

# 2018 STRAFFORD TOWN MEETING

March 13, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 AM on Tuesday, March 13, 2018 at the Strafford Town Hall, in the Town of Strafford, by Moderator Pro Tem Kurt Wuelper to act on Article #1 of the 2018 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 8:32 am on Saturday, March 17, 2018 at the Strafford School gymnasium by Moderator Pro Tem Kurt Wuelper to act on articles #2 through #18.

The Moderator welcomed all to the meeting and introduced Boy Scout Troop #23 which then presented the colors with a Flag Ceremony and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Pastor Harold Muzzey offered an invocation.

Selectmen Scott Young thanked the voters who made the effort to vote this week despite the 30 inches of snow that fell on Election Day. It was a higher than average turnout. Selectman Young talked about Bill Lord, Strafford Town Moderator for many years, and noted how much he has done for the town, thanking him for all the hard work through the years. The voters showed their appreciation with a round of applause and standing ovation.

He reviewed the accomplishments of the past year including but not limited to capital improvements on Water St. and Brown's Pasture Rd, the purchase of a new police cruiser, ballistic vests for first responders, and upgraded server securing at town hall with a new firewall. He applauded the team work displayed from all branches of town services in response to the October of 2017 storm.

There were PowerPoint displays reviewing the tax rate in Strafford throughout the years. He stated that Strafford has one of the lowest rates in the area.

Selectman Young summarized Article #2 listing some of the areas that are due for road improvements, he pointed the value of SRPC's MapGeo Landuse database, to be voted on in article #10. He drew the voter's attention to Article #11, the recycling center building, stating that approx. \$20,000 worth of electrical equipment is housed in the crumbling building. He pointed out a needed Capital Reserve fund for future town hall repairs.

He reviewed some future needs including security measures at the dam, and replacing the Recycling Center backhoe.

The moderator introduced the head table, Town Clerk Christine Bane, Selectman Bryant Scott, Selectman Scott Young, Selectboard Chairman Lynn Sweet, and Town Administrator Ellen White. Moderator Wuelper stated that he will not be following Robert's Rules of Order. He pointed out that the body has control of the meeting and can overrule him for any reason. He asked that speakers state their names and direct questions to the moderator. No personal attacks will be tolerated. He reviewed the process for secret petitions.

The Moderator read the results of Article 1:

	<b>Library Trustee – One Year</b>	
Lindsay Aucella.....		505
	<b>Library Trustee – Three Years</b>	

Jessie Copeland.....	492
<b>Selectman – Three Years</b>	
Bryant J. Scott.....	476
<b>Trustee of the Trust Funds – Three Years</b>	
Jean Ewen.....	474
<b>Road Agent – One Year</b>	
Greg Messenger.....	531
<b>Town Moderator – Two Years</b>	
Ron Lemieux.....	481
<b>Planning Board – Three Years..</b>	
Alan Williams.....	114
Philip Auger.....	189
R. Stephen Leighton.....	244
<b>Supervisor of the Checklist – Six Years</b>	
Carol H. Cooper.....	499

He then read the results of the School District Election:

<b>(2) School Board Member – Three Years</b>	
Misty Lowe.....	333
Bruce Patrick.....	309
<b>School Board Member – One Year</b>	
Erica McLean Helm.....	356
<b>School District Moderator – Two Years</b>	
Kurt Wuelper.....	396

**Article #2:**

2. 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.

**Selectman Sweet motioned and was seconded by an audience member.**

Greg Messenger then reviewed that his intention is to repave both the Province Rd and Ricky Nelson Rd.

Don Clifford then praised the financial management of our Road Agent, pointing out Tasker Hill and the professional repairs recently completed. He questioned why the tax impact statement is not included for each warrant article as has been past practice.

Selectman Sweet replied that with state guidance advising against this practice, it was discontinued in 2012. She reminded the voters that any change to an article from the floor would change the stated tax impact, should it be included on the warrant. .

**Moderator Wuelper then asked for a vote by show of cards, vote carries.**

**Article #3:**

3. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$573,359 for the operation and maintenance of the Strafford Police Department.

Article was moved by Chief Richard and seconded by Selectman Scott.

Chief Richard spoke to the article. He thanked Road Agent Messenger for the work he and his crew does during the winter and he thanked his staff on the department for their hard work during a staff shortage in 2017. He states that his full-time staff is now at 100% but continues to search for hard-to- find part-time employees. His overall operating budget increased due to the need to bump up the speed of internet access.

**The Moderator called for a vote on article #3. A show of cards indicates an approval.**

**Article #4:**

4. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$32,918 for the purchase of a police vehicle and equipment to be funded by a withdrawal of \$17,918. from the Police Special Details Revolving Fund established by Article 18 at the March 14, 2009 Town Meeting, with the balance of \$15,000. to come from general taxation. The Selectmen recommend this article.

**Article moved by Chief Richards seconded by Scott Young.**

Don Clifford spoke to the \$15,000 from taxation. He stated we set up a fund years ago to fund police vehicles. He recommends that we hold off on the \$15k for one year

Selectmen Young responded that the purpose of the fund was created to offset taxation. At time of creation, they were running cruisers 140,000-150,000 miles per year resulting in high repair expenses. The thinking at the time of creating this fund was to spend less on repairs.

Suzanne Murdough states that by delaying this purchase this year, we delay the process by a year and will be unable to purchase a vehicle next year.

**The moderator called for a vote, and a show of cards reflects that Article #4 passes.**

**Article #5:**

5. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$487,455 for the operation and maintenance of the Strafford Fire Department and Rescue Squad.

**Article #5 was moved and seconded by the audience.**

Fire Chief Whitehouse spoke to article by reading the Strafford Fire Mission Statement which was displayed on the PowerPoint for voters. He reviewed the call numbers for 2017, breaking them down between night and day coverage.

Deputy Fire Chief David Hartranft then reviewed Strafford EMT coverage and payroll. This article is asking for an additional \$108,000 in salary line, which increases the Firefighter/EMT per diem rate. He reviewed the average response time of the Strafford Fire Department as well as Mutual Aid response times. He went on to review past requests for increased funding and the past pay and budget freezes in town. He reviewed the structure of the personnel needed in responding to calls, and stated that there is a need for additional personnel in order to reduce response times therefore improving quality of care.

Genny Rizotti stated that she sees the value in 24-7 coverage and supports the article. She questioned if there are ways to recover money through billing. David Hartranft explained how the ambulance fund works and where the insurance money goes when received. If new ambulance is needed, they go to the Ambulance Fund, which is financed by insurance proceeds. Ms. Rizotti asked if this article could be funded by the proceeds of the insurance billing, such as other towns. Deputy Fire Chief Hartranft explained that there is no way to anticipate the receipts generated by insurance billing from year-to-year, therefore making this an undependable source of personnel funding.

Other members of the audience spoke with support for this article and questioned various aspects of the

proposal.

The moderator questioned the body regarding the desire to stop discussion on this article. A show of cards indicated that the body would like to move the question.

**The moderator summarized the article and a vote shows that Article #5 passes.**

**Article #6:**

6. 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.

**Selectman Sweet moved the Article and a member of the public seconded.** There was no discussion.

**A show of cards indicated that Article #6 passes.**

**Article #7:**

7. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,343 for the purpose of extended warranty coverage and service contract on the Zoll X-Series Defibrillator, and to authorize the withdrawal of \$1,343. 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.

**Selectman Sweet moved the article and Selectman Scott seconded.** Discussion did not materialize.

**It was put to vote, and a show of cards passes Article #7 passes.**

**Article #8:**

8. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$150,000 to be used for the design, construction and furnishing a new station on the site of the existing Crown Point Fire Station and to authorize the withdrawal of \$100,684. from the fund known as 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 balance of \$49,316 to come from general taxation. The Selectmen recommend this article.

**Selectman Sweet moved the article, seconded by Selectman Scott.**

Discussion ensued. Don Clifford spoke in support of this article, although questioned if the plan is well-thought out. Chief Whitehouse replied that this is a work in progress...with the project being completed over several years. This proposal should last town over 50 years with good maintenance and care.

**The moderator asked for a show of cards which resulted in passage of Article #8.**

**Article #9:**

9. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000 to be placed in the fund known as the Fire Engine Capital Reserve Fund established by Article 20 at the March 19, 2005 Town Meeting for the future purchase of a fire truck. The Selectmen recommend this article.

**Selectman Sweet motioned and Selectman Scott seconded.** There was no discussion.

**A vote was taken and article #9 passes.**

**Article #10**

10. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$4,700 for the purpose of digitizing the Town Tax Maps and to participate in the SRPC's regional on-line MapGeo Land-use database.

**Article was moved by Selectman Young and seconded by Selectman Sweet.**

Selectman Sweet spoke to the article stating that this is a tool that will be helpful to both staff and residents. It is an online database available through Strafford Regional Planning. The service will include a \$1000 yearly maintenance fee and will allow for flood plain and aerial mapping, among other things.

**The article was put to a vote and Article #10 passes.**

**Article #11**

11. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000 to replace the Electrical Building at the Recycling Center.

**Article moved by Selectman Scott and seconded by the public.**

A brief explanation of the need for this building was given, including the protection of expensive electrical equipment.

**A show of voting cards indicates that Article #11 passes.**

**Article #12:**

12. 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.

**Selectman Sweet moved the article and Selectman Scott seconded.**

Selectman Sweet explained that this is the third year of funding this Non-Capital Reserve Fund with the goal of addressing the Barn Door Gap bridge needs. With recent unanticipated funding of approximately \$108,000 through SB38, this \$25,000 addition to the fund will allow us enough money to begin the process with the state.

**A show of voting cards showed that the article passes.**

**Article #13:**

13. To see if the Town will vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund pursuant to RSA 35:1 for the purpose of Town Hall building maintenance, improvements and/or expansion and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to be placed in this fund, and to designate the Selectmen as agents to expend. The Selectmen recommend this article.

**Article was moved by Selectman Sweet and seconded by Selectman Scott.**

Don Clifford spoke in favor of this article, and the need to put money aside. He wants the article to read differently, and proposed that the selectmen come before the town to ask for authorization to expend, rather than have the selectmen be agents to expend the dollars. Selectman Sweet states, for instance, that in 2017, the town had two expensive repairs that were not anticipated and therefore the budget was depleted. A fund like this

would provide the town with a source to use should other unexpected repairs be required. Mr. Clifford asked for a report of the fund expenditures next year.

**A vote by cards was taken and the article passes.**

**Article #14**

14. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to be added to the fund known as the Library Expansion/Improvement Capital Reserve Fund established by Article 12 at the 2013 Town Meeting for the purpose of Library expansion and improvements. The Selectmen recommend this article.

**Article was moved by Selectman Young and seconded by Selectman Scott.**

Don Clifford asked for the balance in the fund and questioned if there is any intent to add on to the existing building. Selectman Sweet responded in the negative. She explained that this is a maintenance fund, not a building fund. Mr. Clifford’s desire is to build a new building on another site in future, not add on to the building. Selectman Young states the selectmen asked the library trustees for a 10 year plan. The trustees provided one which included a future plan for building at a different site.

Charles Burnham, long time library supporter, talked about the lack of parking at the current library and the robust usage of the library by many groups. He feels the future of library is in a different location, which and that bringing this vision to fruition will be a long process. Don Clifford questioned the availability of the land to the left of Mountain View Drive. There was no further discussion

**The motion was put to vote, and a show of cards indicated that this article passed.**

**Article #15:**

15. 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.

The article was moved by Selectman Sweet and seconded by Joann Brown. There was no discussion.

**A vote was taken showing that Article#15 passes.**

**Article #16:**

16. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,369,091 for general Town operations.

Executive.....	\$ 83,055.
Election & Registration.....	32,920.
Financial Administration.....	96,779.
Appraisal of Property & Tax Maps.....	39,738.
Legal Expenses.....	10,000.
Employee Benefits, FICA, Medi & Unemp. Comp.....	41,065.
Planning and Zoning.....	9,411.
General Government Building.....	35,400.
Auto Permits/Town Clerk Fees.....	35,088.
Insurance.....	52,800.
Advertising and Regional Association.....	4,010.
Strafford Regional Planning Comm. Dues.....	4,833.
Contingency Fund.....	16,000.
Annual CPA Audit.....	10,890.

Emergency Management.....	5,000.
Building Inspection.....	17,540.
General Highway Expenses and Town Maintenance.....	445,500.
Street Lighting.....	5,000.
Solid Waste Disposal.....	265,367.
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.
Haven Sexual Assault Support Services.....	992.
My Friend’s Place.....	200.
The Homemakers Health Services.....	3,200.
Ready Rides.....	1,500.
CASA.....	500.
Parks and Recreation.....	19,923.
Library.....	87,909.
Patriotic Purposes and Fire Works.....	4,800.
Conservation Commission.....	2,500.
Interest Expense & Tax Anticipation Notes.....	<u>2,000.</u>

TOTAL..... \$1,369,091.

(The intent of this article is to raise the sum of \$1,369,091. exclusive of all other Articles addressed.)

**Selectman Lynn Sweet moved the article and the public seconded.** Selectman Scott spoke to the article. Stated that this is our town budget, and the selectmen **made a motion to add the following amendment, seconded by Selectman Young.**

“Based on 2018 expenditures to date for sand/salt/plowing due to the number of recent storms, after a comparison to 2017 expenditures for the same time period, the board would like to add \$35,000 to the line for general highway expenses and town maintenance.”

This increases the General Highway Expenses and Town Maintenance line from \$445,500 to \$480,000, and increases the budget bottom-line by \$35,000, from \$1,369,091 to \$1,404,091.

**A vote on this amendment by a show of cards was in the positive, the amendment passes.**

Don Clifford made a motion to amend the legal expenses line by increasing it from \$10,000 to \$15,000. A second was made. Michael Harrington questioned the 2017 expenditures and the need to increase by this substantial amount. Donald Coker supports this amendment; that as a member of the Planning Board, he has learned that the town has been reluctant to get involved in some issues, due to the lack of funding in this line. He feels that the town will be faced with an increased need to rely on legal advice in the future. Jim Vera spoke in favor of this amendment. Charles Burnham asked if the town can obtain services of a ‘go to’ law firm. Selectman Sweet stated that they are open to this suggestion and will follow up with that.

**Moderator asked if the voters will approve increasing the legal line from \$10,000 to \$15,000 and the bottom line from \$1,404,091 to \$1,409,091.**

**A show of cards indicates that the amendment passes.**

**The moderator asked for further discussion on Article #16, seeing none, a vote was taken, and a show of cards passes the article, including both amendments.**

**Article #17**

17. "To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$6,000 as a donation to be used for the purpose of mowing and maintenance of the Center Strafford Cemetery, Caverly Cemetery and the Crown Point Cemetery. These funds will be placed in the care and custody of the designated cemetery association for each of the aforementioned cemeteries." (by Petition.)  
The Selectmen recommend this article.

**Motion to move the article was made by Lynn Sweet and seconded by Bryant Scott.**

Larry Smith, Treasurer of Strafford Crown Cemetery Association spoke to this article. He explained the need for additional funding to maintain town cemeteries. The sale of burial lots fluctuates from year-to-year and donations are also depended on but by no means guaranteed. John Hall states that this is the first time they have asked the town for money. James Anderson asked for a plan from the Cemetery trustees before asking for yearly funding. There was lengthy discussion on the needs for funding, the current trust-fund set up, and the fact that this is a complicated situation. Some voters oppose the use of tax payer dollars for maintenance of private property. John Hall stated that most of the work involved is unpaid volunteer labor, and that indigent are treated with dignity and compassion and not turned away.  
**Article #17 was put to a vote and the motion carries by show of cards.**

**Article 18:**

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

Michael Harrington questioned if residents were notified of the dates of meetings, as requested in 2017. Chairman Sweet stated that it did not happen this year due to a misunderstanding but will be attempted again next year. Don Clifford again requested that the tax impact be put on the warrant. The selectmen agreed to this request, with the understanding that the tax impact will be an estimate and not exact.

The Moderator adjourned the meeting at 10:45 AM.

Given under my hand and seal, this 17<sup>th</sup> day of March in the year of our Lord Two Thousand and Eighteen.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Bane  
Strafford Town Clerk