

## **Mason Town Meeting, March 14, 2015**

Mason Elementary School, 13 Darling Hill Road, Mason, NH

This town report is dedicated to Curtis M. Dunn, Mason's first full-time Road Agent (1973 to 2000), who has lived his entire life (so far) in Mason.

Moderator Catherine Schwenk came to the microphone at 8:55 am and requested that non-voters wear non-voter credentials and sit in the first row to the Moderator's left. There was no request for interpretive services. She indicated the fire and emergency exits and then introduced those sitting at the head table: Selectmen Charles (Charlie) Moser, Bernard (Bernie) O'Grady, Louise Lavoie and Town Clerk Debra (Deb) Morrison.

The Moderator acknowledged that preparation for this meeting is a coordinated effort of many individuals, including Assistant Moderator Mary McDonald, Select Board Assistant Jeannine Phalon, Town Clerk Debra Morrison and Supervisors of the Checklist Kathleen Wile, Dorothy Minior and Wallace Brown.

The Moderator then reviewed the procedure for voters. Voters wishing to speak should use the microphones and address any questions to the Moderator. All questions must be addressed to the Moderator and residents need to give their name at the microphone when recognized. All amendments and substantive motions must be in writing (please print your name) and signed by the maker and seconder. Five voters may make a written request prior to a voice vote or division vote per RSA 40:4A. Voters and seconders must be present at the meeting to request a secret ballot vote. Every voter is entitled to speak on a debatable motion unless the meeting, by a two-thirds vote, has ordered discussion stopped. A voter is entitled to speak a second time on the same question provided all voters who wish to speak have spoken.

The Moderator requested that audience remain seated after the meeting while the oath of office was administered to the newly elected officials. She then announced the results of the Town and School District elections. Total votes cast were 252 out of a total of 969. She declared the winning candidates elected to their respective offices.

**Selectman:** Charles Moser 184

**Town Clerk/Tax Collector:** Debra Morrison 222

**Treasurer:** Patricia Letourneau 201

**Trustee of Cemeteries:** Robert Larochelle 229

**Library Trustee:** Lynn McCann 231

**Trustee of Trust Funds:** Write-in

The following articles were voted on at the polls on Tuesday, March 10, 2015.

The results of **Article 2** — To see if the Town will vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 40:13 (known as SB2) to allow official ballot voting on all issues before the Town. By petition. Requires a 3/5 vote to pass.

Yes 122 / No 127 (needed 150 to pass / Article 2 fails)

### **Mason School District Results**

**School Board Member:** Write-in

**District Clerk:** Rebecca Partridge 206

The results of **Article 2** — To accept the reports of agents, auditors, committees or officers chosen as printed in the annual Mason School District Report.

Yes 223 / No 20 / Article 2 carries

The results of **Article 3** — Shall The Mason School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant, or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purpose set forth therein, totaling \$2,950,683? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$3,025,997 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Mason School District, or by law, or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13 X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. Note: This operating budget warrant article does not include appropriations contained in ANY other warrant articles. (School Board recommends this Warrant Article)

Yes 219 / No 27 / Article 3 carries

The results of **Article 4** — Shall The Mason School District raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty Nine Thousand One Hundred Sixty Five Dollars (\$59,165) to implement an all-day kindergarten option?

Yes 94 / No 153 / Article 4 fails

The results of **Article 5** — Shall we rescind the provisions of RSA 40:13 (known as SB2), as adopted by the Mason School District on 9 March 2010, so that the official ballot will no longer be used for voting on all questions, but only for the election of officers and certain other questions for which the official ballot is required by state law? (this is a Petition Warrant Article, 3/5 majority vote required.)

Yes 103 / No 144 (needed 149 to pass / Article 5 fails)

Moderator Catherine Schwenk called the 247<sup>th</sup> annual town meeting to order at 9:02 am.

There were 150 registered voters and 11 non-voters present.

The colors were presented by Boy Scout Troop 264, which included leaders Michael McGuire and Donald Hodges and scouts Max McDonald, Jonathan Arsenault, Max Phalon, Cole Vocell, Kaleb Kearney, Ian Alton, Mason McDonald, Mikey McGuire, Samson Hodges, James Arsenault and Drew Hodges.

The Pledge of Allegiance of the United States of America was led by Milford High School sophomore honor student Erin McGuire.

The Moderator recognized Liz Fletcher for a special recognition of retired Select Board Administrative Assistant Barbara Milkovits. Liz acknowledged that it was Nancy Richards' idea to honor Barb after 24 years of service. She presented Barb with an engraved clock saying, "Barb knows everything and we hope she enjoys her retirement." Barb received a standing ovation.

There was no objection to waiving the reading of the warrant.

The Moderator made note of the following errors or omissions to the 2013 Town Reports. Minutes of 2013 Town Meeting should say that Bruce Mann served for 30 years (not 25) on the Mason Planning Board. In the 2014 Town Report, a correction is made for Dorothy (Dee) Mitchell being appointed for a three-year term ending in 2016. The report of the Trustee of the Trust Fund was incomplete and handouts are available. The report will be included in next year's town report.

Moderator Catherine Schwenk asked the question, "Is there general consent to allow Attorney Alec MacMartin to speak on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. Huston?" General consent was approved.

It was advised by legal counsel that Article 3 – a bond issue – requires that it be the first item of business and further that it requires 2/3 vote by ballot with the polls being open for one hour.

**Article 3:** Charlie Moser moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Seventy Six Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$76,500) for the purpose of purchasing a backhoe at a cost of One Hundred Five Thousand Dollars (\$105,000) less trade in credit of Twenty Eight Thousand, Five Hundred Dollars (\$28,500) for the Mason Highway Department and to authorize the issuance of a five (5) year bond in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33) in the amount of Seventy Six Thousand, Five Hundred Dollars (\$76,500) and to authorize the municipal officials to issue and negotiate such bond and to determine the rate of interest thereon. Recommended by the Selectmen. (2/3 ballot vote required)

Charlie spoke on the issue of the backhoe since it failed last year. We received a good trade-in and a good purchase price. The old backhoe has a lot of problems. It's very old and unsafe with about 10,000 hours on it. We need a backhoe as well as a loader to do the necessary work on town roads.

Road Agent Gary Lizotte (non resident) was given permission to speak. He spoke on the need as well and described how dangerous the current backhoe is to drive and the problems with the machine itself. A question was asked regarding how long a backhoe will last. Response: It's all about the maintenance and the correct operator.

Nancy Richards lent her timer which the Moderator set. Ballots were handed out and the polls opened at 9:20 and closed at 10:20 am. Yes 129 / No 13 / Article 3 carries

**Article 4:** Bernie O'Grady moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Million Six Hundred Twenty Nine Thousand, Twenty One Dollars (\$1,629,021), which represents the operating budget, or take any other action relative thereto. Said sum is exclusive of all Special or Individual Articles addressed. Recommended by the Selectmen. (Majority vote required)

Walter Alford moved to amend Article 4 "such that the Town of Mason NH adopt a budget committee pursuant to RSA 32:14 Adoption under line II, and that the Town adopts of budget committee of three members at large appointed by the Moderator for a one-year term, starting from today, pursuant from line IV."

Charlie objected on a point of order "that we're discussing the budget. Line item amendments are appropriate." The Moderator ruled that the motion to amend was out of order and the amendment fails.

Walter Alford questioned line item 6026-06 regarding telephone fees. "We're spending too much. Is a committee possible?"

Mary Wolfe questioned the credit on line item 6005-03 regarding health insurance. Charlie said it was a refund from the state.

Gary Elsworth asked why the amount in the assessing line item, 6003-01, was so high. Charlie said that last year we failed to plan for cyclical assessing. Approximately one-fifth of the town gets assessed each year.

Walter Alford made a motion to amend Article 4, section 6006, Planning and Zoning, with new figures on each line item. Seconded by Garth Fletcher. Pat Letourneau spoke as clerk of the Board of Adjustment regarding the salaries and explained how the board worked. Motion to amend Article 4 fails.

Walter Alford made a motion to amend Article 4, section 6007, General Government Buildings, with new figures on each line item. Seconded by Steve Tamulonis. Charlie said that line item 6007-05 (repairs and maintenance) was increased due to the endless maintenance needed to the buildings. Heating costs are at a low right now but "we can't predict that they'll stay low." Stanley Brown asked why the amount was raised

so much. Bernie said that they have several project in mind like fixing the roof on the old schoolhouse on Valley Rd. They've also consolidated all building maintenance. Motion to amend Article 4 fails.

Gary Elsworth asked that if line item 6008-04, worker's comp, is based on salary, why are the numbers not jiving? Town bookkeeper Brenda Wiley responded that insurance companies were ordered to give money back on worker's comp last year that we're not getting this year.

Walter Alford wanted to know why the telephone amount for the highway department in line item 6019-03 is so high. Charlie said that it includes internet and is a commercial rate. Jeannine got our rates lowered for this year for several departments.

Shawn Jodoin said that Police Chief Barry Hutchins is retiring and why is the salary remaining at \$82,000? Charlie replied that Barry is retiring and they haven't hired a replacement. They need to keep the salary commensurate with experience. They're leaving enough money in there to work with depending on their future hire. Shawn "finds it excessive" and made a motion to amend line item 6012-20 from \$82,348 to \$65,000. Walter Alford seconded. Shawn said he doesn't think there's much happening in this town, to much disagreement from the audience. The Moderator told him he was out of order. Charlie said they are looking for a working chief with a decent salary and they need room to negotiate. He would like the town to "trust the selectmen to find the right person at the right price." Devan Fletcher noted that there was \$60,000 remaining because the Chief's already worked the first quarter of this year.

Shawn Jodoin requested a ballot vote (as per RSA 40:4-a) on line item 6012-20 regarding the police chief's salary signed by himself, Harvey Jodoin, Alan Wolfe, Mary Wolfe and Paula Babel. Ballots were handed out, polls opened at 10:22 and closed at 10:27 am. Yes 48 / No 103 / the Amendment fails

Walter Alford questioned line item 6012-08, detail expenses. Chief Hutchins explained that line item has always been complicated, it never comes out to the true amount. If payments don't come by the end of the year, it may create an offset. They still have outstanding bills. Jeff Babel questioned heating/vehicle fuel line items for highway, police and the town offices. Charlie said we're still using the same vendor (Ciardelli Fuel Co.) but are looking at costs. It may be time to look at other options. Jeff said this should be done every year. Jeannine said she's currently looking at different companies and bids are submitted in July. The Moderator encouraged everyone to participate in the budget prep process.

Gary Elsworth asked why health and dental isn't broken down by department. Brenda said that HIPAA prohibits breaking it down because we're a small town and it's against the law. Garth Fletcher said there should be a cautionary note regarding the budget. "The interesting figure is the expended number. Look at the money spent the year before. We should leave some padding and not shrink it down to nothing. We don't want to run out."

Cheryl Greenwood spoke about line item 6019-19 saying it's like heating a sieve at the highway barn. What are the plans to remediate that? Bernie acknowledged that there's a problem with the highway barn that the town needs to fix. We should see activity on that shortly. Icicles have grown on the inside of the building. They got estimates on insulating the existing building but more research is needed on its needs. Stanley Brown asked if the decision to go to heating oil was a mistake. Other towns use scrap wood to heat. Our existing building was built when it was allowed to be lightweight. New building, new location, radiant floor heating? Outside wood boiler? "Good luck."

Walter Alford asked why hospitals are not replacing certain equipment, referring to line item 6014-19. Fire Chief Dave Baker said that some items are replaced and a good chunk includes batteries. They cannot replace out of the ambulance and batteries are the big charge on this line item. Walter decided not to propose amendment but wants to point out that we're taxed on what we agree on, not what's been spent.

Article 4 carries.

John Lewicke moved to advance Articles 12 and 13 before Article 5. Motion to advance Articles 12 and 13 carries.

**Article 12:** Charlie Moser moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will authorize the Board of Selectmen to take all reasonable and prudent actions to oppose the proposed Northeast Energy Direct high pressure gas pipeline, lateral line, and appurtenances, and all reasonable and prudent actions necessary to mitigate the impact thereof on the land and people of the Town of Mason. Such actions may include but are not limited to participating directly in all Federal and State regulatory processes related to such pipeline project, joining in coalition with the selectmen of other affected New Hampshire towns in opposing or mitigating the effects of the proposed project, and hiring legal professionals and consultants to advise and appear on behalf of the Town of Mason in regulatory and/or judicial proceedings related thereto. This authorization shall remain in effect until rescinded by a vote of the town meeting. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen.

Charlie explained that this article is in opposition to the proposed pipeline which began in January. This article is “to send a message to the pipeline companies and will give the selectmen authorization to act in opposition to the pipeline. The message was clear from the townspeople.”

Joe McGuire spoke in support of these articles. Details are murkier than in the beginning when it was first explained. Committees have been formed in town to discuss and look into the issue. 1) Things they don’t like: Facts are hard to come by. 2) What are we going to do about it? Appropriate funds in Article 13. The Kinder Morgan pipeline will be a 36” pipe that will run across north Mason with a lateral 10” line that runs down through town to Fitchburg. There will be an 80K industrial compression station complex that will run 24/7/365. This is slated to go through 17 towns and 122 properties. Land may be taken by eminent domain (the original intent was for public good). The law was changed to include private corporations. Mason will have 72 properties (about 9%) affected. He spoke about the incineration zone should the pipe explode. Twenty percent of the homes are potentially affected. We will not have access to this gas, it’s mostly slated for export. The power companies will charge more. Kinder Morgan (KM) will be paying taxes, but that property will no longer be marketable and taxes will reflect that. KM says this should not affect property taxes and we should not need to improve our fire department. Town roads will take a hit with heavy machinery to dig tunnels. It is possible that more compressions stations could be added after initial construction. There will be monthly foot patrols, aerial patrols and the land will be sprayed with an herbicide. According to KM, this won’t hurt water resources. This will divide the town into three pieces. KM originally said they would co-locate with transmission lines, but not really. Should we roll over and go with it? “We’re a town of rural characters.” Once filed, it will probably come true and we should try to kill this effort before their filing. This is what happened in northern Mass. and the time to act decisively is now. Hollis has resources and was successful in removing the threat. We need an attorney and an engineer to do research. There will also be fundraising on other efforts.

Jen Schongar talked about the reasons she chose to live in Mason. “If the pipeline and compression station come, we will lose these qualities with sound, light and particulate pollution.” She gave some statistics on existing compression stations. “This is not how we want to live. We need to stop this.” It will sound like a large diesel truck idling in your driveway. Pipelines leak and contaminate the water supply. She described the cleaning process of the pipe which is left to leach on the ground. She questioned the safety of having possible explosions with two pipelines. “We don’t have the equipment or manpower to fight these potential disasters. There are no guarantees that KM will pay enough in taxes as promised. The value of pipes and compression stations decrease with age.”

Pat Letourneau reminded everyone that the tax bill came down this year so we have the money to fight this.

A motion was made to move the previous question and vote on Article 12. Article 12 carries unanimously to lots of applause.

**Article 13:** Bernie O'Grady moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$80,000) to be expended at the discretion of the Board of Selectmen in opposition to the proposed Northeast Energy Direct high pressure gas pipeline, lateral line, and appurtenances, and/or to minimize the impact thereof on the land and people of the Town of Mason, including but not limited to expenditures for legal representation and consultants, land use planning and zoning consultation, public information purposes, administrative and court filing fees, participation in multitown coalitions, and any and all other expenses reasonably related to opposing said pipeline project and/or mitigating the effects thereof. This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32-7, VI and will not lapse until December 31, 2018. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen.

Bill Rendle made a motion to amend Article 13: "The Board of Selectmen shall establish a citizen's subcommittee to make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen before any expenditure reasonably expected to be greater than \$10,000. Joe McGuire seconded. He explained that they would like to assist the selectmen without restricting them as there's lots of "spade" work to be done. The amendment to Article 13 carries.

Walter Alford asked for clarification on the non-lapsing appropriation – we can spend \$80,000 by 2018.

Article 13 carries as amended.

John Lewicke moves to restrict reconsideration on Article 12 so it can't come up again or be reversed today. Stanley Brown seconded. The motion to restrict reconsideration carries unanimously and the process was repeated for Article 13. The vote on Article 13 carries unanimously.

**Article 5:** Louise Lavoie moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of Forty Five Thousand Dollars (\$45,000) to purchase and equip a police cruiser with the funding as follows: Thirty Six Thousand Dollars (\$36,000) from the Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund, created for this purpose and the balance of Nine Thousand Dollars (\$9,000) to come from general taxation, or take any other action relative thereto. Recommended by the Selectmen. (Majority vote required.)

Walter Alford made a motion to amend Article 5, seconded by Ted Hauri, "such that the monies in the capital fund referenced in Article 5 are not to be expended until the current and/or future police chief presents in writing to the Board of Selectmen and the Town, the pros and cons financially of the full purchase versus a capital lease program such as the ones in use by the Brookline PD and the Hollis PD (their expenses are 26% less than their 2008 budget line was for those items which was the last time they purchased cruisers outright). Further, the monies should be expended until the new police chief is hired and can weigh in on the needs and viability of the procurement options. Surrounding town are leveraging this option with interest rates as low as 1% which is less than our TAN rate. It would be remiss not to investigate those options before expending the monies in the capital fund."

Louise spoke and said that the \$9,000 is about 5.5 cents on the tax rate which is minimal and they're trying to build the capital reserve fund to balance this out. Sgt. Kevin Maxwell said that the two cruisers are close to 80,000 miles. He's not sure what we'll get on a trade to offset the cost, but it's time to replace one of the cruisers.

Alan Wolfe made a motion to amend to oppose Article 5. He requested a ballot vote on the article signed by himself, Mary Wolfe, William Weiss, Marion Thompson, Mike McGuire and Steve Bibeault. He cited an incident last July when there was a disturbance in his neighborhood. His wife called the police and was told there was no one on call at night. The State Police would have to be notified. He suggested we have a part-time police force and the police department budget is pretty high. He feels the cruisers jump the bottom line too high. Chief Hutchins responded by saying his figures are not accurate. "It's \$9,000 per year, not \$45,000." He said the vehicles need to respond with the proper equipment. Our town roads dictate what type of vehicles are needed.

Walter Alford moved to amend Article 5 so as not to expend funds until a comparison is made and a new police chief is hired. Seconded by Ted Hauri. Chief Hutchins spoke on the needs and cost process involved in buying a vehicle for the PD and said that the process moved to the capital reserve system to slowly build the amount necessary to accommodate vehicle rotation.

The polls opened at 11:42 and closed at 11:49 am. Yes 91 / No 40 / Article 5 carries

**Article 6:** Charlie Moser moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) for the repair and maintenance of the Town's paved roads, or take any other action relative thereto. Recommended by the Selectmen. (Majority vote required)

Charlie spoke on this article and said that they established a Paved Road Committee last year. As a result of their study, we now have a five-year plan for restoration of the paved roads. Bernie O'Grady said that copies of the plan are available on the town web site. The committee did a complete study of each paved road and for the next four years, we would need that \$50,000 from this warrant article. Each road would then be addressed and maintenance applied after that.

John Lewicke said he would hope that the highway department would address the dirt roads as well.

Article 6 carries.

Mark McDonald made a motion to advance Article 18 before Article 7. Seconded by Michael McGuire. Motion to advance Article 18 carries.

**Article 18:** Charlie Moser moved and it was seconded "Shall the Town of Mason vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 72:61 through 72:64 inclusive, which provide for an optional property tax exemption from the property's assessed value, for property tax purposes, for persons owning real property, which is equipped with photovoltaic (solar energy systems), intended for use at the immediate site. Such property tax exemption shall be in the amount equal to 100% of the assessed value of qualifying equipment under this statute. From the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning: "The goal of the exemption is to create a tax neutral policy within a municipality that neither increases an individual's property tax, nor decreases the municipality's property tax revenues. By implementing it as a tax neutral policy, homeowners do not have a disincentive of higher property taxes for installing a renewable energy system, since there is no net reduction in municipal tax revenues, other taxpayers in a municipality are not affected." (as petitioned)

Mike McGuire spoke on this article saying this was stated on the state's energy web site. He said that 97-98 town have adopted this and you are permitted to generate and use your own power. Without incentives, it takes about 25 years to pay down the investment in your system. Generally it takes longer to pay them off than it saves. In March 1975 Mason implemented the solar exemption in the amount of \$3,000. This warrant article proposes that whatever you spend on your system you will not be taxed on. Ted Hauri said that it would be ironic to oppose the pipeline and then oppose renewable energy.

Mark McDonald made a motion to strike out “optional” property tax and add after intended for use at the immediate site, “or by approved group net metering” saying, “If you live in a section of town where there may be restrictions, this would provide for another lot in town where you could put up an installation if you can’t put it up at your home.”

Devan Fletcher asked if this amendment would only apply to photovoltaic or would it cover other alternative energies?

Charlie said we need to be wary of the authorizing statute (RSA). He’s not sure if it’s expansive enough to cover solar hot water. Mike McGuire replied that yes, it was. Ann Moser stated she’s been off the grid for 35 years. Her panels have never been replaced. “It’s easy,” she recommends.

Bryan Herrin asked if this was a reoccurring exemption. Charlie said it applies every year the solar panels are on your home. The value of the panels/system would be excluded from the value of your house. Motion to amend Article 18 carries.

Leland Craig had a point of order regarding the wording and made a motion to reconsider. The Moderator asked if he voted with the prevailing side. He said yes. Devan Fletcher made a motion to amend Article 18 to strike the word “photovoltaic.” Seconded by Donald Hodges. This opens it up to any solar application as covered by state statute. Motion to amend carries unanimously. Article 18 as amended carries unanimously.

**Article 7:** Bernie O’Grady moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) to be added to the Fire Department Building Reserve Fund previously established. Recommended by the Selectmen. (Majority vote required.)

Fire Chief Dave Baker said he’s seeking to add \$10,000 to capital reserve so they don’t need to come forward with a large warrant article. Article 7 carries.

**Article 8:** Louise Lavoie moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Thousand Four Hundred Ninety Six Dollars (\$20,496) for the purchase of four (4) Scott AP75 Airpacks with face pieces for the Fire Department. Recommended by the Selectmen. (Majority vote required)

Chief Baker wants to make a minor amendment. This was written last year and the Scott people have come out since then and he would like to make a model change. Ken Spacht seconded. Strike out “AP” and replace with “XP.” Amendment to Article 8 carries.

The current air packs are 23 years old. Philip Phalon and Ken Spacht demonstrated the use of the airpacks. The audience got a little punchy. The new packs are much more comfortable. They’re staying with the low-pressure bottles which have a shelf life of 15 years and a 30-minute limit.

Article 8 as amended carries unanimously.

**Article 9:** Charlie Moser moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Three Hundred and Ninety Two (\$2,392) for the purpose of purchasing one (1) Scott RIT Airpack. Recommended by the Selectmen. (Majority vote required)

Chief Dave Baker said this goes along with the previously approved packs and that these are lifesaving devices for the firefighters. It’s a backup air supply to the buddy breathing valve, including the valve and mask, giving them additional air. Walter Alford asked if the pack has an option for a hose attachment. The Chief said this unit will sit in the truck. They only have four packs this will work with – the ones we bought and the new replacement packs. Article 9 carries unanimously.

**Article 10:** Bernie O'Grady moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Thousand Seven Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$4,750) for the purchase of five (5) SCBA Carbon Fiber Bottles. Recommended by the Selectmen. (Majority vote required)

Chief Baker stated that this article spreads out the expense over time. Article 10 carries unanimously.

Paula Babel made a motion to move Article 16 before Article 11. The Moderator denied the request and will carry on in order as these articles go together.

**Article 11:** Louise Lavoie moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to establish a 250th Anniversary Celebration Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 31:19-a, for the 250th Town anniversary celebration in 2018 and to raise and appropriate Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000) to put in the fund, with this amount to come from taxation; further to name the Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund. Recommended by the Selectmen.

Charlie Moser said, "We need to celebrate this great anniversary. It was strongly suggested by Curt Dunn every time I saw him. If nothing else, do it for Curt!" There was a comment made that it should come from donation, not taxation.

Treasurer Pat Letourneau said that "if we put that into a money market, it will earn \$600 in interest." John Lewicke disagreed with her math.

Article 11 carries.

**Article 12:** Louise Lavoie moved and it was seconded to see whether the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to take action to release restrictive covenants that have been placed on Map B, Lot 24, so that the owners may construct lawful improvements on this parcel, and, further, to authorize the Selectmen to convey any interest in said property necessary to facilitate the same, for such consideration and on such terms and conditions as the Selectmen deem prudent and in the best interest of the Town.

Representing Alfred and Tamara Huston, Attorney Alec MacMartin explained that the parcel was purchased in the early '90s and the perc test did not pass. The selectmen sent a deed of covenant memorializing what had happened and it created a greater restriction on the property. As with current use, a fee should be paid to release it. Charlie Moser said that the current board did not place the restriction and they don't have the authority to release it and convey it back. A warrant article would become necessary. After the restriction is removed, no further restrictions would be imposed and would need to be conformed to the property itself.

Pam Lassen was wondering how the warrant article was proposed. Charlie explained they were approached by the Hustons and asked to put on this warrant article. Realtor Carol Anne Bennett had a client who wanted to place a small barn on the parcel but was denied. Garth Fletcher wondered about the history and the precedent being set. He said the owners have profited by the reduction in taxes by current use. "Is it in the town's best interest in having these restrictions lifted?"

Charlie said this article implies there will be a charge in regards to the change that can be negotiated. This came up in a 2010 warrant article which failed at that time. Bob Larochelle said, "Let's let them do this." Stanley Brown said, "It won't pass a perc test but we'll allow animals on the property which will do what? Why is this an improvement?" Atty. MacMartin replied that any change will require compliance with existing zoning but it lets them explore some use of the property.

Article 14 carries unanimously.

**Article 15:** Charlie Moser moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will urge; That the New Hampshire State Legislature shall join more than 500 municipalities and 16 other states, including all other New England states, in calling upon Congress to move forward a Constitutional Amendment that 1) clarifies that constitutional rights were established for people, not corporations, unions, or other artificial entities and, 2) guarantees the right of our elected representatives and of the American people to safeguard fair elections through authority to regulate political spending; That the New Hampshire Congressional delegation shall support such a constitutional amendment; That the New Hampshire State Legislature shall support such an amendment when it is approved by Congress and sent to the State for ratification; That the record of the vote approving this article shall be transmitted by written notice to Mason's Congressional delegation, and to Mason's State Legislators, and to the Governor of New Hampshire, and to the President of the United States, informing them of the instructions from their constituents, by the Town of Mason's Office of the Selectmen within 30 days of the vote. (as petitioned)

Doug Whitbeck said this article tells your local, state and congressional officials the value of your voice in local government. It protects from the influence of big money (such as with the pipeline) and limit campaign contributions in spending. Don Hodges said he opposes restricting speech of any kind. Garth Fletcher disagreed with the disagreement. "Corporations are not human beings and have unlimited funds to further their own agenda and take over our government. Our voices become irrelevant and is a cancer on our society." Joanie Lane said we need our constitution enforced. Article 15 carries.

**Article 16:** Bernie O'Grady moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to discontinue the practice of paying for any medical and dental benefits for any town employee that is not currently and actively employed full time by the Town of Mason and to rescind and discontinue paying for anyone receiving this benefit. To be determined by a ballot vote. (as petitioned)

Bernie spoke on this article stating that, "Benefits were negotiated a long time ago and this is problematic on several levels. Town counsel advised that we are likely to lose if we go to court. To discontinue this practice going forward is a whole different thing. It's a difficult thing to continue."

Paula Babel said she drafted this article because she feels it's excessive. It could account to millions of dollars over the years and could bankrupt the town. Charlie responded that this benefit is expensive and could be perilous to the town regarding a large number of employees. It would be grossly unfair to revoke this benefit to the people who were given these benefits with the blessing of the Board of Selectmen. He agrees with town counsel in that we would be headed to court if this went through. This is a matter of honor with that promise and understanding and would be dishonorable to allow this. If the policy is reworded, it is unfair to people close to that retirement period.

Shawn Jodoin asked when this was written and placed into policy. Should this have been allowed in the first place? Jeff Babel questioned the selectmen's "authority to dole out this benefit without the governing body's authority." John Lewicke asked if we should differentiate from going forward and have a motion next year. Bill Rendle asked if Medicare was available for these retirees. Charlie said the policy needs to be rewritten and was maybe hastily adopted.

Barbara Milkovits spoke and said that this is "a very personal issue." She was honored earlier for her service to the town and a promise was made. "We three retirees worked very hard for this benefit. Are you a town of decent moral people? I am willing to fight for this." Linda Cotter Cranston said she finds this "totally insulting. A promise is a promise. You don't have to agree, but this was promised. Let it ride, change it for the future."

Suzanne Kelly asked what the cost is to the taxpayer. Brenda said that there are three people on this plan. “They won’t live forever and it will *not* run into the millions. For a regular household, it costs less than \$100 per year.”

Mary Wolfe said she’s worked at a hospital for many years. Their pension and benefits have been taken away. “This is a business and you can’t run a business on emotion.” Many things have been taken from her and she can’t go to court to get them back.

Dave Morrison read a letter he had written describing his work history for the town highway department over the course of 38 years. Pat Letourneau said, “We are not a business. This is a town, not a for-profit. We ask people to serve our town on a 24-hour basis. We don’t want them to work somewhere else. We can’t just tell someone they have to do it. We can’t afford to pay so we agreed to give them their benefits. We made a promise. We’ve already voted against people like Kinder Morgan who don’t keep their promises.” Pam Lassen expressed the same sentiment. A motion was made to move the previous question. Motion carries.

A ballot vote was requested by Paula Babel, Mary Wolfe, Alan Wolfe, William Weiss, Christine Weiss and Carol Iodice. Polls opened at 1:27 and closed at 1:34 pm. Yes 15 / No 84 / Article 16 fails

**Article 17:** Louise Lavoie moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to require any town employee that receives medical and dental benefits to contribute 20 percent towards the cost of medical and dental benefits: effective immediately. To be determined by a ballot vote. (as petitioned)

Mary Wolfe requested a ballot vote signed by herself, Alan Wolfe, Marion Thompson, Christine Weiss, Teresa Wiley and Mike McGuire. She stated that she’s worked in the medical field for 37 years. Insurance continues to rise for various reasons. “We need to look for alternatives.” She was on a committee several years ago to provide good coverage for less money which they presented to the selectmen. Why not make this fair and make the employees pay the 20% of their coverage? Louise responded that, “We only have a small number of employees who receive the full benefit,” and she is against this article.

Anna Faiello spoke and suggests that to follow the corporation model is wrong. “This is a town, a community, and we live together. Do we want our children to follow the corporate model? Do we care about each other or not? Are you happy with what your business is doing to you? We need to live according to our own principles. This is not the principle Mason is working for.” Paula responded that “\$15,000 is a lot of money to her as a taxpayer. Twenty percent is not a lot of money to pay, it’s a fairness issue.”

Charlie pointed out that we have only three people at the full level. “You are giving an immediate cut in pay to these people.” Cheryl Greenwood said that “If we’re going to be fair, we need to see if these people are being paid fairly.” Pat Letourneau said, “No one ran against any of the incumbents. You want people to do this for you but you don’t pay them to do it. You pay them salaries, not hourly.”

Chief Hutchins reminded everyone about the actual impact and that several years ago “you wanted to change it to 80/20, which is what happened. Now you want another 20%?” A motion was made to move the previous question. Motion carries.

Ballot count starts at 1:47 and ends at 1:55 pm. Yes 23 / No 74 / Article 17 fails

**Article 19:** Bernie O’Grady moved and it was seconded that the gravel part of Starch Mill Road shall be restored to the width, grade and appearance of five years ago. Excess piles of gravel and other material shall be removed. Drainage shall be restored such that most water flows into the woods and drainage streams adjacent to the road rather than running in canals in the road. Landowners and abutters shall be consulted by the highway department as to the prior condition, and the road shall be restored according to their recollection

and wishes. Lawns, woods and other property adjacent to the road shall also be restored. If this requires restoration of loam, plantings, etc., it shall be done by the highway department in accordance with landowners' recollection and guidance. (as petitioned)

Bernie spoke about the needs of this road being the same as all dirt roads. He's afraid this will give license to some to be a pain in the neck to the road agent ("there's always one"). He doesn't need a road full of experts to tell him how to do his job. He does not support this article.

John Lewicke said, "This is not the same road as five years ago. A tree that used to be several feet out of the road is now three feet into the road. Water runs onto the road rather than off." He suggested that all Starch Mill Road residents support this article. Bernie replied that there have been improvements to this road. A large boulder that was in the road has been removed. "Should we drag it back into the road?" John said the road has been widened by several inches every year.

Charlie said there have been lot of complaints about the grading the last couple of years. He does not want to remove the discretion of the Board of Selectmen and the road agent in how the roads are to be maintained.

Pat Letourneau said that this article is too open-ended and doesn't address any road other than Starch Mill. Gary Elsworth said he's tried to address the prior select boards and has never had previous trouble with this road. He has spent many hours himself working on the road because the material on the road is being pushed off into the woods and expanded. He stated that Dave Morrison should be hired to train the grader operator. Pam Lassen asked if there was any idea how long it would take to properly crown the road back to its original state. The crown was destroyed immediately and trees are now in the road. "I would hate to see some of these beauties go."

Stanley Brown asked that if we go back five years, will it go back to narrower, windier, etc.? He doesn't think the grading is as horrific as being presented. Dave Morrison disagreed with throwing gravel off to the side. "You bring it back in. You don't have to throw it off into the woods."

A motion was made to move the previous question. Motion carries. Article 19 fails.

Garth Fletcher announced that "as former Deputy Treasurer, I saw each selectman take one day a week to keep the office open during Barb Milkovits' medical leave. I'd like to give them a round of applause." Which they then received.

The Moderator read a note of appreciation to Police Chief Barry Hutchins. "Chief Hutchins has worked hard to keep us safe. He's worked in a series of offices in the Town of Mason. First in the Town Hall, the Town Clerk's office, then to the second floor of the Capt. Benjamin Mann House where the evidence room was the stairway to the attic. In 2009, his department was moved into a new building. He initiated a program for a K-9 unit where Barry and his dogs used their skills to advantage both inside and outside of town. He built a police department for us that demonstrated his leadership skills and dedication to the town and its citizens. Most importantly, he and his staff have kept us safe. Please join me as we express our appreciation to Chief Barry Hutchins." The Chief received a standing ovation.

Charlie Moser announced that they have arranged a meeting with Kinder Morgan to be held at 8 am on March 24 at the MES multipurpose room. There will be a brief presentation followed by a question-and-answer session. They will be limiting the time to about one and one-half hours.

On motion of Michael Bromberg and duly seconded, Town Meeting was adjourned Sine Dai at 2:16 pm.

At the conclusion of town meeting, Moderator Catherine Schwenk installed Selectman Charles Moser, Treasurer Patricia Letourneau, Town Clerk Debra Morrison and Cemetery Trustee Robert Larochele.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debra Morrison".

Debra A. Morrison  
Town Clerk