

**MINUTES OF  
STRONG ANNUAL TOWN MEETING  
Friday, March 20, 2026  
1:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.  
and  
Saturday, March 21, 2026, at 9:30 A.M.**

The meeting was opened by Town Clerk, Amanda Coolong, at 12:45pm on Friday, March 20, 2026.

**ARTICLE 1.** To elect a Moderator to preside at said meeting.

*It was read, moved and seconded to nominate Susan Pratt as moderator. Motion carried. Phillip Richards inspected and locked the ballot box.*

**ARTICLE 2.** To open the polls for the election of two Select Board members (3-year terms) and two School Board members (3-year terms).

*Moderator Susan Pratt opened the polls at 1:00PM, then closed them at 6:00PM and recessed the meeting until March 21, 2026 at 9:30AM.*

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March 21, 2026

Moderator Susan Pratt opened the meeting at 9:30AM and conducted the pledge of allegiance. Pastor Lorrie Aikens led the invocation and read the names of the deceased during a moment of silence. Susan Pratt then reviewed housekeeping items about how to participate in town meeting. Select Board Chair Rupert Pratt announced the Town Report dedication to Roger Lambert. Town Clerk Amanda Coolong read it aloud.

*Susan Pratt announced the secret ballot election results:*

*Joel Doyon: 61 (elected), Marcel Lecours: 79 (elected), Gilbert Read: 56*

*School Board: Joan Reed: 70 (elected). Jessie Stinchfield: 59 (elected).*

**ARTICLE 3.** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to make appointments to minor offices for the ensuing year. *Was read, moved and seconded. Motion carried with no discussion.*

**ARTICLE 4.** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to procure temporary loans in anticipation of tax payments. *Was read, moved and seconded. Motion carried with no discussion.*

**ARTICLE 5.** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to spend an amount not to exceed 3/12ths of the amount budgeted in each account of the annual budget for 2026 during the period from January 1, 2027 to the Annual Town Meeting. *Was read, moved and seconded. Motion carried with no discussion.*

**ARTICLE 6.** To see what sum of money the Town will vote to transfer from Surplus to reduce the 2026 Tax Commitment.

Select Board Recommends: \$300,000  
Budget Committee Recommends: \$300,000

*Was read and moved with an amendment to update the select board recommendation to \$260,000. Seconded.*

*Discussion: suggested using the \$60k not used for Tarvia to help increase Surplus to \$371k. Mike Pond asked that if the town has need, could it take back some of the \$75k set aside for the withdrawal committee's legal fees? Andrew Bracy reminded Mike Pond that we also took money out of Surplus for the revaluation. Mike Pond's concern is that by taking money out of Surplus instead of raising and appropriating, we are increasing our mill rate. \$60k in excise has already been paid, so we should use that.*

*Motion carried with select board's amendment to \$260,000.*

**ARTICLE 7.** To see if the Town will vote to transfer \$75,000 from Surplus to the Revaluation account. *Was read, moved and seconded. Discussion about when this will reflect upon our taxes (2027) and when all the money will be expended (by the end of this year). Motion carried.*

**ARTICLE 8.** To see if the taxes shall be made payable and collected according to law and to authorize the Tax Collector to accept early payments. *Was read, moved and seconded. Motion carried with no discussion.*

**ARTICLE 9.** To see if the Town will allow a discount of 2% (to be taken out of overlay) when all real estate and personal property taxes are paid within 30 days of the date of commitment by the Assessors and to charge interest at the rate of 6% per annum from November 1, 2026 on all real and personal taxes unpaid at that date. *Was read, moved and seconded. Discussion about how 6% was calculated. It's been used for many years. The town is allowed to go higher or lower. If you don't pay your taxes on time, Strong charges 6% interest. If you pay early, you get a 2% discount. Questions about what overlay means. The town is allowed to charge slightly extra in taxes that can be used toward discounts, abatements, etc. If it's not used, it goes back into Surplus. The 6% goes into Surplus, too. Motion carried.*

*The Moderator recognized Select Board Chair, Rupert Pratt who shared that anyone who paid taxes between Oct. 31 and Nov. 31, 2025 and didn't get their discount will get a credit this year that comes out of the select board's stipends.*

**ARTICLE 10.** To see if the Town will vote to set the interest rate of 2% to be paid by the town on abated taxes pursuant to 36 M.R.S. State Statute 506-A. *Was read, moved and seconded. Rupert Pratt explained that if a resident pays their taxes then receives an abatement, they will also get 2% interest. Motion carried.*

**ARTICLE 11.** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from the overlay account, tax abatements, applicable interest granted, and interest paid on abatements during the 2026 fiscal year. *Was read, moved and seconded. Motion carried with no discussion.*

**ARTICLE 12.** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Municipal Officers to dispose of tax acquired property as they deem in the best interest of the Town, except that the Municipal Officers shall first use the sale process in 36 M.R.S. State Statute 943-C if they choose to sell property to anyone other than the former owner, as defined in State Statute 943-C. For sales to someone other than the former owner, excess sale

proceeds, as defined in 36 M.R.S. State Statute 943-C, shall be returned to the former owner. *Was read, moved and seconded. Motion carried with no discussion.*

**ARTICLE 13.** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to accept gifts of money and equipment and dispose of Surplus equipment to support the needs of the Town that they deem advisable, the reason being for insurance purposes. Said sale to be public and by bid process at least once for anything valued over \$500. *Was read, moved and seconded. Motion carried with no discussion.*

**ARTICLE 14.** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate all the money received from the State of Maine for snowmobile registrations to the Narrow Gauge Snowmobile Club for the purpose of maintaining their snowmobile trails, and to authorize the Municipal Officers to enter into an agreement with the Club under such terms as the Municipal Officers deem advisable, for that purpose. *Was read, moved and seconded. Discussion on where excise tax goes for side-by-side registrations. Town Treasurer/Tax Collector, Maria Johnson explained there is no excise tax on ATVs, only a small fee for the office staff. Motion carried.*

**ARTICLE 15.** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to accept and/or apply for all funds that may become available to them and to expend such funds for their intended purpose. *Was read then Mike Pond moved with an amendment at the end to say, "...and all projects and expenditures shall be voted on at the annual or a special town meeting." Seconded.*

*Discussion was had about grant applications, and whether or not the select board should be allowed to decide where the money gets spent.*

*Second amendment was offered by Phoebe Smith to instead read, "...and if a grant has choices as to how the money is to be spent, it goes to a town meeting and to expend such funds for their intended purpose." Seconded.*

*Discussion was had about missing grant deadlines if we have to bring them to a town meeting. We already have hearings on grants to get resident input.*

*Article as amended: Moderator was not in doubt. Challenged. Moderator preferred written ballot. Aye: 25 Nay: 32. Motion failed.*

*Amendment 2: motion to amend the article back to the original warrant. Seconded. Amendment passed as written.*

*Article as amended: motion carried.*

**ARTICLE 16.** To see if the Town will authorize the Select Board to utilize income generated to operating accounts to reduce the 2026 tax commitment. *Was read, moved and seconded. Motion carried with no discussion.*

**ARTICLE 17.** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to appropriate from Surplus \$3,500 to meet unanticipated overages and emergencies that occur during fiscal year 2026. *Was read, moved and seconded. Motion carried with no discussion.*

**ARTICLE 18.** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to appropriate from Surplus an amount to fund employee retirement accounts for the year 2026.

Select Board Recommends: \$7,000

Budget Committee Recommends: No recommendation

*Was read, moved and seconded at \$7,000. Discussion: we voted on this last year. Did employees receive it? No, it started this year.*

*John Evans moved to amend the motion to \$14,000 and to remove the year. Seconded. Discussion: not sure how it can be implemented when the town has a 3% match with the retirement company. Duayne Boyd confirmed the town can pay it retroactively. Motion as amended: vote unclear. Conducted a showing of hands. Aye: 20. Nay: 19. Passed as amended at \$14,000.*

*Article as amended: carried.*

**ARTICLE 19.** To see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and allow the Select Board to utilize revenues from the agent fees and town charges for General Government accounts for the ensuing year.

Statement of Fact	<u>Appropriated 2025</u>	<u>Requested 2026</u>
Administration	\$ 101,000	\$ 107,000
Town Charges	\$ 33,000	\$ 36,000
Assessing	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000
Legal Fees	\$ 2,000	\$ 5,000
Code Enforcement	<u>\$ 8,000</u>	<u>\$ 8,750</u>
Total	\$ 162,000	\$ 174,750

Select Board Recommends: \$174,750

Budget Committee Recommends: \$174,750

*Was read, moved and seconded at \$174,750. Discussion: the \$6,000 increase in admin is for items like staff training and CEO fees.*

*Motion to amend the total to \$168,500, broken out as follows: admin: \$104,000, town charges: \$36,000, assessing: \$18,000, legal fees: \$2,000, code enforcement: \$8,750. Seconded.*

*Moderator called for a show of hands. Carried: (Aye: 31, Nay: 27)*

*Article as amended: carried.*

**ARTICLE 20.** To see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the Town Office Dedicated Technology account and to allow the Select Board to use any Cable Franchise fees for the Dedicated Technology account.

Select Board Recommends: \$16,000

Budget Committee Recommends: \$16,000

*Was read, moved and seconded at \$16,000. Discussion: the amount covers software programs, tech support, and equipment. Motion carried.*

**ARTICLE 21.** To see if the town will vote to allow the Select Board to enter into yearly Service Agreements for Fire Protection with Franklin County and the Town of Avon.

*Was read, moved and seconded. Motion carried with no discussion.*

**ARTICLE 22.** To see if the Town will vote to transfer \$34,217.79 from County funds and up to \$9,000 from Avon funds for the accounts listed below and to see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for Protection accounts for the ensuing year.

Statement of Fact	<u>Appropriated 25</u>	Select Board <u>Requested 2026</u>	Budget Committee <u>Requested 2026</u>
Fire Department Equipment	\$ 13,000	\$ 13,000	\$ 9,000
Fire Department Operating	\$ 6,500	\$ 6,500	\$ 6,500
Fire Department Payroll	<u>\$ 10,000</u>	<u>\$ 10,000</u>	<u>\$ 7,000</u>
	\$ 29,500	\$ 29,500	\$ 22,500
Transfer of Funds		<u>Avon</u>	<u>County</u>
Fire Department Equipment		\$ 3,000	\$ 6,239.26
Fire Department Operating		\$ 1,500	\$12,239.26
Fire Department Payroll		<u>\$ 4,500</u>	<u>\$15,739.27</u>
		\$ 9,000	\$34,217.79

Select Board Recommends: \$29,500  
 Budget Committee Recommends: \$22,500

*Was read, moved and seconded at \$29,500.*

*Motion to amend the article to raise and appropriate \$16,500 for fire dep't equipment, \$6,500 for operating and \$10,000 for payroll. Seconded. Discussion around how funds have been used in the past. Budget committee felt that if the fire dep't wants to buy a specific item like an ATV, it should be raised through a separate article.*

*Gilbert Reed moved the question (end debate). Carried.*

*Vote on amendment: failed.*

*Original motion carried.*

**ARTICLE 23.** To see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the Fire Department Truck Reserve account for the ensuing year.

Select Board Recommends: \$35,000  
 Budget Committee Recommends: \$35,000

*Was read, moved and seconded at \$35,000. Motion carried with no discussion.*

**ARTICLE 24.** To see if the Town will vote to allow any balances in the Protection accounts to be placed in the Fire Department Special Equipment account at the end of the current fiscal year.

Select Board Recommends: Yes  
 Budget Committee Recommends: No

*Was read, moved and seconded. Discussion about why the budget committee recommended no. If the fire dep't wants something specific, they should write a separate article about what they want to spend, and what it's for.*

***Motion to amend the end to, "...and all expenditures will be approved at a town meeting." Seconded. Discussion was had about the cost of waiting due to inflation. Having less red tape helps. The fire dep't does not spend large amounts of money without going before the select board.***

***Moved the question (cease debate) – carried.***

***Amended article: failed.***

***Original motion: carried.***

***Motion to recess for lunch until 12:30pm. Seconded. Motion carried.***

***12:30pm: moderator swore in new officials in open session.***

***Motion by Lynne Hall to go out of order to article 34. Seconded. Carried.***

**ARTICLE 25.** To see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for Public Safety accounts for the ensuing year.

Statement of Fact	<u>Appropriated 2025</u>	<u>Requested 2026</u>
Ambulance	\$ 29,343	\$ 34,000
Hydrants	\$ 32,027	\$ 32,027
Streetlights	\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000
Animal Control	\$ 4,300	\$ 4,000
Insurance	\$ 94,000	\$105,000
Health officer	<u>\$ 1,200</u>	<u>\$ 1,200</u>
Total	\$167,870	\$183,227

Select Board Recommends: \$183,227

Budget Committee Recommends: \$183,227

***Article 25 was read, moved and seconded at \$183,227. Discussion on the ambulance account increase. They run on a different fiscal year to our town. They've increased by \$5,000. The \$34,000 is what it's going to cost us for the next year. Really accounts for \$32,000 in our fiscal year. Motion carried.***

**ARTICLE 26.** To see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for Health and Sanitation accounts for the ensuing year.

Statement of Fact	<u>Appropriated 2025</u>	<u>Requested 2026</u>
Landfill and Solid Waste	\$ 8,500	\$ 8,700
General Assistance	<u>\$ 1,000</u>	<u>\$ 1,500</u>
Total	\$ 9,500	\$10,200

Select Board Recommends: \$10,200

Budget Committee Recommends: \$10,200

***Was read, moved and seconded at \$10,200.***

***Motion to amend amounts to \$8,700 for landfill and solid waste, \$1,000 for general assistance. Motion carried.***

***Motion as amended: carried.***

**ARTICLE 27.** To see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the Highway accounts for the ensuing year.

Statement of Fact	<u>Appropriated 2025</u>	<u>Requested 2026</u>
Winter Roads	\$ 109,000	\$ 115,000
Roads and Bridges	<u>\$ 91,000</u>	<u>\$ 91,000</u>
Total	\$ 200,000	\$ 206,000

Select Board Recommends: \$206,000  
Budget Committee Recommends: \$206,000

***Was read, moved and seconded at \$206,000. Motion carried with no discussion.***

**ARTICLE 28.** To see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the Public Works accounts for the ensuing year.

Statement of Fact	<u>Appropriated 2025</u>	<u>Requested 2026</u>
Town Garage	\$ 16,000	\$ 16,000
Equipment Operating	\$ 55,000	\$ 55,000
Equipment Fund	<u>\$ 1,500</u>	<u>\$ 1,500</u>
Total	\$ 72,500	\$ 72,500

Select Board Recommends: \$72,500  
Budget Committee Recommends: \$72,500

***Was read, moved and seconded at \$72,000. Motion carried with no discussion.***

**ARTICLE 29.** To see if the Town will vote to allow the Select Board to enter into a lease purchase agreement for a new wheeler truck and plow equipment. The lease would be for 5 years, not to exceed \$331,000, and payments not to exceed \$47,000. The down payment of \$100,000 would be taken from the Special Equipment fund.

Statement of Fact: current interest rate of 5.48%

***Was read and moved at \$0 on this account. Seconded. Motion carried with no discussion.***

**ARTICLE 30.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$46,172.77 for the first payment on the new wheeler truck and plow equipment. ***Was read and moved to table. Seconded. Motion carried with no discussion.***

**ARTICLE 31.** To see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the Special Equipment Fund for the ensuing year.

Select Board Recommends: \$25,000  
Budget Committee Recommends: \$25,000

***Was read and moved to raise \$45,000. Seconded. Discussion was had on the increase. It behooves us to build up this account more due to the cost of equipment. However, why save the money when inflation is***

*making the price of equipment skyrocket? In 2019, the select board came up with an equipment replacement plan which suggested setting aside \$50k per year. What's the point in saving, when it will be chewed up in inflation? Motion carried.*

**ARTICLE 32.** To see what sum of money the Town will vote to transfer from the Surplus account to the Tarvia account for the ensuing year.

Select Board Recommends: \$60,000  
 Budget Committee Recommends: \$60,000

*Was read and moved to transfer \$0 from Surplus to the Tarvia account. Seconded. Discussion: there is ARPA money left over which won't be used for broadband, so it will be rotated to the Tarvia account instead. Motion carried.*

**ARTICLE 33.** To see if the Town will vote to transfer \$40,120 from the L.R.A.P. account to the Tarvia account for the ensuing year.

Select Board Recommends: \$40,120  
 Budget Committee Recommends: \$40,120

*Was read, moved and seconded. Motion carried with no discussion.*

**ARTICLE 34.** To see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the Recreation accounts for the ensuing year.

Statement of Fact	<u>Appropriated 2025</u>	<u>Carry-Over</u>
Town Park	\$ 4,500	\$ 6,368.64
Beach	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,027.33
Legion Field	\$ <u>0</u>	<u>\$ 2,876.48</u>
Total	\$ 6,500	\$ 10,272.45

	<u>Select Board Requested 2026</u>	<u>Budget Committee Requested 2026</u>
Town Park	\$ 2,000	\$ 0
Beach	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
Legion Field	<u>\$ 1,000</u>	<u>\$ 1,000</u>

Select Board Recommends: \$7,000  
 Budget Committee Recommends: \$5,000

*Was read and moved at \$7,000. Seconded. Discussion about why. Residents are donating time to maintain the town park. The goal is to get a piece of equipment that is wheelchair accessible. Concern about broken equipment and liability.*

*Motion to amend amounts to: \$4,500 park, \$4k beach, \$1,000 legion field: \$9,500. Seconded. Discussion: we're looking at grants to replace the stairs. Motion carried.*

*Motion on article as amended: carried.*

**ARTICLE 35.** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Municipal Officers to make final determinations regarding the closing or opening of roads for winter maintenance pursuant to 23 M.R.S. § 2953. *Was read, moved and seconded. Discussion about who is considered a municipal officer (select board. Gilbert Reed read the statute. Motion carried.*

**ARTICLE 36.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000 to make payment on the American Legion Post 78 Johnson Cox real estate contract.

Select Board Recommends: Yes  
Budget Committee Recommends: Yes

*Was read, moved and seconded. Motion carried with no discussion.*

**ARTICLE 37.** To see if the Town will allow the Select Board to utilize interest and dividends from accounts at the Portland Trust Company for the Library and to see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the Library account for the ensuing year.

Select Board Recommends: \$10,000  
Budget Committee Recommends: \$10,000

*Was read, moved and seconded at \$10,000. Motion carried with no discussion.*

**ARTICLE 38.** To see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the following Unclassified accounts.

Statement of Fact	<u>Appropriated 2025</u>	<u>Requested 2026</u>
Franklin County Animal Shelter	\$ 3,366	\$ 3,479
Cemeteries	\$ 500	\$ 500
Payroll Taxes	<u>\$ 22,500</u>	<u>\$ 25,500</u>
	\$ 26,366	\$ 29,479

Select Board Recommends: \$29,479  
Budget Committee Recommends: \$29,479

*Was read, moved and seconded at \$29,479. Motion carried with no discussion.*

**ARTICLE 39.** To see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the Strong Community Events account.

Select Board Recommends: \$3,000  
Budget Committee Recommends: \$3,000

*Was read, moved and seconded at \$3,000. Motion carried with no discussion.*

*Moderator recognized Rupert Pratt who explained we need new flags for Main Street. The Galen Cole Family Foundation will match us for every flag we buy. Residents who offered to purchase flags: Pratt: 2;*

**Reed-Carrier: 2; Pond: 2; Bracy: 2; Worthley: 2; Lecours: 1; Hall: 2; Ayotte/Mispilkin: 1; Coolong: 1; Crogan: 5**

**ARTICLE 40.** To see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for Christmas lights.

Select Board Recommends: \$2,000

Budget Committee Recommends: \$2,000

***Was read, moved and seconded at \$2,000. Discussion about lights that break and whether or not they get fixed and go back up. Also a question if this is a carry-forward account. Motion carried.***

**ARTICLE 41.** To see if the Town will allow the Select Board to utilize \$4,800 in growth of funds invested in Linsco Private Ledger accounts and any other revenues, and to see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the Forster Building account.

Select Board Recommends: \$27,000

Budget Committee Recommends: \$27,000

***Was read, moved and seconded at \$27,000. Questions about any interest accrued in these accounts until the money is used. Much of the town's money is in investment accounts so that it will work for us. Motion carried.***

**ARTICLE 42.** To see if the Town will vote to allow any balances in the Forster Building account to be placed in the Forster Memorial Building Maintenance Reserve account. ***Was read, moved and seconded. Discussion about whether or not there is a plan for using the money in the reserve account. Plan is to set aside enough money to refinish the wood floor in the hall, and brickwork on the chimney. Also questions about if the money be used to fix the heat pumps in the town office. Andrew Bracy is repairing them at no cost to the town (1-2 days of labor). Motion carried.***

**ARTICLE 43.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$500.00 for the Septic Cluster Fund.

Select Board Recommends: Yes

Budget Committee Recommends: Yes

***Was read, moved and seconded. Discussion about a written agreement with the private homeowner and the pumping schedule. Motion carried.***

**ARTICLE 44.** Shall an ordinance entitled, "Community Tobacco-Free Policy" be enacted?

***Was read, moved and seconded. Discussion: with this policy in place, the police can enforce it. Which locations? The Legion field, town beach, Scott Paul park. Motion: carried (yes).***

**ARTICLE 45.** Shall an ordinance entitled, "Community Substance Use Policy" be enacted?

***Was read, moved and seconded. Question about enforces it (law enforcement). Motion carried (yes).***

**ARTICLE 46.** To see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the Economic Ministry.

By Request: \$4,000  
Select Board Recommends: No recommendation  
Budget Committee Recommends: \$4,000

*Was read, moved and seconded at \$4,000. Motion carried with no discussion.*

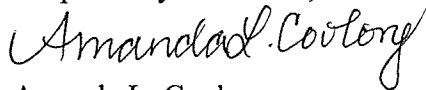
**ARTICLE 47.** To see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the Faith Works Food Bank.

By Request: \$4,000  
Select Board Recommends: No recommendation  
Budget Committee Recommends: \$4,000

*Was read, moved and seconded at \$4,000. Motion carried with no discussion.*

*Motion to adjourn by Gilbert Reed. Seconded by Richard Worthley. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 1:50pm.*

Respectfully submitted,



Amanda L. Coolong  
Strong Town Clerk

