

Minutes of Town Meeting

First Session – March 12, 2024

Election Officials Present: Jim Miller, Moderator; Kathleen Doherty, Assistant Moderator; Samuel Papps, Town Clerk; Brenda Murray, Denise Sojka, and Pam Smarling, Supervisors of the Checklist; Mary Hauptman and Kathleen McKay, Ballot Clerks. Also present: Cheryl Gordon, Kent Ruesswick, and Scott Doherty, Selectmen; BJ Entwisle and Ellen Bassett, Assistant Election Clerks.

The Polling was held at the Old Town Hall, Canterbury, NH. Ballot Boxes for the Town and School District ballots were checked at 7:00 a.m. by Moderator Miller and voter Betty Fifield of Shaker Road and then closed and locked. Moderator Miller then opened the polls. The Town’s Accuvote Ballot Counting Device was used to tally the votes cast.

Polling Hours were held from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and a total of 543 voters cast ballots. Of those, 36 were Absentee for the Town, and 29 were Absentee for the School District. There were 1,870 voters on the checklist, and 4 new voters were registered.

Polling was closed at 7:00 p.m. by Moderator Miller, and the count of votes was conducted by election officials assisted by Bob Steenson, Ray Craigie, Steve Rasche, Kelly Papps, Ray Chesley, and Beth McGuinn.

School District Ballots were sent to Belmont by the Canterbury Police Department at 7:30 p.m., accompanied by Assistant School District Moderator Heidi Cheney of Southwest Road.

Town Ballot Results:

Selectman: (1 position, 3 years)	Todd, Calvin	200
	Blair, Beth	332
Planning Board: (2 positions, 3 years)	Bragdon, Nate	49
	Franco, Tom	64
	Meeh, Greg	382
	O’Donnell, Brendan	170
	Portnoy, Megan	236
	Sanborn, Jonas	89
Cemetery Trustee: (1 position, 3 years)	Cote, Jan	492
Supervisor of the Checklist: (1 position, 6 years)	Sojka, Denise	482
Library Trustee: (3 positions, 2 years)	Crockford, Rick	419
	Snow, Debbie	438
	Woods, Florence	404
Trustee of the Trust Funds: (1 position, 3 years)	Styles, Silvia	448
	Franco, Tom	52

Article 2 passed, 422 Yes to 101 No.

Article 3 passed, 404 Yes to 127 No.

Article 4 passed, 445 Yes to 88 No.

Article 5 passed, 409 Yes to 112 No.

Article 6 passed, 428 Yes to 97 No.

Article 7 passed, 463 Yes to 65 No.

Article 8 passed, 394 Yes to 113 No.

Article 9 passed, 505 Yes to 26 No.

Article 10 passed, 483 Yes to 43 No.

Article 11 passed, 441 Yes to 80 No.

Moderator Miller announced the results of voting at 8:38 p.m.

Reports were finalized at 9:30 p.m. by the Town Clerk.

The meeting convened until Friday, March 15, 2024, beginning at 7:00 p.m., at Canterbury Elementary School for the deliberative session.

Minutes of Town Meeting

Second Session – March 15, 2024

Moderator Jim Miller opened the meeting at 7 p.m., held at the Canterbury Elementary School Gymnasium on Baptist Road. He expressed comments of welcome to the voters gathered, and asked for acknowledgement of the veterans in the room, followed by applause from the voters. Cate McDonald, a member of the Canterbury 4-H group, led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Moderator Miller asked for a few moments of silence for the people of Ukraine and Gaza. Cheryl Gordon read the Annual Town Report dedication for Jan Stout, noting that Jan had retired the prior summer after 24 years of service. Scott Doherty offered words of thanks to Michael Labrecque, who was retiring after serving 7 ½ years as our Chief of Police. Kent Ruesswick expressed the Board's thanks to David Nelson, who was retiring after 24 years of service on the Canterbury Fire Department. Ken Folsom, Town Administrator spoke about Cheryl Gordon, who was stepping down from the Selectboard after 4 terms as selectman, and prior to that, 31 years as Canterbury's Town Clerk-Tax Collector. Moderator Miller stated that registered voters were given a yes-no card at the door, which would be used to vote on a question, and signify that they could be recognized by the Moderator. He explained that the Canterbury Farmers Market was running a baked goods table at the back for people to get refreshments, and the Energy Committee, FOEPL, Shaker Village, and the Cemetery Trustees, all had tables at the back of the room to share information. Mr. Miller then thanked all the election workers and counters from Tuesday's Town election, the Road Agent John O'Connor and his staff, and announced there were 543 voters who cast ballots in the election.

Moderator Miller introduced the group at the dais; Town Administrator Ken Folsom, Selectmen Kent Ruesswick, Cheryl Gordon, and Scott Doherty, and Town Clerk Sam Papps. He asked that the Road Agent Donald "John" O'Connor, the Police Chief Michael Labrecque, and the Fire Chief Michael Gamache, all non-residents, be allowed to speak if called upon, and the body responded verbally in the affirmative. He also recognized Edgar Rivera, who was taping the meeting. He proceeded to review the rules of how the meeting would run, and how to address questions and make amendments. Mr. Miller read the results of the voting session held that Tuesday, March 12th, 2024, thanking candidates for running for the offices. He asked that Article 15 be moved up to follow Article 12, with the body verbally affirming this request. Then he read Warrant Article 12:

Article 12: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-six Thousand Four-Hundred and Five dollars (\$26,405) for the first year's payment towards a new backhoe. This payment is for a long-term lease/purchase agreement in the amount of \$197,950 payable over a term of seven (7) years. Furthermore, to offset the lease agreement amount using \$40,000 from the Capital Reserve Account created for this purpose as the Selectmen are agents to expend, and to trade-in the current Backhoe for Twelve Thousand Dollars (\$12,000). This lease contains an escape clause. *Motion by Beth McGuinn; second by Bob Scarponi.*

Kent Ruesswick introduced the article, stating that the DRA asked the Town to rewrite the article, and noted that this article would need to be voted on annually because the lease contract

has an “escape clause” built into it. He gave a brief summary of how the old backhoe died this past year, and the necessity that a new one be procured for the Road Crew to do their jobs effectively and efficiently. Because money was coming out of Capital Reserves to help cover the cost of the item, the first year was paid for in full. Moderator Miller opened the floor for questions, and there were none. He then asked for a show of cards. Motion carried; **Article Passed.**

Moderator Miller read **Article 15:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Eighteen Thousand Dollars (\$118,000) to be deposited into the following Capital Reserves:

4915.3 Highway Equipment \$ 10,000
4915.4 Highway Truck \$ 30,000
4915.5 Highway Grader \$ 30,000
4915.18 Rescue Truck \$ 12,000
4915.24 Landfill Closure \$ 1,000
4915.27 Maintenance & Repair of Town Buildings \$ 5,000
4915.30 Highway Loader \$ 30,000.

Motion by Jacob Mason; second by Clifton Mathieu.

Scott Doherty introduced the article, explaining the capital reserve program and putting money away for large expenditures.

Rick Crockford of Ayers Road inquired as to the life expectancy of the new road grader, and the reply was 15 to 20 years. Kent noted that they would resume contributions to the Capital Reserve Fund for the grader, partway through the lifetime of the new one.

Patrice Rasche of Center Road inquired as to the \$11,000 of repairs to the Packer Truck at the Transfer Station, and if there were plans for a Capital Reserve to replace it as she had heard the cost for one would be expensive. Kent Ruesswick responded that they were trying to use the existing packer for as long as they possibly could.

Having no other questions, Moderator Miller read the article again and asked for a show of cards. Motion carried; **Article Passed.**

Moderator Miller read **Article 13:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four-Hundred and Forty-Thousand Dollars (\$440,000) for the purpose of purchasing a new Motor Road Grader and the withdrawal of Four-Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$400,000) from the Capital Reserve Account created for this purpose. The balance, Forty-Thousand Dollars (\$40,000) to be raised by taxes. ***Motion by John Udaloy; second by Frank Tupper.***

Scott Doherty stated the existing grader in service is 22 years old, and there were no more parts readily available. He commended Evan Hauptman of the Road Crew for his tenacity in finding parts and fixing it for this year, but warned that it was only a matter of time until it was unrepairable. He explained the new grader would have a 20 to 25 year life expectancy.

Laurie Lockwood of Northwest Road inquired if they were replacing the Capital Reserve amount right away. Scott Doherty responded that there would likely be a few gap years before the Town resumes Capital Reserve contributions.

Jacob Mason of Carter Hill Road asked if there was a trade-in value for the old grader and if it was going to be applied to the cost of the grader. John O'Connor replied that if the old grader is still running at the time of purchasing the new one, then the trade-in value would be assessed.

Sean McDonald of Old Gilmanton Road asked if the Caterpillar Grader had been demoed because he had understood that Cats don't road well. John O'Connor replied that it had not been demoed.

Having no other questions, Moderator Miller read the article again and asked for a show of cards. Motion carried; **Article Passed.**

Moderator Miller read **Article 14:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Three-Million, Three-Hundred and Twenty-Three Thousand, Four hundred Fifty-Three Dollars (\$3,323,453) for general municipal operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. *Motion by Emily Preston; second by Kelly Short.*

Scott Doherty gave an overview of the budget and described the rises in lines including the underspending of the 2023 budget by \$33,000; 4% COLA raises for town employees; and a \$1,000 increase in the Selectmen's salaries, which had only been raised once since 1979. He also noted a new Land Use position had been created to assist the Planning, Zoning, Conservation, and Historic District boards, ending that the 2.9% increase over last year's budget could be interpreted as modest. The School District budget and finances were discussed, and that the increased cost of school funding would be apparent in the December 2024 tax billing. He also announced that the Selectboard had heard from Comcast that grants had been secured and that broadband internet would be coming to the remaining approximately 256 residences in town that did not have broadband to date.

Jessica Treadway of Intervale Road inquired if their road would get internet, and the answer was yes.

George Rogers of Old Schoolhouse Road asked about the tax impact of the operating budget and warrant articles, and Scott Doherty responded that \$261.72 represented the impact of the warrant articles.

Bob Steenson of Hackleboro Road noted in reply that he had attempted to recreate the numbers proposed by the SRSD for their projection of the tax rate increase, and could not come up with the projected numbers the District had published. Steenson cautioned not to panic quite yet.

Moderator Miller read the article again and asked for a show of cards. Motion carried; **Article Passed.**

Moderator Miller read **Article 16:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty-Six Thousand Seven-Hundred and Four dollars (\$36,704) to pay principal (\$35,000) and

interest (\$1,704) on the Gold Star Bond, said amount to be removed from the Town's Unassigned Fund Balance. ***Motion by Kelly Short; second Ruth Smith.***

Cheryl Gordon explained this article had been the same since 2005, and was a housekeeping item.

Patrice Rasche of Center Road inquired where the money came from. Cheryl replied when the Town sold the farm to Brookford Farm, the proceeds were deposited into the General Fund, and payments continued to be made on the bond despite not owning the property anymore. This is an annual payment.

Moderator Miller read the article again and asked for a show of cards. Motion carried; **Article Passed.**

Moderator Miller read **Article 17:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty-Three Thousand Dollars (\$33,000) for the purpose of preparing new cemetery lots at the Maple Grove municipal cemetery and to complete a lot line adjustment with abutter to add a parcel of land at the Cemetery for future expansion. ***Motion by Dale Caswell; second by Rich Marcou.***

John Goegel and Jan Cote introduced themselves as Cemetery Trustees, and reported that in the past year, local partners had helped with donated time to survey and chart out wetlands and boundaries. Now that the land had been cleared, the second phase of this project includes removing stumps and preparing the area to sell lots. It was anticipated that \$208,000 would be raised in revenues with the new 464 graves being sold.

Frank Tupper of Ayers Road inquired what the cost of a cremation plot at the cemetery was, and the answer was \$250 each. He also commented that perhaps the private family cemeteries helped take the pressure off the Town for burials in the municipal cemetery.

Moderator Miller read the article again and asked for a show of cards. Motion carried; **Article Passed.**

Moderator Miller read **Article 18:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten-Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) for the purchase and installation of a Ductless AC and Heating unit at the Canterbury Historical Society Archives storage room in the Elkins Public Library. ***Motion by Judy Nelson; second by Emily Burr.***

Ron Routhier, President of the Canterbury Historical Society, introduced the article and gave some background as to why a new unit was necessary. Many town documents, scrapbooks, and old glass plate negatives were kept in the Archives room, and it was time to keep them safe with a replacement climate control system.

Seeing no questions, Moderator Miller read the article again and asked for a show of cards. Motion carried; **Article Passed.**

Moderator Miller read **Article 19:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten-Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) for the purpose of negotiating a contract to upgrade the Town Website. ***Motion by Felipe Salas-Ogilvie; second by Beth McGuinn.***

Ken Folsom stated that there were several RFP's received in response to the bid for the creation of a new Town website, and that Kathleen McKay, the Administrative Assistant, could answer technical questions.

Frank Tupper of Ayers Road asked if there were people in town who could provide this service and the answer was yes, there was one proposal from a company in town.

Patrice Rasche of Center Road inquired if this money was for hardware, and the answer was no. She also offered an observation that items need to be put up on the website in a timely manner.

Mindy Beltramo of Hackleboro Road asked Kathleen McKay to speak more to the new website.

Kathleen McKay of Shaker Road spoke to the current website, which is cumbersome and outdated. The new website will give the town more control over how it looks and how it interacts with residents or users. Mindy inquired about a community calendar feature which was confirmed will be a part of the new site.

Kevin Bragg of Baptist Road thanked the board for taking the suggestions given at last year's Town Meeting and bringing about this necessary change, and asked if digital records could be placed on the new website, which was answered in the affirmative.

Ruth Smith of Southwest Road asked if there would be surveys to ask what residents want on the new website, and it was stated that there would be surveys going out to garner input from residents in April or May.

Moderator Miller read the article again and asked for a show of cards. Motion carried; **Article Passed.**

Moderator Miller read **Article 20:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten-Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) for the purchase of a Steam Cleaner and to withdraw the funds from the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Account created for this purpose. **Motion by Bob Steenson; second by John Udaloy.**

Kent Ruesswick explained that the present steam cleaner was not working and it would be used for cleaning trucks and equipment and thawing out frozen culverts.

Emily Preston of Southwest Road asked if it was going to be used to prevent the spread invasive species, and the answer received was no it will not.

Seeing no other questions, Moderator Miller read the article again and asked for a show of cards. Motion carried; **Article Passed.**

Moderator Miller read **Article 21:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five-Thousand and Five Hundred Dollars (\$5,500) for the purchase of a Folder/Inserter for the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's office. **Motion by Ron Routhier; second by Rachel Baker.**

Sam Papps gave a background of how many items the Town Clerk-Tax Collector's office mails out each year, and explained that per state statute, property tax bills must be sent out by mail. He

also noted that the folder/insert, if purchased, would be available for other town boards and committees to use.

Seeing no questions, Moderator Miller read the article again and asked for a show of cards. Motion carried; **Article Passed.**

Moderator Miller read **Article 22:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Six-Thousand Dollars (\$6,000) for the purpose of replacement and repairs to the Town Gazebo hand rails. *Motion by Emily Burr; second by Kathleen Doherty.*

Kent Ruesswick spoke to the article, stating that the existing rails were rotting and were in need of replacement. They had received one bid so far for the work, and the rails would be replaced with wood.

Mark Hopkins of Foster Road stated that he was in favor of replacing the railings with wood, since it is within the Center Historic District.

David Emerson of Shaker Road asked if this included the bench seats and the answer was no, the seats are still sound.

Moderator Miller read the article again and asked for a show of cards. Motion carried; **Article Passed.**

Moderator Miller read **Article 23:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four-Thousand Dollars (\$4,000) for the purchase and installation of gutters for the Meeting House. *Motion by Caley Shepard; second by BJ Entwisle.*

Kent Ruesswick stated the Selectmen were trying to do better with maintenance of buildings, and that the gutters were a part of that. The installation of gutters would help deflect the water that has rotted some of the siding at the Meeting House.

Moderator Miller read the article again and asked for a show of cards. Motion carried; **Article Passed.**

Moderator Miller read **Article 24:** To see if the Town will authorize the Selectmen to accept up to Fifteen-Thousand Dollars (\$15,000) from the forced distribution of funds from the Sam Lake Trust Fund. The exact dollar amount is to be determined by the Trustees of the Sam Lake Trust Fund and distributed to the Town by the end of the calendar year. *Motion by Kelly Short; second by Judy Nelson.*

Ken Folsom explained the history of the Sam Lake Trust and that tax laws force the distribution of the excess interest accrued to the beneficiary of the Trust, in this case the Town of Canterbury. It must be placed in the Capital Reserve Fund for the Sam Lake House and can only be used for the maintenance of the Sam Lake House property. The amount this year is not known and they chose \$15,000 based on prior years receipts from the Trust.

Bob Scarponi of Clough Pond Road asked if the money could be used for the bandstand railings, and the answer was no because it is not part of the Sam Lake property.

Alexandria DiNome of Morrill Road inquired if they could use the funds for the Sam Lake Garage, and the reply was yes it could go towards that.

Judy Nelson of Center Road inquired why the money had to be taken, and Ken Folsom explained the tax consequences of not taking the money, and that it goes into the Sam Lake House Capital Reserve Account. Judy queried how much land was with the house, and the answer was 7 acres.

George Rogers of Old Schoolhouse Road asked what if the amount exceeds the \$15,000. It gets retained by the Trust but with a penalty.

Mindy Beltramo of Hackleboro Road inquired about the status of the Sam Lake Garage, and the Canterbury Fair's usage of space for supplies. Ken Folsom replied that the long-term plan for the garage space, as determined during the building planning process of the Sam Lake House in 2017, was that the Garage could be retrofitted as permanent record storage space for Town records.

Moderator Miller read the article again and asked for a show of cards. Motion carried; **Article Passed.**

Moderator Miller opened the meeting to any other business that would come before the body.

Beth McGuinn of Southwest Road spoke about Community Power and how Canterbury saved over \$105,000 in electricity costs over the past eight months.

Ruth Smith of Southwest Road made a presentation on the Canterbury Farmers Market.

Kelly Short of Hackleboro Road spoke as a member of the Conservation Commission, acknowledging the Stern's gift of conserving land off Bean Hill Road.

Claudia Leidinger of Hackleboro Road spoke on behalf of the Energy Committee, and invited residents to a workshop on building interior storm windows.

Seeing no other business, there was a vote by voice to adjourn the meeting. Meeting closed at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Samuel Papps, Town Clerk

Canterbury, New Hampshire