

**Town of Gilsum**  
Selectboard Meeting  
Held in Gilsum Public Library  
February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6:00pm

**Board Present:** Clem Louder, Chair; Brian Bazarnicki, Member; Bill Mitchell, Member; Selectboard Asst. Hailey Hrabovsky

**Others:** Vicki Ayer, David Dauphin, Bruce Murphy, Deb Reilly, Dee Denehy, Cassandra Curtis

6:03pm Chair Clem Louder calls meeting to order

**Louder motions to approve 1/12/2026 minutes as amended**

Bazarnicki 2nds

Vote: Unanimous

Motion passed

**Mitchell motions to accept 2/2/2026 check manifest**

Bazarnicki 2nds

Vote: Unanimous

Motion passed

**Bill Signing – Financial**

Profit and Loss are in the Selectmen's Office to view and updated weekly.

**NO MEETING 1/26/26 DUE TO WEATHER**

**Cassandra Curtis; Petitioned Warrant Article:** Bazarnicki read the presented warrant article. Discussion ensued on school vouchers and more explanation on the warrant article. Discussed family income and caps, as last year the state had a cap and this year they do not. See attachment for the warrant article and information on it.

**Louder motions that the Selectmen opinions are neutral on the petitioned warrant article presented by Cassandra Curtis.**

Bazarnicki 2nds

Vote: Louder yea, Bazarnicki yea, Mitchell nay

Motion passed

**Cheshire County Sherriff's Office; 2025 Annual Report:** Bazarnicki read report. Brief discussion on report. We saved some money with less man hours giving the town the ability to purchase two radar speed limit signs.

**Hundred Nights; Email:** Louder read letter from Hundred Nights thanking the Town of Gilsum of their donation.

**Fire Department:**

**Louder motioned to transfer \$20,539.00 from the Breathing Apparatus Expendable Trust Fund, established 2016, for the purchase of 17 new air tanks, at the request of the Fire Department.**

Bazarnicki 2nds

Vote: Unanimous

**Motion Passed**

**Dee Denehy; Hazard Mitigation:** The hazard mitigation plan is now in a public comment period. Louder would like to have input from the public if they know of someone that can write up easements, also if someone has knowledge about getting a generator for the school. The town needs a heating and cooling shelter in town. Denehy is going to bring in "draft memorandum of understanding with Badger" for the Selectboard to review to use as an emergency shelter. Discussion on generators and where it would be needed, it will need more research. *SR MB*

**Fire Chief Stipend:** From discussion at the Budget Committee meeting, Bruce Murphy asked if the Selectmen are still in support of a stipend for the Fire Chief and Fire Chief Assistant. Recounted the discussion from the meeting, the Selectmen are still in favor of the stipend and discussed more on it.

**Fire Department; Primex – volunteer firefighting:** Louder brings up that as we are a volunteer fire department, there should be a clean bill of health on record for each person. With this being said, if a person develops health problems from being on the fire department, due to their duties, Primex will cover the person. It is encouraged for members of the fire department to get a clean bill of health.

**MDS; Transfer Station:** 3 plugs do not have electricity; Louder will look into it. Louder brings up that trash prices are potentially going to rise as out of state people are buying the local trash districts and asked other members of the Selectboard how they feel about entering into a contract to lock in prices. Discussion about length of contract terms.

**Vicki Ayer:** Ayer said she had helped someone with their resume at the request of a Selectmen. Ayer brings up that for many years the Selectboard had discussed the retirement of the Road Agent and what needs to be addressed in regards to what the Road Agent does and their responsibilities. Ayer also brought up how the Selectboard over the years has felt the Road Agent was not up to par and there have been several complaints and/or concerns. She states it is the job of Selectboard to tell the Road Agent what they need to do. Briefly discussed the resume that Ayer helped with. Discussed accepting resumes for appointed positions, which are accepted anytime. Hrabovsky brings up that we should post it on the website that the town are asking for applications/resumes for appointed positions. Discussed locations of posting the information such as the website and Gilsum Bridge. *hb ch*

**Vicki Ayer; Apparel Impact:** Ayer would like the Selectboard to think about moving the bin from near her road to the center of town, if it made more sense. There have been 17 people that have requested clothing from it. Discussed the clothing that the families can get. The Planet Aid bin by the school has now dropped 50% while having the Apparel Impact clothing bin as well. Discussed what happens with the contents of each box and how that benefits the residents.

**Bids:** Brief discussion on bids and when officials are involved. RSA 95:1 states: if a public official, someone appointed or elected, is looking to bid, then it has to be public for anything valued over \$200. Even if you are an employee of the town and wanting to volunteer to do the same as the bid, you cannot volunteer. The Selectboard needs to set parameters on bids.

Bazarnicki motions to adjourn  
Lounder 2nds  
Meeting adjourned at 7:42pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by:  
Hailey Hrabovsky

Minutes approved

Clem Louder

Brian Bazarnicki

Bill Mitchell

Signature

Date



2/9/26



2/9/26



2/9/26



**Petition to add the following Warrant Article to the Ballot**

We, the undersigned registered voters of Gilsum, request this warrant article be added to the 2026 Town Meeting Warrant.

**New Hampshire communities value strong public schools and responsible use of public funds for education.** Therefore, the voters Gilsum, New Hampshire, are asked:

Shall we call on our legislators to protect taxpayers by requiring the Education Freedom Account program to provide fiscal and educational performance reports comparable to those required of public schools, and by limiting eligibility to families with demonstrated financial need?

This question is raised because state legislators recently removed all income limits from the Education Freedom Account program (vouchers), expanding it beyond its original purpose. These changes added tens of millions of dollars in costs while the program provides limited public information on how funds are spent or if educational standards are being met.

The voucher program is projected to cost \$110 million over the next two years, with no new revenue sources identified. This directs public funds to private education without reducing the expenses public schools are constitutionally required to cover, increasing pressure on local property taxes.

Be it further resolved that the Town of Gilsum shall send the results of this vote to the Governor and all members of the General Court representing Gilsum within thirty (30) days of this vote.

Printed name:

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Street Address:

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Signature:

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Date:

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Email: (optional)

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Printed name:

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Street Address:

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Signature:

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Date:

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Email: (optional)

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This warrant article strengthens accountability by ensuring education dollars are used effectively and by protecting local property taxpayers from rising costs.

Lets use **SCHOOL VOUCHER PROGRAM** language. Education Freedom Account” is marketing jargon.

Taxpayers deserve:

- **Transparency & Accountability** equal to that required of public schools
- **Responsible limits** so vouchers prioritize families with financial need
- **Protection of local property taxpayers** from rising costs
- **A renewed commitment to strong, well-funded public schools**

*“EFAs don’t affect property taxpayers—they aren’t paid by towns.”*

**Response:**

- Vouchers are paid from the Education Trust Fund
- That fund was created to meet the State’s *constitutional duty* to fund public schools
- Vouchers drain that fund
- Towns are left covering nearly **89% of special education costs** (as one example) — costs that fall directly on property taxpayers.

*“Public schools are failing.”*

**Response:**

- NH public schools are in the top 10 in the country, but funding is last.
- When New Hampshire state funding for schools is last in the country, the outcome is predictable: underfunded districts without strong tax bases struggle, while wealthier towns pull ahead.

OR - if they “provide” low test scores-

- If those numbers were true, wouldn’t you be arguing that schools need *more* funding - not less?

*“Families need choice.”*

**Response:**

- Choice already exists in New Hampshire.
- Vouchers don’t provide property tax relief, don’t save towns’ money, and mostly subsidize families already paying for private school
- 90% of voucher students never came from public schools.
- Property owners need tax relief.

