



TOWN OF NORTHWOOD 2021 VOTER GUIDE

**Please Vote June 8th, 2021 at
Northwood Elementary School
from 7:00am to 7:00pm**

WARRANT ARTICLE 01: Elections

To choose all necessary officers for the ensuing year.

Warrant Article 02: Section VI.A Wetlands Conservation Overlay District

Are you in favor of adoption of Zoning Amendment No. 1 as proposed by the Planning Board for the town's development ordinance as follows:

Amend Section VI.A Wetlands Conservation Overlay District to update those uses permitted by right and by Special Exception within the Wetlands Conservation Overlay and its required setback areas; to clarify the process and required application materials for granting a special exception; and to clarify the standards regulating Prime Wetlands and wetlands within the Conservation Area Overlay District by introducing a new term, "High-Priority Wetlands", and creating a new Section VI.A(6) regarding their regulation.

The intended purpose of these changes is to resolve numerous points of confusion in the existing overlay district to make the entire section more user-friendly and explicit in its requirements. Minor regulatory changes are proposed in some sections.

Warrant Article 3: Section VI.E Steep Slope Protection Overlay District

Are you in favor of adoption of Amendment #2 as proposed by the Planning Board for the town's development ordinance as follows:

Amend Section VI.E Steep Slope Protection Overlay District to clarify that relief to this overlay is granted through a Special Exception from the Zoning Board of Adjustment, and not a Conditional Use Permit. This amendment is for clarification purposes and would not alter the regulatory impact of this overlay.

Amendments proposed to the Town's Steep Slope Protection Overlay for clarity and to resolve several points of confusion in the overlay district were previously adopted at Town Meeting 2020. The adopted changes included an error that referenced an application for a conditional use permit. This minor edit is to correct the language to clarify the method for granting relief from the requirements of the zoning ordinance is a special exception.

The full text of all proposed zoning amendments is available for inspection in Town Hall during regular business hours.

Warrant Article 4: 2021 OPERATING BUDGET

Shall the Town 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 **Three Million Nine Hundred Sixty-Two Thousand and Sixty Dollars (\$3,962,060)**. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be **Three million seven hundred three thousand sixty-six dollars (\$3,703,066)** which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the town 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. **(Tax Impact Net of estimated revenue \$3.54.) (Majority vote required) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4/0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 14 - 0)**

This article is the operating budget for the town. It contains funding for all departments and services. The FY21 budgets represents an approximately 7% increase over the previously adopted budget from 2020 with certain adjustments. It reflects the need to play catch-up following two years of default budgets. Items included in the increase include higher employee benefit costs including a significant increase in the town share of the retirement system contribution and health insurance, as well as adjustments in wages to be competitive in the workforce marketplace. There are also significant increases due to solid waste disposal, changes in employee positions and additional hours for part-time firefighters.

Warrant Article 5: FIRE APPARATUS LEASE/PURCHASE

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **Fifty-six thousand six hundred seventy-two dollars (\$56,672)** as the first payment on a 5-year lease/purchase agreement for a Tanker Truck with said funds to come from the Fire Rescue Vehicle Replacement Special Revenue Fund established for this purpose. If this article is defeated the vehicle must be returned and the town loses the \$300,000 down payment it has committed to spend. This purchase is in accordance with the Town's Capital Improvement Plan. **(No Tax Impact) (Majority vote required) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 14-0)**

This purchase was approved by the voters in 2020 in accordance with the Town's Capital Improvement Plan. Based on historical ambulance revenues, it is anticipated that on-going lease payments could be made using the Special Revenue Fund. If this article is defeated the vehicle must be returned and the town loses the \$300,000 down payment it has committed to spend.

Warrant Article 6: AMBULANCE LEASE PURCHASE

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **twenty-six thousand two hundred twenty-five dollars (\$26,225)**, as the first payment on a 7 year lease/purchase agreement for an Ambulance with said funds to come from the Fire Rescue Vehicle Replacement Special Revenue Fund established for this purpose. If this article is defeated the vehicle must be returned and the town loses the \$100,000 down payment it has spent on it. This purchase is in accordance with the Town’s Capital Improvement Plan. **(No Tax Impact) (Majority vote required) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 14-0)**

This purchase was approved by the voters in 2020 in accordance with the Town’s Capital Improvement Plan. Based on historical ambulance revenues, it is anticipated that on-going lease payments could be made using the Special Revenue Fund. If this article is defeated the vehicle must be returned and the town loses the \$100,000 down payment it has spent on it.

Warrant Article 7: COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT PURCHASE

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of **thirty-three thousand dollars (\$33,000)** for the acquisition of communication equipment pursuant to the second year of the three-year Fire Department Mobile Communications Equipment Replacement Plan. The plan will replace all our portable and mobile radios over the three-year period. This purchase is in accordance with the Town’s Capital Improvement Plan. **(Tax Impact \$0.05) (Majority vote required) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 14-0)**

This is the second year of a three plan to replace all outdated portable and mobile radios for the police and fire departments. Year one of the plan was funded in 2020. This purchase is in accordance with the Town’s Capital Improvement Plan

Warrant Article 8: EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND DEPOSITS

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **Ninety-six thousand three hundred and ninety-one dollars (96,391.00)**, to be placed in the following existing expendable trust funds created under RSA 31:19 - a. These amounts represent the amount of user fees deposited in the general fund in 2020 for these purposes, and the appropriation shall be funded by the withdrawal of the sum from the unexpended fund balance as of December 31, 2020. Current balance as of December 31, 2020: Cable \$63,478, Transfer Station \$98,291, and Cemetery: \$57,633.

Cable Expendable Trust Fund \$40,617.00	Transfer Station Expendable Trust Fund \$53,674.00	Cemetery Expendable Trust Fund \$2,100.00
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(No Tax Impact) (Majority vote required) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4/0) (Recommended by the Budget committee (14/0)

This article requests approval to deposit the 2020 proceeds from the above listed services into the expendable trust funds set up for their individual operation and maintenance.

Warrant Article 9: VESTED BENEFIT EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND DEPOSIT

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **ten thousand dollars (\$10,000)** to be added to the Benefit Vested Time Expendable Trust Fund previously established. Current balance as of December 31, 2020: \$40,394. **(Tax Impact \$0.02) (Majority vote required) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 14-0)**

Vested Benefit Expendable Trust is for the accrued time earned by long term employees. When an employee leaves, their accrued time will get paid from the trust fund so as not to impact the operating budget. As of Dec. 31, 2020, the town's liability was \$88,400.

Warrant Article 10: HIGHWAY DUMP TRUCK LEASE

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of **Twenty-six thousand one hundred six dollars (\$26,106)** for the third year's lease payment of the seven-year lease/purchase agreement of a highway dump truck that was approved at the 2019 Town Meeting. If this is defeated the vehicle must be returned and the town loses all the money it has spent in prior years. The lease agreement contains an escape clause. **(Tax impact \$0.04) (Majority vote required) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 14-0)**

This article is for the third payment of the 7-year lease/purchase of the town's highway dump truck purchased in 2019. If this is defeated the vehicle must be returned and the town loses all the money it has spent in prior years.

Warrant Article 11: HIGHWAY EQUIPMENT CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **Eighteen thousand five hundred dollars (\$18,500)** to be deposited into the previously established Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. Current balance as of December 31, 2020: \$107,417. **(Tax Impact \$0.03) (Majority vote required) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 14-0)**

This article deposits funds into the Highway Capital Reserve Fund. This fund is used for payment of equipment and/or vehicle leases and is intended to accrue until needed to avoid fluctuations in the annual appropriations and reduce the amount of funds that need to be financed at the time of purchase.

Warrant Article 12: POLICE EQUIPMENT CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **Six thousand dollars (\$6,000)** to be deposited into the previously established Police Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. Current balance as of December 31, 2020: \$17,125. **(Tax Impact \$0.01) (Majority vote required) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 14-0)**

This article deposits funds into the Police Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. This fund is used to offset costs to purchase police equipment which helps to minimize operating budget spikes.

Warrant Article 13: LAGOON MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **five thousand six hundred and eighty-one dollars (\$5,681)**. to be placed in the Lagoon Maintenance and Repair Expendable Trust Fund and to

fund this appropriation by authorizing the withdrawal of that amount from the Lagoon Special Revenue Fund held by the Northwood Treasurer. Current balance as of December 31, 2020: \$118,027 **(No Tax Impact) (Majority vote required) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 14/0)**

This article is to allow the deposit of user fees into the Lagoon Expendable Trust fund. These funds are used for state licensing and monitoring of the lagoon, as well as the fees for the consultant to do the required testing of the lagoon.

Warrant Article 14: DISCONTINUE BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE TRUST FUND.

To see if the Town will vote to continue the Bicentennial Committee Trust Fund and not transfer the said funds with accumulated interest to the municipalities general fund. **(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0)**

This article was originally to discontinue the existence of the fund however after further investigation it was discovered the trust could not be discontinued and must continue to exist.

Warrant Article 15: NORTHWOOD'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY EXPENDABLE TRUST

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **Eight Thousand Four Hundred Dollars \$8400** to be deposited into the 250th Anniversary Expendable Trust Fund to support efforts to recognize the Town's 250th Anniversary in 2023, said funds to come from the unassigned fund balance as of December 31, 2020. **(Tax Impact zero) (Majority vote required) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 14-0)**

Deposits into this trust fund will be used for the town to recognize our 250th anniversary in year 2023. By making deposits each year, the cost for the celebration should not impact our future budgets when needed. This sum is the same amount coming from the unassigned fund balance.

Warrant Article 16: HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT BACKHOE LEASE/PURCHASE

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of **Twenty Thousand Two Hundred Ninety-Seven Dollars and Seventy-nine cents (\$20,297.79)** for the fourth of five yearly payments for the lease/purchase of the backhoe. This lease agreement was approved in 2018 and does contain an escape clause so if the article is defeated the vehicle must be returned and all prior expenditures will be lost. **(Tax Impact \$0.03) (Majority vote required) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 14-0)**

This article is for the fourth payment of the five-year lease/purchase of the town's highway backhoe purchased in 2018. If the article is defeated the equipment must be returned and all prior expenditures will be lost.

Warrant Article 17: ROAD CONSTRUCTION/RESURFACING/PAVING AND DITCHING

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$150,000)** to be used for the construction, reconstruction, paving, and ditching and/or resurfacing of town roads, and the refurbishing of ditches and culverts as recommended by the Highway Advisory Committee. This would include Town Road Projects including paving Bigelow Road, culvert work on Harmony Hill, etc. **(Tax Impact \$0.22) (Majority vote required) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0) (Recommended by the Budget committee 12-0)**

These funds enable the town to complete road projects including paving Bigelow Road, culvert work on Harmony Hill. Due to concerns with the economy and minimizing the impact to property taxes, this amount is only half raised in prior years but will allow us to address some improvements on our road plan.

Warrant Article 18: AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES PREVENTION EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of **Seven Thousand Dollars (\$7,000)** to be deposited into the previously established Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Expendable Trust Fund. Current balance as of December 31, 2020 is \$3,260. **(Tax Impact \$0.01) (Majority vote required) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 14-0)**

This article deposits funds into an expendable trust fund used to prevent invasive species from entering our lakes and ponds that currently do not have invasive species.

Warrant Article 19: AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES TREATMENT AND CONTROL EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **Twelve Thousand Dollars (\$12,000)** to be deposited into the previously established Aquatic Invasive Species Treatment and Control Expendable Trust Fund. Current balance as of December 31, 2020 is \$300. **(Tax Impact \$0.02) (Majority vote required) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 14-0)**

This article deposits funds into an expendable trust fund used to control and treat lakes and ponds that currently have an invasive species problem.

Warrant Article 20: TERRESTRIAL INVASIVE SPECIES EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **Five Thousand (\$5,000)** to be deposited into the previously established Terrestrial Invasive Species Expendable Trust Fund. Current balance as of December 31, 2020 is \$1. **(Majority vote required) (Tax Impact \$0.01) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 14-0)**

This article deposits funds into an expendable trust fund that will be used to control and treat invasive species on land such as the Emerald Ash Borer.

Warrant Article 21: FACILITIES COMMITTEE EXPENDABLE TRUST DEPOSIT

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000)** to be deposited into the Facilities Committee Expendable Trust Fund previously established for the maintenance, improvement, repairs, and replacement of general government buildings including the

Chesley Memorial Library. Current balance as of December 31, 2020: \$49,565. **(Tax Impact \$0.02) (Majority vote required) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 14-0)**

This article deposits funds into the facilities expendable trust fund to fund current and future significant repairs, improvements and replacement of government buildings, including Chesley Memorial Library, when needed.

Warrant Article 22: ESTABLISH A PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY SITE CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

To see if the Town will vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund for acquisition of land for a new public safety facility, said purpose to include the land acquisition cost, site evaluation, design and engineering, and other costs associated with the development of the site, and further to raise and appropriate the sum of **Two Hundred and Ninety-Five Thousand Dollars (\$295,000)** to be placed in said fund, and to appoint the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund without further authorization. Said amount to come from the unrestricted fund balance as of December 31, 2020. **Majority vote required. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5 – 0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 12-2)**

This article is the first important step in addressing the significant deficiencies at the existing police station, and both the Narrows and Rt. 4 fire stations. By establishing this fund, the Board of Selectmen with guidance from the public safety facility committee, will have the opportunity to explore the suitability of potential available building sites as they become available and purchase any site that meets the needs of the department members and the community. An open house tour of the existing facilities is not possible at this time due to Covid 19 pandemic but a video tour has been created and is available on the Town website and Facebook page. Please take a moment to view it.

Warrant Article 23: ESTABLISH AN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CAPITAL RESERVE ACCOUNT

To see if the Town will vote to establish a capital reserve fund for the purpose of purchasing information technology equipment both hardware and software for town departments, and to raise and appropriate the sum of **Twenty-three Thousand Six Hundred Dollars (\$23,600)** to be deposited in said fund and further to appoint the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from said account without further authorization. Said amount to come from the unassigned fund balance as of December 31, 2020. **9 (No tax impact). Majority vote required. (Recommend by the Board of Selectmen 5-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 14-0)**

This article will establish a capital reserve account with the Selectmen as agents to expend that will allow for the management of annual upgrades to the Town's hardware equipment and software and prepare the Town to cover unforeseen emergency repairs and replacement of equipment and software without impacting the annual operating budgets. This amount is equivalent to the sum refunded to the Town for finance software upgrades from a prior year in favor of purchasing new software in the coming year. These funds came about as a refund from our current software company in 2020 after deciding not to upgrade the current program but find a new program.

Warrant Article 24: CABLE EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND.

To see if the Town will vote to expand the purposes of the Cable Expendable Trust Fund established in 2000 from “creating, maintaining, and upgrading a broadcast system” to include paying costs for improving communications to Town citizens from Town’s Boards, Committees, and Departments. Said improvements to include but not limited to e-mail communications, message signage, newsletters, etc. **2/3 vote required. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5/0)**

This article will allow the Selectmen the ability to better utilize the revenue received from the cable franchise fees by allowing for the funds be used to expand and improve the communications with the community by more contemporary options available today including virtual means and traditional means.

Warrant Article 25: ESTABLISH A ROAD IMPROVEMENT EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND

To see if the Town will vote to establish a Road Improvements Expendable Trust Fund for improvements to Town roads including but not limited to paving, installing, and replacing culverts, ditching, grading, and full reconstruction, etc. and to raise and appropriate the sum of **One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$150,000)** to be placed in said fund and further to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund without further authorization. Said amount to come from the unassigned fund balance as of December 31, 2020. Said funds will be used for road improvement projects as outlined in the Town’s Road Surface Management Plan and for emergency road repairs as they arise. **(No Tax Impact) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee (13-1)**

The creation of a road improvement expendable trust fund will provide a supplement to the annual appropriation from taxation, which will allow for additional road projects to be completed during financially difficult budget years. This fund will also be available to cover the cost of unanticipated emergency road repairs without impacting the scheduled capital projects or the operating budget. Funds will come from the unexpended highway funds in the 2020 unrestricted fund balance so there will be no tax impact.

Warrant Article 26: Shall the town, in accordance with RSA 72:39-a and 72:39-b, modify the elderly exemptions from property taxes, based on assessed value, for qualified taxpayers, to be as follows: for a person 65 years of age up to 74 years, \$113,620; for a person 75 years of age up to 79 years \$162,500; for a person 80 years of age or older \$211,250. If approved, these amounts will be effective as of April 1, 2021. **(Majority vote required). Recommended by the Board of Selectmen. (5/0)**

In order to keep our elderly exemptions relevant with today’s significant increase in property values, the Board of Selectmen is proposing to increase the elderly exemptions for qualified property owners. If approved, this change will have a minimal impact on the property taxes of other property owners.

Warrant Article 27: OTHER BUSINESS

To transact any other business that can legally come before this meeting.

Please Note:

The estimated tax impacts noted in each article are only estimates and will likely change at the time the 2021 tax rate is set next October. The estimates are based on the 2020 tax rate setting total town evaluation (\$684,256,881) which will likely change in 2021. Revenues are based on estimates and will also change at the time of tax rate setting in 2021. The revenue total used to calculate the net impact of the operating budget does not include any use of any fund balance at tax rate setting.