



**TOWN OF THORNTON
THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
2016 Town Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, March 8, 2016

Thornton Town Offices, 16 Merrill Access Road, Thornton, NH
The Town Meeting and Polls were opened at 8:00am by Moderator Pro Temp Ray Bandi.
The polls will remain open till 7:00pm.

To the inhabitants of the Town of Thornton in the County of Grafton in said state, qualified to vote in the town affairs and to act upon the following subjects:

Article 1: To choose all necessary officers for the ensuing year.

OFFICIAL ELECTION RESULTS

<u>Select Board Member</u> <i>Three Year Term</i>	<u>Trustee of Trust Funds</u> <i>Three Year Term</i>	<u>Overseer of Public Welfare</u> <i>One Year Term</i>
John Paul-Hilliard 126 Frank Cawley 1 Howard Clement 1	Becky Rogers Phyllis Holbrook Jim Sanbourn, Jr. Nancy Decoteau Geri Ann Benton Marianne Peabody Bart Dutto Anita Ross Diane Gravel Wendy Johnston All aforementioned write in candidates received one vote	Marianne Peabody 121 Edward Downing 1 Bertram Downing 1
<u>Cemetery Trustee</u> <i>Three Year Term</i>	<u>Planning Board Member</u> <i>Three Year Term</i>	<u>Town Moderator</u> <i>Two Year Term</i>
Duncan Booth 126	Donna O'Donnell 105 Russell Gilman 105	Robert J. MacLeod 129 Robert Gannett 1
<u>Library Trustee</u> <i>3 Year Term</i>	<u>Planning Board Member</u> <i>Two Year Term (partial term)</i>	<u>Town Clerk</u> <i>One Year Term (partial term)</i>
Diane Gravel 132	Frank A. Freeman 120	Brook Rose 127 Lisa Lima 1 Anita Ross 1



Total Registered Voters: 1847
Ballots cast: 134 (7.3% of registered voters)

Saturday, March 12, 2016

The meeting reconvened at the Thornton Central School on Saturday, March 12, 2016 at 10:00am to act on the remaining articles of this warrant.

Voters present: 60 (3% of registered voters)

The Town Meeting was opened at 10:05am by Moderator Pro Temp Ray Bandi. Moderator Bandi led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Moderator Bandi introduced the following individuals representing the Town: Town Clerk Brook Rose, Town Administrator Tammie Beaulieu, Select Board Chairman John Paul-Hilliard, Select Board Vice Chair Roy Sabourn, Select Board member Brad Benton, and Select Board member Marianne Peabody.

At this time Chairman John Paul-Hilliard honored the dedicated service of former Select Board member and U.S. Navy Veteran James Demeritt who recently passed away. A place at the table in honor of Jim Demeritt was recognized. John also honored several individuals who have passed away this past year, Attorney and former Town Moderator John Mckinnon, former U.S. Veteran and Police Chief Robert McGee. All are greatly missed.

The Board congratulated all candidates on this year's ballot on their recent election.

MOTION: To waive the reading of the warrant in its entirety.

MOVED: Alfred Burbank

SECOND: Voter

Motion carries unanimously.

MOTION: To permit non-residents to speak at the meeting for the purpose of information and clarification of the articles.

MOVED: Voter

SECOND: Voter

Motion carries.

Article 2: To see if the town will vote to rescind its 1988 vote authorizing the planning board to adopt a capital improvements plan and instead authorize the board of selectmen to appoint a capital improvement program committee to prepare and amend a recommended program of municipal capital improvement projects projected over a period of at least 6 years in accordance

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with RSA 674:5 through RSA 674:9. The Board of Selectmen recommends this article. (Majority vote required).

MOTION: Voter

SECOND: Voter

DISCUSSION: John Paul-Hilliard explained that the Board became aware that the Town is not taking full advantage of the intended design of a capital improvements plan (CIP) per the RSA's.

Roy Sabourn added that this is a housekeeping article and that the CIP has existed for many years and is working really well. When the Town voted on the CIP in 1988, the article stated that the CIP would be overseen by the Planning Board. However, the Planning Board does not wish to oversee the CIP so the responsibility has been left to the CIP Committee and the Select Board. The only effective change provided in the aforesaid article is that the CIP will come under the jurisdiction of the Select Board.

Motion carries.

Article 3: To see if the Town will vote to change the name of the current Municipal Building Addition Capital Reserve Fund to Municipal Buildings Capital Reserve Fund and expand the purpose of the fund to include municipal buildings capital items as needed in accordance with the Town CIP plan. To further designate the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend these funds. The Board of Selectmen recommends this article. (2/3 vote required)

MOTION: Alfred Burbank

SECOND: Voter

Motion carries unanimously.

Article 4: To see if the Town will vote to change the name of the current Paving Capital Reserve Fund to Municipal Department Paving Projects Capital Reserve Fund and expand the purpose of the fund to include paving of parking lots or thruways for municipal properties as needed in accordance with the Town CIP plan. To further designate the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend these funds. The Board of Selectmen recommends this article. (2/3 vote required)

MOTION: Alfred Burbank

SECOND: Voter

Motion carries unanimously.

Article 5: To see if the Town will vote to approve an additional full time patrol officer position be added to the Thornton Police Department, and to furthermore see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000.00) to compensate the wages and benefits for the position hired on or after May 2, 2016. This position will be incorporated into the police department annual operating budget starting in 2017. The Board of Selectmen recommends this article. (Majority vote required).

MOTION: Voter

SECOND: Voter



DISCUSSION: Resident Dave Rivers stated that there have been approximately 5,000 calls for service this past year and questioned whether this reflects an increase. Police Chief Rod Diamond directed the audience to the bar graph he had prepared. The bar graph is a review of calls for service since the year 2000. While some years show a decline in calls, the overall trend of the past 15 years shows a steady increase in calls.

Resident Ann Marie Foote stated that Chief Diamond spoke at the most recent budget hearings and made everyone aware that even with the addition of an officer; the Department would still be understaffed. She added that the years that show a decrease in calls for service is a reflection of neighboring towns picking up Thornton's calls. She expressed her support for this position especially with the State's current rise in heroin addiction.

Jessica Bartlett stated that she has had really positive experiences with the Police Department in Thornton. She questioned how local resources could be used to support the community's children and asked that Chief Diamond elaborate on the need for the additional officer.

Chief Diamond replied that Thornton is relying a great deal on the State Police as well as the Campton Police Department. If a resident had a serious situation in their house after midnight and were to call the Thornton Police, the current response time could be 30-40 minutes as officers are only required to live within a 25 minute radius. An additional officer would allow for 24 hour staffing of the Department and would significantly improve response time. An additional officer would also promote increased visibility of the Police Department in the community which has proven to decrease crime.

John Paul-Hilliard stated that he supports this article. He stated that the Town is paying a significant amount of money for an officer to be on call at home. The gas and maintenance costs for moving cruisers in and out of the community are substantial. Some of these expenses will be eliminated from the budget. He added that he appreciates the fact that neighboring police departments have been covering Thornton for years but questioned how long this town is going to drain these resources. Thornton is not offering a good community policing policy. The Town's goal is to keep everyone as safe as possible in their homes.

Resident Bill Deleo questioned what the actual annual cost will be for an additional officer as the proposed \$50,000 only covers the remainder of 2016. Chief Diamond replied that the annual expense is approximately \$70,000.

Another resident expressed her frustration that arresting citizens is not working and that the State spends much more on policing than on mental health and human services. She stated that increased policing is not the solution.

Resident Barbara Patterson expressed her support for Chief Diamond. She stated that he has been in this Town a very long time and knows the people in this town better than anyone. She added that it is not the Thornton Police Department's fault that the mental health system is broken in this state.



It is the state's fault and now the communities have to play catch up with mental health and addiction issues. She added that the officers in this town work with people whose actions are at time reprehensible and yet officers treat them with respect.

Resident Stephanie Olsen also expressed her support for the position. She stated that Thornton is not Campton's or the State Police's first priority. She encouraged residents to approve this position and take a stand for our community.

Motion carries.

Article 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **fifty-two thousand dollars (\$52,000)** to be added to the existing Assessing Capital Reserve Fund. The Board of Selectmen recommends this article. (Majority vote required).

MOTION: Voter

SECOND: Voter

Motion carries.

Article 7: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000)** to be added to the existing MillBrook Road Construction & Improvement Capital Reserve Fund. The Board of Selectmen recommends this article. (Majority vote required).

MOTION: Voter

SECOND: Voter

DISCUSSION: Dave Rivers stated that he lives on MillBrook Road and the entire road needs more attention than what has been given to it in the past. He stated that the population on this road is growing and he would like to see a plan for the entire road put in place. Roy Sabourn replied that the intent of the article is to do improvements to the graveled portions of the road which need the most attention. The Town does work on this road every year and this article will aid in that process.

Motion carries.

Article 8: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **thirty-five thousand dollars (\$35,000)** to be added to the existing Fire Truck/Rescue Vehicle/Equipment and Major Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund. The Board of Selectmen recommends this article. (Majority vote required).

MOTION: Voter

SECOND: Voter

Motion carries unanimously.

Article 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **fifty-nine thousand dollars (\$59,000)** to be added to the existing Police Cruiser and Cruiser Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. The Board of Selectmen recommends this article. (Majority vote required).

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MOTION: Voter

SECOND: Voter

Motion carries.

Article 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **forty-five thousand dollars (\$45,000)** to be added to the existing Property Tax Map Capital Reserve Fund. The Board of Selectmen recommends this article. (Majority vote required).

MOTION: Voter

SECOND: Voter

DISCUSSION: Jessica Bartlett asked for clarification on this article. Town Administrator Tammie Beaulieu explained that a few years ago the Select Board found the tax maps to be lacking in many areas thus a capital reserve fund was created for keeping the tax maps updated with the most accurate information. This update is funded and scheduled for the near future (2018/2019). These maps are utilized by residents and assessing companies alike.

Motion carries unanimously.

Article 11: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **fifty-four thousand dollars (\$54,000)** to be added to the existing Highway Vehicle, Equipment and Major Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund. The Board of Selectmen recommends this article. (Majority vote required).

MOTION: Voter

SECOND: Voter

Motion carries unanimously.

Article 12: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **two million six hundred seven thousand one hundred thirty four dollars (\$2,607,134.00)** to support town operations for the 2016-year. Said sum does not include special or individual articles. (Majority vote required)

MOTION: Voter

SECOND: Voter

DISCUSSION: Roy Sabourn proposed the following amendment:

AMENDMENT: To reduce the amount of the operating budget by \$11,500 to \$2,595,634.00 to support town operations. This savings is realized from the Police Department budget for overtime. The audience applauded the Board for the said amendment.

SECOND: John Paul-Hilliard seconded the amendment.

Amended motion carries unanimously.

Tammie Beaulieu pointed out that the Town's budget originally increased by \$3,000 from last year. Roy Sabourn added that with the operating budget amendment of \$11,500 the Town will spend \$8,500 less than last year. He added that the Board works hard to do the best they can with the taxpayers' dollars. The audience once again applauded the Board and the Town's staff.

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OTHER BUSINESS AS PRESENTED

There were some questions from the audience specific to the auditors' report and GASB 45, long term retirement costs, undesignated fund balances, and specific budget line item questions. All questions were addressed by Town Administrator Beaulieu.

Resident Howard Clement stated that he has two areas of concern which are the surplus funds and reserve funds. He believes these figures and the application of said funds should be reflected in the budget so that taxpayers are aware of where their money is being directed. John Paul-Hilliard referred Mr. Clement to page 108 of the town report which is the 2015 tax rate calculation and the fund balance retention. Roy Sabourn also pointed out that on page 106 the breakdown of the tax rate and the fund balance to reduce taxes is outlined. He added that town administration took special care to ensure all of this was divulged in the annual report in part due to Mr. Clement's recommendations.

Trustees of Trust Funds Position

As there were numerous write-in candidates (each receiving one vote), Moderator Pro-Temp Bandi drew a name to determine which candidate would be offered the position. Diane Gravel's name was chosen and she respectfully declined.

Oath of Office

At this time, Mr. Bandi administered the oath of office to all newly elected officials present at town meeting.

Vacant Select Board Position

Select Board member Brad Benton stated that the Town needs to fill the vacant position left by Mr. Demeritt. Any interested parties should submit a letter of interest. The position will also be advertised.

Town Offices Addition

Marianne Peabody addressed the audience to discuss the 2013 proposal for the expansion of both the town hall and the police department. She stated that when this issue was brought to a vote a few years ago, the Select Board was split and she was against doing both additions at once. She supported the addition of the police department as the safety of the employees was her main concern. The construction of the police department addition has been completed. She stated that with the growing needs of the community, she believes it is now time to support the expansion of the town offices. She explained that there are 10 departments housed in the same work space which was originally designed for 6. Confidentiality and productivity are difficult to maintain with so many departments in a small space. There is also the issue of town meetings with higher attendance beyond what the fire code allows. During elections, it is very difficult to meet State and Federal

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election requirements in such a confined space. Storage space is also very inadequate. In conclusion she stated that overall; the town has made many necessary repairs and has worked hard to maintain a respectable building the community can be proud of. The outside of the town hall is beautiful but the lack of space inside needs to be improved.

There was a question from the audience regarding how much the project would cost. Roy Sabourn stated that the project has not been put back out to bid. In 2013, the original design was estimated to cost \$750-800,000 and the town actually had all of the funds to do the work without having to apply for a bond. If the voters approve this project going forward, the town will have to bond to cover some of the costs. However, the town has no other bonds at this time. If the consensus of the townspeople is to not move forward with the addition, the town will have to spend approximately \$60,000 to retrofit the town offices to meet election mandates. The proposed retrofit will cut into the newly constructed police department space. Mr. Sabourn stated that approximately 1,300 ballots were cast in the presidential primary with 125 newly registered voters. The town offices simply do not have the capacity or clearance required for elections. With the proposed addition, the town meeting could be held at the town hall rather than the school. A member of the audience questioned why elections could not be held at the school. Mr. Sabourn replied that school would have to be cancelled in order to do so as the school is not open to the public for the protection of the students. It is a safety issue and the school is not willing to shut down for elections on a regular basis.

Steve Medaglia stated that he served as a member of the citizens committee that did planning and design work associated with this project in 2013. This same committee reviewed the proposed school renovations and reduced the project costs by 5 million dollars. The committee researched needs vs. wants and spent a year coming up with the design for the town building addition at a cost that would minimize the tax impact to the townspeople. The committee was disappointed when it was voted down. Mr. Medaglia recommends that the Board move forward with this project and put it out to bid. Once this has been completed, an information meeting with members of the public will be held.

After further discussion and public comments, it was the consensus of the townspeople that the addition has become necessary and that now would be a good time to proceed with the project. Interest rates are low, the town has no bonds, and the project costs will only go up the longer the project is delayed. No one was in favor of spending the \$60,000 to retrofit the town offices when this does not offer a permanent solution.

Mad River Road

Russ Gilman stated that two years ago the Campton Water Department had to replace a portion of their water line that passes underneath Mad River Road. This has created a large dip in the road that is dangerous and needs attention. Roy Sabourn stated that he would discuss this with the road agent.



Planning Board Enforcement

Russ Gilman stated that as a member of the Planning Board, he would like to see an additional staff member hired to follow up on zoning enforcement issues. He would like to see the town authorize and move to allocate \$1,000 to hire a part time employee. Mr. Sabourn replied that the budget has already been approved but that there are funds in the budget to cover such a small expense.

Northern Pass

Mr. Rivers encouraged everyone to be vigilant on being the voice of opposition on the Northern Pass Project. If the Northern Pass project were to alter their plans and install towers in Thornton, it would greatly reduce property values. He reiterated that this is a for profit company. Several other residents expressed their mutual opinions on the project.

MOTION: To adjourn

MOVED: Gloria Kimball

SECONDED: Voter

Motion carries unanimously and meeting is adjourned at 12:00pm.

Given under my hand and seal this 8th day of March in the year 2016.

Respectfully,

Brook J Rose

Thornton Town Clerk