

TOWN OF GRANTHAM NEW HAMPSHIRE

TOWN MEETING MINUTES

MARCH 8, 2016

SS. STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

SULLIVAN COUNTY

Moderator Susanna Schweizer called the 240th Annual Town Meeting to order at 5:05pm. The assembly was lead in the Pledge of Allegiance by the Grantham Girl Scout Brownie Troop #42060 and the Grantham Girl Scout Juniors Troop #12260.

The Moderator reminded those residents in attendance to sit within the posts in the room so that they will be allowed to vote on all articles. She also reminded them to be sure to pick up their yes/no paper ballots if they have not already, as those will be necessary for any secret ballot votes. Non-voters were instructed to sit behind the police tape on the east side of the room. Emergency exits and rest rooms were identified.

The Moderator welcomed new residents to Grantham. She also advised residents to pick up a copy of the Town Report at the rear of the room, as a copy of the warrant is included within the report.

The 2015 Town Report is dedicated to the employees of the town. Selectman Warren Kimball noted the hard work of the town's employees and asked the townspeople to thank them whenever possible.

The Moderator stated that the meeting having been properly warned as it is certified on page 75 of the Town Report and by the authority vested in me by the laws of the State of New Hampshire I do now declare the 240th Annual Meeting of the Town of Grantham officially opened for business. Polls were opened at 10:00am for ballot voting and close at 7:00pm. Articles 1-4 appear on the ballot and will be voted on by ballot. Ballots are available from the Supervisors of the Checklist at the rear of the room.

The Moderator introduced Selectmen Constance Jones, Sheridan Brown and G. Warren Kimball; Town Administrator Melissa White; Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector Ken Story; Supervisors of the Checklist Donna Stamper, Sandra Noordsy and Suzanne Goldman. The complete list of town officers is on pages 7-10 of the Town Report. The Moderator noted two minor errors in the list of terms within the list of town officers; specifically, those for Chris Morris, Town Treasurer, and Suzanne Goldman. The Moderator then indicated these corrections.

The Moderator also noted the recent retirements of two long-term town employees, Cindy Towle and Rita Friedman. She acknowledged both women and all their hard work on behalf of the town.

2016 Town Meeting Rules (listed on page 73 of the Town Report)

1. The Moderator will use the following general rules of procedure, the main purpose of which are to keep the meeting moving and not get bogged down in procedural quagmires.
2. Non-voters who are not officers of the town or consultants to the town may be allowed to address the meeting only if the town votes to permit it. A simple majority is required.

3. The Moderator will consider each Article as follows:
 - A. The Moderator will announce the Article number, and the text of the Article will be displayed on the overhead screen or will be otherwise made available at the Meeting. The Moderator need not read the full text of the Article.
 - B. The Moderator will recognize a member of the Board of Selectman or the petitioner (if a petitioned Article) to move the adoption of the Article.
 - C. If the Motion is seconded, the Moderator will recognize a member of the Board of Selectmen or the petitioner to explain the Article.
 - D. The Meeting will debate and then vote on the Article.
4. ALL voters will direct their remarks to the Moderator. Whenever a voter wishes to speak, he or she will go the microphone, address the Moderator by first identifying him or herself and providing his or her street address. The microphone is necessary for accurate recording of the meeting.
 - A. If a voter is unable to reach one of the stand-up microphones, the voter should raise his/her hand and one of the hand-held microphones will be provided.
 - B. In order for everyone to have the opportunity to speak, speakers will be limited to three minutes (with the exception of initial presentations on warrant articles).
 - C. No one will be recognized to speak a second time until everyone who wishes to speak a first time has had the opportunity.
 - D. If you agree with someone, it is OK to say that instead of repeating something that has already been said.
 - E. The microphone will also be used by people wanting to “Call (or Move) the question.” Anyone shouting it out from his or her seat will not be recognized. This will avoid preempting people who are already in line to speak to an issue.
 - F. A motion to “Call the question” requires a 2/3 vote. If this motion is passed all voters standing at a microphone or holding a microphone and anyone seated at the head table who has previously told the Moderator that he/she wishes to speak on the Motion will be allowed to speak.
 - G. The Moderator shall have the right to refuse to recognize a Motion to Call (or Move) the question if, in the Moderator’s opinion, the voters have not yet had an adequate opportunity to discuss an issue.
5. All questions and comments should be addressed to the Moderator. The Moderator will choose who responds to the questions.

6. Unless superseded by State law, reconsideration of a vote on any article should be brought up immediately after the vote has been declared and may only be made by a voter who voted on the prevailing side of the vote to be reconsidered.
 - A. **Mandatory Restriction:** A vote on the issuance of bonds or notes over \$100,000 cannot be reconsidered at the same meeting. In accordance with RSA 33:8-a, if a motion to reconsider a ballot vote on a bond issue of over \$ 100,000 passes, the Article cannot be reconsidered until a reconvened Meeting that is at least seven (7) days after the original vote. With respect to bond votes, the restrictions on reconsideration automatically apply without the need for the Meeting to vote for it.
 - B. **Optional Restriction:** Voters may postpone reconsideration of any Article at this Meeting by voting to restrict reconsideration of the Article in accordance with RSA 40:10. If the Meeting passes such a motion, then the Article cannot be reconsidered until a reconvened meeting held at least seven (7) days after the date of the original vote.
7. The Moderator will conduct a secret “yes-no” ballot when five voters make a written request prior to a voice or show of hands vote on any article open for discussion. All five voters must be present and identified.
8. Any ruling by the Moderator can be challenged. The Moderator will conduct a secret “yes-no” ballot when seven or more voters question any non-ballot vote immediately after the vote is declared and before any other business is conducted.
9. All proposed amendments to articles will be submitted in writing to the Moderator prior to discussion of the amendment.
10. Registered voters only will be seated in the center section of the meeting hall. Non-voters will be seated in the visitor’s gallery located in the area bounded by the pillars and the inside wall of the meeting hall.
11. The Moderator will not accept negative motions; that is, motions which require a “no” vote to vote in the affirmative such as “I move that we not adopt the budget.”
12. If the Meeting is not finished at 11:00 pm, the Moderator may recess the Meeting to a future date.

ARTICLE 1 – Election of Officers

To choose by ballot and majority vote for the ensuing years as enumerated:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Elected</u>
Selectman	3 years	Connie Jones
Selectman	2 years	Sheridan Brown
Planning Board	3 years	Mary Hutchins
Town Clerk/Tax Collector	3 years	Kenneth Story
Trustee of Trust Funds	3 years	Robert Fogg
Cemetery Trustee	3 years	Chris Paquette
Trustee of Dunbar Free Library	3 years	Beverly Marshall
Trustee of Dunbar Free Library	3 years	Sara Lang
Supervisor of the Checklist	6 years	Sandra Noordsy
Moderator	2 years	Susanna Schweizer

ARTICLE 2 – Zoning Change

To choose by ballot and majority vote:

Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 1 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town Zoning Ordinance as follows: Amending Article X-B. Forest Lands Conservation Districts to add the Town-owned parcel known as Brookside Park to the list of areas designated for conservation.

Rationale: Brookside Park was designated for conservation on the date the Town’s Zoning Ordinance was adopted, but was unintentionally omitted. The omission, to be corrected by the proposed amendment, was realized when the Town recently acquired abutting acreage to expand the Brookside Park conservation area.

Recommended by the Planning Board

Passed by Official Ballot – Yes 170; No 12

ARTICLE 3 – Zoning Change

To choose by ballot and majority vote:

Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 2 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town Zoning Ordinance as follows: Amending Article XII. General Provisions, Section C, to include as a prohibited “Obnoxious Use” the storage of junk (e.g., materials such as construction and demolition debris and household waste).

Rationale: The goal of the “Obnoxious Use” provision of the Town’s Zoning Ordinance is to protect the comfort, peace, enjoyment, aesthetics, health, and/or safety of the surrounding neighborhood and community.

The amendment seeks to strengthen the ordinance's effectiveness as a safeguard against neighborhood blight and reduction in neighborhood property values that may result from storage of junk materials.

Recommended by the Planning Board

Passed by Official Ballot – Yes 143; No 37

ARTICLE 4 – Zoning Change

To choose by ballot and majority vote:

Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 3 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town Zoning Ordinance as follows: Amending Article XVIII Definitions to create a separate definition of “Junk” that includes items already listed within the definition of “Junkyard” and adds “construction and demolition materials; household waste; and all other discarded or second hand material” within the proposed new definition of “Junk.”

Rationale: The present list of items that constitute junk within the current definition of “Junkyard” in the Town zoning ordinance lacks clarity regarding items other than automobiles and their parts whose storage may also have a detrimental impact upon the comfort, peace, enjoyment, aesthetics, health, and/or safety of the surrounding neighborhood. The new definition of “junk” will improve the clarity and enforceability of the ordinance by adding additional examples of junk items.

Recommended by the Planning Board

Passed by Official Ballot – Yes 144; No 36

Before proceeding with discussion of Articles 5-21, Moderator Schweizer directed the audience's attention to the screen at the front of the room, and Town Administrator White's summary of the town's budget. This summary was presented.

Moderator Schweizer then asked for a show of hands for those who wanted her to read each article aloud before discussion. There being no response in the affirmative, she agreed not to read each article aloud prior to discussion.

ARTICLE 5 - Shall the town adopt the provisions of RSA 72:61-64 inclusively, which provide for an optional property tax exemption from the property's assessed value, for property tax purposes, for persons owning real property, which is equipped with solar energy systems intended for use at the immediate site. Such property tax exemption shall be in the amount equal to 100% of the assessed value of qualifying solar energy system equipment under these statutes.

Recommended by the Selectmen (Majority vote required)

Selectman Brown moved the article and Selectman Kimball seconded. Brown spoke to the article and its exclusive use by residential homeowners. Ray Sears of 23 Fairway Drive requested clarification on the benefit for shared use, for this article and Articles 6-7. Brown said that residents who install this system on his/her property would receive the exemption, not anyone else benefitting from the reduced cost of using the system. Richard Karash of 23 Shore Road asked if a solar energy system would be assessed separately from the rest of the property. Brown replied that state guidance indicates that any additional assessed value beyond the cost of the system would be covered by the proposed exemption.

Article 5 Passed by majority voice vote

ARTICLE 6 – Shall the town adopt the provisions of RSA 72:65-68 inclusively, which provide for an optional property tax exemption from the property’s assessed value, for property tax purposes, for persons owning real property, which is equipped with wind powered energy systems intended for use at the immediate site. Such property tax exemption shall be in the amount equal to 100% of the assessed value of qualifying wind-powered energy system equipment under these statutes.

Recommended by the Selectmen (Majority vote required)

Selectman Kimball moved the article and Selectman Jones seconded. Kimball spoke to the article and said it’s essentially same proposal as Article 5 with different equipment. Given that there was no discussion, the Moderator called for a vote.

Article 6 Passed by majority voice vote

ARTICLE 7 - Shall the town adopt the provisions of RSA 72:69-72 inclusively, which provide for an optional property tax exemption from the property’s assessed value, for property tax purposes, for persons owning real property, which is equipped with wood heating energy systems intended for use at the immediate site. Such property tax exemption shall be in the amount equal to 100% of the assessed value of qualifying wood-heating energy system equipment under these statutes.

Recommended by the Selectmen (Majority vote required)

Selectman Jones moved the article and Selectman Kimball seconded. Jones spoke to the article and said it goes along with the previous two, but this is for outdoor wood-burning furnaces. Richard Karash of 23 Shore Road made the point that the article mentions only wood-burning heating systems and does not specifically say ‘outdoor;’ he then asked if his wood-burning stove would qualify, as he thought it would, given the included language. Mr. Karash then added that he was concerned about the article as it would mean that every homeowner who heats with an interior wood-burning stove would be coming to the town for an exemption and he suggested that the language of the article be amended to include specific mention of ‘outdoor’ in front of every incidence of the phrase “wood heating energy systems.” He asked for assistance with the language and the addition of the word ‘outdoor’ was suggested as noted above. Mr. Karash then made the motion to submit that amendment. Moderator Schweizer asked for a second, but discussion continued as to where exactly the word ‘outdoor’ should be included; it was agreed that it should be included twice within the language of the article, and the Moderator re-read the article with the proposed language included. Mr. Karash agreed to the amended article as read. The Moderator then asked for further discussion. Selectman Brown then read from the statute enabling this article; specifically, the section of the statute that defines a wood-heating energy system as “...a wood-burning appliance designed to operate as a central heating system to heat the interior of a building. The appliance may burn wood solely or burn wood in combination with another fuel. The central heating system shall include a central appliance to distribute heat by a series of pipes, ducts or similar distribution system throughout a single building or a group of buildings. A wood-burning appliance shall not include a fireplace – meaning a hearth, fire chamber or similarly prepared place with a chimney intended to be usable in an open configuration – whether or not it may also be

closed and operated closed or a wood stove, meaning a wood-burning appliance used for space-heating purposes which does not operate as a central heating system or as a sole source of heat.” Brown then offered his opinion that, operating under the authority of that statute, and incorporating its definition by reference, we would not be covering wood stoves with this exemption as written in the original article. The Moderator then asked for further discussion. Peter James of 28 Split Rock Road spoke and asked, if by adding the word ‘outside’ to this article, are we excluding those who install pellet-burning stoves or furnaces in their basements and thereby eliminating other opportunities for savings on these systems. Mr. James added that the addition of the word ‘outside’ seems unnecessary given the language of the statute and that he was therefore opposed to the amendment. Mr. Karash spoke again and apologized for suggesting the amendment, as he felt that his concern was covered by the language of the statute. He then asked to withdraw his amendment. Moderator Schweizer then asked if withdrawing the amendment was amenable with whoever seconded the amendment; as the second could not be identified, she declared that if there was no objection to withdrawing the amendment, the amendment should be considered withdrawn. The Moderator then went back to the original article and asked if there was further discussion. State Representative Andy Schmidt of 56 Anderson Pond Road then spoke in opposition to the article due to his concern about pollutants. He questioned the wisdom of giving a tax exemption for such polluting devices. Jones then mentioned that the reason that this article is being considered at all is due to a recommendation from the town’s Energy Committee and in deference to all the research done by that committee toward this end. She then asked if there was anyone from the Energy Committee who might want to speak to this article. Scott Holland of 8 Pioneer Point seconded what Schmidt had said earlier and added that he lives in a neighborhood where several wood stoves are in use. In spite of closed windows, etc., he can still smell the wood smoke and the irritating chemicals inside his residence. Jeannine Chenevert of 16 Wildwood Drive then identified herself as a member of the Energy Committee and said that the committee proposed this as a way of promoting renewables. This RSA is intended to promote high-efficiency wood-burning systems that have to meet certain criteria when you apply for the exemption. These systems are not going to produce high volumes of smoke and very little exhaust or ash. Richard Kaszeta of 182 Split Rock Road clarified that according to RSA just read by Selectman Brown, it doesn’t say anything about high-efficiency systems. He expressed concern as he used to live near someone who used a poorly tuned outdoor wood boiler and found the exhaust to be stifling. He is hesitant to recommend an article like this when there are many health concerns about such systems. Susan Buchanan of 43 Deer Run asked a question of the Energy Committee representative; specifically, what are the benefits of these systems over a high-efficiency wood stove. She wondered if a study had been done for comparison. The Moderator asked if anyone wanted to respond to that question. Given that no one did, the Moderator called for a vote.

Article 7 Defeated by majority voice vote

ARTICLE 8 – To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of seventeen thousand, five hundred dollars (**\$17,500**) for the purchase and installation of upgrading the existing streetlights in town to LED streetlights.

Recommended by the Selectmen (Majority vote required)

Selectman Kimball moved the article and Selectman Brown seconded. Kimball spoke to the article and said it’s an effort by the town to reduce future energy costs. This money will replace all current streetlights with LED bulbs. At present we spend \$3,400/year to run the existing bulbs; according to Eversource, replacement with LED bulbs will cost approximately \$1,400/year with a payback of approximately four years. We wanted to be ahead of the curve here, and we want to take advantage of a potential \$2,600 rebate from Eversource for this program. Given that there was no discussion, the Moderator called for a vote.

Article 8 Passed by unanimous voice vote

ARTICLE 9 – To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of forty one thousand, eight-hundred forty five dollars (**\$41,845**) for the purchase and installation of LED fixtures and lights in the Municipal Town Building, Fire Station and Transfer Station.

Recommended by the Selectmen (Majority vote required)

Selectman Brown moved the article and Selectman Kimball seconded. Brown spoke to the article and said this project has a return on investment (ROI) of 4.8 years which is far less than the lifespan of LED lights which can be 20-30 years. This will provide a significant annual cost savings in our energy use and will have significant payback once we reach that 4.8 year limit. Also, by doing this project now we can substantially reduce the cost of this project by receiving a 50% rebate from Eversource. The Moderator asked for discussion. Scott Holland of 8 Pioneer Point mentioned the compact fluorescent bulbs he installed in his home and the significant drop in lifespan of the bulb by the constant ‘on/off’ of operating the bulb. He wondered if this would affect the proposed bulbs in their use in the fire station, town hall, etc. Brown noted that the vendor with whom he spoke assured him that the LED bulbs have an extensive lifespan. He went on to explain his understanding of difference between compact fluorescent bulbs and LED bulbs. He added that he’s not aware of any such issue with the LED bulbs. Ray Sears of 23 Fairway Drive mentioned that he is an electrical engineer and noted the compact fluorescent is fitted with a filament that suffers mechanical stress from the on/off process that wears it out. That filament is not present in the LED bulb. Given that there was no further discussion, the Moderator called for a vote.

Article 9 Passed by unanimous voice vote

ARTICLE 10 – General Government

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one million two hundred thirty-three thousand three hundred twenty-four dollars (**\$1,233,324.00**) to defray the cost of **General Government** operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

Recommended by the Selectmen (Majority vote required)

Account Title	Budget 2015/2016	Proposed 2016/2017	Change Increase or (Decrease)
Selectmen’s Office	\$208,150	\$209,088	\$938
Town Clerk/Tax Collector	\$116,350	\$115,109	(\$1,241)
Supervisors of the Checklist	\$4,500	\$7,400	\$2,900
Financial Administration	\$40,200	\$40,200	\$0.00
Tax Maps/Assessing	\$42,000	\$43,000	\$1,000
Legal	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$0.00
Personnel Administration	\$556,119	\$602,355	\$46,236
Planning Board	\$21,750	\$7,850	(\$13,900)
Zoning Board of Adjustment	\$2,375	\$2,450	\$75
General Government Buildings	\$114,100	\$117,635	\$3,535
Cemeteries	\$18,200	\$19,200	\$1,000
Insurance	\$31,416	\$34,063	\$2,647
Regional Associations	\$3,935	\$3,974	\$39
Other General Government	\$0.00	\$1,000	\$1,000
TOTAL	\$1,189,095	\$1,233,324	\$44,229

Selectman Jones moved the article and Selectman Kimball seconded. Jones reviewed the increases and decreases, line by line. Given that there was no discussion, the Moderator called for a vote.

Article 10 Passed by unanimous voice vote

ARTICLE 11 – Public Safety

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of six hundred thirty-two thousand, seven hundred forty-two dollars (**\$632,742.00**) to defray the cost of **Public Safety** operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

Recommended by the Selectmen (Majority vote required)

Account Title	Budget 2015/2016	Proposed 2016/2017	Change Increase or (Decrease)
Police Department	\$382,418	\$404,586	\$22,168
Ambulance (FAST Squad)	\$71,026	\$80,450	\$9,424
Fire Department	\$126,670	\$127,206	\$536
Building Inspection	\$8,500	\$8,500	\$0.00
Emergency Management	\$12,600	\$12,000	(\$600)
TOTAL	\$601,214	\$632,742	\$31,528

Selectman Kimball moved the article and Selectman Brown seconded. Kimball reviewed the increases, line by line. Jamielynn Garland of 12 Slalom Drive proposed an amendment to the article: “To see if the town will vote to raise the sum of an additional \$15,000 to be added to the Public Safety operations budget to be used for salaries and benefits for the Police Department’s hourly personnel. The total operations budget would be \$647,742 if this amendment passes.” The amendment was seconded by Brenda Malloy of 86 Stocker Pond Road. Peter James of 28 Split Rock Road noted that there is currently \$7,500 in the article for pay raises and that this amendment seeks to add another \$15,000, which makes a total of \$22,500 to be divided by three, maybe four officers, which amounts to an additional minimum \$100 weekly increase in pay per officer. He noted that he’s on Social Security and did not get an increase this year, and added that he suspects there are others in the room who did not get an increase either. In view of the fact that we’re short an officer right now and have not yet begun the search process, he believes that the original \$7,500 increase was more than enough for the three officers on staff and urged the town to vote down this amendment. Richard Karash of 43 Shore Road stated how much he appreciates our officers, but would like to hear the argument in favor of this amendment rather than just the wording of the amendment itself. He’d like to hear more about the necessity of this amendment; otherwise, he’s just not sure how to vote. Chief Madore explained that he took over police department in 2008; ever since 2011, we have experienced a virtually constant turnover in personnel. He believes the town has top-rated equipment, a top-rated facility, and all the newest equipment the town can afford, so the department has done everything in its power to provide a modern, efficient work environment for its officers. The problem we have is we cannot retain officers because of the amount of money that we pay them. He stated he has tried over the years to be frugal with the town’s money and he has not come before the town to ask for large budget increases. There comes a time when we need to look at everything. The \$7,500 increase he submitted for the original article was for the entire department, including himself, the sergeant, patrol officers and the administrative assistant, and included a \$1/hour increase for patrol officers. He also noted that right now, our senior patrol officer is making \$19.30/hour. We are starting patrol officers at \$18.49/hour. This allowed for a contractual increase of .25/hour after six months, and a 3% increase after a year. We are woefully behind most of the police departments in the state as far as what we are paying our police officers. He added that we have done wage studies, and other towns have done wage studies, and we are behind. Chief Madore cited a recent wage study, which contacted 28 towns; of these towns, Grantham came in at 14th of 28; for senior patrolmen, of the other departments that had senior patrolmen, we came in 8th out of eleven. For certified patrolmen, Grantham ranked 22nd out of 26 towns. As far as department secretaries, Grantham came in 4th out of twelve departments that have a full-time assistant or secretary. Also, he added that we are not the only department in the state looking for help. For example, Enfield recently lost three patrolmen; they are now starting their officers at \$25/hour. And we aren’t even paying our officers \$20/hour.

Chief Madore pointed out that this amendment came to light only after these recent wage studies revealed the disparity in what Grantham pays officers vs. other comparable towns. Jamielynn Garland of 12 Slalom Drive added information regarding the starting salaries for other nearby towns: Enfield starts patrolmen at \$50K/year, Lebanon starts them at \$51K/year, Hanover at \$51K/year, and Newport at \$50K/year, and those numbers are all before training. By comparison, ours start at \$36K. David Wood of 103 Road 'Round The Lake asked the Chief, if we were to approve the amendment, what would that do to patrolmen salaries. Chief Madore said he'd have to sit down and look at it, but with a \$7,500 increase, it would mean a \$1/hour increase to the patrolmen, and then a 2% increase to the sergeant's salary, which he thought would add a little over \$1,000/year to his salary; then a 2% increase to the department secretary, which would mean a little over \$800/year. It would definitely bring us up to make us competitive. Scott Holland of 8 Pioneer Point made the point that if he heard the Chief correctly, he heard the Chief claim that the increase would bring us up to specific amounts, which followed his statement that he had yet to work it out. Chief Madore responded by saying that benefits would have to be figured in, for one thing, which he does not calculate as part of his budget. These include retirement, health insurance and payroll taxes, and so he's not sure of the percentage. State Representative Andy Schmidt of 56 Anderson Pond road spoke to urge passage of the amendment. He added that there's an acute shortage of qualified police officers in the state and that it's not certain that the state will continue to fund the training academy. He added further that every year in the state, 160 officers retire, and right now we're training 60 per year. Thus there will be a shortfall and officer retention will be critical to retaining the fine department we have. Peter James of 28 Split Rock Road asked for a clarification regarding whether or not the additional \$15K was for salaries and benefits, or just salaries exclusively. Jamielynn Garland of 12 Slalom Drive added that she believed the \$15K was intended to cover both retirement and benefits, but was not sure of the percentages. Town Administrator Melissa White added that current benefits run at 26.38% of salaries. Thus, of the 15K included in the amendment, \$4,200 would be needed to cover required benefits. Deborah Cheever of 44 Whitetail Ridge asked if we give the officers a salary raise, there is still no guarantee that they will stay. She offered the suggestion that we include language in their contracts that they get a bonus after a certain period of time rather than a salary increase. Chief Madore answered that question by pointing out that after a candidate has passed the various tests required before hiring, only then is a conditional offer made to the candidate. At that point, the candidate is also put on a training contract, which is for a three-year period. That takes into account their rate of pay during their training, which includes their time at the police academy and their field training, before they go out on their own. They are also placed on a one-year probation period. Once they have completed that probation, only then are they given a raise. After the first year, one-third of that employment contract goes away. Then from the start of the second year through the end of the contract, the contract is pro-rated. This means that should an officer leave the town of his/her own accord before the end of the contract, they owe the town what remains on their contract. Walt used the example of the officer who just left, who owed the town over \$17K on his contract. He was making enough money at his new job that he was able to take out a loan to pay back the town. Lorie McClory, 38 Brookridge Drive, asked where that officer went as she would like to work there also; however, she seriously wanted to know. Chief Madore responded that the officer went to Bedford, New Hampshire. The Chief added that this officer also had an offer from Nashua, where he would have started at over \$50K/year. The Chief remarked that we have great benefits and equipment, but we need to pay the price to keep good people. Christine Conroy, 32 Spring Valley Drive, stated that she's having a hard time with the fact that the original article included \$7,500 and now the amendment seeks to add \$15,000; she wanted to know why the original budget did not include the increase in the amendment. She added that she can appreciate the need, but she's not sure what affect the additional \$15K will have. Chief Madore reviewed the increase in the original article, which would have added \$1/hour to the patrolman salaries, and also reviewed Town Administrator White's figure of \$4,200 of the proposed amendment that will be needed to cover benefits. So, the amendment would mean that he would be able to bring up his officers to a total increase of \$2/hour. He added that he knows it sounds like a lot of money, but when broken down, it doesn't add up to that much. Christine Conroy added that her question is: is \$15K enough? Chief Madore responded that he thought it would make the department competitive. The Chief also answered the question of why wasn't a larger increase included in the original budget, and admitted that perhaps he hasn't pushed hard enough for pay increases. He said he's always tried to do the best with what he had and make do, opting for moderate increases. He then mentioned the wage study and how it highlighted the disparity in pay. Chris Buchanan of 23 Deer Run said he

supported what the Chief said and believed the officers earn every penny. He added that he thought it was a relatively small increase and amounted to pennies on the dollar to keep good help. His only other question was about whether the amendment was intended for public safety generally or was it intended solely for the police department. Wendy Bayles-Dazet of 145 Doc's Drive stated that she's not arguing with the Chief's point regarding salaries, but also noted that we cannot compete with larger towns and cities around the state in terms of salaries. She also made the request that when we're ready to vote on the amendment, she requested that we do so by secret ballot. Richard Karash of 23 Shore Road stated to both the Chief and the person who proposed the amendment that he found their arguments quite persuasive. However, he had another question of the Selectboard as to whether or not they had any comments on the amendment, and a specific question regarding whether or not the proposed increase in the amendment would create parity problems elsewhere in the town budget. Selectman Jones responded that the time when this should have been brought up was when we were doing the budget process in the fall. In November, we were presented with the request from the police department; a few suggestions were made by the Selectboard and ultimately the budget was agreed upon as presented. She added that yes, it would be great to give the officers more, but she added that the comparisons to other towns are a little different in terms of size, area, etc. that the Selectboard generally takes all this into consideration when developing the budget. Towns truly comparable to Grantham are what the Selectboard attempts to look at in that process. She supported the proposed increase but added that the time to consider the increase included in the amendment was last November. Those budget meetings are advertised and the Selectboard would have appreciated citizen input at that time. Selectman Brown spoke in support of the police department but added that there are many other factors that go into retention of police staff besides salary. He mentioned that the Selectboard recently commissioned a study of the police department to study how we can do better in terms of retention, and added that he would personally like to see the department offer more competitive salaries, and that we do need to be competitive in our area of the state. He echoed Selectman Jones comments that we do have a process where department heads come to us with a proposal, and we're looking at an amendment where a significant portion of the proposed increase will get eaten up by benefits. He is supportive of getting to a point where police department salaries can be increased but he hoped that could be attained in a reasoned and measured way, whether it's a bonus or step increase, so that we do improve retention. Peter James of 28 Split Rock Road added that there are a number of reasons why officers leave; salary is one consideration, but where these officers live is another, and a third is the amount of action they see in a small town like Grantham. He made the point that a lot of the younger officers prefer to work in a community with more activity. However, he noted that the last officer we lost was commuting to Grantham from the Bedford area. He suggested that this officer may have taken a cut in pay to work closer to home. He also noted that another officer we lost moved to Newport, where there's probably more law enforcement activity. So, money is important, but there are lots of other factors to be considered. He ended by saying that he suspected the loss of our last officer had more to do with the commute than salary. Scott Holland of 8 Pioneer Point made a point regarding procedure. He said that he hated to see us get to a point where we're having line-item discussions of budget items that should have been addressed during the budget process when there were open forums and plenty of time for people to comment or remark. He added that he'd hate to see us get into a situation where everyone with a special interest is going to seek to amend articles that everyone will have to discuss, especially in the more emotional areas like police. He added that when topics such as paving roads are discussed, there's not much to argue about, but when people are involved and they're your friends and neighbors, then it becomes more difficult. Margery Bostrom of 2 Pioneer Point noted that the democratic process is our opportunity to think about what is presented to us. Yes, it's messy but it's the best we have. She added that perhaps five months ago the Chief should have included this request in the original budget, but things have been happening since then. She added that the Grantham Police have come to her house three times and the service was professional, and in two cases, life-saving. She believed that the proposed amendment makes sense. The Moderator then noted that we do have the five signatures required to request a secret ballot and that the ballot boxes would be passed around by the counters. She clarified how to vote for or against the amendment using the 'yes/no' paper ballots. The Moderator then repeated the amendment. The Moderator then announced that while the paper ballots are being counted, she was going to move on to the next article and would return to the amendment and the original article once the counting was complete.

Upon completion of the counting, the Moderator returned to this amendment to announce the results.

Article 11 Amendment Passed by secret ballot

73 yes; 28 no

The Moderator then returned to consideration of the original article, as amended, which would now include a total of \$647,742. She then asked for any other discussion. Given that there was no further discussion, the Moderator called for a vote.

Article 11 as amended Passed by majority voice vote

ARTICLE 12 – Public Works

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of seven hundred thirty-four thousand, two hundred thirty dollars (**\$734,230.00**) to defray the cost of **Public Works** operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

Recommended by the Selectmen (Majority vote required)

Account Title	Budget 2015/2016	Proposed 2016/2017	Change Increase or (Decrease)
Highway Administration	\$221,220	\$228,430	\$7,210
Highway Maintenance	\$147,200	\$158,200	\$11,000
Street Lights	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0.00
Transfer Station	\$137,100	\$137,600	\$500
Waste Disposal	\$196,000	\$197,000	\$1,000
Landfill Monitoring	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$714,520	\$734,230	\$19,710

Selectman Brown moved the article and Selectman Jones seconded. Brown reviewed the increases in this budget. F. Robert Osgood, 77 Pillsbury Road, mentioned that he is proposing an amendment that was first read to the Selectboard at the budget hearing. He reviewed his service at the transfer station, including the training requirements, and then reviewed the salaries of the two senior supervisors at the transfer station. He believes these rates of pay are way too low for what is expected of them. Firstly, they’re required to have a CDL (commercial driver’s license); secondly, they have to work every weekend. He added that the supervisor is required to present the budget every year and he runs a tight ship. He also reviewed the small increase in the budget for the transfer station, noting that it’s \$500. He added that all staff answer to these supervisors and they are also responsible for following state laws and regulations. He brought forth the amendment as an opportunity to bring the hourly rates in line with where they should be. Mr. Osgood added he is not a disgruntled worker at the transfer station, or he would not still be there. Mr. Osgood mentioned that most of the town’s women are genuinely appreciative of the service provided at the transfer station, along with some of the men. He then read the amendment: “To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,000 dollars to defray the cost of public works operation.” He pointed out that this amendment would mean a tax rate increase for a home assessed at \$250,000 of \$7.50. By comparison, he noted the article in the Valley News that mentioned the increase caused by the recent school budget for a house assessed at \$250,000 was \$280 in town taxes. The proposed increase would put the transfer station supervisor at \$21/hour and the assistant supervisor at \$18/hour. Peter James, 28 Split Rock Road, seconded the amendment. The Moderator then called for discussion. Lori Avery, 6 General Court, indicated that she’d rather be safe in her home than safe at the dump for the two weekends a month she can be there. Brenda Malloy, 86 Stocker Pond Road, asked if she understood the proposed increases of the police department and transfer station correctly, which Bob Osgood and Chief Madore confirmed; that is, if this amendment passed and that for

the police department did not, that at least one of the transfer station supervisors could make more money than the patrolmen. Susan Buchanan of 23 Deer Run asked how long have the transfer station supervisors been town employees. Osgood said that Chris Scott has been there about seven years and that Bud Sweeney started 2-3 months before Osgood, so about 2 ½ years. Osgood reminded the town of the low wages that were paid to both positions as of just last year. Susan Buchanan continued and said that all the employees under discussion might very well be underpaid, including both police and transfer station employees, and added that one department does not need to be put in competition with the other; supporting pay increases for one does not mean you have to vote against increases for the other. Town Administrator White then clarified what happens during the budget consideration by the Selectboard and herself, and noted the comparisons made with other towns our size, our neighbors, and how hard they try to make salaries competitive while keeping the whole budget in mind. While it may seem that our wages are low in some areas, the town does try to pay good wages and be competitive. The Moderator then called for the vote on the amendment to be taken. A voice vote being inconclusive, she then called for a show of hands to be counted. The count was taken first for all those in favor, and then taken for all those opposed.

Article 12 Amendment Defeated by majority show of hands

62 No, 23 Yes

The Moderator then asked to return to original article and asked for discussion. Andrea Felix of 16 Mill Pond Lane asked about the streetlights and would there be any impact on this article of the previous article. Selectman Jones responded that she did not believe there would be any impact. Merle Schotanus, 28 Sugarwood Lane, asked the Moderator to announce the results of the vote on Article 11. The Moderator said she would wait until the vote was taken on this article and would then go back to Article 11. Hearing no more discussion regarding Article 12, the Moderator then called for a vote on the original article.

Article 12 Passed by majority voice vote

ARTICLE 13 – Highway Department Backhoe

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$110,000 for the purchase of a new John Deere Backhoe for the Highway Department with \$30,000 to come from trade-in and to authorize the withdrawal of eighty thousand dollars (\$80,000) from the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund previously established for that purpose. No amount to be raised from taxation.

Recommended by the Selectmen (Majority vote required)

Selectman Kimball moved the article and Selectman Jones seconded. Kimball stated that this is a customary upgrade of older equipment, where the town's best interest is served by trading in equipment while it still has value but before it causes more cost to the town. The Moderator asked for discussion. Given that there was no discussion, the Moderator called for a vote.

Article 13 Passed by unanimous voice vote

ARTICLE 14 – Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to defray the cost of holding a household hazardous waste collection day for Grantham residents only.

Recommended by the Selectmen (Majority vote required)

Selectman Brown moved the article and Selectman Kimball seconded. Brown stated that this is an event we conduct every two years. It allows residents to remove hazardous chemicals from their homes without those chemicals ending up in the traditional waste stream. In the past this has been included in the regular transfer station budget but the Selectboard separated this out as a way for the townspeople to have a voice in this decision. Given that there was no discussion, the Moderator called for a vote.

Article 14 Passed by unanimous voice vote

ARTICLE 15 – Health and Welfare

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of forty-four thousand three hundred dollars (**\$44,300.00**) to defray the cost of **Health and Welfare** operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

Recommended by the Selectmen (Majority vote required)

Account Title	Budget 2015/2016	Proposed 2016/2017	Change Increase or (Decrease)
Health Officer	\$0.00	\$1,700	\$1,700
Boarding Animals	\$700	\$700	\$0.00
Community Services	\$16,900	\$16,900	\$0.00
Town General Assistance	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$42,600	\$44,300	\$1,700

Community Agencies:	Budget 2015/2016	Proposed 2016/2017	Change Increase or (Decrease)
Lake Sunapee VNA	\$8,000	\$6,500	(\$1,500)
Newport Food Pantry	\$0.00	\$500	\$500
Sullivan County Nutrition Services	\$200	\$200	\$0.00
Kearsarge Area COA	\$3,800	\$3,800	\$0.00
Southwestern Community Services	\$900	\$900	\$0.00
West Central Services	\$2,500	\$3,500	\$1,000
Mascoma Valley Health Initiative	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$0.00
Community Alliance of Human Services	\$500	\$500	\$0.00
Total	\$16,900	\$16,900	\$0.00

Selectman Jones moved the article and Selectman Kimball seconded. Jones reviewed the increase, and explained that the health officer is a required position that previously had been held by a volunteer. So, this budget includes a small stipend for the health officer, and money for workshops and training. The Moderator called for discussion; hearing none, the Moderator called for a vote.

Article 15 Passed by unanimous voice vote

ARTICLE 16 – Culture and Recreation

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of two hundred seventy-four thousand, seven hundred eighty dollars (**\$274,780.00**) for **Culture and Recreation**. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

Recommended by the Selectmen (Majority vote required)

Account Title	Budget 2015/2016	Proposed 2016/2017	Change Increase or (Decrease)
Recreation	\$45,976	\$47,450	\$1,474
Dunbar Free Library	\$191,837	\$197,980	\$6,143
Activities	\$27,800	\$27,850	\$50
Archives	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$500
TOTAL	\$266,613	\$274,780	\$8,167

Selectman Kimball moved the article and Selectman Jones seconded. Kimball spoke to the use of the recreation park and his positive experience as an immediate neighbor. He also spoke to the new library addition and his belief that all included increases are justified. The Moderator then called for discussion; hearing none, the Moderator called for a vote.

Article 16 Passed by unanimous voice vote

ARTICLE 17 – 250th Anniversary Celebration

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of seven thousand dollars (**\$7,000**) to defray the cost of holding a celebration in honor of the Town’s 250th anniversary.

Recommended by the Selectmen (Majority vote required)

Selectman Kimball moved the article and Selectman Brown seconded. Kimball noted that we’d like to get a head-start on the town’s 250th anniversary and a committee has already been formed to build partnerships in support of this project. Brown added that the committee sees this as a year-long event showcasing various partners and their contributions, including the conservation commission, the historical society, the Blue Mountain Snowdusters, and many others. Hopefully the town will be able to use this as a marketing opportunity for the town to make it more attractive for the residents, and for employees we want to retain. He added that the committee does not just want people’s money, but also their involvement in the committee. The Moderator then asked for further discussion; hearing none, she called for a vote.

Article 17 Passed by unanimous voice vote

ARTICLE 18 – Conservation, Debt Principal, Debt Interest, and Tax Anticipation Note Interest

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of two hundred thirty-four thousand eight hundred seventy two dollars (**\$234,872.00**) for **Conservation, Debt Principal, Debt Interest, and Tax Anticipation Note Interest**. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

Recommended by the Selectmen (Majority vote required)

Account Title	Budget 2015/2016	Proposed 2016/2017	Change Increase or (Decrease)
Conservation Commission	\$5,400	\$4,400	(\$1,000)
Town Hall Bond Payment	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$0.00
Town Hall Bond Interest	\$28,200	\$25,200	(\$3,000)
Library Bond Payment	\$0.00	\$50,000	\$50,000
Library Bond Interest	\$8,580	\$15,555	\$6,975

Highway Plow Truck Lease	\$31,603	\$31,603	\$0.00
Police Cruiser Lease	\$13,505	\$10,817	(\$2,688)
Fire Department SCBA's	\$40,386	\$37,197	(\$3,189)
Tax Anticipation Notes Interest	\$100	\$100	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$187,774	\$234,872	\$47,098

Selectman Jones moved the article and Selectman Kimball seconded. Jones reviewed the commitments and how many years are left on the bonds and leases, line by line. The Moderator asked for discussion; hearing none, the Moderator called for a vote.

Article 18 Passed by unanimous voice vote

ARTICLE 19 – Capital Reserve Funds

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred thirteen thousand dollars (**\$113,000.00**) to be placed in previously established **Capital Reserve Funds**. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

Recommended by the Selectmen (Majority vote required)

Account Title	Budget 2015/2016	Proposed 2016/2017	Change Increase or (Decrease)
Fire Department Capital Reserve	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$10,000
Highway Equip Capital Reserve	\$30,000	\$50,000	\$20,000
Town Office Equip Capital Reserve	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$0.00
Transfer Station Capital Reserve	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$5,000
Police Vehicle Capital Reserve	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0.00
Revaluation CRF	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0.00
Town Buildings CRF	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0.00
Library Expansion Capital Reserve	\$25,000	\$0.00	(\$25,000)
Library Building Repair Capital Reserve	\$15,000	\$5,000	(\$10,000)
Town Clerk/Tax Collector Equipment CRF	\$3,000	\$2,000	(\$1,000)
TOTAL	\$114,000	\$113,000	(\$1,000)

Selectman Kimball moved the article and Selectman Jones seconded. Kimball reviewed the increases and decreases, line by line, noting that this is the annual attempt to put aside money in anticipation of future purchases for the town rather than borrowing money and paying interest. The Moderator then called for discussion; hearing none, the Moderator called for a vote.

Article 19 Passed by unanimous voice vote

ARTICLE 20 – Public Safety Expendable Trust Fund

To see if the town will vote to establish a Public Safety Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 31:19-a, for the purpose of purchasing or repairing repeater, radio and other ancillary equipment related to communications for Public Safety and to raise and appropriate \$5,000 to put in the fund; further to name the Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund.

Recommended by the Selectmen (Majority vote required)

Selectman Brown moved the article and Selectman Kimball seconded. Brown explained that this article is the result of a Federal Communications Commission mandate that has narrowed the bandwidth on which police and fire departments communicate. It went from 25 kilohertz to 12.5 in 2013, and we're soon reaching the next step when it will go down further to 6.5. This will require additional equipment to insure that our fire and police have an adequate signal in all parts of the town. The article will put \$5,000 into a public safety trust fund for this purpose. The Moderator asked for discussion; hearing none, the Moderator called for a vote.

Article 20 Passed by unanimous voice vote

ARTICLE 21 – End of Meeting

To hear the reports of agents, officers, and committees heretofore chosen, to pass any vote relating thereto, and to transact any other business that may legally come before said meeting.

Recommended by the Selectmen (Majority vote required)

Selectman Brown moved the article and Selectman Kimball seconded. The Moderator then asked those present if anyone had any other business to be brought up at this time. Peter James of 28 Split Rock Road thanked the Board of Selectmen for giving the town the opportunity to vote on the new John Deere backhoe. He added that it's good that the Selectboard trusts the townspeople and their judgment, and he said he thinks it's important to pass judgment on these purchases. He also wanted to thank those who attended this evening and who have been heard. Though new to Grantham, he's been coming to town meetings for years, and where he used to live they often lasted much longer than ours do. He thought it was good to see lively discussion and to remind everyone that it is the townspeople who are the governing body of the town, not the Selectboard; the Selectboard is the administrative body and can only spend the money given them by the townspeople. He finished by saying all those townspeople who blame those at town hall for raising their taxes were not present tonight. Merle Schotanus, 28 Sugarwood Lane, asked if candidates have been put forward for fence viewers and hog reeves. The Moderator noted that nominees have been identified. She also noted that, historically, the town's fence viewers and hog reeves are chosen from among those newly married couples in town. The Moderator then asked if there were any nominations for these positions. Selectman Kimball then nominated Katie and Tristan Neville as hog reeves and Patience and Patrick Ashley as fence viewers. Several seconds were offered from the room. The Moderator asked for discussion; hearing none, she called for a vote.

Article 21 Passed by majority voice vote

There being no further business or reports, the Moderator declared the 240th Town Meeting adjourned at 7:15pm.

A true copy attest,



Kenneth Story, Town Clerk/Tax Collector
March 17, 2016