

MARCH 12, 2024 ELECTION AND TOWN MEETING MINUTES

All Ballot Clerks and Election Workers were sworn in at 6:45 am and 12:45 pm accordingly. Election Officials Present were Town Moderator David Emanuel, Assistant Town Moderator Beth Dupell, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Deborah Bakie, Deputy Town Clerk/Deputy Tax Collector Jim Joseph, Assistant to the Town Clerk Lisa Dudek and Select Board Members Mike Houghton, Allison Knab and Joe Anderson. Supervisors of the Checklist present were Connie Aubin-Adams, Cathy Warner, and Melanie McGrail. A bright and sunny day welcomed in the 2024 Town Election with 1,209 official election day ballots cast, with 57 of those being absentee ballots. There were 9 new voters registered, making the total number of voters on the Checklist 5,836. Voter turnout for this election was 21%.

Exeter Region Cooperative School District Ballot results for Stratham only are as follows: **(*Denotes the Winner)**

Cooperative School Board, for Exeter for three years: *William “Bill” Gauthier 576; Peggy Massicotte 447. Cooperative School Board, for Newfields for three years: *Amy Ransom 569; Jacqueline “Jackie” Tassinari 403. Cooperative School Board, for Stratham for three years: *Tami Gunst 796. Exeter Cooperative School District Moderator for one year: *Katherine B. Miller 749. Cooperative School District Budget Committee, East Kingston for three years: *Jamie Saucier 244 (write-in). Cooperative School District Budget Committee, Exeter for three years: *Ben Adams 281 (write-in). Cooperative School District Budget Committee, Stratham for three years: *Rachel Jefferson 337 (write-in).

Warrant Article for Exeter Co-operative School District (Stratham Only results):

Article 1: ERCSD Operating Budget
Yes: 573 No: 403

Article 2: ERSCD Capital Reserve Fund
Yes: 716 No: 383

Article 3: CRF for Synthetic Turf Replacement
Yes: 685 No: 410

Article 4: Investment Management of Trust Funds
Yes: 882 No: 190

Article 5: Articles of Agreement of the Exeter Regional Coop
Yes: 715 No: 210

Stratham Memorial School District Ballot results as follows:
(*Denotes the Winner)

School Board Member for three years, vote for two: Jessica Kliskey 481; *Jennifer Scrafford 678; *Paul Tusini 555; Kathleen Peck 442 (write-in). School District Clerk for three year, vote for one: *Kathleen Peck 5 (write-in).

Annual Town of Stratham Ballot results as follows:
(*Denotes the Winner)

Town Moderator for three years, vote for one: *David F. Emanuel 1,015; Select Board for three years *Allison Knab 860. Supervisor of The Checklist for six years, vote for one: James Scamman 440; *Connie Aubin-Adams 686. Cemetery Trustee for three years, vote for one: *June Scamman 912. Trustee of the Trust Funds for three years: *Eileen Herrington 266 (write-in). Library Trustee for three years, vote for two: *Sarah Rosenthal 684; *Heather Harvey 717.

Article 2: Are you in favor of the following amendment to the Town of Stratham Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board?

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section II *Definitions*, Section III Table 3.6 *Table of Uses*, and *Footnotes to Table 3.6* to include new definitions and property uses that are not currently defined. This is a housekeeping amendment to better define terms, building uses and associated requirements.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 981 No: 131

Article 3: Are you in favor of the following amendment to the Town of Stratham Building Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board?

To amend the Building Ordinance, Article III *Permits* to clarify the circumstances in which the Building Inspector may require that a plan prepared and stamped by a licensed land surveyor or certified wetland scientist is required. This amendment provides the Building Inspector discretion to require a plan prepared and stamped by a certified professional where there is a reasonable basis to question if a building permit application meets the requirements of the Zoning and Building Ordinances and/or the State Building and Fire Codes.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 903 No: 208

Article 4: Are you in favor of the following amendment to the Town of Stratham Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board?

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section 3.8.8 *Gateway Commercial Business District*, Table 4 to establish minimum standards for sidewalks, driveways, and electric vehicle charging stations in the Gateway Commercial Business District. The purpose of this amendment is to add minimum standards for driveways and sidewalks to reduce conflict points between pedestrians and motorists and to add provisions for electric vehicle charging facilities.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 869 No: 217

Article 5: Are you in favor of the following amendment to the Town of Stratham Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board?

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section III *Footnotes to Table 3.6* to consolidate the number of criteria the Planning Board considers in Conditional Use Permit applications. The purpose of this amendment is to expedite reviews of Conditional Use Permit applications while maintaining the core permit review criteria.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 937 No: 132

Article 6: Are you in favor of the following amendment to the Town of Stratham Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board?

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section VIII *Residential Open Space Cluster Development* to amend the requirements associated with residential cluster developments. This amendment would establish minimum lot sizes for individual lots, require that open space parcels meet additional minimum requirements, and to require that historical resources be preserved and incorporated into cluster developments whenever practicable.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 948 No: 128

Article 7: Are you in favor of the following amendment to the Town of Stratham Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board?

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section V *Supplementary Regulations*, to create a new Sub-section 5.14 for *Small Accessory Structures*. The purpose of this amendment is to provide for reduced setbacks for small sheds or accessory structures under 120 square-feet in size provided that the structure meets a number of minimum criteria.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 918 No: 155

Article 8: Are you in favor of the following amendment to the Town of Stratham Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board?

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section IV *Dimensional Regulations*, Sub-section 4.1.4 *Maximum Residential Density* to clarify that non-buildable areas cannot be incorporated into maximum residential density calculations. This amendment would also reduce the maximum residential density in the Route 33 Heritage District from three units per acre to two units per acre.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 898 No: 164

Article 9: Are you in favor of the following amendment to the Town of Stratham Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board?

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section V *Supplementary Regulations*, Sub-section 5.13 *Solar Energy Systems* to allow small-scale ground-mount solar energy systems by right if the proposal meets a number of minimum criteria.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 905 No: 167

Article 10: Are you in favor of the following amendment to the Town of Stratham Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board?

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section V *Supplementary Regulations* to enact additional regulations, including screening requirements, on storage containers, semi-trailers, and associated structures.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 893 No: 177

The remaining Town of Stratham articles will be voted on March 16, 2024 at the Stratham Memorial School at 9:00 am.

Town Moderator David Emanuel declared the meeting to come to order at 9:20. Cub Scout Pack 185 presented colors with the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Emanuel introduced the panel: Dave Emanuel; Town Moderator, David Moore; Town Administrator, Michael Houghton; Select Board Chair, Allison Knab; Select Board Vice Chair and Joe Anderson; Select Board. Mr. Emanuel also invited other officials and department heads to introduce themselves, they included Assistant Moderator, Beth Dupell; Cordell Johnston, Town Counsel; Tim Stevens, Director of Public Works; Mark Connors, Town Planner; Kerry Cronin; Library Director, Christiane McAllister; Finance Administrator, Lieutenant David “Butch” Pierce; Stratham Police Department, Deborah Bakie; Town Clerk and Jim Joseph; Deputy Town Clerk. Supervisor of the Checklist Melanie McGrail, Connie Aubin-Adams and Cathy Warner were also in attendance. Mr. Emanuel asked for a moment of silence in respect for those serving in the Armed Forces, and for those lives lost in the last year. Mr. Emanuel then invited David Canada to read the Town Report dedication. This year the report was dedicated to Rebecca Mitchell. Paul Deschaine, then read the Memorial Page in memory of Joyce Rowe, former Town Clerk. Mr. Emanuel read the results from the Town Election held on Tuesday, March 12, 2024 and reviewed the Rules of Procedure for Town Meeting. A motion was made by Debra Altschiller to take the meeting out of order, bringing Article 15 to the front of the meeting. Pat Abrami seconded the motion. A vote was taken in favor of changing the order of business. The meeting then proceeded as follows:

ARTICLE 15: Shall votes be counted by paper and hand count only?

Shall the following provisions pertaining to elections be adopted? All voting shall be by paper ballot and all ballots shall be hand counted only, rather than by use of optical scanning or any other types of programmable electronic counting devices. This shall constitute a return to hand counting ballots and the immediate discontinuance of all electronic voting machines and electronic devices authorized for use by trial in RSA 656:40. Should this article be passed; it should be enacted by the Town of Stratham immediately.

Submitted by petition of 30 registered voters. Non-monetary.

Several registered voters both for and against the article presented their concerns before the question was moved and vote was taken by paper ballot. A request was made by 5 registered voters to move Article 15 to a vote by paper ballot, a secret ballot vote. The Moderator then explained the rules for paper ballot voting.

43 registered voters voted in favor of removing the ballot machines and 381 registered voter voted against removing the ballot machines.

Motion Fails.

Jeremy Riecks motioned to restrict reconsideration. Lucy Cushman seconded the motion. A vote was taken to restrict reconsideration. Motion passed to restrict reconsideration.

ARTICLE 11: 2024 Operating Budget

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Eight million four hundred eighty two thousand one hundred sixty dollars (\$8,482,160) for general municipal operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

Selectboard Chair Michael Houghton moved to accept the article as read. Selectboard Vice-Chair Allison Knab seconded the motion.

Motion Passes.

ARTICLE 12: Capital Improvements Program

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Six hundred seventy eight thousand dollars (\$678,000) to implement the Capital Improvements Program for 2024 as presented in the Town Report and recommended by the Planning Board. This is a special warrant article which will be non-lapsing until the specific items are completed or obtained but shall in no case be later than December 31, 2029 per NH RSA 32:7 (VI).

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

Selectboard Vice-Chair Allison Knab moved to accept the article as read. Selectboard member Joseph Anderson seconded the motion.

Motion Passes.

ARTICLE 13: Appropriate Funds to Capital Reserve Funds

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) to be added to the following capital reserve funds previously established with One hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) to come from the unassigned fund balance and one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to be raised through general taxation.

Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund	\$125,000
Highway Vehicle/Equipment Capital Reserve Fund	\$125,000
Total	\$250,000

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

Selectboard Member Joseph Anderson moved to accept the article as read. Selectboard Chair Michael Houghton seconded the motion.

Motion Passes.

ARTICLE 14: Raise and Appropriate from EMS Special Revenue Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty six thousand five hundred dollars (\$36,500) for the following purposes:

2024 EMS Supplies	\$16,500
2024 EMS/EMT/First Responder Training	\$10,000
2024 ALS Services Contract	\$10,000

and to further authorize the withdrawal of Thirty six thousand five hundred dollars (\$36,500) from the Stratham Fire Department EMS Special Revenue Fund created for these purposes during the March 17, 2000 Annual Town Meeting and as amended during the March 11, 2005 Town Meeting. No additional funds from general taxation are to be used.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

Selectboard Vice-Chair Allison Knab moved to accept the article as read. Selectboard Chair Michael Houghton seconded the motion.

Motion Passes.

ARTICLE 16: Other Business

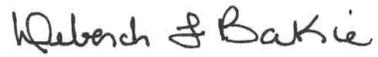
To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting.

Selectboard Chair Michael Houghton recognized the town employees in the room and the outstanding job that they do. Melissa Currier made a motion that the Body consider the avoidance of scheduling large community events during town meetings and town elections. Bill Dagiau seconded the motion. A vote was taken in affirmative.

Melissa Currier made a motion requested that the Selectboard recommend to the School Board to improve the recruitment of full and part time paraprofessionals. Ed Mathieson seconded the motion. Lucy Cushman questioned that the town and school are two different entities. The Moderator ensured that the town and school are indeed two separate entities and that the Board would only offer a recommendation to the School Board. A vote was taken in affirmative.

Seeing no other business was presented, Moderator Emanuel solicited a motion to adjourn Travis Thompson motioned to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Frank Swift. A vote was taken in affirmative. The town meeting was adjourned at 11:45 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deborah L. Bakie".

Deborah L. Bakie

Stratham Town Clerk