

GOFFSTOWN DELIBERATIVE SESSION  
FEBRUARY 4, 2021

In attendance were Moderator Rodney Stark, Town Clerk Cathy Ball, Assistant Town Moderator Jim Raymond, Select Board Chairman Collis Adams, Vice Chair Kelly Boyer, Selectman Chet Bowen, Town Administrator Derek Horne and Assistant Town Administrator Danielle Basora. Absent: Selectman Georgantas and Selectman Mark Lemay

**7:00 PM CALL TO ORDER**

Moderator Stark called the meeting to order. Moderator Stark led the Board and the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Moderator Stark introduced the head table: Town Clerk Cathy Ball, Assistant Town Moderator Jim Raymond, Select Board Chairman Collis Adams, Vice Chair Kelly Boyer, Selectman Chet Bowen, Town Administrator Derek Horne and Assistant Town Administrator Danielle Basora. He said Selectman Mark Lemay and Selectman Peter Georgantas were unable to attend.

**INTRODUCTIONS AND RECOGNITION**

Moderator Stark said the dignitaries who may be in attendance, includes Department Heads: Police Chief Eric Sereno, Fire Chief Brian Allard, Public Works Director Adam Jacobs, Library Director Dianne Hathaway and Parks & Recreation Director Rick Wilhelmi.

It includes Budget Committee members: Chair Cole Riel, Vice Chair Jeffrey O'Brien, Joseph Alexander Jr., Spencer Dias, William Kordas, Dennis Lynch, Richard Manzo, Eileen McNinnie, Schuyler Sund, Gregg Flegal, Fred Plett and Elizabeth Dubrulle. The Budget Committee also includes Goffstown Village Water Precinct Representative Richard Fletcher, School Board Representative Jared Talbot and Select Board Representative Mark Lemay (absent). We may also have our State Representatives Joe Alexander, Jr., Cole Riel, Barbara Griffin, Michael Gunski, Fred Plett, John Burt, Claire Rouillard and State Senator Lou D'Allesandro (present).

**MODERATOR'S OPENING STATEMENT & RULES OF PROCEDURE**

Moderator Stark said, at the 1996 Town Meeting, the Town of Goffstown voted to adopt what is known as "Senate Bill 2" (which has since been codified and is also known now as RSA 40:12 & 13). This Act is otherwise referred to as the "STANDARDIZED OFFICIAL BALLOT REFERENDUM SYSTEM." It is under this system which the Town of Goffstown in general, and this meeting, will conduct its business. Considering current circumstances and the COVID-19 pandemic, I am going to provide everyone with a highlight of the rules of this meeting. Printed copies of the rules were made available at the Supervisors of the Checklist table this evening.

We are guests in the Goffstown High School this evening. Please continue to wear a face mask and maintain appropriate social distancing while here this evening. Also, there is no smoking while on school grounds. Registered voters have been given a voting card. Please make sure you sign your card. If you leave before the meeting ends, you will be asked to return these cards. These voting cards must be displayed during a standing vote. All speakers at the microphone must display their voting card. Before speaking, please spell your last name for our scribe.

At tonight's meeting, Articles 9 through 18 will be open for discussion, debate, and amendment. This Deliberative Session allows the same range of possible amendments which voters have

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always had under the traditional town meeting system. If an amendment to any Warrant Article is adopted, the Article as amended, will appear on the Official Ballot for voting on March 9, 2021.

The printed rules of this meeting include the following information for proper amendments and the process of presenting one this evening; how to request a written secret ballot, the parliamentary procedure to move “the previous question”, motion for reconsideration and motion to restrict reconsideration.

Does anyone here have any questions about the rules of this meeting? Finally, please note that I will not tolerate derogatory comments to be made about any speaker or person in this hall – so please be civil.

**MOTION TO DISPENSE WITH THE READING OF THE WARRANT**

Moderator Stark recognized Chairman Adams.

*Chairman Adams made a motion to dispense with the reading of the Warrant. Vice Chair Boyer seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.*

**ARTICLE 9—OPERATING BUDGET**

Moderator Stark recognized Chairman Adams.

*Chairman Adams made a motion to move Article 9 to the floor. Vice Chair Boyer seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.*

Chairman Adams said the Town Operating Budget consists of 2 funds—the General Fund and the Sewer Enterprise Fund. EMS Ambulance expenses are included in the Operating Budget and in the Default Budget. At the request of the Department of Revenue Administration, the EMS Special Revenue Fund appropriation has been moved to a separate Article 10. If Article 10 fails, EMS operations will be funded by the General Fund. The proposed Operating Budget is \$24,844,592. We will focus this presentation on the General Fund, as that is the only fund which impacts the town’s property tax rate.

The General Fund Budget has an increase of \$1,075,572 over last year’s budget. The General Fund Revenue is anticipated to decrease, by \$389,859, which is largely due to a reduction of one-time State Aid, in the State’s previous biennial budget (FY20-21).

Seventy percent (70%) of the \$1 million increase to the General Fund Budget is primarily caused by two items. The first item is the Road Plan. The 2020 Town Meeting approved a Special Article to fund an additional \$500,000 from fund balance to the Road Plan. That Special Article included language directing the Select Board to include that increase in the 2021 Default and Operating Budget. That increase is contained within the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) portion of the Operating Budget, which has an increase of \$621,555 over 2020.

The second item is the increase of the Employer Contribution Rates for the NH Retirement System. Effective July 1, 2021, the employer rates for the NH Retirement System are increasing because the System’s assumed rate of return on investments was lowered last fall. Based on budgeted wages, the increase to NH Retirement System is a \$198,019 increase in 2021. Other changes affecting department operating budgets from the previous year are that the budget includes

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contractual increases for 2 union contracts previously approved: Firefighters and DPW Teamsters. The CBA's for Police Patrol, as well as the Police Dispatchers & Clerks unions will be separate Special Articles on this year's ballot and discussed later this evening.

The budget includes a 2% wage matrix adjustment for non-union employees, as well as step increases for eligible non-union employees. Health insurance premiums increased 12.3% in 2021. There were no increases to Dental, Disability, Life, or Unemployment insurance, and modest adjustments to the property, liability, and worker's compensation insurances. These increases amount to a 3.2% increase to the insurance line. Contract pricing for gasoline, diesel, heating oil, propane, and electricity have moderate increases.

If the article fails, the Default Budget shall be \$23,752,598. This article is recommended by the Select Board and the Budget Committee.

Moderator Stark opened Article 9 to the floor for discussion.

There was no discussion.

***Chairman Adams made a motion to restrict consideration of Article 9. Vice Chair Boyer seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.***

**ARTICLE 10—EMS SPECIAL REVENUE FUND**

Moderator Stark recognized Chairman Adams.

***Chairman Adams made a motion to move Article 10 to the floor. Vice Chair Boyer seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.***

Chairman Adams said the EMS Special Revenue Fund was established in 2001, and 100% of all revenues collected from EMS operations is deposited into the fund. Traditionally, the EMS Special Revenue Fund Budget has been included as part of the overall Operating Budget appropriation article. In 2017, the DRA issued guidance that all appropriations for Special Revenue Funds should be made in separate warrant articles because they require an affirmative annual vote by the legislative body.

This article asks voters to fund 2021 EMS operations from the EMS Special Revenue Fund, with no funds to be raised by taxation. The proposed EMS budget is \$834,764, which is an increase from \$634,408 in 2020. This increase is due to the purchase of an ambulance scheduled in 2021. If Article 10 passes, Article 9 (the Operating Budget) will be reduced by the amount of the EMS operations. If Article 10 fails, EMS operations will be funded through taxation, which is estimated to increase the tax rate by \$.48.

Moderator Stark opened Article 10 to the floor for discussion.

There was no discussion.

***Chairman Adams moved to restrict reconsideration of Article 10. Vice Chair Boyer seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.***

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**ARTICLE 11—COLLECTIVE BARGAINING FOR THE PATROLMEN UNION**

Moderator Stark recognized Vice Chair Boyer.

*Vice Chair Boyer made a motion to move Article 11 to the floor. Selectman Bowen seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.*

Vice Chair Boyer said this is a 3-year contract for Patrolmen I, II, and III. This contract covers 21 patrolmen positions at the Police Department. The Select Board negotiated this 3-year contract with an eye to improving recruitment of new officer candidates and retaining our current officers. We estimate that it costs \$54,000 to train a new officer. Over the last 4 years, 10 officers from the Police Department have left; 5 of those have left for other Police Agencies. In southern NH, the market for police officers is very competitive, with some municipalities offering higher starting wages and sign-on bonuses.

This CBA would include a 15-step Wage Matrix, with placement based on years of service. The starting pay for a new officer will increase to \$24.70/hr., which is based upon Market Analysis for Southern NH Patrolmen Wages. Regarding benefits, the CBA language modifies the Employer/Employee share of the High Deductible Plan, to make this more attractive to this young workforce. Also, it reduced the impact of those employees that opt-out of the Town's insurance by change to a flat rate. The Town negotiated changes to language throughout the contract to clarify process and procedure of existing policies and benefits.

The tax rate impact of this increase in 2021 is estimated at \$.05. This article is recommended by the Select Board and the Budget Committee.

Moderator Stark opened Article 11 to the floor for discussion.

Cathy Holt, 27 Stinson Road, asked about the percentage increase.

Vice Chair Boyer said the percentage of increase overall would depend on the years of service for each patrolman that was hired. We don't have an average. They will increase the starting pay to \$24.70 per hour. We have 21 patrolmen in the department.

Cathy Holt asked the average raise. Other people are getting raises. What is the average patrol person getting as a raise?

Vice Chair Boyer said the increase for starting is 8%. We shrunk the matrix to a smaller size, so that placement is dependent on the years of service. So, she doesn't have an answer to that question. They are placed differently across the board.

There was no further discussion.

*Vice Chair Boyer moved to restrict reconsideration of Article 11. Selectman Bowen seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.*

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**ARTICLE 12—COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT DISPATCHERS & CLERKS**

Moderator Stark recognized Vice Chair Boyer.

***Vice Chair Boyer made a motion to move Article 12 to the floor. Selectman Bowen seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.***

Vice Chair Boyer said this is a 3-year contract for the Dispatchers and the Clerks at the Police Department. The Town's Dispatch Center currently dispatches for 6 outside agencies. It generates over \$150,000 in revenue to the General Fund annually. The focus of negotiations was to maintain competitive wages. Dispatcher starting pay in this agreement will be \$20/hr. in 2021, based upon Market Analysis of Southern NH dispatch centers. Clerk starting pay will be \$18/hr. in 2021.

Regarding benefits, this contract eliminates the most expensive Health Insurance Plan in the previous contract. It also reduces the impact of those employees that opt-out of the Town's insurance by changing to a flat rate. The Town negotiated changes to language throughout the contract to clarify process and procedure of existing polices and benefits. The tax rate impact of this increase in 2021 is estimated at \$.02. This article is recommended by the Select Board and the Budget Committee.

Moderator Stark opened Article 12 to the floor for discussion.

Cathy Holt, 27 Stinson Road, asked what the percentage of the raises are.

Vice Chair Boyer said the clerks starting wage is increasing by 9%. Dispatch is increasing by 10%. We don't have an average. That is the general increase overall.

There was no further discussion.

***Vice Chair Boyer moved to restrict reconsideration of Article 12. Selectman Bowen seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.***

**ARTICLE 13—FEMA/SAFER GRANT ARTICLE**

Moderator Stark recognized Selectman Bowen.

***Selectman Bowen made a motion to move Article 13 to the floor. Chairman Adams seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.***

Selectman Bowen said this article is a non-lapsing appropriation for a period of 4 years. This article would appropriate funds to hire four full-time Firefighter/EMTs to cover shifts currently staffed by part-time or overtime personnel, and is contingent upon approval for a Federal Homeland Security Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant. The SAFER grant program provides financial assistance to help departments increase their team of frontline firefighters.

If awarded, Goffstown would be able to hire four full-time Firefighter/EMT's to cover shifts currently staffed by part-time or overtime personnel. The grant is 100% funded through grant proceeds that will be received from FEMA. Firefighter positions created under this program my

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be retained by the community for the duration of the grant period, which is 36 months. This article is recommended by the Select Board and Budget Committee.

Moderator Stark opened Article 13 to the floor for discussion.

There was no discussion.

***Selectman Bowen moved to restrict reconsideration of Article 13. Chairman Adams seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.***

**ARTICLE 14—FIRE APPARATUS CAPITAL RESERVE FUND**

Moderator Stark recognized Chairman Adams.

***Chairman Adams moved Article 14 to the floor. Selectman Bowen seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.***

Chairman Adams said the Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund was established in 2008, for helping defray the single year impact of the replacement cost of modern fire apparatus, which can run between \$750,000 and \$1.5 million. This CRF helps to spread that cost over multiple years to avoid spikes in the tax rate. This fund can also provide the Town leverage, in the form of a local match, when seeking grants to replace apparatus.

This was the case in 2010 when the Fire Department was able to accept an Assistance to Firefighters Grant to replace the town's obsolete ladder trucks with one Tower/Ladder. In that instance, the required match dollars came from this fund. The current balance, as of 12/31/20 of the Fire Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund is \$644,276. Over the years, this fund has also been used to replace a Pumper/Tanker, Command SUV and a rescue boat. This article is to be funded from the Unassigned Fund Balance, with no additional monies to be raised by taxation. This article is recommended by the Select Board and Budget Committee.

Moderator Stark opened Article 14 to the floor for discussion. He asked how much is being proposed to add to the account.

Chairman Adams said it is \$250,000.

There was no further discussion.

***Chairman Adams moved to restrict consideration of Article 14. Selectman Bowen seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.***

**ARTICLE 15—GRASMERE TOWN HALL CAPITAL RESERVE FUND**

Moderator Stark recognized Chairman Adams.

***Chairman Adams moved Article 15 to the floor. Vice Chair Boyer seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.***

Chairman Adams said this article would deposit \$100,000 into the Grasmere Town Hall Capital Reserve Fund, which was established in 2005. The Select Board and the Historic District

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Commission are designated as agents to expend and could access this fund any time during the year. The Fund currently has approximately \$272,000 and this article would add \$100,000 for construction of a 2-story addition on the rear of the building.

The second floor of Grasmere Town Hall has been restored through grants, volunteer efforts and previous uses of this fund. The space is available for residents of Goffstown, but it is only accessed using the front stairwell. The addition will have an elevator to the restored second floor, making the space available to ALL residents of Goffstown. It will include storage and an additional bathroom on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. In 2018, the architect of record updated the probable construction cost estimate for the addition of \$450,000. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> of 3 planned \$100,000 deposits into the Capital Reserve Fund. The Town will explore grant opportunities and other funding sources. This Capital Reserve Fund can be used for any required match for grants. This article would be funded by Unassigned Fund Balance, with no additional monies to be raised by taxation. This article is recommended by the Select Board and Budget Committee.

Moderator Stark opened Article 15 to the floor for discussion.

There was no discussion.

***Chairman Adams moved to restrict reconsideration of Article 15. Vice Chair Boyer seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.***

**ARTICLE 16—AUTHORIZATION - USE OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES UNRESTRICTED FUNDS**

Moderator Stark recognized Vice Chair Boyer.

***Vice Chair Boyer made a motion to move Article 16 to the floor. Selectman Bowen seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.***

Vice Chair Boyer said this article would appropriate \$95,000 from the Library Trustees Unrestricted Funds for the purpose of hiring industry professionals to help develop a more accurate budget for the Library addition and renovation project, as well as a realistic fundraising goal for a capital campaign. The Library Trustees Unrestricted Funds are a result of gifts, bequests, or donations to the Goffstown Library.

This appropriation includes funds for land surveying and geotechnical studies. The Library Trustees will use the information from those professionals to lower costs where they can, to troubleshoot problems before the project begins, and to obtain the most accurate numbers for the Library addition and renovation project. An itemization of costs and more information about the addition and renovation can be found on the Goffstown Library's website [www.goffstownlibrary.com](http://www.goffstownlibrary.com). This article is to be funded by the Library's unrestricted funds, with no monies to be raised by taxation. This article is recommended by the Select Board and Budget Committee.

Moderator Stark opened Article 16 to the floor for discussion.

There was no discussion.

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***Vice Chair Boyer moved to restrict reconsideration of Article 16. Selectman Bowen seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.***

**ARTICLE 17—CRISPIN’S HOUSE**

Moderator Stark recognized Selectman Bowen.

***Selectman Bowen made a motion to move Article 17 to the floor. Chairman Adams seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.***

Selectman Bowen said this article would continue taxpayer support of Crispin’s House Coalition for Youth. Crispin’s House has provided services to youth and families of Goffstown for over 30 years, providing a wide range of program opportunities to help kids make positive choices. The annual budget of Crispin’s House is about \$106,000. The article funds \$20,000, or 19%, of the total budget. The organization works hard to raise the remaining funds through fund raising activities, community involvement, and grants.

This article demonstrates strong and continued community support, which helps these efforts. Programs include an accredited Juvenile Court Diversion Program, VolunTEENS, Youth Forms, Challenge Day, Mental Health education, Suicide Prevention, and Substance Misuse Prevention. This article is recommended by the Select Board and Budget Committee.

Moderator Stark opened Article 17 to the floor.

There was no discussion.

***Selectman Bowen moved to restrict reconsideration of Article 17. Chairman Adams seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.***

**ARTICLE 18—GOFFSTOWN MAIN STREET PROGRAM**

Moderator Stark recognized Selectman Bowen.

***Selectman Bowen moved Article 18 to the floor. Chairman Adams seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.***

Selectman Bowen said this article would continue taxpayer support of the Goffstown Main Street Program. Goffstown Main Street Program’s mission is to provide support, advice, and promotion to current and potential business owners in the designated Main Street area and to cultivate a sense of community for Goffstown residents using the National Main Street Center’s 4-Point Approach. The 4-Point Approach revolves around principles of effective design, promotion, economic restructuring, and organization as the keys to economic revitalization of the historic downtown. Passage of this warrant article would provide \$15,000 toward their budget of \$117,912. This article is recommended by the Select Board and Budget Committee.

Moderator Stark opened Article 18 to the floor for discussion.

There was no discussion.

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***Selectman Bowen moved to restrict reconsideration of Article 18. Chairman Adams seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.***

***7:47 p.m. Chairman Adams made a motion to adjourn. Vice Chair Boyer seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.***

Respectfully submitted,  
Gail Labrecque  
Recording Secretary