

## **MARCH 8, 2022 ELECTION AND TOWN MEETING MINUTES**

All Ballot Clerks and Election Workers were sworn in at 6:45 am and 12:45 pm. Present were Moderator David Emanuel, Assistant Moderator Beth Dupell, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Deb Bakie, Deputy Town Clerk/Deputy Tax Collector Jim Joseph, Assistant to the Town Clerk Tara Madden 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, Nancy Hunter, Michael Hunter, Christina Tischler, Gale Lyon, Johanna Greenlaw, Liz Chisholm, Patricia Hughes, Karen Cushing, Joan Gough, June Sawyer, Veronique Ludington, Karen Richard and Cantrece Forest. Lia Joseph, Denise Lemire and Seth Hickey were also present assisting with voter assistance when arriving at the Polls. It was a steady day at the Polls with 1,430 official Election Day ballots cast, with 117 of those being absentee ballots. There were 43 new voters registered on Election Day, making the total number of voters on the Checklist 5,958. This made it a 24% turnout for this election.

### **Exeter Region Cooperative School District Ballot results for *Stratham only* are as follows:**

#### **(\*Denotes the Winner)**

Cooperative School Board, for Exeter for three years: \*Kimberly Meyer 640; Joseph Cahill 629. Cooperative School Board, for Brentwood for three years: \*Melissa A Litchfield 510; Scott Dennehy 490; Melissa Hanlon 29. Cooperative School Board, for East Kingston for three years: \*Kimberly Casey 656; E.A."Ted" Lloyd 618. Cooperative School Board, for Kensington for three years: \*Jennifer Marr 661; Robert Hall 593. For Exeter Cooperative School District Moderator, for three year, vote for one: \*Katherine Miller 817. Cooperative School District Budget Committee, for Exeter for three years: \*Margaret (Meg) Bateman 702; Robert Delorie 462. Cooperative School District Budget Committee, for Newfields for three years: \*Patricia Cox 593; Donald A. Cardinale 561. Cooperative School District Budget Committee, for Stratham for three years: \*Patrick Gillis 678; Heidi Hanson 622.

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

#### **Article 1:** ERCSD Operating Budget

**Yes: 688 No: 499**

#### **Article 2:** ERSCD Collective Bargaining Agreement- Administrator

**Yes: 782 No: 548**

#### **Article 3:** ERSCD Collective Bargaining Agreement- Paraprofessional

**Yes: 1154 No: 200**

#### **Article 4:** ERSCD Collective Bargaining Agreement- Teacher

**Yes: 1119 No: 235**

**Stratham Memorial School District Ballot results as follows:**

**(\*Denotes the Winner)**

School Board Member for three years, vote for one: \*Kenneth Otto 1040. School Board Member for two years, vote for one: \*Jennifer Scrafford 740; James Bolton 638. School Board Member for one year, vote for one: \*Erik Herring 724, Rachel Jefferson 654. School District Moderator for three years, vote for one: \*David Emanuel 1118. School District Treasurer: write-in, \*Amber Dagata 113.

**Annual Town of Stratham Ballot results as follows:**

**(\*Denotes the Winner)**

Select Board for three years, vote for one: \*Joseph Anderson 1048. Town Clerk for one year, vote for one: \*Deborah Bakie 1112. Town Moderator for two years, vote for one: \*David Emanuel 1134. Cemetery Trustee for three years, vote for one: \*Lucy Cushman 1074. Trustee of the Trust Funds for three years, write-in: \*Donna Marsh 20. Library Trustee for three years, vote for two: \*Ana Makabali 462, Denise Bowdidge-Katz 339, \*Connie Gilman 540, Thomas Jarvela 295. Supervisors of the Checklist for six years, vote for not more than one: \*Melanie McGrail 1025.

**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, by deleting Section XV *Growth Management & Innovative Land Control* and renumbering subsequent sections of the Ordinance. This is a housekeeping amendment as Section XV of the Ordinance includes a sunset provision to expire in March 2014 and is therefore no longer enforceable.

***The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.***

**Yes: 1098    No: 149**

**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 Sub-Section 3.7 *Flexible/Mixed Use Development District* in its entirety and to replace it with a revised Sub-Section 3.7 *Flexible/Mixed Use Development District*. The purpose of this amendment is to better clarify permitted and prohibited land uses and other land use requirements in the district, which is limited to the parcel housing the former New Hampshire Technical College.

***The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.***

**Yes: 1101    No: 136**

**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 V, Sub-Section 5.4 *Accessory Dwelling Units* in its entirety and to replace with a revised Sub-Section 5.4 *Accessory Dwelling Units* to clarify the requirements associated with accessory dwelling units and to enact additional requirements for detached accessory dwelling units to ensure that such uses do not create the appearance of two primary residences on a single lot.

***The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.***

**Yes: 984      No: 257**

**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 V, Sub-Section 5.14.4.2 *Setbacks for Solar Energy Systems* in its entirety and replace with a revised Sub-Section 5.14.4.2 in order to require all ground-mounted solar energy systems meet the minimum property setbacks of the applicable zoning district and to require medium- and large-scale systems be set back a minimum of 60 (sixty) feet from the front property boundary.

***The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.***

**Yes: 980      No: 258**

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

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section III, to establish a new zoning district, the *Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage District*, codified as Section 3.10, for parcels with frontages along the Route 33 corridor from the Town Center District to the Greenland town line. The intent of the District is to encourage historic preservation and adaptive re-use of structures through both greater regulation of demolitions and major building alterations as well as through greater flexibility in land uses.

***The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.***

**Yes: 975      No: 251**

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

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section III, by deleting Table 3.6 *Table of Uses* and *Footnotes to Table 3.6* in its entirety and to replace with a revised Section 3.6 *Table of Uses* and *Footnotes to Table 3.6* in order to better clarify permitted and prohibited land uses by zoning district. This amendment would also permit Personal Services in the Professional/Residential District and, if

passed, would account for land uses in the Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage District.

***The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.***

**Yes: 989 No: 203**

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

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section II *Definitions*, to provide definitions for land uses included in Table 3.6 *Table of Uses* to better define and clarify the permitted nature and scope of land uses.

***The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.***

**Yes: 1052 No: 143**

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

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section IV, Section 4.2 Table of Dimensional Requirements and Section 4.3 Explanatory Notes to clarify that ‘porkchop lots’ which do not meet the minimum frontage requirements are prohibited and to clarify that the minimum frontage requirement for parcels in the Professional/Residential District shall be 150-feet.

***The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.***

**Yes: 981 No: 226**

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

To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section V, by deleting Section 5.7 *Affordable Senior Housing* and re-numbering subsequent sections of the Ordinance, because the Ordinance already provides for Elderly Affordable Housing and this section is duplicative. This is a housekeeping amendment to eliminate inconsistencies related to the land use in the Ordinance.

***The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.***

**Yes: 1107 No: 102**

**Article 11:** 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 XVI, by amending Section 16.2.1 in order to prohibit the issuance of building permits for a property if existing un-inspected or expired permits have been outstanding for a period of one year or more. This amendment would require property owners to address any outstanding safety issues related to previously issued building permits and allow for necessary inspections before a new building permit for the same property could be issued.

***The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.***

**Yes: 964 No: 256**

**The remaining Town of Stratham articles will be voted on March 12, 2022 at the Exeter Cooperative Middle School at 9:00 am.**

Town Moderator David Emanuel declared the meeting come to order. Boy Scouts Pack and Troop 185 presented colors with Pledge of Allegiance. Moderator David Emanuel introduced the panel: Dave Emanuel; Town Moderator, David Moore; Town Administrator, Michael Houghton; Select Board Chair, Joseph Lovejoy; Select Board Vice Chair, Allison Knab; Select Board, and Joe Anderson; Select Board Elect. He also invited other officials and department heads to introduce themselves, they included Assistant Moderator, Beth Dupell; Abby Karoutas, Town Counsel; Nate Mears, Director of Public Works; Mark Connors, Town Planner; Leslie Kimball; Library Director, Christiane McAllister; Finance Administrator, Jim Marchese; Building Inspector, Tony King; Chief of Police, Deborah Bakie; Town Clerk and Jim Joseph; Deputy Town Clerk. 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 pandemic. He then invited Nate Merrell to read the Town Report dedication. This year the report was dedicated to Florence "Flossie" Chisholm Wiggin. Patty Lovejoy then read the Memorial Page dedicated to Bob O'Sullivan. Mr. Emanuel read the results from the Town Election held on Tuesday, March 8, 2022. He reviewed the Rules of Procedure for Town Meeting. He also introduced the supervisors of the checklist, Melanie McGrail, Connie Aubin-Adams and Cathy Warner.

#### **ARTICLE 12: 2022 Operating Budget**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of eight million fifty thousand one hundred and eighty-five dollars (\$8,050,185) 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 outlined the goals of the operating budget which ensures that the Town's operations can continue, the Town can make progress on its master plan and other goals. He explained that the benefit of the American Rescue Plan Act funds. These funds are to be deployed in a way that strengthens the Town's financial position over the long term. Details associated with the budget can be found in the 2021 town report on page 69 and published on the Town's website. Mr. Houghton spoke on the relationship between tax dollars and town services stating that .17 of every tax dollar goes to town services. Mr. Houghton then explained how the funds were allocated within the town and stated that the operating budget has remained stable. Mr. Houghton also spoke on the water quality challenges and issues as a long-term challenge. Richard Swett, a resident of 24 Vineyard Drive, spoke to the rising costs of arsenic mitigation for his association and reemphasized that arsenic also remains an issue partly due to more strict arsenic level regulations. Seeing there were no other questions or comments from the floor, Moderator Emanuel read the question, the vote was taken in the affirmative, and Article 12 passed.

#### **ARTICLE 13: Capital Improvements Program**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of four hundred and seventy-three thousand dollars (\$473,000) to implement the Capital Improvements Program for 2022 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. Ms. Knab moved to accept the article as read. Selectman Houghton seconded the motion. Ms. Knab spoke to the motion. Ms. Knab explained that the Town's Capital Improvement Program is a planning tool established by state law that allows towns to work toward the goals and priorities of the Master Plan. She further explained that it looks at investments over a 6 year timeline for items that are infrequent or non-reoccurring expenses, such as infrastructure projects, building maintenance, highway maintenance, conservation projects and rolling stock, referencing page 78 in the 2021 town report. Pat Abrami, a resident of 9 Tall Pines Drive, asked about a dedication sign for the Smyk property, which was deeded to the Town by Walt and Mary Smyk. He asked for an update on this sign. David Moore gave a status update and replied that in accordance with the terms of the bequest the Smyk's Trustees were responsible for the installation of a plaque at the site. He indicated that the Town reached out to the Trustees and offered to assist in managing this project. He said has been done and the funding will be provided by the Smyk Trustees who are based in California. Larry Schmidt of 5 Jason Drive, asked for clarification of the totals on the PowerPoint slide noting a total appeared to be incorrect. Mr. Moore provided further clarification and that the total expenditure on the slide matched the warrant. Seeing no further questions or comments from the floor, Moderator Emanuel read the question, the vote was taken in the affirmative, and Article 13 passed.

#### **ARTICLE 14: Appropriate Funds to Several Capital Reserve Funds**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of two hundred and ninety thousand dollars (\$290,000) to be added to the following capital reserve funds previously established with One hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) to come from the unassigned fund balance and One hundred forty thousand dollars (\$140,000) to be raised through general taxation.

Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund	\$110,000
Radio Communications Capital Reserve Fund	\$5,000
Historic Preservation Capital Reserve Fund	\$50,000
Highway Vehicle/Equipment Capital Reserve Fund	<u>\$125,000</u>
Total	\$290,000

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote. Ms. 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 used to manage large expenses. She explained that investing in this tool avoids a tax hike in any given year when large expenses are incurred. The Town has six Capital Reserve Funds. Funding for the land conservation fund is not recommended this year as funds have come in from the land use change tax, nor are the funds recommended for the building and grounds maintenance because those funds have been covered by ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds. Ms. Knab noted that the highway

department plans to replace a 6 wheel heavy duty truck in 2022 and the fire department is planning to replace engine one in 2023. The ARPA funds will be used to replace the roof at the salt shed, for road reconstruction projects and for online permitting and software equipment. Ms. Knab summarized, reiterating that the Capital Reserve Funds allow planning for future capital large scale expenditures, timely replacement without large hikes in the tax rate, and allows equipment to be replaced based on lifecycle and allows for consistent service. Pat Abrami, 9 Tall Pines Drive, asked for clarification of the total amount spent on the ARPA funds. Mr. Moore provided a summary of total ARPA funds received, used, and remaining. Seeing no further questions or comments from the floor, Moderator Emanuel read the question, the vote was taken in the affirmative, and Article 14 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 twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) for the following purposes:

2022 EMS/EMT/First Responder Training	\$10,000
2022 ALS Services Contract	\$10,000

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. Mr. Lovejoy moved to accept the Article as read. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. Mr. Lovejoy spoke to the motion. Funding is required annually for repeated training for EMS personnel to stay current and the proposed \$10,000 is to defray those costs. The ALS (Advance Life Support) services contract (\$10,000) cost is to defray the costs which occur in severe circumstances during transportation using the services of Advanced Life Support personnel. Mr. Lovejoy stated that the Town does not have advanced services to transport and uses the services of Exeter Hospital to provide the ALS personnel to accompany our ambulance drivers. Mr. Lovejoy stated that both Medicare and Medicaid require the transporting organization to bill for these services. In order to obtain these services and reimburse the hospital when their personnel is used, \$10,000 is set aside to pay for that. These funds will be recovered with no additional costs to the Town. Nancy Hunter, resident of 2 Brown Avenue, asked why we do not have our own paramedics. Mr. Lovejoy reiterated that it is a costly venture for the Town to absorb training personnel. 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: Raise and Appropriate from the EMS Special Revenue Fund: Equip.**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of three hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$350,000) for the following purposes:

Replacement of Ambulance #2	\$350,000
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and to further authorize the withdrawal of three hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$350,000) 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. Mr. Lovejoy moved to accept the Article as read. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. Mr. Lovejoy spoke to the motion. Mr. Lovejoy described that a new ambulance will replace the current 2008 ambulance which is outdated and in need of constant repair. Mr. Lovejoy invited Peggy Crosby, EMS Captain, to speak in support of the new ambulance. Jeremy Riecks, a resident of 18 Doe Run Lane, asked if this ambulance will work with the traffic interrupters. Ms. Crosby responded. Tim Slager, resident of 4 Pheasant Run, spoke to the state of the equipment at intersections and how the traffic interrupters work. Pat Abrami, 9 Tall Pines Drive, asked if the state has ownership of the lights and ability to control the traffic interceptors efficiently. Dave Emanuel responded that it is typically a town issue, not a state issue. Mr. Moore pledged to follow up on the roles and responsibilities related to the interrupters and work with the Select Board on any appropriate actions on behalf of the Town. Seeing no further questions or comments from the floor, Moderator Emanuel read the question, the vote was taken in the affirmative, and Article 16 passed.

#### **ARTICLE 17: To Raise the Service-Connected Total Disability Tax Credit**

To see if the Town will vote to modify the Tax Credit for Service-Connected Total Disability in the Town of Stratham, in accordance with RSA 72:35 from its current tax credit of \$2,000 per year to \$4,000 per year.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote. Ms. Knab moved to accept the Article as read. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. Ms. Knab spoke to the motion. Ms. Knab stated that this Article is in response to a change in State Law which allows the credit to rise from \$2,000 (what it was previously) to a limit of \$4,000. 15 Stratham residents would continue to receive this credit based on past participation. Ms. Knab stated that this applies to service members who have been honorably separated from services in the United States Armed Forces and to those who have a total and permanent service-connected disability, or a double amputee, or a paraplegic, because of a service connected injury. The tax credit would raise the upper limit by \$2,000 and has a total tax impact of \$30,000. Seeing no questions or comments from the floor, Moderator Emanuel read the question, the vote was taken in the affirmative, and Article 17 passed.

#### **ARTICLE 18: Other Business**

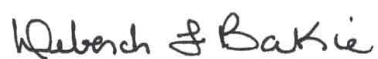
To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting. Lucy Cushman, a resident of 159 Winnicutt Road, asked for clarification of the acronyms used during the meeting. David Moore clarified this information. Ms. Cushman also suggested (due to the Town's growth) that the Town, in conjunction with the Fire Department consider a full time fire department. Pat Abrami, a resident of 9 Tall Pines Road, spoke in regards to ARPA money allocations and distribution throughout the State of New Hampshire. Moderator Emanuel thanked Mr. Abrami for the information and then invited Select Board Chair Houghton to offer acknowledgements. Mr.



Houghton began by congratulating newly elected officials and asking them to stay for an oath administration following the Town Meeting. Mr. Houghton went on thanking the residents for their amazing support and the gracious way that they supported the Town Staff during the pandemic as the staff strived to continue to provide consistent and high quality services. He then recognized the Town Staff, thanking them for the amazing contributions they provide while serving the Town's needs to included Karen Richard; Executive Assistant to the Town Administrator and Denise Lemire; Land Use Department Coordinator. Mr. Houghton congratulated Florence "Flossie" Wiggin and thanked her for her years of service during her time with the Heritage Commission and the energy that she brings to the Town to make it a better place. He also thanked June Sawyer a long standing member of the fire department and budget advisory committee, for all of her work during her 15 years as a Cemetery Trustee, which is ending with this Town Meeting. Mr. Houghton continued by thanking Vice-Chair Joe Lovejoy for his dedication and service to the Select Board over the past 6 years. Mr. Houghton spoke to Mr. Lovejoy's engagement with the community and how it is something Mr. Lovejoy has cherished and acted upon. Mr. Houghton went on to explain the several different areas that Mr. Lovejoy has contributed to through his support and resulting in cost reductions. Mr. Houghton further stated that he was a trusted advisor to the DPW, fire department and recreation commission making himself available representing the Select Board and representing each department to the Select Board. Mr. Houghton then presented Mr. Lovejoy with a clock in appreciation of his dedication and support to the Town. In conclusion, Mr. Lovejoy spoke on how he enjoyed his 6 years while serving on the Select Board. He further went on to say that he hoped that Mr. Anderson enjoys the Select Board as much as he did. He then thanked Karen Richard, Administrative Assistant to the Town Administrator whom he fondly referred to as his own personal assistant. Mr. Lovejoy then thanked everyone he has encountered along the way and the wonderful support he received from the staff and hopes that they continue to offer the same support to his successor.

Moderator Emanuel asked if there was any further business to discuss. Seeing no other business before the floor, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting. Moderator Emanuel adjourned the meeting at 10:42 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Deborah L. Bakie  
Stratham Town Clerk