  
34 and invited Joanna Doria of the Ripton School Board to speak on the proposed financial  
35 agreement.  
36

37 Doria said this was a very straight forward financial agreement for the Ripton  
38 Elementary School to withdraw from the ACSD and it was adopted unanimously by both  
39 the newly formed Ripton School Board and the ACSD Board. She said it focuses on  
40 Ripton taking back the debt on their solar panels and being responsible for the lease  
41 agreements for the school equipment and any other expenses pertaining to Ripton  
42 school. She said the Town of Ripton will also buy back the school building and the land  
43 for \$1.  
44

45 There were no questions for Doria.

46

47

## Article II

48

49 Shashok read Article II asking if the Town of Middlebury should bond for an amount not  
50 to exceed \$323,000, subject to alternative funding sources, to purchase units in the  
51 Bristol Community Solar Project.

52

53 Chair of the Middlebury Energy Committee Howard WidELITZ provided background  
54 information on how the Energy Committee had been investigating ways to increase the  
55 net metering for the Town where Green Mountain Power would give the Town credit for  
56 any energy produced from a renewable source, and in this case it's the units in the  
57 ACORN solar project in Bristol.

58

59 WidELITZ said the Energy Committee had criteria they used to review projects, and when  
60 the ACORN project came along, it was decided that it was the best option, since it  
61 would provide the most energy to the Town. He said the Energy Committee made a  
62 recommendation to the Selectboard on July 13, 2021 to purchase 25% of the units in  
63 the Bristol project and this recommendation was approved on July 27th.

64

65 He said the average net savings to the Town of Middlebury would be \$7,222 per year  
66 for 25 years, and could potentially continue beyond the 25 years. WidELITZ said the  
67 Energy Committee had recommended purchasing 25% of the units, but ACORN has  
68 only agreed to hold 15 of the units for sale to Middlebury pending the outcome of the  
69 bond vote. WidELITZ said that the savings to the Town in electricity costs over 25 years  
70 will be approximately \$180,000 if 25% of the shares are purchased, and this is over and  
71 above the cost of the bond and interest payments.

72

73 Brown said he believed that there was only 15% of the shares left for Middlebury to  
74 purchase, and WidELITZ said that was what he understood as well, since a lot of people  
75 have bought into this project.

76

77 Resident Victoria DeWind asked if it was true that the savings from this project would  
78 cover the cost of the bond payments. WidELITZ said the Town of Middlebury will save  
79 \$23,000 on their electric bill, and the bond payment is \$21,479, so the savings will  
80 exceed the bond payment. DeWind asked about in future years as electric rates go up,  
81 and WidELITZ said then the savings would increase and the estimate is based on an  
82 average year.

83

84 Seeley said she wanted to thank ACORN for working with the Town and being willing to  
85 set aside the 15% of the project while they waited for the Town to hold the bond vote.

86

87 Ann Webster said that WidELITZ had stated the solar panels would probably continue to  
88 produce beyond the 25 years and the Town would need to decide at that time if we  
89 wanted to continue to take advantage of the savings. She said she wondered why we  
90 would not want to and also asked when the panels are no longer viable, what happens

91 with the dismantling. Widelitz said as a share holder in the project, the Town would  
92 need to look at the overhead costs compared to what the panels are producing at the  
93 end of 25 years and make a decision on whether to continue or not, and the cost to  
94 dismantle the project is included in the financial projections. Carpenter said he  
95 remembers ACORN said in their presentation that there is no guarantee of a lease  
96 beyond the 25 years and the partners in the project would need to make the decision at  
97 that time to continue.

98  
99 Widelitz said this is working towards the goal of the Energy Committee to reduce the  
100 Town's carbon footprint by 80% in 2030.

101  
102 Prior to adjournment, Webster gave a reminder of the Tuesday voting information.

103  
104 **Adjournment**

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106 The meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m. upon motion by Carpenter, seconded by Webster.

107  
108 Respectfully submitted,  
109 Beth Dow