

2020 STRAFFORD TOWN MEETING
MARCH 10, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 AM on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at the Strafford Town Hall, in the Town of Strafford, by Town Moderator Ron Lemieux, to act on Articles One through Five 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 14, 2020 at the Strafford School Gymnasium by Moderator Ron Lemieux to act on Articles Six through Twenty-Nine.

The moderator welcomed all to the meeting and introduced Ted White who gave an invocation. Moderator Lemieux then discussed the rules and proper conduct for the meeting.

The Moderator read the results of the March 10, 2020 election.

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

Voters on the Checklist.... 3450

Votes Cast.....514

Library Trustee –Three Years

Sharon Omand 251

Selectman – Three Years

Brian Monahan 290

Road Agent – One Year

Greg Messenger 498

Planning Board – Three Years

Terry Hyland.....319

Planning Board – Three Years

Charlie Moreno344

Town Moderator – Two Years

Ron Lemieux.....423

Trustee of the Trust Funds – Three Years

Scott Hodgdon (write-in)10

Supervisor of the Checklist – Six Years

Judith Dupre.....462

**2. 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 amend Building Regulations 4.1.10 **Driveway** by adding requirements for the construction of driveways to new residential and/or commercial buildings including a requirement for a 12 foot minimum travel way and adequate clearances to accommodate fire apparatus and to require that when a bridge or culvert is required for construction of a driveway, it shall be designed and installed to nationally recognized standards, and to add definitions for Bridge and Culvert.”

YES – 290

NO – 217

Article #2 passes.

**3. 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 new Section 4.1.10 A **Shared Driveways** to clarify width, clearances, turnaround requirements, and construction standards for shared driveways to insure that there is adequate access for fire and safety vehicles.”

YES – 310

NO – 192

Article #3 passes.

**4. Are you in favor of the adoption of the following amendment to the existing Town of Strafford Zoning and Land Use Ordinances:

“To add a new Article 1.5 B **Junkyards** clarifying that junkyards as defined are a prohibited land use and establishing enforcement procedures and defining a junkyard as five or more vehicles which are no longer in condition for legal use and/or 1500 cubic feet in volume in parts or discarded materials, unless they are contained within an enclosed building. Agricultural and forestry equipment and vehicles are excluded from the provisions.”

YES – 313

NO – 198

Article #4 passes.

**5. “Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 287-E relative to the conduct of games of bingo and the sale of lucky 7 tickets?” (by petition.)

YES – 298

NO – 175

Article #5 passes.

The Moderator then read the results of the School election.

Selectman Scott Young spoke to the voters regarding the decision to hold this meeting today, in light of the Covid-19 situation. He stated that it was a difficult decision, compounded by the State of Emergency declared by Governor Sununu on March 13th. Due to the CDC predicting a worsening of the situation, the decision was made that moving forward with the Town Meeting now, as opposed to waiting, was the most prudent decision.

Mr. Young recognized Marilyn Roderick, a Supervisor of the Checklist for over twenty years. Mrs. Roderick was presented with flowers and a card as a token of appreciation for her many years of public service. She received a lengthy round of applause and a standing ovation from all who were present.

He then recognized Lynn Sweet, who has served the town for over for 13 years. During her many terms she has shown a deep level of commitment to the town and its residents. Her hard work and dedication were noted and with a background of hearty applause she was presented with flowers and a card.

Selectman Young reviewed accomplishments that have been completed over the past year including capital improvements to town roads. He mentioned that Chief Whitehouse has worked hard to find staff to provide EMS coverage 24/7. He gave a breakdown of the tax rate which is estimated to increase by .40 with the passage of all articles.

Selectman Young compared Strafford with towns that are similar in make-up to ours, stressing that we have never had a Bond, which keeps our taxes lower than many other towns. He mentioned the Recycling center, sharing that costs are increasing and the revenues are decreasing. This is an industry-wide problem. Plowing rates have increased and are comparable to the state rates. He explained that the town will have 27 pay periods this year, a one-time adjustment. State mandated Statistical Revaluation is projected for 2021. He thanked the volunteers, employees, first responders and residents of the town. He pointed out the dedication of the residents serving as board members on the Planning Board, Conservation Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment and others, and thanked them for the sacrifice they make to serve our town. He thanked the town residents for supporting capital reserve funds, which eliminate the need to raise large sums of money at one time.

Article #6:

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$385,000. 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.” The Moderator read the article. Motion made and seconded.

Greg Messenger, Road Agent, spoke to the article.

With no public discussion, a vote was taken by a show of cards. **Article #6 passes.**

Article #7:

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,500. to be placed in the Capital Reserve Fund known as the Reflective Road Signage Fund established by Article 6 at the March 12, 2011 Town Meeting for the purpose of reflective road signage.” The Selectmen recommend this article. Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

There was no public discussion. **Article #7 passes with a show of cards.**

Article #8

“To see if the Town will vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund pursuant to RSA 35:1 to be known as the Highway Department Vehicle and/or Equipment Fund for the purpose of purchasing vehicles and/or equipment to be used by the Highway Department/Road Agent and to raise and appropriate the sum of

\$5,000. to be placed in this fund, and to designate the Selectmen as agents to expend.” The Selectmen recommend this article. Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

There were not comments. **Article #8 passes with a show of cards.**

Article #9:

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$744,885. for the operation and maintenance of the Strafford Police Department.” Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

Chief Richard spoke to this article. He reviewed that he has 6 full time officers. His budget is up \$95,000 in this budget. Of this amount \$21K is the extra payroll. Insurance costs and dispatch fees have increased. He is asking for a pay increase for his staff based on his feeling that other towns are ‘stealing’ or ‘buying’ small-town officers by offering them more money.

Melinda Bubier made a motion to request an amount of \$25,000 to be added to this article, for a total of \$769,885. This amount reflect additional monies for Emergency Preparedness. There was discussion as to the best location for any funds that may be voted in for this purpose. The amendment was withdrawn.

A show of cards was taken for Article 9 as written, **Article #9 passes.**

Article #10:

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$41,195. for the purchase of a Police vehicle and equipment with \$15,000. to come from the Police Vehicles and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund and the remaining \$26,195. to come from the Police Special Details Fund, with no amount to come from general taxation. The Selectmen recommend this article. Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

Chief Richard spoke to this article. Seeing no public comment, a vote was taken.

Article #10 passes.

Article #11:

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000. to be placed in the Police Vehicles and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. The Selectmen recommend this article. Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

There was no discussion. A show of cards reflects that **Article #11 passes.**

Article #12:

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$502,751. for the operation and maintenance of the Strafford Fire Department.” Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

Chief Whitehouse spoke to the article. A show of cards reflects that **Article #12 passes.**

Article #13:

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000. for the purpose of purchasing equipment and supplies for the ambulance with \$10,000. to come from the Rescue Vehicle and Equipment Fund, with no amount to come from general taxation.” The Selectmen recommend this article. Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

Chief Whitehouse spoke to the article. A show of cards reflects that **Article #13 passes.**

Article #14:

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,318. for the purpose of extended warranty coverage and maintenance contract on the Zoll X-Series Defibrillator with \$1,318. to come from the Rescue Vehicle and Equipment Fund, with no amount to come from general taxation.” The Selectmen recommend this article. Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

Chief Whitehouse spoke to the article. A show of cards reflects that **Article #14 passes.**

Article #15:

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$76,775. to be placed in the Crown Point Fire Station Capital Reserve Fund.” The Selectmen recommend this article. Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

Chief Whitehouse stated that phase 1 has been completed and phase 2 will soon be underway.

A show of cards reflects that **Article #15 passes.**

Article #16:

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000. to be placed in the Fire Engine Capital Reserve Fund.” The Selectmen recommend this article. Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

Chief Whitehouse spoke to the article. A show of cards reflects that **Article #16 passes.**

Article #17:

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,258. for the purpose of purchasing new forestry equipment with \$1,629. to come from the State Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant and the balance of \$1,629. to come from general taxation.” Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

Chief Whitehouse spoke to the article. A show of cards reflects that **Article #17 passes.**

Article #18:

“To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to enter into a five year lease agreement for \$327,149 for the purpose of leasing to own a new ambulance and to raise and appropriate \$69,328. for the first year’s payment, and to authorize the withdrawal of \$69,328. 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. This lease/purchase agreement contains an escape clause. No funding to come from general taxation. The Selectmen recommend this article. Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

Chief Whitehouse spoke to this article and proposed an amendment to read: "To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to enter into a five year lease agreement for \$284,154 for the purpose of leasing to own a new ambulance and to raise and appropriate \$60,217. for the first year's payment, and to authorize the withdrawal of \$60,217. 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. This lease/purchase agreement contains an escape clause. No funding to come from general taxation." The Selectmen recommend this article.

A motion was made to accept this proposal to amend Article #18; seconded. A vote was taken to amend the article. Vote carried.

The Moderator then read the amended article, and asked for a show of cards.

A show of cards shows that **Article #18, as amended, passes.**

Article #19:

"To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to raise and appropriate the sum of \$57,000. for the purpose of purchasing required equipment for the new ambulance to be certified for use, and to authorize the withdrawal of \$57,000. 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. Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

Chief Whitehouse spoke to this article. By a show of cards, **Article #19 passes.**

Article #20:

"To see if the Town will vote to authorize a full time position at the Hill Library and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$44,210. to cover this position and benefits." Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

Jessie Copeland, Library Trustee spoke to this article. A informative PowerPoint presentation was shown which gave an overview of the current state of the library as well as new programs and improvements over the past year. There are new after school programs with student bus drop-offs now possible.

There was a display showing the increase in adult and children's book borrowing, programs and program attendance. She states that a full time employee will help to meet the needs of increased attendance, will help to increase employee retention efforts, and will strengthen efforts to plan for the future of the library. She reviewed the 6-week Summer Reading Program and showed a video of the program in action – a very successful and labor intensive effort much appreciated by students and parents alike.

She stated if this position is approved, it would result in the transition of the current part-time position (28 hours) to a full-time position. The floor was opened to questions. Seeing none a vote was taken.

Article #20 passes.

Article #21:

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$108,886. for the operation and maintenance of the Hill Library. Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

Selectmen Young then presented an amended article, as follows:

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$84,470 for the operation and maintenance of the Hill Library.” This amendment reduces the amount of wages included in the budget for the part-time position by \$24,416., due to the passage of the full-time position at the Library approved under Article #20. A Motion was made and seconded to amend Article #21. Vote taken to amend, vote carries. Moderator Lemieux then read the amended article. A vote was taken on the amended article.

Article #21, as amended, passes.

Article #22:

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000. to be added to the Library Expansion/Improvement Capital Reserve Fund.” The Selectmen recommend this article. Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

There was no discussion. A show of cards indicates that **Article #22 passes.**

Article #23:

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000. to be added to the Repair/Replace Recycling Center Equipment Capital Reserve Fund.” The Selectmen recommend this article. Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

Seeing no comments, a vote showed that **Article #23 passes.**

Article #24:

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000. to be placed in the Bridge C & R Non-Capital Reserve Fund.” The Selectmen recommend this article. Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

Road Agent Greg Messenger explained that the town needs to continue to fund this in order to qualify for state aid. If passed, this sum will be added to the existing fund currently earmarked for the Barn Door Gap bridge repair.

A show of cards reveals that **Article #24 passes.**

Article #25:

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000. to be added to Town Hall Building Maintenance, Improvements and/or Expansion Capital Reserve Fund.” The Selectmen Recommend this article. Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

There was no public discussion. A show of cards indicates that **Article #25 passes.**

Article #26:

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,500. to help defray expenses associated with Strafford’s Bicentennial Celebration in 2020 in coordination with the Strafford Historical Society.” Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

Elizabeth Evans spoke to this article and mentioned that there are many costs involved in public celebrations such as the bicentennial, including insurances, facilities requirements, public safety and supplies. The Historical Society is grateful for the continued support of the community.

A show of cards indicates that **Article #26 passes.**

Article #27:

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1, 498,976 for general Town operations.”

Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

Executive	90,510
Election & Registration	36,291.
Financial Administration	102,593.
Appraisal of Property & Tax Maps.....	41,888.
Legal Expenses.....	30,000.
Employee Benefits, FICA, Medi & Unemp. Comp.....	39,680.
Planning and Zoning.....	14,200.
General Government Building.....	45,900.
Auto Permits/Town Clerk Fees.....	38,310.
Insurance.....	60,847.
Advertising and Regional Association.....	4,203.
Strafford Regional Planning Comm. Dues.....	5,168.
Contingency Fund.....	16,000.
Annual CPA Audit	13,000.
Emergency Management	5,500.
Building Inspection.....	17,453.
General Highway Expenses and Town Maintenance.....	534,500.
Street Lighting.....	5,000.
Solid Waste Disposal	325,511.
Animal Control	1,800.
Cemeteries	9,000.
Cornerstone VNA (formerly Roch Dstr VNA).	3,991.
General Assistance and Welfare.....	15,180.
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.
Strafford Nutrition & Meals on Wheels.....	1,000.
Parks and Recreation.....	21,759.
Patriotic Purposes and Fireworks	6,800.
Conservation Commission	2,500.
<u>Interest Expense & Tax Anticipation Notes</u>	<u>2,000.</u>
TOTAL	\$1,498,976.

(The intent of this article is to raise the sum of \$1,498,976. exclusive of all other Articles addressed.)

A motion to amend was made and seconded by members of the public to increase the Emergency Management line by \$50,000., bringing it to \$55,500. The basis for this increase is to set funds aside for measures that may be needed to address the as Covid-19 situation. Vote to amend carried.

The Moderator read the motion, as amended:

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,548,976 for general Town operations.”

A vote shows that **Article #27, as amended, passes.**

Selectman Scott Young then presented another amendment, to increase the legal line from \$30,000. to \$60,000. The newly amended article would increase the budget to \$1,578,976. A motion to accept this amendment was made and seconded. Vote to amend carried.

The Moderator read the newly amended article:

"To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1, 578,976 for general Town operations. " The vote was affirmative.

The vote by a show of cards indicates that **Article #27, amended, passes.**

Article #28:

To see if the Town will vote to discontinue the following capital reserve funds; Account #104870014 known as the Records Storage Fund (balance - 0), and Account #104870016 known as the Office Equipment Fund (balance \$.83). Said funds with any balance with accumulated interest to date of withdrawal to be transferred to the Town’s general fund. The Selectmen recommend this article. Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

Selectman Sweet explained that these are unused accounts.

A show of cards indicates that **Article #28 passes.**

Article #29: "To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting. "

Moderator Lemieux read the article. Motion made and seconded.

Seeing no discussion, a motion to adjourn was made and seconded.

A vote was taken and the Strafford Town Meeting was adjourned at 10:05 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Bane

Christine Bane, CTC
Strafford Town Clerk
TOWN CLERK'S CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Town of Strafford Annual Town Meeting held on March 14, 2020.