

# 2024 Annual Town Meeting Minutes

## Article 01: Choose necessary Town Officers for the year ensuing

Selectmen – 3 years, Brenna Kucinski  
Moderator – 2 years, Lew Derby  
Trustee of the Library – 3 years, Judi Lang  
Trustee of the Trust Funds- 3 years, Tom Newcombe, Greg Rothman  
Cemetery Board – 3 years, Linda Cates, Laurie Smith, Al Stoops  
Emergency Management Director –1 year, Jonathan Pfister  
Planning Board Member – 3 years, Sandi Mackenzie, Dan Bishop  
Planning Board Member – 1 year, Mike Ezell  
Road Equipment Committee – 3 years, John Bunce  
Nelson Fire & Rescue – 3 years, Barbara Roland  
Nelson Fire & Rescue – 2 years, Bob Lenox  
Nelson Fire & Rescue – 1 year, TBD  
Supervisor of the Checklist – 6 years, Anita Flanagan

The business portion of the meeting was held on Saturday, March 16, **starting at 10:00am**. Lew Derby, moderator, lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance, and a moment of silence as he read those who left us this year. Law went over the procedural rules for a town meeting. The meeting began with Article 2 as Article 1 was decided by ballot votes on March 12, 2024.

## Article 02 To defray the Town charges for the year ensuing

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$ 1,329,026.00 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 \$346,589. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

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Article was moved by Mike Blaudschun and seconded by Brenna Kucinski

Brenna spoke to the article

Brenna said she would only point out lines of the budget that changed and referred to the annual town report page 30 to begin. Under the Financial line were raises and full medical for the 3 full time employees. Cemetery had an increase of \$8000 to be used for a consultant and erosion control design for the Munsonville Cemetery, legal fees and design for the new cemetery. Planning budget added \$7000 for professional help to revisit the Master Plan. Town Clerks budget was increased slightly to accommodate the 4 elections to be held this year. Police had the biggest increase to support going from a part-time to full-time position, which included a raise in salary, retirement, social security, health insurance and gas. Brenna went on to explain that the board did a lot of research when the present part time officer said he couldn't continue as part time. The selectboard tried to find part time candidates, investigated support from the sheriffs' department, merging with Sullivan, and sharing with Stoddard. Brenna expressed the selectboards reasons why they feel the best way to go was full time with the position and laid out the cost to taxpayers. Highway Department included raises for Mike and Nick and Family health insurance. Library budget included a 3% raise in salaries.

John Bunce made the motion to amend the article with a written amendment that reads

**This amendment is to reduce the Article 2 raised and appropriated amount by \$98,800. The intent of this amendment is to reduce the 2024 proposed 421-POL-Police Dept budget by \$98,800.** Lisa Sieverts seconded.

Speaking for the amendment, John Bunce stated the Selectboard did an excellent job providing information, having 2 forums and getting a list of all the calls. He went on to say looking at all the calls there were very few serious problems and a full time officer was more of a want than a need. Also speaking against was Lisa Sieverts expressing that going from 3 to 4 full time employees is a big deal for our small town. She said she questions the hiring process and we shouldn't be creating a job for the current part time officer. Tom Buttrick pointed out that out of the 231 calls to Cheshire County Dispatch last year for Nelson, 194 were not serious leaving 37 calls of which 11 were serviced by the Nelson Police Department. Tom said this is not worth \$180,000.

Speaking against the amendment was Zack Byam, a resident who is the Marlborough Chief of Police. Zach said at every town meeting we vote in favor of all kinds of fluff. The chance to fund the police department is now, because it may not come again. In his position, he hears calls all day long and the response time in some of the towns are horrible. He added with a full time police department you can provide aid to others towns and it will be reciprocated. Also against, Al Guida said the numbers mentioned previously are not reality. The reality is the State of New Hampshire has one of the highest addiction and gun ownership rates in the country. Every school shooting has people wondering how it could happen in their town. This is our opportunity to be proactive.

Tom Buttrick called for a vote- Lisa Sieverts seconded and requested it be a secret ballot.

**The amendment FAILED by a vote of 60-31**

Mike French referred to pg 27 of the town report and the differences in the budgets allotted and actual expenses. Mike French - the selectman are asking for a 22% increase and underspent 14% last year. Mike French makes the motion to cut the budget by 10%.

**I purpose an amendment to Article 2 to reduce the proposed budget by \$132,903.00** Tom Buttrick seconded

Brenna explained what we vote on is what we have to spend. Last year ,for example ,the Highway Departments gas went up. There is nothing we can do if we don't have the money. Look at Vermont as an example of the weather changes and all the devastation. They didn't have the money and had to get a bond. Any overage goes back to the taxpayers and has stabilized the tax rate the last few years. Lisa Sieverts states as a project manager by profession it is prudent to budget for flexibility. As someone who works closely with the select board on different projects, I recommend voting against the article to reduce the budget by 10%. **Mike French withdraws the amendment.**

**Lew back to Article 2 as written.**

**Article 2 PASSES on a VOICE VOTE**

**Article 03 Support of Town Library**

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$49,890 for the support of the town library, \$44,507 to be raised by taxes and \$5,383 to come from Library Memorial Funds, gifts, grants, and other sources. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

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Article 3 was moved by Mike Blaudschun and seconded by Brenna Kucinski.

**Article 3 PASSED by a VOICE VOTE**

**Article 04 Funding of Various Social Service Agencies**

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$6,663 for support of social service agencies which provide assistance to Nelson residents. The agencies chosen to receive funds are: American Red Cross (\$350), The Community Kitchen Inc. (\$500), Home Health Care, Hospice and Community Services (\$550), Monadnock Family Services (\$786), Southwestern Community Services (\$877), Monadnock Region Child Advocacy Center (\$1,850), Hundred Nights Inc. (\$500), Community Volunteer Transportation Co. (\$250) and Casa for Children (\$1000). In 2023, \$5,786 was paid in support of social service agencies and Nelson residents were provided over \$200,221.00 in food, services, discounts and direct assistance. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

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Article 4 was moved by Mike Blaudschun and seconded by Brenna Kucinski.

**Article 4 PASSED by a VOICE VOTE**

**Article 05 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 12/31/2023 was approximately \$39,792. The Selectmen Recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

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Article 5 was moved by Mike Blaudschun and seconded by Brenna Kucinski.

Brenna spoke to the article explaining \$20,000 from this fund will be used for a new roof if Article 12 for the solar array passes.

**Article 5 PASSED by a VOICE VOTE**

**Article 06 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 12/31/2023 was approximately \$144,590. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

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Article 6 was moved by Mike Blaudschun and seconded by Brenna Kucinski

Rick Church asked for a state of the equipment and predicted replacements. Joe Scarcione, Fire Chief, explained that Engine 1 will need to be replaced in the next 2-3 years at a cost of roughly \$900,000. Last year \$15,000 was allocated for hoses and approximately \$4,000 was spent. Pump and hose testing is every 2 years so for now the department is keeping it together.

**Article 6 PASSED by a VOICE VOTE**

**Article 07 Add funds to Milfoil Prevention and Treatment ETF**

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000 to be added to the Milfoil Prevention Expendable Trust Fund previously established. The fund balance as of 12/31/2023 was approximately \$38,238. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

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Article 7 was moved by Mike Blaudschun and seconded by Brenna Kucinski.

**Article 7 PASSED by a VOICE VOTE**

**Article 08 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 12/31/2023 was approximately \$25,642. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

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Article 8 was moved by Mike Blaudschun and seconded by Brenna Kucinski.

John Bunce - a new police cruiser was just purchased for \$52,000 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> vehicle is fine. He goes on to say these articles aren't meant to fund 100% and the select board should do a better job with the Capitol Reserve Fund. Brenna responded the Capitol Reserve Fund needs a vote of the people and the Expendable Trust Fund only needs a vote of the select board. These projects should be what the people want to spend their money on and be voted on by them.

**Article 8 PASSED by a VOICE VOTE**

**Article 09 Add funds to Nelson Bridge Repair/Replacement ETF**

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 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 12/31/2023 was approximately \$22,136. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

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Article 9 was moved by Mike Blaudschun and seconded by Brenna Kucinski.

**Article 9 PASSED by 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 \$25,000 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 12/31/2023 was approximately \$109,869. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

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Article 10 was moved by Mike Blaudschun and seconded by Brenna Kucinski.

Max Nunnemaker knows a couple of pieces of equipment will need replacing in the next few years. Mike Tarr expects replacing the 31 year old Wheel Loader is not far off. Mike is trying to get a grant that would be an 80/20 split and cost the town \$50,000 and not \$250,000. Val Van Meier thanks Nick and Mike saying they are the most thrifty yankees she knows.

**Article 10 PASSED by a VOICE VOTE**

**Article 11 Add funds to Renewable Energy Capital Reserve**

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000 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 12/31/2023 was approximately \$25,977. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

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Article 11 was moved by Mike Blaudschun and seconded by Brenna Kucinski.

Brenna spoke to the article explaining if the next article passes they will be taking \$25,000 from this fund for the solar panels

. John Bunce makes the motion to move article 11 to be recalled after article 12. Robert Roland seconded. Motion PASSED on a VOICE VOTE

**Article 11 RECALLED after Article 12 PASSED**

**Article 11 PASSED by a VOICE VOTE**

## **Article 12    Repair Roof of Town Hall & Add Solar Array**

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$89,500 for the repair and shingling of the Town Hall roof sufficient to support a new solar array (Roof \$29,500 & Solar Array \$60,000) and to purchase and install a grid-tied solar array with a size of at least 17 kW DC, to be installed on the south-facing roof of the Nelson Town Hall. The array shall be of a low-profile design with black frames for the solar panels in order to minimize its visibility. Further, it is intended that the energy produced be primarily used to supply the electrical loads created by the air-sourced heat pump heating/cooling systems that were installed in 2022 in the Town Office, Town Hall, and Olivia Rodham Memorial Library. Further, to include all electrical infrastructure modifications needed to connect the output of the solar system to the electrical grid and to the heat pumps described above. \$20,000 to come from the Town Buildings Capital Reserve fund to be used toward the roof repair and shingling as a qualifying purpose of use of that fund and \$25,000 to come from the Nelson Renewable/Green Energy Project Capital Reserve Fund to be used toward the Solar array purchase and installation as a qualifying use of that fund and the balance to come from taxation. As of 12/31/2023 the balance in the Town Buildings Capital Reserve Fund was approximately \$39,792 and the balance in the Nelson Renewable/Green Energy Project Capital Reserve Fund was approximately \$25,977.

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

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Article 12 was moved by Mike Blaudschun and seconded by Brenna Kucinski

John Bunce started by saying he's not a solar person, but putting solar panels on historical buildings is just wrong. Most towns won't even let you paint the front door a different color but we put solar panels on them. John said we should take advantage of the age left on roof and this is not necessary this year. Lisa Sieverts-this was brought up last year and the select board promised to bring it back this year and they did. This is the only article out of all the articles on the warrant that brings money back to the town. According to Lisa the town would be paid back for the investment in 8-9 years and there would be an additional 15 years of profit. Lisa supports this article because it makes financial sense and green sense. Lisa said the National Historical Society recommends solar panels as long as they are low profile. Brenna Kucinski agreed that the select board asked that this article wait a year so they could evaluate the roof and structural issues on the Town Hall. The select boards investigation found the building was structurally sound but does need a new roof. Lisa and Edie worked on a grant that would have been an 80/20 split for the town and also added a battery storage system but it went to larger towns. She added that battery storage for the generator could be added at a later date. Mike Blaudschun- I have read the electric meters over the last few years and we get money back. He also said we are 5,000 kwh short of paying for all the electricity used in all the town buildings. Beth Draper asked if there was any time left on the roof and Brenna said no. Joe Sykes said he noticed shingles already falling off.

Lew called for a vote

**Article 12 PASSED by a VOICE VOTE**

**Article 13 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.

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Article 13 was moved by Mike Blaudschun and seconded by Brenna Kucinski

**Article 13 PASSED by a VOICE VOTE**

**Article 14 Purchase New Nelson Road Signs**

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$8,500 for the purchase of new Road Signs including posts and materials for proper installation, for each of Nelson's Town Roads. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

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Article 14 was moved by Mike Blaudschun and seconded by Brenna Kucinski

Brenna spoke to the article saying the road signs are in bad shape and need to be replaced. Mike Tarr, road agent, added the signs cannot be seen at night as all the reflective paint has worn off and they are vertical instead of horizontal which makes them harder to read. Mike said emergency vehicles not familiar have trouble finding streets. He suggested having the correctional facility make the new ones. Amy Whitney said she and a few residents have surveyed the issue and only 3 signs are rotten to the point of needing replacement and all the others only need maintenance. Amy has a group of people ready to volunteer to help restore the existing road signs.

**Amy Whitney makes the motion to amend the article by \$8,000**

Mike Blaudschun suggested the amendment be withdrawn and article voted down and the \$500 or so dollars needed to fix the signs by the volunteers could be reimbursed with receipts.

**Amy Whitney withdraws the amendment.**

Lew called for a vote

**Article 14 FAILED by a VOICE VOTE**



**Article 15 Purchase & Installation of 2 Nelson Welcome Signs**

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum \$5,500 for the purchase and installation of two Town of Nelson Welcome signs, each to be placed on the Nelson Road just before entry into the Village, one from the Harrisville side of the village and one along the hill entering the Village from the Munsonville side .

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

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Article 15 was moved by Mike Blaudschun and seconded by Brenna Kucinski

Brenna spoke to the article saying she realizes that the wooden Welcome to Nelson signs were an Eagle Scout project many years ago, but they need to be replaced. Brenna showed the new metal design that the select board was considering as a replacement, as the prices for a new wooden sign was just too expensive. Brenna said they could also consider fixing up and reusing the existing wooden signs. A few residents expressed their opinion that signs are just clutter and Welcome to Nelson signs are unnecessary. A group supported the signs saying you can drive through town and not realize you are in Nelson without them. And another group was just unhappy with the metal signs and would prefer they are kept wood.

Lew called for a standing vote.

**Article 15 PASSED by a 36-34 STANDING VOTE**

**Article 16 Fund other patrols/details performed by Nelson PD**

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$4,000 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 \$4,000 from any of the previously listed entities contracting this service. The Police Chief recommends this appropriation. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

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Article 16 was moved by Mike Blaudschun and seconded by Brenna Kucinski

Brenna spoke to the article saying it is a cost generator for the town providing money to be offset.

Lew called for a vote.

**Article 16 PASSED by a VOICE VOTE**

**Article 17 Purchase and Installation of Standby Generator**

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$59,425 for the purpose of purchase and installation of a Propane Fueled Standby Generator sufficient in size to power the Nelson Town Office, Town hall and Library in the event of a power outage. Cost to include one Kohler 60RCLB, 60kw, 120/240 Volt, Single-Phase, 1800 RPM, Propane Fueled Standby Generator in Sound Attenuated Enclosure, two Kohler RDT, 200 Amp, 120/240 Volt, Single-Phase, Service Entrance Rated Automatic Transfer Switches in Nema 3R Enclosures and One Kohler RDT, 100 Amp, 120/240 Volt, Single-Phase, Automatic Transfer Switch in Nema 3R Enclosure, transfer switches to be located next to existing electrical meters, includes site work, trenching for electrical and propane lines, Electrical Installation of generator and automatic transfer switches, Gas installation to include line from customer supplied tank to generator, Concrete pad, engine battery, and block heater, Factory warranty startup and owner training session, Required permits and inspections, and Equipment includes 5-year manufacturer limited warranty. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

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Article 17 was moved by Mike Blaudschun and seconded by Brenna Kucinski

Brenna spoke to the article saying right now 3 of the town buildings do not have generators, Library, Town Hall and Town Offices. With this generator the Library could be open and provide a warm space in a power outage. Brenna- in these times, with the deteriorating weather, we need generators in case of a long power outage so the buildings don't freeze. Battery back-up could be added later. Bill Dunn said he was confused as all of our focus seems to be green, green, green. Bill said looked up a Tesla generator which was much cheaper at \$41,000. Al Guida asked if the school couldn't serve as a warming location as it has a generator and internet. Mike Tarr said we need these generators because of the solar panels and heat pumps and that we have done it to ourselves. With a handful of other residents speaking against the article Lisa Sieverts urged it be voted down as it is not a green solution. Her group is actively working on being a pilot town for a grant that would fund a battery backup. Lisa urged at least postponing a year as it is not the time to be investing \$60,000 in fossil fuel generators.

Beth Draper called the question and Lisa Sieverts seconded

**Article 17 FAILED on a VOICE VOTE**

**Article 18 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 Granite Lake near the Dam. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

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Article 18 was moved by Mike Blaudschun and seconded by Brenna Kucinski

Brenna spoke to the article recalling last year's push for a dry hydrant on Tolman Pond. The fire chief, Joe Scarcione looked for feasible location. Tolman Pond is shallow so a hose would need to go too far out. The only location ready at this time is on Granite Lake in the Mill Pond area. Joe said it is possible that it can be done for less than the \$20,000 but he is not 100% sure of the total cost for the project. Joe explained that the problem comes when the lake is drawn down for the winter. A dry hydrant would be out far enough to give better access to the pumper to get water quickly and urged the town to start installing these one per year to make it easier on the wallet. With questions about the water being open by the dam and waterfall, why would a dry hydrant be necessary? Jeff Walter, a firefighter in town, explained with a dry hydrant one person can easily hook up and draw water which could be crucial in the case of a fire. The force of the waterfall and changing depth of the water around the dam makes using that to fill the tanker a difficult task.

Al Guida called the question

**Article 18 PASSED by a VOICE VOTE**

**Article 19 By Petition-Support for Nelson School Students**

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,550 for the Game of Village Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. This money would be used to support the expenses of Nelson resident school students in order to attend Village 2024 - a summer learning experience. Any children who live in Nelson and are entering 5th-8th grades may apply. This is a Petitioned article. The Selectmen recommend this article 3-0. Majority Vote Required.

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Article 19 was moved by Mike Blaudschun and seconded by Brenna Kucinski

The residents had only great things to say about the wonderful experience the Game of Village provides and that these monies are only available to kids that wouldn't be able to afford to attend. Margaret Iselin said it was started by her grandmother and often the money isn't used in which case it goes back to the town.

Lew Called for a vote

**Article 19 PASSED by a VOICE VOTE**

Meeting adjourned at 1:21PM

Karen Castelli Karen Castelli