

**WARRANT
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING/MUNICIPAL ELECTION
AND NON-BINDING REFERENDUM QUESTIONS
HARPSWELL, MAINE
JUNE 10, 2003**

Cumberland, s.s.

State of Maine

To any Constable or Resident of the Town of Harpswell:

You are hereby required in the name of the State of Maine to notify and warn the inhabitants of the Town of Harpswell qualified to vote in Town affairs to assemble at (1) Merriconeag Grange, 529 Harpswell Neck Road, for voters who reside on Harpswell Neck; (2) Cundy's Harbor Community Building, 837 Cundy's Harbor Road, for voters who reside on Great Island; and (3) Bailey Island Library Hall, 2167 Harpswell Islands Road, for voters who reside on Orr's and Bailey Islands, on Tuesday the tenth day of June, 2003 at 8:45 o'clock in the forenoon of said day to act on Articles 1 through 6.

Art. 1 – To choose a Moderator to preside at each of the three polling sites.

(POLLS OPEN AT 9:00 A.M. AND CLOSE AT 8:00 P.M.)

Art. 2 – To choose by secret ballot one Selectman, who shall be an Assessor and Overseer of the Poor, for the remaining year of a vacant three-year term.

**Art. 3 – To vote by secret ballot on the following Non-Binding Referendum Question # 1:
Are you in favor of increasing the number of Selectmen from three to five?**

**Art. 4 – To vote by secret ballot on the following Non-Binding Referendum Question # 2:
Should the Board of Selectmen explore the possibility of a charter commission to change the form of town government?**

Note of explanation: A charter is a single document setting forth the plan of municipal government comparable, in certain respects, to federal and State constitutions. Typically, a charter specifies the form of government (e.g., town council-manager, town meeting-selectmen-manager, town meeting-selectmen); the distribution of legislative, executive and other powers; the delegation of various legal and administrative functions; and the procedures for making and implementing budgetary decisions. Municipalities are not required to have a charter. A change in the form of government can be made by the Town's legislative body (currently, town meeting) without the need for a charter. However, final legislative authority may not be vested in a town council or a body other than town meeting except by charter. Establishment of a charter commission is a prerequisite to adoption of a charter.

**Art. 5 – To vote by secret ballot on the following Non-Binding Referendum Question # 3:
Do you favor switching from one property tax payment per year to two property
tax payments per year?**

Note of explanation: Switching to two property tax payments per year would allow taxpayers to pay their property taxes in two semi-annual installments, rather than one. Currently, in order to meet its operating expenses, the Town borrows money each spring in anticipation of property tax payments due on or about October 15. The Town expends approximately \$23,000 per year in interest expense which could be avoided by this change. The Town estimates that the administrative cost of adding an additional property tax payment per year would be approximately \$3,500 per year.

**Art. 6 – To vote by secret ballot on the following Non-Binding Referendum Question # 4:
Do you favor switching from a January 1 to December 31 fiscal year to a July 1 to
June 30 fiscal year?**

Note of explanation: Moving to a July 1 to June 30 fiscal year would synchronize the municipal, M.S.A.D. # 75, County and State fiscal years so that (i) the municipal budget could be developed and evaluated at the same time that school and county budgets and State contributions are known; (ii) the municipal financial reporting deadlines would conform to those used by the state and federal governments, thus eliminating the need to adjust municipal reporting to different standards; (iii) the municipal budget would be adopted prior to the beginning of each fiscal year so that purchasing decisions and contractual arrangements could be made under more favorable conditions within a fiscal year; and (iv) the municipal budget would be adopted at a time when more is known about the coming year's assessed valuation, allowing for a more accurate forecast of the property tax rate at annual Town Meeting. To implement a change in the fiscal year, the Board of Selectmen would have to adopt either a one-time interim 6-month budget or a one-time 18-month budget, either of which would require a one-time accelerated property tax payment. If adopted, the date of the annual Town meeting might also be changed from March to June in order to take full advantage of additional budget, tax and financial information.

The Selectmen hereby give notice that the Registrar of Voters will be available at the Town Office during regular business hours for the entire week preceding said meeting to receive applications of persons claiming the right to vote at said meeting and to make corrections to the list of voters. Registrations will be accepted at the meeting.

Given under our hand this twenty-ninth day of May, A.D. 2003.

James W. Knight

Lee E. Theberge
Harpwell Board of Selectmen

