

# 2017 STRAFFORD TOWN MEETING

March 14, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 am on Tuesday, March 14, 2017 at the Strafford Town Hall, in the Town of Strafford, by Moderator William Lord to act on Articles 1,2,3,4 and 5 of the 2017 Town Warrant by ballot vote.

The ballots were cast and the meeting recessed at 7:00 pm for the purpose of tallying the votes.

The meeting was called to order again at 8:30 am on Saturday, March 18, 2017 at the Strafford School gymnasium by Moderator William Lord to act on articles 2 through 22.

The Moderator welcomed all to the meeting and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Moderator read the results of Article 1:

\*\* 1. To choose all necessary Town Officers for the year ensuing.

Voters on checklist: .....	3271
Votes cast.....	409
Library Trustee-Three Years	
Joanne Brown.....	44
Library Trustee-Two Years.	
Mary Marquardt.....	312
Selectman-Three Years	
Lynn Sweet.....	356
Road Agent- One Year.	
Greg Messenger.....	370
Planning Board-Three Years	
Charles Moreno.....	284
Terry Hyland.....	238
Trustee of the Trust Funds-Three Years	
Betsy Cozine.....	328
Town Clerk-Two Years	
Christine Bane.....	351

Christine Bane, Strafford School District Clerk Pro Tem, then read the results of the School District elections held on March 14<sup>th</sup>:

School Board Member – Three Years	
Debbie Hinrichsen.....	187
School District Treasurer- Three Years	
Sandra Pierce.....	342
School District Moderator – Three Years	
William Lord .....	337
School District Clerk – Three Years	
Christine Bane (write-in) .....	9

The Moderator then read the results of Article 2:

\*\*2. Are you in favor of the adoption of the following amendment to the existing Town of Strafford Zoning and Land Use Ordinances, as proposed by the Planning Board:

“To add a proposed Article 1.4.1 K Accessory Dwelling Unit (“ADU”) to allow the construction of an attached or detached ADU unit by Special Exception as an accessory use to a single family dwelling in order to comply with state requirements under RSA 674:71-73 which will take effect June 1, 2017. This article includes sections on authority, administration, application and approval process, design requirements, minimum lot size requirements, owner residency requirements, and the maximum allowable size for an ADU.”

Yes: 295                      No: 76                      Article 2 carried.

Moderator Lord then read the results of Article 3:

\*\* 3. Are you in favor of the adoption of the following amendment to the existing Town of Strafford Zoning and Land Use Ordinances, as proposed by the Planning Board:

“To amend Article 1.4.2 F Land Uses Allowed by adding the word “agrotourism” and to add a new definition 1.14.24 AGROTOURISM. This will clarify review procedures for agrotourism proposals.”

Yes: 333                      No: 44                      Article 3 carried.

Moderator Lord then read the results of Article 4:

\*\*4. Are you in favor of the adoption of the following amendment to the existing Town of Strafford Zoning and Land Use Ordinances, as proposed by the Planning Board:

“To add a paragraph to Article 1.8 to clarify enforcement procedures and to allow better compliance with ordinances and regulations by stating that zoning issues must be addressed in order for permits or certificates of occupancy to be issued.”

Yes: 289                      No: 80                      Article 4 carried.

Moderator Lord then read the results of Article 5:

\*\*5. Are you in favor of the adoption of the following amendment to the existing Town of Strafford Building Regulations, as proposed by the Planning Board:

“To add a proposed Building Regulation 4.1.13 Photovoltaic Solar Array to establish a regulation regarding the placement of rooftop solar arrays in order to allow firefighter access to roof edges.”

Yes: 289                      No: 86                      Article 5 carried.

The moderator then introduced the head table including Christine Bane, Town Clerk; Bryant Scott, Lynn Sweet and Scott Young, Selectmen; and Ellen White, Town Administrator. He then advised the voters that the meeting would follow NH Municipal Association’s Best Practices for a Better Town Meeting. He spoke to the option of secret ballots, requirements for amendments and rules for reconsideration.

Selectmen Scott Young then explained that due to the lack of hardware, the prepared PowerPoint would not be shown. He then acknowledged that the Town Clerk had recently retired after serving 14 years. He thanked Diane Waldron for her years of hard work and expertise on behalf of the town. A round of applause for Diane was then heard. Selectmen Young then acknowledged the hard work and dedication shown by our First Responders and Police, sharing that 2016 was a particularly challenging year with a number of fatalities and difficult situations. They received a standing ovation.

Selectman Sweet reviewed the 2016 town Tax rate (\$21.25) noting the breakdown as follows:

Municipal Tax \$2.70

County Tax \$2.72

State Education Tax \$2.20

Local Education Tax \$13.63

She then gave brief overview of the warrant articles being presented and added that future articles may include computer technology upgrades, and building maintenance for the town hall which will soon be 10 years old. Finally, she stated that if all articles pass, with the exception of Article 20, the net increase is 3%, about 8 cents per thousand.

Moderator Lord read article 6:

\*\* 6. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$380,000. for Capital Improvements (Drainage work, culverts, gravel and paving) of roads within the Town boundaries at the discretion of the Road Agent, as funding permits.

Motion made and seconded. Road Agent Greg Messenger addressed the article.

Moderator Lord re-read the article and a vote was taken. The article carried.

Moderator Lord read article 7:

\*\* 7. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$555,414 for the Operation and maintenance of the Strafford Police Department.

Motion made and seconded. Chief Richard spoke. Thanked Retired Chief Young for his dedication to the town. He addressed the budget, explaining that there is a less than 1% increase, and that increase is due to NH retirement and insurance costs.

Moderator Lord re-read the article. A vote was taken on article 7 and carried.

Moderator Lord read article 8.

\*\*8. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,000. to be placed in the Police Vehicles and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund previously established by Article 13 at the March 2011 Town Meeting for the purpose of purchasing future police vehicles and associated equipment. The Selectmen recommend this article.

Motion made and duly seconded. Police Chief Richard proposed an amendment which read:

“To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$12,000 to be placed in the Police Vehicles and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund previously established by Article 13 at the March 2011 Town Meeting for the purpose of purchasing future police vehicles and associated equipment.”

He went on to explain that the price of a vehicle being purchased has decreased resulting in this new amendment. After a brief discussion of the reduction, Moderator Lord called a vote on this amendment. The amendment failed on a vote of 24 to 33.

Moderator Lord then re-read the original article. A call for a vote by show of cards reflected a majority vote of yes. Article 8 passes as written.

Moderator Lord read article 9:

\*\*9. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$355,361. for the operation and maintenance of the Strafford Fire Department and Rescue Squad.

Chief Scott Whitehouse addressed the article, and noted that his prepared PowerPoint could not be shown. He noted that Captain Craig Robichaud, a crucial member of the squad and dedicated fire-fighter, is leaving for Manchester and will be sorely missed. After a brief discussion,

Moderator Lord called for a vote by show of cards. Article passed.

Moderator Lord read article 10:

\*\*10. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$29,000. for the purpose of the replacement of the Zoll Defibrillator E-series and upgrade to the X-series defibrillator,

and to authorize the withdrawal of \$29,000. from the special revenue fund known as the Rescue Vehicle and Equipment Fund established by Article 8 at the March 14, 2000 Town Meeting to be used for this purpose. No funding to come from general taxation. The Selectmen recommend this article.

Motion to put on floor was made and seconded. Chief Whitehouse addressed this article.

No discussion, Moderator Lord re-read the article and it was put to vote by show of cards.

Motion passed by show of cards.

Moderator Lord read article 11:

\*\*11. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$4,680. for the purpose of purchasing a replacement of the Two way radio system in Ambulance 1 due to problems this Fall with the current radio system as the manufacturer no longer provides support for parts or service, and to authorize the withdrawal of \$4,680. from the special revenue fund known as the Rescue Vehicle and Equipment Fund established by Article 8 at the March 14, 2000 Town Meeting to be used for this purpose. No funding to come from general taxation. The Selectmen recommend this article.

Chief Scott Whitehouse is addressed this article, and after a brief discussion, Moderator Lord re-read the article. A vote was taken by show of cards, and the article passed.

Moderator Lord read article 12:

\*\*12. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000. for the purpose of purchasing of equipment and supplies for the ambulance, and to authorize the withdrawal of \$10,000. from the special revenue fund known as the Rescue Vehicle and Equipment Fund established by Article 8 at the March 14, 2000 Town Meeting to be used for this purpose. No funding to come from general taxation. The Selectmen recommend this article.

A motion was made and seconded. Chief Scott Whitehouse is addressed this article and after a brief discussion, Moderator Lord re-read article and called for a vote. A show of cards reflected that the motion carried.

Moderator Lord read article 13:

\*\*13. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,000. to be placed in the Dry Hydrant Capital Reserve Fund established by Article 11 at the March 12, 2016 Town Meeting for the purpose of repairs and/or replacement of existing dry hydrants in the Town of Strafford. The Selectmen recommend this article.

Chief Scott Whitehouse is addressed this article, and after a brief discussion, Moderator Lord re-read the article. A vote was taken by show of cards, and the article passed.

Moderator Lord read article 14:

\*\*14. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000. to be placed in the Crown Point Fire Station Capital Reserve Fund established by Article 12 at the March 12, 2016 Town Meeting for the purpose of rehab or replacement of the Crown Point Fire Station. The Selectmen recommend this article.

Chief Scott Whitehouse addressed this article. He explained that the current sight has been determined to be adequate for a new building, and that his desire is for a 60'x40' (2-bay) building, similar to the Bow Lake station, with a much needed second decontamination station. He stated he has received information from a contractor that this building could be built for approximately \$75/sf. With \$50,000 set aside in 2016, 2017 and 2018, the building could be a possibility in 2018. After brief discussion, Moderator Lord re-read the article and put it to vote. Article carried.

Moderator Lord read article 15:

\*\*15. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$4,500. for the purpose of

purchasing Forest Fire equipment through the 2017 Volunteer Fire Assistance Fund Grant Program. The grant request is for \$4,500. to be funded by \$2,000. from the VFA Grant with the balance of \$2,500. to come from general taxation. This article is contingent upon being awarded the grant. In the event that we are not awarded the grant, this article is to be considered null and void. Motioned and seconded to place on floor. Chief Whitehouse spoke to the article. Lord re-read and put article to vote. Article 15 carried.

Moderator Lord read article 16:

\*\* 16. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000. to be placed in the Bridge Construction & Repair Non-Capital Reserve Fund previously established by Article 9 at the March 2004 Town Meeting to be used for the purpose of funding any future bridge repairs/construction. The Selectmen recommend this article.

Motion made and seconded. Lynn Sweet addressed article, explaining that we continue to put aside funds in order to qualify for the State 80-20 match. The current red-listed bridge project is on Barn Door Gap. After a brief discussion, Moderator Lord re-read the article and a vote was taken. Article 16 carried.

Moderator Lord read article 17:

\*\*17. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$500. to help defray expenses associated with Strafford's Bicentennial Celebration in 2020 in coordination with the Strafford Historical Society. Motion made and seconded. Brief discussion ensued, with Selectman Sweet adding that this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> of putting aside monies for the celebration. Joanne Brown gave an overview of current activities including a webpage, Facebook page, and regular meetings. Moderator Lord re-read the article. A vote was taken, motion carried.

Moderator Lord read article 18:

\*\*18. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$500. for CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates). A motion was made and seconded. Resident Suzanne Murdoch spoke to the article, explaining that CASA is 100% volunteer run, is free to families, and that as an advocate herself, she has witnessed many cases where children have become the collateral damage of the drug problem in our state. Ms. Murdoch urged people to contribute as a town by passing this article, and to consider volunteering to be a CASA. Moderator Lord then re-read the article and it was put to vote. Motion carried by show of cards.

Moderator Lord read article 19:

\*\*19. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,333,277. for general Town operations.

Executive.....	\$ 79,245.
Election & Registration.....	32,720.
Financial Administration.....	95,828.
Appraisal of Property & Tax Maps.....	40,009.
Legal Expenses.....	10,000.
Employee Benefits, FICA, Medi & Unemp. Comp.....	41,038.
Planning and Zoning.....	7,598.
General Government Building.....	32,406.
Auto Permits/Town Clerk Fees.....	33,550.
Insurance.....	52,200.
Advertising and Regional Association.....	3,800.
Strafford Regional Planning Comm. Dues.....	4,678.
Contingency Fund.....	16,000.
Annual CPA Audit.....	10,890.

Emergency Management.....	5,000.
Building Inspection.....	17,540.
General Highway Expenses and Town Maintenance.....	443,500.
Street Lighting.....	4,900.
Solid Waste Disposal.....	249,289.
Animal Control.....	3,800.
Health Inspector.....	200.
Cornerstone VNA (formerly Roch Dstr VNA).....	3,991.
General Assistance and Welfare.....	25,180.
Community Action.....	2,000.
Havenwood Sexual Assault Support Services.....	992.
My Friend's Place.....	200.
The Homemakers Health Services.....	1,000.
Ready Rides.....	1,500.
Parks and Recreation.....	19,923.
Library.....	85,000.
Patriotic Purposes and Fire Works.....	4,800.
Conservation Commission.....	2,500.
Interest Expense & Tax Anticipation Notes.....	2,000.
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>\$1,333,277.</b>

(The intent of this article is to raise the sum of \$1,333,277. exclusive of all other Articles addressed.)

Motion made and seconded. Selectman Sweet addressed this article. After a brief discussion, the article was re-read and a vote taken. Article 19 carries.

Moderator Lord read article 20:

\*\*20. Shall the Town of Strafford vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 72:28-b, All Veterans' Tax Credit? If adopted, the credit will be available to any resident, or the spouse or surviving spouse of any resident, who (1) served not less than 90 days on active service in the armed forces of the United States and was honorably discharged or an officer honorably separated from services and is not eligible for or receiving a credit under RSA 72:28 or RSA 72:35. If adopted, the credit granted will be \$200., the same amount as the standard or optional veterans' tax credit voted by the Town of Strafford under RSA 72:28. Motion made and carried.

Selectman Scott addressed this article, and possible impacts to the town. Discussion was held and various concerns were raised. Motion to call the question was made and seconded.

Moderator Lord re-read the article. A vote was taken by show of cards. Article failed.

Moderator Lord read article 21:

\*\* 21. "To see if the town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$4000.00 for the purchase of Body Armor Vests to protect the Town of Strafford Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) and First Responders." (by petition) The Selectmen recommend this article.

A motion was made and seconded. Michelle Bengert addressed this petitioned article.

After a brief discussion, a vote was taken on this article. The article carried.

Moderator Lord read article 22:

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

Juliet Perdichizzi proposed the following:

"To see if the town will advise the Selectmen to notify all households in Strafford by mail of the dates of the Town Election, Town Meeting and School District Meeting."

Duly seconded.

The maker of the proposal suggested that increased awareness of important dates could result in greater participation in local government. A brief discussion was held and the proposal was re-read and put to vote. Proposal passed.

David Hartranft proposed the following:

“That the town recommends that the Selectmen create a Compensation Analysis Committee. This will be comprised solely of citizens of Strafford, not including anyone employed by the town, to look at the pay structures of each department within the Town of Strafford in order to compare those salaries with similarly structured towns in the state of NH. The end goal of this committee would be to make a recommendation to the department heads regarding compensating town employees in a competitive manner based on education, certification, experience and job description.”

Moderator Lord put the proposal on the floor for discussion. The maker of the proposal stated that salaries need to increase in order to keep employees in the town. The selectmen shared that the town salary structure is carefully crafted every year, and is based on many factors including but not limited to comparison research, experience, tenure and qualifications. Selectman Sweet stated emphatically that the Selectmen would certainly support pay increases if that is the desire of the town. She urged participation in the upcoming budget preparation process. Moderator Lord then re-read the article and a vote was taken. The proposal failed.

Bob Fletcher motioned to limit reconsideration which was duly seconded. Moderator Lord asked for a vote. Cards showed that the motion carries.

Motion to adjourn was made and seconded. Meeting adjourned at 10:50AM.

Given under my hand and seal, this 18<sup>th</sup> day of March in the year of our Lord Two Thousand and Seventeen.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Bane  
Strafford Town Clerk