

2025 Town Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 13, 2025
Hanover High School
Ballot Voting 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Business Meeting 7:00 p.m.

The annual Town Meeting of Hanover, New Hampshire, convened on May 13, 2025, at 7:00 a.m. by the town moderator, Jeremy Eggleton. Moderator Eggleton explained the polls would be open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. for the purpose of voting for candidates for Town Meeting and for all other articles requiring a vote by official ballot as set forth in Articles One through Article Six of the Town Meeting Warrant.

ARTICLE ONE: To vote (by nonpartisan ballot) for the following Town Officers:

One Selectboard Member to serve for a term of three (3) years.
Evan Leonard Gerson 259
Athos John Rassias 916

One Supervisor of the Checklist to serve for a term of three (3) years.

Marcia J Kelly 1064

One Etna Town Library Trustee to serve for a term of three (3) years.

Sharry Baker 1057

One Town Clerk to serve for a term of two (3) years.

Tracy Walsh 1086

One Trustee of Trust Funds to serve for a term of three (3) years.

Elizabeth (Betsy) McClain 1078

One Trustee of the Cemetery to serve for a term of three (3) years.

Jennifer Ross Taxman 1056

ARTICLE TWO (to vote by ballot): To see if the Town will vote to amend the Hanover Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Hanover Planning Board in Amendment No. 1:

The following question is on the official ballot:

"Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 1 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Hanover Zoning Ordinance as follows?"

Amend the Zoning Ordinance to incentivize the creation of new house-scale residential units by easing zoning restrictions on lots in the SR, GR, and RO Districts served by Town water and sewer.

Amendment No. 1 proposes to:

- a) Add a new overlay district to encourage the development of house-scale residential units by reducing lot size, frontage, setback, building footprint and lot coverage requirements for such new units and allowing up to four dwelling units per lot, but to limit tenancy in these new units to a "family" as defined in Section 302.

- b) Add the definitions of "flag lot" and "house-scale residential dwelling" to the Definitions Section 302.
- c) Amend Section 405.4 B., 405.7. B, and 405.8 B to include house-scale residential dwellings as permitted uses, add two-family uses to Single Residence District, and add a footnote to the uses table to connect house-scale residential dwellings with the new overlay district.
- d) Amend Section 405.8.A, Single Residence District Objective, to better align with additional building types.
- e) Amend Section 604 to allow house-scale residential dwellings on a lot.

RESULTS: YES 703 NO 575

ARTICLE PASSED

ARTICLE THREE: (to vote by ballot): To see if the Town will vote to amend the Hanover Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Hanover Planning Board Amendment No. 2:

The following question is on the official ballot:

"Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 2 for the Hanover Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Hanover Planning Board as follows?"

Amend Sections 1202 and 1204 of Article XII: Affordable Non-Profit Provided Workforce Housing to make it easier to build such housing.

Amendment No. 2 proposes to:

- a) Amend Section 1202 to allow Affordable Non-Profit Provided Workforce housing without requiring a Special Exception.
- b) Amend Section 1204 to apply the more permissive dimensional controls of the House- Scale Residential Overlay district to this type of housing.

RESULTS: YES 748 NO 525

ARTICLE PASSED

ARTICLE FOUR: (to vote by ballot): To see if the Town will vote to amend the Hanover Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Hanover Planning Board Amendment No. 3:

The following question is on the official ballot:

"Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 3 as proposed by the Hanover Planning Board for the Hanover Zoning Ordinance as follows?"

Amend Section 302 and Section 715 to add subsection 715.8 Campus Wayfinding Signage.

Amendment No. 3 proposes to:

- a) *allow a wider range of sign options and a less burdensome sign approval procedure for campus wayfinding signs*
- b) *Add "Campus Wayfinding Signage" to the definition section.*
- c) *Add a new section (Section 715.8) to Article VII, Accessory Uses; Section 715, Signs.*

RESULTS: YES 971 NO 294

ARTICLE PASSED

BUSINESS MEETING

Moderator Jeremy Eggleton called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. at Hanover High School. He introduced distinguished citizen and Selectboard member emerita, Nancy Carter, to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Moderator Eggleton stated that the first question on the agenda is approving the rules for the meeting; he directed everyone to read page 18 of their packet, The Town Moderator's Message. Moderator Eggleton took a motion from the floor to utilize the set of rules listed in the Town Moderator's Message. The motion was seconded. Moderator Eggleton calls the question. The motion PASSED.

Before starting the business meeting, Moderator Eggleton stated he wanted to recognize someone who has served the town profoundly over the last three years. Leading the election clean-up crew is a woman named Bobbie Hitchcock. Bobbie's term as the town clerk and the chief town clerk election officer is terminating tonight, and she hasn't run for re-election, but her service to the town has been invaluable over the past three years. He asked the town to recognize her and give her a nice round of applause, which he acknowledged that she would hate.

Next, he introduced the Selectboard members and asked Town Manager Rob Housman to introduce town department heads. Houseman began by extending his thanks to the Selectboard for giving him the opportunity to serve as town manager. Their support has been amazing. He also recognized the department heads who've made his transition much easier than it could have been. With that, he asked each one to stand, and then, at the end, there was a round of appreciative applause.

Moderator states that articles will be read and moved by Selectboard members and then we will introduce debate after a second. Following the conclusion of debate he will call for a vote.

The Moderator introduced Selectboard Chair Carey Callaghan to provide a preview of some technical corrections to the budget process. These will be covered in detail as we go through the specific articles. Chair Callaghan began by thanking our terrific staff for the tremendous effort involved in developing not only the budget but also the initiatives and plans that stand behind the numbers themselves. This year, we substantially decompressed the budget process, spreading elements of it over months, and the actual public hearing to adopt the warrant articles was spread over two weeks. We feel this process made decision-making better, but the back-to-back public hearings contributed to the need for three technical corrections for which the Selectboard apologizes. So these essentially constitute an errata. And here's a preview of what those are, so you're not surprised when they come up. In Article 10, which authorizes additions to capital reserve funds, the warrant article language voted upon by the Selectboard on April 7th was subsequently agreed by the Selectboard on April 14th to be increased by adding over \$620,000 to the sewer fund and 173,000 to the water fund. We did not, however, formally amend our April 7th vote. However, the language in the published warrant article before you in the annual report is what the intended and discussed, but Joanna will offer an amendment to align the voted-upon warrant article with the published warrant article.

In Article 11, we will drop the \$44,500 withdrawal from the municipal Transportation Improvement Fund, which should have been a separate warrant article. Joanna will amend the article accordingly.

Lastly, in Article 13, the last sentence will be struck, which was inadvertently published but had been properly deleted by the Selectboard in its vote. Jennie will amend to fix this error.

ARTICLE FIVE:

Selectboard member Berke read out the current open positions and those nominated for the roles; he then moved the article.

To choose the following Town Officers to be elected by a majority vote.

One Advisory Board of Assessors for a term of three (3) years.

Mac Gardner

Three Fence Viewers, each for a term of one (1) year.

Robert Grabill

Matt Marshall

Bruce Simpson

Two Surveyors of Wood and Timber, each for a term of one (1) year.

Timothy Bent

James Kennedy

Such other Officers as the Town may judge necessary for managing its affairs.

The article was seconded by a resident in the fourth row, and the moderator asked for discussion.

The moderator called for a voice vote.

ARTICLE PASSED

ARTICLE SIX:

Selectboard member Chamberlain read and moved Article Six. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000 for the purpose of funding the Hanover Climate Adaptation Planning Project, and to authorize the Selectboard to apply for, accept, and expend funds through the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Program, including up to \$100,000 in principal loan forgiveness, in accordance with the program requirements. Further, to authorize the issuance of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33:1, et seq.) for the full loan amount, with the understanding that up to \$100,000 of the principal will be forgiven upon meeting all program conditions.

This appropriation shall be non-lapsing until June 30, 2030, or until the project is completed, or until all funds have been expended in accordance with NHDES program requirements.

The moderator noted that if we act on this article, it will be by ballot vote, not voice. He explained that you have in your packet a sheaf of small papers, one with a pink sheet and a ballot labeled Article 6. Voters please use the Article Six ballot to indicate your preference or somehow demonstrate your decision and bring it down to the ballot box. Also, bring the pink sheet so that the ballot clerk may indicate that you have voted. This article, because it is a bond issue under RSA 33:1, will have to pass by a three-fifths majority, not just a preponderance. So that having been explained, the motion is on the table. The moderator accepted a second.

Before we move on to voting, are there any comments, questions, or concerns? He shared that he has received questions about what does this mean. This is a way that we can get reimbursed for our sewer project. We've been paying for this project through our sewer fund and the undesignated fund balance. Passage of this article will allow us to get this cost from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Water State Revolving Fund through a loan forgiveness program.

The moderator called for thoughts, comments, observations, or concerns. Hearing none, the moderator opened the voting; the floor will be open for 10 minutes, and voting will close at 8:25.

183 for/3 Against **ARTICLE PASSED (9:52 pm)**

ARTICLE SEVEN:

Selectboard member Chamberlain read out and then moved the article. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$19,375 for deposit into the Land and Capital Improvements Fund and to fund this appropriation by authorizing the withdrawal of this amount from the Unassigned Fund Balance. The amount appropriated is the equivalent of 50% of the total collected in Land Use Change Tax in the fiscal year 2024.

The moderator accepted a second and Selectboard member Chamberlain contextualized articles 7 & 8. They both deal with the money that is generated from the land use change tax. Historically, the town put 50% into this capital improvement fund and 50% into the conservation fund. We voted to establish the Land and Capital Improvements Fund and the Conservation Fund in 1999.

The moderator called for thoughts, comments, observations, or concerns. Hearing none, the moderator called for a voice vote.

ARTICLE PASSED

ARTICLE EIGHT:

Selectboard member Chamberlain read out and then moved the article. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$19,375 for deposit into the Conservation Fund and to fund this appropriation by authorizing the withdrawal of this amount from the Unassigned Fund Balance. The amount appropriated is 50% of the total collected in Land Use Change Tax in the fiscal year 2024. The moderator called for and accepted a second.

Resident Bernie Waugh asked how the monies are accessed? Response was by the conservation Commission after a public meeting.

Moderator asks for any further questions, concerns, observations, thoughts, or comments from the body? Hearing none, he called the question.

ARTICLE PASSED

ARTICLE NINE:

Selectboard member Chamberlain read out and then moved the article. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$34,505 for deposit into the Municipal Transportation Improvement Fund and to fund this appropriation by authorizing the withdrawal of this amount from the Unassigned Fund Balance. This amount is equivalent to the total Transportation Fee surcharge for each motor vehicle registered in the Town of Hanover (\$5.00 per vehicle) during fiscal year 2024. The moderator accepted a second to the motion.

Selectboard member Chamberlain shared some context for this article. Pursuant to RSA 261: 153, in May 2000 the town of Hanover established this fund as a way to put aside some money for transportation improvements.

The moderator called for a voice vote.

ARTICLE PASSED

The moderator states that Article 10 is before us. Selectboard member Whitcomb is going to read the article. This is one of the articles that did require a technical amendment, and we'll get to that momentarily.

ARTICLE TEN:

Selectboard member Whitcomb read out and then moved the article. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,936,412 and authorize payment into existing capital reserve funds in the following amounts for the purposes for which such funds were established:

Ambulance Equipment Capital Reserve Fund	\$163,000
<i>with funding to come from the Ambulance Fund</i>	
Building Maintenance and Improvement Capital Reserve Fund	\$251,000
<i>with funding to be raised through taxation</i>	
Dispatch Equipment and Dispatch Center Enhancements Capital Reserve Fund	\$ 28,800
<i>with funding to be raised through taxation</i>	
Fire Department Vehicle and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund	\$162,000
<i>with funding to come from the Fire Fund</i>	
Highway Construction and Maintenance Equipment Capital Reserve Fund	\$542,375
<i>with funding to be raised through taxation</i>	
Parking Operations Vehicles and Parking Facility Improvements Capital Reserve Fund	\$ 84,000
<i>with funding to come from the Parking Fund</i>	
Police Vehicles and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund	\$142,000
<i>with funding to be raised through taxation</i>	
Road Construction and Improvements Capital Reserve Fund	\$ 75,000
<i>with funding to be raised through taxation</i>	
Sewer Equipment and Facilities Improvements Capital Reserve Fund	(amended to) \$978,567
<i>with Funding to come from the Wastewater Treatment Facility Fund</i>	
Water Treatment and Distribution Equipment and System Capital Reserve Fund	(amended to) \$509,670
<i>with funding to come from the Water Utility Fund</i>	

The moderator called for and received a second from Jeff Acker. Before asking for debate, the moderator called on Selectboard member Whitcomb to offer a motion to amend the article.

She offered an amendment to Article 10, adding \$621,567 to the sewer fund and \$173,330 to the water fund. These figures reflect what was on the warrant and retroactively ratify the dollar figures as the Selectboard did not have the correct dollar figure when they first voted.

The moderator accepted a second for the amendment. To add more context he shared that, essentially, you are the legislative body for the town of Hanover and you are being asked to ratify or correct the decision of the executive, which is the Selectboard.

Laura Spector-Morgan introduced herself as the Town attorney. There were two budget hearings, and the Selectboard voted on the first half of the budget at the first budget hearing. The first half of the warrant at the first budget hearing and the second half of the warrant at the second budget hearing. There were changes made to Articles 10 and 11 between those two meetings, but the Selectboard did not vote on those changes at the second hearing; they approved the final warrant as you have it. So, a question was raised as to whether or not these articles were properly presented. To avoid there being any question about the legality of the appropriations, we suggested that the Selectboard offer an amendment to make it very clear this is what they intend and this is what they recommend.

A resident was recognized as asked to clarify the correct figure for the Capital Reserve Fund. The Selectboard member inadvertently said \$252,000 instead of \$251,000. Whitcomb reinforced that it was \$251,000.

The moderator called for a vote on the amendment, which needs to pass by a 2/3 majority.

AMENDMENT PASSED

Moderator asks for any further debate, questions, concerns, or observations concerning Article Ten?

A resident was recognized to pose a question. His mental calculation between this article and the next one is that the sum total is about \$3.5 million, which is roughly 10% of the budget requested in Article 18. This is a large amount of money not included as part of the operating budget, but asking for money to buy things that operate the town. Ellen Bullion, Finance Director, explained that these warrant articles are required by the Department of Revenue Administration to be voted on as separate articles. Article 18 which has our operating budget, excludes these dollars because they are capital reserve dollars as opposed to operating funds.

Further questions, comments, concerns? Hearing none, I'll call the question on Article 10 as amended

ARTICLE PASSED

ARTICLE ELEVEN:

Selectboard member Whitcomb read out and then moved the article. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$1,728,744 (amended to \$1,684,244) for the purposes listed below and to authorize funding these amounts by withdrawal from the listed capital reserve funds in the following amounts:

Building Maintenance and Improvement Capital Reserve Fund: HVAC	\$ 30,000
<i>Controls, Police Department</i>	
Dispatch Equipment and Dispatch Center Enhancements Capital Reserve Fund:	\$70,000
<i>Hayes Hill Radio Building</i>	
Fire Department Vehicle and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund: Fire Car	\$101,668
<i>1 replacement; Overhead Doors Etna Fire Station</i>	
Highway Construction and Maintenance Equipment Capital Reserve Fund:	\$523,176
<i>Truck 11 replacement (10-wheeler with plow); Backhoe Loader; Truck 1 replacement</i>	
Municipal Transportation Improvement Fund:	\$44,500
<i>Maple Street Sidewalk Gap- (Removed by an amendment)</i>	
Parking Operations Vehicles and Parking Facility Improvements Capital Reserve Fund:	\$77,400
<i>Stairwell maintenance</i>	
Police Vehicles and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund: Safety Rescue Equipment	\$67,500
Road Construction and Improvements Capital Reserve Fund:	\$28,000
<i>Lebanon/Summer Street Video Detection System</i>	
Sewer Equipment and Facilities Improvements Capital Reserve Fund:	\$80,000
<i>Backhoe Loader for Line Maintenance (50%)</i>	
Water Treatment and Distribution Equipment and System Capital Reserve Fund:	\$706,500
<i>Backhoe Loader for Water Treatment (50%); Balch Hill Water Storage</i>	
<i>Tank Painting; Greensboro Booster Pumps</i>	

This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until these specified purchases are complete or June 30, 2030, whichever occurs sooner.

The moderator accepted a second. Selectboard member Whitcomb offered an amendment to the posted warrant to eliminate the \$44,500 withdrawal from the municipal Transportation Improvement Fund. The new amended total for Article 11 is \$1,684,244.

A resident was recognized and asked if this means we're no longer doing the Maple Street sidewalk gap project. The response from the Town Manager was that the project will be delayed by one year, and we will include the project in next year's appropriation.

Hearing no further comments, the moderator called for a vote on the amendment.

AMENDMENT PASSED

Any further comments or questions on Article 11, hearing none moderator called for a voice vote.

ARTICLE PASSED

ARTICLE TWELVE:

Selectboard member Chamberlain read out and moved the article. To see if the Town will vote to discontinue the *Bridge Capital Reserve Fund*, established under RSA 35:1 for the purpose of funding bridge maintenance and improvements, and to transfer all remaining funds to the General Fund undesignated fund balance.

The moderator accepted a second from the front row. Any comments, questions, or concerns?

A resident asked that the article be explained more fully. Selectboard member Chamberlain summarized that we had a reserve fund and have completed bridge repairs, but looking forward, we anticipate bonding for future bridge work, which leaves funds set aside that would be moved to a new fund, which is more usable. To the question How much? The answer was \$214,277.

Resident Knuuti posed this question. So this is a fund that was approved by the state, and the town voted to appropriate money for it through taxation dollars for the express purpose of maintaining bridges. And now you want to take that money out and use it for something else?

The answer was yes to move to a fund for roads and bridges and the public right of way, among other things, but a necessary first step is to move the funds to the general fund, close the existing bridge reserve fund, and then move to a new fund. We do not currently have any bridge projects underway.

Resident Acker further questioned if the funds would now be sitting in a new fund unused; the answer was that the new fund would be more flexible in terms of usage.

Town Manager Houseman offered the clarification that in a future warrant, funds are proposed to be moved to a new Reserve Fund, which will be a newly created fund to address our capital building needs. This proposed warrant is to reflect that the work we do on bridges generally triggers a bond most of the time. We are consolidating capital reserve funds to have one general capital improvement fund and one dedicated to roads and bridges in a way that is more responsive than the status quo.

Resident Acker asked to verify where these bridge funds will go. He feels that we have a general building fund and also a roads fund, but the total is first moved to the undesignated fund balance.

Houseman responded that the bridge funds would be moved to the Roads capital fund, whose purpose is proposed to change in Article Thirteen

Resident Acker asked to offer an amendment. He proposed to close the bridge fund but move the remaining balance in the Bridge Capital Reserve Fund to be applied to this year's amount that will need to be raised by taxes to cover this year's budget. The moderator tried to assist in drafting amendment language, which the Town manager attempted to type in real time. The consensus was that funds would need to be moved to the general budget and that can be requested in the budget article. In the end Acker decided to withdraw his amendment.

Resident Kari Asmus began by agreeing about where funds would need to be moved. Further, she shared that several years ago, we did a bond for bridges and have fixed every bridge in town. Each has a lifespan of 50-75 years so we do not expect to be bonding for bridges soon, hence why this move makes sense; creating a more flexible capital reserve fund. Asmus shared that she chaired the finance committee for six year, stepping down last year, and has been following this closely. As a current trustee of the trust fund, this is something they oversee and she pays careful attention to our funds.

There was robust debate about reserve funds (bridges, road and facilities), some feeling bridge monies should stay reserved and/or funds used to lower taxes; others espousing counter views. Allusions were made to upcoming capital needs that will be presented in future budgets. The moderator raised the thought that it might be helpful to think of Articles Twelve, Thirteen, and Fourteen as a whole package.

The moderator called the question, received a motion and second for the call, and reminded residents that a two/thirds majority is needed. Receiving that, he moved to vote on Article Twelve. He stated that the Ayes carried, but he did hear the nays.

ARTICLE PASSED

ARTICLE THIRTEEN:

Selectboard member Chamberlain read out and then moved the article.

To see if the Town will vote to change the purpose of the *Road Construction and Improvement Capital Reserve Fund*, established under RSA 35:1, to include both road and bridge maintenance, repair, and reconstruction; to rename it the *Road Right-of-Way and Bridge Construction and Improvement Capital Reserve Fund*. ~~And furthermore, to name the Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund.~~

(Two-thirds vote required)

Once the article was moved and seconded, Selectboard member Chamberlain offered a technical amendment to strike the final sentence from the article. A second was given for the amendment.

Resident Bernie Waugh asked to clarify that if the selectmen are not named as agents, a vote at Town Meeting would be required to withdraw funds. The answer was yes. Further questions or concerns about the amendment. Hearing none, the amendment was passed with a voice vote.

Selectboard member Chamberlain explained how this warrant fits within articles twelve, thirteen, and fourteen to deal holistically with transportation needs. The naming also aligns with eligibility for certain federal grants. When asked by a resident why we don't just put the bridge funds into this account. Chamberlain shared that there was a good discussion about pressing capital needs broadly at a Selectboard meeting, resulting in a need to prioritize funds that could be used for facility needs broadly

Moderator asks for further comments or questions on Article 13 as amended. Hearing none, Moderator calls the question and requests a voice vote.

ARTICLE PASSED AS AMENDED

Before moving to Article Fourteen, the Moderator announces the results from the Ballot voting. In total, 1,296 ballots were cast.

Selectboard – Two Candidates for one open seat. Evan Gersen 259 & Athos Rassias 916.

Supervisor of the Checklist – Marcia Kelly 1,064; Etna Library Trustee - Sharry Baker 1,057

Town Clerk - Tracy Walsh 1,086; Trustee of the Trust Funds –Betsy McClain 1,078

Cemetery Trustee – Jennifer Taxman 1,056

Zoning Articles/Amendments

Article 2 YES 703/NO 575 Article 3 YES 748/NO 525 Article 4 YES 971/NO 294

ARTICLE FOURTEEN:

Selectboard member Chamberlain read out and then moved the article.

To see if the Town will vote to change the purpose of the existing *Building Maintenance and Improvement Capital Reserve Fund*, established under the provisions of RSA 35:1, to expand its purpose to include the planning, design, construction, repair, improvement, and/or replacement of municipal buildings and facilities, and to rename it the *Capital Facilities Capital Reserve Fund*; and further, to raise and appropriate the sum of One Million Seven Hundred Thirteen Thousand Four Hundred Forty Seven Dollars (\$1,713,447) to be placed in said fund, with said amount to come from the Town's undesignated fund balance.

(Two-thirds vote required)

As this is another article where we are changing the purpose of one of our trust funds, a two-thirds majority is required. The moderator accepted a second for the article.

Selectboard member Chamberlain shared that the purpose of this article is to make sure the fund reflects more than just routine maintenance and repairs and can be used for capital projects as usage allowances were unclear.

Hearing no thoughts, concerns, or observations, Moderator calls for a voice vote.

ARTICLE PASSED

ARTICLE FIFTEEN:

Selectboard member Berke read out and then moved the article. To see if the Town will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Selectboard and the International Association of Fire Fighters, Local 3288 on March 10, 2025, which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>
2026	\$125,859 (an increase of \$54,400)
2027	\$138,250

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$125,859 for the 2026 fiscal year, such sum representing additional costs attributable to the increase in the salaries and benefits required by the proposed agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels in accordance with the most recent collective bargaining agreement, with said funds to come from the Fire Fund.

The moderator accepted a second, and Berke further explained the context of this article. When we approved the collective bargaining agreements last year, which included each of the different unions, there was an opener in the fire department's contract. This brings the fire department in line with all other unions in terms of salaries and benefits.

Further thoughts, comments, observations, or concerns about Article 15. Hearing none, moderator calls for a voice vote.

ARTICLE PASSED

The moderator reminds the crowd that voting has closed on Article Six and those votes are being counted now.

ARTICLE SIXTEEN: .

~~If the preceding article is defeated, to see if the Town will authorize the Selectboard to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article FIFTEEN cost items only.~~

ARTICLE MOOT DUE TO ARTICLE 15 BEING PASSED

ARTICLE SEVENTEEN:

Selectboard member Rassias read out and then moved the article. To see if the Town, per RSA 31:98a, will vote to raise and appropriate \$100,000 into the Town's Annual Contingency Fund for fiscal year 2026, this sum to come from the undesignated fund balance.

Rassias further explained that the contingency fund was created last year with \$25,000. This \$100,000 is a modest amount of money to allow flexibility to respond to critical needs that may arise during the year without having to call a special town meeting

Resident Acker asked if any of the \$25,000 had been spent. The answer was no. At the end of the budget cycle, those funds revert back to the undesignated fund balance.

Further thoughts, comments, observations, or concerns about Article 17. Hearing none, Moderator called the question for a voice vote.

ARTICLE PASSED

ARTICLE EIGHTEEN:

Selectboard chair Callaghan read out and then moved the article. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$32,870,441 to pay the operating expenses of the Town for the 2026 fiscal year for the purposes set forth in the Town budget. This sum does not include the funds voted in any of the preceding or succeeding articles.

Chair Callaghan asked the crowd to stand and stretch a bit as he wanted to spend fifteen minutes on the overall budget. As the crowd was moving about, he acknowledged that we live in a special place. And I don't mean like a precious place, special in the sense that we have fantastic volunteers, and before we all leave and our election workers leave, I'd like you to join me in giving them a huge round of applause. Thank you to all of our election workers. And thank you to all the volunteers who do so much for this town. It makes an enormous difference.

Chair Callaghan then presented a PowerPoint presentation on the budget. (see 2025 TM Appendix A). His goal is to tie out warrant article number 18 versus the budget, because they're two different numbers, which might prompt a question about why. He wants to do a deep dive on the biggest fund,

the general fund, summarize the budget, present our tax bill in the context of this year's reevaluation, and give a preview of FY2026. He suggested that residents follow along in the Town Report book when figures are referenced.

When developing the budget, the Selectboard took a zero-based budget approach that helped us to really focus on priorities and eliminate unnecessary costs. He thanked Rob Houseman and Ellen Bullion for leading that process and all the department heads who embraced it. The budget this year benefited really from careful resource stewardship by departments and some favorable revenue trends. This was a thoughtful and disciplined budget approach using this zero-based technique. The tax increase is modest. The municipal increase of 2.9% is less than inflation.

Callaghan said that last year, this body asked some good questions about what you get for your tax dollars, and we've taken some steps to answer that question. Throughout the annual report, we have started to embed infographics that detail department work performed and achievements. The Selectboard adopted an objectives and key results approach, deliberately trimming our ambitions to focus on delivering and being accountable for our goals. The report of the Selectboard that's in the annual report before you goes through the list in some detail, and we have been reviewing this at Selectboard meetings as well. The four main goal areas centered on people, the governance process, fiscal improvements, and advancing the Hanover Sustainability Master Plan. He said that we made great progress against most of our specific deliverables. We missed on a few, and we will have a continuing focus on others that will always be fundamental to our activities.

Callaghan opened the floor to questions, including specifically asking for comment from the Finance Committee. Greg Snyder spoke on behalf of the Finance Committee. He shared that the full committee statement is included on page 61 of the town report, but he wanted to highlight a few things.

- They have unanimously as a committee endorsed the approval of the budget.
- All of the concerns that they had raised last year about the budget process, financial control issues, and transparency of the undesignated fund balance have been addressed. None of the concerns are highlighted in this report this year because there's no need.
- We are commending the administration on the fine progress and great work that they've done this year.
- He concluded with a call for potential finance committee volunteers, though no members are retiring this year.

Resident Bruce Franks asked how the Selectboard measures progress toward its goals. Are we getting \$32 to \$33 million worth of benefit? He would like to see some results from the individual line items according to our needs and the direction of the town. He mentioned that he brought this up last year, and the response was that we don't do that. This year, he is not looking for an answer but is making an observation as he feels that we still haven't had a good understanding of what our money's going for and the value of what we're spending on meeting the needs of the town.

Further thoughts, comments, observations, or concerns about Article 18; Hearing none, Moderator calls the question for a voice vote.

ARTICLE PASSED

ARTICLE NINETEEN:

Selectboard member Rassias read and moved the article. To see if the Town will modify the elderly property tax exemption under RSA 72:39-a as follows?

To increase the exemption, based on assessed value, for qualified taxpayers to the following amounts:

- \$145,000 for a person 65 years of age up to 74 years,
- \$205,000 for a person 75 years of age up to 79 years, and
- \$285,000 for a person 80 years of age or older.

To qualify, the individual must:

- Be at least 65 years of age,
- Have been a New Hampshire resident for at least three consecutive years,
- Own and occupy the real estate as their principal place of abode, either individually or jointly; or if the property is owned by the person's spouse, they must have been married for at least five consecutive years,
- Have a net income not more than \$46,000 if single, or \$65,000 if married, and
- Own net assets not in excess of \$145,000, excluding the value of the residence.

This article represents a proposed modification of the current exemption amounts of \$96,000 (age 65-75), \$144,000 (age 75-80), and \$198,000 (age 80+), with current income limits of \$36,800 (single) and \$51,700 (married), and asset limits of \$125,000. If approved, this article shall take effect April 1, 2025, for the 2025 tax year.

The moderator accepted a second. The context for this article, and the two subsequent ones, are relatively similar. Their intent is to ensure that the qualifying seniors are kept financially whole after the town-wide property reevaluation and that the exemption continues to offer some meaningful tax relief for these residents.

Moderator hearing no further thoughts, questions, or concerns called for a vote. **ARTICLE PASSED**

ARTICLE TWENTY:

Selectboard member Rassias read and moved the article. To see if the Town will modify the optional property tax exemption for the disabled as authorized by RSA 72:37-b?

If adopted, the exemption for qualified disabled taxpayers would increase from \$198,000 to \$285,000 based on the assessed value of the property.

To qualify, the individual must:

- Have been a New Hampshire resident for at least five consecutive years,
- Own and occupy the property as their principal place of abode, either individually or jointly; or if the property is owned by a spouse, they must have been married for at least five consecutive years,
- Have a net income not exceeding \$46,000 if single, or \$65,000 if married, and
- Own net assets not in excess of \$145,000, excluding the value of the residence.

This article represents a proposed modification to the current exemption of \$198,000 in assessed value, with current income limits of \$29,900 (single) and \$40,200 (married), and asset limits of \$125,000. If approved, this article shall take effect on April 1, 2025, for the 2025 tax year.

The moderator accepted a second. Hearing no requests to comment, he called the question for a voice vote.

ARTICLE PASSED

ARTICLE TWENTY-ONE:

Selectboard member Rassias read and moved the article. To see if the Town will modify the exemption for the blind under the provisions of RSA 72:37?

If adopted, every inhabitant who is legally blind, as determined by the State of New Hampshire, shall be exempt each year from the assessed value of their residential real estate, for property tax purposes, in the amount of \$50,000.

This article represents a proposed modification of the current exemption amount of \$35,000. If approved, this article shall take effect April 1, 2025, for the 2025 tax year.

Moderator accepted a second. Resident Bill Fischel asked how many current exemptions for blind and elderly are in place. Answer give there are 2 blind exemptions and 20 elderly exemptions.

Hearing no requests to comment, the Moderator called for a voice vote.

ARTICLE PASSED

ARTICLE TWENTY-TWO: (by Petition)

Before reading article twenty-two, the petitioner, Susie Holcombe, shared that this exact petition has passed in at least 17 other towns in New Hampshire, and it comes at a time when New Hampshire is at a fiscal crisis.

To see if the Town will vote to: reject any expansion of taxpayer funding for private education until we have full accountability, transparency, and a sustainable funding plan that ensures no further strain on public schools or local property taxpayers:

- Whereas, taxpayers have a right to know how their money is spent and deserve clear, verifiable evidence that it is being spent wisely and delivering results; and
- Whereas, taxpayer dollars are being diverted from public schools to private and religious education through Education Freedom Accounts (vouchers), and this shift does NOT reduce public school expenses, leaving local taxpayers to cover the difference through higher property taxes; and
- Whereas, unlike public schools, private education funded by taxpayers through vouchers lacks key accountability measures, such as reporting how funds are used, tracking student performance, ensuring service! for students with disabilities, conducting background checks for staff, and adherence to minimum standards.

Therefore, we, the voters of Hanover, New Hampshire, call on our state elected officials to uphold their duty to fiscal responsibility by rejecting any expansion of taxpayer funding for private education until we have full accountability, transparency, and a sustainable funding plan that ensures no further strain on public schools or local property taxpayers. We further direct the Town of Hanover's Selectboard to deliver this warrant article and the results in writing to New Hampshire's Governor and members of the State Legislature within thirty days of this vote.

Submitted by petition with signatures of twenty-five (25) or more registered voters in the Town of Hanover. (RSA 675:4).

The moderator accepts a motion and a second. Resident Mary Hakken-Phillips introduced herself as one of our elected state representatives and said that she was speaking on this topic specifically because it has to do with her duties at the State House. She serves on the Finance Committee, which is the primary body that oversees public education funding in our state. So this issue in particular comes up quite frequently at discussions, and most desperately during the most recent budget process. This language has been approved in 18 towns across New Hampshire, both in very progressive towns and in

deep red districts as well. On a personal note, this language, if approved by our town, would be a tremendously powerful tool for me to have when I am fighting for proper public education funding at the state level, and I would be extremely proud of our town again stepping forward and being leaders on this issue across the state.

Resident Ben Keeney introduced himself as the current chair of the Dresden School board, which is responsible for the middle and high schools, and was a previous chair of the Hanover School Board, which covers the elementary school, Hanover Special Education, and Hanover Transportation. He iterated that he is speaking for himself and not the school board. He has serious concerns about this proposal as written, and he discussed it with our superintendent and principals earlier today, and they have similar concerns. The issue is the wording that is said twice about rejecting any expansion of taxpayer funding for private education.

The specific concern is tied to out-of-district placement and students who have severe disabilities, mental disabilities, learning disabilities, things like deafness, blindness, or traumatic brain injury. The local school district actually pays private schools, both residential and day programs, to take care of such students like that, and the current count is roughly in the low two digits for Hanover students. We budget about \$1.2 million a year for that. So if we do that math, these are very high-need students. And as worded. I don't think we'd be allowed to expand funding for that. That funding can vary widely year to year, and the state and federal laws require that towns provide a free and adequate education for all of our students. He asked Representative Hakken-Phillips how other towns have dealt with this issue. She responded that she believes this is the first time this issue has been raised.

Conversation continued about potentially offering an amendment that would protect and carve out special education funding. This is not possible as this is a petition article.

The response to the question if the article is non-binding is that, if passed, the Selectboard must deliver this article in writing to the NH Governor and State Legislature.

There was additional robust discussion about the article. Some agreed with the intent and content but are worried about potential problems and unintended consequences should this be implemented. Others referenced differences between public and private education or federal law versus the NH Constitution's defined right to an adequate education. The article refers essentially to a state voucher program, which is not a vested right.

Further thoughts, questions, comments, and concerns on the Article, hearing nothing further, the Moderator called for a vote

ARTICLE PASSED

ARTICLE TWENTY-THREE: (by Petition)

Petitioner Nancy Welch read the petition article. To call on the Hanover Town Manager and the Hanover Police Chief NOT to enter into or sign any agreements with Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) 287(g) program.

- The 287(g) is an expensive program that has been criticized for civil rights abuses since it launched in 2006.
- It has long been criticized for perpetuating and legalizing widespread racial profiling.
- Studies have shown that communities with 287(g) agreements spend more money on less effective policing. 287(g) agreements often target people who pose no risk to public safety and those with no criminal record and this type of enforcement creates distrust and fear-between police and the communities they serve.

- Additionally, the Department of Homeland Security is now allowed to track, surveil, and target people based on assumptions about their sexual orientation and gender identity. This compounds the risk for some people with informal status, and adds new risks for Queer Transgender folks traveling across borders.

*287(g) should not be used in the place of a federal immigration policy.

*This resolution will act as an amendment to the Hanover Welcoming Ordinance of 2020.

The article was moved and seconded.

Resident Carolyn Gordon shared background that ICE287(g) is a program that enables municipal, county, or state police departments to enter collaborative agreements with ICE to enforce federal immigration law. Many of the police departments that eagerly embraced them early on later withdrew when they saw the very destructive effects. Unfortunately, in the last several months, there's been a frenzy of activity with many departments entering them again and sadly, both the Grafton County Sheriff's Department and the New Hampshire State Police Department recently entered such agreements. Entering an agreement like this would certainly violate the spirit, if not the letter, of the Hanover Welcoming Ordinance. Other residents stood to offer their support for the article. Residents shared personal stories of individuals who live in fear or have had interactions with ICE after entering the country legally or illegally. Others view this article as a way to make a statement

One resident wanted to know how our police department would respond if called. One wanted to know if this is binding for the Hanover PD and Town Manager to not enter into ICE agreements. Town response was that counsel has advised that this is non-binding but the Selectboard does set policy and the ordinance that's proposed to be amended is a Selectboard ordinance.

Selectboard member Rassias shared some background on the current Ordinance 38, Fair and Impartial Policing. He encourages everyone to go to the town website and read it. It's long and comprehensive, and the Selectboard had a very prolonged discussion over this over many Selectboard meetings in concert with the chief of police, with a lot of other input from a lot of concerned folks. In his opinion, it is quite a strong and formidable, well-written ordinance.

Resident Bill Fischel wanted to know if this passes are we putting our police between a rock and a hard place between the Selectboard and federal law. They may have different people giving them different directives.

Resident Jim Bullion shared that he spent 30 years sworn to defend the Constitution of this country. This country has laws. It has immigration laws. We have borders. I have family members who were citizens of Vietnam. After the war, they came to this country as legal immigrants and they were welcomed here. I have good friends from Afghanistan and Iraq who fled their country, came to this country legally and are now citizens. ICE exists to fulfill the laws of this country. Do they make mistakes? Probably do. Every police department does, I'm sure. But their mission is to fulfill the Constitution and the laws of the United States. We owe them that respect. And the laws of our country that respect. Thank you.

Selectboard Rassias spoke again about the current ordinance, shared some of the existing language:

- The Declaration of purpose, the purpose of this ordinance is to prevent biased policing and other discriminatory practices in any law enforcement-related activity involving an officer of the Hanover Police Department.

- It draws a huge distinction between the civil actions that ICE is doing and criminal actions, which is what our Hanover Police Department is involved with.
- In the absence of any criminal conduct, no department officer shall aid or participate in civil Immigration enforcement activities carried out by the federal or state government.

The moderator called the question with appreciation for the debate, a passionate issue, a lot of feelings on it, a lot of important feelings, and a lot of important points made. As a result of a voice vote, the article passes.

ARTICLE PASSED

The moderator shared the results from bond Article Six. In favor 183, against 3. **ARTICLE SIX PASSED**

ARTICLE TWENTY-FOUR: (by Petition)

The moderator called on the petitioner, Mr. Macri to read the article.

To see if the Town will vote to require that all meetings of the Selectboard be available for remote participation, either by video or audio, in real time, through the use of appropriate technology, including but not limited to conference calls, video conferencing, or online meeting platforms. This requirement will apply to all regular and special meetings, and it will ensure that town residents have the ability to participate in Selectboard proceedings remotely.

The Selectboard shall ensure that the necessary technology and support are available for remote participation and that remote participants are provided the opportunity to comment and ask questions during public comment periods and other appropriate segments of the meetings.

The article was moved and seconded. When asked for context, Macri shared that our Selectboard meetings are available to livestream thanks to Junction Arts and Media, but the members of the public cannot participate in them without appearing in person at Town Hall. Other committees and boards do not have this practice. He believes the town is strengthened by having participation from as many residents of the town as possible, and for many people, traveling to the town hall can be challenging and time-consuming.

The Moderator called for further thoughts. Resident Asmus asked the town whether this is binding or advisory and asked the petitioner if he took this question to the Selectboard before bringing this to town meeting. Town Manager Houseman stated that this would be advisory. Macri stated that he thought a petition amendment was a way to get the town's opinion.

Resident Rockmore asked if the Selectboard had an opinion on the amendment and if someone could articulate it. Chairman Callaghan said this has not been discussed as a board, but that they would take this up. Resident Hakken-Phillips asked if the included language states that residents would have the ability to participate remotely, does this obligate the board to ensure all residents have the access needed to participate remotely, broadband, internet, etc. She also shared her experience with Zoom bombing during remote school board meetings during the pandemic.

Resident McIlroy (SP?) asked if this would apply to all boards and committees or only to those that can take action; many smaller boards meet where they may not have equipment for remote access. Houseman responded that it would only be statutory. Kim Hartman suggested the Selectboard review the public comment policy currently used by the School Board if looking for guidance.

The Moderator called for further questions, comments, and concerns. Hearing none, he called for a voice vote. The vote was too close to discern so the Moderator asked residents to raise paddles to vote.

ARTICLE PASSED

ARTICLE TWENTY-FIVE: (by Petition)

The moderator called on the petitioner, Mr. Macri to read the article.

To see if the Town will vote to adopt a policy requiring the use of gender-neutral language in all official town documents, including but not limited to the Town Charter, ordinances, policies, and the Town website. This shall include replacing gendered terms such as "Selectmen" with "Selectboard" and ensuring all future documents reflect inclusive and gender-neutral terminology.

Further, to authorize the Selectboard to make non-substantive revisions to existing town documents to align with this policy without requiring further town meeting approval.

The Selectboard has made substantial progress towards this goal in recent years, but there are still ordinances that continue to reference selectmen. It was also noted that the State of New Hampshire considers the terms interchangeable legally.

The moderator called for further comments, questions, and concerns about Article 25. Hearing none, he called the question and received a second.

Resident Kollish asked if there would be any costs to the town if this passes. Town Manager Houseman responded that the petitioners have given us suggested language changes for most of the ordinances, and we believe that this can be accomplished with in-house staff in a relatively reasonable time.

Resident Kari Asmus asked if this is advisory or binding, and would this include changes to our town charter, or is a town vote required? Counsel advises us that this is binding; this vote can include the charter if not counter to state law. We will vet that with counsel.

The moderator, hearing no further thoughts, called the question by a voice vote **ARTICLE PASSED**

ARTICLE TWENTY-SIX: To transact any other business that may legally be brought before this Town Meeting.

David Vincellette requested to speak. He addressed issues, claiming local government officials have broken State and Federal laws against him and calling for their response and investigations into these matters. He continued to make specific accusations against Town departments, staff, and Board members.

The Moderator thanked Mr. Vincellette and asked if there was any further business. Hearing none, he called for a motion to adjourn, and it was seconded. Town Meeting was adjourned at 10:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Tracy Walsh, Town Clerk