

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair Mary Jo Holmes starting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were Committee members Mary Jo Holmes, Pat Martel, Neal Janvrin (filling in for Gene Cordes), Jon Benson, Josh Yokela, Emily Phillips and Steve Bonaccorsi; Town Administrator Heidi Carlson; FPD Sergeant Mike Buckley and Recording Secretary Shawn Perreault. Holmes noted that Gordon Muench is also out sick and if needed Greg Fraize is in the FCTV Control Room and can vote or be available for School items.

Motion was made by Holmes to approve the meeting minutes of November 16, 2022 as presented, Bonaccorsi seconded. Motion passed by a vote of 5 Yes – 0 No – 2 Abstain (Phillips, Janvrin)

The Committee undertook a review the Town Warrant Articles.

Carlson explained that Article 1 is the election of all Town Officers. Articles 2-4 (thus far) are reserved for Zoning Ordinance Amendments. None of these articles require a recommendation by the Budget Committee and were not further reviewed. Carlson noted that the Planning Board's Public Hearing on Zoning Ordinance Amendments is next Wednesday December 7th at 7:00 pm. The petition deadline is a few days later and could require another hearing.

Town Operating Budget – This Article is the Town's operating budget and includes the Budget Committee's recommended number. Bonaccorsi made a motion to recommend the Town operating budget in the amount of \$4,104,296; should this article fail the default budget is \$3,973,579. Benson seconded. Motion passed with a vote of 5 Yes – 2 No (Yokela, Phillips) – 0 Abstain.

Fire Rescue Truck - This Article is for a replacement fire truck. The current estimates on the fire truck range from \$440,000 to \$470,000. The Department Truck Committee is looking at stock trucks instead of custom to save money. There is currently just over \$300,000 in the Fire Truck Capital Reserve Fund. Carlson believes the fire truck only will be in this Warrant Article. The EMS truck is currently being reviewed and evaluated for purchase with ARPA funds by the Select Board. Carlson further explained that this article may have several offsetting funding sources (CRF, lease/purchase, or other grants or budget offsets). The Budget Committee tabled this article until the details are finalized.

Bridge Construction and Reconstruction Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) - The Article seeks to put \$50,000 into the existing fund. The Martin Road Bridge is scheduled to be worked on in the Spring of 2023. The engineer has submitted the final plans to the NH DOT for approval. As soon as they are approved, Carlson can start to request 80% reimbursement of costs to date from NH Bridge Aid. The Bridge CRF currently contains \$227,000. Yokela asked for further clarification on where the money was coming from to pay bills and what could be reimbursed by the State's Bridge Aid fund which Carlson reviewed. Also discussed was the next bridge on the State's Red List, which is the Scribner Road Bridge, and how the Bridge funds would be used for that bridge's construction as well. Carlson explained that the General Fund is owed money from the Bridge CRF and that once construction is approved and started she can request 50% of the construction contract also from the State. Motion made by Bonaccorsi to recommend \$50,000 for the Bridge CRF. Janvrin seconded. Motion passed by a vote of 7 Yes – 0 No – 0 Abstain.

Highway Equipment CRF – This Article seeks to raise \$25,000 for the Highway Equipment CRF. Carlson explains that this saves for future needs. Currently all large equipment has been replaced within the past couple of years. Motion was made by Bonaccorsi to recommend \$25,000 for the Highway Equipment CRF. Janvrin seconded. Motion passed with a vote of 6 Yes – 0 No – 1 Abstain (Holmes).

New FT Police Officer – This Article proposes to hire a seventh full time police officer for \$46,046. Holmes reminded the Committee that this is for five months of wages and benefits, and if passed this will

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remain part of the operating and default budget in the future years. Motion was made by Bonaccorsi to recommend \$46,046 for a new police officer. Benson seconded. Motion passed with a vote of 4 Yes – 3 No (Phillips, Yokela, Martel) – 0 Abstain.

Computer Expendable Trust Fund (ETF) – This Article is to place \$4,000 into the Computer ETF, a savings account used to replace the servers every 5-6 years. The money will be taken from unassigned fund balance and have no tax impact. Motion was made by Bonaccorsi to recommend \$4,000 in the Computer EFT. Benson seconded. Motion passed with a vote of 5 Yes – 2 No (Yokela, Phillips) – 0 Abstain.

Library Building Maintenance ETF – This Article seeks to place \$10,000 in the Library Building Maintenance ETF. The HVAC system replacement will use the current balance in this account and the appropriation will help to rebuild the fund for future needs. The money is planned to be taken from unassigned fund balance and have no tax impact. Motion was made by Yokela to recommend \$10,000 for the Library Maintenance ETF. Bonaccorsi seconded. Motion passed with a vote of 7 Yes – 0 No – 0 Abstain.

The Mosquito Control Article has been voted by the Committee. Holmes reviewed an email forwarded by Carlson from the Health Officer with some additional information she may present at upcoming public meetings to provide additional information to the community. The Committee did not feel like they needed any more information at this time.

Town Clerk Tax Collector Salary increase - This Article seeks the 5% raise for the Town Clerk Tax Collector. This position is elected and as such, salary increases are placed as Warrant Articles for the Town to vote on. Motion was made by Bonaccorsi to recommend \$1,894 for the Town Clerk Tax Collector salary increase. Janvrin seconded. Motion passed by a vote of 5 Yes – 2 No (Martel, Yokela) – 0 Abstain.

Cemetery Trustee Stipend increase – This Article seeks to increase the stipend of the Cemetery Trustees by \$50.00 each, appropriating a total of \$150. This will increase each Trustee's stipend to \$200 annually. There was a lot of discussion after the vote about the rationale behind the “no” votes. Other Committee members asked if they would explain their reasons behind their negative vote. Bonaccorsi also informed the Committee that he was in the process of conducting a study on other Town's stipend information based on population, property values and job similarities. He is hoping to present this next budget season. Motion was made by Bonaccorsi to recommend \$150 for Cemetery Trustee stipend increases. Benson seconded. Motion was neither passed or failed with a vote of 3 Yes – 3 No (Phillips, Yokela, Martel) – 1 Abstain (Holmes).

Historic Museum CRF – This Article seeks to place \$15,000 in the Museum CRF. The Historian is working on a plan to add storage space to the current Museum. He would like to build the fund and is hoping to have more details in the near future. Motion was made by Bonaccorsi to recommend \$15,000 for the Museum CRF. Janvrin seconded. Motion passed by a vote of 4 Yes – 3 No (Phillips, Yokela, Martel) – 0 Abstain.

The two Veteran Credit Warrant Articles are not yet ready for action. There was discussion on the Legislature's intent provided by Yokela, and Carlson stated the NH DRA is still looking at technical advise to Town's on required actions. The Legislature was seeking to add currently serving veterans to the statute and not just discharged service members. Yokela discussed what he felt the intent of the bill was and asked Carlson to forward the further information she receives from the State. Carlson stated that

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as of now, if they do not adopt the new statute the people that currently qualify will no longer qualify. Carlson will update the Committee as soon as other articles are ready.

Town Forest Designation – This Article seeks to designate donated parcels of land as Town Forest and make them subject to the Town Forest Ordinance. Discussion was held on location of the donated land, adjacent to the State's railroad bed behind the Library/School land. Phillips called the question. Motion was made by Bonaccorsi to recommend including Parcels 04-066 and 04-066.001 as Town Forest. Janvrin seconded. Motion passed by a vote of 6 Yes – 1 No (Yokela) – 0 Abstain.

Parks & Recreation ETF – This Article proposes to create a new savings account for future improvements at parks facilities and appropriate \$5,000; and further make the Select Board agents of the fund. This was brought forward by a resident but not as a petition. The Select Board is reviewing the idea and running it by the Parks and Recreation Commission. No action has been taken. These funds would be used for things like fencing, a pavilion, playground equipment, etc. The Article was tabled pending other recommendations.

Copies of the current expense and revenue summary reports were circulated for review.

Reminders:

The Planning Board's Public Hearing to review Zoning Ordinance changes will be held on Wednesday, December 7, 2022 in the basement meeting room of the Town Hall at 7:00 pm.

Annual meeting petitioned Warrant Articles are due on Tuesday, January 10, 2023. Town petitions are due to the Select Board office no later than 11:00 am and School District petitions to the SAU Office no later than 3:00 pm.

The Public Budget Hearing will be held on Wednesday January 11, 2023 in the Ellis School Gym at 7:00 pm. Candidate declaration runs from January 25 to February 3, 2023 with the Town Clerk or School District Clerk.

A combined Town and School District Deliberative Session is scheduled for Saturday, February 4, 2023 at 9:00 am with the snow date of the following Saturday, February 11, 2023.

The next meetings dates are December 7, 2022 (first floor) and December 14, 2022 (basement meeting room) at the Town Hall. Those meetings are planned for School discussion. A meeting on January 4, 2023 was added to the calendar.

Motion to adjourn made by Bonaccorsi, seconded by Phillips. Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Perreault
Recording Secretary