

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

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

February 5, 2015

Selectmen Present: Chair Abigail Arnold, Betsy Hardwick and Scott Carbee

Staff Present: Town Administrator Michael Branley

Also present: Budget Advisory Committee - Charlie Pyle, Nick Wilder, Stewart Brock and Henry Kunhardt; and Larry and Jay Ames, Tom Anderson, Warren Kiblin, Brad Howell, Dennis Orsi, Lisa Bourbeau, David Hanlon, Linda Kunhardt, Ray and Beth Wallace, John Arnold, Jan Hicks, Sarah Pyle, Celeste Lunetta, Fire Chief Larry Kullgren, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Pam Finnell and others

CALL TO ORDER: Abigail called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. She opened the budget and warrant public hearing and indicated that Mike will give an overview of each warrant and will discuss each article and take questions as he proceeds through each article.

Mike said tax rate estimates are based on current values. Mike gave a brief introduction and he noted articles 1 and 3 will not be discussed at this meeting, as they will be voted on by official ballot.

Article 2: Seeks to combine the offices of Town Clerk and Tax Collector creating a new position of Town Clerk/Tax Collector to be held by one individual

- Historically the position has been held by one person for practical reasons
- The new combined position will be elected to a three year term at the 2016 Annual Meeting (by Official Ballot)

Article 4: Operating Budget \$1,619,200 – An increase from 2014 budget of \$26,530 or 1.67%
Major increases and decreases:

- Executive: Salary increase to the Town Administrator (\$5,000) and funding for contracted services (\$3,500)
- Elections: Fewer elections offset by purchase of Avitar Software for the Town Clerk's Office. Pam outlined some benefits of Avitar Software such as improved efficiency, ability to accept debit and credit cards in the future, one-check town, streamlines reporting and auditing processes and creates options not currently available.
- Legal: Litigation with PSNH & Fairpoint over values continues but budget amount is reduced (-\$8,000)
- Personnel Administration: Reduced health insurance premiums (-\$2,000) offset by increases to insurance and other fringe benefit lines (net +\$2,000)

- Buildings: Biannual septic pumping of Town Buildings (+\$1,900), increase to grounds keeping (+2,000) and facility painting
- Insurance: Property & Liability Insurance (+\$3,500)
- Police: Reduction in gasoline and increase to professional development
- Ambulance: Increased fee to Peterborough based on new fee calculation (+\$9,000). The Town is looking into possible alternatives for next year.
- Highway: Reductions in gasoline, diesel, and overtime offsetting increases to gravel and sand, roadside mowing, truck repair, and other accounts (net -\$500)
- Reseal: Increase asphalt preventative maintenance (+\$3,500)
- Bridges: Removal of the remaining funding for the 2013 Turnpike temporary bridge (-\$3,500)
- Solid Waste: Biannual household hazardous waste day (+\$4,000) and increases to hauling and other accounts
- Welfare: Decreased based on current activity (-\$6,200)
- Library: Increase for inclusion of technology improvement plan (+\$1,000)
- Debt Service: Decrease in the Conservation Bond payment (-\$2,000) and savings in the cost of other short term borrowing for 2015 bridge replacements (-\$3,500)
 - Overall operating budget increase from 2014 of \$26,530
 - Net revenues approximately \$20,000 more than last year
 - Net amount to be raised by taxes if \$1,184,200 – an increase of roughly \$6,700
 - The approximate tax rate impact of this article is \$6.21/\$1,000
 - The Board of Selectmen and Budget Advisory Committee unanimously recommend this article

Article 5:

- Contributions to Capital Reserve Funds seeking to allow the Town to continue funding for current operations with existing equipment and facilities
- \$399,500 from taxation and \$89,600 from the Undesignated Fund Surplus
- The Approximate tax rate impact of this article is \$2.10/\$1,000
- The Planning Board, Board of Selectmen and Budget Advisory Committee unanimously recommend this article

Article 6:

- This article seeks to move \$1,600 from the Undesignated Fund Surplus into the General Cemetery Maintenance Trust
- This \$1,600 represents ½ of the revenue received for the sale of cemetery lots in 2014
- This article is funded by the Undesignated Fund Surplus; it has no direct tax impact
- The Board of Selectmen and Budget Advisory Committee unanimously recommend this article

Article 7:

- This article seeks to appropriate \$2,000 to the Master Plan Update Fund created in 2014
- The Planning Board has expended \$2,200 so far out of the fund and the Town has an additional \$5,500 under contract. The goal is to put away a small amount each year to keep the fund from getting depleted.
- This article is funded by the Undesignated Fund Surplus; it has not direct tax impact

- The Board of Selectmen and Budget Advisory Committee unanimously recommend this article

Article 8:

- This article seeks to fund two major building projects
- Projects expected to be completed are purchasing and installing an exhaust treatment system for the Fire Station (\$70,000) and exterior painting, clapboard repairs, and window replacements at the Town Offices (\$30,000)
- This article is funded from the building improvement capital reserve; it has no direct tax impact
- The Board of Selectmen and Budget Advisory Committee unanimously recommend this article

Article 9:

- This article seeks to change the way the town clerk / tax collector is compensated from a combination of fees and salary to straight salary of \$34,000 effective 2016
- The salary is projected to be comparable to the actual compensation of the town clerk and tax collector over the past few years
- The Board of Selectmen and Budget Advisory Committee unanimously recommend this article

Article 10:

- This article seeks to purchase a rescue truck to replace the current vehicle
- This article is funded by a withdrawal from the fire truck capital reserve fund and acceptance of a contribution from Mt. Crotched Firefighters' Association; it has no direct tax impact. Chief Kullgren stated the Fire Department is recommending this article be postponed until next year. The Board agreed to remove the article.

Article 11:

- This article seeks to appropriate \$24,000 for the treatment of invasive milfoil in Scoby Pond using both herbicide and DASH (diver assisted suction harvesting) treatments
- This article is funded by the acceptance of a state grant in the amount of \$6,000 and \$18,000 from taxation
- The approximate tax rate impact of this article is \$0.09 / \$1000
- The Board of Selectmen and Budget Advisory Committee unanimously recommend this article

Discussion followed regarding the State's depleted reserve fund, which is the reason for the lower grant amount, and boat monitoring at the public access to Scoby Pond.

Article 12:

- This article seeks to appropriate \$2,500 to fund milfoil prevention at Pleasant Pond by contributing to the funding of boat monitors between Memorial Day and Labor Day
- The approximate tax rate impact of this article is \$0.01/\$1,000

Summary:

- The approximate overall tax rate impact of all warrant articles is \$8.41 / \$1,000, with \$1,604,200 to be raised by taxes
- This in an increase of \$54,000 to be raised by taxes (3.48%)
- For a home valued at \$200,000 this is approximately \$1,682 for the Town portion of 2015 taxes (NOTE: based on current property assessments)

There being no further questions or public input, the public hearing was closed and the meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Marti Callahan

Approved on March 9, 2015

Board of Selectmen Chair, Abigail Arnold

Selectmen Scott S. Carbee

Selectperson Betsy Hardwick