

## 2022 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Meeting comes to order at 9:00am on March 12<sup>th</sup> at the Groton Town Hall Community Room at 754 N Groton Rd, Groton, NH

Moderator: Tony Tavares

Select Board Members: Ron Madan (not present); John Rescigno; Tony Albert

Supervisors of the Checklist: Pamela Hamel; Gina Rescigno; Virginia Parker

Administrative Assistant: Sara Smith; Town Clerk: Ruth Millett

Non-residents in Attendance and allowed by the body to answer questions related to any Police issues;

Groton Police Chief: Michael Bagan

Moderator begins the meeting with the Pledge to the American Flag

There are 404 registered voters in the Town of Groton – information from the Town of Groton Alpha List 03/12/2022.  
48 registered voters in attendance at Town Meeting on March 12, 2022

There were 127 voters who came out to vote on March 8<sup>th</sup> Town Election.

Moderator draws attention to the Rules of the Town Meeting in the Town Report

### **BALLOT ARTICLE 1:**

To choose all necessary Town Officers for the year ensuing.

Moderator lists the names of newly elected Town Officials:

Select Board for 3 years: Ron A Madan; Moderator for 2 years: Amy Prive-Hardy; Town Auditor for 1 year: Ann M Joyce; Supervisor of the Checklist for 6 years: Virginia Parker; Supervisor of the Checklist for 2 years: Pamela Hamel; Planning Board Members for 3 years: David M Madden and Kristina Lyn Madden; Zoning Board Members for 3 years: Glen R Hansen and Peter W Smith; Cemetery Trustee for 3 years: Michelle Sharp.

**The above elected Officials are the results of the Groton Town Elections held March 8, 2022**

### **BALLOT ARTICLE 2:**

Town of Groton Zoning Ordinance –

Are you in favor of the adoption of the Town of Groton Zoning Ordinance, (“Ordinance”) as proposed by the Planning Board?

The effect of a Yes vote is summarized as follows:

1. Replacing the current one-page zoning with the proposed Ordinance, known hereafter as The Town of Groton Zoning Ordinance will:
  - a. Establish zoning districts: A. Residential and Forestry/Agriculture; B. Rural Residential, Forestry/Agriculture; C. Renewable Energy/Other Businesses, Forestry/Agriculture, Conservation Cluster and Recreation
  - b. Guarantee personal property uses, and distinguish size and priorities within each district
  - c. Integrate the 2007 approved Floodplain Development Regulation as Article 6.
  - d. Integrate the 2015 approved Large Wind Energy Systems Ordinance (LWES) as Article 7

Should the proposed Zoning Ordinance fail to receive an affirmative vote, the 2007 Zoning Ordinance, the LWES and Floodplain Development Regulation will continue in their present forms as Groton’s zoning.

**This Ballot Article passed during elections held on March 8, 2022 YES- 95; NO- 32**

**Deliberative Session  
March 12<sup>th</sup> 2022**

Moderator reads Article 3:

**Article 3:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **seven hundred ninety-nine thousand, five hundred eighty-five dollars (\$799,585)** which represents the Operating Budget for the ensuing year. Said sum does not include special or individual articles addressed.

**The Select Board Recommends This Article 3-0**

Tony Albert moved the Article, John Rescigno seconded:

John Rescigno presented an amendment to Article 3 that reads:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **eight hundred seven thousand, eighty-five dollars (\$807,085)** which represents the Operating Budget for the ensuing year. Said sum does not include special or individual articles addressed.

**The Select Board Recommends This Article 3-0**

This amendment to warrant article 3 is due to having to amend the Contracted Services for Hebron line from \$74,500 to \$82,000 due to the increase of \$7,500/yr. for the three-year agreement from 2022-2025 which was just received from Hebron and the budget was already created. This makes the Fire/Ambulance budget increase from \$103,104 to \$110,604 which increases the overall operating budget from \$799,585 to \$807,085.

John Rescigno – After we made the budget, we received a bill from the Hebron Fire Department which increased from \$74,500 to \$82,000, so we would like to increase that budget line and thus increase the overall budget to \$807,085.

Stacy Darlington - Which budget line is this?

Sara Smith – under Fire and Ambulance services, you'll see "contracted services Hebron". That is the line John is referencing which increased from \$74,500 to \$82,000.

Dave Darlington – Was it \$82,000 that they submitted for?

Sara Smith - No, it was a little under the \$82,000, but then there are other things that come up they will need to pay for, so it brought the budget to \$82,000.

Dave Leone - Was there a reason for the increase? Did they give you a reason why their number jumped up?

Tony Albert - They are starting to put people on daytime shifts so there's going to be an increase there. These will be per diem people, not full-time people. We're having trouble finding people for shifts during the day.

Sara Smith - and with everything else going up, like increased cost of gas.

Moderator reads the amendment and calls the vote:

Steve Marston moves the amendment, Holly Ann Marston seconds that

Vote taken and Amendment is passed.

Moderator now reads the Amended Article 3 to proceed to a vote on this amended Article.

Doug Millett makes a motion to accept the amended article, Jeremy Elder seconds

Amended Article passes by a clear majority.

Moderator reads Article 4 as written:

**Article 4:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **one hundred eighty-two thousand five hundred dollars (\$182,500)** to be added to the previously established Capital Reserve Funds. The Selectmen recommend this special article. (Majority vote required).

Public Works CR Fund (Dec. 31,2021 balance: \$60,064.44): \$100,000.

Disaster Relief CR Fund (December 31, 2021 balance: \$30,186.57): \$50,000.

Police Cruiser CR Fund (Dec. 31, 2021 balance: \$5,735.68): \$10,000.

Truck/Sander CR Fund (Dec.31,2021 balance: \$1,020.87): \$10,000.

Assessing Reval CR Fund (December 31, 2021 balance \$3,002.18): \$7,500.

Electronic Equipment & Software CR Fund (December 31, 2021 balance \$3,432.38): \$5,000.

**Total Capital Reserve Funds \$182,500.**

**The Select Board Recommends This Article 3-0**

John Rescigno moves to accept the article as written, Tony Albert seconds.

Sharon Nelson – How are we going to figure the majority vote; it says the majority vote required?

Moderator – We are voting on all, instead of voting on each one separately. They've been combined.

Dave Darlington – Last year the Town agreed to liquidate a bunch of its capital assets and it all went into the general fund. We liquidated two funds, the reserve funds for \$100,000. We sold off a bunch of property for another \$50,000. So, we built up the general fund at the end of the year it went from \$100,000 to \$380,000 in the open general fund, but I think this is the time we use that money that we liquidated from our capital assets and put it back into the capital assets. I'm proposing to change this article to read at the end that the \$100,000 come from the unassigned balance as of December 31<sup>st</sup> and the remainder to come from taxation. (Some comments in there are unclear), I propose we use the \$100,000 from the existing funds to put back into the capital funds. Dave Darlington hands the written amendment to the Moderator and the Moderator reads the amendment:

*“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **one hundred eighty-two thousand five hundred dollars (\$182,500)** to be added to the previously established Capital Reserve Funds with one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to come from the unassigned fund balance as of December 31, 2021, and the remainder to be raised through taxation.”*

Public Works CR Fund (Dec. 31,2021 balance: \$60,064.44): \$100,000.  
Disaster Relief CR Fund (December 31, 2021 balance: \$30,186.57): \$50,000.  
Police Cruiser CR Fund (Dec. 31, 2021 balance: \$5,735.68): \$10,000.  
Truck/Sander CR Fund (Dec.31,2021 balance: \$1,020.87): \$10,000.  
Assessing Reval CR Fund (December 31, 2021 balance \$3,002.18): \$7,500.  
Electronic Equipment & Software CR Fund (December 31, 2021 balance \$3,432.38): \$5,000.”

Stacy Darlington makes a motion to accept the amendment, Dave Leone seconded

John Rescigno – Part of that money, the unassigned balance is also being used in Article 6, \$65,000. So, we would take that money out. That money is usually what is used to offset the taxes when we need to offset the tax rate. This year with the tax rate being so low there will not be additional money going into that fund which would affect us next year. It would result in a negative impact on the budget.

Dave Darlington – This will also decrease the taxes. We will be assigning back to the funds that money came out of.

John Rescigno – Which leaves less money in that fund to offset the taxes in the future.

Dave Darlington – It’s still gone up by \$100,000 from last year.

John Rescigno – Keep in mind that there were a lot of things that weren’t voted in last year because there was a little bit of confusion during that meeting. We were hoping the building was going to go through so there were less warrant articles, so those all affected the overall tax rate. Last year was an anomaly. You really need to compare the budget to a previous year.

Dave Darlington – All I am saying is we should take \$100,000 out of that fund to lower the taxes so we know where that money went, so it goes back into the funds for the capital.

Ted Yeaton – How are we going to know how to vote on this if we’re going to maybe use that money for article 6, but we haven’t even got to article 6 yet, (recording poor for the rest of this comment).

Dave Leone – Is this money that came out of other Capital Reserve funds that we had?

John Rescigno – Part of that money did, yes.

Dave Leone – So this \$100,000 money that he is referring to came out of other capital reserve funds that we closed?

John Rescigno - Last year we closed 2 reserve funds. It was money that we were going to put towards the Town Garage and when the Town Garage did not pass the money went goes into that fund.

Dave Leone – So the \$100,000 that he is referring to came from other Capital Reserve funds that we had?

John Rescigno – Yes and No. Part of that money, that \$100,000 is in there, but also when we raise the tax money and that money is not spent, that money also goes into that.

Dave Leone – I understand that, but the \$100,000 that he’s referring to, did that come from these capital reserve funds that we had closed?

Dave Darlington – We liquidated 2 or 3 funds last year and they went into the general fund without anything specific and the general fund went up by \$100,000 over the year one way or other, it hasn't been spent yet, so I see putting it back into these Capital Reserve Funds rather than additional taxation.

Pam Hamel – What percentage of money did we keep back?

Dave Darlington – The fund balance is on page 39. (Dave is talking but I can't make out what is being said).

Sara Smith – 17.37 %

Pam Hamel – and the prior year we were down to....

Sara Smith – It was actually 4 point something %. The lowest the DRA recommends we retain 5% and the Selectmen chose, so that we could add money to taxes to reduce the tax rate, we went below that 5% to reduce the tax rate. Each year it can jump a lot and if we take too much from it this year and apply it to so many other things, we don't know what the situation will be next year.

Pam Hamel – The disaster relief capital reserve fund only has \$30,000 in it and I know we can easily spend over \$100,000 like a drop in the bucket when we have a disaster.

Sara Smith – Our cheapest disaster was \$40,000 and that was the first one in 2017. The other one since then, that was October of 2017 was like \$300,000 and July of 2019 was over \$100,000, that money would not cover the cost of a storm with the minimum damage.

Pam Hamel – We are adding \$50,000 giving us a total of \$80,000 which still in not a whole lot of money, so having an unreserved fund balance of \$300,000 is not crazy money. Its actually good to have, and we always tried to keep 15% - 17% in there because you don't know what might come up. For this reason, I would vote against this amendment.

Sara Smith – That money is also used for emergencies that happen in Town and other things that might come up, the unforeseen things.

Stacy Darlington - Based upon the comments that were just made about the Disaster Relief Fund, the \$50,000 Recommended here by the Select Board is that underfunding the Disaster Relief Fund? Should that be more?

John Rescigno – (Some comments can not be heard, too many people talking at once), We want to lower the taxes and then we want to raise the taxes, so if we raise the taxes, we pay for it with that we're not accomplishing anything. We already have the money on hand. There's no point in raising more.

Stacy Darlington – I understand that, but the argument she's using is that this \$50,000 is insufficient, therefore, that's why we have the reserve fund. It seems illogical to me. That's all I'm saying.

Sara Smith – so, the gentleman next to you put in to take money from the unreserved fund balance. When the Select Board made those numbers, they kept that unreserved fund balance in mind, so they technically already did what he is proposing to do with the amendment, that's why they did \$50,000 because they know they have that money in the unreserved fund balance. So they have already taken that in mind, this could be a lot higher for a lot of those categories.

Stacy Darlington – It's not written that way.

Sara Smith – We're telling you that. That's their job when they make those numbers.

Stacy Darlington – It's not written there.

Bill Jolly – I walked in half-way through this but, I did have a question about it. I just want to get some clarity. When we had a really big flood, when was that?

Sara Smith – Which one? There have been many.

Bill Jolly – The one that blew up all of Sculptured Rocks Road.

Sara Smith – There was one that affected Sculptured Rocks Road in 2017 and July 2019 was the most recent one that did a lot of the damage.

Bill Jolly – If there's an emergency, the reserve funds generally can't be pushed into another need. If we have an emergency, does the Select Board have the right to move funds or is it always locked up?

John Rescigno – We can take money out of that fund to do the repair work that's necessary. Money that is set aside, say for a Police cruiser must be used to that.

Sara Smith – if it was voted on for the cruiser it must be used for the cruiser.

John Rescigno – That is very specific, so if you vote on a Ford 2020 cruiser, that is what we must buy. That is very specific. The general fund moneys we can use for emergencies.

Bill Jolly – So no capital reserve fund can be used for another purpose.

Sara Smith – We can't take money from Public Works for a disaster. It must be used for what that fund is set up for.

Dave Darlington – We took \$150,000 of capital assets that we had reserved last year and liquidated it and put it into the General fund. It can be used for anything. All I'm asking, if we don't need to raise taxes for this and we put it back into the fund we could use that money to build our capital reserves up to what we need to by not raising our taxes. We already liquidated those assets we paid for before. This is just making sure that \$100,000 doesn't come out of this year's taxes if it was raised for certain assets in the past.

John Rescigno – Just to clarify, we don't spend the money for whatever we want to. The budget's very clear, you see where the money goes. It would not be wise for us to decide to put in a park or something and use that money. That money is there right now as a safety cushion for the Town and if you want to remove that safety cushion it's not very wise. You would be doing two things; one, if the tax rate did go up for some reason and we needed to use that money to offset the rate, we would no longer be able to do that, and two, if an emergency did come up, whatever that may be in the Town and that money is not there, we could do nothing to take care of that. You are just looking to shuffle money around which is not a wise thing to do, especially with what is going on in this country. There are a lot of uncertainties. It's nice to have that safety cushion there.

Dave Leone – I agree with Pam, with the 7-15%. I've been a Selectman, been in office. 15% is a number that the DRA has come up with that's a good fund balance to have. I'm personally in favor of having that higher number because it's nice to have money on hand in case something goes wrong. Can you tell us what that percentage would be if it was 15%? Is that where we're at? Do we have an idea of what we have in that reserve fund balance percentage?

Sara Smith – What I told Pam, it's 17.37%.

Dave Leone – So we have a little more than 15%.

Sara Smith – They recommend between 5 and 17%. Last year the Town was forced to go below that 5% to keep the taxes as low as they could and you could see that last year, we did not have low taxes and that was with even going below that 5%. The number that they gave is close to that 17%.

John Rescigno – Keep in mind that 17% is there as of today. If something were to happen tomorrow, that could go down.

Bill Jolly – (cannot understand first part – too much talking), The smart kids on Wall Street right now are saying we could be looking at diesel over \$9/gallon. We don't know what we're facing. I think what the Town's people are saying is that they are concerned that there will be behavior at the Select Board level that they will spend that money for purposes that would not be desirable. The one thing I was thinking of is that in the past we've spent money on doing architectural work for the building. Is there a way to make sure that we are protected from that? To make sure we have this money and that it won't be used for other expenses over which we have no control?

Sara Smith – The other fund balances there are only certain things you may use that for. The Selectmen could not say, we want money from the unreserved fund balance to get an architectural plan. They got the architectural plan because that came out of the public works which is what the money was in there for. The unreserved fund balance is only to offset taxes or for emergencies. There are specific things through the DRA. The Town would need to go to the DRA to tell them what the money would be used for.

Bill Jolly – So if the Town wanted to pull \$60,000 out for an architect, this money would not be available?

Sara Smith – It would not come out of the unreserved fund balance.

John Rescigno – What the Town did in the past was not hidden. It was clear on everything we were doing.

Bill Jolly – I'm trying not to be confrontational.

John Rescigno – I just want to make it clear the Select Board has never done anything deceptive to the Town as you suggested.

Sara Smith – It was not like it was hidden.

Pam Hamel – I just want to say that the comment I made that the line is underfunded. I was just saying it doesn't bring us where we eventually need to go. Words do matter.

Miles Sinclair – As I understand, you must get DRA's permission before you can use any of the unreserved fund balance.

Sara Smith – Yes, that is correct.

Gina Rescigno – There have been suggestions that the Select Board is doing something funny all the time. They should be addressed in a way that they are not stealing from you. They have been more than clear.

Jeremy Elder moved to vote on the Amendment, Ann Joyce seconded.

Moderator reads the amendment again as was written:

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **one hundred eighty-two thousand five hundred dollars (\$182,500)** to be added to the previously established Capital Reserve Funds with one hundred

thousand dollars (\$100,000) to come from the unassigned fund balance as of December 31, 2021, and the remainder to be raised through taxation.

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Assessing Reval CR Fund (December 31, 2021 balance \$3,002.18): \$7,500.  
Electronic Equipment & Software CR Fund (December 31, 2021 balance \$3,432.38): \$5,000.”

Vote is taken and the amendment fails.

Back to **Article 4** as it is written:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **one hundred eighty-two thousand five hundred dollars (\$182,500)** to be added to the previously established Capital Reserve Funds. The Selectmen recommend this special article. (Majority vote required).

Public Works CR Fund (Dec. 31,2021 balance: \$60,064.44): \$100,000.  
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Electronic Equipment & Software CR Fund (December 31, 2021 balance \$3,432.38): \$5,000.

**Total Capital Reserve Funds \$182,500.**

**The Select Board Recommends This Article 3-0**

Moderator asks if there is any more discussion on this article.

Dave Leone – Is this the first year we have put all the Capital Reserve Fund balances in one Article?

Sara Smith – They used to be their own separate articles and it took too much time to go through each CRF individually. Other towns were grouping them together so it was decided to group them together about 5 years ago.

Moderator wraps up discussion and calls for a vote.

Article 4 passes as written.

**Article 5**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **thirty thousand dollars, (\$30,000)**, to conduct sitework and plan design at the land across from the Transfer Station which is the potential site for the future Highway Garage. (Submitted by the Highway Department)

**The Select Board Recommends This Article 2-1**

John moves the article as written, Tony seconded



Bill Jolly – It was 2-1 in favor of it. What was the dissenter’s reason for voting no?

John Rescigno – That would be me. The reason I was against this is because we have already put money into that land and I didn’t want us to go into a step process, where one year we do excavation, the next year a foundation and all these different steps, because doing it that way will, A, take longer to put the building up and it’s going to cost more money and, B, there’s always a chance that there will be a step along the way that the Town will vote against something and then all that money that was spent would be wasted. That was my reason. I just felt that if we’re going to vote for a building we need to vote for a building and have a plan and put that building up.

Ted Yeaton – Shouldn’t we decide on if we even approve of the Town Garage before we spend the money on something we haven’t even decided about the garage we’re going to have? How do we do this without deciding that first?

Tony Albert – We brought this up in a discussion and Ron and I agreed to it for this reason, we need to move the garage, it floods out. It’s not a question of whether or not we need to do this – we need to do this. Talking to other people in Town we got a quote to level the site and stabilize the site, put down rip wrap and seed it so it’s stable and flatten it out so we can have a design and part of this money is a septic design and the layout of a different building and the piecemeal is the only way I feel we’re going to get this done. We got a quote from an Amish Company doing Kuplin’s garage. It’s wood with steel on it and we got an estimate for the building only enclosed with doors and windows and insulation, not electricity or plumbing for \$174,000 using the same design that we have. We’re not moving on that today, but we’re trying to work on getting a building Committee together for next year to try to move on that. We’ve got to have more than the Selectmen. If it’s just Selectmen, it won’t go forward again. We’ve got to put money away. We have to move. The insurance company has not said they won’t insure us, but this is like the third time the building has flooded out and we have \$1 million of equipment down there and every big rainstorm we have to go down and move the equipment in case it floods. This \$30,000 will be well-spent. We put \$100,000 in the budget but we got an estimate and this if for septic design and then we can come back to the Towns people. This will stabilize and stop the erosion and drainage will go where it’s going to be and then we can decide what we’re going to do later.

Robert Ellis – The thought process was that we may come to you next year and ask about putting the salt and sand shed up there and it goes along with the next article about keeping the old backhoe and then the backhoe would be up there for that. So, if we can get the site and least stable and flat, we can figure out where we actually want to put things, but it’s also so we can put the sand and salt shed up out of the flood zone. It will start out with that. It seems that’s the way people want to do it in actual steps.

Bill Jolly – In the interest of being good stewards of the land that we own, how much of that \$30,000 is for doing site work specifically to make sure it doesn’t erode or damage adjoining property and things like that?

Sara Smith - \$21,000 as of today’s date depending on increases etc.

Bill Jolly – What if we were to change that to \$20,000 specific for site work knowing we own the property and we don’t want it to disappear on us, but we don’t necessarily know we’re going to have a building as John said and I tend to agree, we don’t know what’s going to happen with the building itself, but at some point that land’s going to have a purpose, or we’ll sell it and we want the land to be intact when we do that, so what’s the process of doing that?

Moderator – You can write an amendment specific to this article as long as it doesn’t change the purpose of the article but change the amount and then we can vote on it.

Bill Jolly – It will be changing the article in that it would remove the septic design.

Robert Ellis – (recording not clear).

Dave Leone – To give you a little history of myself and that property and the building we have now. At one time I had a deal with the, then, landowner to give us that land for one dollar. This was when we were going to build the garage we have now. I designed the garage, I drew plans for the garage, presented them to the Town at Town Meeting and those plans were accepted and it was done in 2 years. With that being said, the reason the garage was put where it is now was because the, then, Select Board, chose not to move forward with putting it at the top of the hill. They wanted to leave it where it was for whatever reason, so that's the reason the garage is build where it is now. I have a few questions on this article. First of all, I would like to ask where we got the bid from. One reason I ask this is that last year I donated wood to do the bridge that goes up to the pond which I never ended up donating because I didn't know the price that was given also included the labor to have it taken out and the new put in. I thought the price was just for wood. I thought it was townspeople that were going to put it in and it didn't happen that way. So, now I would like to know who you got a bid from to do the work. Before you answer that, I have a couple other comments. As for the peptic design. The Town has had a test pit done in the past. I'm not sure if they had a design done with it. I'm a licensed septic installer. The septic design isn't worth anything unless you already know what you're going to do for a building and the size of the building. The septic design we had done the last time and the test pit, that's all money that's thrown out the window because once you change the grades of the land that septic design is no good anymore. You will need to start from scratch again. So, the bottom line, once the Town started doing any dirt work on that site, the Town should have gone back immediately and seeded it to follow good practice rules that are in place in the State. I don't know why that wasn't done. Then we have more materials dumped where we spent money to look for ledge. I believe we spent \$12,000 to look for ledge. I can tell you, the rock that they found wouldn't have cost \$3000 to get rid of it. So, we're spending more and more money. Now we're looking to level out the material we had trucked in there to prep the site to do something different that we don't know what we're going o do. I can tell you right now, all that it would take is a 100-pound bag of grass seed covered over that whole area and let the grass grow in and we're done. We can go back in when we have a plan, reshape it, have a building plan, have a site plan, reshape it. The grass seed isn't going to do anything that will affect what is done in the future. We're looking a 100 pounds of grass seed to seed the whole area and just let it grow in. If we need to put a berm in so we can stop any run-off if that's what is happening, I'm not sure, that can easily be done. We have a backhoe that works. So, I guess I'm really confused as to why we'd want to spend another \$20-\$30,000, or any more money to do something to hold it so that we can decide in the future what we're going to do. We need the building at the top. I wanted to build the current building at the top. Who did you get a bid from, or an estimate from to do the dirt-work?

Sara Smith – Casey Kuplin, but it's not a bid, it's a quote. There's a difference between a bid and a quote. To do a warrant article we just reached out for a quote, so we have an estimate. Once the amount is approved, we then send out for a bid to more than just one company. So, this is just our starting point to know what amount to put in the article.

Miles Sinclair – At the budget hearing, I asked Sara to produce a total of all the money we have put on that property up to this point and she gave me that information and it was \$64,907.76. What that doesn't include is that this was supposed to be a land swap with a property off of Old Rumney Road, but there were problems with the deed search or something with that, and with the title search, and so it wound up the Town had to pay the \$50,000 for that piece of property. So as of right now we have spent \$114,907.76 on that property and that excludes the survey. I guessing that was \$1-\$2,000. My concern is similar to some of the questions that other people have raised. Up to this point, we have spent all that money and now that we're looking at an entirely different proposal, a brand-new proposal, much of the money we have already spent on the Turn Stone and the excavation that took place before, and the \$7606 that we spent applying for the grant, in hindsight that hasn't been well spent. I would like to think we can agree on that. My concern is that we shouldn't be doing anything more with this property until we have a complete proposal on what we're going to do next. Dave's concerns that he brought up, the septic and if you do this and that; the people heard what he had to say. I think it's unwise to do anything more until we have a concrete proposal to move forward on. Beyond that, to me these are the worst financial times of my lifetime, so I would like to think that we're not going to

spend money on anything that isn't absolutely necessary at this point, and to me, this is not absolutely necessary, Thank you.

Stacy Darlington – I just wanted to state, I don't think anyone here is disputing the fact that we need to move the Town garage. That's a given, and we understand that, but I think at this point, just to continue on what these two gentlemen said, we're at that stage where we need to look at this wholistically, complete, before we add any more dollars to this. I understand the thought of perhaps moving the sheds up there in the interim. We don't know where the sheds are going to fit in yet with the entire picture, so until we have the entire picture, I'm not sure it is in our best interest to apply any more money at this time.

Ann Joyce moves the article, Bill Jolly seconds.

Moderator reads Article 5 again and calls for the vote.

Article 5 fails

#### **Article 6 –**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **one hundred sixty-five thousand dollars (\$165,000)** for the purpose of purchasing a new Backhoe/Loader for the highway department with **fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000)** to come from the Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund, **sixty-five thousand dollars (\$65,000)** to come from the unassigned fund balance as of December 31, 2021, and **fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000)** from a RSDA grant. If the grant is not received, the **fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000)** will be raised through taxation. (Submitted by the Highway Department).

#### **The Select Board Recommends This Article 3-0**

Tony moves the article and John seconds

Robert Ellis – The backhoe that we have now is getting pretty tired and a lot of that is it has to come up to the dump and pack the dump. Mostly once a week but in the summertime, it can be twice a week. It's 10 years old which doesn't seem very old, but climbing that hill is actually pretty hard on it. It has just under 4500 hours. It's real tired. The other thing, the old back hoe has a trade-in value of \$22,000. We were actually thinking about leaving the old backhoe at the transfer station so that the new backhoe wouldn't actually need to climb up and down that hill. If there are things, I can do with the old backhoe on this end of town, then I would still use the old backhoe.

Stacy Darlington – Our house is directly across from the Town garage. I call her Old Bessie and I can attest to how busy Old Bessy is especially during the summer.

Deb Johnson – I don't understand if the issue is bringing the backhoe back and forth from the bottom of the hill up to the top of the hill, why can't you build a lean-to for \$2-\$3,000 and keep it up there now?

Robert Ellis – Most of the time, I need it at the garage to load the sand and material at the garage in the wintertime especially.

Deb Johnson – So you're really talking about keeping two backhoes.

Robert Ellis - Yes, instead of trading the old backhoe in we'd leave the old backhoe at the transfer station and use it there. Newer backhoes are definitely made to go over the road, but 90% of the time they are not climbing on hills like "dump hill".

Steve Marston – What kind of a backhoe do you have numbers on?

Robert Ellis – JP, Caterpillar, and John Deere.

Steve Marston – Do you know if any of those machines are made so that you can replace components; like a transmission if it's modular so you can take it out and put in a new one?

Robert Ellis – The backhoe that we're leaning towards is a backhoe that I believe the State uses as well and most towns around here, so parts are more readily available for that machine.

Steve Marston – Most of that kind of equipment is designed so that you can replace modules so that it can be done easily. If this backhoe that we have now had been designed that way, chances are you could replace the transmission and it would make a lot of difference. 4500 hours is not a lot of hours. Most machines today are designed for 10000 hours.

Robert Ellis – I don't disagree and again, climbing that hill is a totally different animal.

Bill Jolly – To follow what they're saying, it is bad practice to purchase a backhoe during the summer months when you aren't having to move sand as often and then keep it down where it is now. You also have labor involved and it's a long ride in that. What is the obstacle to perching it up at the dump in the summertime and then having it down where it needs to be near the sand and salt in the wintertime?

Robert Ellis – It's not practical. I use that machine a lot more than people think I do. If I needed to do something, let's say on Province Road, I'm still going to need to take it down the mountain and back up the mountain again.

Bill Jolly – Can it be trailered?

Robert Ellis – We don't have the means to do that, no. or the drivers with the correct licenses.

Dave Darlington – I'd like to know what is the status of the grant request?

Sara Smith – We won't know till July.

Robert Ellis – We've never been denied it, but there's no promise.

Sara Smith – It has been submitted. It was on time; they have everything they need. We've never been denied when we've gone for it, not to say that we won't.

Dave Darlington – If we do get the grant, will we get it before the tax rate is set?

Sara Smith – The rate is not set usually till November and then you get the tax bills.

Dave Leone – This backhoe, is it just the backhoe or are there other attachments to go with it? What is the make of the backhoe?

Robert Ellis – I can't specifically say the make because one time we got forced into a brand. That's why it is not written exactly. I'm leaning towards a John Deere because that's what the State is using and most of the towns around us. It does have more than what we have now, it has a wrist on the back and a thumb.

Dave Leone – So, as an excavation person, as an equipment operator and owner. I have an excavator. I have minimal attachments on my excavator because the machine is built to do what it does, anytime you add something to it, it changes the weight distribution in the machine. You're making the machine heavier; you're asking the machine to do something else other than it's made to do. I have minimal attachments. I don't have a twister wrist because that's more weight. I don't have a hydraulic coupler; I have to get out and manually loosen two bolts and take them off so I can change buckets which is the only attachment I have. With that being said, by adding more things to a piece of equipment, you're asking it to do more. You're asking it to be the Town's sweeper. Sweeping is the worst thing you can do with a piece of equipment. When I was down in the southern part of the state, part of what I did was sweeping. I had one particular machine I used for that and I leased that machine. Has the Town looked into leasing a backhoe that would do what we need as far as loading the trucks with sand and push down the dumpsters at the transfer station? Did you look at a machine that would be a basic machine and have you looked at leases? My other question, has the Town looked into trailers or asking anyone what they would charge to move that machine for them? In the past I have moved the machine for the Town at no cost because if I charge the Town to do it, then I have to pay more insurance.

Robert Ellis – It's a little tough moving that. You'd be moving that machine every week and if something happened out on the River Road, it would need to be moved... (hard to hear on the recording) ... I weighed all the options and went with the best option obviously.

Ted Yeaton – If we get this new backhoe, where are we going to put it? We have a garage that floods. We're worried about that, what are we going to do with it?

Robert Ellis – The same thing we do with the old one. I move it every time it rains now.

John Rescigno – As far as leasing goes, you have an ongoing payment and get yourself nowhere. If we take care of the machine, we'll have it paid off and have a machine to be used for the future. If we lease something we just have a constant payment. You don't really benefit from that.

Rich Bellanger – The State puts out bids on everything in the world. They put out bids for backhoes. If we were to buy a backhoe through the State, they tend to like John Deere right now. It'd be \$24,000 a year. I think that might be the way to go. One of the reasons I think that's the way we should do it is that these new modern pieces of equipment are all full of emissions stuff that go bad and cost a ton of money to fix. If we lease the vehicle for 5 years and we get rid of it in 5 years we're not paying for emissions repair. A lot of the big construction companies figure \$10-15 grand per year just on emissions stuff. That's not cost effective. So, it's worked out well. I've seen towns do it, lease the backhoe for 5 years then lose it and get another new one. I understand the Yankee frugal way is to keep it till it's no good, unfortunately because of the Federal Government, it's not cost effective to do that anymore. I'm way against having two backhoes. We should always have the amount of shovels that we need, not more because it will sit around. If that backhoe is not good enough to use it ain't good enough to keep around and 4500 hours ain't the end of the world. It'll be OK, but I'm not opposed to getting a backhoe, but let's lease it and get rid of it in 5 years. Always have been against it, now I think it's a good idea.

Miles Sinclair – I also have a concern about keeping extra equipment. We have been spoiled up to this point in recent years with the money we get from the windfarm. With out current thirst for spending, we better hope that the wind farm gets repowered, because if it doesn't, we're going to have a collision course with financial reality. Somehow, perhaps magically this Town used to be able to get by with one backhoe, with one 6-wheeler, with one extra truck and again, we've been spoiled and we've been able to do more up to this point, but to me, a lot of this, I have similar concerns to ones that have been raise already. I don't think we're getting our value from it once we start adding additional equipment and this "back-ups for back-ups". I don't know about other people, but I don't have a "back-up" pick-up truck in case my truck has a problem with it. I don't have a "back-up" for my lawn mower, my Kubota tractor. If something goes wrong, you get it fixed. If you need something short-term, we can always use a rental.

Robert Ellis - I don't disagree with you on some of what you're saying, but it's not 20 years ago. The dump didn't used to get packed once a week. The dump never got packed. The dumpsters would be only half full, they didn't pack the dump, right? That's the truth and during COVID there's been a lot more garbage coming in. I'm all right with one backhoe, the only thought process behind that was, to trade it in for \$20,000 when we could leave it at the dump and maybe get another 5 years out of it just to pack the dump and maybe use it for some projects on this end and save the new backhoe. It's over 50 minutes to get down to Bailey Hill Road in the backhoe. I know there's a lot of questions about if we could trailer it. We could buy a \$50,000 trailer, but no one in Town has a class A license that works for the Town. There's only 2 of us that can actually drive the big 6-wheeler with a class B license. Things are getting out of control with being able to afford the people that we have. We're lucky right now with the 3 guys that work with me don't necessarily have to be here, but they are. It's not easy, but I've had zero turn-over in the last 4 years in the guys. When I worked here the first 3 years there were 7 people that came and went. Anyway, that getting a little off the subject.

Bill Jolly – If we reread the article, because that's what we're talking about, if we read the article, the sentence I'm focusing on is the last one..." if the grant is not received, the \$50,000 will be raised through taxation." Everything else is accounted for already, so if in the future, if this fails, we can look at a lease, sure, but right now, it appears as though we have a lot of funds already available. Is there a way to remove that sentence, or is that disallowed right now?

Sara Smith – You can't remove that sentence. You're required to have that since we don't know the status of the grant. So that is the amount that would need to be raise from taxation if we don't get that grant. You have to have that in there. We've applied for the grant, but we have not been awarded it.

Bill Jolly – Can we change the language to say, in the event that the grant is not funded, this will be a moot article, or something to that effect? I'm asking the moderator 'cause he's the guy.

Moderator – To be honest, I don't have the answer. We can do anything to any article that you want. You guys are legislators. You can write this article anyway you want. The DRA will review it and disallow it if it's not passable.

Bill Jolly – So is anyone apposed to that idea? So, I'd like to amend...

John Rescigno – I just want to point one thing out, I'm open to the discussion of whether we keep or get rid of the old unit, but keep one thing in mind, when you talk about a back-up unit and all these other components and what you own and what the Town owns, you're relying on yourself, if your mower breaks down, it's your yard, When a piece of equipment breaks down in the Town, it's 600 people that are relying on the piece of equipment. It's a bigger picture than when you're just looking in your own yard and what you have and that you don't have a back-up for x,y,z.

Sara Smith – We can't use the grant on a lease.

Ann Joyce – I just want to move this article. I think we've gone around in circles enough times. Your either vote for it or you don't. Jeremy Elder second this.

Moderator reads the article again and call for a vote.

The results were very close, so Virginia Parker does a count: Opposed 20, in Favor 24.

Article 6 passes.

## Article 7

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **forty thousand dollars (\$40,000)** to pave the parking lot at the Town House.

### The Select Board Recommends This Article 3-0

John moves to accept the article as written, Tony seconds.

Tony Albert – This was brought up to us by the Town’s people, to ask us if we’d consider paving the parking lot. You can see the reason why, with all the mud. We got a quote/estimate on doing it and it’s up to you people if you want it to be done.

Stephen Spafford – At the deliberative session that we had, Miles brought up that since 1769 it hasn’t been paved, what do we need it now for? Since this came up, I’ve been talking to people and trying to get a feeling for it, and there’s a couple of things that weren’t brought up at that meeting and nobody asked; what kind of pavement? If we put pavement that’s impervious, all that water’s going to end up running down into Norm Willey’s yard. They do make a pervious, where it does allow water to drain down and through. That was never discussed. I don’t know what the plans were when this was drawn up. Also, being the chair of the Conservation Commission, I should be concerned about these sorts of things and as a result of that, and also in these questions I’ve asked people, I’ve asked, “When did you get stuck in the parking lot?” I don’t think I’ve known anyone who got stuck. Someone the other day said to me, “When I go to Town Meeting, I get all muddy.” When you bring people in from the outside, and I’m one of them, you want to pave? Bring in the city to us? No, we moved here to get away from the city. We kind of like it the way it is as much as we possibly can. Therefore, I have written an amendment.

Motion to amend article 7: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$40,000 to build the recycle bays at the Town Transfer Station.

Moderator instructs that this cannot be done because it changes the purpose of the article.

Moderator – You cannot change the intent of the article.

Stephen Spafford – We’ve put in the concrete pads...

John Rescigno – There’s a \$116,000 quote for that. There wasn’t electricity in the townhouse then either and they chose to do that, or there wasn’t plumbing, so just because this wasn’t in the Town house doesn’t mean you can’t progress forward. The parking lot is a mess, it brings a lot of dirt into the building. There’s nothing wrong with enhancing the Town and making the Town look nicer and more appealing. I’m totally for the project and it should be passed.

Holly Ann Marston – What area are we paving? I just want to know how big it will be, like how many cars will it fit?

John Rescigno – Basically the foot print that’s out there now.

Anne Tobine – I have a farm out back so I’m a little concerned about this. With pavement there is run off with oils and stuff. I already have run off from the cemetery so I don’t really need stuff getting to my animals. What would it cost to re-gravel it so it’s not a mud bath, so there’s good gravel here, so you can fix it rather than have a pavement that would need to be repaved every 5 years or so?

Ruth Millett – I wondered if you had looked into putting hard pack instead of pavement. When we lived in Ascutney we had a sand and clay base and my dad put down hardpack. The parking lot and driveway withstood 20 years and still is firm today.

John Rescigno – We have not looked into that as an option. We were looking for something that was a little more permanent.

Stacy Darlington – Is this area a part of the Newfound Watershed?

John Rescigno – No

Stephen Spafford – The signs are right up here.

John Rescigno – It doesn't begin here, it's down a little bit.

Stacy Darlington – The reason I ask that is because the Newfound Watershed has specific requirements of paving within the Watershed area. My question is if it's part of that watershed area.

John Rescigno – No, the first sign for the Watershed is down the road slightly. We can confirm that, but to the best of my knowledge that sign is where it begins.

Stacy Darlington – I suggest that the Town confirm that, because the Watershed does have specific requirements within the Watershed area.

Ted Yeaton – Do you think this is an accurate figure with the cost of what things are today? The cost will probably go over what you're asking for with the cost of oil now.

John Rescigno – It was an accurate figure to the estimate we received and we did add a little cushion on to it.

Sara Smith – We got a quote and then increased a little bit so the quote's a little under what they're asking for knowing that fuel and everything went up.

Steven Marston – Does this use pervious material or is it going to be impervious?

Robert Ellis – Impervious

Steve Marston – Does the pervious work this far north? I don't know.

Robert Ellis – That is questionable still.

Miles Sinclair - I have 3 concerns with this. First and foremost, it's not historical. The work that has been done to this building up to this point we've tried to maintain some historic character. The second is similar to what Mrs. Darlington had raised. We give \$1000 every year to the Newfound Lake Region Association. They advocate to minimize impervious surfaces to the extent possible, which, if we're going to give money to that we should perhaps practice what they preach in that regard if it's reasonable. And then the third thing is, like I said, these are the worst financial times of my lifetime and as I said earlier, I don't think we should spend any money on anything unless it is absolutely necessary. No body with a straight face can claim that this is a need, because we've been able to get away without it for 220+ years. So, at its best it's a "want". Because of where we're at and the uncertainty going forward, I don't think we should spend this money on this. I think that it's unnecessary.

Bill Jolly – If we're looking at this as something we want to pave, we want to be good stewards as something that will not affect the neighbors and will not affect the soil in general. We are in very uncertain times. If we just say we're going to wait a year and if the Select Board would like to revisit this, I think most people would be in favor of not having their cars covered in mud. We also want to make sure we're doing the right thing by all the other things we have discussed,



financially, just get a price on ledge pack and revisit it next year. At least then we'd know what we're dealing with. Hopefully we'll be out of these financial times. I'd like to ask that we move on this.

Moderator – We had 2 hands who wanted to speak before we move.

John Rescigno – I just want to point out that, yes, these are difficult times but the housing crisis was equally as devastating to what we're going through right now, so let's focus on the whole picture, and not emphasize why we should not do something. Let's consider whether the job should be done or should not be done.

Dave Leone – To answer the Watershed question, I'm a water guy. I can tell you that there's a spot out behind the Townhouse that's actually where the water either goes towards Newfound Lake or it goes down Halls Brook Road. When it falls there it goes towards Newfound Lake, I can tell you that for sure. There's another spot in Town that I find very interesting, there's a beaver dam. It's on the line and at that beaver dam the water comes out two ways. When it comes out on this side it goes to Hall's Brook Road, when it comes out of the other side it goes down in the Newfound Lake. It's funny where water goes, but I can tell you that water that falls here goes to Newfound Lake. To address Pam's comment or the comment of whether there is something else we can put down, by driveway is a gravel driveway. I don't have any mud in my driveway for 2 reasons. On the top of my driveway, I put a layer of 1 1/2" stone and I compacted it in. You can walk on my driveway right now and you'll be walking on that 1 1/2" stone. It's compacted in, it's tight. Every once in a while, I put more stone down and press it up, compact it in. I don't get any mud. Another concern that I have is the fact that they're using salt to treat this driveway. I have a picture I took on my phone when I was up here last week. I can show anyone the picture if they want to see it. Pure salt to salt the driveway. Salt is the worst thing you can do on a gravel surface; it holds the moisture and turns into mud. To that's contributing to why this is mud. My other concern is if we voted to pave it, we have drainage concerns, there's a drainage issue in the front of the driveway that has been there forever. There's a puddle that has been there forever. To address that we need to spend more money initially to shape the driveway or put a culvert in that will cost money. The State didn't want to put a culvert in. I tried to get them to do it years ago, to there's drainage issues, there issues with the material that's on the ground there now. Paving the driveway the way it is right now is not the thing to do.

The Article has been moved; Jeremy Elder seconded

The moderator reads the article again and calls for a vote.

The article fails

Article 8

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **nineteen thousand dollars (\$19,000)** to pave the intersections in Groton.

#### **The Select Board Recommends This Article 3-0**

John Rescigno moves to accept the article as read, Tony Albert seconded.

Robert Ellis – So, this is to put 6-8' aprons on intersections with Town roads, Old Rumney Road, Edgar Albert and Blanchette. The highest stopping spot at the end of the road. We're just trying to save the end of the road and most of the other gravel roads do have a 5 – 7' apron.

Dave Leone – I think this is a waste of our money. If we are going to pave them, we need to totally reshape the ends of those roads to accept the pavement. They really should be rebuilt so it will last. We did it on the Old Rumney Road and the reason to do it there was because the Town's truck was coming up the hill and having to stop on that gravel hill and then go up from there. I don't see any purpose in doing this.

Robert Ellis – I actually disagree with you. From a lot of the classes I've gone to, and one of the people actually said, that paving the end of the road will save the gravel and we're losing the gravel.

The one reason we have salt going out into the road out here is because when we empty the truck out and you don't run the chain and the spinner it puts down quite a bit of salt. I'm not disagreeing with you that there was salt out there.

Ted Yeaton – Edgar Albert Road has access onto a state Road. Is there a permit we need to do that from the State? Can we do whatever we want?

Dave Leone – I'm on a private road and I have to ask the State about paving the end of my private road and they told me I had to get a permit to do it.

Bill Jolly – This is specific to Orange Road which still needs to be done. For those of you who don't know on this side of town, if you didn't check it out after the last flood, we had one flood that washed out the bridge.

Moderator questions whether this is about the article.

Bill Jolly – It is. There's just a back story to it. The bridge got knocked out and then an entire section. When they rebuilt it they elevated the road. It needed to be done, no fault there but what happened was, now it's creating a dam at the bottom of Orange Road and so what's happening it it's retaining water which will cause damage to the newly paved road that was just built through grant money. We don't want to have to rebuild it. What happened when they put the new box culvert in everything got elevated now it's creating a dam. With what you're suggesting be done, will it be used for something like that or something else?

Robert Ellis – Will it stop it? We're not doing anything to the end of Orange Road.

Moderator - You must ask questions specific to the article. Is that road part of this article?

Select Board – No.

Jeremy Elder makes a motion to move the article, Ann Joyce seconded

Moderator closes comments and call for the vote.

Moderator reads the article again.

Article fails.

**Article 9 –**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **nine thousand five hundred dollars (\$9,500)** to recoat and restripe the basketball court at the Everett Hobart Memorial Park.

**The Select Board Recommends This Article 3-0**

Tony Albert moves to accept the article as written, John Rescigno seconds.

John Rescigno – We are all familiar with the basketball court that’s down at the Town Park. It requires maintenance. There are cracks in it and we want to address the cracks and have it resurfaced and restriped to maintain the integrity of the basketball court. Otherwise, it will deteriorate and just need to be torn up.

Celine Richer – I’m all for basketball courts and for kids being able to have a nice basketball court. Right now, at this time, I think that’s really a lot. It’s nice to have and maybe next year, but I don’t see spending \$9000 to do this at this point.

Robert Ellis – I don’t disagree with you, but this is the only court that I see getting used a lot at the park. Not necessarily the baseball diamond, not necessarily soccer. The basket ball court is used by a lot of kids and a lot of adults play. The cracks are just getting worse and worse. We actually tried to fix it about 4 years ago. I just bring this stuff forward to the people and obviously you can decide on it. I do see a lot of use by kids and young adults on the basketball court.

Sara Smith – This is the cheapest quote we’ve been able to get. When we looked into it a few years ago it was almost \$20,000 from that company to redo it, so this company was one that Bubba found that he’s worked with and they were able to get us this quote. So that’s another reason, seeing this lower quote, seeing that it is used, that’s why it was brought forward.

Gina Rescigno – I’m just curious if the majority voted for the park to be part of the community, when is the right time to take care of it? It seems like every year it’s not the right time to take care of everything. You can’t put something in and the not take care of it.

Pam Hamel – So few things in town we call our own and are nice and well-kept. I understand times are difficult and if I asked most people in this room whether or not they’re still spending money on wants, I bet you are in your personal life. I think we just voted down \$89,000 worth of stuff. I think we should do this. We needed to do it a few years ago and time just keeps going on. I just think we should do this.

Anne Tobine – I was actually part of the group many years ago, 10 or 12 years ago that actually got the money for the park after 3 or 4 years we finally got it together. Sadly, most of the people who helped put the park together are no longer here on earth. So, I’m going o speat up. There was a lot of hard work that went into building that park, now, sadly there’s no longer a recreation committee mainly because a lot of people just don’t see the need for it, but just redo that basketball court if we keep putting it off it will have to be dug up because it will become a danger to people. We did the park for the kids in Town. A lot of people think, well, no one goes there. There are kids there that go and play basketball. Groton has no other outlet. We don’t have store. The park is all the kids have. So, I think \$9,500 is pocket change. I know how hard it is. I live in a one salary household, so I know how hard it is right now. But the thing is, there are a lot of kids in Town that don’t have anything. If their parents can take them down there to play basket ball at the park for free, that’s what they’re going to do. So please remember that. It’s not just about, we don’t have money, well you know what? There’s a lot of people in this town who have even less. There was a lot of work that went into that park and a lot of blood, sweat and tears and time that people put into it so please just help keep it so it can be used.

Ruth Millett – Just to emphasize what she is saying, if we don’t maintain it, it will be destroyed. Water gets in there and ruins the pavement. Just resurfacing it alone would be wonderful.

Stacy Darlington – I also want to speak to this. Please keep in mind that this road the park is on is a main thoroughfare to a New Hampshire State Park, Sculptured Rocks, and this also speaks to the overall quality of the Town of Groton. I do believe that this is money well spent, not only for the children and adults that use it, but also for our reputation and what people perceive as the quality of the Town. I believe it will be money well-spent.

Bill Jolly – I have Scottish ancestry that makes us really cheap. My daughter doesn't use the court, she doesn't like basketball, but I think that it's important. We have a culture right here and we want to make sure our kids have something to do. There's a direct correlation... (most of this comment is unclear on the recording), I think this is something that strengthens the Town and helps us be more resilient against these hard times we are facing.

Celine Richer – When I said this, I wasn't aware of all the history. Understanding the history, understanding how bad the court is. I'm in favor of basketball and sports for the kids. I don't have kids in the Town and I don't come from this town originally. Now hearing how passionate people are about this and that it is used as much as it is. I take back what I said.

Robert Ellis – We aren't taking the whole court up or anything, we're filling the cracks and resurfacing the top basically. I didn't want you to think it was being ground up.

Dave Leone – I think you just answered my question about what material is being used to recoat.

Robert Ellis – I can't honestly tell you. This is what the company does.

Dave Leone – I'm in favor of doing this and I'm one of the people that donated a lot of time and material to set up the park.

Ann Joyce makes a motion to move the article, Jeremy Elder seconds

Moderator reads the article again and then call for the vote.

Article passes

#### **Article 10 –**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **two hundred ninety-one dollars (\$291)** for deposit in the Conservation Fund. Fund to be offset by **two hundred ninety-one dollars (\$291)** from the unassigned fund balance. This sum represents 3% of the Timber Tax revenue for 2021. (Submitted by the Conservation Commission) (Majority vote required)

#### **The Select Board Recommends This Article 3-0**

Virginia Parker – I'm a member of the Conservation Commission. We have added this item in because the Conservation Commission has recently become a member of the Spectacle Pond Association. Spectacle Pond is the largest body of water that we have. From the discussion I've seen in this room you all understand the importance of the watershed. You understand hopefully the importance of having clean water. This additional testing which will be shared 50/50 with the Town of Hebron since they share the water with us, this test will allow us to make sure that e coli levels are not getting out of hand. It will make sure the camp that is on the western border of the pond is not unduly polluting on a regular basis, there are some septic issues that have happened in the past. I personally believe that a few hundred dollars to protect the largest body of water isn't too much.

Stacy Darlington – How much money is currently in the Conservation Fund?

Virginia Parker – Approximately \$8,500.

John Rescigno – So this is money that is offset by the Timber Tax that's raised every year. A percentage of that money – 3% is handed over to the Conservation Fund. We started this a couple years ago.

Bill Jolly motions to move the article,

Dave Darlington – I don't think you can spend it unless you have another appropriation. We already have the \$200 in the the regular budget for doing the sampling of the water. I'm not against it, but I don't think it can be used "willy, nilly" without an appropriation to pull it out of the fund.

Jeremy Elder seconds Bill's move of the article.

Moderator reads the article and again and calls for the vote.

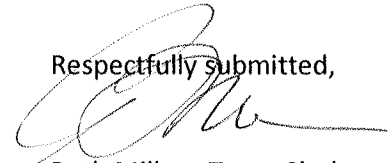
Article passes.

Article 11 passes.

Sherry Nelson speaks up to thank Tony Tavares for his excellent service to the Town as Moderator for the past two years.

Moderator concludes the Town Meeting for 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Millett', written over the text 'Respectfully submitted,'.

Ruth Millett, Town Clerk