

October 26<sup>th</sup> 2024, Special Isle La Motte Town Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Town Moderator, Charlie Gurney at 10:01 AM.

In Attendance: Peter Brzozowy, Cary Sandvig, Joseph Deller, Vickie Buswell, Sylvia Jensen, Alexandria Montagne, Susan Larkin, Chistine Wilkins, Jim Wilkins, Via Zoom: Andrea Carbone, Carmine Centrella, and other attendees who did not sign the attendance sheet or use full names on Zoom.

### Summary

Discussion of Article I put forward for town vote on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024:

To begin the meeting Charles Gurney read a summary that Joe Deller put together explaining the article to establish a Reserve Fund to be called ILM Reserve Fund to be used improving & maintaining Town Offices in accordance with 24 V.S.A. 2804. A copy of the summary will be attached to the minutes. It was explained that these funds were part of the \$148,000. Isle La Motte received via the ARPA rescue fund. The town had voted at the March town meeting to spend \$50,000. to digitize town records. The remaining \$79,000 is the money to be called ILM Reserve Fund. The reason for this is that this ARPA money has to be use before December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024. This is a one-time Reserve Fund not to be refunded in the future.

Discussion of Article II put forward for town vote on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024:

Sylvia Jensen started off the discussion by reading a letter sent out on October 5<sup>th</sup> by the Isle La Motte Community Organization (ILMCO). A letter was sent to every Isle La Motte household. They are requesting the town put aside up to \$12,500 of 2024 Town surplus funds to build an outdoor pavilion at the Veterans Recreational Park. She said they may not need that entire amount as they can explore matching grant money and renting out the space. The "Music in the Park" as an example of the successful events held. It was suggested that soliciting donations would help to raise funds. The question was asked about their previous experience in receiving grants and the data used in applying. Also, it was explained that the Rec Dept. is part of the town as ILMCO is a separate entity. Meaning that renting the space out would need to be brought to the Selectboard for approval. Also, this would make the town responsible for upkeep, Insurance, electricity etc. It was noted that the Town has a history of helping ILMCO and the other way around also.

Other Business discussed:

It was brought to voters' attention that the town has approximately 500 voters and maybe around 200 vote in elections. The State of Vermont sent a ballot to all Vermont voters with a stamped return envelope to make it easy to vote. Also, with so many elections this year the town has spent a lot of money on postage. So, everyone should exercise their right to vote. Everyone was reminded that if a voter finds it difficult to get to the polls a Justice of the Peace will come to their home to collect their ballot and deliver to the polls.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 AM.

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Town Clerk

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Moderator

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Selectboard Member/Justice of the Peace

October 23, 2024

The Isle LaMotte Selectboard has put forth the following article for a town vote on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 :

Article 1: Shall the Town establish a Reserve Fund to be called the ILM 2024 Reserve Fund to be used for improving and maintaining Town Offices, as well as grant match, by depositing \$79,000 from the General Fund surplus in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 2804?

Why has the Selectboard introduced this article?

In 2021, the Town received approximately \$148,900.27 in ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds. The ARPA funds must be “obligated” before December 31, 2024 or be returned to the US Treasury.

As a reminder, there was a ballot article passed by the Town in March 2023 to use \$50,000 of the ARPA grant to start digitizing town records.

Additionally, an ARPA Committee was formed in 2023 to solicit input and make recommendations to the Selectboard for the use of the remainder of the ARPA grant. That committee recommended, based on the input they received, to spend some of the money on Computer Upgrades/Security.

By the summer of 2024, the Selectboard had not yet obligated the full amount of the ARPA grant. This was a common situation being faced by other Vermont towns. The Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) had a recommendation for towns that were not able to obligate their remaining ARPA funds before December 31, 2024. Under the ARPA Grant rules, towns are allowed to use the funds for town payroll expenses. Following the recommendation of VLCT, the Selectboard, at a Selectboard meeting on September 25, 2024, made a resolution to move the ARPA funds to the general fund to pay for town payroll expenses. This is fully documented in the meeting minutes and available on the Town website.

Based on a report from the Town Treasurer, there was approximately \$78,500 of the ARPA funds that were unspent/uncommitted at the time of the September 25<sup>th</sup> meeting. With the resolution of September 25<sup>th</sup>, the ARPA money has now been either fully obligated or spent. However, we will now have a budget surplus in 2024 of approximately \$78,500.

Typically, budget surpluses are used to reduce the taxes of the following year. There is typically an article in the town budget vote asking if a surplus should be used to reduce taxes in the coming year. However, since this surplus was the result of how the town allocated the ARPA funds and not a true surplus of taxpayer funds, the Selectboard recommends creating a Reserve Fund from this surplus to be used for improving and maintaining Town Offices and for grant matches.

The Selectboard looks forward to answering any questions related to this article in the Town Meeting on Saturday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024.