

## Town of Whitefield

### ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES

2016

The Annual Town Meeting was held at the auditorium of the C.D. McIntyre Building on Tuesday, March 8, 2016. Carroll (Butch) Rexford, Moderator, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Moderator Rexford asked all veterans to please stand and be recognized, and on behalf of the Board of Selectmen and the residents of Whitefield we would like to recognize and honor all the Whitefield residents and thank them for their sacrifices for our freedom. We are proud of you all, and all that you have done to "Keep America as a Beacon of Hope". The R.O.T.C. from White Mountains Regional High School presented the flags and Katie Siggins sang the National Anthem. Moderator Rexford reviewed the rules of the meeting. Moderator Rexford introduced Bill Jones, his Assistant Moderator. Moderator Rexford thanked Duane Hall for his three terms as selectmen and service to the Town of Whitefield. Selectperson Hersom thanked Butch Rexford for his time and service as serving as Moderator and Assistant Moderator for many years.

**Article 1.** The polls were opened at 8:00 o'clock in the forenoon by Moderator Rexford and closed at 6:00 o'clock in the afternoon. The results being as follows:

Selectperson (Three Year Term)	Peter Corey – 253 votes Duane Hall – 62 votes Frank Lombardi – 58 votes
Town Clerk (Three Year Term)	Tina Wright – 357 votes
Moderator (Two Year Term)	Kenneth Russell, Jr. – 60 votes
Two, Library Trustee (Three Year Terms)	Valerie Fitchett – 321 votes Frederick Vashaw – 287 votes
Trustee of Trust Funds (Three Year Term)	Bob Stiles – 11 votes Kathleen Dunlap – 3 votes Bill Jones – 3 votes
Trustee of Trust Funds (Three Year Term)	Catherine Burns – 231 votes
Trustee of Trust Funds (Two Year Term)	Bruce Brekke – 329 votes
Cemetery Trustee (Three Year Term)	Maynard L'Heureux – 303 votes

**Article 2.** – To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the following amounts for general municipal operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. (Majority Vote Required)

**General Government:** A motion was made by Wendy Hersom to move the question. It was seconded by Mark Lufkin. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$467,655.**

**Public Safety:** A motion was made by Duane Hall to move the question. It was seconded by Wendy Hersom. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$760,065.**

**Airport Operations:** A motion was made by Mark Lufkin to move the question. It was seconded by Duane Hall. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$9,000.**

**Highways/Streets & Bridges:** A motion was made by Wendy Hersom to move the question. It was seconded by Mark Lufkin. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$692,206.**

**Sanitation:** A motion was made by Duane Hall to move the question. It was seconded by Wendy Hersom. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$163,310.**

**Health:** A motion was made by Mark Lufkin to move the question. It was seconded by Duane Hall. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$1,577.**

**Welfare:** A motion was made by Wendy Hersom to move the question. It was seconded by Mark Lufkin. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$25,000.**

**Culture & Recreation:** A motion was made by Duane Hall to move the question. It was seconded by Wendy Hersom. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$110,337.**

**Conservation Commission:** A motion was made by Mark Lufkin to move the question. It was seconded by Wendy Hersom. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$2,500.**

**Economic Development:** A motion was made by Wendy Hersom to move the question. It was seconded by Mark Lufkin. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$5,000.**

**Debt Service:** A motion was made by Duane Hall to move the question. It was seconded by Wendy Hersom. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$158,437.**

**Municipal Sewer Department:** A motion was made by Mark Lufkin to move the question. It was seconded by Duane Hall. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$234,795.**

**Municipal Water Department:** A motion was made by Wendy Hersom to move the question. It was seconded by Mark Lufkin. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$230,640.**

**Article 3: Fire Department Equipment Replacement Capital Reserve**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$35,000) to be added to the Fire Department Equipment Replacement Capital Reserve Fund created in 2007. The Board of Selectmen recommends this appropriation.

A motion was made by Duane Hall to move the question. It was seconded by Wendy Hersom. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$35,000.**

**Article 4: Bridge & Town Buildings Repair/Maintenance/Replacement Capital Reserve**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) to be added to the Bridge & Town Buildings Repair/Maintenance/Replacement Capital Reserve Fund created in 2010. The Board of Selectmen recommends this appropriation.

A motion was made by Mark Lufkin to move the question. It was seconded by Duane Hall. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$50,000.**

**Article 5: Police Cruiser**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Eighteen Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$18,500) to be added to the Police Cruiser Capital Reserve fund created in 2014. The Board of Selectmen recommends this appropriation.

A motion was made by Wendy Hersom to move the question. It was seconded by Mark Lufkin. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$18,500.**

**Article 6: Recycling Center Equipment Replacement Capital Reserve**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000) to be added to the Recycling Center Equipment Replacement Capital Reserve Fund, created in 2012, and to use income generated from the Transfer Station Metal Pile Recyclables to fund this article. No money will come from taxation. The Board of Selectmen recommends this appropriation.

A motion was made by Duane Hall to move the question. It was seconded by Wendy Hersom. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$5,000.**

**Article 7: Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000) to be added to the Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund created in 2015. The Board of Selectmen recommends this appropriation.

A motion was made by Mark Lufkin to move the question. It was seconded by Duane Hall. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$5,000.**

**Article 8: Road Projects Capital Reserve Fund**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000) to be added to the Road Projects Capital Reserve Fund created in 2013. The Board of Selectmen recommends this appropriation.

A motion was made by Wendy Hersom to move the question. It was seconded by Mark Lufkin. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$40,000.**

**Article 9: Highway Equipment Replacement Capital Reserve Fund**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$35,000) to be added to the Highway Equipment Replacement Capital Reserve Fund created in 2001. The Board of Selectmen recommends this appropriation.

A motion was made by Duane Hall to move the question. It was seconded by Wendy Hersom. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$35,000.**

### **Article 10: Sidewalk Repair/Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) to be added to the Sidewalk Repair/Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund created in 2011. The Board of Selectmen recommends this appropriation.

A motion was made by Mark Lufkin to move the question. It was seconded by Duane Hall. The floor was opened for discussion. Sue Gradual said we need better sidewalks at the end of this driveway out by the McIntyre Building and throughout town. Sue made a motion to amend the amount in this article from \$10,000 to \$30,000. The motion was seconded by Art Hammon. The floor was opened for discussion on the amendment. Ken Russell asked the balance in the account at this time Wendy said \$20,032 How much is needed? Much more than that is needed to fix the sidewalks. It was stated that we are not doing anything about the sidewalks, are their plans to do something for the sidewalks? Shawn White said since 2008 when Shawn took over the Department, unfortunately we had some problems with the State DOT office on the first grant and the work by the library. We got another TE grant for the downtown area, and this last spring that grant was cancelled by the state. We had a 100% grant to repair the Union Street sidewalks –denied by District One. Shawn said that the State is planning on reclaiming those roads on Union Street so they don't want us to do the sidewalks until they have completed that project. Shawn said we can start and do a considerable amount of work for the \$30,000. We need to justify the work on the sidewalks opposed to the road work. Wendy explained that the Board of Selectmen are agents to expend from the Sidewalk Capital Reserve Account. Lewis Gooden said he walks the sidewalks every day, and if this town doesn't fix the sidewalks in town someone will be in for a big lawsuit. Wendy said we can't do the work on the sidewalks on the state roads at this time because we want them to finish their road improvements, and we need to get state approval. They are adjacent to state roads. Ray Gradual said we have \$20,000 in the capital reserve fund. Ray felt that \$20,000 should have been used in the past few years. The town crew last summer worked on the town building. Ray said the sidewalks need repairs. The Board explained that we were going to use that money in the capital reserve fund as matching funds for the sidewalk TE grant, which the state cancelled last year. Sue is talking about the sidewalk out here by the McIntyre, and a lot of people feel that is the priority. Sue Bissonnette said she lives at McIntyre and she walks every day and she agrees that these sidewalks have to be fixed. She said they are not safe to be walking on. Lewis Gooden said the Selectboard should be ashamed of those sidewalks. He has never seen them in worse condition. Shawn said he agrees the sidewalks are in horrible condition, and District One will not allow us to fix the sidewalks on the state roads. We have been trying to get that TE sidewalk grant so we could do the whole common area. It was engineered, and the state pulled the plug and the town has been actively trying to get free money to fix these sidewalks. It is time to move forward and raise some money and get the sidewalks fixed. Bruce Brekke said he appreciates the effort on the grants. Anything

the state owns, the state should repair. Bruce said he feels we need to get the state down here to look at the sidewalks. Bruce said he doesn't want to put money in to the capital reserve account if we are not going to spend it. Wendy said it is pointless to spend money on the sidewalks that the state is going to tear up. Gerry Pons said he is sympathetic to the issue of sidewalks, but he is leary on spending money without a priority list of what sidewalks need to be fixed –what are the specific projects and what are the specific dollars? Sue understands the state is going to take care of Elm Street and Union Street. Sue said she is basically asking for the sidewalks out front here. Sue said it is more important for the people who live here to be able to get out and walk to the bank or Cumberland Farms. Sue just wants to change the amount from \$10,000 to \$30,000. Frank Mai said he agrees with the issue with the state. Frank said it has been at least five years since we have been dealing with this. Frank said hell will freeze over before the state fixes the roads. It is time to sit down with the state and get Joe Kenney involved and tell them we need to get this done. Wendy said we are happy to sit down with them and discuss the sidewalks, but we don't have control over the New Hampshire D.O.T. Frank said we have to come to a conclusion. That has to be the town's stance. It is a safety issue. We apply for the grants and it ends up being a lot of wasted time. Get Joe Kenney involved and let him set up the meeting. We can't leave that meeting until something is done with the sidewalks. Ken Russell explained the issue with the grant project that was cancelled by the State. Ken said we couldn't prove that we owned the sidewalks. Ed Betz applied for this grant on behalf of the Town. Austin Pilotte suggested forming a committee to decide which sidewalks are most important to be repaired. Austin said he feels this sidewalks out here, which mostly effect the elderly should be a priority. Shawn said the public has spoken and he can't to anything without money. A show of voting cards was in favor of the amendment. Ken Russell made a motion to move the article as amended from \$10,000 to \$30,000. The moton was seconded from the floor. The floor was opened for discussion on the article as amended. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article as amended in the amount of \$30,000.**

#### **Article 11: Road Grader**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-Four Thousand Dollars (\$24,000) for this year's payment on the road grader for the highway department. The Board of Selectmen recommends this appropriation.

A motion was made by Mark Lufkin to move the question. It was seconded by Duane Hall. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$24,000.**

**Article 12: Backhoe Lease**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to enter into a six year lease agreement for One Hundred Forty-Four Thousand Dollars (\$144,000) for the purpose of leasing a backhoe for the Highway Department, and to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-Three Thousand Dollars (\$23,000) for the first year's payment for that purpose. This lease agreement contains an escape clause. The Board of Selectmen recommends this appropriation.

A motion was made by Wendy Hersom to move the question. It was seconded by Mark Lufkin. The floor was opened for discussion. Ray Gradual asked about committing this for future years. This lease agreement has an escape clause so if it is not passed in future years. Is there a buy out at the end of the lease? Shawn said as soon as we are done at the end of six years the backhoe will belong to the town. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$23,000.**

**Article 13: Capital Improvement Plan Update**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Six thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$6,500) for the purpose of updating Whitefield's Capital Improvement Plan. The Board of Selectmen recommends this appropriation.

A motion was made by Duane Hall to move the question. It was seconded by Wendy Hersom. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of \$6,500.**

**Article 14: Northern Pass Resolution**

To see if the Town will vote to support the following resolution:

WHEREAS the Northern Pass Transmission Project as presently proposed would pass through the Town of Whitefield utilizing overhead transmission lines, and

WHEREAS this project would blight the landscape and devastate the values of properties within its transmission corridor and lines of sight, and

WHEREAS this project would make the area less attractive for outdoor recreational activities and tourism and negatively impact sightseeing, hunting, hiking, and other activities that this region depends on for revenue, and

WHEREAS this project would adversely impact wildlife and wildlife habitat and wetlands located within the region, and

WHEREAS the adverse health effects of such high voltage transmission power lines on human, animal and plant life within the electromagnetic field created by the liens are not fully understood, now be it

RESOLVED that the Town of Whitefield strongly opposes this project as currently proposed utilizing overhead transmission lines in part of the project rather than placing the lines underground along the entire route, and that a copy of this resolution be sent to the President of the United States, the Governor of the State of New Hampshire, the United States Senators and Representatives from the State of new Hampshire, the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission, and the New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee.

This is a non-binding article and is advisory only to the Board of Selectmen.

A motion was made by Mark Lufkin to move the question. It was seconded by Duane Hall. Luke Wotton said he is in favor of the article. **A show of the voting cards was in favor of the article.**

Ray Gradual made a motion to combine articles 15 through 25 for voting purposes. The motion was seconded from the floor. The floor was opened for discussion. A show of voting cards was in favor of combining articles 15 through 25 for voting purposes. The floor was opened for discussion on the articles combined in the amount of \$37,457. Moderator Rexford read each article. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the articles 15 through 25 in the amount of \$37,457.**

**Article 15: North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Thousand Four Hundred Dollars (\$3,400) for the purpose of North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency, Inc. to provide home health and home care services to the underinsured and uninsured Whitefield residents. The Board of Selectmen recommends this appropriation. (By Petition)

**Article 16: North Country Transit**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Thousand Dollars (\$4,000) to support North Country Transit's Senior & Public Transportation. The Board of Selectmen recommends this appropriation. (By Petition)

**Article 17: Ammonoosuc Community Health Services, Inc.**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Thousand Dollars (\$4,000) for Ammonoosuc Community Health Services, Inc. (ACHS). ACHS is a non-profit community

health center that provides primary preventive health care to anyone, regardless of their ability to pay. This will help ACHS continue to provide high quality care to 597 current WHITEFIELD patients, as well as reach more of those in need. The Board of Selectmen recommends this appropriation. (By Petition)

**Article 18: Senior Meals Program**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Eight Hundred Dollars (\$2,800) in support of Tri-County CAP, Inc.--North Country Elder Programs for Town of Whitefield funding in support of the Senior Meals Program. The Board of Selectmen recommends this appropriation. (By Petition)

**Article 19: Northern Gateway Regional Chamber of Commerce**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Nineteen Dollars (\$1,019) (.50 per capita) for the Northern Gateway Regional Chamber of Commerce. The Board of Selectmen recommends this appropriation. (By Petition)

**Article 20: Child Advocacy Center of Coos County**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Three Hundred and Six Dollars (\$2,306) in support of the CAC-CC, a not-for-profit community partnership dedicated to the investigation, prosecution, and treatment of child victims of crime. The Board of Selectmen recommends this appropriation. (By Petition)

**Article 21: Northwoods Home Health & Hospice Services**

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Eleven Thousand Five Hundred and Thirteen Dollars (\$11,513) in support of Northwoods Home Health & Hospice Services, a division of Northern New Hampshire Healthcare Collaborative, Inc. The requested funds shall be used to assist in the delivery of home health and hospice services to the residents of the Town of Whitefield. The Board of Selectmen recommends this appropriation. (By Petition)

**Article 22: White Mountain Mental Health & Common Ground**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Nine Hundred and Nineteen Dollars (\$2,919) as the Town's contribution to the White Mountain Mental and Common Ground, programs of Northern Human Services, serving the mental health and developmental services needs of Whitefield residents. The Board of Selectmen recommends this appropriation. (By Petition)

**Article 23: Caleb Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Thousand Dollars (\$4,000) to help support Caleb Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers, that serves the needs of Seniors in the community. The Board of Selectmen recommends this appropriation. (By Petition)

**Article 24: The Center for New Beginnings**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000) to support "The Center for New Beginnings". The Center for New Beginnings provided services to 35 Whitefield residents in 2015. The Board of Selectmen recommends this appropriation. (By Petition)

**Article 25: Above the Notch Humane Society**

To see if the Town of Whitefield will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500) to help support Above the Notch Humane Society for the purpose of rehabilitation and care of surrendered and abandoned dogs and assistance in investigating animal cruelty and abuse in New Hampshire's North Country. The Board of Selectmen recommends this appropriation. (By Petition)

**Article 26: Solar Energy Property Tax Exemption**

To see if the Town will vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 72:61 through RSA 72:64 inclusively, which provide for an optional property tax exemption from the property's assessed value, for property tax purposes, for persons owning real property, which is equipped with solar energy systems intended for use at the immediate site. Such property tax exemption shall be in the amount equal to 100% of the assessed value not to exceed \$50,000.00 of qualifying equipment under these statutes. (By Petition)

A motion was made to move the question from the floor. It was seconded from the floor. Peter Corey thanked the voters for their support in his election for Selectman. He will work for the best interest of the community. Peter said he is the one who submitted this article. He said he is very concerned about the Northern Pass and what it might do to our area. There is a market demand for the energy. He said what has been absent is talking about conservation or what we can do to reduce the demand of electricity in the region. There are things we can do individually, i.e. recycle, new light bulbs. You can put up solar panels. Peter did some research to what some area communities are doing, and one item is this solar energy property tax exemption. It provides a resident, small business or large business who considers putting in an solar energy system a small relief from the tax increase up to the amount of \$50,000. He looked at what other towns have done. They have to apply to the Town for the exemption. Peter said he feels it is a

good incentive to get at the growing electric consumption in this area. Art Hammon said he wondered if the Selectmen have information or a legal opinion. Art said he feels it is well-intentioned, but he is wondering about use of the power transmitted to the grid. Wendy explained we did send this article to our Town Attorney who informed us that she interpreted the warrant article as meaning that the exemption would not be available for solar energy systems installed to generate electricity for sale on the grid like a solar farm, although she thinks that net metering (use of the power generated primarily on-site with excess transmitted onto the grid to "roll back" the electric meter) likely would still be allowed under this language. This is an opportunity so we don't have to face projects like Northern Pass. Sondra Brekke thinks this is a good thing for the Town. It is a good incentive for people who might want to move in to this area. Mr. Mai said as time goes by these things come down in value and become more affordable. A motion was made by Ray Gradual to table discussion on this article. The motion was seconded. The floor was opened to table discussion on this article. The motion to table discussion on the article was defeated. Wendy Hersom said that the solar exemption is a local optional exemption that must be approved at town meeting to be available to property owners. There will be increased costs of administration, both initially and ongoing. Solar energy systems are proven to add value to real property and the property tax is based on fair market value. Most solar systems are being installed by the above-average income property owners. Low income homeowners cannot afford the cost of most systems and the subsidies are not great enough, nor the payback short enough to make an investment worthwhile. There was discussion if this was a permanent exemption or needed to be applied for each year. Ken Russell said whatever the statute says if we pass that article it is only to be used on that property. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article, 42 in favor/32 against.**

#### **Article 27: Solar Energy System Proposals**

To see if the Town will vote to seek proposals for installation of a solar energy system of sufficient design to offset 100% of the annual electrical energy usage of the town hall and EMS/fire station. Such proposals shall be reviewed and evaluated by town officials for cost, rate of return on investment, warranty, siting, grant availability, and other relevant factors. The proposal selected for best value shall be presented by warrant article at the 2017 Town Meeting for a vote of approval or disapproval of any expenditure associated with the installation of said solar energy system. (By Petition)

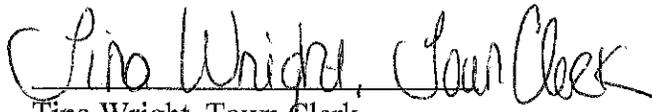
This is a non-binding article and is advisory only to the Board of Selectmen.

The motion was moved and seconded from the floor. Peter Corey explained that the Town of Lancaster has a proposal tonight for a solar project. Peter said all he is asking is that we come back here next year at town meeting after proposals have been sought to evaluate solar energy systems for town properties. Peter said it would be Whitefield's contribution to reduce energy consumption in this area. **A show of voting card was in favor of the article.**

Wendy Hersom said the Board wants to give an update on the building completion. We are going to install a light at the driveway entrance. We went over budget on the project and there are some items left to complete. We have some painting to complete in the building, the attic floor needs to be finished, there is drainage that needs to be done out back, and we received an USDA grant to finish the downstairs room with the bathroom, kitchen, painting, etc. The size of the meeting room is approximately 38 x 40, which could accommodate 217 people according to the fire codes on that building. The plan is to have meetings up there starting next March. We have saved hundred of thousands of dollars by having the town crew do the work. Mr. Stiles is wondering how much was paid out of the highway budget. Bob would like to know how many hours were spent at the town building, and maybe the sidewalks would have been done. Police Chief Ed Samson wanted to reiterate how much effort the town crew put in to get the building done and to get us in the building in July. Wendy said the Board of Selectmen is happy to get input from everyone. If you have a concern or complaint, please let us know or come to our meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

I hereby certify that the above return of the Annual Town Meeting of March 8, 2016 is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tina Wright, Town Clerk".

Tina Wright, Town Clerk  
Town of Whitefield, New Hampshire