

APPROVED
MINUTES OF THE MILFORD BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
December 27, 2023

PRESENT: Gary Daniels, Chairman Lincoln Daley, Town Administrator via zoom
Chris Labonte, Vice Chairman Tina Philbrick, Executive Assistant
Paul Dargie, Member Chris Gentry, Videographer
Tim Finan, Member
Dave Freel, Member

1. CALL TO ORDER, BOARD OF SELECTMEN INTRODUCTIONS & PUBLIC SPEAKING INSTRUCTIONS:

Chairman Daniels called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m., introduced Board members, and then led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. APPOINTMENTS – (Approximate times)

5:30 p.m. - On December 11th Joe Vallier came before the Board to discuss the potential creation of a snowmobile trail connection through the Class VI portion of Foster Road between Federal Hill Road and Wallingford Road. Multiple abutters spoke in opposition to the trail. Tonight's meeting is to allow the public to weigh in on the subject and have the Board's opinion on the use of the road.

Chairman Daniels said the only question before us is if this Board wants to authorize the use of a class V road for snowmobiling.

Mike Thornton, a Milford resident asked how we would distinguish this class V road from others. Class V roads have been accepted by the town. Class VI roads are not town-maintained.

Joe Vallier, a Milford resident, they are asking permission to use the road and give the snowmobile club permission to maintain the road.

Bill Tessier, a Milford resident, said this trail will dump into Wallingford Road. Does this town want to open up liability for this class V section? There are small children in this neighborhood.

Jane Tessier, a Milford resident, asked if the Board looked into this area. She is opposed to having snowmobiles drive through her neighborhood. It's currently a quiet neighborhood.

Mr. Vallier recapped his previous conversation with the Board so that Selectman Freel could understand what was being suggested. He said maybe 8 snowmobilers would use the trail. His snowmobile club has the skills and labor to maintain the class VI road which is now neglected. This portion of Foster Road could be part of a larger trail network, connecting contiguous public and private properties. He admitted to making unauthorized improvements to the class VI portion of Foster Road. He also wants to erect gates to discourage unauthorized vehicles from using the trails. It's a nice trail with stone walls on both sides. He said the snowmobiles would be the least amount of people to use this area. He wants permission to keep the roadway clear for passage.

Selectman Finan doesn't support this. All they are talking about is a little piece of road that goes nowhere. It's pointless. Selectman Dargie agrees.

Tina Philbrick, a Milford resident, said she has no weigh-in on this property but abutters are here who don't want this on their property. The Board should be listening to them and not the single person who wants to do something on property he doesn't own and doesn't belong. She asked if the trails were scenic and if the Heritage Commission had been informed of this. She doesn't think the Board should allow this.

Mr. Tessier fears it will open the area to more snowmobiles than Mr. Vallier is thinking. He appreciates that Mr. Vallier wants to maintain trails. It's going to cause safety issues for the families.

Mr. Wilson showed the Board photos of the area and houses this will impact. He provided some history of why the road was maintained in its current state. There is already a walking trail in that area that is used. No one was

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asked if they wanted this. He asked the Board to declassify that section of road. Selectman Labonte said Selectmen can't do that.

Administrator Daley, said to declassify a town road, it requires a warrant article at a town meeting. If that occurred and it passed, that small section would be given to abutters on both sides of the property.

Ryan Lamb, a Milford resident, said his children use this trail and sometimes they are not useable. He is in favor of fixing these trails. The Nor'easters Snowmobile club will do high-quality work. He observes about 20 people a day walking the Federal Hill area.

Jessie Mills, a Milford resident, said his wife owns horses and he would like the trails fixed for use.

Amos White, a Milford resident, said this is keeping with the master plan and connecting Milford. He said the snowmobile club usually gets only about 3 weeks of the season. He agrees with the snowmobile club maintaining these trails. There is no crime in this area.

Selectman Freel asked if the Board would have to look into Heritage or Conservation look into this. He sees a benefit for this but we should be having the other committees input on it as well. Selectman Finan agrees. There are two issues. We have committees that do this. He isn't willing to let snowmobiles go up the class V road. If we don't want snowmobiles to use the class V road then it's a dead issue and we are done here and we can ask for the other committee's input.

Selectman Labonte asked if the Board decides to not allow on the class V road, would Mr. Vallier still be looking for permission to maintain the class VI road? Mr. Vallier said yes. He just won't have funding for the gates if we do that. The snowmobile club has the tools to do this. Selectman Labonte said that it isn't a dead issue if they still want to do this. He isn't opposed to having other committees look into this. Selectman Finan said if we don't do anything, things don't change. Conservation has a Trails Committee.

Katherine Kokko clarified that we have been maintaining class V road, but not class VI road. She sent the Board information about what would happen if you maintain a class VI for some time. She questioned who could maintain the road without it reverting to a class V road. Selectman Dargie said the town can't spend money on maintaining a class VI road. If the conservation commission maintains a trail for free. You can gate it but you can't lock the gate.

Chairman Daniels said we need to look at liability about who maintains the road. We could take a vote on the use of a class V road for snowmobiling and put off any other decisions until the other committees discuss this.

Mr. Wilson said we are here today about the road being used as a snowmobile trail to be maintained by a snowmobile club. He would be happy to get some scouts and others to help clear the trails after that decision.

There was additional discussion about maintaining different properties.

Ken Flaherty, Fire Chief was asked his opinion of whether or not the class VI road should be maintained to the level spoken about here tonight. Chief Flaherty said any access to any development is good for if anything happens so there is always another way out of a development. This would get us out on foot.

Jeff Wells, a Milford resident, said no authorization was given to Mr. Vallier to do this, he was wrong. The materials removed caused ditches to be filled spilling into other properties. It makes no sense to him that the people who did this may be allowed to come and do this again. He isn't in favor of this at all.

Beth Birkett, a Milford resident, is against this. There was an accident in that area this past summer and kids were thrown from the back of a truck before the class V section started. She doesn't know how emergency vehicles would be able to get to anyone if they had to go into the woods. She is concerned about noise and safety.

After additional discussion, the Board decided to refer the road to the Planning Board, Heritage Commission, and the Conservation Commission and will reconvene sometime in February after all parties have met.

Selectman Finan made a motion to affirm the current law that snowmobiles are not allowed on the class V section of Foster Road. Seconded by Selectman Dargie.

Selectman Labonte made a motion to table the discussion. Seconded by Selectman Freel. The motion failed 2/3 with Selectman's Daniels, Dargie, and Finan opposed.

To continue with Selectman Finan's motion, all were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

5:45 p.m. - At their December 19, 2023 meeting, the Planning Board voted by majority to recommend that the Board of Selectmen award the Master Plan contract to Resilience Planning & Design to prepare and update the Town's comprehensive Master Plan. On September 12, 2022, the Board of Selectmen appropriated \$100,000 of the Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to the Town to complete a new Master Plan. Funds need to be expended by mid-2026. Staff recommends that the Board award the contract to Resilience Planning & Design, LLC.

Selectman Labonte agrees the master plan needs to be updated. He is concerned that we couldn't get anyone else to bid, how do we know they are the right one? Mr. Dolan said we don't, but we've heard nothing but good things about this company. Selectman Finan said Amherst has nothing but great things to say about Resilience Planning & Design.

Administrator Daley said they have an opportunity to work with the consultant to reduce the overall cost. They are one of the better consultants that focus on Master Planning for New England.

Selectman Dargie made a motion to award the contract to Resilience Planning & Design LLC to prepare and update the Town's comprehensive Master Plan not to exceed \$100,000. Seconded by Selectman Finan. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS (items not on the agenda) -

Katherine Kokko brought up the bandstand and it being added to the budget. The Board voted to remove the bandstand from the warrants and put it into the budget on November 27th. Selectman Dargie said he is advocating to have the bandstand monies added to the budget tonight.

4. DECISIONS

a. CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Donation to the Granite Town Rail Trail Revolving Fund from Faye Richey - \$500.00
2. Acceptance and Appropriations of Unanticipated Revenues Under \$10K NH (RSA (31:95(b))
 - From the American on-line Giving Foundation to the Milford Fire Department - \$100.00

Selectman Freel made a motion to approve the consent calendar. Seconded by Selectman Dargie. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

b. OTHER DECISIONS

1. Fire Works

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Two Fire Works quotes were presented for review. American Thunder Fireworks Inc. proposes to provide a Fireworks Display on 6/29/2024 with a proposed budget of \$15,000. The rain date will be 6/30/2024. Pyrotecnico, formally Atlas Fireworks, proposes to provide a Fireworks Display on 6/28/2024 with a proposed budget of \$13,000. Both companies provided a breakout of shells.

There was some discussion about fireworks and the cost and letting the public decide if they want it or not.

Mr. Thornton said he heard people mention that they would help bring forth privately funded displays. He also heard that Amherst would be interested in doing a joint fireworks display.

Selectman Dargie made a motion to add fireworks for \$15,000 to the warrants. Seconded by Selectman Finan. The motion passed 3/2. Selectman Daniels and Labonte opposed.

5. TOWN STATUS REPORT –

1. Town Department Expenditure Reallocation Request

The Board received transfer request forms submitted by Department Heads exceeding \$10,000 for their review. The submission of departmental transfer request forms (when applicable) will be submitted every month for review and approval by the Board.

Selectman Labonte asked how many requests came through under \$10,000. Administrator Daley said one or two. Selectman Labonte asked if this money had been spent or not. Selectman Dargie said he expected that we would get this in December and the policy would kick in in 2024. Selectman Labonte asked when he should ask the questions. Selectman Daniels agreed with Selectman Dargie. He thinks the form needs work and gave an example to the Town Administrator.

Selectman Labonte made a motion that the Board acknowledge the transfers for 2023. Seconded by Selectman Dargie. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

2. Waste Management Contract

The current 5 ½ year waste management contract with Waste Management of New Hampshire, Inc., is set to expire December 31, 2023. Previous and proposed contracts were submitted for review. The solid waste hauling and disposal fee will increase from \$118 per ton to \$125 per ton in 2024. The monthly compactor rental will be \$900 for 2 units but we use 4 and they are charging us for only 2. Hauling and disposal fees for Construction and Demo will increase from \$102 per ton to \$110 per ton in 2024. The Trash Disposal Budget (\$300,000) and Demo Disposal Budget (\$170,009) will fully fund the increased rates. Usually, this type of contract would be sent out to bid however, given the timing of the expiration of the existing contract, the Board should consider executing a shorter term (1 year) contract and then determine if the Town should issue an RFP to qualified waste management companies. The current company agreed to a one-year contract with the option to extend an additional 4 years using the rates listed. We have until March to decide to go out to bid and if we choose to do so, the company will raise their prices.

Ms. Scott said the rates are not going up very much. The service is great with this company. They don't charge us for some of the things they do.

Selectman Labonte asked about working with a co-op. Tammy Scott said Waste Management comes in during working hours. In co-ops, they have keys to the gates, there in and out and you get charged whatever they get charged. You have a hauler who hauls privately. We are very demanding; this company is here every day. This company is fair.

Selectman Labonte asked about approving this for a year and checking around for other places. Ms. Scott said we don't have time; the contract ends on December 31st. They can look within the 5 years at other prices.

Chairman Daniels asked that the Town Administrator go through all the contracts that are coming up for renewal at least a couple of months before they are due and bring them to the Board so they can have time to review them.

Selectman Labonte isn't opposed but we have a policy about going out to bid and we should use it. Administrator Daley said this was discussed in 2018 and the Board decided not to go out to bid.

Selectman Freel made a motion to approve the waste management contract with Waste Management of New Hampshire for five years. Seconded by Selectman Finan. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

Selectman Labonte made a motion to allow the Chairman to sign the Waste Management Contract. Seconded by Selectman Dargie. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

3. Third-Party Payroll Services Request for Proposal

At the December 11, 2023 meeting, the Board of Selectmen meeting was provided a draft Request for Proposal to outsource payroll services to a third-party company. The Board asked staff to contact payroll companies directly to provide general costs for payroll and human resource services. Staff continues to interview companies who currently provide services for the public and private sectors. They hope to come back with an overview of the three companies to review with the Board.

4. Wadleigh Memorial Library – Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The Library Trustees submitted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for review and consideration between the Wadleigh Memorial Library Board of Trustees (LBOT) and the Town of Milford Board of Selectmen (BOS). This is not a contract; it just outlines the roles and responsibilities of both parties. Kathy Parenti, Library Trustee said this is not a contract.

Identifying responsibilities stated in the MOU will require some reallocation of the funds from the Library budget to Public Works related to utilities and building/property maintenance and will become part of the Public Works Department 2024 budget.

Library - Purchased Services

43002-541000 ELECTRICITY	\$21,600
43002 - 541100 - HEAT & OIL	\$ 8,400
43002 - 541200- WATER	\$ 900
43002 - 541300- SEWER	\$ 900
43002 - 543300 - CONTRACTUAL-BLDS	\$10,000

Jenny Siegrist, Library Trustees said the MOU would help other Trustees understand what they should and shouldn't be doing. This is a living document that can be changed at any time.

Chairman Daniels said section 8 and asked that the word "required" be removed. Ms. Parenti said the wording comes from the RSA. Selectman Finan agrees about that word and the seems like the library will be preparing part of DPW's budget. Selectman Labonte said it can be looked at like the library is a tenant.

There was additional discussion about the budget who will prepare it and who has authority over the amounts requested. Selectman Freel feels the shell and maintenance of the building should fall under DPW. The contents of the building should fall under the library. Captain Frye explained how they work with DPW.

Selectman Finan suggested having a work session with the Trustees, the Board, and DPW to finalize the MOU. It was decided that the Board and Library Trustees would take their time to get the MOU correct.

5. Boards, Commission, Committee Volunteers

The Town is actively seeking volunteers to serve on various boards, commissions, and committees. The following is a list of current vacancies:

Zoning Board of Adjustments	2 alternate positions
Conservation Commission	2 alternate positions
Economic Development Advisory Council	TBD (January 2024)
Recycling Committee	1 full-time position
Planning Board	2 alternate positions

6. SELECTMEN'S REPORTS/DISCUSSIONS

1. 2024 DRAFT Warrant Articles

Administrator Daley explained the spreadsheet tax rate calculation in detail. The average amounts taken from the fund balance over the past 5 years have been

Selectman Labonte asked what makes up the fund balance. Director Calabria said many things make up the fund balance including, exceeding revenue, and lower spending than anticipated, (like open positions). If you don't spend the surplus, it goes into the fund balance. They have been trying to keep the surplus amount at 7.5%

Warrant articles discussed and/or removed from the warrants:

WARRANT ARTICLE – TOWN HALL HVAC REPLACEMENT

There was some discussion about the HVAC amount and what the system would entail. Selectman Freel said there is no reason that we would only have one bid. Companies should be bidding on this. Ms. Philbrick said the first time this went out to bid, no one replied. The second time it went out to bid we received one bid.

Selectman Freel made a motion to remove the Town Hall HVAC Replacement from the warrants. Seconded by Selectman Labonte. The motion passed 3/2 with Selectman Finan and Dargie opposed.

WARRANT ARTICLE – RECONSTRUCTION OF TOWN ROADS

The Board decided to keep this at \$300,000 and keep this warrant on the warrants.

WARRANT ARTICLE – 58K Gross Vehicle Weight (or similar) 10-WHEEL DUMP TRUCK WITH PLOW AND SANDER ASSEMBLY – 5-YEAR LEASE/PURCHASE

Selectman Dargie made a motion to remove 10 Wheel Dump Truck with Plow and Sander Assembly from the warrants. Seconded by Selectman Finan. The motion passed 5/0.

WARRANT ARTICLE – WADLEIGH LIBRARY ELECTRICAL SYSTEM SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY UPGRADES

Ms. Parenti said the quote came in at \$88,000 but they would like \$90,000 to be on the warrant. Director Calabria suggested that the \$25,000 remaining in the Library Capital Reserve be put towards this warrant article. There was a lengthy discussion about what was needed. The Board agreed. Ms. Parenti said that money is under the Trustees, she thinks they will be okay with using it but they have to vote on it. Director Calabria said if they could get a re-quote for 600 amps instead of 800 amps, that would help. Selectman Freel would like to get with DPW to review the electrical panels.

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Ms. Kokko clarified that there is a 400 amp that is recommended to be upgraded to 800 amp. She asked Ms. Parenti to send the quote to the Board. Mr. Thornton said the CIP rated the electrical panel replacement as number one because of the safety aspect.

The Board decided to keep this warrant article on the warrants.

WARRANT ARTICLE – AMBULANCE REPLACEMENT REVOLVING FUND

Selectman Labonte made a motion to remove the Ambulance Replacement Revolving Fund from the warrants. Seconded by Selectman Freel. The motion passed 3/2 with Selectman Finan and Dargie opposed.

WARRANT ARTICLE – TOWN GRANT WRITER

Selectman Labonte made a motion to remove the Town Grant Writer from the warrants. Seconded by Selectman Freel. The motion passed 3/2 with Selectman Finan and Dargie opposed.

WARRANT ARTICLE – SOCIAL SERVICES

The Board decided to keep this warrant article on the warrants.

WARRANT ARTICLE – DPW VEHICLES AND HEAVY EQUIPMENT CAPITAL RESERVE

Selectman Labonte said he would have no problem phasing these capital reserve warrants back in starting last year.

Ms. Kokko said it would be helpful if there were some recordings of what the plans were for capital reserve accounts. Capital reserve funds are supposed to help plan for things.

Selectman Freel made a motion to remove DPW Vehicles and Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve from the warrants. Seconded by Selectman Labonte. The motion passed 4/1 with Selectman Finan opposed.

WARRANT ARTICLE – NON-EMERGENCY COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION BUS SERVICES

Selectman Dargie said he would like to get this into the budget sometime in the future.

The Board decided to keep this warrant article on the warrants.

WARRANT ARTICLE - CONSERVATION LAND FUND

Selectman Finan said this came off the warrants last year because we had too many warrants, and Conservation voluntarily removed it. Chairman Daniels said they still have over \$82,000 in their fund. Selectman Dargie said there is a reasonable chance that this will be a petition warrant.

Selectman Labonte made a motion to remove the Conservation Land Fund from the warrants. Seconded by Selectman Freel. The motion passed 3/2 with Selectman Finan and Dargie opposed.

WARRANT ARTICLE - TOWN FACILITIES RENOVATION AND MAJOR REPAIR REPLACEMENT CAPITAL RESERVE

Selectman Freel made a motion to remove the Town Facilities Renovation and Major Repair Replacement Capital Reserve from the warrants. Seconded by Selectman Labonte. The motion passed 3/2 with Selectman Finan and Dargie opposed.

WARRANT ARTICLE - FIRE APPARATUS REPLACEMENT CAPITAL RESERVE

There was some discussion about capital reserves and what amounts should be in them to save the cost of a down payment instead of the total amount.

Selectman Freel made a motion to remove the Fire Apparatus Replacement Capital Reserve from the warrants. Seconded by Selectman Labonte. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

WARRANT ARTICLE - KEYES PARK EXPANSION COMMITTEE PROJECT CAPITAL RESERVE

Peggy Seward said this account is down to \$6,000 and it would be important to get \$25,000 so they have something to work with. Selectman Finan said they can do some of the smaller items with this money towards their long-term plan since the building isn't being torn down. It's important to encourage a group that does a lot of things for our town. This is never high on anyone's priority list. There was additional discussion about things that could be phased in.

Selectman Freel made a motion to remove the Keyes Park Expansion Committee Project Capital Reserve from the warrants. Seconded by Selectman Labonte. The motion passed 3/2 with Selectman Finan and Dargie opposed.

WARRANT ARTICLE - WADLEIGH LIBRARY MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP CAPITAL RESERVE

Selectman Freel made a motion to remove the Wadleigh Library Maintenance and Upkeep Capital Reserve from the warrants. Seconded by Selectman Labonte. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

WARRANT ARTICLE – INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE CAPITAL RESERVE

The Board decided to keep this warrant article on the warrants.

WARRANT ARTICLE - SUMMER BAND CONCERTS SUPPORT

Administrator Daley said at the work session the Board discussed potentially removing this and maybe putting it into Recreation's budget for fund raising for this event. Both Selectmen Labonte and Freel e know some companies who would be willing to put money towards this.

There was a discussion about when these bands need to be booked for the bands to hold their place for the dates we need. Paul Bartolomucci said these bands are usually booked in January or February with paperwork being officially signed after the March town vote. Recreation is already fundraising for a variety of things and it would be impossible to do more at this time. If local businesses would like to contribute a set amount of money that we could count on for one concert, we would be happy to accept that money. Selectman Labonte said he stated at the work session that he knows of one company that is willing to put their money where their mouth is. He doesn't know if you will get people to give donations while you still have this warrant article on the warrants.

Ms. Philbrick agrees with Selectman Dargie and Mr. Bartolomucci, that you won't be able to fundraise at this late date. Keep the warrant article on for now and have Recreation look into it over the next year. Hundreds of people go to those concerts. There were at least 4 or 5 hundred people at the last concert of the season alone. Let the citizens decide on this.

Selectman Labonte and Selectman Freel asked if there was additional surplus money, could if this money be put into the Recreation revolving fund. Director Calabria said it would be similar to the scout house. Selectman Labonte asked what would happen if we left it for this year while Recreation looked into fundraising. What would happen if we gave the money for the first year with the notion of telling Recreation that you now have a year to raise the money for next year? Ms. Philbrick said it could happen should you take some of the surplus and put it aside for the concerts, but you might say you're going to do that, take this warrant off, and then change your mind later. Selectman Labonte asked if we could transfer \$9,000 into the revolving fund. Director Calabria said he would have an answer in the morning.

Mr. Bartolomucci said Recreation is already raising ½ of one salary. Selectman Dargie said this warrant is popular and passes every year, it's not a huge amount of money. Selectman Labonte said, what if this is the year that someone votes it down? He loves the concerts.

The Board decided to keep this warrant article on the warrants.

WARRANT ARTICLE – MEMORIAL, VETERANS & LABOR DAY PARADES AND RECOGNITION

Selectman Labonte asked if there was a reason, we couldn't add this to the budget. Chairman Daniels said he can't see separating this now. Selectman Freel said what if it doesn't pass. Director Calabria said it passed by 1,500 votes last year.

The Board decided to keep this warrant article on the warrants.

WARRANT ARTICLE – ANNUAL LABOR DAY PARADE SUPPORT

Selectman Labonte felt this number was low at \$3,000. Director Calabria said that they currently have \$8,115 in their account. There was discussion about what is usually spent on the parade, which is about \$13,000 to \$15,000. The Selectman discussed increasing the support amount.

Selectman Dargie made a motion to increase the Annual Labor Day Parade Support to \$6,000. Seconded by Selectman Freel. The motion passed 4/1 with Selectman Daniels opposed.

WARRANT ARTICLE – DISCONTINUE OSGOOD POND CAPITAL RESERVE TRUST FUND

The Board decided to keep this warrant article on the warrants.

2. Budget Surplus

Ms. Kokko wanted to confirm that the bandstand would be built into the budget. She asked about the roof of the scout house. Director Calabria said we could transfer the surplus into non-lapsing funds. Selectman Dargie said he wants to make sure we get \$28,000 into the budget for the bandstand and address the scout house roof for \$18,000. He also asked about the \$30,000 in wage adjustments for some of the employees.

Per the 2024 BOS Work Session – Adjustment sheet, Chairman Daniels asked if there was anything the Select-board would like removed from the previously discussed adjustments.

Administrator Daley asked if there was a way the Board might consider fully funding one of the vacant Police positions and then fund the other position for 6 months. They have a viable candidate to fill one of the positions right now and he would hate to lose an opportunity to hire someone that won't need to attend the Police Standards Training Class. This allows the Police Department to hire a more qualified person and reduces the amount of overtime required to fill open shifts.

Selectman Labonte said they can hire a full-time person as of January 1, 2024. They can get the part-time person with their noticeable savings in their part-time budget by making a transfer on the wage adjustment line with the potential savings identified with not having to pay overtime.

Selectman Dargie asked how much money were we talking about and if there was anything we could replace this with like pre-buying something. Administrator Daley said they would need about \$40,000 and they could find it. There was additional discussion about where to find the money.

Selectman Labonte said they compromised by going from five positions at half time to only going down to two positions that are less than half time and if it's going to reduce the over-time there should be a noticeable savings. Administrator Daley said last year we had 5 positions that were half funded and the default budget was increased. We are hurting ourselves in the long term because we had to fully fund those positions in our default budget. Going forward we should get away from half-funding positions because it hurts us. Selectman Labonte agrees but we have to transition positions back into the budget.

Chief Viola clarified that it won't reduce the over-time budget because this year we spent well over what was budgeted. We haven't increased our overtime budget in years even though salaries went up. Selectman Labonte said there are sacrifices that every department is going to have to make. It's a position that has been vacant for two to three years. Chief Viola said we made the sacrifice last year and paid our price. Selectman Labonte said it's a phased approach to try and put it back instead of trying to do it all in one year. Chief Viola said he isn't trying to do it all in one year. If we have a chance to go full staff based on the increase of people in this town, it's only the smart thing to do. It benefits the town because public safety is the number one concern. He doesn't need our officers to be burnt out again.

Selectman Labonte asked if they could find somewhere to fund \$40,000 in the budget. Administrator Daley said they could make an effort through all departments to locate \$40,000. We may have to make a sacrifice collectively. Selectman Labonte asked what else they could fine for money in other places. Administrator Daley said they are at the point where we are picking at the bones. The challenge to department heads was to fully fund their departments at the level of service that this town deserves and requests. There may be small opportunities we could realize but not much.

Selectman Dargie made a motion to reduce the budget by \$414,000 with the exception of finding an additional \$40,000. Seconded by Selectman Freel. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

Selectman Dargie made a motion to remove \$18,000 from the surplus to use for the scout house repairs and put it in the Heritage Commission non-lapsing fund. Seconded by Selectman Finan. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

The Board discussed the \$28,000 for the bandstand and Director Calabria said he would find out how we can process it tomorrow. Selectman Dargie supports the bandstand even if we need to add it to the budget although he would rather take it from surplus. Selectman Freel said no means no as far as the warrant article being voted down this year.

Ms. Kokko said the reasoning that is used for applying the no means no clause includes what is proposed compared to what is originally proposed which includes the dollar amount. Selectman Dargie said the project scope is the same but the money is different. Ms. Kokko said the work that the money is covering could be defined as different as well. Selectman Freel isn't for this. Ms. Kokko would prefer to see the bandstand in the budget.

Selectman Dargie made a motion to add \$28,000 to the budget for the bandstand renovation. Seconded by Selectman Finan.

Selectman Freel said they will struggle to find \$40,000 for a police officer position already. Selectman Labonte asked Administrator Daley what the odds were to find another \$28,000 for the bandstand. Selectman Finan suggested using the surplus to pre-buy something else. Administrator Daley said there are opportunities but the Board discussed items that were one-off. Some items could be purchased like a vehicle or copier for example. Selectman Dargie said one-offs are better but those are limited.

Ms. Kokko said the Board already voted to put the bandstand into the budget at a previous meeting. Administrator Daley said he could try to find \$28,000 but he made no promises. Selectman Dargie said just pre-buy something.

The Board went on to the budget surplus request and Selectman Labonte asked if they had purchase and sales on all of the items proposed. Director Calabria said they do on the Fire Department vehicle. There was some discussion on pre-buying additional fuel.

Selectman Dargie asked if there was any way to put surplus towards the additional \$30,000 requested for increases in some of the salaries. Director Calabria said no. Selectman Labonte isn't in favor of this. He has a hard time

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doing a wage adjustment and a 4% increase. They are not large increases. There is a 10% increase in health benefits which we kept at 85/15 and to him, that's a monetary benefit that the town is paying out.

Selectman Dargie asked Director Schelberg what the implications were if the recommended wage increases didn't occur for ambulances. Director Spielberg said they are currently down two full-timers and he doesn't have any applicants for the current rate they are posting. They are falling further behind and are not being competitive, the increases and 4% increase would help. They are below where they should be for recruiting and retaining. There was additional discussion on how to utilize other money to find staff.

Neal Beauregard, Public Works, said they currently don't have a purchase and sales on a truck. They have their eyes on one. Director Lessard won't be back until after the New Year but he will be calling with specs for a truck soon. The truck will be to replace the one at the parks and cemetery. Director Calabria said they don't have a purchase and sales in hand but can make it contingent on having one executed by December 31st. If they can't get one, it goes away and we lose that opportunity to take the money out of surplus.

Selectman Dargie recommends that staff fully expend the full surplus amount. Selectman Freel asked about two vehicles being in the police budget. Administrator Daley said there is currently only one vehicle in that budget. They originally had two. A second vehicle could be included as far as surplus. There was additional discussion about surplus

Selectman Dargie made a motion to task Administration to spend \$350,000 out of the forecasted surplus by removing things from the budget and giving Administrator Daley temporary authority to sign purchase orders over \$25,000. Seconded by Selectman Finan. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0

The Board will host a joint work session with the Budget Advisory Committee on January 3rd. There were some questions as to whether or not the CIP document was approved in a public forum. Administrator Daley said he would find out.

Selectman Dargie referred to a sheet that estimated fund balance used over the past few years. He recommends using about \$500,000 to help offset taxes. Selectman Labonte asked what percentage would that leave us at. Director Calabria said he wouldn't know until July or August. There was additional discussion about the amount and what the impact would be. Selectman Labonte isn't in favor of \$500,000, he recommends \$350,000. Administrator Daley said the average has been about \$617,000 over the last few years.

Selectman Finan made a motion to use \$500,000 from the fund balance to offset taxes. Seconded by Selectman Dargie. The motion passed 4/1 with Selectman Labonte opposed.

a) FROM PROJECTS, SPECIAL BOARDS, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES

Chairman Daniels mentioned that Dorothy Cooper celebrated her 100th birthday yesterday and he brought over a proclamation from the Town.

b) OTHER ITEMS (not on the agenda)

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS - There were no public comments at this time.

8. APPROVAL OF FINAL MINUTES – December 11, 2023.

Selectman Dargie made a motion to approve the final minutes of December 11, 2023, as presented. Seconded by Selectman Freel. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

10. INFORMATION ITEMS REQUIRING NO DECISIONS.

a. Selectmen's Goals and Initiatives

APPROVED MINUTES OF BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING – 12/27/2023

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11. NOTICES. Notices were read.

12. NON-PUBLIC SESSION – N/A

13. ADJOURNMENT: Selectman Labonte moved to adjourn at 11:14. Seconded by Selectman Dargie. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0 by roll call vote.

Gary Daniels, Chairman

Tim Finan, Member

Chris Labonte, Vice-Chairman

Dave Freel, Member

Paul Dargie, Member