

RESULTS
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
Town of Sheffield
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Monday, October 23, 2023

The Special Town Meeting was held on October 23, 2023 at the Mount Everett Regional High School, 491 Berkshire School Road. Town Clerk Felecie Joyce called the meeting to order at 6:23 PM. There were 628 of the Town's 2,666 registered voters in attendance. Due to the high volume of voters in attendance, once the auditorium was filled, the gymnasium was used to accommodate the additional voters, which numbered approximately 200 people. Town Clerk Joyce is opening the meeting as elected Moderator Martin Mitsoff resigned July 12, 2023. The minutes were taken by Nicole Parker, the Administrative Assistant to the Town Clerk. James M. McGarry volunteered his services as Moderator for this meeting. Town Clerk Joyce made the motion to nominate him, it was seconded. *With a show of hands, the motion passed by majority.*

Selectboard Chair Robert C. Kilmer, Jr. cast one vote for James M. McGarry, it was seconded. Moderator McGarry accepted the nomination and Town Clerk Joyce swore him in. Town Clerk Joyce gave an overview of the voting process for the ballot question. Moderator McGarry lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance and then gave some overview for the discussion period. Voters would have three minutes to speak, must state their name and address and present their green voting right when it is their turn to speak. During this time, the Moderator insured that consideration was taken for the vote counts in both the auditorium and the gymnasium.

Article 1: (Of the Warrant)

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of sections sixteen to sixteen I, inclusive, of chapter seventy-one of the General Laws providing for the establishment of an eight town regional school district, together with the towns of Alford, Egremont, Great Barrington, Monterey, New Marlborough, Sheffield, and West Stockbridge, to be known as the Southern Berkshire Hills Regional School District (the "New District"). The New District would be formed and governed in accordance with the proposed agreement filed by the 8 Town Regional School District Planning Board with the Select Board (the "8 Town Regional Agreement") (a copy of which is available for inspection at town hall and on the website 8towns.org).

Formation of the New District is subject to voter approval in each of the eight towns who is a party to the 8 Town Regional Agreement. As provided in the 8 Town Regional Agreement, full operation of the New District and dissolution of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District (the "SBRSD") and the Berkshire Hills Regional School District (the "BHRSD") shall be further subject to:

- (i) voter approval, in accordance with applicable law and the terms of the 8 Town Regional Agreement, of the debt required to construct a new high school for the New District on the Great Barrington campus of the current BHRSD; and*
- (ii) enactment of special legislation permitting (a) the transfer of the buildings and other assets of each of the SBRSD and the BHRSD to the New District on the date the New District becomes fully operational (at the end of the transition period specified in the 8 Town Regional Agreement); and (b) the dissolution of the SBRSD and the BHRSD on that same date without further action by any public body.*

ARTICLE 1:

On a motion by Moderator McGarry to waive reading of the Warrant. It was seconded, passed by show of hands. Moderator McGarry then made a motion to waive reading the article as written. It was seconded, passed by a show of hands. Selectboard Chair Kilmer made a motion to move the motion as written in the warrant. It was seconded, passed by a show of hands.

Discussion proceeded. Voters spoke in support for either side.

On a motion by Robert C. Kilmer, Jr. to take the question by secret ballot and dissolve the meeting when the results are announced as a procedural matter. It was seconded. *Motion passed by a show of hands.*

Discussion continued for a short time.

On a motion by Neal Chamberlain to call the question. It was seconded. Moderator McGarry informed the voters that to move forward requires a 2/3rds majority. *The motion passed with an overwhelming majority.*

Town Clerk Joyce detailed how to correctly mark a ballot and how the voting would proceed. Voting began at 6:57 PM. At 7:09 PM, Town Clerk Joyce announced that two other voting lines would open in the auditorium, and that voters had a choice to vote and place ballot in a pile to be counted later, sacrificing privacy, or to wait in line to place their ballot in the voting machine themselves. This choice was then presented to the voters in the gymnasium. All voters had marked their ballots by 7:47 PM.

Town Clerk Joyce began to process the ballots that were to be placed in the voting machine by staff at this point. All ballots were processed by 9:07 PM and the polls closed at 9:09 PM. At 9:15 Town Clerk Joyce read the results of the voting and announced the ballot question failed with 503 No votes, 99 Yes votes, 7 Blank votes. 609 voters total.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Parker, Administrative Assistant to the Town Clerk