

TOWN OF LEE
249 Calef Hwy
Lee, New Hampshire
03861

TOWN OF LEE
VOTER INFORMATION GUIDE

Prepared by the Office of the Select Board, Town Offices – 249 Calef Hwy, Lee, NH 03861
603-659-5414 - www.leenh.org

TOWN ELECTION/BALLOT SESSION

Tuesday, March 14th

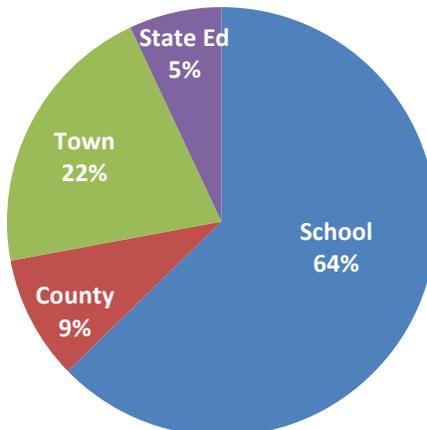
Lee Public Safety Complex, 20 George Bennett Road, Lee, NH
Polls Open 7:00 am – 7:00 pm

This Voters' Guide is distributed to help Lee citizens prepare for the Official Ballot Voting (SB2) by providing key decision-making information prior to voting. The Guide contains all of the Warrant Articles as discussed and amended at the Deliberative Session on February 4th, along with brief, explanatory notes.

You may bring this Guide with you on Election Day.

If you have questions or need more information, please feel free to call the Select Board's Office at 603-659-5414 ext. 301. If you have questions about voter eligibility or absentee ballots, please contact the Town Clerk's Office at 603-659-2964 ext. 307 or 308

2022 Tax Rate



Tax Year	School	County	Town	State Ed	Total
2022	13.97	2.03	4.61	1.11	21.72

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2023 TOWN WARRANT FOR THE TOWN OF LEE
As presented at the February 4, 2023 Deliberative Session

ARTICLE 1 To choose all necessary Town Officers for the ensuing year:

Select Board	(1) 3-year position	Scott Bugbee
Town Clerk	(1) 3-year position	Erik Johnson
Trustee of the Trust Funds	(1) 3-year position	Elizabeth Stone
Library Trustee	(2) 3-year positions	John Tappan
		Mark Nelson
		Katrina Rusteika
		Deborah Schanda
		David Benson
Cemetery Trustee	(1) 3-year position	Donna F. Eisenhard
Advisory Budget Committee	(2) 3-year positions	David Benson

ARTICLE 2

Existing Ordinance

5. Temporary Signs

i. A property owner may place one sign with a sign face no larger than] six (6) six square feet on the property at any time. When a property has frontage on more than one road, both areas of road frontage are allowed a temporary sign that confirms to this ordinance.

ii. All Political Advertisement shall be done in compliance with NH RSA 664.17.

iii. One temporary sign may be located on a property when:

- a. The property is being offered for sale or lease through a licensed real estate agent;
- b. The property is being offered for sale or lease by the owner;
- c. For a period of 30 (30) days following the transfer of title.

Proposed New Ordinance

5. Temporary Signs

A property owner may place one event sign or one activity or a sign as outlined below, on their property, provided that the sign face is no larger than six (6) square feet. The sign shall show the date of installation in the lower right-hand corner and said sign shall not be illuminated or audible. When a property has frontage on more than one road, both areas of road frontage are allowed one conforming sign.

- I. Signs advertising a specific event or activity shall be displayed not more than two weeks prior to the event or activity and shall be removed forty-eight (48) hours after the conclusion of the event.
- II. A sign offering a property for sale, rent or lease, shall be removed within seven (7) days following the transfer of title or rental.
- III. Construction site identification signs may identify the project, the owner of the development, architect, engineer, contractor and subcontractors, funding sources and other professionals conducting work on a property and shall be removed within ten (10) days of issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy or the discontinuance of construction, whichever comes first.
- IV. Yard Sale Signs may be located on a property twenty-four (24) hours prior to the yard sale but must be removed within twenty-four (24) hours after the yard sale.

- V. All Political Advertisement shall be done in compliance with NH RSA 664:17, however, signs are not to be erected more than ninety (90) days before Election Day.

Planning Board recommends this article. Majority vote required.

This warrant article clarifies language in the town's sign ordinance and specifies sizes for temporary signs as well as the number of days temporary signs can remain placed. NH RSA 664:17, relative to Political Advertising and Political Signs, can be referenced on the NH.gov website at the following location: <https://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/LXIII/664/664-17.htm>

ARTICLE 3

Shall the Town of Lee raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling **\$5,138,406**. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be **\$4,822,097** which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Select Board or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. The Select Board recommends this article. Majority vote required.

This operating budget warrant article does not include appropriations contained in ANY other warrant articles. The entire budget is available online at leenh.org; below is a summary line item comparison between the current budget and the proposed FY24 budget. Estimated tax impact \$6.07, please note this is a rough estimate, see advisory note at end of the Voters Guide.

Increases in the operating budget are attributable to several factors; the primary drivers are cost increases for energy (fuel, electricity, heating oil), material costs (road salt and sand, building materials, equipment parts and repair costs), personnel costs (wages, COLA, ancillary costs) and insurance premium increases. This budget does include a new part-time position (DPW administrative assistant) and accounts for 2 existing positions moving from part-time to full time, these being the Youth Services Librarian and the Transfer Station Solid Waste Operator positions.

A number of the following Articles propose depositing funds into Capital Reserve Funds. Saving money in Capital Reserve Funds helps to balance the tax rate by reducing the impact of one-time large expenditures by saving a portion of the cost every year so it is available when a capital purchase becomes necessary.

OPERATING BUDGET FY23 VS PROPOSED FY24

Account	FY23 Adopted	FY24 Proposed	+/-
Select Board Office - 41301	161,095.00	169,927	8,832
Elections & Registrations - 41401	13,510.00	11,190	(2,320)
Town Clerk/Tax Collector - 41411	109,649.00	114,066	4,417
Financial Administration - 41501	115,373.00	120,502	5,129
IT Expense - 41502	72,180.00	74,100	1,920
Assessing - 41521	33,300.00	37,015	3,715
Legal Fees - 41531	15,000.00	15,000	0
Personnel Administration - 41551	1,110,869.00	1,109,825	1,044
Planning & Zoning - 41911	101,278.00	106,466	5,188
Government Buildings - 41941	241,845.00	312,035	70,190
Cemetery - 41951	7,800.00	7,900	100
Insurance - Property Liability-41961	50,609.00	57,542	6,933
Police Department - 42101	739,484.00	771,604	32,129
Dispatch - Police & Fire - 42111	16,870.00	16,545	(325)
Ambulance - 42151	27,133.00	31,394	4,261
Fire Department - 42201	657,402.00	709,433	52,031
Code Enforcement - 42401	62,400.00	66,144	386
Emergency Management - 42901	3,600.00	3,600	0
Highway Department - 43111	638,340.00	714,692	76,352
Transfer Station - 43211	178,385.00	181,194	5,809
Solid Waste Disposal - 43241	123,898.00	136,446	12,457
Animal Control - 44141	100.00	100	0
Health Service Agencies - 44151	17,343.00	21,475	4,132
Direct Welfare Assistance - 44421	17,600.00	16,840	(760)
Parks & Recreation - 45201	10,700.00	10,700	0
Library - 45501	253,930.00	281,657	27,727
Patriotic Purposes - 45831	250.00	750	500
Culture & Rec. - Agricultural Comm. - 45891	0.00	0	0
Conservation - 46191	10,850.00	10,060	(790)
Bond Principal - 47111	90,000.00	30,000	(60,000)
Bond Interest- 47211	2,120.00	204	(1,916)
TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET	4,882,913	5,138,406	255,493 4.97%

ARTICLE 4

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Hundred Thousand dollars (\$200,000) to be deposited into the Lee Library Building Capital Reserve Fund. The Select Board recommends this article. Majority vote required.

This article is intended to replenish the Library Building Capital reserve Fund which will be spent down as the library embarks on a major renovation project in 2023. As of 01/31/23, this fund has a balance of \$411,548. Estimated tax impact 27 cents, please note this is a rough estimate, see advisory note at end of the Voters Guide.

ARTICLE 5

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Seventy-Five Thousand dollars (\$175,000) to be deposited into the Fire Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. The Select Board recommends this article. Majority vote required.

This fund was created in 1958 to save money for purchases of fire equipment, such as the Fire Command Vehicle that was purchased in FY19; SCBA equipment in FY20, and Thermal Imager Cameras purchased in FY20 & FY21 and Fire Engine purchased in 2022. As of 01/31/23, this fund has a balance of \$352,149. Estimated tax impact 24 cents, please note this is a rough estimate, see advisory note at end of the Voters Guide.

ARTICLE 6

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thousand dollars (\$100,000) to be deposited into the Town Buildings Capital Reserve Fund. This sum to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance and no amount to be raised from general taxation. The Select Board recommends this article. Majority vote required.

The Town created this Capital Reserve Fund in 1988 and the fund has been used for major repairs and/or improvements to existing Town buildings. As of 01/31/23, this fund has a balance of \$492,887. At the close of FY22, the unassigned fund balance was \$2,134,617. No tax rate impact.

ARTICLE 7

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ninety Thousand dollars (\$90,000) to be deposited into the Highway Dept. Road and Bridge Improvement Plan Capital Reserve Fund. The Select Board recommends this article. Majority vote required.

This Fund was created in 2002 for the eventual replacement of 5 bridges, 3 large culverts, and road reconstruction or major road projects (High Road bridge was replaced in 2011-12 with an 80% State Grant.) The fund was used for guardrail replacements in FY20 and \$5,960 was used toward expenses to replace the Beaver Brook culvert on Tuttle Road; the Chesley Brook culvert on Packers Falls Road; and for wetland delineation on James Farm Road in FY21. As of 01/31/23, this fund has a balance of \$718,651. Estimated tax impact 12 cents, please note this is a rough estimate, see advisory note at end of the Voters Guide.

ARTICLE 8

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ninety Thousand dollars (\$90,000) to be deposited into the Transfer Station Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. The Select Board recommends this article. Majority vote required.

The Town created this Capital Reserve Fund in 2006 for the purpose of purchasing equipment for the Transfer Station, such as the Bobcat Skid Steer in FY17; the Roll-off Containers purchased in FY18; the security cameras in FY19; and new storage containers in FY21; and a new roll off truck for \$168,000 in 2021. As of 01/31/23, this fund has a balance of \$97,947. Estimated tax impact 12 cents, please note this is a rough estimate, see advisory note at end of the Voters Guide.

ARTICLE 9

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Sixty Thousand dollars (\$60,000) to be deposited into the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. The Select Board recommends this article. Majority vote required.

The Town created this Capital Reserve Fund in 1977 for the replacement of Highway Equipment, such as the new Plow Truck that was purchased in FY18 for \$181,000 and a sand spreader for the existing F450 in FY19. In FY21, a new F350 Super Duty Pickup Truck was purchased for \$43,604; both this amount and \$17,989 towards the roll off truck will be withdrawn by the end of FY22. The purchase of an excavator for \$80,000 in March of 2023 will be paid for from this fund. As of 01/31/2023, this fund has a balance of \$336,484. Estimated tax impact 8 cents, please note this is a rough estimate, see advisory note at end of the Voters Guide.

ARTICLE 10

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Sixty-five Thousand Dollars (\$65,000) for the purchase of a new Fire Utility Pickup Truck and Equipment and to authorize the withdrawal of this amount from the Fire Equipment Capital Reserve Fund for this acquisition and no amount to be raised from general taxation. This will replace the 2003 Utility 1 that is used as a forestry/medical response apparatus. The Select Board recommends this article. Majority vote required.

This article, if passed, will enable the Fire Dept. to replace a truck. As the money will come from an existing capital reserve fund there is no effect on the tax rate. As of 01/31/23, this fund has a balance of \$352,149.

ARTICLE 11

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$35,000.00) to refurbish Utility 2 and equipment for the continued use as a forestry apparatus and to authorize the withdrawal of this amount from the Fire Equipment Capital Reserve Fund for this acquisition and no amount to be raised from general taxation. This will allow the department to refurbish the 2009 Ford F-350 to include repairing the body; add a new skid tank, pump, and equipment. The Select Board recommends this article. Majority vote required.

This article, if passed, will enable the Fire Dept. to refurbish an older truck. As the money will come from an existing capital reserve fund there is no effect on the tax rate. As of 01/31/23, this fund has a balance of \$352,149.

ARTICLE 12

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Thousand dollars (\$20,000) to be deposited into the Internal Service Expendable Trust Fund for Accrued Benefits. The Select Board recommends this article. Majority vote required.

This article, if passed, will provide funding to pay accrued benefits such as earned vacation and sick time to employees leaving town employment. Estimated tax impact 3 cents, please note this is a rough estimate, see advisory note at end of the Voters Guide.

ARTICLE 13

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand dollars (\$30,000) to be deposited into the Fire Ponds and Cisterns Capital Reserve Fund. The Select Board recommends this article. Majority vote required.

The Town created this Capital Reserve Fund in 2005 for the repair and replacement of fire ponds and cisterns which assist the fire department with water supply and improves the fire insurance rates as determined by the Insurance Services Office (ISO.) As of 01/31/23, this fund has a balance of \$197,219. Estimated tax impact 4 cents, please note this is a rough estimate, see advisory note at end of the Voters Guide.

ARTICLE 14

To see if the Town will vote to establish a contingency fund for Fiscal Year 2024 for unanticipated expenses that may arise and further to raise and appropriate Twenty Thousand dollars (\$20,000) to go into the fund. This sum to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance and no amount to be raised from general taxation. Any appropriation left in the fund at the end of the year will lapse to the general fund. The governing body shall annually publish a detailed report of all expenditures from the fund. The Select Board recommends this article. Majority vote required.

RSA 31:98-a; 32:11 allows Towns to establish a contingency fund by warrant article for the purpose of unanticipated expenses; the Select Board will have the authority to expend these funds. A report of all expenditures from this fund appears each year in the Annual Report. This authorization lapses at the end of each fiscal year and would have to be re-authorized by the voters through a warrant article each year. No tax rate impact

ARTICLE 15

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate Thirty-Five Thousand dollars (\$35,000) to be used for the renovation of the Lee Public Library and to authorize withdrawal of this amount from the Library Capital Reserve Fund for this purpose and no amount to be raised from general taxation. The Select Board recommends this article. Majority vote required.

This project will be accomplished in phases, beginning with the addition and basement renovations and culminating in the schoolhouse portion of the library being repurposed as the children's area. The intent is to fund the work through a combination of funds held in capital reserve funds and private funds and grants. As of 01/31/23, this fund has a balance of \$120,179. No tax rate impact.

ARTICLE 16

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be deposited into the Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund. The Select Board recommends this article. Majority vote required.

The Town created this Capital Reserve Fund in 1994 for the purpose of funding the cost of Town-wide revaluations, which are required by the State every five years. A statistical revaluation was last conducted in 2021. Periodic revaluations adjust for natural market-driven fluctuations in property values and help ensure that the value of your property is proportional to all other property in the Town. As of 01/31/2023, this fund has a balance of \$46,321. Estimated tax impact \$1 cent, please note this is a rough estimate, see advisory note at end of the Voters Guide.

ARTICLE 17

Shall the Town of Lee readopt the Optional Veteran's Tax Credit in accordance with RSA 72:28 II, for an annual tax credit of \$750 on residential property. The Select Board recommends this article. Majority vote required.

This warrant article appears as a result of a new state law that makes the Optional Veterans credit available to active military personnel as well as those who have been honorably discharged. Previously active service members were not eligible for the credit. Passage of this article would also increase the Veteran's Tax Credit from \$500 to \$750. If both articles 17 & 18 pass, there is an estimated tax rate impact of 5 cents (although it is unknown how many additional residents may become eligible for the credit).

ARTICLE 18

Shall the Town of Lee readopt the All Veteran's Tax Credit in accordance with RSA 72:28 b, for an annual tax credit of \$750 on residential property. The Select Board recommends this article. Majority vote required.

This warrant article appears as a result of a new state law that makes the "All Veterans" credit available to active military personnel as well as those who have been honorably discharged. Previously active service members were not eligible for the credit. Passage of this article would also increase the Veteran's Tax Credit from \$500 to \$750. If both articles 17 & 18 pass, there is an estimated tax rate impact of 5 cents (although it is unknown how many additional residents may become eligible for the credit).

Note: If Articles 17 & 18 do not pass both the Optional Tax Credit and the All Veteran Tax Credit would revert to the Standard Veteran Tax Credit under RSA 72:28-I, and as of April 1, 2023, the Standard Veteran Tax Credit would be in place and reduce the Veteran Tax Credit from \$500 to \$50 per year.

ARTICLE 19

To see if the Town will vote to adopt the Lee Community Power Electric Aggregation Plan, which authorizes the Select Board to develop and implement Lee Community Power as described therein (pursuant to RSA 53-E:7). The program would provide a new default electric supply and new renewable energy supply options for customers in Lee. There is no cost to the Town budget, and no obligation to participate. Customers can opt out at any time and return to utility default service. The Select Board recommends this article. Majority vote required.

When a town adopts a community power program, residents and small businesses are pooled into one large buying group that becomes competitive on the open market for electricity, with a larger potential for savings. Your utility, which owns no power plants and does not profit from the sale of electricity, will still be delivering the power, taking care of the lines and poles and sending you the bills. Under this program, the electricity part of your bill, called the supply, will now offer four options concerning the levels of renewables included in the mix of electricity you receive. Each of the four options will have a slightly different rate depending on costs. Your participation is voluntary. You can choose to stay or go back with your current provider for the supply portion of your bill at any time for no cost.

The supply portion of the bill will be administered by a consulting team. This team, which searches for the lowest cost suppliers, works at its own risk, and is paid a fee embedded in the price of the electricity, agreed upon at the outset. NH Electric Co-op and Eversource have indicated that they support community power as a choice for their customers. Over forty New Hampshire towns are currently in some stage of planning a Community Power program.

PETITION ARTICLE 20

To require that the annual budget and all special and separate financial warrant articles having a tax impact contain a notation stating the estimated tax rate impact of the article, as authorized under RSA 32:5, V-b. Majority Vote Required.

This article, if passed would require the Select Board to add an estimated tax impact amount for each article on the warrant beginning in 2024.

PETITION ARTICLE 21

Shall the Town suspend efforts to remove or demolish the Lee Parish House until July 1, 2028 to allow the Lee Heritage Commission and the Town of Lee sufficient time to explore options for its potential preservation and future use.

This article, if passed, would prevent the removal or demolition of the Parish House at 15 Mast Road for another 5 years.

PETITION ARTICLE 22

Shall the Town move forward with efforts to demolish or remove the Parish House located at 15 Mast Road given that the time allotted for consideration of preservation by vote of the Town in 2019 and again in 2020 will expire on July 1, 2023.

This article, if passed, would allow the town to remove or demolish the Parish House at 15 Mast Road after July 1, 2023.

Tax Rate Estimate Advisory Note:

The estimated tax rates shown after certain warrant articles are just that, estimates. There is no way to accurately calculate a tax rate at this point in the budgeting process, the estimates shown here were calculated using NH Dept. of Revenue Administrations accepted “three finger rule” which uses the following formula to estimate tax impact: “Taking the local assessed property value and covering the last three digits with three fingers provides an estimate of the amount of appropriations that represents \$1.00 on the tax rate. Covering the next digit would represent 10 cents on the tax rate, and covering one more digit would be a penny on the tax rate.”

The NH Municipal Association has long advised that it is important to point out to voters that the estimated tax impact will always be just that: an estimate. It will rarely be correct.