

2026

TOWN MEETING VOTER INFORMATION GUIDE

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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 2026 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.

Each section (where applicable) ends with where to find more information about each article.

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 10th) and a second session (this year, Saturday, March 14th). In the Town Meeting form, the residents – Stratham’s registered voters – are the legislators.

This year, Articles 1-8 (election of officers and zoning articles) are to be acted upon at the Town election (first session). Articles 9-18 are to be acted upon at the second session.

Important Dates

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

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

Thursday, March 5, 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 10, Town and School Districts Elections, Ballot Voting
Polls open: 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., Stratham Memorial School (39 Gifford Farm Road)

Saturday, March 14, 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/departments/clerk/voting_election_information/index.php
(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 [2026 Town Meeting page](#).

- This 2026 Voter Information Guide;
- Link to Voter Information Night and Candidate Information;
- 2025 Town Report (look for link on Select Board page under Town Meeting);
- Town Warrant and NH DRA Form MS-636;
- 2026 Town of Stratham Budget Summary and line item 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.

2026 Town Warrant Articles 1 through 8

These articles are to be voted on at the Town Election to be held on Tuesday, March 10th from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., at the Stratham Memorial School (39 Gifford Farm Road).

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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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
- One (1) Supervisor of the Checklist – six (6) year term
- One (1) Town Clerk – 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 2026 webpage for a link to the information night details and candidate information, and attend the March 5th Voter Information Night.

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STRATHAM PLANNING BOARD 2026 proposed Zoning Articles

On October 8, 2025, and October 15, 2025, the Planning Board conducted Public Meetings on Proposed Zoning Amendments for 2026. The Planning Board held Public Hearings on November 5, 2025, November 19, 2025, December 3, 2025, December 17, 2025, January 7, 2026, and January 21, 2026.

Seven zoning amendments are proposed by the Planning Board.

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

ARTICLE 2: Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage District

Amend Section III, *Establishment of Districts and Uses* to add Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage District; and substantially amend Section 3.10 *Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage District*, updating 4.1.5; 4.2 the *Table of Uses*; and 4.3 *Explanatory Notes*.

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 Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage District. This article also aims to clarify the expectations of the district by defining dimensional requirements for new developments.

ARTICLE 3: Define Lot Size Requirements for all Zoning Districts

Amend Section 4.2 *Table of Dimensional Requirements* and 4.3 *Explanatory Notes* for the removal of (a); add a footnote placed in the section header; define the lot size for all districts; and renumber the Section accordingly.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

The purpose of Article 3 is to update outdated information and clarify existing language regarding the requirements for creating new lots.

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ARTICLE 4: Solar Energy Requirements in the Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage District

Amend Section 5.13.3 *Use Regulations* for Solar Energy Systems and update *Table 1* to add Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage District solar uses.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

The purpose of Article 4 is a housekeeping amendment to direct readers to the sections of the Ordinance for the Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage District requirements for solar energy systems.

ARTICLE 5: Technical Review Committee

The creation of a Technical Review Committee for all Planning Board major site plan and subdivision applications.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

The purpose of Article 5 is to create a Technical Review Committee (TRC), an advisory committee comprising Town staff and representatives from various boards and committees. They review the major site plan and subdivision applications to assist the applicant and town staff in expediting the development review process, ensuring technical compliance with regulations, and fostering cross-departmental collaboration. These recommendations are then passed on to the Planning Board, ensuring all information is presented for the proposed development application.

ARTICLE 6: Reinforce Development Regulations for Residential Open Space Cluster Development

Substantially amend Section VIII, Residential Open Space Cluster Development, including the renumbering of sections; strengthening the requirements for design criteria and the yield plan; preserve rural character, protecting historical structures, protecting ecological resources, create greenway networks, increasing requirements for open space to amend lot sizes and setbacks; limiting density and remove array and multi-family housing.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

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The purpose of Article 6 is to reinforce development regulations for Residential Open Space Cluster Development that protect natural resources by encouraging homes to be clustered on smaller lots rather than dispersed across a parcel. This approach steers development away from environmentally sensitive areas and creates shared, protected open space for residents.

ARTICLE 7: Definitions

Amend Section II to update and add definitions for accessory dwelling unit; attached unit; detached unit; lot, corner; lot coverage, lot depth; non-buildable area; principal use; setback line; historic structure; and renumber the Section accordingly.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

The purpose of Article 7 is to maintain updated definitions for effective implementation of the zoning ordinance.

ARTICLE 8: Technical Corrections When Necessary

Amend Section XXI, Amendments, to add a new subsection 21.2, authorizing the Planning Board to assign and modify Section numbers and make other technical corrections to the zoning ordinance, provided that no substantive changes may be made.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

The purpose of Article 8 is to serve as a housekeeping clause that allows for the assignment and modification of section numbers and other technical corrections to the Zoning Ordinance. It ensures that no substantive changes to the Ordinance will result from these modifications.

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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 14th at 9:00 a.m.** at the Stratham Memorial School (39 Gifford Farm Road).

2026 Town Warrant Articles 9 through 18

ARTICLE 9: 2026 Operating Budget

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of nine million, thirty-two thousand, six hundred sixty-two dollars (\$9,032,662) 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 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 2026 proposed operating budget recommended by the Select Board totals \$9,032,662 which is an increase of approximately \$338,977 or 3.75% over 2025.
- The operating budget is combined with other budgetary appropriations (Article 10 - \$666,000 in Capital Improvement Funds and Article 11 - \$400,000 in Capital Reserve Funds).
- Together with revenues and credits the total amount to be raised from taxation is \$-5,688,822
- This results in an estimated tax rate of \$2.20 which is a \$0.05 (2.68%) increase over the current rate.

For more information: The Town's budget information is presented in a **2026 Town of Stratham Budget Summary** located at the [2026 Town Meeting page](#).

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ARTICLE 10: Capital Improvements Program

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of six hundred sixty-six thousand dollars (\$666,000) for the purpose of implementing the Capital Improvements Program for 2026 as presented in the Town Report. This is a special warrant article, per RSA 32:3 VI (d) and RSA 32:7 VI, which will be non-lapsing until the specific items are completed or obtained but shall in no case be later than December 31, 2031.

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 resources needed 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 (2026).

The 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan document located at the [Town Meeting 2026 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.

ARTICLE 11: Appropriate Funds to Capital Reserve Funds

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of four hundred thousand dollars (\$400,000) to be added to the following Capital Reserve Funds previously established with one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) to come from unassigned fund balance and two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) to be raised through general taxation.

\$150,000 Fire Department Capital Reserve
\$150,000 Highway Vehicle Capital Reserve
\$100,000 Town Buildings and Grounds Capital Reserve
\$400,000 TOTAL

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

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The Town has several 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 to meet the needs of future replacements. Generally, money is set aside each year even if expenditure is 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 following are scheduled capital replacements and purchases in 2026: The Town will replace a 2014 six-wheel International Terrastar plow truck with a new Dodge Ram 5500 One-Ton plow truck with an all-season body; The Town will also purchase a facilities maintenance truck to support maintenance of all Town properties.

The Fire Department will replace two defibrillators and replace expiring fire gear to ensure safety of personnel. The next fire engine is scheduled to be ordered not sooner than 2028. The 2026 allocation to the Fire Department CRF has been increased by \$25,000 to account for increased costs and to ensure the funds are available the future replacement of Engine 3.

ARTICLE 12: EMS Special Revenue Fund Ambulance Operating Expenses

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred eight thousand five hundred dollars (\$108,500) in accordance with Warrant Article 13/2025 for the purposes of supplies, training, billing contracts, ambulance vehicle equipment and ambulance repairs and upgrades, gas and oil, and uniforms with said funds to come from the Stratham Fire Department EMS Special Revenue Fund.

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 appropriation. They can only be spent after a town meeting vote and only for a purpose connected with the activity generating the fees.

EMS Special Revenue Fund Ambulance Operating Expense allows 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
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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 fund ambulances and equipment from this account in the future.

ARTICLE 13: Municipal Buildings Keyless Access Systems

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred seventy-five thousand dollars (\$175,000) for the purpose of purchasing and installing keyless access systems at the municipal center, fire department, police department and public works department. This amount to come from unassigned fund balance. This special warrant article will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until the project is completed or by December 31, 2031, whichever is sooner.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

This article funds the replacement of the Police Department and Fire Department Building Keyless Access Systems which are no longer meeting safety and security standards. To take advantage of economy of scale the article also includes the installation of keyless access at the Municipal Center, Library, and DPW facility.

ARTICLE 14: Maintenance and Improvements Fire Tower

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) for the purpose of maintaining and improving the fire tower located at Stratham Hill Park. This special warrant article will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until the maintenance and improvement work is completed or by December 31, 2031, whichever is sooner.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

In 2023 a Structural Assessment Report was prepared by HEB Engineers, Inc. (HEB) to address the condition of the fire tower located in Stratham Hill Park
Recommendations:

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- Replace all the anchor bolt nuts and anchor bolts as required.
- Repair concrete spall at east footing.
- Prepare steel framing with special emphasis on the gusset connections and apply a new protective coating.
- During recoating process take note of any loose bolts or members with visible section loss.
- Annually monitor first level gusset plate connections for cracking, damage to bolts, and noticeable changes in the deformation

ARTICLE 15: Distribution of Funds Received from the Sale of Cemetery Lots

To see if the Town will vote to establish a Cemetery Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund pursuant to RSA 31:19-a and RSA 289:2-a, to be funded by future proceeds received from the sale of cemetery lots in Stratham cemeteries, with the Trust principal and any interest gained thereon to be used for the maintenance of cemeteries; and, further to name the Trustees of the Trust Funds to manage these funds and name the Cemetery Trustees as agents to expend from this Trust Fund.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote

This article proposes establishing a Cemetery Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund to be funded by future proceeds received from the sale of cemetery lots in Stratham cemeteries. Principal and interest will be used for the maintenance of cemeteries, reducing tax burden of residents of the town.

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ARTICLE 16: Discontinue Right of Way

To see if the town will vote to completely discontinue the portion of the right-of-way formerly known as State Route 101 from its intersection with the center line of Blue Ridge Circle to the Greenland town line. The road was discontinued as a state highway in 1961 when Route 101 was relocated. Upon its discontinuance as a state highway, it reverted to the town as a Class V road under RSA 230:57. Although legally a Class V road, it has never been used as such, but is vacant land that abuts the north side of Route 33 (Portsmouth Avenue), and the town has no use for the land. This action will not affect Route 33 (Portsmouth Avenue) or the town's right-of-way associated with that road. Further, to authorize the Select Board to convey by quitclaim deed any rights in the property underlying the former Route 101 right-of-way to the abutting landowners.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

The purpose of this article is to convey ownership of vacant land between the current Route 33 Right of Way and abutting properties. The town has no use for the land, and this will not impact the right of way associated with Portsmouth Avenue. The Select Board will convey by quitclaim deed any rights in the property underlying the former Route 101 right-of-way to the abutting landowners.

ARTICLE 17: Modify Optional Veterans Tax Credit

To see if the Town will vote to modify the existing provisions of RSA 72:35, optional Tax Credit for Service-Connected Total Disability from property tax in the Town of Stratham to four thousand, seven hundred fifty dollars (\$4,750) to offset the Legislative change set forth in HB 99, adopted in 2025, that now prohibits combining veteran credits. This modification will allow these veterans to receive the same credit amount as previously, as the new \$4,750 credit amount would equal the sum of the previous combined credits.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

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The New Hampshire Legislature, via HB 99, recently made changes to RSA 72:35, the Optional Tax Credit for Service-Connected Total Disability, that prohibits veterans from being eligible for both the Optional Veteran's Tax Credit RSA 72:28 (\$750) and the Tax Credit for Service-Connected Total Disability RSA 72:35 (\$4,000). This means permanently and totally disabled veterans cannot claim both the Optional Veteran Tax Credit and the Tax Credit for Veterans with service-connected permanent and total disability. This restriction could result in a reduced benefit amount for permanently and totally disabled veterans of \$750 in some cases. This warrant article will allow these veterans to receive the same credit amount as previously, as the new \$4,750 credit amount would equal the sum of the previous combined credits.

ARTICLE 18: To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting.

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