

TOWN OF FRANCESTOWN
OFFICE OF SELECTMEN
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FRANCESTOWN, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03043-0005

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

February 7, 2013

Selectmen Present: Chair Betsy Harwick, Scott Carbee, Abigail Arnold, Administrative Coordinator Michael Branley, and Budget Advisory Committee members Charlie Pyle, Nick Wilder, Henry Kunhardt, and Bill McAuley

Also present: Dick Leavitt, Bill McNeil, Henry Camirand, Kerry Camirand, Warren Kiblin, Fire Chief Larry Kullgren, Police Chief Steve Bell, Tom Anderson, Donna Noonan, Becky Moul, Maureen von Rosenvinge, Lawrie Barr, Polly Freese, Sarah Pyle, Betty Behrsing, Lisa Bourbeau, Lisa Stewart, Linda Kunhardt, and others unknown to the minute taker.

CALL TO ORDER: Betsy called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and opened the public hearing.

Betsy stated that the purpose of this public hearing is to discuss the Town's operating budget and warrant articles. She asked Mike to go over each warrant article and then for the public to ask questions and provide comments.

Warrant Article 2 – Mike outlined article 2, the operating budget of \$1,547,067, and outlined some of the major accounting changes being made and some of the budget lines that are up or down significantly. Overall it is approximately a 3% increase from 2012 with a tax rate impact of \$5.44 / \$1,000. Lawrie Barr stated he felt the Town was spending too much money.

Warrant Article 3 – Mike outlined article 3, the capital improvement program's recommended base contributions to capital reserve funds. This article total \$369,700, totaling \$327,850 from taxation and \$41,850 from undesignated fund surplus with a tax rate impact of \$1.55 / \$1,000.

Warrant Article 4 – Mike outlined article 4, the continuation of road reconstruction on Pleasant Pond Road for \$180,000 from the capital reserve fund. Lisa Bourbeau asked what happened with Kris Stewart's recommendation for a temporary bridge on the turnpike. Abigail responded that the Town had received a price estimate from CLD for about \$65,000. There was a discussion about if the temporary bridge could be moved to Woodward Hill Road and how expensive that would be. Polly Freese stated that she felt that the turnpike was more important than Pleasant Pond. There was a discussion about the police presence on Red House Road and Chief Bell stated he has officers on that road every day. There was a discussion about how Town Meeting could authorize the temporary repair of the bridge by increasing the bridge account in the operative budget.

Warrant Article 5 – Mike outlined article 5, which is to complete the basement support modification on the Town Hall so the first floor is usable for \$25,300, \$11,800 from a grant and the balance from the undesignated fund surplus. There was a discussion about the work to be done at Town Hall.

Warrant Article 6 – Mike outlined article 6, to purchase a new motor grader using capital reserve funds. There was a discussion about the values of buying a used grader instead of a new one. Scott stated that typically buying used equipment like that means you are buying someone else's problem. Mike stated he had looked into renting a grader and financially it made more sense to buy one.

Warrant Article 7 – Mike outlined article 7, the appropriation for the bridges in the state bridge aid program. There was a discussion about how certain the Town was that it would receive the state aid and the Board stated that they were confident but there is a chance that the program would get cut.

Warrant Article 8 – Mike outlined article 8, which is to purchase a defibrillator for the Fire Department and Chief Kullgren provided some additional information.

Warrant Article 9 – Mike outlined article 9, to treat milfoil in Scoby Pond with a combination of taxes and the acceptance of a grant. The approximate tax rate impact of this article is \$0.05 / \$1,000.

Warrant Article 10 – Mike outlined article 10, to fund milfoil prevention at Pleasant Pond for \$2,500 through taxation. There was a discussion about the value of funding this program to prevent milfoil from getting into the pond. The tax rate impact of this article is approximately \$0.01 / \$1,000.

Warrant Article 11 – Mike outlined article 11, to transfer \$4,700 from the undesignated fund surplus to the Cemetery Maintenance Trust, representing the sale of cemetery lots in 2012.

Warrant Article 12 – Mike outlined article 12, to appropriate \$30,000 to the building improvement capital reserve fund with \$23,000 from taxation and \$7,000 from the Undesignated Fund Surplus. Abigail stated this represents the Planning Board's acknowledgement that the Town is facing a lot of building projects in the near future and she listed some of the projects not included in the program. The Board of Selectmen and the Budget Advisory Committee do not support this article because they feel it would increase the tax rate too significantly.

Warrant Article 13 – Mike outlined article 13, to appropriate \$45,000 to perform the work to allow for the removal of the temporary posts at the Town Hall, \$22,500 from grant and \$22,500 from taxation. The approximate tax rate impact of this article is \$0.10 / \$1,000. Heritage Commission Chair Maureen von Rosenvinge stated she asked the Board of Selectmen to place this article on the warrant because she had been approached by many residents who want the support posts removed. The Board of Selectmen and BAC do not support this article also

because they feel it would increase the tax rate too significantly, although they do not oppose the project.

Warrant Article 14 – Mike outlined article 14, to authorize the Board of Selectmen to borrow money during the construction of the bridge programs while the Town waits to be reimbursed by the state. The Board of Selectmen hope to not need to borrow funds, however feel it is important to have that authority should they need it. This article has no tax impact and needs to be voted by a 2/3rds ballot vote.

Warrant Article 15 – Mike outlined article 15, to accept the Board of Selectmen's recommendation to change the title of the Town's administrative assistant to the title of Town Administrator. Abigail stated this is the title that most towns in the area use to describe the position. The public asked and Mike responded that this change of title would not impact his salary or benefits.

Warrant Article 16 – Mike outlined article 16, to change the position of treasurer from an elected office to a position appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The Board discussed how in the past it has been difficult to recruit willing and qualified candidates for the position. Treasurer Nick Wilder stated he supports the change because the position has become increasingly complex and it would be a problem if someone was to be elected who is not qualified. There was a discussion about if having an appointed treasurer would be more expensive and the Board stated the position is probably underpaid now so a pay adjustment would probably need to be made either way.

Mike summarized the warrant articles and stated that if the articles pass that the Board of Selectmen recommend the estimated Town tax rate is \$7.05 / \$1,000. If all of the articles pass as written, the estimated Town tax rate is \$7.25 / \$1,000. The Town tax rate last year was \$6.84 / \$1,000.

ADJOURNMENT: Betsy closed the public hearing and adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Michael Branley

Approved on February 18, 2013

Board of Selectmen Chair Betsy Hardwick

Selectman Scott S. Carbee

Selectperson Abigail Arnold