

Town of Bradford  
State of New Hampshire

Town Warrant of Annual Town Meeting March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026

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 at 75 West Main Street in said Bradford, N.H. on **Tuesday, the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) day of March** next, at eight o'clock in the morning (8:00 a.m.) for the First Session of the Annual Meeting (Official Ballot Voting) to act on Articles 1-3 set forth below. The Polls will open at 8:00 a.m. and not close earlier than 7:00 p.m. on March 10<sup>th</sup>.

**You are hereby notified** to re-convene at the Kearsarge Regional Elementary School at 163 Old Warner Road in said Bradford, NH on **Wednesday the eleventh (11<sup>th</sup>) day of March** next, at seven o'clock in the evening (7:00 p.m.) for the Second Session of the Annual Meeting (Transaction of All Other Business) to act on Articles 4-32 set forth below.

**Article One:** To choose all necessary town officials for the ensuing year.  
Total Votes Cast: 398 (15 absentee ballots were cast)

Selectman 3 years - Vote for not more than 1

Devin Pendleton 227 Elected

Budget Committee 3 years - Vote for not more than 2

Karen Hambleton 241 Elected  
Taylor Matano 169 Elected

Cemetery Commission 3 years - Vote for not more than 1

Dan Cilley 224 Elected

Moderator 2 years – Vote for not more than 1

Bruce Storm 337 Elected

Planning Board 3 years - Vote for not more than 3

Bruce Gezelman 233 Elected  
Kelly McCaskill-Eneguess 275 Elected  
Write-in - Savannah Griffin 14 Elected

Scholarship Committee 3 years - Vote for not more than 1

Patty Heffner 312 Elected

Supervisor of the Checklist 6 years - Vote for not more than 1

Linda Cansler 324 Elected

Trustees of the Brown Memorial Library 3 years - Vote for not more than 2

Laura Beaton	319 Elected
Mary Keegan-Dayton	304 Elected

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

Rachel Sweetbrown	306 Elected
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Zoning Board 3 years - Vote for not more than 2

Jim Varney	180 Elected
Nathaniel Bruss	221 Elected

**Article Two:** Zoning Amendment - To see what action the Town will take with respect to the following proposed amendment to the Bradford Zoning Ordinance by ballot vote upon the following question:

Are you in favor of the adoption of the amendment to the existing Bradford Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the planning board, as follows:

Amend certain sections of the Zoning Ordinance as listed below to require frontage on a Class V or better road as a prerequisite for new construction.

1. Amend Article II, Definitions:

a. Revise the existing definition of Frontage as follows:

Frontage: ~~The length of a lot bordering on an accepted public road or on a proposed street on a subdivision plat approved by the Planning Board.~~ The width of a lot measured along its common boundary with a public right of way.

b. Add a new definition, as follows:

Public way: A public right of way which the Town or State has the duty to maintain.

YES 251      NO 114

**Article Three:** Zoning Amendment - To see what action the Town will take with respect to the following proposed amendment to the Bradford Zoning Ordinance by ballot vote upon the following question:

Are you in favor of the adoption of the amendment to the existing Bradford Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the planning board, as follows:

Amend certain sections of the Zoning Ordinance as listed below as follows:

Add a new Section Q to Article III as follows: Any alterations or improvements made to a Town road, must first receive design approval by the Road Agent and Select Board.

YES 289 NO 82

**KEARSARGE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ELECTION, March 10, 2026**

**Question 1** - To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate the Municipal Budget Committee’s recommended amount \$56,653,713 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 \$56,653,713. 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 7-0) (Municipal Budget Committee Recommends 7-1) The average cost per pupil for the preceding year as calculated in accordance with RSA 189:75,1(a) is \$27,691.58. ELA Proficiency: 62 % Math Proficiency:46%, Science Proficiency 38%.  
Vote for only one: A or B

- A. \$56,653,713 for the proposed Operating Budget recommended by the School.
- B. \$56,653,713 for the proposed Operating Budget recommended by the Municipal Budget Committee.

A. 219 B. 104

**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 Para Educators Association of Kearsarge, (PEAK) which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Estimated Increase</i>
2026-2027	\$166,972
2027-2028	\$202,703
2028-2029	\$194,665

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$166,972** for the 2026-27 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 8-0)**

A. 274 B. 101

**Question 3** - To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate up to **\$200,000** to be placed in the Special Education Expendable Trust Fund, established in 2008 within the



Election officials present at the March 10, 2026, Town Election:

Moderator: Bruce Storm

Assistant Moderator: Kathleen Bigford

Town Clerk: Erica Gross

Deputy Town Clerk: Amelia Dohrn

Supervisors of the Checklist: Judith Marshall, Susan Gildersleeve, and Linda Cansler

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

Ballot Clerks: Mary Derry, Denise Renk, Kathleen Barr, Maria Storm, Barbara Southard, Steve Pierce, and Tandy Hartford

Counters: Steve Pierce, Jason Grey, Barbara Southard, Tandy Hartford, Mary Keegan-Dayton, Kayla Gleason, Dawn Gezelman, Bruce Gezelman, Garry Kalajian, Ben Scalise, Eileen Kelly, Paul Gross, Melanie Leathers, and Martha Barron

The count ended at 10:28 pm, and the results were announced.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, opened the 239<sup>th</sup> Town Meeting at 7:01 pm.

Marlene Freyler, Chairperson of the Selectboard, welcomed everybody to the meeting and said she was pleased with the voter turnout at the prior day's election. She stated that that's what we need: citizens to vote and to volunteer. She wished all of the winners good luck. Marlene then remarked that it had been a pleasure serving the town for the last two terms and thanked the voters.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, introduced Harriet Douglass, who led us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Harriet is also the current holder of the Boston Post Cane.

Erica Gross, Town Clerk, announced the resignation of Judy Marshall as a Supervisor of the Checklist. Judy served as a supervisor for 23 years. Erica thanked Judy for all her years of service and hard work.

Maureen Brandon, Bookkeeper/Assistant Administrator, and Erica Gross, Town Clerk, presented flowers to Marlene Freyler and thanked her for her dedication to this town as a Select Board member. Her love for this town really showed.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, read the election results for the zoning, town, and school. He mentioned that write-ins were posted at the Town Clerk's office.

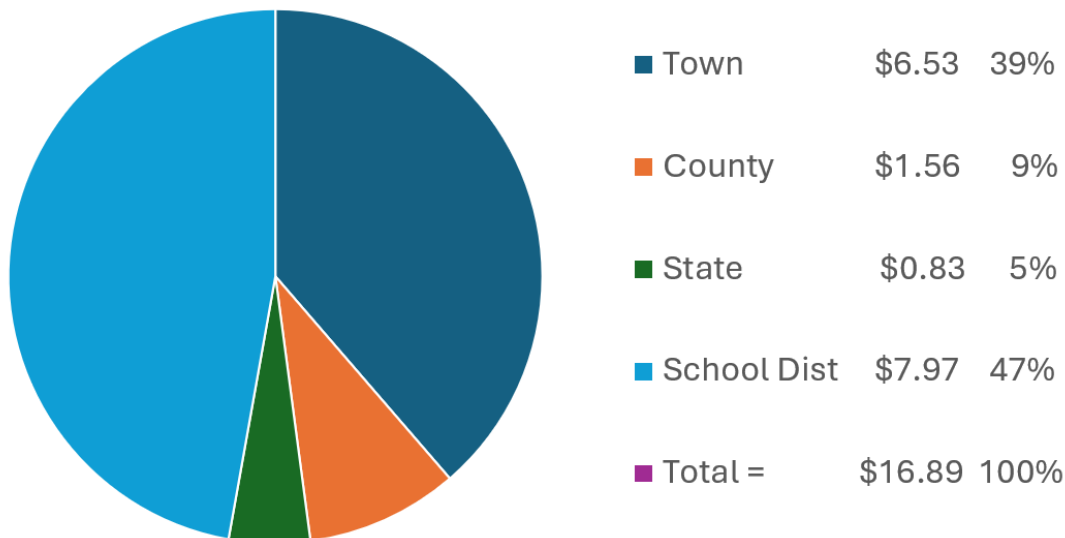
Andrew Pinard made a motion to waive the reading of each warrant article unless the floor specifically requests it or if an amendment requires clarification. Mary Keegan-Dayton seconded.

**Motion Passed with a voice vote.**

Bruce Storm, the moderator, explained the meeting guidelines.

Bliss Dayton, Budget Committee, presented a slideshow on the proposed 2026 appropriations and year-to-year trends in tax-rate drivers.

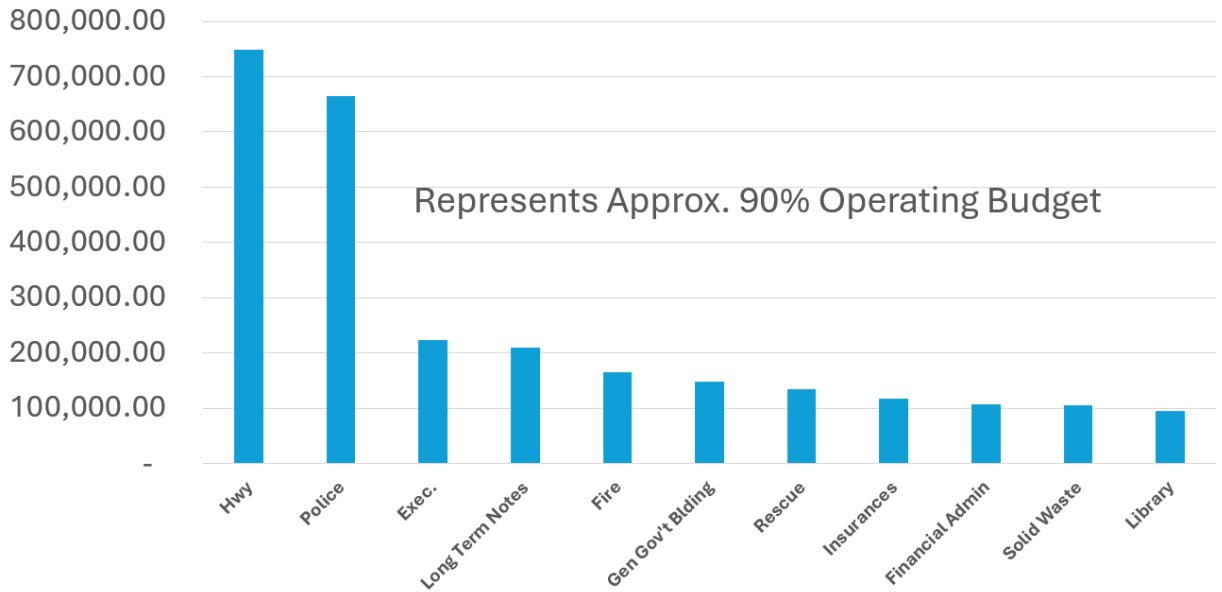
1. During 2025, the town
  - Demolished the Masonic Building
  - Paved two and a half miles of roads
  - Improved the Community Center, and
  - Hired a new Town Administrator (Scott Butcher)
2. The 2025 tax rate was \$16.89 per \$1,000 of assessed value  
Only \$6.53 of that was for Town expenses  
The rest was for the School District, State, & County
3. This chart shows 39% of property taxes went to the town.  
47% to the School District, 9% to the County, and 5% to the State.



4. The budget process included the department heads, Selectboard, & Budget Committee. The Budget Committee reviewed each request and considered the planned projects and expenditures, amounts spent in prior years, trends, changing conditions, and both dollar amounts and percentage changes.

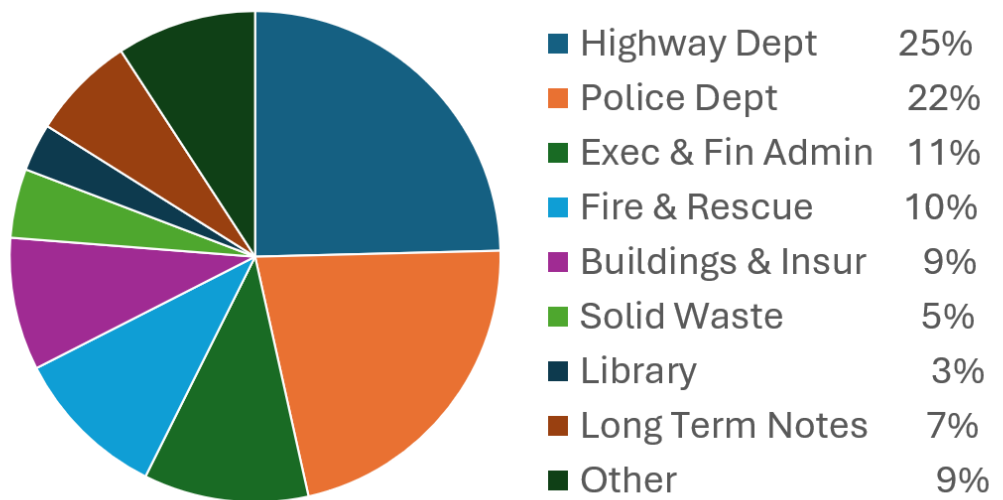
5. The proposed 2026 budget provides most of the funding for the Highway Department and the Police Department. 90% of the funds go to these 11 areas.

### 2026 Proposed General Operating Budget



6. This chart shows how the town portion of taxes are allocated with one quarter for the Highway Department and 22% for the Police Department.

### 2026 Proposed General Operating Budget



7. Factors impacting the 2026 budget increase include:
  - Rescue Service Contract
  - A 2.7% Cost of Living Adjustment for town employees
  - Increases in the cost of: insurance, waste disposal, dispatch fees, and electricity
  - More elections, software upgrades, and a part-time maintenance position
  
8. The Budget Committee recommends Three Million Forty-One Thousand Three Hundred Twenty-One Dollars (\$3,041,321.00) as the Operating Budget for 2026.  
 That is 3.1% over the 2025 budget, and Sixteen Thousand Dollars (\$16,000.00) lower than the requested amount.
  
9. The Tax Impact of the Operating Budget is offset by a decrease in the Warrant Article amounts raised through taxation. If all warrant article funding is approved, the combined total is about Eighty-Six Thousand Dollars (\$86,000.00) less than in 2025 (down 2.3%).

The actual tax rate in 2026 will depend on School District, County, & State taxes, as well as Revenue and Fund Balance.

**Article Four:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Million Forty-One Thousand Three Hundred Twenty-One Dollars (\$3,041,321.00) for general municipal operations. This article does not include amounts appropriated by other warrant articles. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends \$3,057,321.00. Budget Committee recommends \$3,041,321.00.

	<u>Select Board</u>	<u>Budget Committee</u>
1. Executive	223,000.00	223,000.00
2. Elections & Vital Statistics	9,100.00	9,100.00
3. Financial Administration	107,451.00	107,451.00
4. Revaluations	47,700.00	47,700.00
5. Legal	31,000.00	20,000.00
6. Employee Benefits	1.00	1.00
7. Planning & Zoning	14,500.00	14,500.00
8. General Gov	153,800.00	148,800.00
9. Cemetery	25,000.00	25,000.00
10. Insurances	116,842.00	116,842.00
11. Other General Gov	9,500.00	9,500.00
12. Police Department	665,820.00	665,820.00
13. Fire Department	164,500.00	164,500.00
14. Rescue Services - FAST	8,700.00	8,700.00
15. Rescue Services – Contract	135,000.00	135,000.00

16. Building Code Department	36,830.00	36,830.00
17. Emergency Management	1.00	1.00
18. Highway Department	748,506.00	748,506.00
19. Bridges	1.00	1.00
20. Street Lighting	2,500.00	2,500.00
21. Solid Waste Collection	104,944.00	104,944.00
22. Solid Waste Disposal	33,320.00	33,320.00
23. Inoculations	1.00	1.00
24. Welfare Administration	7,685.00	7,685.00
25. Welfare Payments	30,427.00	30,427.00
26. Parks and Recreation	23,670.00	23,670.00
27. Library	95,549.00	95,549.00
28. Patriotic Purposes	22,350.00	22,350.00
29. Community Center	28,300.00	28,300.00
30. Other Conservation	1,200.00	1,200.00
31. Economic Development	1.00	1.00
32. Long Term Notes	209,122.00	209,122.00
33. Interest on TAN notes	1,000.00	1,000.00
Total	\$ 3,057,321.00	\$ 3,041,321.00

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Four. Kim Firth moved to approve Article Four, which Beth Downs seconded.

Joel Banaszak, asked about the discrepancy on #5 Legal Fees, Select Board asking for Thirty-One Thousand Dollars (\$31,000.00) and the Budget Committee asking for Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00).

Kim Firth, Budget Committee, explained that they looked at the actual costs and went over the trends, and there are currently no pending lawsuits. So, they ended up producing the budget in accordance with what was spent over the last few years, and particularly knowing that there are no pending lawsuits.

Scott Butcher, Town Administrator: If you look at the average cost of our legal services over the last 10 years, it exceeds Thirty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$35,000.00) a year. So legal fees do go up and down. We never know what's going to happen, who could bring a suit against us, what we may need for advice and counsel to do code enforcement or other activities. Or just get advice for the various boards and committees in town. In my opinion, the Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) is grossly underfunded. I think Thirty-One Thousand Dollars (\$31,000.00) is still below our 10-year annual average, so it's still less than we have typically spent on average, and I would certainly encourage you to go with the Select Boards' recommended budget.

Jason Grey, Deputy Treasurer: So, we have the audit report this year. Interestingly, I've never seen an audit report that lists preliminary figures, but the statement of functional expenses lists actual expenditures for legal fees of Twenty-Four Thousand, Six Hundred and Thirty-Six Dollars and Seventy-One Cents (\$24,636.71) for the period of January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025, with a surplus of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00). I'm kind of curious how we

justify spending over Thirty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$35,000.00) a year when we had a surplus of Forty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$45,000.00) last year.

Scott Butcher, Town Administrator: As I mentioned, the Thirty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$35,000.00) a year was the actual, not the budgeted, amount that was spent on average over the last 10 years. While this year was under that, it is awfully hard to predict what the town may need, and we're still reducing it from the previous year. It's still a decrease, but it does give us some capability to provide legal support when we need it.

Kim Firth, Budget Committee: From the Budget Committee's perspective, overall, last year the budget was underspent by One Hundred and Six Thousand Dollars (\$106,000.00). There is plenty of wiggle room in the budget if an unexpected legal cost were to occur.

Pat Moreland: Are there any major legal cases pending before the board?

Scott Butcher, Town Administrator: No

Beth Downs, Selectboard: I disagreed with the original amount that the operating budget had asked for because it makes us more strategic when we call legal. We seem to have used it as a crutch. The biggest suit we had was Eversource, and that got settled 2 years ago. We don't have any pending lawsuits. I just find that if we take the crutch away, I think we'll do just fine.

Chip Meany, Selectboard: I tend to disagree with that last statement. You never can tell when you're going to need money. We could be getting into automobile accidents. There are all kinds of variables that we have to deal with legally. I originally asked for the Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00). As a former code enforcement officer, I know there are a lot of code issues we could be dealing with this year, and the only way to settle them is in court. We can't just take the assumption that we can write a letter and that person is going to do what we asked them to do. Many of the problems that we have, we're going to end up in court over, so there's no way to predict that. You can't say that we're not going to be in legal difficulties this year.

Beth Downs, Selectboard: I disagree with Chip. We haven't even started the letter-writing process for this year, and we haven't even determined who the letters will be going to. We are not there yet. We are putting the cart before the horse, and we don't need the extra money.

Bruce Storm asked for a hand-held vote for Article Four to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Million Forty-One Thousand Three Hundred Twenty-One Dollars (\$3,041,321.00) for general municipal operations.

#### **Article Passed with a Hand-Held Vote.**

**Article Five:** Shall the Town vote in accordance with RSA 72:27-a to modify the provisions of RSA 72:35, previously adopted, for an optional tax credit of \$1,900.00 for a Service-Connected Total and Permanent Disability? If approved, this article shall take effect for the final property tax bill of the 2026 property tax year. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 6-0.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Five. Bruce Gezelman moved to approve the Article, which Dawn Gezelman seconded.

**Article Passed with a voice vote.**

**Article Six:** Shall the Town vote to modify the Veteran's Tax Credit in accordance with RSA 72:28, II from its current tax credit of \$500.00 per year to \$750.00 per year? (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 6-0.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Six. Dawn Gezelman moved to approve the Article, which Scott McCaskill seconded.

**Article Passed with a voice vote.**

**Article Seven:** 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 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 6-0.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Seven. Marlene Freyler moved to approve the Article, which Beth Downs 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 be placed in the 2021 Police Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 5-1.

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

**Article Passed with a voice vote.**

**Article Nine:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$80,000.00) to be placed in the 2006 Fire Department Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 6-0.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Nine. Bruce Gezelman moved to approve the Article, which Beth Downs seconded.

John Marden: Does anyone have the balance of that account?

Karen Hambleton, Budget Committee: Page 67 in your Town Report.

Bruce Storm asked for a voice vote for Article Nine.

**Article Passed with a voice vote.**

**Article Ten:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) to be placed in the 2020 Fire Equipment Expendable Trust Fund. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 6-0.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Ten. Dawn Gezelman moved to approve the Article, which Rachel Sweetbrown seconded.

**Article Passed with a voice vote.**

**Article Eleven:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$350,000.00) 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, 2031. (Majority vote required). Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 6-0.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Eleven. Dawn Gezelman moved to approve the Article, which Mary Derry seconded.

Joel Banaszck: Do we have a plan for the Three Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$350,000.00)? I may be speaking out of turn here, but I feel like I've been to these meetings before and we've talked about Breezy Hill Road being paved, work on West Road, things like that. Is this part of the Three Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$350,000.00)?

Steve Hall, Road Agent: Specifically, Breezy Hill Road is not in the immediate format. This is a program that we put together with Central New Hampshire Regional Planning. If this gets approved, the Road Committee will have a meeting and review what they feel would be the best avenue to pursue.

Joel Banaszck: We are asking for Three Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$350,000.00). We're just going to see where it gets us, not like Breezy Hill Road needs to be paved; things need to be done on West Road. Do we have budgeted numbers for this? I'd rather you guys come and ask for half a million dollars and have a plan, versus I want Three Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$350,000.00) and we'll just kind of like spend it.

Steve Hall, Road Agent: We do have a plan. We've worked with Central New Hampshire Regional Planning, and they put together a plan 5 years ago. We've had to change it over the last 2 or 3 years because we haven't been putting enough money into the program. This Three Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$350,000.00) is about One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$150,000.00) short of where it should be. This has happened over the last 2 years. We should have been on an increase, and I think, in the format Scott put together, the outline shows we're just barely holding our own. We're not going anywhere near where we should be to get this work done.

Joel Banaszck: So, you think you need half a million dollars to get things done?

Steve Hall, Road Agent: I would love it!

Joel Banaszko: Does the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning have a number that they give you? Do they help?

Steve Hall, Road Agent: They come out, and they oversee everything. They do their due diligence.

Joel Banaszko: Do they have a recommended number versus Three Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$350,000.00)?

Steve Hall, Road Agent: Absolutely. Their recommended number is half a million dollars.

Joel Banaszko: So I would like to make an amendment that we raise it to Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000.00).

Bruce Storm, Moderator: Are you making that a formal amendment?

Joel Banaszko: Yes!

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a second on the motion. Marlene Freyler seconded.

Marlene Freyler, Chairperson of the Selectboard: You can't blame the Road Agent if there is not enough money in the budget. He requests more and always gets cut down at meetings. We started out with a really good 10-year plan, and it got cut through the budget system, not by him but by people, so we are 3 to 4 years behind on this plan. We will never catch up until we start giving the roads the right amount of money.

Steve Pierce, Treasurer: Five years ago, it was done right. Central New Hampshire Regional Planning came in. They ran the roads with a measurement unit and determined the best approach to doing all the roads. It was wonderful technology, and they recommended half a million. We haven't had half a million per year because that would have been appropriate, but roads don't argue; committee people and department heads argue, so the roads lose out, so I would be in favor of raising it to half a million.

Beth Downs, Selectboard: I agree with the Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000.00). With things going the way they are, how much the paving will cost is going to depend on how much oil costs. We all know what's going on with oil, so the Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000.00) isn't going to get us what we would get normally. Unless things change drastically, a barrel of oil was One Hundred and Twenty-Five Dollars (\$125.00) today. Oh, pardon me, One Hundred and Eighty Dollars (\$180.00).

Steve Hall, Road Agent: Just to make sure that everybody's on the same page. When we say Three Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$350,000.00) or whatever the number may be, it doesn't focus on paving. That's not totally paving. It's the road work that has to be done. Whether we have to remove rocks and replace culverts, haul gravel and do the shoulder work, or

cut brush trees. Anything that goes along with that comes out of that fund, so it's not totally paving.

Carl Goldberg: Steve, do you have the manpower and equipment to do this work?

Steve Hall, Road Agent: There is a good possibility that some of that would be outsourced.

Mary Keegan-Dayton: I'm just wondering what the tax impact would be on that?

Karen Hambleton, Budget Committee: \$0.32 per thousand.

Michael Carter: Is there anyone on the Road Committee who can give us more clarification?

Caleb Connor: Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000.00) is what Steve asked for this year. That got shot down. Steve asked for Five Hundred and Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$525,000.00) last year. That got shot down, so it's hard to keep a plan when we're not getting the money. What I've advised Steve to do every year is focus on the main arteries in town. People complain that their road isn't getting done. Do it on traffic count. We have been doing that, the main arteries, Center Road, Fairgrounds Road, and West Road. Where we can go with Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000.00) is quite a distance.

Michael Furdek: West Road already has cracks in it. How can we prevent this.

Steve Hall, Road Agent: This is an act of G-d. You're not going to prevent this.

Taylor Matano: Given the price of, and the volatility of oil right now, does it make sense to spend that money now instead of waiting until it's more stable?

Caleb Connor: I don't think it makes any sense to wait. Over a ten-year cycle, the price of oil has not gone down. Spend it now, you do not know what tomorrow is going to bring. There's really no predictor for the AC escalation; everything trends that it's going to keep going up and up. Liquid AC/Liquid Asphalt is the most expensive part of what's in the pavement. That's really what you are paying for.

Scott Butcher, Town Administrator: Also, this is a non-lapsing warrant article. Even though we appropriate the money this year, we have 5 years to spend it. If it doesn't make sense to spend it this year, it's already been appropriated. We don't have to come back next year, and we can spend it when it makes the best sense for the taxpayer.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, called for a Hand-Held vote on the amendment to change Article Eleven to read Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000.00) instead of Three Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$350,000.00).

**Amendment to Article 11 Passed with a Hand-Held vote.**

Bruce Storm read the amended Article Eleven to read as follows:

**Article Eleven:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000.00) 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, 2031. (Majority vote required). Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 6-0.

**Amended Article Passed with a voice vote.**

**Article Twelve:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Forty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$45,000.00) to be placed in the 2020 Highway Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. (Majority vote required). Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 6-0.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Twelve. Dawn Gezelman moved to approve the Article, which Bruce Gezelman seconded.

**Article Passed with a voice vote.**

**Article Thirteen:** 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 2019 Road and Bridge Expendable Trust Fund. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 6-0.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Thirteen. Marlene Freyler moved to approve the Article, which Bruce Gezelman seconded.

**Article Passed with a voice vote.**

**Article Fourteen:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty-Eight Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$38,500.00) to fund the 2026 lease-purchase payment on the Caterpillar backhoe acquired by the Highway Department last year. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 6-0.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Fourteen. Dawn Gezelman moved to approve the Article, which Scott McCaskill seconded.

Savannah Griffin: Is there any reason the Thirty-Eight Thousand Dollars can't come from the Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund?

Beth Downs, Selectboard: It can't, since it is a payment that we are making on a lease. We have to make the payment once a year.

**Article Passed with a voice vote.**

**Article Fifteen:** 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 2015 Town Equipment Repair and Purchase Expendable Trust Fund. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 6-0.

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

**Article Passed with a voice vote.**

**Article Sixteen:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) to be placed in the 2008 Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 6-0.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Sixteen. Bruce Gezelman moved to approve the Article, which Marlene Freyler seconded.

Link Heffner: I just like to know what this is. The revaluation capital?

Karen Hambleton, Budget Committee: The Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund is used to do our re-evaluation, which is generally done every five years. That's that big, expensive Town-wide calculation of the town's value.

Steve Pierce, Treasurer: It seems underfunded. We've generally put Seven Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$7,500.00) a year, Eight Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$8,500.00) a year into it so that we make the Thirty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$35,000.00) in five years. So I'm not making a motion, but I would like the Budget Committee or someone to explain why it's only One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00).

Scott Butcher, Town Administrator: This is part of the process that we go through in the budgeting and CIP process on how much we're going to put into each one of these reserve fund accounts, and it's a matter of finding a balance when they're looking at what the overall impact of these investments are going to be on the tax rate. They're looking to spread some of these costs around over the years in different amounts so that there's less of an impact each year on the tax rate. So that's generally the methodology behind it.

**Article Passed with a voice vote.**

**Article Seventeen:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) to be placed in the 2022 Emergency Road and Bridge Repair Expendable Trust Fund. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 5-1.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Seventeen. Bruce Gezelman moved to approve the Article, which Marlene Freyler seconded.

**Article Passed with a voice vote.**

**Article Eighteen:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) to be placed in the 2022 Long Term Planning Expendable Trust Fund. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee does not recommend 1-5.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Eighteen. Beth Downs moved to approve the Article, which Bruce Gezelman seconded.

Michael Furdek: Why the discrepancy between the Budget Committee and the Select Board?

Kim Firth, Budget Committee: Generally, these articles are not generated by the Budget Committee; we did not feel like there was a plan for the plan. This sounds like a good idea. How the money was going to be used wasn't explained to us. You know, there wasn't a contractor that had been identified, there wasn't a process that had been put in place. We don't think it's a bad idea, just come back when there is a plan.

**Article Passed with a Hand-Held vote.**

**Article Nineteen:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) to be placed in the 2022 Matching Funds for Grants Expendable Trust Fund. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 4-2.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Nineteen. Marlene Freyler moved to approve the Article, which Bruce Gezelman seconded.

Taylor Matano: What is this?

Scott Butcher, Town Administrator: This is money that's set aside that, if we have a grant opportunity, a lot of the grants that we pursue require a certain amount of matching funds. Sometimes it's 80/20, sometimes it's 50/50, but we have to have the money readily available to be able to take advantage of the grant opportunities. This allows us to do that. It sets some money aside that's readily available for the Select Board for the purposes of meeting the matching Grant requirements.

Taylor Matano: How much is currently in that fund?

Karen Hambleton, Budget Committee: Ten Thousand Six Hundred Dollars (\$10,600.00).

Scott Butcher, Town Administrator: It's actually a bit more.

Kim Firth, Budget Committee: Since it's been established, we have never used the fund.

Scott Butcher, Town Administrator: The fund is only four years old, so there hasn't been a chance to use it. Pursuing grants takes a lot of time.

Josh Stewart: Are there any plans, any grants that are being pursued?

Scott Butcher, Town Administrator: Almost every department is looking at grant opportunities, all the time. Whether it's the Fire Department, the Police Department, or the Select Board. There are oftentimes with highway projects where we have opportunities to go after grants. We're looking at some culvert replacements that are going to require matching money if we are able to

get grants. Some of that funding has been put on hold by the federal government, so we're looking for other sources, but sooner or later, we're going to have an opportunity, and we're going to have to have some matching funds available. Basically, we're trying to get one of the culvert projects to the point where it's shovel-ready, and the money has to be there as well for us to be able to pull the trigger and make it happen.

Josh Stewart: What is the range that we are expected to chip in? Do we have enough to cover it?

Scott Butcher, Town Administrator: It depends on the grant. Chances are, what we have may not cover it. Then we'd have to look to other funding sources that we have to make up the difference.

Joel Banaszek: In the last four years, has anyone written a grant proposal?

Bryan Nowell, Fire Chief: For the last 4 years, I've been writing grants. Something that they forgot to mention. We have to pay 100% up front to get that 50/50 or 80/20 grant. We've been successful a couple of times getting grants. I've written two forestry grants that we've been able to get portable radios to replace our pagers, get a new portable pump for our forestry, and get a couple of sets of gear, so we're constantly trying to apply for grants, but it gives us an opportunity to have some more funding. Chances are that money didn't come out of that line; instead, it came out of my operating budget or out of a CIP line that helps fund it. We're constantly chasing grants. I got Twelve Thousand Dollars (\$12,000.00) worth of radios on a donation, so we're constantly trying to figure out ways. If you look at the budget you guys just voted on, One Hundred and Sixty-Seven Thousand Dollars (\$167,000.00) to operate the Fire Department, there are a bunch of Warrant Articles coming up for the Fire Department, but I figured I would mention we do write a ton of grants.

**Article Passed with a voice vote.**

**Article Twenty:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000.00) to replace the furnace and associated equipment at the Fire Station building. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 5-1.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Twenty. Marlene Freyler moved to approve the Article, which Mary Derry seconded.

Josh Stewart: What is the relation of this one to Article Thirty-One?

Bryan Nowell, Fire Chief: I have been pursuing grants for several years. This has been an attempt to get the CIP to replace the furnace. If you do happen to have that little voting guide, it's Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000.00) to replace the 40-year-old furnace at the fire station. It's a forced-hot-air system. Every time we pull a truck out of the fire station, it drains all the air out of it. When those cold vehicles come back in, it drains that furnace. I do spend a fair amount of time there at the station, and that furnace never stops. We all know that if a furnace is going to fail, it's not going to fail when it's 80° and summertime. It's going to fail when it's -25° and windy outside. We are looking to kind of upgrade it. The point to address with heating oil you know knowing the volatility with diesel, gas and everything else that we're all experiencing out there

same thing with heating system, so we're looking at some alternatives to make it more efficient to better heat the bays out there hopefully at Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000.00) will pay dividends over the long term, last another forty years and save us money so that's what the intention is. Sandra Bravo put in the other one from the energy committee. They're not tied together. They're just an analysis of the buildings. I can't speak to hers 100%, but they're looking at the two structures. The Town Hall was just remodeled, so that's one building that's really updated. The fire station furnace is 40 years old, hasn't had a real structural look at it, and the highway's is a number of years old; they're just kind of looking at the buildings. Again, trying to come up with a long-term plan on what to do with these facilities so we're not having to rebuild or replace. We can just kind of maintain and keep them in service.

Sandra Bravo, Energy Committee Chair: I thought I might wait to speak till article 31. But what I wanted to acknowledge first is the support from this town on renewable energy and in fact approving an energy goal to transition to 100% renewable electricity by 2030, and 100% renewable sources of fuel for heating and transportation by 2050, and some of the ways this commitment was demonstrated was by approving funds to weatherize the library, the highway and fire department. I just want to take this opportunity to let everybody know that we are well on the way to transitioning to renewable energy for our municipal electricity account. When the Poverty Plains Solar Facility goes online later this year, 80% of the municipal electricity will come from that solar facility. As Bryan said, the furnace in the fire station is forty years old, and the one in the highway department is almost twenty, and this study is to look at them in a systematic manner. The building envelope, the roof, exterior walls, doors and windows, the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, and to provide the town with a report of the adequacy and condition of all these items. We will have a much better idea for replacing in kind with another oil furnace, or if there are some non-fossil options that are complementary.

Josh Stewart: I want to make sure that we don't replace it and then get this assessment done.

Sandra Bravo, Energy Committee Chair: When I brought this to the attention of the Select Board, I brought this matter up, and they thought that this study could be done in a very quick manner. So hopefully, before Bryan signs a contract to put in an oil furnace, we'll have a better idea if there are any options.

**Article Passed with a voice vote.**

**Article Twenty-One:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) for fire suppression equipment and associated items for replacement. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 6-0.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Twenty-One. Dawn Gezelman moved to approve the Article, which Marlene Freyler seconded.

**Article Passed with a voice vote.**

**Article Twenty-Two:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) for repairs to the Fire Station building. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 5-1.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Twenty-Two. Dawn Gezelman moved to approve the Article, which Marlene Freyler seconded.

Link Heffner: What are the repairs?

Bryan Nowell, Fire Chief: The CIP request was for siding and trim upgrades. Due to the building's age, there is water damage to some of the wood, cracks in the siding, and some leakage. We are trying to make some upgrades so that we don't degrade the building's quality, and structure.

**Article Passed with a voice vote.**

**Article Twenty-Three:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000.00) for portable radios and repeaters for the Fire Department. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 4-2.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Twenty-Three. Marlene Freyler moved to approve the Article, which Bruce Gezelman seconded.

Andrew Pinard: What percentage of radio replacement does this cover?

Bryan Nowell, Fire Chief: This covers the phase-in of the gear, so we don't have a huge one-time purchase, so it's Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000.00). We're looking to get a start on it when we factor in the CIP. I believe it's another two years down the road for Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000.00) and Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000.00), it's about a 30% change into it. With a new engine last year, we are able to do some upgrades with the radios. We are in the further reaches of the Capital area. We have to either hit Pats Peak, Craney Hill for a repeater, or we have to hit Kearsarge with a repeater. And if you've seen Liberty Hill and Mink Hills, it blocks us out. Safety and communications, both on rescue and fires, are pretty important. The portable radios we use are 5 watts, and the ones that we use in the vehicles are 50 to 100 watts. So we're trying to get up with a new compliant P25 radios for our firefighters for life safety for them, and be able to report back to dispatch critical information.

**Article Passed with a voice vote.**

**Article Twenty-Four:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000.00) to purchase and outfit with equipment a new Police Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV). This appropriation will come from the 2021 Police Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of Fifty-Two Thousand Dollars (\$52,000.00), and from the Police Detail account in the amount of Eight Thousand Dollars (\$8,000.00). This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI, and will continue until the money is spent or December 31, 2031. (Majority vote required.) Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 5-1.

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

Ed Shaughnessy, Police Chief: This Article has no tax impact. I just wanted to put out there that a couple of years ago, in the meeting, we approved the police vehicle detail fund. That's when you see vehicles outside of town working on the highway. It's a third party that's paying that officer and all the dues. That fund was to put the excess from those details into a side account for many years. I want to go back to 2005, but for many years, a typical Warrant Article would have read Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000.00) from Capital Reserve and Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) from taxation. This is the first one where we're putting that fund into play, and with Capital Reserve and using that detail fund, there's no tax impact to that. Thank you for approving that detail fund, and I just wanted you to know that it's being used

**Article Passed with a voice vote.**

Nathanial Bruss: Would like to make a motion to move Articles 26 and 27 before Article 25.

Andrew Pinard: Seconded.

Bruce Gelzelman: RSA 80:80. I believe the number is a reference to selling town-owned property that we've taken from a previous tax deed, which requires a sealed bid that is going out for auction, and I hope like hell that Nate and Pam get it, but we're looking at possible lawsuits involved with the 26 and 27 Articles.

Bruce Storm, Moderator: There is a motion on the floor to take these Articles out of order.

Michael Carter: RSA 80:80 deals with the disposition of tax-deeded property by way of a specific warrant article in lieu of either public auction or sealed bid. So this is what Articles 26 and 27 are about. This is a special town warrant. RSA 80:80 specifies that the Select Board, as the governing body, must, before proceeding with this article, make an affirmative finding that disposal by a method other than sealed bid or public auction is in the public interest. Bruce is exactly right. I'm questioning whether it's legal to even hear these articles, where the Select Board has voted unanimously to not be in favor of it.

Tandy Hartford: I don't believe we should be discussing the article when we have not agreed to move it. We need to vote on moving the Articles or not before we discuss the merits.

Matthew Decker, Town Attorney: I agree with the commenter that the pending motion on the floor right now is to take Articles 25, 26, and 27 out of order. We need action on the order of the articles that you're going to address before you start talking about the meat of what those articles are about.

Bruce Storm, Moderator: There is a motion on the floor to take these Articles out of order. The motion is to take Articles 26 and 27 out of order and move 25 to the end of that list.

Joel Banaszczuk: I think it's very difficult for us to vote on whether we want to move these articles without any discussion on them. I feel that we shouldn't move them out of order.

Kathleen Bigford, Assistant Moderator: I would like to know why we would move these two Articles before Article 25?

Nathaniel Bruss: We would move these two Articles, as Article 25 may or may not need to be amended. It would be a different discussion for Article 25 depending on the outcomes of Articles 26 and 27. That's why I think it makes sense to talk about Articles 26 and 27 first.

Marlene Freyler, Select Board Chair: Why are you not willing to go the way the town goes and the way that the RSA reads?

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a hand count vote on the motion to move Articles 26 and 27 before Article 25.

**Motion passed with a Hand-Held vote.**

**Article Twenty-Six:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to sell town-owned property, identified as "Map 06, Lot 48, located at Center Road, consisting of approximately 6.4 acres (landlocked)", to Nathaniel and Pamela Bruss, of 367 County Rd, Bradford NH, at fair market value, and to authorize the Select Board to take any and all actions necessary to carry out this sale. Subject to terms, easements and deed restrictions as the Selectboard deems to be in the best interest of the town. To further authorize the Selectboard to make a finding that such conveyance is in the public interest, taking into consideration the return of the property to productive use, return to tax rolls, and continued agriculture use in harmony with the Master Plan. **By Petition.** (Majority vote required). Select Board does not recommend 3-0.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Twenty-Six. Nathaniel Bruss moved to approve the Article, which Michael Furdek seconded.

Nathaniel Bruss: I grew up in Bradford, mostly on Center Road. The piece of property, we've been grazing animals on and mowing for at least 25 years. We had a good relationship with the previous owner, and when she passed away, it went to the family, which made things messy. Hence why taxes weren't paid, and we're in the situation we're in now. These two lots, if you're walking through the woods, you wouldn't know that they were separate lots. There's the large front lot and then this. I guess Article 26 is about a backlot. Everybody's probably aware by now, because it does state it in the good voting handbook we got, but the town only retains the funds for back taxes, interest, statutory penalties, and any associated costs. All the rest goes back to the previous owners. As far as why Marlene asked me earlier, we would hope not to have the property go to auction. I think it probably is a noticeable piece of property around town. It was a lot of open space and woods, also easily developable, and my wife and I would like to keep it in agriculture and forestry. I do believe in following the right legal channels. These articles don't direct the Select Board or the town to do anything illegal, as long as an appropriate appraisal is done and the Select Board makes a finding that it is in the best interest of the town to keep the property in this manner.

Marlene Freyler, Select Board Chair: My only problem with this is that they are all up for auction, and it's supposed to be open to everyone. By doing this, it sets a precedent for doing this with other properties.

Erica Gross, Town Clerk: I do not have a problem with this (if the proper procedures were being followed), but my office has received many phone calls regarding these properties. Each and every one has been told the same thing: that there is a procedure of channels to follow. First, you go to the Select Board, then the property is presented at Town Meeting for approval to be auctioned. I realize you submitted a petition, and some of those names were on it, but others were not. I feel that it's unfair to these people who have been told that they have to follow these procedures, and now they won't be given a chance to purchase these properties.

Matthew Decker, Town Attorney: I was just going to ask the same question. There are two provisions in RSA 80:80 that address how a town can dispose of tax-deeded property. The basic version is in Roman numeral 2, and that's that the Town meeting can authorize the Select Board to sell tax-deeded property either by sealed bids or by public auction. Those are the two basic ways, and that's what Article 25 calls for: to sell all seven lots listed in Article 25 by sealed bids or public auction. There's also Roman numeral 3 in RSA 80:80 that says the governing body may also be authorized to dispose of tax-deeded properties in a manner other than as provided above, as justice may require and then the statute goes on to provide examples of other ways that as justice may require, you're allowed to sell up the property, and that could be engaging a real estate agent or broker to list and sell the property selling an undeveloped parcel to an abutter to be merged into an existing lot, conveying the property to a former owner or to a third party for the benefit of a former owner, and those are just listed as examples. The way the statute is written, the authority disposed of as "justice may require" includes these examples, but it's not limited to them. Then the question becomes, do you have the authority to approve the sale to one specific person? As Articles 26 and 27 call for it, it doesn't specifically say so in the RSA. My opinion would be that this is within the authority of the Select Board, as justice may require, if the meeting approves it. For example, there could be other specific reasons why you, the voters, would find it important to sell to a specific person, as long as you are making sure that you are selling it at a reasonable fair market value. And the reason for that is because, as has been said, the Town is only entitled to keep taxes, interest, penalties, and other amounts. Any excess proceeds have to be returned to the former owner, and so you don't want to run into a situation where the former owner thinks that the property has been given away too cheaply and they've been deprived of some of the equity in the property. That's something where, if you were to approve the sale to a specific person, as is proposed in articles 26 and 27, the Select Board would need to do some work to determine the fair market value to make sure that it's being sold for an appropriate price. Or you, as the voters, could be more specific in terms of what process the Select Board should follow in determining the fair market value. So those are the options I think you have before you. Obviously, Articles 26 and 27 are in conflict with Article 25. Whatever you end up deciding on, Articles 26 and 27 will inform, in theory, how you vote on Article 25 as well.

Natalia Karaulova: As a voter and as a person who lives in Bradford, I have a problem with bids, and maybe the town can do something about it in future meetings. But a problem that we are facing in this country is the corporation coming to the town, bidding and seeking them out, and buying these properties that should belong to us, to you know, people like Nate, or you know,

our neighbors, who want to farm them, who want to put them in Ausbon Sargent for public use. For all enjoyment, instead of the corporations or people who are not in town, move in on these bids. They can bid higher than any one of us can afford, and what happens is that the developments happen. I live across that property on Center Road, and the last thing I want to see is the forest being chopped and 15-20 or 30, who knows how many houses can fit on 150 lots divided. How would it affect our water supply? You know our local wells. How is it going to affect the Hoyt Brook, which is a watershed? We have neighbors who pasture their animals, Dan and Spencer. You know, Nate and Pam pasture their cows along Center Road. So, anyway, that's the question for me. When local properties are put up for bid, is it fair to offer those bids to people out of town and corporations who can offer way more than anyone in town can?

Erica Gross, Town Clerk: The people who contacted my office were all townspeople. They were not corporations.

Robert Urich: There's no interest yet. Doesn't mean once it goes live, somebody isn't going to swoop in. Somebody with an extra Ten Million Dollars (\$10,000,000.00)? You also brought up the fact that there was somebody else, and they're not here. He's physically here. We're all physically here; that person's not here. If land stays within the town, why is that a bad thing? If less money goes to the initial owners who failed to pay their taxes? I take this with a grain of salt should have paid her taxes. You wouldn't have lost it. I understand, whatever the story behind it is. I'm ignorant of that fact, but this gentleman's here. He wants to keep it here.

Andrew Pinard: Fundamentally, the question is whether or not we buck the current trend, which is to put it up for bid and accept whoever comes in with the highest amount. There are positive arguments for keeping it with a local property tax owner who's going to keep it in certain ways. There may even be legal arguments about right of way and things if you've been grazing your animals on it for a certain number of years. There's a certain amount of legal argument that can be made into that becoming part of a future legal discussion, but fundamentally, the question here is, does this Body wish to direct the Select Board to force the sale to an individual property owner in this community? Is it substantial justice in terms of what the law allows this body to make that determination, but we would require more hoop jumping to make sure that we're not going to be the basis of a lawsuit with the previous owners. We have to follow the legal process there. There is substantial justice in keeping property within our community rather than from without. We've seen efforts up in that neck of the woods by absentee property owners to come in and develop that property in ways that thankfully have been rebuffed. But that is not always going to be the case, and neither will it be the case. Frankly, I love the service that the Bruss's have put into this community, but that does not protect the land if they decide to sell it. So again, there is a trust factor here, but I think my friend from the conservation commission may have something to speak to this when she gets to the podium. I think that my question is, is there a substantial justice in us directing the Select Board to sell these two properties? Do we have enough information right now to alter the normal process for selling available properties?

Patty Hefner: I actually think that's unfair considering what legal advice we just got, what he read. It sounds like the Select Board can do this. They're not breaking any rules, and you know he has a history with this property. I think that should count for something, I mean. I'm not so concerned about some corporation coming in, but that could happen, and sure, it could go to

some other high bidder. But I think the history that his family has is part of what makes this town special. You know, I think we should take care of our others, and there are plenty of woods

George Cilley: You know my property's been in the family for 200 years, so it's never had to be sold, but there's nothing to prevent my kids and heirs from selling that property. Selling it for an automobile garage, a junkyard, or anything else. There's nothing to prevent Mr. Bruss when he gets sick of the property, if he ever does, of selling it to whoever pays him the most money. You're breaking a big precedent here, and I think it's totally wrong.

Ann Eldridge, Conservation Commission: I've been on the Conservation Commission for far too long. But that's what I want to speak to. One thing I want to clear up is that the Bruss's are offering to easement that property so that it cannot be subdivided. I want to make that clear. They're well aware of what they're getting into because they've worked with easements before, but I want to speak from the Conservation Commission's point of view. Many years ago, the Conservation Commission worked with UNH to define focus areas in town. The job of the Conservation Commission is to take an inventory of all the land in town and to try to protect what the town has decided. It went through its master plan, and various other things, identifying all the natural resources, the best of the areas that are left. This property is across from Battles Farm. I know the name has changed, and I can't remember what it is, but we all know it as Battles Farm. There's very little agricultural land in Northern New England that's flat, not too wet, not too dry, and this is one property that protects Hoyt Brook. It's got high-value forestry. Keeping agricultural land in town may become very important. Not in my lifetime, but maybe you know the next generation, the one after that. I wanted to put a little historical reference in here. Right now, the town is just a little bit over the population that it was in the 1860s, which is kind of weird, but everyone was packed into downtown. They were packed into the meeting house area. The town was fairly self-sufficient at that point. They were starting to sell stuff to other people. I think holding on to agricultural property or potential agricultural property is a far-sighted thing to do, and I think that would be an argument to be made to the Selectmen in preserving this property. The last point I'd like to make is that if it goes to a developer in town or out of town, that's going to raise your taxes because regular housing is going to increase your taxes. Open space does not require town services, and it helps to moderate your taxes. So that's another thing to keep in mind.

Steve Pierce, Treasurer: I would speak to the fact that the Town needs to stick to State statutes to preclude the Town from engendering a lawsuit and paying for that lawsuit. It is just inappropriate for us to dispose of the land in any other way to preclude the one who lost it from claiming they didn't get a reasonable return. We will be sued. We will be sued by whoever lost the property because you can constantly claim you didn't get market value. There'll be a court argument. You didn't get market value. Please don't put us in that problem.

Doug Southard, Conservation Commission: We think that this is a particularly attractive piece of property as it is, and obviously would be attractive to others in terms of development. I just wanted to put forth a thought that this is a fairly contentious issue and perhaps deserves a fair amount of consideration, thought, and exploration. Perhaps one of the ways we could approach this is to actually take this off the property list for sale this year and consider it for next year, after we've had an opportunity to explore options for a conservation easement and other ways of looking at this particular situation.

Andrew Pinard: Essentially, that was what my recommendation was going to be. I generally support the sale to the Bruss's, but if we do not pass either of these, and we remove the two properties from Article 25. Essentially, it gives us a year to process.

George Freyler: I have a small hydroponic operation going, a greenhouse, and I'm considering expanding it, and I might be interested in being able to bid on this property. This proposal would prevent me or anybody else who's interested from pursuing it. So that is my comment.

Robert Urich: I keep hearing lawsuit, lawsuit, lawsuit. It sounds like they didn't have money for the taxes. How are they going to afford a lawsuit, lawsuit, lawsuit? If you don't have enough money for taxes, how are you going to keep having a lawyer come back? I might be ignorant of the fact, but just something I wanted to point out. Also, somebody brought up a small-town thing. I think it is a small-town thing to keep a piece of land with somebody who's worked it for a quarter of a century.

Beth Downs, Select Board: A few years back, and it may be longer than that, but we were going to have a gun range in town, and that got turned down, and Ausbon Sargeant took over the property. We don't have a gun range in town, and that's a big deal. We stopped that from happening, and I don't think more development up where they have their property is worth it. We also saved the property on Pleasant View from being developed, which was forty-eight acres. A number of houses could have been built on it, but now it's there for everybody to walk. So I'm perfectly fine with taking this off and giving people time to ponder. I am okay with the Bruss's having it.

Stephanie Laurendeau: I just have a question and a comment, just to look around this room. There are a few people who are actually from Bradford, and so most of you have come from other towns and purchased property. Just a comment. And also, if this property were sold, what tax impact would that have? If it were put into agriculture, what would that mean? Agriculture and forestry? Just wondering if the plan is to use it or if it's to be put into something else, and what the tax impact is?

Nathaniel Bruss: It's in current use right now, and that wouldn't change.

Scott Butcher, Town Administrator: Just a correction, it's not in current use, it's not being taxed at all, because the Town owns it. There is no tax revenue of any kind being generated. If you put it in current use, then basically you get about 10% of the normal tax revenue that you would get on a non-current use portion of the property. To put it in current use for conservation restrictions on it, it is not going to be a big tax revenue generator for the town.

John Marden: If this continues at its current status, not paying taxes, what is the town forfeiting as opposed to the change that occurred yesterday to a taxpayer?

Erica Gross, Town Clerk: I feel that we're skipping the whole process of the way that we've always been telling people to handle the sale of deeded properties. Now we're saying that we don't care about the other people. They may not be here because they're sick. I don't know why they are not here tonight, but their names weren't on the petition. I just don't feel that it's fair to the other people, who are all Bradford residents. I don't care who gets the property but I want to

be fair to everyone because my office was contacted by many families who are interested in that property.

John Marden: I'm leaning towards just suspending this for a year and getting it sorted out a little better so that the voting public knows what the true intentions are here and what all the ramifications are. Part of the question in my mind is if that happens, and it doesn't sell, some amount of tax money is going to be forfeited. I'd like to know what that amount is. Is it Ten Dollars (\$10.00)? Is it Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000.00)? It's going to have a tax impact on the town if it sells, and if it sits, it's probably going to be a zero tax revenue. I'd like to know what that number is.

Tate Sweetbrown: I'm not sure if I should start with a question for legal before I have an amendment. Can this be amended to include that the sale be contingent on it going into a conservation easement of some sort?

Matthew Decker, Town Attorney: I anticipated that question when I heard the lady from the Conservation Commission speak. These Articles 26 and 27 are both written already to suggest subject to terms easements and deed restrictions as the Select Board deems to be in the best interest of the Town. My opinion would be yes. The voters have already been put on notice that one of the conditions of the sale to the Bruss's would be that the voters could specify the terms of easements or deed restrictions. So, in my opinion, if you wanted to amend these Articles to be more specific, subject to a conservation easement being granted back to the town or subject to the town, keeping a deed restriction that the property would not be developed. I think those are within the realm of possibility.

Tate Sweetbrown: Years ago, at the Battles Farm, the Town had tried to put in an easement, but the cost would have been great to the Town. I am making a motion that there be an amendment made to include a conservation easement as part of the sale.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a second to the motion. Rachel Sweetbrown seconded.

Bruce Storm, Moderator: The amendment to this Article would be that the sale is subject to a conservation easement.

Matthew Decker, Town Attorney: Mr. Moderator, do your rules require an amendment to be submitted in writing?

Bruce Storm, Moderator: No, they do not.

Bruce Storm, Moderator: I would recommend that we narrow down the specific sentence to be amended so that the voters have an understanding of what exactly would be changed.

Bruce Storm, Moderator: I suggest we take a 10-minute recess to sort this out. Is there a second to that motion before we before recess? Bruce Gezelman seconded.

The 10-minute recess began at 8:59 pm.

At 9:09 pm, recess ended, and Town Meeting resumed.

Bruce Storm, Moderator: I just want to apologize and thank everyone for the break.

Tate Sweetbrown: I would like to withdraw my motion. It sounds like it's going to add too much complication, so I'm going to just withdraw that motion to amend.

Bruce Storm, Moderator: Motion to amend will be withdrawn. Rachel do you withdraw your second?

Rachel Sweetbrown: I do.

Matthew Decker, Town Attorney: First, there was a request that I introduce myself because I never did that at the start of the meeting. My name is Matthew Decker, and I'm with the law firm of Drummond Woodsum. This is my associate, Hadley Johnson. I've worked with the town of Bradford for over 10 years now, since I moved to New Hampshire and started practicing municipal law up here in New Hampshire. The motion has been withdrawn to amend Article 26. So now we're back to the discussion on the main motion. There was a question from Mr. Pinard about what the process would be if the voters would like to have a year to consider what to do with these two parcels. My recommendation is that if that's what a majority of the voters want to do, I would recommend voting No on Article 26 and No on Article 27, with the understanding that you would then proceed to Article 25 and amend it to delete lot C and lot E, the two lots that are referenced in the other Articles 26 and 27 and then proceed to consider approval of Article 25 without these two lots included. That way, the Select Board could move forward with selling the rest of the lots, and then you would have a year to consider what to do with these two lots that are the subject of 26 and 27.

John Marden: I just want to let the body know that I have reliable information. The average tax revenue had been paid on those properties over the last few years. Would have been about Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00) a year, so even if it's sold and continued as current use, that's the revenue the town would miss. Secondly, I'm not in favor of the town, specifically the Select Board, playing broker to a property. I mean, I understand what was read in the law, but I think that's just a bad spot to be. It sets a bad precedent. I would prefer not to see it, so I would like to move the question to these Articles. 26 and 27. Let's find out with the vote.

Bruce Storm, Moderator: Let's take it one step at a time. Are you moving the question on Article 26 individually or together?

Matthew Decker, Town Attorney: Individually.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to move the question Article Twenty-Six. John Marden moved the Article, which Bruce Gezelman seconded.

**Article Failed with a voice vote.**

**Article Twenty-Seven:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to sell town-owned property, identified as "Map 06, Lot 17, located at Center Road, consisting of approximately 151.8 acres", to Nathaniel and Pamela Bruss, of 367 County Rd, Bradford NH, at fair market value, and to authorize the Select Board to take any and all actions necessary to carry out this sale. Subject to terms, easements and deed restrictions as the Selectboard deems to be in

the best interest of the town. To further authorize the Selectboard to make a finding that such conveyance is in the public interest, taking into consideration the return of the property to productive use, return to tax rolls, and continued agricultural use in harmony with the Master Plan. **By Petition.** (Majority vote required). Select Board does not recommend 3-0.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Twenty-Seven. Bruce Gezelman moved to approve the Article, which Justin Dohrn seconded.

**Article Failed with a voice vote.**

**Article Twenty-Five:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to offer for sale the following parcels of Town-owned land on such terms and conditions as the Select Board determine are in the best interest of the Town. Such authority to transfer or sell shall continue to be in effect indefinitely, until rescinded. (Majority vote required). Select Board recommends 3-0.

- A Map 5 Lot 81 95 West Road (2.0 acres and buildings)
- B Map 5 Lot 99 West Meadow Road (5.0 acres – land only)
- C Map 6 Lot 17 Center Road (151.8 acres – land only)
- D Map 6 Lot 31 West Road (4.5 acres – land only)
- E Map 6 Lot 48 West Road (6.4 acres – land only)
- F Map 6 Lot 94 Cheney Hill Road (7.0 acres – land only)
- G Map 9 Lot 5-1 225 E. Washington Road (3.41 acres – land only)

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Twenty-Five. Andrew Pinard moved to approve the Article, which Dawn Gezelman seconded.

Bruce Gezelman: I would like make a motion to amend Article 25 to remove C, Map 6 Lot 17 and E, Map 6 Lot 48. Scott McCaskill seconded.

**Amendment to Article 25 Passed with a voice vote.**

Bruce Storm read the amended Article 25 to read as follows:

**Article Twenty-Five:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to offer for sale the following parcels of Town-owned land on such terms and conditions as the Select Board determine are in the best interest of the Town. Such authority to transfer or sell shall continue to be in effect indefinitely, until rescinded. (Majority vote required). Select Board recommends 3-0.

- A Map 5 Lot 81 95 West Road (2.0 acres and buildings)
- B Map 5 Lot 99 West Meadow Road (5.0 acres – land only)
- ~~C Map 6 Lot 17 Center Road (151.8 acres – land only)~~
- D Map 6 Lot 31 West Road (4.5 acres – land only)
- ~~E Map 6 Lot 48 West Road (6.4 acres – land only)~~
- F Map 6 Lot 94 Cheney Hill Road (7.0 acres – land only)
- G Map 9 Lot 5-1 225 E. Washington Road (3.41 acres – land only)

**Amended Article Passed with a voice vote.**

**Article Twenty-Eight:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty-Nine Thousand Four Hundred Fifteen Dollars (\$39,415.00) for paving and improvements to the Town Hall parking area. Said funds to come from Fund Balance, representing the revenue from the sale of land in 2024. No amount to be raised from taxation. This special warrant article will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until the project is completed or by December 31, 2031, whichever is sooner. (Majority vote required). Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 6-0.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Twenty-Eight. Bruce Gezelman moved to approve the Article, which Link Heffner seconded.

**Article Passed with a voice vote.**

**Article Twenty-Nine:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate Forty-Eight Thousand One Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$48,150.00) for grounds restoration and paving the adjacent parking area at the site of the now-demolished Masonic Lodge within the Town-owned Fire Department lot. Said funds to come from Fund Balance, representing the leftover amounts appropriated under Article 27 at the 2025 town Meeting, which lapsed to Fund Balance following the completion of the Masonic Lodge demolition project. No amount to be raised by taxation. This special warrant article will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until the project is completed or by December 31, 2031, whichever is sooner. (Majority vote required). Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 5-1.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Twenty-Nine. Bruce Gezelman moved to approve the Article, which Link Heffner seconded.

Michael Carter: Could someone speak to the cost? It seems like an exorbitant.

Bryan Nowell, Fire Chief: So that takes into effect drainage. They were going to put some catch basins in, but it's just not leveling, re-sloping, and paving. They're going to do some engineering to pitch it away from the fire department and the adjacent property, put a storm drain in, and drain it away. It's a little bit of engineering, and that money is left over from the appropriation last year to demolish the building, so it has zero tax impact because it's carrying that money forward.

Shanna Griffin: I'm wondering about paving at all. I just wonder about letting the groundwater go down through the ground instead of the runoff into the river. Just wonder about that.

Bryan Nowell, Fire Chief: If you've been by the fire station lately, half the Fire Department parking lot is dirt or mud, so it's not going to get any better. If you look at the trucks that come in and out of there, they're fairly large vehicles. Much more so than we're taking over some of the dirt roads, with the exception of Steve's dump trucks. There's been parking there for church services. There's been parking there for out-of-town events. There was parking there for the Town Hall theater meeting the other night, so it's an additional parking space for overflow, as long as they don't block the bay doors and leave a couple of spots for us to show up. It's not just the Fire Department parking lot. It's everybody's, but it has to take into account drainage. If

you've looked at the drainage that comes down West Main Street, it comes into the parking lot of the fire station, so it's not drainage from the fire station. It's draining from all other properties, and we just have to rectify that.

Carl Goldberg, Fire Department: I'm assuming this is going to cover the full lot, right?

Bryan Nowell, Fire Chief: The whole lot.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Twenty-Nine. Bruce Gezelman moved to approve the Article, which Link Heffner seconded.

**Article Passed with a voice vote.**

**Article Thirty:** To see if the Town will vote to change the term of Supervisors of the Checklist from 6 years to 3 years, electing one supervisor each year over a 3-year cycle. If the Town votes to adopt a 3-year term for Supervisors of the Checklist, the change in term length will apply beginning with the supervisor elected at the annual town election in 2028. The Supervisors elected in 2022, 2024, and 2026 shall still serve 6-year terms ending in 2028, 2030 and 2032, respectively. One Supervisor shall be elected in 2028 to a 3-year term ending in 2031. One Supervisor shall be elected in 2030 to a 3-year term ending in 2033. Beginning in 2031 and continuing each year thereafter, one Supervisor of the Checklist shall be elected to a 3-year term at the annual town election each year. (Majority vote required). Select Board recommends 3-0.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Thirty. Bruce Gezelman moved to approve the Article, which Beth Downs seconded.

**Article Passed with a voice vote.**

**Article Thirty-One:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twelve Thousand Dollars (\$12,000.00) for the purpose of conducting a structural and HVAC assessment of the Highway Department garage and the Fire Station with said funds to come from Fund Balance. No amount to be raised from taxation. This special warrant article will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until the assessment is completed or by December 31, 2031, whichever is sooner. (Majority vote required). Select Board recommends 3-0. Budget Committee recommends 5-1.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Thirty-One. Bruce Gezelman moved to approve the Article, which Beth Downs seconded.

**Article Passed with a voice vote.**

**Article Thirty-Two:** 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.

Bruce Storm, Moderator, asked for a motion to accept Article Thirty-Two. Rachel Sweetbrown moved to approve the Article, which Beth Downs seconded.

**Article Passed with a voice vote.**

Bradford Select Board,

Marlene Freyler, Chairman  
Beth Downs, Selectmen  
Charles F. Meany III, Selectmen

A true copy attest:

Official Town Warrant and Minutes for the Election on March 10, 2026, and Meeting on March 11, 2026. 113 registered voters attended the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 pm.

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



Erica Gross  
Town Clerk/Tax Collector