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**APPROVED**

**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET & BOND PUBLIC HEARING**

January 8, 2024

**PRESENT:** Gary Daniels, Chairman Lincoln Daley, Town Administrator  
Chris Labonte Vice Chairman Tina Philbrick, Executive Assistant  
Paul Dargie, Member Andy Kouropoulos, Videographer  
Tim Finan, Member Department Heads & Senior Staff  
Dave Freel, Member EXCUSED

**BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS, WATER COMMISSIONERS, AND LIBRARY TRUSTEES**

Chairman Daniels opened the public hearing at 6:30 p.m. thanking everyone in attendance. Chairman Daniels introduced members of the Board of Selectmen. Budget Advisory Committee, and the Water Commissioners.

Chairman Daniels indicated that tonight's hearing is for the Town Budget and Bond Hearing, but the warrant articles will also be reviewed for the public to voice their opinion on all items. Chairman Daniels explained if any members of the public wish to comment or have questions, they should please use a microphone to be heard on the PEG Access Live broadcast.

**Chairman Daniels opened the Bond hearing.**

**BOND HEARINGS**

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**WARRANT ARTICLE 3 - PENNICHUCK BOOSTER PUMP STATION - \$2,700,000 BOND (Project cost offset by \$1,000,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and loan forgiveness).**

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,700,000 for the purpose of constructing the Nashua Street Water Booster Pump Station. Such sum to be raised by the issuance of serial bonds and notes not to exceed \$2,700,000 under and in compliance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (NH RSA 33:1 et. seq., as amended) and to authorize the Town to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon. Further, to take such actions as may be necessary to affect the issuance, negotiation, sale and delivery of such bonds or notes as shall be in the best interest of the Town. Additionally, to authorize the Town to apply for, receive, and expend grants or other funds that may reduce the amount to be repaid, and pass any vote relating thereto. Note: As this is for issuance of long-term debt, this vote requires, under State law, 3/5 affirmative vote to pass. This is a Special Warrant Article in accordance with RSA 32. This warrant article is paid for by the wastewater user fees. **The Board of Commissioners supports this Article (0-0). The Budget Advisory Committee supports this Article (0-0).**

Water Utilities Director Jim Pouliot said one of the requirements with the new contract with Pennichuck Water was that we had to replace the Booster pump station. We decided to take over the maintenance of the booster station and design it ourselves because the town is eligible for grant monies that Pennichuck is not eligible for. We will have a solid number for Deliberative once the bids are back.

Devin Smith, Underwood Engineer, gave a brief presentation of the reasons for the Pennichuck Booster Pump Station Upgrade. The existing station is over 40 years old and has exceeded its useful life and has structural issues. The station will be located next to Lorden Plaza and have security cameras and motion-sensing lights around the building. They will only be utilizing the DOT easement for the building which is about ½ acre. There was additional discussion about how long the bond was for. Dale White, Water Commissioner, said they don't usually add the years of the bond on their warrant articles.

Katherine Parenti, a Milford resident questioned the dollar appropriation of the warrant. Director Calabria said the warrant article has to show the gross appropriation amount. A couple of items were corrected in the warrant article.

**There were no other comments.**

**Chairman Daniels closed the Bond hearing.**

**TOWN BUDGET HEARING**

**WARRANT ARTICLE 4 - TOWN OPERATING BUDGET - \$ 18,300,535**

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts outlined in the budget for the purposes set forth herein, totaling **\$18,300,535**. Should this Article be defeated, the default budget shall be **\$18,043,468** which is the same as last year with certain adjustments required by previous actions of the Town, or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meet-

ing in accordance with RSA 40:13 X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. **The Board of Selectmen recommends this Article (0-0). The Budget Advisory Committee recommends this Article (0-0). Voting YES on this article has an estimated tax impact of \$11.94 on an assessed valuation of \$100,000 when compared to voting NO on this article.**

Administrator Daley gave a brief presentation of the town's operating budget. The difference between the 2023 and 2024 operating budget is \$826,169 which is 4.7%. The difference between the 2024 operating budget and the default budget is \$246,168.

Selectman Labonte said they all worked hard on getting the numbers down. Previous partially funded positions have been phased back into the budget. Administrator Daley said the town used the surplus and some of the fund balance to reduce the cost of the budget going forward. The budget with all warrant articles passing shows an increase of 4.7%.

**There were no other comments.**

**Chairman Daniels opened the Water/Wastewater Budget Hearing.**

## **WATER/WASTEWATER BUDGET HEARING**

### **WARRANT ARTICLE 5 - WASTEWATER DEPARTMENT OPERATING BUDGET - \$ 2,711,808**

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,711,808 to operate and maintain the Wastewater Treatment Facility and the Sanitary Sewer Collection System, said appropriation to be offset by income received from wastewater user charges, or take any other action relative thereto? Should this Article be defeated, the default budget shall be **\$2,680,050** which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous actions of the Town, or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13 X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. This warrant article is paid for by the wastewater user fees. **The Board of Commissioners recommends this Article (0-0). The Budget Advisory Committee recommends this Article (0-0).**

Director Pouliot explained that the current budget is a 3.11% increase over last year. The drivers include payroll and software upgrades. We just did a rate increase in 2022 which should carry us until 2025. The Commission is planning to do smaller increases over the next couple of years so when we start paying on the bond from March, it won't be a shock to the users. We just did a water increase in October and it should be all set for the next three years.

**There were no other comments.**

### **WARRANT ARTICLE 6 - WATER DEPARTMENT OPERATING BUDGET - \$2,204,593**

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,204,593 to operate and maintain the Water Department, said appropriation to be offset by income received from the water user charges, or take any other action relative thereto? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$2,107,269, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous actions of the Town, or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13 X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. This warrant article is paid for by the water user fees. The Board of Commissioners recommends this Article (0-0). The Budget Advisory Committee recommends this Article (0-0).

Director Pouliot explained the current budget is a 5.3% increase over last year. The drivers include payroll, we are finally at full staff, and software upgrades.

**There were no other comments.**

Chairman Daniels opened the Town appropriation warrant articles portion of the hearing.

## **APPROPRIATION WARRANT ARTICLES**

### **WARRANT ARTICLE 7 - RECONSTRUCTION OF TOWN ROADS - \$ 300,000**

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$300,000** to reconstruct or repair Town roads? This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI. **The Board of Selectmen recommends this Article (0-0). The Budget Advisory Committee recommends this Article (0-0).** This Article has an estimated tax impact of \$14.50 on an assessed valuation of \$100,000.

There were no other comments.

## **WARRANT ARTICLE 8 - WADLEIGH LIBRARY ELECTRICAL SYSTEM SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY UPGRADES - \$ 90,000**

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$90,000** for the purpose of the replacement of the four (4) obsolete and unsafe Federal Pacific electrical panels in the library? Note: \$25,000 will be used from the Wadleigh Library Maintenance and Upkeep Capital Reserve account to offset this cost. This is a Special Warrant Article in accordance with RSA 32. **The Board Library Trustees recommend this Article (7-0). The Board of Selectmen recommends this Article (0-0). The Budget Advisory Committee recommends this Article (0-0). This Article has an estimated tax impact of \$3.10 on an assessed valuation of \$100,000.**

Katherine Parenti, Library Trustee said they received a new quote on a 600 amp service for about \$10,000 less which would bring it to \$78,000. Ms. Parenti said she isn't sure they want to go down to 600 amps, she would rather stay at 800 amps. Selectman Labonte referenced an e-mail that was sent by Selectman Freel saying that there are circuit breakers that are serviceable. You are not limited to a certain kind. He mentioned doing a load test which has less than 50 amps. Ms. Parenti said it doesn't include several things that we need. Ms. Parenti said it would have been nice to have been included in that e-mail.

Peggy Seward, Budget Advisory Committee Member, asked that the \$25,000 being used from the Library Capital Reserve account be included in the header of the warrant article. Tina Philbrick, Executive Assistant said she could include it in the header.

Mike Thornton, a Milford resident, said it's more cost-effective to increase the amps now, he's never seen the number of circuits go down because of the number of devices using the circuits goes up.

Katherine Kokko, a Milford resident, said the library was asked to do a step approach to the changes being made to the building. Preplanning for expansion makes sense. It's a small amount and we should not be spending this much time on this.

There were no other comments.

## **WARRANT ARTICLE 9 - SOCIAL SERVICES - \$40,000**

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$40,000**, for the purpose of providing funding to Social Service agencies for Milford residents as proposed by the Social Services Committee and submitted to the Board of Selectmen? This is a Special Warrant Article in accordance with RSA 32. **The Board of Selectmen recommends this Article (0-0). The Budget Advisory Committee recommends this Article (0-0). This Article has an estimated tax impact of \$1.93 on an assessed valuation of \$100,000.**

There were no other comments.

## **WARRANT ARTICLE 10 - NON-EMERGENCY COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION BUS SERVICES – \$32,000**

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$32,000** for the purpose of providing the Town's share of funding to the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC) to continue operating a regional, non-emergency, wheelchair-accessible transportation service providing rides within the designated service area to seniors, people with disabilities, and the general public? **The Board of Selectmen recommends this Article (0-0). The Budget Advisory Committee recommends this Article (0-0). This Article has an estimated tax impact of \$1.55 on an assessed valuation of \$100,000.**

There were no other comments.

## **WARRANT ARTICLE 11 - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE CAPITAL RESERVE - \$ 20,000**

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$20,000** to be placed in the Information Technology Infrastructure Capital Reserve Fund? The Board of Selectmen has the authority to expend from this fund. The \$20,000 adds to the Information Technology Infrastructure Capital Reserve Fund approved by voters in 2021. The current available balance in this capital reserve account as of August 31, 2023, is approximately \$41,186.59. **The Board of Selectmen recommends this**

Article (0-0). The Budget Advisory Committee recommends this Article (0-0). This Article has an estimated tax impact of \$0.97 on an assessed valuation of \$100,000.

There were no other comments.

## **WARRANT ARTICLE 12 - SUMMER BAND CONCERTS SUPPORT - \$9,000**

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$9,000 for the purpose of holding the annual summer evening Band Concerts (bands, sound system, crossing detail)? This is a Special Warrant Article in accordance with RSA 32. This is a non-lapsing article until 12/31/25. **The Board of Selectmen recommends this Article (0-0). The Budget Advisory Committee recommends this Article (0-0). This Article has an estimated tax impact of \$0.43 on an assessed valuation of \$100,000.**

There were no other comments.

## **WARRANT ARTICLE 13 - MEMORIAL, VETERANS & LABOR DAY PARADES AND RECOGNITION SUPPORT - \$8,000**

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$8,000 for the purpose of town support relative to the observance of Memorial, Veterans, and Labor Day Parades? These funds shall be used to cover parade costs incurred by Public Works, Police Departments, and other Town departments, and to purchase flags to be placed on the graves of veterans 30 days before Memorial Day and removed 30 days after Veterans Day. Departmental support costs and materials associated with the provision of these services will be charged against this appropriation. This is a Special Warrant Article in accordance with RSA 32. This is a non-lapsing article until 12/31/25. **The Board of Selectmen recommends this Article (0-0). The Budget Advisory Committee recommends this Article (0-0). This Article has an estimated tax impact of \$0.39 on an assessed valuation of \$100,000.**

There were no other comments.

## **WARRANT ARTICLE 14 - ANNUAL LABOR DAY PARADE SUPPORT - \$6,000**

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$6,000 for the purpose of funding bands, musicians, and other allied expenses directly attributed to the annual Labor Day Parade? This is a Special Warrant Article in accordance with RSA 32. **The Board of Selectmen recommends this Article (0-0). The Budget Advisory Committee recommends this Article (0-0). This Article has an estimated tax impact of \$0.29 on an assessed valuation of \$100,000.**

There were no other comments.

## **WARRANT ARTICLE 15 - DISCONTINUE OSGOOD POND CAPITAL RESERVE TRUST FUND - \$0**

Shall the Town vote to discontinue the Osgood Pond Capital Reserve Trust Fund created in 1997 with a current balance of .88, per RSA 35:16-a. Said funds, with accumulated interest to date of withdrawal, are to be transferred to the municipality's general fund. This is a housekeeping Warrant Article. This fund is no longer utilized and has not been for some time. **The Board of Selectmen recommends this Article (0-0). The Budget Advisory Committee recommends this Article (0-0). This article has no tax impact.**

There were no other comments.

## **WARRANT ARTICLE 16 - CONSERVATION LAND FUND - \$30,000 By Petition**

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand (\$30,000) Dollars for the purpose of adding it to the Conservation Fund created in accordance with RSA 36-A, said fund being allowed to accumulate from year to year and to be available for the acquisition of property, conservation easements and other RSA 36-A allowable purposes, or take any other action relative thereto? Contributions further the protection of the town's natural resources. This is a Special Warrant Article in accordance with RSA 32. **The Board of Selectmen recommends this Article (0-0). The Budget Advisory Committee recommends this Article (0-0). This Article has an estimated tax impact of \$1.45 on an assessed valuation of \$100,000.**

There were no other comments.

Chris Pank, Budget Advisory Committee asked about a previously discussed warrant article for the pumpkin festival. Administrator Daley said was withdrawn.

251 Chairman Daniels said the public hearing for the 2024 Bond & Budget is now complete at 7:07 p.m.

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Chairman, Gary Daniels

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Vice Chairman, Chris Labonte

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Member, Paul Dargie

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Member, Dave Freel

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Member, Tim Finan