

TOWN OF HEBRON, NH
TOWN MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 9, 2010

The meeting was called to order by the moderator, Peter Carey, at 7:00 pm. Official ballot voting for town officials closed at 7:00 pm. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the moderator introduced town and election officials and then reviewed the meeting rules with the audience.

(Note: The original wording of articles is in *italics*; amendments are in *italics* and **bold**; and results are in **bold**).

ARTICLE 1: To choose all Town Officers for the ensuing year by official ballot. The polls will be open at 11:00 a.m. and close at 7:00 p.m., and the business meeting will commence at 7:00 p.m. on Article 2 and following:

The results of voting for town officials are recorded separately.

Selectman John Dunklee explained that if Articles 2 – 15 are voted as presented, there would be no change in the property tax rate. He further explained the term “fund balance” is synonymous with equity and retained earnings. The current balance due the town from 2009 property taxes is \$66,443.

ARTICLE 2: *John Dunklee moved and Bruce Barnard seconded the motion to see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000.00) to be added to the Ambulance/EMS Capital Reserve Fund previously established in 1995. The sum to come from fund balance. (Recommended by the Selectmen.)* John Dunklee spoke to the motion. Mr. Dunklee explained the town purchased a new ambulance in 2009 and the Town of Rumney purchased the previous ambulance for \$30,000. The sale proceeds were deposited into the town’s general fund and this article seeks permission to transfer the proceeds into the Ambulance/EMS Capital Reserve Fund. Several residents asked if the proceeds could be used to lower property taxes. John Matthews explained the proceeds could be used to lower property taxes if the selectmen chose to use the proceeds for that purpose. John Dunklee further explained the cost of the new ambulance was \$175,000 and that a replacement ambulance would probably cost more. A resident inquired if the capital reserve fund could be used to purchase items other than an ambulance. Mr. Dunklee stated the capital reserve fund is used to purchase EMS related items.

The article passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 3: *John Dunklee moved and Bruce Barnard seconded the motion to see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of three thousand eight hundred dollars (\$3,800.00) to be added to the Police Capital Reserve Fund previously established in 1990. The sum to come from fund balance. (Recommended by the Selectmen.)* John Dunklee spoke to the motion. Mr. Dunklee explained this article is similar to Article 2. The police department purchased a new Ford Crown Victoria police cruiser and sold the four-wheel drive cruiser to another municipality. The sale proceeds were deposited into the town’s general fund and this article seeks permission to transfer the proceeds into the Police Capital Reserve Fund.

The article passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 4: *John Dunklee moved and Ed Gempka seconded the motion to see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of eight thousand seven hundred thirty-three dollars (\$8,733) to be added to the Government Buildings Repair Capital Reserve Fund previously established in 2005. The sum to come from fund balance. (Recommended by the Selectmen.)* John Dunklee spoke to the motion. Warrant article #32 from the 2009 town meeting dissolved the Town Shed Capital Reserve Fund and transferred the balance into the Government Buildings Repair Capital Reserve Fund. The State of New Hampshire, Department of Revenue

Administration disallowed this transfer. This article seeks permission to transfer the monies into the Government Buildings Repair Capital Reserve Fund from the general fund.

The article passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 5: Bruce Barnard moved and John Dunklee seconded the motion to see if the town will vote to discontinue the Capital Reserve Fund entitled "Cockermouth/ George Brook" created in 1982 per RSA 35:16-a. Said funds, with accumulated interest to date of withdrawal, are to be transferred into the municipality's general fund. Bruce Barnard spoke to the motion and asked the audience to reference page 42 of the 2009 town report for the Cockermouth/George Brook Capital Reserve Fund balance as of 12/31/09. This article seeks permission to transfer the balance into the general fund. A resident inquired if this article is related to the Bog/George Brook Hydrologic capital reserve contribution listed under Article 8. Mr. Barnard replied this article and Article 8 are not related. No further discussion.

The article passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 6: John Dunklee moved and Bruce Barnard seconded the motion to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of forty-seven thousand dollars (\$47,000.00) to rebuild and apply a base coat of pavement to Cooper Road from Brookside Lane to Town Shed Drive. This will be a four year non-lapsing appropriation (until 2014). The sum to come from fund balance. (Recommended by the Selectmen.) Bruce Barnard spoke to the motion and explained the existing pavement is cracked and needs to be torn up. Gravel would be added to the base of the road and finished with 2 inches of pavement (hot top). This will complete the reconstruction of Cooper Road from the junction of North Shore Road to Town Shed Road. A resident asked if it was practical to spend \$47,000 on a road that has logging trucks currently traveling over it. John Matthews explained the lumbering operation has ceased, but the town could collect for repairs if damage occurs to the road as a result of the logging trucks.

The article passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 7: John Matthews moved and Bob Brooks seconded the motion to see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of ten thousand seven hundred and sixty five dollars (\$10,765.00) for the Gazebo Programs. Five thousand nine hundred thirty-one dollars (\$5,931.00) to be raised from taxes, two thousand three hundred and thirty-four dollars (\$2,334.00) to be taken from fund balance, and two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500.00) to be raised from donations. John Matthews spoke to the motion and explained the town is on a gross budgeting basis; therefore the town must raise and appropriate the total expenditures for this warrant article. Everett Begor, Gazebo Program Coordinator, presented the summer schedule of programs. The programs have been rescheduled from Sunday nights to Saturday nights.

The article passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 8: John Matthews moved and Bruce Barnard seconded the motion to see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of ninety-one thousand dollars (\$91,000.00) to be added to the Capital Reserve Funds listed below and previously established. The sum to come from taxation. (Recommended by the Selectmen.)

Ambulance/EMS	\$20,000.00
Communications	\$2,000.00
Fire	\$25,000.00
Highway	\$20,000.00
Town Hall	\$5,000.00
Police	\$6,000.00
Government Building Repair Fund	\$10,000.00
Bog/George Brook Hydrologic	\$3,000.00

John Matthews spoke to the motion and stated this warrant article allows the town to manage purchases for capital projects. Lee Alexander, Capital Improvements Program (CIP) committee member, informed the audience of the CIP committee's function to recommend capital expenditures for the town. The committee has asked the selectmen and department heads to project capital expenditures over the next ten years. The capital reserve accounts help fund these projects and assist the selectmen with budgeting.

The motion passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 9: *Bruce Barnard moved and John Dunklee seconded the motion to see if the town will vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund entitled "Cemetery Expansion" per RSA 35:1. Said fund to be used to either (a) fence in any expansion and/or survey any future expansion of the existing Hebron Village Cemetery extents and/or (b) survey, lay out and fence in a new cemetery location acceptable to the Town, and to raise and appropriate the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to be placed in this fund; further, to name the selectmen to be the agents of this fund. The sum to come from taxation. (Recommended by the Selectmen, Majority vote required).* Bruce Barnard spoke to the motion and gave a PowerPoint presentation. The existing section of the Hebron Village Cemetery has only five plots remaining. The proposed expansion would be for 96 graves and is located in the area closer to the old fire station. Ellie Lonske, Planning Board member, expressed concerns about the future of the village and that the Planning Board will be reviewing the Master Plan. Mr. Barnard explained the proposed plots were laid out in 1991 and would take care of an immediate need. The Selectmen are trying to plan ahead for a cemetery due to land and soil conditions. Cemetery plots are provided at no cost to Hebron residents with the owner providing the headstone and concrete markers.

The motion passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 10: *John Matthews moved and Bruce Barnard seconded the motion to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of three thousand dollars (\$3,000.00) to the Coalition Communities group headed by the City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, consisting of 35 towns to represent the Town of Hebron in attempting to find a solution to the educational funding issue that does not reinstate donor towns but allows Hebron to continue to keep the statewide education property tax for local use to fund local schools. The Coalition already has saved the Town of Hebron thousands of dollars per year for several years. The Legislature has enacted a new education funding formula under which Hebron could become a donor community again as of FY2012 with an estimated payment of twenty eight thousand one hundred and thirty one dollars (\$28,131). The Coalition is continuing to fight to reverse that new formula. This will be a four year non-lapsing appropriation (until 2014). The sum to come from taxation. (Recommended by the Selectmen.)* John Matthews spoke to the motion and provided background information that the State of New Hampshire implemented a state-wide property tax in 1999. The current amendment expires in 2011 and states excess monies raised for education can be used in the local area. Hebron could become a "donor" town again in 2011. The City of Portsmouth has spearheaded the effort to find a solution to the tax. ***Ed Gempka made a motion, seconded by Richard Kirby to amend Article 10 to change \$3,000 to \$4,000.*** A resident asked if the town was obligated to send funds to the City of Portsmouth. Mr. Matthews explained the selectmen would like flexibility as to when to forward the funds to the City of Portsmouth. **The amendment did not pass by voice vote.**

The original article as written passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 11: *Richard Kirby moved and Greg Melton seconded the motion to see if the Town will vote to approve the following resolution to be forwarded to our State Representative (s), our State Senator, the Speaker of the House and the Senate President.*

Resolved: The citizens of New Hampshire should be allowed to vote on an amendment to the New Hampshire Constitution that defines "marriage".

Submitted by Petition

Suzanne Smith moved and Ed Gempka seconded the motion to indefinitely postpone this article as a subsidiary motion. Suzanne Smith spoke to the subsidiary motion. She explained this article will change the Bill of Rights and New Hampshire is not a referendum state; hence the reason for asking to indefinitely

postpone. Richard Kirby stated that New Hampshire citizens did not have a chance to vote on the definition of "marriage" and asked residents to not postpone this article. Residents expressed town meeting should discuss town business and there is a process to follow to change the constitution.

The postponement carried by voice vote.

ARTICLE 12: *John Matthews moved and John Dunklee seconded the motion to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifty thousand (\$50,000.00) to fund engineering and architectural studies for the proposed new town hall. This will be a four year non-lapsing appropriation (until 2014). The sum to come from taxation. (Recommended by the Selectmen.)* John Matthews spoke to the motion. The Rogers property was purchased for a future town hall. Current town offices are located in different buildings with limited office space, security concerns and handicap accessibility issues. This warrant article would fund planning, engineering and conceptual architectural plans for a new town hall. Architectural and engineering work needs to be completed before the town can apply for any grants. ***Sheila Oranch made a motion, seconded by Bob Brooks to be expended after an intensive survey of the townspeople's will for what is needed and wanted in a Town Hall.*** Ellie Lonske, Planning Board member, stated the Planning Board will discuss the Master Plan and no action should be taken. A resident stated the town does have a Planning Board and a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) committee. Mr. Matthews stated the Town Hall Committee has been researching where to locate a new town hall. A general concern mentioned was the town should not spend the \$50,000 until a decision is made as to the location of a new town hall. ***Ralph Larson made a motion, seconded by Ellie Lonske to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of five thousand (\$5,000.00) to fund the generation of conceptual architectural sketches and preliminary cost estimates, from a minimum of 3 firms, for the proposed new town hall. The conceptual sketches and preliminary cost estimates shall be presented at a future town meeting where the town voters shall select the new town hall concept. Any further actions on the new town hall shall be based on the selected concept. This shall be a four year non-lapsing appropriation (until 2014). The sum to come from taxation.*** Ralph Larson spoke to the amendment and mentioned that this is a step-by-step process so that it involves everyone. Concerns mentioned were how to repurpose the existing buildings and whether the existing buildings should be expanded. Alan Barnard explained that in 1996, the town started to put away funds for a future town hall. Previously, a set of plans for a future town hall on the Governor Barry Lot were presented and the design was not well received. Mr. Barnard provided background history from prior committee studies. The current Town Hall Committee did speak with town officials as to space needs. **Roger Larochelle moved and Ed Gempka seconded the motion to move Mr. Larson's amendment. The amendment as presented did not pass by voice vote.**

No further discussion occurred to Sheila Oranch's amendment. The motion as presented did not pass by voice vote.

The original motion for Article 12 as presented did not pass by voice vote. Alan Barnard requested a hand count: Yes – 35, No – 48. The article did not pass.

ARTICLE 13: *John Dunklee moved and Suzanne Smith seconded the motion to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of seventy-five hundred dollars (\$7,500.00) to install a computer server, associated software, and backup system for the town computer system. This will be a two year non-lapsing appropriation (until 2012). The sum to come from taxation. (Recommended by the Selectmen.)* John Dunklee spoke to the motion and explained the current computer backup method requires a substantial amount of media and the backup is not stored offsite. This article seeks to establish a system with a regular backup schedule and offsite storage. The selectmen have received four bids from three firms in Plymouth and one in Alton. The proposed system would backup the computer files with mirror image drives and then also have offsite backup. Don Franklin, Town Auditor, stated he supports a better backup approach to the current system. **The motion passed by voice vote.**

ARTICLE 14: *Bruce Barnard moved and Linda Fischer seconded the motion to see if the town will vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund entitled "Security Alarms" per RSA 35:1. Said fund to be used to install and*

maintain security systems in town buildings, and to raise and appropriate the sum of eight thousand dollars (\$8,000.00) to be placed in this fund; further, to name the selectmen to be agents of this fund. The sum to come from taxation. (Recommended by the Selectmen). Bruce Barnard spoke to the motion and mentioned that not all the town's buildings have burglar, heat or cold alarms and that by installing alarm systems, the value of the town's equipment and buildings would be protected. Alan Barnard mentioned the Town of Alexandria has a surveillance system which can be accessed remotely.

The motion passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 15: *John Dunklee moved and John Matthews seconded the motion to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one million one hundred forty-four thousand and seven hundred seventy-three dollars (\$1,144,773) to defray charges for the ensuing year. This article EXCLUDES appropriations made under all previous articles.* John Dunklee spoke to the motion and explained this article is the town's 2010 operating budget. One resident expressed a concern that the town's expenditures have increased by 79 percent over the past five years. Mr. Dunklee explained a part of the increase was due to refuse disposal increasing by \$40,000 to \$50,000 over the years, the State of New Hampshire increasing retirement contributions by 10 percent along with increased health insurance premiums. John Matthews stated the selectmen have managed a fairly constant tax rate along with the usage of capital reserve accounts, but there are costs the selectmen have no control over, i.e. the refuse district. Bruce Barnard also stated the town has taken on some long-term debt and there are more town roads to maintain. One resident asked why the selectmen are budgeting \$5,000 for emergency management when only \$64 was spent in 2009. Mr. Barnard explained the \$5,000 is for emergency situations. Mr. Matthews further explained the town must budget on a gross basis. Jennifer Larochelle asked to move the article.

The motion passed by voice vote.

OTHER BUSINESS: Mary Campbell expressed her thanks to the selectmen and all the public volunteers. A resident asked the selectmen that more public information be made available. John Matthews informed the audience the Town Hall Committee meets the last Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm.

Suzanne Smith moved and Jennifer Larochelle seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.

A true copy of action taken at the Hebron Town Meeting on March 9, 2010.

Tracey Steenbergen
Town Clerk