

**TOWN OF STRATHAM
TOWN ELECTION MINUTES
MARCH 10, 2020**

The ballot clerks and election workers were sworn in at 7:55 am and 1:55 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 Joe Lovejoy, Michael Houghton, and Allison Knab. Supervisors of the Checklist present were Connie Aubin-Adams, and Melanie McGrail. Ballot clerks for the day were: Cheryl Ewart, Diana Alsterberg, Susan Canada, Susan Brett, Dianna Thompson, Roger Thompson, Lois Graham, Liz Chisholm, Patricia Hughes, Karen Cushing, Joan Gough, and Sara Lyn Doran. It was a quiet day with 483 official Election Day ballots cast, with 15 of those being absentee ballots. There was 1 new voter registered on Election Day, making the total number of voters on the Checklist at 6581. This made it a 7.3% 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 Brentwood for three years, vote for one: Morgan Lois DeYoung, 335*. For Exeter for three years, vote for one: Roy Morrisette 351*. For Kensington for three years, vote for one: Jennifer Ramsay 353*. For Exeter Cooperative School District Moderator, for one year, vote for one: Katherine Miller 363*. Exeter Cooperative School Board: For Exeter for three years, vote for one: David Slifka 341*. For Stratham for three years, vote for one: Travis Thompson 430*. For East Kingston for three years, vote for one: Mary Kathleen (Kathy) McNeill 344*.

Stratham only results:

Article 1: ERCSD Operating Budget

Yes: 311* No: 141

Article 2: Sale of Land

Yes: 378* No: 72

Stratham Memorial School District Ballot results as follows:

(*Denotes the Winner)

School Board Member for three years, vote for two: Carissa Magri 407*. Erin Garcia de Paredes 396*.

Annual Town of Stratham Ballot results as follows:

(*Denotes the Winner)

Select Board for three years, vote for one: Michael Houghton 421*. Cemetery Trustee for three years, vote for one: Colin Laverty 432*. Supervisor of the Checklist for six years, vote for one: Cathy Warner 435*. Town Clerk/Tax Collector for three years, vote for one: Joyce L. Charbonneau 447*. Town Moderator for two years, vote for one: David F. Emanuel 449*. Trustee of the Trust Funds for three years, vote for one: Mikki Deschaine 426*. Library Trustee for three years, vote for one: Kate Kim 429*. Library Trustee for one year, vote for one: Susan Wilbur 429*

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 II, Subsection 2.1.67 Structure to further clarify the definition as it relates to the permitting requirements and procedures related to septic tank installation.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 374 No: 79*

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 III, by amending to Section III, Subsection 3.5.1, and also to amend Section III, Subsection 3.6 *Table of Uses* to clarify the nomenclature and the permitting requirements and procedures for the various permitted land uses of the Zoning Ordinance, and also to amend the *Footnotes to Table 3.6* by adding footnote number 9, to clarify the permitting requirements and procedures for uses within the Industrial Zoning District.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 358 No: 93*

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 IV, by amending to Section IV, Subsection 4.3 (e) *Explanatory Notes*, to clarify the process for waiving the prescriptive height limitations within the zoning districts so permitted by Section IV, Subsection 4.2 *Table of Dimensional Requirements*, as provided by the Zoning Ordinance.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 354 No: 112*

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 the Zoning Ordinance, Section V, Section 5.4 Accessory Dwelling Units, Subsection 5.4.2 *Objectives*, 5.4.3 *Regulations*, and 5.4.4 *Additional Regulations* to clarify the permitting requirements and procedures for Accessory Dwelling Units.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 346* No: 122

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 the Zoning Ordinance, Section V, Subsection 5.14.4.1 *Exceptions* to modify the maximum height for ground mount installations.

The Planning Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Yes: 360* No: 108

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 XI, Subsection 11.3.2 b and amend Section XI, Subsection 11.5.3.b 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: 360* No: 110

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: 353* No: 109

The remaining Town of Stratham articles will be voted on July 11, 2020 at the Stratham Memorial School at 9:00 am.

Town Moderator Dave Emanuel declared the meeting come to order at 9:27 am. He checked on tents 1 – 4 to ensure tight communication with the deputy monitors in those tents. Selectman Michael Houghton 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. Mr Emanuel also introduced additional assistants to help with the ballot counting: Kyle Hollasch, Travis Thompson, and David Black. Mr. Emanuel asked for a moment of silence in

respect for those serving in the Armed Forces and friends and family who could not be with us today. Mr. Emanuel reviewed the Rules of Procedure for Town Meeting.

Article 9 - 2020 Operating Budget

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Seven Million Eight Hundred Sixty Seven Thousand One Hundred Twenty Six Dollars and no cents (\$7,867,126) 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 motioned to move the article. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion.

Mr. Houghton proposed a motion to amend the current motion to replace the sum in Article 9, to read as Seven Million, Four Hundred Sixty Thousand One Hundred Forty Nine dollars and no cents (\$7,460,149). Mr. Lovejoy seconded the amendment to Article 9.

Mr. Houghton thanked everyone for their patience and for attending. He went on to explain what the resident's tax dollars are going towards. He explained that we are in the seventh month of our fiscal year. He explained that at the outset of the health crisis, we have worked diligently to maintain an operating budget that is one tenth of one percent over last year's operating budget. Over time our annual growth has averaged 2%. He showed a diagram which illustrated the breakdown by percentages of the Operating Budget. Next, he listed the items driving the budget increases and decreases instituted to manage the pandemic. He cited sources of revenue and the anticipated use of fund balances to reduce the taxable burden on the town.

Bruce Scamman, 3 Blossom Lane, and Chairman of the Budget Advisory Committee listed the Committee Members and thanked these members for their participation, stating that they met more times this year than ever before. He said the Committee originally opposed the budget. However, with the reductions that have been made, they will not oppose it, nor will they oppose the CIP or the Reserve Fund.

Stacey Hall, 11 Pinewood Drive, inquired about the impact of removing the proposed police officer. Mr. Houghton yielded to Police Chief Anthony King. Chief King said that when he was hired, he reviewed his manpower and personnel, and, prior to Covid, he requested one full time officer. However, he stated that we have been making adjustments due to the Covid 19 pandemic. He agreed an additional officer would be beneficial, but they are adjusting.

Mike Cashman spoke in favor of adding an officer, saying that compared to surrounding communities, we are number 2 in calls. He expressed concern for our officers, referring to the Greenland incident.

A resident (not clear on name) spoke in support of putting the additional police position back in the budget.

Mr. Emanuel said there is an amendment on the floor to revise the original article. He explained that this is to revise the amendment to the article. He explained that to add an officer back in, we need to vote this amendment down, then someone would need to propose a revised amendment

with the additional officer. The amendment is to replace the original \$7,460,149. The vote was taken and passed.

John Scheel, 154 Portsmouth Ave. motioned that the town add the additional officer to the budget. Tim Copeland seconded the motion. Mr. Emanuel asked for a dollar amount for one police officer. Mr. Houghton asked to clarify the specific number they would be adding back to the budget.

Pat Abrami commented that he believed amendments needed to be written down.

Mr. Moore explained that we are in the 7th month of our fiscal year. When we budgeted originally we budgeted for a six month position. He stated that the six month position, (salary only), would be \$39,000.

Mr. Scheel motioned to add \$39,000 to the budget for the purpose of an additional police officer. He felt the money would be well spent for the safety of the residents.

Mr. Moore stated the new total, including the officer, would be \$7,499,149. Wanting to manage expectations, Mr. Moore said the hiring and training process would take time. He also stated that, as a technical clarification, in accordance with the rules of Town Meeting and the Municipal Budget Act of the State of NH, the Town Meeting cannot direct a specific expenditure in adding to this gross appropriation amount. The responsibility falls to the Select Board to implement what they are hearing.

The Moderator again stated the amendment as revised would increase the budget by \$39,000. This amendment amends the budget for a new total of \$7,499,149. The motion was seconded by Tim Copeland.

John Demopoulos, Morning Star Dr. questioned the point of order, believing this should be a reconsideration. Mr. Emanuel explained that this is a second amendment to revise the dollar amount of the Operating Budget by \$39,000 for a new total of \$7,499,149.

Jacob Johnson, 7 Union Rd, commented that many people put a lot of thoughtful work into the budget as proposed. He wanted clarification that in subsequent years the additional police officer would be a full year's salary added every year or we would have to reduce the appropriation for the Police going forward. He stated that he didn't think the Police would want just a six month hire. This is a long term deal that we are approving if this additional amendment passes.

The Moderator clarified by saying when Mr. Moore spoke about the six months, the intent was not to hire a six month position. The intent was to amend the salary to reflect the remaining six months of this year.

Mr. Johnson noted that we would have to ask the officer not to come back after six months or refund the position in perpetuity.

Mr. Houghton thanked Mr. Johnson for the clarity. This vote would fund an additional full time officer from now and into the future. The burden for the remaining part of this year would be \$39,000.

Steve Simons, 22 Vineyard Dr, asked for clarification on the total including the officer.

The Moderator said with the proposed amendment the total would be \$7,499,149.

Rachael Jefferson, 8 Fifield Lane, asked how a six month position can be funded without considering benefits. Mr. Moore responded that this was the benefits, payroll taxes, and salary. He stated that for the amount of time remaining in the year, that amount would be sufficient. The action of the town meeting is to provide the appropriation that allows for it to be covered. The Board understands the intent.

Craig Teed, 2 Country Farm Road, thanked the town for freezing expenditures when the pandemic hit. He supports saying yes to Article 9.

Bruno Federico, would like to hear from Chair of the BAC as to their concerns about the original budget. Mr. Emanuel requested that the response remain pertinent to the \$39,000 we are speaking about.

Bruce Scamman said the committee looked at the police position. It was not unanimous to not fund, but almost unanimous. He stated that the thought process was that we added the 11th officer around two years ago and that didn't get fully positioned until last year. We went from 10 to 11 officers a year ago and the committee felt that we needed more time with the 11 officers to determine if it was necessary to add a 12th officer. The committee also held discussions about the number of calls.

John Scheel proposed that we change the amended amount to \$7,499,149. The Police Department ensures our freedoms and we need to support them as much as possible.

Seeing no other speakers, the Moderator moved to vote on Article 9 which would add \$39,000 for a new total of \$7,499,149. Upon hearing the vote, Mr. Emanuel stated that it was a close enough vote that it was unclear to him how that vote stands. He asked everyone in favor of the amendment to Article 9 to increase the operating budget to \$7,499,154 to stand. The Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, and Deputy Moderator counted the standing voters. He then asked those opposed to Article 9 to stand. Those voters were also counted. The amendment to Article 9 failed by a vote of 200 – 143. The Moderator then said the Article before us is back to the amount as originally amended which is \$7,460,149. Seeing no further discussion, he moved to vote on Article 9, the 2020 operating budget - to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Seven Million, Four Hundred Sixty Thousand One Hundred Forty Nine dollars and no cents (\$7,460,149) to defray general town charges for the ensuing year. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. The vote was taken. Article 9 passed as amended.

Article 10 – Capital Improvement Program. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Hundred Forty Three Thousand Dollars (\$443,000.00) to implement the Capital Improvements Program for 2020 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 motioned to accept the article as read. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. Ms. Knab said that prior to speaking to the motion she is proposing to amend the current motion to replace the sum in Article 10, to read as Three Hundred Sixty Four Thousand dollars and no cents (\$364,000). Mr. Houghton seconded the motion.

Ms. Knab explained that the CIP is a planning vehicle established by state law that helps the Town implement its Master Plan. Our Master Plan identifies development and land use decisions for the town which often includes long term capital investments. This CIP is a tool for managing those investments. The CIP identifies the town's needs over a six year timeline. She noted the line item amounts in the Town Reports have changed. Highlights include a police cruiser replacement and upgrading technology at the Municipal Center, funding towards building and infrastructure, such as a Library space needs assessment, Parks & Recreation improvements, roadway reconstruction, and State Roadway Intersection projects.

Marty Wool, Winnicutt Rd, thanked the Select Board and the Employees for the super job they did in organizing this event. Mr. Wool stated that all areas of our expenditures have been reduced on a well scheduled plan during these uncertain times. The Select Board has done a great job of spreading out the reductions that they think are needed to keep the Town moving forward.

Nancy Hunter, Brown Ave, recognized that she cannot ask for a line item veto. She questioned how \$35,000 could be cut for a Police Dept. vehicle, yet \$15,000 was kept for a Parks & Rec van.

Tedd Tramaloni, 2 Scamman Rd, requested clarification on the information systems computer technology upgrades noting the Voter Information Guide shows a reduction of \$14,000. He asked what the net was and if the Town was buying new technology or not. Mr. Moore responded saying that the intention of the amendment was to reduce workstation replacements published in the Town Report by \$4,000. We ended up at \$15,000 for workstation replacements.

Seeing no other questions or comments on the amendment to Article 10, Mr. Emanuel stated that we will vote on the amendment to Article 10. The amendment is to change the amount to \$364,000. The Amendment passed for Article 10.

The Moderator then went back to the original business for Article 10 as amended. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Hundred Sixty Four Thousand Dollars (\$364,000.00) to implement the Capital Improvements Program for 2020 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). Article 10 passed as amended.

Rachel Jefferson, 8 Fifield Lane, motioned to restrict reconsideration of Article 9. Jacob Johnson, 7 Union Rd, seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Article 11 - Appropriate Funds to Several Capital Reserve Funds. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Hundred Ninety-Nine Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$499,000.00) to be added to the following capital reserve funds previously established with One Hundred Fifty Thousand (\$150,000) to come from the unassigned fund balance and Three Hundred and Forty Nine Thousand (\$349,000) to be raised through general taxation.

Land Conservation Fund	\$35,000
Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund	\$134,000
Radio Communications Capital Reserve Fund	\$15,000
Historic Preservation Capital Reserve Fund	\$50,000
Highway Vehicle/Equipment Capital Reserve Fund	\$215,000
Town Buildings and Grounds Maintenance Trust	<u>\$50,000</u>
Total	\$499,000

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

Ms. Knab motioned to accept the article as read. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. Ms. Knab said that prior to speaking to the motion, she would like to amend the current motion to replace the first sum in Article 11, to read as Four Hundred Fifty Seven Thousand dollars and no cents (\$457,000). And, to reflect the total funds to be raised (after use of fund balance of \$150,000) to be Three Hundred Thousand Seven Dollars (\$307,000). Mr. Houghton seconded the motion.

Ms. Knab explained that the Capital Reserve Fund is another financial tool to manage large expenses. This avoids a tax spike in any given year. The fund is used to purchase fire trucks and other apparatus, i.e. heavy equipment for the Dept. of Public Works. It is also used to create repositories to respond to potential conservation and historic preservation opportunities. In an effort to be conservative in light of current economic conditions, they have amended the Land Conservation Fund from \$35,000 to \$18,000 and the Historic Preservation Capital Reserve Fund from \$50,000 to \$25,000. The CIP also includes the Radio Communication Capital Reserve Fund, Building Maintenance, Capital projects such as replacing the Municipal Center and DPW salt shed roofs and HVAC improvements.

Mr. Emanuel said that we will vote on the Amendment to Article 11 – to replace the sum in Article 11 as read from \$457,000 to reflect total funds raised after the use of the fund balance to be \$307,000 and to revise the amount of the Land Conservation fund to \$18,000 and the Historic Preservation fund to \$25,000.

Paul Deschaine, Thornhill Rd. made a point of clarification. The appropriation is actually \$457,000 which is the gross amount. You aren't reducing it to \$307,000 which is the net amount. Mr. Emanuel thanked him and read the article again - to replace the first sum in Article

11 to read as \$457,000 and to reflect the total funds to be raised after the use of the fund balance of \$150,000 to be \$307,000 and to revise the amount of the contributions to the Land Conservation Fund to \$18,000 and the Historic Preservation Fund to \$25,000. He then called for a vote on the amendment to the article as just read. The amendment to Article 11 passed as stated.

Paul (last name not clear) asked for clarification as to what the figure was that we are voting on. Mr. Emanuel read the article as amended: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Hundred Fifty Seven Thousand dollars and no cents (\$457,000) to be added to the following capital reserve funds previously established with One Hundred Fifty Thousand (\$150,000) to come from the unassigned fund balance and Three Hundred Thousand Seven Dollars (\$307,000) to be raised through general taxation.

Land Conservation Fund	\$18,000
Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund	\$134,000
Radio Communications Capital Reserve Fund	\$15,000
Historic Preservation Capital Reserve Fund	\$25,000
Highway Vehicle/Equipment Capital Reserve Fund	\$215,000
Town Buildings and Grounds Maintenance Trust	<u>\$50,000</u>
Total	\$457,000

The vote was taken in the affirmative and Article 11 as amended passed.

Article 12 – Raise and Appropriate from the EMS Special Revenue Fund. To raise and appropriate from the EMS Special Revenue Fund the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$20,000.00) for the following purposes:

2020 EMS/EMT/First Responder Training	\$10,000.00
2020 ALS Services Contract	\$10,000.00

and to further authorize the withdrawal of Twenty Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$20,000.00) 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. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to accept the article as read. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. Mr. Lovejoy explained how a special fund was set up years ago to pay for necessary items for the Fire Dept. He then explained how the ALS services contract works, noting the ALS funds are recovered by billing through the providers. Nothing in this article effects taxes. Seeing no questions or comments, the Moderator called a vote on Article 12. Article 12 passed.

Article 13 - Replacement of Jaws of Life for Fire Department. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$30,000.00) for the purpose of purchasing new Jaws of Life and to further authorize the withdrawal of Thirty Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$30,000.00) from the 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 motioned to accept the article as read. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. Mr. Lovejoy explained that the Jaws of Life that we have is outdated. We need a device that is compatible for the types of cars we drive today. The funds will come out of the Fire Department Special Fund. This appropriation will not make any changes to resident's taxes. Seeing no questions or comments, the Moderator called a vote on Article 13. Article 13 passed as presented.

Article 14 - Adopt Legislation Authorizing Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Districts. To see if the Town will vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 162-K, Municipal Economic Development and Revitalization Districts, which if adopted will grant the Town (at Town Meeting) authority to establish tax increment financing districts.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to accept the article. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. Mr. Lovejoy said Articles 14 and 15 concern economic development in our community. He then gave a brief history: He stated that many years ago a group was concerned about economic development and eventually the Gateway District was created. The Master Plan, released in 2008, included a vision for the Gateway that would necessitate municipal water and sewer services in the district. Zoning regulations were put in place to implement the Gateway vision. Residents voted overwhelmingly in favor of the Gateway Master Plan in 2010 and 2014. In 2017, a group was created to research if the vision for the Gateway district was still valid. A survey was done which showed the community favored pursuing the Gateway Master Plan, which called for water/sewer with the provision that the developers/owners pay their fair share. A TIF would help drive this process. In 2018 – 2019 a group was assembled and spent months updating the town Master Plan. This was adopted by the Planning Board. The first action item recommended by the Committee was to adopt a TIF district to drive the process. A conservative estimate of what the Gateway implementation could bring is a tripling of value; that is the tax base changing the ratio of commercial vs residential tax assessments from the current 84% residential and 16% commercial to 77% residential and 23% commercial. It would make a significant difference in dollars raised from the commercial sector rather than the residential. The purpose would be to generate an opportunity to reduce what would be continual upward pressure on our residential taxes. Mr. Houghton referred to Market Basket who wanted to build a bigger store, but to do so they would have needed municipal water. That effort failed. Therefore, the valuation in tax increases that it would have brought was a missed opportunity. He described the areas within the Gateway that could be reclaimed and developed. He stated that millions of dollars of new investments could be made there.

Mr. Houghton explained that the creation of a TIF would support economic development, senior services, housing for seniors or young professionals, restaurants and bars, etc. Additional benefits include an environmental design, new architectural standards, and a defined area for development. It would include greenery, pedestrian walkways, protect environmentally sensitive lands, provide implementation of EPA accepted storm water regulations, provide significantly more building density than is possible currently, and would get traffic off of Rt. 108.

He then described what a TIF district is. He explained that it defines a limited district and enables borrowing to finance defined improvements in the district. He stated that we are not asking for any borrowing or funding of any sort today. Any recommendations to borrow funds would come as a new article at a future town meeting, if at all. He described the mechanics stating it would freeze the current assessed values. Any future incremental increases in property tax revenues within the district are captured, and all or a portion of this new revenue could be used to pay for infrastructure improvements (water and sewer) that would enable development within the district. This only applies if something new gets built. If nothing new gets built, nothing get diverted to the TIF. Once the improvements are paid for, 100% of the property taxes generated in the district go into the Town's General Fund. The purpose is to generate taxation through commercial development to offset what would otherwise be continuing pressure on your residential real estate taxes. He stated that we believe this initiative is community driven. Taxes will continue to grow. Growth and commercial valuations are important. Benefits would go beyond simple economics. He then reviewed the area included in the district.

Mr. Lovejoy addressed the flyer that was sent anonymously to residences through the mail noting it was mailed from Hudson, Wisconsin. He addressed the inaccurate statements contained within the flyer. He explained that the zoning for that area is very specific and doesn't allow for "ugly industrial buildings". His major points were the following: To use one of the few state legislatures sanctioned programs is not "governmental overreach". It is not true that in 2016 voters rejected water/sewer contract. That article only included water. At the time it was suggested it might have passed if sewer was included. The next several bullet points in the flyer refer to fear of borrowing money. Mr. Lovejoy reiterated that we are not asking for any money today. The next point refers to sprawl and desecration of our rural environment. Mr. Lovejoy noted that the very reason for implementing the gateway is to prevent sprawl. It prevents commercial buildings from being interspersed throughout the Town. He urged voters to have an open mind.

Melissa Currier, 53 Depot Rd. thanked Mr. Lovejoy and the Route 108 Corridor Study Committee. She stated that when she first heard of this idea she went to Mr. Lovejoy to learn more about it. He invited her to join the Committee which was exploring the idea and trying to understand it so they could explain to the Town the pros, cons, and the direction the Town should take moving forward. It was a deliberative process. Melissa explained she had to step down from the committee because of personal and professional obligations and she couldn't devote the kind of time they were putting in in researching this. This was a completely thought out process. She reiterated Mr. Lovejoy's point that zoning will guide the architectural design of buildings in the district; and stated that you will not have a Wal-Mart or big box store. She urged the residents to take a look at it from a fiscally conservative perspective. If we do nothing, the property will depreciate over time. At present, we aren't offering anything to potential developers or current owners. If we keep the status quo, the residents will take on more of the tax burden; the commercial will take on less. We have many car dealerships because that is the best use of that space without water/sewer. She went on to say that she is a fiscal conservative and if we do nothing our residential taxes will go up and we'll have a hard time finding anyone to build going forward. It was a deliberative and thoughtful process. She said the Board is recommending this because it is in the best interest of the Town and she concurs.

Kyle, (last name not clear) stated that from the time Stratham was first settled has been a great little town. He takes this legacy seriously. He stated that we are the current stewards of Stratham. He said that he is young and has a vested interest in Stratham's future. He supports the article. He wants the area turned into something new and useable; he doesn't want to see it continue to fall down. He wants to see thoughtful, tasteful, development in that area, not more car dealerships or cheap chain restaurants. He wants to see something walkable and useful. He wants the town to be financially stable and continue to pay its bills in 50 years. Employees and volunteers have put a lot of work into this project. He has reviewed the work and it checks out. Engineers, development experts, and economic gurus all with decades of experience say this is a good idea. He stated it is how we stay special and strong. He concluded that this will keep our taxes from skyrocketing and without a doubt, this is a great idea.

Tim Roche, Chelsea Way, said the TIF is a long term proposition. He stated that this is the part that is overlooked. Everyone is talking about next year's taxes. Mr. Roche said he has been a planner for 20 years. Looking down the road he sees an older demographic, an aging population, few younger folks that are interested in being here. If you plan to remain in town you will need to shift that tax burden away from the residents and towards the commercial. This is the best opportunity we have to explore and try to take advantage of that opportunity. He asked if you are going to vote no, you've got to come up with a real plan to generate revenue, not just stopping spending. This Town will need a full time fire department. He stated that you wanted another police officer today and you will need more down the road. Residential development isn't stopping; you will need funds to cover those services. If you want to pay for it out of commercial taxes, vote yes so we can at least understand what we are up against.

David Canada, Bunker Hill Ave., representing the Stratham Heritage Commission, said that at their March 2020 meeting, the Heritage Commission voted unanimously to support the TIF district because it relates directly to their mission. It is a first step in the long process of bringing public utilities to the Gateway corridor. This will enable new development and redevelopment of existing sites in this core section of town which is already unrecognizably altered from its historic appearance. The old homes, barns, and fields that once dotted the landscape are long gone. Eventual placement of municipal utilities will allow for expanded use of the existing commercial land and provide a future tax base without harming historic resources that remain in the rest of the town. Secondly, focusing on development investment in the Gateway will help alleviate development pressure on the rest of the town which still maintains its agrarian character. Finally, focusing development in the gateway will help prevent future sprawl up on Portsmouth Ave. This is especially important to us as a Commission because Stratham's oldest, most historic street still contains over 60 historic homes, farmsteads, civic buildings, and cultural sites. We urge you to support this article.

Rob Roseen, 9 Greta's Way, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to come together in this type of town government to discuss in a respectful manner different viewpoints. He felt it was important to recognize the changing economic climate which has been going on for some time. Recent issues of the pandemic is stressing businesses more. We have a struggling business district. One reason for that is lack of services. It is important to recognize that a TIF doesn't increase the tax burden; it is designed to do the opposite. He used local examples of Exeter, Durham, and Dover. A TIF district is the best way to finance development. Opponents are

concerned about economic uncertainty but any economic plan has uncertainty. The TIF Plan is what you are doing and how you are doing it. A TIF plan can be adjusted at any time based on economic climate and conditions. That area has been teetering on the edge of failure for many years. He is on the Planning Board and said that many of the landowners have considered pulling out. We almost lost Staples; the owner had to cut their rent. We do have Starbucks and Chipotle, but these will only happen to a limited degree unless we offer utilities and services.

Lester Cuff, 50 Stratham Heights Rd, stated that he has lived here for 34 years and he supports growth. He stated that he didn't send out the propaganda. He doesn't support the TIF at this time for the following reasons. He said the Town seems to focus on raising revenue but we could also cover property taxes by reducing the operating cost. A good example is the solar panels on the Police Station. He talked about the money being saved because of the panels. He suggested putting solar panels on schools and asked that the Select Board look at renewable energy. He cited the benefits of solar energy.

Gregg Pruitt, 132 Portsmouth Ave., stated that he was a four year resident from Oklahoma City. TIFs are used there successfully. However, we knew who would get the benefits, and how the project would go. TIFs work fantastically, but he has concerns with Stratham attempting this. They were recruited here under the guise of historic preservation of the Town Center of Stratham and now he feels duped. The Town has allowed gross overdevelopment of the Town Center. It is a poor time for our Town to start looking at ways to develop. He stated that he has concerns over the small groups that approve these things. He said he noticed Frying Pan Lane residents have been successful in stopping overdevelopment. He speculated that the reason the Gateway was proposed only to Frying Pan Lane was so that more residential homes could be built there. He feared the development would forever erase our sunsets.

John Dinopolos, Morning Star Drive, said he grew up in Dover. That's why he lives here. He invited people to go to Dover and said it would change their mind about development here. He stated that no one's mind would be changed by anything anyone was saying today. He called for a vote.

Ben Zaines, Doe Run Lane, stated that he was a 13 year resident and said he'd first like to address the economic impact of passing a TIF and second, address the impact on the community. Tax revenue collected on the incremental value of land after that land depreciates post infrastructure. So worth \$1 million, put in water/sewer, makes the land worth \$1.5 million. The extra \$500,000 is used to pay off the infrastructure cost. Nothing would go into the General Fund. The land associated with the TIF district is valued at approximately \$70 million. He used the recently implemented TIF in Exeter as a comparison. He said that that Exeter land, however, was completely undeveloped prior to implementing the TIF. After development in Exeter, the value of the land went up 27%. If we were to follow the same logic, it would go to \$85.6 million. The additional tax revenue would generate \$338,000 in tax revenue of which Stratham would get \$64,000. He believes the cost to secure a bond for sewer/water at the low end would be \$30 million. The annual payment over 30 years would be \$1.5 million. We'd collect \$338,000 which wouldn't be enough to pay back the bond. You could argue the land could increase 50% but that still wouldn't get us there. The historic increase of our net operating budget is 1.2%. In order to cover the difference in revenue generated vs expense associated with

bond, it would go up 15%. He fears the burden will fall to the residents. The tax revenue generated from this proposed development would go towards paying the loan, not into paying for schools, police, etc. It would also go to paying the businesses which doesn't help the residents. He doesn't believe we would be in control of the development of infrastructure. He thinks that development would lead to congested roads and would block sunsets. He also believes the developers would build what they want. Developers, landowners, and businesses that come in would get the benefits and we would be left footing the bill. Zoning laws are in place but we would be at the mercy of paying back a loan so he fears we would change the zoning to accommodate the developers.

Paul Reppucci, Willowbrook Ave, stated he has been here 12 years in October. He moved here from a busy place for the cute little town, and the great residents. He's owned property in a few places and has never seen taxes go down. He stated that the Great Bay College has been vacant for years and no one is interested in it. They are proposing a TIF, but where are the contractors today? Where are the people that want to build? Affordable housing was mentioned. That brings cars, congestion, people, crime. Infrastructure costs will increase if we put in big box stores. Traffic lights, intersections, sidewalks will all be a cost to the taxpayers. Businesses are coming slowly – we now have Starbucks. Will our small fire and police departments, as wonderful as they are, be able to handle a BJ's? He stated that we will need a full time Fire Dept. He also stated that we just voted down the additional police officer. If we put in a movie theater, kids will be jumping the border and coming here. Crime will rise. Water and sewer will require a new department, with at least two employees that would have to include salaries, benefits, and vehicles. He concluded that there are hidden costs in this proposal.

Pat Abrami, 9 Tall Pines Dr. opposes Article 14. A no vote on 14 makes a vote on 15 moot. TIFs are a decades old concept for towns to use as tools. The NH Office of Energy and Planning literature discusses the risk of TIFs to taxpayers. Other municipalities have over promised resulting in increases in taxes and reduction in services because of assumptions and promises that could not be met. The goal of a TIF is to attract developers. We have 82 lots and almost as many owners with nearly all lots with existing structures. Will developers find this an attractive area? He thinks not... Exeter's TIF is a developers dream. Here we have 82 owners who they'll have to negotiate with. A developer can do what he wants. The consultant's report contains information about financing a TIF; we are not talking about bonding here, but we will have to. The bonds are backed by the developers, not the residents. A TIF will create a baseline of assessed values. Because our TIF is spread out, he suspects it will take a decade to complete. He believes nothing will happen to stop organic growth. An example is Chipotle. If a TIF is approved, the value of Chipotle will accrue to the TIF and not the General Fund which could help offset values. He stated that there are many negative impacts on voting yes. He respects the work that was done researching the TIF but he must respectfully vote no. Mr. Abrami asked the chair if the vote is no on 14 will we vote on 15. Mr. Emanuel said that he will request the people to vote no on 15 if 14 is voted down. Mr. Abrami then requested a ballot vote and presented the petition with the required signatures.

Heidi Hansen, Strawberry Lane, thanked the committee for the research they've done. She is not in support because she said we are at the cusp of a national recession. This is not the time to enter into a speculative venture. Residential property taxes will go up whether or not we have

water and sewer in the district. There is no guarantee that development will take the burden off the taxpayers. She feels it is a risky investment. She further stated that she is worried about consequences with a dense district, such as traffic. It will change the character of the town. She does not support the creation of a TIF.

Sophie Robinson Saltonstall said she has a letter from Stratham Farms and also a personal appeal. The letter from the Stratham Farms supports creation of a TIF district. They recognize the benefits of a TIF. The farms that remain have weathered and adapted to shifting markets, politics, etc. She stated the following: 1. TIF will shift tax pressure from residential agriculture to commercially zoned districts. Controlling future property tax growth would benefit the long term future of farms and homeowners. 2. The recently adopted Master Plan calls for investment in the Gateway district to focus developmental growth in that core area and avoid sprawling of the commercial zone towards Greenland in order to build the tax base. Development will require water and sewer infrastructure. Focusing growth in the Gateway will avoid development pressure on the Town's unprotected farm land. 3. Diversified mixed use of the commercial and residential area is likely to bring new customers to our farms. New mixed use development could bring marketing and sales opportunities for Stratham farmers, such as year-round Farmers Markets and new restaurants that source local, fresh ingredients. For these reasons and more, they support the creation of the TIF and encourage everyone to vote yes on Articles 14 and 15. The letter was signed by Kyle and Sophie Saltonstall of Saltonstall Farm, Nathan and Judy Merrill of Stuart Farm, Barker's Farm, Scamman Farm and the MacDonalds.

Sophie went on to make a personal appeal. She is the third generation on the Saltonstall farm. The town has changed considerably since her mom grew up here. Due to the generational nature of her family in Stratham, she often thinks about the long term impact of her actions. The TIF is a long term project which will benefit her generation and the next. She is currently thinking a lot about the next generation because she is pregnant with her first child. We should be thinking about the future of our town. She stated she would be ashamed to pass down failing infrastructure to her children. The TIF is a wonderful opportunity to be future thinking. It's been studied by professionals. It can be a positive impact on future generations. She asked everyone to please join her in voting yes. She concluded with her hopes that her daughter finds Stratham to be as warm, welcoming and community oriented as she has found it to be.

Lucy Cushman, 159 Winnicutt Rd, stated that as she is looking around, she has probably been in town longer than anyone. She remembers when the Gateway was fields. She stated that she has been on the Gateway Committee and the 108 Committee and she supports the TIF. All we are voting on is if we allow the town to have a TIF. Nothing more. All this debate is way ahead of itself. They are not asking for any money today. Article 15 just defines the area. If nothing is built, and nothing goes into the TIF, nothing happens. If something does happen, it will come back to the Town to make a decision. Zoning doesn't allow for big box stores or cinemas. The only way zoning changes is if the Town votes for it. Traffic will always be there. She appreciates Mr. Cuff's dedication to solar energy but solar panels will not pay the taxes that will be hitting the town in years to come. Chipotle and Starbucks went in, but with a massive addition to the leach field. She asked if that is the best use of prime commercial land. She used Ocean State as an example saying it isn't particularly attractive, and neither is the crumbling parking lot in front of it. Is that what you want? She stated that it is time for us to move forward.

She is 72. She will not see a benefit, but many of you will. She sincerely hopes that you will vote yes. She reiterated that it simply says we can have a TIF, nothing more. What you have been hearing today is rhetoric and fear. There is never a good time to do anything. Lucy concluded with that it is time for Stratham to take a step forward into the future.

Nancy Hunter, Brown Ave, stated she wanted to reiterate what Lucy just said. She stated that we are not spending any money today. We are simply setting up a "let's call it a savings account if somebody does renovation". It's the tax money on the renovation. We're not doing a bond, we're not starting water and sewer. They've already spent thousands of dollars on study after study for 12 years. Either stop now or start a TIF to put their money into it and not our money.

Jay Nesvold, 7 Bittersweet Lane, moved to call the question.

Bruce Scamman, 3 Blossom Lane, wanted to make two points. The potential for a sewer district which is the environmental and best way to move forward. We have a commercial district. They flow sewerage out of all those buildings. The only way to make it better for the environment is to have it go through a treatment plant so we are not contaminating local streams and brooks. Parkman Brook runs right next to that leach field next to Starbucks and Chipotle. The bigger issue is, he was at the school district meeting and looking at the tax rates of where the SAU16 tax bill goes. Stratham was the least taxed out of any of the 6 school districts. The worst was Brentwood. Brentwood hasn't done a lot of the things we've done. We should take a look back at what previous Stratham residents have done. Back in the 80's they started the Industrial Park. There was a lot of talk then about how Stratham would be full of industrial buildings. That has brought down our taxes and kept us where we are. There were people against doing conservation easements due to the big initial investment. We put a lot of land under conservation easements; and less houses were built. That's the second thing we did. He looks at this the same way. We, as Stratham residents, looking to the future, just as previous residents had looked to the future. Start a TIF district so our children can live here and afford the taxes, and not end up like Brentwood that has a 10% tax rate increase every year.

Nate Merrill, 73 College Rd, asked everyone to please support this. He stated that it is very important that we are looking long term. He further stated that our forbearers planned for growth of the town in certain spots and that's what I want to see for the next generation. We've worked on this for a long time. We've reached out to the community. We've tried to be as inclusive as possible. There's been a huge amount of thought that's gone into this. I encourage you to vote yes.

Wayne Scales, 21 Rollins Farm Dr., stated that he is not opposed to economic development. We are seeing some of it with 110 Grill, Starbucks and Chipotle. There is no evidence to believe this development will not continue without a TIF. He moved here from Illinois around 5 years ago. TIFs were widely used there. Studies show municipalities grow more slowly after adoption of a TIF. Overall municipal growth is sacrificed to encourage the development of blighted areas. What's the answer to other areas that become blighted at the expense of a TIF district? Is it more TIFs? In many parts of the country, the answer is yes and that is a slippery slope. For this reason, he is against this Article.

John Scheel, 154 Portsmouth Avenue, spoke in opposition. He believes it will be a Pandora's Box once it is approved. He thinks that Market Basket could afford to put in a new grocery store if it wanted to. This Town has changed but not at the rapid rate as the rest of the country. To compare pictures of Stratham with Portsmouth or Dover is outrageous. Those communities are totally despoiled. Portsmouth has eradicated their water view. The new development on Dover Point is only half full. As far as tying into Exeter water, he doesn't trust Exeter's Water Board. Last year they doubled their water rates to their own citizens. We would be at risk of losing our aquifers. We moved here knowing it was a septic system. We knew what we were buying. He would urge you to vote no on the TIF proposal.

Judy Merrill, 73R College Rd, stated that she is not a public person, she is usually very quiet. Today's meeting has her running through quite a few emotions. It brings her back to the Master Plan meeting in 1996 when her grandfather-in-law was the chair of the committee. She sat in the back of the room and watched people and how they acted and reacted to each other. Today she sat back and listened and watched. She was listening to the speakers and heard people around her laughing, cheering, muttering, talking about what the speaker is saying. As she looked around she sees very few young people. At that meeting years ago, there were many people 40 years and younger. The demographics have changed. She married a lifelong resident 30 years ago. She has read the town reports. Back then, births outweighed the deaths. This community is aging. Who will be there to take care of us? Who will work in the ambulance, fire dept., stores? Many people say they moved here 5, 10 years ago. She stated that things have changed a lot in the 30 years she's been here. Back at the '96 meeting, her neighbor spoke and said, we didn't want you, but here you are. We couldn't stop you from coming here. Many good things have come of that. She's met many wonderful people in this town. People are devoted and care about each other. That has not changed. She stated that it sums up by one thing: we need to look at the demographic. Ask yourselves who will take care of us when we get older? This is not a quaint town compared to 30 years ago. Now there's a lot of traffic and congestion, it's all relative to your perspective. She concluded with that we can't stop development.

Seeing no other speakers, the Moderator moved to vote on Article 14 to adopt legislation authorizing Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Districts. To see if the Town will vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 162-K, Municipal Economic Development and Revitalization Districts, which if adopted will grant the Town (at Town Meeting) authority to establish tax increment financing districts. The Select Board recommends this article by unanimous vote.

Mr. Lovejoy spoke again to urge the residents to vote in favor of the article. He again explained that they are not asking for any money. Mr. Houghton spoke of the wonderful opportunity to plan the future of our Town. He stated that in the past, the Town voted wisely, to implement zoning regulations which would enable future development of the Gateway. This provides the town with a tool to manage future growth. Not long after that, similar measures were taken up to regulate the Town Center and the Professional Residential District. The development you have seen is consistent with the regulations you approved. This gives us an opportunity to build a plan that aligns with the vision you all have voted on and approved. Mr. Houghton stated that we have not been meeting to come up with a way to try and fool you. This TIF program is a planning tool that enables the potential for future development. This gives us the opportunity to be able to sit down with developers about the possibility of developing property on the 82 pieces

of land in the Gateway district. When they develop a plan, we come back to you and say do you want to do this? This is the process. This is not a nefarious set of activities by people not mindful of the issues we confront in this community day in and day out. We have a track record of behaving responsibly. Mr. Houghton stated that he has lived here for 15 years and there has been three new properties built in the Business District. He stated that there is little organic growth happening. He went on to state that we have a decision about whether we provide tools to direct the future of this Town. The notion that we will come forward with a bond request is silly. This is a fiscally responsible plan to benefit the taxpayers. Despite the emotion and misinformation, this is what the process is. Zoning and Code won't allow the liquor store to move to the Market Basket plaza. Voting for the TIF enablement in this Town would allow us to set aside potential money to be used for potential infrastructure. He concluded with the hope that you will vote in the affirmative on this Article.

Mr. Emanuel read Article 14 and instructed the residents to write their vote on the yellow ballot card. The deputy moderators collected the ballots as they moved through the crowd with the ballot boxes.

The deputy moderators collected the ballots as they moved through the crowd with the ballot boxes. 133 Yes 251 No. Article 14 failed.

ARTICLE 15: Route 108 Corridor Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District

To see if the Town will vote to:

(a) establish a municipal economic development and revitalization district in accordance with RSA 162-K: 5, which district is as shown on a map entitled "Town of Stratham Tax Increment Finance District (TIF)," dated February 20, 2020 and which generally runs along Route 108 from its intersection with Route 101 to the Town Center, including 82 properties along the Route 108 corridor. The district will have the name, "Route 108 Corridor Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District."

(b) Adopt the provisions of the "Route 108 Corridor Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District Development Program and Financing Plan" dated February 20, 2020 in accordance with RSA 162-K:6 and RSA 162-K: 9; and

(c) Authorize the Select Board to appoint the District Administrator in accordance with RSA 162-K: 13 and to create a five member Advisory Board in accordance with RSA 162-K: 14, with the Advisory Board membership to be determined by the Select Board.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

Mr. Emanuel read Article 15 and polled for a verbal vote, motion failed.

The Moderator stated that because Article 15 is tied to Article 14, and Article 14 did not pass, Article 15 is null and void, and we will move to Article 16.

Jay Nesvold moved to restrict reconsideration of Article 14, motion seconded. Motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 14 voted on and passed.

Ben Zaines moved to restrict reconsideration of Article 15, Greg Pruitt seconded it. Motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 15 voted on and passed.

ARTICLE 16: - 79-E Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive. To see if the Town will vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 79-E relative to Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive Programs, enabling the Select Board to grant Community Revitalization Tax Incentives for all of the areas and structures permitted by RSA 79-E. Failure of this article to pass shall not affect the authority to grant Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive Programs in the limited areas described in a similar warrant article adopted by the Town in 2014. The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

Mr. Houghton motioned to support Article 16. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. Mr. Houghton explained that the 2019 Master Plan identifies several goals for the preservation of historic buildings and landscapes. The Town has a number of architecturally significant structures and this provides options and incentives to restore and rehabilitate that stock, allowing owners to preserve and retain it. This was adopted for the Town Center. This Article extends that opportunity across all of Stratham for all historic properties. Along with the Select Board, the Heritage Commission also recommends this article unanimously.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

Seeing no comments or questions, Moderator Emanuel read Article 16, the vote was taken in the affirmative and Article 16 passed.

ARTICLE 17: - Modifications of Elderly Exemption from Property Tax

To see if the Town will vote to 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, \$125,000; for a person 75 years of age up to 80 years, \$145,000; for a person 80 years of age or older \$165,000. 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 \$200,000 excluding the value of the person's residence.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

Select Board Chair Michael Houghton moved to accept the article as read. Select Board Member Lovejoy seconded the motion. Select Board Chair Houghton spoke to the motion.

Select Board Chair Houghton stated that this Article deals with the elderly population property values that are excluded for taxation. Essentially it increases the exemption to \$25,000 within each age group beginning at the age of 65. The affected impact to the town is currently \$85,000, this would an increase to \$103,000. Mr. Houghton stated that this Article is warranted and appreciates the support.

Seeing no comments or questions, Moderator Emanuel read Article 17, the vote was taken in the affirmative and Article 17 passed.

ARTICLE 18: - Modification to Veteran's Tax Credit

To see if the Town will vote to modify the Veterans' Tax Credit in the Town of Stratham, in accordance with RSA 72:28, II from its current tax credit of \$500 per year to \$600 per year.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

Select Board Member Knab moved to accept this article as read. Select Board Member Lovejoy seconded the motion. Select Board Member Knab spoke to the motion.

Ms. Knab spoke to the Article and stated that this Article is in response to an RSA that went into effect in 2018 from \$500 to \$750. Stratham currently has 362 veterans that are accessing this credit. This would increase the total amount of the credit by \$31,000 bringing the total credit to \$234, 200 for 2020 which has a .15 impact per taxed property.

Seeing no further comments of questions, Moderator Emanuel read Article 18, the vote was taken in the affirmative and Article 18 passed.

ARTICLE 19: Multi-Sport 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 Three Hundred Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$300,000.00) for the purpose of constructing a concrete recreational facility (Multi-Sport Park) on the southerly portion of the Municipal Center parcel at 10 Bunker Hill Avenue and to authorize the Select Board to accept \$10,200 in donations already raised towards this project (a total of \$289,800 to come from general taxation). 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 vote to recommend this article was two in favor and one against.

Select Board Member Lovejoy moved to accept this article as read. Select Board Member Knab seconded the motion. Select Board Member Lovejoy spoke to the motion.

Mr. Lovejoy motioned to move the article. Ms. Knab seconded the motion.

Select Board Member Lovejoy stated as this is a Petition Article and the Board will Yield to Petitioners.

Ms. Knab read a letter presented by the Petitioners: Due to the COVID-19 virus and the impact

on the community, our Committee is withdrawing our request for support for the warrant article for the skate park for this year's 2020 Town Meeting. Our group is committed to creating a designated park for skateboarders, bikers and scooters. If you have any questions you can reach us at our email at 03sk885@gmail.com

James Scamman stated he did not support the Article but he does support a skate park in Town and feels that two parks are needed, one for each age group.

Jan Teague stated that she cannot put three hundred thousand dollars towards the skate park given where we currently are with our economics.

Seeing no further comments or questions, Mr. Emanuel read Article 19, and the vote was taken. Article 19 failed.

Jay Nesvold moved to restrict reconsideration on Article 19, James Scamman Jr. seconded it. Motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 19 voted on and passed.

ARTICLE 20: New Hampshire Resolution for Fair Redistricting

By petition of 25 or more eligible voters of the Town of Stratham to see if the Town will urge that the New Hampshire General Court, which is obligated to redraw the maps of political districts within the state following the 2020 census, will do so in a manner that ensures fair and effective representation of New Hampshire voters. That in order to fulfill this obligation of the New Hampshire General Court shall appoint an independent redistricting commission that draws the new district maps in a way that does not rely on partisan data such as election results or party registration or favor particular political parties or candidates.

The record of the vote approving this article shall be transmitted by written notice from the Select Board to the Town of Stratham's state legislators and to the Governor of New Hampshire informing them of the instructions from their constituents within 30 days of the vote.

The Select Board recommends this Article by unanimous vote.

Select Board Member Knab motioned to accept the article. Select Board Chair Houghton seconded the motion.

Select Board Member Knab stated that as this is a Petition Article the Board will Yield to the Petitioners.

Representative Altschiller spoke in favor of the Article and stated that this is an election and census year. She further went on to say that whichever party gains control in the upcoming election will get the privilege of redrawing the election district map. She stated that the Article is a clear statement from Stratham that voters should pick their elected officials and that lawmakers

should not be picking their voters. The Town of Stratham supports fair electoral maps, and that we want to put an end to gerrymandered districts in our state and that we support a non-partisan independent redistricting commission that would do this work in the open with public oversight and input. It would put an end to political partisans drawing maps behind closed doors with no transparency or accountability. Representative Altschiller continued by urging voters to vote yes to send a clear message to Concord that voters should pick their lawmakers and not the other way around.

Charles Currier spoke and said we are in one of the most Democratic states in the United States and we have over four-hundred elected representatives to our state legislature. An opportunity like this to turn that decision making process to two-hundred majority votes in favor for a committee of fifteen people defies logic.

Representative Abrami stated that the House and Senate have already passed the bill. He continued on by stating that the only thing that can happen is if the Governor vetoes it and then it would be turned back to the House and Senate for a vote. He further stated in terms of redistricting that there are four-hundred state representatives in this state with a voice and with a commission and they are arbitrarily picked. State representatives and State Senate seats are very hard to gerrymander.

Representative Lovejoy stated that the bill that passed by the legislature that is on the way to the Governor's desk does call for a fifteen member committee, five chosen by the majority party and five by the minority, those ten select the next five. No one on the Committee can be a lobbyist or representative and there is specific criteria in the legislation process. Representative Lovejoy concluded by stating that there is considerable opportunity to gerrymander the New Hampshire Senate seats and the Executive Council.

Representative Altschiller stated that the House Senate Districts are combined in a way that have been gerrymandered. Representative Altschiller continued by saying that this Article is needed to send a message from our Town that regardless of which party is in power we believe districts should be decided on based on the fairness of voters and not the fairness to the law makers. This would allow the public to provide their input which right now does not exist. Representative Altschiller concluded with urging voters to say yes to this non-binding resolution to show that Stratham believes in fairness in drawing electoral maps.

Roger Stephenson stated that he supports the Article, adding that people and not politicians should have a voice in redistricting.

Representative Abrami stated that whichever party is in control will control that redistricting and urged voters to vote their conscience.

Seeing no further questions or comments, Moderator Emanuel read Article 20, and the vote was taken. The vote was unclear and a hand count was taken. The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk counted the hand votes. Article 20 passed 144 yes 66 no.

ARTICLE 21: Other Business

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

Martin Wool thanked all the employees for their hard work in making everyone comfortable and keeping everyone safe.

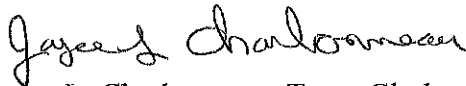
Select Board Chair Michael Houghton thanked everyone for all the hard work to complete this Town Meeting and making everything run smoothly and easy.

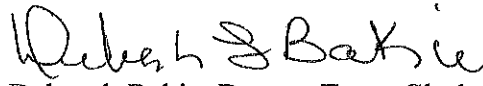
Seeing no further comments or questions, Moderator Emanuel entertained a motion to close the meeting.

Melissa Currier made a motion to close the meeting. Peter Mason seconded the motion.

Seeing no other business before the Town, Moderator Emanuel adjourned the meeting at 1:58 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,


Joyce L. Charbonneau, Town Clerk


Deborah Bakie, Deputy Town Clerk


Karen Richard, Administrative Executive Assistant