

**TOWN OF ACWORTH
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES
March 10, 2026
ACWORTH TOWN HALL, 13 TOWN HALL ROAD**

**Elections – 10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Absentee ballots opened at 3:25p.m. and finished at 3:28 p.m.
Business Meeting – 7:05 p.m. – 8:41 p.m.
Polls closed at 8:57 and business meeting adjourned. Counting of ballots began
Counts given to Town Clerk beginning at 9:30
Meeting adjourned at 11:15 p.m.**

Article 01 - To vote by non-partisan ballot for the following Town Officers:

Results of ballots cast – declared winners’ names are noted in **bold print**

Selectmen – One person for three-year term	
Katy Haas	201
Tax Collector - One person for one-year term	
Marianne Wierenga Nevelson	208
Treasurer - One person for one-year term	
Melinda R Loiselle	212
Local Auditor – One person for one-year term	
Lisa DeValk	208
Moderator – One person for two-year term	
John Luther	219
Trustee of Trust Funds – One person for three-year term	
Ann Marie Kosa	206
Cemetery Trustee – One person for three-year term	
Lillie LeBlanc	215
Library Trustee – Two person for three-year term	
Doug Robinson	204
Guy Russell	192
Planning Board – One person for two-year term	
Frank Emig	166
Planning Board – Two persons for three-year term	
Brian St Pierre	196
Mark Goodwin (write-in)	27
Budget Committee – Two persons for three-year term	
Frank Emig	94
Susan Metsack	193
William Vannah	107
Supervisor of the Checklist – One person for six-year term	
Adriane Sturgeon	202

Moderator, John Luther called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He announced that the polls were suspended and would be open after the meeting for those that had not had a chance to vote. He announced for those that hadn't picked up the secret ballot to see the Supervisors of the Checklist. At 7:10 John asked everyone to stand, the men to remove their hats, and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Moderator acknowledged Selectman, Chair Kathi Bradt. Kathi explained briefly that there is thorough consideration and much time by the Selectmen and Budget Committee in arriving at the figures which will be voted on.

Kathi recognized Jim Jennison and thanked him for the many years served on various boards.

John Luther recognized Betty Gowen for her 25 years of service as Supervisor of the Checklist.

Article 02 - Empower the Selectmen

To see if the Town will vote to empower the Selectmen to serve as pound keepers, measurers of wood and fence viewers. *(Majority Vote Required)*

A motion was made by Mike Aron. Seconded by Gary Baber.

The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the article. Mike Aron mentioned that there is some further information about this at the back if anyone wanted it. With no further questions it was moved to vote by voice vote.

ARTICLE 02 PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Article 03 - Selectmen Borrowing Money

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to borrow money in anticipation of taxes. *(Majority vote required)*

A motion was made by Jim Jennison. Seconded by Linda Christie

The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the article. Being none, it was moved to vote by voice vote.

ARTICLE 03 PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Article 04 - Fund the Operating Budget

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the Budget Committee recommended sum of \$1,526,381 for general municipal operations with \$100,000 of these funds to come from unassigned fund balance (This amount represents partial FEMA reimbursement funds received in 2025). This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. *(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen, 2:Yes, 0:No; 1:Absent). (Recommended by the Budget Committee, 4:Yes, 1:No, 1:Absent).* (Majority vote required)

A motion was made by Claudia Istel. Seconded by Teresa Berntsen

The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the article.

On a motion by Prescott Trafton. Seconded by Ken Cubberley, Prescott proposed to raise the \$100,000 by taxation and not use unassigned fund balance. After much discussion regarding the amendment, Jim Jennison called the question.

The amendment was moved to vote by voice vote.

AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 04 WAS DEFEATED

With no further discussion, the article was moved to vote by voice vote.

ARTICLE 04 PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Article 05 - Long-Term Lease/Purchase of a Truck to replace 2018 Dodge 5500

To see if the town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to enter into a long-term lease/purchase agreement in the amount of up to \$168,000, payable over a term of five (5) years, to finance the purchase of a truck to replace the Highway Department's 2018 Dodge 5500, and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$33,600 for the first year's payment under the lease/purchase agreement, with those funds to come from the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund established in 2000 created for that purpose. No amount to be raised from taxation. *(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen, 2:Yes 0:No, 1:Absent (Recommended by the Budget Committee, 4:Yes, 1:No, :Absent).* (3/5 ballot vote required)

A motion was made by Norm Bernaiche. Seconded by Frank Emig.

Kathi explained that this is in the Capital Improvement plan that the Planning Board works on. Mike Aron mentioned that the Planning Board has been working with the Highway Dept. and the Selectmen on needs. It was also noted that the 2018 Dodge has had over \$20k in repairs since June and the warranty has expired. After much discussion, Jim Jennison called the question.

The Moderator announced to use secret ballot "M" to vote on the article. The votes were collected at 7:35.

The Moderator announced that the vote will remain open for one hour. The ballots were counted at 8:41

Results of Cast Secret Ballot Vote for Article 05: Yes 85 No 14

ARTICLE 05 PASSED

Article 06 - Paving Cold Pond Road

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$500,000 to pave Cold Pond Road with \$200,00 to come from unassigned fund balance. *(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen, 2:Yes, 0:No, 1:Absent).* *(Recommended by the Budget Committee, 5:Yes, 0:No, 1:Absent).* (Majority vote required)

A motion was made by Teresa Berntsen. Seconded by Susan Metsack.

After some discussion, the article was moved to vote by voice vote.

ARTICLE 06 PASSED

Article 07 - Forest Road Bridge Replacement

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum \$1,750,000 for the purpose of replacement of the bridge on Forest Road over Great Brook (Federal Project X-A005(517) NHDOT Project #44523). \$1,400,000 (80%) of said funds to come from Federal Bridge Aid Program; and \$350,000 (20%) of said funds to come from unassigned 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 project is completed or by 2031, whichever is sooner. *(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen, 2:Yes, 0:No, 1:Absent).* *(Recommended by the Budget Committee, 5:Yes, 0:No, 1:Absent).* (Majority vote required)

A motion was made by Judy Aron. Seconded by Brenda Melius.

After much discussion, Ed Metsack called the question.

The article was moved to vote by voice vote.

ARTICLE 07 PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Article 08 - Fund the Fire Truck CRF

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$10,000 for the Fire Truck Capital Reserve Fund previously established in 2020. *(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen, 2:Yes, 0:No, 1:Absent).* *(Recommended by the Budget Committee, 5:Yes, 0:No, 1:Absent).* (Majority vote required)

A motion was made by Jim Jennison. Seconded by Bill Vannah.

The Moderator stated there is an amendment to the article.

A motion by Frank Emig. Seconded by Bill Vannah on the amendment.

Chief Gary Baber stated that the cost of fire trucks has increased significantly since he first started looking at them. This is something that is required to be replaced at a certain timeframe and at this point between what the fire company has and what is in the capital reserve funds it will be short. He is asking the voters to increase the amount from \$10k to \$20k.

After some discussion, the amendment was moved to vote by voice vote.

AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 08 PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

A motion was made by Frank Emig. Seconded by Claudia Istel on the article as amended.

The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the article as amended. Being none, it was moved to vote by voice vote.

ARTICLE 08 AS AMENDED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Article 09 - Fund the Highway Equipment CRF

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$10,000 for the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund previously established in 2000. *(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen, 2:Yes, 0:No, 1:Absent)*. *(Recommended by the Budget Committee, 5:Yes, 0:No, 1:Absent)*. (Majority vote required)

A motion was made by RYANNE SCHOONOVER. Seconded by Frank Emig.

The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the article.

Prescott Trafton proposed to amend this article.

A motion by Carolyn Jerard. Seconded by Bill Vannah on the amendment.

Prescott proposed increasing this amount to \$20k to help with future purchases rather than having to lease vehicles.

After much discussion, Ed Metsack called the question.

The amendment was moved to vote by voice vote.

AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 09 WAS DEFEATED

With no further discussion, the article was moved to vote by voice vote.

ARTICLE 09 PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Article 10 - Fund the Bridge CRF

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$10,000 for the Bridge Capital Reserve Fund previously established in 2014. *(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen, 2:Yes, 0:No, 1:Absent)*. *(Recommended by the Budget Committee, 5:Yes, 0:No, 1:Absent)*. (Majority vote required)

A motion was made by Kathi Bradt. Seconded by Jim Jennison.

The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the article. After some discussion, it was moved to vote by voice vote.

ARTICLE 10 PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Article 11 - Fund the Revaluation CRF

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$5,000 for the Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund previously established in 2010. *(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen, 2:Yes, 0:No, 1:Absent)*. *(Recommended by the Budget Committee, 5:Yes, 0:No, 1:Absent)*. (Majority vote required)

A motion by Susan Metsack. Seconded by Marianne Nevelson.

The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the article. Being none, it was moved to vote by voice vote.

ARTICLE 11 PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Article 12 - Fund the Building and Grounds CRF

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$2,500 for the Building and Grounds Capital Reserve Fund established in 2019. *(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen, 2:Yes, 0:No, 1:Absent)*. *(Recommended by the Budget Committee, 5:Yes, 0:No, 1:Absent)*. **(Majority vote required)**

A motion was made by Theresa Berntsen. Seconded by Kathi Bradt.

The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the article. Being none, it was moved to vote by voice vote.

ARTICLE 12 PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Article 13 - Modify Tax Credit for Service-Connected Total Disability

To see if the Town will vote to modify the Service-connected total disabled veteran tax credit from \$1,400 to \$1,700 pursuant to RSA 72:35. The optional tax credit for service-connected permanent and total disability shall replace other veteran credits in its entirety and not be in addition to. (Majority vote required)

A motion was made by Prescott Trafton. Seconded by Kathi Bradt.

The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the article. Being none, it was moved to vote by voice vote.

ARTICLE 13 PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Article 14 - Adopt the All Veterans' Tax Credit

To see if the Town will vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 72:28-b, All Veterans' Tax Credit. If adopted, the credit will be available to any resident, or the spouse or surviving spouse of any resident, who (1) served not less than 90 days on active service in the armed forces of the United States and was honorably discharged or an officer honorably separated from services and is not eligible for or receiving a credit under RSA 72:28 or RSA 72:35. If adopted, the credit granted will be \$300 the same amount as the standard or optional veterans' tax credit voted by the Town under RSA 72:28. (Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made by Mark Girard. Seconded by Gregg Thibodeau.

The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the article. Being none, it was moved to vote by voice vote.

ARTICLE 14 PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Article 15 - Other Business

To transact any other business that may legally be brought before this Town Meeting.

Gregg Thibodeau discussed changes in membership on the Conservation Commission and that he, Jennifer Bland, and Rob Traver will be stepping down but he and Rob will still volunteer and help in the transition. He gave an overview of all the achievements over the years he has been on the commission.

Tom Tonioli discussed the increased traffic in the village on 123A and how it has become a problem and a dangerous situation with speeding. He asked if anyone had any solutions to let him know. Stella Herpel suggested putting in speed bumps and put a four-way stop at the intersection.

Geoffrey Jones discussed replacing Forest Road Bridge with a wooden bridge and that he has experience working in Stoddard with this type of thing. Kathi encouraged him to attend the next informational meeting when he can discuss this with the engineer.

A motion was made by Ryanne Schoonover. Seconded by Jim Jennison to adjourn the business portion of the meeting. Motion passed. The Moderator announced at 8:41 p.m. that the business portion of the meeting was adjourned and that anyone who didn't have a chance to vote before the meeting may vote now. Polls closed at 8:57 p.m. Meeting was recessed at 8:41 p.m. to count ballots.

Counting of ballots completed at 10:45 p.m. The Town Clerk compiled and completed all necessary paperwork and meeting was adjourned at 11:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Charlotte Comeau
Acworth Town Clerk