

The referendum to keep the Woodstock Town Hall open five days a week within our approved budget passed 309 to 173; approximately 9% of eligible voters participated in the referendum.

Subsequently the Board of Selectmen met and unanimously voted to keep the town hall open on Fridays from 7AM to 10AM. During these hours the only office that will be accessible will be the Selectmen's Office which will be staffed by our office manager and me. During the months of July and January only, the Tax Collector's office will be staffed by the Tax Collector and her assistant. Our two offices can only process work that falls within our statutory responsibilities.

Why will only these two offices be open? Several years ago a collective bargaining agreement was struck with Woodstock's non-elected town hall employees. According to the negotiated terms, the town cannot utilize elected officials and other third-parties to do work in place of our unionized employees. As a result, having our elected employees work alone on Fridays could subject Woodstock to litigation for state labor law violations.

A second option available to the Board of Selectmen was to offset Friday hours with cuts elsewhere. As we explored this option it became apparent that we would need to cut our Wednesday hours and make adjustments to the remaining days as well. The confusion that this could potentially create, coupled with the knowledge that town hall employees have made alternative arrangements to replace lost compensation, made this option unacceptable.

We will track foot traffic into the town hall to determine whether an increased budget is warranted for next fiscal year. In the interim, our town hall's professional, dedicated staff will be available to meet your needs.

Mike Alberts
First Selectman