

**MINUTES OF THE FRANCONIA TOWN MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2017**

Moderator William Mead declared the polls closed at 7:00 p.m. The Moderator then called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

The Moderator introduced the Selectmen John Lachapelle, Bernardette Costa, and Eric Meth and the new Town Administrator, Holly Burbank.

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for those residents who passed away this year.

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

ARTICLE I. To choose all necessary Town Officers for the ensuing year. (By ballot)

Selectman (3-year term)	Jill Brewer	170
	John Lachapelle	68
Write-ins:	Trevor Presby	1
Treasurer (1-year term)	Tina Peabody	216
Library Trustee (3-year term)	Sharon Penney	198
	Melinda Richmond	177
	Harriet Taylor	193
Write-ins:	Sally Small	1
Water Commissioner (3-year term)	Joan Hartford	200
Write-ins:	Richard McLachlin	4
	Charles Herbert	1
Trustee of the Trust Funds (3-year term)	Ronald Baillargeon	96
	Joseph Germano	79
Write-ins:	Karen Foss	1
	Steven Plant	1
	David Starr	1
Trustee of the Trust Funds (2-year term)	Karen Foss	121
	Steven Plant	100
Trustee of the Trust Funds (1-year term)	Elizabeth Andross	189
Write-ins:	David Starr	19
	Mary Grote	1
	Katherine Lewis	1
	Ted Hoyle	1
Cemetery Trustee (3-year term)	Jayne O'Connor	207

ARTICLE 2. To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate one million seven hundred fifty-nine thousand nine hundred twenty-one dollars (\$1,759,921.00) to defray town charges for the ensuing year. (Majority vote required)

GENERAL GOVERNMENT		
Executive		\$144,072.00
Election, Registration, & Vital Statistics		\$40,524.00
Financial Administration		\$45,598.00
Revaluation of Property		\$9,450.00
Legal Expenses		\$12,000.00
Planning & Zoning		\$5,236.00
General Government Buildings		\$119,422.00
Cemeteries		\$15,430.00
Insurance		\$10,325.00
Advertising & Regional Associations		\$12,390.00
(Chamber of Commerce - \$10,000.00)	(North Country Council - \$2,390.00)	
PUBLIC SAFETY		
Police		\$379,008.00
Fire		\$129,214.00
Forest Fire		\$3,400.00
Life Squad		\$76,981.00
Building Inspection		\$3,000.00
Emergency Management		\$2,900.00
Dispatch Phone Lines		\$45,500.00
(Franconia's Share \$44,000.00)		
HIGHWAYS & STREETS		\$401,888.00
UTILITIES		\$21,500.00
Health Officer		\$200.00
WELFARE		\$8,700.00
(General Assistance	\$6,000.00)	
(CAP	\$2,700.00)	
CULTURE & RECREATION		
Recreation Programs		\$117,150.00
(Franconia's Share	\$56,147.00)	
Patriotic Purposes		\$1,000.00
Museums		\$421.00
Conservation		\$1,000.00
DEBT SERVICE		\$153,612.00
TOTAL	(Franconia's Share \$1,698,418.00)	\$1,759,921.00

The article was read, moved by Bernardette Costa and seconded by Eric Meth. Bernardette spoke to the article. Bernardette stated the increase in the budget is due to salary increases, legal expenses, forest fire equipment, utilities, consulting fees paid to the Administrative Assistant for training of the new Town Administrator, payment of unused sick time and vacation time to the Administrative Assistant, purchase of culvert bar for de-icing culverts, dispatch phone lines increase, and replacing the broken snow blower..

Dawn Steele raised a concern that the unassigned fund balance is down to 5.24% and under State law the Town must maintain a minimum unassigned fund balance of 5%. In order to increase this line taxes will need to be increased. Also the revenue/credit estimate for 2017 is 25% higher than 2016, which she feels is too high. Bernardette stated the Board is trying to tighten up the budget so that it reflects what will be spent which does not leave room for extra monies.

Dawn Steele raised a concern regarding the \$10,000.00 charitable donation to the Chamber of Commerce since 53% of their budget is spent on payroll. Barbara Ashley stated the Chamber of Commerce is not a charitable organization but a 501(c) (6) business non-profit organization. The Mission Statement is to promote economic growth in and around the Franconia Notch region and its villages and it is supported by memberships and donations.

Thad Presby noted that the written amount of the budget was different than the numerical value in the warrant article. The Moderator stated for the record that the correct amount of Article 2 is \$1,759,921.00 (one million seven hundred fifty-nine thousand nine hundred twenty-one).

Article 2 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 3. To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred eighty-one thousand twelve dollars (\$181,012.00) to be added to the following Capital Reserve Funds previously established. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

Town Buildings Truck, \$6340.00; Town Buildings and Grounds Equipment, \$6,971.00; Highway Trucks, \$33,450.00; Highway Heavy Equipment, \$13,835.00; Police Cruisers, \$11,713.00; Life Squad Van, \$11,340.00; Life Squad Equipment, \$3,329.00; Fire Rescue Truck, \$7,201.00; Fire Pumper Truck, \$12,000.00; Fire Tanker Truck \$13,280.00; Fire Ladder Truck \$5,000.00; Fire Fighting Equipment \$12,103.00; Bridge Maintenance, \$5,000.00; Legal \$30,000.00; and Re-Assessment \$9450.00

The article was read, moved by Bernardette Costa, seconded by John Lachapelle. Bernardette spoke to the article. She stated the \$30,000.00 is for legal fees that have been incurred for Northern Pass. The Town has paid \$14,049.16 and there are outstanding balances for the lawyer and the consultant of \$27,479.64. Several residents questioned how the Board could allow this fund to be overspent.

Marsha Luce made a motion to remove the legal \$30,000.00 from Article 3 of the Capital Reserve Fund. Second by Kirk Luce.

Bernardette stated the Board did not know how much money had been spent on Northern Pass but these bills need to be paid.

The amendment to Article 3 failed by voice vote.

Jon Peabody raised a concern over the wording of the article pertaining to the fund names i.e. Bridge Maintenance Fund instead of Bridge Construction Fund and "Fire Rescue Truck Fund" instead of "Fire Equipment Truck Fund". He is concerned about the legal ramifications of not using the proper fund names.

Article 3 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 4. To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred twelve thousand dollars (\$112,000.00) to be added to the following Expendable Trust Funds previously established. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

Highway Improvement, \$75,000.00; Town Buildings Maintenance, \$15,000.00; Sidewalk Improvement, \$21,000.00; and Heritage Museum Maintenance \$1000.00.

The article was read, moved by Bernardette Costa and seconded by Eric Meth. Jon Peabody raised a concern over there being a Heritage Museum Maintenance Fund when it is a town building and we have a Town Buildings Maintenance Fund.

Article 4 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 5. To see if the town will vote to appropriate the sum of two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00) from the Recreation Committee's line item budget to the Rink Surface Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund previously established. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

The article read, moved by Bernardette Costa, seconded by Eric Meth. Kim Cowles spoke to the article and explained that Articles 5, 6, and 7 are in the Recreation line item budget but that budget is a tri-town budget so that money will come out of the line item budget and go into those funds. No additional money is being raised.

Article 5 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 6. To see if the town will vote to 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 Bernardette Costa, seconded by John Lachapelle.

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

ARTICLE 7. To see if the town will vote to appropriate the sum of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) from the Recreation Committee's line item budget to the Recreation Van Capital Reserve Fund previously established for this purpose. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority Vote required)

The article was read, moved by Bernardette Costa, seconded by Eric Meth.

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

ARTICLE 8. To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of eighty three thousand four hundred ninety-nine dollars (\$83,499.00) 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)

The article read, moved by Bernardette Costs, seconded by John Lachapelle.

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

ARTICLE 9. To see if the town will vote to appropriate the sum of three hundred fifteen thousand five hundred twenty-two dollars (\$315,522.00) for the purpose of solid waste disposal, with (\$62,872.00) from the Town of Sugar Hill, (\$28,578.00) from the Town of Easton, (\$80,000.00) PAYT Fees, (\$20,000.00) Special Handling Fees, (\$25,000.00) in Recycled Material, and to raise (\$99,072.00) from taxation. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Marsha Luce, seconded by John Lachapelle. Greg Wells spoke to the article and stated the increase is due mainly to an increase in fees and transportation costs and additional personnel at the transfer station.

Article 9 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 10. To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of five thousand seven hundred fifteen dollars (\$5,715) for health insurance coverage for the Town Clerk/Tax Collector. If approved, the town's portion of health insurance will be included in the operating budget in future years. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Bernardette Costa and seconded by Eric Meth. The Moderator stated he has a petition from the floor for a secret ballot for Article 10. Bernardette spoke to the article stating the Town Clerk/Tax Collector position is an important position and should have health insurance provided by the Town as do other employees. If approved, this article will raise the funds necessary for the town's portion of the health insurance for the remainder of this year and then the yearly cost will be added to the budget going forward.

A resident raised a concern that this would set a precedent for all elected officials to ask for health insurance. It was stated this article is specific to the Town Clerk/Tax Collector. It was also suggested that the Town offer the Town Clerk/Tax Collector a certain amount of money and have her go out and get her own insurance.

After a brief discussion the article was called to a vote (ballot vote).

Results: Yes - 40 No - 23 Article 10 passed.

ARTICLE 11. To see if the town will vote to establish the Lafayette Recreation Expendable Trust Fund to enhance the Lafayette Recreation programs, events and activities (these are to be determined by the Lafayette Recreation Committee), and to appropriate fifty one thousand four dollars (\$51,004.00) to be placed in said fund with the monies to come from the unassigned fund balance (this amount represents previously collected donations and fundraising monies); furthermore to name the Selectmen as agents to expend from the fund. Recommended by the Selectmen.

The article was read, moved by Bernardette Costa and seconded by Eric Meth.

Kim Cowles spoke to the article. Back in 1991, the Dow Field was donated to the Town of Franconia to establish a Dow Fund, a savings account. The Recreation Department has had fundraising events (i.e. Halloween Cup, Hobble Gobble, and Top Notch Triathlon) and has received donations over the years to make improvements to the facilities in town and those funds were placed in the savings account. Upon advice of legal counsel these funds need to be placed in an expendable trust fund. The Board of Selectmen will be agents to expend but any request must come before the Recreation Committee and then to the Select Boards of Sugar Hill, Easton and Franconia.

After some discussion, the Moderator moved the question. Article 11 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 12. To see if the town will vote to establish the Dow Clock Expendable Trust Fund for maintenance, repairs and improvements to the Dow Clock and to appropriate six thousand three hundred eighteen dollars (\$6,318.00) to be placed in said fund, with this amount to come from the unassigned fund balance (this amount represents previously collected donations and fundraising monies); furthermore to name the Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund. Recommended by the Selectmen. (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Bernardette Costa, seconded by Eric Meth.

There being no discussion, the article passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 13. To see if the town will vote to discontinue the following CAPITAL RESERVE TRUST FUNDS. Said funds and accumulated interest to date of withdrawal, are to be transferred to the municipality's general fund. (Majority vote required)

Fire Truck Tanker, established in 2008 - \$146,407.00; Fire Truck Pumper, established in 1998 - \$126,512.00; Fire Truck Equipment, established in 2005 - \$52,104.00; and Fire Ladder Truck, established in 2016 - \$37,189.00; and Forestry Truck, established in 2010 - \$545.00.

The article was read, moved by Bernardette Costa, seconded by John Lachapelle. Bernardette spoke to the article stating the Selectmen decided to do what other towns do and combine these funds into one Fire Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund.

Karen Foss stated that making the Selectmen agents to expend this fund allows two out of the three Selectmen to spend the money and eliminates the checks and balances process that is in place now. Bernardette stated that before any funds are spent from this new capital reserve fund it would need to be voted on at a Town Meeting.

Article 13 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 14. To see if the Town will vote to establish a Fire Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of purchasing heavy equipment for the Fire Department and to raise and appropriate the sum of three hundred sixty-two thousand seven hundred fifty-seven dollars (\$362,757.00) to be placed in this fund with said funds to come from unassigned fund balance (this represents the funds from the discontinuation of the CRF's listed in article 13. Furthermore to name the Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund. Recommended by Selectmen. (Majority vote required). This article is contingent on the passage of article 13.

The article was read, moved by Bernardette Costa, and seconded by John Lachapelle. The Moderator declared Article 13 as passed. There was no discussion.

Article 14 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 15. To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of forty thousand dollars (\$40,000.00) for the purpose of financing the conversion of its streetlights to LED and to remove a number of certain designated streetlights and to authorize the issuance of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33) and to authorize the Commissioners to issue and negotiate such bonds, or notes in the amount of up to and to determine the rate of interest thereon; additionally forty thousand dollars (\$40,000.00) will be financed with a low interest rate (2.5%) loan through the NH Community Development Finance Authority for five (5) years. Interest and principal payments will come from the savings in electricity, and no further appropriations of town funds are needed. After loan repayment, all savings accrue to the town. 2/3 ballot vote. Recommended by the Selectmen.

The article was read, moved by Eric Meth, seconded by John Lachapelle. The Energy Committee spoke to the article (Chip Stowell, Karen Foss, and David Strange). There are 142 street lights in Franconia and it costs the Town \$21,000.00 a year. By converting to LED there will be a savings of approximately \$10,000.00. If some of the lights were turned off the savings would increase. Eversource will give a rebate of \$100.00 per light. The savings on the lights will pay for the loan which should be paid off in 3.5 years.

The Moderator stated this is a ballot vote. After a brief discussion, residents waived the ballot vote and agreed to a show of hands.

The article was called to a vote. Results: Yes – 60 No – 0 Article 15 passed.

ARTICLE 16. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000.00) to be added to the Northern Pass Defense Fund as previously established. Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (Majority vote required.)

The article was read, moved by Eric Meth, and seconded by Bernardette Costa. Eric spoke to the article stating the Site Evaluation Commission, which is basically the Planning Board for the State of New Hampshire, are the ones entertaining the application for Northern Pass. Eric stated this is a difficult process to maneuver and the Town cannot go through it without legal representation. The Select Board is trying to be proactive in having these funds available. After further discussion, the Moderator called the article.

Article 16 passed by voice vote.

The Moderator announced the results of the candidate vote (as outlined under Article 1 above).

ARTICLE 17. Shall the Town of Franconia vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 72:28-b, All Veterans' Tax Credit? If adopted, the credit will be available to any resident, or the spouse or surviving spouse of any resident, who (1) served not less than 90 days on active service in the armed forces of the United States and was honorably discharged or an officer honorably separated from services and is not eligible for or receiving a credit under RSA 72:28 or RSA 72:35. If adopted, the credit granted will be five hundred (\$500.00), the same amount as the standard or optional veterans' tax credit voted by the Town of Franconia under RSA 72:28.

The article was read, moved by Eric Meth, seconded by Bernardette Costa. The Moderator stated he has a request for a ballot vote on this article. Eric spoke to the article. This is a tax credit for all veterans as opposed to those that served in a time of war. It was not recommended by the selectmen simply because there is no set amount involved.

After a brief discussion, the article was called to a vote. (ballot vote).

Results: 42 - Yes 16 – No Article 17 passed

ARTICLE 18. We, the undersigned, petition the town to take appropriate steps at the March 2017 town meeting to change the Town of Franconia Solar Energy System exemption from an exemption capped at \$20,000.00 to a full assessed value exemption. We note that more than 50% of the towns in NH have adopted a full assessed value or a full installed cost exemption, and we wish to align ourselves with this policy. We submit this petition with the vision of encouraging a cleaner energy future. (By petition) The Board of Selectmen recommend this.

The article was read, moved by Eric Meth, seconded by Bernardette Costa. The Moderator stated there is an amendment to this article. Barbara Treadway stated they want to amend Article 18 to include the following language, "...and would exclude any homeowner or commercial business venture from making a profit on such solar energy system savings."

There was a motion by Eric Meth to amend Article 18 as stated above, second by Barbara Treadway. Barbara stated this credit is just for personal solar use and not for anyone who has a solar farm.

The Moderator read the amended article and called it to a vote. Article 18, as amended, passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 19. To see if the Town will vote to adopt the following policy in regard to non-profit/charitable contributions.

Each and every request for charitable contributions shall be listed and voted on as a separate article on the Town Warrant. No appropriations for non-profits/charities shall be included in the Town's line item budget. (By petition)

The article was read, moved by John Lachapelle, seconded by Mary Grote. There was no discussion. Article 19 passed by voice vote.

Bernardette Costa made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Warrant Article 2, seconded by Eric Meth. Motion passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 20. To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,000.00 (one-thousand and no dollars) to support the Boys & Girls Club of the North Country in order to provide a healthy, safe, and productive after school and vacation camp environment for children from Franconia and other area towns. The Selectmen recommend this article. (By petition)

The article was read, moved by Victoria Cole, seconded by Jeff Woodward. Jeff Woodward spoke to the article. The Boys and Girls Club now has a bus that will come to the Franconia school and transport students to the Boys and Girls Club.

Article 20 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 21. To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750.00) for the support of Adaptive Sports Partners of the North Country. (Majority vote required.)

The article was read, moved by John Lachapelle, seconded by Bernardette Costa. Jeff Woodward spoke to the article. They have volunteers that take people out to do every type of sport. There are two full-time employees, one part-time employee, and the rest are volunteers.. The budget is about \$230,000.00 and we raise every bit of it from donations and we appreciate the support of the town.

Article 21 passed by voice vote

ARTICLE 22. To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of four thousand dollars (\$4,000.00) for the support of Ammonoosuc Community Services, Inc. (Majority vote required.)

The article was read, moved by Eric Meth, and seconded by Bernardette Costa. There is an amendment to this article which is a procedural matter. Ned Densmore made a motion to amend Article 22 by substituting Ammonoosuc Community Health Services, Inc. for Ammonoosuc Community Services, Inc., seconded by Eric Meth. There was no discussion.

The amendment to Article 22 pass by voice vote.

The Moderator called the article, as amended, to a vote. Article 22, as amended, passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 23. To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) for the support of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of New Hampshire. (Majority vote required.)

The article was read, moved by John Lachapelle, seconded by Bernardette Costa. There was no discussion. Article 23 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 24. To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of one thousand dollars (\$1000.00) for the support of Center for New Beginnings. (Majority vote required.)

The article was read, moved by Eric Meth, seconded by Bernardette Costa. There was no discussion. Article 24 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 25. To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00) for the support of Franconia Children's Center. (Majority vote required.)

The article was read, moved by Bernardette Costa, seconded by Eric Meth. There was no discussion. Article 25 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 26. To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500.00) for the support of Grafton County Senior Citizens Council, Inc. (Majority vote required.)

The article was read, moved by John Lachapelle, seconded by Bernardette Costa. There was no discussion. Article 26 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 27. To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of three thousand two hundred dollars (\$3,200.00) for the support of North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency. (Majority vote required.)

The article was read, moved by Bernardette Costa, seconded by John Lachapelle. There was no discussion. Article 27 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 28. To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of one thousand two hundred ninety-two dollars (\$1,292.00) for the support of Northern Human Services - White Mountain Health. (Majority vote required.)

The article was read, moved by Eric Meth, seconded by Bernardette Costa. There was no discussion. Article 28 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 29. To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of five hundred twenty dollars (\$520.00) for the support of Support Center at Burch House. (Majority vote required.)

The article was read, moved by Bernardette Costa, seconded by John Lachapelle. There was no discussion. Article 29 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 30. To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00) for the support of Tri-County Transit. (Majority vote required.)

The article was read, moved by Bernardette Costa, seconded by Eric Meth. There was no discussion. Article 30 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 31. Above The Notch Humane Society requests \$500.00. This money is used to care for stray animals the Police Dept. or individuals bring in, waiting to be reunited with their owners, as well as any veterinary care required. The Selectmen recommend this appropriation. (By petition) (Majority vote required)

The article was read, moved by Mary Grote, seconded by Dawn Steele. There was no discussion. Article 31 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 32. To hear the reports of agents, auditors, and committees, or other officers heretofore chosen and pass any vote relative thereto.

The article was read, moved by Richard Gaudette, seconded by Steven Plant. There was no discussion. Article 32 passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 33. To transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

The article was read, moved by Melinda Richmond, and seconded by Bernardette Costa.

Karen Foss thanked Joe Germano for his conscientious service over the last year in serving as a Trustee of the Trust Fund.

Dawn Steele thanked John Lachapelle for his service to the Town, especially this past year when he served on several committees.

After a motion by Carol Wills and a second by Melinda Richmond, the meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol F. Wills