

Mason Town Meeting, March 12, 2016

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

This Town Report is dedicated to Anne “Nancy” Richards, who became a Selectman in 1990 and held the position for 23 years. In 1979, she became a member of the Mason Fire Department and continues to serve to this day.

Moderator Catherine Schwenk came to the microphone at 9:00 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 Bernard (Bernie) O’Grady, Charles (Charlie) Moser, Louise Lavoie, Assistant Moderator Mary McDonald and Town Clerk Debra (Deb) Morrison.

There were 98 voters and 3 nonvoters present.

The Moderator acknowledged that preparation for this meeting is a coordinated effort of many individuals, including Assistant Moderator Mary McDonald, the School Facilities Manager Rick Griffith, Select Board Assistant Kathy Wile, Town Clerk Debra Morrison and Supervisors of the Checklist Kathy Wile and Wally Brown.

The Moderator then reviewed the procedure for voters. Voters wishing to speak should use the microphones and address any questions to the Moderator. Residents need to give their name at the microphone when recognized. All amendments and substantive motions must be in writing (please also print your name) and signed by the maker and seconder.

Five voters may make a written request for a secret ballot vote 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.

In regards to voting by ballot, it was clarified “to please come out of your seats to the center aisle and receive a yes/no ballot. Come down the center aisle to the ballot box. It is your responsibility to place your vote in the box. You may pocket the other half of the ballot or put it in the wastebasket. Please return to your seat by the side aisle.”

The Moderator made note of the following error in the 2015 Town Report: On page 7, the Moderator’s term of office is two years (three years in the Mason School District), not three as written.

The Moderator requested that the audience remain seated after the meeting while the Oath of Office is administered to the newly elected officials. She then announced the results of the Town and School District elections. Total votes cast were 238 out of a total of 1,022. She declared the winning candidates elected to their respective offices.

Moderator: Catherine Schwenk 207

Selectman: Bernard O’Grady 145

Supervisor of the Checklist: Dorothy Millbrandt 210

Library Trustee: Christine Weiss 200

Trustee of Cemeteries: Kenneth Spacht 211

Trustee of Trust Funds (3 yr): George Schwenk 216

Trustee of Trust Funds (2 yr): Dorothy Minior 210

The following articles were voted on at the polls on Tuesday, March 8, 2016.

The results of **Article 2** — Shall the Town amend the Town of Mason Planning Ordinance of 1967 to add Article XXII, Aquifer and Wellhead Protection Overlay District Ordinance? Recommended by the Planning Board.

Yes 154 / No 78 / Article 2 Carries

The results of **Article 3** — Shall the Town amend the Town of Mason Planning Ordinance of 1967 to:

Add Article XXIII, Outdoor Lighting Ordinance.

Amend Article IV, Section O, Paragraph 1.c from “No sign shall be neon, animated, or flashing.” To “No sign shall be neon, animated, or flashing. All illumination of signs shall conform to the requirements of Article XXIII, Outdoor Lighting Ordinance. ”

Amend Article IV, Section O, Paragraph 1.d from “No sign or lighting for a business shall be positioned in such a manner that it impedes the vision or line of sight of drivers in or on public ways, nor cause glare or direct lighting on any adjacent property.” To “No sign for a business shall be positioned in such a manner that it impedes the line of sight of drivers in or on public ways.” Recommended by the Planning Board.

Yes 174 / No 62 / Article 3 Carries

The results of **Article 4** — Shall the Town amend the Town of Mason Planning Ordinance of 1967 Article XIV, Section A, by adding:

31 Commercial Use the buying and selling of goods and services in retail businesses, wholesale buying and selling, and financial establishments.

32 Industrial Use the manufacture, fabrication, processing, reduction or destruction of any article, substance or commodity, or any other treatment thereof in such a manner as to change the form, character or appearance thereof, and including storage elevators, truck storage yards, warehouses, wholesale storage and other similar types of enterprise. Recommended by the Planning Board.

Yes 152 / No 79 / Article 4 Carries

Mason School District Results

School Board Member (3 yr term): Dr. Christopher Guiry 178

School Board Member (2 yr term): [write-in] Bradley Gilbert 13

School District Treasurer: Susan Schulman 208

Results of **Article 2** — Shall the Mason School District accept the reports of agents, auditors, committees, or officers chosen as printed in the Annual Mason School District Report?

Yes 201 / No 25 / Article 2 Carries

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 Three Million One Hundred Seventeen Thousand Six Hundred Eighty Two Dollars

(\$3,117,682)? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be Three Million One Hundred Eighteen Thousand Thirty Dollars (\$3,118,030) 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. (The School Board recommends this Article.)

Yes 203 / No 29 / Article 3 Carries

Results of **Article 4** — Shall The Mason School District raise and appropriate the sum not to exceed Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) to be added to the previously established Educating Educationally Disabled Children Capital Reserve Fund (established in 2010), with such amount to be funded from the June 30, 2016, unreserved fund balance available for transfer on June 30? No amount to be raised from taxation. The School Board recommends this Warrant Article. (Majority vote required.)

Yes 179 / No 54 / Article 4 Carries

The 2016 Town Meeting was called to order at 9:02 am. The Moderator recognized all members of the US Armed Forces, past and present, active duty and reservists to stand and be recognized for their service to our Country and their sacrifices in time of war, conflicts and peace. They received a warm round of applause.

The colors were presented by Mason Boy Scout Troop 264 including Jaden Davies, Drew Hodges, Max Phalon, Mike McGuire, Mason McDonald, Ian Alton, Scoutmaster Donald Hodges, Webelos Leader Nancy Richards, Troop Committee Member and Former Scoutmaster Ronald Dube and George Schwenk who reinstated the Troop in 1974 and served as Scoutmaster from 1974 to 1989. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was led by Colonel Nancy Richards USAR (ret.).

Scoutmaster Donald Hodges recognized the Scouts, Nancy Richards and Ronald Dube, and presented George Schwenk with a Special Certificate and a pin for his 70 years of service to the Boy Scouts.

Selectman Bernie O'Grady moved and it was seconded to accept the reports of agents, auditors, committees or officers chosen as printed in the Annual Town Report. The motion carries.

He then moved to allow Police Chief Kevin Maxwell and Road Agent Gary Lizotte to speak as needed on town affairs. The motion carries.

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

Article 5: 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 Fifty Seven Thousand, Three Hundred Fifty Nine Dollars (\$1,657,359) for general municipal operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. (Majority vote required.) Recommended by the Selectmen.

Mike Bromberg questioned the total revenue amount of almost \$4 million. Permission was given to Town Bookkeeper Brenda Wiley to speak. Brenda answered and said it includes all revenues for all items – the actual 2015 numbers.

Stanley Brown asked why there was a 150% increase in line item #6025-02 [payroll taxes]. Brenda said they budgeted it at \$100 and it was an estimate, a placeholder). The actual calculation shows a much closer number to what it should be.

Mike Bromberg noted that line item #6001-28 [Ballot Clerks and Supervisors] reflected a 900% increase.

Pat Letourneau questioned line item 6001-03 [Town Clerk salary] and wanted to know why the salary was increased from \$25 to \$35 an hour. Town Clerk Deb Morrison responded that the position is a salaried position, not an hourly one, and did not reflect all the additional hours required for the job outside the open office hours. The Town Clerk hours changed effective January 1 with an increase of eight hours per week with the salary increase coming from the Deputy Town Clerk's salary line item 6001-05 when Deputy Town Clerk Suzanne Kelly requested a reduction in her hours. Deb pointed out there was no increase in the salary bottom line and the additional eight hours were being performed at the Deputy's lower rate of pay.

John Lewicke stated that half the roads in town were getting no attention. Bernie spoke and said the Highway Department was reduced this year.

Stanley Brown wanted to know why we even owned a grader since the roads are a disaster. "The dirt roads are a mess." Road Agent Gary Lizotte said the grader's been down since last November and they try to keep up. "Problems spring up with a small handful of people and we're doing our best. Spring has been difficult."

Walter Alford asked what line item ditching, culverts, etc. fall under. Gary said there's no line item, it's part of the job. He addresses complaints as they come in. "Emergencies come first."

Stanley Brown asked if we need more manpower to do what needs to be done. Gary Elsworth said that widening the roads is not the way to make them better. "All material goes into the woods and the roads are lowered."

Gary Elsworth then questioned line item #6012-05 [police department payroll taxes] – an increase in taxes but not in salaries? Brenda Wiley explained that there may be an error in the spreadsheet program and it should be in the \$5,600 range. Bernie O'Grady made a motion and it was seconded by Walter Alford to amend line item #6012-05 [payroll taxes] by reducing it from \$8,826 to \$5,605.62 with the knowledge that it may not be accurate and will need to be adjusted. It was voted to amend line item #6012-05 with a new total budget of \$1,654,138.62.

Connie LaCasse wanted to know about the K-9 Maintenance Fund. Where has the dog money gone? "Did the \$700 flea collar go back into the trust?" Charlie Moser explained that we need to go through some gyrations to move funds from the Dog Trust Fund because it includes forfeiture money and private donations that went to support the dog. "We need to separate the funds and decide where to suggest the funds should go." Mike Bromberg said that since we have the K-9 fund, shouldn't we keep it in case we ever get another K-9? Police Chief Kevin Maxwell said it takes six months to train a dog and he doesn't have the manpower.

Walter Alford questioned line items #6014-04 – 06 [Fire Department]. Why so high? Fire Chief Dave Baker said they're trying to get Hep B vaccinations for 10 people done at \$300 apiece.

Article 5 as amended to \$1,654,138.62 Carries.

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

Bernie O'Grady spoke about the Paved Roads Committee Report which was to address all paved roads by 2018. We are now in year three of that plan.

Article 6 Carries.

Article 7: Charlie Moser moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000) 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 the 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 nonlapsing appropriation per RSA 327, VI and will not lapse until December 31, 2018. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen.

Charlie spoke on this article and said the \$80K was raised in a nonlapsing fund to carry on against the pipeline. We've spent \$20,080 and have donated \$7K to Plan NE to support the fight against the utilities. We spent \$63,000 for an attorney retainer in the 14-town coalition we participate in. We've spent approximately \$5,000 to determine the sensitive areas in town. We need to have proposals ready or we'll miss out on funding. This year the coalition has come up with a minimum fee of \$10K per town with the balance being prorated on an equalized valuation – about \$14,500 for Mason's burden. Our attorney has filed an intervention with FERC. Charlie said this is "hard to estimate where this will go. More filings need to be made and we could be spending more with [the attorney]. This is really the year of the pipeline fight. The application for Kinder Morgan is in with FERC and wants it decided by fall. We need more environmental impact studies. This money would go into the general fund if it's not used by the end date."

Kathy Chapman thanks the Selectmen and townspeople for their support of this bill. "Is all this money going to the pipeline fight, nowhere else?" Charlie: "Yes." Gary Elsworth also offered his thanks and there was a round of applause.

Bill Rendle said he thinks people need to note that the NE Plan involves rate payer assessments. Has the Town taken a no-access position? "The \$7,500 has no benefit to Mason. You need to be a rate payer to have any standing." He's been amazed at the degree of opposition. "No one here is a Liberty rate payer. To raise and spend another \$20K is foolish."

Pam Lassen thinks the contribution to the Massachusetts coalition is a benefit. "If we can stop them at Mass., they can't come into NH." Jen Schongar said, "This is a fight to protect our town. If we stand on our own, we're David and Goliath. We have to stand with Mass. and anyone else who fights it."

Article 7 Carries Unanimously.

Article 8: Bernie O'Grady moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fourteen Thousand Dollars (\$14,000) to be added to the Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund previously established. (Majority vote required.) Recommended by the Selectmen.

Bernie spoke on this article and said that "we've been using the Capital Reserve Fund. We purchased one [cruiser] this year and need to replenish funds this year. One more cruiser has excessive mileage – 92K – on it and will need replacement.

Article 13 Carries Unanimously.

Article 9: Louise Lavoie moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000) to be added to the 250th Anniversary Celebration Expendable Trust Fund previously established. (Majority vote required.) Recommended by the Selectmen.

Dotsie Millbrandt asked the question, "Didn't we see this amount as a line item on the budget? Jeannine Phalon said no, "that line item funds other Rec Committee events." Brenda Wiley said it's not added into the budget until approved.

Article 9 Carries.

Article 10: Charlie Moser 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. (Majority vote required.) Recommended by the Selectmen.

Charlie spoke on this Article and said the Fire Department needs to expand the building for more room. There is \$40K in the fund now. Chief Baker explained the 16 x 45 ft., one-and-a-half story addition will expand to the back. "The roof's been redone, the siding replaced, the overhead door openers and the windows have been done."

Article 10 Carries.

Article 11: Bernie O'Grady moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Eighteen Thousand Nine Hundred Ninety Seven Dollars (\$18,997) for the purchase of 4 Scott X3 Airpacks for the Fire Department. (Majority vote required.) Recommended by the Selectmen.

Chief Baker explained [and Phillip Phalon graciously modeled] the new air packs which have 30 minutes of air. The old packs are 23 years old.

Article 11 Carries.

Article 12: Louise Lavoie Moved and it was Seconded to see if the Town will urge:

That the next President and Congress fight big money politics and restore government of, by, and for the people by championing the We the People agenda:

1. Ban Super PACs and overturn Citizens United
2. Expose secret donors and require full transparency
3. Ban bribes from big-money lobbyists and government contractors
4. Establish small-donor, citizen-funded elections
5. End gerrymandering and modernize voter registration
6. Close loopholes and enforce campaign finance laws

That the New Hampshire State Legislature support legislation to enact the We the People agenda.

The record of the vote approving this article shall be transmitted by written notice from the Selectmen to the NH congressional delegation and to Mason's state legislators, and to the President of the United States informing them of the instructions from their constituents within 30 days of the vote. By petition.

Article 12 Carries.

Article 13: Charlie Moser moved and it was seconded to see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Seven Hundred Dollars (\$5,700) for the purchase of 6 SCBA Carbon Fiber Bottles for the Fire Department. (Majority vote required.) Recommended by the Selectmen.

Article 13 Carries.

Jeannine Phalon made a motion and it was seconded by Pam Lassen to advance Article 15 to be heard before Article 14. The motion to advance Carries.

Article 15: Louise Lavoie moved and it was seconded to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Six Thousand Dollars (\$6,000) for the purpose of upgrading the Information Technology infrastructure at the Mann House. Recommended by the Selectmen. (Majority vote required.)

Louise spoke on this article and said they are working with Brady Schulman as a consultant. Brady also consults with the school on their infrastructure. The town needs to address the infrastructure at the Mann House in regards to the wiring to the computers, routers, etc. "We needed to replace the server this year and are addressing deficiencies in the library."

Treasurer Pat Letourneau thinks this is necessary. "I tried to put money into the postage meter and had to bypass the firewall. It's been piecemealed over the years and nothing's up to spec."

Walter Alford asked if the \$6K was in addition to the new router. Louise said yes. She explained that the proposed plan has several tiers of options and they chose the \$6K plan.

Article 15 Carries.

On motion of Doug Whitbeck and seconded by Alison Jaskiewicz, it was voted to postpone indefinitely Article 14.

For brevity purposes, please refer to the 2016 Town Warrant, Article 14, for the substance of this Article which is deemed too lengthy to repeat in these minutes.

On motion of Michael Bromberg and duly seconded, Town Meeting was adjourned Sine Dai at 10:58 am.

At the conclusion of Town Meeting, Moderator Catherine Schwenk installed Selectman Bernard O'Grady and Supervisor of the Checklist Dorothy Millbrandt. Selectman O'Grady then installed Catherine Schwenk to the position of Moderator.

Respectfully submitted,



Debra A. Morrison
Town Clerk