

APPROVED
MINUTES OF THE MILFORD BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
December 12, 2022

PRESENT:	Paul Dargie, Member	Mark Bender, Town Administrator
	Tim Finan, Member	Tina Philbrick, Executive Assistant
	Gary Daniels, Member	Andy Kouropoulos, Videographer
	Laura Dudziak, Member	
	Dave Freel, Member	

1. CALL TO ORDER, BOARD OF SELECTMEN INTRODUCTIONS & PUBLIC SPEAKING INSTRUCTIONS:
Chairman Dargie 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. - Granite Town Media Committee (GTM) Update – Chairman Josh Breault and Community Media Director, Chris Gentry

Mr. Breault and Mr. Gentry gave an overview of what GTM provides as well as their revenue, capital expenses for the next 2 years, and the current revolving fund balance. Most of the revenue from GTM comes from a 3% Cable TV franchise fee from Comcast. This is only cable related and does not include the internet. They are proposing a 2% franchise fee increase. Their current budget is expended at about 96%. GTM works off a 10-year plan that their board approved. They outlined a couple of capital expenses coming up in the next two years. Selectman Freel asked what the cost was of those upgrades. Mr. Gentry said approximately \$40,000 to \$50,000 for upgrades to the Board room. They upgraded the audio last year.

Mr. Gentry explained the fees. If we increase to the additional 2% it would come from the sale of ads.

Mr. Gentry said if we go up 2%, we would get up to \$90,000 more. If we have to replace everything at the high school we are looking at around \$200,000. Everything is going up and things are getting costly. They are hoping to offer more coverage and there has been a decline in people working per diem in this department.

Selectman Finan said it's not huge money to upgrade but they are facing big challenges with people cutting cable. Technology is changing. This may dry up within the next 5 to 10 years and we need to figure out how to fund GTM going forward. Most of GTM's budget comes from its revolving fund. The revolving fund helped with raises so it wouldn't have to come out of the taxpayers' pockets. Milford is one of the last towns to only charge 3%. Most of the surrounding towns have been at 5% for years.

Selectman Freel suggests splitting the difference and only going up 1%. It's a town-wide thing and everyone uses it, not just the cable users. Mr. Gentry explained that the average increase in monthly costs per household would increase anywhere from \$1.10 to \$3.00 per month. This doesn't include phones and internet or streaming.

Selectman Daniels doesn't think this is a good deal for those who originally signed up for this. It's just the cable users who are paying the tax. We should be looking at the scope and not expanding beyond our ability to pay for it. Administrator Bender said we are not increasing the fee by 2%, we are increasing it by 2 percentage points, and the annual revenue increase will be around \$114,000. This might have a small impact per user on their monthly cost but the impact for GTM will be substantial. GTM does a great job and it's a tremendous asset to the town.

There was additional discussion about what may or may not happen over the next few years. Chairman Dargie said it may get to a point where Consolidated will be better and this will go away.

Natalie Watson, a Milford resident, and GTM member is in favor of the increase.

Selectman Dudziak made a motion to approve the 2% fee increase in franchise fees from Comcast. Seconded by Selectman Finan. The motion passed 3/2 with Selectman Freel and Selectman Daniels opposed.

5:45 p.m. - Ambulance Transport – Fee Schedule Increase – Ambulance Director, Eric Schelberg

Director Schelberg is requesting a 10% increase in ambulance transport fees. Anticipated revenue generation would be approximately \$24,239. Fees were increased in May of 2021. Medicare and Medicaid are capped so this would have no impact on their charges.

Selectman Freel is for this but said it doesn't look like it's bringing in a lot of revenue. He asked what the rough amount of increase was to cover payroll. Paul Calabria said the 2022 budget was \$840,000 and the proposed 2023 budget is \$1,069,000. Director Schelberg provided the Board with a spreadsheet of rates from surrounding towns. The percentage of calls for Medicare and Medicaid is about 63%. Selectman Daniels said an increase affects everyone and it's unfair to say

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that a raise isn't going to affect people. Increases get passed on to private companies who then pass the to their policyholders. There was additional discussion on who pays what and who is impacted by the rate increase.

Chairman Dargie likes the idea of an increase but proposed a couple of changes. He proposed an increase of \$850 on the BLS, and \$1,300 on the ALS1. Director Schelberg said those numbers are not unreasonable. Chairman Dargie also suggested rounding the other two categories, ALS2 to \$1,800 and ALS1 (SCT) to \$2,100 and keep mileage as proposed.

Selectman Finan clarified that they only charge for transport and asked if this was standard practice and if insurance pays for it. Director Schelberg said we charge for transport and if we don't transport, we don't charge. Medicare and Medicaid will not pay for a non-transport. They only pay for transport to an emergency department. Private insurance may or may not pay for non-transport. We can charge, but the odds of getting paid for those charges are slim. There was some additional discussion about budget and revenue and other possible fees.

Chris Labonte, a Milford resident, suggests looking into what it would cost to privatize the ambulance department.

Scott Kimball, a Milford resident was confused and asked if there was a paramedic charge and if not, suggests that we start charging for as a way of increasing revenue stream to get money for the work we are doing. Chairman Dargie explained that they just had that discussion and the town doesn't get paid for everything that we do.

Selectman Dargie made a motion to approve the Basic Life fee to \$850, the Advanced Life (ALS1) to \$1,300, the Advanced Life (ALS2) TO \$1,800, and the Advanced Life SCT (ALS1) to \$2,100. Seconded by Selectman Dudziak. The motion passed 4/1 with Selectman Daniels opposed.

6:00 p.m. – Fire Department Fee Schedule Increase – Fire Chief, Ken Flaherty

Chief Flaherty is requesting an increase in permit fees. The cost of goods and services has increased an average of 20% and they have not increased fees in 7 years. He based his increases on several surrounding towns. They have other fees that they didn't address because he feels that they are fine. He explained the changes to their forms.

Selectman Freel asked about mechanical fee charges and gas charges. Chief Flaherty said it depends. There was a discussion on what is done during a generator installation. Selectman Freel doesn't see the need for a third mechanics permit fee on the generator. Chief Flaherty explained why they charge for this. Chief Flaherty said he would get together with Community Development to assess the electrical permit charge.

Selectman Freel made a motion to approve the suggested Fire Department Fee Increase except for the generator portion of the mechanical permit. Seconded by Selectman Finan. The motion passed 4/1 with Selectman Daniels opposed.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS (regarding items that are not on the agenda) There were no comments at this time.

4. DECISIONS

a. CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of Timber Report, Map 5, Lot 18
2. Approval of Intent to Cut, Map 6, Lot 41-1
3. Acceptance and Appropriation of Unanticipated Revenues Under \$10,000 (31:95(b))
 - From NH Charitable Foundation, Turtle Island Fund - Donation to the Fire Department - \$1,000.00
 - From VFW Auxiliary to Harley-Sanford Post 4368 – Donation for Labor Day Parade Support – \$250.00
 - From Marjorie Law - Donation for Bandstand Upkeep/Restoration - \$100.00
 - From Marchesi Fund (Town) Trust Fund - Donation for Bandstand Upkeep/Restoration - \$3,000.00
 - From Granite Town Festivities Committee – Donation to Support the Town Luncheon - \$2,500.00
 - From NH the Beautiful – Grant, First Place Award to the Transfer Station - \$3,000.00
4. Acceptance and Appropriation of Gifts of Property Under \$5,000 (31:95(e))
 - From Trombly Gardens – Donation of 4 Wreaths to the Fire Department - \$84.00
5. Acceptance of Donations from Ghost Train Rail Trail Race 2021 and 2022
 - 2021 Ghost Train Rail Trail Race and Hat Sales - \$10,033.25
 - Surplus from Two Eagle Scout Projects from Jack Seale and Chris Diehle to the Rail Trail Project - \$1,014.99

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

b. OTHER DECISIONS

1. Final decision to Approve Updates to the Current Stormwater Ordinance, Chapter 5.32

Selectman Dudziak made a motion to adopt the updates to the current Stormwater Ordinance, Chapter 5.32. Seconded by Selectman Finan. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

5. TOWN STATUS REPORT –

1. **2023 DRAFT Warrant Articles** - The 2023 Warrants were presented to the Board. All warrants have been reviewed with Town Council. We will send the warrants to the DRA once changes are made tonight.

WARRANT ARTICLE 3 – WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY (WWTF) UPGRADE PROJECT – \$23,953,000 BOND

Chairman Dargie suggests adding the following language to the bottom of #3: “In 2023 this article has an estimated tax impact of \$0.00 on an assessed valuation of \$100,000. (NOTE: In 2026, this article has an estimated tax impact of \$0.00 on an assessed valuation of \$100,000.”

There was discussion on the number of years for the bond and the split between the town and rate users for payment of the bond.

Selectman Dargie made a motion to restrict doing a 20-year bond for the Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrade Project Bond. Seconded by Selectman Dudziak. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

Selectman Dargie made a motion to approve a 50/50 split between taxpayers and rate users for the Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrade Project Bond. Seconded by Selectman Dudziak. The motion passed 3/2 with Selectman Daniels and Selectman Freel opposed.

Selectman Dargie made a motion to change the wording of the Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrade Project Bond to include the reference to the tax rate impact in 2026. Seconded by Selectman Dudziak. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

WARRANT ARTICLE - RECONSTRUCTION OF TOWN ROADS - \$ 400,000

Chairman Dargie suggested adding the words "or repair" after the word reconstruct and removing the words "as detailed using Cartegraph Data by the Department of Public Works" from the warrant article.

Selectman Daniels asked for the justification for removing those words. Chairman Dargie asked Leo Lessard, Public Works Director if his town roads plan was based on Cartegraph Data. Mr. Lessard said no. They still have it and will implement it in the future. They are updating Cartegraph as roads are updated and will continue to use it.

Selectman Dargie made a motion to add the words “or repair” after the word reconstruct and remove the words “as detailed using Cartegraph Data by the Department of Public Works” from the warrant article. Seconded by Selectman Finan. The motion passed 4/1 with Selectman Daniels opposed.

Scott Kimball, a Milford resident, wanted the Board to be aware that there is no additional tax impact on the petition warrant article he submitted for Historical Preservation of the Town of Milford's Fire Horn. He mentioned that this was not noted in the warrant article.

Administrator Bender said it's a petition warrant article and we have to accept it as it was presented. It can be amended at the deliberative session. Selectman Daniels said all the equipment for the horn was removed when we stopped blowing the horn. There will be a cost to put it back. Chief Flaherty said there is a maintenance cost for the upkeep of the horn. There is an ongoing procedure that we pay for. It also gets inspected by the state yearly. There is an impact on cost. Public Works should know what the cost is. The tanks will have to be replaced eventually, usually around the 30-year mark. The current tanks are from 1995.

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Mr. Kimball said maintenance has always been incorporated into the building maintenance budget. We are just going back to the way it was. Chairman Dargie said there was always a cost for that. Mr. Kimball said it was never itemized. Chairman Dargie said the way it is now, there is no cost. If this passes, there will be a new cost. Mr. Kimball still argued his point. Chairman Dargie said we stopped doing something so there is zero cost, bringing it back has cost. Mr. Kimball said this is an imaginary hurdle being artificially created.

Selectman Freel said Mr. Kimball was making a big deal out of nothing. This will be worded correctly in the warrant article. There will be a cost to upkeep the horn.

Katherine Kokko, a Milford resident, strongly supports Chairman Dargie's proposed edits to the wastewater warrant article but she suggests adding the word "beginning in 2026" Tina Philbrick, the executive assistant said additional language can also be included to explain more information in the voter's guide.

Selectman Dargie made a motion to add the word "beginning" in the second to the last sentence in the Wastewater warrant article. Seconded by Selectman Daniels. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

WARRANT ARTICLE - FIRE RESCUE TRUCK #1 REPLACEMENT - 7-YEAR LEASE/PURCHASE - \$755,000

Selectman Finan said that there was incorrect information in the Fire Truck warrant. Chief Flaherty explained what some of the language was and said he would get together with Ms. Philbrick to add the correct language.

WARRANT ARTICLE - BANDSTAND RENOVATION

Chairman Dargie said the amount should be \$90,000 to reflect the entire amount that is needed to repair the bandstand. He suggests removing the words "This is the net amount in anticipation of the Heritage Commission collecting \$30,000 in donations." The tax analysis would be based on \$60,000 or what ever number is left after the Heritage Commission's fundraiser. You need to raise and appropriate the total amount of the project.

Selectman Dargie made a motion to change the amount of the Bandstand Renovation Warrant Article to \$90,000 and remove the words "This is the net amount in anticipation of the Heritage Commission collecting \$30,000 in donations. Seconded by Selectman Finan. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

WARRANT ARTICLE – TRANSFER STATION RECYCLING CENTER / REVOLVING FUND - \$0

Chairman Dargie is not in favor of this warrant article. The expenses are known during the year. He doesn't see a purpose of a revolving fund. If we segregate money, it ties our hands to other things. Selectman Finan doesn't agree. He said we want to encourage recycling and he thinks this is a good idea. Selectman Freel agrees and asked if they are always in the red. Selectman Daniels said the office at the Transfer Station is already suffering deficiencies and needs to be fixed.

Administrator Bender asked if the revolving fund is just for recycling, or is it for demo and any other revenue that's being collected. Selectman Finan said he is in favor of the Transfer Station revolving fund.

Fred Hobbs, a Milford resident and member of the Recycling Committee, said the Transfer Station does earth day information sessions and they are looking into putting more things in place having to do with recycling. Chairman Dargie said all of that can be part of the regular budget. A special fund is helpful when you can change things during the year. Mr. Hobbs said the Solid Waste and Recycling Committee is in full support of the revolving fund. Chairman Dargie said he would like to see a document stating why you want to have a revolving fund, what is the purpose of it and what are the advantages of doing it. There are negatives to doing a revolving fund where money just sits there and you can't do anything with it.

There was additional discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of having a revolving fund. Selectman Finan suggested creating the revolving fund and then spending the next year figuring out how to model the program. Selectman Finan said the warrant article doesn't say how the money gets into the fund. Chairman Dargie said the warrant article isn't worded correctly. Additional work needs to be done on the wording for this warrant article.

Chairman Dargie said there was a recommendation that we add some kind of tax impact statement on the petition warrant article. He is not willing to put anything on the warrant article. The petitioner can modify it at the Deliberative session. Anything in perpetuity will eventually have a cost.

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Ms. Philbrick will make corrections and forward the warrants to Finance. Finance will forward them to the DRA.

2. Budget Updates -

Administrator Bender presented the 2023 Operating Budget and 2022 Project Surplus sheet to the board. The top of the sheet shows the original proposed budget is \$17,815,817 which is an 8.8% increase over last year's budget. The calculated 2023 default budget is \$17,013,992. The consensus was to reduce the budget by at least 2 percentage points. Items pulled into the 2022 budget totaled \$65,249. Other reductions proposed totaled \$104,500. The total of the items pulled into 2022 is \$169,749. They are proposing additional budget reductions of \$189,000 to include a pre-buy of fuel for \$48,000 which gives us a credit going into 2023. They are also asking the Board to purchase the DPW vehicle as a 2022 budget item from the 2022 surplus for \$68,503. Our surplus is estimated at \$295,360. The two purchases from the surplus would be the pre-buy fuel and truck which total \$116,503 leaving us with a balance of \$178,857.

Chairman Dargie asked if there was still enough funding in the roads budget to cover the funds we receive from the state. Administrator Bender said yes, plus \$75,000 left over from the additional block grant we received earlier this year.

Mr. Labonte clarified that the \$65,249 was removed from the 2023 budget and paid for with 2022 money. Administrator Bender said yes.

Ms. Kokko asked if the \$358,749 in reductions was because they wanted to reduce the budget by 2%. Administrator Bender said yes. Ms. Kokko has concerns about money being taken out of paving and verified the \$328,000 as the amount in the budget for paving next year. Director Calabria and Administrator Bender explained the line items to Ms. Kokko. Ms. Kokko asked if we were trying to keep our municipal budget under the inflation amount. Director Calabria said we have to balance is the default budget. If the delta is too big in the default budget, you will see drastic cuts in services in the town if the budget doesn't pass in March.

Selectman Finan moved to accept the budget recommendations as presented. Seconded by Selectman Dudziak. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

6. DISCUSSIONS

1. Traffic Safety Concern – Westchester Drive

John Ranger, a Milford resident, was the person who was walking a dog that was hit and killed in November. The dog did dart into the road, but the vehicle was speeding. Both he and the dog were wearing reflective vests. He has concerns about children playing outside with the amount of speed on Westchester Drive. He looked into ways to get people to slow down and would like to be involved in trying to find a solution. People's lives are at risk.

Chief Viola said they put patrols out on Westchester when they can. They are following up on leads for this case. The speed trailer was up in that area for a while. We will keep a presence in that area. He doesn't recommend sending this to Traffic Safety because it will be the same discussion we are having now.

Administrator Bender asked if there was any difference in the time of day or day of the week that the Police could be looking at. Mr. R. said before work and right after work. The nighttime walking is a risk. Chief Viola said they were out in the morning and when the high school was getting out and also between 5 and 6 in the evening.

Paul Calabria said it's a raceway in that area, and very heavily traveled.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS. (Regarding items that are not on the agenda)

Mike Thornton, a Milford resident, said the original charter for MEAC stated that this committee will review community power programs for approval by the BOS and town meeting. They are being requested under the enabling legislation to change their charter and ask the Milford Board of Selectmen to appoint the Milford Advisory Committee and their members as the Milford Community Power Committee under RSA 53-e: 6 & 7. The initial charter was to examine energy and that has been completed.

Chairman Dargie made a motion to appoint all members of the Milford Energy Advisory Committee to also be members of the Milford Community Power Committee which is a sub-committee with memberships concurrent on both committees. Seconded by Selectman Daniels. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

8. SELECTMEN’S REPORTS/DISCUSSIONS

- a) **FROM PROJECTS, SPECIAL BOARDS, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES**
- b) **OTHER ITEMS (that are not on the agenda)**

9. APPROVAL OF FINAL MINUTES - Selectman Daniels moved to approve the minutes of November 28, 2022, as amended. Seconded by Selectman Finan. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

10. INFORMATION ITEMS REQUIRING NO DECISIONS.

- a. N/A

11. NOTICES. Notices were read.

12. NON-PUBLIC SESSION – Selectman Freel made a motion to go into non-public in accordance with NH (RSA 491-A:3, II(c)) Reputation. Seconded by Selectman Daniels. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

Selectman Daniels made a motion to exit non-public. Seconded by Selectman Dudziak. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

Selectman Daniels approved the unsealed minutes from November 28, 2022. Seconded by Selectman Freel. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

13. ADJOURNMENT: Selectman Daniels moved to adjourn at 8:50. Seconded by Selectman Freel. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

Paul Dargie, Chairman

Laura Dudziak, Member

Tim Finan, Vice-Chairman

Dave Freel, Member

Gary Daniels, Member