

**Town of Bradford
State of New Hampshire**

Town Warrant of Town Meeting March 11th, 2025

The Polls will open at 8:00 am, and not close earlier than 7:00 pm, on March 11th, 2025.

To the inhabitants of the Town of Bradford in the County of Merrimack in the said State qualified to vote in town affairs: .

You are hereby notified to meet at the Bradford Town Hall on West Main Street in said Bradford, N.H. on Tuesday the eleventh day of March next, at eight o'clock in the morning to act on the following articles:

Article One: To choose all necessary town officials for the ensuing year.
Total Votes Cast: 332 (20 absentee ballots were cast)

Selectman 3 years - Vote for not more than 1

Beth Downs	167 Elected
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Budget Committee 3 years - Vote for not more than 2

Bliss Dayton	273 Elected
Justin Dohrn	204 Elected

Cemetery Commission 3 years - Vote for not more than 1

Linda Cansler	5 Elected
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Planning Board 3 years - Vote for not more than 2

Kathleen Bigford	272 Elected
Laurie Colburn	251 Elected

Scholarship Committee 2 years - Vote for not more than 1

Devin Pendleton	254 Elected
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Scholarship Committee 3 years - Vote for not more than 1

Write-in tie – This will be determined by appointment from the committee.

Trustees of the Brown Memorial Library 3 years - Vote for not more than 4

Caitlin Banaszak	255 Elected
Devin Pendleton	265 Elected
Maria Storm	243 Elected

Write-in tie – This will be determined by appointment from the committee.

Trustees of the Trust Funds 3 years - Vote for not more than 1

Scott McCaskill	276 Elected
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Zoning Board 3 years - Vote for not more than 2

Laura Beaton	231 Elected
Brooks McCandlish	231 Elected

**KEARSARGE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
ELECTION, March 11, 2025**

Question 1 To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate the Municipal Budget Committee's recommended amount \$55,387,481 for the support of schools, for the payment of salaries for the school district officials and agents, and for the payment for the statutory obligations of the District. The School Board recommends \$55,387,481. This article does not include appropriations voted in other warrant articles. This warrant article asks the voters to raise and appropriate for the support of schools, the salaries of School District Officials and Agents, and for the statutory obligations of said District, and to authorize the application against said appropriation of such sums as are estimated to be received from the State sources, together with other income, the School Board to certify to the Selectmen of each of the Towns of Bradford, New London, Newbury, Springfield, Sutton, Warner, and Wilmot, the amount to be raised by taxation by said towns. (School Board Recommends 6-0) (Municipal Budget Committee Recommends 6-1)

Vote {X} for only one: A or B

- A. \$55,387,481 for the proposed Operating Budget recommended by the School Board
B. \$55,387,481 for the proposed Operating Budget recommended by the Municipal Budget Committee
- A. 202 B. 71

Question 2 To see if the School District will vote to approve the cost item included in the Collective Bargaining Agreement reached between the Kearsarge Regional School Board and the Kearsarge Regional Educators Association which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>
2025-2026	\$857,617
2026-2027	\$879,608
2027-2028	\$861,580

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$857,617 for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by

the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels. (School Board Recommends 6-0) (Municipal Budget Committee Recommends 7-0)

YES 222 NO 94

Question 3 To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate up to \$100,000 to be placed in the School Buildings Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund for the purpose of repair, unanticipated utility costs, and maintaining the school buildings and equipment, with such amount to be funded from unassigned fund balance (surplus funds) remaining on hand as of June 30, 2025. (School Board Recommends 6-0) (Municipal Budget Committee Recommends 6-1)

YES 239 NO 81

Question 4 To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate up to \$100,000 to be placed in the Capital Reserve Roof Fund for the purpose of replacement or major repairs to roofs in the district with such amounts to be funded from unassigned fund balance (surplus funds) remaining on hand as of June 30, 2025. (School Board Recommends 6-0) (Municipal Budget Committee Recommends 6-1)

YES 242 NO 77

Article Two: Zoning Ordinance To see if the Town will vote to adopt provisions which seek to update dates, definitions, map references and provide clarity for various requirements as recommended by the State of New Hampshire. These requirements are recommended by the State to ensure that Bradford stays in compliance with the Federal Flood Program. Maintaining compliance with the Flood Program is required for Bradford property owners to maintain their flood insurance. The following question will appear on the Official Ballot:

"Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 2 as proposed by the Bradford Planning Board for the Town of Bradford Zoning Ordinance as follows:

To amend Article IX FLOODPLAIN DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE as necessary to comply with requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program. .

This Amendment was recommended for approval by the Planning Board by a vote of 5-0."

YES 263 NO 63

Article Three: Zoning Ordinance - To see if the Town will vote to adopt provisions which seek to establish a Surface Water Overlay District. The Surface Water Overlay District (SWOD) is an overlay that establishes buffers from the major lakes, ponds, rivers and streams in Bradford. The provisions of the SWOD only apply to area within the SWOD buffer area and they establish a series of prohibited land uses and conditional land uses. Conditional uses within the SWOD buffer are those uses allowed in the underlying zoning district that are allowed if additional stormwater protections are put in place. It also establishes that the Planning Board is the

permitting authority for Conditional Use Permits. Lastly, the SWOD also establishes additional standards and setbacks for all land uses within the SWOD buffer. The following question will appear on the Official Ballot:

"Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 3 as proposed by the Bradford Planning Board for the Town of Bradford Zoning Ordinance as follows:

To establish a new Article, SURFACE WATER OVERLAY DISTRICT, that creates setbacks and standards for surface water protection to be administered by the Bradford Planning Board through a Conditional Use Permit process as described in NH RSA 674:21.

This Article will replace the current Article XI, ENFORCEMENTS, which will be redesignated as Article XII; all subsequent amendments articles will be renumbered accordingly.

This Amendment was recommended for approval by the Planning Board by a vote of 5-0."

YES 231 NO 91

Election officials present at the March 11, 2025, Town Election:

Moderator: Bruce Storm

Assistant Moderator: Kathleen Bigford

Town Clerk: Erica Gross

Deputy Town Clerk: Amelia Dohrn

Supervisors of the Checklist: Judith Marshall, Thomas Marshall, and Susan Gildersleeve

Selectmen: Beth Downs, Marlene Freyler, and Charles F. Meany III

Ballot Clerks: Mary Derry, Denise Renk, Robert Toppi, Kathleen Barr, Maria Storm, Sterling Gross, and Tandy Hartford

Counters: Carey Rodd, Beth Rodd, Steve Pierce, Jason Grey, Algrid Leonas, Annette Leonas, Barbara Southard, Tandy Hartford, Julie Lutter, Dawn Gezelman, Bruce Gezelman, and Martha Barron

The count ended at 10:30 pm, and the results were announced.

Article Four: To adjourn the meeting until Wednesday, March 12th, 2025, at 7:00 pm, at the Kearsarge Regional Elementary School, on Old Warner Road in Bradford. Raising the money and remaining articles in the Warrant will be taken up at the adjourned meeting.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, opened the meeting at 7:01 pm.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, introduced Harriet Douglass, who led us in the Pledge of Allegiance in honor of her husband, Donald Douglass, who was a Veteran of the Army-Air Force. Harriet is also the holder of the Boston Post Cane as the oldest and nicest person.

Beth Downs, Chairperson of the Selectboard, welcomed everybody to the March 11th, 2025, Town Meeting and thanked them for coming.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, went over the rules of conduct for the meeting, asking neighbors and friends to respect each other's right to an opinion. He then read the election results for the zoning, town, and school. He mentioned that due to the number of write-ins, they were posted at the Town Clerk's office.

Laurie Colburn, Budget Committee, then gave a presentation showing the highlights, the 2025 proposed appropriations, and a year-to-year trend in tax rate drivers.

Article Five: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Million Nine Hundred Forty-Nine Thousand Five Hundred Nineteen Dollars (\$2,949,519.00) for general municipal operations. This article does not include amounts appropriated by other warrant articles. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends \$2,946,569.00. Budget Committee recommends \$2,949,519.00.

	<u>Select Board</u>	<u>Budget Committee</u>
1. Executive	243,610.00	243,610.00
2. Elections & Vital Statistics	4,600.00	4,600.00
3. Financial Administration	105,368.00	105,368.00
4. Revaluations	47,500.00	47,500.00
5. Legal	45,000.00	45,000.00
6. Employee Benefits	1.00	1.00
7. Planning & Zoning	13,138.00	13,138.00
8. General Gov	137,551.00	136,501.00
9. Cemetery	25,000.00	25,000.00
10. Insurances	113,560.00	113,560.00
11. Other General Gov	9,500.00	9,500.00
12. Police Department	647,134.00	647,134.00
13. Fire Department	159,000.00	159,000.00
14. Rescue Services – FAST	9,700.00	9,700.00
15. Rescue Services – Contract	80,000.00	80,000.00
16. Building Code Department	26,780.00	26,780.00

	<u>Select Board</u>	<u>Budget Committee</u>
17. Civil Defense	1.00	1.00
18. Highway Department	732,630.00	737,630.00
19. Bridges	1.00	1.00
20. Street Lighting	2,400.00	2,400.00
21. Solid Waste Collection	100,910.00	100,910.00
22. Solid Waste Disposal	31,100.00	31,100.00
23. Inoculations	1.00	1.00
24. Welfare Administration	7,468.00	7,468.00
25. Welfare Payments	30,177.00	30,177.00
26. Parks and Recreation	23,759.00	22,759.00
27. Library	95,479.00	95,479.00
28. Patriotic Purposes .	5,450.00	5,450.00
29. Community Center	38,550.00	38,550.00
30. Other Conservation	1,200.00	1,200.00
31. Economic Development	1.00	1.00
32. Long Term Notes	209,000.00	209,000.00
33. <u>Interest on TAN notes</u>	<u>1,000.00</u>	<u>1 000.00</u>
Total	\$ 2,946,569.00	\$ 2,949,519.00

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read Article Five and asked for a motion to accept the article. Beth Downs moved to approve Article Five, which Marlene Freyler seconded.

Article Passed with a voice vote.

Article Six: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Eight Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$8,500.00) to be placed in the 2024 Police Department Equipment Expendable Trust Fund. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends. Budget Committee recommends.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read Article Six and asked for a motion to accept the article. Beth Downs moved to approve Article Six, which Marlene Freyler seconded.

Article Passed with a voice vote.

Article Seven: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) to be placed in the 2021 Police Vehicle Capital Reserve Trust Fund. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends. Budget Committee recommends.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read Article Seven and asked for a motion to accept the article. Beth Downs moved to approve Article Seven, which Marlene Freyler seconded.

Article Passed with a voice vote.

Article Eight: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty

Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) to fund the 2006 Fire Department Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends. Budget Committee recommends.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read Article Eight and asked for a motion to accept the article. Beth Downs moved to approve Article Eight, which Marlene Freyler seconded.

Article Passed with a voice vote.

Article Nine: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) to fund the 2020 Fire Equipment Expendable Trust Fund. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends. Budget Committee recommends.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read Article Nine and asked for a motion to accept the article. Beth Downs moved to approve Article Nine, which Marlene Freyler seconded.

Article Passed with a voice vote.

Article Ten: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Seventy-Two Thousand Dollars (\$72,000.00) to purchase turnout gear for the Fire Department. This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32: 7, VI and will continue until the money is spent or December 31, 2030. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends. Budget Committee recommends.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read Article Ten and asked for a motion to accept the article. Beth Downs moved to approve Article Ten, which Marlene Freyler seconded.

Article Passed with a voice vote.

Article Eleven: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00) to fund SCBA bottle and apparatus replacement. This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will continue until the money is spent or December 31, 2030. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends. Budget Committee recommends.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read Article Eleven and asked for a motion to accept the article. Beth Downs moved to approve Article Eleven, which Marlene Freyler seconded.

Article Passed with a voice vote.

Article Twelve: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the total sum of Three Hundred Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars (\$375,000.00) to fund road maintenance, preservation and paving. This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32: 7, VI and will continue until the money is spent or December 31, 2030. (Majority vote required). Select Board recommends. Budget Committee recommends.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read Article Twelve and asked for a motion to accept the article. Beth Downs moved to approve Article Twelve, which Marlene Freyler seconded.

Russell Von Beren: Wanted to know if this is above and beyond what the highway department does. Is this for private contractors to come in and pave the roads?

Steve Hall, Road Agent: First, thank you to the highway crew for their work over the past winter. It's been a crazy up-and-down year, and you've done a great job. I appreciate that.

There are comments about the highway department not having a plan. We do have a plan. We come in every day to maintain, build, and improve the town's infrastructure. We work diligently with the Selectboard and other departments, the Budget Committee, the CIP Committee, etc. We have identified vehicle replacement and projected projects. We have identified \$1.4 million worth of culvert work that needs to be addressed and four bridges in town that need attention. Three are red-listed, one with an estimated cost of about \$500,000.00. Pricing is in today's world, not 2 or 3 years later.

So, addressing the \$375,000.00, we met a couple of weeks ago with Central New Hampshire Planning, trying to get a feel for where we were with the results of work performed over the last 3 years. This program was approved at the 2021 town meeting and the projects were started in 2022. In the last 3 years, we crack-sealed and chip-sealed a portion of Fairgrounds Road, Center Road, and Massasecum Lake Road, did a double chip seal on Pleasant View Road, along with micro-surfacing other locations. We have replaced culverts, dug rocks, overlayed Jones Road and Center Road, crack-sealed and chip-sealed a portion of Old Warner Road, and micro-surfaced other locations. We have removed rocks, replaced culverts, cleaned ditches, reclaimed, paved, and coated for one mile on West Road. We cut trees, did stump removal, reclaimed ditches, paved the base road on Fairgrounds Road for 3,700 feet, and re-did the shoulders on both roads. The expanded monies for the last 3 years were \$125,000.00 for 2022, \$380,000.00 for 2023, and a little over \$349,000.00 for 2024. The Plan for 2025 would be to place a top coat of asphalt on West Road and Fairgrounds Road, with the cost estimated at around \$200,000.00. This is not only paving; it is all-inclusive of everything needed for this project. There is a map that shows all the roads slated for improvements. If we were to do that every year with \$350,000.00, you can see the amount flatten out a bit and then start to decline.

This is just an overview of what is going on with the costs.

Rachel Sweetbrown: Will the smaller roads be addressed?

Steve Hall, Road Agent: Absolutely, but West Road is over 4 miles long, and Fairgrounds Road is 3 plus miles, so we are trying to focus on the main arteries in town first.

Andrew Pinard: Could the updated plan be accessible to everybody on the website? This way we could have a good sense of how the spending and maintenance will get to those secondary and tertiary paved roads.

Steve Hall, Road Agent: This has been laid out. However, if we don't have enough money to follow the plan, things get changed and realigned. That's why we met with Central New Hampshire Planning. We are behind the eight ball, so we're trying to play catch-up again.

David Camire, Sr.: Is the paving going to be done by a private company?

Steve Hall, Road Agent: Yes, it will go to a professional company.

Marlene Freyler, Selectboard: In the last few years, since the road plan came in, we have been unable to do it because there has not been enough money. The roads are bad because the plan gets cut every year, and now we are 2 years behind. Also, prices are high.

Mel Pfeifle: Our operating budget has superseded what we are putting into our capital budgets. Even though this year it doesn't look like our operating budget has gone up much. It's already escalated to the point that it's out of whack with what we can spend on the capital budget. We have 46 miles of roads. I'd like you guys to consider this in the future. We need to adjust our operating budgets to the point where we can recapitalize the town.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, re-read Article Twelve and asked for a motion to accept the article. Beth Downs moved to approve Article Twelve, which Marlene Freyler seconded.

Article Passed with a voice vote.

Article Thirteen: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the total sum of Two Hundred Fifty-Four Thousand Dollars (\$254,000.00) to purchase a 2026 International six-wheel dump truck outfitted with equipment. This appropriation will come from the 2020 Highway Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of Two Hundred Eighteen Thousand Dollars (\$218,000.00) with the balance of Thirty-Six Thousand Dollars (\$36,000.00) to be raised by taxation. Further, this will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32: 7, VI and will continue until the money is spent or December 31, 2030. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends. Budget Committee does not recommend (6-1).

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read Article Thirteen and asked for a motion to accept the article. Beth Downs moved to approve Article Thirteen, which Charles F. Meany III seconded.

Tate Sweetbrown: What will this be replacing?

Steve Hall, Road Agent: This is replacing a 2008 International dump truck. It's got about 90,000 miles on it, and it's 17 years old. It is a front line piece. It has an all-purpose body on it, and a front line piece plow wing setup. The multi-purpose body had some issues. It's got rot holes in it and has been repaired twice already. The center chain has been replaced twice, and that cost about \$3,000.00. Cross members are rotted and cracked, and the body underneath needs repair. We've got an estimate to repair that for about \$6,600.00. The basic value of the truck is maybe between \$5,000.00 and \$6,000.00 if you're going to trade it or sell it outright. However, we are

trying to acquire a grant, and where we would get one-quarter of that money, which is about \$63,000.00. If we acquire that grant, the stipulation is that you must destroy that truck. You have to blow a hole in the motor, which brings the value down and is not worth anything. From 2017 to date, we have put \$52,000 into that truck for repairs.

Jason Grey: It seems if this article is written correctly, this is a new piece of equipment, and I believe I understand the reason for article 14 that the Budget Committee doesn't approve this because they wish to fund a capital reserve piece and eventually replace this piece of equipment. However, as the Road Agent has alluded to, this item is from 2017, so it seems like it's well past its useful life. While a capital plan is an awesome idea, it is only effective if you have a piece of equipment with a useful life left to replace. For example, a few years ago, we bought a used piece of equipment for a truck. It broke down and couldn't be fixed. Then we had to buy another used piece of equipment. So, while the Capital Improvement Plan is good, a Capital Improvement Plan only really works if the piece of equipment you're going to replace has useful life in it. This will allow you to save money over the course of that time to replace it while also factoring items like inflation and rising costs inside of it so well. It may seem like a large cost to buy a new piece of equipment now versus putting \$110,000.00 into the Capital Reserve Program, but it doesn't really sound like this piece of equipment will last long enough for us to raise money to purchase a new piece of equipment five or so years down the line. I think we do need the Capital Improvement Plan, but we need to have it be for equipment that can last while we raise the money to go ahead and pick it back up.

Pam Bruss, Capital Improvement Plan Committee: I am on the CIP and worked with the Select Board and the Budget Committee, and a little bit of background on what happened here might be better to understand. The paving was at \$550,000.00 as a plan for this year, and we know the CIP is great. It's a plan. All plans change. The first couple of years are supposed to be accurate, but then it gets less accurate as the years go by just because of change. This truck was in the plan for next year, which is why the Budget Committee decided to stick with that. We know it's old, but the CIP Committee prioritized the roads over the equipment. We've been working hard and diligently with Steve, and he's been progressing so much on plans for roads and equipment. So, kudos to him for that. But at the last minute, the plan changed, so he changed the equipment and the roads. The CIP did recommend \$550,000.00 for paving, putting this truck in next year and the backhoe for the year after that, but you'll see that that's all been pushed into this year, decreasing the paving. Although we know it doesn't have a useful life, we're just trying to catch up for 15 years of not doing everything we should have done.

Tate Sweetbrown: Between Articles 13 and 14, which one is more important at the moment?

Steve Hall, Road Agent: They both have their purpose, and both are important.

Eric Werner: Have we looked into the possibility of leasing this?

Steve Hall, Road Agent: I went to the different committees, approaching them, trying to bring this to fruition; I went in with the plan of leasing both of these pieces of equipment. We have

enough money in the CIP now to fund them if we went along with x amount of dollars in the future and just keep adding to that. There are pros and cons to leasing, and obviously, you will be spending money to enable you to do that. The feeling of the boards was to purchase the truck outright and then possibly lease the backhoe if that's an option as we go into the following articles.

Marlene Freyler, Selectboard: The Selectboard was in favor of leasing. If you leased, you could leave some of the money in there. Let it grow and on the backhoe, the interest rate is cheaper than the money that we have to put in to fix the backhoe, which is almost 80,000.00.

A discussion started up, which was interrupted by the Moderator, saying this is on the warrant and that now is not time for a discussion on it.

Beth Downs, Chairperson of the Selectboard: I was the withstanding selectmen who disagreed with purchasing the truck this year or the backhoe. The plan was when Steve came to us in October and the CIP, that the truck he wants to replace today would last another year. In November, it changed, but now it's not. It's a piece of garbage. I think now is not the right time to be expending all of the money out of our Capital reserves when he has other trucks that he can use and use this current truck until it dies and I feel the same way about the backhoe and the climate that the thing that the world is in now, I don't think that the town should be burdened with making payments plus interest to get anything. And yes, we can pay outright for the new truck, but then there's nothing in the CIP if something happens. We all know what happens to your savings if you don't have savings and something catastrophic happens.

Steve Hall, Road Agent: Just to clarify, everyone's using the word leasing. This is a lease purchase. After that time frame, whether it's 5 years or 7 years. Whatever you choose, the town will own that piece of equipment, and both units will have a 7-year warranty. There's pretty much bumper-to-bumper as far as coverage. You would be doing away with many of the repairs that might incur. My repair budget last year was \$78,000.00.

Bruce Storm, Moderator: Can you reiterate the actual budget implications of this truck mentioned in Article 13?

Steve Hall, Road Agent: It's an International dump truck with a plow, a wing, and an all-purpose dump body. It's a sander, dump body combination. The total cost is \$254,000.00 but will only have \$36,000.00 of impact on taxation.

Josh Stewart: Could you speak more about the potential grant?

Steve Hall, Road Agent: The latest word is that it has been reviewed, and they are trying to move forward. The caveat to the grant is that you must pay full price upfront, even if you receive it. You cannot deduct the Grant amount from it.

Article Passed with a raised hand vote.

Article Fourteen: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Ten Thousand Dollars (\$110,000.00) to fund the 2020 Highway Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Trust Fund. This article is null and void with the passage of Article Thirteen. (Majority vote required). Select Board recommends. Budget Committee recommends (4-3).

Article is null and void with the passage of Article 13.

Article Fifteen: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Seventy-Four Thousand (\$74,000.00) to fund the 2020 Highway Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Trust Fund. This article is null and void with the passage of Article Fourteen. (Majority vote required). Select Board recommends. Budget Committee does not recommend.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read Article Fifteen and asked for a motion to accept the article. Beth Downs moved to approve Article Fifteen, which Marlene Freyler seconded.

Andrew Pinard: Could the Budget Committee speak to why they didn't recommend it?

Jen Richardson, Chairperson, Budget Committee: We didn't recommend this one since we didn't recommend Article 13 and Article 15, but we did recommend Article 14, which had a total raised by taxation of \$110,000.00.

Article Passed with a voice vote.

Article Sixteen: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) to fund the 2019 Road and Bridge Expendable Trust Fund. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends. Budget Committee recommends (5-1).

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read Article Sixteen and asked for a motion to accept the article. Beth Downs moved to approve Article Sixteen, which Charles F. Meany III seconded.

Article Passed with a voice vote.

Article Seventeen: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to enter into a lease purchase agreement to acquire a Caterpillar four-wheel drive backhoe and further to authorize the Select Board to issue and negotiate such notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon. (This agreement will contain a fiscal funding non-appropriation clause). The total cost of the backhoe is One Hundred Seventy-Three Thousand Three Hundred Dollars (\$173,300.00). The lease amount of One Hundred Seventy-Three Thousand Three Hundred Dollars (\$173,300.00) will be payable over a term of 5 years with an annual appropriation of not more than Thirty-Eight Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$38,500.00). Further, to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty-Eight Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$38,500.00) to fund the 2025 payment. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends. Budget Committee does not recommend (5-1).

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read Article Seventeen and asked for a motion to accept the article. Beth Downs moved to approve Article Seventeen, which Charles F. Meany III seconded.

Eileen Kelly: Could someone please define fiscal funding non-appropriation clause?

Karen Hambleton, Town Administrator: It will be paid over a period of years which means that you will see the amount come up in the future warrant. If the town, in the future, decides not to fund the lease payment for that year, the vehicle goes back, and we don't have to pay it.

Charles F. Meany III, Selectboard: We can also pay it off at any time and are not restricted to a 5-year lease.

Steve Hall, Road Agent: The machine that we're trying to replace is a 2011 John Deere backhoe. It's got little about 7,000 hours on. It's 14 years old. It is, again, a front line piece. Some repairs are needed for this machine. We've taken it to the dealer, who is quoting us about \$42,000.00 to repair the front and rear pins and bushings. There is a trade value of \$26,000.00, so the price would be \$173,300.00. However, a program is going on as we speak for this particular machine. Caterpillar is offering another \$20,000 discount if we purchase that machine. Again, since 2017, we have put \$37,000 into that machine.

Article Passed with a raised hand vote.

Article Eighteen: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$80,000.00) to fund the 2015 Town Equipment Repair and Purchase Expendable Trust Fund. This article is null and void with the passage of Article Seventeen. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends. Budget Committee does not recommend.

Article is null and void with the passage of Article 17.

Article Nineteen: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Forty-One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$41,500.00) to fund the 2015 Town Equipment Repair and Purchase Expendable Trust Fund. This article is null and void with the passage of Article Eighteen. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends. Budget Committee recommends.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read Article Nineteen and asked for a motion to accept the article. Beth Downs moved to approve Article Nineteen, which Marlene Freyler seconded.

Article Passed with a voice vote.

Article Twenty: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) to fund the 2008 Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends. Budget Committee recommends.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read Article Twenty and asked for a motion to accept the article. Beth Downs moved to approve Article Twenty, which Charles F. Meany III seconded.

Article Passed with a voice vote.

Article Twenty-One: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Eleven Thousand Seven Hundred and Forty-Five Dollars (\$11,745.00) to be placed in the 2021 Police Vehicle Capital Reserve Trust Fund. This appropriation will come from unassigned fund balance and represents the funds received from the Police Department's sale of two cruisers in 2024. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends. Budget Committee recommends.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read Article Twenty-One and asked for a motion to accept the article. Beth Downs moved to approve Article Twenty-One, which Rachel Sweetbrown seconded.

Article Passed with a voice vote.

Article Twenty-Two: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) to fund the 2020 Highway Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Trust Fund. This appropriation will come from unassigned fund balance and represents the funds received from the Highway Department's sale of a dump body in 2024. (Majority vote required). Select Board recommends. Budget Committee recommends (5-1).

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read Article Twenty-Two and asked for a motion to accept the article. Beth Downs moved to approve Article Twenty-Two, which Charles F. Meany III seconded.

Article Passed with a voice vote.

Article Twenty-Three: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) to fund the demolition and removal of the Masonic Building at 89 West Main Street (Map 16 Lot 87) from Town property. This appropriation will come from unassigned fund balance, be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32: 7, VI and will continue until the money is spent or December 31, 2030. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends. Budget Committee recommends.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read Article Twenty-Three and asked for a motion to accept the article. Beth Downs moved to approve Article Twenty-Three, which Marlene Freyler seconded.

Bruce Gezelman made a motion to amend Article Twenty-Three to raise and appropriate the sum of Sixty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$65,000.00), which Patricia Moreland seconded.

Bruce Gezelman: I've been involved with the Mason building and I believe we should take it down. This would preclude Article 27, which is for Ninety-Seven Thousand, Five Hundred Dollars (\$97,500.00).

Ann Eldridge: I want to amend the wording of this article to include demolition and removal but also assessment and abatement if there are any hazardous materials in that building.

Bruce Storm, Moderator: This amendment does not mention that.

Unknown speaker: What about asbestos removal?

Charles F. Meany III, Selectboard: No one has to ask that question again. All state and federal regulations will be complied with when destroying that building. We will not give you mesothelioma. We will not put lead in your hair. We have to write the specifications before we do anything, and it will all be included in the specifications. We have been in contact with the State of New Hampshire, so it will comply with all regulations.

Amelia Dohrn: I just had a question about this one because it was my understanding, and I might be wrong, that the \$5,000.00 was supposed to be put in, then slowly start saving money to afford the demolition of the building. Not to assume it would only cost \$5,000 to tear it down. Is that right?

Bruce Storm, Moderator: I think that's correct.

Bliss Dayton: Speaking to the amendment, is there another \$60,000.00 available in the unassigned fund balance?

Karen Hambleton: I don't know exactly how much is in the fund balance because it gets calculated based on how we go through the year. It would certainly put a dent in it. Last year, we had approximately \$50,000.00 available to help offset taxes and the Select Board opted not to do that using my balance because it would have taken us below the 5% that the state recommends.

Mel Pfeifle: How close are we to the 10% rule? Bruce Gezelman, how did you come up with the \$60,000.00?

Bruce Gezelman: We've been talking with multiple demolition people and have come up with a ballpark amount. We have to actually have a firm contract before we have the exact amount. There is already \$5,000.00 set aside. This was going to be another \$5,000.00, but the building is not getting better. The roof is blowing off, and you can find pieces all over Main Street. The longer we wait to destroy this building, the more damage will incur. The money I am talking about is to supersede the money in Article 27.

Beth Downs, Chairperson of the Selectboard: Draining the fund balance doesn't help us at all, and we need a certain percentage in order to end every year with the Department of Revenue. I personally disagree with this. We do not have the funds to do it. I think we ought to just wait. The building's not going to go anywhere.

David Leathers: It seems like we're now talking about whether we should tear the building down. But the real point was we have Article 27 for \$96,000.00, and now somebody's saying we can do it for \$65,000.00. Realistically, has this really been looked into at this point in time? Not that I disagree with the need to take the building down. We should take it down, so I don't know if

anyone can elaborate more on the discrepancy between these two figures, but I think that would be important.

Brooks McCandlish: I'm a member of the fire department. This building was given to the town of Bradford. I forgot how many years ago, I believe five or six. The fire department is not in the business of owning land, so it went to the select people, as it should. A lot of people in town felt it was a nice historic building that shouldn't just be torn down. That's why there's been so many years of discussion about this. An estimate was done, and this is not a firm estimate, but something was done at the time, said it would cost as much as \$50,000.00 to take it down. It's been 6 years. The roof is blowing off. It is going to be rotting. It's not doing the town any good sitting there, and it could be a potential hazard. It could be an asset if that building is gone. The idea of saving a historic building has been well studied, and it would take a lot more money than that. The town has been looking into this, but there are no grants available for it. Last year the proposal was to put it up for auction. Somebody would take the responsibility of moving the building or salvaging what they could from it, then leaving the site clean. I think that the idea of saving it has been pretty well examined. Personally, I think it's high time that something's done there. The roof is disappearing as we speak. It's been coming off for several years now. Shingles are all over the place. We're not seeing as many anymore, probably because a lot of them are gone. One last point: the final article said \$96,500.00. I think the amount was based on a bid from a local contractor, and my understanding was that it was the worst-case bid. Assuming that there are all kinds of hazardous waste that need to be dealt with. The first step would be to assess that. In any case, the contractor said if it's not the worst case, then we are not going to have to spend that money. \$65,000.00 may be enough since the hazardous material assessment has not yet been done. We don't really know, but I think at least what we should do would be to vote for the \$65,000.00 to go on with this project instead of just continuing to take it down the road. The costs are just going to go up.

Tate Sweetbrow: My real issue is where the money comes from in this one in the amendment. Are we trying to just find money from places where we don't necessarily have the money? I'm not saying it shouldn't be done. I just feel that the way this warrant article is written doesn't allow it to come from a place where we have the money.

Bruce Storm, Moderator: For clarification purposes, we have an amendment to Article 23 that changes \$5,000.00 to \$65,000.00, and that amendment was approved. We have not voted on it yet. There is an article later that we must also pay attention to. Mr. Gezelman said this would supersede Article 27, but I have no indication that that would be the case.

Andrew Pinard: The other consideration with this amendment is that if you amend this, this is coming from an unassigned fund balance, which kicks the can down the road until whatever those funds are being determined. If the intent is to study and figure out exactly what mitigation is required and then act upon it, this kicks this can down till October or November, whenever the Select Board votes on how to use the unassigned fund balance, and there's no guarantee that it's the correct amount. The question I have is whether or not the timing of \$65,000.00 is prudent or whether the future considerations of this body might make the time shift sooner rather than later

to accomplish the goals of the body, which might be to remediate the problem and remove the property. I ask that we vote this article down and make the amendments to Article 27.

Mel Pfeifle: I agree with Andrew because, taking it out of the fund balance, we have to have a minimum amount. I don't know what we have in the fund balance, but secondly, we very often offset our taxes with what's left over from the fund balance. I would prefer to vote for this as it comes forward at the \$95,000.00 and amend that article, over taking this out of the fund balance.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a vote on the amendment to Article 23.

Amendment to Article 23 Failed with a voice vote.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, re-read Article Twenty-Three and asked for a vote.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read Article Twenty-Seven and asked for a motion to accept the article.

Beth Downs moved to approve Article Twenty-Seven, which Bruce Gezelman seconded.

Article 23 Passed with a raised hand count.

Brooks McCandlish made a motion to move Article 27 up next. Rachel Sweetbrown seconded.

Motion to move Article 27 up next Passed.

Article Twenty-Seven: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$97,500.00 (Ninety-Seven Thousand Five Hundred Dollars) for the purpose of asbestos abatement and the demolition of the former Masonic Lodge located at 89 Main Street (Map 16, Lot 87). This is to be non-lapsing funds pursuant to RSA 32: 7, VI and will continue till the project is complete or December 31, 2030. By Petition. (Majority vote required.) Select Board does not recommend. Budget Committee does not recommend.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read Article Twenty-Seven and asked for a motion to accept the article.

Beth Downs moved to approve Article Twenty-Seven, which Bruce Gezelman seconded.

Chris Aiken made a motion to Amend Article 27 from \$97,500.00 to \$92,000.00. Rachel Sweetbrown seconded.

Laurie Colburn, Budget Committee: Not sure if I can make this motion, but I would like to amend this to add a project completion date of December 31, 2026. Just want to voice my opinion.

Bruce Storm, Moderator: That would be changing the essence of the Article and a second amendment.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, called for a vote on the amendment to change Article 27 to read \$92,000.00 instead of \$97,500.00.

Amendment to Article 27 Passed with a voice vote.

Bruce Storm re-read Article 27 to read as follows:

Article Twenty-Seven: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$92,000.00 (Ninety-Two Thousand Dollars) for the purpose of asbestos abatement and the demolition of the former Masonic Lodge located at 89 Main Street (Map 16, Lot 87). This is to be non-lapsing funds pursuant to RSA 32: 7, VI and will continue till the project is complete or December 31, 2030. By Petition. (Majority vote required.) Select Board does not recommend. Budget Committee does not recommend.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept the article. Marlene Freyler moved to approve Article Twenty-Seven, which Tate Sweetbrown seconded.

Amended Article Passed with a raised hand vote.

Article Twenty-Four: "Resolution to Conserve and Maintain New Hampshire's Public Natural Resources"

"People, plants, and wildlife require clean air, pure water, and a healthy environment. The voters in the Town of Bradford call upon our governor, senators, representatives, and other elected officials to conserve and maintain New Hampshire's public natural resources for the benefit of this and future generations."

The record of the vote approving this article shall be transmitted by written notice to Bradford's State Legislators and to the Governor of New Hampshire, informing them of the instructions from their constituents, by Bradford's Select Board, within thirty days of this vote."

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read Article Twenty-Four, and asked for a motion to accept the article. Beth Downs moved to approve Article Twenty-Four, which Charles F. Meany III seconded.

Barbara Southard: The reason for this resolution is that you know many states have the idea of inalienable rights to a healthy environment in their constitution, but not New Hampshire, and recently, there've been several bills put before our legislature about something related to this, and they haven't moved forward. So I think it's very important to tell our legislators that we care about that. We think that we deserve to have a healthy environment, and our kids especially deserve to have it.

Article Passed with a voice vote.

Article Twenty-Five: "Property Taxes for Private Education: A Call for Responsible Use"

"Whereas, taxpayers have a right to know how their money is spent and deserve clear, verifiable evidence that it is being spent wisely and delivering results; and

Whereas, taxpayer dollars are being diverted from public schools to private and religious education through Education Freedom Accounts (vouchers), and this shift does not reduce public school expenses, leaving local taxpayers to cover the difference through higher property taxes; and

Whereas, unlike public schools, private education funded by taxpayers through vouchers lacks key accountability measures, such as reporting how funds are used, tracking student performance, ensuring services for students with disabilities, and conducting background checks for staff;

Therefore, we, the voters of Bradford, New Hampshire, call on our state elected officials to uphold their duty to fiscal responsibility by rejecting any expansion of taxpayer funding for private education until we have full accountability, transparency, and a sustainable funding plan that ensures no further strain on public schools or local property taxpayers.

We further direct the Bradford Select Board to deliver this warrant article and results in writing to New Hampshire's Governor and members of the State Legislature within thirty days of this vote."

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read Article Twenty-Five and asked for a motion to accept the article. Andrew Pinard moved to approve Article Twenty-Five, which Beth Downs seconded.

Kathleen Bigford, Assistant Moderator: I just wanted to give a little bit of an explanation about why this motion came to be, and this comes on the heels of the incredible support that was shown on January 4th at the deliberative session of the Kearsarge Regional School District. At that meeting, it was stressed that our representatives and senators need to know that the Kearsarge Regional School District wants fair funding for the district. While there are concerns with using public money for placements in private and religious programs, this warrant article seeks to let Governor Ayotte and Bradford's representatives in the New Hampshire legislature know that voters in Bradford, New Hampshire, are expecting fair and adequate funding for the Kearsarge Regional School District as tax dollars are diverted to fund non-public educational programs. One of the expenses of New Hampshire's Education Trust Fund is the Education Freedom Account, also called vouchers. Vouchers are essentially public support of private education. Private schools funded through education, freedom accounts, or EFA's are not subject to the same requirements as public schools, including financial oversight by locally elected officials, academic progress reporting, special education mandates, student disability mandates, instructor certification, and criminal background checks for all staff and volunteers. To date, there has been no information from the Bipartisan Education Freedom Account Oversight Committee that reports how public school requirements are being met by private educational providers. Again, this warrant is a statement to Governor Ayotte, Senator Innis, and Representatives Caplan, Kelly and Payeur. The Bradford residents would like them to uphold their duty of physical responsibility by rejecting any expansion of taxpayer funding for private education until there is a sustainable accountable funding plan that ensures no further strain on public schools or local property taxes.

Article Passed with a voice vote.

Article Twenty-Six: To see if the Town will vote to create the Efficiency Opportunity Committee for the purpose of identifying strategies to reduce Bradford's unsustainable property tax growth while continuing to maintain quality services. The Committee shall include one or more members of the Select Board, one or more members of the Budget Committee, one or more members of the Capital Improvement Plan Committee/Planning Board, and any Bradford resident with interest. Members of the Efficiency Opportunity Committee will collaborate, document and present strategic opportunities to the Select Board for consideration and discussion with Bradford residents. By Petition. (Majority vote required.) Select Board does not recommend (2-1). Budget Committee recommends (4-2-1).

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read Article Twenty-Six and asked for a motion to accept the article. Beth Downs moved to approve Article Twenty-Six, which Marlene Freyler seconded.

Marlene Freyler, Selectboard: The Town Attorney wrote me on this, and I'll read verbatim what he said;

I am mailing to confirm to the Select Board that I spoke with Marlene Freyler concerning the questions about the Position Warrant Article 26 for the annual meeting. I gave Marlene my opinion that Article 26, concerning the creation of an Efficiency Opportunity Committee, would be advisory only and not legally enforceable. In other words, if the town meeting votes to adopt this article, the Select Board could take this as advice from the voters to create such a committee. However, because this committee is not required by state law it would exist only to present information to the Select Board and would be comprised of town officials who cannot be compelled to serve on such committees. The creation of the committee is not legally enforceable ie voters could not sue or require the committee to have meetings as described in the warrant article.

Andrew Pinard: I admire and appreciate the initiative of developing such a committee, but I share the frustration expressed by the Town Attorney about the dictation of who will serve, when they will serve, and how it will serve. I do not share Marlene's or the Town Attorney's concern that this committee would be a compelling activity. The language in the petition does not say that the selectmen must do it very specifically says for consideration and discussion. I think that it might be beneficial to strike the language associated with the specific qualifications of who must serve on the committee. An advisory committee is very important to have, and I think at least one selectman should serve. But I think this should be a recommendation of the composition, not a dictate by this body.

Andrew Pinard made a motion to amend the wording of Article 26 to read "To see if the Town will vote to recommend the creation of " and "the committee may include one or more members of the Select Board, etc." And leave all the rest the way it is. Marlene Freyler seconded.

Amendment Passed with a voice vote.

Kim Firth, Budget Committee: In October and November of 2024 we partnered together to field a survey and there were lots of great recommendations from that survey, opportunities for efficiency. During the Budget Committee discussions, there were other great ideas and opportunities that needed further research. I think that this is a committee that really has the opportunity to roll up its sleeves, learn together, and explore different possibilities, some of them small and practical and some of them big, like looking at possible ways to work creatively with other towns as we do with our ambulance. Shorter-term and longer-term opportunities for efficiencies in the budget. I think this is an opportunity to engage folks in the town. I really believe that we've got a lot of talent here in Bradford and it would be terrific to engage more folks beyond just the Budget Committee and the Select Board. I think people are probably watching out there, but not a lot of people come to the meetings. We are not able to benefit from your thinking. This is an opportunity to engage everybody. We're seeing some significant tax increases, and what you all voted on today was a 10 percent increase in your taxes. Looking at the Capitol Improvement Plan, which is posted online, you can see just what is recommended each year and then the operating budget, the school, a national and state climate where policies are really kicking the can to the locals to make up on what has been government's responsibility, federal government's responsibility and state government's responsibilities.

Andrew Pinard made a motion to amend the wording to eliminate Efficiency Opportunity and have it read "a committee." Rachel Sweetbrown seconded the motion.

Amendment Passed with a voice vote.

Bruce Storm re-read Amended Article 26 to read as follows:

Article Twenty-Six: To see if the Town will vote to recommend the creation of a Committee for the purpose of identifying strategies to reduce Bradford's unsustainable property tax growth while continuing to maintain quality services. It's recommended that the Committee may include any Bradford resident with interest. Members of the Committee will collaborate, document and present strategic opportunities to the Select Board for consideration and discussion with Bradford residents. By Petition. (Majority vote required.) Select Board does not recommend (2-1). Budget Committee recommends (4-2-1).

Amended Article Passed with a voice vote.

Article Twenty-Seven Moved to after Article Twenty-Three

Article Twenty-Eight: To see if the Town will vote to accept the reports of the Town Offices. To transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

Article Passed with a voice vote.

Bradford Select Board,

Beth Downs, Chairman

Marlene Freyler, Selectmen

Charles F. Meany III, Selectmen

A true copy attest:

Official Town Warrant and Minutes for the Election on March 11, 2025, and
Meeting on March 12, 2025. 124 registered voters attended the meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:32 pm.

These minutes are abridged. A full recording of the meeting is available at the
Town Clerk's office.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Erica Gross".

Erica Gross

Town Clerk/Tax Collector