

**TOWN OF LEBANON  
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING — March 24, 2022  
MINUTES**

The special town meeting of the electors and those qualified to vote at the town meetings of the Town of Lebanon was held on Monday, March 24, 2022 at Lyman Memorial High School Auditorium, 917 Exeter Road. Audience: 44

First Selectman Kevin Cwikla called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

First Selectman Kevin Cwikla called for the nomination of a Moderator.

Moved by Fran Malozzi, seconded by Nick Poppiti to appoint Diane Malozzi as Moderator. Vote called – Motion passed.

Moderator Malozzi reviewed Town Meeting rules and protocol.

Moved by Betsy Petrie-McComber seconded by Meghan Bruce to wave the reading of the call of the Special Town meeting dated March 24, 2022. Vote called – Motion passed unanimously.

Moderator Malozzi asked for a motion to bring the item 1 to the floor.

Moved by Betsy Petrie-McComber, seconded by Kevin Cwikla, to bring item 1 to the floor: “Consider and act upon authorizing the use of General Fund Balance to fund the following capital projects: as identified on the screen and on the town meeting handout (“Replacement of Outdoor Basketball Court for \$65,000; 27 Breathing Apparatus Pack Replacement (incl. RITs, compressor) for \$445,000; Dead Tree Removal for \$60,000; New Fieldstone Wall at North Lebanon Cemetery for \$30,000; New Police Cruiser \$70,000; New DPW Director Truck - Ford F-250 w/Plow for \$15,000 (in addition to existing funds); LES/LMS – Phase one of Asbestos Abatement tile/wall board replacement and projected contingency for \$160,000; New Over-Rail Mower for \$125,000.”) Vote called- motion passed unanimously.

Board of Finance Vice Chair, Meghan Bruce spoke to the question as follows: These projects total \$970,000.00 which all have been identified by Boards and Commissions. These projects have been a part of Long-Term Capital Planning which is a joint effort between Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen. A number of these projects including the basketball courts, police cruiser, the breathing apparatus for the fire department and the additional funds for the DPW Director truck were purposely not paid for last year as part of the capital budgets knowing a surplus was expected. There was surplus that rolled into fund balance, and we waited for the audit to be completed before bringing to town meeting. The fund balance currently stands at \$5,741,376.00. The Board of Finance has had a policy to keep fund balance at 15 to 18 percent of the total operating budget. That number represents 28.1 percent. We want to make certain taxpayers funds are being used responsibly. If approved tonight, the fund balance will be reduced and will be back around 18 percent. It is important to stay 15-18 percent as the Library project will be going to bonding this summer after completion of the project.

Moderator Malozzi opened the floor to questions/comments.

Sheree Swenson, Leonard Bridge Road: Appreciates the good work by Board of Finance. Pleased to see these items on the list for expenditures. Town is in good financial shape; most responsible thing is to spend money on projects, especially at a time during high inflation when money sitting is not growing at a good rate. Important to maintain assets and to keep things in good working order. Happy to support item 1 tonight.

There were no further questions/comments from the audience.

Moderator Malozzi called the question "Consider and act upon authorizing the use of General Fund Balance to fund the following capital projects" as identified on the screen. (Replacement of Outdoor Basketball Court for \$65,000; 27 Breathing Apparatus Pack Replacement (incl. RITs, compressor) for \$445,000; Dead Tree Removal for \$60,000; New Fieldstone Wall at North Lebanon Cemetery for \$30,000; New Police Cruiser \$70,000; New DPW Director Truck - Ford F-250 w/Plow for \$15,000 (in addition to existing funds); LES/LMS – Phase one of Asbestos Abatement tile/wall board replacement and projected contingency for \$160,000; New Over-Rail Mower for \$125,000.) Vote called - Motion carried. Item passed unanimously.

Moderator Malozzi asked for a motion to bring the item 2 to the floor.

Moved Betsy Petrie-McComber, seconded by Fran Malozzi to bring item 2 to the floor "Consider and act upon releasing up to \$20,068 from the capital budget Open Space Account #220-00-461-2701-0060 for the purpose of preserving 104-acre Andrews' Farm located at 234 Cook Hill Road." Vote called- motion passed.

Town Planner Philip Chester spoke to the question as follows: The Town has been looking to preserve the Andrews' Farm on Cook Hill Road for some time. Last year, all seven owners of the Andrews' family applied to the Town's Preservation Program. The Program primarily conducts property appraisal and surveys when the Board of Selectmen approve such action as recommended by the Conservation and Ag Commission. The Department of Agriculture for the State considers these to be the Town's demonstrated level of community support. On occasion, the Town may also provide funding directly to property owners. This is the purpose to present this item tonight.

The Town's appraisal for the Andrews farm shows a conservation easement for development rights valued at \$410,000.00. The State's offer to purchase development rights is \$3,740.00 an acre, or less than the appraised value. In addition, the town survey shows that there are 104 acres of farm versus 107 which the town map shows. This brings the State's offer to \$390,000.00, or roughly \$20,000.00 less than the town's \$410,000.00 appraisal which the Andrews require to settle their estate. Town Meeting is being asked to release \$20,068.00 to cover the difference in the appraised value in State funds. This action has been approved ten times over the past twelve years. The Town believes preservation of farms is valuable to the community. There is currently \$136,000.00 uncommitted in the Open Space Account. The commitment of \$20,000.00 this evening will leave \$116,000.00 uncommitted.

Moderator Malozzi opened the floor to questions/comments.

Sheree Swenson, Leonard Bridge Road: Would like to ask two questions. First, if an active farm, will it continue to operate and under what restrictions?

Phil Chester stated that the State of Connecticut brings most of the money to these projects and places a Conservation Easement on the land in perpetuity – so forever. This limits the land use to agriculture. At this moment, one segment of the family will continue to farm.

Second question, by preserving land, does this also preserve key critical components including farmland soils?

Phil Chester stated the Town's Conservation Agriculture Commission and the State of Connecticut require when looking at land to preserve the prime important farmland soil.

Moderator Malozzi called the question: "Consider and act upon releasing up to \$20,068 from the capital budget Open Space Account #220-00-461-2701-0060 for the purpose of preserving 104-acre Andrews' Farm located at 234 Cook Hill Road

Vote called - Motion carried. Item passed unanimously. *(copy of map follows these minutes)*

Moved by Betsy Petrie-McComber, seconded by Kevin Cwikla to adjourn meeting. Moderator Malozzi called for vote. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:21 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Ellen Wieczorek, CCTC  
Lebanon Town Clerk



Andrews Farm  
234 Cook Hill Road  
104.26 Acres

Parcel 1

Parcel 3

Parcel 2

COOK HILL RD  
AIRLINE TRAIL STATE PARK

