

**TOWN OF ACWORTH
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES
March 12, 2024
ACWORTH TOWN HALL, 13 TOWN HALL ROAD**

**Elections – 10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Absentee ballots opened at 3:10 p.m. finished at 3:20 p.m.
Business Meeting – 7:05 p.m. – 9:10 p.m.
Polls closed at 9:12 and business meeting adjourned. Counting of ballots began
Counts given to Town Clerk beginning at 9:30
Meeting adjourned at 10:00 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 Ryanne Schoonover	99
Tax Collector - One person for one-year term Marianne Wierenga Nivelson	138
Treasurer - One person for one-year term Melinda R Loiselle	137
Local Auditor – One person for one-year term Lisa DeValk	135
Moderator – One person for two-year term John Luther	143
Trustee of Trust Funds – One person for three-year term Sandra Binion	135
Trustee of Trust Funds – One person for one-year term Laurie Luther-Houghton	135
Cemetery Trustee – One person for three-year term Claudia Istel	140
Planning Board – Two persons for three-year term Stephen Murray Robert Vogel	115 128
Library Trustee – One person for three-year term Andrea Alderman Mary J Hildreth	132 128
Budget Committee – Two persons for three-year term Jennifer Bland John Balla (write-in)	120 14

John called the meeting to order at 7:05 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 asked whether all had their ballots 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 02 - Road Repairs Following the July 10, 2023 Flood

To see if the Town will vote (1) to raise and appropriate up to \$1,000,000 (gross budget) for the purpose of restoring, repairing, and improving Town roads, including Crane Brook Road, Sam Putnam Road, Forest Road that suffered significant damages during the flash flood of July 10, 2023 (the "Project"); (2) to authorize the issuance of not more than \$1,000,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33) to fund costs of the Project and to authorize Town officials to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest, maturity, and other terms thereon; (3) to authorize Town officials to apply for, obtain, accept, and expend 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. The borrowing authority granted by this Article shall be contingent upon the Town first receiving reimbursements from FEMA/State of New Hampshire to fully pay off the amounts borrowed in 2021 for prior flash flood repairs. *(Recommended by the Budget Committee, 5:Y, 1:N) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen, 3:Y, 0:N). (3/5 ballot vote required)*

A motion was made by Mike Aron. Seconded by William Vannah.

The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the article. Kathi spoke on the 2021 loan and we are still expecting further reimbursement of about 1 million. We may receive reimbursement in time not to take out the second loan but we are making provisions so we don't lose an entire construction season.

After further discussion, the article was moved to vote by secret ballot vote. The Moderator announced to use ballot "G". The Moderator announced that the vote will remain open for one hour. The ballots were collected at 7:37 p.m. and counted at 9:12 p.m.

Results of Cast Secret Ballot Vote Article 02: YES 99 NO 5

ARTICLE 02 PASSED

Article 03 - Long-Term Lease/Purchase of a 10-wheeler

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 \$300,000, payable over a term of five (5) years, to finance the purchase of a 10-wheeler truck to replace the Highway Department's Ford F550, and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$60,000 for the first year's payment under the lease/purchase agreement, with \$20,000 of those funds to come from the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund established in 2000, \$22,133 to come from unassigned fund balance (this represents the one-time highway payment received November 2023), and \$17,867 to be raised by taxation. *(Recommended by the Budget Committee, 6:Y, 0:N) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen, 1:Y, 2:N). (3/5 ballot vote required)*

A motion was made by Ryanne Schoonover. Seconded by David Goodwin

The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the article. After much discussion, the article was moved to vote by secret ballot vote. The Moderator announced to use ballot "H". The Moderator announced that the vote will remain open for one hour. The ballots were collected at 8:03 p.m. and counted at 9:17 p.m.

Results of Cast Secret Ballot Vote Article 03: YES 92 NO 15

ARTICLE 03 PASSED

ARTICLE 04 - 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 Helen Frink. Seconded by David Goodwin.

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

ARTICLE 04 PASSED BY A MAJORITY

ARTICLE 05 - TANS

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 David Goodwin. Seconded by Claudia Istel.

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

ARTICLE 05 PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Article 06 - Fund the Operating Budget

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the Budget Committee recommended sum of \$1,515,778 for general municipal operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. *(Recommended by the Budget Committee, 6:Y, 0:N) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen, 3:Y, 0:N). (Majority vote required)*

A motion was made by Ryanne Schoonover. 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 06 PASSED

Article 07 - Drainage on Cold Pond Road

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$200,000 to replace culverts on Cold Pond Road and grader shim the affected areas in anticipation of a pavement overlay of the whole road in 2025. *(Recommended by the Budget Committee, 0:Y, 6:N) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen, 0:Y, 3:N) (Majority vote required)*

A motion was made David Goodwin. Seconded by Jameson Norman.

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

ARTICLE 07 FAILED BY A MAJORITY

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 Budget Committee, 6:Y, 0:N) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen, 3:Y, 0:N). (Majority vote required)*

A motion was made by Kevin Davey. Seconded by Daniel Young.

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

ARTICLE 08 PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Article 09 - Fund the Highway Equipment CRF

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$20,000 for the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund previously established in 2000. (Recommended by the Budget Committee, 6:Y, 0:N) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen, 3:Y, 0:N). (Majority vote required)

A motion was made by Ryanne Schoonover. 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 09 PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Article 10 - 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 2020. (Recommended by the Budget Committee, 6:Y, 0:N) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen, 3:Y, 0:N). (Majority vote required)

A motion was made by Steve Murray. Seconded by David Goodwin.

The Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on the article. Being none, 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 Budget Committee, 6:Y, 0:N) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen, 3:Y, 0:N). (Majority vote required)

A motion was made by Teresa Berntsen. Seconded by Steve Murray.

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 - Engineering for Forest Road Bridge

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$228,140 for the cost of Engineering Forest Road Bridge replacement with the sum of \$60,000 to come from the Bridge Repair or Replacement Capital Reserve Fund previously established in 2014; \$72,746 to come from unassigned fund balance (this represents the one-time bridge payment of \$54,948 received January 2023, and the one-time bridge payment of \$17,798 received December 2023), and \$95,394 to be raised by taxation. (Recommended by the Budget Committee, 5:Y, 1:N) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen, 3:Y, 0:N). (Majority vote required)

A motion was made by Judy Aron. Seconded by Mark Girard.

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

ARTICLE 12 PASSED BY A MAJORITY

Article 13 - Establish Position of a Building Inspector

To see if the Town will vote pursuant to RSA 674:51 and RSA 673:1 (III) to adopt the state building code (RSA 155-A) as the Town's local building code and to provide for the appointment of a building inspector who shall enforce the state building code. The building inspector shall be appointed by the Board of Selectmen and shall be compensated according to the level of compensation authorized by the adoption of the annual budget by the Town Meeting.

A motion was made by Teresa Berntsen. Seconded by Charlie Bradt.

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

ARTICLE 13 WAS DEFEATED BY A MAJORITY

Article 14 - Other Business

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

Mike Aron thanked Ray Leonard and Mike Girard for all their work on the Planning Board.

Kathi Bradt gave an update on Bowers Brook stating there is \$371k in ARPA funds that DES is giving us to work on this project and it is planned to be started in April.

Claudia Istel spoke on the drift track that is being put in in Lempster stating that Lempster has no zoning rules. The noise from this will carry into Acworth and would be louder than the motor cross. This would effect property values and asked that the Selectmen write a letter to the Lempster Selectmen. The Moderator said there is nothing under other business that can bind the Selectmen but she could bring it up at one of their meetings.

The Moderator announced at 9:12 p.m. that the business portion of meeting was adjourned and that anyone who wishes to vote may do so. There were none so Polls closed at 9:12 p.m. Meeting was recessed at 9:12 p.m. to count ballots.

Counting of ballots completed at 10:00 p.m. Meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m. All information was given to the Town Clerk to compile and complete necessary paperwork.

Respectfully submitted,



Charlotte Comeau
Acworth Town Clerk