

ANNUAL REPORT JULY 1, 2023-JUNE 30, 2024

RAYMOND VOTER INFORMATION PROJECT

P.O. Box 813; Raymond NH 03077

www.raymondvip.org

Board of Directors/President's Report:

This Annual Report will summarize the activities of the Raymond Voter Information Project (VIP) during the fiscal year 7/1/23-6/30/24. This is the 15th year of VIP's operation, thanks to the many volunteers who keep this well-established Project relevant in today's world.

Executive Board members were President: Kathy Pouliot 7/1/23 until mid-September; Susan Hilchey from mid-September until the Annual meeting. Vice President: Joyce Wood; Secretary: Dana Zulager; Treasurer: John Beauvilliers; Members-at-Large: Yvonne D'iorio and Susan Hilchey (between the new fiscal year and mid-September when Kathy Pouliot needed to resign due to new job responsibilities).

An Executive Board Meeting was held in person on 3/13/24 to review publication of the Voter Guide and address other business. Additional communication during this fiscal year was maintained via emails among Board members, and via a newsletter to the public.

The 15th edition of the Voter's Guide was published and distributed in February 2024. Again, this year, an Administrative Team was instrumental in updating Google docs for the many Warrant Articles, writing collaboration, and problem-solving. Sincere appreciation is sent to the many other volunteers who worked tirelessly to create the Guide. Also, thanks go to the 8 businesses and 2 in-kind donors whose sponsorship allowed us to publish and mail the Guide. Contact information for those companies is printed on VIP's home page found at www.raymondvip.org and a list is included here:

Universal Electric	ACE/Ben Franklin	Tuckaway/Vernet Properties
Jamb's Jewelry	John's Painting Service	Embrace Home Loans
I.C. Reed & Sons, Inc.	Madore Electric	

Additionally, the following agencies made in-kind donations of space at public events, meetings or other promotions:

Raymond Coalition for Youth Raymond Area Rotary Club

The 2024 Guide Administrative Team consisted of Kathy Pouliot, dana zulager, Deb Doda, and Susan Hilchey. The Editorial Team members were Debra Doda and Kirsten Rundquist Corbett. Dana Zulager served as the Bias Checker. Additional information about the 2024 publication is included later in this report.

2023-2024 VIP Board activities included:

- Hundreds of hours were needed to create the 2024 Voters Guide during the fall and winter. Seasoned Ed Com and Reporters were invaluable in completing the project. First-time Reporters were very effective in their efforts.
- Unfortunately, the Book Bash was canceled this year due to a snowstorm. Hopefully, this great program will resume next year.
- Since the current SAU Superintendent and Financial Director are quite familiar with the Voter Guide, a meeting was not held, but rather emails were sent to them, stating that VIP was getting ready to work on the School Warrant Articles and would once again, look for their expertise.
- As the Town of Raymond had some administrative transitions, several Town Managers were informed about the Voter Guide this year via in-person meetings. dana and Susan talked with Ernie Creveling, later met with Interim Town Manager Paul Branscome, and then with Ken Robichaud to present what the Voter Guide is, how information is gathered, and ways the team worked with previous Town officials. All seemed pleased to have the opportunity to broadcast information about the Town Warrant Articles and were willing to work with us in providing information and giving a “last look” at write-ups for accuracy.
- There were 8 business sponsorships, plus 2 in-kind contributions for the Voter Guide. We received a very generous donation from a local citizen. One additional business sponsor was added mid-year as the result of a fundraiser, and the company logo was added to the webpage.
- The Board marched in the July 4th parade. Support from the community cheered the group on, as always.
- The anticipated Fall speaker program presenting the Bean Tavern preservation project as one of “Seven to Save 2022” was postponed until more local interest in the project is evident.
- A great opportunity came about through Hannah Gullickson and the Raymond Coalition for Youth. The youth collaborated with Hannah and Art Wolinsky and with dana and Susan on the sidelines, to create 4 videos promoting the Voter Guide. These videos were broadcast on RCTV, and the public was informed about them through Facebook posts.
- In the spirit of NH Gives Day, Kathy Pouliot sent out an appeal via electronic Mailchimp newsletter to VIP members and supporters to donate directly to the VIP via our website using PayPal or sending checks to our mailing address. As noted above, this event brought in a new business sponsor.
- Alex Torpey, former Town Manager of Hanover NH, was contacted as part of RVIP’s outreach. Creating a podcast with several of the Administrative Team is anticipated in the early fall of 2024.
- A presentation about the Voter Guide was made to the Raymond Area Rotary Club by dana zulager. As a result of this presentation, another new business sponsorship was obtained.

- dana and Susan drafted items to be included in a VIP Toolkit which could be presented to citizens in another town wanting to create their own voter guide.
- Website hosting was renewed with WebFreeHosting.net, and the VIP domain name registration was maintained with MoxDog in order to identity and control flow of info.
- Email newsletters were sent periodically, to report VIP activities and opportunities to donate or volunteer.

Please remember that anyone who wishes to donate to Raymond VIP may mail their contribution to PO Box 813, Raymond NH 03077 OR use PayPal via www.raymondvip.org As VIP is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, donations may be tax deductible and receipts will be provided. For anonymous contributions and receipts, please contact Treasurer, Yvonne Diorio via the PO Box or emailing r.vip.guide@gmail.com

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Hilchey, R-VIP President

Financial/Treasurer's Report:

VIP's fiscal year began July 1, 2023, and ended June 30, 2024. The summary of finances for this fiscal year is presented below:

Beginning Balance:	\$968.99
Income:	\$3,205.67
Expenses:	\$2,800.88
Ending Balance:	\$1,373.77
In-Kind Hours (not reported)	
In-Kind Donations	0
990 N to State of NH	\$54.99
PO Box rental	\$82.00
MoxDog	\$60.00
Total Cost of Guide:	\$2,532.06
Printing (4,580 copies)	\$1074.66
Postage	\$969.40
Layout	\$488.00
Note: The Board opted not to renew NH Center for Nonprofits membership	
Annual Report Filed	

Information Submitted by

John Beauvilliers, Treasurer

Website Report:

During the 2024 local election cycle, the Raymond VIP analyses were posted on the website as they were approved by the Editorial Committee and forwarded by the Administrator. Election results were posted immediately after votes were counted on voting day. The website was edited and updated on an as needed basis throughout the year. Business supporters were also recognized with logos and links to their websites or other contact information.

Submitted by:

Kathy Pouliot

Editorial Committee Report:

The Administrative Team consisted of 4 individuals who were experienced in various parts of Voter Guide production. Those included Deb Doda who helped schedule the flow of Warrant Articles through the system and offered suggestions on wording for clarification and transparency; Susan Hilchey who helped assign Reporters; dana zulager who set up templates for Reporters, and Kathy Pouliot who contributed ideas throughout the process, completed final edits, worked with the Layout person, and posted info on the website. Additionally, the Administrative Team did factual checks on the write-ups and initial edits. The Editorial Committee consisted of Debra Doda and Kirsten Rundquist Corbett who checked grammar, punctuation, and clarity. The Bias Checker was dana zulager. Jane Paradis LaDuke helped immensely with final proofreading.

Google docs was the tool helping facilitate this process. That included setting up Google folders for Reporters, creating templates for each Warrant Article, and adding new info to the Excel spreadsheet to track the progress of each Warrant Article through the multi-step process of checks and balances based on the flowchart. Also, Google Docs was used to communicate with volunteers, obtain drafts, make edits, and finalize write-ups. For a few volunteers who weren't familiar with Google docs, regular email was used.

This year, there were 38 Town and School Warrant Articles, including 2 Citizen Petitions. As always, a cadre of dedicated volunteers researched Articles, drafted write-ups, and read those drafts for clarity. In total, there were 4 people on the Admin Team, 13 Reporters, many Readers, 2 Ed Comm members, and 1 Bias Checker.

In review, working with staff from the School District and Town Office was very positive for the Researchers/Reporters and for the Administrative Team. Staff members were accessible, responsive, prompt and helpful. Marjorie Whitmore & Terry Leatherman from the SAU, and Ken Robichaud and Julie Jenks from Town were all tremendous help and great resources.

Early on, the Board learned that Seacoast Media Group would no longer be publishing in NH, so the search began for a new publisher. Estimates were obtained from five publishers in NH, Maine, and

Massachusetts. Maine Trust, a nonprofit publisher of smaller local papers, was chosen due to the prompt response to many questions from VIP, Maine Trust's nonprofit status, and the fact that a former Seacoast Media Group employee, who helped with previous Voter Guide publications, worked there.

Again, Sharon Crockett Holt, Raymond resident, worked as an independent contractor on layout and was instrumental in getting the final draft to Maine Trust by their deadline. The 2024 issue of The Voter Guide was picked up in Maine by dana zulager in order to save shipping costs, and then John & Lillian Beauvillers and Susan Hilchey delivered Guides to the Raymond Post Office in February as planned. Extra copies were made available at the Ray-Fre Senior Center and at the Dudley Tucker Library.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Hilchey and Kathy Pouliot