

**State of New Hampshire  
Town of Northumberland  
2007 Results of Town Meeting**

The Annual Town Meeting for the Town of Northumberland was opened at 9:00 AM Tuesday, March 13, 2007 to act upon the subjects hereinafter mentioned. The polls were declared open for the reception of ballots on Article 1. Moderator Carl Ladd announced that the polls would remain open until 5:00 PM. The absentee ballots would be opened at 1:00 PM and the business-meeting portion would be opened at 7:00 PM. The Boy Scouts of America Troop 233 performed a flag presentation with Tiger Cub Christian Simpson leading residents with the Pledge of Allegiance. Moderator Ladd held a moment of silence for those men and women who have fought and are fighting for our freedom before going over rules of the meeting. The results of this Town Meeting are:  
Ballots cast – 601

**\*Article 1:** To choose by ballot the following Town Officers for the ensuing three years: one Selectmen, one Library Trustee, one Supervisor of the checklist, and one Trustee of Trust Fund.

<b>Selectmen:</b>	Robert H. Larson	362
	John J. Normand	138
	Write-in Richard Paradis	90

<b>Supervisor of the Checklist:</b>	Terri Charron	543
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<b>Trustee of Trust Funds:</b>	Reginald Charron	536
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<b>Library Trustee:</b>	Randy Blodgett	123
	Linda Caron	466

**Article 2:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,100 as a contribution for the support and services of Upper Connecticut Valley Mental Health Service and the Vershire Center.(Recommended by Selectmen)(.02 Tax Impact).

Motion by Brian Sullivan and seconded by Richard Paradis to accept article as read.

No further discussion. Voice vote. Article 2 passed as read.

**Article 3:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$11,454 for the purpose of supporting Weeks Medical Center – Home Health Services in the delivery of services to town residents.(Recommended by Selectmen)(.07 Tax Impact).

Motion by Mario Audit and seconded by Brian Sullivan to accept article as read.

Discussion Rebecca Craggy wanted to point out that this is one of 4 articles that provides goods or services to our elderly and asked everyone to be mindful when they vote and to keep in mind that how you vote may affect the elderly and the services that they may need.  
Allen Holmes said that his mother got charged \$75.00 for ½ hr call and suggested that this was self-supporting.  
Rebecca Craggy said that they look at each community for help as to how they can provide services to the elderly.  
Ann Pelchat said that money that the town gives helps the residents who do not have insurance or inadequate insurance and it helps pay for their services. This money picks up the slack. People who do have insurance get a bill.

No further discussion. Voice vote. Article 3 passed as read.

**Article 4:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,500 for the Groveton Cal Ripken Baseball Program, to be used to cover accident and liability insurance, tournaments, and registration fees. (Inserted on Petition of Voters)(Selectmen Recommend 3-0)(.02 Tax Impact).

Motion by Christopher Canton and seconded by Robert Larson to accept the article as read.

No further discussion. Voice vote. Article 4 passed as read.

**Article 5:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,500 for the Groveton Community Christmas Organization.(Recommended by Selectmen)(.02 Tax Impact).

Motion by Richard Paradis and seconded by Mario Audit to accept the article as read.

Discussion William Osgoode feels that this article should be cut out because the town doesn't need to contribute \$2500.00 each year for Christmas decorations.  
Joanne Shannon replied that the organization supplies the fruit baskets to elderly that are delivered and sponsors the Santa at the Moose Club. They do the decorations around town and raise much of the money on their own, but need the \$2500 for the hand full of people who work very hard. There is not much of an impact and everyone is hurting.  
Yvette Viger asked if this is for each year?  
Moderator Carl Ladd answered that this is for one year.

No further discussion. Voice vote. Article 5 passed as read.

**Article 6:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$250,000 to purchase the former Groveton Paper Board Building for town office,

police department and ambulance.(Recommended by Selectmen)(1.63 Tax Impact).

Motion by Brian Sullivan and seconded by Mario Audit to accept the article as read.

Discussion Lorna Aldrich wanted to say that this article is here because residents have asked for it. A lot of elderly or handicapped have trouble getting up the stairs. The Selectmen are very aware of the problems and didn't want to put the article in but since residents asked for it they decided to put it in front of the people. It would be nice to have one but probably not looking at it for another 3-4 years down the road.

Robert Larson recommended putting it off a year because of the \$1.63 impact.

Rose Roberge asked why it was hard for the elderly to get up here because there is a chair and wanted to know if it worked?

Lorna Aldrich answered that some people don't like using the chair and we have had to go down to the bottom of the stairs to help people up because they don't like it.

Norman Cotter asked if it was true that the sale of the GPB building only includes the building and not the parking lot?

Lorna Aldrich confirmed that this was correct.

No further discussion. Voice vote. Article 6 was defeated.

**Article 7:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$200,000 to purchase the Robert Mayhew building for town office, police department and ambulance. (This article will be passed over if Article 6 passes.).

Motion by Mario Audit and seconded by Richard Paradis to pass over this article.

No further discussion. Voice vote. Article 7 was passed over.

**Article 8:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,500 for the purpose of supporting the Groveton Chem Free Graduation Fund, these funds to be used to promote alcohol and drug-free youth by sponsoring a chemical-free graduation celebration. (Inserted on Petition of Voters)(Selectmen Recommend 3-0)(.01 Tax Impact).

Motion by Lisa Grimes and seconded by Donald Paquette to accept the article as read.

Discussion Uldric Bernard asked how much money do they have and how much money do they need?

Leslie Ruch responded that they have \$6600 not \$15,000 and the building itself was \$600.

Tonya Cloutier asked what the kids were doing to help raise the money? Also, she asked if there was an alternate location?

Lisa Grimes answered that they sold 4-wheeler tickets, did a road toll, and sold food as the soccer jamboree. So they have done fundraisers. They do not have any other facility that offers the swimming, racquetball and the things that the Four Seasons has to offer.

Terrance Bedell said that if the building was only \$600 then there's a slush fund left over right because they have \$6600?

Donald Paquette added that the Chem. Free committee needs to raise \$8000-\$10,000 to have a good party. Graduation night was special and they didn't want the kids out drinking. They had to hire entertainment to come in.

Elaine Connary actually searched for other facilities. The Four Seasons was least expensive. Loon Mountain was \$1500, Bretton Woods is now privatized and others were just too expensive. The committee wanted to provide extras for the graduating kids such as a DJ, swimming and other prizes as an incentive to get the kids to go. \$600 wasn't a bad price. The community was excellent at providing food but needs a lot to be provided and also expressed that it was about the kids not having their own party and drinking.

Yvette Viger asked how many seniors in the class?

Lisa Grimes answered 33.

Richard Cotter made a motion to move the question.

Donald Paquette seconded it.

Voice vote to move the question. Passed.

No further discussion. Voice vote. Article 8 passed as read.

**Article 9:** To see if the Town of Groveton will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,500 (One Thousand Five hundred Dollars) to support Senior Wheels Demand Response Program. (Inserted on Petition of Voters)(Selectmen Recommend 3-0)(.01 Tax Impact).

Motion by John Normand and seconded by James Tierney to accept the article as read.

Discussion John Normand gave a brief description of the program. He said that this runs 5 days a week and he runs 3 days a week in town, Mon-Wed. They operate just on contributions and that is why the program would like a little support. The bus runs from Groveton to Lancaster and Whitefield.

No further discussion. Voice vote. Article 9 passed as read.

**Article 10:** To see if the voters will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,650 (one thousand six hundred and fifty dollars) to help support The Caleb Interfaith Volunteer Caregiver Program that serves the needs of elderly and disabled people in the community. (Inserted on Petition of Voters)(Selectmen Recommend 3-0)(.01 Tax Impact).

Motion by Lorna Aldrich and seconded by Rose Roberge to accept the article as read.

No further discussion. Article 10 passed as read.

**Article 11:** To see if the voters will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,970.00 for the Senior Meals Program on behalf of the North Country Elder Program. Meals served to Groveton residents was 8,586 which is an increase over last year of 10.8%. (Recommended by Selectmen)(.01Tax Impact).

Motion by Brian Sullivan and seconded by Mario Audit to accept the article as read.

Discussion John Normand gave a description of the program. It is a 5-day program including 3 hot meals brought in 3 days a week with frozen meals included to last 5 days. 8586 meals just in this town alone. This program runs on donations only. The sometimes receive a money donation in little envelopes but depend on the town to help out. The town appropriates \$16,000 to feed the seniors at the church for 2 days a week so this is just a small amount for 5 days.

No further discussion. Voice vote. Article 11 passed as read.

**Article 12:** Shall the town adopt the provisions of RSA 31:95-b providing that any town at an annual meeting may adopt an article authorizing indefinitely, until specific rescission of such authority, the selectmen to apply for, accept and expend, without further action by the town meeting, unanticipated money from a state, federal, or other governmental unit or a private source which becomes available during the fiscal year? (No Tax Impact)

Motion by Brian Sullivan and seconded by Mario Audit to accept the article as read.

Discussion James Tierney asks to add one sentence to amend this article. He amended this article to read the same with the addition of "The acceptance of the unanticipated funds shall have no increased tax impact on the town in future years".

Motion made by James Tierney to accept the amendment to article 12 and second by Donald Paquette. Voice vote. The amendment to article 12 accepted.

Robert Larson said that this article allows the selectmen to search for grants and other aid to come into this town. He agrees with Mr. Tierney that he doesn't want to see any further tax commitment other than what is already given to them.

Nancy Joy said that nothing is in there about reporting back and how it's reported to the town's people for the tax impact. A grant requires an evaluation process.

Lorna Aldrich said that she had no problem with it if she wanted to make an amendment. It would be in the town report on grants and money received and how it was expended.

No further discussion. Voice vote. The amendment to Article 12 passed as read. Article 12 passed as amended.

**Article 13:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$16,000 to hire the services of George Sansoucy to assess the Public Utilities in the town of Northumberland. This amount is in addition to the services of our current assessor Brett S. Purvis & Associate. (Recommended by Selectmen) (.10 Tax Impact).

Motion by Richard Paradis and seconded by Mario Audit to accept the article as read.

Discussion Uldric Bernard asked what recourse does the town's people have if we are unhappy with Mr. Sansoucy? What if they screw it up?

Brian Sullivan responded that there is no guarantee if it goes up the taxes go up and if it goes down the taxes go down. There is no guarantee of how it goes.

Robert Larson said that he had studied the utility stuff pretty hard and that he has reason to believe that there are utilities that were missed. Mr. Sansoucy has a very high track record and it would be worth our while to pick up the lost assets.

Ellen Gries asked if article 22 was the same?

Lorna Aldrich answered that the Selectmen had already inserted article 13 and that article 22 came in by petition. There was no difference in the articles and by law the article has to go on the warrant. We can pass over article 22 if 13 passes.

Rob Larson spoke up and said that there was no difference between the two articles.

Deborah Weeks asked what was better 22 or 13? Which one was protecting the people more?

Robert Larson said that he wrote article 22 and it's basically the same. The verbiage was the only difference. The Selectmen's should be considered first. The petitioners had signed the petition in the meantime but it's the same. He doesn't want article 22 to be heard.

Moderator Ladd said that court cases in the past the voters carry the weight.

Lorna Aldrich said that town council and DRA review the warrants.

Elizabeth Pearce said that article 13 specifies whom we'll hire and 22 does not.

Robert Larson said that article 13 is better than his article.

Dwight Noyes asked if there was any recourse through Purvis from the \$16,000 and why hire Sansoucy?

Lorna Aldrich explained that Sansoucy is the person because it is his expertise and specialty. She went on to say that no one would know if any of the utilities were missed or under assessed so the town wants to hire him because of his expertise.

Robert Larson added that Mr. Sansoucy does his work all over the USA.

Dwight Noyes expressed his displeasure of having to pay for assessments twice.

Shelly Fleury said that article 22 has different wording and covers more.

Robert Larson apologized to everyone for being confused over article 13 and 22. He said that Mr. Sansoucy would assess the utilities, which includes PSNH, Verizon, the CoGen, Portland Gas, etc. He thinks that we are lacking in our assessment of the commercial properties but that residential wasn't missed.

Tom Grimes asked why Groveton Paper Board wasn't assessed properly?

Elaine Gray responded that the assessor had told her that GPB was not assessed equally with Wausau and he brought it up to date. Our previous assessor did not assess this correctly. The assessment had to be brought up to what it should be.

Robert Larson said that GPB is not commercial. It was on page 74 of the Town Report as a utility. There are things that were missed and GPB was one of them.

Lee Rice Jr. made a motion to move the question. Seconded by Richard Cotter. Voice vote. Question moved.

No further discussion. Voice vote. Article 13 passed as read.

**Article 14:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$27,500 to purchase 1 lot and an Easement on Graham Street from Addison Hall.(Recommended by Selectmen)(.18 Tax Impact).

Motion made by Brian Sullivan and seconded by Richard Paradis to accept the article as read.

Discussion Moderator Ladd Presented written notice by 7 registered voters to have a secret ballot.

Kim Deblois asked what the purpose was in buying this piece of land?

Brian Sullivan explained that utilities went through the land without an easement and that the town had 3 choices, to buy the land, move the utility, or take it by eminent domain. Blasting would cost a lot. At some point the utilities were put across the land without permission.

Kim Deblois said that during the years of 1983-1986 the taxes were not paid by Mr. Hall and that Vern Gadwah was the owner at that time and did sign an easement allowing the town to use the land for the utility.

Brian Sullivan said that the legal council hadn't found anything as far as he knows.

Kim Deblois said that she referred to the tax blotters and that Mr. Gadwah signed the easement letting the town use his land. In 1993 her father in law (Richard Deblois) owned the land and gave it to Addison Hall. She has written verification of all that through researching in the Town Office and Registry of Deeds. She said that the taxes are high enough and that there were other things to vote on right now.

Ron Caron said that the assessed value of this land is \$1700 and if we purchased it for \$27,500 then our values would go up again. The town has other places in town that have similar circumstances.

Allen Holmes said that Ron was right. He has a line running through his property and he might be interested in selling it.

Addison Hall didn't recall the land being given to him. The deed shows that he has owned that land since he was 19 years old. \$21,000 was the estimate by Twin State to move if there were not any problems. He gave no one permission to put that on his property. He could have sold it but after it was studied found that it wasn't buildable. He added that on a second piece of land there was a well destroyed that had been there since before he was born. He also had attorney fees invested and lost a considerable amount of money and felt that the town owed him something.

Barbara Benoit asked Addison if Vern Gadwah had anything to do with it because she couldn't remember that.

Addison Hall replied to her that Mr. Gadwah didn't have anything to do with this.

Ron Caron said that he felt bad for Mr. Hall and that we are responsible for moving the pipe, a little blasting and the lead to remove as well. He feels that the highway crew could do it and that the town could cover it. He said that if the pipe was moved then there could be a house built there to bring in tax revenue.

Addison Hall responded that he wasn't against what Ron said but that he felt the well should be replaced and attorney that he has spent to be reimbursed to him.

Robert Perras added that Mr. Sullivan had made a false statement. He said that the town does take things by eminent domain due to the sewer project that the town had built on his father's land. He said that this was common practice and that we are heading for disaster. We must be accountable for what we do and how much we spend.

Albert Paquette asked when this line got put in?

Richard Paradis said that it was done in 1984.

Albert Paquette asked why it was being brought to our attention now?

Addison Hall answered that three years ago when he was trying to sell this property they found that this was on his property. Someone checked it out and found sewage and so it wasn't buildable therefore he lost the sale. He said that Diane Daley could verify that. He didn't know it was there because he was living in Colebrook at the time.

Shelly Fleury said that Clifton and Nellie Hall deeded this property to Vern Gadwah in 1958 and in 1986 her father bought it. She had the

information right in her hand. She said that Addison Hall did not own this property at this time frame. In 1993 Richard Deblois, her father, gave up the parcel of land to Mr. Hall.

Addison Hall responded that Vern Gadwah thought he owned the property but that he really didn't. He said that he had the maps and the deed. Colin Sutherland surveyed it and Vern never owned it.

Ervin Connary made a motion to pass this article over until the town can find out whom the real owner was. Nancy Marshall seconded this.

No further discussion. Voice vote. Article 14 was passed over.

**Article 15:** To see if the Town will vote to modify the elderly exemptions from property tax in the Town of Northumberland based on assessed value, for qualified taxpayers, to be as follows: for a person 65 years of age up to 75 years of age \$10,000; for a person 75 years of age up to 80 years of age \$15,000; for a person 80 years of age or older \$20,000. To qualify, the person must have been a New Hampshire resident for at least 3 consecutive years, own the real estate individually or jointly, or if the real estate is owned by such person's spouse, they must have been married for at least 5 consecutive years. In addition, the taxpayer must have a net income of not more than \$15,000 or, if married a combined net income of less than \$25,000; and own net assets not in excess of \$35,000 excluding the value of the person's personal residence and up to 2 acres of land.

Motion by Brian Sullivan and seconded by Richard Paradis to accept the article as read.

Discussion Robert Larson offered an amendment to read:

To see if the town will vote to modify the elderly exemptions from property tax in the town of Northumberland based on assessed value, for qualified taxpayers, to be as follows: for a person 65 years of age and up to 75 years of age, \$50,000 off of assessed value; for a person 75 years of age up to 80 years of age, \$75,000 off of assessed value; for a person 80 years of age or older, \$100,000 off of assessed value. To qualify, the person must have been a Northumberland resident for at least 5 consecutive years, own the real estate individually or jointly, or if the real estate is owned by such person's spouse, they must have been married for at least 5 consecutive years. In addition, the taxpayer must have a net income of not more than \$26,800 or if married a combined net income of not more than \$40,400 and own net assets not in excess of \$75,000 excluding the value of the person's personal residence consisting of up to 2 acres. Motion by Robert Larson and seconded by Nelson Fontaine.

Discussion James M. Gonyer asked if this calculation goes with the rate of inflation? Robert Larson responded that the original elderly exemption law was written in 1996 and that this elderly exemption had to be rewritten for the

rate of inflation, income, assets and would again need to be done in 10 years.

Harry Lee Rice Jr asked if this was 29 cents per thousand for the working person and isn't it already 10 cents?

Robert Larson answered that yes, it was that.

Harry Lee Rice Jr. said that he was trying to understand this better and wanted clarification.

Robert Larson said that he appreciated the question and that he understood the high tax impact and he understood the economy of the town. He wanted to put the money back in the pockets of our elderly and that the elderly in town were in trouble. He wants them to have money for home repair and Medicaid. He said that \$29 a year to keep the elderly in their homes (based on an assessment of 100,000) wasn't a lot and that he didn't mind. He knows this because he's in real estate.

Lorna Aldrich explained that the current article was only a 4-cent tax impact and that you only had to be a resident for 3 years.

Denise Normand added that the town needed "X" amount of dollars to operate and that the young people pick up the slack.

Kathy Locke wanted to reiterate what she had put in the newspaper. There are young people now that will be elderly down the road. We need to help the elderly now. The young people can work several jobs to make up for what the elderly cannot.

Ron Caron made a motion to move the amendment. Donald Paquette seconded it. Voice vote. Divide the house. 217 YES 87 NO amendment passed.

#### Discussion on the passed amendment

Rebecca Craggy said that in 5-6 years the baby boomer population would be able to qualify for this.

Allen Holmes added that perhaps a better way to aide our seniors is to cut the taxes not spend more.

Louis Frechette said at the 28-cent impact someone should know how much there are. If there are more, where does the money come from?

Robert Larson said that there are 27 who qualify right now and this amendment will bring it up to 35.

Leon Lacroix asked how income is verified and if someone were disabled would that be included?

Rebecca Craggy answered that there was an application and that when they come in it will divulge some information such as sources of income and debts.

Leon Lacroix also asked if they had to show their IRS return?

Rebecca Craggy answered yes and that the information doesn't stay at the town office due to privacy issues. She added that no one is receiving total disability and elderly exemption at the same time.

Allan Bryant asked if there are 35 who qualify then the rest of the elderly pay?

Robert Larson answered that yes they would have to pay.

James M Gonyer asked about a trust. Would anyone who planned for his or her Estate qualify? Is it separate or individual?

Robert Larson answered that they did not qualify.

Elaine Gray responded that yes, they do qualify and that a special form that was available in the office could be signed by the trustee.

Donald Paquette said that he was trying to understand. He said that 200 people were going to pay so that 35 can get a break

Edward Bezanson asked if there was any problem with extra taxes? He added that the new plant would hopefully be coming in along with more families moving to the area.

Richard Cotter made a motion to move the amended question. Donald Paquette seconded it.

No further discussion. Voice vote. The amended article 15 was defeated.

**Article 16:** Shall we increase the optional veterans' tax credit from its current amount of \$50 to \$100 such amounts to be subtracted each year from the property tax on the veteran's residential property?

Motion by Brian Sullivan and seconded by Melinda Kennett to accept the article as read.

Discussion Nancy Joy asked what the impact on taxes would be?

Elaine Gray answered that it would be a 10-cent impact and is currently a 5-cent impact now.

Allen Holmes said that the vet exemption is a nice thank you and that \$50 is plenty. He wants to cut taxes.

Michael Cloutier disagreed and said that the vets give an awful lot and we need to give something back.

No further discussion. Voice vote. Article 16 passed as read.

**Article 17:** To see if the town will vote to delegate the duties and responsibilities of the cemetery trustees to the board of selectmen? (No Tax Impact)

Motion made by Brian Sullivan and seconded by Mario Audit to accept the article as read.

Discussion Terri Charron explained that the reason this request was in there is that the Cemetery folks found out that they are a committee and that means that they have no say. They want to declare themselves as Trustees and as of right now they are begging the state and anyone else for the \$28,000 to move 8 of our loved ones. This article would allow the Selectmen to have the say until they can get into a trust.

Edward Bezanson said that he was at a meeting a month or so ago and that he wondered if the money was going to be used for wetlands or is it going to be used for the cemetery?

Lorna Aldrich said that this didn't include the cemetery. There were no funds offered.

Edward Bezanson said that the chief was there and that the suggestion was made to have money go for taxes by the wetlands.

Chief Lloyd Tippitt was confused and said that at the meeting he never asked him to leave and didn't know what he was talking about.

Richard Cotter made a motion to move the question and John Normand seconded it.

No further discussion. Voice vote. Article 17 passed as read.

**Article 18:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty four thousand five hundred dollars \$24,500 to modify the wiring at the Groveton High School. This will allow the town to use the generator in the event of emergency involving power outages. This generator was received by a grant in 2003. (Recommended by Selectmen)(.16 Tax Impact)

Motion by Brian Sullivan and seconded by Mario Audit to accept the article as read.

Discussion Ron Caron said that the history on this is that the town received a grant and that the \$5800 was well worth it. He was totally against this article because of the installation fees being very expensive. He said that the fuel would be expensive. He said that he also believes that this should have been installed within 6 months after we got it. He also said that once this is tied to the school that the added expenses would be an obligation of the school board and their budget.

Leon Lacoix asked if the generator had any value and perhaps could be swapped for something for the emergency shelter?

Ron Caron said that there is a set of rule that we don't meet. We cannot install this now until we get permission from FEMA. This would have to be inspected and audited. None of this has been done and it has not been started.

Robert Pinette asked if we could just swap it for something smaller?

Allan Bryant said that we own it.

Sheldon Belanger added that it is a different configuration from other towns.

Robert Pinette if we would lose the money?

Sheldon Belanger said that the money was spent and it is gone. We got none back.

Ron Caron said that surrounding towns have 430-3 amp or excess of 200 amps and up. Most towns have 240-volt single phase and 100 amps. To locate it you'd have to move the walls and get PSNH here to move the

wires. Better off giving it back and buy one that is bare minimum. Serious emergency wouldn't have school. We would have to house everyone for the night. He said that a smaller one would be more effective. He wants one more portable.

Leon Lacoix asked what the town had for portable generators now?

Ron Caron answered that the fire department had some and the town has an AKW that runs one pump.

Leon Lacroix asked if they were big enough to do the job?

Ron Caron answered that it wasn't big enough. The town needs a 3-phase generator for the furnace.

Allan Bryant said that the purpose of this generator is to house people for months much like a hospital and not necessarily to heat. It's for big scale and saving lives.

Rae-Deanne Hurlbutt wondered that if other towns have smaller why do we need bigger?

Sheldon Belanger said that the paperwork came from the EMS manager at the time of this sale. This would cost several millions of dollars.

Brian Sullivan said that the fact is as big as it is it's not big enough to run this place. Purchased for 3-phase and it is portable. It is not easy because of the size. This can be wired and that Ron was approached at the time. He felt that the high school was the only place to go in case of a disaster.

Ron Caron said that he wasn't involved in the purchase and that he never suggested a portable generator. The \$24,500 is to take the hard pipe to fuel the system and to put a concrete slab down with a fence around it so it would be pretty much permanent. It would run all but the elevators and the welders in the building. He said he could bid on this job and get it but doesn't believe it's a good idea.

No further discussion. Voice vote. Article 18 was defeated.

**Article 19:** To see if the town will vote to authorize the selectmen to accept for consideration requests for community revitalization tax relief incentives pursuant to RSA 79-E. If adopted, this warrant article will allow owners of downtown buildings who intend to substantially rehabilitate those buildings to apply to the selectmen for tax relief.

Motion by Brian Sullivan and seconded by Lorna Aldrich to accept the article as read.

Discussion James Tierney asked what the article meant by "intent"?  
Kathy Locke responded and explained that the incentive program is for tax relief after the building is remodeled. The tax break would be for the part that was renovated. So if your building was assessed at \$100,000 now and the new stuff was \$5000 or \$10,000 that is the tax incentive break that we asked for. The GREAT committee talked to the select board back in October and the Governor put this into law in July. GREAT is hoping and working very hard at revitalizing the town. GREAT has talked to the

banks about low interest loans for businesses to be able to complete renovations for the GREAT group to accomplish this. The businesses that they have talked to are on board with them.

Uldric Bernard asked if this was for 1 year or multi year?

Kathy Locke answered that it was for 5 years.

Mark Robinson asked if this was for commercial or residential?

Kathy Locke said that it was for Main St. buildings only.

Terri Charron asked what Main St consisted of? How far is Main St. going to run?

Kathy Locke said that it was the downtown street that runs from the GPB building to the railroad tracks. Main St. is what we are working on right now.

Lorna Aldrich added that Main St. started at the railroad tracks.

Charlotte Sheltry a GREAT group member corrected Mrs. Locke and said that State St. was also included.

Kathy Locke said that she was corrected and it included the State St. and Main St. to revitalize the downtown area.

No further discussion. Voice vote. Article 19 was defeated.

**Article 20:** To see if the Town will vote to do away with the following article that the selectmen have imposed on the tax payers as of Jan 2007. Section 7.02-Septage Hauler Fees As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007, there will be a charge of \$80.00 on the first 1,000 gallons dumped into the Northumberland Wastewater Treatment Plants by a State Certified Hauler and a rate for gallons exceeding 1,000 gallons dumped at .080 per gallon. (Ex. 1,100 gallons x .080=\$88.00). Septage haulers will be required to come to the town office to pick up a key before dumping the septage and return the key to the office to get their weight slip to be filled out. Septage haulers will be billed on a monthly basis. Any delineation from this process could add a surcharge the haulers monthly bill.(Inserted by Petition of voters).

Motion made by Donald Paquette and seconded by Uldric Bernard.

Discussion Rebecca Craggy said that the fee that is charged is charged to haulers not to the resident. There are currently 2 haulers right now.

Uldric Bernard wanted to thank the petitioners for helping him. Those who signed were being double charged because they are already assessed for the septic system and are paying to have it pumped. The haulers will add the dump fee to the bill and he will have to pay \$306.00 to be pumped. The \$80 would be charged to him. He would love to be on the town system.

Rebecca Craggy said that currently there are 182 septic users in town and the assessment on the septic system is \$4500. The town only sees \$6.84 per thousand to use towards revenues to offset our expenses. That only comes to \$30.78 per year. This will generate income of \$5601 from these

haulers to use to offset expenses. She said that she talked to one of the septic haulers and that he charges \$175 for an average of a pumping of 2 years. That equals \$87.50 a year to have system pumped. If a citizen is on the town sewer they pay \$390.50 a year. This is a way to offset that and this is only going to offset in a small way. They could have collected \$9-10 thousand in fees. The town is looking for ways to help offset expenses because it is getting more expensive to treat the system and she would love to trade places with someone who has a septic system.

Donald Paquette said that he had heard that this whole thing had started because the town didn't trust a hauler. If we can't trust them shouldn't we sign a slip or something? As far as people who do have septic we have paid on the sewer bond for 30 years and would rather be on town sewer.

Uldric Bernard asked that why out of the tax rate of \$26.21/ thousand is the town only keeping \$30? How come?

Rebecca Craggy answered that the portions of the tax bill go to other entities such as the town, school, county and state.

Gerald Crompton said that \$390.50 for a single family how much sewage does a family use per year? How many gallons?

Rebecca Craggy said that she didn't know but that maybe Richard Marshall can address that.

Richard Marshall said that it's about 101.8 gallons per day.

Lorna Aldrich added that there were 2 public hearings for this ordinance and only a handful of people showed up. This is only an advisory if the article passes. The time to change this is when at the public hearing on the ordinance is. Mr. Bernard was told that before he did the petition.

Tracey Morrill said that if the resolution does pass and it's not acted upon then we had the wrong people as Selectmen.

Richard Marshall said that the whole system was taking in about 125,700 from outside users and the average was about 380 per day for people on town sewer.

Uldric Bernard added that when he put the petition in he wanted in so that people could vote on it. He had gotten the letter from Lorna after he had already started.

Jennifer Fennell said that the 300+ people on town sewer have someone to call if they have a problem and that she didn't have anyone.

Yvette Viger said that it was better off flushing into the town. Then they wouldn't have any payment on building a septic that can cost up to \$10,000.

Christopher Canton said that people on the system are responsible for their pipes to the curbside. He just recently replaced his materials from the house to the road.

A member of the audience (who did not identify themselves and was unknown by the moderator or myself) asked how the gate was going to be locked? He added that there was no gate and that people were allowed access to it because of the snowmobile trail.

Rebecca Craggy answered that there is a lock in place on top of the tank. Haulers have to stop and get a key at the office and a weight slip and return it when they are done.

Richard Cotter made a motion to move the question and Donald Paquette seconded it.

No further discussion. Voice vote. Article 20 (an advisory) passed as read.

**Article 21:** To see if the town will vote to suspend the use of meters for water billing purposes and retain the flat water rate until April 1, 2012. (Inserted by Petition of voters).

Motion by Richard Marshall and seconded by Jana Marshall to accept the article as read.

Discussion Moderator Ladd informed the crowd that the article would be dealt with by secret ballot.

Richard Marshall said that PSNH and other places charge for meters. Water system belongs to us and that we have no stockholders to answer to. If we bill by meters the elderly have gardens and such that use a lot of water and do they stop? He said he didn't want to pick on the elderly but his own mother was deaf and if she had a leak she wouldn't be able to hear it. How do they pay for it? During the summer kids like to run under the sprinkler and that will cost more to do more. When most people get a drink they like to let the water run and now we have to pay Public Service more now for more. People in town like to wash cars and driveways. On the other hand the people who let their water run in the winter so that they don't freeze we give them an abatement. No one is really abusing the system. One time a serious problem arose and it was under control in 5 days. During a 40-year cycle you have young kids using a lot of water and then when you are elderly you use less water and with the cycle of life that happens. The same amount of water comes from the cycle of a house over years. The average use of water is about a dollar a day. Water meters in your house do not do a thing for a leak in the town. If you have a neighbor who is abusing it let them know.

Thomas Grimes asked what would change between now and the date in the article?

Richard Marshall said that he had to pick a year and didn't want it brought up at the meeting every year over the next several years.

David Auger said that 2 years ago it was voted on at town meeting to go to water meter billing. In 2006 it was voted to be put off until the water project was complete. This is slated to start this year on April 1. A flat rate = one size fits all. If someone doesn't have much water use it's not fair that they pay for it. He has talked to a Steve Deldeo and that his comment was he strongly recommended us of water meters to be fair. The consumption part of water reading is a minimal. The average family of 4 uses about 80,000 gallons of water a year, which is like a visual of 8

tankers truckloads. Most use less than 65,000 gallons per year. This will help with tax bills no doubt because you would be saving money on water. Please vote no.

Ron Caron said that he had been on the committee for several years and had argued with Richard Marshall many times. He feels that 1 unit of water is an endless amount of water. We cannot tell you to shut it off if you pay your bill and he pays for 11 units of water. Some customers use more water than the total of his 4 buildings together. Elderly would be shocked to see bills go up. He believes you should pay for what you use. Vote this down.

Norman Cotter asked what the rate would be if we go to the meters? Will it be an adjusted rate? Will it be correct? He said that he didn't want his bill to go up.

Lorna Aldrich answered that we didn't know because we don't know the variables yet. The Selectmen would have to wait for the budget to adjust the rate. Two years ago it was purposed to be \$2.42 per thousand gallons on different size meters and pipes. No figure would be done until the budget was voted on.

Norman Cotter asked what the average usage was per household?

Winston Hawes said that the average usage is 65,000 gallons per year. 47,000 was the average on residential per year. There were about 180 high end users. A flat rate doesn't allow savings. Meters do allow savings. About 380 low end users use less than 50,000 a year. All have generated a history. If this remains the same they should go down on their bills. He believes that the figures will be about the same as what was speculated last year.

John McLeod said that he sees a lot of bottles of water on the table and basically one of those bottles of water is what he got charged today for the whole day and he thinks that is a heck of a bargain.

Robert Larson said that he was not on the water meter system but it seems to him that he would give the individuals a choice so that if they want to save money they can cut back so now they have a choice. It's a matter of choice.

Ervin Connary said that we can always come back in years to what we charge now and urged everyone to try it for a year.

Richard Cotter made a motion to move the question and Albert Paquette seconded it.

No further discussion. Secret ballot vote. 259 ballots cast. 91 YES 166 NO 2 blank.  
Article 21 was defeated.

**Article 22:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Sixteen Thousand Dollars (\$16,000) to perform a Jeopardy Assessment, in accordance with RSA 76:10-a, of all non-residential property in the Town of Northumberland. Including, but not in limitation thereof, all commercial, industrial, utility and power generating property located in

the municipality.(Inserted by Petition of Voters)(Selectmen Do No Recommend 3-0)(.10 Tax Impact).

Motion by Robert Larson and seconded by Ron Caron to pass over this article.

No further discussion. Voice vote. Article 22 was passed over.

**Article 23:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,286 to be deposited in the Ambulance Capital Reserve Fund, said sum to come from the town's undesignated fund balance (surplus).(Recommended by Selectmen) (No Tax Impact)

Motion by Brian Sullivan and seconded by Richard Paradis to accept the article as read.

Discussion Ron Caron noted that this does affect taxes. Vote no and it will be put back to offset taxes.

Richard Cotter said that there was no tax impact on the town and that this is put away for a new ambulance. If this goes away there's no new ambulance.

Allan Bryant said that currently there is about \$300 in the Capital Reserve Fund for a new ambulance. The oldest one now is 10 years old and that we needed to start saving now so that when it was time to get a new one the money would be there.

No further discussion. Voice vote. Divide the house. 64 YES and 186 NO by standing Vote. Article 23 was defeated.

**Article 24:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,734,510 which represents the operating budget of the Town, said sum exclusive of special or individual articles addressed. (Recommended by Selectmen).

Motion made by Brian Sullivan and seconded by Mario Audit to accept the article as read.

Discussion Mario Audit made a motion to amend the article and Lorna Aldrich seconded it. Mario's amendment changed the \$2,734,510 to \$2,539,510 a difference of \$195,000.

Discussion on the amendment

Ron Caron said that he wanted the people to vote this amendment down because he was going to propose one for \$2,450,921.00 instead of this amendment.

Robert Larson said that according to the 2006 the budget that was approved was \$2,604,341.00 and that the amount spent was \$2,263,782.

That's a difference of \$340,559. Question to the board, where is the surplus? Where is it in the budget criteria?

Lorna Aldrich Said that it was in the unreserved fund balance, which DRA recommends. They have to keep 5% for overlay and they added to the \$30,000 another \$50,000 to it because of the reassessment and abatements this past year.

Robert Larson said he was not sure where the \$340,000 is disclosed in that document. Should be where we can find it.

Michael Phillips said that we have \$340,000 in surplus hidden from us and the people in charge sitting up front are responsible for that. Vote this amendment down because they are working with sloppy numbers and we deserve better than that.

No further discussion on the amendment from Mr. Audit. Voice vote. The amendment to article 24 was defeated.

Discussion Ron Caron made a motion to amend the article. He proposed the number to be from \$2,734,510 to read \$2,450,921. He said that the Selectmen could take the numbers out of any line that they so choose.  
John Normand seconded it.

Voice vote. The amended proposal from Ron Caron passed.

Discussion on the amendment

Rebecca Newton asked what we were spending \$50,000 on interest for?

Lorna Aldrich answered that it was for bonds that are listed in the Town report.

Rebecca Newton asked if it was for water and sewer too or taxes only?

Lorna Aldrich answered it is for the water project bond of 1993, 1990 transfer station and pool bond of 2004.

No further discussion. Voice vote. The amendment to Article 24 was passed as read.

**Article 25:** To see if the Town will vote to instruct the Selectmen to appoint all other officers as required by law.

Motion by Brian Sullivan and seconded by Mario Audit to accept the article as read.

No further discussion. Voice vote. Article 25 passed as read.

**Article 26:** To hear reports of agents, auditors, committees or other officers heretofore chosen and pass any vote relating thereto.

Motion by Brian Sullivan and seconded by Mario Audit to accept the article as read.

Discussion Christopher Canton introduced himself as the Planning Board chairperson. He invited people to come to more meetings. More important is that we have an opportunity to plan for the future. Companies want to come in that can greatly impact our taxes in a positive way. He said that many meetings are coming up and to be sure to go to the school meeting next Tuesday. We have to vote to allow the school board to have the option to sell the land to this company. Vote at the meeting. The Planning Board plans for the future.

**Article 27:** To transact any other business that may be legally brought before said meeting.

Motion by Brian Sullivan and seconded by Mario Audit to accept the article as read.

Discussion Ron Caron thanked the people for supporting his amendment. He complained that it cost a lot of money to get copies from the town office. Copies are \$1 per page. As taxpayers we have the right to get a copy of our budget. The SAU office charges within reason or not at all. Most places are 25 cents a copy.

Lorna Aldrich presented Greg Kenison with the Employee of the Year award.

Kathy Locke presented Jeannie Hagenbucher a certificate for her 10 years as Supervisor of the Checklist.

Moderator Ladd read an official announcement from State Rep. Bill Remick:

“The finance committee of NH House of Representatives will be in the North Country to discuss the proposed state budget. The meeting will be held on March 15, 2007 at the WMRHS from 4:00 to 7:00 PM. “

Mr. Remick would like to encourage people to come. This meeting is usually held in Concord and he has worked hard to push to have this meeting in the North Country so he wants it well attended

Rebecca Craggy told everyone that if there were any questions about the usage information to contact Winston Hawes.

No further discussion. Voice vote. Article 27 passed as read.

Motion by John Normand and seconded by Ron Caron to adjourn.

Motion to adjourn passed unanimously by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 10:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Melinda Kennett, Town Clerk, Town of Northumberland

