



ANNUAL TOWN MEETING May 23, 2016

The Annual Town Meeting was held on Monday, May 23, 2016, in the Town Hall Auditorium. Members of the Region #4 administration, Region #4 and Deep River Elementary School Boards of Education, Board of Finance, Board of Selectmen, the Registrars of Voters and their deputies and approximately 65 residents attended. First Selectman Angus L. McDonald, Jr. called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. A motion to appoint David Oliveria as moderator of the meeting was made by Russell Marth. The motion was seconded by Lori Guerette and was approved unanimously.

The moderator appointed Town Clerk Amy Winchell as clerk of the meeting, who then read the call. A motion to accept the call of the meeting as read was made by Lori Guerette with second by Bill Ballsieper. Motion was approved unanimously.

A motion to approve Item #1 was made by Jane Samuels and seconded by Lori Guerette.

“1) Town Budget for the Fiscal Year 2016-2017 in the amount of \$16,419,832.”

DISCUSSION: Bill Burdick questioned the increase in the POLICE (10120) line of the budget. Board of Finance Chair, George Eckenroth, explained that several budget lines under that category were combined which may cause some confusion. The State no longer carries a portion of the cost for our resident State Trooper so that line has gone up, but not by the full amount shown, as lines were combined. The Town is reimbursed by Eversource utility company for local police presence on state highways during tree-trimming operations. Jan Kollmer asked that the Selectmen consider joining a regional police force to save cost vs having our own police force.

We share our Animal Control Officer with Essex and Chester, and lease space at the Essex Dog Pound which explains why payments to Essex are included in the budget. Having an Animal Control Officer is a requirement of the State.

The increase in the HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT (10130) is a direct result of the loss of long-time First Selectman Dick Smith who passed away suddenly in March. In addition to his duties as First Selectman, he also spent a significant amount of time working with and supervising the Highway Department. He will need to be replaced by someone with leadership and management capabilities.

Pay increases for town employees were questioned as well as why the First Selectman salary wasn't decreased with a less experienced man in place. Union negotiations result in contractual pay raises which are then extended to all employees to be fair. The First Selectman position is paid by salary, therefore a less experienced person will have to work many more hours to get the job done. The salary rate is for the job, not the employee. There are Senior Tax Relief programs in place to help offset tax increases for those on fixed incomes. Information on that can be found in the Assessor's office.

The sewer construction company will pay to repair sidewalks damaged during the construction process. The three lines under DEBT REDEMPTION (10173) were explained. Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Ruth Levy explained that the law which does not allow a school budget to go down does not really affect our small towns.

Moderator David Oliveria introduced the recently appointed Selectman Duane Gates. Duane is a lifelong resident and has been active on the Region #4 Board of Education. He was appointed to fill the vacancy on the Board of Selectman made when Selectman Angus McDonald was appointed to the vacant First Selectman's position.

There being no further discussion, a vote by paper ballot was administered by Registrars of Voters Dale Winchell and Hadley Kornacki. **The results were 63- YES votes to 23- NO votes. Item #1 was approved.**

A motion to approve Item #2 was made by Rich Balducci and seconded by Greg Alexander.

“2) To authorize the Tax Collector to collect real estate taxes and personal property taxes in two semi-annual installments, the dates to be July 1, 2016 and January 1, 2017.

To authorize the Tax Collector to collect regular motor vehicle taxes in one installment, due and payable on July 1, 2016.

To authorize the Tax Collector to collect supplemental motor vehicle taxes in one installment, due and payable on January 1, 2017.

Any property tax due the Town of Deep River in an amount that does not exceed one hundred dollars (\$100) shall be due and payable in a single installment on July 1, 2016.”

There being no discussion, Item #2 was unanimously approved by voice vote.

A motion to adjourn was made by Russell Marth, with second by Lori Guerette. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

(Note: the Annual Meeting date, prescribed by ordinance to be the third Monday in the month of May, was postponed due to an error made in the timing of Legal Notice of the meeting. Proper notice plus a postcard mailing was subsequently made and the May 23rd meeting was legal).

ATTEST: Amy M. Winchell, Town Clerk