

2025

TOWN MEETING VOTER INFORMATION GUIDE

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VOTER INFORMATION GUIDE, February 2025

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Town of Stratham 10 Bunker Hill Ave. 603.772.7391 StrathamNH.gov



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Town Meeting

Voter Information Guide

This guide is presented to the residents of Stratham as a resource in preparing for the 2025 Town Meeting. The Town Meeting Warrant contains the articles to be voted on during Town meeting. This guide is intended to provide introductory information to the articles and explain their essence as well as inform residents where more information can be found.

The Town of Stratham operates under the “Traditional Town Meeting” form of government, the default form of government prescribed by law in New Hampshire Government. In this form, the legislative body is the Town Meeting and the governing body is the Select Board. The Town Meeting meets each year. In Stratham, the Town Meeting, at which the legislative body acts in two sessions. The first session is an election (this year on Tuesday, March 11th) and at a second session (this year, Saturday, March 15th). In the Town Meeting form, the residents – Stratham’s registered voters – are the legislators.

This year, Articles 1-9 (election of officers and zoning articles) are to be acted upon at the Town election (first session). Articles 10-24 are to be acted upon at the second session.



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Important Dates

Tuesday, March 4, Stratham School District Meeting¹
6:00 p.m., Stratham Memorial School

Thursday, March 6, Voter Information Night Hosted by the Wiggin Memorial Library
6:30 p.m., Stratham Town Offices (Joan M. Sewall Room – 10 Bunker Hill Avenue)

Tuesday, March 11, Town and School Districts Elections, Ballot Voting
Polls open: 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., Stratham Memorial School (39 Gifford Farm Road)

Saturday, March 15, Town Meeting
9:00 a.m., Stratham Memorial School (39 Gifford Farm Road)

Town Meeting, Voting & Election Information

Town Clerk/Tax Collector's website
<https://www.strathamnh.gov/certified-town-clerk-tax-collector>
(603) 772-7741 ext. 140

Summary of Additional Resources Listed in this Guide

You can find the following documents and information pertaining to Town Meeting at the Town's [2025 Town Meeting page](#) (see black tab at top of Town's homepage).

- This 2025 Voter Information Guide;
- Link to Voter Information Night and Candidate Information;
- Video link to a narrative explanation of zoning-related articles (2-9);
- Video link to explanation of business session warrant articles (10-24);
- 2024 Town Report;
- Town Warrant and NH DRA Form MS-636; and
- 2025 Town of Stratham line-item budget detail.

For more information about Warrant Articles pertaining to zoning, please consult this guide, the Town Report, or contact the Planning Department by calling (603) 772-7391 ext. 147.

¹ The Local Stratham School District is its own political subdivision and, like the Town, also operates under the Town Meeting form of government.



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2025 Town Warrant Articles 1 through 9

These articles are to be voted on at the Town Election to be held on Tuesday, March 11th from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., at the Stratham Memorial School (39 Gifford Farm Road).

ARTICLE 1: To choose all Town Officers for the year ensuing.

- One (1) Select Board Member – three (3) year term
- One (1) Trustee of the Trust Funds – three (3) year term
- One (1) Cemetery Trustee – three (3) year term
- One (1) Library Trustee – one (1) year term
- Two (2) Library Trustees – three (3) year term

The following Elected Positions will appear on the Local School District ballot and the Exeter Region Cooperative School District (ERCSD) ballots.

Stratham School District ballot:

- One (1) Stratham School District Moderator – three (3) year term
- One (1) Stratham School District Board Members – three (3) year term
- One (1) Stratham School District Treasurer – three (3) year term

Exeter Region Cooperative School District ballot:

- One (1) Board Member seat from Brentwood – three (3) year term
- One (1) Board Member seat from Kensington – three (3) year term
- One (1) ERCSD Moderator – three (3) year term
- ERCSD Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) Member seats open
 - One (1) BAC Member seat from Newfields – three (3) year term
 - One (1) BAC Member seat from Exeter – three (3) year term
 - One (1) BAC Member seat from Stratham – three (3) year term

More information: See the Town Clerk's office for links to sample ballots, the Town Meeting 2025 webpage for a link to the information night details and candidate information, and attend the March 6th Voter Information Night.



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ARTICLE 2: Definitions & Table of Uses

To amend Section IV, Table 4.2 *Table of Dimensional Requirements* to clarify where in the Ordinance to find the dimensional requirements for the Flexible Mixed Use and Route 33 Heritage Districts and to amend Section 4.3(i) *Explanatory Notes* to require that newly subdivided parcels demonstrate that the area currently required in this section is to exclude non-buildable areas including property line setbacks and wetland buffer areas.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Article 2 has two purposes. It is a housekeeping amendment to direct readers to the sections of the Ordinance for the Flexible Mixed-Use District and the Route 33 Heritage District to find the dimensional requirements for projects in those districts as the information does not fit neatly into Table 4.2. This article also amends a footnote to the table to ensure that newly subdivided parcels will not be irregularly shaped by demonstrating that a buildable area exists that excludes property line setbacks and wetland buffer areas.

ARTICLE 3: Zoning Ordinance Amendment

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section VIII *Residential Open Space Cluster Development*, Sub-sections 8.9 *Dimensional Requirements & Setbacks* and 8.10 *Minimum Open Space Requirements* by adding and clarifying definitions; by limiting wetland areas to no more than 20% of a residential lot in new open space cluster subdivisions; and to increase the amount of wetlands that the open space parcel can contain from 20% to 30%.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Article 3 adds definitions for yield plans and conventional subdivisions and clarifies that the definition of non-buildable area in new Residential Open Space Cluster Developments includes wetlands buffers. Article 3 also limits the total wetland area allowed for a residential lot in a new cluster subdivision while increasing the maximum amount of wetlands that the Open Space Parcel can contain by a small percentage. The purpose of this is to encourage environmentally sound planning by providing more usable land on residential lots while also balancing the need for a practical open space experience.



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ARTICLE 4: Accessory Dwelling Units

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section V, 5.4 *Accessory Dwelling Units*, to limit accessory dwelling units to no more than two bedrooms; to amend the 50-foot front property boundary setback to read that detached accessory dwelling units shall not be sited in the front yard; and to include a maximum height of 1.5 stories for detached accessory dwelling units.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

The purpose of Article 4 is to enhance the intent that an ADU is accessory to a primary home and to ensure that ADUs do not detract from the character of the neighborhood in which they are proposed.

ARTICLE 5:

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section VII *Signs* to define and prohibit 'feather flag' style signs; to permit signs identifying major residential developments; to create size, height, and type limitations for temporary signs; to reduce the maximum period for temporary signs in a calendar year to from 120 days to 60 days for an individual property; to cap the maximum number of temporary signs displayed on an individual property in a calendar year to from six signs to three signs; and to make sandwich board signs subject to a temporary sign permit

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

The purpose of Article 5 is to limit visual clutter from temporary signs in town and to prevent road hazards such as lightweight signs being blown into roadways.



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ARTICLE 6:

To rezone the following parcels located in both the Professional/Residential District and the Residential/Agricultural District, to fully fall under the Residential/Agricultural District:

- 11 Bunker Hill Avenue, Tax Map 13, Lot 91
- 5 Trisha's Way, Tax Map 13, Lot 93
- 7 Trisha's Way, Tax Map 13, lot 94
- 9 Trisha's Way, Tax Map 13, Lot 95
- 13 Trisha's Way, Tax Map 13, Lot 96
- 15 Trisha's Way, Tax Map 13, Lot 97
- 17 Trisha's Way, Tax Map 13, Lot 98

To rezone the following parcels located in both the Professional/Residential District and the Residential/Agricultural District, to fully fall under the Professional/Residential District:

- 7 Bunker Hill Avenue, Tax Map 13, Lot 90
- 10 Bunker Hill Avenue, Tax Map 13, Lot 129
- 102R Portsmouth Avenue, Tax Map 13, Lot 85
- 108 Portsmouth Avenue, Tax Map 13, Lot 83
- 118 Portsmouth Avenue, Tax Map 13, Lot 69
- 1 Millbrook Drive, Tax Map 13, Lot 70
- 10 Millbrook Drive, Tax Map 13, Lot 78
- 12 Millbrook Drive, Tax Map 13, Lot 77

To rezone the following parcels within the Residential/Agricultural District, to fully fall under the Professional/Residential District:

- 3 Millbrook Drive, Tax Map 13, Lot 71
- 5 Millbrook Drive, Tax Map 13, Lot 72
- 7 Millbrook Drive, Tax Map 13, Lot 73
- 14 Millbrook Drive, Tax Map 13, Lot 76
- 16 Millbrook Drive, Tax Map 13, Lot 75

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

The purpose of Article 6 is to correct certain parcels that are currently zoned in two separate districts. The boundary of the Professional/Residential District was originally created as a measured distance from Portsmouth Avenue which caused some parcels to be split-zoned; meaning a single parcel is required to follow different zoning requirements for different portions of the same parcel. The article also changes the zoning of five undeveloped lots on Millbrook Drive to match the zoning district of the existing office park that they are a part of.



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ARTICLE 7:

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section III *Establishment of Districts and Uses*, to establish a new section 3.11 *Professional Residential District*, the purpose of which is to establish architectural and site design standards for projects that require site plan review located within the existing Professional/Residential District

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Article 7 creates a new section that establishes architectural and site design standards for projects in the Professional/Residential District (PRE). This District is located along Route 108/Portsmouth Avenue between the traffic circle and the Police Station. The purpose of the standards is to promote the District as a mixed-use environment that is consistent with a residential aesthetic character and provide for a visual transition between the commercially-oriented Gateway Commercial Business District and the Residential and Town Center Districts all of which abut this District. Architectural standards are proposed for siding, windows, underground electrical utilities, among other features, and prohibits franchise or corporate style architecture. Site Design standards include a maximum gross building footprint size of 10,000 square feet per structure, preservation of the view from Portsmouth Avenue of historic buildings, and parking area and building layout requirements.

ARTICLE 8:

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section XI Wetlands Conservation District Overlay, by deleting Section XI in its entirety and replacing it with a new ordinance, the purpose of which would be to:

- (1) use the NH Department of Environmental Services definition of wetlands;
- (2) change the 50-foot setback from poorly-drained soils and the 100-foot setback from very poorly-drained soils to a single 75-foot setback from all wetlands which is inclusive of the existing 25-foot no-disturbance buffer;
- (3) clarify what uses are permitted and what uses are prohibited; and
- (4) allow proposed uses in the 75-foot setback and outside of the 25-foot no-disturbance buffer to be reviewed by the Planning Board through a conditional use permit application where currently a variance from the Zoning Board of Adjustment is required.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Article 8 updates the Wetlands Conservation Overlay District to align with recommendations from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services with respect to the definition of wetlands, building setbacks to wetlands, and permitted and prohibited uses. The current ordinance is outdated with references to poorly drained and very poorly drained soils from a 1987 Army Corps of Engineers wetland delineation manual that is no longer used at the federal and state levels.



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ARTICLE 9:

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section IV *Dimensional Requirements* Paragraph 4.1.4 to clarify that the maximum residential density in the Gateway Commercial Business, Town Center, Flexible Mixed Use, Professional/Residential, Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage, and Special Commercial Districts applies only to properties that are developed or will be developed as mixed-use (residential and commercial) properties and to amend Paragraph 4.1.5 to extend the limitation of one primary dwelling per parcel to the Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage District and to specify that only one duplex is permitted per parcel in the Residential/Agricultural, Manufactured Housing, and Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage Districts, unless permitted as part of a condominium or mobile home park.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Article 9 is largely a housekeeping amendment to clarify that the maximum residential density specified in Section IV of the Ordinance applies to mixed-use properties. The existing language refers to "commercially zoned" properties and in 2024 an amendment was passed that added a definition for "mixed use development" which is a combination of residential and commercial land uses on the same site or building. The article also clarifies that only one primary dwelling or one duplex is allowed per parcel in the Residential/Agricultural, Manufactured Housing, and Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage Districts, unless permitted as part of a condominium or mobile home park.

For more information about zoning-related articles: See the Town Report or contact the Planning Department by calling (603) 772-7391 ext. 147 or e-mailing planning@strathamnh.gov.



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2025 Town Warrant Articles 10 through 24

As noted in the introduction, the following articles will be voted upon at the second session of the Stratham Town Meeting to be held on Saturday March 15th at 9:00 a.m. at the Stratham Memorial School (39 Gifford Farm Road).

ARTICLE 10: 2025 Operating Budget

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of eight million six hundred ninety-three thousand one hundred eighty-five dollars (\$8,693,185) 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.

The Town's operating budget includes all of the expenses and revenues associated with running the Town government on an annual basis. It includes the required level of investment to meet the needs and service-level expectations of our residents and business owners and addresses other factors that influence the budgeting process. These factors include the strategies and goals in the Master Plan, contractual and debt obligations, federal and state mandates, and other operational needs.

The 2025 proposed operating budget recommended by the Select Board totals \$8,693,185, which is an increase of approximately \$211,000 or 2.49% over 2024.

The operating budget is combined with other budgetary appropriations (Article 11 - \$727,000 in Capital Improvement Funds and Article 12 - \$386,000 in Capital Reserve Funds).

Together with revenues and credits the total amount to be raised from taxation is \$5,417,549 or 1.76% increase over last year).

This results in an estimated tax rate of \$2.11, which is a \$0.03 increase over the 2024 rate.



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ARTICLE 11: Capital Improvements Program

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of seven hundred twenty-seven thousand dollars (\$727,000) to implement the Capital Improvements Program for 2025 as presented in the Town Report. 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, 2030 per NH RSA 32:7 (VI).

The Select Board supports this article by a vote of two to one.

The Town's Master Plan guides development and land use decisions for the Town. In addition, it identifies strategies, visions, and projects which often require long range capital investment. Long-term financial planning ensures the Town has the needed resources to maintain current services, replace equipment, and upgrade or rehabilitate facilities as needed. The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is the tool used to plan these investments, and this Article appropriates funding for the "year one" projects (2025).

The 2025-2030 Capital Improvement Plan document located at the Town Meeting 2025 website includes information about the Town's current and future capital needs to support its rolling stock, buildings, recreational facilities, and information technology over a six-year time horizon.

A summary of the projects is included in the Town Report.

ARTICLE 12: Appropriate Funds to Capital Reserve Funds

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of three hundred and eighty-six thousand dollars (\$386,000) 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 two hundred thirty-six thousand dollars (\$236,000) to be raised through general taxation.

Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund	\$150,000
Highway Vehicle/Equipment Capital Reserve Fund	\$136,000
Town Building & Grounds Maintenance Trust	\$100,000
Total	\$386,000

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.



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The Town has a number of financial tools used to plan for large purchases. These tools represent a “best practice” in municipal finance. If funded appropriately, these tools can ensure the Town can fund large purchases for capital items when they are needed and avoid “spikes” in a tax rate in any given year.

For example, the Town projects future costs for replacing ambulances and fire trucks as well as heavy equipment and trucks in the Public Works department. These projections are based on replacement schedules informed by life cycle expectations and condition of the assets. Annual funding is set aside through this article in order to meet the needs of future replacements. Generally, money is set aside each year even if expenditures are not required in that year. These funds are also used to establish repositories to be used to respond to opportunities for conservation and historic preservation projects.

The Town’s 2004 John Deere diesel loader is scheduled for replacement in 2025; a \$70,000 grant from the State of NH has been secured for this replacement to help offset the purchase price. No determination has been finalized on the schedule for replacement.

No purchases are planned in the Fire Department for 2025. The next engine is scheduled for 2028. The 2025 allocation to the Fire Department CRF has been increased by \$25,000 to account for increased costs and to ensure the funds preparedness for the 2028 purchase.



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ARTICLE 13: Modify Purpose of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Special Revenue Fund

To see if the Town will vote to modify the purpose established at the annual Town Meeting under Article 13 of the 2005 Town Warrant, an amended version of Article 19 of the 2000 Town Warrant, for the Stratham Fire Department EMS Special Revenue Fund to also include ambulance billing contract costs; EMS responder uniforms; and all costs to operate ambulances, including repair, maintenance, fuel costs, and any required inspection/certification fees. Upon passage of this article, the Article will be amended as indicated to read as follows:

To see if the Town will vote to adopt the provisions of NH RSA 31:95-c to restrict one hundred percent (100%) of the revenues derived from the recovery of Fire Department costs associated with emergency services provided to expenditures for the purpose of purchasing emergency medical equipment and supplies, Fire Department Vehicles and equipment, providing training to Fire Department personnel, ambulance billing contract costs, EMS responder uniforms, and all cost to operate ambulances, including repair, maintenance, fuel, certifications and inspections. Such revenues and expenditures shall be accounted for in a special revenue fund, to be known as the Stratham Fire Department EMS Fund, separate from the General Fund. Any surplus in said fund shall not be deemed part of the General Fund accumulated surplus and shall be expended only after a vote by the legislative body to appropriate a specific amount from said fund for a specific purpose related to the purpose of the fund or source of revenue.

(Two thirds vote required for approval. Ballot vote required.)

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

RSA 31:95-c authorizes towns to create non-lapsing funds into which they will place the revenue from fee-generating activities. These funds are not exempt from the budget appropriation process. Special revenue funds, while exempt from lapse, cannot be spent without an appropriation. They can only be spent after a town meeting vote and only for a purpose connected with the activity generating the fees.

The EMS Special Revenue Fund has traditionally been used for equipment and vehicle purchases. This year, in order to make greater use of available funding in this Special Revenue Fund and lessen the burden the overall tax effort from general taxation, this Fund is proposed to be revised to include additional operating expenses as eligible. Without this change, more funding would need to come from taxpayers.



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The new eligible uses include purchasing emergency medical equipment and supplies, Fire Department Vehicles and equipment, providing training to Fire Department personnel, ambulance billing contract costs, EMS responder uniforms, and all cost to operate ambulances, including repair, maintenance, fuel, certifications and inspections.

This fund has always been used to fund 100% of Ambulance replacements as well as equipment replacement in the Fire department. This strategy for using this fund will still enable the Town to fully fund ambulances and equipment from this account in the future.

ARTICLE 14: EMS Special Revenue Fund Ambulance Operating Expenses (new)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of forty-three thousand five hundred dollars (\$43,500) for the following purposes with said funds to come from the Stratham Fire Department EMS Special Revenue Fund. These appropriations are contingent on the passing of Article 13:

Ambulance billing contracts	\$10,000
Ambulance equipment maintenance	\$ 9,000
Ambulance repair and maintenance	\$15,000
EMS uniforms	\$ 5,000
Gas and oil	\$ 4,500
Total	\$43,500

No additional funds from general taxation are to be used.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

This article funds the additional appropriations eligible under the new expanded purpose. Without Town Meeting approval these costs would need to be borne by the general fund. This strategy aligns costs for providing the services with revenues available as a result of providing them. If Article 13 does not pass, this article will be moot.



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ARTICLE 15: First Responder Supplies, Training & ALS Services

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of forty-six thousand five hundred dollars (\$46,500) for the following purposes with said funds to come from the Stratham Fire Department EMS Special Revenue Fund.

2025 New Equipment	\$15,000
2025 EMS Supplies	\$16,500
2025 EMS/EMT/First Responder Training	\$10,000
2025 ALS Services contract	\$5,000
Total	\$46,500

No additional funds from general taxation are to be used.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

ARTICLE 16: EMS Special Revenue Fund – SVFD Equipment

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of seventy two thousand dollars (\$72,000) for the following purposes, with said funds to come from the EMS Special Revenue Fund:

Self-Contained Breath Apparatus Compressor	\$47,000
Lucas Autopulse Device	\$25,000
Total	\$72,000

No additional funds from general taxation are to be used.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

This Article provides funding for needed equipment in the Fire Department including equipment for outfitting our newest ambulance (Lucas Autopulse Device) and equipment for the station that is critical to ensuring the availability of oxygen for responders.



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ARTICLE 17: Veterans Credit Adjustment

To see if the Town will vote to modify the Veteran's Tax Credit in accordance with RSA 72:28, II from its current tax credit of \$600 per year to \$750 per year, where \$750 is the maximum permitted in state law.

Submitted by petition.

This item was submitted by petition. The State of NH allows municipalities to grant credits up to \$750. The Town last set this credit level at \$600. The proposal is to increase that by \$150. The Town has about 330 Veterans who receive this credit. This would result in \$50,000 in added credits.

ARTICLE 18: Modification to Elderly Exemptions RSA 72:39-a

To see if the Town will vote to modify the provisions of RSA 72:39-a for elderly exemptions from property tax in the Town of Stratham, based on assessed value, for qualified taxpayers, to be as follows:

for a person 65 years of age up to 75 years, \$213,000
for a person 75 years of age up to 80 years, \$247,000 and
for a person 80 years of age or older \$281,000

To qualify, the person: must have been a New Hampshire resident for at least three (3) consecutive years, own the real estate individually or jointly, or if the real estate is owned by such person's spouse, they must have been married to each other for at least 5 consecutive years. In addition, the taxpayer must have a net income of not more than \$56,500 or, if married, a combined net income of less than \$75,000; and own net assets not in excess of \$275,000 excluding the value of the person's residence.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

The Town Meeting last adjusted the Elderly Credits in 2019 before the last revaluation. The Select Board is recommending the Town Meeting restore the value of these exemptions to their 2019 value and to make other adjustments in income and eligibility in order to ensure those who are intended to benefit from these exemptions are able to.



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The exemptions in the article above have all been increased 25 percent in reflection of the inflation since 2019.

The income levels for eligibility have also been adjusted by 25% (increased).

The article also increases the net asset level in order to be eligible and reduces the difference between income levels for single and married households.

ARTICLE 19: Adoption of Disabled Exemptions RSA 72:37-b

Shall the town adopt the provisions of RSA 72:37-b, Exemption for the Disabled from property tax, based on assessed value for qualified taxpayers to be \$150,000. To qualify the person must have been a New Hampshire resident for at least 5 years, own the real estate individually or jointly, or if the real estate is owned by such person's spouse, they must have been married for at least 5 consecutive years. In addition, the taxpayer must have a net income of not more than \$56,500 or if married, a combined net income of not more than \$75,000, and own net assets not in excess of \$275,000 excluding the value of the person's residence. Adoption of this article shall include adoption of RSA 72:37-b, I-a, providing that after his or her 65th birthday, a person who would otherwise be eligible for the disabled exemption shall remain eligible for an exemption in the amount of the disabled exemption or the elderly exemption, whichever is greater.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

The Town has not previously offered this exemption, which must first be adopted by a Town Meeting. This article also provides that, if residents are eligible for this exemption and the elderly exemption, they would be eligible only for the exemption which is of greater value.

The income and asset limits are set to match the elderly exemption.



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ARTICLE 20: Modify amount of Blind Exemption

Shall the town increase the value of the blind exemption in Stratham to \$150,000 from the State minimum of \$15,000?

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

Each Town in New Hampshire is required to offer the blind exemption but they are able to adjust the amount of the exemption. For administrative ease, this article recommends the exemption level be set to match the disabled exemption. There are no income or asset limitations as part of this exemption.

ARTICLE 21: Adopt Deaf Exemption RSA 72:38-b

To see if the Town will adopt the provisions of RSA 72:38-b for an exemption for the deaf or severely hearing-impaired persons as follows: the exemption from assessed value for qualified taxpayers shall be \$150,000. To qualify, the person must: meet the definition of a "deaf person or person with severe hearing impairment" under RSA 72:38-b (II); must be a resident of the State of New Hampshire for at least five (5) consecutive years prior to April 1 in which the exemption is sought; must occupy the property as his/her principal place of abode; must own the property (as defined in RSA 72:27(VI) individually or jointly, or if owned by a spouse, they must have been married for at least (5) consecutive years; had in the calendar year preceding April 1 a net income of all sources of not more than \$56,500 if single and \$75,000 if married; and own net assets not in excess of \$275,000, excluding the value of the person's residence as described in RSA 72:38-b(III).

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

The Select Board unanimously supports this article.

This exemption is for the severely hearing-impaired persons as determined by a licensed audiologist after an assessment. The value of this exemption is set to match the recommended levels in previous articles for blind and disabled. The income and asset limits match those recommended for the elderly exemption.



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ARTICLE 22: Adoption of Stratham Recreation Expendable Trust

To see if the Town will vote to establish a Stratham Recreation Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 31:19-a,IV to hold in trust gifts, legacies and devises made to the Town for the purpose of both specific and generally designated recreation purposes; and to further name the Select Board as agent to expend. The Select Board shall approve expenditures based on the intent of the donor when specified with receipt of the gift.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

Accounting standards and guidance from our auditors have discouraged the commingling of donations related to recreation programming with the Town's Recreation Revolving Fund, which collects fees for programming and funds recreation programs. Through the establishment of this fund, the Town will have a repository for donations for specific recreation purposes or general donations from fundraising activities of volunteers groups. This tool prevents commingling with Town funds for other purposes.

ARTICLE 23: Stevens Park Improvements

To see if the Town of Stratham will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of (\$625,000) for the purpose of constructing improvements to Stevens Park, such improvements to include parking, drainage, and additional recreation facilities. Improvements may be phased in accordance with funding availability. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance (\$625,000). No additional funding is to be raised from taxation. This is a special warrant article per RSA 32:3 VI (d) and RSA 32:7 V.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

This article appropriates \$625,000 for the purpose of implementing improvements at Stevens Park at 70 Bunker Hill Avenue. This premier recreation facility on land donated by the Stevens family has been a beloved community resource for over 20 years.

Three key improvements are sought to be made to the facility overall:

1. Expanded parking lot to meet demands of peak visitation. The existing parking spaces limit the programming options at the facility.



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2. Construction of a pavilion for shade and bathrooms. Similar to the Scamman Pavilion in Stratham Hill Park, this facility would greatly increase programming opportunities, add much more use for events that require shelter, public restrooms and picnic tables.
3. Expansion of the court space; with additional hard court surfacing. Additional sports can be accommodated beyond the existing two tennis courts.

This project is planned to be bid in the spring. Project components above, may need to be phased depending on project pricing following bids.

This project is proposed to be funded with fund balance. This one-time project is a good use of fund balance and would leave the Town with a projected fund balance at the end of next year of 7.82%. This is within recommended guidance from the State of New Hampshire for municipalities. There is no impact on the tax rate with this funding strategy.

ARTICLE 24: To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting.

This Article allows for other business that may be legally be acted upon by the Town meeting to be done so.