

Approved 11/16/2022

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Holmes starting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were Committee Members Mary Jo Holmes, Pat Martel, Gene Cordes, Gordon Muench, Jon Benson, Emily Phillips, Josh Yokela (arrived at 7:05 pm), Steve Bonaccorsi (arrived at 7:08 pm), and Recording Secretary Shawn Perreault.

Motion was made by Martel to approve the meeting minutes of October 26, 2022 as presented, seconded by Benson. Motion passed with a vote of 4 Yes – 0 No – 2 Abstain (Holmes, Phillips).

4194 Government Buildings – Cordes explained that the increase in this budget is in the wage line and the propane. He stated that a full-time building maintenance staff member was hired half way through the year. This budget reflects a full year of wages for that position. In addition, they are still seeking to hire a part-time staff member, which has not been filled. There are a few candidates they are currently interviewing. Also, the prior contract for propane was up and the new rate is \$2.70.

Motion was made by Benson to recommend function 4194 in the amount of \$159,034. Muench seconded. Motion passed with a vote of 6 Yes – 0 No – 0 Abstain. (Yokela and Bonaccorsi were not present for this vote.)

Yokela and Bonaccorsi entered the meeting.

4155 Personnel Administration - Cordes stated that there were changes in staff and an increase in the insurance premium. However, due to a premium return for the prior year, the overall budget for this function is down by \$11,000. Motion was made by Benson to recommend function 4155 in the amount of \$485,399. Muench seconded. Motion passed with a vote of 5 Yes – 2 No (Phillips, Yokela) – 0 Abstain.

Discussion was held on dates for upcoming meetings. It was determined by the Committee to hold meetings on November 9, November 16, November 30, December 7 and December 14, 2022. The meeting locations will alternate between the basement meeting room and the first floor of the Town Hall on the nights when the Planning Board meets (first and third Wednesdays).

The School Administration Staff will plan to be at the next two meetings.

Martel stated that she compared operating budgets for this year and the current budget season. The operating budget is up by approximately \$259,000 or 6%, which is about a .45 cent tax impact without the School District budget or any Warrant Articles. Discussion was held on the impact of the Warrant Articles and the School budget coming in low, as well as the School's surplus over the years. The School's Trust Fund accounts are looking very good.

Town Warrant Article Draft: Upon review, Martel and Yokela's three year terms on the Budget Committee are up for reelection in March. In addition, due to Phillips being appointed to fill a vacant position, her position is up for a one year term in March.

The Committee reviewed the following Town Warrant Articles as numbered on the 11/02/2022 draft. Although the numbers will change the action taken remains:

Article H – Funding of Mosquito Control - There was discussion by the Committee on the public's perception of what this program actually covers. Some members felt the public viewed this as a large spraying and not the treatment of larvae that it actually is. This program sprays three or four public areas and then is primarily larval treatment in wetland breeding grounds. The treatment kills the larvae and not to control mosquitos. There was further discussion on some personal experience with actually spraying.

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Cordes stated that the Select Board recommended this because they know that the residents want it. It has passed every year it's been on the Warrant. Motion was made by Bonaccorsi to recommend Article H, Funding of Mosquito Control, seconded by Muench. Motion failed with a vote of 3 Yes – 5 No (Holmes, Phillips, Yokela, Benson, Bonaccorsi).

Article K – Increase of the Road Agent Stipend by \$2,000 – Discussion was held on the number of years since this was increased. The Committee also discussed the different between wages and what a stipend is used for. A number of members felt the increase was an arbitrary number and wanted to better understand the amount requested. The discussion also covered the different views of what a stipend is designed to do. That it isn't intended to represent the value of a people, but what is given to fill an option. That this is a manager position and although the person is on-call 24 hours a day, they are not necessarily the individual handling the emergency. An example was given, for contracting a company to remove trees that have fallen in the road for a certain amount per tree as needed. Members also expressed stipends are given to people to off set some of their expenses to keep experienced people in these positions. Cordes stated these are not positions that you would see moving from town to town. They are elected and must live in town. Further discussion was held. Motion was made by Bonaccorsi to recommend Article K, increase in the Road Agent stipend, seconded by Benson. Motion passed by a vote of 5 Yes – 2 No (Phillips, Yokela) – 1 Abstain (Holmes).

Article M – Increase the Membership of Parks & Recreation Commission from 5 to 7 - The only concerns the Budget Committee saw was the positions not being filled, and the Commission not being able to meet the new quorum. Motion was made by Muench to recommend the increase in membership of the Parks & Rec Commission, seconded by Benson. Motion passed by a vote of 7 Yes – 1 No (Yokela) – 0 Abstain.

The Public Budget Hearing will be held on Wednesday January 11, 2023 in the Ellis Gym at 7:00 pm.

A combined Town and School District Deliberative Session is tentatively scheduled for Saturday February 4, 2023 at 9:00 am with the snow date of the following Saturday.

The next meeting date is November 9, 2022 in the basement meeting room at the Town Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Perreault
Recording Secretary