

On March 11, 2025 at 8:00 a.m., Moderator Richard Haskins opened the Town of Hancock's Annual Town Meeting by reading the Town Warrant:

Town of Hancock, New Hampshire, Warrant, 2025

To the inhabitants of the Town of Hancock in the County of Hillsborough in the state of New Hampshire qualified to vote in Town Affairs; You are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Hancock Town Offices Building on Tuesday, the eleventh (11th) day of March 2025, at eight o'clock in the forenoon until seven of the clock in the evening, to vote on ballot of Town Officers and other matters requiring ballot vote; and to meet at said Hancock Meetinghouse in said Hancock on Saturday, the fifteenth (15th) day of March 2025, at nine o'clock in the forenoon, to act upon the following subjects:

Article 01: To Choose Town Officers.

To choose all necessary Town Officers for the ensuing year.

Article 02: Amendment No. 1

Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 1 to the existing Town Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board, to improve the definitions, improve the readability and reduce inconsistencies across the Ordinance. The Planning Board approves and recommends the adoption of Amendment No. 1. The full text is available on the Town Website and in the Town Offices during business hours.

Moderator Haskins then accepted a motion to forego reading of the balance of the Warrant at this time by Kathy Anderson and seconded by Alice Welden. All present voted in favor of the motion.

Moderator Haskins then declared that the polls were open and would remain so until 7:00 p.m. At 7:00 p.m. Moderator Haskins declared the polls closed. A motion to reconvene on Saturday, March 15, 2025 at 9am at the Hancock Meetinghouse was moved by Theresa Earle and seconded by David Kidd. The motion carried by voice vote.

Moderator Haskins declared the meeting is now adjourned and will reconvene at 9am on Saturday, March 15, 2025 at the Hancock Meetinghouse.

All the ballots cast were then counted and tabulated.

The reconvened meeting was called to order by Moderator Haskins on March 15, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. in the Hancock Meetinghouse in the Lower Meeting Room.

Moderator Haskins then asked newly appointed Police Officer Daniel Camuso to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Moderator Haskins introduced the Select Board members Virginia Smith - chair, Jeff Brown and Betsy Villaume; Town Administrator Jonathan Coyne, Administrator Assistant Linda Coughlan; Town Clerk Joan Joseph; Fire Chief Tom Bates; Police Chief Tom Horne; Director of Public Works Tyler Howe; Library Director Amy Markus; Town Treasurer William Flatley and Supervisors of the Checklist Kathy Anderson, James Mason and Alice Welden.

Moderator Haskins announced that the Ballot Clerks for the meeting would be Linda Coughlan, Brad Geer, David Drasba and David Anderson.

Moderator Haskins presented Certificates of Recognition to the flowing:

Dennis Caldwell	Memorial Day Committee	1 Year
Earl Carrel	CIP Committee	2 Years
Raisa West	Planning Board	1 Year

Moderator Haskins recognized David Drasba for his creation of the History of the Hancock Meetinghouses panels displayed around the walls of the Lower Meetinghouse room. David collected the content from numerous sources including the Hancock Historical Society, the Congregational Church of Hancock and Hancock Archives Committee.

Moderator Haskins proposed a set of Rules of Order for the meeting and they were accepted by voice vote. He also stated that "For any motion, five voters present may request a vote by secret ballot by signing a petition after the motion has been seconded and before the vote has been called". He identified that the blue voting card would be used for a show of hands vote. Please don't hand them to someone else. He then asked the meeting grant; "Voice without Vote" status to non-residents Police Chief, Tom Horne and Director of Public Works, Tyler Howe.

Moderator Haskins stated: So now we are resuming the meeting that adjourned on March 11, 2025.

Moderator Haskins asked Town Clerk, Joan Joseph, if copies of the signed Warrant were posted at the Hancock Post Office, the Hancock Town Building and here in the Hancock Meetinghouse at least seven days prior to the Town Meeting. Town Clerk Joan Joseph replied that it was so posted. Haskins requested and received the signed Warrant and read it:

Town of Hancock, New Hampshire, Warrant, 2025

To the inhabitants of the Town of Hancock in the County of Hillsborough in the state of New Hampshire qualified to vote in Town Affairs; You are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Hancock Town Offices Building on Tuesday, the eleventh (11th) day of March 2025, at eight o'clock in the forenoon until seven of the clock in the evening, to vote on ballot of Town Officers and other matters requiring ballot vote; and to meet at said Hancock Meetinghouse in said Hancock on Saturday, the fifteenth (15th) day of March 2025, at nine o'clock in the forenoon, to act upon the following:

Article 01: To Choose Town Officers.

To choose all necessary Town Officers for the ensuing year.

Total of ballots cast - 546 (includes 12 absentee ballots). At the start of the day we had 1457 voters on the checklist. We received and accepted 2 new voter registration forms. At the end of the day we were 1459 voters on the checklist. We had 37.5% voter participation.

The results from ballots cast were:

Selectman for three years - Virginia Smith 418

Charles A. Willard 93

Common Commissioner for three years - David Drasba 492

Water Commissioner for three years - Stephen Pope 488

Library Trustee for three years - Neal Cass 515

Trustee of Trust Funds for three years - Paul Faber 497

Cemetery Trustee for three years - Timothy J. Lord 452

School Board Representative for three years - Dan Harper 495

All those newly elected will be sworn in during a break or at the end of the meeting.

Newly elected may also choose to visit the Town Clerk during office hours to be sworn in.

Article 02: Amendment No. 1

Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 1 to the existing Town Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board, to improve the definitions, improve the readability and reduce inconsistencies across the Ordinance. The Planning Board approves and recommends the adoption of Amendment No. 1. The full text is available on the Town Website and in the Town Offices during business hours.

The results from ballots cast were: Yes 476 No 49

Moderator Haskins stated that Amendment No 1. passes and the Town Zoning Ordinance is duly is amended.

Article 03: Paved Road Project (Bond).

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Hundred Sixty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$465,000) for the purpose of paved road capital improvements; Four Hundred Sixty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$465,000) 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 (et sequentes)., as amended: to authorize the Select Board to apply for, accept and expand 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 Select Board 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 Select Board to take any other action or to pass any other vote relative thereof. (Recommended by the Select Board (¾ ballot vote required)).

The Article was moved as follows by Ginger Smith and seconded by Jeff Brown.

I move that the Town raise and appropriate the sum of Four Hundred Sixty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$465,000) for the purpose of paved road capital improvements; Four Hundred Sixty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$465,000) 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 Selectboard to apply for, accept and expend 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 Selectboard 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 Selectboard to take any other action or to pass any other vote relative thereto.

DPW Director, Tyler Howe stated that the Bond that we are doing this time is to get us started and there is a hand out made by CIP Committee and by Tyler. This is going to start toward leveling the tax rate as far as paving goes.

This will cover the three years of full deck reclamation, base pave, top coat and chip seal the section of Middle from Vatcher Road to Bonds Corner Road. The pamphlet shows when the rest of the roads will be paved.

At the close of the discussion, Moderator Haskins stated that this being a bond vote, the poll/ballot box for this must remain open for one hour, and declared the polls are open at 9:29 a.m and will close at 10:29 a.m.

At 10:29 Moderator Haskins closed the ballot and the counting began.

The motion was voted by ballot, and passed by more than the 3/5th majority required - in fact it received 93% of the affirmative vote - the count was: Yes 126 No 9.

William Rouff entered a motion to Restrict Reconsideration on the motion, votes and decisions relating to Article #3, Paved Roads Project as provided under RSA 40:10. It was seconded by David Kidd.

The motion to Restrict Reconsideration on Article #3 that is provided under RSA 40:10 was voted by voice and passed. Article #3, its Motion, its votes and decision is now restricted from reconsideration.

During the initial ballot voting on Article 3, Moderator Haskins took the opportunity to continue a Town Meeting tradition, he read the following:

Maple Syrup Report 2025 as submitted by Mark Thompson.

It's Town Meeting time. Which means it's Maple Sugaring Season.

Every year I say I'm going to start early so I will be ready for the "first run." Well, I wasn't able to get into the woods until the beginning of January, same as most years.

As usual, the weather has been unpredictable. A cold windy January with no January thaw made it challenging to prepare for the season. The plan was to tap trees on the first of February, but a snowstorm made us postpone until the second weekend. As it turns out, the sap didn't start flowing until last week due to the continued cold temperatures. So, I've managed to catch the "first run", for the first time that I can remember.

I have heard reports that some (bigger) sugar makers made syrup on New Year's Day, but that doesn't count. Those sugar makers must start tapping in November and December in order to be ready for the season.

Many sugar makers I've talked to say this winter is more like the seasons they remember from years ago. Frost is deep in the ground, snowpack around the base of the trees has kept the roots cool and snowshoes have been a requirement to get around in the woods.

It feels like a late season. But historically, sugar makers used to tap the first weeks in March, right around Town Meeting.

We have collected and boiled approximately 8,000 gallons of sap so far this season and have made 140 gallons of syrup. The last couple of years we've made over 450 gallons. As Bill used to say, the sugaring season runs about 6 weeks long, so we are right in the middle of it. I expect we will see quite a bit more to come.

Putting out 2500 taps, fixing sap lines and chasing leaks caused by downed trees and animals is a daunting task. Collecting sap and boiling it down takes a fair amount of time. I'm thankful for all the help from family and friends. They make the season possible.

Warm days and cool nights make for long days and short nights....and good maple syrup. We are looking forward to more days like the past week.

Mark Thompson, March 13, 2025

Article 04: Operating Budget.

To see if the Town of Hancock will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,780,885 for general municipal operations inclusive of Water Department Operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. (Recommended by Select Board). (Majority vote required)

The Article was moved as follows by Jeff Brown and seconded by Betsy Villaume.

I move that the Town of Hancock raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,780,885 for general municipal operations inclusive of Water Department Operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

Selectman Jeff Brown motioned to amend the sum to \$3,790,885. Betsy Villaume seconded the Amendment.

Selectman Ginger Smith explained the reason for the Amendment, that we made an error of \$10,000 when we were writing it.

The motion to Amend was voted by voice and passed unanimously.

Selectman Ginger Smith addressed the major issues, the first one is the general government which includes salaries, memberships, supplies went up \$6,400 dollars. Financial administrative went up \$7,700 dollars, that's the treasurer assisting the bookkeeping, we have a new booking keeping system, personnel administrative that's our health insurance, retirement and workmen comp, it went up substantially. We also have some new employees, so more health insurance, more retirement and workmen comp.

General government buildings, electricity, heating and sewer went up. Police Dept salaries and dispatch services went up \$7,000. Fire Dept up \$21,000, salaries,

insurance, equipment replacement and training. Transfer station, getting rid of recycling, trash and tires.

A few things did go down. We changed engineering testing for our old dump. Parks and Recreation is down \$4,400 because of different programs and uniforms. Things that we did not use last year, so we can use those again this year and not have to purchase them again. Those are our major costs that went up and down a little bit.

Our proposed operating budget for revenue coming in, we are going to lose some this year. Going to lose \$20,000 at least from properties coming out of current use, probably lose the \$40,000 that the Sargent Center was paying us in lieu of taxes (PILOT) and contributions and donations have gone down. Our operating budget will go up about 5% from last year.

Roberta LaPlante asked if the personnel administrative (expeditures) were those new hires or replacing a vacancy?

Selectman Ginger Smith responded that its new hires were replacing new hires that we had budgeted for and have not been able to fill - but not new positions.

Tom Villeneuve asked if in the future we could show on the handout the actual spending. Ginger Smith referred Tom to see the MS-636 in the green pages.

David Carney stated that we are spending basically half million dollars less than we did last year and the budget is still going up a tremendous amount. Asked if there was a single thing, expenditure, or program or line item that we did away with?

Administrator Jon Coyne responded, what you see on the MS-636 is the Total Operating Budget plus all approved Warrant Articles from last year.

Tom Shevenell, Chair of the Capital Improvement Program, responded on the capital asset of it, we have the bond issue which for this particular year would have \$235,000 in terms of what needs to be done on Middle Road, this will come out of that bond. When we get to the warrant articles we will be using about \$222,000 on unassigned fund balance money to focus on putting those in Capital Reserve Funds for this year and up and coming years. The bond has no tax impact this year.

David Carney asked, is there anything we did last year that we spent money on that we are not doing this year? With concern about the economy, people's ability to live and

work in this town and having no reduction in anything. We need to be a little more considerate to the taxpayers.

Selectman Ginger Smith explained that we do not get a lot of federal money, everything is pretty much State and Town. We could eliminate a number of things and if we don't have the money we will not do them. We are trying to run the Town, itself, in an orderly fashion to be able to maintain our roads and maintain our departments.

Administrative Jon Coyne explained that the big increase this year was health expenses, up 25%.

David Carney expressed that we need to budget better. He asked why for the last number of years, the Town refuses to agree with the Auditor to have our books in accordance with public account standards. This note has been in the Auditors Report for a number of years and it implies that our books are not accurate.

Selectman Betsy Villaume explained the Town follows generally accepted accounting standards for government entities. They are slightly different from generally accepted accounting principles for commercial business. The major thing they ding us on that you will see is we have an adverse opinion on is post retirement health benefits. There is one former employee of the Town whom this applies to. In order to comply with that we would have to pay a lot of money to do a proper actuarial analysis and where there is only one this covers, we opt not to do that. That is the only adverse opinion item on the auditor's report.

David Carney suggested that in the future, a note to that affect in the Report would be helpful.

Don Lussier, with respect to the unallocated fund balance, what people should understand is that it is not a slush fund, it's a piggy bank that allows the Town to weather financial storms.

Moderator Haskins asked for the audience's awareness, if the DAR requires us to have a particular percent of money in our unassigned fund balance.

Administrator Jon Coyne responded the minimum 5% is recommended and maximum is 17%, the town policy is 10% and that is what we have. That money is not necessary just sitting in a fund waiting to be spent, that's our money that covers our daily operations because we don't collect tax money for this budget until November of next year.

Eric Spitzbarth asked why the PILOT money of \$40,000 from the Sargent Center was removed from the revenue estimates. Selectman Betsy Villaume responded that we chose to be conservative in not anticipating a payment for the coming year as that property has been up for sale for a year and that future owners may not be so generous.

The question was voted by voice vote and passed unanimously.

William Rouff entered a motion to Restrict Reconsideration on the motion, votes and decisions relating to Article #4 as provided under RSA 40:10. It was seconded by David Kidd.

Moderator Haskins explained that it is a non-debatable motion. What that does is restrict further discussion.

The motion to Restrict Reconsideration on Article #4 that is provided under RSA 40:10 was voted by voice vote and passed. Article #4, its Motion, votes and decision is now restricted from reconsideration.

Article 05: Conduct Feasibility Study for Regional Police Department

To see if the Town of Hancock should conduct, with the Town of Greenfield, a feasibility study for a Regional Police Department. Each Town will provide a Board member of their designee and other members by Board appointment to conduct monthly meeting(s). No monies to be expended and results of study to be available by March 2026. (Recommended by Select Board). (Majority vote required)

The Article was moved as follows by Betsy Villaume and seconded by Ginger Smith.

I move that the Town of Hancock should conduct, with the Town of Greenfield, a feasibility study for a Regional Police Department. Each Town will provide a Board member or their designee and other members by Board appointment to conduct monthly meeting(s). No monies to be expended and results of study to be available by March 2026.

Police Chief Tom Horne spoke and explained that this is a topic that has come up in the last few budget cycles where the question has been asked should we consider regionalization with other agencies. Staffing has become problematic for a number of local agencies, ourselves included. The Select Board of both Greenfield and Hancock

asked if we should poll our community and see what the community sentiments are for joining forces with an effort to try to improve our operational coverage for both communities. While still maintaining a budget that is reasonable for the individual communities. This is not at this time an endorsement of whether or not we should do this. This is simply permission to poll the community to see what their feelings are. This is permission to explore the topic.

David Carney asked if the Selectman would have conversations with the Selectmen in Sharon, Temple and Greenville, to see if they like the new arrangement and to see what happened to their budget for policing. He hopes and encourages them to think about how to dissolve the arrangement at some point down the road and to make sure separation policies are clear. Both towns have excellent police chiefs and thinks we really need to look into it. He expressed how he is very concerned that we could lose our Police identity. We need honest feedback from the people, not just professionals.

Selectman Besty Villaume responded, I want to make it clear, if Greenfield or we fail to pass this warrant article then this feasibility study will not occur. She also stated that David's concerns are very much on their list of issues to be discussed.

The question was voted by voice vote and passed unanimously.

Article 06: Purchase & Upfit Police Vehicle

To see if the Town of Hancock will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of up to \$75,000 for the purpose of purchasing and upfitting a new police vehicle, authorize the Select Board to trade-in the 2019 Ford F-150 police vehicle, and authorize the withdrawal of \$15,000 from the Police Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund created for that purpose. Of the remaining balance of \$60,000, \$12,500 to come from trade-in and \$47,500 to be raised from general taxation. (Recommended by Select Board). (Majority vote required)

The Article was moved as follows by Ginger Smith and seconded by Jeff Brown.

I move that the Town of Hancock raise and appropriate a sum of up to \$75,000 for the purpose of purchasing and upfitting a new police vehicle, authorize the Selectboard to trade-in the 2019 Ford F-150 police vehicle, and authorize the withdrawal of \$15,000 from the Police Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund created for that purpose. Of the remaining balance of \$60,000, \$12,500 to come from trade-in and \$47,500 to be raised from general taxation.

Selectman Besty Villaume explained that the Ford truck has about 110,000 miles on it and at this point it is a little bit short of our usual mileage goal replacement. The truck hasn't worked out the way it should have. We don't use it to transport materials, traffic cones, anything like that and it still has a trade in value, where it probably would not if we tried to keep it for another year. It has had mechanical issues and so now it feels like a good time to trade it in and purchase a new vehicle for the department. The department will still be a two vehicle department.

Police Chief Tom Horne explained that we are discussing trading in the pickup truck, however it is fair to say that after five years of the experiment of having a pickup truck as a police car, we have enough information to say it's not the right application. The turning radius is too wide and not well suited for driving under stressful conditions especially on these back twisty roads. He recommended that we trade in the pickup, get us into another SUV similar to the Tahoe or specifically a Tahoe, like our other police car. Then we will have continuity between two vehicles for officer safety.

David Carney stated that he was angry that a previous public official lied to the town at the Town Meeting, referencing the purchase of the pickup truck in the first place. He is concerned that we remain diligent in our spending. Moderator Haskins asked the Checklist Supervisors for our current attendance. Kathy Anderson reported that at that moment, we have 144 voters attending today. Moderator Haskins pointed out that you in attendance represent only 10% of the voting population - He hoped that the other 90% don't mind how You are spending Their money.

The question was voted by voice vote and passed unanimously.

Article 07: Fire Service Planning and Organization Assessment

To see if the Town of Hancock will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000 for the purpose of conducting a comprehensive planning and organizational assessment of the Hancock Fire Department. (Recommended by Select Board). (Majority vote required)

The Article was moved as follows by Ginger Smith and seconded by Betsy Villaume.

I move that the Town of Hancock raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000 for the purpose of conducting a comprehensive planning and organizational assessment of the Hancock Fire Department.

Selectman Jeff Brown explained that we are looking to hire an outside company to come in and do an analysis of our current facilities and staffing starting with the Fire Department, and determine what needs to be done. The firm has done this for other towns and other departments and has come recommended by other towns.

Selectman Ginger Smith explained that the assessment has helped other Fire Departments get grants they needed for their additions and improvements

David Carney commended our Fire Department volunteers and the efforts that they contribute to the town. He responded that he would be skeptical of an outside vendor and would rather go with what the Chief and Fire Department thinks needs to be done.

Tom Shevenell, Chair of the Board of the Water Commissioner, we did an asset management plan in 2022. We did get one of those reports from the engineer stating all the things we need to do to come up to grade. We took that into consideration, but we also met and listened to our community, listened to people that ran the system and created a level of service our community wanted. What I think is important for the Fire Department, is to take that step first then find out what the community wants, kind of service and to make sure you have the people, space and equipment to do it.

Selectman Jeff Brown stated that the Telecommunication Committee approached the Board for money to hire a firm to do a study. Because the Committee was prepared, did the homework, had the study, played a big factor in getting the grant to have fiber installed throughout the town. If we have a study to help us show to others that we are serious about the topic, it may be beneficial when preparing request for grants or similar actions.

The question was voted by voice vote and passed by majority vote.

Article 08: Fire Station Addition and Renovations Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town of Hancock will vote to establish a Fire Station Addition and Renovations Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of building and addition to and renovating the Hancock Fire Station and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$75,000 to be placed in this fund. Further, to name the Select Board as agents to expend from and fund.

(Recommended by Select Board). (Majority vote required)

The Article was moved as follows by Jeff Brown and seconded by Ginger Smith.

I move that the Town of Hancock establish a Fire Station Addition and Renovations Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of building an addition to and renovating the Hancock Fire Station and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$75,000 to be placed in this fund. Further, to name the Selectboard as agents to expend from said fund.

Don Lessiur explained that the Hancock Fire Department is proposing to make a renovation/modification to the fire station. The current proposal is to add on an equipment bay on the south side of the building. This will create more room for the vehicles and a dedicated room for the firefighters to put on their equipment. Right now the gear is spread along the outside of the truck bays, so you are getting dressed next to the trucks that are pulling out. By having everyone in one room, we can get dressed safely and the officers can assign us to trucks.

Currently in the station, there is really no difference between where the dirty space is, contaminated gear is stored and where we have our meetings. For the future, the contaminated gear will be restricted to one area and the meeting space is now a clean space. The other reason is to improve the department's efficiency of getting our response to the call out the door. Right now we have trucks parked behind one another and have to move one truck to get to the one we need.

With the plans we have from David Drasba, we were able to contact contractors for a solid number of \$1.1 million dollars. Department staff has put together a financing request in the form of Congressional Direct Speeding Proposal that has been submitted for \$600,000 thousand dollars and that leaves the town with the remaining balance of \$480,000 thousand dollars. We have already collected just under \$10,000 from private donations. Our goal is to raise at least half the town's share by private donations.

The Budget Advisory Committee recommended against this motion, and wanted to wait for the results from the assessment. The building needs some work, so let's put the \$75,000 thousand dollars into a capital reserve fund to use in the future. My suggestion/ argument to the Budget Committee is to put the \$75,000 into a Capital Reserve Fund. This would help even out the cost of projects over time so you're not having spikes and dips in the tax rate. So let's put a little away this year and next year we will have a better idea with this assessment and answers to grant funding.

William Rouff, Budget Committee Member explained, that you, as the taxpayers, the voters of the community need to decide if today is the day that we will put money aside or do you wait. That decision is up to you as the voters. The Budget Committee didn't want you to think they were against this project, we were actually in favor of the project.

George Kidd stated that the Selectboard put up the motion on Article 7 and a conflict on Article 8 because in Article 7 they are going to find things that are not apparent in the house study. He wanted to know how Selectman felt about it.

The Selectman, all felt the project was going to happen sooner than later and the money would help with engineering and the study on that and it would start us on the path for what is inevitable. Selectman Besty Villaume didn't see a conflict. This article put money in place for the future and if there are needs like engineering drawings, there will be monies for those such expenses.

George Kidd asked if the money would be spent this year and the Selectman stated that it would be spent on preliminary work that needs to be done.

David Carney thought to spend that money we had to come back to Town Meeting to authorize the money. Somehow, we appear to be authorizing the Selectman to spend the money without even seeing the study, without even a vote at Town Meeting. He would like to understand how this is different from every other Capital Reserve Fund.

Administrator Jon Coyne explained that part of the Article states " Further, to name the Select Board as agents to expend from and fund." That statement allows the Selectboard to spend from that fund and if that statement was not there the only way to spend a Capital Reserve Fund would be to wait for Town Meeting.

David Drasba stated that the Fire Department is committed to hearing what the study has to say and that will confirm that we have a good plan or a plan too big or too small. We will then adjust accordingly based on the report and what the town has to say.

Catherine Closter stated that she agreed with the overall concept of getting the assessment and to put money into the proposal. With the uncertainty of the global financial market, we should postpone this for one year.

Tom Shevenell, Capital Improvement Committee, we start setting aside the money, so we don't do it in big chunks and impact the tax rate. We recommended \$60,000 a year for 4 years (target of 2029). Our intent was not to spend lots of money before Town Meeting (2029) doing anything other than assessment first.

John Regan, asked why are we spending money on engineering when the assessment might come back and have totally a different thing. It might say a new building is the way to go. He was concerned that they can spend that money anytime. If we approve

the \$75,000, he wanted to limit it so they cannot spend it on engineering until after the assessment is complete.

Moderator Haskins asked John Regan if he was proposing that as a motion, John responded yes. Moderator Haskins worked with John, to prepare a written version

John Regan - I motion that Article #8's motion be Amended to add a sentence: "No money will be spent until after the assessment has been received."

Seconded by Nathaniel Peirce.

David Carney asked if this Amendment passes and the report from the experts comes back in July, can the Selectmen start spending money out of the fund. Moderator Haskins responded saying that's what I believe the motion intends. Dave further expressed his concern that this implies that the Selectboard may expend from the Capital Reserve without Town Meeting approval.

Fire Chief Tom Bates, explained that the assessment is not focused on the building. The assessment the town proposed, that we voted on, was to assess the operations of the Fire Department, to assess how we are doing. This has to deal with response time, pay scales, who is available at certain times, response during the day and night, mutual aid, and meeting standards of NFPA . We have to follow all these recommendations, we have the same standards in Hancock as the paid firemen in Manchester and New York. This assessment was not to be used for, do we need a new fire station, do we need a renovation, this has nothing to do with that. This assessment is for the Fire Department as a whole program and how it operates for you. This article is to allow us to spend \$75,000 for the engineering fees. We have already done a lot of stuff, we have been working with architects, we looked at costs for materials. We just need the \$75,000 to continue, move on.

The assessment is not going to have a big impact on what we have to do at the fire station. We do not need to lump these together. It's a whole different item.

Neal Cass, responded I support the Article originally proposed and I'm speaking against the Amendment. It is believed the Amendment is going to make this whole article invalid. This is the DRA language and once you change it you cannot put other restrictions on that. So if it is passed with the Amendment it's the same as voting NO, so I encourage you to vote down the Amendment.

Administrator Jon Coyne responded, the intent of the original article was for a Capital Reserve fund as a saving mechanism for town's portion of the monies needed in the future for a project of renovating the Fire Department facility. It was not meant to an appropriation for monies to be spent for engineering for such a project - we would have had an article for such an appropriation.

Peri Chickering called the question about the Amendment.

Moderator Haskins stated that the Motion that stands before you is an Amendment to Article #8 and that it be amended to add a sentence: "No money will be spent until after the assessment has been received."

The amendment question was voted by voice vote and failed by a majority vote. Moderator Haskins then stated that motion no longer stands before you and we are back to the original Article as you can see on the screen.

Peri Chickering called the question about the original Article.
The question was voted by voice vote and passed by a majority vote.

Article 09: Fire Department Vehicle & Related Equipment Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town of Hancock will vote to establish a Fire Department Vehicle and Related Equipment Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of purchasing fire department vehicles and equipment and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$17,000 to be placed in this fund; further, to name the Select Board as agents to expend from said fund. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance, no amount to be raised from general taxation. (Recommended by Select Board). (Majority vote required)

The Article was moved as follows by Betsy Villaume and seconded by Jeff Brown.

I move that the Town of Hancock establish a Fire Department Vehicle and Related Equipment Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of purchasing fire department vehicles and equipment and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$17,000 to be placed in this fund; further, to name the Selectboard as agents to expend from said fund. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance, no amount to be raised from general taxation.

Selectman Besty Villaume explained that fire department equipment is very expensive, the \$17,000 amount represents a year's depreciation on the vehicle that is next up for

replacement. I would like to remind people that when we establish a new capital reserve fund, the money needs to go in that account in a very short order after the town meeting. We intend to establish some at lower amounts, then increase them as years go by and we start planning for more equipment replacement.

David Carney asked when is the next truck going to be cycled out?

Tom Shevenell responded, Tank T1 is the next one in line, estimated useful life is coming up this year. We have done some repairs to keep it a couple more years. We wanted to start this fund now with a small number.

Moderator Haskins asked what is the value of that and what do you expect the cost to be on a new vehicle.

Tom Shevenell responded with around \$400,000 to \$500,000 dollars.

David Carney commented that these are very expensive and not getting any cheaper, we should start investing more into these capital reserve funds. We need to spread the burden over the next five years to taxpayers.

Tom Shevenell with respect to future planning, he pointed out that part of the handout from the CIP committee shows a graph of six years planning for all the equipment in town. The town's assets of buildings and equipment is about \$45Million, all with different estimated useful lives. Our goal of the CIP is to invest in capital reserve funds at the same rate that the assets are wearing and tearing and going out of business, so that we are paying for capital improvements in the taxes at the same rate in the year in which the assets are wearing and tearing. Dave is right, a lot more should be going into Capital Reserves, we have an eye on it but we need to aware of what these complex problems have in store for us.

George Kidd, called the question.

The question was voted by voice vote and passed unanimously.

Moderator Haskins then invited Assistant Moderator, David Kidd to come to podium and take over for the next few articles.

Article 10: Information Technology Expendable Trust Fund

To see if the Town of Hancock will vote to establish an Information Technology Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 31:19-a , for the purpose of purchasing IT equipment for the Town and to raise and appropriate \$15,000 to put in the fund; further, to name the Select Board as agents to expend from said fund. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance, no amount to be raised from general taxation.(Recommended by Select Board). (Majority vote required)

The Article was moved as follows by Ginger Smith and seconded by Betsy Villaume.

I move that the Town of Hancock establish an Information Technology Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 31:19-a, for the purpose of purchasing IT equipment for the Town and to raise and appropriate \$15,000 to put in the fund; further to name the Selectboard as agents to expend from said fund. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance, no amount to be raised from general taxation.

Town Administrator Jon Coyne explained that the intent to establish this is to have a fund for purchasing computers and servers for the town. Previously we put it into the budget, but it would create a spike in the budget whenever we needed to purchase a new server or a number of computers. We thought it would be best to establish a fund so we are not creating that spike and we would have that money set aside.

The question was voted by voice vote and passed unanimously.

Article 11: Road Pavement Expendable Trust Fund

To see if the Town of Hancock will vote to establish a Road Pavement Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 31:19-a, for the purpose of paving and maintaining town roads, and to raise and appropriate \$10,000 to put in the fund, further, to name the Select Board as agents to expend from said fund. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance, no amount to be raised from general taxation. (Recommended by Select Board). (Majority vote required)

The Article was moved as follows by Jeff Brown and seconded by Ginger Smith.

I move that the Town of Hancock establish a Road Pavement Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 31:19-a, for the purpose of paving and maintaining town roads and to raise and appropriate \$10,000 to put in the fund; further to name the Selectboard as agents to expend from said fund. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance, no amount to be raised from general taxation.

Tom Shevenell explained the reasoning is for long term planning. The goal is to get away from doing financing on our road projects, by using unassigned fund balance instead. The goal is to build over that time period enough to be able to handle these kinds of ups and downs in our paving program. This is just a start, because we have to take out the money within thirty days after the town meeting.

A call for the vote by George Kidd.

The question was voted by voice vote and passed unanimously.

Article 12: Readopt Optional Veterans Tax Credit

Shall the Town of Hancock readopt the Optional Veterans Tax Credit in accordance with RSA 72:28,II, for an annual tax credit on residential property of \$750? (Recommended by Select Board). (Majority vote required)

The Article was moved as follows by Ginger Smith and seconded by Betsy Villaume.

I move that the Town of Hancock readopt the OPTIONAL VETERANS TAX CREDIT in accordance with RSA 72:28, II, for an annual tax credit on residential property of \$750?

Selectman Jeff Brown explained, raising the tax credit to \$750.00 to all our veterans that qualify, previously credit was \$500.00

David Carney asked if this is the maximum amount the legislature lets us authorize.

Selectman Jeff Brown answered, Yes.

The question was voted by voice vote and passed unanimously.

Article 13: Bridge Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town of Hancock will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000 to be added to the Bridge Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance, no amount to be raised from general taxation. (Recommended by Select Board). (Majority vote required)

The Article was moved as follows by Betsy Villaume and seconded by Jeff Brown.

I move that the Town of Hancock raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000 to be added to the Bridge Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance, no amount to be raised from general taxation.

Selectman Ginger Smith explained that we have only one bridge that is red listed, it is on Weston Road. We already have \$42,248 dollars in the Capital Reserve Fund and adding \$50,000 would get us closer to replacing it. We are going to keep going until we have enough to replace it and it looks like it is going to be around a \$150,000 - \$200,000 bridge. So we are looking at another two to three years before we are ready to replace that bridge.

Don Lussier asked if the bridge has been accepted into the State DOT State Aide Bridge Program.

Selectman Ginger Smith replied "not sure" but it is a culvert, just like Middle Road was a culvert but had to become a bridge. It needs to be able to support fire equipment.

Don Lussier responded that the State level of funding for bridge rehab and replacement in the state is wholly inadequate. If anyone knows State Legislators, it would be an area where the state could help out municipalities.

Susanna Toumanoff, a resident on Weston Road, stated that they need the bridge.

Molly Howard, our State Rep., agreed that we need to better fund the Bridge Fund, but there basically isn't any money for bridges at the State level. She encouraged people to encourage other people that might know people at the State level to fund important projects like this.

The question was voted by voice vote and passed unanimously.

Article 14: Building Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town of Hancock will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000 to be added to the Building Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance, no amount to be raised from general taxation. (Recommended by Select Board). (Majority vote required)

The Article was moved as follows by Jeff Brown and seconded by Betsy Villaume.

I move that the Town of Hancock raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000 to be added to the Building Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance, no amount to be raised from general taxation.

Selectman Ginger Smith stated that we have a lot of old buildings in the town that need constant upgrades and repairs. We have \$16,656 in the Capital Reserve now and adding \$20,000 because we are looking at some other projects that are going to need some work in the next year.

The question was voted by voice vote and passed unanimously.

Article 15: DPW Machinery, Equipment & Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town of Hancock will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$70,000 to be added to the DPW Machinery, Equipment and Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance, no amount to be raised from general taxation. (Recommended by Select Board). (Majority vote required)

The Article was moved as follows by Ginger Smith and seconded by Jeff Brown

I move that the Town of Hancock raise and appropriate the sum of \$70,000 to be added to the DPW Machinery, Equipment and Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance, no amount to be raised from general taxation.

Selectman Betsy Villaume stated that this is the third year we have funded this account, we started with \$20,000 in 2023 and added \$50,000 last year and asked \$70,000 this year.

It is short of the annual goal for additions for the Capital Reserve Fund because we are working our way up to it. Typically we use the annual depreciation less any finance cost to come up with the goal. The Capital Reserve balance at the end of 2024 was almost \$64,000 and if we add the \$70,000 to it this year the balance will be around \$134,000 at the end of this year. That is almost 50% of the next significant equipment purchase for the DPW. This puts us in a good position to purchase it out right instead of leasing it which saves interest.

David Carney applauded the Capital Improvement team and stated that we need to invest in the future. We need to be realistic in our savings for all the capital reserve funds.

The question was voted by voice vote and passed unanimously.

Article 16: Meetinghouse Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town of Hancock will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to be added to the Meetinghouse Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance, no amount to be raised from general taxation. (Recommended by Select Board). (Majority vote required)

The Article was moved as follows by Betsy Villaumeand seconded by Jeff Brown.

I move that the Town of Hancock raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to be added to the Meetinghouse Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance, no amount to be raised from general taxation.

Selectman Ginger Smith explained that this is what the Meetinghouse Committee has asked for to keep this building beautiful. Painting the building is incredibly expensive and we are looking in the next five years or so to rebuild or replace the steeple. The Meetinghouse Committee felt that the \$10,000 every year would handle the repairs needed.

David Drasba, a member of the Oversight Committee stated we project out expenses over 25 years based on the past experience and looking ahead on what we have to do. One thing to point out is that this does not include the steeple. We paint the steeple every seven to ten years and every other maintenance to the building is covered under this fund. We hold the steeple out because sometimes we are eligible for grant money. It will be next year or the year after that, we will be back likely for a warrant article specifically for the steeple. The steeple is in decent shape but needs to be painted and repairs done to the railings. It is probably a \$100,000 project that gets split between us and the church.

The question was voted by voice vote and passed unanimously.

Article 17: Police Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town of Hancock will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$30,000 to be added to the Police Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance, no amount to be raised from general taxation. (Recommended by Select Board). (Majority vote required)

The Article was moved as follows by Ginger Smith and seconded by Jeff Brown.

I move that the Town of Hancock raise and appropriate the sum of \$30,000 to be added to the Police Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance, no amount to be raised from general taxation.

Selectman Betsy Villaume stated that we established this Capital Reserve Fund a few years ago and we are going to use \$15,000 toward the purchase of the new vehicle. We want to start adding \$30,000 a year. In three years, when the existing Tahoe is up for replacement it should allow us to merely purchase it out right, so that is why we have chosen \$30,000 to add starting this year.

The question was voted by voice vote and passed unanimously.

Article 18: Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town Hancock will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to be added to the Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance, no amount to be raised from general taxation. (Recommended by Select Board). (Majority vote required)

The Article was moved as follows by Betsy Villaume and seconded by Ginger Smith.

I move that the Town of Hancock raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to be added to the Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance, no amount to be raised from general taxation.

Selectman Jeff Brown explained that every five years we have to do a revaluation of the Town. We have been putting money into the existing account and by adding \$10,000 we should have almost enough to cover the cost of the revaluation which will be next year.

The question was voted by voice vote and passed unanimously.

Assistant Moderator David Kidd, passed the gavel back to Moderator Richard Haskins.

Article 19: Police Special Reserve Fund

To see if the Town of Hancock will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,059 for the purpose of repairs and replacement of police equipment with said funds to come from the Police Special Revenue Fund established for this purpose at the 1993 Town Meeting.

(Recommended by Select Board). (Majority vote required)

The Article was "Moved as Read" by Jeff Brown and seconded by Ginger Smith.

The motion was voted by voice vote and passed unanimously.

Article 20: Recreation Special Reserve Fund

To see if the Town of Hancock will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$7,416 for the purpose of repairs and replacement of facilities with said funds to come from the Recreation Special Revenue Fund established for this purpose at the 1993 Town Meeting.

(Recommended by Select Board). (Majority vote required)

The Article was "Moved as Read" by Ginger Smith and seconded by Betsy Villaume.

The motion was voted by voice vote and passed unanimously.

Article 21: To Accept Town Reports

To see if the Town of Hancock will vote to accept the 2024 reports of the Town Officials, agents and committees and to accept the 2023 auditor's report. The Select Board recommends this article.

The Article was moved as follows by Ginger Smith and seconded by Betsy Villaume.

I move that the Town of Hancock accept the 2024 reports of the Town Officials, agents and committees, and to accept the 2023 auditor's report.

David Carney - Is this the appropriate time to request to ask the Selectboard to prepare a response to the Auditor's adverse finding about our post retirement health benefits and include that in the report or have the audit include that awareness in their adverse finding.

Moderator Haskins responded that Yes this is the appropriate time for such a request. Moderator Haskins polled the Selectboard and they concurred.

The motion was voted by voice vote and passed unanimously.

The Supervisors of the Checklist reported 146 voters checked in today.

Article 22: Transact Any Other Business

To transact any other business that may legally come before said meeting:

Deb Sampson stated that she attended many Select Board meetings and saw what the CIP did and watched the Budget Committee. She offered that we need to thank everyone particularly the Select Board. They have been open to suggestions at the meetings as well as the citizens' public hearing. Thank-you for keeping our town taxes at a reasonable rate. We all need to get involved with our state funds and schools because that is where the bulk of our tax shock comes from. Thank-you.

Moderator Haskins let everyone know that next Saturday, the 22nd, at 2:00 pm the Police Chief is going to meet at the Library, so if you like to come and informally meet with the Chief, that is your opportunity and we encourage you to do so.

Moderator Haskins stated at this time, "I will entertain a motion to adjourn the 2025 Town of Hancock Annual Town Meeting."

It was so moved by David Carney and was seconded by David Kidd.

Moderator Haskins asked that all those in favor please signify by saying "Yes, Please.", All those opposed?

The motion was voted by voice vote and passed unanimously.

Moderator Haskins stated that where that motion carried, he declared the 2025 Town of Hancock Annual Town Meeting to be adjourned!

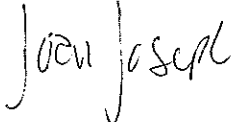
The meeting closed at 12:30 PM.

Swearing-In of newly elected officials by Town Clerk, Joan Joseph, occurred directly after the meeting.

Sincerely submitted,

Joan Joseph

Town Clerk

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joan Joseph".