

**STODDARD, NEW HAMPSHIRE
ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION & MEETING**

On May 11, 2021, the TOWN ELECTION took place at the Town Hall. **ORDER OF BUSINESS: To the inhabitants of the Town of Stoddard in the County of Cheshire in the State of New Hampshire, qualified to vote in Town affairs: You are hereby notified to meet at the Stoddard Town Hall, 1450 Rt. 123 North in said Stoddard on Tuesday, the eleventh (11th) day of May 2021 next, at eleven of the clock in the forenoon (11:00 AM) to act upon the following article:**

Article 1: To choose, by ballot all necessary Town Officers for the ensuing year.

**TOWN MEETING MINUTES
MAY 18, 2021**

Pledge of Allegiance

Power Point presentation given by Michelle Pong, Town Administrator, which provided a specific breakdown and explanation of this year's budget.

Article 2: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a \$50,000.00 down payment from the Fire/Rescue Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund toward the gross sum of \$230,000.00 (gross budget) for the purchase of a new Fire Vehicle, and to authorize issuance of not more than \$180,000.00 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33) and to authorize municipal officials to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon; and raise and appropriate an additional \$40,000.00 for the first year bond or note payment to come from general taxation with \$40,000.00 raised from general taxation to fund payment over the following four years. **Recommended by the Selectmen. 3/5 vote required. Discussion followed. Ballot vote commenced; vote results 61 – 21. Article was adopted.**

Article 3: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$548,514.00 for general municipal operations. This article does not include special or individual articles addressed. **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion was made to pass this article by Robert Fee; seconded by Stephen McGerty. Various questions were asked. Discussion followed. **Motion was passed.**

Article 4: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$265,600.00 for winter and summer maintenance, emergencies, and planned repairs of Town roads and bridges. **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by David Vaillancourt; seconded by JoAnn Vaillancourt. **Motion was passed.**

Article 5: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$225,703.00 for all recycling, solid waste and related expenses for the ensuing year for the Stoddard Transfer Station, use of the Washington Transfer Station by certain residents and for hazardous waste disposal services provided by the City of Keene. **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by Christopher Madden; seconded by Robert Fee. Questions were raised about the length of the current contract with Waste Management and whether the Town was considering other companies. Residents voiced concern over other town residents using the Town's transfer station. The selectmen answered the questions and acknowledged the concerns. It was explained that the Town is currently in a contract with Waste Management and that when this contract is over, other options will be considered. Discussion followed. **Motion was passed.**

Article 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$116,600.00 for the operating budget of the Stoddard Fire & Rescue Department. **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by Steven Rockwell; seconded by Brian Michaud. **Motion was passed.**

Article 7: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the Selectmen's recommended amount of \$70,325.00 for the operating budget of the Stoddard Police Department. **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by David Vaillancourt; seconded by JoAnn Vaillancourt. A question was asked and answered. **Motion was passed.**

Article 8: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$45,090.00 for the operation of the Davis Public Library. [Per RSA202-A:11, the funds raised and appropriated, other than payroll and utilities, shall be paid over to the Library Trustees pursuant to a payment schedule as agreed upon by the Library Trustees and the Selectmen.] **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by Don Healy; seconded by Sheila Healy. **Motion was passed.**

Article 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$17,000.00 for the Lay Monitoring, Lake Host Programs and water testing. **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by Terri Shepard Laroche; seconded by David Laroche. **Motion was passed.**

Article 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$17,325.00 for the operating budget of the cemeteries. **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by Karen Bell; seconded by Deborah McGerty. A question was raised about specific budget expenses. TA Michelle Pong explained. **Motion was passed.**

Article 11: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$12,000.00 for providing ambulance services and other related services. **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by Jen Merrill; seconded by Stacy Merolla. **Motion was passed.**

Article 12: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$8,060.00 for the operating budget of the Stoddard Zoning Board of Adjustments. **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by Jason Kovarik; seconded by Dawn Kovarik. **Motion was passed.**

Article 13: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$7,350.00 for the operating budget of the Stoddard Planning Board. **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by Jane McOsker; seconded by Patricia Putnam. **Motion was passed.**

Article 14: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$1,706.00 for the operating budget of the Conservation Commission. **Majority vote required. Not recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by Geoff Jones; seconded by Margo Santoro. Discussion followed. **Motion was passed.**

Article 15: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,900.00 for the operating budget of Emergency Management. **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by Daniel Eaton; seconded by Jason Kovarik. **Motion was passed.**

Article 16: To see if the Town shall vote pursuant to RSA 154:1 to organize the Stoddard Fire and Rescue Department so that the Fire and Rescue members annually elect by ballot vote at the May meeting the Fire Chief and the Board of Officers; Fire and Rescue members shall also vote on admittance of new firefighter members of the department which may occur as needed during the year. Applicants for the position of Fire Chief and Board of Officers must already be members of the department. Qualifications and the procedure for considering new members, Board of Officers, or the Fire Chief shall be as described in the department's duly enacted bylaws. **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by Donald Holland; seconded by Steven Rockwell. Questions were asked. Discussion followed. **Motion was passed.**

Article 17: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000.00 to be added to the Fire/Rescue Vehicle Capital Reserve fund previously established. **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by Brian Michaud; seconded by Steven Rockwell. Discussion followed. **Motion was passed.**

Article 18: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$800.00, to Home Healthcare, Hospice and Community Services to support the continuance of visiting nurse and home health services being provided to the residents of Stoddard. **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by Fred Ward; seconded by Patricia Putnam. **Motion was passed.**

Article 19: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,540.00 for Monadnock Family Services, a non-profit agency which provides quality mental health services to residents of Stoddard, which is requesting said amount to help underwrite the cost of services provided to residents. **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by Ruth Ward; seconded by Patricia Putnam. **Motion was passed.**

Article 20: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$900.00, for support of The Community Kitchen, Inc., located in Keene, New Hampshire. **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by Dawn Kovarik; seconded by Daniel Eaton. Questions were raised and answered. **Motion was passed.**

Article 21: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,000.00, for support of the New Hampshire Region of the American Red Cross. **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by Patricia Putnam; seconded by Clement (Bud) Record. **Motion was passed.**

Article 22: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$876.00 for support of Southwestern Community Services. [Explanation: A non-profit agency which facilitates fuel assistance, weatherization and other related services to residents of Stoddard.] **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by Christopher Madden; seconded by Robert Fee. **Motion was passed.**

Article 23: To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,000.00, for the support of Hundred Nights, Inc. located in Keene, New Hampshire for services provided to Stoddard residents. **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by Stephen McGerty; seconded by Christopher Madden. Discussion followed. **Motion was passed.**

Article 24: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000.00, to be placed in the Building Capital Reserve Fund, established in 2013. **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by Stephen McGerty; seconded by Robert Fee. **Motion was passed.**

Article 25: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000.00, to be placed into the Bridge and Roadway Capital Reserve Fund, previously established. **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by David Vaillancourt; seconded by Robert Fee. A question was asked and answered. **Motion was passed.**

Article 26: To see if the Town will vote to encourage the Stoddard Planning Board to study the feasibility of creating commercial and/or industrial areas along the Route 9 corridor and to include any proposed areas that may result from the study to be part of the 2022 Town Meeting Warrant. **Non-binding. Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by Christopher Madden; seconded by Jane McOsker. Discussion followed. A Standing vote commenced; vote results 33 – 30. **Motion was passed.**

Article 27: To see if the Town will modify the optional adjusted elderly exemptions (per RSA 72:39-a) from property tax to the following:

To qualify for the elderly exemption, the person must have been a New Hampshire resident for at least three consecutive years as of April 1 of the tax year in which application is made; own the real estate individually or jointly, or if the real estate is owned by his or her spouse, they must have been married for at least five consecutive years. In addition, the taxpayer must have a net income of less than \$35,000 or, if married, a combined net income of less than \$45,000; and own net assets not in excess of \$95,000, excluding the value of the person's residence.

The optional exemptions, based on assessed value, for qualified taxpayers shall be as follows:

For a person 65 years of age up to 75 years: \$50,000.

For a person 75 years of age up to 80 years: \$70,000.

For a person 80 years of age or older: \$80,000.

Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen. A motion to pass this article was made by June Congdon; seconded by Patricia Putnam. Discussion followed.

A motion to grant a tax credit of \$250 to residents who are 65 years or older, which is not based on income or assets, was made by Ray Durand. No second motion was made. **Motion was not passed.** Discussion continued.

A motion to table this article was made by Terri LaRoche; seconded by Fred Ward. This is non-negotiable motion. A voice vote commenced. **Motion was passed.**

Article 28: To see if the Town shall approve the following Resolution to Take Action on Climate Pollution: We the town of Stoddard, NH hereby call upon our State and Federal elected representatives to enact carbon-pricing legislation to protect New Hampshire from the costs and environmental risks of continued climate inaction. To protect household, we support a Carbon Fee and Dividend approach that charges fossil fuel producers for their carbon pollution and rebates the money collected to all residents on an equal basis. Enacting a Carbon Cash-Back program decreases long-term fossil-fuel dependence, aids in the economic transition for energy consumers, and keeps local energy dollars in New Hampshire's economy. Carbon Cash-Back has been championed by US economists (Jan 17, 2019 WSJ) as the most effective and fair way to deliver rapid reductions in harmful carbon emissions at the scale required for our safety.

We expect our representatives to lead in this critical moment for the health and well-being of our citizens and for the protection of New Hampshire's natural resources upon which we all rely.

The record of the vote approving this article shall be transmitted by written notice to Stoddard's State Legislators, to the Governor of New Hampshire, to Stoddard's Congressional Delegation, and to the President of the United States, informing them of the instruction from their constituents, by Stoddard's Select Board, within 30 days of this vote. **Submitted by petition. Majority vote required. Not recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by Geoff Jones; seconded by Helen Tamm Semmens. Considerable discussion followed. A motion to indefinitely postpone this article was made by George Davenport; seconded by Fred Ward. **Motion was defeated.** Discussion continued. A voice vote commenced. **Motion was passed.**

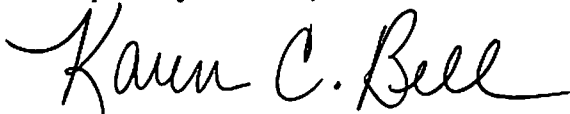
Article 29: To see if the Town will vote to establish an Emergency Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of funding unexpected losses or repairs to town buildings or equipment that require immediate attention and cost over \$5,000.00; and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000.00 to be placed in this fund. Further, to name the Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund. **Majority vote required. Recommended by Selectmen.** A motion to pass this article was made by Christopher Madden; seconded by Robert Fee. **Motion was passed.**

Article 30: To see if the Town will be amenable to instituting a fee structure for disposal of refuse at the Town of Stoddard Transfer Station. **Non-binding. Recommended by Selectmen.** Discussion followed. A motion to pass this article was made by Stephen McGerty; seconded by Robert Fee. **Motion was defeated.**

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Kaitlyn Hayes; seconded by Anita Shaw.

Meeting adjourned at 9:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen C. Bell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Karen C. Bell, Town Clerk