

## **March 2020 Town Meeting Ballot Issues - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

### **Climate Action Initiative (Article 25 on Town Meeting Ballot)**

#### **What would be required of the Town?**

- By 2027 the Town would need to account for greenhouse gas emissions resulting from all Town activities on an annual basis. This includes direct GHG emissions like those from the operation of Town buildings or vehicles and infrastructure as well as indirect emissions like those resulting from purchased electricity and the extraction, production, and transportation of purchased materials. The Town will need to move away from the use of polluting fossil fuels and invest in renewable energy, energy efficient equipment, and, when necessary, emissions offsets to achieve carbon neutrality by 2027.

#### **What does “carbon neutrality” mean?**

- “Carbon neutrality” means annual zero net anthropogenic (human caused or influenced) CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by a certain date. By definition, carbon neutrality means every ton of anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> emitted is compensated with an equivalent amount of CO<sub>2</sub> removed (e.g. via carbon sequestration). For example, if a Town plow truck emitted X tons of CO<sub>2</sub> in a year, the Town would have to balance those emissions by taking X tons of CO<sub>2</sub> out of the atmosphere. This could be achieved by planting trees, investing in carbon free energy, or taking another action that lowers or avoids emissions by an equivalent amount. The Town could implement projects such as these or invest indirectly by purchasing carbon offsets.

#### **How will we achieve it, and how much will it cost the Town?**

- There are many, well understood actions that the Town can take to achieve carbon neutrality, like weatherizing its buildings and transitioning to low-emissions vehicles and equipment where feasible. In many cases, reducing energy demand (through conservation and efficiency measures) can lead to savings. There will be costs associated with making the transition to clean, efficient technologies as well. The solutions (technologies, etc.) available to the Town will likely improve in the coming years; i.e. more options can be expected and at a cost that makes them more economically feasible. Additionally, the Town plans to hire a consultant to advise it on the most cost-effective strategies for achieving the goal.
- The Town government saved \$46,000 on energy costs last year as a result of energy efficiency and solar, and these savings will grow as the Town does more to conserve energy and use cleaner, more efficient technologies.

**For additional questions, see presentation linked on Town website here: <https://www.hartford-vt.org/DocumentCenter/View/2828/Climate-Action-Warrant-Article-FAQs-long-version>**

## Municipal Pool Bond (Article 24 on Town Meeting Ballot)

### **What will the proceeds from the \$3,300,000 bond buy?**

- A replacement outdoor pool at the existing Sherman Manning Pool location on the Hartford High School campus. The new pool design will incorporate some of the design features requested through community wide surveys, such as:
  - Zero entry (beach front design) pool to an 8ft depth.
  - Spray features within zero depth area.
  - Separate spray pad with deck features.
  - Lap swim area for exercise, lesson and general recreation play.
  - Slide feature into pool.
  - Deck shade structures with pool deck furniture.
  - New entry structure for access controls. Includes two family changing rooms to accommodate need for bathrooms when field house returns to late summer school usage.
  - Grassy areas surrounding pool deck space.
  - Rehabilitated filtration room with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant access for staff and first aid.
  - Continued usage of field house during non-school operation.
  - Replaced perimeter fencing.

### **If approved, what are the ongoing annual operating costs for this pool?**

- An average of \$200,000/year in debt service costs for 20 years
- Program costs of approximately \$100,000 would be resumed (these ceased when the former pool closed in 2017).
- At the current tax rate, these annual costs will approximately equal to 2¢ on the tax rate, or about \$50/year for the owner of a \$250,000 property

### **If approved, when would it be built?**

- Bond proceeds would be available from the Vermont Bond Bank later this year. Construction would be coordinated with the School calendar and begin and be substantially completed in 2021, with a proposed opening in the Spring of 2022.

### **Who will be able to use the pool?**

- It will be open to all.

**For additional questions, see presentation linked on Town website here:** <https://www.hartford-vt.org/DocumentCenter/View/2369/Pool-Bond-Informational-Meeting-21320>

## Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Bond (Article 23 on Town Meeting Ballot)

### **What is Article 23 about?**

- This year's Town Meeting warning will contain a warrant item for \$2,666,600 for the next set of public infrastructure improvements in the White River Junction's TIF District.

### **What are the voters voting on?**

- The voters will be asked to approve the projects, and how the projects will be financed using new tax revenue generated by new private development in the TIF District.

### **What are the Projects?**

- The projects include engineering, design, permitting and construction of public sidewalk, road, streetscape, lighting, water, stormwater improvement, and related costs for two public parking lots on South Main Street, and a roadway section along 87 and 101 Maple Street.

### **Is there more I need to know?**

- Yes. The following link includes the official "Public Information Notice" and presentation which contain very important and detailed information about the proposed projects and financing.  
<https://www.hartford-vt.org/DocumentCenter/View/2830/TIF-2020-TIF-Project-Detailed-Public-Info-Notice-Update>