TOWN OF ACWORTH
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 28th, 2022
ACWORTH TOWN HALL, 13 TOWN HALL ROAD

Elections – 10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Absentee ballots opened at 2:55 p.m. finished at 3:15 p.m.
Business Meeting – 7:00 p.m. – 9:25 p.m.
Polls closed at 9:25 and business meeting adjourned. Counting of ballots began
Counts given to Town Clerk beginning at 9:45
Meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

ARTICLE ONE: 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	
Frank Emig	81
Jim Jennison	**133**
Tax Collector - One person for one-year term	
Marianne Wierenga-Nevelson	**206**
Treasurer - One person for one-year term	
Melinda R Loiselle	**207**
Local Auditor – One person for one-year term	
Lisa DeValk	**196**
Trustee of Trust Funds – One person for three-year term	
Ann Kosa	**192**
Cemetery Trustee – One person for three-year term	
Lillie K Leblanc	**209**
Library Trustee – One person for three-year term	
Douglas Robinson	**187**
Guy Russell	**177**
Planning Board – Two persons for three-year term	
Michael Aron	**169**
Victoria Wuest (write in)	**10**
Budget Committee – Two persons for three-year term	
Judy Aron	**159**
Cheryl Sanctuary	**187**
Supervisor of the Checklist – One person for six-year term	
Marianne Wierenga-Nevelson	**205**

ARTICLE TWO: To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town's Zoning Ordinance, Article III: General Provisions, Section D: Signs, as follows: *(New language is in italics.)*

1. **Change:** "No neon, tubular gas, or privately owned flashing electric signs shall be allowed" to *"No signs with internal illumination or flashing shall be allowed".*
2. **Add***: "It shall be unlawful for any person to erect, replace, alter, or relocate any sign, as defined in this Ordinance, without first obtaining a sign permit and complying with the provisions of this ordinance and other applicable Statutes."*
3. **Add:** *"The following signs do not require a permit: Property numbers; Street signs; Legal notices such as "No Trespassing" or "No Hunting"; Flags with the word "Open"; Historical markers; "For Rent" or "For Sale" signs placed by a property owner or realtor; Portable signs used for a temporary purpose."*

The following question will appear on the Official Ballot: "Are you in favor of amending the Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board regarding signs? The amendments disallow flashing and internally lit electric signs and require permitting for signs except ordinary use signs such as For Sale, historical markers and temporary purpose signs?" *Planning Board recommend this article. (Majority Vote Required)*

Results of Article Two Cast Ballot Vote: YES 152 NO 79

ARTICLE THREE: To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town's Zoning Ordinance, Article III: General Provisions, new Section M: Tiny Houses and Yurts, and Article XVI: Definitions as follows: *(New language is in italics.)*

Article III: **Add:** "M. Tiny houses and Yurts

1. Tiny houses and yurts which meet this Ordinance's definitions are allowed in order to provide opportunities for green and affordable housing in the Town and pursuant to filing a building permit application with the Board of Selectmen.

2. Tiny houses and yurts shall be subject to the same standards used for dwellings including compliance with State sanitary rules, boundary setbacks and all other provisions of this Ordinance and shall be subject to taxation as deemed appropriate by Town assessors."

Article XVI: **Add:**

"S. Tiny house means a dwelling that is 400 square feet or less in floor area excluding lofts.

T. Yurts, for purposes of this Ordinance, means those structures designed for year-round living with heating, cooking and sanitary facilities as opposed to those which are unheated, temporary, seasonal living quarters."

The following question will appear on the Official Ballot: "Are you in favor of amending the Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board to allow permitting of tiny houses and year-round yurts as dwellings and adding definitions of tiny houses and yurts to the Ordinance?" *Planning Board recommend this article*. *(Majority Vote Required)*

Results of Article Three Cast Ballot Vote: YES 155 NO 76

At 7:00 Moderator John Luther announced for people to see the Supervisors of the Checklist to get their secret ballots. John called the meeting to order at 7:26 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 welcomed everyone and set ground rules asking everyone be civil to one another. He then asked everyone to stand, the men to remove their hats, and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ARTICLE FOUR ROAD REPAIRS FOLLOWING THE JULY 29-30, 2021 FLOOD: To see if the Town will vote (1) to raise and appropriate $750,000 (gross budget) for the purpose of restoring, repairing, and improving Town roads that suffered significant damages during the flash flood of July 29-30, 2021 (the "Project"); (2) to authorize the issuance of not more than $750,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33) to fund costs of the Projects and to authorize Town officials to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon; (3) to authorize Town officials to apply for, obtain, and accept federal (e.g. FEMA), state, or other aid or grant monies in respect of the Project and to use such monies to reduce the amount of bonds or notes issued for the Project, to prepay such bonds or notes, or to pay debt service on such bonds or notes; and (4) to authorize the selectmen

to take any other action or to pass any other vote relative thereto. *Selectmen recommend this article (2:Y-0:N-1:A), Budget Committee recommend this article (5:Y-1:N). (3/5 ballot vote required)*

A motion was made by Mike Aron. Seconded by Sally Eaton.
The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the Article. Much discussion took place.
On a motion by Kathi Bradt. Seconded by Torrey Greene, the following amendment was presented to add to the article:

"To require that the Town shall first begin to receive reimbursements from FEMA/State of New Hampshire before the Selectmen could borrow more funds pursuant to this warrant article. Funds to be borrowed may not exceed the amount reimbursed."

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

AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE FOUR PASSED BY A MAJORITY

On a motion by John Balla. Seconded by Tara Balla, a second amendment was presented to add to the article:

"This vote subject to the Town using an Engineer who is independent from the Contractor."

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

SECOND AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE FOUR FAILED BY A MAJORITY

After further discussion on the article as amended, the Moderator announced to use secret ballot "G" to vote on the article as amended. The votes were collected at 8:20 p.m. The Moderator announced that the vote will remain open for one hour. The ballots will be counted at 9:20 p.m.

Results of Cast Secret Ballot Vote Article Four as Amended: YES 78 NO 14

ARTICLE FIVE: 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 Helen Frink. Seconded by Brenda Melius.
The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the article. Being none, it was moved to vote by voice vote.

ARTICLE FIVE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

ARTICLE SIX: 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 Neidert. Seconded by Brenda Melius.
The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the article. After some discussion, the Moderator moved to vote by voice vote.

ARTICLE SIX PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

ARTICLE SEVEN: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the Budget Committee recommended sum of $1,551,727 for general municipal operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. Selectmen and Budget Committee recommend this article. *(Majority vote required)*
A motion was made by Sally Eaton. Seconded by Judy Aron.
The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the article. Being none, it was moved to vote by voice vote.

ARTICLE SEVEN PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

ARTICLE EIGHT: Polling hours in the town of Acworth are now open at 10 o'clock in the morning and close at 7 o'clock in the evening. Shall the Town vote to change polling hours so that polls shall open at 11 o'clock in the morning and close at 7 o'clock in the evening for all town and state elections? *(Majority vote required)*

A motion was made Claudia Istel. Seconded by Carolyn Jerard.
The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the article. After some discussion, it was moved to vote by voice vote. With uncertainty of the result, the Moderator asked for a show of hands.

ARTICLE EIGHT FAILED BY A MAJORITY

ARTICLE NINE: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate $10,000 for the Fire Truck Capital Reserve Fund previously established in 2020. *Selectmen and Budget Committee recommend this article. (Majority vote required)*

A motion was made by Jim Jennison. Seconded by Laura Butson.
The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the article. After some discussion, it was moved to vote by voice vote.

ARTICLE NINE PASSED BY A MAJORITY

ARTICLE TEN: To see if the Town will Vote to raise and appropriate $10,000 for the Bridge Capital Reserve Fund established in 2014. This sum to come from the Acworth Special One-Time Bridge Payment. (No New Taxation) *Selectmen and Budget Committee recommend this article*. *(Majority vote required)*

A motion was made by Kathi Bradt. Seconded by Judy Aaron.
The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the article. After some discussion, it was moved to vote by voice vote.

ARTICLE TEN PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

ARTICLE ELEVEN: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate $20,000 for the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund previously established in 2000. *Selectmen and Budget Committee recommend this article. (Majority vote required)*

A motion was made by Ed Metsack. Seconded by Sue Metsack.
The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the article. Being none, it was moved to vote by voice vote.

ARTICLE ELEVEN PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

ARTICLE TWELVE: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate $8,000 for the Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund previously established in 2010. *Selectmen and Budget Committee recommend this article. (Majority vote required)*

A motion was made by Ken Cubberley. Seconded by Mike Aron
The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the article. After some discussion, it was moved to vote by voice vote.

ARTICLE TWELVE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

ARTICLE THIRTEEN: Shall the town modify the Veteran's Tax Credit in accordance with RSA 72:28, II from its current tax credit of $200 per year to $300. *(Majority vote required)*

A motion was made by Carole Wallace. Seconded by Dennis Eaton.
The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the article. Charlotte stated there is an amendment for this article.

On a motion by Judy Aron. Seconded by Jim Jennison, an amendment was presented:

"Shall the Town re-adopt the OPTIONAL VETERANS' TAX CREDIT in accordance with the requirements of RSA 72:28, II, for an annual tax credit on residential property, and modify the amount of the credit from $200 to $300."

The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the Amendment. After some discussion with an explanation on why this was necessary, the amendment was moved to vote by voice vote.

AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE THIRTEEN PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

With no further discussion, article thirteen as amended was moved to vote by voice vote.

ARTICLE THIRTEEN AS AMENDED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

ARTICLE FOURTEEN: To see if the town modify the provisions of RSA 72:39-a for elderly exemption from property tax in the Town of Acworth, based on assessed value, for qualified taxpayers, to be as follows: for a person 65 years of age up to 75 years, $20,000; for a person 75 years of age up to 80 years, $40,000; for a person 80 years of age or older $50,000. To qualify, the person must have been a New Hampshire resident for at least 3 consecutive years, own the real estate individually or jointly, or if the real estate is owned by such person's spouse, they must have been married to each other for at least 5 consecutive years. In addition, the taxpayer must have a net income of not more than $25,000 or, if married, a combined net income of less than $32,000; and own net assets not in excess of $48,000 excluding the value of the person's residence. *(Majority vote required)*

A motion was made by Mike Aron Seconded by Linda Christie.
The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion. After some discussion, the article was moved to vote by voice vote.

ARTICLE FOURTEEN PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

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

Mike Aron thanked John for doing a great job as the moderator. He said we need people to get involved in our government. He said they are looking for alternates join the Planning Board or other boards. He said the Planning Board will be updating the Town's master plan and wants others to be involved.

Gerry Demuro informed everyone about grants that are currently available.

Marianne noted that we lost a lot of people this past year that will be sorely missed.

Charlotte asked if people would like the town report in a larger book. Majority of the public were in favor of this.

Discussion on using a microphone. John said we could try it next year.

Judy Aron thanked Kathi Bradt and Mike Aron for organizing the meeting with the FMSD to postpone the meeting due to the winter storm on the 14th. John Luther stated that he was so appreciative to Mike for stepping in.

The Moderator announced at 9:20 p.m. that the business portion of meeting was adjourned and that anyone who wishes to vote may do so. Polls closed at 9:25 p.m. Meeting was recessed at 9:25 p.m. to count ballots.

Counting of ballots completed at 10:30 p.m. Meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m. All information was given to the Town Clerk to compile and complete necessary paperwork.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlotte Comeau

Charlotte Comeau
Acworth Town Clerk