

Town Meeting 2020

MONDAY, JULY 20, 2020

FRIDAY, JULY 24, 2020

SATURDAY, JULY 25, 2020







Presented by the
TOWN OF HOPKINTON

to

JIM O'BRIEN

Select Board Member 2008-2020

Select Board Chair 2010-2020



With Gratitude and Appreciation.





Article 3: Bond Issue for Road, Bridge, and Culvert Rehabilitation

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum \$2,200,000 (gross budget) for the planning, design, rehabilitation, and construction of existing town roads, bridges, and culverts, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$2,200,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33), as amended; to authorize the Select Board to apply for, obtain and accept federal, state or other aid, if any, which may be available for said project and to comply with all laws applicable to said project; to authorize the Select Board to issue, negotiate, sell and deliver such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof; and to authorize the Select Board to take any other action or to pass any other vote relative thereto.

(2/3 Ballot vote required – voting must be open for 1 hour).

(The Select Board recommends this article (5-0)).

(The Budget Committee recommends this article (10-0)).



Review of Pending Road Project

Projects that should be done now:

◦ Chip Seal 18 Roads	392,258
◦ Shim & Overlay 17 Roads	1,286,809
◦ Reclaim & Rebuild 20 Roads	3,954,771
◦ Culverts & Bridges	2,230,000

TOTAL = \$7,863,838



Road Bond Article (Pre-COVID)

\$2,200,000 road bond for road, bridge and culvert rehabilitation (Tax impact begins in 2021).

Will largely pay for culvert replacement



Bond will be used for

Kearsarge Avenue	\$ 400,000	
Briar Hill #2	390,000	
Briar Hill #3	390,000	
Bound Tree #1	130,000	
Bound Tree #2	330,000	
Tyler Bridge Re-decking	530,000	
Engineering	<u>30,000</u>	
		\$2,200,000



Factors leading to this proposal

Stickney Hill Road was closed because the “bridge” was not safe for traffic.

The culvert planned for Briar Hill Road was used on Stickney Hill Road leaving 2 culverts needing replacement.

Permits for Briar Hill will expire in 2021.

There is a metal plate over a major culvert on Kearsarge Avenue.



Amended Bond Request

Kearsarge Avenue	\$	0
Briar Hill #2		390,000
Briar Hill #3		390,000
Bound Tree #1		130,000
Bound Tree #2		330,000
Tyler Bridge Re-decking		530,000
Engineering		<u>30,000</u>
		\$1,800,000



Road Bond Article (as amended)

Bond Cost (\$1,800,000)

- 10-year bond at 2.25% interest – conservative estimate
- Total interest costs: \$247,500
- Year 1 payment
 - \$245,250 = .31 on tax rate - \$300,000 property = \$93.00
- Year 10 payment
 - \$184,050 = .23 on tax rate - \$300,000 property = \$ 69.00



Article 4: Adoption of Official Ballot Referendum Form of Meeting

Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 40:13 (known as SB 2) to allow official ballot voting on all issues before the Town of Hopkinton on the second Tuesday of March?

(By Petition).

(3/5 Ballot vote required – Voting must be open for 1 hour).

*(The Select Board **does not** recommend this article (5-0)).*



Article 4: Change to SB2

- Article submitted by petition; Board does not support
- Requires 3/5 vote to pass
- Board required to hold public hearing; did so on March 2, 2020

What is SB2 and what does it mean?

- If passed, Hopkinton would become official ballot community and have to follow RSA 40:13



What is SB2 form of town meeting?

- If passed, Hopkinton would become official ballot community and have to follow RSA 40:13 for Town Meetings going forward
- “Town Meeting” split into two separate sessions, held about five (5) weeks apart:
 - First Session – Deliberative – for the explanation, discussion, and amendments to the proposed operating budget and other warrant articles
 - Second Session – Voting – to vote on all warrant articles as amended by First Session on the second Tuesday in March, at the same time as local elections. Only can vote “yes” or “no”



How would this compare to what we have done so far?

- The First/Deliberative Session is similar to traditional Town Meeting, but only vote on wording of each article
- By law, Deliberative Sessions are held in late January/early February, about five (5) weeks before voters actually vote “yes” or “no” on each article
- Voting on each article is by ballot at the typical March election (second Tuesday in March). Can only vote “yes” or “no”
- Absentee Ballots can be obtained for the Voting Session in March
- If operating budget doesn’t pass, then possible to use the “Default Budget”



What is the Default Budget?

- The Default Budget is the previous year's budget, plus or minus debt service, contracts, other obligations previously incurred, and then reduced by one-time expenses and salaries/benefits for eliminated positions
- The Default Budget is created by the Select Board as the governing body
- Possible to have several years in row of default budget
- If/when the proposed operating budget fails, Select Board can choose to go with Default Budget or call a special meeting to reconsider only the operating budget again.



Why Does the Select Board Oppose SB2?

- Low voter participation at deliberative sessions; other towns that have adopted SB2 almost universally report very low turnout for the deliberative session; far lower than what Hopkinton turns out for our traditional meeting
- Not the democratic process we think of as integral to a town meeting. With lower turnout and a 5 week break between deliberation and voting, there would be less debate and less informed voters
- Small groups of voters can make significant changes at the deliberative session, and when larger portions of the town later vote at the voting session, they are stuck with a “yes” or “no” choice on the article as amended
- Concerns about operating under a default budget; even possible that the default budget may be higher than the proposed operating budget
- If this petition is intended to address lack of access for the elderly or those with disabilities, those issues don’t go away for the deliberative session, they would remain; if people have a disability or concern over access, please inform the town and we will do our best to make an accommodation for you
- If this petition is to change when the town has the business session of the meeting so its no longer on a Saturday, the Select Board has the power to set the business session for a different day and retain the traditional meeting format
- Many SB2 communities regret having made the switch from traditional town meeting



Article 5: Operating Budget

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the Budget Committee recommended sum of \$ 7,703,736 for general municipal operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

(Majority vote required).

(The Select Board recommends this article (5-0)).

(The Budget Committee recommends this article (10-0)).



Budget Process to Date

Department Heads prepared budget requests.

Department Heads meet with Town Administrator and Finance Director to review budget requests.

Department Heads held a “Budget Summit” to review all requests and overall impact.



Budget Process to Date

Department Heads presented their Capital requests to the CIP Committee

The Select Board met with each Department Head to review requests.

Select Board reviewed the CIP Committee recommendations.



Budget Process to Date

Select Board cut the Department Heads' requests by \$102,200 and the CIP Committee's recommendation by \$265,000.

The Select Board was able to use \$350,000 from the Undesignated Fund Balance to offset taxes – \$215,000 more than last year.



Final Results – Pre-COVID

Operating Expenses

Change in Tax Impact \$ 421,350

CRF/Trust Fund Funding

Change in Tax Impact \$ 343,500

Individual Warrant Articles

Change in Tax Impact \$ 0

Use of Fund Balance

Change in Tax Impact -\$ 215,000

2020 Estimated to be raised by taxes \$5,243,045 +\$390,485 8.05%

2020 Estimated Town Portion Tax Rate \$6.75/thousand +\$ 0.50 7.87%



July Changes Eliminating Tax Rate Increase

Additional Revenues - \$35,401

Reduction in Proposed Operating Expenses - \$183,200

Reduction in Proposed CRF Funding - \$142,500

Reduction in Use of Fund Balance - \$35,000

Increase in valuation on April 1, 2020 – New Building - \$63,568



Budget numbers as amended compared to 2019



Revenue

Estimated Revenues of \$3,414,993

- Increase of \$159,074 - 4.89% (\$98,471 – 3.13% without Sewer)

Major Drivers:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| ◦ Motor Vehicle Registrations | 80,000 |
| ◦ Municipal Aid From State | 49,891 |
| ◦ Income from Sewer Fund | 60,603 |
| ◦ Transfer Station Commercial | -15,000 |
| ◦ Recycling Revenue | -15,000 |
| ◦ Pay-by-Bag Revenue | 25,000 |



Potential Future Revenue Sources in Process

- Part-time or Per Diem Economic Development Director
 - Half paid by the TIF Districts
 - To encourage development and obtain grants
- Solar Array at Transfer Station
 - Option has been exercised
 - They are moving forward



Operating Budget

Total Operating Budget of \$7,520,646

- Increase of \$238,335 - 3.27% (\$182,403 – 2.54% without Sewer)

Major Drivers:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| ◦ TC/TC PT Wages | \$ 21,956 |
| ◦ Merit Wage Pool (3.0%) | 74,739 |
| ◦ Health Insurance | 116,545 |
| ◦ Police FT Wages | 27,610 |
| ◦ DPW FT Wages | 23,385 |
| ◦ Sewer Increase (offset by Revenue) | 60,603 |



Warrant Article for CRF & Trusts

Total Warrant Articles of \$748,000

- Increase of \$201,000 - 36.75%

Major Drivers:

◦ Fire Vehicle Replacement	\$112,500
◦ Road and Culvert Rehabilitation	30,000
◦ Ambulance Replacement	50,000
◦ Library Building Systems	20,000
◦ Library Buildings & Grounds	41,000
◦ Sewer Equip./Sludge Removal	30,000
◦ Town Facilities Maintenance Trust	-20,000



Use of Undesignated Fund Balance

Total use of Fund Balance to offset taxes \$315,000

- Increase of \$180,000 - 133.33%



	2019 Approved	2020 Proposed	\$ Change	% Change
REVENUE				
OPERATING REVENUE				
Operating Revenue	3,144,679	3,243,150	98,471	3.13%
Sewer Fund Revenue	111,240	171,843	60,603	54.48%
Total	3,255,919	3,414,993	159,074	4.89%
PASSTHROUGH REVENUE				
Road Bond	-	1,800,000		
From Special Revenue	110,910	121,380		
Total	110,910	1,921,380	1,810,470	1632.38%
GRAND TOTAL	3,366,829	5,336,373	1,969,544	58.50%
EXPENSES				
OPERATING BUDGET				
Operating Expenses	7,171,071	7,353,484	182,413	2.54%
Sewer Expenses	111,240	167,172	55,932	50.28%
Total	7,282,311.11	7,520,656.04	238,345	3.27%
WARRANT ARTICLE(CRF/TRUST FUNDS)				
To CRF	502,000	676,500	174,500	34.76%
To Trust Funds	45,000	71,500	26,500	58.89%
Total	547,000	748,000	201,000	36.75%
WARRANT ARTICLES (INDIVIDUAL)				
Road Bond	-	1,800,000		
Pay-by-Bag Special Revenue	110,000	120,000	10,000	9.09%
Senior Center Rental Spec. R	910	1,380	470	51.65%
Total	110,910	1,921,380	1,810,470	1632.38%
OTHER RATE IMPACTS				
Fund Balance use	(135,000)	(315,000)	(180,000)	0.00%
Overlay	215,693	179,000	(36,693)	-17.01%
War Service Credits	198,400	198,400	-	0.00%
Total	279,093	62,400	(216,693)	-77.64%
GRAND TOTALS				
GRAND TOTALS	4,852,485	4,916,063	63,578	1.31%
TAX IMPACT	6.25	6.25	(0.00)	-0.06%
2019	777,100,755			
2020	786,490,870			



Summary of Proposed 2020 Budget

Tax Rate Impact

TO BE RAISED BY TAXES:

<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
\$4,852,560	\$4,916,063	\$ 63,578	1.31%

TAX RATE:

<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
\$ 6.25	\$ 6.25	\$ 0.00	0.00%



Article 6: Appropriation to Capital Reserve Funds

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$819,000 to be added to previously established Capital Reserve Funds as follows:

Police/Fire Radio Replacement	\$ 12,000
New & Replacement Equip. & Vehicles for Public Works & Highway Dept.	235,000
Road/Bridge Rehabilitation	100,000
Police Vehicle Replacement	27,000
Town Hall Renovations	12,500
Replacement & Equipping of Ambulance	75,000
Fire Department Vehicle and Equipment Acquisitions	277,500
Library Building Systems	20,000
Recreation Facilities	20,000
Sewer Equipment/Sludge Removal	30,000
Dam Maintenance and Construction	10,000
TOTAL	\$ 819,000

(Majority vote required).

(The Select Board recommends this article (5-0)).

(The Budget Committee recommends this article (10-0)).



CRF – Select Board Updates Numbers

Police/Fire Radio Replacement	\$ 12,000	
DPW Equipment/Vehicle Replacement	200,000	
Road/Bridge Rehabilitation	30,000	
Police Vehicle Replacement	27,000	
Replacement & Equipping Ambulance	75,000	
Fire Dept. Vehicle/Equipment	262,500	
Library Building Systems	20,000	
Recreation Facilities	20,000	
Sewer Equipment/Sludge Removal	<u>30,000</u>	
TOTAL		\$676,500



Article 7: Appropriation to Expendable Trust Funds

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$71,500 to be added to previously established Expendable Trust Funds as follows:

Library Building & Grounds	\$ 41,000
Town Facilities Maintenance	25,000
Recreation Facilities	<u>5,500</u>
TOTAL	\$ 71,500

(Majority vote required).

(The Select Board recommends this article (5-0)).

(The Budget Committee recommends this article (10-0)).



Article 8: Authorization to Sell the Bates Building

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to sell the Bates Building (Former Bates Library) at 846 Main Street, identified on the Town Tax Maps at Map 101, Lot 085-000, with sufficient land; further, that the Select Board shall be authorized to sell such lot upon such terms and conditions which they deem to be in the best interest of the Town and as determined by the Probate Court.

(Majority vote required).

(The Select Board recommends this article (5-0)).



Timeline – Initial Move

In October 2018, following advice from Town Counsel and after much deliberation, the Select Board unanimously made the decision to quickly move the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's office to the Town Hall.

When the decision was first made, the move was to be on a temporary basis. Then during the 2018 budget process, the Select Board decided to make the move of the office permanent.

The Town voted very narrowly to not authorize the Select Board to sell the Bates Building at last year's Town Meeting



Renting of the Main Level

After Town Meeting, the Select Board entered into a month-to-month lease with a local artist to display artwork.

There have been art shows including the work of Hopkinton students.

The Bates Building has also been used during this time for concerts, which have been well attended.



Factors in Decision to Keep TC/TC at Town Hall

Operational Efficiencies

- Departments work together

Cost Savings

- Duplication of items

Convenience of Town Services in One Location

Safety and Security of Employees

- Employees shouldn't have to work alone

Bates Building Back on the Tax Rolls





FAQs

How has the transition to Town Hall worked?

Can we sell the Bates Building? I thought it had restrictions on it.

Aren't the town archives kept at the Bates Building?

Will extensive renovation be required to the Town Hall to accommodate this additional use?



Process from here...

Town Meeting vote

Approval from Probate Court

Assuring that Supervisors of the Checklist and archives are ready for the move

Selling the building or continuing to rent the building

This vote merely gives the Select Board the authority to pursue a sale of the building, it does not mean the Board *will* sell the building.



Article 9: Modification of Elderly Exemptions

Shall the Town modify the previously adopted provisions of RSA 72:39-a for elderly exemption from property tax in the Town of Hopkinton, based on assessed value, for qualified taxpayers, to be as follows: for a person 65-74 years of age, \$120,000; for a person 75-79 years of age, \$145,000; for a person 80 years of age or older \$170,000. To qualify, the person must have been a New Hampshire resident for at least 3 consecutive years, own the real estate individually or jointly, or if the real estate is owned by such person's spouse, they must have been married to each other for at least 5 consecutive years. In addition, the taxpayer must have a net income of not more than \$50,000 or, if married, a combined net income of not more than \$60,000; and own net assets not in excess of \$150,000 excluding the value of the person's residence.

(Majority Vote Required).

(The Select Board recommends this article (5-0)).



Article 9: Elderly Exemption

Income limit changes:

- Single: \$30,000 → \$50,000
- Married: \$40,000 → \$60,000

Exemption amount changes:

- Age 65-74: \$60,000 → \$120,000
- Age 75-79: \$80,000 → \$145,000
- Age 80+: \$100,000 → \$170,000

Asset limit remains \$150,000 excluding residence (same as 2019)

AGE	Number	Current Exemption	2019 Amount Total	New Exemption	2020 Estimated Amt	Difference	Revenue Change
64-74	19	\$ 60,000	\$ 1,140,000	\$ 120,000	\$ 2,280,000	\$ 1,140,000	\$ 33,196.80
75-79	20	\$ 80,000	\$ 1,600,000	\$ 145,000	\$ 2,900,000	\$ 1,300,000	\$ 37,856.00
80+	35	\$ 100,000	\$ 3,500,000	\$ 170,000	\$ 5,950,000	\$ 2,450,000	\$ 71,344.00
	74						\$ 142,396.80



Article 10: Adoption of Disabled Exemption

Shall the Town adopt the provisions of RSA 72:37-b, Exemption for the Disabled from property tax, based on assessed value for qualified taxpayers to be \$100,000. To qualify the person must be eligible under Title II or Title XVI of the federal Social Security Act for benefits to the disabled, have been a New Hampshire resident for at least 5 years, and own the real estate individually or jointly, or if the real estate is owned by such person's spouse, they must have been married for at least 5 consecutive years. The exemption may apply only to property that is occupied as the principal place of abode of the disabled person. In addition, the taxpayer must have a net income of not more than \$50,000 or if married, a combined net income of not more than \$60,000, and own net assets not in excess of \$150,000 excluding the value of the person's residence.

(Majority Vote Required).

(The Select Board recommends this article (5-0)).



Article 10: Disabled Exemption

- New for Hopkinton
- Exemption amount: \$100,000
- Income limits:
 - Single: \$50,000
 - Married: \$60,000
- Asset limit: \$150,000 excluding residence



Article 11: Modification of Optional Service-Connected Total Disability

Shall the Town modify the previously adopted provisions of RSA 72:35 optional tax credit on residential property for a Service-Connected Total Disability by increasing the amount of the credit to \$4,000? This tax credit is only available to a person who has been honorably discharged or an officer honorably separated from the military service of the United States and who has total and permanent service-connected disability, or who is a double amputee or paraplegic because of service-connected injury, or the surviving spouse of such a person. This tax credit may be applied only to property which is occupied as the principal place of abode by the disabled person or the surviving spouse.

(Majority Vote Required).

(The Select Board recommends this article (5-0)).



Article 11: Service-Connected Total Disability Credit

- Amount increases \$2,000 → \$4,000
- 13 credits given in 2019



Article 12: Modification of Solar Exemption

Shall the Town adopt the provisions of RSA 72:61-64 inclusively, 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 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 up to \$25,000 of qualifying solar energy system equipment under these statutes.

(Majority Vote Required).

(The Select Board recommends this article (5-0)).



Article 12: Solar Exemption

WHY ASK FOR INCREASE IN SOLAR EXEMPTION?

- Already have solar exemption in town; currently capped at \$5,000 of assessed value
- Almost all solar installations exceed this amount by wide margin
- Board wants to promote use of solar energy systems, but balanced against the need to capture some of that tax revenue
- Asking town to support exemption of 100% of assessed value of solar energy systems, with cap of \$25,000



Article 12: Solar Exemption

HOW DOES SOLAR EXEMPTION WORK?

- Owners of property with “solar energy systems” satisfying statutory definition submit permanent application by April 15th
- Use application forms created by NH DRA
- Town can ask for background documentation to establish cost of system
- If approved, get exemption on your property’s assessed value each year >> 100% of assessed value, capped at \$25,000
- Not limited to residential properties
- If denied, can appeal to BTLA or Superior Court



Article 13: Modify LUCT Percentage Allocated to Conservation Fund

To see if the Town will vote to authorize 100% of the Land Use Change Tax collected pursuant to RSA 79-A:25 to be deposited into the existing Conservation Fund in accordance with RSA 36-A:5. III, as authorized by RSA 79-A:25, II. If adopted this article shall take effect April 1, 2020 and shall remain in effect until altered or rescinded by a future vote of the town meeting.

(Majority Vote Required).

(The Select Board recommends this article (5-0)).



Article 13: Modify LUCT Percentage Allocated to Conservation Fund

To see if the Town will vote to authorize 100% of the Land Use Change Tax collected pursuant to RSA 79-A:25 to be deposited into the existing Conservation Fund in accordance with RSA 36-A:5. III, as authorized by RSA 79-A:25, II. If adopted this article shall take effect April 1, 2020 and shall remain in effect until altered or rescinded by a future vote of the town meeting.

The Select Board is recommending that this article be TABLED and not voted on this year.



Article 14: Clarifying Amendment to Hart's Corner TIF District Plan

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Hart's Corner Tax Increment Finance District and Plan of 2018 as presented at Public Hearing on February 18, 2020 and posted. The amendment clarifies that development may include multi-family residential development.

(Majority Vote Required).

(The Select Board recommends this article (5-0)).



Article 14: Clarify Hart's Corner TIF Plan

- Hart's Corner TIF District created by 2018 Town Meeting
- Intended in 2018 to apply to multi-family residential development as well as non-residential development; conceptual plan used at meeting depicted multi-family planned development
- Language of plan unclear, so back asking to clarify TIF Plan to make it consistent with original intent and to make consistent with recently passed zoning changes
- As result of earlier voting session of this Town Meeting (3/10/20), town passed zoning amendments for underlying B-1 zoning district.
 - Single-family/Two-family = not permitted; multi-family = permitted; among many other changes
- In order for Town Meeting to amend, BOS required by RSA 162-K to hold public hearing on amendments; did so on Feb. 18, 2020

Amending *Statement of Objectives* and *District Development Plan*:

- Statement of Objectives: "It is recognized that this District could represent a core commercial **and/or multi-family residential development** area in the Town that could provide **housing**, jobs, and services, and could represent an important part of the **non-residential** tax base."
- District Development Plan: "It is the purpose in forming this district to encourage revitalization, re-investment, and new investment within those portions of Town that are **in this TIF District zoned for commercial development.**"



Article 15: Authorization to Expend from Pay-by-Bag Special Revenue Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$120,000 for the purpose of offsetting the cost of collection and disposal of residential solid waste and such other direct costs as budgeted annually, with said funds to come from the Pay-by-Bag Special Revenue Fund. No funds to be raised by taxation.

(Majority vote required).

(The Select Board recommends this article (5-0)).

(The Budget Committee recommends this article (10-0)).



Article 16: Authorization to Expend from Senior Center Rental Special Revenue Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,380 for the purpose of offsetting operational and maintenance costs of the Slusser Center with said funds to come from the Senior Center Rental Special Revenue Fund. No funds to be raised by taxation.

(Majority vote required).

(The Select Board recommends this article (5-0)).

(The Budget Committee recommends this article (10-0)).



Article 17: New Hampshire Resolution for Fair Districting

To see if the Town will urge that the New Hampshire General Court which is obligated to redraw the maps of political districts within the state following the 2020 census will do so in a manner that ensures fair and effective representation of New Hampshire voters. That in order to fulfill this obligation the New Hampshire General Court shall appoint an independent redistricting commission that draws the new district maps in a way that does not rely on partisan data such as election results or party registration or favor particular parties or candidates.

The record of the vote approving this article shall be transmitted by written notice from the Select Board to the town of Hopkinton's state legislators and to the Governor of New Hampshire informing them of the instructions from their constituents within 30 days of the vote.

(By Petition).

(Majority vote required).

(The Select Board recommends this article (5-0)).



Article 18: Other Legal Business

To transact any other business that may legally come before said meeting.



Adjournment

