

**MINUTES OF THE FRANCONIA TOWN MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2026**

The Moderator opened the meeting at 7:15PM

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Moderator informed those in attendance that next year’s ballot voting for town offices and zoning amendments, if any, will take place at the Town Hall from 1:00pm-6:00pm and then the Town Meeting will begin at 7:00pm at the Lafayette School.

Stephen Schwartz asked if the Select Board would consider in the future having a short biography of each candidate that is on the ballot posted on the website so people have an idea of who they are. The Moderator stated in the past there has been a candidate forum and that could certainly be looked into.

There was a motion by Tim Burnell to accept the 2025 town meeting minutes as written, second by Cindy Burnell. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

There was a motion by Cindy Burnell to waive the reading of the warrant, second by Tim Burnell. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 1. To choose all necessary Town officers for the ensuing year. (By Ballot)

| | | |
|---|---------------------------|------------|
| Selectman (3-year term): | Eugene Leeds | 107 |
| Write-Ins: | Theodore Teegarden | 2 |
| | Mike Betley | 1 |
| | Jill Brewer | 1 |
| | Jan Cole | 1 |
| Treasurer (1-year term): | Steven Plant | 47 |
| Write-Ins: | Mike Betley | 1 |
| | Colby Meehan | 1 |
| | Adam Nyborg | 1 |
| | Henry Vecna | 1 |
| Town Moderator (2-year term): | James Walker | 110 |
| Trustee of the Trust Fund (3-year term) | Jan Cole | 109 |
| Supervisor of the Checklist (6-year term) | L. Monica Laflamme | 107 |
| Write-Ins: | Mandy Young | 1 |
| Supervisor of the Checklist (2-year term) | Lydia Cumbee | 103 |
| Cemetery Trustee (3-year term): | Jayne O’Connor | 113 |
| Library Trustees (3-year term): | Melinda Richmond | 104 |
| Two Vacancies | Sharon Penney | 55 |
| Write-Ins: | Colby Meehan | 2 |
| | Colleen Foley | 1 |
| Water Commissioner (3-year term): | | |
| Write-Ins: | Dick Andross | 4 |

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| William Grote | 2 |
| Don Carey | 1 |
| Ron Cohen | 1 |
| Steve Heath | 1 |
| Veronica Leeds | 1 |
| Richard McLachlin | 1 |
| Steve Plant | 1 |

ARTICLE 2. Zoning Ordinance Amendments – (By Ballot) – Are you in favor of the adoption of the new Official Franconia Zoning Map to support the revised 2024 Franconia Zoning Ordinance that was approved at the March 2025 Town Meeting? At that time the new version of the zoning map, that supported the latest zoning ordinance, was not ready for inclusion at the 2025 Town Meeting—subsequently, the original map was updated and finalized—it does not change any existing zoning boundaries, but only clarifies the established district boundaries, to better support the 2024 Franconia Zoning Ordinance.

Article 2 Passed: Yes - 107 No - 1

ARTICLE 3. Town Line-Item Budget. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate two million, three hundred two thousand four hundred forty dollars (\$2,302,440.00) to defray town charges for the ensuing year. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required) Tax Impact \$3.85 per thousand

| | | |
|------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 4130 | Executive | \$ 211,480.00 |
| 4140 | Town Clerk | \$ 61,961.00 |
| 4150 | Tax Collector | \$ 22,124.00 |
| 4152 | Revaluation of Property | \$ 29,372.00 |
| 4153 | Legal | \$ 6,000.00 |
| 4155 | Personnel Administration | \$ 330,715.00 |
| 4191 | Planning & Zoning | \$ 6,501.00 |
| 4194 | Buildings & Grounds | \$ 169,895.00 |
| 4195 | Cemetery | \$ 25,200.00 |
| 4196 | Insurance | \$ 74,856.00 |
| 4210 | Police | \$ 506,283.00 |
| 4220 | Fire | \$ 158,620.00 |
| 4240 | Building Inspection | \$ 18,000.00 |
| 4290 | Emergency Management | \$ 4,000.00 |
| 4299 | Other Communications | \$ 35,000.00 |
| 4312 | Highway | \$ 501,175.00 |
| 4316 | Street Lights | \$ 10,000.00 |
| 4411 | Health Administration | \$ 1,045.00 |
| 4442 | Welfare | \$ 8,000.00 |
| 4520 | Recreation | \$ 124,267.00 |
| 4583 | Patriotic Purposes | \$ 10,000.00 |
| 4619 | Conservation | \$ 1,500.00 |
| | Long Term Debt | <u>\$ 110,713.00</u> |
| | TOTAL | \$2,302,440.00 |

The article was read, moved by Tim Burnell, second by Ned Brewer. Jill spoke to the article reviewing the slide presentation that was presented at the budget hearing.

Jill stated there was approximately \$31,000.00 in unspent appropriations last year due in part to the highway revenues not being factored in; being understaffed a bit which brought not only the wages below what had been budgeted, but some projects could not be done because of being understaffed; and finally, the principal and interest on the bonds has been corrected.

Jill stated there is an increase of \$109,782.00 in the 2026 proposed budget over the 2025 budget. The increase is

due in part to the proposed fourth full-time highway employee, the bulk purchase of the PAYT bags, a planned vehicle repair for a fire department vehicle, the long-term debt schedule, and the 3% COLA increase for town employees.

Carol Walker questioned why there is a difference in the amount of the budget in the warrant of \$2,302,440.00 and the proposed budget on the slide of \$2,843,641.00. Libby Staples stated the difference is the Recreation Department and Transfer Station budgets have separate warrant articles because they are tri-town budgets.

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

There was a motion by Cindy Burnell to restrict reconsideration of Article 3, second by Tim Burnell. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 4. Appropriate to Capital Reserve Funds

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of three hundred forty-four thousand seven hundred three dollars (\$344,703.00) to be added to the following Capital Reserve Funds previously established. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required) Tax Impact \$0.79 per thousand

Police Cruiser, \$29,000.00; Highway Department Trucks, \$118,492.00; Highway Heavy Equipment, \$48,323.00; Bridge Construction, \$40,000.00; Town Buildings and Grounds Equipment, \$13,565.00; Town Building Vehicle, \$19,519.00; Fire Heavy Equipment, \$55,188.00; Transfer Station, \$13,992.00; Frost Place, \$5,000.00; Dow Field, \$1,624.00.

The article was read, moved by Tim Burnell, second by Ned Brewer. Dan Walker spoke to the article explaining the process the CIP goes through to determine what monies need to be put away each year in order to replace the equipment when it is needed.

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

Article 5. Appropriate to Expendable Trust Funds

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred eighty-two thousand five dollars (\$182,005.00) to be added to the following Expendable Trust Funds previously established. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required) Tax Impact \$0.42 per thousand

Sidewalk Improvement Fund, \$21,000.00; Highway Improvement Fund, \$75,000.00; Town Building Maintenance Fund, \$30,000.00; Fire Department Safety Equipment, \$39,005.00; Library Building Maintenance Fund, \$10,000.00; Franconia Heritage Museum Maintenance Fund, \$5,000.00, Welfare, \$2,000.00.

The article was read, moved by Tim Burnell, second by Sally Small. Dan spoke to the article stating this process is similar to the CIP but is more for buildings and infrastructure.

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

Article 6. Tri-Town Transfer Station

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of three hundred ninety-six thousand four hundred eighteen dollars (\$396,418.00) for the purpose of solid waste disposal, with \$52,614.00 from the Town of Sugar Hill, \$23,019.00 from the Town of Easton, \$190,000.00 PAYT Fees, \$30,000.00 Special Handling Fees, \$12,000.00 in Recycled Material, and to raise \$88,785.00 from taxation. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required) Tax Impact \$0.20 per thousand.

The article was read, moved by Tim Burnell, second by Sally Small. There being no discussion, Article 6 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 7. Tri-Town Recreation Department

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred forty-four thousand seven hundred

ninety-three dollars (\$144,793.00) for the purpose of providing recreation services to residents of the tri-town area, with \$29,78900 from the Town of Sugar Hill, \$19,219.00 from the Town of Easton, \$48,700.00 from Recreation Program income and to raise \$47,085.00 from taxation. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required). Tax impact \$0.11 per thousand.

The article was read, moved by Tim Burnell, second by Sally Small. There being no discussion, Article 7 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 8. Abbie Greenleaf Library

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of ninety-eight thousand three hundred dollars (\$98,300.00) 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 \$0.23 per thousand.

The article was read, moved by Tim Burnell, second by Sally Small. There being no discussion, Article 8 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 9. Water Department Operating Budget

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of four hundred eighty-six thousand five hundred fifty dollars (\$486,550.00) for the operation of the Water Department. The 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 Tim Burnell, second by Sally Small. There being no discussion, Article 9 passed unanimously by voice vote.

There was a motion by Cindy Burnell to restrict reconsideration of Articles 4 through 9, second by Sally Small. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 10. Contract for Ambulance Service

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of six hundred seven thousand two hundred dollars (\$607,200.00) for the purpose of securing ambulance service for the Town of Franconia through December 31, 2026. This amount is reflective of continuing the contract in place with the Town of Littleton. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required) Tax Impact \$1.39 per thousand.

The article was read, moved by Tim Burnell, second by Sally Small. After a brief discussion, Article 10 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 11. Highway Department Truck – Highway Department Purchase

To see if the Town will vote to transfer and appropriate the sum of seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000.00) for the purpose of purchasing a replacement for the one-ton truck for the Highway Department and to authorize the withdrawal of an amount of \$75,000.00 from the Highway Department Truck Capital Reserve. No amount to be raised by taxation. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Tim Burnell, second by Sally Small. There being no discussion, Article 11 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 12. Utility Terrain Vehicle-Fire/EMS Purchase

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of forty-three thousand dollars (\$43,000.00) for the purpose of purchasing a UTV and trailer for Fire/EMS rescue and to authorize the withdrawal of an amount of \$43,000.00 from the Fire Department Safety Equipment Expendable Trust Fund. No amount to be raised by taxation. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Tim Burnell, second by Sally Small. Dan spoke to the article stating the Fire Department has had a number of calls over the last few years in Franconia Notch (bike paths, hiking trails, cross-

country trails) and in our town that are inaccessible to their current fire equipment and this would make it a lot easier for them to access those areas.

There being no discussion, Article 12 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 13. Abbie Greenleaf Library – Building Maintenance

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00) for the purpose of repairing the exterior brick facade of the library and to authorize the withdrawal of an amount of \$100,000.00 from the Unassigned Fund Balance. No amount to be raised by taxation. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Tim Burnell, second by Sally Small. Sharon Penney and Ann Steuernagel spoke to the article.

The library is 114 years old and the exterior brickwork is deteriorating, with sections beginning to come apart. If not addressed promptly, this deterioration is expected to lead to serious structural integrity issues. It will cost \$400,000.00 to repair the exterior of the building and the interior damage caused by water leaking through the walls that are crumbling on the outside.

The Library Board has launched a capital campaign and has received \$50,000.00 in donations. It has applied for an L-Chip grant for \$100,000.00. In order to apply for the L-Chip grant, the library needs to have \$150,000.00 in matching funds and that is the reason for the \$100,000.00 request.

If the library receives this grant that would bring the total raised to \$300,000.00 and the remaining \$100,000.00 would be raised by donations and possibly other grants.

The Abbie Greenleaf Library is on the National Historic Registry and the State Historic Registry. The NH Preservation Alliance has designated the Abbie Greenleaf Library as one of the buildings to save for 2026.

There being no further discussion, Article 13 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 14. Frost Place Museum – Building Maintenance

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of thirty-thousand dollars (\$30,000.00) for the purpose of repairing the exterior/foundation of the building and to authorize the withdrawal of an amount of \$30,000.00 from the Unassigned Fund Balance. No amount to be raised by taxation. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Tim Burnell, second by Sally Small.

Stacey Holmes, Director of the Frost Place, spoke to the article stating they are attempting to replace the foundation by lifting the house, excavating the existing foundation, which is just a dirt floor that is constantly wet, and replace it with a modern, poured concrete foundation. The actual cost is \$260,000.00 and they have an L-Chip grant for \$130,000.00. They will raise the balance of \$100,000.00 if the town will approve the \$30,000.00.

There being no discussion, Article 14 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 15. Revaluation

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) to be added to the Reassessment Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) previously established. This CRF is for the required five-year town-wide revaluation. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required) Tax Impact \$0.02 per thousand.

The article was read, moved by Tim Burnell, second by Sally Small. There being no discussion, Article 15 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 16. 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. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required) Tax Impact \$0.02 per thousand.

The article was read, moved by Tim Burnell, second by Sally Small.

Kevin Johnson spoke to the article indicating that for many years the Chamber was getting \$9,000.00 from Franconia. When the Welcome Center was established, the Chamber requested an increase of \$2,000.00 to offset the \$4,800.00 in rent the Chamber was paying to the Town of Franconia. Kevin stated he believed the Select Board reduced the amount this year because the Chamber is not participating in organizing Old Home Day, but the Chamber never organized Old Home Day.

Kevin made a motion to amend Article 16 to put back the \$2,000.00 that the Select Board took out and increase the amount to \$11,000.00, second by Mandy Young.

There being no discussion, the Amendment to Article 16 passed by hand vote (42-yes, 16-no).

The Moderator read the amended article.

Jan Cole asked how many members the Chamber has and what the revenue is because the letter the Chamber submitted indicates the Chamber did two things -- a yard sale and Old Home Day. Kevin stated the Chamber is small and has about 100 members. He stated the business community does not support the Chamber. Their goal is to bring people here through their website (franconianotch.org) and newsletter.

Jill explained the reason the Board lowered the amount from \$12,000.00 to \$9,000.00 is two-fold. The Board felt the Chamber's mission of promoting the area was under the umbrella that Old Home Day falls under and if the Chamber was not going to participate in Old Home Day, then the Board supported allocating that \$3,000.00 to Old Home Day. The other reason is the other non-profits listed in Article 17 have asked for significantly less than \$9,000.00 and they directly impact the residents of Franconia in a positive way. So, the Board felt that \$9,000.00 was plenty to ask taxpayers to pay to the Chamber.

After a brief discussion regarding Old Home Day, Article 16, as amended, passed by voice vote.

Article 17. Non-Profits

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of twenty-three thousand eight hundred eight dollars (\$23,808.00) for the support of the following agencies. (Majority vote required) Tax Impact \$0.06 per thousand.

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| American Red Cross | \$ 600.00 |
| Ammonoosuc Community Services, Inc. | \$ 5,800.00 |
| Boys & Girls Club of the North Country | \$ 2,500.00 |
| Center for New Beginnings | \$ 1,000.00 |
| CASA of NH | \$ 500.00 |
| Franconia Children's Center | \$ 2,000.00 |
| Good Neighbors Food Bank | \$ 2,000.00 |
| Grafton County Senior Citizens Council, Inc. | \$ 2,750.00 |
| North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency | \$ 3,200.00 |
| Northern Human Services | \$ 1,292.00 |
| Tri-County Community Action Program (CAP) | <u>\$ 2,166.00</u> |
| Total | \$23,808.00 |

The article was read, moved by Tim Burnell, second by Sally Small. There being no discussion, Article 17 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 18. Proceeds from Sale of Town Equipment

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of seventy-nine thousand two hundred four dollars (\$79,204.00) to the following three accounts: Fire Heavy Equipment CRF - \$49,500.00 from the sale of the previous Rescue 2 truck; Transfer Station CRF - \$6,804.00 from the sale of two old containers (this amount represents Franconia's 54% share of the proceeds); Highway Department Truck CRF - \$22,900.00 from the sale of the old F550 truck. This sum to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance. No amount to be raised by taxation. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Tim Burnell, second by Sally Small. There being no discussion, Article 18 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 19. Transfer Fund to Town Building Maintenance ETF

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of four thousand dollars (\$4,000.00) to be added to the Town Building Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund previously established. This sum to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance. These funds represent rent received from the Chamber of Commerce in 2025. No amount to be raised from taxation. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Tim Burnell, second by Sally Small. There being no discussion, Article 19 passed unanimously by voice vote.

There was a motion by Cindy Burnell to restrict reconsideration of Articles 10 through 19, second by Tim Burnell. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 20. Add to Energy Capital Reserve Fund (CRF)

To see if the Town will vote to transfer and appropriate the sum of eighteen thousand one hundred one dollars (\$18,101.00) to be added to the Energy Capital Reserve Fund previously established. These funds represent money received from the Internal Revenue Service as credit for installation of solar panels at Town Hall and shall come from the Unassigned Fund Balance. No amount to be raised by taxation. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Tim Burnell, second by Sally Small. There being no discussion, Article 20 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 21. Add to Rink Surface Maintenance Fund

To see if the Town will vote to transfer and appropriate the sum of two thousand one hundred sixty-four dollars (\$2,164.00) from the Recreation Department line-item budget to the Rink Surface Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund previously established. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Tim Burnell, second by Sally Small. There being no discussion, Article 21 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 22. Add to the Recreation Van Fund

To see if the Town will vote to transfer and appropriate the sum of five thousand four hundred twelve dollars (\$5,412.00) from the Recreation Department line-item budget to the Recreation Van Capital Reserve Fund previously established. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Tim Burnell, second by Sally Small. There being no discussion, Article 22 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 23. Appoint Town Treasurer

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to appoint a Town Treasurer in accordance with RSA 41:26-3, rather than electing a Treasurer. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Tim Burnell, second by Sally Small. There being no discussion, Article 23

passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 24. Town Building Maintenance ETF – Clarify Name and Purpose of this Account

To see if the Town will vote to change the name and clarify the purpose of the existing Town Building Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund (ETF) established under RSA 31:19-a in 1997. The Town owns and maintains multiple buildings and the surrounding grounds which include parking lots for these buildings. The Town would like to change the current name to clarify that this fund can be used on all town buildings, grounds and parking lots. The new name of this ETF would be “Town Buildings and Grounds Maintenance Fund Expendable Trust Fund (ETF). The Selectmen approve this change in name and clarification of purpose. (2/3 majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Tim Burnell, second by Sally Small. There being no discussion, Article 24 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 25. New Three-Year Term for Supervisors of the Checklist

To see if the Town will vote to adopt a three-year (3) term of service for Supervisors of the Checklist instead of the current six-year (6) term. This change is by amendment to RSA 41:46-a passed in 2025. This change does not affect the terms of current supervisors. The Selectmen approve this change. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Tim Burnell, second by Sally Small. After a brief discussion, Article 25 passed unanimously by voice vote.

There was a motion by Cindy Burnell to restrict reconsideration of Articles 20 through 25, second by Sally Small. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Article 26. To Hear Reports

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

The article was read. The Moderator stated those reports are listed in the Town Report.

Article 27. Transact Any Other Business

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

There being no further business, after a motion by Tim Burnell, second by Sally Small, the meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol F. Wills
Franconia Town Clerk