

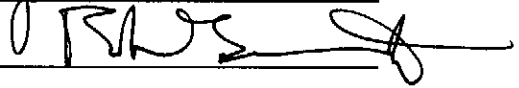
Bob Thompson



John Allen



Richard Bennett



Selectmen's Budget Hearing #1
January 12, 2017

Present: Bob Thompson, Chairman; John Allen, and Richard Bennett; Selectmen

Visitors: Town Office Administrator Julie Atwell, Town Administrative Assistant Julie Hoyt, Police Chief Chris Perley, Fire Chief Jay Henry, Kathleen Dougherty, Videographer Hank Benesh,, Bea Davis, Bob Davis, Stan Weiss, Jerry Dougherty, Sarah Clemons, Peter Benson, Betsey Harding, Kevin Bennett, Thomas Greig, Bill Paul Manix, Darlene Ference, Sarah Duffy, Hank Duesch, Anne Lee Doig, and Roger Aubrey.

Chairman Bob Thompson called the meeting to order and opened the Budget Hearing at 6:30 p.m. The plan is to review the budget packet and take comments. Any changes will be incorporated and reviewed at Budget Hearing #2 on February 9th which will be immediately following the Selectmen's Meeting scheduled for 4:00.

Selectman Thompson started by announcing that the total operating budget is down \$9243 and that the Warrant Articles being presented are also slightly down. He will proceed through the budget department by department.

Kathy Dougherty wishes to thank Julie on the great job she did putting the packet together. It shows great transparency.

Selectmen Budget - We have a 3% salary increase we're proposing across the board.all staff. Treasurer's and Clerk's expenses for mileage will both increase because the TD bank closed in Glen.

Stan Weiss questioned what we were looking at on the third to last page for gross wages. They were from last year. Why aren't there projections for this year? Selectman Allen commented that all base salaries would go up 3% but we couldn't project how much overtime would be required by the police, fire , or highway departments.

Town Clerk Office - We have a 3% salary increase but since this is an elected position it has to go on a Warrant Article. The Town Clerk has requested to have her increases always tied in with the increases of other town staff so a Warrant Article is being proposed to do that. More money is in the budget for the Deputy Town Clerk. This increase is so that the Clerk's Office can be open 5 days a week. The increase in expenses again is due to the longer drive to the TD bank in No. Conway. There is also a decrease in election costs because there are fewer elections this year.

When asked about the 3% salary increase Selectman Thompson said that cost of living is about 2% and that a study they have been doing comparing our town to other towns of similar size show that our staff is underpaid compared to them. We want our town staff up to a comparable level on how other town's staff are paid.

Financial Administration - Again the staff has a 3% salary increase. Utilities are down in this department because they have been moved to a different department. Phone and postage expenses are down. Computer Technology and support was a one time upgrade so we're still proposing the same budget this year.

Sarah Clemons listed all the benefits that are added to the base salary of someone making \$50,000 a year. She would like us to consider other people that don't get these increases. Stan Weiss asked who was part of the Financial Administration? The selectmen answered they were the women that run the offices that run the finances for the town. ~~Paul Benson~~ commented that people need to understand they cannot amend a line item in the budget. They can only voice their opinion about specific items. All they can change is the bottom line. Selectman Bennett said now is the time to adjust or request to adjust line items. Peter Benson commented that looking at a 2 million dollar budget \$24,000 is a fairly small portion of the budget for the 3% salary increase which he supports.

*Willis
Kelly*

Assessing is a flat fee. Re-valuation is done every 5 years. Due in 2019.

Legal is down by thirty thousand. Jerry Dougherty commented that \$60,000 still seemed high. The Selectmen noted that there are things coming that are ongoing and can't be discussed.

Planning Board expenses Flat

Zoning Board down \$1500.

General Government Parks and Buildings is where we find maintenance and utility costs for town Parks, Library, and other misc. expenses. This department cost is down \$3500.

Cemeteries same as last year. Selectman Bennett asked where cemeteries fees go. They go into the capital reserve and cover things like maintenance and mowing. Bea stated that the cemetery takes care of themselves. Jay Henry said they spend more than they receive

Property Liability Insurance went up \$1679 reflecting the movement to Primex.

Building Inspection again the wages reflect the 3% increase and that is up a little higher because we are adding 4 hours to the building inspector's week. Everything else is flat.

Kevin

~~Jay~~ commented that the permit fees brought in about \$14,000 which helps to offset any increases in this department.

Police wages are down \$19,000 as are insurance down \$8197 and NHRS Pension down \$25,145. There is an increase of \$2,000 for fuel due to the increase in the cost of gas. The other increases are due to uniform upgrades and Software Upgrades. There will also be an increase of \$1900 for dues and fees for the Madison Firearms Training. Chief Perley stated that the current situation of having a range on public land is a risky business and also due to a resident's complaint the current situation was not adequate. To resolve the

matter he decided to cease use of the facility and instead train at the Madison Fish and Game Club. We will also be joining some Associations that will bring benefits to the town. The chief is very pro training. Thinks training is the cheapest insurance you'll ever spend. Sarah Clemons asked what this proposed budget will pay for in the Police Department. This accounts for 3 full time officers and 1300 hours for a part time officer @ \$17 per hour. This would give coverage from 8 AM to midnight 7 days a week 365 days a year. The part time officer would fill in for vacations, training, sick time, and court dates. You get more for less. Sarah asked how many hours the chief could work. He replied that he had a cap of 32 hours he could work. He considers himself one of the full time officers in his count so he would be hiring one additional officer. He'll wait to hire until the budget is finalized. Bob Davis asked how officers cover the after midnight calls and how are they compensated. That is included in the bottom line budget. We don't do readiness to work call. They are available to be called. If you can respond you will otherwise the next officer will be called. Bob said we've always seemed to have someone to respond in emergencies. The state just added 4 night troopers in the area that could also respond. Sarah Thinks we should wait until March to see if we need another full time officer.

Ambulance is up \$8202 due to increased payroll, fewer payments received, increased insurance and supplies. When asked about fewer payments received the selectmen responded that it's getting harder to collect payments. There is also a big difference between what elderly are charged and what medicaid covers. Karen asked who does the collections. We use a collection agency. Bartlett contributes more.

Fire again has a 3% wage increase. The Fire Code Inspector wages were reduced by half. FICA down, Medical Expenses down. Slight increase in Health Insurance.

Emergency Management had a slight increase of \$62 and a reduction of \$3300 in health officer expenses. We got a reduction because the EOP is complete.

Highway Administration again wages up 3% .Other increases are due to the wish list of other departments needing maintenance that can be done quicker and cheaper than using contractors. The wages increase and health insurance increase are due to the additional manpower needed to accomplish this.

Highway materials are pretty flat. Less culverts are needed. Less gas and diesel fuel. Less Utilities and Propane. The \$2000 increase is for the Porta Potty expenses. A comment was made that the highway crew has done well with the roads over the past few days. Sarah Clemons wants to know how many employees are in the highway department.. There are 3 full time employees and 1 per diem with plowing adding an additional ½ time employee. This ½ time employee will probably be helping with the maintenance list. Sarah feels that the highway department is fortunate that the town feels that extra staffing is important. Jay said that back in 2006 there were four full time employees. We are operating with less and the expectation is higher with 850 full time homeowners and upwards of 1000 to 1200 weekenders.

Street Lighting is flat.

Solid Waste Disposal at the transfer station the wages are flat and based on the contractual situation we have with Bartlett. Most things flat with health insurance down a little. Groundwater Monitoring will be needed in 2017. All the Transfer Station Employees are Bartlett employees.

Animal Control officer is needed if you license dogs according to Chief Perley. Police can do it if we have too. There was an increase because Officer Orsini was chasing a lot of unlicensed dogs. Since she left there has been a rash of unlicensed dogs. Having licensed dogs that are up to date on their rabies shots keeps our families safe.

Library had slight increases in wages, FICA, medical expenses, and utilities.

Recreation & Parks was flat across the board.

Debt Service - Bond interest is coming down.

Tan Interest is the same.

Warrant Articles: Bottom line is we're asking for \$35,000 less this year than last year. Four are coming off the books from last year. The Highway Truck, Police Cruiser, Town Office AC, and Old Library Capital Reserve Fund. There are five new ones:

- 1)Time Warner Agreement has run out and we need a lawyer to negotiate a new contract
- 2)The 3% increase for the Town Clerk
- 3)Purchase Ambulance
- 4)Phase 2 of the Transfer Station
- 5)Fire Department Furnace Upgrade

Jerry voiced his opinion on Bonding vs. Reserve Funds. He feels that maybe bonding could be used to pay half of capital expenditures so that the people paying for the items would reap more of the benefits for them. Selectman Allen thought this was a good idea. It had been brought up last year in regards to the fire truck purchase. He feels that leaving an extra 12% in Reserve Funds is too much. Before the next budget meeting we can look at the plusses and minuses of Capitals vs. Bonding.

Consolidating Capital Reserve Funds in one article and Expendable Trust Funds in another. Less Articles to vote on.

Selectman Allen asked Pat if \$65,000 was needed for road reconstruction. He said that Switchback is very bad. The only reclaim last year was Cross Road. This year we're going to reclaim a much longer distance. We are catching up on some road reclaiming. We're able to do more maintenance preservation with this budget. Selectman Bennett said anytime we can do a complete job rather than throw a band aid on a road it's better

No updates on new backhoe for Transfer Station. One town has to own it for insurance reasons. They were talking \$50,000 a year for 5 years. Relationship with Bartlett working well

Second page of warrant articles is pretty basic stuff adding into the funds. Sarah feels that using the highway crew at the transfer station takes them away from there road repair work and maintenance work. The Selectmen feel we have to use them wherever they can be effective.

The tax rate should remain flat.

There being no further business, the hearing was adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Amiee Murphy

Recording Secretary