

Budget Hearing/Public Hearing-Solar
February 5, 2025, 6:00 p.m.
Fuller Town Hall

Selectmen Present: Clayton Macdonald, Charles Goulet and Harry Juergens.
Public Present: Maryann Lister, Jim Lister, Rene & Gini Routhier, Bryan & Wendy
McMann, John McCarthy, Kitty Kerner, Jamie Sayen, Chris & Scott Pitas,
Marcel Goulet, Chuck Stinson, Chelsea Petereit, Mark McCulloch, Jen &
Chris Caron, Chuck Stinson, Scott & Heather McMann and Suzanne Goulet
Clayton called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

Clayton read all the Warrant Articles.

State of New Hampshire
Town of Stratford
2025 Town Meeting Warrant

To the inhabitants of the Town of Stratford in the County of Coos qualified to vote
in Town affairs:

You are hereby notified to meet at the Fuller Town Hall on Tuesday,
March 11, 2025, at 10 a.m. to act upon the subjects hereinafter set forth.
The voting on Article 1 will be by official ballot and the polls shall be open
for balloting from 10 a.m. and close at 7 p.m.

You are hereby notified, in accordance with the provisions of RSA
39:2, to meet at the Fuller Town Hall on Saturday March 15, 2025, at 10
a.m., to consider Articles 2 through 19.

Article 1: To choose by non-partisan ballot the following officers: 1
Selectboard Member (3 Year Term); 1 Cemetery Trustee (3 Year Term); 1
Library Trustee (3 Year Term); 1 Trustee of Trust Funds (3 Year term); 2
Supervisor of the Checklist (3 Year Term) (5 Year Term). 1 Town Treasurer
(3 Year Term).

Article 2. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate
\$997,174 for the operating budget. This article does not include the cost of
any other warrant article.

Article 3. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate
\$6,200 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)

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)

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)

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)

Article 7. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$5,000** to be added to the previously established Land Purchase/ Building Capital Reserve Fund. (Board Recommends)

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)

Article 9. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$500** to be added to the previously established Municipal Solar Capital Reserve Fund. (Board Recommends)

Article 10. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$5,000** to be added to the previously established Recreation Revolving Fund. These funds will be specific to upgrading recreational parks. (Board Recommends)

Article 11. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$2,000** to be added to the previously established Cemetery Capital Reserve Fund. (Board Recommends)

Article 12. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$5,925** to resurface the Hollow basketball court.

Article 13. To see if the Town will vote to authorize reducing 100% to **15%** of the Land Use Change Tax collected pursuant to RSA 79-A:25 to be deposited into the existing Conservation Fund. (Board Recommends)

Article 14. To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$60,860** for Bog Road Infrastructure and Roadway improvements and authorize the withdrawal of Highway and Bridges Capital reserve Fund created for that purpose. The balance of \$30,430 is to come from general taxation. (Board Recommends)

Article 15. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$100** for the Cohos Historical Society in showing support of the Town in helping to match grants for the restoration of the Marion Blodgett Museum in Stratford Hollow.

Article 16. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$5,266** in donations to the following groups: \$500, North Country Home

Health & Hospice; \$1,000, Northern Human Services; \$1,655, Tri-County CAP; \$500, Colebrook Food Pantry; \$500, Helping Hands; \$611, Backpack Program; \$250, CASA; \$250, Stratford Old Home Day, Inc.

Article 17. Petition to file a Warrant Article for presentation at the March 2025 Town Meeting. The purpose of the article is to discuss and bring to a vote the following:

...any expenditure of \$25,000 or more made by the Town throughout the course of the fiscal year that was not included in the annual budget must be brought before the residents for discussion at a public meeting prior to the expenditure being made (unless needed for urgent safety or emergency reason).

...any piece of equipment to be purchased by the Town with a cost of \$25,000 or more will require an ROI presented to the town residents prior to the purchase. Additionally, any piece of equipment purchased by the Town that meets or exceeds \$25,000 will require a minimum of three (3) written quotes submitted to the Town prior to the purchase.

This article is seeking the vote & approval of Stratford residents on the articles described above.

Article 18. Petition to file a Warrant Article for presentation at March 2025 Stratford Town Meeting. The purpose of the article is to discuss and vote on moving the Stratford Selectboard meetings to 6pm on their currently, normally scheduled days. This topic has come up numerous times with no change to the meeting schedule. Maintaining the current scheduled time of 3:30pm prevents many working residents from attending the meetings, being involved, being informed of plans, topics of discussion, current & future needs of the Town, etc.

This article is asking for the vote & approval of Stratford residents on the subject of moving all regularly scheduled Selectboard meetings from 3:30pm to 6pm.

Article 19. To transact any other business that may legally come before said meeting and to hear reports from any agents or committees heretofore chosen.

Clayton asked if anyone, from the public, had any questions concerning the Warrant Articles.

There was none.

Clayton started with the MS-636 (Budget) line by line and asked if anyone had any questions to please raise their hand.

Christopher Caron and Brian McMann discussed that the state pays very little for the lands they own and that if they paid more, it would ease tax burdens on the tax payers.

Mr. Caron also pointed out that the state tax expert that came to the SAU 58 meeting stated that the town was being penalized by the state in our education funding we received due to not being sufficiently valued. He asked how the selectboard were going to approach dealing with this issue which the town is obviously upset about. Moderator Jamie Sayen responded in kind by explaining that this is nothing that the selectboard can control. The uptick in taxes across the state is troubling. Both the board and town administration advised that residents with or without children need to go to the school board meetings and vote accordingly and that they too are residents and pay taxes as well. Mr. Sayen also advised it is not just the school but Coos County that also increased the tax burden. He also thanked the current town administration as it takes a lot of work and is a very thankless job but he wanted the board to know that he thanked them for doing the job.

Goulet/Juergens (3/0 approved) motion to adjourn at 6:43 pm.