

Chairman Shaw called the meeting to order at 6:30pm in the Town Hall.

Present: Almann, Conroy, Hartnett, Kennedy, Klein, Major, Rideout, Schill, Shaw, Zavorotny

Excused:

Absent: Carrier

This was a joint meeting with the Selectmen to discuss the 2012-2013 Town budget. Town Administrator Collins also attended.

Ms. Collins covered the final budget status. The operating total is down just over 0.8% compared to the 2010 twelve month total. The actual total is up some \$52,746 or 1.59% due to \$35,073 for Mutual Aid which is now eliminated from the County assessment and \$45,000 in preparation for a possible Vernon Dam tax abatement. The total includes a 3% raise. Some committee members voiced concern over continual budget increases. Selectman Bellville disagreed stating that the overall operating expenses are down.

Mr. Hartnett asked if perhaps the budget was being cut too closely and we may be setting ourselves up for a problem later. Mr. Bellville again responded indicating the budget will support Town needs. The biggest difference is that it has little space for unanticipated expenses and no surplus is expected for return to the General Fund. If unanticipated expenses are experienced, there are methods available to draw from reserves.

Anticipated revenues are flat.

Mr. Hartnett moved and Mr. Major seconded to tentatively approve the \$3,367,287 expense and \$1,218,309 income amounts. Passage was unanimous.

The Wastewater Treatment total is down by 2.8% or \$6,022. Mr. Major moved to Tentatively Approve the \$332,768 total. Mr. Rideout seconded and passage was unanimous.

The Water Distribution and Treatment amount is reduced by 2.7% or \$12,443. Mr. Major moved Tentative Approval of \$455,620. Mr. Rideout seconded. The motion carried with members Almann and Schill voting No.

Some members indicated a concern that more history is needed in order to make accurate estimates of need.

The Selectmen noted that Water rates will be increased by 5% and Sewer rates by 10% in order to build reserves for those departments.

Articles were then reviewed:

Add \$50,000 to the Police Station Fund. Mr. Zavorotny moved to Recommend. Mr. Rideout seconded and passage was unanimous.

Add \$25,000 to the Fire Department Apparatus Fund. The fund presently stands at \$25,000. Mr. Major moved to Recommend. Second was by Mr. Hartnett. The motion carried with Schill and Zavorotny abstaining.

Add \$25,000 to the Monument Road Reconstruction Fund. Mr. Conroy voiced concern that it seemed we were not maintaining the road as we should and it was deteriorating rapidly. The Selectmen commented that it is due to the heavy truck traffic and major repairs are needed before regular maintenance will be beneficial. Mr. Hartnett moved to Recommend. Mr. Rideout seconded and passage was unanimous.

Create an expendable trust for Highway Capital Equipment and initially fund with \$25,000. This would reduce costs over time by eliminating the need to enter into leases. Mr. Major moved to Recommend. Mr. Conroy seconded and passage was unanimous.

Add \$19,250 to the Fire Department Personal Protective Equipment Fund and add \$16,000 to the Fire Department Breathing Apparatus Fund. Mr. Zavorotny moved to Recommend both articles. Second was by Mr. Major and passage unanimous.

Fund a transit service between Hinsdale and Brattleboro. This would run six days a week/ four times per day. The company did not feel Winchester was a viable addition. The cost to the Town is \$15,500. Grants will be pursued. Mr. Rideout moved and Mr. Conroy seconded to Recommend. Passage was unanimous.

Add \$10,000 to the Backhoe Expendable Trust Fund. \$5,000 from tax funds and \$5,000 from user fees. Mr. Major moved to Recommend. Mr. Zavorotny seconded and passage was unanimous.

Add \$5,000 to the Community Center Building Improvement Fund. To come from any undesignated fund balance. Mr. Rideout moved and Mr. Major seconded to Recommend. The motion passed unanimously.

Donate \$1,939 to the Red Cross. They are active in the community and have responded to emergencies by staffing the shelter at the High School. The amount is based on a per capita calculation. Also donate \$1,000 to the Monadnock Region Child Advocacy Center. They are also active in the community. These are the first requests from these agencies, so are presented separately from the other Health Agencies in the budget. Mr. Rideout moved to Recommend both articles. Mr. Hartnett seconded the motion. Some members indicated they wanted to consider the two separately as they could support one and not the other. In particular, Mr. Conroy had had a bad experience with the Red Cross. The motion and second were withdrawn. Mr. Hartnett moved to Recommend the Red Cross article. Mr. Rideout seconded. The motion carried with Almann, Conroy and Zavorotny voting No and Schill abstaining. Mr. Major moved to Recommend the \$1,000 donation to the Monadnock Region Child Advocacy Center. Mr. Conroy seconded. The motion carried with Almann and Zavorotny voting No and Schill abstaining.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 25, 2012 at 7:30 in the Town Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Peter W. Zavorotny
Recording Secretary