Town of Whitefield

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES

2019

Moderator Brekke called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

The JROTC from White Mountains Regional High School presented the colors. Moderator Brekke led the Pledge of Alliance.

Moderator introduced the head table as well as his Assistant Moderator, Bill Jones.

Chairman Peter Corey of the Board of Selectmen presented Sandy Holz, who retired this past year after 44 years of service, with a citation for the many years of her service to the Town from Governor Sununu.

Moderator Brekke reviewed the results from the balloting during the day:

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

Selectperson (Three-Year Term)  
Peter Corey – 182 votes
Shawn White – 133 votes

Town Clerk (Three-Year Term)  
Tina Wright – 315 votes

Library Trustees (Two Trustees, Three-Year Terms)  
Valerie Fitchett – 230 votes
Kathleen Kopp – 243 votes

Cemetery Trustee (Three-Year Term)  
Maynard L’Heureux – 274 votes

Trustee of Trust Funds (Three-Year Term)  
Catherine Burns – 297 votes

Supervisor of the Checklist (Five-Year Term)  
Barbara Jones – 302 votes

Article 2. Shall we allow the operation of keno games within the Town of Whitefield? The article passed:

Yes – 154  No - 115

Article 3. Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 1 as proposed by the planning board for the town zoning ordinance as follows: To amend Article IV – Administration and Permits to regulate the use of recreational vehicles, clarify the status of recreational vehicles that
are not registered as motor vehicles, and provide for RV occupancy permits and special event RV permits to be issued by the Board of Selectmen?  The article passed:

Yes - 204  No - 109

Article 4.  Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 2 as proposed by the planning board for the town zoning ordinance as follows: To amend Article IX – Zoning Board of Adjustment by revising the criteria for a special exception to conform to the provisions of RSA 674:33, IV?  The article passed:

Yes - 184  No - 107

Article 5.  Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 3 as proposed by the planning board for the town zoning ordinance as follows: To amend Article XIV – Activity: Commercial by adding campgrounds to the list of commercial activities and adding a requirement for parking space for each campsite?  The article passed:

Yes - 208  No - 98

Article 6.  Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 4 as proposed by the planning board for the town zoning ordinance as follows: To amend Article XVIII – Activity: Single Family Home to clarify that recreational vehicles may not be approved as detached ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Units)?  The article passed:

Yes - 199  No - 104

Article 7.  Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 5 as proposed by the planning board for the town zoning ordinance as follows: To amend Appendix I – Definitions by adding definitions for “campground” and “recreational vehicle”?  The article passed:

Yes - 217  No - 87

Article 8.  Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 6 as proposed by the planning board for the town zoning ordinance as follows: To add a new Appendix VIII – Activity: Solar regarding the accommodation and regulation of solar energy collection systems pursuant to RSA 674:17, I(j), to classify different categories of solar uses based on location, purpose, nameplate capacity, and/or area; to require a development permit for solar systems (other than municipal systems) and establish standards and requirements for such permits related to height and lot coverage, location, impact to public health and safety, screening, system layout, emergency response, natural resource impacts and buffers, interconnection with utility, glare, noise, setbacks, stormwater management, lighting and decommissioning of systems?  The article passed:

Yes - 184  No – 123

Moderator Brekke reviewed the Rules of Procedure for the meeting.  Moderator Brekke said that Tim Vadney and Mike Curry, Engineers with Wright-Pierce are here to speak on Article 9 and
answer any questions. There are also two representatives here to speak on their petition warrant articles. They will need to be granted permission to speak.

A motion was made from the floor and seconded from the floor to allow Richard Carlson to speak on Article 37, Saint Paul’s Episcopal Church Weekend Food Backpack Program. A show of voting cards was in favor of the motion.

A motion was made from the floor and seconded from the floor to allow Amy Goyette of Tri-County Community Action Program to speak on Articles 29, 31, 36, 38, and 39. A show of voting cards was in favor of the motion.

Members who are experts to answer questions on Article 9. Allow them to speak. Articles 37 for the Food Back Program: Moved & seconded from the floor. All in favor.

**Article 9: Supplementing the Whitefield Wastewater Treatment Facilities Improvement Project**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Million Six Hundred Thousand Dollars ($1,600,000) for the purpose of supplementing the Whitefield Wastewater Treatment Facilities (WWTF) Improvement Project authorized by the Town on March 14, 2017 in the amount of $6,500,000 with One Million Six Hundred Thousand Dollars ($1,600,000) of such sum to be raised through the issuance of bonds or notes under and in compliance with the Municipal Finance Act, RSA 33:1 et seq., as amended; to authorize the Selectmen to apply for, obtain and accept federal, state or other aid, if any, which may be available for said project and to comply with all laws applicable to said project; to authorize the Selectmen to issue, negotiate, sell and deliver said bonds and notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof; and to authorize the Selectmen to take any other action or to pass any other vote relative thereto. These supplemental project funds are being sought based on updated engineering recommendations to provide necessary project scope items to bring the WWTF into compliance with their National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit as identified in the USEPA Administrative Order, CWA-AO-R01-FY19-04. (Recommended by Board of Selectmen) (2/3 ballot vote required.)

A motion was made by Peter Corey to move the question. The motion was seconded by John Tholl. The floor was opened for discussion. Peter Corey introduced Michael Curry of Wright-Pierce, the engineer for this project. Mr. Curry said his presentation tonight is to provide a brief summary of the WWTF project and to discuss Article 9 on the Town’s 2019 warrant. Project History: The existing aerated lagoon system was constructed in the mid-1980’s. Simple, reliable, low maintenance with minimal upgrades since initial construction. Throughout the 2000’s the existing lagoons struggled to meet effluent discharge limits and additional treatment standards were put in place, including total phosphorus. In 2016, the Town received an administrative order from the EPA to develop an engineering Facilities Plan to bring the existing WWTF to come into compliance with discharge limits. In 2016 and into 2017, the Town and the Town’s engineer developed a Facilities Planning study outlining a proposed upgrade approach with a total budget of $6,500,000. During this time, there was concern that available funding and
grant opportunities may not be available for long with a new administration coming into power so the Town expedited a warrant article in 2017 for $6,500,000 in order to secure USDA-Rural Development funding which includes low-interest loans and 45% grant. In addition the Town received a septage receiving grant worth approximately $400,000 which can be used for part of the WWTF upgrades. The total approved budget for the WWTF in 2017 was $6,900,000. Fast forward to 2018: Wright-Pierce was brought on board to confirm the proposed approach from the 2017 Facilities Plan approach. We concluded during our peer review and through comprehensive technical reviews with the funding agencies that there is an additional treatment process required for compliance, specifically Effluent Filtration (Total Phosphorus). The original cost estimates were low based on the increased competitiveness in the construction market, and equipment and material costs have increased resulting in an overall cost increase due to inflation. Wright-Pierce and the Town coordinated to select a balanced Final Design approach for what was determined to be the “right” design for the Town of Whitefield’s future. We needed to add an effluent filtration process to the project, which was not included in the original cost estimate. We need to look at the Sludge Dewatering approach and balance short term capital investments vs. long term operational costs. Taking all these factors into consideration, the estimated project costs increased to $8,500,000, approximately $1,600,000 less than the current available funding. Where are we now? NHDES and USDA-Rural Development approved the Preliminary Design (30%), which included a comprehensive technical review, cost effectiveness, future considerations for permit limits, town expansion, etc., and includes the Sequencing Batch Reactor system, which has ease of operation, is flexible, and upgradeable. The project is proposed to be bid this summer. Why are we here tonight? The proposed project has a funding difference of $1,600,000 compared to the Town’s approved bonds, and Article 9 is seeking approval for appropriating this $1,600,000. The Town and Wright-Pierce have contacted NHDES and USDA-Rural Development and are hopeful that additional low interest loans will be available if the warrant is approved, and grants or principal forgiveness opportunities are also possible. However, nothing is set in stone until the Town votes to appropriate the supplemental funds. Peter Corey said we understand the question in everyone’s mind, how did we get here really, why do we need to ask for additional funding? What went wrong? Peter said nothing went wrong We were faced with an EPA administrative order issued to us in 2016, new administration comes into the office and all the signals were that the funding that might be available through USDA was going away. USDA came to the town hall and met with the board and told us to put in an application. It put us against a difficult time line and we worked with an engineering firm and thought we addressed the best design procedures. We thought we would meet the EPA discharge requirements and that is where we derived the original $6.5 million project cost. However, at the time USDA said this was rushed and we really would like this design to go through a peer review for more data to be collected. With Wright Pierce’s assistance we did that and there were additional design elements to be included in the project to meet the discharge requirements. We went to NH DES and USDA in December of last year with a design plan for their approval. The decision was delayed because USDA could not attend the meeting due to the National Day of Mourning. We hoped to have some more information from USDA on funding. We had no contact with USDA during the government shut down. They did tell us that they approved the project, and said we think you
are heading in the right direction, and are looking to provide you with additional loan and that decision will come after your vote in March. If we don’t approve the $1.6 million for the project, USDA is not going to find us additional grant funds or loan. Are there things we can take off and still meet the discharge requirements? The best solution was this additional $1.6 million. We would significantly increase those operating costs with another design which would more than offset what we would pay on a bond note. It did not make sense to decrement the project any further. We hope the voters will pass this bond. We do not know what will happen if this does not pass tonight. We don’t know if we can get any more extensions. It is not going to go well. The three selectmen urge you approve this article. We will work to try to get additional grant funds. If we get more grant, it will probably be a similar mix to the last time. We do need to pass the warrant article that authorizes the Board to spend the additional $1,600,000. The septage receiving station will be a revenue generator for the Town. We don’t want to lose the $400,000 in grant funds from Northern Borders. Currently, every septic tank in Whitefield goes somewhere other than Whitefield but with the septage receiving facility we will be able to take Whitefield residents’ septage and take other area towns’ septage. There is a real need in the north country for a septage receiving facility.

Valerie Yelton said she had four questions: Could you outline for us what the new treatment facility encompasses? Detail what the additional effluent process involves? What is the capacity of this new system compared to our current capacity? How long is it going to cover our needs? Interest rates?

Michael Curry said when we design treatment plants we design them for a 20-year design life. We measure the effluent and look at development in the town. This should meet the town’s needs for 20 years and possibly longer. Michael described how the Effluent process works. The treatment process is a Sequencing Batch Reactor, which includes clarification tanks and reactive tanks. We do not know the interest rates at this time.

Frank Mai thanked Wright-Pierce for a good presentation. Frank said in order for the Board to make intelligent decisions, what dollar amount is this going to affect us in taxes, not only on this project but on the other articles as well. If everything passes that we are going through, what is the dollar impact?

Peter Corey explained that this bond will be paid for by the sewer users so it will not affect the tax rate. If everything passes on the warrant, we anticipate a .99 cent per thousand increase. This particular bond will be paid via the sewer users and sewer usage rates. Peter said further down in the warrant, there is an article to set up a Septage Receiving Station capital reserve fund, which will be funded by the tax rate. Peter said if we create a septage receiving station in town everyone who has a septic tank or an RV with a septic tank can now discharge here at the treatment plant and will reduce the price you pay for that service. If you look at other towns most of them charge residents less than they charge non-residents. There is a huge advantage to have that here in town. USDA is looking for the town to show they are in support of this project. It helps score higher when they come to the decision-making process whether we should receive funding.
Terry Lufkin said that they pay .12 cents a gallon to get our septic tank pumped. Terry's question is where is the waste is going, what is happening with the sludge after they take it out of the tanks? Mike Curry said that was one of the main points in our cost engineering phase. We were looking at removing the water with sludge dewatering. We don't want to have to haul liquid sludge. It is better to pay the up-front capital costs for the sludge dewatering system. You spin the water out and reduce it to a much smaller volume. There are many options for disposal, landfills, composting plants. We will put it out to bid and see what we can get for a price. It could go to a landfill or a plant that will composite it and land apply it.

Frank Lombardi said his concern is the cost impact on the sewer users. Peter said the concern is a valid one. There will definitely be an increase. There are a lot of variables that we don't know the exact numbers for yet. We don't know exact costs or exact revenues from the septage receiving plant, and we don't know what additional grant monies there may be and how it will impact the rate. There are still a lot of unknowns. We recently had a sewer rate study done by Horizons Engineering and there are different options for how rates can be apportioned. It can be done in many different ways. It will be a tough decision. We can no longer meet our discharge requirements and we need to move on with newer technology. There will be an increase in the sewer rates.

Dave Holmader said he would like to speak in support of this. If we can receive sewage from outside of the town, it can become revenue generating support. We can sometime think in terms of the negative aspect. We will see an increase in the sewer rate. It can also become a positive whereas it has been presented to us this evening, most of the septic currently has to be trucked south of the notch.

Steve Cox asked what is the ultimate cost of kicking this can down the road? The subject of water and septic has been coming up for years and we always kick it down the road. What can EPA do for fines? Tim Vadney said that the EPA can levy fines up to $27,500 a day. They have the leverage to make this happen. There are some unseen price increases that have occurred over the past couple of years. Nobody could have seen the tariffs that have been put on steel. Competition for costs, construction firms are very busy for concrete and other construction materials. A lot of the costs increased significantly. There are real costs associated with kicking the can down the road.

Moderator Brekke explained that this is a secret written ballot vote and needs to pass by 2/3 vote. The polls were opened for secret written ballot at 8:24 p.m. and the polls closed at 9:24 p.m. A separate ballot box was used for this bond vote. There was not any motion made to reconsider the vote on this bond issue. The article passed with a 2/3 vote: Yes: 84/No: 14

**Article 10.** – 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. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Majority Vote Required)
**General Government:** A motion was made by Stanley Holz to move the question. It was seconded by Peter Corey. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $579,715.**

**Public Safety:** A motion was made by John Tholl to move the question. It was seconded by Stanley Holz. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $887,584.**

**Airport Operations:** A motion was made by Peter Corey to move the question. It was seconded by John Tholl. 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 Stanley Holz to move the question. It was seconded by Peter Corey. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $746,066.**

**Sanitation:** A motion was made by John Tholl to move the question. It was seconded by Stanley Holz. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $186,278.**

**Health:** A motion was made by Peter Corey to move the question. It was seconded by John Tholl. 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 Stanley Holz to move the question. It was seconded by Peter Corey. The floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $21,000.**

**Culture & Recreation:** A motion was made by John Tholl to move the question. It was seconded by Stanley Holz. The floor was opened for discussion. Terry Lufkin said that she believes the Whitefield Historical Society has a Facebook page and she feels where they are municipally supported by the taxpayers that the Historical Society should not be allowing the bashing of people or businesses and bullying. Stanley Holz said any remarks of this nature are removed, and if it continues they will be permanently banned. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $145,725.**

**Conservation Commission:** A motion was made Peter Corey to move the question. It was seconded by John Tholl. 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 Stanley Holz to move the question. It was seconded by Peter Corey. The floor was opened for discussion. Terry Lufkin said she has a concern that the EDC is not posting or publishing their minutes since August, 2018. She said she feels that anything the taxpayers support should have minutes available to the public. Mark
Luftin asked why aren’t there minutes posted for something we are supporting. Peter said that we inquired with New Hampshire Municipal Association and they said the WEDC should be treated no differently than any other non-profit who gets money from the Town. They are a 501:c-4. Peter said that Stanley Holz sits on the WEDC and reports to the Selectmen monthly on what happens at the WEDC meetings. A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $5,000.

**Debt Service:** A motion was made by John Tholl to move the question. It was seconded by Stanley Holz. The floor was opened for discussion. A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $174,383.

**Municipal Sewer Department:** A motion was made by Peter Corey to move the question. It was seconded by John Tholl. The floor was opened for discussion. A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $290,268.

**Municipal Water Department:** A motion was made by Stanley Holz to move the question. It was seconded by Peter Corey. A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $475,612.

**Article 11: Fire Department Equipment Replacement 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 Fire Department Equipment Replacement Capital Reserve Fund created in 2007. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made by John Tholl to move the question. It was seconded by Stanley Holz. The floor was opened for discussion. A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $40,000.

**Article 12: Bridge & Town Buildings Repair/Maintenance/Replacement Capital Reserve Fund**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty-Five Thousand Dollars ($55,000) to be added to the Bridge & Town Buildings Repair/Maintenance/Replacement Capital Reserve Fund created in 2010. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made by Peter Corey to move the question. It was seconded by John Tholl. The floor was opened for discussion. A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $55,000.
Article 13: Ambulance Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars ($20,000) to be added to the Ambulance Capital Reserve fund created in 2004. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made by Stanley Holz to move the question. It was seconded by Peter Corey. The floor was opened for discussion. A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $20,000.

Article 14: Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifteen Thousand Dollars ($15,000) to be added to the Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund created in 2015. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made by John Tholl to move the question. It was seconded by Stanley Holz. The floor was opened for discussion. A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $15,000.

Article 15: Road Projects Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thirty-Three Thousand Dollars and Five Dollars ($133,005) to be added to the Road Projects Capital Reserve Fund created in 2013. Seventy-Three Thousand Five Dollars ($73,005) of said funds is to come from unassigned fund balance, which represents the FEMA funds received in 2018. The balance of Sixty-Thousand Dollars ($60,000) is to come from general taxation. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Majority vote required)

A motion was made by Peter Corey to move the question. It was seconded by John Tholl. The floor was opened for discussion. A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $60,000.

Article 16: Highway Equipment Replacement Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Forty-Seven Thousand Five Hundred Dollars ($47,500) to be added to the Highway Equipment Replacement Capital Reserve Fund created in 2001. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made by Stanley Holz to move the question. It was seconded by Peter Corey. The floor was opened for discussion. A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $47,500.
Article 17: Sidewalk Repair/Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars ($20,000) to be added to the Sidewalk Repair/Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund created in 2011. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made by John Tholl to move the question. It was seconded by Stanley Holz. The floor was opened for discussion. A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $20,000.

Article 18: Recycling Center Equipment Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of $5,000 (Five Thousand Dollars) to be added to the Recycling Center Equipment Capital Reserve Fund created in 2012. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made by Peter Corey to move the question. It was seconded by John Tholl. The floor was opened for discussion. A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $5,000.

Article 19: Establish Emergency Services Building Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to establish an Emergency Services Building Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for additions, renovations, and construction of the Emergency Services Building and to raise and appropriate the sum of $20,000 (Twenty Thousand Dollars) to be placed in this fund. Further, to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made by Stanley Holz to move the question. It was seconded by Peter Corey. The floor was opened for discussion.

Ken Russell said he is not questioning the article, but in the past there has been an explanation of why we need it. Peter Corey said when we built the town hall there was an emergency services building capital reserve fund that was used towards the town hall building project. The Fire Department building continues to age, and the Board felt it was prudent to establish the emergency services building capital reserve account for anything that needs to be upgraded.

Rick Wright said he is on the CIP Committee who evaluates some of these capital reserve fund requests, and when this request came to the CIP Committee, it was not articulated what was needed and when it was needed. Rick said the CIP Committee tries to evaluate how can we best meet those needs with existing funds. The CIP Committee voted to rank this the lowest priority and recommended it be deferred. Rick said for that reason he is against this article.

Lee Hallquist said he is concerned that you need to draw the line somewhere. He is not going to be able to stay in this town with the tax increases. He said he loves this town, but he knows the writing is on the wall for his family to continue to pay the taxes. We have one of the highest tax
rates in New Hampshire. He said we need to think hard and twice about creating new capital reserve funds because they will be there forever.

Peter Corey said we certainly appreciate the work the CIP committee does and we certainly appreciate concerns. All members of the Selectboard pay taxes as well. We are not emotionally connected to this budget. We take the advice from department managers and we present to you what we think is an adequate budget with what we believe you want, a vibrant downtown, a rec program, emergency services, etc. You get to choose what you want. It is not going to hurt our feeling one way or another. We do realize that as a community we have kept our taxes unrealistically low for a number of years, and we have to start paying for that. The capital reserve accounts are basically a savings account for money put aside for future purchases.

A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $20,000.

Article 20: Establish Septage Receiving Station Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to establish a Septage Receiving Station Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 to be used for construction of the Septage Receiving Station at the Whitefield Wastewater Treatment Plant and to raise and appropriate the sum of $25,000 (Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars) to be placed in this fund. Further, to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Majority vote required)

A motion was made by John Tholl to move the question. It was seconded by Stanley Holz. The floor was opened for discussion on the article. Peter said this is a new capital reserve fund, which he discussed during the discussion of the Wastewater Treatment Plant bond. We envision coming back to the Town for some money next year as well, but then the plant should be up and running. It is a signal to USDA that we are supporting this project, and there are advantages to having the septage receiving plant in the community. A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $25,000.

Article 21: Establish Sewer Collection System Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to establish a Sewer Collection System Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for maintenance, repair, and construction of the Sewer Collection System and to raise and support the sum of $10,000 (Ten Thousand Dollars) to be placed in this fund. Further, to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Majority vote required)

A motion was made by Peter Corey to move the question. It was seconded by John Tholl. The floor was opened for discussion on the article. Peter said this is similar to what we have described. We have not been performing preventative maintenance to the sewer collection system like we should have been. We have a line item in the budget for repairs to the wastewater collections system and we have not been proactively planning for sewer main replacements.
This capital reserve fund will give us some money to do this. Ironically, one of our residents has had an issue with the sewer collection system this week. Rick Wright asked if the wastewater collection system was paid for by the tax rate, and Peter replied that it is. A show of voting cards was in favor the article in the amount of $10,000.

**Article 22: Police Cruiser**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Forty-Four Thousand Dollars ($44,000) to purchase a Police Cruiser and authorize the withdrawal of Twenty Thousand Dollars ($20,000) from the Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund created for that purpose. The balance of Twenty-Four Thousand Dollars ($24,000) is to come from general taxation. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Majority vote required)

Moderator Brekke announced at 9:15 p.m. that the Polls for Article 9 will close in 9 minutes at 9:24 p.m.

A motion was made by Stanley Holz to move the question. It was seconded by Peter Corey. The floor was opened for discussion on the article. Lee Hallquist asked when we buy a new cruiser what is the mileage and what do you do with the old ones? Chief Samson replied that the oldest vehicle has just over 120,000 miles. It is six years old. The P.D. will no longer be using it. We have recycled past vehicles into the Fire Department or Highway Department for their use. There is really not a lot of value in those vehicles. Peter Corey said if it does not go to another department, it is disposed of by public auction or bid to the highest bidder. A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $44,000.

**Article 23: Wastewater Asset Management Program**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars ($30,000) for the purpose of developing a Wastewater Asset Management Program for the Town’s wastewater assets. The funds are being sought for the development of a program to identify areas of improvement and to maintain sustainable, cost effective and compliant operation of the Town’s assets; to authorize the issuance of not more than $30,000 of bonds and notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act, RSA 33; and, further, to authorize the Selectmen to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the conditions and the rate of interest thereon; and to further authorize the Selectmen to apply for a Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) loan. Repayment of the loan funds will include up to 100% forgiveness of loan principal in an amount up to $30,000. This article is contingent upon the Town receiving loan forgiveness from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) in the amount of $30,000. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (2/3 ballot vote required)

A motion was made by John Tholl to move the question. It was seconded by Stanley Holz. The floor was opened for discussion on the article. Peter Corey said that this is a program that will enable us to conduct a full assessment of our wastewater system and to develop a maintenance plan going forward. It will not cost us anything, but we need a vote on this to get the funding
and we need 2/3 ballot vote majority to do it. The polls for voting on Article 23 were opened. **Article passed with 2/3 ballot vote majority: Yes: 86/No: 9**

Frank Lombardi made a motion to move Article 42 forward to be addressed at this point in time. Valerie Yelton seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion, and a show of the voting cards was in favor of the motion. We will now go to Article 42 and then back to Article 24.

**Article 42: Establish a Town Forest**

Pursuant to RSA 31:110-113, shall the Town establish as Whitefield Town Forest the following parcels:

--Tax Map #234-4.3 (Town of Whitefield, Abutting Pondicherry Wildlife Refuge)
--Tax Map #234-4.2 (Town of Whitefield, Abutting Pondicherry Wildlife Refuge)

and that the management of the Whitefield Town Forest be the responsibility of the Whitefield Conservation Commission (per RSA 31:112); any proceeds from the forest (such as a selected timber harvest) shall be placed in a special forest maintenance fund (per RSA 31:113). (Not recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (By Petition) (Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made by Frank Lombardi to move the question. The motion was seconded by Valerie Yelton. The floor was opened for discussion on the article.

Roxie Severance, Chair of the WEDC, said they commend the Conservation Commission members to volunteer and serve. The property proposed for the town forest is in the industrial park, and we hope to sell the property. Right now it is mostly open land. We, as the WEDC, are against this article. Rick Wright is on WEDC but he also wants to reinforce this property is right next to the airport and the tall trees next to the airport are a hazard. There are many other hiking trail options for Whitefield, i.e. the Whitefield Heritage Trail, Dana Forest trails, Pondicherry. Mr. Wright said he feels setting up a town forest in this particular spot is a mistake.

Frank Lombardi said he is the Chairman of the Conservation Commission. This spot is attractive as it is surrounded by the Pondicherry property. If there are issues with tall trees, the Conservation Commission can help deal with that. A lot of this property is wetlands and not buildable. This is one of the reasons we are looking at this. It is town-owned and abutting the Pondicherry. The Department of Interior supports this and can assist with developing a parking lot for Pondicherry. We are ready to move forward and we are partnering with the WMRHS to plan and create our recreation trail systems out there. There is a lot of potential and we want to get the community involved with a survey. We just started up in August. Thanks to the Selectboard for getting the Conservation up and going again.

Mr. Holz said all of the members of the WEDC and selectmen do not think that taking a large piece of property out of the industrial park is a good idea. The WEDC is starting to promote that lot. Stanley said he has a question how do we vote to take a property that the WEDC owns? Mr. Holz said that the Town transferred ownership to the WEDC not that long ago. WEDC
maintains ownership of that property. Stanley doesn’t think it is in the best interest of the town to give away this large parcel of our industrial park. Stanley said he loves the idea of a town forest but not in that spot.

Ken Russell said it would seem to him that there is some way you could work together to let the Conservation Commission use part of this property that is not going to be able to be sold because of the wetlands. There should be a way to let them use some of that for the purposes of a town forest without transferring ownership or anything else. Ken thinks we will have problems with this article. Ken said this should probably be voted down with the real issues that need to be addressed. Ken encourages the Board to work with the Conservation Commission and come up with a mutually agreeable arrangement. Peter Corey said that the Board doesn’t support this proposal as it is presented tonight. We are grateful that we have a Conservation Commission again after many years. We encourage them to have more dialogue before jumping to this conclusion, and when we were presented with this we said we did not feel that it is the best use of the property. This affects DG Whitefield which is seeking a collocated company to sell power and waste steam to. If we give up this property, this makes it difficult for them. We certainly look towards the Conservation Commission to help us to preserve land. We should preserve open spaces. We need to look to the Master Plan and the voters have said they want some light industrial manufacturers to provide jobs and offset the tax base. This is our best opportunity to do that. We lost out on a company who recently went to Groveton. We already have 2,219 acres in Whitefield that is in the Pondicherry Wildlife Refuge. We get $402 year in tax revenue for that. We don’t feel that adding this parcel to Pondicherry will provide an economic benefit to the community. It was established over the years as an Industrial Park. Peter said it has been voted on in the past to make this town forest and it was not successful. The Board asks that we not approve this warrant article.

Frank Mai said he doesn’t know if anybody has checked the Shoreline Protection Act. As this land abuts Pondicherry, it should be looked into. The Shoreline Protection Act may greatly affect what can be done with this property. Frank said before we spend the money on a survey, see if it falls under the Shoreline Protection Act before you spend your money on a survey.

Edith Worcester said that this land has been for sale for 30-40 years. It has sat there for years. She said there are a lot of properties around this parcel that have conservation easements, Bernie Bean’s farm, the Rexford’s are going to put 150 acres into a conservation easement. This would be the area if we are going to have a town forest. It is loaded with protective properties so this is the ideal spot. No one wants that piece of property.

Sondra Brekke said as she is a member of the Airport Commission, there is concern for trees growing up around the airport. If there is a lot of wetlands there, how much will it actually cost to develop the trails in those wetlands?

Don Laplante said he is a member of the conservation commission. We have all learned things tonight. Ken’s suggestion of voting it down while we do further discussion is probably the best suggestion. Don said that the information that came to them is that it is town-owned property. We were not aware that ownership has been transferred to WEDC so it does change the flavor of
the conversation. Not sure it makes it impossible, but he doesn’t think we should move forward. 60% of the property is wetlands, the wetlands stand between the airport and forest section, there would be a little island of buildable land isolated from the airport property. Wetlands are a valuable resource we need to protect. That is a concern. Mr. Mai’s suggestion that we look into the Shoreland Protection Act is another good suggestion. That is something we need to do as well. The prudent thing is to put the question on hold until we have more information to work with since some of this information is just coming to them this evening. Don said they did approach the Board in October about wanting to do this.

Mr. Lombardi said they have been working on this since October and we did address the Board of Selectmen. They tried to reach out to the Airport Commission, but the Airport Commission did not get back to them. If we are working together, why didn’t we know this ahead of time that the land was owned by the WEDC. Frank does not have any belief it is owned by them. Frank would hate to restart this process all again. Frank would still like to see this happen. Frank thinks he has answered most of the questions.

Peter Corey said he wants to respond to the comment that the Selectboard did not work with the Conservation Commission. Peter said this was plopped in front of us at an October Selectboard meeting. At that time the Selectmen said we are not necessarily opposed, but we feel it is premature and we need dialogue of what is possible. That is where we left it and the next thing we received was a petition article. It may be possible that part of this land could be used for a town forest, but we need to have that dialogue.

A show of voting cards defeated the article.

Moderator Brekke announced the results of Article 9: Yes: 84 to No: 14

Moderator Brekke announced the results of Article 23: Yes: 86 No: 9

Article 24: Library Roof

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars ($20,000) to repair the library roof with said funds coming from unassigned fund balance. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Majority vote required)

A motion was made by Peter Corey to move the question. The motion was seconded by John Tholl. The floor was opened for discussion. A show of voting codes was in favor of the article in the amount of $20,000.

Article 25: Fire Department Exhaust Removal System

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars ($25,000) for an exhaust removal system for the Fire Department. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Majority vote required)
A motion was made by Stanley Holz to move the question. The motion was seconded by Peter Corey. The Floor was opened for discussion. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $25,000.**

**Article 26: Pay Off General Obligation Bond**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Sixty-Eight Thousand Four Hundred Dollars ($68,400) to pay off the General Obligation Bond with Rural Utilities Service (USDA) dated October 27, 2011 which was for the purposes of financing the costs of renovations and improvements to the Whitefield Public Library. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Majority vote required)

A motion was made by John Tholl to move the question. The motion was seconded by Stanley Holz. The floor was opened for discussion on the article. Peter said we look a look at our long-term debt and for this note and if we paid off the principal of $68,400 we could save $32,000 in interest over the term of the loan. We thought it was an opportunity to save some money on interest payments.

Sondra Brekke asked how many years do we have left on the loan? Peter replied that it goes until 2035. Sondra said in a year we are raising taxes .99 cents a thousand that we should table it for another year. Lee Hallquist said he feels with everything that we have approved tonight that the tax rate is going to go up more than 99 cents.

**A show of voting cards was to too close to. A tally count was taken: Yes: 46/No: 26**

**Article 26 passes.**

**Article 27: Rescind Solar Energy Property Tax Exemption**

To see if the Town will vote to rescind the provisions of RSA 72:61 through RSA 72:64 inclusively, (which were adopted at the 2016 town meeting), 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 as currently in effect is in the amount equal to 100% of the assessed value not to exceed $50,000 of qualifying equipment under these statutes. (Recommend by the Board of Selectmen) (Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made by Peter Corey to move the question. It was seconded by John Tholl. The floor was opened for discussion. Peter said this was his article to adopt the solar energy property tax exemption that he introduced in 2016 as a way to provide incentive for solar panels or arrays and as a way to offset what we needed for Northern Pass. Since that time we have participated in seminars that say the economics are such with solar that no incentives are needed for those who would like to install solar systems. A lot of communities are getting solar arrays in their communities. After getting all the information from NHMA, we feel it is not necessary to offer tax exemptions to companies or individuals who take advantage of this.
Valerie Yelton said that we have a number of articles that are increasing our taxes. This is the only article in here to provide capital back to the homeowner. It is an option that can benefit a homeowner. What harm is it to leave it?

John Tholl said he is not necessarily against that, but if you give someone up to $50,000 in a tax exemption, then everyone else pays for it.

**A show of voting cards was in favor of the article.**

**Article 28: Adopt RSA 41:11-a**

To see if the Town will vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 41:11-a to authorize the Board of Selectmen to rent or lease municipal property for a term of up to 5 years without further vote or ratification of the town. Once adopted, this authority shall remain in effect until specifically rescinded by the legislative body at any duly warned meeting provided that the term of any lease entered into prior to the rescission shall remain in effect? (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made by Stanley Holz to move the question. The motion was seconded by Peter Corey. The floor was opened for discussion. Peter Corey said that the selectmen can currently enter into a lease for town-owned property for one year. There are many towns in the state who have taken advantage of solar arrays to assist with their electrical costs. It is better to have the ability to lease property for 5 years. This gives towns the ability to solicit RFPs.

Valerie Yelton said that the wording of the article does not specify if the town is being designated to be the lessee or lessor. Peter said that this is the verbiage that is required to lease property to anyone for up to 5 years.

**A show of voting cards was in favor of the article.**

**Article 29: Tri-County Community Action Program, Inc., Tri County Transit**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Thousand Dollars ($4,000) for the operation of Tri County Transit a community service program provided by Tri-County Community Action Program, Inc. (Not recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (By Petition) (Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made and seconded from the floor to move the question. The floor was opened for discussion on the article. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $4,000.**

**Article 30: 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. (Not recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (By Petition) (Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made and seconded from the floor to move the question. The floor was opened for discussion on the article. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $4,000.**

**Article 31: Tri-County Community Action Program Inc., Senior Meals Program**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Eight Hundred Dollars ($2,800) for the operation of Senior Meals a community service program provided by Tri-County Community Action Program, Inc. (Not recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (By Petition) ( Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made and seconded from the floor to move the question. The floor was opened for discussion on the article. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $2,800.**

**Article 32: 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 cents per capita) for the Northern Gateway Regional Chamber of Commerce. (Not recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (By Petition) (Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made and seconded from the floor to move the question. The floor was opened for discussion on the article. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $1,019.**

**Article 33: North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency**

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fourteen Thousand Nine Hundred and Thirteen Dollars ($14,913) in support of North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency to assist in the delivery of home health and hospice services to the residents of the Town of Whitefield. (Not recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (By Petition) (Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made and seconded from the floor to move the question. The floor was opened for discussion on the article. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $14,913.**

**Article 34: 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, who provided services to twenty-four (24)
Whitefield residents in 2018. (Not recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (By Petition) ( Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made and seconded from the floor to move the question. The floor was opened for discussion on the article. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $1,000.**

**Article 35: 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. (Not recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (By Petition) (Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made and seconded from the floor to move the question. The floor was opened for discussion on the article. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $4,000.**

**Article 36: Tri-County Community Action, Coos ServiceLink Resource Center**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Dollars ($1,000) in support of Tri County CAP, Inc., Coos ServiceLink Resource Center. (Not recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (By Petition) (Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made and seconded from the floor to move the question. The floor was opened for discussion on the article. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $1,000.**

**Article 37: Saint Paul’s Episcopal Church Weekend Food Backpack Program**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Three Hundred Forty-Eight Dollars ($1,348) in support of the Saint Paul’s Episcopal Church Backpack Program which provides weekend and vacation meals and snacks to eligible children attending the Whitefield Elementary School. This request represents 10% of the anticipated cost of the program for the 2019/2020 school year. The Whitefield School was added to the program in September, 2016 and has served an average of 55 children each week—up from 25 last year. This includes the food and snacks as well as a voucher for ½ gallon of milk each week. Saint Paul’s is currently serving an average of 250 students weekly compared to 190 last year in the towns of Stratford, Groveton, Stark, Lancaster, and Whitefield. (Not recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (By Petition) (Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made and seconded from the floor to move the question. The floor was opened for discussion on the article. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $1,348.**
Article 38: Tri-County Community Action Homeless Outreach

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars ($2,500) for the operation of Homeless Outreach a community service program provided by Tri-County Community Action Program, Inc. (Not recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (By Petition) (Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made and seconded from the floor to move the question. The floor was opened for discussion on the article. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $2,500.**

Article 39: Tri-County Community Action Program, Inc., Tyler Blain House

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars ($2,500) for the operation of The Tyler Blain House a community service program provided by Tri-County Community Action Program, Inc. (Not recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (By Petition) (Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made and seconded from the floor to move the question. The floor was opened for discussion on the article. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $2,500.**

Article 40. White Mountain Mental Health

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Nine Hundred Nineteen Dollars and 24 cents ($2,919.24) for White Mountain Mental Health, recognizing that untreated mental illness results in loss of productivity at work, disruption to families and children, risk to the community and loss of life through suicide. Treatment works, but only if it is available and affordable. (Not recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (By Petition) (Majority Vote Required)

A motion was made and seconded from the floor to move the question. The floor was opened for discussion on the article. **A show of voting cards was in favor of the article in the amount of $2,919.24.**

Article 41: Northwoods Estates: Indian Ridge Lane and Sunrise Drive

To see if the Town will vote to accept the road known as Sunrise Drive located off of Northwoods Drive and to accept the road known as Indian Ridge Lane located off of Sunrise Drive, (see Northwoods Estate Subdivision Plan #2715 for specific location), as Class V. Highways pursuant to N.H. R.S.A. 229:1 and N.H. R.S.A. 229:5. (By Petition) (Majority Vote Required)
A motion was made and seconded from the floor to move the question. The floor was opened for discussion on the article. Sarah Doucette asked if someone from the town could speak to this article. Peter Corey said that this is tough. We struggle to maintain the roads we do own. The Northwoods Estates roads are probably the only roads constructed to the appropriate standards when it was done. We are maintaining a portion of the road and there are two roads because of language in last year’s town meeting that were not adopted at the same time. The Board has discussed this and we will leave it up to the voters to decide.

Scott Colby who is the President of the Northwoods Estates Homeowners Association said it is about 1,300 feet of road. There are six homes out there. Stanley Holz said that they have enough of a build-up that the Town get a fairly good return in property taxes. Valerie Yelton asked if there are there other roads that we opt not to deal with? They are either the roads the Town builds themselves or the voters vote and decide whether to take it on or not to take it on.

**A show of voting cards was in favor of the article.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

I hereby certify that the above return of the Annual Town Meeting of March 12, 2019 is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Tina Wright, Town Clerk
Town of Whitefield, New Hampshire