

MARCH 9, 2021 ELECTION AND TOWN MEETING MINUTES

The Ballot Clerks and Election Workers were sworn in at 6:55 am and 12:55 pm. Present were Moderator David Emanuel, Assistant Moderator Beth Dupell, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Joyce Charbonneau, Deputy Town Clerk/Deputy Tax Collector Deborah Bakie, and Select Board Members Joe Lovejoy, Michael Houghton, and Allison Knab. Supervisors of the Checklist present were Connie Aubin-Adams, Cathy Warner, and Melanie McGrail. Ballot clerks for the day were: Susan Canada, Dianna Thompson, Roger Thompson, Liz Chisholm, Patricia Hughes, Karen Cushing, Joan Gough, Sarah Bedingfield, Gale Lyon, and Paul O'Neil. Our Office Assistant, Tara Madden, also served as a ballot clerk. It was a steady day with 808 official Election Day ballots cast, with 69 of those being absentee ballots. There were 7 new voters registered on Election Day, making the total number of voters on the Checklist 7056. This made it an 11.5% turnout for this election.

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

Cooperative School District Budget Committee: For Exeter for three years: Write in votes: Ami Faria 27*. Robin Tyner 3. For Stratham for three years: Jennifer Scrafford 641*. For East Kingston for three years: Terence Waldron 511*. For Exeter Cooperative School District Moderator, for one year, vote for one: Katherine Miller 549*. Exeter Cooperative School Board: For Exeter for three years, vote for one: William "Bill" Gauthier 585*. For Stratham for three years, vote for one: Helen Joyce 472 *. Philip Jackson 312. For Newfields for three years, vote for one: Paul Bauer 543*.

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

Article 1: ERCSD Operating Budget
Yes: 544* No: 92

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

School Board Member for three years, vote for two: David M. Zippin 283. Kate Davis 403*. Sarah Galligher 359*. Kenneth J. Otto 330.

School District Clerk for three years, vote for one: (No one filed for this position, Jennifer Scrafford received two write in votes.)

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

Select Board for three years, vote for one: Allison Knab 649*. Cemetery Trustee for three years, vote for one: Jessica Kliskey 624*. Trustee of the Trust Funds for three years, vote for one: Patricia Lovejoy 646*. Library Trustee for three years, vote for two: Adrienne R. Sherry 549*. Susan E. Wilbur 577*.

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

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section III, by deleting Subsection 3.8, *Gateway Commercial Business District*, in its entirety and replacing it with an amended Subsection 3.8, *Gateway Commercial Business District*, in order to eliminate site plan requirements that are dependent upon the existence of public water and sewer infrastructure.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 563* No: 151

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

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section III, by deleting Subsection 3.9 *Town Center District* in its entirety and replacing it with an amended Subsection 3.9 *Town Center District*, in order to eliminate site plan requirements that are dependent upon the existence of public water and sewer infrastructure.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 558* No: 151

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

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section III, Subsection 3.6 *Table of Uses* to clarify the nomenclature and permitting requirements and procedures for permitted land uses and to add Footnote Number 10, to clarify the permitting requirements and procedures for light manufacturing uses.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 570* No: 108

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

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section XVI, Section 16.5.3 *Historic Demolition Review Procedure*, by adding Subsection 16.5.3 d. to clarify the permitting requirements and procedures of the Demolition Review Committee.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 587* No: 103

Article 6: Are you in favor of the following amendment to the Town of Stratham Building

Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board?

To amend the Building Ordinance, *Preamble: Authority*, to correct a statutory reference by deleting Chapter 674:51 and replacing it with Chapter 675:3, VII.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 561* No: 103

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

To amend the Building Ordinance, Article IV, Section 4.2 *Third Party Professionals* to clarify that the Town is not responsible for costs associated with necessary third-party reviews.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote

Yes: 606* No: 85

The remaining Town of Stratham articles will be voted on March 27, 2021 at the Exeter Cooperative Middle School at 9:00 am.

Town Moderator David Emanuel declared the meeting come to order at 9:10 a.m. Assistant Moderator Beth Dupell led the community in the Pledge of Allegiance. Moderator David Emanuel introduced the Select Board: Michael Houghton; Chair, Joseph Lovejoy; Vice Chair, and Allison Knab. He also introduced his Assistant Moderator Beth Dupell and Town Administrator David Moore, Town Clerk Joyce Charbonneau, and Deputy Town Clerk Deborah Bakie. Mr. Emanuel asked for a moment of silence in respect for those serving in the Armed Forces, and for those lives lost in the last year due to the Covid 19 epidemic. He then asked Hannah Hall to read the Town Report dedication. This year the dedication was to the First Responders, Essential Workers and the Town Employees. Lucy Cushman then read the Memorial Page dedicated to Wallace Stuart, and Lesley Kimball read the Memorial Page dedicated to Rogers Johnson. Mr. Emanuel then read the results from the Town Election held on Tuesday, March 9, 2021. He then reviewed the Rules of Procedure for Town Meeting.

Article 8: 2021 Operating Budget

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Seven Million Eight Hundred forty four Thousand three Hundred Twenty five Dollars (\$7,844,325) 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. Mr. Houghton moved to accept the article as read. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. Mr. Houghton spoke to the motion. Mr. Houghton explained that the 2021 operating budget totals \$7.84 Million dollars, which is an increase of 5.1% from last year's budget. He explained that the drivers that increased the budget were: Waste Collection, Salaries and Wages, the NH Retirement System, and Paving. Mr. Houghton did note however, that the transition to curbside collection

resulted in savings over manual collection of approximately \$76,000.00 annually, or \$456,000.00 over the life of the contract. The increase from Waste Collection resulted from residents spending more time at home this past year due to the Covid 19 pandemic, resulting in more waste tonnage, an increase of about 11%. Mr. Houghton went on to state the drivers that decreased the budget were Health Insurance, Recreations' Summer Program, and Debt Services. Seeing no questions or comments from the floor, Moderator Emanuel read the question, the vote was taken in the affirmative, and Article 8 passed.

ARTICLE 9: Capital Improvements Program

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four hundred ninety-nine thousand dollars (\$499,000) to implement the Capital Improvements Program for 2021 as presented in the Town Report and recommended by the Planning Board. This is a special warrant article which will be non-lapsing until the specific items are completed or obtained but shall in no case be later than five (5) years from this appropriation per NH RSA 32:7 (VI). The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote. Selectwoman Knab moved to accept the article as read. Selectman Lovejoy seconded the motion. Ms. Knab spoke to the motion. She explained that the Town's Master Plan guides development and land use decisions for the Town. She stated that it identifies strategies, visions, and projects which often require long range capital investment. She further explained that long-term financial planning will ensure that the Town has the needed resources to maintain current services, replace equipment, and upgrade or rehabilitate facilities as needed. The Capital Improvement Plan is the tool used to plan these investments, and this Article appropriates funding for the "year one" projects (2021). Mr. Emanuel then asked for questions from the floor. Paul Piraino, Haywick Dr. asked what is the itemization of the \$499,000 that is being requested for this year. Mr. David Moore, Town Administrator, directed him to the Town Report and referred him to pages 101 and 102, which breaks down the cost. Seeing no further questions or comments from the floor, Moderator Emanuel read the question, the vote was taken in the affirmative, and Article 9 passed.

ARTICLE 10: Appropriate Funds to Several Capital Reserve Funds

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four hundred thousand dollars and (\$400,000) to be added to the following capital reserve funds previously established with One hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) to come from the unassigned fund balance and Two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) to be raised through general taxation.

Fire Dept. Capital Reserve Fund	\$110,000
Radio Communications Capital Reserve Fund	\$15,000
Historic Preservation Capital Reserve Fund	\$50,000
Highway Vehicle/Equipment Capital Reserve Fund	\$125,000
Town Buildings and Grounds Maintenance Trust	<u>\$100,000</u>
Total:	\$400,000

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote. Selectwoman Knab moved to accept the Article as read. Selectman Lovejoy seconded the motion. Ms. Knab spoke to the motion. Ms. Knab explained that the Capital Reserve Fund is another financial tool to manage large expenses. She explained that this avoids a tax spike in any given year. The fund is used to purchase apparatus such as heavy equipment for the Department of Public Works, and Fire trucks for the Fire Department. The CIP also includes the Radio Communications Capital Reserve Fund, the Land Conservation and Historic Preservation Capital Reserve Fund, as well as the Building and Grounds Maintenance Fund. Seeing no questions or comments from the floor, Moderator Emanuel read the question, the vote was taken in the affirmative, and Article 10 passed.

ARTICLE 11: Appropriate Funds for an Additional Police Officer

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Forty-four thousand seven hundred ninety-five dollars (\$44,795) for the purpose of hiring an additional full-time police officer for the Town of Stratham. Said sum includes pay and benefits for six (6) months of 2021 (the 12-month total annualized cost is \$89,590). If approved, the amount raised will be incorporated into the police department pay and personnel administration budgets for accounting purposes. The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

Selectman Michael Houghton moved to accept the article as read. Selectwoman Knab seconded the motion. Selectman Houghton introduced Chief Anthony King of the Stratham Police Department. Moderator Emanuel stated if there was no objection from the floor, Chief King would speak to the motion. Seeing no objections, Chief King introduced himself, and thanked the Community for all of their support since he started almost two years ago, in the Spring of 2019. Chief King stated that the Police Department would always be there for the Community, and that they would strive to offer the best possible service to the Community. Chief King stated he was there today to ask the Town to approve the hiring of a full-time police officer. Chief King explained that over the past two years, he completed an extensive staffing study in order to identify what levels we should be at in order to best serve the Community. Chief King further explained that they are a 24/7 operation with at least one officer coverage around the clock, 7 days a week. He explained that they currently have 11 full time police officers, which includes himself, the Lieutenant position, which are primarily administrative positions, and a full time plain clothes Detective Sergeant assigned to investigations. These 11 officers also includes the School Regional Officer. This position is fully reimbursed by SAU 16. Chief King stated that leaves them with seven officers to perform patrol functions. Chief King explained that for this year, he is only asking for a half year's salary and next year would be the full year's salary. Chief King further stated that he would never inflate statistics or exaggerate the need for anything, be it equipment or manpower. He stated that he would always be honest with the needs for the Police Department in order to serve the Community in the best way that they can. Chief King went on to explain why they need the additional police officer. First, he stated, was for officer

safety. Currently, he explained, there are 76 scheduled hours per week with only one patrol officer on duty. He stated that it is his goal to always have a minimum of two officers on at a time. Secondly, Chief King stated that Stratham falls short in a Nationwide Comparison Analysis. In the State of NH, the police to population per 1,000 is 2.2 officers. He stated that Stratham currently has a 1.45 officer to population ratio per 1000. The third reason, Chief King explained, is existing gaps in service. He explained that increasing call volume and time on tasks forces our officers to become more reactive than proactive. He stated that our Police Department excels in how it connects with the Community, and how positive relationships have been created and maintained, and they want to continue that. The last two reasons he mentioned were Mutual Aid, explaining that they often help neighboring communities when the need arises, which can result in our Town being undermanned, and Traffic Enforcement, which current manpower prevents them from monitoring high traffic areas as much as they would like. Chief King then invited questions from the floor. Moderator Emanuel then asked for questions or comments from the floor. Larry Schmidt, 5 Jason Dr. asked what kind of training is offered for the new hire. Chief King explained that the NH Training Academy mandates eight hours of training a year outside of the normal firearms, defensive tactics, First Aid, and CPR training. The Chief explained that he increased this to 30 hours a year when he started here that includes de-escalation, ethics, implied bias, and use of force training. Now, the NH training academy mandates this which, he stated, we have already implemented. Jennifer Scrafford, 24 Wiggin Way, asked what are the demographics of the Police Department. The Chief explained that we have one female officer, and the rest are males. He further explained that Officer Ken Gauthier, who is currently employed as a part-time officer, would go to full time. He further explained that Officer Gauthier is already certified and has all the equipment. David Canada, 47 Bunker Hill Ave., stated that he is against this proposal. He stated that he thinks that there is a far greater need at the Fire Department which will become a full-time paid Personnel Department sooner rather than later. Mr. Canada explained that when that time comes, it will be a million dollar increase in our budget. He further stated that the national statistics do not reflect the Stratham we know. He explained that he was on the Budget Committee, and although he is not speaking on behalf of the Committee, they had voted unanimously not to fund this request. Mr. Canada went on to go over some statistics. He explained that the population of Stratham increased by only 215 residents from 2010-2019, making this just a 3% increase, while the Police Department increased their staffing by 22% over the last 15 years. He further stated that if the need arises where we need double coverage, we have mutual aid, the Sheriff's Department, and the State Police available to help us. Mr. Canada stated that we should not hire another police officer on chance situations that have alternative solutions. He concluded with a question to the floor. He asked if you feel safe in your home now. Mr. Canada urged the floor to reject this proposal. Chuck Law, 15 Alderwood Dr. stated that he has been a resident of Stratham for the last 28 years, and has been employed by the Stratham Police Department for the last 22 years. He stated that Stratham has grown

immensely in that time with the Industrial Park, the Lindt Chocolate factory, multiple car dealerships, shopping plazas, and new housing developments. Officer Law explained that we have three major roadways that run through our Town. He stated that the Town has now outgrown our Police Department, and that we are the second busiest Police Department that Rockingham Dispatch handles. Officer Law stated that we have only increased the Police Department by two officers in the last 22 years. He explained that if they have to deal with a motor vehicle accident, the time that it takes to do everything is at least an hour, and if there is an injury, it can be multiple hours. He stated that if they stop someone for a DWI, that type of stop can take up to 4 hours. Officer Law stated that as a Use of Force Instructor, it is paramount that we have two officers on 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. He stated that he has been in numerous situations where he has asked for back-up, and the neighboring towns had their own situations they were dealing with and could not send help. He went on to state that you cannot always count on mutual aid. Officer Law stated that in the last few years, the Police Department has had some very serious calls for service, such as homicide, a structure fire where the homeowner was wielding a machete, and a couple of serious assaults. He also stated that as of next year, the Department is required to have 32 hours of annual training in order to keep their certification. He further stated that as a taxpayer, he would be concerned with the level of public safety. He stated that the Police Department is facing a staffing shortage. In conclusion, he closed with a question to the floor. He asked, how do you put a price tag on public safety? Debra Altschiller, Apple Way, stated that while she has the greatest respect for the Police Department, she is against this proposal. She went on to state that if Chief King came before them with a proposal for more service, she would be much more amenable for that. Mrs. Altschiller stated that his ask is for a predetermined hire for another patrol officer that increases the labor pool and does not reflect the demographics of our Town. She further stated that if the Chief had outlined a need for the Department to have a licensed Social Worker that would respond to the increase in calls of domestic violence, well-being checks, sexual violence, and who would assist with the de-escalation that the Chief has outlined in his presentation, then she stated that she would support that. She asked the Chief to review the needs of our Community in a way that reflects the demographic, and social and emotional needs, and that will address the mental issues that our officers are dealing with now. Michael Cicchetti, 5 Jacqueline Way, stated that he supports this proposal. He stated that we are extremely fortunate to have Chief King's leadership, his commitment to the Community's policing, and his thoughtful way of approaching his request. Mr. Cicchetti stated that he feels very fortunate to live in Stratham, and if he has an emergency, he doesn't want to wait for mutual aid from another town. He stated that it is very important to have the proper staffing in this Town. Lucy Cushman, 159 Winnicutt Rd. stated that she supports this proposal, with two caveats. She stated that if the Chief comes back next year for another police officer, she would recommend putting that on hold, and consider hiring a Social Worker. In addition, she stated that if another police officer is hired due to a current officer retiring or leaving, that the additional officer be female. Michael

Cashman, 7 Humes Court, stated that he supports this proposal. He stated that he is retired Law Enforcement, and that going forward with the CALEA accreditation is the gold standard in policing, and he stated that he loves that the Chief is going forward with that. Mr. Cashman informed us that when he was away from home one time, he received a call that there was a fire at his house. He stated that he was so relieved when he was told that Sergeant Call was the first person on the scene. He knew that if one of the Stratham Police Officer's was there, that everything would be handled and it would be ok. Mr. Cashman stated that their job is a very stressful job, and that an additional police officer will definitely help them. He concluded with that he loves this Town and the Police Department, and that he is speaking from his heart. Paul Wolf, 19 Doe Run lane, stated he supports this and further stated that timing is of the essence in an emergency. He explained that this is simply an insurance policy, and although we may never need it, the one time we do, it would be very critical to have that extra officer there. Mr. Wolf stated that it would be short-sighted not to have this additional officer. Rachel Jefferson, 8 Fifield Lane, stated that she was also on the Budget Committee, and further stated that crimes in Stratham are 8.9 times lower than the U.S. average. She also stated that more people than typical are struggling to pay their tax bills. Mrs. Jefferson also stated that it seems irresponsible to add additional staff members to our Town payroll given the uncertainty as we recover from this pandemic. She further stated that over ten years' time, this will be an increase of over a million dollars, and she urges everyone to vote against this. Bob LaCoste, 16 Drumlin Rd., stated that he feels it is dangerous not to have two officers on at all times. He further stated that the response time is important for the Police Officer, more so than any other service in this Town. Mr. LaCoste stated that he strongly supports this motion, and encourages everyone to vote for this Article. Joyce Charbonneau, 33 High St. stated that she supports this Article and the Police Department. She stated that Mr. Canada asked earlier if we feel safe in our community. Joyce stated that while she does feel safe, and reiterated that we have a great Police Department, she asked that shouldn't the question be "Do the Police Officers feel safe when they are responding to a call, without back-up, between 2:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m.?" She went on to state that we need to support our Police Department. She further stated that if Chief King is asking for this, and the Select Board recommended this Article by a unanimous vote, then we, as a Community, need to support Chief King and his Department.

Select Board member Michael Houghton stated he wanted to close out this discussion with a couple of points of clarification. He clarified that this original request was advanced to the Budget Committee as part of the operating budget. He stated that the Budget Committee voted unanimously not to include this Article in the operating budget. Mr. Houghton stated that the Select Board concluded that they would include this Article as a Warrant Article to be discussed at Town Meeting, and for the residents of Stratham to decide on this. He also informed us that they were also asked for \$110,000.00 to assist in staffing with the Fire Department and Emergency Management. He explained that the Select Board did not appropriate the entire \$110,000.00 and that the final number appropriated was approximately

\$78,000.00. Mr. Houghton wanted to clarify that they are also attentive to the needs of the Fire Department and the First Responders. Mr. Houghton also stated that to suggest that we do not support the Police Department in order to support the Fire Department is not logical. He stated that we need to do something about both, and the Fire Department's needs will be addressed when they stand before the Board and its residents addressing their proposal. Mr. Houghton concluded with that he would stand by Tony King any day of the week. He further stated that Chief King is the best he has seen in the role that he is in, and that he will support the Chief with every fiber of his being. Mr. Houghton ended with stating that Chief King is a huge asset to this Town, and he appreciates what he and his staff do to keep the Town safe. Seeing no further questions, Moderator Emanuel announced that he had received a petition with five registered voters from Stratham to vote on this Article by secret ballot. The Article was voted on by secret ballot, and once the ballots were counted by the Assistant Moderator, and her assistant, it showed that Article 11 passed. Moderator Emanuel announced that there were 58 Yes votes, and 18 no votes.

Joyce Charbonneau made a motion to restrict reconsideration of this Article, and the motion was seconded by Deborah Bakie. The motion to restrict reconsideration was voted on and passed.

ARTICLE 12: Appropriation for the Accrued Benefits Liability Expendable Trust

To see if the Town shall vote to appropriate Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) to be deposited into the Accrued Benefits Liability Expendable Trust. The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote. Selectwoman Knab moved to accept the Article as read. Selectman Lovejoy seconded the motion. Ms. Knab spoke to the motion. Ms. Knab explained that the Article is an ongoing practice for setting aside money to provide for the unfunded obligation for the retirement of Town Employees. Seeing no questions or comments from the floor, Moderator Emanuel read the question, the vote was taken in the affirmative, and Article 12 passed.

ARTICLE 13: Raise and Appropriate from the EMS Special Revenue Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) for the following purposes:

2021 EMS/EMT/First Responder Training	\$ 10,000.00
2021 ALS Services Contract	\$ 10,000.00

and to further authorize the withdrawal of Twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) 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 the Article as read. Selectman Houghton seconded the motion. Selectman Lovejoy spoke to the motion. Selectman Lovejoy explained that the EMS/EMT training is for a course that is offered every year for continuing education for our medical personnel. He further explained that the ALS Services Contract is for the advanced life support system's contract with Exeter Hospital. Seeing no questions or comments from the floor, the vote was taken in the affirmative, and Article 13 passed.

ARTICLE 14: Raise and Appropriate from the EMS Special Revenue Fund: Equip.

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One hundred twelve thousand five-hundred dollars (\$112,500) for the following purposes:

Thermal Imaging Cameras	\$12,500
2021 Radio Replacements	\$100,000

and to further authorize the withdrawal of One hundred twelve thousand five-hundred dollars (\$112,500) from the Stratham Fire Department EMS Special Revenue Fund created for these purposes during the March 17, 2000 Annual Town Meeting and as amended during the March 11, 2005 Town Meeting. No additional funds from general taxation are to be used. The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote. Selectman Lovejoy moved to accept the Article as read. Selectman Houghton seconded the motion. Selectman Lovejoy spoke to the motion. Mr. Lovejoy explained that the Fire Department's current thermal imaging camera is in need of replacement. He further explained that the Fire Department will be moving forward with a portable radio replacement project. Mr. Lovejoy explained that the radios are over 19 years old, are a primary communication method for the Department, and that parts are no longer made by the manufacturer. Seeing no questions or comments from the floor, Moderator Emanuel read the question, the vote was taken in the affirmative, and Article 14 passed.

ARTICLE 15: Lapse of Automated Curbside Collection Funding

To see if the Town shall vote to lapse the 2019 appropriation of \$365,000 intended to fund a transition to a curbside collection program. Lapsed funds become part of the Town's unassigned fund balance. The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote. Selectman Houghton moved to accept the Article as read. Selectwoman Knab seconded the motion. Mr. Houghton spoke to the motion. Mr. Houghton explained that through a competitive proposal process the Town was able to secure the acquisition, delivery, storage, and overall management of automation compliant trash and recycling carts through our

vendor. Therefore, the appropriated amount that was approved from the 2019 Warrant Article for \$365,000 to purchase these carts are no longer needed. These funds will become part of the Town's unassigned fund balance. Moderator Emanuel then asked for questions or comments from the floor. Cantrece Forest, Dumbarton Oaks asked "what is the unassigned fund"? David Moore, Town Administrator, explained that these are funds that were not used for their original intended purpose, and can now be used to manage or stabilize the tax rate and to help offset the amount of the annual budget appropriation that would otherwise come from general taxation. Seeing no further questions or comments from the floor, Moderator Emanuel read the question, the vote was taken in the affirmative, and Article 15 passed.

Article 16: Other Business

To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting. Select Board Chair Michael Houghton thanked everyone for coming out to Town Meeting and thanked the Community for their support in 2021. He also stated that he was deeply thankful to all the volunteers for all that they do to make our Community run. With that in mind, he stated that they will be looking at future emergency services, particularly the Fire Department. He stated that the Town will start to construct a plan and to form a sub-group to help frame our approach to this. Mr. Houghton stated that they welcome and encourage anyone who is interested in participating in this group to step up and let them know. Mr. Houghton also informed the residents that the Select Board has stepped up their level of communication with the Select Board Newsletter that is distributed twice a month and encourages everyone to subscribe to this if you haven't already. He then went on to recognize Town Clerk/Tax Collector Joyce Charbonneau. Mr. Houghton stated that Joyce has made it known that she is retiring as of May 7th of this year. He stated that it was his honor to recognize a truly incredible individual who has serviced this Town for the past 17 years in her role as the Town Clerk and Tax Collector. He explained that Joyce was appointed as the Town Clerk/Tax Collector at the time of Shirley Daley's untimely death in April of 2008. He further stated that Joyce went on to win five re-elections, which is a testament to her dedication and hard work. He stated that she is a Steward of the Elections, and ran them smoothly year after year. Mr. Houghton further stated that Joyce oversaw three major elections last year and that they were absolutely flawless in their execution. He stated that her dedication and grit were on display as she also had to deal with the restrictions in place from the Covid 19 pandemic. She also navigated her office enabling the staff to serve the Community and process their transactions throughout the Pandemic. Mr. Houghton further stated that although it may have been different, it was successful, and her leadership made it happen. He went on to say that she has taken great care of our historical records, performed numerous marriage ceremonies, and patiently assisted the residents with their needs day in and day out. Mr. Houghton went on to thank Joyce for all that she has done, and for all of her hard work. He added that they all wish her the best in her retirement. The Moderator

then presented her with flowers. Joyce responded with heartfelt thanks to everyone there, and stated that she loved her job, and will miss the residents and the staff. Joyce stated that it has been a joy and a privilege to serve the residents these past 17 years. Seeing no other business before the floor, Moderator Emanuel adjourned the meeting at 11:29 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joyce L. Charbonneau". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'J' and 'C'.

Joyce L. Charbonneau
Stratham Town Clerk