

Town Meeting 2023 Minutes  
Tuesday, May 09, 2023  
Hanover High School  
Ballot Voting 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.  
Business Meeting 7:00 p.m.

The annual Town Meeting of Hanover, New Hampshire convened on May 09, 2023, at 7:00 a.m. by the town moderator, Jeremy Eggleton. Moderator Eggleton explained the polls would be open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. for the purpose of voting for candidates for Town Meeting and for all other articles requiring vote by official ballot as set forth in Articles One through Article Seven of the Town Meeting Warrant.

**ARTICLE ONE:** To Vote (by nonpartisan ballot) for the following Town Officers:

Two Selectboard Members serve for a term of three (3) years.

|                           |            |
|---------------------------|------------|
| <b>Carey Callaghan</b>    | <b>596</b> |
| <b>Jennie Chamberlain</b> | <b>545</b> |
| Peter L. Christie         | 427        |

One Etna Library Trustee to serve for a term of three (3) years.

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Elizabeth P. Storrs | 761 |
|---------------------|-----|

One Trustee of Trust Funds to serve for a term of three (3) years.

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Kari Asmus | 757 |
|------------|-----|

**ARTICLE TWO:** (to vote by ballot) to see if the Town will vote to amend the Hanover Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Hanover Planning Board in Amendment No. 1:

The following question is on the official ballot:

*“Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 1 as proposed by the Hanover Planning Board for the Hanover Zoning Ordinance as follows?”*

Amendment No. 1 would amend Section 405.6 (B) to allow by right the renovation, replacement, or expansion of a student residence existing as of May 9, 2023, and to limit the cumulative increase of less than 35% above the May 9, 2023 building footprint. Increases above 35% footprint will require a special exception to be permitted. The amendment also reduces parking requirements for student residences.

**RESULTS:    Yes 768        No 124        ARTICLE PASSED**

**ARTICLE THREE:** (to vote by ballot): To see if the Town will vote to amend the Hanover Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Hanover Planning Board as Amendment No. 2:

The following question is on the official ballot:

*“Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 2 as proposed by the Hanover Planning Board for the Hanover Zoning Ordinance as follows?”*

Amendment No. 2 Proposes to:

- Expand the allowable signage for buildings that have frontage and points of entry on two streets from two signs total to two signs for each frontage.
- Define Theater and allow theaters to have an electronic marquee to display information for events.

**RESULTS:      YES 759      No 135      ARTICLE PASSED**

**ARTICLE FOUR:** (to vote by ballot): To see if the Town will vote to amend the Hanover Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Hanover Planning Board in Amendment No. 3:

The following question is on the official ballot:

*“Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 3 as proposed by the Hanover Planning Board for the Hanover Zoning Ordinance as follows?”*

Amendment No. 3 would address the following:

Clarifies the requirement for new building(s) situated frontmost on the lot and the percentage of the building’s front wall that must be constructed in the build-to area. And exempts any additional building(s) on the lot situated behind the frontmost building from the requirement of building a front wall in the build-to area.

**RESULTS:      YES 799      No 68      ARTICLE PASSED**

**ARTICLE FIVE:** (to vote by ballot) To see if the Town will vote to amend the Hanover Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Hanover Planning Board in Amendment No. 4:

The following question is on the official ballot:

*“Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 4 as proposed by the Hanover Planning Board for the Hanover Zoning Ordinance as follows?”*

Amendment No 4 proposes to amend Section 1002 by reducing the required minimum parking requirements for accessory dwelling units, multi-family, and Planning Residential Developments (PRD). The amendment also includes removal or revisions of use categories to link with uses permitted or use permissible with special exception in Article IV (4).

**RESULTS:      Yes 742              No 135              ARTICLE PASSED**

**ARTICLE SIX:** (to vote by ballot): To see if the Town will vote to amend the Hanover Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Hanover Planning Board as Amendment No. 5:

The following question is on the official ballot:

*“Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 5 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Hanover Zoning Ordinance as follows?”*

Amendment No.5 would amend Section 302 the definitions of “accessory use or building” to comply with NH Case Law and “downtown residential” to allow mixed-use buildings to include multi-family residential use.

**RESULTS:      Yes 831              No 57              ARTICLE PASSED**

**ARTICLE SEVEN:** (to vote by ballot): To see if the Town will vote to amend the Hanover Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Hanover Planning Board in Amendment No. 6:

The following question is on the official ballot:

*“Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 6 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Hanover Zoning Ordinance as follows?”*

Amendment No. 6 would add section 519.2.1, allowing occupancy requirements for sprinkled multifamily units to be consistent with the State fire safety code (NFPA 101).

**RESULTS:      Yes 855              No 33              ARTICLE PASSED**

**Business Meeting**

**7:00 p.m.**

Moderator Jeremy Eggleton called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at Hanover High School. Selectboard Member Nancy Carter led the Pledge of Allegiance. Moderator Eggleton directed everyone to read page 20 of their packet, The Town Moderator's Message. **Moderator Eggleton took a motion from the floor to utilize the set of rules listed in the Town Moderator's Message. The motion was seconded. Moderator Eggleton calls the question. The motion PASSED.**

Moderator Eggleton introduced Alex Torpey, Town Manager, to introduce the Selectboard Members present:

Peter Christie - Chair, Nancy Carter, Joanna Whitcomb, Athos Rassias, Bill Geraghty, and the Town Manager, Alex Torpey . Mr. Torpey introduced Town Department Heads present.

**Article Eight:** To choose the following Town Officers to be elected by majority vote:

One Advisory Board of Assessors, one for a term of three (3) years.

Nominees: Joe Roberto

Three Fence Viewers, each for a term of one (1) year.

Nominees: Robert Grabill, Matt Marshall, and Sarah Packham

Two surveyors of Wood and Timber each for a term of one (1) year.

Nominees: James Kennedy and Robert Keene

Such other Officers as the Town may judge necessary for managing its affairs.

Before the vote, Selectboard Member Christie thanked Bill Geraghty for his service to the Town of Hanover.

**Selectboard Member Christie Moved to Nominate the above persons for the above offices.**

**The motion was seconded.**

**Moderator Eggleton called the question.**

**The motion PASSED and the nominees were ELECTED.**

Articles Nine, Ten, and Eleven are bond articles and will be voted on by ballot. Moderator Eggleton explained the process of casting votes for these Articles. Each article will be introduced and discussed in order.

**Article Nine:**

**Selectboard Member Carter Moved to Nominate Article Nine and read Article Nine as follows:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-two Million Dollars (\$22,000,000) for the purpose of funding a Wastewater Treatment Facility Proposed Capital Project, and to authorize Twenty-two Million Dollars (\$22,000,000) such sum to be raised through the issuance of bonds or notes under and in compliance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33), as amended; to authorize the Selectboard to apply for, obtain, and accept federal, state or other aid, gifts and donations 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 such bonds or 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 necessary to carry out this vote or to pass any other vote relative thereto. Without impairing the general obligation nature of bonds and/or notes issued to finance the project, it is the intention of the Selectboard that debt service payments shall be made from wastewater fees. This action shall be a written Yes/No ballot; polls shall remain open and ballots shall be accepted by the moderator for a period of not less than one hour following the completion of discussion of this article. (3/5 ballot vote required to pass.)

**The article was seconded.**

Kari Asmus, Chair of the Hanover Finance Committee, read the following statement for Articles Nine and Ten.

*“Thank you, Mister Moderator. My name is Kari Asmus, and I am the Chair of the Hanover Finance Committee. Due to the length of tonight’s warrant, I will forgo my normal preamble explaining why it is my role to opine on sundry warrant articles and simply recognize the members of the committee—who I ask to please stand for a moment. All our meetings are open to the public, but we like for people to know who we are in the event they have thoughts to share or questions to ask. I would also like to take a moment to thank our Selectboard member Bill Geraghty and at-large member Mac Gardner who are both stepping down.*

*Now on to the “opining.”*

*During a public meeting on April 17, the Hanover Finance Committee voted unanimously to support this Wastewater Facility bond in the amount of \$22 million and (spoiler alert) the \$7.8 million bond for the water distribution in the next warrant article.*

*We reviewed the proposed payment schedules for these bonds or notes both individually and combined to discern the overall impact to ratepayers and deemed them to be reasonable—in large part because the payments would start after the payments for current bonds will end. It is also fortuitous that our neighbors in Lebanon, who are wastewater subscribers, will also contribute to the costs of this project—as will those in rural Hanover who have private septic systems as tipping fees are expected to increase.*

*In addition to procuring the grants that are currently available, the Finance Committee encourages the Selectboard to make note of the \$1 million plus available in the Wastewater Undesignated Fund balance that has been set aside for capital improvements such as this as these monies could serve as an additional offset. We would also like to see reports on principal and interest payments in future statements included in the Annual Town Report.*

*Overall, the Finance Committee believes these are necessary and desirable upgrades to our wastewater and water systems and support their passage.”*

Moderator Eggleton opened the Article for debate. Mr. John Ruth asked for clarification for those residents with private wells. Moderator Eggleton closed the debate.

#### **Article Ten:**

#### **Selectboard Member Carter moved to nominate Article Ten and read Article Ten as follows:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Seven Million Eight Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$7,800,000) for the purpose of funding a water distribution plan, and to authorize Seven Million Eight Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$7,800,000) to be raised through the issuance of bonds or notes under and in compliance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33), as amended; to authorize the Selectboard to apply for, obtain, and accept federal, state or other aid, gifts and donations, 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 such bonds or 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 necessary to carry out this vote or to pass any other vote relative thereto. Without impairing the general obligation nature of bonds and/or notes issued to finance the project, it is the intention of the Selectboard that debt service payments shall be made from water fees. This action shall be a written Yes/No ballot; polls shall remain open and ballots shall be accepted by the moderator for a period of not less than one hour following the completion of discussion of this article. (3/5 ballot vote required to pass.)

**The Motion was Seconded.**

Moderator Eggleton opened the Article for discussion. Sarah Lord asked about how long the new water distribution and reclamation system would last. Peter Kulbacki, Director of Department of Public Works, answered that water main would last 100 years and the reclamation system parts would last 25 - 50 years. Mr. Ruth spoke again about why people not on the sewer should be responsible. Laura Spector-Morgan, Town Counsel, answered why they decided to go with a general obligation bond and not a revenue bond. Rich Howarth comments and moves to amend to say "Intention of the Selectboard". **Amendment was Seconded.** John Ruth stated this amendment makes no difference. Tom I/k/u, Rip Road, asks if Town Meeting is an entity. Moderator Eggleton states that it is a legislative body. **Moderator Eggleton asks for a vote. Amendment does not carry.**

**John Ruth makes a motion for an amendment that would strike "without.....that" and add Debt service payments shall be made solely from water and other user fees. Motion was seconded.** Several residents commented on the amendment. Deb Nelson spoke against the amendment. Jeff Acker asked what the interest rate would be. Town Manager Alex Torpey stated they were looking at interest rates in the 2-3% range for a general obligation bond. Bill Fishel seconded Ms. Nelson's comment and asked if the Town ever failed to pay a general debt obligation. Selectboard Member Whitcomb stated Hanover has not to her knowledge. Kari Asmus commented on what fee increases for users would be. **Moderator Eggleton calls for a vote. Amendment #2 does not carry.** Original Warrant Article Ten is what will be voted on tonight. Moderator Eggleton closed the debate on Article 10.

#### **Article Eleven:**

**Selectboard Member Carter moved to nominate Article Eleven and read Article Eleven as follows:**

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 funding the purchase of a Fire Engine, and to authorize One Million, Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,200,000) to be raised through the issuance of bonds or notes under and in compliance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33), as amended; to authorize the Selectboard to apply for, obtain, and accept federal, state or other aid, gifts and donations 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 such bonds or 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 necessary to carry out this vote or to pass any other vote relative thereto. This action shall be a written Yes/No ballot; polls shall remain open and ballots shall be accepted by the moderator for a period of not less than one hour following the completion of discussion of this article. (3/5 ballot vote required to pass.)

**The motion was seconded.**

**Moderator Eggleton opened the Article for debate.**

Kari Asmus commented on Article Eleven with the following statement:

*“The Finance Committee voted unanimously to support the replacement of Engine #4 through the issuance of a \$1.2 million bond. The need and advantages of ordering the engine now are understood, and as we reviewed what we calculated would be a repayment schedule, we could readily see the relief bonding brings to the Fire Fund budget when compared to making the capital reserve deposits that would otherwise be necessary. We do note, however, when payments on the bond begin in FY26 that will require additional taxation as no other offsets are anticipated.”*

**Moderator Eggleton Closed the debate and invited residents to vote on Article Nine, Ten, and Eleven. Moderator Eggleton motions to recess for voting. The motion was seconded. The Motion PASSES.**

**Article Twelve:**

To see if the Town will vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 72:28, Standard and Optional Veterans’ Tax Credit. If adopted, the credit will apply to every resident of this state who is any person who is a veteran, as defined in RSA 21:50, and served not less than 90 days on active service in the armed forces of the United States in any qualifying war or armed conflict listed in this section, and continues to serve or was honorably discharged or an officer who continues to serve or was honorably separated from service; or the spouse or surviving spouse of such resident, provided that training for active duty by a member of the national guard or reserve shall be included as service under this subparagraph; (b) Every resident of this state who was terminated from the armed forces because of service-connected disability; or the surviving spouse of such resident; and (c) the surviving spouse of any resident who suffered a service-connected death.

If adopted the credit granted will be \$500.00, which is the amount adopted by the Town in 2012. NOTE: This Article is required because the legislature expanded the eligibility criteria for this credit to include individuals who have not yet been discharged from service in the armed forces.

**Selectboard Member Geraghty moved to approve Article Twelve.**

**The Motion was Seconded.**

Moderator Eggleton opened the Article for debate. Bill Fischel commented and **moved to amend the dollar amount from \$500 to \$100. The amendment was seconded by a resident.** Jeff Acker spoke against the amendment. **Moderator Eggleton calls for a vote for the Amendment. Amendment does not carry.** Original Article Twelve remains. Moderator Eggleton closed the debate.



**Moderator Eggleton Called the question.**

**Article Twelve PASSED.**

**ARTICLE THIRTEEN:**

To see if the town will vote to readopt the provisions of RSA 72:62, an exemption from the assessed value for property tax purposes for persons owning real property which is equipped with a solar energy system as defined in RSA 72:61. Such solar property tax exemption shall be in the amount equal to 100% of the assessed value of qualifying equipment as defined in RSA 72:61 and as may be amended, but not until such equipment is demonstrated to add to the value of real property based on the determination of the Town Assessor. This readoption is required because in 2020 the legislature voted to expand the definition of solar energy system to include systems which utilize solar energy to produce electricity for a building, including all photovoltaics, inverters, and storage. Such systems may be off grid or connected to the grid in a net metered or group net metered arrangement pursuant to RSA 362-A:9 or in a direct retail sale arrangement pursuant to RSA 362-A:2-a.

**Selectboard Member Geraghty moved to approve Article Thirteen.**

**The Motion was Seconded.**

Moderator Eggleton opened the Article for debate. Debra Olson asked about condo owners not being able to utilize tax deductions for solar. Norm Bernaiche, Assessor stated the Town does not assess solar on properties. Moderator Eggleton closed the debate.

**Moderator Eggleton Called the question.**

**Article Thirteen PASSED.**

**ARTICLE FOURTEEN:**

To see if the Town will vote to adopt RSA 41:14-a, to allow the Selectboard to acquire or sell land, buildings, or both; provided, however, they shall first submit any such proposed acquisition or sale to the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission for review and recommendation by those Boards and hold two public hearings, as required by RSA 41:14-a. This article will remain in effect until rescinded by a majority vote.

**Selectboard Member Whitcomb moved to approve Article Fourteen.**

**The Motion was Seconded.**

Moderator Eggleton opened the Article for debate. Selectboard Whitcomb stated 110 Towns in New Hampshire have already adopted something similar. Town Counsel, Laura Spector-Morgan, clarifies the Selectboard would need to use funds in the current budget and would not be able to raise funds. Selectboard Member Whitcomb stated this would allow the Selectboard to act on easements. Kari Asmus commented that the wording in the original Selectboard packet was different and read the original wording that shared the two mandated hearings were not going to be held by the Conservation Commission and the Planning Board.. **Kari Asmus moves to amend Article Fourteen to read “provided they shall must first submit any proposed acquisition or sale to the Planning Board and Conservation Commission for review. Review and recommendation by those Boards and hold the mandated two public hearings as required by RSA...” . The motion is seconded.** Jeff Acker asks for clarification on the wording of approval vs recommendation of the Boards. Town Counsel states the statute states “Recommendation”. **Moderator Eggleton called the question. The amendment PASSED. Jeff Acker proposed making an amendment to change “recommendation” to “approval”.** Moderator Eggleton opened the second amendment up for debate. Town Counsel stated that the statute stated that if the residents want the item to go to Town Meeting, fifty voters can petition it to be put on the Warrant. Bill Fishel stated he was against the Planning Board having the same powers as the Selectboard. Moderator Eggleton closed the debate. **Moderator Eggleton calls the question on Amendment Two. The Amendment FAILS.** Moderator Eggleton closes the debate on Article Fourteen. **Moderator Eggleton Called the question.**

**Article Fourteen PASSED as amended by Amendment One.**

#### **ARTICLE FIFTEEN:**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the conveyance of Tax Map 1, Lot 11-2 (5 acres of the 265 acre former Leavitt property) located on the north side of Greensboro Road, acquired by the Town in 2020, to Twin Pines Housing Trust, or another nonprofit organization, to be developed as workforce housing; on such terms and conditions as the Selectboard may negotiate.

**Selectboard Member Whitcomb moved to approve Article Fifteen.**

**The Motion was Seconded.**

Moderator Eggleton opened the Article for debate. Comments about the housing crisis were made by Joanne Conroy and Clay Adams. Jeff Acker asks about the value of the land. Selectboard Member Whitcomb states it was worth \$250,000. Jeff Acker questions the accuracy of the value and asks if this is the right area for the project. Other comments were made by Dena Romaro, Dave Cioffi, and Roger Slaboda. Selectboard Member Whitcomb responds to comments.

Moderator Eggleton Announces ballot polling for Articles Nine, Ten, and Eleven will be closing soon.

More comments were made by residents Nicolas Macri, Rich Howarth, Ann Hill and Deb Nelson. Andrew Winter, Director of Twin Pines Housing Trust, commented. Selectboard Member Peter Christie commented. Moderator Eggleton closed the debate.

**Moderator Eggleton Called the question.**

**Article Fifteen PASSED.**

**ARTICLE SIXTEEN:**

To see if the Town will vote to adopt a Rental Housing Ordinance #42 pursuant to RSA 48-A, as prepared, reviewed, and approved by the Selectboard to establish standards governing the condition and maintenance of dwelling units offered for rent with the goal of ensuring that they are safe, sanitary and fit for human habitation; to authorize the inspection of such dwellings and the imposition of penalties for violation of the Ordinance; and to define certain responsibilities and duties of owners and occupants of such dwellings.

**Selectboard Member Rassias moved to approve Article Sixteen.**

**The Motion was Seconded.**

Moderator Eggleton opened the Article for debate. **Selectboard Member Rassias makes and amendment to Article Sixteen, Appendix B:**

APPENDIX B

ORDINANCE # 42

TOWN OF HANOVER

ORDINANCE OF THE SELECTBOARD

ESTABLISHING RENTAL HOUSING ORDINANCE

The Selectboard of the Town of Hanover ordains as follows:

I. DECLARATION OF PURPOSE: the Purpose of this Ordinance is:

1) to establish the minimum standards governing the condition and maintenance of dwelling units offered for rent with the goal of ensuring that they are safe, sanitary, and fit for human habitation,

2) to authorize the inspection of such dwellings and if necessary the condemnation of dwellings unfit for human habitation and citing penalties for violations, and

3) to define certain responsibilities and duties of owners and occupants of such dwellings.

II. TITLE: This Ordinance shall be known and shall be cited as the Rental Housing Ordinance of Hanover, New Hampshire.

III. AUTHORITY: RSA 48-A:1-13

IV. DEFINITIONS: Any term not specifically defined in this Ordinance shall have the meaning implied by its context in the Ordinance or the ordinarily accepted meaning.

Responsible Party: an individual identified as the primary contact for the safe operation of a Unit. The Responsible Party will either be the owner or an individual authorized to act on behalf of the owner.

Unit: The following are considered Units for the purposes of this ordinance:

1) Dwelling Unit(s) as defined by Town of Hanover Zoning Ordinance Chapter III:

A single room or group of connected rooms constituting a separate and independent housekeeping establishment for occupancy by an individual or a family, physically separated from any other rooms or dwelling units that may be in the same structure and containing independent and dedicated cooking, sanitary, and sleeping facilities, including prefabricated and modular units that meet all pertinent building code standards and excluding housing for transient occupancy such as a motel, hotel, or rooming house.

OR

2) An owner-occupied dwelling which is renting a room(s) “without separate cooking facilities...” as regulated by Town of Hanover Zoning Ordinance Chapter V. Section 519.

V. APPLICABILITY: The “Rental Housing Ordinance of Hanover, New Hampshire” shall apply to any rented Unit within the Town.

VI. OTHER ORDINANCES: This Ordinance shall not interfere with or annul any ordinance, rule, regulation, permit, or any other more restrictive code. All rental units shall comply with all applicable state, federal and local ordinances, and regulations, including but not limited to the Hanover Zoning Ordinance, the Hanover Site Plan Review Regulations, RSA 48-a, 153,-a, and RSA ]55-A, which includes, but is not limited to compliance with the State Fire Code.

VII. CERTIFICATES OF COMPLIANCE: It shall be unlawful for anyone to rent, or offer for rent, any Unit without a Certificate of Compliance, Interim COC, or Transfer Permit.

A. The Hanover Planning, Zoning & Codes Department (Department) will use its best efforts to notify all known owners of Units of the COC requirements as set forth in this Ordinance, including the requirement to complete an application for an Interim COC within 30 days of receipt of the notice. An Interim COC will be automatically issued by the Department and be valid until there is a transfer of property or a COC is issued. The failure of the Department to notify an owner of an applicable property of the COC requirements shall not excuse the owner from complying with this Ordinance.

B. Following the issuance of an Interim COC or receipt of a renewal application, the Department will inspect the Unit including all areas that impact egress and common areas where applicable. Inspections will be based on the following to determine compliance with the provisions of this Ordinance:

1. 2018 NFPA 101, Life Safety Code as amended by Saf-FMO 300
2. 2016 NFPA 211, Standard for Chimneys, Fireplaces, Vents, and Solid Fuel- Burning Appliances
3. 2015 NFPA 720, Standard for the Installation of Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detection and Warning Equipment
4. 2018 International Building Code (IBC) with NH Amendments (IRC Ex
5. NH RSA 48-A

C. Following the inspections the Department shall:

1. Issue a COC if the Unit complies with all provisions of this Ordinance; or
2. Issue a violation notice if the Unit does not comply with all provisions of this Ordinance. The notice shall list all violations, order their correction, and establish re-inspection requirements and a date for re-inspection.

D. On or before the date specified in a violation notice, the Responsible Party shall correct all violations. If the Unit complies with all provisions of this Ordinance on re- inspection, a COC shall be issued. If the Unit does not comply with all provisions of this Ordinance on re- inspection, the Department may schedule a subsequent inspection or initiate enforcement action, [pursuant to RSA 48-A:4.](#)

E. The initial and renewal COC will be issued for a period of three (3) years from the date of inspection.

F. Nine months prior to the expiration of a COC, the Department will notify Responsible Party of the requirement to submit an application to renew their COC. Such application is required to be submitted six months prior to the expiration of a COC.

G. If the Department does not complete the required compliance inspection prior to the termination date of the existing COC, the existing COC will be extended by the Department by issuing an Interim COC until the required inspection has been completed.

H. In the case of newly constructed rental property for which a Certificate of Occupancy has been issued, the Certificate of Occupancy will serve as the COC and will be good for three (3) years from the date of issuance.

I. Upon conveyance of a property, an application for a Transfer Permit shall be made to the Department and shall be signed by all sellers and buyers. A Transfer Permit will be issued by the Department and require no additional inspections.

J. On the request of Responsible Party, prospective purchasers, real estate brokers, financial institutions, housing agencies, or others with a legitimate interest, the Department will inspect the Unit.

K. The following fees shall be charged:

1. Application: \$50 per Unit\*
2. Inspection: \$250 per Unit.
3. Reinspection: \$75 per Unit
4. Transfer Permit: \$25 per Unit.\*
5. Replacement of COC \$25.

\*a single application and transfer permit is permissible for each multiple unit site.

## VIII. ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT

A. Staff from the Department, or their designees are hereby authorized to enter and inspect the Unit for compliance. Such inspection shall be made at reasonable times with no less than a 24-hour notice to the Responsible Party, who then shall notify the occupant.

B. In the event that such entry is denied or resisted, the Town of Hanover may seek an Administrative Inspection Warrant or other order from a court of competent jurisdiction for the purpose of making such entry.

C. The Department and its designees shall exercise the powers necessary or convenient to carry out the provisions of this Ordinance, including but not limited to the following:

1. To inspect the Unit in order to determine if the Unit is unfit for human habitation.
2. To administer affirmations, examine witnesses, and receive evidence.

D. The Department may determine that a Unit is unfit for human habitation if it finds that conditions exist in the Unit which are unreasonably dangerous or injurious to the health or safety of the occupants of the Unit, the occupants of neighboring dwellings or other residents of Hanover.

Such conditions may include the following:

1. Defects which increase beyond normal the hazards of fire, accident, or other calamities.
2. Lack of adequate ventilation, light, or sanitary facilities.
3. Dilapidation, disrepair, or dangerous structural defects.
4. Uncleanliness.
5. Overcrowding.
6. Inadequate ingress and egress.
7. Inadequate drainage.
8. Any violation of other health, fire, or safety regulations. (RSA 48-A:7)

E. If the Department determines that a Unit is unfit for human habitation, it shall state in writing its findings of fact in support of such determination and shall issue and cause to be served upon the owner and Responsible Party thereof an order which requires the owner, within the time specified in the order, to repair, alter, or improve such Unit to render it fit for human habitation and/or to vacate the Unit. If the owner fails to comply with such an order, the Town may file a petition in Superior Court pursuant RSA 48-A:4.

F. If, during the term of a COC, a petition is filed with the Department by at least ten residents of Hanover charging that any Unit is unfit for human habitation or if the Department has reason to believe that the Unit is unfit for human habitation, the owner and Responsible Party will be notified of the requirement for a new inspection. Such notice will be delivered by certified mail at least ten days prior to the date of inspection.

G. If an Responsible Party is aggrieved by any order of the Department made pursuant to this Ordinance, they may appeal to the Selectboard. The Selectboard shall hold a public hearing upon the appeal, due notice of the hearing having first been given to the Department and to the Responsible Party. The Selectboard may affirm or revoke the order of the Department, or it may modify it in accordance with its findings. If it shall affirm or modify the order, the Department shall proceed to enforce the order as affirmed or so modified. If the Selectboard revokes said order, the proceedings shall be terminated. Within thirty (30) days after the Selectboard has given the appellant notice of its decision, as provided by this Ordinance, such appellant or any person aggrieved by such decisions may appeal by petition to the superior court. ~~The burden of proof shall be upon the party seeking to set aside any order or decision of~~

~~the Department to show that the same is unreasonable or unlawful, and all findings of the Department upon all questions of fact properly before it shall be deemed to be prima facie lawful and reasonable; and the order or decision appealed from shall not be set aside or vacated, except for errors of law, unless the court is persuaded by the balance of probabilities, on the evidence before it, that such order or decision is unjust or unreasonable.~~

H. Where the Department determines that extreme danger or menace to the occupants or the public health exists, the Department may order immediate correction of such condition to be made or, if the circumstances warrant, may order the occupants to vacate the Unit. If any person so notified, neglects or refuses to comply with an order of the Department, the Department may then declare the Unit unfit for human habitation by issuing to the occupants and the Responsible Party a written order to vacate the Unit within such time as the Department may deem reasonable, and a placard prohibiting continued occupancy or re-occupancy may be conspicuously posted on the Unit.

#### IX. RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND OCCUPANTS

A. All Units must be registered with the Department and have a valid and current COC or Temporary COC as required in this Rental Housing Code in order to be occupied.

B. No Responsible Party or occupant shall cause any heating, electrical, hot water equipment or utility to be removed, shut off, or discontinued for any occupied Unit except for such temporary interruption as may be necessary while actual repairs or alterations are in process, or during temporary emergencies.

C. No Responsible Party or occupant shall cause or let a Unit become a Public Nuisance. For purposes of this Ordinance, "public nuisance" shall mean the following:

I. The physical condition or use of any Unit regarded as a public nuisance at common law.

1. Any physical condition, use or occupancy of any Unit or its appurtenances considered an accessible nuisance to children, including, but not limited to abandoned wells, shafts, basements, excavations, and unsafe fences, structures or improperly secured buildings.

2. Any Unit which has unsanitary sewerage or plumbing facilities.

3. Any Unit designated as unsafe for human habitation or use.

4. Any Unit which is manifestly capable of being a fire hazard or is manifestly unsafe or unsecure as to endanger life, limb, or property.

5. The interior or exterior of any unit which is unsanitary, or which is littered with rubbish, garbage, tires or appliances.



6. Any Unit that is in a state of dilapidation, deterioration, or decay, is in danger of collapse or failure, or is dangerous to anyone in or near the Unit.

7. Any Unit with occupancy exceeding limits for the approved use class as established in the State adopted National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 101, Life Safety Code. The Responsible Party shall advise the occupant in writing by insertion in the lease between the parties, or otherwise, of the maximum number of occupants permitted in the leased Unit.

D. It will be the responsibility of the Responsible Party to abide by the requirements of the New Hampshire Lead Paint Poisoning Prevention and Control Act (R.S.A. 130-A et seq.)

E. It shall be the duty of every Responsible Party to keep the Unit in good and safe condition and in compliance with all applicable codes and provisions of all applicable state laws, regulations and local ordinances.

F. It shall be the responsibility of every Responsible Party to display a copy of the issued COC in the Unit, along with the following information:

1. The name, mailing address and telephone number of the Responsible Party, who must be available to be reached twenty-four (24) hours per day, seven (7) days per week.

2. Solid waste and recycling protocol.

3. The telephone number to call to register complaints regarding the physical condition of the dwelling unit.

4. Maximum occupancy limit

G. Any person, firm or corporation who violates any provision of this for ordinance for which another penalty is not specifically provided shall, upon conviction, be subject to a fine not exceeding the \$1,000.00 per RSA 31:39-d. Each day a violation occurs or continues shall constitute a separate offense.

**The Amendment was seconded.** Comments clarifying the Article were made by Kari Asmus and Laura Spector-Morgan. **Moderator Eggleton calls the question on the Amendment. The Amendment PASSES.** Moderator Chris Kennedy asks about Short-Term Rentals in relation to the Rental Housing Ordinance. Planning, Zoning & Codes Department Head Rob Houseman answers the questions. Eggleton closed the debate.

**Moderator Eggleton Called the question.**

**Article Sixteen PASSED with Appendix B amended.**

**ARTICLE SEVENTEEN:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$10,000 for deposit into the Land and Capital Improvements Fund, an expendable trust, and to fund this appropriation by authorizing the withdrawal of this amount from the Unassigned Fund Balance. The amount appropriated is the equivalent of 50% of the total Land Use Change Tax collected in the fiscal year 2021-2022.

**Selectboard Member Rassias moved to Approve Article Seventeen.**

**The motion was seconded.**

Moderator Eggleton opened the Article for debate. Kari Asmus comments regarding Articles Seventeen and Eighteen. Moderator Eggleton closed the debate.

**Moderator Eggleton calls the questions.**

**Article Seventeen PASSED.**

**ARTICLE EIGHTEEN, NINETEEN, and TWENTY:**

**Selectboard Member Rassias moved to consolidate Articles Eighteen, Nineteen, and Twenty into one Article. The Motion is seconded. Moderator Eggleton calls the question. The motion PASSED.**

**ARTICLE EIGHTEEN:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$10,000 for deposit into the Conservation Fund, and to fund this appropriation by authorizing the withdrawal of this amount from the Unassigned Fund Balance. The amount appropriated is the equivalent of 50% of the total Land Use Change Tax collected in the fiscal year 2021-2022.

**ARTICLE NINETEEN:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$33,353 for deposit into the Land and Capital Improvements Fund, and expendable trust, and to fund this appropriation by authorizing the withdrawal of this amount from the Unassigned Fund Balance. This corrects the amount appropriated at the 2022 Town Meeting and is the balance of the equivalent of 50% of the total Land Use Change Tax collected in the fiscal year 2020-2021.

**ARTICLE TWENTY:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$33,353 for deposit into the Conservation Fund, and to fund this appropriation by authorizing the withdrawal of this amount from the Unassigned Fund Balance. This corrects the amount appropriated at the 2022 Town Meeting and is the balance of the equivalent of 50% of the total Land Use Change Tax collected in the fiscal year 2020-2021.

**Selectboard Member Rassias moved to Approve Articles Eighteen, Nineteen, and Twenty. The motion is Seconded.** Moderator Eggleton opens the item up for debate. Moderator Eggleton closes the debate. **Moderator Eggleton calls the question. The Articles PASSED.**

**ARTICLE TWENTY-ONE:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$34,065 for deposit into the Municipal Transportation Improvement Fund, a capital reserve fund, and to fund this appropriation by authorizing the withdrawal of this amount from the Unassigned Fund Balance. This amount is equivalent to the total Transportation Fee surcharge for each motor vehicle registered in the Town of Hanover (\$5.00 per vehicle) during fiscal year 2021-2022.

**Selectboard Member Carter moved to approve Article Twenty-One. The motion is seconded from the floor.** Moderator Eggleton opens the item up for debate. Moderator Eggleton closes the debate. **Moderator Eggleton calls the question. The Article PASSED.**

**ARTICLE TWENTY-TWO:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,093,451 and authorize payment into existing capital reserve funds in the following amounts for the purposes for which such funds were established:

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Ambulance Equipment Capital Reserve Fund with funding to come from the Ambulance Fund   | \$105,567 |
| Building Maintenance and Improvement Capital Reserve Fund with funding to be raised through taxation                          | \$199,600 |
| Dispatch Equipment and Dispatch Center Enhancements Capital Reserve Fund with funding to be raised through taxation           | \$ 17,981 |
| Fire Department Vehicle and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund with funding to come from the Fire Fund                            | \$160,000 |
| Highway Construction and Maintenance Equipment Capital Reserve Fund with funding to be raised through taxation                | \$471,840 |
| Parking Operations Vehicles and Parking Facility Improvements Capital Reserve Fund with funding to come from the Parking Fund | \$174,955 |
| Police Vehicles and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund with funding to be raised through taxation                                 | \$120,000 |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Road Construction and Improvements Capital Reserve Fund with funding to be raised through taxation                                | \$55,300  |
| Sewer Equipment and Facilities Improvements Capital Reserve Fund with funding to come from the Wastewater Treatment Facility Fund | \$307,000 |
| Water Treatment and Distribution Equipment and System Capital Reserve Fund with funding to come from the Water Utility Fund       | \$481,208 |

**Selectboard Member Carter moved to approve Article Twenty-Two. The motion is seconded from the floor.** Moderator Eggleton opens the item up for debate. Moderator Eggleton closes the debate. **Moderator Eggleton calls the question. The Article PASSED.**

**ARTICLE TWENTY-THREE:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$2,495,500 for the purposes listed below, and to authorize funding these amounts by withdrawal from the listed capital reserve funds in the following amounts:

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Building Maintenance and Improvement Capital Reserve Fund: Howe Roof replacement   | \$200,000 |
| Fire Department Vehicle and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund: Metal Door replacement, phase II   | \$15,500  |
| Highway Construction and Maintenance Equipment Capital Reserve Fund: DPW Fleet 12-6 wheel dump with plow, 14-6-wheel dump with plow, 3 sidewalk tractors, 20-ton equipment trailer | \$673,000 |
| Parking Operations Vehicles and Parking Facility Improvements Capital Reserve Fund: parking facility lighting conversion, membrane repair  | \$520,000 |
| Police Vehicles and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund: police cruiser replacements (4), mobile data terminals   | \$296,000 |
| Water Treatment and Distribution Equipment and System Capital Reserve Fund: Greensboro Rd lead abatement, water meter phase 1, F550 dump truck                                     | \$487,000 |
| Sewer Equipment and Facilities Improvements Capital Reserve Fund: water meter phase 1, Truck 16222   | \$304,000 |

This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until these specified purchases are complete or June 30, 2028, whichever occurs sooner.

**Selectboard Member Carter moved to approve Article Twenty-Three. The motion is seconded from the floor.** Moderator Eggleton opens the item up for debate. **Kari Asmus suggests amending the Article by adding road construction and capital improvements for school zone speed flashers for \$31,000 for a total amount of \$2,527,500.00.** Town Counsel, Laura Spector-Morgan, stated this would not be a legal amendment by DRA as it would add cost that is not on the warrant. **The amendment is seconded. Moderator Eggleton calls the question. The amendment is REJECTED.** Moderator Eggleton closes the debate. **Moderator Eggleton calls the question. The Article PASSED.**

**ARTICLE TWENTY-FOUR, TWENTY-FIVE, AND TWENTY-SIX:**

**Moderator Eggleton asks for a motion to consolidate Articles Twenty-Four, Twenty-Five, and Twenty-Six. The Motion is moved and seconded from the floor. Moderator Eggleton calls the question. The motion PASSED.**

**ARTICLE TWENTY-FOUR:**

To see if the Town will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Selectboard and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 93, Local 1348 (Public Works Department employees) on March 6, 2023, which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

| Year      | Estimated Increase |
|-----------|--------------------|
| 2023-2024 | \$202,503          |

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$202,503 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, such sum representing additional costs attributable to the increase in the salaries and benefits required by the proposed agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels in accordance with the most recent collective bargaining agreement.

**ARTICLE TWENTY-FIVE:**

To see if the Town will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Selectboard and the International Association of Fire Fighters, Local 3288 on March 6, 2023, which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

| Year      | Estimated Increase |
|-----------|--------------------|
| 2023-2024 | \$175,226          |

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$175,226 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, such sum representing additional costs attributable to the increase in the salaries and benefits required by the proposed agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels in accordance with the most recent collective bargaining agreement.

**ARTICLE TWENTY-SIX:**

To see if the Town will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Selectboard and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 93, Local 3657 (Police Department employees) on March 6, 2023, which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

| Year      | Estimated Increase |
|-----------|--------------------|
| 2023-2024 | \$170,176          |

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$170,176 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, such sum representing additional costs attributable to the increase in the salaries and benefits required by the proposed agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels in accordance with the most recent collective bargaining agreement.

**Selectboard Member Geraghty moved to approve Article Twenty-Four, Twenty-Five, and Twenty-Six. The motion is seconded from the floor.** Moderator Eggleton opens the item up for debate. Selectboard Member Geraghty makes additional comments on the Articles. Moderator Eggleton closes the debate. **Moderator Eggleton calls the question. The Articles PASSED.**

**ARTICLE TWENTY-SEVEN:**

To see if the Town, per RSA 31:98a, will vote to raise and appropriate \$25,000 into the Town's Annual Contingency Fund for fiscal year 2023-2024, this sum to come from taxation.

**Selectboard Member Geraghty moved to approve Article Twenty-Seven. The motion is seconded from the floor.** Moderator Eggleton opens the item up for debate. Moderator Eggleton closes the debate. **Moderator Eggleton calls the question. The Article PASSED.**

**ARTICLE TWENTY-EIGHT:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$28,555,313 to pay the operating expenses of the Town for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, for the purposes set forth in the Town budget. This sum does not include any of the preceding or succeeding articles.

**Selectboard Member Christie moved to approve Article Twenty-Eight. The motion is seconded from the floor.** Moderator Eggleton opens the item up for debate. **Selectboard Member Christie comments and suggests someone move the question straight to vote. The move is seconded.** Moderator Eggleton indicates we need 2/3 vote to move question without comment. **Moderator Eggleton calls the question. The motion passes to move directly to vote.** Moderator Eggleton closes the debate. **Moderator Eggleton calls the question. The vote for Article Twenty-Eight by voice is too close to call so moved to a hand vote. The Articles PASSED with a vote of Ayes (56) and Nays (10).**

Moderator Eggleton announces Bond Voting Results:

|                 |           |         |                |
|-----------------|-----------|---------|----------------|
| Article Nine:   | Yes - 140 | No - 12 | Article PASSED |
| Article Ten:    | Yes - 141 | No - 11 | Article PASSED |
| Article Eleven: | Yes - 145 | No - 7  | Article PASSED |

Moderator Eggleton Announces Ballot Voting Results. Shown under each Article as written in these minutes.

Selectboard Member Rassias gives a presentation.

**ARTICLE TWENTY-NINE:**

Moderator Eggleton introduces Steve Fowler to introduce Article Twenty-Nine.

To see if the Town, pursuant to RSA 31:9-b will vote to increase the meeting stipend for the Town Moderator from \$100.00 per local election/meeting to \$125 per local election/meeting and from \$500 per state election to \$550 per state election.

**Selectboard Member Whitcomb moved to approve Article Twenty-Nine. The motion is seconded from the floor.** Mr. Fowler opens the Article up for debate. Mr. Fowler closes the debate. **Mr. Fowler calls the question. The motion PASSED.**

#### **ARTICLE THIRTY:**

To see if the Town, pursuant to RSA 41:25 will vote to authorize the Selectboard to increase the Town Clerk's compensation from \$11.51 per hour to \$15.00 per hour.

**Selectboard Member Whitcomb moved to approve Article Thirty. The motion is seconded from the floor.** Moderator Eggleton opens the Article up for debate. Moderator Eggleton closes the debate. **Moderator Eggleton calls the question. The motion PASSED.**

#### **ARTICLE THIRTY-ONE:**

To see if the town, pursuant to RSA 31:9-b. will vote to authorize the Selectboard to increase the hourly rate for the Supervisors of Checklist from \$11.51 per hour to \$15.00 per hour.

**Selectboard Member Whitcomb moved to approve Article Thirty-One. The motion is seconded from the floor.** Moderator Eggleton opens the Article up for debate. Moderator Eggleton closes the debate. **Moderator Eggleton calls the question. The motion PASSED.**

#### **ARTICLE THIRTY-TWO:**

To see if the town, pursuant to RSA 674:5, will authorize the Selectboard to appoint a Capital Improvement Program Committee, including at least one member of the planning board, to discuss, prepare and amend a recommended program of municipal capital improvement projects projected over a period of at least 6 years.

**Selectboard Member Whitcomb moved to approve Article Thirty-Two. The motion is seconded from the floor.** Moderator Eggleton opens the Article up for debate. Moderator Eggleton closes the debate. **Moderator Eggleton calls the question. The motion PASSED.**

#### **ARTICLE THIRTY-THREE:**

To transact any other business that may legally be brought before this Town Meeting. **Kari Asmus requests the prepared statement on Article 28 by the Hanover Finance Committee be included in the Minutes of Town Meeting. The motion was seconded from the floor. Moderator Eggleton calls the question. The motion PASSED.**

Article Twenty-Eight Prepared Statement as submitted:

*"During a public meeting on March 29, the Finance Committee voted unanimously to approve the FY24 Town of Hanover budget as contained in this article and many of the other articles.*

*Our full statement is on page 66 of the Annual Report.*



*We voted our approval primarily on the basis that we believe the level of funding in this budget is generally necessary for the goods and services that residents of Hanover have historically enjoyed and expected. There are some amounts that we might quibble over, and those perhaps can be part of the discussion next year as we will undoubtedly need to look some challenges in the eye as part of the FY25 budget process.*

*For the third straight year, the Selectboard budget proposes use of one-time monies from the Undesignated Fund Balance to support on-going operational expenses and to temper what would otherwise be a 10.9% tax rate increase. (With the non-inclusion of \$32,000 in Article 23, the anticipated tax rate increase itself is now estimated at 7%.) This proposal is of particular concern as the reliance on fund balance has doubled over last year, and in the case of the Ambulance Fund where the fund balance will be drawn down to \$0, its usage is inconsistent with Selectboard policy.*

*The Finance Committee also notes that capital reserve funds are on a trajectory to be depleted more rapidly than they are replenished—owing to the impact of inflation on replacement costs. The Finance Committee urges the Selectboard and administrators to carefully monitor and plot the multi-year trajectories necessary to keep future increases manageable to taxpayers and to weigh the fairness of shifting costs from current to future taxpayers when considering additional bonds.*

*The Selectboard's involvement will be critical in this highly uncertain environment, and we encourage members of the public to engage in the discussions that we hope will ensue. In closing, the Finance Committee expresses its appreciation for the efforts of staff, administrators and Board members throughout this past year and the difficulties endemic to times of transition. We note the budget process of the past two years has been less than ideal and many questions regarding fiscal management have been raised as completion of the FY22 audit is still in the wings. We are pleased with the recent hiring of key staff, and we look forward to a productive year ahead."*

**Joanna Whitcomb moves Peter Christie's prepared statement on Article Twenty-Eight to be included in the Minutes of Town Meeting. The motion is seconded from the floor. Moderator Eggleton calls the question. The motion PASSED.**

Article Twenty-Eight prepared statement as submitted:

*"First I want to thank you for your support of the earlier articles - in particular the collective bargaining articles which are a big part of the full budget .*

*Before I get started on the Budget itself, I have a few other budget related items to bring you up to speed on. The first is relative to the Bressett Fund. The Bressett fund spending request in this budget is \$100,000. In managing this fund, we have had three main objectives:*

*- to fund high value projects that meet the intent of the endowment,*

- to limit spending in any one year to 5% of the fund based on a three-year rolling average
- to maintain the purchasing power of the fund.

Historically we have been able to meet all of these objectives until this year when the fund realized a 16% loss in market value and a high inflation rate put the fund “underwater” in terms of maintaining its purchasing power.

Based on recommendations from the Trustees of Trust Funds, the Selectboard chose to limit the payout formula to 4% and of that to spend only the \$100,000 already committed to the Hanover Improvement Society Campion Rink Capital Campaign. Hopefully, this year the market will be more kind and inflation lower allowing a more generous use of the fund in 2024.

The Town is blessed with a robust Capital Improvement Plan which is funded annually based on the calculated ten-year need. I like to think of our current practice as a “pay forward” system. The capital purchases made this year were funded by taxes paid 5 or so years ago, and the amount going into reserves this year will be spent 5 or so years from now. This plan has the advantage of smoothing out the year-to-year tax impact of capital purchases.

The Plan has been developed and funded over many years. Early on it was a challenge to just document all Town assets, with items being added each year as the list became more and more complete. Then we realized that applying a 2% inflation factor would make the cost of future acquisitions more realistic. Now we expect that 2% is too low given recent inflation trends. In addition, facility needs have historically not been included in the CIP. There is money in this budget to quantify that need as well. Yet another hole to climb out of.

In addition, we have come to realize that while the plan works well for lower value and shorter useful life purchases (think computers and police vehicles), it has proven very difficult to fully fund larger and longer life assets (think fire trucks and bridges), which at the end of the day have required bonding or lease financing. The “generational equity” issue is also much greater for these high value, longer life assets. As we continue to refine the system, I predict that we will use more bonding and leases as the best way to fund these larger purchases.

Our thinking about the use of Undesignated Fund Balances is also evolving and consideration is being given to purposely building up these funds as the most transparent way to reserve for anticipated higher operating costs. Historically we have tried to manage the Undesignated Fund on a year-to-year basis without a long-term perspective. We have also had a goal of not using Undesignated Fund Balances to manage the tax rate. That goal has not been met for several years in a row and probably is unrealistic. We used over \$500,000 this year to keep the tax rate increase in the desired range. This is about the same as was used last year.

The good news is that the general fund undesignated fund balance remains at 15% - which is at the high end of our targeted range.

Like many budget issues - always a work in progress.

*This year's budget development was significantly different than in past years. With a new town manager and new finance director, both going through the Hanover budget process for the first time, and each with ideas on how budgets should be developed and presented - we set off on a true adventure which I think has ended in a good place.*

*Alex is committed to greater public involvement and discussion of Town priorities, and having those priorities overtly reflected in budget choices. He and Ellen also took a deep dive into each line-item account to be sure that expenses were being charged accurately.*

*This resulted in some accounts being trimmed and others being added. Two examples of this were the creation of an account to capture the cost of running elections and another for the pay out of known retirement obligations. Both of these had previously been paid from other non-related accounts that were historically over budgeted.*

*This year's intentional alignment of priorities and more accurate accounting of expenses will serve us well going forward.*

*Now on to the budget itself.*

*The proposed budget calls for a general fund tax rate increase of 6.51 % and a blended rate tax rate increase of 6.58 %.*

*This is the highest increase that I can remember in over 20 years and is primarily driven by the Town's need to significantly increase salaries to remain competitive. This need was confirmed by an in-house survey and by the data. In 2022 we lost 47 employees, approximately 1/3 of our staff. Not all of those were attributable to pay, but a significant number were. Could you run a business with 30% turnover in one year? I know I couldn't.*

*Our Department Heads supported the priority for significant wage increases and were tasked with level funding their operating expenses in order to keep the tax rate increase below 7%.*

*They did this in several ways. The most significant being to make hundreds of small cuts. I think this can best be demonstrated by comparing this year's total operating expenses to last year's. Overall, they are going up by less than 1% despite a 7% inflation rate.*

*Some of the bigger operating expense items that did not make the cut include:*

*office furniture (\$2,500)*

*a scanner for HR (\$3,000)*

*Howe and Etna Library requests (\$20,300)*

*DPW funds for additional sidewalk repair (\$50,000)*

*a new Police vehicle (\$76,600)*

*and software for the rental housing inspection initiative (\$5,500)*

*I mention these as examples of belt tightening to help offset the wage and benefit increases.*

*The Town will be taking a broader look at our compensation, benefits, and HR policies this coming year, as we try to address the needs of a new generation of public employees. The old formula was based on good pay and benefits, a very robust retirement plan, and long term job stability. Those may no longer be what are most valued, as the next generation is more driven by work/life balance, flexible schedules, the potential to work from home, highly competitive compensation, job challenge and growth, with less emphasis on retirement.*

*The times they are a changing.*

*This budget introduces a few new concepts.*

*It includes a \$25,000 contingency fund. As the budget itself becomes tighter and tighter, the need for a contingency fund increases to cover unpredicted expenses. This year's funding is only a token amount, but a beginning.*

*Another new concept includes:*

*The overt funding of known retirement liabilities in the amount of \$30,000.*

*The funding to properly staff and support election work in the amount of \$110,000.*

*\$30,000 for new initiatives which include funds for a town wide facilities review and other initiatives that hopefully will lead to a more rapidly growing tax base.*

*On a separate note, the Town will soon decide on the best use of the remaining \$935,000 of ARPA Funds. As you can imagine, the wish list far exceeds that amount. The Select Board almost pulled the trigger on using \$300,000 to replenish the Parking fund which took a terrible hit due to covid but decided to wait and include that need in the larger wish list to be looked at this summer. There will be abundant opportunity for your input on how to best spend these one-time funds.*

*As I wrap up, again, this budget calls for a blended 6.58% tax rate increase and hopefully earns your support. It should be noted that this increase is in line with inflation, with increases in neighboring towns, and with the tax rate increase recently approved for the schools.*

*As always, I want to thank our Department Heads and all Town staff who performed above and beyond during this past year. Many departments are significantly understaffed, putting even more pressure on an already full workload.*

*A special shout out goes to Kerry Osgood, Ellen Bullion and Alex who dug down deep and survived their first Hanover budget and Town Meeting preparation.*

*Along with Town staff, our volunteers also went the extra mile again this year to keep their areas of interest alive and thriving.*

*We also appreciate the support of the Hanover Finance Committee and Kari Asmus in particular, who was especially helpful this year in identifying gaps and errors as the budget was being developed.*

*Let me stop here and open the floor for questions.”*

Moderator Eggleton asked if any member of the public had any business. Nico Macri moved to include the \$32,000 for school crosswalk lights to be added back into the budget. Moderator Eggleton stated it could not be done due to not being properly noticed.

**A motion to adjourn was made.**

**The motion was seconded from the floor.**

**Moderator Eggleton called the question.**

**Town Meeting was adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta Hitchcock, Town Clerk

Minutes prepared by Catheryn Hembree