



ANNUAL TOWN MEETING May 15, 2017

The Annual Town Meeting was held on Monday, May 15, 2017, 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 approximately 80 residents attended. First Selectman Angus L. McDonald, Jr. called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. A motion to appoint David Oliveria as moderator of the meeting was made by Duane Gates. 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 Carmela Balducci with second by Lori Guerette. Motion was approved unanimously.

A motion to approve Item #1 was made by Lori Guerette and seconded by Duane Gates.

1) Town Budget for the Fiscal Year 2017-2018 in the amount of \$16,746,610.

DISCUSSION: Board of Finance Chair, George Eckenroth, gave an overview of the budget, pointing out certain areas of interest. Our contract with the Resident State Trooper program includes services through Troop F and the Westbrook barracks but we are also now responsible for full salary and benefits for our Resident State Trooper. A new, full-time Highway Department employee has been added to the budget. The Board feels this will be a cost savings to the Town as a full crew with a variety of skills will save us having to contract out for services.

The budget has been deeply cut but can only sustain Town services for one year. Anticipated State cuts have been factored into the budget but actual amounts will not be known until later in the year. At that time, depending on the amount of cuts to our State aid, the Tax Collector may have to send out a supplemental tax bill to make up the difference.

Jan Kollmer and Margo Hilfinger both had questions regarding the Elementary School portion of the budget. Jan wondered why they were cutting a teacher but adding a math coach, neutralizing any savings that may have been realized. Why does the budget keep going up when the number of students keeps going down? Margo wanted to know why the cost per year in 2013 was \$13,000 per pupil and the cost in this budget is \$20,000 per pupil. Michelle Grow, chairperson of the Elementary School Board of

Education, explained that our math scores are lower than in area towns and that other towns have multiple math coaches. We currently have 16.1:1 student to teacher ratio which is higher than Chester's ratio. She said our per-pupil costs are lower than those in Chester and Essex and are average for the State. That cost also includes building maintenance. 85% of the budget is set by contractual obligations and they have cut as much as they can while still maintaining a good school system. Nelle Andrews, vice-chair of the Elementary School Board of Education, urged residents to go to meetings and budget workshops to be informed and have their concerns addressed before this point in the process.

Frank Santorro thanked the Boards of Finance and Education and Town Government for all of their hard work and commitment.

There being no further discussion, a vote by paper ballot was administered by Registrars of Voters Dale Winchell and Hadley Kornacki. **The results were 70- YES votes to 23- NO votes. Item #1 was approved.**

A motion to approve Item #2 was made by Jonathan Kastner and seconded by Jane Samuels.

- 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, 2017 and January 1, 2018.**

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

To authorize the Tax Collector to collect supplemental motor vehicle taxes in one installment, due and payable on January 1, 2018.

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, 2017.

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

A motion to adjourn was made by Michelle Grow, with second by Jane Samuels. The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

ATTEST: Amy M. Winchell, Town Clerk