

# 2021 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

The polls were opened at Thornton Central School, located at 1886 NH Route 175, Thornton NH, at 8:00 am by Moderator John Piantedosi. The polls remained open until 7:00 pm.

The total number of registered voters on the checklist: 1884  
 New voters on election day: 19  
 Total number of registered voters: 1903  
 Ballots cast: 440 (23% of registered voters)

To the inhabitants of the Town of Thornton in the County of Grafton in said state qualified to vote in the town affairs and to act upon the following subjects:

**Article 1:** To choose all necessary officers for the ensuing year.

## OFFICIAL ELECTION RESULTS

<p><b><u>Select Board Member</u></b>  <i>Three-Year Term, One position</i></p> <p>John "Jack" F. Gaites 185                      Joseph Monti 231</p>	<p><b><u>Library Trustee</u></b>  <i>Three-Year Term, One position</i></p> <p>Diane Gravel 351</p>	<p><b><u>Moderator</u></b>  <i>Two-Year Term, One position</i></p> <p>John Piantedosi 350</p>
<p><b><u>Town Clerk</u></b>  <i>One-Year Term, One Position</i></p> <p>Ericka Benton 184                      Anita C. Ross 223</p>	<p><b><u>Overseer of Public Welfare</u></b>  <i>One-Year Term, One Position</i></p> <p>Marianne Peabody 354</p>	<p><b><u>Trustee of the Trust Funds</u></b>  <i>Three-Year Term, One position</i></p> <p>Anthony Torino 340</p>
<p><b><u>Cemetery Trustee</u></b>  <i>Three-Year Term, One position</i></p> <p>Wendy Johnston 221                      Peter A. Laufenberg 173</p>	<p><b><u>Planning Board Member</u></b>  <i>Three-Year Term, Two positions</i></p> <p>Donna O'Donnell 299                      David Rivers 233</p>	

## Article 2: Zoning Amendments

### Zoning Amendment #1

Are you in favor of the adoption of an amendment to the existing Town of Thornton Zoning Ordinance, as proposed by the Town of Thornton Planning Board, which changes *Article VI: Dimensional Requirements, Paragraph 4. Dwellings per Lot* to read:

Unless otherwise allowed by this Ordinance, no more than one building used and intended for human habitation shall be erected, placed, or converted to use as such on a single parcel in any Zoning District.

Recommended by the Planning Board	YES	216
	NO	135

**Article passed.**

**Saturday, March 12, 2022**

**Thornton Town Meeting** convened at Thornton Central School on Saturday, March 12, 2022, at 10:00am to act on the remaining articles of this warrant.

Voters Present: 76

The Town Meeting was opened at 10:00am by Moderator John Piantedosi. He led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence for the people of Ukraine. This was followed by introductions of the head table: Supervisors of the Checklist, Clarissa Uttley, Cynthia McAuley and Mary Pelchat; Assistant Moderator Ken Wolff; Interim Town Clerk Pamela White; Town Administrator Debra Shepard; Selectwoman Marianne Peabody; Selectman and Chair Roy Sabourn; Selectman and Co-Chair Joseph Monti; and Selectman Peter Laufenberg.

**MOTION: To permit non-residents and unregistered voters to speak at the meeting for the purpose of information and clarification of the articles at appropriate times.**

**Moved:** William DeLeo

**Seconded:** Anita Ross

**Discussion:** Steven Babin stated he would like non-registered voters to identify themselves as such when speaking at the meeting.

**Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

**MOTION: To waive the reading of the warrant in its entirety.**

**Moved:** Peter Laufenberg

**Seconded:** Anita Ross

**Discussion:** None

**Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

**Article 3:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be added to the existing Municipal Department Paving Projects Capital Reserve Fund. The Board of Selectmen recommends this article. (Majority vote required).

**Motion:** William DeLeo

**Second:** Anita Ross

**Discussion:** John Palmieri noted that on page 101 of the budget, it appeared there was a savings of over \$200,000 and that the Town should be commended for doing this. He questioned where this savings went and wondered if it could be applied to the warrant articles. Selectman Sabourn stated the money goes to an undesignated fund balance and the money that is not expended can be applied toward the next tax rate. Selectman Sabourn noted that \$350,000 from last year's undesignated fund balance was used to buy down the tax rate.

Mr. Palmieri stated he would like to see the savings used now to reduce the amount of money needed for each warrant article to reduce what has to be spent now. Selectman Laufenberg clarified that the Selectboard has historically chosen to take the surplus to lower the tax rate in the fall, but the articles could be funded with money out of the undesignated fund balance. Mr. Palmieri wondered if that was something that could be done today. Selectman Laufenberg stated each article would need to be amended. Mr. Palmieri presented the motion to use the savings on each line item until the \$220,000 was depleted; further discussion followed with an attempt to get clarification on what amendment/motion is to be presented. Maureen Patti stated her concern is that the warrant articles had already gone to DRA and this could be an improper subject matter modification that the DRA might not accept at this point.

Selectman Monti stated \$350,000 was applied to offset the tax rate in 2021 which took in the surplus that the Town had. He noted by taking the surplus now and using it toward the articles would make it more difficult to reduce the tax rate in the fall. Selectman Sabourn mentioned this would also likely upset the CIP in place.

Town Administrator Shepard clarified that the Selectboard does apply the excess funds in the fall to offset taxes; they do not choose to do it through the capital reserve items. Mr. Palmieri then withdrew his motion.

**Motion on Article 3 carried by unanimous vote.**

**Article 4:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be added to the existing Bridge Repair and Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund. The Board of Selectmen recommends this article. (Majority vote required).

**Moved:** William DeLeo

**Seconded:** Anita Ross

**Discussion:** None

**Motion on Article 4 carried by unanimous vote.**

**Article 5:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty-four thousand dollars (\$24,000) to be added to the existing Assessing Capital Reserve Fund. The Board of Selectmen recommends this article. (Majority vote required).

**Moved:** William DeLeo

**Seconded:** Jack Gaites

**Discussion:** Maryann Medaglia wondered what the average annual cost for Avitar's assessing services is. Town Administrator Shepard stated the town has a five-year contract with Avitar. Selectman Sabourn believes the cost for their services was around \$100,000 for the five-year contract.

**Motion on Article 5 carried by unanimous vote.**

**Article 6:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of forty thousand dollars (\$40,000) to be added to the existing Highway Vehicle, Equipment and Major Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund. The Board of Selectmen recommends this article. (Majority vote required).

**Moved:** Richard Baker

**Seconded:** Ralph Bradley

**Discussion:** None

**Motion on Article 6 carried by unanimous vote.**

**Article 7:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) to be added to the existing Police Cruiser and Cruiser Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. The Board of Selectmen recommends this article. (Majority vote required).

**Moved:** Anita Ross

**Seconded:** Timothy White

**Discussion:** Robert Hatcher wondered if voice voting was appropriate instead of raising the Registered Voter cards so that only registered voters were voting. Moderator Piantedosi affirmed that raising the registered voter cards would be easier.

Bruce Andrew wanted to know why the town needed four cruisers.

Selectman Sabourn stated this warrant article is for a replacement cruiser for one that will be retired. The officer on call brings a cruiser home. If a cruiser is out of service, a fleet of two would not be sufficient. The number of cruisers we have now seems to work for the size of our police department when it is fully staffed with six officers.

**Motion on Article 7 carried by unanimous vote.**

**Article 8:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifty-one thousand dollars (\$51,000) to be added to the existing Mill Brook Road Construction and Improvement Capital Reserve Fund. The Board of Selectmen recommends this article. (Majority vote required).

**Motion:** Michael Pomerantz

**Seconded:** William DeLeo

**Discussion:** Terry Penny stated she lives on Mill Brook Road and that speeding on the road is a problem; she wondered what part of the road will be reconstructed. Selectman Monti stated the fund is specifically for Upper Mill Brook Road and would be addressing drainage issues. Ms. Penny stated speed is more of an issue and the road could use a speed sign. She stated the road has been made worse with paving and re-paving; she is not opposed to fixing the drainage but is opposed to more paving.

Stanley Bujalski wanted to clarify that the Forest Service proposed logging that might affect some damage to Mill Brook Road has nothing to do with this warrant article. Selectman Sabourn stated the Forest Service has backed off from using Mill Brook Road, but the logging operation has nothing to do with this article.

**Motion on Article 8 carried by unanimous vote.**

**Article 9:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred fifteen thousand dollars (\$115,000) to be added to the existing Fire Truck/Rescue Vehicle/Equipment and Major Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund. The Board of Selectmen recommends this article. (Majority vote required).

**Motion:** Richard Baker

**Seconded:** Anita Ross

**Discussion:** Steven Babin wondered if this article was due to the joint relationship between the towns or is it specific to a piece of equipment. Selectman Sabourn stated it was to fund the replacement of a fire truck in the future as the cost of one starts at \$550,000. Selectman Monti stated that a look at the CIP will show the timeline for such purchases.

Robert Hatcher wondered if Campton was appropriating an identical amount. Selectman Sabourn noted Campton's amount is higher, but he was unsure what their appropriation amount was. It was noted that the amounts are set proportionally among the towns and the agreement is available at Town Hall.

Steve Babin stated that the Selectboard altered the decision on a specific piece of equipment made by the fire chief. Selectman Monti noted that the process goes to all three towns and all three towns must agree on what gets purchased for the fire department; what the fire chief recommended in the end is what was supported.

Fire Chief Dan Defossess stated they looked at their fleet, what they have for vehicles, and what is actually used versus the level of declining staff. The determination was five fire trucks is not necessary; buying a large rescue truck was a better use of the funds available. Maintaining this fund allows the department to keep ahead of things. There was a lot of discussion but at the end of the day everyone is on board with where the fleet is headed.

Bill DeLeo wondered if they were buying an additional piece of equipment above what they already have in their fleet. Chief Defossess stated they currently have four fire engines; they will be replacing one of the four.

**Motion on Article 9 carried by unanimous vote.**

**Article 10:** To see if the Town will vote that the Thornton Central School (District 531, SAU 48) shall make all instructional materials, including, but not limited to, textbooks, printed matter and/or materials in electronic form used in classrooms available to the general public in a "School Text Reference Section" within the Thornton NH Public Library. A list of current texts and materials will be displayed in the reference area. The town is instructed to spend up to \$200 to publicize the availability of these materials. This was submitted by a petition of at least twenty-five registered voters. (Majority vote required).

**Motion:** Anita Ross

**Seconded:** Robert Hatcher

**Discussion:** Bill DeLeo wondered if this article was enforceable by the Town. Selectman Sabourn noted that this was submitted by petition. Town Council recommended it be placed on the warrant as it had the necessary signatures. The Town cannot tell library trustees what to do. This talks about school information, not town information, and should have probably been on the school warrant. Town Council did advise that this article is not enforceable.

David Rivers stated this might be an exercise in futility, but the intent was transparency.

Vivica Duffield stated she is the library director and noted enforcing this warrant article would be time-consuming for teachers. She stated the core curriculum can be accessed through the web. She further noted that the library does not have space for this and the cost would be far more than \$200.

Selectman Laufenberg asked whether residents can request this information. Kyla Welch, a resident of Thornton and the Superintendent of Schools, stated all this material is available upon request. They have never received any such request. Ms. Welch stated this is a school board issue and not enforceable by the Town.

Diane Gravel, a library trustee, stated the library does not have space for storing such materials, but anyone can call the school and are welcome to come in to see the curriculum.

Katherine Hadaway, a library trustee and parent, stated that requests for electronic materials creates a huge problem regarding licensed material. She noted that going against copyright laws can result in \$150,000 fines.

Myrtle Lewis stated she thinks teachers should be applauded. This action would take them

away from students because of the time involved to pull this information together. She encouraged people who signed the petition to become more involved at the school level and perhaps consider serving on the school board.

Liz Gibbs stated she is a parent of children who attend the school. She noted that anytime she has had questions about curriculum, everything has been readily available.

Terry Penny stated she thinks there is a problem nationally with CRT; transparency in the school library is a good idea and feels better knowing the information is available to everyone.

A.J. Coppola, a resident of Thornton and a teacher in Campton, spoke to the issue of CRT (Critical Race Theory). He stated emphatically that it is not being taught in our schools.

**Motion:** Ralph Bradley motioned to move the question

**Seconded:** Steve Babin

**Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

**Motion on Article 10 did not pass by unanimous vote.**

**Motion:** Katherine Hadaway motioned to not reconsider any of the articles already discussed.

**Seconded:** William DeLeo

**Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

**Article 11:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **three million, five hundred forty-four thousand, two hundred forty-seven dollars (\$3,544,247)** to support town operations for the 2022 year. Said sum does not include special or individual articles. (Majority vote required).

**Motion:** William DeLeo

**Seconded:** Katherine Hadaway

**Discussion:** Robert Hatcher stated we should give the administration a round of applause for keeping our town expenses in order.

**Motion on Article 11 carried by unanimous vote.**

**NEW BUSINESS:** Moderator Piantedosi asked the residents if there was any new town business to mention.

- A. Robert Hatcher felt there was a gross lack of information provided by the Town regarding town warrant articles. He asked the Board to make available to residents a description of the warrant articles and why we need or do not need it.
- B. Myrtle Lewis stated she would like to have seen a posting of information about the candidates running for office. Steve Babin said the town cannot promote candidates; posting such information is illegal in the state of New Hampshire.
- C. Steve Babin asked the residents to vote that the Selectboard send monthly or bi-monthly direct mailings via USPS of any upcoming meetings as well as minutes from those meetings. He stated money could be appropriated from their administrative budget. TA Shepard stated this would be difficult for several reasons; the number of meetings held weekly, staff having time to complete these mailings, and the significant impact to the budget for postage. She went on to say that information is posted on the town website, bulletin boards at Town Hall (inside and out), and the transfer station. Public hearing notices are posted in the newspaper, on the town website, and at various town locations. She noted everything is transparent; staff is happy to assist and

will provide copies of information when requested. She encouraged residents to stop in at Town Hall or call for information. TA Shepard said residents do bear some responsibility to stay informed and they can find information on the town website.

- D. Bruce Andrew stated he was at the budget hearing; no one was there. If people want to know what is going at the Town Meeting, they need to attend the budget hearing. He stated the Selectboard had hand-outs and answered all questions presented to them; the information is available to everyone. Mr. Andrew noted that people need to attend meetings and the Town does a very good job.
- E. Barbara Patterson stated her family has been here for generations, but she doesn't know many of the people in attendance. She states most people are here because they love the area and hoped to not end the meeting with such negativity. She stated although she did not vote for every member currently on the Board, she does trust every one of them; the town has a good board.

**Motion to Adjourn:** Ralph Bradley


**Seconded:** Richard Baker

**Motion to adjourn carried by unanimous vote.**

**Meeting was adjourned at 11:15am.**

Given under my hand and seal this 21<sup>st</sup> day of March, 2022.

Respectfully Submitted,



Pamela D. White  
Interim Town Clerk  
Town of Thornton

# SAMPLE BALLOT

## \* OFFICIAL RESULTS \*



OFFICIAL BALLOT  
ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION  
THORNTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
MARCH 8, 2022

Parula D. White  
INTERIM TOWN CLERK

### INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS

- A. TO VOTE, completely fill in the OVAL to the RIGHT of your choice(s) like this: ●
- B. Follow directions as to the number of candidates to be marked for each office.
- C. To vote for a person whose name is not printed on the ballot, write the candidate's name on the line provided and completely fill in the OVAL.

<p><b>SELECT BOARD MEMBER</b></p> <p>Three Year Term      Vote for not more than ONE</p> <p>JOHN "JACK" F. GAITES 185 ○</p> <p>JOSEPH MONTI 231 ○</p> <p>_____ (Write-in) ○</p>	<p><b>LIBRARY TRUSTEE</b></p> <p>Three Year Term      Vote for not more than ONE</p> <p>DIANE GRAVEL 351 ○</p> <p>_____ (Write-in) ○</p>	<p><b>MODERATOR</b></p> <p>Two Year Term      Vote for not more than ONE</p> <p>JOHN PIANTEDOSI 350 ○</p> <p>_____ (Write-in) ○</p>
<p><b>TOWN CLERK</b></p> <p>One Year Term      Vote for not more than ONE</p> <p>ERICKA BENTON 184 ○</p> <p>ANITA C. ROSS 223 ○</p> <p>_____ (Write-in) ○</p>	<p><b>OVERSEER OF PUBLIC WELFARE</b></p> <p>One Year Term      Vote for not more than ONE</p> <p>MARIANNE PEABODY 354 ○</p> <p>_____ (Write-in) ○</p>	<p><b>TRUSTEE OF THE TRUST FUNDS</b></p> <p>Three Year Term      Vote for not more than ONE</p> <p>ANTHONY TORINO 340 ○</p> <p>_____ (Write-in) ○</p>
<p><b>CEMETERY TRUSTEE</b></p> <p>Three Year Term      Vote for not more than ONE</p> <p>WENDY JOHNSTON 221 ○</p> <p>PETER A. LAUFENBERG 173 ○</p> <p>_____ (Write-in) ○</p>	<p><b>PLANNING BOARD MEMBER</b></p> <p>Three Year Term      Vote for not more than TWO</p> <p>DONNA O'DONNELL 299 ○</p> <p>DAVID RIVERS 233 ○</p> <p>_____ (Write-in) ○</p> <p>_____ (Write-in) ○</p>	

### ZONING ARTICLE

Zoning Amendment #1

Are you in favor of the adoption of an amendment to the existing Town of Thornton Zoning Ordinance, as proposed by the Town of Thornton Planning Board, which changes Article VI: Dimensional Requirements, Paragraph 4. Dwellings per Lot to read:

Unless otherwise allowed by this Ordinance, no more than one building used and intended for human habitation shall be erected, placed, or converted to use as such on a single parcel in any Zoning District.

Recommended by the Planning Board.

216  
YES ○  
NO ○  
135

# of Voters who voted = 440  
% of Registered voters = 23%



# SAMPLE BALLOT

## \* OFFICIAL RESULTS \*

OFFICIAL BALLOT  
THORNTON SCHOOL DISTRICT  
THORNTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
MARCH 8, 2022

*Lynne Campbell*  
SCHOOL DISTRICT CLERK

### INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS

- A. TO VOTE, completely fill in the OVAL to the RIGHT of your choice(s) like this: ●  
B. Follow directions as to the number of candidates to be marked for each office.  
C. To vote for a person whose name is not printed on the ballot, write the candidate's name on the line provided and completely fill in the OVAL.

#### SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER

Three Year Term	Vote for not more than TWO	
MATTHEW McDERMOTT	280	<input type="radio"/>
ANGEL ALLISON	109	<input type="radio"/>
ROBERT V. HATCHER	121	<input type="radio"/>
MATT HESSER	255	<input type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>
	(Write-In)	<input type="radio"/>
	(Write-In)	<input type="radio"/>

#### MODERATOR

Two Year Term	Vote for not more than ONE	
PETER A. LAUFENBERG	363	<input type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>
	(Write-In)	<input type="radio"/>

# \* OFFICIAL RESULTS \*

**ABSENTEE  
OFFICIAL BALLOT  
PEMI-BAKER REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
THORNTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
MARCH 8, 2022**



Lynn Davis  
Pemi-Baker Regional School District Clerk

### INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS

- A. TO VOTE, completely fill in the OVAL to the RIGHT of your choice(s) like this: ●
- B. Follow directions as to the number of candidates to be marked for each office.
- C. To vote for a person whose name is not printed on the ballot, write the candidate's name on the line provided and completely fill in the OVAL.

**SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER  
FROM ASHLAND**

Vote for not  
(2-Year Term) more than one

PAUL PIZZANO 267

(Write-In)

**SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER  
FROM PLYMOUTH**

Vote for not  
(3-Year Term) more than one

GREG APRILLIANO 141

JOHN RANDLETT 133

(Write-In)

**SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER  
FROM WENTWORTH**

Vote for not  
(3-Year Term) more than one

BERNICE SULLIVAN 177

OMER AHERN, JR. 103

(Write-In)

**SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER  
FROM HOLDERNESS**

Vote for not  
(3-Year Term) more than one

SAM BRICKLEY 264

(Write-In)

**SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER  
FROM THORNTON**

Vote for not  
(3-Year Term) more than one

PAUL CIOTTI 332

(Write-In)

**MODERATOR**

Vote for not  
(2-Year Term) more than one

QUENTIN BLAINE 294

(Write-In)

### ARTICLES

**Article 1: Negotiate and Execute Tuition Contracts**

To see if the School District will vote to authorize the School Board to negotiate and execute such tuition contracts as the Board may determine advisable for students inside or outside the Pemi-Baker Regional School District. The School Board **recommends** this article. (Majority vote required.)

324  
YES   
NO   
56

**Article 2: School Board Contingency Fund**

To see if the School District will vote to establish a contingency fund in accordance with Revised Statutes Annotated 198:4-b, such contingency fund to meet the cost of unanticipated expenses that may arise during the year and, further, to raise and appropriate the sum of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for such contingency fund. The School Board **recommends** this article. (Majority vote required.)

319  
YES   
NO   
67

**VOTE BOTH SIDES OF BALLOT**

# \* OFFICIAL RESULTS \*

## ARTICLES CONTINUED

### Article 3: Teachers Collective Bargaining Agreement

To see if the School District will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Pemi-Baker Regional School Board and the Plymouth Regional Education Association which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

Fiscal Year	Estimated Increase
2022-2023	\$120,667
2023-2024	\$123,385
2024-2025	\$137,694
2025-2026	\$142,600

277  
YES

And further to raise and appropriate One Hundred Twenty Thousand Six Hundred Sixty-Seven dollars (\$120,667) for the current fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels. The School Board recommends this article. (Majority vote required.)

NO   
136

### Article 4: Operating Budget

Shall the Pemi-Baker Regional School District vote to 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 purposes set forth therein, totaling Sixteen Million, Six Hundred Fifty-Eight Thousand Five Hundred Forty dollars (\$16,658,540)?

Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be Fifteen Million Nine Hundred Sixty-Four Thousand One Hundred Eighty dollars (\$15,964,180), which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Pemi-Baker Regional School Board, 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. This sum excludes the sum in Warrant Articles 2, 3, and 4. The School Board recommends this article. (Majority vote required.)

273  
YES   
NO   
136

VOTE BOTH SIDES OF BALLOT