

2026 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Article 01 Choose necessary Town Officers for year ensuing

To Choose necessary Town Officers for year ensuing
This article appears on the Official Ballot.

Selectmen – 3 years, Mike Blaudschun
Moderator – 2 years, Lisa Sieverts
Trustee of the Library – 3 years, Jorga Bishop, Melinda Belden
Cemetery Board – 3 years, Elaine Giacomo
Emergency Management Director – 1 year, Jonathan Pfister
Planning Board Member – 3 years, Bob Lenox
Road Equipment Committee – 3 years, Maury Collins
Nelson Fire & Rescue – 3 years, TBD
Nelson Fire & Rescue – 2 years, TBD
Nelson Fire & Rescue – 1 years, TBD
Supervisor of the Checklist – 6 years, Deb Pfister

Article 02 Amendments to Zoning Ordinances

To see if the Town will vote to approve Amendments to the Nelson Zoning Ordinances. This article appears on the Official Ballot

AMENDMENT # 1 PASSED 83-35

AMENDMENT #2 PASSED 88-27

The business portion of the meeting was held on Saturday, March 14, 2026 starting at 10:03am. Lew Derby, moderator, lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance, and went over the procedural rules for a town meeting as set by the State of New Hampshire. The meeting began with Article 3 as Articles 1 & 2 were decided by ballot votes on March 10, 2026.

Article 03 To defray the Town charges for the year ensuing

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$ 1,399,722.00 for general municipal operations of town departments including Executive, Administrative, Cemetery, Fire, Police, Highway, Emergency Management, Health Officer, Conservation Commission, Agricultural Commission, Planning and Zoning Boards, for the year ensuing. This article has anticipated offsetting revenue of \$520,311.00. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

MOTION- Mike Blaudschun

SECONDED-Brenna Kucinski

Brenna spoke to the article going through the budget just focusing on the lines that have increases or decreases.

Elections line up due to 3 elections this year as opposed to 1 last year

Administrator up the amount of Edie's medical deductible as she did not add her husband to the family plan.

Property assessment up due to revaluation year.

Government buildings- Brenna said she misspoke at caucus saying the schoolhouse roof needed replacing when it was just the roof on the cupola is the only item in need of work.

Gravel Pit is paid off saving \$22,400 per year

Loader first payment due adding \$11,724 per year to budget

Conservation budget up as it now includes milfoil so it will not be a separate article.

Planning Board down as last year there was added postage and printing costs for the master plan survey sent out in the spring.

Town Clerk budget up slightly for added elections.

Fire Department up because of contract with ambulance service. Last year there was a grant that helped with that cost. Also, more members so payroll up slightly.

Police Department salary up slightly due to COLA raise. Wayne retired so his salary will be saved.

Hwy Department – salaries up with COLA raise. Equipment up as the chain saw/chipper had to be replaced. Backhoe and loader lines down as new ones were purchased last year. Truck #3 had major repairs and still not sure how long it will last before needing a new one at \$350,000. Paving line down significantly no paving is scheduled this year leaving the overall highway budget up \$30,000

With no further discussion Lew called for a vote

Article 3 **PASSED** on a **VOICE** vote

MOTION – Brenna “I move to change the order of business. “I move Article 17 forward for consideration before Article 4. “

SECONDED- Mike Blaudschun

Lew called for a vote without asking for discussion.

The amendment **PASSED** on a **VOICE** vote.

Article 17 Article by Petition: Return to part-time police service at end of current police contract and begin negotiations this year.

To see if the town will vote to return the Nelson Police Department to part-time status at the end of the current police contract and, further, direct the Selectboard to begin negotiations before the close of this year, with the Cheshire County Sheriff's Department and/or a part-time police officer to provide police service to Nelson. This article is by Petition. The Selectmen do not recommend this article 2-1. Majority vote required.

MOTION- Dave Bower **SECONDED-** Kathy Schillemat

Lisa Sieverts – point of order the petitioner goes first.

Dave Bower spoke to the article- Dave compared the cost of Nelson full time officer to the surrounding towns using the sheriff's department.

Sullivan – population 682 cost \$64,346 using for 10 years

Gilsum – population 786 cost \$55,000 using for 12 years

Stoddard- population 1431 cost \$105,800 contracted for 30 hours per week

Nelson would be half the cost of the police department budget of \$186,209 with 25 hours of the sheriff's department costing \$95,500. Dave added the town reports for the towns who currently use the sheriff have very positive reviews and talking to the administrators when gathering this info all had positive things to say.

Elizabeth Williams also spoke to the article saying in her 40+ years in town there has always been a part-time officer and nothing has changed. We have a school, library and 2 churches. No Post Office, store or businesses. The current population of 667 people, most of whom are elderly and on a fixed income, feel the unnecessary cost of a full-time department. Here in Nelson we have always counted on neighbors helping out neighbors. We are paying so much more than other towns so please vote yes on this as we have always had part-time and there just isn't a need for full-time.

Don Carlisle- Says he was on the fence before caucus and supported the article because of people's financial concerns. Now I see people have gotten to know Joe, and people say it shouldn't be about Joe, but it should be. Nelson is a quality town and I now support Joe and think it is money well spent.

Brenna Kucinski-When we talked to the sheriff's department Eli advised us to keep our officer. We have investments in vehicles and equipment and it would be a shame to squander what we have built. Joe does work part-time in Fitzwilliam but this in no way shorts Nelson as it is done on his own time. Joe has many attributes including an EMT, Fire and Police.

Tom Buttrick- the selectboard made statements about the person not the position and this is not about the person but the need. Tom proceeded to breakdown the calls to Municipal Aid, who responded and what was considered urgent. Of the 295 calls reported by MA for 2025 ,78 were handled by State Police and 217 were left for Nelson. These ranged from abandoned vehicles, loose animals, vin verifications, fire dept calls to Route 9 calls. In the end 24 calls were to 911 and some of those were hang ups. The last year of part-time in 2023, 57 calls were handled by Nelson and we were just fine. Somehow the town report states there were 544 calls, 419 handled by Nelson and 125 handled by State Police but I have no idea where those inflated call numbers came from.

Jacob Norton- the salary of the full-time police officer is too much for all the non-police work being done. Greeting kids at school, if that's what people want, can be done by a school monitor for much less cost.

Zack Byam-Joe is a friend. He has 3 qualifications that protect your property. He can even drive a fire truck. He works with youth and family services and handles domestic disputes and God forbid an active shooter situation at our school.

Ralph Walter- Joe's the best thing that has happened to this town

Brian Lambert- Joe is an investment in our future and great for our community.

Elizabeth Williams-We did the work, we didn't just google information. We actually went to the surrounding towns and talked to people. There is no guarantee of getting our policeman in an emergency. We have had part-time for 40 years and the budget is just too high.

Hope Lothrop-I've been here 52 years and wish we had a full-time officer years ago and I'm on a fixed income. \$285 on my taxes is worth it.

John Taylor Maule- I still haven't heard a good argument for a full-time officer. I still feel safe leaving my doors unlocked. All the tales of violence are just tales and there is no need for full-time.

Brenda McEachern- First town meeting. I work at Corrections in Keene and drug addiction is rampant and will get worse in the future.

Ethan McBrien-the tensions around me concern me. We are a community and I hope we can move forward as a community. Our connection will keep us safe.

Susan Peery-as a school board member I appreciate Joe at the school.

Joe Shawver- I grew up here, 3rd generation. I left and moved back. I'm a finance person so money matters. I'm not sure, are we arguing over the dollars or the person? Joe is great, we've had great conversations, but I have 4 kids and a few hundred dollars can make the difference of a family vacation or not.

Lew calls for the vote

MOTION-Mike Blaudschun for paper ballot **SECONDED**- Brenna Kucinski

Motion **PASSED** on a **VOICE** vote

Lew explained a **YES** vote means you are in **FAVOR** of the Article to return to part-time

NO means you **OPPOSE** part-time.

Lew advised this has no impact on this years' budget you already approved, but possible impact on the 2027 budget.

Lew reread Article 17

MOTION- Brenna -"I move that the meeting restrict reconsideration of this article in accordance with NH RSA 40:10." **SECONDED**- Mike Blaudschun

Lew called for a vote without asking for discussion.

The amendment **PASSED** on a **VOICE** vote

Someone from the audience immediately asked what does this mean.

MOTION- Brenna - "I move to change the order of business. I move Article 12 forward for consideration before Article 4. **SECONDED** Mike Blaudschun

Lisa Sieverts asked for the purpose of moving Article 12. Brenna said because it has to do with the revolving fund for the Police Dept. Since there are a lot of people here now in support of the police or whatever I thought it best to do it while those people are still here. Lisa said we don't even know the outcome of the vote on Article 17 yet. Brenna **WITHDREW** the motion until later.

Article 04 Support of Town Library

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$54,551 for the support of the town library, \$46,051 to be raised by taxes and \$8,500 to come from offsetting revenue. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

MOTION- Mike Blaudschun SECONDED- Brenna Kucinski.

With no discussion Lew Called for the VOTE

Article 4 **PASSED** on a **VOICE** vote

Article 05 Funding of Various Social Service Agencies

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$7,576 for support of social service agencies which provide assistance to Nelson residents. The agencies chosen to receive funds are: American Red Cross (\$350), Home Health Care, Hospice and Community Services (\$1500), Monadnock Family Services (\$849), Southwestern Community Services (\$796), Monadnock Region Child Advocacy Center (\$1,850), Hundred Nights Inc. (\$500), Casa for Children (\$1000), and Monadnock Center for Violence Prevention (\$731). In 2025, \$7,644 was paid in support of social service agencies and Nelson residents were provided over \$106,307.00 in food, services, discounts and direct assistance. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

MOTION- Mike Blaudschun SECONDED- Brenna Kucinski

Brenna spoke to the article saying the overall budget for social services was down by \$68.00. Melinda Blanchard asked if any money was allocation for abortions and Brenna said she did not know the answer know that. When asked why the Community Kitchen was not allocated any money Brenna said they did not apply.

With no further discussion Lew called for the vote

Article 5 **PASSED** on a **VOICE** vote.

Article 17 **FAILED** on a **PAPER BALLOT** vote – **58 IN FAVOR 69 AGAINST**

MOTION- Brenna – “I move to change the order of business. I move Article 12 forward for consideration before Article 6. SECONDED Mike Blaudschun

Without asking for discussion Lew called for a vote

The amendment **PASSED** on a **VOICE** vote

Article 12 Establish a revolving fund for the Police Department funded by detail income

To see if the town will vote to establish a revolving fund pursuant to RSA 31:95-h, to be known as the Nelson Police Revolving Fund for the purpose of receiving revenues and paying costs in connection with Police Special Details, and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100 to open the fund. All revenues received for Police Department use from fees, charges, or other income derived from the activities or services supported by the fund will be deposited into the Revolving fund, and the money in the fund shall be allowed to accumulate from year to year and shall not be considered part of the town's general fund balance. The town treasurer shall have custody of all moneys in the fund and shall pay out the same only upon order of the Governing Body and Police Chief and no further approval is required by the legislative body to expend. Such funds may be expended only for the purpose for which the fund was created. This article has offsetting revenue of \$100. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority vote required

MOTION- Mike Blaudschun **SECONDED-** Brenna Kucinski

Brenna spoke to the article stating we have always had a detail fund that had to be revisited at town meeting every year. The difference is the revolving fund doesn't end at the end of the year and the money can be spent at any time. Brenna said ALL towns have a revolving fund and it serves as a way to not have to increase the police officers' salary as it gives them a way to make more money.

Judy Lang asked where the money goes at the end of the year in the other fund and Brenna responded to the general fund but the revolving fund goes back to the police fund. Brenna said with 1 officer it probably wouldn't be enough to buy a car with it.

Dave Bower said when he talked to Hancock Administrator in person and this fund caused a lot of problems. Officers were going all over the state and they had to put a limit on it. Dave said with the detail work he already does in another town it would be too much. Brenna said they spoke to Marlborough and were told the extra bookwork takes about 25 minutes a week and Joe wants to do more details for us and cut down on his Fitzwilliam details.

MOTION- Jacob Norton made a motion to change governing body to legislative body.
SECONDED by Duane Schillemat.

Brenna said she doesn't think you can change the Article to legislative body as that requires a vote of the town and defeats the purpose.

Duane -this gives more power to the selectboard.

Karen Castelli – Article 13, the detail article we always had, gives the money back to the general fund so vote this article down and vote on 13.

Martha Collins asked about what monies we get for the cruiser and Brenna said **money from the details go to the cruiser.**

Heather Bower asked who was doing the accounting and could anyone have access to those books at any time. Brenna said Edie and anyone could see at any time and it will be published in the town report.

Zack Byam-details are only done in Cheshire County and comments about ICE are ridiculous.

Vote for Amendment changing to legislative body **FAILED** by a **VOICE** vote

Article 12 as written **PASSED** on a **STANDING** vote.
Did not ask to show yellow voter verified card.

Article 6 Add funds to Town Buildings Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000 to be added to the Town Buildings Capital Reserve Fund previously established. No withdrawals may be made from the fund except by vote of the Town. The Town Buildings Capital Reserve Fund balance as of 12/31/2025 was approximately \$75,000. The Selectmen Recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

MOTION – Mike Blaudschun

SECONDED- Brenna Kucinski

Barbara Roland asked if there was a schedule for major repairs coming up and Brenna said no, we just take care of them as they arise. Barbara said shouldn't there be a schedule? Brenna agreed it was a good idea.

Max Nunnemaker- didn't we have a buildings committee?

Kathy Schillemat, the school district is starting a capital improvement plan and believes that is part of the towns' Master Plan.

Mike Ezell- as Planning Board Chair this is not part of the RSA and the Master Plan reflects aspirational goals.

Hope Lothrop-SWRPC helped set up the Capital Improvement Plan when the Master Plan was first written.

With no further discussion

Lew called for a vote

Article 6 **PASSED** on a **VOICE** vote

Article 7-Add funds to Fire Equipment Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000 to be added to the Fire Equipment Capital Reserve Fund previously established for the purpose of Fire Apparatus purchases for the Fire Department. No withdrawals may be made from this Fund except by vote of the town and upon recommendation of the Fire Chief. The Fire Equipment Capital Reserve Fund balance as of 12/31/2025 was approximately \$211,852. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

MOTION- Mike Blaudschun

SECONDED- Brenna Kucinski

Melinda Blanchard- if there is a big forest fire where do we go?

Joe Scarcione- we had a big fire a few years in Stoddard and we watched and analyzed it before considering evacuations.

Jason Walter- the town buildings would be evacuation centers

With no further discussion

Lew called for the vote

Article 7 **PASSED** on a **VOICE** vote

Article 8 Add funds to Police Equipment Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to be added to the Police Equipment Capital reserve fund previously established. No withdrawals may be made from this fund except by vote of the town and with the recommendation of the Police Chief. The Police Equipment Capital Reserve Fund balance as of 12/31/2025 was approximately \$49,351. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

MOTION- Mike Blaudschun **SECONDED-** Brenna Kucinski

Barbara Roland- I thought the target for this fund was \$49,000 and we are already there.

With no further discussion Lew called for the vote.

Article 8 **PASSED** on a **VOICE** vote

Article 09 Add funds to Nelson Bridge Repair/Replacement Expendable Trust Fund

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000 to be added to the Nelson Bridge Repair or Replacement Expendable Trust Fund previously established. Funds are to be used for the extensive repairs or replacement of bridges in the Town of Nelson. The Selectmen are the agents to expend said funds. The Nelson Bridge Repair or Replacement Expendable Trust Fund balance as of 12/31/2025 was approximately \$45,497. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

MOTION- Mike Blaudschun **SECONDED-** Brenna Kucinski

Brenna- Bailey Brook Bridge and the Granite Lake Dam need repair. What the state wants would be an incredible cost

Kathy Schillemat- grants are available- maybe a study for flood problems as culverts are not properly sized.

Mike Blaudschun- we don't have anywhere near enough money. Mike Tarr replaces culverts every year.

Without further discussion Lew called for the vote.

Article 9 **PASSED** on a **VOICE** vote.

Article 10 Add funds to Road Equip. Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$40,000 to be added to the Road Equipment Capital Reserve Fund previously established. No withdrawals may be made from this fund except by vote of the town upon recommendation of the Road Equipment Committee. The Road Equipment Capital Reserve Fund balance as of 12/31/2025 was approximately \$25,290. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

MOTION- Mike Blaudschun **SECONDED-** Brenna Kucinski

Brenna spoke to the article explaining there have been serious, costly repairs to the Peterbuilt and hoping it will last a while longer but need to build up this fund in preparation.

Without further discussion Lew called for the vote

Article 10 **PASSED** on a **VOICE** vote.

Article 11 Add funds to Renewable Energy Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000 to be added to the Nelson Renewable/Green Energy Project Capital Reserve Fund previously established for the purpose of supporting renewable or "Green" energy projects in Nelson, such as Solar, Wind, or other renewable energy sources as may become available. No withdrawals may be made from this fund except by vote of the Town. The Renewable/Green Energy Capital Reserve Fund balance as of 12/31/2025 was approximately \$54,512.

The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0.
Majority Vote Required.

MOTION- Mike Blaudschun

SECONDED- Brenna Kucinski

Brenna spoke to the article saying there was a good amount in this fund and with no projects in the near future the amount was lowered to \$5,000

Lisa Sieverts- I just want it noted in the minutes a huge thank you to Edie for her hard work with the government to get us a \$16,000 rebate.

John Bunce- makes sense for the bridge and truck but with over \$50,000 why put in more.

Max Nunnemaker- does the selectboard know how much things will cost with inflation? I made a **MOTION** to amendment to raise and appropriate \$20,000. No one **SECONDED**

Without further discussion Lew called for the vote

Article 11 **PASSED** on a **VOICE** vote

Article 13 Fund Other Patrols/Details performed by Nelson PD

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000 for the purpose of patrols or details performed by the Nelson Police Department for the State of New Hampshire, Cheshire County Sheriff's Department, other municipalities or authorized private entities. This article has anticipated offsetting revenue of \$20,000 from any of the previously listed entities contracting this service. The Police Chief recommends this appropriation. If article 12 passes this article will be passed over. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

MOTION- Lew made the motion to **PASS OVER SECONDED-** Mike Blaudschun

Article 14 Funding for Fighting Forest Fires/NH Reimbursement

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$500 for the purpose of fighting forest fires. This article has anticipated reimbursement from the NH State Fire Warden in the amount of \$500. If the grant is not fully received, the remainder to be raised through taxation. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

MOTION- Mike Blaudschun

SECONDED- Brenna Kucinski

With no discussion Lew called for the vote

Article 14 **PASSED** on a **VOICE** vote

Article 15 Purchase and installation of Dry Hydrant

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000 for the purpose of purchasing and installing a Dry Hydrant, including the cost of design engineering, permitting, equipment, parts, labor and any other costs associated with installation and permitting. The location to be at Center Pond. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority vote required.

MOTION- Mike Blaudscun

SECONDED- Brenna Kucinski

Brenna- spoke to the article saying they are trying to identify places and put one up every year. This one on Center Pond is an easy installation and the permissions of the property owners have already been obtained. It will be installed to the right of the boat ramp.

John Bunce- I have talked to the fire chief about this. There is one hydrant behind the town barn and putting one on Center Pond would require an additional 3000 feet that needs to be plowed out. The dry hydrant at the school hasn't been operable for years and there is one on Granite Lake. They are not practical and expensive.

Keenan Blanchard- I agree with John it makes no sense.

Joe Scarcione- the school hydrant is completely out of service due to the beaver dam not being there anymore. In the winter they freeze up so it costs money to find the right spot, As far as Center Pond, we have met with fish and game and they will tell us what we need to do as far as putting gravel down which is not a big deal Granite Lake hydrant cost \$12,000 to install and this one will not cost \$20,000 unless things go way up. These help with your home owner insurance costs.

Hope Lothrop- need more than one hydrant in case other towns come to help. More than one spot to fill up.

Patty Blanchard- will swimming for the kids be affected if there is an emergency? Is there another spot for it to be located? Joe assured it is out and to the side so it won't affect swimming but an emergency is a different story.

Kelly French- Which abutters have you checked with? Mike Blaudschun said it's Coughlin's property. Kelly said that dam is not good, will it cause any problems with the dam?

Jon Pfister- as EMD the hazard mitigation plan says we need more dry hydrants.

Al Stoops- can the intake be closer to the road? Joe Scarcione said it would increase the cost
Brenna- Tolman Pond was not deep enough at the edge and not a good fit. Nubanusit will probably be the next sight to explore.

Keenan Blanchard- asked Joe Scarcione to describe the strainer that will be on top of the pipe. Joe said the pipe will be 5 feet under water, smooth with a working flapper. At that depth it shouldn't interfere with any activities.

Without further discussion Lew called for the vote

Article 15 PASSED on a VOICE vote

Article 16 Adopt/Modify amount of tax credit for Service-connected Total/Permanent Disability
To see if the town will vote to Adopt/modify the provisions of RSA 72:35 for the optional tax credit for Service-Connected Permanent and Total Disability on residential property to be in the amount of \$1,500. This optional tax credit for service-connected permanent and total disability shall replace the tax credits pursuant to RSA 71:28, 72:28-b, 72:28:c and 72:36-a in its entirety and shall not be in addition thereto. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority vote required.

MOTION- Mike Blaudschun

SECONDED- Brenna Kucinski

Brenna- spoke to the article saying it now allows \$1,000 and \$500 so nothing really changes.

Without further discussion Lew called for the vote

Article 16 **PASSED** by a **VOICE** vote

Article 18 Article By Petition: Support for Nelson Resident School Students to attend Village 2026
To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,700 for the Game of Village, Inc. a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization to support the expenses of Nelson resident school students in order to attend Village 2026 - a summer learning experience. All children who live in Nelson and are entering 4th - 8th grades may attend. This article is by petition. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority vote required.

MOTION – Margaret Iselin

SECONDED- Brenna Kucinski

Duane Schillemat- it's a shame it doesn't apply to all kids that go to the school

Without further discussion Lew called for the vote

Article 18 **PASSED** on a **VOICE** vote.

Brenna wanted to recognize Betsey Church for her 18 years as Supervisor of the Checklist and Lew Derby for his 10 years as Moderator,

Meeting ended at 1:33 PM

Brenna Castellini
Town Clerk
