

Budget Advisory Committee
MPD-Community Room
January 7th, 2025

Present: Karen Mitchell, Chris Pank, Wade Campbell, Claudia Lemaire, Paul Bartolomucci, Vanessa Sheehan, Mike Thornton, Kevin Hunter, Peg Seward

Absent: None

Guests: Troy Neff (Town Finance Director), Lincoln Daley (Town Administrator, present remotely)

Troy Neff begins our meeting by reviewing the revised town budget. The 2025 budget is a 5.69% increase above the 2024 operating budget. Troy reviews several items in the packet including the proposed Warrant Articles. Lincoln is hoping for a preliminary vote on the warrants tonight from the BAC.

Troy reviews the Warrant Articles beginning with Warrant Article Three- Water Department - with a match for federal funding opportunities totaling 1,000,000 dollars. This is for future matching grants for repairs and improvements to the town water system.

Warrant Article Four is concerning the potential for lower-level restrooms at Wadleigh Memorial Library. Paul asks if the cost has been provided by a contractor. The Board does not think it has not been brought to bid yet. The total for this Warrant is 225k in taxpayer funds with 25k coming from the Wadleigh Library Capital Reserve Fund.

Warrant Article five is the Town Operating budget. Peg raises a concern about the language of the default budget, the language of "certain adjustments". Her concern is that "certain adjustments" may make the default budget higher than the actual budget which may be misleading to voters. Troy states that Milford will be presenting the default to Budget and Bond as the actual default budget. The number represented already includes "certain adjustments". The language is more from a legal standpoint and is appropriate for the warrant. Paul B. raises concerns about the surface of the pool and the discussion on this topic is tabled till later in the meeting.

Warrant Article Six- Wastewater Operating Budget- There are no concerns about the budget. Kevin Hunter raises concerns about pipes breaking and if there is a plan to continue to fix the older infrastructure. Members of the BAC comment on Leo's past discussion on the continued work DPW is doing on the older pipes in town.

Warrant Article Seven - Water Operating Budget- there are no concerns.

Warrant Article Eight- Milford Swing Bridge- \$700,000. The state is paying for eighty percent of the costs \$560,000. This is a historical bridge that past mill workers used as a means to get to

work. This is a great opportunity to repair this very iconic structure in Milford. The state is hiring the engineers and will bid out for construction.

Warrant Article Nine- Dump Truck- 5-year lease purchase totaling \$352,260. Peg brings up the DPW Capital Reserve for Vehicle and Equipment and if it can be used to offset the costs of the lease purchase agreement. We will be given the final numbers next week on the balance of our current Capital Reserve Accounts. More discussion is needed.

Warrant Article Ten- Reconstruction of Town Roads- 300,000. This Warrant if approved in conjunction with the 500,000 in the operating budget, will give roads 800,000 total in funds.

Warrant Article 11- Three Full-Time Firefighters- There has been a decrease from six to three firefighters for the warrant. There was a presentation given by Chief Flarety, explaining how three firefighters will be a good recruitment tool for other firefighters and a model for other fire departments. Chris Pank gives some statistics in regard to number of fires and timing for fires to support the warrant. Chris encourages BAC members to reach out to the Fire Department with questions or concerns.

Warrant Article 12- Ambulance Equipment Replacement and Revolving Fund for 140,000. Peg feels that a Capital Reserve is still an appropriate way to save for a new ambulance. Other members feel a revolving account may be a better way to save for the ambulance. The capital reserve always has a chance of being voted down. Peg feels that a revolving fund still needs a vote to expend the money, but other members feel that it is a less "risky" vote because the money is already in the account.

Warrant Article 13 - Milford Dams Feasibility Study- 100,000. There are some concerns that the study may suggest changes to the water system that might not be favorable to the landscape of the town. More information is needed regarding the study and why the study is needed at this time.

Warrant Article 14- 60,000 Keyes Park Expansion Committee. The hope of the 60,000 is to resurface the tennis courts. There are some concerns that the original Keyes Warrant may not include the tennis courts because they were also going to be relocated at that time. Paul B. feels that only the pool was excluded from the original warrant. Claudia asks why we are not just wording the warrant to say tennis courts. The board feels that with "no means no", should the warrant fail, we could then not use surplus tax money for the repair.

Warrant Article 15 - Social Services- 45k-no concerns

Warrant Article 16- Police Department Portable Radios - Capital reserve to expend 35k- no concerns other than we would like to know the balance in that fund.

Warrant article 17 - Blue Bus- 32k- no concerns

Warrant Article 18- Capital Reserve for IT 20k- no concerns

Warrant Article 19 - Conservation land Fund 20k- no concerns

Warrant Article 20- Memorial Parades- 11k- no concerns

Warrant Article 21- Summer Band Concerts-9k no concerns

Warrant Article 22- Annual Labor Day Parade-6k- no concerns

Karen asks Troy what we spent our surplus on from the last budget- He states several items. Leo from DPW needed a pick-up truck, Police needed ammunition and a vehicle, firefighters needed equipment, ADA chair for the pool, an admin. tool for MUNIS and also a compensation study for town employees. The board feels that it is prudent to spend the surplus on much needed items versus "giving it back" to taxpayers.

Paul asks the questions of abatements and was told that around 99k was adjusted for abatements. We will do a commercial and residential re-evaluation in 2026 which may make more sense than a partial commercial. It could be more expensive to split up the re-evaluation and it has the potential to put more stress on the residential taxpayer for one year.

The BAC begins preliminary voting on the Warrant articles- Warrants 3-9, 13, and 15-22 receive a 9-0 in favor. Articles 10-12, and 14 have abstentions. The board will vote again next week after we receive more information on the warrants.

Karen assigns members of the BAC the write ups for the voter's guide. Claudia will assemble the write-ups.

The minutes from the December 17th meeting are reviewed. Paul makes a motion to approve the minutes, Wade seconds, all in favor.

Paul makes a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:47, Kevin seconds, all in Favor.

Next meeting will be Monday, January 14th, in the BOS Room at 6:30PM.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by,

Claudia Lemaire, Secretary BAC