

**MINUTES OF THE 2020 TOWN MEETING FOR THE TOWN OF WEBSTER
THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2020**

Moderator Mike Jette called the meeting to order at 10:02am in the Webster Town Hall.

He invited David Hemenway to lead everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Moderator Jette asked all service members to stand and be recognized. He then asked volunteers to the town and/or those serving on a committee to stand and be recognized.

The Town Report was dedicated to Normandie “Dee” Blake and the Moderator invited her to stand and be recognized. Moderator Jette announced Webster’s two State Representatives and our State Senator; the Webster Fire Department was available to issue fire permits and the First Congregational Church of Webster had snacks available.

Select Board Chair Christine Schadler explained Select Board Member Bianca Acebron Peco was not present because she was recently a new mom and did not want to risk her health or the health of the new baby due to the Corona virus. Select Board Chair Schadler also introduced Normandie Blake as the third Select Board Member who filled in after Select Board Member Schofield’s resignation. Town Administrator, Leslie Palmer and Town Clerk, Michele Derby were introduced.

Select Board Chair Christine Schadler mentioned that Select Board Member Acebron Peco’s new baby was the first child born to a Select Board Member while in office. She drew attention to pages 14 – 20 in the Annual Town Report. She explained it is a narrative written by Leslie Palmer of the budget. Select Board Chair Schadler said each of the warrant articles are voted by each Board Member in the affirmative or negative. The Select Board did not have enough information to support the petitioned warrant article 15 at the time the warrant was posted. They did receive the requested financial information and Select Board Chair Schadler announced the Board unanimously changed their vote to the affirmative for warrant article 15. She went on to present a slide presentation including completed projects in 2019 (storage cabinets, video live-stream recording of Select Board meetings, Personnel Policy revisions, well filtration system, Accufund Accounting system, paving to Deer Meadow Road, new generator for the Town Hall, Workplace Violence & IT Security training, pilot agreement with Hopkinton Solar LLC at the Hopkinton/Webster Transfer Station.) Ongoing projects include the Clothespin Bridge Replacement scheduled for 2022/2023, White Plains Road bridge by Knights Meadow Marsh where a temporary “fix” was implemented using metal plates until its replacement in the Spring. The Salt Shed Committee continues its efforts in relocating the salt shed. ADA access, concrete pad replacement and roof repair to the Public Safety Building. Town Hall maintenance projects include painting and repair to the cupula and gutter work. IT upgrades also continue.

Moderator Jette addressed the rules of order for the meeting; which were found on page 8 of the Town Report.

Motion to allow Town employees, staff and others to speak

Moderator Jette called for a motion to allow Town employees, staff and others to speak if needed. Moved and seconded.

Moderator called for a voice vote to allow Town employees, staff and others to speak.

PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

Moderator Jette announced the appointment of David Richardson as Assistant Moderator for this meeting. He invited voters wanting to speak to use the microphone at the front of the room. Note, due to the Coronavirus, the two microphones were wiped down with disinfectant between speakers. He urged voters to be efficient and not repeat the same thing other voters have already said.

The Moderator addressed Article 1, the official ballot portion of Town Meeting by reading the results of the Town Election held on Tuesday, March 10, 2020.

Article 1: To choose all necessary Town Officers for the ensuing year. (BY BALLOT) – 248 ballots cast

OFFICE	TERM	NAME	# OF VOTES
Selectman	3 yrs	David Hemenway	191
		Ben Nadeau	54
Moderator	2 yrs	Mike Jette	214
Town Clerk	3 yrs	Michele Derby	232
Treasurer	3 yrs	Bruce Johnson	203
Tax Collector	3 yrs	Karen King	233
Supervisor of the Checklist	2 yrs	Nancy Webster	225
Supervisor of the Checklist	6 yrs	Sarah Chalsma	223
Cemetery Trustee	3 yrs	Brenda Silver	224
Library Trustee	3 yrs	Nancy Picthall-French	223
Trustee of Trust Funds	3 yrs	Normandie Blake (by write-in)	65

Article 2: *The Moderator read the Article in its entirety, To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,559,468 for general municipal operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. (Majority vote required) **The Select Board recommends – 3 to 0***

The Moderator noted it was moved by Select Board Chair Schadler and seconded by Select Board Member Blake.

The Moderator opened the article for discussion with Select Board Chair Schadler asking for any questions.

Motion to Amend Article 2

Kim Fortune made a motion to amend Article 2 by \$500 and take from the contribution to the Penacook Community Center. Seconded by Alisa Vasquez.

Kim Fortune asked why the Town gives to the Penacook Community Center. Select Board Chair Schadler stated page 17 of the Town Report provided examples of the programs offered through the center and the \$500 cost is “a deal”. David Richardson spoke to the youth programs offered to Webster kids through the center and the \$500 donation is “cheap” and the cost to have a Webster Community Center would be far greater.

George Cummings made a motion to move the amendment. Seconded by Renee Doucette.

Moderator called for a voice vote to amend Article 2 to reduce by \$500 to come from the Penacook Community Center line.

AMENDED ARTICLE FAILED BY VOICE VOTE.

Moderator asked for other discussion to Article 2. There being none, he reread the Article and called for a voice vote.

PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

Article 3: *The Moderator read the Article in its entirety,* To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$330,500** to be added to the following established Capital Reserve Funds under RSA 35:1.
(Majority vote required)

Fire Department – Air Packs	20,000
Bridge/Culvert Improvements	75,000
Fire Department – Dry Hydrant Repairs	2,000
Reappraisal	5,000
Town Hall Improvements	5,000
Office Equipment	5,000
Police Cruiser	17,000
Emergency Apparatus	50,000
Fire Department – Bunker Gear	2,500
Public Safety Building	5,000
Webster/Hopkinton Transfer Station	4,000
Police Equipment	1,500
Highway Equipment	7,500
Medical Equipment	6,000
Highways and Roads	125,000

The Select Board recommends – 3 to 0

The Moderator noted it was moved by Select Board Chair Schadler and seconded by Select Board Member Blake.

The Moderator opened the article for discussion. Select Board Chair Schadler stated the article is identical to last year except for Town Hall Improvements was up from last years \$2,500 and the Police Cruiser has increased by \$2,000.

There being no discussion, the Moderator reread the Article and called for a voice vote.

PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

Article 4: *The Moderator read the Article in its entirety,* To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$225,500** to be added to the following established previously Expendable Trust Funds per RSA 31:19-a.
(Majority vote required)

Forest Fire	2,000
Legal (Webster)	6,000
Highway	5,000

Fire Department Equipment	5,000
Compensated Absences	2,500
Road Preservation	200,000
Municipal Property Maintenance	5,000

The Select Board recommends – 3 to 0

The Moderator noted it was moved by Select Board Chair Schadler and seconded by Select Board Member Blake.

Select Board Chair Schadler said the amounts are the same as last year with the exception of the Legal line. The amount is \$2,000 less than 2019.

There was no discussion and the Moderator called for a voice vote after rereading the article.

PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

Article 5: *The Moderator read the Article in its entirety,* To see if the Town will vote to establish a contingency fund for the current year under the provisions of RSA 31:98-a for unanticipated expenses that may arise and further to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$15,590** to put into the fund. This sum to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance and no amount will be raised by taxation. Any appropriation left in the fund at the end of the year will lapse to the General Fund. This is an Individual Warrant Article (Majority vote required) **The Select Board recommends – 3 to 0**

The Moderator noted it was moved by Select Board Chair Schadler and seconded by Select Board Member Blake.

Select Board Blake explained the money is for unanticipated expenses and if it is not used, it goes back into the General Fund. Town Administrator Leslie Palmer said the fund is 1% of the operating budget and allows the Town to use the money, if needed, without further approval by the Department of Revenue.

The Moderator asked for further questions. There being none, the Moderator reread the article and called for a voice vote.

PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

Article 6: *The Moderator read the Article in its entirety,* To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$41,500** for the purchase of a 2020 Police Cruiser and related equipment, with **\$39,500** to come from the Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund created for that purpose and **\$2,000** to come from the trade-in/sale of the Police Department 2014 Police Cruiser. No funds will be raised through taxation. This is a Special Warrant Article. (Majority vote required) **The Select Board recommends – 3 to 0**

The Moderator noted it was moved by Select Board Chair Schadler and seconded by Select Board Member Blake.

Police Chief Adams explained the current 2014 cruiser has 94,599 miles with 4,369 hours of idle time, which according to Ford's estimate of 32 miles for every idle hour, equates to 139,808 miles. He mentioned the cruiser had been in an accident with a tractor trailer shortly after it was purchased. Generally, the equipment in the old cruiser would be reused in the new cruiser but due to the changes Ford has made half of the equipment will not fit the new cruiser.

There were no questions and the Moderator reread the article and called for a voice vote.

PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

Restrict Reconsideration of Articles 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

Dan Nudd made a motion to restrict reconsideration on Articles 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6; seconded by Renee Doucette.

The Moderator called for a voice vote to restrict reconsideration on Articles 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

Article 7: *The Moderator read the Article in its entirety, To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,000 for the purchase of commercial laundry equipment for the Fire Department. (Majority vote required) The Select Board recommends – 3 to 0*

The Moderator noted it was moved by Select Board Chair Schadler and seconded by Select Board Member Blake.

Select Board Chair Schadler explained this article was a special project worked on by Select Board Member Acebron Peco. She stated the current washer and drier at the Webster Fire Department are unequipped to handle the gear. Fire Department members are exposed to various chemicals and contaminants when responding to a fire and the gear needs to be properly cleaned. A household washer and dryer are inadequate and commercial equipment is more appropriate. Select Board Member Acebron Peco had explored a grant for the washer and dryer but the grant round never opened. Fire Chief Bean spoke in support of this article.

The Moderator reread the Article and called for a voice vote.

PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

Article 8: *The Moderator read the Article in its entirety, To see if the Town will vote to establish an expendable trust fund under the provisions of RSA 31:19-a, to be known as the Technology Fund, for the purpose of purchasing and maintaining computer equipment, software and technology infrastructure and to appoint the Select Board as agents to expend from this fund for said purposes and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,000 to be placed in this fund. This is a Special Warrant Article. (Majority vote required) The Select Board recommends – 3 to 0*

The Moderator noted it was moved by Select Board Chair Schadler and seconded by Select Board Member Blake.

Town Administrator Palmer directed us to page 19 of the Town Report listing upcoming technology projects.

The Moderator asked for more discussion. With no more questions, he called for a vote.

PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

Article 9: *The Moderator read the Article in its entirety, To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to help offset the cost of the bond for “Funds to Repair Dam” passed at the Pillsbury Lake Water District Special Meeting held August 5, 2006. (Majority vote required) The Select Board recommends – 3 to 0*

The Moderator noted it was moved by Select Board Chair Schadler and seconded by Select Board Member Blake.

Select Board Member Blake explained the money is the Town's share of helping to pay off the bond needed to rebuild the Pillsbury Lake dam.

There was no discussion.

The Moderator reread the Article and called for a voice vote.

PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

Article 10: *The Moderator read the Article in its entirety,* To see if the Town will vote to establish a Fire Department Mobile Communication Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of purchasing mobile communication devices for the Fire Department and to appoint the Select Board as agents to expend for said purposes and to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$10,000** to be placed in this fund. This is a Special Warrant Article. (Majority vote required) **The Select Board recommends – 3 to 0**

The Moderator noted it was moved by Select Board Chair Schadler and seconded by Select Board Member Blake.

Fire Chief Bean explained the Town voted \$65,000 the past two years to replace the Fire Department radios. The new account would spread the cost for future radios out rather than a large lump sum. He also explained the broader wording of the fund name was to accommodate future technology jargon instead of specifically for radios.

The Moderator reread the Article and called for a voice vote.

PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

Restrict Reconsideration of Articles 7, 8, 9 and 10

David Hemenway made a motion to restrict reconsideration on Articles 7, 8, 9 and 10; seconded by Renee Doucette.

The Moderator called for a voice vote to restrict reconsideration on Articles 7, 8, 9 and 10.

PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

Article 11: *The Moderator read the Article in its entirety,* To see if the Town will vote to amend Article 12 enacted on March 5, 1974, which established a Town Conservation Commission consisting of five (5) members to permit the appointment of up to seven (7) members and up to seven (7) alternate members, in accordance with RSA 36-A. (Majority vote required)

The Moderator noted it was moved by Select Board Chair Schadler and seconded by Select Board Member Blake.

Select Board Chair Schadler explained the article will allow more members appointed to the Conservation Commission to spread the work load out with no taxpayers' money being spent. It was asked why there was no recommendation by the Select Board and answered because it is a non-monetary article.

There being no further discussion, the Moderator called for a voice vote.

PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

Article 12: *The Moderator read the Article in its entirety,* To see if the Town will vote to discontinue the Land Trust Fund created in 1996. Said funds, with accumulated interest to date of withdrawal, are to be

transferred to the municipality's general fund. This article is contingent upon the passage of Article 13. (Majority vote required) **The Select Board recommends – 3 to 0**

The Moderator noted it was moved by Select Board Chair Schadler and seconded by Select Board Member Blake.

The Moderator read Article 13 for clarification of Article 12.

Select Board Chair Schadler explained the article is to discontinue using the Land Trust Fund and transfer the \$20,759 in the fund to the General Fund. Then Article 13 is asking to move the same money from the General Fund to a new Conservation Fund. NH DRA would not allow the article to be written to simply move the Land Trust Fund to the Conservation Fund. Article 13 is dependent on the passing of Article 12.

Charles Petruccelli asked what the money in the Land Use Trust be used for. Select Board Chair Schadler answered it is for conservation purposes such as financial assistance with survey costs to a landowner wishing to put their land into conservation. Mary Jo Mac Gowan explained the purpose is to change the RSA the Land Use Trust fund was established under to one the Conservation Commissions are controlled under.

The Moderator called for a voice vote.

PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

Article 13: *The Moderator read the Article in its entirety, To see if the Town will vote to establish a Conservation Fund in accordance with RSA 36-A:5 and further raise and appropriate \$20,759 to be placed in the fund. This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance. This article is contingent upon the passage of Article 12. (Majority Vote Required) **The Select Board recommends – 3 to 0***

The Moderator noted it was moved by Select Board Chair Schadler and seconded by Select Board Member Blake.

The Moderator called for a voice vote of Article 13 as read.

PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

Article 14: *The Moderator read the Article in its entirety, To see if the Town will vote to modify the amount of the Land Use Change Tax revenue to be deposited on an annual basis in the Conservation Fund established under Article 13 from a maximum amount of \$3,000 to 100% of such revenue up to \$5,000, plus 50% of such amount in excess of \$5,000. This article is contingent upon the passage of Article 12 and Article 13. (Majority vote required) **The Select Board recommends – 3 to 0***

The Moderator noted it was moved by Select Board Chair Schadler and seconded by Select Board Member Blake.

Select Board Chair Schadler explained the Land Use Change Tax (LUCT) is to provide monies for the use of Conservation Commission. When land is taken out of Current Use to be developed it is taxed at 10% of its full-market value. The concept of LUCT is to preserve open space and to keep land in Current Use for conservation. Select Board Chair Schadler showed a chart of towns and the percentage of LUCT provided to their Conservation Commissions. The chart showed most towns gave 100% of the LUCT to their Conservation Commissions. She presented a ten-year chart of LUCT collected in Webster with a total of \$80,000 of that the Conservation Commission received \$24,000.

Tom McWilliams made a motion to amend Article 14 to give the Conservation Fund 100% of any Land Use Change Tax revenue. Seconded by Susan Youngs.

The Moderator called for discussion to the amendment.

Sue McGinnis asked how this impacts the budget already voted on and did the general budget consider making this change. The Moderator clarified any revenue received from any Land Use Change Tax would not impact the tax rate and would go into the Conservation Fund. Town Administrator Palmer mentioned the Town is “in good fiscal shape” in the Unassigned Fund Balance; which is used to reduce the tax rate.

Craig Fournier stated LUCT is only generated when land is taken out of Current Use for development and is not a dependable source of revenue from year to year. Further discussion in support of the amendment.

George Cummings moved the amendment.

The Moderator reread the motion to amend Article 14 as: To see if the Town will vote to modify the amount of the Land Use Change Tax revenue to be deposited on an annual basis in the Conservation Fund established under Article 13 to 100% of the funds received through the Land Use Change Tax. and called for a voice vote.

AMENDMENT PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

The Moderator reread the amended Article 14 and called for a vote.

AMENDED ARTICLE PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

Restrict Reconsideration of Articles 11, 12, 13 and 14.

Dan Nudd made a motion to restrict reconsideration on Articles 11, 12, 13 and 14; seconded by Renee Doucette.

The Moderator called for a voice vote to restrict reconsideration on Articles 11, 12, 13 and 14.

PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

Article 15: *The Moderator read the Article in its entirety, To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,000 for the purpose of windows restoration of all windows at the Old Meeting House. This would represent matching funds from the Webster Historical Society and allow the work to proceed this year. This is a Special Warrant Article. (Submitted by Petition) The Select Board recommends – 0 to 3*

The Moderator reiterated the Select Board originally did not recommend the article. They have since received the information they had asked for and now recommend it by a vote of 3 to 0.

It was moved by Mark Kimball and seconded.

Mark Kimball spoke on behalf of the Webster Historical Society in support of the article and preserving the historical building. He mentioned the handout provided by the Webster Historical Society. He said they are working with architectural historians to complete the window project properly. John Clark and Emmett Bean spoke in the support of the article and the importance of preserving our history.

The Moderator called for a voice vote.

PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

Article 16: *The Moderator read the Article in its entirety, To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting*

Kim Fortune asked to amend Article 9 to read: To accept only if any and all rights associated with said resource are wholly authorized to act in such capacity with no liens whatsoever.

The Moderator clarified the article had been voted to constrict reconsideration and the motion was not accepted.

Kim Fortune explained a current NH State law from 1871 stating “Concord for its inhabitants and for such purposes from time to time hereafter may take and appropriate any lands, water and other rights that may be deemed necessary and proper for such enlargement or improvements in the same manner and in the same terms provided for taking and appropriating land and other rights in the act aforesaid. This all pertains and has been authorized to include the town of Boscawen and Webster in the county of Merrimack.” She added Boscawen repealed their rights in 1794. Concord has a lien on any and all water and land in Webster. The remedy is for the Selectmen to petition the Superior Court of Merrimack County. She wanted the voters to know this is still active and concerned Concord could take Webster’s land and water.

Select Board Chair Schadler stated she is in contact with a NH Senator regarding Kim’s statements.

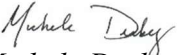
Sally Embley recognized all past Roadside Cleanup volunteers and provided the date of April 18 for this year’s date and noted it was the 50th anniversary of Earth Day.

Tom McWilliams reminded people to complete their 2020 US Census. He thanked Road Agent Emmet Bean and his crew for Webster’s amazing roads. Having traveled all over the state of the Census work we should be proud of the condition of our roads.

Mark Kimball made a motion to adjourn and it was seconded.

The Moderator adjourned the meeting at 11:44 am.

Respectfully Submitted,


Michele Derby
Town Clerk