

**TOWN MEETING 2024
TOWN OF EATON
THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE**

Moderator Paul Hennigan called the Annual Town Meeting of Eaton, NH to order on Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at 11 am. Moderator Hennigan announced a quorum being present, and the return of the School and Town Warrants showing that they had been properly served. At this time, the entire Town and School Warrants were read, followed by the Moderator stating that the polls were open for voting on Articles #1 through #4 on the School Warrant and Articles #1 through #12 on the Town Warrant. The remaining Articles on the School Warrant will be considered at the School Meeting beginning at 5 pm today. The remaining Articles #13 through #32 on the Town Warrant will be considered by Town Meeting resumes at 6 pm on Wednesday, March 12, 2024 at the Eaton Town Hall. Moderator Hennigan stated that the absentee ballots will be processed at 2 pm.

Moderator Hennigan closed the polls at 6 pm and recessed the Town Meeting until 6 pm on Wednesday, March 12, 2024.

At 6 pm on Wednesday, March 12, 2024, Moderator Hennigan announced “A quorum being present, the 2024 Annual Town Meeting of the Town of Eaton, County of Carroll, State of New Hampshire, now resumes for consideration of Articles #13 through #32 on the Town Warrant duly posted here at the public meeting place of Town Hall and the Eaton Village Store.” Moderator Hennigan opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Moderator Hennigan stated that the Town Warrant in its entirety was read at the opening of the polls and that each Article will be read prior to discussion and voting, and asked for a motion to dispense with the reading of the Warrant. ***Dennis Sullivan made a motion, seconded by John Hartman to waive the reading of the entire Warrant at this time. There was no discussion. Motion unanimously carried by hand vote.***

Moderator Hennigan stated that there are 358 registered voters and that 113 ballots were cast with the following results:

Articles #1 through #4 on the School District Warrant:

Moderator	Dennis Sullivan
Clerk	Alice Burns
Treasurer	Dale Schofield
School Board Member	Susan Wiley

The following were elected as Town Officers under Article #1 of the Town Warrant:

Selectman	Richard Fortin
Moderator	Dennis Sullivan
Town Clerk/Tax Collector	Robin Nuccio
Trustee of Trust Funds	Elaine Klose
Supervisor of Checklist	Bethany Hicks

All Zoning Ordinance Amendments (Articles #2 through #12) passed.

The Board of Selectmen recognized Kate Goslee, Richard Brisbois and Judy Fowler for their years of service to the Town. Selectman Fortin explained that Stephanie Mathurin could not be present to run Town Meeting and thanked Paul Hennigan and Dennis Sullivan for their willingness to run the Meeting. The Moderator thanked all those people who serve in Town government positions and Town Administrator Lianne Boelzner for her help and support. Moderator Hennigan called for a moment of silence for resident Mary Gospodarek, who passed in 2023.

Moderator Hennigan read the rules for the Town Meeting and asked if there are any questions or changes. Moderator Hennigan explained the process for the first two bond Articles and the option of restricting reconsideration of any Article.

ARTICLE #13

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Million Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,200,000) for the purpose of constructing a new Town Garage and repurposing the old garage; One Million Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,200,000) 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. (3/5 ballot vote required)

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 3-0-0

William Heath moved the Article, Richard Heath Jr. seconded. Selectman Fortin explained that at the 2023 Town Meeting it was voted to form a Capital Improvements Committee, who reviewed the needs of the Town and presented a report of their suggestions to the Selectmen at a Public Hearing on January 2, 2024. Selectman Fortin stated that based on that report, a Bond Hearing was held on January 22, 2024 to present details for the construction of a Town Garage and addition to Town Hall. Selectman Fortin stated that at the February 8, 2024 Budget Hearing, all Warrant Articles were reviewed, including the two bond Articles. Selectman Fortin stated that the Board of Selectmen wanted the voters to make the decision on whether to move forward with the projects. Selectman Fortin gave an overview of the process should the Article pass.

Selectman Fortin stated that the current garage is 50 years old and explained the heat loss due to lack of insulation. After requesting several companies to review the structure to obtain an estimate for insulation, the Board was advised that the structure could not handle the snow load if insulated. Selectman Fortin noted that the Town has out-grown the current garage due to the larger trucks, grader and backhoe. Selectman Fortin explained that the CIP Committee recommended an 80x80 garage, but the Selectmen have researched a 64x80 garage and propose to utilize the \$80,000 cost savings for items such as septic system, survey, moving the salt shed and converting the current garage to a sand shed.

John Hartman stated that he attended several of the meetings and indicated that the most important information to consider is the projected cost for a 20-year bond. Carol Mayhofer stated that she understands the need but that the Town will be facing an increase in school costs and suggested postponing the project until the school taxes are reduced. Anne Jenkins Provost stated that if the Town wants young families to move into Town, the tax rate needs to be appealing and that we don't want properties purchased to be used as short-term rentals. Selectman Fortin noted that the cost estimates given at prior meetings was to give the "worst case scenario" and that based on the last bond sale, the interest rates are much lower. Dick Dole questioned whether there is any State or Federal aid available. Ed Reilly stated that the Selectmen are not aware of any funds but will research if the project is approved. Carol Mayhofer stated that she has been investigating possible grants and noted that there is none at this time.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Hennigan opened the poll for secret ballot at 6:47 pm. At 7:48 pm, the poll was closed and ballots counted with the following result:

93 Ballots cast: Yes – 43 No – 50

Article 13 was declared defeated as the required 3/5 majority of 56 votes was not obtained.

ARTICLE #14

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$300,000) for the purpose of constructing an addition to Town Hall; Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$300,000) 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. (3/5 ballot vote required)

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 2-0-1

Richard Heath Jr. moved the Article, William Heath seconded. Selectman Fortin explained that the Town Hall was built as a school approximately 70 years ago and that this proposal is to address security of staff, computers and records. Selectman Fortin noted that this proposal was first drawn about 20 years ago. Selectman Fortin noted that the basement does not have enough room for archival storage for historical records and that this proposed addition does address climate control storage.

Mary Lou Dow requested more information on the addition and how it will address the safety concerns. Selectman Fortin explained that the addition would have two secure offices and a hallway, leaving the current space open for community use. Selectman Grinnell noted that the offices will have secure doors and that business would be conducted through a window. Anne Jenkins Provost stated that the current building should be brought up to code if it is to be used for meetings and events. Selectman Reilly stated that the Board has been attempting to address items on an annual basis.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Hennigan opened the poll for secret ballot at 6:57 pm. At 7:57 pm, the poll was closed and ballots counted with the following result:

92 Ballots cast: Yes – 48 No – 44

Article 14 was declared defeated as the required 3/5 majority of 56 votes was not obtained.

ARTICLE #15

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$805,957 for general municipal operations:

Executive	78,000
Election & Registration	8,000
Financial Administration	61,000
Revaluation of Property	12,800
Legal Expense	20,000
Personnel Administration	119,000
Planning & Zoning	10,000
General Government Building	28,000
Cemeteries	7,000
Insurance	10,155
Regional Associations	1,500
Public Safety -- Fire	40,000
Public Safety -- Ambulance	9,680
Public Safety -- Signs	250
Building Inspection	2,500
Highways & Streets	345,000
Street Lighting	2,500
Solid Waste Disposal	30,272
Health	800
Welfare	3,000
Parks/Town Beach	9,500
Library	2,000
Interest on Tan	5,000
Total	805,957

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 3-0-0

Kevin Conklin moved the Article, Patricia McMurry seconded. Selectman Fortin stated that the Selectmen tried to keep the budget as low as possible. Dana Cunningham questioned whether the Street Light item could be reduced as she would like the light near her house removed. Selectman Fortin noted that the Board can look at procuring a shield but that for safety, lights at the corner are necessary. Steve Kafka questioned the increase for Personnel Administration. Selectman Reilly explained that the increase reflects health insurance, employee retirement plans and payroll taxes. There being no further discussion, **Article 15 was declared passed by majority hand vote.**

Kevin Conklin made a motion, seconded by Richard Heath Jr., to restrict reconsideration on this Article. There being no discussion, motion was declared passed by unanimous hand vote.

ARTICLE #16

To see if the Town will vote to change the purpose of the existing Road Reconstruction Capital Reserve to the Road Reconstruction & Maintenance Capital Reserve for the purpose of reconstructing, maintaining and asphaltting of Town Roads. Furthermore, to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend. (2/3 vote required).

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 3-0-0

William Heath moved the Article, Kevin Conklin seconded. Selectman Fortin explained that this Article changes the purpose of an existing Capital Reserve fund in attempt to make it easier for the Highway crew when working on the roads. There being no discussion, ***Article 16 was declared passed by unanimous hand vote.***

ARTICLE #17

To see if the Town will vote to discontinue the Asphalt Trust Fund created in 1987. Said funds, with accumulated interest to date of withdrawal, are to be transferred to the Town's General Fund. This Article is contingent on Article #16. If Article #16 fails, this Article is null and void.

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 3-0-0

Eugene Long moved the Article, Kevin Conklin seconded. Selectman Fortin explained that funds cannot be moved from one Capital Reserve to another so it is placed in the General Fund. There being no discussion, ***Article 17 was declared passed by unanimous hand vote.***

ARTICLE #18

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$155,000 to be added to the Road Reconstruction & Maintenance Capital Reserve fund previously established. The sum of \$30,000 is to come from unreserved fund balance and the balance of \$125,000 to be raised through taxation. This Article is contingent on Article #16. If Article 16 fails, this Article is null and void.

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 3-0-0

Richard Heath Jr. moved the Article, Eugene Long seconded. Selectman Fortin noted that this Article uses the funds from the previous Article. There being no discussion, ***Article 18 was declared passed by unanimous hand vote.***

ARTICLE #19

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$125,000 to be added to the Road Reconstruction Capital Reserve fund established in 2020. This Article is contingent on Article #16. If Article 16 passes, this Article is null and void.

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 3-0-0

Richard Fortin made a motion, seconded by Eugene Long, to pass over Article 19 as it is null and void due to Article 16 passing. There being no discussion, Article 19 was passed over by unanimous hand vote.

ARTICLE #20

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$60,000 to be added to the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve fund previously established under RSA 35:1.

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 3-0-0

William Heath moved the Article, Jada Heath seconded. Selectman Fortin explained that this account is used to replace trucks, with the next one due in 2026. There being no discussion, ***Article 20 was declared passed by majority hand vote.***

ARTICLE #21

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$40,000 to be added to the Equipment Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund previously established under RSA 31:19A.

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 3-0-0

Jada Heath moved the Article, Kevin Conklin seconded. Selectman Fortin explained that this fund is used to cover unexpected repairs. Selectmen Fortin stated that last year there was \$50,000 for backhoe repairs and \$25,000 for truck repairs. There being no discussion, ***Article 21 was declared passed by majority hand vote.***

ARTICLE #22

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$75,000 for resurfacing of Class V gravel roads.

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 3-0-0

Richard Heath Jr. moved the Article, Jada Heath seconded. Selectman Fortin explained that this is an annual maintenance expense. There being no discussion, ***Article 22 was declared passed by majority hand vote.***

ARTICLE #23

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$32,360 for this year's grader lease payment. This sum to come from unreserved fund balance and no amount to be raised through taxation.

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 3-0-0

William Heath moved the Article, Eugene Long seconded. Selectman Fortin explained that there are three more payments on this lease. There being no discussion, ***Article 23 was declared passed by unanimous hand vote.***

ARTICLE #24

Shall the Town convey the property known as the South Eaton Meetinghouse located at 402 Burnham Road (Map R06 Parcel 31) to the South Eaton White Meetinghouse Parish Association for One Dollar (\$1.00) and further to authorize the Board of Selectmen to negotiate the terms of the sale and to take all action necessary to carry out this vote?

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 3-0-0

Eugene Long moved the Article, William Heath seconded. John Border explained that after extensive research, a deed for this property could not be located and that this Article is to place the Meetinghouse back in the hands of the Parish Association. Anne Jenkins Provost questioned whether the Town could retain the right of first refusal. Eleanor Jenkins stated that the intent is for the Parish to continue maintaining the property. There being no further discussion, ***Article 24 was declared passed by unanimous hand vote.***

ARTICLE #25

To see if the Town will vote to establish as a Town Forest under RSA 31:110 the following lots, Map R12 Parcel 10, Map R13 Parcels 1, 3, 5, 11 and 14, to authorize the Eaton Conservation Commission to manage the Town Forest under the provision of RSA 31:112(II) and to authorize the placement of any proceeds that may accrue from this forest management in a separate forest maintenance fund which shall be allowed to accumulate from year to year as provided by RSA 31:1132.

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 3-0-0

Judy Fowler moved the Article, Jennifer Kovach seconded. Selectman Fortin stated that there is a typo in the Article and that the RSA is 31:112. Selectmen Fortin explained that this is designating property already owned by the Town and in the care of the Conservation Commission to Town Forest rather than Conservation land. There being no discussion, ***Article 25 was declared passed by unanimous hand vote.***

ARTICLE #26

To see if the Town will vote pursuant to RSA 31:19-a and RSA 289:2-a to allow all future

proceeds received from the sale of cemetery lots in Eaton cemeteries to be deposited with the Trustees of Trust Fund into the Cemetery Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund previously established.

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 3-0-0

William Heath moved the Article, Jane Gray seconded. Selectman Fortin explained that this Article was suggested by the Department of Revenue to permit cemetery plot proceeds to be placed immediately into the Capital Reserve. There being no discussion, ***Article 26 was declared passed by unanimous hand vote.***

ARTICLE #27

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,000 to support Eaton home delivered meals (Meals on Wheels), congregate meals, transportation and program services by the Gibson Center for Senior Services, Inc.

Agreeable to a petition signed by Eleanor Border and others.

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 3-0-0

Eugene Long moved the Article, Eleanor Jenkins seconded. Selectman Fortin stated that 12 people in Eaton receive Meals on Wheels. Judy Wilson requested that a representative speak to the Article. Eleanor Border gave an overview of the services provided by the Gibson Center. Quddus Snyder noted that the amount being raised seems small. There being no further discussion, ***Article 27 was declared passed by unanimous hand vote.***

ARTICLE #28

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$911 for the operation of Tri-County Community Action Program Inc. service programs in Eaton: Transportation, Energy Assistance, Weatherization, Guardianship, Head Start, Homeless Intervention & Prevention, Disaster Relief and Tamworth Dental Center.

Agreeable to a petition signed by Nora Keith and others.

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 3-0-0

Eugene Long moved the Article, William Heath seconded. Selectman Fortin stated that 31 households receive benefits: \$17,000 for fuel and \$4,000 for electric assistance. There being no discussion, ***Article 28 was declared passed by unanimous hand vote.***

ARTICLE #29

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,500 for the Family Resource Center at Children Unlimited, Inc.

Agreeable to a petition signed by JoAnn Kelly and others.

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 3-0-0

William Heath moved the Article, Judy Fowler seconded. JoAnn Kelly gave an overview of services provided and noted that there were 3 Eaton families last year and 5 families so far this year. There being no discussion, **Article 29 was declared passed by unanimous hand vote.**

ARTICLE #30

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,783 in support of Starting Point providing advocacy and support to victims of domestic and sexual violence and their children.

Agreeable to a petition signed by Nora Keith and others.
Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 3-0-0

Dana Cunningham moved the Article, Eugene Long seconded. Laura Nash questioned why the amount is so high compared to surround Towns. **Laura Nash made a motion, seconded by Judy Wilson, to reduce the amount to \$2,000.** Judy Fowler noted that the amount being requested is about the same as last year. Cindy Bailey asked about the number of people serviced. Ed Reilly noted that the Selectmen reviewed the information and it appeared to be acceptable. There being no further discussion, **the amendment was declared defeated by majority hand vote.** Selectmen Fortin noted that this Article costs the taxpayer approximately 3-cents on the tax rate. There being no further discussion, **Article 30 as written was declared passed by majority hand vote.**

ARTICLE #31

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$706 for the support of White Mountain Community Health Center to help meet the healthcare needs of the uninsured and underinsured residents of the Town of Eaton.

Agreeable to a petition signed by Elaine Klose and others.
Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 3-0-0

Patricia McMurry moved the Article, Eugene Long seconded. Selectman Fortin stated that this request is \$112 less than last year and that there are 18 patients from Eaton. There being no discussion, **Article 31 was declared passed by unanimous hand vote.**

ARTICLE #32

To act on any other business that may legally come before this meeting.

Selectmen Grinnell noted that the Board has been discussing cell towers and that input from property owners has been solicited. Selectmen Grinnell requested a show of hands for those in favor of a cell tower in Eaton. A majority of those present were in favor. John

Hartman stated that he would prefer the tower be placed on Town land so that rent is not paid by the Town.

David Sorensen suggested that the Town purchase a speaker system before next Town Meeting.

Selectman Fortin made a motion, seconded by Richard Heath Jr. to close the meeting. Motion passed by unanimous hand vote. Moderator Hennigan dissolved the 2024 Eaton Town Meeting at 8:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather McKendry
Eaton Town Clerk