

2023 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Meeting comes to order at 9:00am on March 18th, 2023 at the Groton Town Hall Community Room
754 North Groton Rd., Groton, NH

Moderator: Amy Prive-Hardy
Select Board members: Ron Madan, John Rescigno, Tony Albert
Supervisors of the Checklist: Pamela Hamel, Gina, Rescigno, Virginia Parker
Administrative Assistant: Sara Smith
Town Clerk: Ruth Millett
Groton Police Chief: Michael Bagan

56 registered voters in attendance and several non-voting residents
There are 427 registered voters in the Town of Groton – information from the Town of Groton Alpha List – 04/06/2023
There were 110 registered voters who voted in the 2023 Groton Town Election on 03/14/2023

Moderator begins the meeting with pledge to the American flag, and then reviews the rules of the meeting.

Moderator introduces Groton Police Chief, Michael Bagan, and asks permission for him to speak, if necessary, on police matters.

BALLOT ARTICLE 1

To choose all necessary town officers for the ensuing year.

Moderator introduces new town officers as a result of Town Elections, March 14th, 2023

Select Board Member: Tony Albert
Treasurer: Pamela Hamel
Planning Board Members: Debra Johnson, Russell Carruth (Michael Sheehan was subsequently appointed as an alternate to the Planning Board on March 29th, 2023).
Cemetery Trustees: Jonathan Beliveau, Richard Ross
Local Auditor: Ann Joyce
Trustee of the Trust Fund: Michele Lacroix
Library Trustees: Gina Rescigno, Roy Sheehan
Zoning Board Members: Casey Kuplin, Jonathan Beliveau, Jeremy Haney, Heath Matthews

BALLOT ARTICLE 2

Are you in favor of the adoption of the zoning amendments as proposed by the planning board of Groton?

The effect of adopting the proposed Zoning Amendments will be to add permitted uses and clarify sections and definitions of the current Zoning as follows:

- A. Subject to issuance of a building permit, the right of a property owner to construct a storage structure on their vacant/unoccupied lot
- B. The right of property owners to rent their single-family dwelling or seasonal camp subject to Town and state, regulated, water, and sewage, disposal systems, other appropriate local, and state laws and to Life – Safety requirements.

- C. The right of resident property owners to build one separate/detached structure as a home business, to rent to a single family, either short-term or long-term, subject to Town and state, regulated water and sewage disposal systems, other appropriate local and state laws, and to Life-Safety requirements.
- D. Subject to issuance of a building permit, the right of a property owner to construct a cabin for seasonal habitation, subject to Town and state regulated, water and sewage disposal systems, other appropriate local and state laws and to Life-Safety requirements.
- E. The right of resident property owners in District A and B, to store one (1) Recreational Vehicle, as defined in the Ordinance, on their lot on which there is a pre-existing principal dwelling. The Recreational Vehicle shall not be occupied as a rental while on the property, including use as a seasonal or year-round dwelling, Home, Occupation, or Home Business. However, it may be occupied as a guest house, rent-free, by family guests and members during short visits.

Should the proposed Zoning amendments fail to receive an affirmative vote, the 2022 Zoning Ordinance will continue in the present form.

yes. no.

Result of voting on March 14th – 70 yes, 36 no, 4 undervotes

Moderator reads Article 3.

ARTICLE 3

Article 3:

To see if the town will vote to raise an appropriate the sum of **six hundred seventy nine thousand dollars (\$679,000)** to design and construct a new department of public works building, with **one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000)** to come from the unassigned fund balance; **two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000)** to come from a USDA Rural Development, grant; and to authorize the withdrawal of **one hundred sixty thousand dollars (\$160,000)** from the Public Works Capital Reserve Fund; with the remainder of **one hundred sixty nine dollars (\$169,000)** to be raised from taxation. (Majority vote required).

The Select Board Recommends this Article 3-0

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

John Rescigno: This article is to design and construct the town garage. It will be a complete garage when it's done. It will include the salt shed and will be putting on a sand shed next year and getting grant money for that as well. If we don't vote this N will lose the \$250,000 grant and with this garage completed your overall budget has gone up \$6272 over last year, which is a pretty good bargain for the town.

Miles Sinclair: As most are aware, there has been a problem with flooding at the garage. I can't speak to prior than 1997 when I moved up here, but since then there's been six or seven major floods. This is a problem and we need to fix and correct the problem that's not going away. The past two attempts to pass this article were roundly, defeated by the public, and I think, in my own opinion that's because the towns people thought it was much too expensive for them to afford. Through this process it's been whittled down a little and a little more to the point where I think that we probably have the best proposal we're going to get. Is the timing ideal for the financial conditions? No. Are the financial conditions going to change for the better anytime soon? I don't believe they are. With all things considered from my perspective, it's important that we address this and it's important we address this before we lose the monies that come in from the wind farm, and that will happen in possibly five years. One of the reasons that we are able to do this at this time, if we choose to, is because of those monies that we received from the wind farm, I don't expect that there will be a

better proposal going forward, I think this is our opportunity to get this done while we can, and I'd ask the towns people to weigh this in their minds, and cast a vote as they see fit and hopefully this will pass.

Bill Jolly: I've been one of the biggest opponents for doing this because we all have limited incomes. This is a tough time we're all going to have a tough time going forward as Miles indicated. The challenge is that the cost of the stuff that goes into this building and the labor to build it is going to increase exponentially as things get tighter and supplies get tighter. If we don't do it, now we're going to be facing a problem with the current building deteriorating rapidly the more it gets hit by flooding. I know it's tough right now we all start our day by hearing bad news on the radio and it's a little over half million for the project. We're taking a very tiny piece of this on. So, I encourage everybody to go forward with this.

Gary Easson: What I'm concerned with about this is, I want to make sure local contractors get first refusal if they get a decent bid. General contractors are prone to hire their own guys. I've run into some resistance in the past, even with banks getting involved making questionable decisions about which contractors are working the job. I think it's only fair that since we're all tax payers if there's a contractor in town, we should be able to get a fair hearing on it and if requested, the Select Board could step in and review a contract. If a contractor is getting a RAW deal, not getting a fair shot at a bid. We're all taxpayers here and it might save the town a little from what's quoted in the estimates. I'm not, as a licensed electrician, looking to grab too much of the pie. I'm only thinking of the alarm system. I've been doing that type of work since the 70s. That's my concern is to save the town some money if possible. I would think Pilcher would want to get in on it and some of the plumbers we've got one or two plumbers in town. Keeping them in the loop and give them a chance.

John Rescigno: It is an open bid so anyone can put a bid in who wants and it will be received. Yes, the economic condition is not great in the country and that's why we hope not to go with a bond so we can take that \$169,000 taxation that we're going to raise towards it and get it over with in one year and not need to worry about next year or the year after.

Ann Joyce: At the select board meeting on March 7, Eric Law said if we don't use the \$250,000 grant, we will lose it. \$250,000 is a lot of money. \$170,000 is the same as we've put into the roads each year for the last 10 years. That's basically all I have to say. The taxes are going up \$7000 and I know we're all hurting. \$250,000 added to the \$169,000 and each year that's going up we lost the grant last year for the backhoe because of a flood zone so if we lose this no more grants that's all I have to say.

(Bob Ferriere spoke about using the microphone so all can hear. Recording device moved so people can get closer to the microphone.)

Bill Jolly motions to move to vote; Joe Koslow seconds.

Moderator reads the warrant a second time.

Article 3 passes.

ARTICLE 4

Moderator reads Article 4

Article 4: to see if the town or vote to raise an appropriate the sum of **eight hundred fifty-three thousand, nine hundred thirty-five dollars (\$853,935)**, which represents the operating budget for the ensuing year. Said sum does not include special or individual articles addressed.

The Select Board recommends this article 3-0

Tony motions to move the article as written, John seconds

Tony Albert: This article is the budget as listed in the book on page 15.

Bill Jolly: What is the cost per thousand on the valuation of the town?

(Select Board responds \$1.00 per thousand.)

Ann Joyce makes a motion to move the vote, Bill seconds

Article 4 passes.

Article 5

Moderator reads the article.

Article 5: To see if the town will vote to raise an appropriate the sum of \$97,501 to be added to the previously established capital reserve funds (majority vote required)

Disaster Relief CR fund (December 31, 2022 balance: \$81,391.98):	\$50,000
Police Cruiser CR fund. (December 31, 2022 balance: \$15,971.74):	\$10,000
Townhouse CR fund. (December 31, 2022 balance: \$34,137.03.):	\$10,000
Truck/Sander CR fund (December 31, 2022 balance: \$11,178.35.):	\$10,000
Heavy Equipment CR fund (December 31, 2022 balance: \$1347.49):	\$10,000
Assessing Reval CR fund. (December 31, 2022 balance: \$10,657.58):	\$7500
Public Works CR fund (December 31, 2022 balance: \$161,886.66):	\$1

Total Capital Reserve Funds \$97,501

The Select Board recommends this article 3-0

Ron Madan motions to move the article as written, Tony seconds

No discussion from the floor.

Joe Koslow motions to move to vote, Ann Joyce seconds the motion

Moderator reads the article again.

Article 5 passes.

Article 6

To see if the town will authorize the establishment of a road repair and paving capital reserve fund to be used for road repairs and paving. Furthermore, to raise an appropriate sum of **fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000)** to be placed in the fund and to appoint the Selectman as agents and expand from the fund. Recommendations Required (Majority Vote Required)

The Select Board recommends this article 3-0

John Rescigno motions to except the article as written, Tony second.

Tony Albert: This is a new capital reserve fund putting \$15,000 in. All our roads have been paved over past few years and are in pretty good shape, but in the future, there will be costs. We want to establish this fund and put \$15,000 in and you will see it, along with others like article 5 next year. We've lucked out getting all our roads paved before prices went really high the last couple of years. All roads are in really good shape now just need maintaining in the future. We're just trying to be proactive.

Bill Jolly: What does "recommendations required" mean?

John Rescigno: This is written by the attorneys, and it's their wording that needs to be in here.

Bill Jolly: If we put this money into a capital reserve fund, can we access it? Is this a limitation on accessing funds?

Moderator: It puts a Select Board as agents. This terminology is to allow the Select Board to withdraw money.

John Rescigno: I think this phrase may have been left in by accident.

Bill Jolly: Does this need to be modified? I want the wording of the article to be correct.

Moderator: DRA will not allow there to be a change in capital reserve warrants that change the agents that are allowed to use the funds.

Bill Jolly: So now it is at the discretion of the Select Board?

Moderator: That must be entered in the warrant, as written when it is sent to Town meeting by the DRA.

Tony Albert: What happens with capital reserve funds is, you hold a public hearing? It is at the discretion of the Select Board to spend it at any time of the year, but the Select Board would hold a hearing before the funds are expended.

Bill Jolly: So, as far as housekeeping goes, can we modify to remove those two words "recommendation required"?

Moderator: I believe that part could be changed you just can't change the agents.

Sara Smith: It just means the town will vote on it just like we did with the building. We voted on taking funds from the public works capital reserve. Does Select Board have to put in the request to take that money out. so, it doesn't come from the towns people to request to take that money out, like with the truck, the Select Board needs to be the ones who expend it. Do you say we need to use that money for the truck, but that's after the towns people already voted to create that capital reserve.

Bill Jolly: So, the town has voted to create the funds, but the Select Board only has the right to remove the funds.

Sara Smith: after it is voted on by the people say we want this much toward the truck or the building, but they need to sign something saying we will draw this money.

John Rescigno: We can't just randomly take money out without the public's knowledge.

Bill Jolly: So, can we remove those two words so it doesn't become a problem later? Do you need me to write that out?
(Bill uses a copy of the written warrant, and scratches out those two words)

Moderator reads the amended article 6.

Ann motions to accept the amendment. Joe seconds.

Jay Bernhardt: I was thinking that someone would need to come to the board to recommend that the work should be done, then the board would vote on this. It would prevent someone from just saying I want my road fixed. And then they would do it. I'm not sure getting rid of those two words is a smart thing to do if someone must come and request something be done, maintenance people, something like that. This is my concern and my question.

Tony Albert: With most of the capital reserve funds you will need to see that request in a warrant article most of the time the people get to decide if we take the money out. The only time you'd see the Select Board take money out is if there is a time of emergency. Like a truck breaking down, then money from the capital reserve might be used to repair it. It would be Town Meeting most of the time the people have a say on how the funds are used.

Dave Leone: I would not be in favor of this article because it says road repair and paving capital reserve fund. If it was a paving capital reserve fund, I would be in favor of that we already pay for our road repairs in the town's highway road repair budget. So that is why I wouldn't be in favor of this as it is written if it was a paving capital reserve fund, I understand we have put a lot of money into the roads and we want to prepare for future costs but we're already paying to maintain our roads. So, to me by putting a capital reserve fund for road repair that doesn't make sense to me and I'm not in favor of the article the way it is written.

John Rescigno: So, the operational budget is the money we are spending this year. Capital reserve, consider it like a savings account. We don't know what kind of damage might be done to the road. This is like a savings account so we have money to put aside if a situation may arise.

Bill Jolly: Point of order. We haven't voted yet on the amendment put forward. When we vote on that then we can discuss David's credible question.

Moderator reads the amended article.

Amended Article 6:

To see if the town will authorize the establishment of a Road Repair and Paving Capital Reserve Fund to be used for road repairs and paving. Furthermore, to raise an appropriate the sum of **fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000)** to be placed in the fund and to appointment the Selectman as agents to expend from the fund.

(Majority Vote Required)

A hand-count vote is taken to except the amendment as written.

Yes 26, no 14.

The amendment to article 6 is passed.

Dave Leone: Once again, we do plan our budget for the year. And we need to be looking at what we need in the budget for repairs. So, to me that money is already in our budget for the repairs we are going to do. I would vote "no" on the article the way it is written.

Tony Albert: The wording is to pave the road, but there may be repairs prior to paving. There may be culvert repair, stuff that's not planned. The wording is for more than just paving. It says repair, but it's for other things besides, just paving and I recommend we pass it the way it is written.

Sherry Nelson: My distress is over the word "paving" for a different reason. Last year there was a push to get the parking lot paved and as Miles put it very well. We don't want a fancy parking lot. About the only time we have a crowd here is at this time and there's mud and a little mud is not going to kill us. Budget-wise it's not going to kill us and we don't want it.

This building was restored by people who are very wary of keeping it historically accurate. A paved parking lot is not historically accurate. So, I don't want that. The paving could mean the paving of the parking lot the way it is worded to be used for a road repair and paving. It doesn't say road paving so I'm not going to vote for it because there is a chance that this paving might mean paving the parking lot.

Tony Albert: The Capitol reserve is for road paving. The parking lot would come up in a separate warrant article anything like that would.

John Rescigno: This could also be amended to say road paving if you would like to do that.

(Random conversation on how to word the amendment)

Sara Smith: Anytime you take money out of a capital reserve fund it would come before the town like it has been done in the past the town wouldn't just take the money out for the paving the parking lot. I understand your concern and you could amend it to say road repair and road paving if that would make you feel better.

Sherry Nelson: Will that hold up the meeting?

John Rescigno: It is your meeting, so if that's what you'd like to do, that's what we're here for.

(More discussion on the amendment and writing it out)

Gina Rescigno: Just a quick statement about what Sherry had to say. I do have the task of cleaning this building. That is not correct. This building is used very often. The road crew comes in and out every day and your carpets are getting destroyed. We just put them down. We've been through three vacuum cleaners and we can't pick up all of the sand. I have to sweep. It takes me a long time and I just want to put that out. I understand the money people don't want to put in for that, but it does cost a lot because of the dirt and sand through the mud season and all along through the snow.

(Meeting, pauses for the amendment being written)

Moderator reads the amended article 6

Amended Article 6:

To see if the town will authorize the establishment of a Road Repair and Road Paving Capital Reserve Fund to be used for road repairs and road paving. Furthermore, to raise an appropriate the sum of **fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000)** to be placed in the fund and to appoint the Selectman as agents to expend from the fund. (Majority vote required.)

Bill motions to move the vote, Bill Oakley seconds.

Amendment to Article 6 passes

Dave, Leone: I vote "no" on the way it's written if you look at page 19 if it was for the purpose of paving, I would agree with this article, but not with the verbiage of road repair in there. We're already paying for road repair.

Bill Jolly: What was the cost of repairs roughly for the flood that really blew out Sculptured Rocks Road? We spent hundreds of thousands of dollars of other of other people's money. We don't know if that's going to be there next time and for me just personally speaking, I broke a jeep a really good job getting out that day to make sure my kid was all right. It was a really bad blow out and needed repair rapidly. We're going to need funds if we get into the same situation to take care of this. My understanding of this capital reserve fund, we don't know what the next board would say, if these funds could be used for something like that. It doesn't mean we are not going to have an ongoing maintenance cost to the road that's a given. I whined last year and nobody wanted to hear about it but the water is going under

Sculptured Rocks Road right now at the bottom of Orange Road. We don't have proper drainage at the class six junctures because that's on us and I don't have that kind of money or time. So the thing is that we need to have this fund because at some point we're going to need the money again because nature seems to do that and also we're going to have ongoing maintenance. We just need to cover the cost of maintaining the roads so we don't need to buy struts every two weeks that's my take on it.

Dave Leone: I agree with you Bill and we need did spend a lot of money that was grant money. That's not what I'm talking about. I don't believe that's what the purpose of the warrant article should be to me. If you're going to save for paving you're going to say for paving because we're not spending that money. Used to be every year we'd ask for \$35,000 a year for paving so this year we're not asking for money for paving we're asking for money to be put into a Capital Reserve Fund so that we have more money when the time comes to pave. I just feel like the verbiage is that we're going to do two things out of this fund and it's not the way to go about it.

Sara Smith: I just want to add one thing. There was grant money, you are correct Dave. But there was also a lot of FEMA money. Not for every storm is there FEMA money. The storm we had most recently in December. We are still waiting to see if it will be declared a major disaster to get the money. If not, that money must come out of the town's money. There's not always grant money. There's not always the requirement that every storm that causes damage to our roads will have FEMA money available. You need to prepare for those unexpected occasions.

John Rescigno: We need to be very careful the way we label these Capital Reserve Funds because we are locked down to what it exactly says. Years ago, we had one that was put in for a Police Cruiser and we ran into an issue because it had a year on it. We actually had to find a Police Cruiser of that year to purchase, so that's why we have opened this up to say paving and also road repair. It's a little bit of an unexpected thing when you start doing that road repairs something else may come up and then notwithstanding. There may be a disaster as Bill said.

Bill, motions to move the vote, Joe Koslow, seconds.

Miles Sinclair: for verification, what exactly are we voting on?

Moderator reads the amended article again.

Amended article 6 passes.

Moderator reads article 7

ARTICLE 7

To see if the town will vote to raise an appropriate the sum of **thirty five thousand dollars (\$35,000)** to refurbish the 2012, International six wheeler body and frame.

The Select Board recommends this article 3-0

Ron Maddon motions to except the article as written, Tony, Albert seconds.

Tony Albert: On the International, the back body is a spreader body combined. It sands the roads too so it's all one and over the years it has started to rust out. We're starting to get holes in the bottom of the body. The steel lines are starting to rust out. We put it out for a quote to have the back body refurbished all the hoses and then steel and the frame painted and the body painted. To do this repair now this will save us because to replace the truck would be more than \$250,000. It gets used very little in the summer and we have the other truck. But it's a vital piece of equipment for the winter. It's a big truck and we need it to push the snow back. The smaller truck won't do that. If we repair and keep this up we could get another 7 to 10 years out of the truck.

Dave Leone: Can you tell me what it means when it says frame repair and can you also tell me what the value of this truck is right now?

Tony Albert: I can't give you the value of the truck but when the guy went over it, he says the frames in good shape. As far as frame repair, it just needs painting. The frame is in good shape and the motor is in good shape and there is no emissions check on his truck at all. A lot of the problem with newer trucks is the emissions. The problem with the truck is there's now holes in the body that need to be repaired. We found this to be a cheaper option. A new body is way more than this repair so the Select Board feels that this is the best way to rectify the problem.

Bill motions to move the vote, Joe seconds

Article 7 passed

Moderator reads article 8

ARTICLE 8

To see if the town will vote to raise an appropriate the sum of **two hundred twelve dollars (\$212)** for deposit into the Conservation Fund with said, amount to come from the unassigned fund balance. This sum represents 3% of the Timber Tax revenue received in 2022. (Submitted by the conservation commission.) (Majority vote required.)

The Select Board recommends this article 3-0

John motions to except the article as written, Tony Albert seconds.

John Rescigno: This is pretty self-explanatory. This is a 3% of the timber tax that we get transferred to the Conservation Commission fund.

No discussion.

Joe motions to move the vote, Bill seconds.

Moderator reads the article again.

Article 8 passes

ARTICLE 9

STANDARD AND OPTIONAL VETERANS' TAX CREDIT (RSA 72:28).

Shall the Town vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 72:28 Optional Veterans' Tax Credit? If adopted, the credit will apply to every resident of the state who is any person who is a veteran as defined in RSA 21: 50, and served not less than 90 days on active service in the Armed Forces of the United States in any qualifying war or armed conflict listed in this section, and continues to serve or was honorably discharged or an officer who continues to serve or was honorably separated from service; or the spouse or surviving spouse of such a resident, provided that training for active duty by a member of the national guard or reserve shall be included as service under this sub paragraph; (b) Every resident of this state who was terminated from the Armed Forces because of service- connected disability; or the surviving spouse of such resident; and (c) the surviving spouse of any resident who suffered a service – connected death. If adopted, the credit granted will be \$500 which is the amount previously adopted by the town.

NOTE: This article is required, because the legislature expanded the eligibility criteria for this credit to include individuals who have not yet been discharged from service in the Armed Forces.

Select Board recommends this article 3-0

Ron motions to move the article as written Tony Albert second.

Discussion is brought to the floor.

Slim Spafford: I would like to amend this article there's only a couple of things I would like to change I won't make her read the whole thing again since it's so long. This is one of the two longest articles and so far we're doing pretty good almost getting as short as Selectman's meetings on Tuesday nights, we come in and at 7:30 and we're out of here. The law in the state of New Hampshire says currently, I do have what it says here. This is New Hampshire taxation title V taxation, title 72 Persons, and property liable for taxation standard veterans tax credit, the optional veterans tax credit upon adoption by a city or town pursuant to RSA 72:27 – a shall be in amount of \$750. That is what you're currently allowed to vote to raise it to. Now other people have already started talking to me about this because they're hearing that I'm talking about doing this. A couple of those people are actually people who are worried about it more than anybody, or the ladies that are widows, because under the law, and I can read it further, which is another three pages they do get their husbands or spouses veterans benefit, and they really can use it probably more than some other veterans who might be sitting here. My heart really goes out to them as well as myself.

John Rescigno: We need to hear the end of this.

Slim: I'm going to have the moderator read this, do you want to read the whole thing?

John Rescigno: It's up to the people what they want to hear.

Moderator will read the amended article as written.

Article 9 standard and optional veterans tax credit RSA 72:28 shall the town vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 72:28 optional tax credit? If adopted the credit will apply to every resident of the state who is any person who is a veteran as defined in RSA 21:50 and served not less than 90 days on active service in the Armed Forces of the United States in any qualifying war or armed conflict, listed in the section and continues to serve, or was honorably discharged, or an officer who continues to serve, or was honorably separated from service or the spouse, the surviving spouse of such a resident provided that training for active duty by a member of the national guard or reserve, shall be included as service under the sub paragraph; (b) every resident of the state who was terminated from the Armed Forces, because of service connected disability; or the surviving spouse of such resident; and (c) the surviving spouse of any resident who suffered a service – connected death. If adopted, the credit granted will be \$750 which is the amount prescribed under 72:28-2 and 72:27-a. The optional veterans tax credit shall replace the standard veterans tax credit in its entirety, and shall not be in addition thereto.

Norm makes motion to move the Amended Article 9, Bill seconds

Bill Jolly: Does this say any resident of the state? Or does it say town?

Moderator: "of the state"

Bill: So, does that mean a non-resident of the town could go to the state to get their tax credit?

Sara Smith: This is an RSA so the state follows it, but you can only get it for your primary residence so if you own multiple properties, it must be for what town you live in as your primary residence.

Bill: But that's not what the warrant seems to say.

(Random discussion on article 9)

Moderator: I do want to advise that, because this is an RSA it is a legal warrant. The language of the warrant cannot be changed. The dollar amount adopted can be changed. The language cannot be changed because it is a statute, so any language in this, I would be careful to review this so that it matches the warrant as written.

John Rescigno: So Slim, you may want to check because I think you only wanted to change the dollar amount, so everything else should stay the same change the \$500 to \$750.

Moderator: The DRA will kick it back if the statute has been changed from how it is written by the state. You can change the dollar amount, but the statute must remain the same.

(More discussion back-and-forth about the amendment to article 9)

The newly written amendment to article 9 is the same as what is written in the town report. The only change is the dollar amount change from \$500-\$750.

(More discussion on the amendment back-and-forth)

Moderator reads the amended article with the change in the dollar amount.

Shall the Town vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 72:28 Optional Veterans' Tax Credit? If adopted, the credit will apply to every resident of the state who is any person who is a veteran as defined in RSA 21: 50, and served not less than 90 days on active service in the Armed Forces of the United States in any qualifying war or armed conflict listed in this section, and continues to serve or was honorably discharged or an officer who continues to serve or was honorably separated from service; or the spouse or surviving spouse of such a resident, provided that training for active duty by a member of the national guard or reserve shall be included as service under this sub paragraph; (b) Every resident of this state who was terminated from the Armed Forces because of service- connected disability; or the surviving spouse of such resident; and (c) the surviving spouse of any resident who suffered a service – connected death. If adopted, the credit granted will be \$750.

Resident from 22 Crosby Lane – (didn't catch name on the recording): I am a veteran and, in my household, we have two veterans. Does each veteran get that tax credit? Or is it just one per household? My husband and I both served and are honorably discharged so is one better than the other?

Sara Smith: You would both would need to apply separately and then you would both qualify.

Resident: So, we've been denied before, so only one of us could take the tax credit.

Sara: I don't know if it was before I came, I can't speak to that. So, I would reapply and you are the owners?

Resident: Yes.

Sara Smith: I do want to speak to this and I don't want it to sound like I don't appreciate what veterans do I have a father, who was a veteran and a brother who is a veteran my brother did three tours in Afghanistan seeing stuff none of us should have to see. But I do not feel this amendment should go through. I feel the credit that the town offers is very fair the RSA states that the standard veterans credit should be \$50 that's the standard. A town can motion to change it which this town voted on. And back when the town voted on it, it was still the same \$51-\$750 so the town voted to make

it \$500. This new change in the RSA is going to open it up to more people so there will be more people getting it. If you look at all 259 towns that are listed on the DRA's list, only 23 towns in the state of New Hampshire, and a lot of them are in southern New Hampshire only 23 towns have credits higher than \$500. What the town of Groton currently has, 78 have credit lower than Groton so the remaining towns are at \$500 like Groton. It's hard to look at the towns in southern New Hampshire that are not comparable to us so I lowered the total to the 10 surrounding towns. Out of the 10, five of them are at \$500. None are over \$500. 5 towns are under. Bridgewater's \$50, Hebron only offers \$100, Dorchester \$100, Danberry \$200, and Alexandria \$270. It's obviously up to you to vote. I just wanted to go on record to say the numbers show that it's very fair at \$500 and I thank you veterans all for your service.

John Rescigno: I want to say that I am in favor of the \$500. When you look at this, you have to find a happy medium because every tax credit we give those taxes fall on other taxpayers. My son-in-law is a Marine. He has not served during a time of war. But I see the commitments that he has made and how it has affected his family; the times that he's been deployed. My daughter was pregnant and she came to stay with us during that time. There are a lot of sacrifices that are made, but we need to look at how this affects everyone and \$750 pushes it to a limit where it starts to strain the other taxpayers so you need to find a happy medium. I appreciate all that the veterans do and I know the hard work and commitment they do so I do understand that, but it's all about finding that balance.

Virginia Parker: For the last three years I have served as a budget committee member, representing the Town of Groton for the school district and if there's something that I've learned in that time is any time you were making a change like this, that is going to have a fiscal impact. We need to know what the ramifications are, and to the best of my knowledge we don't have any data that would let us know what the tax increase would be if this should go through. I wholeheartedly would support putting this through before the amendment, and I encourage as a town to get that information and see what tax impact would be if it were to be adopted in a future year. Once we know what those numbers are, if I can see those concrete numbers and it makes sense to us. I wholeheartedly agree that we should bring this forward in a future year.

Dave Leone: I guess I'm a little confused if we already have the \$500 credit why was this article brought forward?

Moderator: It's stated at the bottom of the warrant article. The state legislature has expanded the eligibility criteria.

Slim: There are 30 veterans in our town right now.

Sara Smith: there's 31 veterans in the town right now so currently we have 31 that either receive the regular veterans' credit or the all veterans' credit so if you take that 31 and multiply it by \$250 which would be an increase \$7750 added to the tax burden. We don't know how many other people will apply right now. We don't know how much that will increase that would increase the amount by those new applicants.

Janet Wallace motions to the vote on the amendment, Ann Joyce seconds.

Moderator reads the amended article 9 again

Amendment did not pass.

Moderator reads article 9, as written in the town report.

Article 9 passes

Moderator reads article 10

ARTICLE 10

ALL VETERANS' TAX CREDIT RSA 72:28 – B.

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 who is a veteran as defined in RSA 21:50, and served not less than 90 days on active service in the Armed Forces of the United States, and continues to serve or was honorably discharged or an officer who continues to serve, or was honorably separated from service; or the spouse or surviving spouse of such a resident, provided that training for active duty or state, active duty by a member of the national guard or reserve, shall be included as service under this paragraph; provided, however, that the person is not eligible for, and is not receiving a credit under RSA 72: 28 or RSA 72:35. If adopted, the credit granted will be \$500, the same amount as the optional veterans' tax Credit voted by the town under RSA 72:28.

NOTE: This article is required, because the legislature expanded the eligibility criteria for this credit to include individuals who have not yet been discharged from service in the Armed Forces.

The Select Board recommends this article 3-0

John Rescigno motions to accept the Article as written, Tony seconds

John: The same as Article 9, we need to find the correct balance should additional money get added to it.

Sara: the amounts need to match.

Joe Koslow motions to move the vote, Alicia Hershberger seconds

Moderator reads article 10 again.

Article 10 passes

Moderator reads article 11

ARTICLE 11

To see if the town will vote to allow the Selectman to transact any other business that may legally come before the town.

Tony Albert motions to except the article is written, John Rescigno seconds.

No discussion.

Article 11 passes

Moderator dismisses the 2023 Town Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,



Ruth Millett, Town Clerk