

**TOWN OF DEERFIELD, NH  
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE  
George B. White Building  
8 Raymond Road, Deerfield, NH 03037  
January 16, 2018  
MINUTES**

**Call to Order:**

6:30 pm – Chairman Dill called the meeting to order

**Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag:**

Chairman Dill asks all to rise and pledge Allegiance to the Flag

**Roll Call:** Alden Dill, Chair, Members Troi Hopkins, David Carbone, Andrea Hotaling, Ben Miner, Kevin Verville, John Dubiansky, Phil Bilodeau, Zach Langlois, School Board Representative, Andrew Robertson, Select Board Representative.

Absent: James Spillane

**6:30 pm – Chairman Dill opened the public hearing.**

Ms. Hotaling brought up that she thought that in order to avoid another public hearing that she would need to bring up the items that don't have a line in the budget currently to discuss during this public hearing.

Chairman Dill stated that yes, items could be brought up for discussion, just not motions that needed to be acted upon.

Ms. Hotaling's proposal when the committee opens in the actual meeting, is to add a line that is currently not in the budget for the fire-rescue department for retirement. She didn't want to add dollars, just add the line especially since this was a new budget for fire-rescue.

Mr. Robertson stated that either he or the Chairman is going to offer an amendment to the bottom line that was previously voted on. It will be to amend the bottom line to \$4,269,211.07 due to some incorrect math. Chairman Dill stated that he was also going to address this as well.

Mr. Verville stated that he didn't think that the Board had to disclose motions that they were going to make in the business meeting during the public hearing and Chairman Dill stated that no, it didn't have to be done during the public hearing.

Chairman Dill asked if there were any comments for the public hearing on the budget. No one came forward.

Ms. Hotaling read the RSA regarding default budgets and the Chairman stated that he would refer it to the town administrator or the select board representative as to how to proceed.

Mr. Robertson stated that if anyone had changes that they wanted to make to the default budget that they should attend either the select board meeting or the school board meeting in order to change the bottom line on the default budget of either of those.

Mr. Langlois stated that the school board has reduced their default budget number but he didn't have the exact number with him but that everyone had the information in their packet.

Amber Wheeler of the SAU stated that the change was approximately \$60,000.00.

Eric Berglund, Nottingham Road – The question he had is if the select board had budgeted enough money should Northern Pass become a reality and Mr. Robertson stated that they had looked at the legal budget with counsel and had received billable hour estimates through March in regards to this project.

Mr. Berglund asked if there was going to be a “clerk of the works” hired should the project come to fruition as it is going to be a huge project. He referenced when the town built the Deerfield Community School as an example.

Mr. Robertson stated that there were not monies put in for new positions that might be needed to oversee the project or anything of that nature but just looked at monies needed for legal expenses that might be incurred for Northern Pass regarding Deerfield’s interests.

Mr. Berglund asked if it was going to be left to chance and furthermore had this issue had even been discussed with the attorney at the time that the Board was deciding how much money to put into the budget.

Mr. Robertson stated that, no not as a Board and he didn’t think that the town administrator or the Chairman of the Select Board had discussed this angle.

Mr. Verville stated to Mr. Berglund that the deliberate session is coming up and that he may bring up any changes that he sees as needed at the deliberative session.

Chairman Dill asked for any further public comment. None seen.

Public hearing was closed.

**Review of Outstanding Minutes:**

Ms. Hotaling stated that all the votes seemed to be off by one.

Also, there was a comment by Mr. Langlois about employees taking their pre-tax help benefits. It should be changed from 47% to 99.9%.

Ms. Hotaling stated that there were some typing and spelling errors to be corrected.

She also brought up that on Warrant Article 7, the wording seemed to be incorrect for what the committee voted on.

Lastly, she stated that she was a little concerned of the fact that the committee voted on the minutes that were outstanding from the month of November. She didn’t vote to approve them because she hadn’t read them but with that said, she wanted the committee to be diligent in reading and approving minutes in the future.

Mr. Verville stated that he couldn’t attend the January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018 meeting but did watch the meeting video. He was concerned as he thought that the motion to approve the minutes wasn’t in order as it didn’t include any dates and yet still passed with a 7 yea and 1 nay vote. He thought at the least that there should have been a list of dates of the minutes that were to be approved.

Chairman Dill asked if there were any other comments regarding the minutes. None were heard.

**Approval of Outstanding Minutes:**

None were approved at this time.

**Old Business:**

Chairman Dill started to state that he wanted to change the bottom line of the MBC budget.

Mr. Verville asked about the agenda and asked if the committee was going to move the bottom lines and then take recommendations for different budget items and warrant articles.

Chairman Dill stated that approval of the bottom lines had already been done at the last meeting and his intent was to correct the bottom line from a calculating error from last meeting and then reopen discussion on the town and school budget.

Mr. Verville asked the Chair that since there were now ten members instead of eight in attendance, would it be worth reaffirming the votes in order to get a more accurate count from the committee.

Chairman Dill stated that it has never been done before. The votes already have been taken but stated that if someone would make that a motion and it passes, he would take it up with the committee.

**Motion:** Chairman Dill moves to correct the bottom line of the MBC budget to \$4,269,211.07

**Second:** Mr. Langlois

**Discussion:** Chairman Dill stated that that is to correct a calculating error from a previous meeting

Mr. Verville stated that he would like to make an amendment to the bottom line in the amount of \$100,000.00 to the road pavement and reconstruction line as was voted on by the committee previously.

**Motion:** Mr. Verville moves to amended the bottom line of the MBC budget to add \$100,000.00 to the road pavement and reconstruction line.

**Second:** Ms. Hotaling

**Discussion:** Mr. Verville stated that the line was increased by \$100,000.00 and it seems that it was a fairly unanimous opinion that the town was not keeping up with our roads. He stated that he had sent an email to the Chairman when he knew he wasn't going to be able to attend the meeting when the highway budget came up and asked if it could be moved to a meeting that he could be in attendance at of which wasn't done.

The removal of the money was done at a meeting that the highway agent wasn't in attendance, and he isn't here for this one either, which is unfortunate.

Mr. Verville read from the draft minutes of the meeting that the \$100,000.00 was removed from the bottom line.

Mr. Verville went on to state that this was the same conversation that was had last year of which the highway agent stated that he didn't have use for the monies that were to be voted on. When impact fees were going to lapse, then a list of priority projects became available in which to use the impact fees and grant money.

Mr. Verville went on to state that he felt that this was the MBC budget and not the Select Board budget and with the roads becoming more in disrepair, that putting this money into the MBC Budget will be in the best interest for the community. He also stated that he thought that if the money was there, voted on by the citizens of the town, that projects would be found to use the money.

Chairman Dill stated that the Select Board representative stated that the Select Board was going to make a motion to remove it from the budget at the deliberative session.

Mr. Verville asked to address this. He stated that would be up to the select board should they choose and that he would also be at that deliberative session and make the motion to put it back in and there is no guarantee that it will pass at the deliberative session.

Chairman Dill asked if there were any other committee members that would like to make a comment on the amendment.

Mr. Robertson stated that it was with reluctance that the budget committee withdrew the \$100,000.00. Both Zach (Langlois) and Alden (Dill) were pretty clear in that they thought that it was money that could be well spent but if the select board wasn't going to move forward with it, they weren't going to leave it in the budget.

Mr. Robertson stated that he himself had talked with the highway agent and after that conversation he didn't think it would be a good idea to give a department head or an elected official \$100,000.00 if they think they didn't need it and they didn't have a plan to use it.

Mr. Dubiansky stated that this budget is going to be hard to pass as it is. If Mr. Verville wants to make an amendment at the deliberative sessions and the voters pass it, then great but as it stands now, he thought every penny added will increase the chances that the town will be living with a default budget in 2018.

Mr. Bilodeau stated that he is torn on this amendment as he did second Mr. Verville's original motion to add the \$100,000.00. He stated that it is poor management if the road agent is given more money than he can manage in his year worth of activities.

Ms. Hotaling brought up the impact fees and asked if there was a deadline for usage of impact fees and if so, are any expiring and we are not going to be using.

Mr. Robertson stated that there is a deadline in which to expend impact fees or it has to be returned to the developer. The bulk of the \$100,000 was from a grant from the state for road improvements which was completely unexpected and then some impact fees were added which is their purpose.

Mr. Verville stated that this is what puzzles him is the inconsistency and messaging that he is receiving that we can throw all this money at them and they can't do anything with it but then get a windfall from the state and now there is a priority list of projects to be done.

Mr. Verville stated if there were money available that any projects could be put out to bid and that they don't need to be done by the highway department.

Mr. Verville went on to say that the second most item that people in Deerfield talk to him about is the shape or disrepair of the roads in Deerfield and that he would hope that members of the committee would support his amendment to the bottom line.

Mr. Langlois stated that he wanted to see the budget pass but with that money included in the budget, he feels that it could have an impact on the budget passing so he wants to leave it as the committee has brought it forward.

**Vote: Yea 2, Nay 8, Abstained 0 – Motion Fails to add \$100,000.00 back into budget for highway department**

Chairman Dill stated that we are now at the original motion to correct the bottom line of the budget to \$4,269,211.07.

Chairman Dill asked if there were any discussion on this motion.

Mr. Verville asked if that number was larger or smaller than was previously voted on.

Ms. Hotaling explained that the MBC budget will be less than the select board by \$1,948.00 due to an amount being added in twice.

Mr. Verville stated that historically, the bottom line had been voted on separately to which Chairman Dill explained that the bottom line number had been voted on at a previous meeting and that this vote is only a housekeeping measure.

Chairman Dill continued that this is only a housekeeping measure due to an incorrect calculation to the bottom line of the budget. No numbers within the budget were changed to cause the change in the bottom line. He also stated that Mr. Verville could make a motion after this motion was completed to reopen discussion on the budget should he choose.

Ms. Hotaling added that she had a question as to how to move money that was already in the budget to another line that currently isn't in the budget. Mr. Robertson deferred the question to the town administrator.

Mr. Verville along with Mr. Langlois stated that the MBC can create lines in the budget as previous years lines have been added by the MBC.

It was stated that a line could be added to the budget when it is being created, a line can't be added during the middle of the budget year.

Chairman Dill stated that Ms. Hotaling's request was to not add money to the budget but just to add a line and separate money from another line.

Mr. Robertson explained that it is just to create a new line for retirement for the fire department and move money there so that it can more easily be seen just as it is in the police department.

Mr. Langlois stated that in order to create the line, money has to be added to it whether by adding or transfer.

Mr. Harrington asked Ms. Hotaling if what she wanted to do was to add another line to the fire-rescue budget for retirement to which she agreed.

Ms. Hotaling stated that yes, she wanted to have that done so that everything that is associated with fire-rescue be all together. With a meeting for the community to come to regarding the fire-rescue department, she thought that it might be beneficial for those who will be attending to see that also.

Chairman Dill thought that before the issue of adding a line is done, since there are no monies that will affect the bottom line, that a vote should be taken on the motion to get it off the table.

Mr. Verville stated that he thought that the vote to the bottom line was rather quick and what he thought was that at this point, the better way to handle this issue would be to remove the motion to vote on the bottom line and reopen discussion on the town budget. After all discussion, a new vote on the bottom line could occur.

Chairman Dill stated that he proceeded this way in order to have the correct number to work with at the beginning.

Mr. Langlois stated that he would like to see the bottom line amended to the correct number first and then if there are any issues that a vote to reopen discussion could then be taken.

Further discussion by all members concluded that the motion to amend the bottom line due to a calculation error needed to be retracted. Both Mr. Langlois and the Chairman retracted their motion and second to the motion.

**Motion:** Mr. Verville moves to open discussion on the town budget for consideration

**Second:** Chairman Dill

**Discussion:**

**Vote: Yea 10, Nay 0, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries**

#### **Discussion on the Town Budget:**

Ms. Hotaling stated that there is a line on page 26, Line ~~01419609230~~ 014196609320 in the amount of \$104,512.00. Prior to the two new positions for fire being added, the number was \$80,500.00 which is a difference of \$24,012.00.

Chairman Dill stated for clarification, the line number that Ms. Hotaling read was listed as retirement under the insurance heading.

Ms. Hotaling continued that there needs to be a new line added on page 37 which would be 01.4220.04320 and make that line \$24,012.00. She stated that there would be no difference to the bottom line.

**Motion:** Ms. Hotaling moves to add a new line for retirement for fire-rescue 01.4220.04.320

**Second:** Mr. Verville

**Discussion:** Mr. Verville stated that he would support this motion as both police and fire-rescue are public safety and should be budgeted consistently.

Chairman Dill asked Mr. Harrington if the amount of money that is being suggested to move into that line be sufficient to which he couldn't answer at that time but Mr. Robertson stated that given the fact that they have the ability to move money as necessary it wouldn't matter and can adjust accordingly.

Chairman Barry from the select board asked if he could chime in to which he was allowed as a "department head" would and stated that if this issue had been brought back to the select board as has been done in the past, it would have been taken care of very easily.

Mr. Robertson stated that in Ms. Hotaling's defense, the issue of fire-rescue retirement and the fire-rescue department in general was late getting to the table and therefore it didn't get looked into until recently.

Ms. Hotaling stated that had this been brought before the committee sooner, she definitely would have brought it up sooner.

Chairman Dill stated that he also agreed that it was a good idea to be consistent.

**Vote: Yea 10, Nay 0, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries**

Mr. Bilodeau made the following motion:

**Motion:** Mr. Bilodeau moves to add \$1.00 to the bottom line of the budget with a new line that reads "Engineering Services for Northern Pass Project".

**Second:** Mr. Langlois

**Discussion:** Mr. Langlois stated that a location was needed for that line.

Mr. Bilodeau stated that it makes sense to go into Planning as that has engineering services within it for their subdivision requirements.

Mr. Bilodeau stated that Mr. Berglund had pointed out that should Northern Pass be approved and construction start, that the town would need someone to oversee what is happening during the construction phase.

Chairman Dill stated that there is a line 399 which is "Planning Board Contracts" on page 17 in the Planning and Zoning section. Mr. Bilodeau asks that a new line be placed under that specifically for Northern Pass.

Mr. Robertson stated that the select board hasn't discussed this and have no recommendation as to where to create the line. He added that Mr. Bilodeau's suggestion to place it in Planning seems like a good place to put it.

Mr. Verville stated that with no representation from the Planning Board and not knowing if the Planning Board would even want this within their budget, he stated that he could not support the motion and that line 310 already exists and it could be put in that line.

Chairman Dill stated that Line 310 is "Planning Board Engineering Reviews".

Mr. Verville went on to say that Planning Board Engineering Reviews already has some money in it and that the amount could be increased if necessary.

**Vote: Yea 5, Nay 5, Abstained 0 – Motion Fails**

Mr. Robertson stated that it isn't anything that the committee needs to act on but that the Board of Selectmen have modified their bottom line budget number by removing \$36,000.00 to bring the bottom line to \$3,947,590.18.

Mr. Robertson stated that he had estimated revenue amounts and that the MBC should take a vote on them.

**Motion:** Mr. Robertson moves to approve the 2018 Estimated Revenues in the anticipated amount of \$1,684,852.00

**Second:** Chairman Dill

**Discussion:** Ms. Hotaling brought forth the issue of revenues from 2017 versus 2018 and brought her concern to the committee regarding projected revenues. She did feel that the 2018 budget numbers seem to be on track with the actual spending from 2017.

Mr. Verville stated that he thought that there were to be two installments of the Road Paving and Reconstruction grant although when Mr. Harrington was asked about this, he didn't have any information that any money would be forthcoming.

Mr. Verville also stated that in his past history on the board, it was always thought that to underestimate revenue is always better than to overestimate so that spending of money that is never received doesn't happen.

He was, as Ms. Hotaling was, dismayed at the fact that the information wasn't available until just before tonight's meeting and therefore should this come to a vote, he would be voting no simply as he hadn't had a chance to read and analyze the data received.

Chairman Dill was going to have either Mr. Robertson or Mr. Harrington give an overview of the information that was given to the committee members.

Mr. Harrington stated that he would try to give an overview- to the best of his ability as the figures were done by the contract finance person. He went on to say that the contract finance person took the 2017 numbers and tried to come up with a conservative 2018 revenue estimate and Mr. Harrington feels that it was a fair estimate of what the town can expect this year.

Mr. Robertson added that if previous history is looked at, the estimates show that revenue numbers have been consistently calculated to be on the low side.

Chairman Dill asked if there were further questions and none were seen.

**Vote: Yea 9, Nay 1, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries**

Chairman Dill asked if there were any further discussion on the budget.

Mr. Verville asked since when the warrant articles were reviewed and voted on, there were only eight members present from the committee and would like to make a motion that they be brought up and reviewed again in order to get a better consensus of the committee since 25% of the members were not able to vote on the warrant articles.

**Motion:** Chairman Dill moves to approve the bottom line of the budget at \$4,269,211.07

**Second:** Mr. Langlois

**Discussion:** Ms. Hotaling stated that she was going to vote against the budget for two main reasons. The first being the fact that there are 2 part-time fire fighters and two full-time fire fighters budgeted in the budget which makes the budget overstated.

Secondly, in the Parks and Recreation budget there is a salary for a full-time director and a half of his assistant's salary. They have a revolving fund and when asked about this, it was stated that he needed to be paid \$50,000.00 because he supervised employees and 100 children so why isn't more of the 1.5 people being paid from fees from the after-school program.

Also, Mr. Hotaling brought up that there was a line for senior services which only has \$240.00 in it. She stated that Deerfield does have an elderly population and perhaps there should be more done with that population.

Mr. Verville stated that he agrees with everything that Ms. Hotaling just stated and he too is going to vote against this budget and the issues are interlinked.

On page 87 it says there is an 8.7, a .6 percent year on year increase. There was a 5% increase in taxes last year and now we are proposing an 8.7% increase in the budget this year and the leading item that is driving this increase is something that either can be approved by accepting the entire budget or rejecting the entire budget to vote against the item and that is whether we go from a volunteer fire department to a partially professional, paid fire department. Mr. Verville's opinion is that the question should be set aside as a separate warrant article for the people to decide.

Chairman Dill stated that debate and vote on this subject was done at the last meeting and asked if anyone else had any comments. Seeing none, the call for the vote was asked.

**Vote: Yea 7, Nay 3, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries**

**Motion:** Mr. Verville moves to reconsider all dollar warrant articles because there are ten members present to vote and not eight.

**Second:** Mr. Dubiansky

**Discussion:** With ten members it will be more representative of the MBC than with eight members voting.

Ms. Hotaling asked if a new copy of the warrant articles was received by members. According to the town administrator, there were no updates to the wording of any of the warrant articles.

Mr. Verville stated that there was no benefit to voting against reconsidering these articles and getting a 10-member consensus.

**Motion:** Mr. Robertson moves to end discussion on the motion.

**Second:** (There was no second to end discussion on the motion (see at 1:04:55 in the video and no proper count of the votes. As I could see from the video only a couple of hands went up to end discussion of the motion so I am going to leave the vote counts empty.)

**Vote: Yea , Nay , Abstained**

Chairman Dill called for the vote to reopen voting on the warrant articles.



**Vote: Yea 5, Nay 4, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries (This vote total was given by the Chairman even though there are 10 members and I did count the Chair in the Yea Column See @1:06:10**

It was brought to the attention of the Chairman that only 9 people had voted and therefore it was asked that the vote be retaken.

Revote totals as follows:

**Vote: Yea 5, Nay 5, Abstained 0 – Motion Fails**

## **Warrant Article 2 – Revisited**

**Motion:** Mr. Robertson moves to approve the warrant - "To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate \$300,000.00 to provide handicapped access to the second floor of the Town Hall in the form of an elevator to be housed in an additional location at the back of the Town Hall. Construction of the elevator will result in the removal of the existing access ramp. The Heritage Commission will be putting \$10,000.00 towards the cost of the project. The Heritage Commission will actively seek grant opportunities to offset the cost to the project. This is a non-lapsing article and will not lapse until December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022."

**Second:** Mr. Langlois

**Discussion:** Mr. Verville asked if this was the ballot recommendation that the committee is voting on. Mr. Verville also added that this warrant has been on the warrant repeatedly and sounded rejected by the voters of Deerfield.

**Vote: Yea 8, Nay 2, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries**

Ms. Hotaling brought to the committee that she had been looking at the town report and within that book the balances for the trust funds were listed. When trying to reconcile the balances with what was reported from the school, she found it very difficult and stated that she thought that the school numbers were probably correct. She also stated that she has some concerns with the auditing company that the town uses as they didn't find the FICA error issue.

Ms. Hotaling mentioned that since the part-time fire fighters are working a 30 hours week that the town should be covering them under the Affordable Care Act.

Mr. Robertson stated that it was researched and because the town doesn't have 50, full-time employees, they are exempt from having to provide health care. This, according to Mr. Robertson was verified by counsel and the town's health care provider.

Seeing no other discussion for the town budget, Chairman Dill moved to the school budget.

The bottom line to the school budget as well as any warrant articles were voted on at the last meeting of the MBC.

Chairman Dill asked Mr. Langlois if he had any updates for the school budget.

Mr. Langlois stated that in reviewing the default budget, there was a change in some figures so the resulting bottom line to the default budget to be reduced by \$66,502.00 and is now \$13,345,847.00.

Chairman Dill stated that the committee did vote on the bottom line of the school budget and it was \$8,000.00 than what the school board had brought to the committee. *The difference between the MBC budget and the school proposed budget is \$1,000.00.*

**Motion:** Mr. Verville moves to open the school budget for a brief discussion.

**Second:** Ms. Hotaling

**Discussion:** Mr. Verville stated that he had two quick questions regarding the school district budget.

**Vote: Yea 7, Nay 3, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries**

Mr. Verville had a question for the superintendent. His question was, are we underfunding the Deerfield School District and if so, where and by how much?

The superintendent stated that she didn't know if she could answer the question. She did state that there were a lot of lines that were level funded that people had asked for increases in.

Follow up by Mr. Verville was "are there any items that are not in this budget that would be supported by either the SAU staff or the administrative staff at the school they would like to have a motion made and considered by this committee before the committee closes the budget this year".

The superintendent stated that she didn't have anything to offer except to give the mic to the principal for his answer to which Mr. Smith stated that he had nothing at this time.

**Motion:** Mr. Verville moves to reduce line 246 (located on page 27) - 001.23.10.8.10.108.000 and that's the NH School Board Association dues and reduce the line by \$3,985.00 to zero it out.

**Second: no second to the motion**

Chairman Dill asked if there was any more discussion on the school budget. None heard

**Motion:** Chairman Dill moves to close discussion on the school budget

**Second: Multiple committee members**

**Discussion:** No other discussion

**Vote: Yea 9, Nay 0, Abstained 0 – One member did not vote with hand (1:18:40) Motion Carries**

**Old Business:**

None brought forward

**New Business:**

Mr. Verville asked to discuss scheduling of meetings after the deliberative sessions to reconsider recommendations on any and all articles that have changed at deliberative session.

After discussion, February 13<sup>th</sup> was chosen at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Verville stated that he would be out of town on important business.

**Citizens Comments:**

None

**Adjourn:**

**Motion:** Chairman Dill moves to adjourn

**Second:** Mr. Langlois

**Discussion:**

**Vote: Yea 10, Nay 0, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries**

**Next Meeting: January 25, 2018 following the Public Hearing at 6:30 p.m.**

*The Minutes were transcribed and respectfully submitted by Dianne L. Kimball, Recording Secretary  
Pending approval by the Municipal Budget Committee*