

**MINUTES OF THE 2021 TOWN MEETING FOR THE TOWN OF WEBSTER
THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
SATURDAY, APRIL 17, 2021**

Moderator Mike Jette called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm behind the Webster Elementary School. He invited newly-elected Select Board Member, Marlo Herrick, to lead everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance. Moderator Jette noted the uniqueness of the meeting due to it being outside and masks being worn. Those unable to wear a mask were gathered in a separate area. He pointed out the two microphones set up for those voters addressing the Moderator.

Moderator Jette welcomed all service veterans to stand and be recognized for their service. Next, all Webster volunteers were asked to stand and be recognized for their time served on committees, elections or any way to support the Town. He then recognized all front-line workers and first responders for working during Covid. It was announced that the fire department was issuing fire permits to those at the meeting, if requested.

Moderator Jette called for a moment of silence separately for the loss of Harold Janeway, Captain Cyndel Donoghue and anyone lost in the past year.

Moderator Jette thanked the Select Board and acknowledged the Town Report dedication to the election officials. He stated it was his pleasure to help keep the election honest and fair in such an unusual year. Moderator Jette announced Webster's state-level Representatives as Margaret Kennedy and Natalie Wells and Senator Harold French.

Moderator Jette introduced the Select Board Chair Chris Schadler and invited her to introduce the Town staff. Select Board Chair Schadler introduced Select Board Members David Hemenway and Dee Blake. She thanked the public for supporting her during her time as Select Board Member and welcomed Marlo Herrick as the newest Board member. She then introduced the Town staff: Town Administrator, Dana Hadley; Russell Tatro, Assistant Town Administrator and Land Use Coordinator; Wendy Pinkham, Financial Administrator; Karen King, Tax Collector; Bruce Johnson, Treasurer; and Michele Derby, Town Clerk. On behalf of the Select Board she thanked the Police and Fire Departments for their consistent hard work and support during the pandemic. She recognized how grateful the Town is to have committed and giving volunteers.

Moderator Jette introduced Select Board Member David Hemenway. Selectman Hemenway made a motion to allow non-voters to speak at the meeting in order for Town employees to speak.

Moderator Jette reiterated the motion; which was seconded by Select Board Chair Schadler.

Moderator Jette called for a voice vote.

PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

Select Board Chair Schadler made a motion for a 5-minute recess to shift the meeting into the Webster Elementary School gym.

The Moderator called for a voice vote.

PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

The meeting was recessed at 1:11 pm and resumed at 1:19 pm in the school gym.

The Moderator invited Town Administrator Dana Hadley to make a few announcements.

Town Administrator Hadley announced the Select Board is accepting bids for the restaurant-style gas stove in the kitchen of the Town Hall. The Planning Board is looking for volunteers to serve on the Board.

Select Board Member Hemenway recognized Select Board Chair Schadler for her time as a Select Board Member. He highlighted her determination and dedication of time devoted to the Town through all the challenges that faced her.

The Moderator explained the Moderator's Rules of the meeting located in the Town Report were the same as in past years. He called for a motion to adopt the rules as listed. It was moved and seconded.

The Moderator called for a voice vote.

PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

Moderator Jette explained voters should have a wrist band and to use the yellow voter card when voting. He encouraged voters to carefully consider the process of requesting a ballot vote and whether it would change the outcome of the vote.

The Moderator read the results of the Town Election held on Tuesday, March 9, 2021. The official ballot portion of Town Meeting with 282 ballots cast:

Article 1:

To choose all necessary Town Officers for the ensuing year. **(BY BALLOT)**

OFFICE	TERM	NAME	# OF VOTES
Selectman	3 yrs	Christine Schadler	138
		Marlo Herrick (write-in)	140
Selectman	1 yr	Normandie "Dee" Blake	216
Supervisor of the Checklist	1 yr	Jennifer Heath-Stilwell	222
Cemetery Trustee	3 yrs	Darlene Cummings	147
		Craig Fournier	102
Library Trustee	3 yrs	Leslie Collins	231
Trustee of Trust Funds	2 yrs	Judy Jones (write-in)	3
Trustee of Trust Funds	3 yrs	Patricia Ilacqua	213

Article 2: *The Moderator read the Article in its entirety, To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,624,830 for general municipal operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. (Majority vote required)*

The Select Board Recommends 3 to 0

The Moderator noted it was moved by Select Board Member Hemenway and seconded by Select Board Chair Schadler.

The Moderator opened the article for discussion with Select Board Member Hemenway explaining that the budget is up 4.18% (\$65,000) but the total expected outlay is down 1% due to a reduction in warrant article expenditures. He noted to expect reduced revenue due to reductions from the state's block grant and meals and rooms tax. Long term debt is down due to the payoff of the solar array loan. He explained increases for revaluation/assessment is due to hiring a utility assessor, which was not considered when the town changed to a new assessing company. More increases include insurance, police wages and cruiser, legal and ambulance and fire. Select Board Member Hemenway pointed out the police operating budget would have only increased 2% had the price of the replacement cruiser from an accident not been included. He explained the insurance company does not pay the dealer for the cruiser. Instead, the claim is received as revenue to the town and paid out as an expense in the police budget. This will not impact the tax rate as it is a wash.

The Moderator asked for any questions. There was no discussion and George Cummings called the question. Moderator called for a voice and card vote.

PASSED BY VOICE AND CARD VOTE.

Article 3: *The Moderator read the Article in its entirety, To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$447,000 to be added to the following established Capital Reserve Funds under RSA 35:1. (Majority vote required)*

Medical Equipment	6,000
Fire Department Air Packs	20,000
Emergency Apparatus	50,000
Fire Department-Mobil Communications	10,000
Police Cruiser	19,000
Highways and Roads	200,000
Bridge/Culvert Improvements	75,000
Public Safety Building	5,000
Town Hall Improvements	5,000
Town Office Equipment	5,000
Webster/Hopkinton Transfer Station	4,000
Fire Department Dry Hydrant Repairs	2,000
Reappraisal	5,000
Fire Department Bunker Gear	2,500
Highway Equipment	7,500
Police Equipment	6,000
Highway Land/Building Fund	25,000

The Select Board recommends – 3 to 0

The Moderator noted it was moved by Select Board Member Blake and seconded by Select Board Chair Schadler.

Town Administrator Dana Hadley explained the article raises and appropriates funds to transfer into Capital Reserve Funds and held by the Trustees of the Trust Funds. He stated the balances of the Capital Reserve Funds as of the end of 2020 could be found on page 59 of the Town Report. The Capital Improvement Committee meets with department heads to address upcoming projects and works up a six-year plan; which is presented to the Select Board. He noted Webster has a healthy approach to stabilizing the tax rate and negating the need to borrow money by adding to the Capital Reserve Funds.

The Moderator opened the article for discussion.

There being no discussion, the Moderator called for a card vote.

PASSED BY CARD VOTE.

Restrict Reconsideration of Articles 2 and 3

George Cummings made a motion to restrict reconsideration on Articles 2 and 3; seconded by Karen King.

The Moderator called for a card vote to restrict reconsideration on Articles 2 and 3.

PASSED BY CARD VOTE.

Article 4: *The Moderator read the Article in its entirety, To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$138,000 to be added to the following established Expendable Trust Funds per RSA 31:10-a. (Majority Vote Required)*

Road Preservation	100,000
Technology Fund	10,000
Forest Fire	2,000
Fire Department Equipment	5,000
Highway	5,000
Legal (Webster)	6,000
Compensated Absences	2,500
Municipal Property Maintenance	2,500

Police Vehicle Maintenance	5,000
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The Selectboard recommends 3 to 0.

The Moderator noted it was moved by Select Board Chair Schadler and seconded by Select Board Member Hemenway.

Select Board Chair Schadler noted the article was the same as the previous year with two exceptions. The first was the Road Preservation line is down \$100,000 (\$100,00 is added to the Highways & Roads line in Article 3). Police Vehicle Maintenance is slightly increased due to the cruiser accident. She explained the Technology Fund was used to purchase a new server for the Police Department and will be used for a new server in the Town Hall in the near future.

The Moderator opened the article for discussion.

The Moderator called for a card vote after there was no discussion.

PASSED BY CARD VOTE.

Article 5: *The Moderator read the Article in its entirety, To see if the Town will vote to establish a contingency fund for the current year under the provisions of RSA 31:98-a for unanticipated expenses that may arise and further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$16,234 to put into the fund. This sum is to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance and no amount will be raised by taxation. Any appropriation left in the fund at the end of the year will lapse to the General Fund. This is an Individual Warrant Article (Majority vote required).*

The Selectboard recommends 3 to 0.

The Moderator noted it was moved by Select Board Member Blake and seconded by Select Board Member Hemenway.

Select Board Member Blake explained this money is 1 % of the budget and if it is not spent on an unanticipated expense, it goes back into the General Fund.

The Moderator asked for any discussion. The question of how the money would be spent was asked. Selectman Blake explained it is only spent in an emergency that is not covered in the budget.

The Moderator called for a card vote.

PASSED BY CARD VOTE.

Restrict Reconsideration of Articles 4 and 5

John Clark made a motion to restrict reconsideration on Articles 4 and 5; seconded by several voters.

The Moderator called for a card vote to restrict reconsideration on Articles 4 and 5.

PASSED BY CARD VOTE.

Article 6: *The Moderator read the Article in its entirety, To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to help offset the cost of the bond for "Funds to Repair Dam" passed at the Pillsbury Lake Water District Meeting held August 5, 2006. (Majority vote required)*

The Selectboard recommends 3 to 0.

The Moderator noted it was moved by Select Board Member Blake and seconded by Select Board Chair Schadler.

Select Board Member Blake explained this article supports the payment to the bond taken out by the Pillsbury Lake Water District in 2006 to repair the dam and should be paid off in 2022.

There being no discussion, the Moderator called for a card vote.

PASSED BY CARD VOTE.

Article 7: The Moderator read the Article in its entirety,

NEW HAMPSHIRE RESOLUTION FOR FAIR NONPARTISAN REDISTRICTING

By petition of 25 or more eligible voters of the town of Webster to see if the town will vote to urge that the New Hampshire General Court, which is obligated to redraw the maps of political districts within the state following the federal census, will ensure fair and effective representation of New Hampshire voters without gerrymandering.

Additionally, these voters ask the town of Webster to urge the NH General Court to carry out the redistricting in a fair and transparent way through public meetings, not to favor a particular political party, to include communities of interest, and to minimize multi-seat districts.

The record of the vote approving this article shall be transmitted by written notice from the selectmen to Webster's state legislators, informing them of the demands from their constituents within 30 days of the vote.

Article received by Petition.

The Moderator stated it was moved by the petitioner Sally Embley and it was seconded. He invited Sally Embley to speak to the petitioned article.

Sally Embley explained gerrymandering as a "very bad practice" and stressed the purpose of the article is to promote fairness and transparency when the special Legislature committee draws the districts for the next ten years. She noted the widespread support in that 58 of 60 towns have passed the resolution.

The Moderator opened it up to discussion. Heather Fairchild stated voters should consider their vote at the polls if the current Legislators do not follow the concerns of the resolution. David Hemenway reiterated Moderator Jette's earlier comment that directly contacting our elected State Representatives is the most effective way to show support or opposition. Christine Schadler stated it was not about Republican or Democrat gerrymandering and the article says NH voters "want a more fair and transparent process."

The Moderator called for a card vote.

PASSED BY CARD VOTE.

Article 8: The Moderator read the Article in its entirety, To Transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting.

The Moderator opened the article for discussion.

Craig Fournier said the Planning Board is looking for new members and to contact him or Russell Tatro.

Adam Mock asked when the bridge at White Plains Road would be fixed. Moderator Jette called for an update on Clothespin Bridge, as well. Select Board Member Hemenway said the Clothespin Bridge project is on schedule with the State for 2022/2023. The Select Board is waiting for sign offs from the abutters and engineer and it can then be submitted to DES (Department of Environmental Services) for the White Plains bridge/culvert project. Adam Mock asked if the project was going out to bid if it were to go over \$10,000. Select Board Member Hemenway said there were only a couple suppliers of this type of culvert and the Board has asked for prices from them. Adam Mock asked if the work to replace the culvert would go out to bid and Selectmen Hemenway said road work first goes to the Road Agent due to his contract.

Moderator Jette noted the great partnership with the school district and thanked Chuck Houston and Robert Longval for the setup.

Jon Pearson called for transparency and answers from the Select Board and Police Chief about missing documents, paper and electronic, an on-going investigation and why the auditors have been at the Town Hall. Police Chief Stephen Adams said there is an active investigation being conducted through the County

Attorney's Office but did not know of any other investigations regarding the Town. Select Board Member Hemenway stated shredding of documents did happen before the new administration arrived and admitted some records were lost. He explained the auditors were recently at the Town Hall performing their annual audit and their report is always printed in the Town Report.

Sally Embley announced the opening day of Town-Wide Roadside Cleanup and there have been 60 volunteers through the years. Pansies were available for the volunteers.

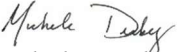
Glen Blanchette asked why the meeting was not postponed to the rain date as noted in the Town Report. Moderator Jette explained the decision to move the meeting to the rain date would have had to be made 48 hours in advance. The weather forecast at that time did not predict rain for Town Meeting Day and the decision to hold the meeting was made the Thursday prior based on the forecast.

George Cummings made the motion to adjourn.

The Moderator called for a vote to dissolve the meeting at 2:01 pm.

PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

Respectfully Submitted,


Michele Derby
Town Clerk