

2017 Town Meeting Minutes

Meeting comes to order at 9:15 am on March 18, 2017 at the Groton Town House Community Room

Tony Albert, Moderator

Select Board Member present: Christina Goodwin, Kyle Andrews, John Rescigno

Town Clerk: Ruth Millett

Supervisors of the Checklist: Pamela Hamel, Gina Rescigno, and Anne Tobine

50 Registered Voters in attendance, 2 Non-registered residents present.

Moderator begins by reviewing the Moderator's Rules which have been revised this year.

Pledge of Allegiance is recited by all.

Slim Spafford - raised a question on the Moderator's rules concerning the negative motion which would require a "no" vote to vote in the affirmative. The Moderator reviewed the rule and answered the question.

The Moderator asked Christina Goodwin to explain the errors that were in the original Town Report. If anyone picked up their Town Report before March 14th there was a page missing out of the budget. The printer reprinted the Town Report and had them to us on Monday afternoon, March 20th. This was done at the printer's expense since it was their error.

Christina pointed out the dedication in the Town Report to Ron Madden (who was present). (Applause) There are errors also on page 7 "Elected Town Officials as of December 31, 2016". Tony Albert's term was up this year, Zoning Board – Otto Jespersen's term was up this year since he was appointed in 2016, Chuck Stata instead of TBH – his term is up in 2018. Under the Planning Board – Dave LaBar and Forest Blake's terms expire in 2018. TBH stand for "to be hired".

Deb Johnson raised a question about Sherry Nelson being on the list as an alternate. Christina asked if Ruth could look into this.

~~~

ARTICLE 1: To choose all necessary Town Officers for the year ensuing.

**The Moderator** read the list of those who were elected this year at the Town Elections.

- Select Board for 3 years – Kyle Andrews
- Treasurer for 3 years – Darlene Andrews
- Planning Board for 3 years – Russell Carruth
- Planning Board for 3 years – Deb Johnson
- Cemetery Trustee for 3 years – Sharon Nelson
- Local Auditor for 1 year – Otto Jespersen
- Moderator for 2 years – Tony Albert
- Trustee of the Trust Fund for 1 year – Gina Rescigno
- Trustee of the Trust Fund for 3 years - Michele Lacroix
- Library Trustee for 3 years – Otto Jespersen
- Zoning Board for 3 years – Helen Martynzyn
- Supervisor of the Checklist for 3 years – Gina Rescigno

~~~

ARTICLE 2: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **seven hundred fifteen thousand, thirty seven dollars (\$715,037)** which represents the **Operating Budget** for the ensuing year. Said sum does not include special or individual articles addressed.

Select Board Recommends this Article 3-0

Kyle Andrews motions to moves the article, **John Rescigno** seconded this motion.

Christina Goodwin speaks to the article:

Overall decrease in the budget was \$38,928 that includes a truck payment of approximately \$28,000 we paid our last truck payment last year. In reality then the total decrease was about \$2,670. There is an increase proposed for the Town Clerk/Tax Collector from \$26,400 to \$28,048 which is a \$1,648 increase. This is on page 17 in the Town Report. Town Clerk/Tax Collector Salary is voted on as part of the budget. NHMA states that this can be part of the budget but needs to be pointed out to the voters at Town Meeting and an amendment can be brought to the floor and the Select Board is bound by that decision. There are proposed merit increases which are not in place they are based on evaluations and they range from 1% to 3%. In the Health Budget (page 21 in the Town Report), there is a stipend. The Select Board has chosen not hire a Health Officer and because the Select Board is acting as the Health Officers they have chosen to split that stipend among the Board members. If the future Select Board chooses to hire a Health Officer, the stipend would be in place to pay for that.

David Leone – Asked about “Estimated Revenues Ensuing Fiscal Year” on page 27 in the Town Report (line 3503-3509), for \$46,666 and where this is coming from.

Christina Goodwin – The amount was from last year 2016 which was a sale of Town property.

David Leone – Asked why there was no revenue under the Police Department.

Christina Goodwin – Police Department Revenues are listed under the Police Department Revolving Fund. The Police Revolving Fund is on page 38 in the Town Report. The total deposits were \$815 and the total debits were \$763.60.

David Leone – Asked about the Health budget (page 21 line 4411.7) and why \$5489.74 was spent on legal.

Christina Goodwin – That was the clean-up of a property in town that was a health issue and that is the reason the Town cleaned it up. The owners have been billed through a supplemental tax bill and this needed to be put into the budget somewhere.

David Leone – We no longer plow for the State of New Hampshire and no longer get money from the State of New Hampshire and because we no longer plow for the State we use less of everything and the budget is not lower since we no longer have that income. We have used considerable amount less of fuel. Has the Select Board taken that into consideration?

John Rescigno – The State purchased the salt to maintain the road, so the amount of salt we used in the past to maintain the road is the same at we now use.

David Leone – Speaking about the checks we get from the State that we no longer get. We no longer have that revenue coming in from the State because of work we were doing for the State that covered plowing, using fuel, wear and tear on the truck, cutting edges and that sort of thing. So has the budget reflected the less use of the equipment since we no longer get paid for that?

John Rescigno – That would just be on the depreciation value of the equipment. We still have the same roads that we need to maintain.

David Leone - We no longer maintain a fair section of North Groton Road that we used to plow. We plowed it, we used cutting edges the truck got more wear and tear because we were plowing it so if we are not using those vehicles and not getting income in return has the budget reflected that?

John Rescigno – No, because the budget stayed the same because we are still maintaining the same roads...

There was back and forth concerning this point between David and John.

Moderator breaks in with rule of order, please raise your green card and he will recognize you in order to speak.

Glenn Hansen – The State did give us materials. They would supply us with salt, a certain percentage and at least 200 yards of sand and in addition to that, the truck doesn't fly over the top of that road, it travels the road, so you have fuel coming up and down, you have driver time to get up and down the hill which must be paid for, that that money is still being expended whether we have the blades down or the blades up. There are situations where we cannot make it up that hill with the blades up we need the blades down to plow through it. That is reported on our time sheets for every instance that it happens and the Select Board and I have discussed the possibility of talking to the commissioner seeing what they are going to do to remunerate us for time expended. This is in no way a slam against the State, everybody has breakdowns. That situation happened the other day when we had two trucks break down. The snow still falls and we need to clear off the road. You people want to get up and down that hill and we understand that and we do everything we can to get you up and down the hill just as we get you out of all your roads that we plow but as far as the State not giving us anything or not replenishing our supply, that is false.

David Leone – One other question, the Town plows a section of road that's in Dorchester that is a State road and we don't get paid for that. Why are we plowing that section of road, and if we are shouldn't the Town be going after the State getting them to reimburse us for plowing that section of road? From the Town line out to 118 is a State road that we plow and don't get paid for.

Christina Goodwin – We can talk to the State about that.

Miles Sinclair – I initially thought the same as Dave about the revenues that are no longer realized. On the surface I think he has an argument, but when you look at that deeper, the issue is, we no longer have the revenue and my understanding was that we actually made money in that arrangement where we were plowing the road, so now if anything since we're not getting the revenue which we made money off of it actually has an adverse impact on the budget so if it is level funded in my opinion that's actually a good thing because otherwise it would have had to be increased to make up for the money we're not making off not doing that.

Barrie Sawyer – I was going through the budget and I noticed that we still are getting (page 27, line 3186 “Payment in Lieu of Taxes”), is that the payment we get for the wind turbines?

Christina Goodwin – Yes, the “Payment in Lieu of Taxes” is for the wind turbines, yes.

Barrie Sawyer – OK, I’m a little bit puzzled because a portion of that has been going to North Groton Road. Did I miss something? Is there no warrant article for redoing North Groton Road, reconstructing it?

Christina Goodwin – There is no warrant article, but we will be discussing it when we get to the Groton paved roads warrant article.

I just want to clarify too that the “Payment in Lieu of Taxes” was specifically to do the road project. It offsets your budget. We were doing the road project because we have the extra money there, so I just want to clarify that.

Dave Leone – How long do we anticipate we will be receiving that “Payment in Lieu of Taxes” from the windmill?

Christina Goodwin – At least 15 years...

Dave Leone – When did it start?

Miles Sinclair and Christina Goodwin – discussion... it was December 2012 when it went into operation.

Dave Leone – So we have approximately 10 years left?

(discussion)

Christina Goodwin – Their viability is up to 20 years and then they start replacing things.

Dave Leone – So how many years to we have left?

Christina Goodwin – Approximately 10 years.

Moderator – Reads Article 2 in preparation for a vote. Article 2 passes.

~~~

ARTICLE 3: To see if the Town will vote to approve the hiring of a full-time Police Officer for the Groton Police Department.

**The Select Board Does Not Recommend This Article 1-2**

**Christina Goodwin** motions to move the article. **Kyle Andrews** seconded this motion.

**Police Chief Ernest Thompson Jr.** will present the Article -

The reason I asked the Board to go with a full-time position is that for the past several years we've had problems with retaining our part-time officers. They come into Town and go through the Academy which the Town pays close to \$3000 just for training and then to outfit him if we don't have equipment that fit him we have to purchase that and that can be anywhere from \$1000 to \$2000. We actually had one officer who came in, made an agreement with former chief Pivoroto, "I'll work weekends. I'll work nights," then after he received his training he did this for about 6 months then went through some personal issues his hours reduced and then the Chief looked at hiring another part-time officer and the first officer went to another town where he made more money and still maintained working here but it was hard to get him to work. The other officer that was hired, he was looking for a full-time employment and ended up about a year after he was certified as a police officer, left for full-time employment.

I feel that by hiring a full-time officer the chief will be able to dictate the schedules that they work and that then in an emergency they will be subject to recall. With a part-time officer they can say, "Chief, I'm unavailable this weekend, sorry," and there's nothing that can be done. Most part-timers will have a full-time job where if there's an emergency in Town unless they worked for a neighboring agency they would be unavailable to help.

I believe that with a full-time officer, this would be a career, they would be invested with the community whereas a part-time officer it's just another job.

By having a full-time officer it would provide the Town with more local police coverage. A theme for the Police Department is, "We try to be the community Police Department", we try to get to know our residents. It's easier if you know us as opposed to the State Police where you don't know them, they don't know you and tensions may be running high in emergency situations, and there is a response issue. Sometimes a trooper could be up in Colebrook and you have an emergency call up here in Groton and the travel time is 2-3 hours.

In the past there have been some problems with State Police by just calling people, talking to them over the phone, or unfortunately there have been occasions where a State Trooper never made a phone call. With a local officer that would eliminate that problem. Also with State Police they usually come in and handle a call in Town and Groton is not the only Town they handle, they'll handle these other little towns, so they may come in and handle the initial call, but then there's no follow-up.

Also, talking with the Hebron Fire Department, there are certain places in Town that the Fire Department and EMS Department are not allowed to go unless there's a Police Officer there. In the event of an emergency the Fire Department, the EMS go to a staging area and they wait, and wait, and wait for a trooper to show up. They've caught on to this and now the people are actually driving to the staging area putting our Fire Department and EMS people at risk.

This is the reason why I've approached the Board of Selectmen requesting a full-time position to have more coverage for the Towns people.

**Christina Goodwin** – asked if it would be appropriate for E.J. to comment on the next two Articles with this because they support the position?

**Moderator** – No, one Article at a time.

**Celine Richer** – May I ask what is considered full-time in the Town?

**Chief Thompson** – It would be 40 hours.

**Celine Richer** – I notice that you have \$28000 but only \$6380.75 was used, is that because they were not available all that time or those were the only hours they worked?

**Chief Thompson** – This is because we were going through a hiring phase and we hired an officer and that's how much he was able to work from August through December.

**Christina Goodwin** – The \$29000 that's in the budget is strictly for a part-time officer should this fail.

**Marilyn Lieto** – How involved is the Sheriff's Department?

**Chief Thompson** – The Sheriff's Department is involved mostly in Civil Service, delivering subpoenas, Civil Court matters. They do not handle calls. If there was an emergency and I needed a backup unit and they are in the area then they would call back. Actual enforcement and handling calls they don't usually do this.

**Lou Lieto** – Can you tell me in rough terms if we were to hire a full-time officer what would be the "wash" between the part-timer at \$29000 plus ancillary costs goes into that to have a full-time officer would you be able to tell me how much more or less it would cost?

**Chief Thompson** – The training would be more, the uniforms and equipment would be about the same. He would provide more coverage for the Town. Unfortunately with a full-timer their salary would be higher plus the benefits.

**Tony Tavares** – People are asking questions, but they're making it like personal, they're not addressing the people so if they would use the microphone or speak up.

**Glen Hansen** – If this article does pass and we hire a full-time officer, are you going to institute a rotating shift program where we will have coverage for 18 or 20 hours a day? How will that work out?

**Chief Thompson** – The hours won't change because I don't work a fixed shift of 7 – 3 every day. I rotate this where I work a 6am -2pm or an 8am – 4pm, 10am – 6pm, 1 – 9pm. We've always maintained a 7 days per week coverage and it would increase the number of hours, but would not be a fixed schedule.

**Barrie Sawyer** – I'm a little alarmed that the Fire and EMT have to wait for a Police Officer in certain areas of the Town. I think it would be good to get an idea of how many people are actually impacted by that particular situation. That might influence my vote. I live on the top of Bailey Hill Road and I'm guessing that I might be a candidate for one of those people who have to wait for a Police Officer to get to the staging area before they come up the hill which is a challenge in and of itself.

**Chief Thompson** – In that case, let's use an example that there is a domestic dispute going on in a residence and there are personal injuries, the EMS will have to wait for the Police Officer to show up. Everybody that's on that crew is possibly affected if they rush in. Obviously the individual that has made a call for help may be victimized even more, so that is another individual that is affected.

**Barrie Sawyer** – My question is how many people are probably being made vulnerable by being in a place where they have to wait for everybody to gang up. Is it usually 3 people, or 20, or 100 and what areas in Town?

**Chief Thompson** – We have 2 or 3 places in town that there is an order that the EMS doesn't go there unless the police go there, however, that doesn't include if there is a domestic or more serious crime that would require EMS to respond.

**Christina Goodwin** – So it's not an actual area of town, it's a situation that can cause that? I don't know if you can answer but, how many people does this actually impact, because that will vary depending on the situation.

**Elizabeth Jespersen** – Can you tell me, of the previous part-timers that we did have, did the Town actually pay for their training and then they left?

**Chief Thompson** – Yes.

**Elizabeth Jespersen** – We wasted money to train someone and then they left because it was part-time and we didn't have the funds for full-time. Can you speak as to the previous coverage that we had? Not this past year because that was a transition period, but in the previous year, how many part-timers and full-timers we had so we can get an idea of what we did have compared to what we have right now?

**Chief Thompson** – When I was hired as Sergeant, the Chief was a part-time officer and we had 2 other part-time officers, so we had 1 full-time officer and 3 part-time officers.

**Elizabeth Jespersen** – and now we have 1 full-time and 1 part-time

**Chief Thompson** – Correct

**Elizabeth Jespersen** – I happen to be one of those people that needed the police to come to my home a couple of months ago and it was on a weekend and there was no coverage here in town. I had to call the State Police and about 15 minutes later I get a call back from the State Police saying, "Do you still need help?" I would have never called 911 if I did not need help at my home and the fact that I couldn't get help when I needed if put Otto and I and my son in really great danger of being harmed. So for that reason, I'm all for having more coverage in this Town so that those types of situations don't happen. The fact that it was a domestic issue they had to go to a staging area and wait for other officers to be there to even come up the road. That's absurd that we don't have the coverage for any type of emergencies except the 40 or 60 hours per week that we have right now.

**Gary Easson** – One of the problems they had with Rumney EMS for a long while was a worse turn-over situation that you did. They adopted a policy that you might want to consider, I strongly recommend it. "We train you, you stay on for X amount of time and then you get half your money back... after 3 years they get the rest of the money back. I used to be an EMT and you do not go into a hostile situation... This has changed EMS dramatically. We don't go in 'til the scene is secure. There could be someone who needs medical attention badly, but EMS is not trained to deal with these people and the police are. We really need someone to protect our EMS and Firefighters who are trained to fight the fires and handle medical situations, not become part of the problem.

**Chief Thompson** – As far as the Fire Department training, if you want to become a firefighter there's a fee you must pay, or the Town pays it, with the Police Academy recently in the last year this comes up in the general budget of the State that is paid by us through our taxes ... (too much noise and could not understand what was said).

**Tony Tavares** – So if someone lives next door and they call 911 and the address comes up that's not going to be a waiting area? You're delaying a response to a specific address on an emergency call

**Chief Thompson** – It is a targeted address because there were prior problems that would rise to a level where Police response is required. I don't want to alarm the Town there are a lot of them, there are only a few.

**Dave Leone** – Do the people who live adjacent to these sites get notified that the site is a flagged call?

**Chief Thompson** – I would say from the Law Enforcement, EMS side, no, but you know how the rumor mills start.

**Pam Hamel** – I think there's a lot of confusion here. It's not that 17 Old Rumney Road is targeted, it's that there's a domestic violence call. I could happen anywhere. Is that correct?

**Chief Thompson** – That's definitely correct.

**Pam Hamel** – So it could happen anywhere, at any time. It's not a specific address, it's a call. So if I had domestic violence at my house; that would turn into one of those situations if I had a domestic violence call. It's not like every time you go there, it's a problem.

**Chief Thompson** – There are specific places where due to the past, if it's recurring, then it's a targeted location (discussion and interruptions – no speaker recognized).

**Pam Hamel** – I think that having another full-time officer does not solve some of these problems that have been mentioned. We are not going to get 24-7 coverage here. We're too small for that. That's one of the things of living in a community this size. That's one of the "prices you pay" that we don't have 24-7 call, that we don't have our own fire and EMS, that we contract out. It's also one of the joys of living here. We are in this rural area. We live here because we want that. We have a population of less than 600. I don't think that we warrant two full-time officers and another part-time officer. I think our problem is that we did not treat our part-time officers the way we should have. We didn't pay them enough to stay here. And we need to take that into consideration. The amount that it's going to cost for an additional full-time officer is significant to the community. It's not just outfitting him, it's salary, his benefit package is going to be huge, there's retirement, there's medical, there's dental, there's a lot of things that are all part of that package that aren't being discussed. This is just if we feel we need another full-time officer. We've never had two full-time officers. There's always been a full-time and a part-time or a number of part-timers. Quite frankly, I think that we should stay that way and maybe look into what we need to do to get part-time officers here that will stay here. When EJ took this position as Chief, the Chief was a Monday – Friday job. Because of the size of the community we have one full-time officer and even if he is the Chief he is the officer who is going to work when he needs to be working. It doesn't mean he's going to be denied a life. Obviously if he can get some good part-time



employees, he can work his schedule so he can have a life, but the bottom line is that Buck ends with him. Not only is he the Chief, he is the full-time officer.

**Dave Leone** – I think we do need to look at the other costs included in this. Right now, under personnel administration, we pay \$80,000 per year for retirement, life and disability, health insurance and FICA. How does that number change if we went to a full-time officer? I agree, the Chief in this Town is like the Road Agent in this Town. The Road Agent in this Town is hired to plow snow. You never know when it's going to snow, but he's there to plow snow when it snows. I think the Board needs to make sure that our Chief whoever our Chief might be now or in the future is there to answer what you refer to as an emergency. There are times when there are other emergencies that another agency would answer or you would call for back-up. I think we should have a contract with Part-timers that say if you're going to come to the Town of Groton you are going to dedicate either X amount of time or X amount of money or some way that we may keep them so that we have others available.

**Lou Lieto** – Do you have an assessment as to what would be reasonable wages and other considerations it would take that would improve our ability to get one or more part-time officers?

**Chief Thompson** – I always look at wages. There was a wage study. I frankly disagree with the wage study because there were two parts of it. Part of it was ongoing value and then they came up with a side that said this is what Groton should pay. I always believed the going value is what's close to... I wouldn't compare us to Plymouth because it is different, but if you look at Hebron, Hebron pays their officers considerably different than Groton.

**Lou Lieto** – So to follow-up, if in fact we maintain this budget with a line item for a part-time wages... would you be able to hire a couple, one or two or however many you needed, part-time officers within the budget and achieve what was needed if you were able to convince the Select Board to approve the wages?

**Chief Thompson** – There's always a possibility, but again they could say, but again they could say, "I'm available at this time..."

**Robert Ellis** – It's not just the Police looking for full-timers. Obviously I work with the Town as well, I'm part-time. The past thinking is that it's just a part-time job so you don't have to pay the guy as much money. That's pretty much how it works. Personally, in this day and age you can't find a person that's responsible enough to work part-time... the Town in the past hasn't paid very much for any of these positions so you need to take care of the people that are here. The Town's part-time employees... have lost 6 or 7 people in about 5 years. Unless you can raise some wages, we're not going to get anybody. We need some coverage.

**Stephen Spafford** – Reading E.J.'s report, I think he does a good job with all the arrests and everything else that he's been doing. He's handled it, that's the way I read that. I would be very interested to know from the other two Selectmen why they voted "no" and if there's a reason. I know at the budget hearing, cost came into the discussion. I didn't write any of that down. I don't need to because we're here today. Pam took the words right out of my mouth. You moved to this Town because it's rural, do you expect to get paved roads? Did you expect to get street lights? No, we can't afford it. Now with only 10 more years of the pilot to go on the wind farm, that's going to disappear. Now we have a man at the academy for a full-time position. When he gets back he's going to think this is full-time. You have all the costs that Pam brought up, does that mean we'd need another cruiser? The costs just keep going up and up. At some point you must realize you live in the woods. You have to accept some

responsibility for that. I would like to hear from the Selectmen why they voted “no”. The must be a reason, I’m sure.

**John Rescigno** – Police Officer, EMT, and Fire Department will be sitting around waiting for the call. When my wood burning stove blew up last week, thankfully the Fire Department was there ASAP otherwise that house next door wouldn’t be here anymore. That’s number one. Number two, wages are important. We created some stability in the Town last year by addressing the wages that had not been addressed over the previous years. The Police department wages do need to be addressed. Do we need a full-time officer? Maybe not. The cost of the benefit package is very high. That’s the reason why I said, “no”. Do we need two part-time officers? We probably could benefit from two part-time officers. Would we need to address that wages so that those officers stay in the Town and continue working for the Town? Yes, we would need to. That’s my stance.

**Elizabeth Jespersen** – Are you able to address the grant?

**Chief Thompson** – no, not now

**Elizabeth Jespersen** – The other issue is, Jon is not at the full-time academy because he assumes he’s going to be made a full-time officer. He is a part-time officer at the Town of Groton at this point.

**Chief Thompson** – You are correct. We have an officer at the full-time academy and the reason we did that is that the academy has a threshold; if you’re a part-time officer you can work no more than 1300 hours per year, around 25 hours per week. We have budgeted that he would be covering about 30 hours per week. Because of that, he would be working over the 1300 hour threshold; therefore he needs to be certified as a full-time officer. That’s why he’s down there. He knows that the possibility of the position may not come through.

**Christina Goodwin** – I wanted to respond to one of the questions earlier how that the Town should contract with individuals, or make sure that they stay. We do that. In the past some of the part-time officers had reached the end of those 3 years, or wouldn’t make it through the training. So it was a revolving interview process, or they get to the end of the 3 year contract we have in place which we estimated to pay back the Town for the hours in training and they would move on to a better paying job. We do have a contract agreement with this officer that is in the Police Academy as well. They are not foolproof though so we are trying to do the best that we can to protect the Town, but it’s not a foolproof method.

**Bob Ferriere** – I think if you have someone classified as a full-time officer, as soon as he’s full-time or certifies as full-time then he’s going to search out all of New Hampshire to see who’s going to give him a better job. It may be a negative thing. It’s better off to have someone part-time who gets to know the people and spend some time here. Yes, I agree that maybe their wages need to be increased over the year or 3 years until the cost is absorbed. Having a part-timer immediately going right into a full-time as soon as he’s certified, who’s to say that a year or two from then he’s going to go out and get a job for \$30000 per year. I don’t think Groton needs two full-time officers. I appreciate the coverage that we have. I also agree with the statement that we are a rural community under 600 people. I’m glad we have a full-time officer, but I don’t believe we need any more than one or two part-time officers that can prove themselves, then after 2 or 3 years if they prove themselves then they might have the opportunity to become full-time officers. Having another full-time officer now is going to increase our cost dramatically, then after 10 years you’ll see your taxes go through the roof, because what we have is 2

full-time officers and maybe by that time 2 part-time officers for 600 people. I think we need to be very careful for now and for the future.

**Tim Crosby** – Since Mr. Thompson has been chief, when I call the Police, I get either the State Police or the Sheriff's department. Anytime I had to come in here to conduct business with the Town Clerk, there has been at least one officer in that office drinking coffee. I don't support this.

**Dave Leone** – I did ask the board earlier if they could reflect on the amount of extra on the wages and the benefits if you could add that number.

**Christina Goodwin** – The total that would need to be added to the budget if this passes would be \$34184.24. That includes wages and benefits. Benefits would be roughly \$22500 – retirement, medical all of that.

**Gary Esson** – E.J. has been nice enough to return my calls on his own time. My concern is, if this goes through or not, is if you get a call and you're off duty and you're the only guy in Town. Are you going to come out? The impression I get is, "he's off duty, he won't be coming out, call the State Police." That's the impression I get from the dispatcher. Their duty is to dispatch, not try to make decisions. I've run into that with dispatch. If it's a serious call are we going to know that someone will come out?

**Chief Thompson** – Dispatchers have a protocol that they go through. I have instructed them if it's a serious emergency, I want to be notified. One of the questions is where's the trooper coming from? Once I'm notified I can invoke mutual aid and we can have officers respond. State Police do not have mutual aid agreements with local Police. They don't do that. If I'm home and there's a serious motor vehicle accident or there's a serious incident, I will respond.

**Lou Lieto** – I'm confused by the numbers. Would you go through them again?

**Christina Goodwin** – This is just what would be added to the budget, \$34184. Add \$11500 in wages.

**Peter Smith** – Is there any requirements for a full-time Officer to live in Groton or within a certain radius of Town?

**Chief Thompson** – I do live in Groton. My contract says within 10 miles. If there was a full-time Officer voted on and approved he would be required to live in a good response time.

**Christina Goodwin** – We can request that he live in a good response time, but legally we can't require him to live in Town.

**Elizabeth Jespersen** – I know it's been a horrible process just to get Jon hired. Not making background checks, not making it through training. It's been over a year just to hire someone. To get a part-timer in here and now we're going to pray that he stays part-time with the wages we have to offer instead of bumping him up to full-time so he can make a livable wage. I know that we are rural New Hampshire and that is the charm of living here, but I can guarantee you that every single one of you, if you called and needed help and happened to be in one of these areas that needed back-up and your house was burning down, you would be infuriated if someone wasn't available to get to your house. Our population is quite a bit older and is in need of more of these services. We have a lot of wood stoves. It's great that John's historic house didn't burn down. It won't add a whole lot of hours, but compared

to what we had in this Town to years ago for coverage, we are sorely lacking right now and I find that frightening. I also would like to know if we were to hire 2 part-time Officers, what would that do to our budget, and would we have to wait till next year to put an amount in our budget to cover their wages?

**Christina Goodwin** – currently there is no attempt to hire any additional part-timer other than the one who's in the academy, and that is budgeted in the budget, the \$29000 currently.

**Elizabeth Jespersen** – So if we wanted to hire another one because the need was there would we need to wait another year for Town Meeting to add that to the budget?

**Christina Goodwin** – We would have to wait another year because we've already voted on the budget.

**Miles Sinclair** – Some of the questions I have I would like clarification from the Police Chief. I was a Police Officer in the Town of Derry for about 20 years. I retired in 2006. I'm a supporter of law enforcement. I'm also a supporter and recognize the needs of the community and the proportionate issues that exist in it. I don't see Joe Pivrotto here today but he was our past Police Chief and one of the things that he said often reflecting on police work here in Groton was, "There's no a lot of heavy lifting." What he was trying to say was there's not a lot going on in this community. I personally don't believe there's enough activity in the Town of Groton to justify two full-time police officers. To me it's not a full-time vs part-time issue it's a matter of retaining the people that we have and getting qualified people wanting to get into police work. This is not just a Town of Groton issue. If you've been watching the news over the past couple of years, the roll of a police officer is much more adversarial now. They're becoming targeted by people who ambush them sitting in their police cruisers. There have been a number of incidents that, that have happened. There are people that I worked with in the past in Derry who have posed a question to me, "If you had to do it all over again, would you still get into police work?" My answer to that was, "Yes", but the reason for that is because when I decided I wanted to be a police officer, I wanted it so bad it literally brought tears to my eyes. I don't think there's that many people now that feel that way. The person that posed this question to me said, "I don't think I would." To me, that's the issue. There are a number of things that have happened; they've made it harder in New Hampshire. There's not as much of an incentive to become a police officer any more as it used to be. When I came on you worked 20 years, you could retired at 45 with half your pay. Back in 2011 they decided to change that now it is 25 and you have to be 50. I was one of the guys who tried to stay in shape and there are a lot of police officers who don't do that. From my perspective over 40 you're chasing people ½ your age, wrestling with them, over 40 years old you're on borrowed time as a police officer. You should not be required to work 50-55 years before you're looking to retire. The retention issue is trying to get people who want to work. There are multiple issues to factor in as to why people don't want to do that. State Police have retention issues; local police departments have retention issues. When they post a hiring they would get hundreds of people showing up. I've participated in some of those. You're not getting close to that many people anymore. The things that I hear from people that are still in the business is that it's harder and harder to get good people for police work. So there are multiple issues with that. There have been questions raised about whether the wages that we offered were appropriate, or inappropriate. During my time on the board, we made adjustments to that. The New Hampshire Municipal Association published studies and we referred to those and we looked at what other police departments were paying their people. We tried to be competitive with that, but you need to understand, Groton is never going to be able to compete with other large Police Departments no matter what we do. Bob's point as far as people not staying in Groton, based on my training and experience, you hire a young kid like we're looking to do here today, you thing he's going to stay in Groton his entire career? There's not enough activity for someone who is truly invested in police work to want to stay here twiddling his thumbs much more than he should be. There's not enough

activity. What Pam said, that's actually a good thing. To me hiring a full-time officer is like buying more house than you need because you can't find one that's the right size. That's not a prudent financial thing to do. Maybe at some point you have no other alternatives. Chief Thompson, I'm not looking to cast aspersions on you in any regard. I respect you and the job you do, but there are certain areas I can take exception to. You mentioned that a part-time can tell you, "Sorry, chief, I'm not available." How many times does that happen before you tell them, "You no longer meet the needs of the Town of Groton. You need to find someplace else to work"? They can't just do that, and the way you presented that... if you can't be here when we need you, you're just not the right person for this Town. A full-time officer could say the same thing, "I've got five years under my belt, I can't come in right now," or "I'm in Mass", but you have somebody that can't meet the needs of the Town then the Town needs to find somebody else who can.

You talked about there's either an address or addresses in plural, how many places are there in Town, a number, where the Fire Department has to stage and wait for Police response before they can handle the call?

**Chief Thompson** – About 4 or 5 actual addresses.

**Miles Sinclair** – I'm not looking to disclose the address or the names of the people, but what is the nature of the reason why that has to take place?

**Chief Thompson** – Serious assaults, domestic violence, drug activity.

**Miles Sinclair** – so past incidents

**Chief Thompson**- Yes, repeated past incidents.

**Miles Sinclair** – You're still a member of the Special Operations Unit, is that correct? The Town of Groton pays \$2500 per year for those services?

**Chief Thompson** - \$3000

**Miles Sinclair** – I'm not hearing that you can't get the job done. I'm hearing that it would be easier to do the things we do if we hired a full-time officer. Again, Pam highlighted some of these issues. The buck stops with you. You're the Police Chief. You need to get things done. I would want to make sure that as a Police Chief you're prioritizing what's really necessary. Again, based on my experience, you can get bogged down as a Police Department with a lot of things that at the end of the day don't matter all that much, documentation, accreditation, being a member of a Special Operations Unit. To me attending Police Chief Meetings with area Police Chiefs can be a good thing, but if it's not the priority and you need more time to do your job here, then you need to give up some of those extra-curriculars. The Town of Groton had had a representative with S.O.U. for a number of years. To me, we've made a significant contribution. I would question whether or not other area departments have done the same as we have. These other extra-curricular meetings with area Police Chiefs or other things like that. I think you need to separate the wheat from the chaff. Focus on what's really necessary and do what you need to do to get the job done. Pam pointed out too; we are never going to have 24-7 coverage. There's always going to be situations where you may wait a little longer for a particular call, but if there was a true emergency, life or death situation, you are not going to wait. We have mutual aid agreements with all area departments just for that specific purpose. If Groton is not available, State Police isn't available, we can use Hebron, Rumney, there's 4 or 5 at least. There are other mutual aid

agreements so other police officers or sheriffs can respond if need be as well. In summary, I don't believe there is justification or the work load for 2 full-time people here. I think we need to focus on other areas trying to address the problems that prevent us from being able to hire or retain the right people. To me this is buying more house than we need and I don't think it's a prudent thing.

**Moderator** – Moving the Article with two requests for secret ballot and petition signed by 5 current registered and present voters. Moderator reads the article and ballots are distributed, collected and counted.

Total Ballots cast: 49, No: 32, Yes: 17. Article 3 fails.

~~~

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board or their designee to accept and expend a 3 year, \$125,000 Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing Service (COPS) grant to defray costs of hiring an additional full-time Police Officer. If the Town accepts the grant, it will be required to retain the full-time officer for fiscal year 2020, at the estimated cost of sixty nine thousand, four hundred five dollars and fifty nine cents (\$69,405.59).

**In the event Article 3 passes, the Select Board recommends this Article 3-0
In the event Article 3 fails the Select Board does not recommend this Article.**

John Rescigno made motion to move Article 4; **Kyle Andrews** seconded the motion

Christina Goodwin presents the Article. We still need to vote on this Article. Since Article 3 failed we cannot accept this grant. We have till the end of March to accept the grant, but we will just decline the grant at this point.

Moderator – Reads Article 4 in preparation for a vote. Article 4 fails.

~~~

ARTICLE 5: If Article 3 passes, to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **thirty four thousand, one hundred eighty four dollars and twenty-four cents (\$34,184.24)** for salary and benefits of the additional full-time officer for the remainder of 2017 which will be offset by a portion of the COPS grant. This amount is in addition to the \$29,000 already included in the operating budget for police salaries and benefits.

**In the event Article 3 and 4 pass, the Select Board recommends this Article 3-0  
In the event Article 3 and 4 fail the Select Board does not recommend this Article.**

**Kyle Andrews** made motion to move Article 5; **John Rescigno** seconded the motion

**Christina Goodwin** – We just need to vote yes or no and since Article 3 failed, we're recommending to vote no for this Article.

**Moderator** – Reads Article 5 in preparation for a vote. Article 5 fails.

~~~

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **two hundred twenty five thousand dollars (\$225,000)** for deposit into the Atwell/Orange Brook Bridge Replacement Capital Reserve Fund (December 31, 2016 balance: \$56,330.98).

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Kyle Andrews made motion to move Article 6; **John Rescigno** seconded the motion

Christina Goodwin – This article is to replace the Atwell/Orange Bridge. We’re recommending to put this money into the reserve fund so that if something happens this year (the plan is to do the project this year), and we are unable to complete the bridge this year the money is in there and we’ll be able to finish the project without coming back to the Town. The bridge had been red listed for a number of years and the last two years the inspection changed from fail to poor. The intent is to replace this bridge with a bridge that will be able to hold logging trucks and also a bridge that will last for a number of years. We haven’t finalized a bridge yet, we’ve only contracted with an engineer to do the design and the planning and the whole project for us. The intent is to have a bridge that will last up to 75 years.

Dave Leone – Can you explain the engineering cost and the cost of the bridge total? If I understand this right, you’re taking \$225,000; you’re adding \$56,330.90 for a total of \$286,000. Is that correct?

Christina Goodwin – correct

Dave Leone – How much are we paying the engineering company to engineer this for us?

Christina Goodwin – The engineering costs are approximately \$30,000. That includes the design, bidding the project out and overseeing the project from start to finish.

Dave Leone – So approximately \$30,000 for engineering and to oversee the whole project. So the engineering company is going to oversee the project from start to finish, buying the appropriate bridge that the Board selects? I’ve heard either a wooden bridge or a concrete bridge, has the Board decided what type of bridge?

Christina Goodwin – The proposed bridge is not wooden, it has concrete abutments. The size of the bridge is to be determined. It has not gone out to bid yet. The size; 1, 1 ½ or 2 lanes has yet to be determined.

Dave Leone – Last year I brought this to the Board’s attention because it wasn’t on a warrant article for a specific date of replacement. At that point I did some research as far as pricing and the price I was given to do the bridge was less than \$85,000 for the bridge itself and then \$22,000 for the engineering, obtaining permits, doing the wetlands study and everything else that needed to be done to obtain permits. That was approximately \$107,000 which is a lot less than \$286,000. What is the extra money for?

Christina Goodwin – We did contact one of the companies you recommended and the cost that we were given was \$80,000 for the bridge only. This did not include site work; it did not include a temporary bridge. There will be a portion of time when that bridge will not be open. It did not include the surveying or the wetlands. It was just the bare-bones minimum cost of a bridge. The preliminary

estimate, site preparation, excavation, gravel, existing bridge removal, temporary stream crossing, precast bridge structure, the rip-rap, guard rail, traffic signs and mountings, loam, seed, removal of temporary bridge, dust and erosion control, all of those things are involved in this project. We have not gone out for a bid yet, but the estimated construction costs are \$187,000 and they add a 10% contingency in case prices change, and a construction engineering price, so the total is approximately \$229,000.

Dave Leone – So \$289,000 is what you are looking to have in that fund?

Christina Goodwin – There's \$229,000 and \$30,000 and again, \$229,000 just so everyone knows, is a very preliminary number. It could go up or down. The intent is to make sure we will be able to finish this bridge this year if at all possible. That is why we put \$225,000 in the Warrant Article.

Dave Leone – According to the Hazard Mitigation Plan, the Road Agent was to facilitate all of this. Is that not going to happen?

Christina Goodwin – The Board chose not to. We chose to have the construction engineer run it from start to finish.

John Rescigno – We're better off to have someone to hold accountable if something goes wrong.

Deborah Johnson – This may be a small point, but what type of bridge are we putting in? In order to retain the small-town rural character, a smaller bridge more fitting to the community and Town I hope would be chosen over a poured concrete two-lane standard bridge. Hebron had a small adequate but deteriorating bridge and they replaced it with a double-lane poured concrete bridge that is "standard highway issue", very ugly, and it changed the whole character of that neighborhood. I'm concerned that the Select Board has not brought plans to the Town that we can look at and see what we are voting on. Basically we're giving you carte blanche to select the style of the bridge. It's nice that you're considering the logging trucks, but they've been going over the existing bridge. While I know the bridge needs to be replaced and we don't have the choice of seeing what type of bridge is going there, I urge the Select Board to consider our rural character and that most residents would like that maintained.

Barrie Sawyer – Given this Town's propensity to not maintain the roads, I vote for getting a bridge that will last for 75 years so we don't need to come back and do this again. Remember, you have flood problems occasionally. The better the construction, the longer it will last and overall the less money we will pay.

Chuck Stata – Last year we raised the idea of grant money from the Federal Government. Is that included in the plan at this time? The problem was then that we didn't have a design and so we couldn't apply. At some point, if we are shovel-ready we might be able to get a good portion of this paid for by others.

Christina Goodwin – We reached out to USDA and they do not have grants for bridges. We also reached out to North Country Council and we were on their 10 year plan, but our priority vs. other priorities makes it so we're nowhere near the top of the list. We did look at other options as well. So right now this number does not include any grants.

Gary Easson – (recording is unclear) asked about monies we've been putting into this account over the years

Christina Goodwin – We've been putting in \$5,000, which is a small amount, into a Reserve Fund/Savings Account with the intent to make repairs eventually. There is a separate Warrant Article for \$5,000 for repairs to Province Road. These are different. The repairs were things we had to do on Province Road separate from the bridge.

Bonnie Lane – Do we need a temporary bridge? Is there a reason why we can't put a bridge up and then take the old bridge down? Would that save any money?

Christina Goodwin – That would interfere with the right-of-way. Opposite sides of the bridge are on different resident properties. For us to move the bridge would be a bigger expense. Using the temporary bridge avoids all the right-of-way issues.

Barrie Sawyer – Just to clarify, I take it we are repairing this bridge at the expense of not repairing or reconstructing any part of North Groton Road this year?

Christina Goodwin – Currently North Groton Road specifically is not on the Warrant Articles. It is up to the voters on the next Warrant Article if they would like to make changes to the amount. The bridge is a separate Article.

Pam Hamel – I'm sure we can build a 75 year bridge that maintains the rural character. There are standards that need to be met on this bridge. Because it sees very little traffic I think it's the perfect candidate for a one-lane bridge. That would be my vote.

Chuck Stata – I agree with Pam in that today there are very few properties, but there are 7000 acres for sale over that bridge which could mean 4-5,000 houses if they choose to develop it. This could be a very busy thoroughfare in 10 years.

Question from the floor about the difference in cost between an HL93 and a E2.

Christina Goodwin – The proposal is for an HL93. Currently this bridge is limited to loads not over 80,000 pounds. So I don't have the difference on that. Most bridges in Town are rated E2, yes.

Deborah Johnson – What will happen if you don't spend the full amount of money? Will that then go back into the general fund, or stay in a reserve fund?

Christina Goodwin – That would stay in the reserve fund until the Board determines, or we come back to the Town. The Board is not able to take this money out of the reserve fund. The intent is to use what is left in the reserve fund to maintain the bridge.

John Rescigno – In the Town we also need to start looking forward, we can't work on projects today and forget about them, we need to think about the future. Seventy five to one hundred years from now, that bridge will need to be replaced again. Small amounts of money should be put into that fund so the future people who live in the Town aren't facing the same predicament we're in today where North Groton Road needs to be repaired and we have a bridge that needs to be replaced and we have a Town garage that needs to be moved. We're being hit with all these things at once because we haven't

continuously put money into these funds. Our plan is to continue to put small amounts into that fund. In the future when it does need to be replaced the Town will not be looking to raise \$225,000, maybe only \$50,000 or \$100,000.

David Leone – The numbers as I add them up come to about \$185,000 and we have \$56,000 in the fund already to go towards that. I'm not sure how you came up with the amount of \$225,000 in addition to the \$56,000. I think the bridge that is there now should be replaced with the same width; the length may change when the engineering study is done for flood purposes. The only other variable may be if they find ledge instead of gravel. I'm not sure how you came up with a total in excess of \$280,000. I'm all for putting money ahead and being able to maintain. It just seems as there will be a lot of money left and \$100,000 is a lot of money to raise just to make sure we have enough. We could put that money into a different road project.

Christina Goodwin – With the preliminary estimate and the cost of engineering it is \$259,000. If we put in \$225,000 and have \$56,000 that brings us to \$281,000 and gives us an extra \$30,000 in the account depending on how it goes. The price could go down or it could go up. We want to make sure we are covering the project.

Peter Smith – This bridge will be used for log trucks more than regular traffic. If that's the case why wouldn't the logging companies that own acreage come up with some money to help pay for the bills?

Christina Goodwin – You can't make the loggers bond the road; you'd need to make all users bond the road by law.

Peter Smith – Why make it extra heavy to carry logging trucks instead of just regular traffic? I assume they're already overloading what's there now and it hasn't fallen into the brook.

Glenn Hansen – We're thinking in the present and it's been stated already that on Province Road there are 7,000 acres. Few use the road right now. What you must think of is that we're looking for a bridge that will perform beyond 75 years. This Town, in 30 years' time, has tripled in population. Lots of properties are selling. Province Road is a perfect candidate where some developer with a lot of money is going to go out there and put the power in, and widen the road. They'll make sure the Town of Dorchester puts their bridge in on the other side. Do we want to go back in 25 or 30 years from now and bleed the taxpayers in this Town? You won't just have logging trucks, you'll have concrete trucks and you'll have triaxles filled with stone. These are things the Board has had to discuss while calculating why we need this bridge the way it is.

Tony Tavares – It seems we are appropriating money for a bridge that hasn't been designed yet. Is there going to be a public hearing on what kind of bridge is going to be built?

John Rescigno – We can have a public hearing, but keep in mind we're thinking of a couple things as we're getting ready to replace this bridge. One, a bridge what's going to last and one that is not a heavy tax burden on the tax payer. We're looking for a professional who will go ahead and create this bridge for us. That's what we're relying on. We can have our meeting and we can manipulate this bridge as much as we want, but the more we manipulate, the more the price may go up or the quality of the bridge may go down. So we need to find that perfect balance.

Tony Tavares – If we appropriate the money, all the people estimating will know how much money they have to work with and it won't be long before there won't be any excess funds for future use.

Miles Sinclair – I've been a strong advocate once we started discussing that we needed to replace that bridge. In the Master Plan, Groton acknowledges we've been a logging community for a number of years and we want to protect that going forward. We've had discussions with loggers over that bridge. To me, you either want to support that industry which has been Groton's history for 100 years at least, or you don't. The only way to support the logging industry is to make that bridge able to handle the loads that they carry. You don't want to encourage them to try to cheat the system. Let's get rid of that notion all together and build it so they can haul their loads over there legally.

Moderator reads the Article in preparation for vote. Article passes.

ARTICLE 7: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25000)** for the repair of Groton paved roads, with **five thousand dollars (\$5000)** to come from the general fund balance and the remainder to be raised by taxation.

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

John Rescigno made motion to move Article 7; **Kyle Andrews** seconded the motion

Christina Goodwin – Mr. Sawyer has been asking about the road project. I will start off by saying the board was a little concerned with leaving the road project in there with having \$225000 going into a reserve fund and doing a \$150000 road project also. We made the decision to take that Warrant Article out. In hind-sight we probably should have left it in for the Town to decide if they wanted to put that money into a road project this year. With that in mind, if someone is really concerned about the road project you can amend this Warrant Article to cover doing a road project. You can add money to it. The \$25000 that is proposed here is for things we need to do. It may be North Groton Rd., it may be Sculptured Rocks Road, and there are things we need to do. There was \$5000 left from last year's Warrant Article and that is why we promoted the other \$20000 to come from the General Fund.

Glen Hansen – If we were to add \$150,000 to this Warrant Article, how much would it raise taxes?

(Discussion between Christina Goodwin and Pam Hamel on the formula for finding the answer to this question)

Glenn Hansen – There are other options that we can do with the \$25000 that is in the article. We can take a section of road and have it reclaimed and leave it reclaimed till next year then bring an article to the Town next year. I would support a much larger amount so we can go a further distance. We reclaimed a section of Sculptured Rocks Road 4 or 5 years ago. With the reclaim process you take asphalt off the top and lay it back down again. The time you do it is on a hot dry day. You lay it out and compact it and then maintain it as a gravel road. The only thing about reclaim is the asphalt that's on top attracts the sun's rays and has a tendency to help get it back together again so if you want to get through that surface you basically need to use the backhoe. That's an option where we can do a section of road. There is a section out there that's horrible. When the guys come back from plowing they're shaken, not stirred. It's doing a lot of damage to cars. I put \$4,000 into my plow truck this year for new suspension. Those are options. If we get something from the Board, and then put the money back in, if you felt comfortable with that raising taxes a little bit, fine, if not, we have some other options. I would

increase the \$25K somewhat to give us some more to work with. We have Sculptured Rocks Rd. to work on too.

Dave Leone - I'll stick with the \$25,000 into the paved roads. I don't know at this time what it would cost for us to pave or to reclaim one mile of road. I don't know if we're going 18' or 20' wide. The far end of North Groton Road, I drove over it last weekend. There's approximately 1 ½ mile from the Town line to where we stopped last year. These roads are very silty. They're not good gravel based materials so the roads move all the time. The way we've been going at it is going down 2 feet, the frost goes down well over 5 feet. The State had a test point out on North Groton Road for a number of years, I'm not sure if they still have. To do 2 feet is still putting a band-aid on the road. They're spending an awful lot of money to go that route (too much noise on the recording unclear what is being said). Instead of spending \$145,000 to do 1400' we could probably spend a little more to get 1 ½ mile done. That's what the Board needs to look at; what it would cost to grind and what it would cost to repave that mile.

Glen Hansen – We have bids upstairs. I've been to RND paving and to GMI that just this year purchased a reclaimer, and we had them look at a section and give a number to reclaim or to shim. We haven't opened those numbers yet. I don't know what they are so as soon as I do I can answer your question.

Barrie Sawyer – I'm looking at the budget which is expenditures of almost a million dollars. Over ½ of that is coming in from the money we get from the wind turbines, and given this large "largesse" I'm just amazed that we can't come up with the money to reconstruct the section of North Groton Road. If you travel North Groton Rd do you want to continue doing that for a year? I'm requesting to amend the Article to add \$135,000.

Moderator – We need that in writing.

Christina Goodwin – To answer the earlier question as to how much it would raise the taxes to add \$125,000 to the Warrant Article; you take the value of your Town and divide it by 1000. Our value is \$78 million. For every 78000 the tax rate would go up \$1 per thousand. For someone with a \$100,000 home it would end up going up \$100.

Moderator reads the Amendment to the Article:

"Motion to amend Article 7 to increase the amount to \$134,000 for a total of \$159000"

Robert Ellis made motion to move the amendment; **Glen Hansen** seconded the motion

Barrie Sawyer – I feel that road maintenance, even though we are in a rural area, is something we need to take care of and due to the fact that we have half a million bonus, I think we can cough up enough at least to keep our roads marginally passable.

Lou Lieto – How did Barrie come up with that number?

Barrie Sawyer – I simply took last year's cost to do the amount of work that they got done and level funded it.

Joshua Ellstein - The Select Board was looking into doing a bond to replace all of North Groton. What would the cost of the debt servicing that rather than doing a 1400 foot section every year?

Christina Goodwin – When we looked into it, it would be \$150,000 over 10 years: the rates change every year so that would fluctuate a little bit. I don't have the exact numbers with me, but it was going to be about \$150,000 per year plus interest.

Joshua Ellstein - What is the cost to do the remainder of North Groton Road in 1400 foot sections?

Christina Goodwin – The quote we received was from last year and it was approximately \$1.8 million.

Dave Leone – If we're going to change this article and go with the amendment, what would we be paying for another 1400 feet to do the same way we have been doing? Are we going to pay to have it ground and repave that 1.5 miles or however far we can? How do we go about justifying the numbers as to what it would cost? Are we even looking at reclaiming and resurfacing?

Christina Goodwin – Speaking as one board member; the intent would be what the public wants. If you add money back in for a road project, we are going to continue it the way we've always done; not reclaim or ship. We would continue to do a certain section of the road just to keep moving. That's the intent I would agree to.

John Rescigno – Reclaiming it would just smooth it over as a temporary band-aid whereas to continue the project, we'd have another section finished.

Lou Lieto – Given the number that I hear for a 10 year bond to do the whole of North Groton Road for about the same amount per year as we're spending, and in addition, at the end of 10 years it's about the time when the wind farm would either cease or reduce its revenues to us, why isn't that a viable option? Why haven't you considered that?

Christina Goodwin – When the Board discussed the 10 year bond, our concern was that we have other projects that need to be done. We did not go forward with the 10 year bond for this year because we have the bridge that needs to be done. We have a highway department that needs to be done. The 10 year bond ties you to a yearly \$150,000 payment. You can't get out of that payment. If there's no funding for it, you're paying that every year. That is why this Board chose not to move forward with it.

Miles Sinclair – I just wanted to point out that the budget is already going up \$70,000 because of the elimination of a full-time officer. That's basically cut in half and as proposed, this is going to add, according to your calculations \$100 for a \$100,000 home. This in fact will impact me about \$200 additional per year just for that in addition to the increase that is already here if everything passes. Getting back again to what the New Hampshire legislature has done to incentivize police work. Back in 2011 in the retirement system there was a separate COLA account, so if investments performed above a certain figure, that surplus went to give retirees a cost of living adjustment. They zeroed out that COLA account and since that time I've received nothing as far as cost of living adjustment for six or seven years. I am on a fixed income and I'm guessing there are others in this room who are on fixed incomes, so to me \$200 is not chump change. That is \$200 I can't spend on something else and already my buying power is on a downward spiral. I just want people to take that into consideration.

Pam Hamel – I'm talking as a property owner in Groton. The wind farm pilot is a 15 year pilot, but when the pilot is over, that doesn't mean that the wind farm does not pay taxes. They are going to pay taxes. You just need to negotiate some kind of agreement, that's all. We know what we'll be getting until year

15, after that we don't know how much we'll be getting, but they're going to be tax payers like everybody else in this room, it's just what kind of agreements get worked out. I just don't want people to look at it as though we won't be having any money from there, of course we will. It's only logical.

Gary Eason – For the moment if we don't go ahead with this amendment we would sit out this one year and then we would be back to the ¼ mile maintenance for ½ mile. Right now I'm trying to play catch-up and I can't afford that this year. I recommend that we stay with the Article as written. I have traveled the road a lot. I have a job across the street and I'm going to be bouncing around a lot myself. Go slow and we'll be back on schedule next year. Let's consider skipping it for this year.

Robert Ellis – I don't have to go down that road and I don't have to go down Sculptured Rocks Road, but I still think that we need to take care of these roads. I drive the Town trucks and they get beaten up going down there.

Glen Hansen – We have a Road Committee that meets every two or three months. We've reached out to have people come join the Road Committee. It's basically the same people all the time. When we initiated the Road Committee we had an engineer on with us. He had looked at the whole situation, looked at the pictures that I took when I first did the section above Helen Santoro's house where we did go down 3 or 4 feet. We took out big boulders, bigger than the bucket on the excavator. There was not good sub base for the road and the Road Committee decided on the 24" box out which was the recommendation of big contractors in the area as being the best option. The road, except one small section that is built over ledge stays in place. I've been taking measurements. The crown remains; everything rises and falls at the same rate, even this year when it's been up and down. Every time it refreezes it just goes deeper. The 24" is not 100%, I'll agree on that, but it's something better than what we had been doing. When I met with GMI and RND the last 3 weeks up there they looked at the road condition. RND has been the paving contractor all the way through the repaving. They also said the same thing. Reclaim and repave might buy two or three years. Look at North Groton Road out here where the State spent several hundred thousand dollars to shim. It's junk; your tax money making it black, making it pretty; just before November. We didn't get the chance of a summer to ride on it. They're throwing our money away. We're trying to give you good service not the 100% answer and we all agree it's what we have to work with.

Stephen Spafford – DeTulippe did the part up there that's the roughest.

Dave Leone – I'm not the largest paving or construction company in this area, but I am the largest since owner of a construction company that purchases material for one of the largest companies around here. So that means, I'm not the big guy, but I buy a lot of materials. I do a lot of road work. I do a lot of site work. They got quotes or opinions from two of the largest companies that supply materials I buy from. Of course those guys are going to say take out two feet of material. Where's the material coming from? It's coming from them. I think the Road Committee and Select Board needs to look at what we're getting for 1400 feet before they ask us to spend more money. I think if you take a string and run it across that road; I have a very good eye; you're going to find that road does not have a crown anymore. Watch when it rains where the water goes. It doesn't run off as it should, it runs down the center of the road because the road is already moving. I think we need to look at other options.

Miles Sinclair – With cost being one of the concerns, I think it's the most immediate response to what Dave is suggesting; that is going to exponentially increase the cost of doing the road. If we're going to go down five feet deep instead of two feet maybe not doubling the price, but there's some factor there.

It'll be significantly more expensive per mile to do it that way. Again you must tailor things to what the Town needs and what's reasonable and the tax payers can afford. I will take exception with Mrs. Hamel in her comment about the Wind Farm isn't going anywhere after this 15 year pilot. I'm a supporter of the wind farm and have been from the outset, but there is no guarantee at the end of this 15 year pilot that they won't decide to say the economics just aren't there anymore, we're going to just decommission it and if they choose to decommission that wind farm there is no pilot from that point forward. Would that land still be taxed? Yes, but at a significantly decreased value. One thing Mr. Sawyer is mentioning in proper context. I'm not disagreeing with him, you have to spend on things you didn't have before the wind farm was built, but with the pilot and with the assessment from DRA we're already paying what used to be \$100,000 increase over what we had been paying to the county. The Board should be able to give us some idea of what we're now paying since our legislation was introduced to have them use the pilot itself instead of just the DRA's assessed value. A significant portion of that is already going to the county. It's not like we have the entire pilot to use just as we choose because we do not. Some of that money has already been committed.

Gary Easson - I think one year we skip this that would be prudent because of budgeting. This is going to raise taxes \$100 per thousand. I'm having a hard time getting by right now and some other people are also.

Barrie moved on the amendment.

Moderator read the amendment prior to vote. Amendment is defeated.

Moderator read the Warrant Article #7 again in preparation to vote. Article 7 passes.

ARTICLE 8: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **six thousand dollars (\$6000)** for deposit into the Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund (December 31, 2016 balance: \$11,112.70).

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

John Rescigno made motion to move Article 8; **Christina Goodwin** seconded the motion.

Chief Thompson – This is the typical capital improvement money to be put away. The price of vehicles goes up every year.

Moderator reads Warrant Article 8 in preparation for vote. Article passes.

ARTICLE 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25000)** for deposit into the Public Works Capital Reserve Fund (December 31, 2016 balance: \$40,178.06).

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Christina Goodwin made motion to move Article 9; **Kyle Andrews** seconded the motion.

John Rescigno – The fund was created in 2014 monies to be used to construct the new Town garage which will be located across from the Transfer Station. The current Town garage is located in the flood plain and it needs to be moved.

Christina Goodwin – We are not ready to come to the Town with any plans, but we have a Building Committee that was established after last year’s Town Meeting and we are working on some type of plan to get that building moved to a location across from the Transfer Station. We’ve met with contractors. We are meeting with the Building Committee in the next couple of weeks, but we won’t be ready to come to the Town for at least a year or two. Right now we need to put money away in order to not hit it all at once.

Moderator reads Warrant Article 9 in preparation for vote. Article passes.

ARTICLE 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **seven thousand dollars (\$7000)** for deposit into the Assessing Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund (December 31, 2016 balance: \$5,735.53).

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Kyle Andrews made motion to move Article 10; **John Rescigno** seconded the motion.

Christina Goodwin – We just completed a revaluation in 2016. We are in the next five year cycle. The Board has gone out to request for proposals hoping to either continue with the same assessing firm or get a firm that is more cost efficient for us. We still need to put money away so at the last yuear we are no hit with the whole cost of revaluation.

Stephen Spafford – When you change firms, the other company is not familiar with the Town. Is there any consideration from the Select Board to stay with the current firm?

Christina Goodwin – There is no intention of the board to change the assessing firm, but we wouldn’t be doing our job if we didn’t put this out for requests for proposals. There’s no intent to change them, no complaints from the Select Board on them. By law we must do revaluation every five years.

Gary Easson – Spoke to show concern over the current assessing firm.

Moderator reads Warrant Article 10 in preparation for vote. Article passes.

ARTICLE 11: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **five thousand dollars (\$5000)** for deposit into the Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund (December 31, 2016 balance: \$44,420.44).

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Christina Goodwin made motion to move Article 11; **John Rescigno** seconded the motion.

Kyle Andrews – This is a savings account to replace any heavy equipment such as a backhoe or other heavy equipment the Town would need.

Moderator reads Warrant Article 11 in preparation for vote. Article passes.

ARTICLE 12: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **five thousand dollars (\$5000)** for deposit into the Disaster Relief Capital Reserve Fund (December 31, 2016 balance: \$65,704.26).

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Kyle Andrews made motion to move Article 12; **Christina Goodwin** seconded the motion.

John Rescigno – This fund was created in 2004 to be used in the event of a natural or man-made disaster to assist those in need.

Peter Smith – Can these funds be used to avoid a disaster such as cutting down dead trees on the side of the road? I've noticed quite a few hazardous dead trees. It's an accident waiting to happen at some point. Most fall and don't hit anyone, but there's that possibility. I wondered where the funding usually comes from to take care of those.

Glenn Hansen – If we were to have a catastrophic event, microburst or anything like that in Town, this money would help us with the clean-up. As far as dead trees go, you must get certified letters from the land owner to take a tree over 6" diameter, 24" above the root ball because the property owner owns the trees up to the edge of the road. Just because it is in our right-of-way does not give us the option to go in and cut it down. In the past one of our Selectmen went and got permission to cut some of those trees. We only have \$700 in the highway budget to manage tree problems and mostly that is used in the higher areas to cut thick brush out of the trees that are not under NH COOP powerlines. I spoke with NH COOP and they will be out this summer, but they cut only under their power lines.

Christina Goodwin – If there is a hazard and it is brought to either the Board or Highway Department's attention we will try to address that as best we can with the land owner. We want to be able to take care of any hazard. In the process you need to contact the land owner or get their permission if it's on private property. The fund does not do that however, this fund is in the event of a disaster.

Miles Sinclair – What Glenn is talking about is the taking of live trees. There is a separate statute that gives the Town the authority to remove hazardous trees and there is a liability issue to address those within the right-of-way. You don't need to get land owner permission to remove a hazardous tree.

Moderator reads Warrant Article 12 in preparation for vote. Article passes.

ARTICLE 13: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **five thousand dollars (\$5000)** for deposit into the Perambulation Non Capital Reserve Fund (December 31, 2016 balance: \$27,428.90).

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

John Rescigno made motion to move Article 13; **Kyle Andrews** seconded the motion.

Christina Goodwin – We are in the process of perambulating at this time. Perambulation is going out and certifying the boundaries of your Town. Right now there's a Statute that says the Town needs to do

this every seven years. We are way behind that on some of our boundaries. Right now, we've only completed one, done in 2012 by Miles and Kyle and we have two that are in progress. Alexandria is one. Some blazing will be done in the spring. Once that is finalized the \$3600 will come out of this fund. Hebron hasn't been started yet, but there is a contract for that and our portion is \$7500. That is a longer line. What are left are Rumney, Orange and Dorchester. We are putting money into this fund to pay for those.

Bob Ferriere – there is a bill in the house to eliminate this need to perambulate every seven years if it does pass.

Christina Goodwin – Yes, my understanding of the bill is that it will not eliminate the need to perambulate, but will alter the seven year statute. You will still be required to do this process, but it will not be as stringent. We are aware of this.

Tony Tavares – What is the cost for perambulation?

Christina Goodwin – Alexandria was \$7250 and the cost was split with them. Hebron is \$15,000. It varies per line. Rumney, when we looked into that was \$22,000 to \$25,000. That's a much more expensive line.

Tony Tavares – What causes the difference in cost?

Christina Goodwin –The length of the line and what sort of records that are on file would affect the cost.

Tony Tavares – Who does this? Who are we paying?

Christina Goodwin – We pay a surveyor. Right now we are contracted with Alan Barnard with Hebron and with Alexandria.

Tony Tavares – So it is not the Selectmen that walk the line, it's a surveyor?

Christina Goodwin – The first year, the Selectmen did walk the line in Plymouth.

Moderator reads Warrant Article 13 in preparation for vote. Article passes.

ARTICLE 14: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **five thousand dollars (\$5000)** for deposit into the Town House Capital Reserve Fund (December 31, 2016 balance: \$30,240.91).

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Christina Goodwin made motion to move Article 14; **John Rescigno** seconded the motion.

Kyle Andrews – This fund is to do work on the Town House to improve or fix any damage.

Moderator reads Warrant Article 14 in preparation for vote. Article passes.

ARTICLE 15: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **five thousand dollars (\$5000)** for deposit into the Truck/Sander Capital Reserve Fund (December 31, 2016 balance: \$10,072.81).

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Kyle Andrews made motion to move Article 15; **Christina Goodwin** seconded the motion.

John Rescigno – This fund was created in 1985 to provide the Town with monies needed to replace the truck or sander should it require replacement.

Moderator reads Warrant Article 15 in preparation for vote. Article passes.

ARTICLE 16: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to dispose of the following tax-deeded property using the services of a real estate broker to market such property rather than disposing of the property by public auction or sealed bid:

Off North Groton Road Map 2, Lot 123

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

John Rescigno made motion to move Article 16; **Kyle Andrews** seconded the motion

Christina Goodwin – This property is North past 1204 North Groton Road. In order for us to do a sale of tax-deeded property through a realtor we must put it on a Warrant Article for the public to approve. It's been over 10 years that the Town has held it and we want to put this vacant land up for sale. If the property sells this year, the money will go to the general fund to offset budget.

Lou Lieto – How big is this piece?

Christina Goodwin – 47 acres

Lou Lieto – Do you know the value?

Christina Goodwin – The assessed value is \$38,000

Stephen Spafford – Is that a land-locked piece?

Christina Goodwin – We don't have the deed here. I'm not clear if there is a right-of-way. There is a gated access point.

Moderator reads Warrant Article 16 in preparation for vote. Article passes.

ARTICLE 17: Shall the Town vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 72:28-b, All Veterans' Tax Credit. If adopted, the credit will be available to any resident, or the spouse or surviving spouse of any resident who (1) served not less than 90 days on active service in the armed forces of the United States and (2) was honorably discharged or an officer honorably separated from services and (3) is not eligible for or

receiving a credit under RSA 72:28 or RSA 72:35. If adopted, the credit granted will be five hundred dollars (\$500), the same amount as the Optional Veterans' Tax Credit voted by the Town under RSA 72:28.

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

John Rescigno made motion to move Article 16; **Kyle Andrews** seconded the motion

Christina Goodwin – In 2016 the law changed to allow those who may not have served during specific time periods to qualify for the Veterans' Tax Credit as long as they served active duty. The board put this up for consideration from the Town. It must be adopted by the Town.

Celine Richer – I only have one issue with this and that is the 90 days. We're a veteran family; we've been around or in the military all our lives. There's a twelve week basic training, then you have advanced individual training from four weeks to one year depending on the skill set you will be doing which means, if you're in the Marine Corp, 84 days plus AIT. The only reason you'd get out is if you have a medical discharge; if you were injured, but never really served. You maybe went through training only and then you were in for 90 days.

Christina Goodwin – It needs to be 90 days active service.

Celine Richer – When you go into basic training you're in active service.

Christina Goodwin – This is the State's wording "...90 days..." is the same wording used in the Optional Veterans' Credit; that you must have served 90 days, so regardless if it's under an armed conflict or not, the Veteran must have served 90 days.

Celine Richer – Once you sign up, you are on active duty. That whole time you're in basic training you are active. I'm not against Veterans, we are Veterans, but I find the 90 day not right.

Miles Sinclair – In the interest of full disclosure in the past I would have qualified. I served in the Marine Corp for July 1977 to August 1981. On the 5th of January in the Union Leader there was an article that explains the reasoning and rationale behind the bill and what it is trying to accomplish (Miles read the article with permission from the Moderator). There is some implication that this will increase taxes in the Town. From my understanding this would not increase cost to the Town, it would redistribute the tax burden. When will this go into effect?

Christina Goodwin – This year: You need to apply before April 15th.

Moderator reads Warrant Article 17 in preparation for vote. Article passes.

ARTICLE 18: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **one thousand dollars (\$1000)** for support of the Groton Historical Society

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Christina Goodwin made motion to move Article 18; **John Rescigno** seconded the motion.

Pam Hamel – The Groton Historical Society would like to thank the Town for your continued support and interest. 2016 was a very good year for us. We were able to open our School House Museum after it had been closed for a number of years. We now have access for everyone. Thanks to the generosity of members and friends including the Town of Groton we were able to do some interior painting, renovate our office and install filing cabinets. We have numerous new displays. We produced our third calendar. We hosted a very successful Memorial Day program last year and we had a Living Historian Program here on Mary Todd Lincoln. The Historical Society is here for this community to offer programs to remember Groton; not only the past, but even now, this day, as though it will someday be in the past. We want to keep that going forward. We have some special events coming up this summer. As you know, Pam Yinger passed away a year ago now and the Historical Society was very fortunate to have acquired some of her belongings so this year in honor of Pam, we are having a special display for Pam Yinger. We are having that available to the public at an Open House on June 24th from 1-3pm at the Museum. We will have a second Open House July 15th from 1-3pm for a special Military display. Mark your calendars for those. We're working on a new calendar for this year and more displays. We're coming back to you for continued support. For the last 3 years the Town of Groton has approved us on a Warrant Article for \$850. This year we are asking for \$1000. The main reason for the increase is actually the response that we got from the Town last year after you overwhelmingly voted to support us for \$850, and then the next Warrant Article was the NLRA for \$1000. Many came up and asked us why we didn't ask for \$1000, so we decided to do that this year.

Lou Lieto – I think the Historical Society provides a benefit to those who are interested in the value of the historical legacy of where we live. On the other hand, I believe that in the context of what we need to do to maintain and survive in this Town, it is a discretionary expense in light of the other things we're struggling to do. My suggestion is that if they are enjoying such good support from the Town people who are willing to give their donations that it should be the major source of their income.

Moderator reads Warrant Article 18 in preparation for vote. Article passes.

ARTICLE 19: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **one thousand dollars (\$1000)** for support of the Newfound Lake Region Association (NLRA).

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Christina Goodwin made motion to move Article 19; **John Rescigno** seconded the motion.

Kyle Andrews – This was \$500 a couple years ago, and we're increasing it to \$1000.

Christina Goodwin – (Reads the letter from NLRA) we have applied for a grant through them to replace culverts on Sculptured Rocks Road, so they have helped us with that. We haven't been given the grant yet, but we are on the list.

Deborah Johnson – the major focus is on maintaining the water quality of the lake. The quality of the lake does benefit all of us and we can get passes at the State Park. The lake itself draws in tax revenue and maintains businesses that we all frequent. Far more importantly, while only half of Groton is in the Newfound Association watershed area, that's half of Groton and we are sitting in part of that half. When the NLRA got a large grant from the Federal Government to do watershed planning, they provided the Planning Board with a lot of great help in getting the process of assessing resources in Groton which

was beneficial to the Planning Board. If we had to go out and hire someone to do that work for us, it would have cost thousands of dollars. They do provide a benefit for the Town in that they are a resource for us if we have questions about our aquifer, water quality, the Cocker mouth River, Punch Brook and more. I would encourage you to support the NLRA. They do provide a benefit to the Town and to the Planning Board.

Moderator reads Warrant Article 19 in preparation for vote. Article passes.

ARTICLE 20: To see if the Town will vote to enter into a contract with Hebron Public Library services, pursuant to **RSA 202-A:4-b Contract for Services**, for a period of one (1) year to provide library services to Groton residents with the sum of \$2000 to pay for this contract out of the Library Savings Account (submitted by the Library Trustees).

The Select Board does not recommend this Article 0-3.

Christina Goodwin made motion to move Article 20; **John Rescigno** seconded the motion.

Elizabeth Jespersen – As Library Trustees we have been trying to work on a couple ideas to figure out what would be best for the Town of Groton. We've had several meetings with Mike York, the State Librarian. We've had telephone calls and emails back and forth tossing around ideas. The reason you see no books on the shelves now is because Mr. York recommended that we box up our books and put them away because they were being pilfered and there was no way for us to protect the assets of the Town. He did not feel we had a viable collection and that it would take multiple thousands of dollars to turn our collection into a real library. This would be more money than we have in our account and more money than this Town is will to put forth at this time. So what we are proposing is entering into a contract with Hebron Town Library, like we contract for Fire and Ambulance services. We've met with the Trustees of the Hebron Library on several occasions and also with Mr. York to draw up an understanding which lays out what we would do for them and what they would do for us. Basically, for that \$2000 any resident of Groton can go down to the Hebron Library, obtain your library card and use the library for free. Right now if you wanted to go down and use the library as a Groton resident, you'd need to pay \$10. If you went to Rumney, you would pay \$20 if you went to Plymouth you would pay \$40 for a year. This agreement would allow any resident to go to Hebron and use any of the services of the library. The library has changed a lot over the last few years. They are open Mondays 5pm-7pm, Wednesday 1pm – 5pm and Saturday 9 am to noon. Over the summer they have special programs for children when there are more people in town. They have "Overdrive" which is downloadable books so any of you can walk in there and have the ability to check out one of 20,000 titles for free rather than paying for them through Kindle or whatever service you use. They have DVD's available; everything is in the process of being barcoded for checking out with just a scan. What we had here was people would sign a list as to what books they took out and that was technically against the law because that sheet of paper was out for anyone in the Town to see who was checking out what book and that is considered private information. We entered into an agreement with them three months ago to provide services until April first then wait to see if the Warrant Article would pass. Because we have not been able to notify residents in Town that this is available we haven't had a flock of people running to the library to get library cards. At present we have 15 families getting services from Hebron. That ratio doesn't look very good that there are only 15 families or about 30 people using that \$2000, but we now have the ability to send out a mailer if this passes to every resident in Groton to let them know that these services are available for you to use. Robin, the librarian and the trustees have been very approachable. They have worked with us. We did address and matter that came up in a public hearing that people on the

other side of Groton aren't going to want to go to Hebron, so we approached Rumney Library, we have many emails going back and forth. We gave them everything that they asked for and they have not answered us back as to whether they want to enter into an agreement, so we don't think it is something they are interested in doing. The library at one time was near the Town Garage and residents used it there. We're asking you to go a couple miles further to obtain services. You can ask for any of the two million books that are available through the State and they can order that for you and have it in a couple days. The reason it is on a Warrant Article is that rather than have this come out of our budget the monies would come from our savings account.

Moderator- If the money is coming from the Library savings account does that need to be a vote of the Town?

Elizabeth Jespersen – Yes, it does. The contract has to be voted on to fulfill the RSA.

Lou Lieto - The librarian is saying that the funds that the library has are monies that came to the library because of the flood when the library building was destroyed. Those can be dispersed by the Trustees on their own authority. The Trustees may not enter into a contract, that requires the Select Board and what they are asking on the Warrant Article is that the Select Board be allowed to enter into a contract which will be funded with library funds.

Elizabeth Jespersen reads the RSA for clarification. We have the money sufficient to carry out the contract and that's why the Warrant Article has been amended to say that the monies would come from our funds.

Bob Ferriere brought up that the wording is different in the Town Report as written.

Elizabeth Jespersen – The budget is what the Town provides for the Library which is \$2500. We have an account that has money from FEMA for the flood, but annual funds have been put into that account.

(Discussion between Bob Ferriere and Elizabeth Jespersen)

Bob Ferriere suggested that we provide money to individuals interested in library cards to other libraries that we provide money for them to obtain cards to the other libraries.

Elizabeth Jespersen – This is not funds from the Town, this is library funds we already have and Mike York suggested that we do this for a year and see how it goes to see how many people participate and if we think it is a go, then we would continue it into the future, if not, we're done. The contract states that we can dissolve this contract on 30 days' notice.

Anne Tobine – The books that had been stored downstairs were destroyed by moisture and mice before. Are the books that we boxed up in the basement now? What is being done to keep them from being destroyed like the others were?

Elizabeth Jespersen - The Select Board addressed the mouse issue that we had and we haven't seen any signs of mice. The plan is to sell those books and they are not to stay in the basement forever. The books are old and outdated. Some are hand-me-downs from other libraries. We don't have a current collection of anything, so there is not point in keeping them, so we will probably sell what we can. I check on them to make sure they are holding up well.

Pam Hamel - I don't even know if this Warrant Article is legal because what the RSA says is if the Town votes to enter into a contract, the Town shall raise and appropriate, not that we should take the money from the library savings.

(Debate about the legality of the Warrant Article)

John Rescigno – instead of entering into a contract, could we just have the Hebron Library bill you for the Townspeople that wanted to go? Instead of committing \$2000, why don't we just pay as we go?

Elizabeth Jespersen – Mr. York stated that this would be a slippery slope and that we didn't want to enter into any agreement like that. By law the Town must appropriate for a library. That was started back in the 1800's, so we have money already appropriated by the Town in the budget and is already appropriated. If we don't use that money it goes back into the General Fund. Right now the only thing we spend money on is the computer and the WIFI services which is open to anyone, free internet service, free printing and we're looking into getting a scanner.

Tony Tavares – Senior Citizens get free cards at Plymouth. I don't think that has changed. I also believe you can still get a card out of Bristol for free if you are in the Newfound School District. I'm wondering why they are charging so much when we can get free cards at other libraries.

Elizabeth Jespersen – It increases the distance you need to go and I think Bristol is looking into changing that.

Moderator reads the amendment to the Article in preparation for a vote. The vote was close, so the Moderator counted. The amendment passes 22 to 18

Moderator reads Warrant Article 20 as amended and opens the floor for discussion.

Miles Sinclair – I've lived in the Town since 1997 and not for a lack of effort we tried to do the best we could to make our own library available for the Town. Because of all the damage to the books we had we are now looking to sell the rest and functionally we don't have any ability to run a library, is that correct? We do have a computer system that is available whenever the Town Hall is open for anyone to come in here and use. My question is, have libraries at this level and ours in particular become obsolete? Are we doing something into the wind, not able to accomplish what the true intent is? It doesn't seem, no matter how we try, that we are able to get it done. Is it something we should continue to try to achieve?

Elizabeth Jespersen – According to the State Librarian libraries have changed over the last ten or fifteen years. People want downloadable books. They want to use their Kindles to read things. People on a budget or students can't afford all the programs to download all the books that they want. They want to go to the library and get that for free. Services have changed from the day when people went in and sat down and read books and studied and did things like that. The library has had a major increase in State with the number of patrons that use the library, because downloadable books are available to them and magazines and newspapers online through your library now. The old fashioned way we've looked at using the library and checking out books, people are still doing that but there's a lot of people that won't have a book in their hand.

Sara Smith – If the \$2000 is not coming out of the Library budget then what is that \$2500 going to be used for if we do sign this contract and there's no longer anything for the library, what would that budgeted \$2500 be used for?

Elizabeth Jespersen – A minimal amount of those funds would be used if we needed to purchase a ream of paper, ink for the printer or things like that. Minimal amounts of money would be coming out for supplies.

Moderator reads the article as amended in preparation for vote. Article, as amended, passes.

ARTICLE 21: To see if the Town will vote to amend the “no spraying of power lines” ordinance adopted in 1972 to allow spot spraying of cut saplings under utility lines, other than high voltage power lines, using an herbicide treatment to control the rapidly growing vegetation.

The Select Board does not recommend this Article 1-2.

Kyle Andrews made motion to move Article 21; **Christina Goodwin** seconded the motion.

John Rescigno – This Article would allow the New Hampshire Electric Coop to spot spray any cut saplings they create as they trim under the power lines along the roadside. By doing so the Town would benefit from a more reliable energy source. If the saplings are not treated, the saplings will generate two or more shoots which will eventually interfere with the power lines thus creating future power outages as we currently experience. This Article will not affect or allow the COOP to spray under the high voltage power lines.

Stephen Spafford – This was brought up at the Budget Hearing, but will it be said that if you don't want them to spray poisons along your boundary line for people to put out signs saying don't spray? If we're talking about Round-Up, that is a carcinogen. I have a horse and I ride it, and she grazes along the side of the road, I don't want a sick animal.

John Rescigno – Round-up wouldn't be effective on saplings. It would be the individuals' responsibility to make sure animals are not grazing on the roadside. It is equally important that if you need power because you have some sort of medical issue that you will be assured of that steady flow of power without interference from saplings that are growing.

Stephen Spafford – When they were using mechanical means to do the power lines those that were doing the work showed appreciation that we don't spray so they have a job to do.

John Rescigno – The difference is that under the high voltage lines they were spraying generally, but this will be spot spraying. The electric company only comes out every so often, every five or six years, is how often they come back through the Town. If we opt for the spot spray it means they won't need to come back every two years to do it. They will come back in the same amount of time, it would just mean more high trees that would interfere with the power lines.

Lou Lieto – He's right, glyphosate was recently added to the list of possible carcinogens. Having said that I don't know if that is in the products they'll be using. One of the advantages of spraying power lines is that people don't live under power lines, but we still live next to or near where they spray and

the water that comes down off the road which would carry some of this herbicide, may end up in my water source. So I think that what the contrast here is not whether to spray or not to spray, but to reduce the cost of operating the COOP because they would have to cut. More time is used for cutting as opposed to spraying. The last time we had a major snow storm which resulted in significant power outages over many days, I was talking to some of the crew and asked them how often the COOP sent people out to trim things that would be problems for the power lines, and he said that the law is five years, but it's been eight or ten or some other large number. They were not paying attention to the law and they got in trouble. It's the cost of doing business. My power rates have not gone down and they certainly have gone up. My attitude is, sharing with the Town the responsibility of trimming along the edges of the road is more effective and would save money.

Deborah Johnson – I do not want anyone spraying by my property or my neighbor's property. If they spray on a breezy day, it drifts and can go anywhere. I voted for them not to spray along the large power lines because it is a water issue, and I have the same issue with spot spraying. If it's an issue with saplings we all can get out there and cut saplings down. Power outages don't necessarily relate to saplings. It's related to the fact that for years, the COOP hasn't come through and cut the dead trees and many other things along the lines. When it comes to keeping the price of our power down, I don't think that this is going to keep our costs down if they spot spray. The costs are going to continue to go up. I do not want spraying.

Gary Easson – (recording was unclear)

Glenn Hansen – How many have attended a COOP Board Meeting. If you want them to come out and cut along the power lines, make a lot of noise and then they'll come. That's what Hebron did and in four years' time they've had Asplundh out there cutting along the power lines. It's a different electric company.

The last time the COOP was in this Town to cut trees under the power lines was on River Road six years ago. The growth rate is 18" – 24" per year.

Moderator reads Warrant Article 21 in preparation for vote. Article fails.

ARTICLE 22: To see if the Town will vote to transact any other business that may legally come before the Town.

Christina Goodwin – The Conservation Commission is looking for active members. If you are interested in serving on the Conservation Commission please submit your name to the Select Board. There are currently two or three active members.

If you are interested in serving on the Old Home Day Committee, please submit your name to the Select Board.

There is a new feature on the Town website; a Tax Kiosk and you are able to go into that and look up taxes for any property as long as you have the name or the map and lot number. You can look up your own property so you can take some time and go look at that. It's located on the home page and also on the Town Clerk/ Tax Collector page.

The Board will be holding an Inventory Meeting on April 4th at 7:00 pm.


The Board is looking into locations for pump stations for fire coverage. We've reached out to three property owners and we've heard back from two. One is not going to work out for us, but the second one we're looking into options for that and we're waiting for the third. These are places we can put in

pump stations for fire prevention, so a truck can pull in on a flat pad, drop a pump in a brook or a pond and be able to fill up a tanker in case of fire. There were questions about dry hydrants. Those are harder to maintain. The Town currently has two that cover the Town, one on the Dorchester side and one on the Hebron side where the old Town Hall used to be. There were conversations about putting in cisterns and those aren't as functional for us with a lot of requirements for maintaining them.

Pam Hamel – Thank you from the Historical Society, and I forgot to announce a program. This year is the 100th year when the United States entered into World War I so the Historical Society is hosting a humanities program this Memorial Day.

Meeting adjourned 1:45 pm.

The minutes respectfully submitted



Ruth Millett, Town Clerk/Tax Collector