

**MINUTES OF THE FRANCONIA TOWN MEETING
TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2021**

The Moderator called the meeting to order at 6:00p.m.

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance. The Moderator noted the town report is dedicated to Chief Roger Odell for his 50+ years of service to the Franconia Fire Department.

The Moderator stated there would be no reading of the entire warrant to make the meeting more efficient. He also stated that he is presenting a Moderator's Rule for tonight's meeting that any motion for reconsideration of an article must be made before the next article is read and it must be done by the prevailing party.

The Moderator stated this is a social distancing event and everyone should remain six feet from others and wear a mask. The mask can be removed to talk at one of the microphones, but if you speak loud enough you may be able to speak from where you are standing.

There was a motion by Kathryn Taylor, second by Charles Lovett to waive the reading of last year's minutes. There being no discussion, the motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

There was a motion by Jade Monahan, second by Charles Lovett to approve last year's minutes as written. There being no discussion, the motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE I. To choose all necessary Town Officers for the ensuing year. (By ballot on March 9, 2021)

Selectman (3-year term)	Daniel Walker	132
	Kenneth Scott Knowlton	39
Write-ins:	Jack McEnany	3
Town Clerk/Tax Collector (3-yr. term)	Carol Wills	170
Town Moderator (2-year term)	James Walker	156
Write-ins:	Susan Moore	2
Treasurer (1-year term)	Steve Plant	159
Write-ins:	Jane McKay	2
Trustee of the Trust Funds (3-yr term)	Carol Walker	158
Water Commissioner (3-year term)		
Write-ins:	Jeff Bartlett	4
	Richard McLachlin	3
	Peter Gaudette	3
	William Cole	1
	Erin Heiskell	1
	Chuck Herbert	1
	Richard Gaudette	1
	Kathy McLachlin	1
	Michael Parcell	1
	Jon Peabody	2
	Trevor Presby	1
	David Starr	1
	Jeff Woodward	1
Supervisor of the Checklist (6-yr term)	Susan S. Moore	159

Cemetery Trustee (3-year term)	Mary Brubaker	169
Library Trustee (3-year term)		
Two Vacancies	Sally L. Small	164
	Charles J. Lovett	146
Write-ins:	William Mellekas	1

ARTICLE 2. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate one million eight hundred ninety-two thousand three hundred fifty-five dollars (\$1,892,355.00) to defray town charges for the ensuing year. (Majority vote required)

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Executive	\$163,670.00
Town Clerk	42,383.00
Tax Collector	14,611.00
Revaluation of Property	22,494.00
Legal Expenses	6,000.00
Personnel Administration	215,549.00
Planning & Zoning	7,390.00
General Government Buildings	142,278.00
Cemeteries	21,425.00
Insurance	50,310.00
Police	373,669.00
Life Squad	82,450.00
Fire	84,600.00
Forest Fire	3,290.00
Building Inspection	10,000.00
Emergency Management	3,500.00
Other Communications	40,000.00
Highways	307,693.00
Street Lights	12,000.00
Health Officer	500.00
Welfare	8,000.00
Recreation Programs	126,093.00
Patriotic Purposes	1,000.00
Other Conservation	500.00
Long Term Debt/Tan Interest	152,950.00
TOTAL	\$1,892,355.00

The article was read, moved by Charles Lovett, second by Jade Monahan.

Karen Foss stated at last year's town meeting it was voted to reduce the budget by \$100,000.00, which was done. At the end of 2020, the reduced budget was still underspent by \$128,000.00. This budget that is being requested for 2021 is virtually the same as what was approved last year, so there is still room for expense reduction.

Jon Peabody stated in order to ask an intelligent question about this article there needs to be more detailed information in the town report instead of just a lump sum amount for each department. He stated it would be much easier if things were broken out like they used to be, but he feels there is less information each year.

Janice Cole questioned why the estimate for the tax impact for Article 2 was \$3.75 at the budget hearing, but on the PowerPoint presentation on the website it is \$4.27. Kim stated it was a mathematical error on her part. She stated when she went back and reviewed the numbers she realized she had counted some of the revenue that is part of the Transfer Station warrant article as revenue towards the line items.

The Moderator asked if the numbers presented in Article 2 and the total of \$1,892,355.00 is correct. Kim stated all the numbers listed in Article 2 are correct. The only number that changed is the amount of the tax impact from \$3.75 to \$4.27.

There being no further discussion, Article 2 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 3. Petition Warrant Article

By petition of 25 or more eligible voters of the Town of Franconia, to see if the town will vote, due to the impact of the COVID virus to many of the residents and taxpayers, wage increases and/or stipends for all employees and the Select Board will be effective on April 1, 2021, and not retroactive to January 1, 2021. Total to be saved \$1,369.67. (Majority vote required). Tax Impact \$0.004 per thousand.

The article was read, moved by Dawn Steele, second by Mary Grote. Dawn spoke to the article stating this past year has been difficult on people who have lost jobs or been furloughed and are concerned about taxes. She stated there isn't a lot of information anymore on employee salaries/wages and this year that information was obtained by a Right-to-Know request. Dawn was concerned that some employees were receiving more than others and some were receiving nothing. She also stated that one employee had already been given an increase as of December 1st, and no one knew about it.

Dawn made a motion to amend Article 3 to read that commencing January 1, 2022, all annual increases for employees will be effective the Monday after the annual Town Meeting of that year. Second by Mary Grote.

The Moderator stated that if this amendment is voted in the affirmative, it is subject to state law. This amendment is dealing with an issue that has not been properly included in the warrant and it is talking about compensation for the next year.

Kim Cowles asked if this amendment means that employees will get their retro pay for this year? Dawn said this article would not take effect this year so, yes, the increases can go back to January 1st. Dan Walker asked if the proposal is to strike what is written and replace it with this amendment and Dawn replied in the affirmative.

After a brief discussion, the Moderator stated that the subject matter proposed in the amendment does not have anything to do with Petition Article 3, and it cannot be brought up at this meeting because it is not in the warrant. The warrant is necessary so people can consider it and be prepared to discuss it. The Moderator ruled the amendment to Petition Article 3 out of order.

There being no further discussion, Article 3 failed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 4. Appropriate to Capital Reserve Funds

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred eighty-nine thousand, seven hundred dollars (\$189,700.00) to be added to the following Capital Reserve Funds previously established. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required) Tax Impact \$0.65 per thousand.

Town Buildings Truck, \$6,900.00; Town Buildings and Grounds Equipment, \$5,600.00; Highway Trucks, \$38,800.00; Highway Heavy Equipment, \$21,200.00; Police Cruisers, \$13,500.00; Life Squad Van, \$21,200.00; Life Squad Equipment, \$9,100.00; Fire Heavy Equipment, \$43,400.00; Fire Fighting Equipment, \$8,000.00; Legal, \$10,000.00; Re-Assessment, \$7,000.00; and Library, \$5000.00.

The article was read, moved by Karen Foss, second by Steve Plant.

Dan Walker stated that later this evening we will be voting on Article 17 which further raises funds for the Life Squad ambulance. If Article 17 passes, the amount of Article 4 will decrease by \$21,200.00.

There being no further discussion, Article 4 passed unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 5. Appropriate to Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of forty thousand dollars (\$40,000.00) to be added to the Bridge Capital Reserve Fund previously established. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required). Tax impact \$0.14 per thousand

The article was read, moved by Ned Brewer, second by Karen Foss.

There being no discussion, Article 5 passed unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 6. Appropriate to Expendable Trust Funds

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred twenty-seven thousand nine hundred fifty dollars (\$127,950.00) to be added to the following Expendable Trust Funds previously established. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required) Tax impact \$0.44 per thousand.

Highway Improvement, \$75,000.00; Town Buildings, \$30,000.00; Sidewalk Improvement, \$21,000.00; Heritage Museum, \$1,100.00; and Frost Place, \$850.00.

The article was read, moved by Ned Brewer, second by Steve Plant.

There being no discussion, Article 6 passed unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 7. Water Department Operating Budget

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of four hundred thousand five hundred sixty-eight dollars (\$400,568.00) for the operation of the Water Department. This amount to be funded by water rents and revenues with no amount from taxation. Recommended by the Water Department Commissioners. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Kathryn Taylor, second by Ned Brewer.

Jon Peabody asked for an explanation of the 29.5% increase in the budget from last year. Dan Walker stated the operating portion of the budget is flat from last year; however, there are plans to continue with improvements at Mittersill. There is money set aside year to year in a Capital Reserve Fund and \$89,000 has been withdrawn from the CRF and put in the budget for a planned upgrade at Mittersill.

Jon Peabody expressed his frustration that the Water Department report does not show specifics of what is going on in the water department. Jon read an RSA regarding annual reports: "The commissioners shall annually make a report to the town or district at the time of the town or district offices reports of the condition of the waterworks financially and otherwise, showing the funds belonging to their departments and the expenses and income thereof and other such facts." Jon stated it would be nice to know who is doing the work up at Mittersill and what is actually being done.

Jill Brewer stated there is an opening for a Water Commissioner, so if anyone is interested in volunteering their time to serve as a Water Commissioner, please let us know.

There being no further discussion, Article 7 passed unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 8. Replace the Sidewalk along Main Street

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of two hundred forty-seven thousand dollars (\$247,000.00) to replace the sidewalk from NH Rte. 142 north to the parking lot entrance to the Catholic Church and to fund this appropriation by authorizing the withdrawal of eighty-five thousand dollars (\$85,000.00) from the Sidewalk Capital Reserve Fund, previously established, with the balance of one hundred sixty-two thousand dollars (\$162,000.00) to come from the unassigned fund balance. The Selectmen recommend this article. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Mary Fowler, second by Dawn Steele.

Peter Grote stated in July of 2009, the town adopted a bidding and purchasing policy. He asked if the town followed the procedure for competitive bidding on this warrant article. Kim stated if this warrant article is approved the town will move forward with the competitive bidding process. This warrant article is based on estimates the town received for the proposed work.

Dawn asked if the town received multiple estimates. Kim stated the town worked with the engineer from DOT and he helped with contractors that have been doing other jobs for them in the northern part of the state and that's how we got these estimates for the job to put this proposal together to be voted on. They are probably high numbers so that we don't run into a problem of not having enough money to get the job done. We will put it out for competitive bid. The state did the same thing for paving Main Street. We will make sure the contractors that are doing Main Street are aware of this so they will be able to bid on the project as well.

There being no further discussion, Article 8 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 9. Build a New Welcome Center

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of two hundred seventy-five thousand dollars (\$275,000.00) for the construction of a new Welcome Center and to fund this appropriation by authorizing the withdrawal of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00) from the Buildings Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund previously established, the withdrawal of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000.00) from the Lafayette Recreation Capital Reserve Fund previously established and one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000.00) to come from taxation. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required). Tax impact \$0.52 per thousand.

The article was read, moved by Jade Monahan, second by Heidi Ballentine.

Janice Cole stated when this was voted on at last year's town meeting it was stated that the Chamber of Commerce would contribute a chunk of money to this project and she asked how much they are committing to this project. Kevin Johnson stated the Chamber of Commerce does not have money to put up front for this project; however, the Board agreed to pay \$400.00 a month to start which will cover the utilities and maintenance of the building.

Janice asked if the town has bids for a full build out of this project. Kim stated right now it is hard to get numbers because the cost of supplies is constantly changing. There are no firm estimates but Kim has spoken with several builders who came up with the cost based on square footage. Kim stated that is why we want this to be a non-lapsing fund so the monies will be held in a Capital Reserve Fund until construction of the center begins. Janice said that the article is not stated as being non-lapsing.

Jill Brewer made a motion to amend Article 9 to read, "\$150,000.00 to come from the unassigned fund balance (UFB)", and put it into the Buildings Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund and to make the article non-lapsing. Second by Dan Walker.

There was a brief discussion regarding what the unassigned fund balance (UFB) is and the recommended range that the NH Department of Revenue Administration recommends. There were concerns raised over using the UFB to fund this project instead of reducing taxes. The Moderator called the amendment to a vote.

Amendment to Article 9 failed by hand vote: Yes-29 No- 30.

Discussion continued on Article 9 with residents raising concerns that there isn't enough information and specifics about the project to move forward and suggested putting the project off for another year until there is a more detailed plan, more accurate estimates, and residents are allowed to give input into this project.

Several residents spoke in favor of this project and the need to upgrade the bathroom that is not ADA compliant and is in severe disrepair because it is the only public bathroom that is available for visitors to town. It was also stated that it is important to repair the warming hut as it is an important feature for the skating rink.

Jill stated the reason it is important to have this article be non-lapsing is because the money can be carried over until it is the right time to build. The Selectmen planned on having public meetings on this project and coming up with a design plan, but there is a need to have money put aside first.

It was suggested that the town approach the surrounding communities who might benefit from this facility and ask them to contribute to this project.

The Moderator called the article to a vote. He stated he received a request for a ballot vote.

Article 9 failed by ballot vote: Yes – 31 No - 36

ARTICLE 10. Add to Rink Surface Maintenance Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00) to be added to the Rink Surface Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund previously established with said funds to come from the Recreation Committee's line-item budget. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Joselle Germano-Presby, second by Ned Brewer. There being no discussion, Article 10 passed unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 11. Add to Recreation Van Fund

To see if the Town will vote to transfer and appropriate the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) to be added to the Recreation Van Capital Reserve Fund previously established for this purpose with said funds to come from the Recreation Committee's line-item budget. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Ned Brewer, second by Trevor Presby. There being no discussion, Article 11 passed unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 12. Add to Dow Field Maintenance Fund

To see if the Town will vote to transfer and appropriate the sum of one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500.00) from the Recreation Committee's line-item budget to the Dow Field Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund previously established. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Heidi Ballentine, second by Dawn Steele. There being no discussion, Article 12 passed unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 13. Abbie Greenleaf Library

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of eighty-two thousand dollars (\$82,000.00) for the purpose of operating the Abbie Greenleaf Library and to transfer this amount to the Library Trustees for their use as they see fit. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required). Tax impact \$0.28 per thousand.

The article was read, moved by Ned Brewer, second by Kathryn Taylor. There being no discussion, Article 13 passed unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 14. Revaluation

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifty-two thousand four hundred ninety-four dollars (\$52,494.00) for the revaluation of the Town, with twenty-two thousand four hundred ninety-four dollars (\$22,494.00) to come from the Revaluation operating budget and thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000.00) from the Reassessment Capital Reserve Fund to pay for the fifth year of the reassessment contract with Avitar Associates of New England. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Ned Brewer, second by Kathryn Taylor. There being no discussion, Article 14 passed unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 15. Tri-Town Transfer Station

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of three hundred forty-five thousand six hundred twenty-six dollars (\$345,626.00) for the purpose of solid waste disposal, with \$57,575.00 from the Town of Sugar Hill, \$28,788.00 from the Town of Easton, \$100,000.00 PAYT Fees, \$25,000.00 Special Handling Fees, \$15,000.00 in Recycled Materials, and to raise \$119,263.00 from taxation. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required) Tax Impact \$0.41 per thousand.

The article was read, moved by Jon Peabody, second by Steve Plant. There being no discussion, Article 15 passed unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 16. Donations Transferred to Expendable Trust Funds

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from the Unassigned Fund Balance and appropriate to the following Expendable Trust Funds previously established, the sum of forty-one thousand six hundred ninety-three dollars (\$41,693.00) to be added to the following Expendable Trust Funds previously established. This equals the amount collected from donations. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

\$14,308.00 to the Lafayette Recreation Fund
\$25,000.00 to the Library Building Maintenance Fund
\$2,385.00 to the Heritage Museum Fund

The article was read, moved by Ned Brewer, second by Charles Lovett.

Kim Cowles made a motion to amend Article 16 to change the amount to the Lafayette Recreation Fund from \$14,308.00 to \$12,308.00 and to add \$2,000.00 to the Dow Field Maintenance Fund. Second by Eric Meth. Kim stated the intent of the Lions Club donation was for the funds to go to the Dow Field and not Lafayette Recreation.

There being no discussion, the amendment to Article 16 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 16, as amended, passed unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 17. Transfer Surplus Fund to Life Squad CRF

To see if the Town will vote to transfer and appropriate the sum of thirty-nine thousand six hundred thirteen dollars (\$39,613.00) to be added to the Life Squad Van Capital Reserve Fund. Funds will come from the unassigned fund balance, representing the surplus from unused appropriations in 2020. If this article passes, it will replace the amounts noted in Article 4. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Ned Brewer, second by Dawn Steele. Kim Cowles made a motion to amend Article 17, that if this article passes it will void the \$21,200.00 appropriation to the Life Squad Capital Reserve Fund that was voted in Article 4. Second by Karen Foss.

There being no discussion, the amendment to Article 17 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 17, as amended, passed unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 18. Transfer Funds to the Fire Department Heavy Equipment CRF

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000.00) to be added to the Fire Department Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund with said funds to come from the unassigned fund balance, representing the surplus from unused appropriations in 2020. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Ned Brewer, second by Steve Plant. There being no discussion, Article 18 passed unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 19. Fire Department Air Tanks

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of one hundred four thousand dollars (\$104,000.00) for the purchase of 10 SCBA air tanks, packs and masks, with fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000.00) to come from the Fire Fighting Equipment Capital Reserve Fund, previously established, and fifty-four thousand (\$54,000.00) to come from taxation. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required) Tax impact \$0.19 per thousand.

The article was read, moved by Dan Walker, second by Steve Plant. Dan Walker made a motion to amend Article 19 to state, “and fifty-four thousand dollars (\$54,000.00) to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance.” Second by Ned Brewer.

There was a brief discussion questioning why the town is not using the money in the Fire Fighting Equipment CRF which has a balance of \$111,000.00. It was explained that there is a lot more equipment necessary to fire fighting than just these SCBA packs. If all the funds were depleted from that account there would be nothing left to fall back on if any firefighting gear was destroyed or if gear needed to be purchased for a new firefighter.

There being no further discussion, the amendment to Article 19 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 19, as amended, passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 20. Cemetery Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund

To see if the Town will vote to establish a Cemetery Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund under the provisions of RSA 31:19-a, for the purpose of maintenance and care of Franconia’s cemeteries. This article amends Warrant Article 9 from Town Meeting 1985, which established the Cemetery Maintenance Fund before the state created a statute for that purpose. (Warrant Article 17 of Town Meeting 2019 authorized the right of expenditure of this fund to the Cemetery Trustees.) Majority vote required

The article was read, moved by Charles Lovett, second by Ned Brewer. There being no discussion, Article 20 passed unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 21. Cemetery - Deposits of Funds

To see if the Town will vote to deposit proceeds received from the sale of cemetery lots (RSA 289:2-a) into the Cemetery Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Ned Brewer, second by Steve Plant. There being no discussion, Article 21 passed unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 22. Non-Profits

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of twenty-six thousand seven hundred sixty dollars (\$26,760.00) for the support of the following agencies. (Majority vote required) Tax impact \$0.09 per thousand.

Above the Notch Humane Society	\$ 750.00
Adaptive Sports Partners of the North Country	\$ 2,500.00
American Red Cross	\$ 518.00
Ammonoosuc Community Services, Inc.	\$ 5,800.00
Bridge House Shelter & Veterans Advocacy	\$ 250.00
Boys & Girls Club of the North Country	\$ 2,500.00
Center for New Beginnings	\$ 1,000.00
Franconia Children’s Center	\$ 2,000.00
Gale River Cooperative - NEW	\$ 500.00
Grafton County Senior Citizens Council, Inc.	\$ 2,000.00
Northern Humane Services	\$ 1,292.00
North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency	\$ 3,200.00
North Country Veterans – NEW	\$ 500.00
Tri-County Community Action Program (CAP)	<u>\$ 2,200.00</u>
Total	\$25,010.00

The article was read, moved by Ned Brewer, second by Peter Grote. The Moderator stated due to the COVID situation he encouraged the Selectmen to consolidate the non-profits into one article.

Janice Cole pointed out that the article says the amount is \$26,760.00, but the total is \$25,010.00. Kim explained there initially were two columns which listed both amounts. The Bridge House Shelter & Veterans Advocacy bumped up their request to \$2,000.00 from \$250.00. It has been our experience that every time we try to use them, they are always full and don't have any room. If there comes a time when they can take someone from here to help them, then we can bump up the request, but it is recommended to keep the request amount at \$250.00.

Kim Cowles made a motion to amend Article 22 to read, "to raise and appropriate \$25,010 for the support of the following agencies." Second by Ned Brewer. There being no discussion, the amendment to Article 22 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 22, as amended, passed unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 23. Franconia Notch Regional Chamber of Commerce

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of nine thousand dollars (\$9,000.00) for the support of the Franconia Notch Regional Chamber of Commerce. (Majority vote required) Tax impact \$0.03 per thousand.

The article was read, moved by Ned Brewer, second by Dan Walker. There being no discussion, Article 23 passed unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 24. Energy Capital Reserve Fund.

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of three thousand dollars (\$3,000.00) to be added to the Energy Capital Reserve Fund previously established. (Majority vote required) Tax Impact \$0.01 per thousand.

The article was read, moved by Ned Brewer, second by Eric Meth. There being no discussion, Article 24 passed unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 25. Board of Selectman Compensation

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of six thousand dollars (\$6,000.00) for the compensation of the Selectmen to perform their duties throughout the year. (Majority vote required) Tax Impact \$0.02 per thousand.

The article was read, moved by Ned Brewer, second by Dinny Richmond. After a brief discussion, Article 25 passed unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 26. Regional Communications District Planning

To see if the Town wants the Selectmen to participate in a regional communications district planning committee. That planning committee would explore working with a supplier to provide fiber optic internet service to residents and businesses. Such high-speed service is seen as important to the Town's growth. The committee would include at least two members from each participating town. The planning committee would not have the authority to enter into any agreement with a supplier. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Ned Brewer, second by Dinny Richmond. Eric spoke to the article stating the local committee, the North Country Broadband Communications Committee, is made up of representatives from Franconia, Sugar Hill, Easton, Bath, Lisbon, and Monroe and meet on a monthly basis to discuss how to bring fiber optics to town. The committee would also like to be part of the Grafton County Broadband Committee to get a spine going from north to south that we can latch on to. This article allows us to move forward with this project and it is a project we should get involved with.

There being no further discussion, Article 26 passed unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 27. Petitioned Article

We, the undersigned registered voters of the Town of Franconia, hereby present by petition the following resolution for inclusion on the 2021 Town Meeting Warrant.

By petition of 25 or more eligible voters of the Town of Franconia, to see if the town will vote to urge that the New Hampshire General Court, which is obligated to redraw the maps of political districts within the state following the federal census, will ensure fair and effective representation of New Hampshire voters without gerrymandering. Additionally, these voters ask the Town of Franconia to urge the NH General Court to carry out the redistricting in a fair and transparent way through public meetings, not to favor a particular political party, to include communities of interest, and to minimize multi-seat districts. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Susan Moore, second by Dinny Richmond. Susan Moore said she believes the redistricting process should be fair, non-partisan and transparent and the Town should stand up for this type of redistricting process.

There being no further discussion, Article 27 passed unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 27. To Hear Reports

To hear the reports of agents, auditors, and committees, or other officers heretofore chosen and pass any vote relative thereto.

The Moderator stated those reports can be found in the town report.

ARTICLE 28. Transact any other business

To transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

There being no further business, motion to adjourn by Ned Brewer, second by Dinny Richmond. Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol F. Wills
Franconia Town Clerk