

**State of New Hampshire
Town of Stratford
2017 Town Meeting Warrants & Minutes**

Jamie Sayen opens Town Meeting recognizing Veterans followed by The Pledge of Allegiance. Jamie verified the ballot box in front of the audience. Jamie acknowledged the Town Officials and recognizing their service to the Town. Jamie discussed the rules for the meeting.

Article 1. To choose by non-partisan ballot the following Officers: 1 Selectman (3 years); 1 Library Trustee (3 years); 1 Cemetery Trustee (3 years); 1 Trustee of Trust Funds (3 years); 1 Town Clerk & Tax Collector (3 years); 1 Town Auditor (1 year).

Motioned: Larry Ladd

Seconded: Clayton Macdonald

Concerns: No concerns voiced

Amendments: No amendments

Method of Vote: By voice

Moderator's Tally: The Article has been accepted.

Article 2. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$740,413** for the operating budget. This article does not include the cost of any other warrant article.

Motioned: Larry Ladd

Seconded: Jamie Davis

Concerns: Ben Blodgett discusses the lack of difference in numbers on the State Police report from when the State Police patrolled when the Town had a police dept. versus when they patrolled when the Town stopped having a police dept.; proposes that we eliminate the police dept. from the budget. Claire Martineau wanted to leave some money for state police. Wayne Hall wants to know the contract with state police. Jamie Davis said it is for 4 hours per week. Wants to leave money in the budget for potential future use. Vicki Delalla cautions that we should leave the budget monies there for future use. Jamie Davis discusses that we need to reserve at least \$2500 to pay state police for services rendered. Tim Brooks wants to know what the budget is for state police and Jamie Davis responds \$3500. Charlie Goulet wants to know what about a part time law enforcer or small time dog enforcer. Clayton Macdonald says that the Town has tried to find someone qualified and says that we should keep some money in the police budget to maintain the police equipment and if we find someone qualified to fill the position. Monies should not be completely eliminated from the police budget. Tim Brooks proposes to eliminate the police budget by half. Wayne Hall advises we keep the budget where it is and not change it. Jamie Sayen wants to know where the unexpended funds go. Clayton Macdonald says it goes into the general fund. Charlie Goulet wants to know how the board feels about it.

Amendment: Amend article 2 to eliminate the police dept. budget. Lowering the entire budget from \$740,413 to \$701,938.

Method of Vote: By voice

Moderator's Tally: The Amendment has been defeated.

Amendment: Reduce Police budget by \$19,237 to bring the total budget to \$721,176

Method of Vote: By voice

Moderator's Tally: The Amendment has been defeated.

No further concerns. Jamie Sayen asks for a Move to Vote.

Motioned: Wayne Hall

Seconded: Wayne Labatte

Method of Vote: By voice

Moderator's Tally: The Article has been accepted.

Article 3. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$4,000** to be added to the previously established Fire Department Expendable Trust Fund, with the full amount to come from the unassigned fund balance. (Board Recommends)

Motioned: Wayne Hall

Seconded: Larry Ladd

Concerns: Larry Ladd discusses that this comes from two separate contracts totaling \$15000.

Amendments: No amendments

Method of Vote: By voice
Moderator's Tally: The Article has been accepted.

Article 4. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$25,000** to be added to the previously established Highway and Bridges Capital Reserve Fund. (Board Recommends)

Motioned: Clayton Macdonald
Seconded: Larry Ladd
Concerns: No concerns voiced
Amendments: No amendments
Method of Vote: By voice
Moderator's Tally: The Article has been accepted.

Article 5. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$10,000** to be added to the previously established Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund. (Board Recommends)

Motioned: Larry Ladd
Seconded: Wayne Hall
Concerns: No concerns voiced
Amendments: No amendments
Method of Vote: By voice
Moderator's Tally: The Article has been accepted.

Article 6. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$3,000** to be added to the previously established Recycling Capital Reserve Fund, with the full amount to come from the unassigned fund balance. (Board Recommends)

Motioned: Jamie Davis
Seconded: Clayton Macdonald
Concerns: Claire Martineau inquires that with \$6000 already in there why do we need this, Jamie Davis replies that the Town needs to buy a compactor, Wayne Hall wants to know the life expectancy of the current bailor, Charlie Goulet replies 5 years but we need a new one. Wayne Hall wants to move to increase this from 3 to 5 thousand.

Motion failed.
Amendments: No amendments
Method of Vote: By voice
Moderator's Tally: The Article has been accepted.

Article 7. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$500** to be added to the previously established 250th Celebration Expendable Trust Fund for the purpose of funding the 250th anniversary celebration to be held in 2023. (Board Recommends)

Motioned: Jamie Davis

Seconded: Larry Ladd

Concerns: Rae Davenports wanted to know the current balance, Claire says \$2,000, and Charlie Goulet wants to know about the pavilion

Amendments: No amendments

Method of Vote: By voice

Moderator's Tally: The Article has been accepted.

Article 8. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$5,000** to be added to the previously established Government Buildings Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund.
(Board Recommends)

Motioned: Larry Ladd

Seconded: Jamie Davis

Concerns: Rae Davenport is curious as to what government buildings are we maintaining. Larry Ladd lists The Grange, Town Hall, North Stratford Fire Station & Garage, Stratford Hollow Fire Station, and The Library.

Amendments: No amendments

Method of Vote: By voice

Moderator's Tally: The Article has been accepted.

Article 9. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$40,000** for construction of a pavilion, \$36,000 to come from grants and donations, and \$4,000 to come from unassigned fund balance.

Motioned: Larry Ladd

Seconded: Jamie Davis

Concerns: Rick Serven wants to know how much money has already been received via grants and donations and are the secured. 20 USDA 24590 anticipated estimated by 1 month or two. If we do not get this grant, the pavilion will not move forward. Claire wants to know that if this grant is more than needed then why do we need the 4k, Clayton says that USDA wants the Town to show support also, the estimate is based on last year's prices, prices may change and this is in anticipation. Claire wants to know if the pavilion is enclosed or open air. Clayton states that it is open air and discusses the attributes of the pavilion. Tim Brooks wants to know when construction will take place. Clayton says as soon as possible. Tim Brooks says that they will need to change the wording to not limit budget to 40k. Rick Serven wants to know why Stratford Hollow pavilion cost no money and this one costs over \$40,000. Clayton Macdonald says that the situations were different. Stratford Hollow was done with a different organization and volunteer work. The North Stratford Pavilion is to serve a different function and is meant to keep in line and appearance with the Library, formally a train station, and to bring pride and commerce to our Town and be used for events such as Fantastic Fridays and other larger events and farmer's markets. To produce something that we really want as and augmentation to the Town. The \$4,000 amounts to 5 cents per thousand from the tax bills. Jennie Routhier reinforced "if the USDA requires it". Jamie Davis says the goal is to not cost

the Town anything, we just need the \$4,000 to show the Town's commitment. Sandra Theberge informed everyone that Stratford Hollow Pavilion paid only for cement. Building maintenance also includes the Stratford Hollow Pavilion. And was gifted to the Town. Wayne Hall inquired as to where the location of the pavilion will be. Clayton Macdonald says that if we get the grants the pavilion materials will, in effect, be donated. Through a series of public workshops and observing the property available, it will be in line with the library to make it look like a railroad platform.

Amendments: Will vote to apply all grant monies and donations to the construction of the pavilion with no more than \$4,000.00 to come from the unassigned fund balance.

Method of Vote: By voice

Moderator Tally: The Amendment has been accepted.

Amended Article 9:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$40,000** for construction of a pavilion, \$36,000 to come from grants and donations, to apply all grant monies and donations to the construction of the pavilion with no more than \$4,000.00 to come from the unassigned fund balance.

Method of vote: By voice

Moderator's Tally: The Article has been accepted.

Article 10. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$7,258** for the refurbishment of the tennis court and basketball court.

Motioned: Larry Ladd

Seconded: Jamie Davis

Concerns: Charlie Goulet, does not want to do the tennis court, only the basketball court and what is the difference in price. Larry Ladd says that the price is combined and not separate. Jenny Routhier says that in the past it was locked and you had to come to the Town Hall to get a key. The Select-board says it is now open no key is needed. Charlie Goulet wants to know what it would cost for just one. Jamie Davis replies that the Selectboard doesn't have that information but then there is the cost of removing the court. Tim Brooks discusses how that once it was repaired after the flood, the Town was required to maintain both.

Amendments: No Amendments

Method of vote: By voice

Moderator's Tally: The Article has been accepted.

Article 11. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$5,000** to be added to the previously established Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund. (Board Recommends)

Motioned: Wayne Hall

Seconded: Larry Ladd

Concerns: Rick Serven inquires as to why if the Town is contracted with the state police, why maintain the police cruiser if it is not being used? Clayton responds that it is a contingency fund in case we do have a police officer and cautions that if the Balsams project moves forward we may have an influx in the population and we may need to reestablish a police force. The cruiser is 2009 (8 years old) when we will need a new one, a new cruiser would be good and the cost is 30k-50k and we need to prepare for a new one. This money does not necessarily need to be used. Wayne Hall, discusses in favor of the article, discusses the age of the cruiser and says that if we do get a new officer, we will need to maintain the cruiser.

Amendments: No Amendments
Method of Vote: By hand
Moderator's Tally: YAY 28 NAY 8 = The Article has been accepted.

Article 12. To see if the Town will vote to establish a conservation Commission of 3 members and 2 alternate members, in accordance with RSA 36-A, said members to be appointed within 60 days of the annual meeting by the selectmen, who also shall designate a temporary chairman for the purpose of calling the first meeting of the Commission.

Motioned: Rachel O'Meara
Seconded: Larry Ladd

Concerns: Rick Serven wants to know what is RSA 36-A. Clayton Macdonald reads RSA 36-A and then states that the gist of the article is that it provides the Town the Commission to inventory the Town's land and usage for projects. Discusses the Nash Stream forest that takes up approx. 1/3 of the Town's land. And how to preserve our natural land resources. The Commission's power is advisory only. It has no decision making power. It interacts with other agencies and panels in cooperation for joint ventures. Jamie Sayen asks for clarification of the location of the Headquarters is in Vermont but has jurisdiction over the Connecticut River and Clayton confirms. Clayton Macdonald continues discussing the Commission and how it gets involved in beautification projects; discussing the benefits; the Commission can accept donations and gifts of land and easements to the Town; how other Towns were shocked that we didn't have a conservation Commission and that other Towns use the Commission to prevent unwanted actions in their Town and said we are vulnerable without this tool. Wayne Hall says this allows for printing of books and papers, wants to know the cost of materials for this. Clayton says we did not budget a single penny for this for this year, we will look into budgeting for this in subsequent budgets once they get a feel for how much it will cost for this Commission. Charlie Goulet that other Towns have one and we should, too; and it need 3 permanent and 3 alternates. Clayton says he approached 2 people who have already expressed interest in joining this Commission and has good faith that we

will find interested people. Mark Mcculloch wants to know if this is only public property or does it include private property? Clayton responds that the conservation has no authority to manage any property to include private property. They can only get this with express permission from property owners. Scott Mason voices his opposition and says that he has concerns of the future use and interference from the Commission and is strongly opposed to the creation of the Commission and that the Select-Board has the authority that the conservation Commission would have. Clayton discusses issues with Trans Canada's damn construction with erosion issues and how Trans Canada did not approach the Town. Rachel O'Meara says she feels this would be a good thing and give reasons. Chelsea Peter says that she feels that any tools that a Town can use to help the Town is a good thing and with environmental issues would make this good. Mark Mcculloch says that the conservation could help private land owners as well.

Charlie Goulet motioned to move to vote

Second: Wayne Labatte

Moved to vote

Amendments: No amendments

Method of vote: By voice

Moderator's Tally: The Article has been accepted.

Article 13. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$8,000** for the removal of 3 large White Pines at Burnside Cemetery and 1 large White Pine at Baldwin Cemetery.

Motioned: Jamie Davis

Seconded: Larry Ladd

Concerns: Wayne Hall we have one bid for 8k, do we have any other bids? Select-Board says no, Wayne wants to ask for more bids. Jamie Davis responds the reason for no bids is the need for a special crane. Tim Brooks says that we should keep the wood from the white pines as valuable wood for the pavilion to recoup some of our 8k. Charlie Goulet talks about the trees being in a dangerous spots and the need for their removal. Scott Mason wants to know if we have an estimate for the removal versus removal with keeping the wood. That information is not available at this time but it would be negligible.

Vicki Delalla responds that she understands this to meaning that the Town needs this money, on standby, to conduct the removal and that negotiations can be handled by the Select-board at a later time. Wayne Hall inquires as to why the trees needed to be removed. Charlie Goulet reiterates they are unsafe and limbs are falling and there are safety and liability issues. Rick Serven reminds the Town of a previous attempt, many decades ago, that resulted in damage to the Cemetery and arose a lot of anger with those in Town and others who had relatives/ancestors laid to rest there.

Charlie Goulet motion to move to vote.

Amendments: Removal of trees with the board feet to be stored on Town property.

Wayne Hall seconds the amendment.

Method of Vote: By voice

Moderator's Tally: Amendment has been defeated
Method of vote: By voice
Moderator's Tally: The Article has been accepted.

Article 14. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$5,700** in donations to the following groups: \$100, Northwoods Home Health & Hospice; \$100, Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital; \$100, Northern Human Services; \$1,600, Tri-County CAP (fuel assistance); \$2,900, Tri-County CAP Senior Meals (meals on wheels); \$100, Tri-County CAP North Country Transit (bus service); \$100, Child Advocacy Center of Coos County; \$100, CASA; \$100, Backpack Program; \$100, Service Link; \$300, Helping Hands; \$100, Colebrook Area Food Pantry.

Motioned: Wayne Hall
Seconded: Larry Ladd

Concerns: Tim Brooks questions why \$300 to Helping Hands where \$100 to everything else. Jamie Davis says that they used to give Helping Hands \$1000 in the past but with all the new requests they had to reduce it. Tim Brooks says that in the past they used a wish list and gave those requests \$100 each but gave more to Meals-on-Wheels. Tim talks about the Backpack Program and reads a thank you letter from a Stratford resident who is a recipient of the program. He goes on to talk about the program and proposes to amend bringing backpack program from \$100 to \$945 dollars.

Wayne Hall seconded.

Amendments: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$6,545.00** in donations to the following groups: \$100, Northwoods Home Health & Hospice; \$100, Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital; \$100, Northern Human Services; \$1,600, Tri-County CAP (fuel assistance); \$2,900, Tri-County CAP Senior Meals (meals on wheels); \$100, Tri-County CAP North Country Transit (bus service); \$100, Child Advocacy Center of Coos County; \$100, CASA; \$100, Backpack Program; **\$945**, Service Link; \$300, Helping Hands; \$100, Colebrook Area Food Pantry.

Method of Vote: By voice
Moderator's Tally: The Amendment has been accepted
Method of Vote: By voice
Moderator's Tally: The Article has been accepted.

Article 15. To transact any other business that may legally come before said meeting and to hear reports from any agents or committees heretofore chosen.

Motioned: Wayne Hall
Seconded: Larry Ladd

Concerns: Ginny Routhier thanked the Select-Board for the Town Christmas Tree. Charlie Goulet asks about the budget article 2, the ambulance is not listed, is that included in the article, Larry says it is. Tim Brooks says that someone said to him that people from other towns say Stratford is looking better also says his mail got bounced back for his house number not matching the 911 house numbering system. Jamie Davis talks about the Town Hall roof needs replaced and that will be an expense. Jamie also talks about 911 calls and asks that people please dial 911 and not Colebrook Dispatch. Larry Ladd says that Colebrook will

not take any more calls from Stratford. Clayton Macdonald discusses that the road ban includes all Town roads not just where the signs are posted. Clayton addresses Tim's concern regarding the 911 address numbers how this has been an ongoing issue and that Stratford is in the process of fixing the problem. She is proud of the Town and the services that we support via donations. She brings up service link and the help that service link offers, free of charge and how they assist in understanding medical services related issues such as providers and plans and how to navigate the system. Charlie Goulet asks the people to move Town meeting to Saturday to allow the working people to be able to make it to Town meeting. Wayne says that he tried to make that move. Tim Brooks says that NH is making legislation to require a day off for Town meeting. And says that we might have better turn out if we combined the School's and the Town's meetings together. Wayne Hall states that some Towns have voting on Tuesday and Town meeting on Saturday. Jamie Sayen encourages the Select-Board to take leadership of this issue and try to find a way to make this work and that he would be open to experimenting with different options and to encourage younger adults to get involved. Josiah Barnes discusses the need to shut down the Town Clerk/Tax Collector window on Mondays during the Select-board meetings; Discontinue 3rd Saturday operations. Discussed with Town different options that would work for the Town; referencing state laws that allows for an alternate deposit schedule in light of the fact that there are no banks or financial institutions in Stratford but that also limits the Town to only 3 days of business transactions per week.

Jamie Sayen thanks everyone for their involvement and professionalism during the meeting and encourages everyone to vote.

Larry Ladd motions to adjourn

Clayton MacDonald seconds

Jamie Sayen asked, "All in favor to adjourn?"

All approve to adjourn in full accord.



D. Josiah Barnes
Stratford Town Clerk & Tax Collector