

TOWN OF STRATHAM
TOWN MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 12, 2019

The ballot clerks and election workers were sworn in at 7:55 am and 1:55 pm. Present were pro tempore Moderator Beth Dupell, Election Worker Bruno Federico, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Joyce Charbonneau, Deputy Town Clerk/Deputy Tax Collector Deborah Bakie, Select Board Joe Lovejoy, Michael Houghton, and Allison Knab. Supervisors of the Checklist present were Connie Aubin-Adams, Natalie Perry, and Melanie McGrail. Ballot clerks for the day were: Vicki Marbacher, Diana Alsterberg, Susan Canada, Susan Brett, Dianna Thompson, Roger Thompson, Lois Graham, Cathy Warner, Vero Ludington, Liz Chisholm, Nancy Hunter, and Sara Lyn Doran.

It was a steady day with 994 official election day ballots cast, 33 photo copies ballots cast once the election day ballots had run out, and 41 absentee ballots cast, making the total ballots cast at 1068. There were 16 new voters registered on Election Day, making the total number of voters on the Checklist 6379. There was a 17% turnout for this election.

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

Cooperative School Board: For Brentwood for three years, vote for one: Melissa Litchfield 784*. For Exeter for three years, vote for one: Kimberly Meyer 798*. For Kensington for three years, vote for one: Robert Hall 791*. For Exeter Cooperative School District Moderator, for one year, vote for one: Katherine Miller 799*. Cooperative School District Budget Committee: For Exeter for three years, vote for one: (There was no candidate for this ballot, winner will be determined by the six Cooperative towns via write-in votes.) For Newfields for three years, vote for one: (There was no candidate for this ballot, winner will be determined by the six Cooperative towns via write-in votes.) For Stratham for three years, vote for one: Lucy Cushman 869*.

Stratham only results:

Article 1: Bond for CMS addition/renovations

Yes: 746* No: 274

*This bond passed. It needed a 60% vote to pass, and when all six towns were tallied, they received a 60.69% in yes votes. Addendum: There was a request for a recount on this Article, and a recount was held on 3/24/2019 at the Talbot Gym in Exeter, NH. The recount's tally resulted in a 60.67% in yes votes. Article 1 passed.

Article 2: ERCSD Operating Budget

Yes: 793* No: 228

Article 3: Capital Reserve Fund for Synthetic Turf Replacement

Yes: 764* No: 260

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

School Board Member for three years, vote for one: Cheryl Eveleigh 937*. School District Treasurer for three years, vote for one: Patricia Lovejoy 970*. School District Moderator for three years, vote for one: David F. Emanuel 997*.

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

Select Board for three years, vote for one: Joe Lovejoy 918*. Select Board for two years, vote for one: Allison Knab 914*. Cemetery Trustee for three years, vote for one: June Sawyer 922*. Trustee of the Trust Funds for three years, vote for one: Beverly Connolly 886*. Library Trustee for three years, vote for two: Steve Simons 772*. Michael Hunter 753*.

ARTICLE 2: – Are you in favor of adopting the following amendments to the Town of Stratham Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board?

To see if the Town will amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section IV, Subsection 4.3 Explanatory notes, to add Subsection 4.3 (i) to further clarify the permitting requirements and procedures related to lot frontage in subdivision applications.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.
Yes: 833* No: 163

ARTICLE 3: – Are you in favor of adopting the following amendments to the Town of Stratham Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board?

To see if the Town will amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section V, by amending Section V, Subsection 5.13.2 (a) *Conditions*, to clarify the total area permissible as a Home Occupation as provided by the Zoning Ordinance.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.
Yes: 811* No: 175

ARTICLE 4: – Are you in favor of adopting the following amendments to the Town of Stratham Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board?

To see if the Town will amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section V, by amending to Section V, Subsection 5.13.3(a) ii *Application for Special Exception & Home Occupation; Inspections*, to clarify the Home Occupation Permit application submission requirements as provided by the Zoning Ordinance.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 810* No: 178

ARTICLE 5: – Are you in favor of adopting the following amendments to the Town of Stratham Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board?

To see if the Town will amend Section V, by adding Subsection 5.14 *Solar Energy Systems* to establish and clarify the permitting process for solar energy systems.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 716* No: 290

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

To see if the Town will amend Section VII *Signs*, Subsection 7.6 *Prohibited Signs*, by amending Subsection 7.6.q to clarify rules pertaining to signage displayed on motor vehicles or rolling stock that are regularly and consistently used to conduct normal business activities.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 749* No: 237

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

To see if the Town will amend Section VII *Signs*, Subsection 7.9.a.vi *Home Occupation Signs*, by adding Subsection 7.9.a.vi.5 to clarify rules pertaining to signage displayed on motor vehicles or rolling stock that are regularly and consistently used to conduct normal business activities.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 736* No: 248

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

To see if the Town will amend Section XI, Subsection 11.4.1.a and d., add 11.4.1.f, amend 11.4.3, and amend Section XI, Subsection 11.5.3.d to further clarify the permitting requirements and procedures for development within the Wetlands Conservation District (Overlay).

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 784* No: 194

ARTICLE 9: – Are you in favor of adopting the following amendment to the Town of Stratham Zoning Ordinance as proposed by petition of Eugene Barker and 25 other registered voters of the Town of Stratham?

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Map, to include 170 Portsmouth Avenue (Tax Map 17 Lot 86) in the Town Center Zoning District.

The Planning Board does not recommend this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 344 No: 624* (Article 9 did not pass)

The remaining Town of Stratham articles will be voted on March 15, 2019 at the Stratham Memorial School at 7:00 p.m.

Pro tempore Moderator Beth Dupell declared the meeting come to order at 7:05 pm. Members of the Stratham Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts led the Pledge of Allegiance. After a moment of silence for all those serving in the Armed Forces, Madam Dupell then went on to introduce herself and announced that Moderator David Emanuel was away on business. Madam Dupell then introduced the Select Board Allison Knab, Chair Michael Houghton, Vice Chair Joseph Lovejoy and Town Administrator David Moore. She then had Town Clerk/Tax Collector Joyce Charbonneau and Deputy Town Clerk/Deputy Tax Collector Deborah Bakie introduce themselves. Madam Dupell also introduced the Supervisors of the Checklists Melanie McGrail, Natalie Perry, and Connie Aubin-Adams. She also introduced Bruno Federico and Jeff Gallagher who were assisting her. Madam Dupell had Pamela Hollasch read the dedication of the Town Report; this year's dedication was to Walter and Mary Smyk. Madame Dupell had Seth Hickey read the "In Appreciation" to Stratham's Town Administrator Paul R. Deschaine. Madame Dupell had Selectwoman Allison Knab read the "In Appreciation" for Stratham's Police Chief John B. Scippa. Lastly, Madam Dupell had Bill Beaulieu read the Memoriam to Terry Barnes; Merchant Marine, Selectman, Building Inspector and friend, 1941-2018. Madam Dupell then brought attention to the distinguished guests that were in attendance that evening as our State Representatives and Stratham Residents Pat Abrami and Patty Lovejoy.

Madam Dupell then read the results of ballot voting from Tuesday, March 12, 2019. Following the Town Election results, Madam Dupell announced there were no requests for recounts. Madam Dupell then went on to explain the "Rules of Procedure" for Town Meeting.

The following articles were discussed and voted on:

ARTICLE 10: 2019 Operating Budget

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of Six Million Nine Hundred Thousand Three Hundred Eighty Three Dollars and no cents (\$6,900,383.00) to defray general town charges for the ensuing year. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

Selectman Houghton moved to accept this article as read. Selectman Lovejoy seconded the motion. Selectman Houghton spoke to the motion. Selectman Houghton stated the operating expenses for 2019 were as follows: 20% General Government, 16% Personnel Administration, 21% Public Safety, 13% Highways & Streets, 12% Sanitation, and 12% Culture & Recreation. He also stated several increases and decreases such as increases in Solid Waste Management and decreases in insurances with the premiums going down, specifically in Workers' Compensation.

Selectman Houghton then welcomed any questions from the floor. Marty Wool of Winnicutt Rd commended the Select Board for keeping the budget at only a \$40,000 increase in the budget from last year, and also recognized the Budget Committee. Selectman Houghton thanked Marty and the Budget Committee which was comprised of Garrett Dolan, Beth Dupell, June Sawyer, Bruce Scamman and Nate Merrill. Seeing no further questions or comments from the floor, pro tempore Moderator Dupell read the question, the vote was taken in the affirmative, and Article 10 passed.

ARTICLE 11: Capital Improvements Program

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Million One Hundred Six Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$1,106,000.00) to implement the Capital Improvements Program for 2019 as presented in the Town Report and approved 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 five (5) years from this appropriation per NH RSA 32:7 (VI).

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

Selectman Lovejoy moved to accept this article as read. Selectman Houghton seconded the motion. Selectman Lovejoy spoke to the motion. Selectman Lovejoy then stated that the (CIP) Capital Improvement Program involves expenditures related to items that benefit more than a single fiscal year such as a new vehicle or new roof to a building. This funding is sought over a period of years to avoid burdening a single tax year with expenditures benefiting multiple years. He then went on to provide the following items related to the CIP: Bond payments for Public Safety Complex \$250,000, Conservation/Firehouse \$180,000, Conservation Easement \$120,000, and Road Maintenance and Reconstruction \$270,000. He also stated that the \$100,000 line item for the Bartlett Cushman House was no longer a line item as it was paid off the end of 2018. He continued by saying that the Playing Field Improvements that was previously \$125,000 was now \$15,000 on an on-going forward basis. Madame Dupel then asked for questions or comments from the floor. Seeing no questions or comments from the floor, pro tempore Moderator Dupell read the question, the vote was taken in the affirmative, and Article 11 passed.

ARTICLE 12: Appropriate Funds to Several Capital Reserve Funds

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Hundred Eleven Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$411,000.00) to be added to the following capital reserve funds previously established.

Land Conservation Fund	\$35,000
Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund	\$131,000
Radio Communications Capital Reserve Fund	\$5,000
Historic Preservation Capital Reserve Fund	\$50,000
Highway Vehicle/Equipment Capital Reserve Fund Total	<u>\$190,000</u>
	\$411,000

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

Selectman Lovejoy moved to accept this article as read. Selectman Houghton seconded the motion. Selectman Lovejoy spoke to the motion. Selectman Lovejoy explained that the Capital Reserve Fund functions in the same fashion as the CIP. He went on to explain that the difference is that the Legislative Body decides to return unused funds to the general fund or use it for the purpose accumulated for, rather than wait five years like the CIP. Paul Deschaine, Thornhill Rd. stated that he supports the Article and asked what the \$130,000 being targeted by the Fire Dept., specifically is for. Chief Matt Larabee, Stratham Fire Chief, stated that Engine 1 is a 2000 year vehicle and funds are being put away for the projection of the year 2022. Mr. Deschaine asked how long the department has had 2 Engines. Chief Larabee stated since at least since he has been on the Department, which is 2001. Mr. Deschaine stated that he was asking so that clearer guidance is provided to what actual funding is and how it affects the tax payers. Marty Wool, Winnicutt Rd., asked how much money is being generated by the Ambulance Fund annually. Chief Larabee stated \$100,000-\$150,000 per year. Marty asked if by 2022, would there be \$300,000 in that fund. Chief Larabee concurred. Bruno Federico of Beech Ct. stated that the plan to replace engine 1 in 2022 is based on current vehicle and its' maintenance history. Bruno also stated that the Fire Department has a great plan in place to replace its' vehicles. Roger Stevenson, Stephen Dr. asked if the monies for the Land Conservation Tax came from the Land Use Tax or if it was in addition to. Selectman Lovejoy stated that they are in addition to. Selectman Lovejoy went onto explain the specifics and definition of current use. Seeing no further questions or comments from the floor, pro tempore Moderator Dupell read the question, the vote was taken in the affirmative, and Article 12 passed.

ARTICLE 13: Town Buildings and Grounds Maintenance Expendable Trust

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Five Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$25,000.00) to be deposited into the "Town Buildings and Grounds Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund" as created by the March 16, 2012 Town Meeting.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

Selectwoman Knab moved to accept this article as read. Selectman Lovejoy seconded the motion. Selectwoman Knab spoke to the motion. Selectwoman Knab stated that this fund is for facility maintenance improvements for Town owned property for unanticipated or emergency situations and will bring the current total funds to \$177,000. She then turned it over to the floor for questions. Seeing no questions or comments from the floor, pro tempore Moderator Dupell read the question, the vote was taken in the affirmative, and Article 13 passed.

ARTICLE 14: Automated Curbside Collection Project

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Hundred Sixty Five Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$365,000.00) for the purposes of facilitating a transition to an automated curbside collection program for solid waste and recyclable materials. This special warrant article will be a non-lapsing appropriation per NH RSA 32:7 and will not lapse until the stated purpose is completed or obtained, but shall in no case be later than five (5) years from this appropriation per NH RSA 32:7 (VI).

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

Selectman Houghton moved to accept this article as read. Selectman Lovejoy seconded the motion. Selectman Houghton spoke to the motion. Selectman Houghton stated that the Town needs to move forward toward the future of automation collection of waste. Stating that the

current contract expires the end of December of 2019, and with great volatility in recycling markets, disposal costs are dramatically increasing. Selectman Houghton also provided that the proposal is to acquire recycling and trash containers which will be delivered to all households in the Fall of 2019. Selectman Houghton relayed that collections would be Monday through Thursday with recycling being every other week. This would provide a cost savings of roughly \$65,000-\$75,000 per year. These cost savings would pay for the containers over a period of 5-6 years in addition to a grant from a recycling partnership that would help facilitate the automated collection program. He further stated that the receptacles would offer a better containment to prevent objects from blowing around yards and neighborhoods. The contract and the implementation of this will still continue to be under negotiation with an outreach into the community to refine and define specifics of the program. Selectman Houghton then presented the Article to the floor for questions. Jackie Hersey of Union Rd. asked if there was a guarantee that trash would be picked up weekly and what the actual cost estimate would be. Selectman Houghton responded with the cost of the warrant article. Doug Marino of Vineyard Dr. asked if the adoption of the article would cause garbage disposal workers to lose their jobs. Selectman Houghton responded that it addresses the shortage of the workforce and reduces the amount of labor to collect waste and moves it to one person on the truck rather than the two it is currently. John Decker of Emery Ln. asked what happens if a container gets destroyed and who would pay for the replacement bin. John also stated a concern of child safety. Selectman Houghton stated that the Town will be working with the provider to gain information and be in the position to further address this, and that programs have been successfully implemented in surrounding communities, and trusts they are operated in a safe and responsible manner. Yielding to the Town Administrator for replacement of the bins, Town Administrator David Moore stated that it may be treated the same as a mailbox struck by a plow. Jonathan Brown of Thornhill Rd. asked about the correlation between buying bins and the recycling market and if the contract will be with Casella again, and will it end up costing less money because of the bins and automated collection. Selectman Houghton responded that the cost of waste disposal continues to rise dramatically, brought on by the changes in global and recycling materials. He then stated an estimated cost savings of \$75,000-\$100,000 per year is projected. Roger Grinde of High St. stated that he was generally supportive of the article and continued by asking details of the \$694,000 and how it breaks down between trash collection and removal. Mr. Moore stated the breakdown was \$200,000 for disposal and \$500,000 for collection. Pat Abrami of Tall Pines Drive spoke for the Article and stated that he attended the public sessions and found them very informative. He then stated that many Towns are faced with the same issue. He informed the floor that previously, China took the recyclables with 3% containments which has now been lowered to .5%, ultimately costing recycling companies more money. Daniel Shepard of Easton Hill Ln. asked where are the condominiums going to put these big containers and were accommodations being made for this. He also stated that his driveway was nearly ¼ mile long and that the bins would not fit in his car. He asked if accommodations would be made for residents taking it to the transfer station. Selectman Houghton responded that the next step in developing the implementation was to plan a broad outreach with communities with "outlier" issues that are out of the norm and to provide solutions. Colin Lavery of Stratham Heights Rd. stated that he is in support of the Article. He then provided background on the project as the former Public Works Director, stating that he and the Former Town Administrator, Paul Deschaine approached Casella on how the Town could save money, using best management practices. Casella stated with the recycling market continuing to fluctuate in negative returns,

automated collections would bring safety and cleanliness. Colin then spoke to John Decker's question as to a replacement of a damaged container and stated that the container would be swapped out or replaced by the manufacturer. He also stated that they should last in excess of 20 years. He also stated that additional days will be added to the transfer station. He continued by adding that with trash pickup being scheduled over four days, weather or holidays would not be a cause for delay, thereby eliminating the necessity for Saturday pickup. Michael Johnston of Glengarry Dr. stated that trash varies with multiple residents, and that going back to using the transfer station needs to be looked at as the new containers will not fit in through his doorway, and they cannot leave them outside. Jay Tischler of High St. stated his concerns were that one size does not fit all, and the bins could be in the way with snow removal and plowing. Jay also said that he would feel more comfortable with spending \$365,000 to start the program if there was more available information on how issues were going to be worked out. Marilyn Decker of Emery Ln. stated she would like to know if the program includes education for residents so that there is high quality recycling. Selectman Houghton stated that there would be educational videos available and they would be posted on the town website, and links would be provided to residents to understand best practices. Brent Scott of Fifield Ln. offered the suggestion for residents to try composting with a compost bin to cut down on their amount of trash. Colin Lavery of Stratham Heights Rd. informed residents of the power point presentation that is located on the Town's website that provides information on where the Town is currently with the automated program. He continued by saying that the next step is crucial. Going forward, The Town will be providing education and outreach programs, to help notify residents of recyclables, trash, and recycling schedules. Colin also reminded the floor that this warrant article was for a proposal for the containers only. Pamela Hollasch of Greta's Way asked what other collection vendors are available to the Town. Mr. Moore, Town Administrator, stated that a final procurement strategy has not been decided upon, and that the Town has had a contract with Casella since 2016, and they have provided much of the information and best practices in the industry on ways to save money. He also stated that no commitment to any one type vendor has been made yet, and the Town will be looking at a procuring strategy depending on the outcome of the meeting. Selectman Houghton reiterated that the current contract expires in December of 2019 and they are asking for this warrant article to make a move towards automation, and to purchase receptacles that enable that. He then went on to say that this will then put them in a position to go out and begin the process in negotiating a new contract, and without approval of this warrant article, the receptacle provider could come back and ask for the containers back until March of 2020, at which time the contract would be expired through Casella. He further stated that they are trying to be proactive, and without the containers lined up they have no ability to negotiate. Tim Roache, Director of Rockingham Planning Commission of Chelsea Way, stated that the grant provided as part of the proposal offsets the costs of the carts. He stated it requires the carts to be 95 gallon carts. He stated further that if we don't move forward in an affirmative way, we could possibly lose the grant and we would need to re-apply. Tim continued on by saying that he wrote the grant in partnership with Colin Lavery and this money is available as part of this proposal. Alana Hickey of Union Road asked if we stayed with what were are currently doing now, and we went to every other week with recycling, what would that cost savings be. She also asked what the price comparisons and lifespans are of automated trucks versus the traditional trucks, and who would be paying for these costs in the long run. Selectman Houghton responded that a third party provider would be contracted to provide service, and they would be held accountable through a contract to provide a level of service that is acceptable to

the Town. He then went on to answer the cost savings portion and stated that the cost savings would be labor savings with reduction of labor. Marty Wool, Winnicutt Rd., stated that recycling has changed dramatically and that this program is going to work very well. The savings will be on the collection side and not the disposal side due to having one person on the trucks.

Marty Wool then moved the question.

The residents already in line were allowed to ask their questions. Pamela Hollasch of Greta's Way asked if the Transfer Station fees would remain the same. Mr. Moore, Town Administrator, stated that because of the changes, they will be offering additional services which was included in the operating budget that was already passed, such as every Saturday year round, and Thursdays in the summer. Mary Dana Washburn of Pheasant Run Ln. asked what are we supposed to do with the current containers. Mr. Moore stated that they have conferred with Casella and there is a special collection strategy that requires work and intensive organization that can be done for the containers that cannot be recycled, and continued on by saying that there are some options that they can pursue. Seeing no further questions or comments from the floor, pro tempore Moderator Dupell read the question, the vote was taken in the affirmative, and Article 14 passed. Jeremy Riecks of Doe Run Ln. makes a motion to restrict reconsideration for Articles 10, 11, 12, 13 & 14. Marty Wool of Winnicutt Rd. seconded it and a vote to restrict reconsideration was taken and passed.

ARTICLE 15: Raise and Appropriate from the EMS Special Revenue Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Forty Eight Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$48,000.00) for the following purposes:

2019 EMS/EMT/First Responder Training	\$10,000.00
2019 ALS Services Contract	\$10,000.00
Auto Load Stretcher for Ambulance #2	\$28,000.00

and to further authorize the withdrawal of Forty Eight Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$48,000.00) 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.

Selectman Lovejoy moved to accept this article as read. Selectwoman Knab seconded the motion. Selectman Lovejoy and Fire Chief Matt Larrabee spoke to the motion. Selectman Lovejoy spoke to the line items stating that the EMS Fund gets generated when someone is transported by ambulance, generating \$150,000 annually. He explained that these funds are dedicated for the use of the Fire Department and EMS for a variety of different purposes. ALS (Advanced Life Support) has advanced training that our EMS does not possess and is contracted through Exeter Hospital. ALS joins our EMS on calls if needed and will ride in the ambulance to provide care to the patient while enroute to the hospital. Continuing on to the Auto Load Stretcher, Selectman Lovejoy stated that the Auto Load Stretcher, which the second ambulance is not equipped with as of yet, will allow the stretcher to automatically load so that the attendants would not have to physically lift the stretcher. Selectman Lovejoy then asked for questions from the floor. Cheryl Eveleigh of Long Hill Rd. asked if the monies carried over like a Trust annually. Selectman Lovejoy stated that the money does carry over and that it only can be used for the Fire Department and EMS. He then provided the example of the ambulance that was

purchased last year for \$700,000 which accumulated over time and did not require any tax money to be generated to pay for that ambulance. Chief Larrabee clarified that \$115,000 was the amount generated last year. He further stated that the money goes into a savings account and that the only way it can be withdrawn from it is by voting done through the Town Meeting. Any remainder of the funds stays in there until it is needed, and it continues to accrue. Madame Dupel then asked for questions from the floor. Seeing none, pro tempore Moderator Dupell read the question, the vote was taken in the affirmative, and Article 15 passed.

ARTICLE 16: Purchase a Car #1 Utility Truck for the Fire Department

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Forty Two Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$42,000.00) for the purpose of purchasing a Utility Truck to serve as Car #1 for the Fire Department and to further authorize the withdrawal of Forty Two Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$42,000.00) 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.

Selectman Lovejoy moved to accept this article as read. Selectwoman Knab seconded the motion. Selectman Lovejoy and Chief Larrabee spoke to the motion.

Selectman Lovejoy stated that currently, the vehicle that is being used is a Crown Victoria that is 12 years old. Selectman Lovejoy explained that the vehicle is used for a variety of purposes, including transporting firefighter and emergency personnel to attend training, thus allowing them to avoid using their own personal vehicles. He stated that currently the equipment is being carried in the trunk or the interior of the Crown Victoria exposing personnel to carcinogens. The new vehicle would allow the equipment to be carried in the bed of the truck and away from personnel. Payment of this vehicle would come from the same source as in Article 15. Chief Larrabee stated that this vehicle would also allow the towing of two different trailers that are currently being towed by personal vehicles when they are needed. The vehicle would also be used to carry hoses and equipment back to the Fire Station that had been exposed to carcinogens for proper cleaning. Questions were then asked of the floor. Mike Cashman of Humes Court reiterated the importance of avoidance of exposure to carcinogens, the leading cause of death among firefighters due to increase of lung cancer, stating that these are volunteers, and we need to take care of our volunteers. Seeing no further questions or comments from the floor, pro tempore Moderator Dupell read the question, the vote was taken in the affirmative, and Article 16 passed.

ARTICLE 17: Purchase a Command Vehicle for the Fire Department

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty Five Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$55,000.00) for the purpose of purchasing a Command Vehicle for the Fire Department and to further authorize the withdrawal of Fifty Five Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$55,000.00) 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.

Selectman Lovejoy moved to accept this article as read. Selectwoman Knab seconded the motion. Selectman Lovejoy and Chief Larrabee spoke to the motion.

Selectman Lovejoy spoke of the significance to be able to communicate and receive information as quickly as possible, further saying this SUV type vehicle with an enclosed back is so that the equipment is readily available to whomever is in charge. Chief Larrabee stated that the vehicle would provide a couple of main purposes. It would allow the Department to take command of the situation, and it would allow the Department the ability to develop strategic tactics to handle various situations. Chief Larrabee further provided that all communications are dispatched over one radio frequency for the Greater Seacoast Area by Rockingham Dispatch, which would in turn assign two to four different channels depending on the situation. This would provide accountability of knowing where personnel are within a building in the event a Firefighter becomes lost or becomes injured. He further explained that it would also allow key documentation on the location of fire hydrants and building layouts for major buildings to enable strategic development and tactics of how to handle situations at hand. Madame Dupel then asked for questions from the floor. Seeing no questions from the floor, Pro tempore Moderator Dupell read the question, the vote was taken in the affirmative, and Article 17 passed.

ARTICLE 18: Skate Park Construction

This warrant article is placed by petition of voters in the Town of Stratham.

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Hundred Sixty-Five Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$265,000.00) for the purpose of constructing a concrete recreational facility (Skate Park) at Stevens Park, in the vacant space north of the existing tennis courts. This special warrant article will be a non-lapsing appropriation per NH RSA 32:7 and will not lapse until the stated purpose is completed or obtained, but shall in no case be later than five (5) years from this appropriation per NH RSA 32:7 (VI). Selectman Houghton moved to accept this article as read. Selectman Lovejoy seconded the motion.

By unanimous vote, the Select Board does not recommend this Article.

Kerri Vivathana, Kinloch Dr., spoke to the article and requested to address the residents. Madam Dupell concurred. Kerri read her presentation to the floor. Her presentation, in part, is as follows: "The Skate Board Committee is asking for an appropriation of \$265,000 to build a concrete skate park at Stevens Park. The tax impact on this article is approximately .21 per thousand which would be a one-time tax impact of approximately \$63.00 for a \$300,000 home. One of the biggest questions we have received about this Article, was "Why?" "Why do we need a skate park here in Stratham?" A skate park embodies Growth Mindset. Growth Mindset is something we directly teach in SAU 16 because it teaches our children that through dedication and hard work it brings growth. Our brains and talent are not fixed but rather they are malleable. A skate park teaches these values in a physical and real way. Learning a new trick could take months or even years - this teaches grit, determination, and perseverance. Trying something that maybe feels a bit out of your comfort zone teaches bravery, resilience and discipline, and that these are the traits of champions. At a skate park they learn what pride is. What it feels like to accomplish something independent of someone else's opinion. It's not about a teacher or a parent or a coach externally saying, "I'm proud of you" but rather developing an understanding that pride is earned not given. Accomplishment comes from our own efforts. These are the skills that are intrinsically taught at a skate park and these are the skills that carry people into adulthood preparing and

allowing them to view failure as a stepping stone and not an endpoint. Many organized team sports are offered in our town. There are 10 baseball fields, basketball, and soccer. These are amazing assets to our town. But not all children want or can be on team sports. A recent study by the National Alliance on Youth Sports stated that 70% of children quit team sports by age 13. A skate park offers a place for these children. They don't need a coach. They don't need a team. There aren't set hours. They go whenever they feel they need to be there.

With that said, 24% of NH children are obese - a skate park offers a safe place to start to tackle childhood obesity by allowing children to be physically active whenever they can and want, not just on Saturdays at 10, or whatever the "schedule" dictates. Many kids go out and ride for 2 or 3 hours at a time! Sweat is part of the scene at a skate park. It's a place where kids can see that exercise can be fun and social. Tied closely to these physical benefits are the mental health benefits. Sadly, as many of you know, our children are riddled with depression and anxiety. A skate park is an oasis for these kids. There is no wrong way to ride. Kids aren't told you aren't good enough, strong enough, fast enough. At a skate park you come as you are. It is a place of ultimate acceptance. They grab their board or their scooter or their roller skates and they lead their own learning and growth. Often times what is heard from our young citizen's, things such as: "When I'm mad at my mom or dad I get out and ride, and an hour later I feel better" and "I sleep so much better after I ride". A skate park is a place to call their own. It is a place to find connection. There was a recent study by Cigna Health that involved a massive 20,000 participants. The results showed that nearly half of Americans are lonely - And of those... the loneliest, was the youngest group. Words like "disconnected" and "isolated" described this group. A skate park offers a place to meet up, hang out, get exercise, talk, and find a "real life", "not behind a computer", friend. When I was a young mom with three little kids in town, I would frequent playgrounds. Because my kids needed exercise, and I needed to get out of the house, and we all needed to find community. A place where I could talk with another mom or dad about struggles I was having, and the chaos and the joys of raising little ones. And my kids needed to talk with other kids about kid stuff. A playground community was as much for my kids as it was for me. Community is what stops people from feeling lonely. It weaves us together. A skate park is simply the next step after your kids outgrow the playground. What is it we are even trying to build? We are proposing a 7500 square foot concrete park placed just north of the tennis courts at Stevens Park. This location was chosen after nearly a year of collaborative work with community stakeholders. In terms of both insurance and administration, this park is looked at just like any other park in Town. Because of this, there is no increase to our insurance. We conducted a survey of all NH parks and recreational departments with skate parks asking multiple questions, one of which was maintenance. Based on the results of this survey, we estimate maintenance costs to be less than \$1000 a year. With the biggest maintenance simply being trash pick-up which is already being done. The design company, Pillar that was hired as part of the money that was appropriated last year has helped to design this beautiful park. It's important to note that the majority of the park is no more than 30 inches tall. This was intentional as this park is to be used by many, not just elite athletes. Should appropriation be approved tonight it is the full intent of the Skate Park Project to continue, as it has over the past year and a half, to patiently work through the town review process. I hope the residents would join us in this vision and vote yes on Article #18. Thank you." Madam Dupell then asked for a motion to let Beckett Hickey, a young non-registered voter, speak. A motion was made and was seconded. Beckett then stated that he was 10 years old and he thought there should be a skate park in Stratham. He stated that some of the residents may think it is not a good idea but he

thinks, from his point of view, the residents would see otherwise. He went on to say that the majority of adults at the meeting had the benefit of growing up in a time where it was safe to ride a bike around town. He then stated that kids today do not have that same opportunity. Instead kids are choosing to sit inside in front of screens playing video games. Beckett would like to see a healthy change by providing the community with a safe and fun place to ride bikes, scooters, skateboards, and rollerblades for people of all ages and abilities. Beckett then said when traveling all over the country with his family, they would often visit various skate parks and the people they have met are amazing. Beckett continued to say that he has been on the receiving end of so much support and has also had many opportunities to give support and encouragement as well. He then said that there is nothing better than seeing someone who is trying a new activity or trick for the first time and others coming together to help them succeed. In closing, Beckett stated "Let's put Stratham on the map as a town that supports a park that will provide a place to promote exercise, community and recreation for generations to come". He then thanked everyone for showing his generation that they care. Nancy Hunter of 2 Brown Ave. stated that she noticed that the Selectman unanimously did not approve this Article and she wanted to know why. Selectman Houghton stated on many occasions he has heard presentations from the Skate Park Committee. He also wanted to note that the Skate Park Committee has worked tirelessly to promote this effort in the town of Stratham, and the Select Board has consistently praised the Committee for their tireless energy and enthusiasm in the amount of effort they have put forth. He continued to state that the Article is for \$265,000 to construct a 7500 square foot concrete skate park in Steven's park. His questions are still what impact does it have on Steven's Park and what other funds will be required to enable that park to accommodate the construction of that skate park. He feels there are more dollars involved associated with the construction of this park. He stated that he is ambivalent to the park, and in many ways it's a great idea, but the issue from his vantage point is being fiscally responsible to the residents of Stratham. Selectwoman Knab stated that this project has had timing issues with the plan not being completed. The Select Board did not feel that this plan was quite ready for them to voice their support on this Article for Town Meeting. There was no site plan at the time this was presented to the Board, and there are still parking issues. The Committee has been very persuasive about the skate board park. She stated that the question is not whether or not we need a skate park. The question is if we need a skate park, what is the best way to implement it? Selectman Lovejoy stated that he was torn on this Article. He further stated that he shared his colleagues concerns about additional costs that may not have been taken into consideration. Selectman Lovejoy also stated that he recognized how hard the skate board committee has worked on this, and if the voters passed this, he would be ok with that. Rob Roseen, 9 Greta's Way stated that as a resident, he supports this project. He further stated that it is an unstructured place where the youth can challenge themselves and supervise themselves. He went on to explain that as an engineer, in regards to any issues of drainage as it relates to the skate park, he believes the impact of drainage would lessen from Steven's Park as a whole. The reason for this is that the skate park is being designed as a low impact development design, and it would capture the runoff, and this would actually improve the drainage situation. Rob also stated that the Skate Park Committee has met with the Fire Dept., the Police Dept., the Parks and Recreation, the Stratham Fair, and the Conservation Commission. The Skate Park Committee is committed to continuing these meetings, and to continue working with the Select Board and the Planning Board going forward. Rob also explained that the design process and the contract with the current designer and the Skate Park Committee are committed to a certain dollar value, and the Park will not exceed that amount. He

also stated that as far as the issues of fencing and the Public Works garage, this has been a security issue for many years, and it predates the issue of the Skate Park. He stated that we are not fencing the Skate Park in as much as we are fencing the Public Works out. He concluded with a humble request for the voters to support this Article. Julie Cashman, Humes Ct. asked if there is a special fund that the Town has in case Stratham is named in a civil lawsuit due to an injury at the Park. Town Administrator David Moore responded that Primex is the Town's insurer. He also stated that the skate board would be treated as a municipal facility. Julie followed up with that Primex would only be responsible for covering an injury, but would the Town be liable for a civil lawsuit or is there a special fund for this. Mr. Moore responded that he is not aware of any fund available in the Town for this purpose. Joe Allwarden, 15 Tall Pines Dr. stated that he is support of this article. He stated that he believes the Committee can control the costs, and come in on budget. He also stated that for unexpected costs, there is the option of fund-raising. Joe further stated that he has been a resident here for twenty-one years, and has raised three children here. He stated that they live right behind the Park, and that this would be a great asset to the Park. He concluded with that he felt this would enhance the Town experience. Luke Breton, Evergreen Way stated that his family supports this project, and that they recognize the demand for this. He also stated that this is a unique park, and it would bring value to the community and to Stevens Park. He further stated that once you build this, you're done. There would be no maintenance costs such as mowing, painting, plowing, etc., and there are no utilities costs. He concluded with the hope that the community would support this. Tim Cushing of Holmgren Rd. stated that he has lived here for 30 years, and has raised his family here. He stated he is in support of this article. He stated that as far as the cost, this is what is needed for a high quality park. He further stated that this is what we need for the kids that don't play traditional sports. He also stated that as far as the Select Boards' concerns about unknown costs, there are also unknown costs with the waste management article that just passed. He asked the floor to support this article. Colin Laverty, Stratham Heights Rd. stated that we approved \$35,000.00 last year for the design, and now we are being asked to approve \$265,000.00 for the construction, so the total cost of the skate board will be \$300,000.00. He stated that he has concerns that we are rushing into this, and there are several issues that still need to be addressed. He mentioned parking, drainage issues, and that there is no approval for the site plan from the Planning Board to date. He explained that the drawings presented tonight are just conceptual drawings. He further stated that there will be maintenance costs just in regards to the concrete, such as cracks, patching, and sealing. Colin continued by asking the question; "What is the rush"? He pointed out that the playground at Stevens Park was 100% fund raised by Stratham volunteers. He also stated that the stage at Stratham Hill Park was also 100% fund raised by the Stratham Volunteer Fire Department. He concluded that this could be a good thing for Stratham, but more time needs to be taken to address the issues mentioned, and also to do additional fund raising rather than asking the Town to fully fund it. Selectman Houghton then made a point of clarification regarding the statement made by Tim Cushing regarding the unknowns of the Waste Mgt. Collection process. Selectman Houghton stated that they do know the exact costs associated in Article 14 that passed. He stated that what we don't know are the intimate details that are associated with the implementation and execution of this strategy, and we will work with the community to get the implementation and execution of this. He concluded that it is not going to cost more for these containers than what was passed tonight. Robert Law, Bunker Hill Ave., stated that there are still issues that need to be addressed before this passes, such as the drainage issues and noise issues. He stated that he doesn't think it would be fair to the taxpayers to move

forward with this without having more information. He stated that there are still unknown costs associated with this project. He further stated that he thinks fund raising is a good idea, and he doesn't support this project using taxpayers' money. Richard Taylor, 4 Elton Ave. stated that he is a new resident, and loves living in this Town. He further stated that he was not there to speak in support of this issue, but wanted to thank everyone if they chose to vote for this, as this is coming from someone who has children, and knows that they would enjoy this. He further stated that he realizes this is a personal decision for everyone as it will affect everyone's taxes. He again thanked everyone for considering and contemplating this article, and for using their tax money to invest in this. Seth Hickey, Union Rd. stated he would like to read a prepared statement. His statement, in part, is as follows: "We moved our family to Stratham because of the sense of community. The residents that make Stratham a special community, you are people that care. Sitting in this room tonight, you are the ones that make Stratham great. You volunteer your time, and you are compassionate and engaged in your community. Your passion for one another shows in the support that you give back to your schools, The Fire and Police Departments, the Town Library, and your Parks and Recreations Department. We have some of the finest athletic fields in our area. We have two softball fields, two soccer fields, two baseball fields, and the best Babe Ruth baseball field in the Seacoast. These facilities make other towns, organizations, and private leagues envious. This Town has done a great job in investing in traditional sports. The Stratham Parks and Recreation Department has deep roots with traditional youth and activities in sports. But not all youth are traditional. These traditional sports are wonderful. They are highly structured and play an important role in children's development. But the Town of Stratham has done very little for non-traditional sports. The Town has the chance tonight to provide an amazing space for children, teams, and adults to be creative, outdoors, and engaged. This space will be nearly maintenance free for the next twenty years. This is a one-time investment in our community, and one year to pay a small amount of money that will be enjoyed by thousands of people. This skate park is a facility that will be an amazing addition to our Parks and Recreation Department. Tonight we have the chance to voice our vote and make this project a reality. I know once this park is built, it will quickly become our most popular park in Town". Michael Tallone, Rollins Farm Dr. stated that the construction and labor costs came to \$274,000.00. He explained that we are asking for \$265,000.00 tonight as the committee already fund raised \$5,000.00, and that Rob Roseen is helping them with an in-kind donation. He further stated that they also have some funds left over from last year's appropriation. He explained with all this, we will have extra money left over. He also thanked the 140 residents that signed the petition for the skate park. Chris West, Brown Ave. wanted to address the Select Board's concerns about the parking, drainage, and fencing. She stated that the issue for parking has been a long standing issue, and the problem predates the plans for the skate board park. She stated that basically it is just sixteen Saturdays that we would have this particular issue, and she would find it hard to turn away a project because of an issue that will only affect sixteen days. She stated the fencing issue around the Public Works Garage is a Town issue, and has nothing to do with the skate park. She further stated that the skate board park would help the drainage issue as explained by Mr. Roseen, an engineer. She also stated that CMA Engineers was hired by the Town last Fall, had stated that there was not a drainage problem. Chris concluded that there are a lot of residents having water issues, but that is due to the excess rain fall we have had this year. Kevin Joyce, Erik Way, stated that while sitting here listening to everyone talk about this project, he was reflecting on his thirty-six years as a teacher and guidance counselor, and couldn't help but think about all the kids who would have loved

this. He stated that he showed his grandson, who is heading off to college in the Fall, the design, and his grandson stated that he wished it had been done ten years ago, but he would definitely use it during his college breaks. Kevin further stated that this is not a costly sport for the kids, and he supports this Article. He concluded with, "Let's make this happen." Marty Wool, Winnicutt Rd. stated that he knows this would be great for the kids, but this project should have gone on the CIP over several years, and accumulate the money to build this. He explained that the CIP is meant to spread large cost items over several years. He stated that the Select Board works very hard to keep costs down and level, and there are still several issues that have not been resolved. Bruno Federico, Beech Ct. stated that he feels that this is a good project, and he gets the sense that the Town supports it. He stated that his only concern was the Committee has not been before the Planning Board. He stated that they need to go before the Planning Board in order to give the abutters a chance to come in and express their concerns. He stated that if we don't do that, the Town is opening themselves up to litigation. He also stated that we are being asked to approve a certain amount of money for this project when we really don't know the final cost. Cathy Tallone, Rollins Farm Rd. stated that her husband loves skate boarding. She also stated that her two boys do balance bikes, and scootering. She explained that she used to think, "Who is going to use this park". She stated that she now knows all ages will utilize this park for roller skating, balance biking, scootering, and skate boarding. She and her family have been to different skate board parks across the Country during family trips, and the parks are always busy, with both adults and children using it. Cathy also stated that this will be a beautiful park, it was well thought out, and that there is a dedicated team behind this. She concluded with that this is for the community, skate boarding is now a 2020 Olympic event, and that there is no agenda here from the Committee other than to share their love of skateboarding. Lucy Cushman, Winnicutt Rd., stated that the recent approval of 17.8 million dollars for the renovations at the Exeter Co-op School was approved without anyone going to the Planning Board. She explained they would be going to the Planning Board before any of that money was spent. She concluded with that if \$17.8 million could be approved without Planning Board approval, then we should certainly be able to approve \$265,000.00 without initial Planning Board approval.

Steve Simons, 22 Vineyard Dr., moved the question.

Rob Roseen, Greta's Way, was in line, and was allowed to speak after the question was moved. Rob stated that although there are still some unknowns, the Skate Park Committee is committed to the \$265,000.00 price tag. He also stated that it is not unusual to bring a design to the Planning Board with a 50% or 75% completion of the design. He further stated that as far as the parking issues, they were informed by the Planning Board that it was not an issue, and to not worry about it. Rob concluded with that timing is important. He stated that they are now into the third year of planning this Park, and he would like to see his youngest son be able to use it before he graduates. Madam Dupell then read the question. She then explained the process to vote by secret ballot as a written request from more than five registered voters from the floor for a secret ballot was presented to Madam Dupell earlier. She explained that the Supervisors of the Checklist would mark the Voter's card, and they would be handed a blank ballot. The voter would write a yes or no on the ballot. She further explained that the Voter was then to hand their ballot to Jeff Gallagher, or Bruno Federico, who were standing by the ballot box in the front center of the room, and they would place the voter's ballot in the locked ballot box. Once everyone voted, the ballot box was brought over to the front side of the room. Madame Dupell stated that we have Jeanne Freeze and Jeremy Reicks of 18 Doe Run Lane counting the ballots for Article 18. The Town Clerk unlocked the ballot box, and the counting of the ballots

proceeded. The Town Clerk and Deputy sat at a table just a few feet from the counting table. Once the votes were counted, and then recounted, the results were announced by Madam Dupell.

The results were **98 Yes** ballot votes to **101 No** ballot votes. Article 18 failed.

There was a motion made by Jeremy Reicks of 18 Doe Run Ln. and Jackie Hersey of 149 Union Rd. to restrict reconsideration on Article 18. Madame Dupell recognized Jeremy on the motion. It was seconded by Jackie Hersey. A vote was taken to restrict reconsideration on Article 18. Jeff Gallagher and Bruno Federico counted the hand held ballots raised. The motion passed to restrict reconsideration, with 73 voting to restrict reconsideration, and 41 voting against restricting reconsideration. Rob Roseen then made a motion to reconsider restriction on Article 18. Madame Dupell explained there would have to be a vote on that, and was there a second to the motion. It was seconded. (Name was not clear on the second to the motion.) Madame Dupel then explained that the vote would be on reconsidering Article 18. A vote was taken to reconsider Article 18 at a different time and place, to be determined, but more than seven days from tonight. Jeff Gallagher and Bruno Federico counted the hand held ballots raised. Madame Dupel announce that the motion failed with 45 in favor of reconsidering Article 18, and 64 against reconsideration of Article 18.

Rob Roseen, 9 Greta's Way, requested a recount on Article 18. Madame Dupell stated that any 10 voters can apply in writing to the Town Clerk within 7 days after a meeting with a \$10.00 fee for a recount on any question appearing on the official ballot used at a meeting. A written request with the \$10.00 fee was then presented to the Town Clerk. The time and place to be determined. Gayle Vardakis, Dumbarton Oaks, stated that she wanted to applaud everyone on the Skate Park Committee that have worked so hard on this project. She also had a question about the process of dividing the costs over a period of time so it is not just one lump sum. Marty Wool, Winnicutt Rd. stated that he thought she was referring to the C.I.P. and that she would have to go before the Select Board and the Planning Board to get this into the C.I.P. for next year's Town Meeting. He also stated that the Committee could double up on fund raising, and some money could come from the fund raising and some money could be put into the C.I.P. Pat Abrami, Tall Pines Dr. raised a question about the restriction of the reconsideration on this Article, and if there is a recount, and the vote turns around, where is the opportunity to reconsider again? Madame Dupell stated that although there are some questions, those answers do not have to be made tonight, as procedure has to take place and we have seven days which gives us time to contact legal counsel. (A recount was held on March 20, 2019 at the Stratham Municipal Center as part of a special Select Board meeting scheduled for this purpose. The ballots were recounted by Joyce Charbonneau, Town Clerk, and Deborah Bakie, Deputy Town Clerk. In attendance were the Select Board; Allison Knab, Michael Houghton, and Joseph Lovejoy, Town Administrator David Moore, and various residents and members of the Skate Board Committee. The results were the same tally from Town Meeting: **98 Yes votes**, and **101 No votes**. Article 18 did not pass.)

ARTICLE 19: Modifications of Elderly Exemption from Property Tax

Shall the Town modify the provisions of RSA 72:39-a for elderly exemption 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, \$100,000; for a person 75 years of age up to 80 years,

\$120,000; for a person 80 years of age or older \$140,000. To qualify, the person must have been a New Hampshire resident for at least 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 \$36,000 if single or, if married, a combined net income of less than \$60,000; and own net assets not in excess of \$125,000 excluding the value of the person's residence.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

Selectman Houghton moved to accept this article as read. Selectwoman Knab seconded the motion. Selectman Houghton spoke to the motion. Selectman Houghton explained that our Town Assessor, Andrea Lewy, did research on this particular issue. He further explained the Town last addressed this issue in 2004 and prior to that, it was 1997. The Board felt that it was more than time to address this again. He went over the assets required currently and what is proposed in this article. He stated that it is prudent to move forward and to secure this initiative. Seeing no questions or comments from the floor, Pro tempore Moderator Dupell read the question, the vote was taken in the affirmative, and Article 19 passed.

ARTICLE 20: Changing of Polling Hours

To see if the Town will vote to place the following question on the next State Election ballot. Shall we place a question on the State Election ballot in November 2020 to change polling hours so that they would open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 7:00 p.m. for all regular State Elections and all regular Town Elections beginning in 2021 for Town Elections and 2022 for State Elections? Currently, polls in the Town of Stratham for both State and Town elections are open from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

Selectwoman Knab moved to accept this article as read. Selectman Houghton seconded the motion. Selectwoman Knab spoke to the motion. Selectwoman Knab stated that this was an issue that was brought forth by Town Clerk Joyce Charbonneau based on comments from the voters on the current polling hours. Selectwoman Knab then turned it over to Town Clerk Joyce Charbonneau to address the article. Town Clerk Charbonneau stated that after every State election, she receives calls and criticisms on the current polling hours. She explained that the voters line up for the busy State elections starting at 7:00 am, but because the polling hours are currently 8:00 am to 8:00 pm, they are not allowed to open the doors until 8:00 am. Town Clerk Charbonneau is proposing that we change the hours from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm. She further explained that the last hour of voting is historically very quiet, so the new hours proposed seemed to be the best option. She also explained that the voters tonight would not be voting on the new hours tonight. Their vote tonight, if affirmative, would be giving permission to put this question on the next State ballot, which would be in November of 2020. She further explained that if this question passes in November of 2020, the new hours will be effective for Town elections in March of 2021, and State elections in September of 2022. Town Clerk Charbonneau then opened the floor to any questions. Marty Wool, Winnicutt Rd. asked what the election hours are for the National Elections. Town Clerk Charbonneau responded that the hours for all elections are currently 8:00 am to 8:00 pm. Jane McGinn, Haywick Dr., asked what the hours are to request an absentee ballot. Town Clerk Charbonneau responded that the hours to request an absentee ballot are what the Town Clerk office hours are. She further explained that we

typically receive the absentee ballots for the elections about three weeks before the election, so you can request and receive a ballot during this time frame. Jane stated that she is a voter and a commuter, and unfortunately does not work in Stratham. She stated that personally, she would like to see the hours change to 6:00 am to 6:00 pm. Otherwise, she asked to keep them at 8:00 am to 8:00 pm. Pat Abrami, Tall Pines Dr. stated that he endorses this Article. He is often out front holding signs and he and other sign holders get there to set up about 7:00 am. He stated that he and the other sign holders see firsthand the cars that pull in at 7:00 am, and when told that the polls do not open until 8:00 am, they leave disappointed. He also agreed that the last hour, 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm is very quiet, and therefore endorses the hours changing to 7:00 am to 7:00 pm. Seeing no further questions or comments from the floor, pro tempore Moderator Dupell read the question, the vote was taken in the affirmative, and Article 20 passed.

ARTICLE 21 – OTHER BUSINESS

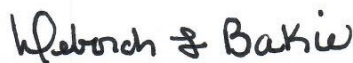
To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting.

Marty Wool, Winnicutt Rd. commended the Select Board on their outstanding work the last several months in regards to all the changes in Personnel at the Town Offices, and also for working on a new Waste program, as well as the disposition of the Cushman House, and the acceptance of the Smyk property. He also donated \$50.00 to start fund-raising for the Skate Board Park. Madame Dupel accepted his donation, and handed it over to the Town Clerk, who will lock it in the Town safe until a member of the Skate Board Committee can accept it. Lucy Cushman, Winnicutt Rd., wanted to thank everyone for their vote Tuesday night on passing the renovations for the Co-operative Middle School. She stated that she was never prouder of her Town, and with Stratham's 73% approval, the bond passed for CMS. Our share pulled all the other towns to 60.69%, which passed the bond by 37 votes. Mike Welty, Walters Way, and Chairman of the Stratham Energy Commission, announced that there will be a program at our library next Wednesday night at 7:00 pm called "Button Up". He explained that this program is being sponsored by the utility company to show how to improve your energy and reduce your utility bills. Mike Houghton, Select Board Chair, thanked the Moderator, his peers on the Select Board, and the Town and Library staff for the amazing job they do. He also stated that we have sixteen Boards/Commissions/Committees that are actively engaged in initiatives to bring the Town forward and preserve the rural and agricultural culture that we have here in Town. He stated that we are a Town of volunteers that make this a better place every single day. He also announced to anyone interested in serving on any Board/Commission/Committee that they can apply to be a volunteer, and the applications are on the website at www.strathamnh.gov. He concluded with thanking everyone for being here tonight. Pro tempore Moderator Dupell entertained a motion to adjourn, and it was seconded with the provision for everyone to please fold their chair and place it in the chair racks. Meeting adjourned at 11:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Joyce L. Charbonneau,
Stratham Town Clerk



Deborah Bakie
Stratham Deputy Town Clerk

