

**2022 STRAFFORD TOWN MEETING
MARCH 8, 2022**

The Town Meeting was called to order at 8:00 AM on Tuesday, March 8, 2022 at the Strafford Town Hall, in the Town of Strafford, by Appointed Town Moderator Ralph Wegner, to act on Articles 1 through 5 by ballot vote.

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

The 202nd Town Meeting was called to order again at 8:48 AM on Saturday, March 12, 2022 at the Strafford School, by Appointed Moderator Ralph Wegner, to act on Articles 6 through 30.

Selectman Brian Monahan led with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Moderator Ralph Wegner introduced himself and welcomed voters. He explained that we are no longer under emergency orders but still offering car participation and thanked the Assistant Moderator Bob Fletcher for his assistance along with the volunteers. He asked for car voters to honk horns and flash lights if they could hear and a few horns were heard. He briefly went over rules and procedures of the meeting. There were 167 registered voters in attendance. Out of that number 22 registered voters were attending from cars.

Moderator Ralph Wegner read the results of the March 8th Election.

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

Voters on the Checklist 3009

Votes cast 726 (of that number 45 were cast by absentee vote and 681 in person)

Selectmen (3 Year Term)

Chris Garcia 388 Votes

Moderator (2 Year Term)

Ralph Wegner 581 Votes

Town Clerk (3 Year Term)

Terri L Marsh 637 Votes

Supervisor of the Checklist (6 Year Term)

Martha English 594 Votes

Treasurer (3 Year Term)

Cindy Cushing 576 Votes

Trustee of the Trust Funds (3 Year Term)

Charles Burnham 581 Votes

Library Trustee (3 Year Term)

Lindsay Aucella 586 Votes

Road Agent (1 Year Term)
Matthew Messenger 654 Votes

Planning Board Member (3 Year Term)
Philip Auger 538 Votes

Zoning Board of Adjustment Member – 2 Positions (3 Year Term)
Scott Hodgdon 55 Write-In Votes
Katrina Labrecque 13 Write-In Votes

Annual School District Election Results
School Board Member – 2 Positions (3 Year Term)
Jessica Grant 370 Votes
Katrina Labrecque 311 Votes

Results of Articles voted on by ballot on Election Day, March 8, 2022

** 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 amend the definitions in *Section 1.14, Definitions*, of the Zoning Ordinance to clarify the definitions of “Accessory Buildings, Structures, or Uses”; “Structure”s; “Building”s; and to correct citations of these terms throughout the Zoning Ordinance.”

YES - 304 NO - 367

Article #2 Failed

** 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 1.14.5—Frontage*, the definition of Frontage, and *Article 1.4.1 D Minimum Land Area* provisions. The proposed amendments to the frontage definition clarify the road type on which a lot must border, that the same provisions apply to both private and public roads, and that the frontage must be fully within the Town of Strafford. The amendments to the Minimum Land Area provisions clarify the requirements for building on lots that do not meet Strafford’s minimum land area specifications.

YES - 294 NO – 383

Article #3 Failed

** 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 amend *Article 1.7.1—Non-Conforming Use* to clarify when Special Exceptions or Variances are required, or when neither is needed. Also, it specifies the duration of permits, allowance to rebuild destroyed non-conforming structures, and that permitted non-conforming construction must comply with state laws and town ordinances.”

YES - 312 NO – 362

Article #4 Failed

** 5. 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 H Telecommunications Facilities* by deleting the existing language and adopting **Article 1.4.2 H Wireless Telecommunication Facilities**, a comprehensive wireless telecommunications facilities ordinance complying with federal and state requirements regarding the siting, construction and deactivation of wireless telecommunications facilities (cell towers) in Strafford. The amendment would establish four wireless communication facility overlay districts delineated by GPS coordinates to be known as Strafford North, Strafford East, Strafford South, and Strafford West, in order to encourage optimal tower locations where comprehensive community telecommunication coverage can be achieved. The ordinance establishes maximum height and setback requirements as well as operational standards regarding security and noise and establishes procedures for both construction and deactivation of cell towers through a Special Use Permit process before the Planning Board.”

YES - 524

NO – 156

Article #5 Passes

Mike Harrington shared that hearings are being held at the State House on 5G cell towers. More studies are being done and 5G will mostly be in densely populated areas. He stated that we do not need to be concerned about 5G coming to Strafford in the immediate future. He welcomes residents to contact him with questions or concerns.

Selectman Scott Young thanked the Police, Fire Department, employees of the Town and Recycling Center. He stated they are the unsung heroes of this Town and do a great job.

Selectman Lynn Sweet thanked Scott Young for his time of service as he is stepping down from his position as Selectman.

Selectman Scott Young continued with praise to Lynn Sweet for her idea and implementation of car voters. He gave recognition to the Strafford Bicentennial group who worked hard to give a celebration even through Covid. He recognized accomplishments of the Town wide revaluation completion. He thanked residents for cooperation during Covid. He stated in comparison with other towns we are doing great. He briefly reviewed the articles. He shared that there is \$200,000 in ARPA funds now and another \$200,000 in ARPA funds to use later in the year. There were articles in this warrant that were removed because ARPA funding will be used for those necessary items.

Mike Harrington joked that he didn't know Strafford had a Highway Department.

Bob Perry asked what ARPA stood for, is it a federal program.

Selectman Scott Young replied it is a federal program.

Eric Almanzan expressed he disagrees with spending of the ARPA Funds without input and vote from the Town.

Selectman Brian Monahan stated that there are very specific rules regarding the use of ARPA Funds. Officials are elected by the people of the Town to make those kinds of decisions.

Selectman Scott Young shared that the Board of Selectmen welcomes questions and concerns.

Moderator Ralph Wegner asked for two volunteers to help with counting votes when needed. Kurt Wuelper and Mark Rainey volunteered. The Moderator began the articles to be voted on.

6. To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to RSA 231:62, to change the currently “*Elected*” Road Agent position to an “*Appointed*” position, and to authorize the Selectmen as agents to appoint. The current Road Agent shall continue in the position until the end of the next Town Meeting.

Motion made by Lynn Sweet Seconded by Scott Young

Discussion:

Greg Messenger stated that he requested this article to restructure how to fund the Road Agent position.

Bob Perry stated he is voting against this article because appointments bring politics and favoritism.

Mike Harrington asked for an explanation of why this change is requested when it is working well the way it is.

Selectman Lynn Sweet explained that times are changing. The Messengers maintain our roads on a very small budget when neighboring towns are 1.2 million just to maintain a highway department. We may not always have the Messengers. She stated that Matthew Messenger is our youngest Elected Official at 19 years old.

Kurt Wuelper stated that our Town is growing, volunteers are declining, and we need to change. We elect the people who do the appointing. They respond to the residents and he has confidence in the Selectmen to do the right thing and move us forward.

Selectman Scott Young stated that this conversation began 5-6 years ago. Greg Messenger has worked 40 plus hours weekly for the Town which takes away from his business. We want to be prepared for change.

Denise Rainey stated she is very concerned with appointments because they become corrupt. She asked if there are any other options.

Selectman Scott Young replied that we can keep it an elected position.

Selectman Lynn Sweet stated it is possible in a few years we may need to create a highway department. This is just a stepping stone into that process.

Selectman Scott Young stated that the Tax Collector, Fire Chief, Police Chief, are all appointed and answer to the Board of Selectmen.

Selectman Brian Monahan stated that appointed positions bring a level of stability to certain positions. Road Agent being a yearly elected position brings instability.

Don Coker asked if there will still be competitive bids for the position.

Board of Selectmen replied yes.

Judy Dupre stated that if something were to happen to the Messenger crew, that do an awesome job, the Town has no equipment to do anything. Judy stated she has been an appointed Tax Collector for 25 years.

Tim Reed stated that last year the Town voted to switch ZBA from appointed to elected and not one person ran for the position this year. He encourages the Town to trust the Board of Selectmen.

Robin Doucette asked if the Town should have a capital reserve fund in place first.

Selectman Lynn Sweet stated that they have had a small capital reserve fund for a few years now.

Chief Michael Richard stated the Messengers go above and beyond to serve the Town however needed. To get someone to replace them would be costly.

Eric Almanzan questioned ideally how does the Board of Selectmen see this going next year.

Selectman Lynn Sweet stated looking at 2023 there would be bids, helping to plan budgets and planning for the future. We just need to slowly take steps moving forward. Neighboring towns are struggling because they did not have a plan in place, this is a beginning.

Kurt Wuelper saw confusion over motions and reminded the Moderator a motion was not needed to vote.

Selectman Lynn Sweet reminded everyone we need to wait for car voters to be counted each article.

With no further discussion a vote was taken by show of cards.

Article #6 Passes

7. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$335,000. 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 by Lynn Sweet Seconded by Brian Monahan

Discussion:

Greg Messenger briefly spoke to the article about work being planned for this year on Northwood Rd and Drake Hill Rd paving. Also finishing work with funds from last year on Barn Door Gap Bridge that was delayed due to permits.

With no further discussion a vote was taken by show of cards.

Article #7 Passes

8. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$814,152. for the operation and maintenance of the Strafford Police Department.

Motion made by Lynn Sweet Seconded by Scott Young

Discussion:

Chief Michael Richard thanked the Police Department staff and stated they will fill the vacant position this year. He shared that the PD roof is 21 years old and needs repair, the new car order from last year will arrive in the next couple of weeks and he is not getting a new car this year. He will use his car past the 5 year rotation schedule. Money for the radio fund will be given back to the Town. That funding will be covered by grants.

With no further discussion a vote was taken by show of cards.

Article #8 Passes

9. To see if the Town will vote to discontinue the Capital Reserve Fund known as the Strafford County Radio Project Fund. Said funds (\$5,000.59), with accumulated interest to date of withdrawal, are to be transferred to the municipality's general fund.

Motion made by Lynn Sweet Seconded by Chief Michael Richard

Discussion:

Selectman Scott Young stated that the Town thought we would have to raise \$35,000 and the fund was started. Strafford County Sheriff got grants and they do not need the Town's money. Vote is to discontinue Capital Reserve Fund and put the money into the general fund

With no further discussion a vote was taken by show of cards.

Article #9 Passes

David Hartranft, Deputy Fire Chief, gave a presentation on Fire Department budget and operations. He thanked the Strafford Citizens. Calls continue to increase, staffing is down 7 people, in part because other towns have increased their payroll. He briefly reviewed the Articles being presented.

10. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$556,271. for the operation and maintenance of the Strafford Fire Department.

Motion made by Lynn Sweet Seconded by Mike Harrington

With no discussion vote was taken by a show of cards.

Article #10 Passes

11. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$60,217. for the third year's payment of the lease agreement for the new ambulance approved at the 2020 Town Meeting, and to authorize the withdrawal of \$60,217. from the Rescue Vehicle and Equipment Special Revenue Fund to be used for this purpose. This lease/purchase agreement contains an escape clause. No funding to come from general taxation. The Selectmen recommend this article.

Motion made by Lynn Sweet Seconded by Scott Young

Discussion:

Bob Perry asked for an update on making Town hydrants operational.

Moderator Ralph Wegner replied that we will get to that after this vote.

With no further discussion vote was taken by show of cards.

Article #11 Passes

Chief Scott Whitehouse stated that there is a program to repair existing hydrants in Town. He stated there is an ongoing battle with DES and problems due to cost increases. He reviewed areas of hydrants and fire ponds.

12. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,000. for the purpose of purchasing equipment and supplies for the ambulances, and to authorize the withdrawal of \$15,000. from the Rescue Vehicle and Equipment Special Revenue Fund, with no amount to come from general taxation. The Selectmen recommend this article.

Motion made by Lynn Sweet Seconded by Judy Dupre

With no discussion vote was taken by a show of cards.

Article #12 Passes

13. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to enter into a five year lease agreement for \$670,000. for the purpose of leasing to own a new Fire Engine Tanker, and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$155,000. for the first year's payment. This lease/purchase agreement contains an escape clause.

Motion made by Lynn Sweet Seconded by JoAnn Brown

Selectman Lynn Sweet made an amendment to the Article #13, due to recent increases.

Article #13 Amendment:

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to enter into a five year lease agreement for \$720,172 for the purpose of leasing to own a new Fire Engine Tanker, and to raise and

appropriate the sum of \$151,953 for the first year's payment. This lease/purchase agreement contains an escape clause.

Motion made by Chief Scott Whitehouse Seconded by Brian Monahan

Discussion:

Chief Scott Whitehouse stated adjustment is due to increased prices in metals and electronics. This is the lowest bid of only two that came back.

David Ekstrom asked if the engine is similar to the one we have.

Chief Scott Whitehouse replied that it is similar, same gallon and pump capacity, some changes in cabin specs.

Alison Brisson asked what happens to the old fire engine we are replacing.

Chief Scott Whitehouse stated that it can be used as a trade or there are companies that will buy it at whole sale value to be reconditioned. Money would be returned to the general fund.

With no further discussion vote was taken by show of cards.

Amendment to Article #13 Passes

Amended Article #13

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to enter into a five year lease agreement for \$720,172 for the purpose of leasing to own a new Fire Engine Tanker, and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$151,953 for the first year's payment. This lease/purchase agreement contains an escape clause.

Motion made by Lynn Sweet Seconded by Brian Monahan

With no discussion vote was taken by show of cards.

Amended Article #13 Passes

14. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000. to be placed in the Fire Engine Capital Reserve Fund and designate the Selectmen as agents to expend. The Selectmen recommend this article.

Motion made by Lynn Sweet Seconded by Michelle Bengert

Discussion:

Selectman Lynn Sweet stated this article is self-explanatory and there is just over \$233,000 in the fund now.

With no further discussion vote was taken by show of cards.

Article #14 Passes

15. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$27,684. to purchase medical and associated equipment (i.e. 2 AED defibrillators and LUCAS auto compression device, etc.), \$24,915. to come from a GOFERR Grant, the balance of \$2,769. to come from general taxation. The Selectmen recommend this article.

Motion made by Lynn Sweet Seconded by JoAnn Brown

With no discussion vote was taken by a show of cards.

Article #15 Passes

16. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,778. for the purpose of purchasing new forestry equipment (i.e. PPE shirts, headlamps, goggles and hose clamps) with \$1,389. to come from the State Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant and the balance of \$1,389. to come from general taxation.

Motion made by Lynn Sweet Seconded by JoAnn Brown

Discussion:

Chief Scott Whitehouse stated there were 14 brush fires and a misprint in the town report stating 5 acres that was actually 2 acres.

With no further discussion vote was taken by show of cards.

Article #16 Passes

17. To see if the Town will vote to establish a New Fire Station Committee to be comprised of the Fire Chief, one Fire Department member, one Selectman, and two Town residents. The committee to report back at the 2023 Town Meeting.

Motion made by Lynn Sweet Seconded by Michelle Bengert

Discussion:

Selectman Lynn Sweet stated Chief Whitehouse came to the Selectmen to request a committee. If this passes we will need some volunteers. In March 2023 the committee would report findings. *Don Clifford* questioned why the Fire Stations were not built sufficiently in the first place. He questioned the plans moving forward and shared that money spending needs to stop. He would volunteer for the committee.

Selectman Lynn Sweet stated it is just an exploratory committee at this point.

Chief Scott Whitehouse stated he would like to consolidate two stations into one using the remodeled Crown Point Station and the Bow Lake Station. Center Station has just been used as a garage. The committee will look at the assets and come up with suggestions for solutions.

Selectman Scott Young stated that in 1998 the Town had a building committee that came up with a building that would house all three (Fire, Police, Town Hall) for 1.2 million dollars and got it down to \$900,000. The Town voted it down. If the money had been spent back in 1998 we would not be where we are today with old buildings to repair. We need to continue looking forward for the future of this Town.

Selectman Lynn Sweet stated this all wraps into the Master Plan process.

Gary Fowler questioned if the size of the new engine would fit in the existing fire station.

Chief Scott Whitehouse stated yes it would be close.

Eric Almanzan questioned if the plan was to have the committee come in next year with a cost.

Chief Scott Whitehouse stated next year the committee would not be coming in with bids, just an idea of what is needed in the future. The Fire Department will live with what they have right now.

With no further discussion vote was taken by show of cards.

Article #17 Passes

18. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$133,554. for the operation and maintenance of the Hill Library.

Motion made by Lynn Sweet Seconded by JoAnn Brown

Discussion:

Jessie Copeland, Trustee of the Hill Library, discussed with a presentation the Library operations, budget and articles being voted on.

JD Clarke stated that he has only praise for the Hill Library that was dedicated in 1973 with \$10,000 of grants acquired by a retired teacher, Bernice Hill.

With no further discussion vote was taken by show of cards

Article #18 Passes

19. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000. to be placed in the Library Expansion/Improvement Capital Reserve Fund. The Selectmen recommend this article.

Motion made by Lynn Sweet Seconded by JoAnn Brown

Discussion:

Selectman Scott Young stated there is now just over \$43,000 in that account.

With no further discussion vote taken by show of cards.

Article #19 Passes

20. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000. to be placed in the Town Office Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. The Selectmen recommend this article.

Motion made by Lynn Sweet Seconded by JoAnn Brown

Discussion:

Selectman Scott Young stated that this capital reserve fund is to handle things that come up in the care of the 20 year old building. There is just over \$4,000 in this account.

Moderator Ralph Wegner questioned if this was the same amount as last year.

Selectman Scott Young replied yes.

With no further discussion vote was taken by show of cards.

Article #20 Passes

21. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000. to be placed in the Town Hall Building Maintenance, Improvements and/or Expansion Capital Reserve Fund. The Selectmen recommend this article.

Motion made by Lynn Sweet Seconded by Scott Young

Discussion:

Selectman Scott Young stated that his comment on Article #20 was actually addressing this article. He added that the building roof needs replacement with a cost of approximately \$30,000.

With no further discussion vote was taken by show of cards.

Article #21 Passes

22. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000. to be placed in the Future Reval/Statistical Update Capital Reserve Fund. The Selectmen recommend this article.

Motion made by Lynn Sweet Seconded by JoAnn Brown

Discussion:

Kurt Wuelper asked for results of the Article #21 vote to assure it was announced.

Moderator Ralph Wegner again announced Article #21 Passed

Selectman Brian Monahan stated that the Town revaluation cost \$40,000 this year; this capital reserve is to help with future cost.

With no further discussion vote was taken by show of cards.

Article #22 Passes

23. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,747,219. for general Town operations.

Executive.....	\$ 94,238.
Election & Registration.....	39,282.
Financial Administration.....	116,623.
Appraisal of Property & Tax Maps.....	45,193.
Legal Expenses.....	60,000.
Employee Benefits, FICA, Medi & Unemp. Comp.....	46,410.
Planning and Zoning.....	52,043.
General Government Building.....	46,800.
Auto Permits/Town Clerk Fees.....	38,310.
Insurance.....	60,847.
Advertising and Regional Association.....	4,243.
Strafford Regional Planning Comm. Dues.....	5,214.
Contingency Fund.....	16,000.
Annual CPA Audit.....	13,000.
Emergency Management.....	15,000.
Building Inspection.....	18,748.
General Highway Expenses and Town Maintenance.....	643,875.
Street Lighting.....	5,000.
Solid Waste Disposal.....	352,147.
Animal Control.....	1,800.
Cemeteries.....	9,000.
Cornerstone VNA (formerly Roch Dstr VNA).....	3,991.
General Assistance and Welfare.....	15,580.
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.

Strafford Nutrition & Meals on Wheels.....	1,000.
Parks and Recreation.....	23,183.
Patriotic Purposes and Fireworks	6,800.
Conservation Commission.....	2,500.
Interest Expense & Tax Anticipation Notes.....	2,000.
TOTAL.....	\$1,747,219.

(The intent of this article is to raise the sum of \$1,747,219. exclusive of all other Articles addressed.)

Motion made by Lynn Sweet Seconded by Scott Young

Discussion:

Mike Harrington questioned if the general highway/town maintenance budget needs adjustment due to rising diesel cost.

Selectman Lynn Sweet stated we are open to an amendment on the floor.

Mike Harrington questioned what a realistic amendment would be.

Greg Messenger, Road Agent, made a suggestion of \$20,000 as a best guess on the spot.

Mike Harrington stated he would like to make an amendment to Article #23 to add \$20,000 to the highway budget.

Philip Auger stated he would like to make an amendment to the building inspection, code enforcer officer position. He stated \$36,000 would increase hours and better meet the needs of the Town. He also encouraged the Board of Selectmen to couple this position with another town.

Eric Rowe asked for some order for these amendments.

Kurt Wuelper stated that these amendments cannot be voted together and need to be voted on individually.

Mike Harrington made an amendment to Article #23

Article #23 Amendment #1

To see if the Town will increase the line for General Highway Expense and Town Maintenance by \$20,000 and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$663,875 for General Highway Expenses and Town Maintenance, revising the total amount to \$1,767,219.

Motion made by Mike Harrington Seconded by Lynn Sweet

Discussion

Linda Pape asked if the Road Agent could use some other capital reserve funds to handle that additional cost.

Selectman Lynn Sweet replied that there are some other funds that could be used.

Kurt Wuelper clarified that the motion before us is to add \$20,000 to the line,

Eric Rowe clarified that we are only discussing and voting to add \$20,000 to the line.

Moderator Ralph Wegner made clarification of the amendment being voted on.

With no further discussion vote was taken by show of cards.

First Amendment to Article #23 Passes

Philip Auger made a second amendment to Article #23

Article #23 Amendment #2

To see if the Town will increase the line for Building Inspection by \$17,252 and to raise and

appropriate the sum of \$36,000 for Building Inspection, revising the total amount to \$1,784,471.

Motion made by Lynn Sweet Seconded by Tim Reed

Discussion:

Kurt Wuelper questioned if intent was to convert to a full time position or two halftime positions. *Selectman Lynn Sweet* stated we currently have 2 inspectors working extremely part time under the existing budget.

With no further discussion vote was taken by a count and show of cards.

Yes – 106 No – 44

2nd Amendment to Article #23 Passes

Continued Discussion:

Ken Berry stated he does not want additional lighting in our rural town and questioned what is planned for the Street Lighting line. He also stated the library street light needs repair.

Selectman Lynn Sweet stated the cost is to maintain what lights we have and no additional lighting is planned. She stated the light in need of repair will be looked into.

Ken Berry stated that our cemeteries are privately owned and questioned what the Cemetery line item funds are for.

Selectman Scott Young stated that the cemeteries are privately owned but by law the Town is required to have a cemetery available so the Town takes on some of the financial responsibility.

Eric Rowe stated that he recommends next year that each line on this article is given a number to make it easier for amendments. He also suggested the Board to consider increasing the funds given to My Friends Place for next year. The contribution has stayed the same for many years and the demands have grown. He questioned the number of referrals made to My Friends Place from Strafford.

Selectman Scott Young stated it would be the welfare department that would have those numbers of referrals. He stated My Friends Place sends a request for funds and that request has not increased. If they ask for more we would increase it.

Amended Article #23

23. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,784,471. for general Town operations.

Executive.....	\$ 94,238.
Election & Registration.....	39,282.
Financial Administration.....	116,623.
Appraisal of Property & Tax Maps.....	45,193.
Legal Expenses.....	60,000.
Employee Benefits, FICA, Medi & Unemp. Comp.....	46,410.
Planning and Zoning.....	52,043.
General Government Building.....	46,800.
Auto Permits/Town Clerk Fees.....	38,310.
Insurance.....	60,847.
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Strafford Regional Planning Comm. Dues.....	5,214.
Contingency Fund.....	16,000.
Annual CPA Audit.....	13,000.
Emergency Management.....	15,000.

Building Inspection.....	36,000.
General Highway Expenses and Town Maintenance.....	663,875.
Street Lighting.....	5,000.
Solid Waste Disposal.....	352,147.
Animal Control.....	1,800.
Cemeteries.....	9,000.
Cornerstone VNA (formerly Roch Dstr VNA).....	3,991.
General Assistance and Welfare.....	15,580.
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.
Strafford Nutrition & Meals on Wheels.....	1,000.
Parks and Recreation.....	23,183.
Patriotic Purposes and Fireworks	6,800.
Conservation Commission.....	2,500.
Interest Expense & Tax Anticipation Notes.....	2,000.
TOTAL.....	\$1,784,471.

(The intent of this article is to raise the sum of \$1,784,471. exclusive of all other Articles addressed.)

Motion made by Lynn Sweet Seconded by Scott Young

With no further discussion vote was taken by show of cards

Amended Article #23 Passes

Moderator Ralph Wegner asked if a 10 minute break was needed and the audience replied clearly “NO”.

Philip Auger introduced and presented Article #24 - #28 on benefits of Class A Trails. This presentation was also made available on the Town Website. He clarified rules and regulations of building on a Class 6 Road and benefits of changing the selected roads to Class A Trails. He shared that the Planning Board has identified sections of roads that reclassification would have zero impact on property owners while protecting natural resources and community character. A review by map of the 68 lots affected because they have frontage on one of these Class 6 Roads was presented. He encouraged residents to get involved in Master Planning.

Eric Almanzan questioned if these articles were from the Planning Board or from a private member. He stated that the Planning Board does not have authority over Class A Trails.

Philip Auger stated that the board has been working on Class 6 Roads for a couple years now. He stated Road articles need to come thru the warrant and that roads are an important part of our community.

Mike Harrington stated that someone owns these properties and these changes devalue their land and deny these property owners opportunity to even petition to build on their land. He stated that the community trust those Selectmen that we elect to consider building permits on Class 6 Roads. He suggested if the Town wants to change classifications and preserve the land let them raise money and buy the land.

Philip Auger stated the best use for most of these parcels is as wood lots not for building.

Wallace Spohr questioned gates put up on Class A Trails.

Philip Auger stated that this discussion is not about gates. The Selectmen would be the ones to discuss that. The Selectmen can set limits to the use and put up gates on Class A Trails but they remain a public right of way. This reclassification would not change that.

Wallace Spohr questioned the gate on Little Niagara Trail.

Philip Auger stated gates can be used to protect the trail and clarified some verbiage on ordinances.

Selectman Lynn Sweet stated that Little Niagara was brought to the Town by petition of the Lovejoy Foundation to reclassify it from a Class 6 Road to Class A trail and that a gate be put in. It was voted on and approved by this body.

Wallace Spohr stated that in that instance there were concerns of off road vehicles and he has concerns with road access if roads are reclassified.

Philip Auger stated that damage from OHRV's and off road vehicles are a concern.

Peter Croteau stated that land he owns would be affected by this and would be rendered useless. His mother lived here 40 years and she would not be able to see the land if gated. He feels the off roaders help to keep the roads picked up. He has concerns about trail access if needed.

Lori Shiere asked if she could turn around and address the audience.

Moderator Ralph Wegner gave permission for her to turn around and address the audience.

Lori Shiere stated that she owns property on Pig Lane that has been in her family since the 40's. She is thankful for the conservation in Strafford but has a financial investment in the property that was appraised at \$49,000 and is not considered just a wood lot. Value of her property would be significantly impacted and limit what her and her children could do with that property in the future. She is against this reclassification.

Philip Auger showed the lot in question on the map and stated that as requirements are today, the only way it could be built on is from Range Road.

Mike Harrington asked for a point of order. He feels Philip Auger should not have special privilege to address each speaker while others have to wait their turn in line.

Moderator Ralph Wegner replied that Philip Auger will not answer each speaker but will remain available if someone asks a question that he needs to address.

Tim Reed stated he is a Civil Engineer with 24 years of experience. He sees developments in other towns and feels open lands draw developers to come in, buy and develop and renders the town defenseless. He is on the Planning Board to help defend the Town's Master Plan to keep it rural. Changing these selected Class 6 Roads to Class A Trails will protect the Town from development. If the Town wants to go back to a Class 6 Road it can be voted on again.

Moderator Ralph Wegner made a request that speakers face the Moderator.

Bethene Wuelper shared that she wants to speak specifically to one of the articles.

Moderator Ralph Wegner asked that she come back to speak when a motion for that article is made and reminded the audience this time is for general discussion.

Eric Rowe stated there are a fair number of private homes affected and feels this is an incredulous act. He stated that this takes rights away from the property owner and lowers the value of the land. He stated this is all about personal property rights and encourages residents to vote against the articles.

Selectman Scott Young asked if Article #24 could be put on the floor.

Moderator Ralph Wegner stated the general comment line will finish and the Article will be brought to the floor.

Eric Almanzan questioned an RSA that limits the use of Class A Trails.

Selectman Lynn Sweet stated that it is a public right of way but the Board of Selectmen decides gates or limitations. There are already restrictions on Class 6 Roads due to mud season. RSA's are decided at the State level.

Eric Almanzan questioned if there was a discussion with Selectmen.

Selectman Lynn Sweet stated the Planning Board works on infrastructure of land in Town.

Eric Almanzan encouraged the residents to not move these articles forward

Doug Hayes stated he owns property on a Class 6 Road and has spent his own money to upgrade and keep the Class 6 Road open. People who own property on Class 6 Roads can keep the road upgraded and build. They cannot do the same on Class A Trails.

Charlie Moreno made a suggestion to turn lights down and show each map as articles are discussed. He stated that our residents enjoy these Class 6 Roads and these segments chosen are largely undevelopable. He stated that the Planning Board is not looking to take property rights from residents.

Lori Shiere stated her family loves their property and has kept it as is for many years. She has received offers to sell but refuses them. She asked the Town to leave Pig Lane alone.

Moderator Ralph Wegner ended the general discussion and read Article #24.

24. To see if the Town will vote to reclassify the following section of a Class VI road as a Class A Trail pursuant to RSA 231-A:2: First Crown Point Road from a point at the northeast corner of Tax Map 17, Lot 20 and the southwest corner of Tax Map 17, Lot 19 to the Barnstead town line (approximately 5900 feet).

Motion made by Bob Perry Seconded by Kurt Wuelper

With no further discussion vote was taken and counted by show of cards.

Yes – 61 No - 65

Article #24 Failed

Don Coker asked if without going into a secret vote can we have a recount for that vote.

Moderator Ralph Wegner replied no.

25. To see if the Town will vote to reclassify the following section of Class VI road as a Class A Trail pursuant to RSA 231-A:2: Second Crown Point Road from the southeast corner of Tax Map 18, Lot 32 to the southwest corner of Tax Map 14, Lot 11-2 (approximately 3600 feet).

Motion made by Scott Young Seconded by Ken Berry

Discussion:

Eric Almanzan stated we have just heard from a land owner affected by this and we should not make decisions for the land owners, vote no.

Alison Brisson stated that we have not heard from one affected land owner in favor of this change, vote no.

With no further discussion vote was taken by show of cards.

Majority vote was clearly No. A count was not taken.

Article #25 Failed

26. To see if the Town will vote to reclassify the following Class VI road as a Class A Trail pursuant to RSA 231-A:2: Snackerty Road (a.k.a. Church Road) from Barn Door Gap Road to the Barnstead town line (approximately 2600 feet).

Motion made by Chris Garcia Seconded by Kurt Wuelper

Discussion:

David Ekstrom asked for map clarification for a road mislabeled.

Liz Evans stated that 2nd Crown Point Road is the old name before 911 updated the name to Barn Door Gap Rd. She stated that Snackerty is like Little Niagara with the bridge out. It is not used to commute and could be a liability for the Town with the bridge out.

Charlie Moreno stated that Snackerty Road is in really rough shape and that the change does not affect anyone negatively.

With no further discussion vote was taken and counted by show of cards.

Yes - 52 No - 68

Article #26 Failed

27. To see if the Town will vote to reclassify the following section of a Class VI road as a Class A Trail pursuant to RSA 231-A:2: Willey Road running northerly from the Beam Camp entrance road (a.k.a Boy Scout Road) to a point 50 feet north of the north side embankment of the Little River crossing (approximately 2600 feet).

Motion made by Kurt Wuelper Seconded by Tim Reed

Discussion:

Eric Almanzan stated across from Perry Road is a gate and the road is blocked off.

Selectman Lynn Sweet stated she also noticed that.

Several in the Audience replied there is a gate but it is not locked.

With no further discussion vote was taken and counted by show of cards.

Yes - 49 No - 73

Article #27 Failed

28. To see if the Town will vote to reclassify the following section of Class VI road as a Class A Trail pursuant to RSA 231-A:2: Pig Lane running northerly from Range Road at the southwest corner of Tax Map 8, Lot 20 and the southeast corner of Tax Map 8, Lot 19-1 to a point 50 feet north of the north side embankment of the Huckins Brook crossing (approximately 4490 feet).

Motion made by Philip Auger Seconded by Lori Shiere

Discussion:

Don Coker clarified that the section in question was not Pig Lane Route 26.

Moderator Ralph Wegner showed the area on the map from the bridge to Range Road.

Denise Rainey stated she has been watching this for a long time. She is concerned that the goal is complete and total loss of private property rights. She encouraged residents to research and know what is going on.

Bethene Wuelper stated her family has land affected and they got a notification letter at the end of January. She does not feel this was communicated well. This change would limit her family access to the land and they would not be able to build if they wanted to. She stated abutters need to be informed better and encouraged residents to vote no.

Moderator Ralph Wegner questioned if residents had input before the budget hearing.

Selectman Lynn Sweet stated there were meetings and public hearings that the Planning Board posted at the Town Hall and on the website. The letter from the Planning Board was an effort to communicate the changes to affected land owners. Moving forward they will work on communication.

Lori Shiere stated that she is impacted by this article and that there should be more input from land owners and better communication.

Tim Reed encourages people to be involved with Master Planning to help develop a plan that works for everyone.

Moderator Ralph Wegner asked if they were looking for volunteers.

Tim Reed suggested residents start getting involved by coming to meetings and volunteering.

Don Coker stated he has been an Alternate Member of the Planning Board for 11 plus years. The Master Planning coming up needs community involvement. The existing Strafford Master Plan says a goal is to protect the rural character of Strafford. Area towns are getting built up with development. We need to protect the rural character of Strafford. He stated that he is sad to see distortions and falsehoods on social media. He shared concerns that the town did not take a step forward today.

With no further discussion vote was taken by show of cards.

Majority vote was clearly No. A count was not taken.

Article #28 Failed

29. "To see if the town will support the use of the Town lot next to the Hill Library (formerly known as the Hill Lot) as the Community Garden and to allow for expansion and improvement of public access to the garden. Improvements include installing steps, changing the slope of the lot, and placing a shed on the land. The cost of improvements will be covered by Hill Library donations, fundraising and grants, at no cost to the Town. The elected town Library Trustees will oversee the improvements." (by Petition.)

Motion made by Eric Almanzan Seconded by Michelle Benger

Discussion:

Moderator Ralph Wegner stated this information was on the library presentation done earlier.

Eric Almanzan stated he is very pleased with the forward direction of the library.

With no further discussion vote was taken by show of cards.

Article #29 Passes

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

Discussion:

Selectman Scott Young shared that the VFW in Northwood needs help with the 2022 Memorial Day Parade. Hazardous Waste Day is scheduled for Saturday, May 21st in Rochester. They are no longer accepting motor oil.

Bob Perry asked for a moment of silence for brave men and women of the Ukraine as they are fighting for their land, lives and democracy.

Moderator Ralph Wegner approved and called for a moment of silence.

Eric Rowe moved to recognize the service of Greg Messenger as the Road Agent.

Selectman Scott Young said he would second that and a standing ovation was given to Greg Messenger.

Jim O'Der asked if he could put a fence up that will not be locked on Foss Rd.

Selectman Lynn Sweet suggested he come to the Selectmen to clarify and/or make the request.

Greg Litsois had questions regarding the earth dam violation, not holding water. (Kent Pond)

Selectman Lynn Sweet advised that is a questions for the School Board, it is school property.

Eric Almanzan stated that the School District owns the land and there is a plan with improvements. It is in compliance. Mr. Almanzan and Mr. Litsois started a back and forth conversation regarding this land.

Selectman Lynn Sweet asked Mr. Almanzan and Mr. Litsois to please continue conversation outside of the speaking area.

Moderator Ralph Wegner restated that request.

With no further discussion a motion was made by Lynn Sweet to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Martha English and the meeting adjourned at 12:55 PM.

Following swearing in as Town Clerk by the Moderator, all newly elected positions present were sworn in by the Town Clerk, Terri Marsh.

Given under my hand and seal, this 12th day of March, in the year of our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty-two.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terri L Marsh
Strafford Town Clerk

*Comments made at the meeting are not included in these minutes as quotes but instead as a summary of what was said.