

2024 Town Meeting Minutes

To the inhabitants of the Town of Wentworth, in Grafton County, in the State of New Hampshire, who are qualified to vote in Town affairs:

You are hereby notified and warned that the election of Town Officers of the said Town of Wentworth will be held at the Wentworth Elementary School, 1247 Mt. Moosilauke Highway, Route 25, Wentworth, N.H., on Tuesday March 12, 2024. The polls will be open at 11 A.M. and close at 7 P.M. to bring in your votes on Article 1 (Election of Town Officers). All other articles will be presented, discussed, and acted upon on Saturday, March 16, 2024, beginning at 1 P.M., the meeting for said purpose to be held at said Wentworth Elementary School.

Article 01 Election of Officers

To choose all necessary Town Officers for the ensuing year. (By Official Ballot).

March 12, 2024 brought out 137 voters and the following were elected:

Selectman 3 years – Brian A. DuBois
Town Clerk / Tax Collector – Deborah Ziembra
Planning Board 3 years - John Meade
Planning Board 3 years – No appointment yet
Supervisor of the Checklist 6 years – Deborah Vlk
Town Auditor 1 year – Lena-Maye Williams
Cemetery Trustee 3 years – Lena-Maye Williams
Cemetery Trustee 1 year – No appointment yet
Library Trustee 3 years – Kimberly Chandonnet
Town Trustee 3 years – Adam Sylvain
Fire Commissioners 1 year - R. Peter Chierichetti
Fire Commissioners 1 year – Brian A. DuBois
Fire Commissioners 1 year – Jeffry Ames

Motion to Accept: Jenn Meade

2nd: Brian DuBois

No questions or comments

Re-read Article

PASSED by Voice Vote

Article 02 Receive Reports

To receive reports from the Selectmen, Town Clerk/Tax Collector, Treasurer, Auditors, and other Town Officers, and to vote on any motion relating to those reports.

Motion to Accept: Devin Godfrey

2nd: Duane Brown

Some discussion

Re-Read Article

PASSED by voice vote

Article 03 Town Clerk/Tax Collector Compensation

To see if the Town will vote to raise the compensation of the combined office of Town Clerk and Tax Collector to \$32,500, plus usual benefits and mileage given to Town employees, in lieu of all statutory fees. This salary shall cover all duties associated with the combined office, and requires the office being open to the public at least 20 hours per week until the Town shall vote otherwise. This amount is included in the General Municipal Operations Article 04.

Motion to accept: Francis Muzzey

2nd: Richard Ducheneau Sr.

Francis stated the article does not raise any money. It is raised in Article 4

Re-Read Article

PASSED by voice vote

Article 04 General Municipal Operations

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$394,260** for General Municipal Operations for the purposes detailed in the operating budget posted with the warrant. This article does not include any amounts contained in any other article.

Motion to accept: Duane Brown

2nd: John Meade

No questions or comments

Re-Read Article

PASSED by Voice Vote

Article 05 Planning Board

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$1,500** for the Planning Board in connection with its activities for such purposes and such uses as deemed necessary by said Planning Board.

Motion to accept: John Meade

2nd Sonia Scheller

John Meade disputed the expense amount on line 4191.1 and said the planning board did not spend \$1402.

Re-Read Article

Passed by voice vote

Article 06 Historical Society

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$3,000** for the maintenance and expenses associated the Wentworth Historical Society Museum and the grounds on which it stands, with \$1,500 coming from the unassigned fund balance and \$1,500 from general taxation

Motion to accept: Carol Young

2nd: Arnie Scheller

No questions or comments

Re-read Article

PASSED by voice vote

Article 07 Police Department

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$104,698** for the maintenance of the Police Department for the ensuing year for the purposes detailed in the operating budget posted with the warrant

Motion to accept: Paul Davis Sr.

2nd: Bernice Sullivan

Chief Trott spoke to explain

Re-read Article

PASSED by voice vote

Article 08 Animal and Pest Control

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$4,000** for the expenses associated with Animal and Pest Control.

Motion to accept: Ryan Borger

2nd: Tim Minear

No questions or comments

Re-read Article

PASSED by voice vote

Article 09 Ambulance Services

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$142,710** for the operating expenses associated with Ambulance Services

Motion to accept: Quentin Mack

2nd: Monica Godfrey

Francis Muzzey asked to amend the article to read:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$66,000** for the operating expenses associated with Ambulance Services

2nd: Rick Ducheneau Sr

Lots of discussion took place

Francis explained his proposal

Quentin Mack disagreed with Francis and asked to defeat the amendment.

Michael Norkelun, Donald Bagley, John Meade, Holly Buker, Arnie Scheller, and John Meade all spoke

Quentin Mack explained it was all or nothing. No increase, no ambulance.

Amendment was re-read

Failed by voice vote

Re-read original article:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$142,710** for the operating expenses associated with Ambulance Services

John Meade asked to amend the article to read:

2nd: Josh Leiter

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$114,950.85** for the operating expenses associated with Ambulance Services

Again, lots of discussion took place and Quentin Mack again explained it was all or nothing “NO increase, no ambulance service”.

Amendment was re-read and FAILED by hand count

No=69

Yes=32

Re-read original article:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$142,710** for the operating expenses associated with Ambulance Services

PASSED by voice vote

Article 10 Fire Department

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$54,100** for the maintenance of the Fire Department for the purposes detailed in the operating budget posted with the warrant, with \$7,000 coming from the unassigned fund balance and \$47,100 from general taxation.

Motion to accept: John Meade

2nd: Lisa Ames

Chief Ames Spoke

Re-Read Article

PASSED by voice vote

Article 11 Highway and Streets

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$399.800** for Highway and Streets for the purposes detailed in the operating budget posted with the warrant, with \$27,000 coming from the unassigned fund balance and \$372,800 from general taxation.

Motion to accept: Clay Young

2nd: John Meade

No questions or comments

Re-Read Article

PASSED by voice vote

Article 12 Western Star

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to continue with the fourth year of the seven (7)-year lease agreement for the purpose of leasing a 2022 Western Star 4700SF Dump/Plow Truck for the Highway Department and to raise and appropriate the

sum of **\$28,490** for the said third year payment for that purpose, \$25,049 being the principal portion and \$3,441 being the interest portion. The lease agreement does not contain an escape clause. The Select Board unanimously recommends this action.

Motion to accept: John Meade

2nd: Richard Ducheneau Sr.

No questions or comments

Re-read Article

PASSED by voice vote

Article 13 North Dorchester Road Bridge Bond

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$127,614** for the first installment of a ten-year bridge bond commitment, \$85,000 being the principal portion and \$42,614 being the interest portion, with \$92,000 coming from the unassigned fund balance and \$35,614 from general taxation.

Motion to accept: Sonia Scheller

2nd: Hannah Heath

No questions or comments

Re-read Article

PASSED by voice vote

Article 14 Transfer Station

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$85,650** for the purpose of disposal and hauling of solid waste and cost of maintenance for the Town Transfer Station, said amount to come from general taxation.

Motion to accept: Phil Chandonnet

2nd: Brian DuBois

No questions or comments

Re-read Article

PASSED by voice vote

Article 15 Parks and Recreation

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$15,500** for the Parks and Recreation for the general maintenance of parks including the Common, Library, Riverside Park, and Hamilton Memorial Field

Motion to accept: Devin Godfrey

2nd: Monica Godfrey

No questions or comments

Re-Read Article

PASSED by voice vote

Article 16 Conservation

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$2,000** to be expended on behalf of the Conservation Commission and Town Forest in connection with activities for such conservation as set forth in RSA 36-A and expenses related to the forester.

Motion to accept: Izzy Mercier

2nd: John Meade

Izzy asked to amend the article to read:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$2,000** to be expended on behalf of the Conservation Commission and Town Forest

Motion to move: Izzy Mercier

2nd: Bernie Sullivan

Amendment passed by hand count Yes=84 No=5

Rick Borger Jr made a motion to move article 22 up in front of Article 17 & 18 because it has points of interest and facts that are related to articles 17 & 18

Motion: Rick Borger Sr

2nd: Tim Minear

Article 17 Conservation Commission-Advisory Only

To see if the Town will vote to approve a foot pathway of approximately 1.5 miles in length on the Town Forest that consists of the Plummer Forest and Van Deusen parcels. This foot path will be laid out by the Town Forester at no cost to the Town. This foot path will be the only foot path on the Town Forest.

Motion to accept: John Meade

2nd: Sonia Scheller

John Meade, Brian Dubois, Ryan Borger, Bernie Sullivan and Josh Leiter had comments concerning where the path was, closed on holidays, hunting, etc...

Re-Read Article

Failed by Voice Vote

Article 18 Conservation Ordinance

To see if the town will vote to enact an ordinance for the Town Forest:

- No wheeled vehicles, with the exception of emergency and maintenance vehicles
- No bikes or tracked vehicles
- No horses
- No open fires
- No camping
- No alcohol
- No defacing or cutting any property
- No littering-Carry In/Carry Out

- No loud or objectionable noise
- Dogs must be on leash at all times with the exception of hunting dogs during open season
- Remove all pet waste
- Trail open from sunrise to sunset

Motion to table: Rick Ducheneau Sr.

2nd: Jenn Meade

Article was Tabled

Article 19 ETF & CRF

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$169,100** to be placed in the following Expendable Trust Funds and Capital Reserve Funds, to come from 2023 general taxation. The Select Board unanimously recommends this action.

- Fire Truck CRF (established 1984) \$25,000
- Highway Equipment and Vehicles CRF (established 1973) \$25,000
- Police Cruiser CRF (established 1993) \$9,000
- Property Revaluation CRF (established 1995) \$5,000
- Town Bridges ETF (established 2006) \$25,000
- Town Hall Maintenance and repairs CRF (established 2000) \$5,000
- Road Paving CRF (established 2002) \$25,000
- Fire Department Site EFT (established 2004) \$25,000
- Webster Memorial Library EFT (established 2015) \$10,000
- Town Office Expansion ETF (established 2017) \$15,000
- Celebration ETF (established 2018) \$100

Motion: Jeff Ames

2nd: Brian DuBois

Francis Muzzey questioned what money was used for at the town hall

Jenn Meade explained

Re-Read Article

PASSED by Voice Vote

Article 20 Webster Memorial Library

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$50,389** for the Webster Memorial Library expenses.

Motion to accept: Glen Wyman

2nd: Sam Brown

Jenn Meade stated he didn't think the money should be dispersed equally to 3 cemetery's and the Library.

R-Read Article

PASSED by Voice Vote

Article 21 Bond Balance Allocation

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the expenditure of the unused portion of the bond approved in 2023 for the North Dorchester Road Bridge repairs and to raise and

appropriate \$118,350 in unused bond proceeds for the purpose of Frescoln Road Bridge repairs per RSA 33:3-a, II. No amount of money needs to be raised by taxation. Recommended by the Select Board. A 2/3 vote is required.

Motion to accept: Brian DuBois

2nd: Devin Godfrey

Rick Ducheneau spoke

Jenn Meade thanked the board about the bridge

Re-Read

PASSED 67-0

Article 22 Petitioned

To see if the Town will vote to rescind Article 17 as amended and passed at the Town Meeting of March 8, 2022 which stated as follows:

“To see if the Town will vote to establish as Town Forest under RSA 31:110 the Plummer Town Forest Map8 Lot11 Sub32 consisting of 130.57± acres, the Van Deusen parcel Map8 Lot11 Sub33 consisting of 35.5± acres, the Turner and Buffalo Road parcel Map11 Lot6 Sub19 consisting of 15.31± acres and the North Dorchester parcel Map12 Lot2 Sub6 consisting of 1.1± acres. To authorize the conservation commission to manage the town forest(s) under the provision of RSA 31:112. To authorize the placement of any proceeds that may accrue from this forest management with the exception of the Plummer Forest which has an existing managed trust fund that that directs proceeds to the library and three cemeteries in a separate forest maintenance fund, which shall be allowed to accumulate from year to year as provided by RSA 31:113.”

Explanation: In the two years since this article was passed, numerous questions of legality and possible infringements upon the intent of George Plummer (who gave the Plummer parcel to the Town in his will) have been cited. Questions have also arisen as to whether or not the article is legal in as much as it may be construed to change the intent as expressly stated by Plummer in his will. In addition to rescinding the vote of the 2022 Town Meeting, it is the further intent of this article to again put the Town Forests into the management of the Trustees of Trust Funds with the assistance of a Town Forester. For over 80 years the Plummer Forest and other Town Forests have been managed in such a manner that does not warrant the change as imposed by the March 8, 2022 Article 17.

Moved in front of article 17

Motion to accept: Rick Borger Jr.

2nd: Kim Chandonnet

Lots of discussion took place

Jenn Meade had questions, Rick Borger Jr. read from a document he wrote with his explanation and facts on this article, John Reed opposed article 17

Re-read article

PASSED by hand vote

Article 23 Petitioned-Advisory Only

To see if the Town will vote to authorize a commission to study the efficacy of combining programs and services, up to and including a merger, of Warren and Wentworth Schools. The commission would consist of three individuals from Wentworth. One appointment would be chosen by the Select Board, one appointment by the School Board, and one appointment by the faculty/staff of the Wentworth School. A matching warrant is being proposed to the voters in Warren for consideration at the Warren Town meeting on March 12, 2024.

Motion: Francis Muzzey
2nd: Devin Godfrey

Dottie Gove and Don Bagley of Warren, NH spoke with the Moderator's permission
Re-read article
PASSED by Voice Vote

Article 24 Other Business

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

Motion to accept: Paul Davis Sr.
2nd Jordan King
No other business
Passed by Voice Vote

Respectfully submitted by Deborah Ziemba,

