

Dick Bennett_____

Barbara Campbell_____

John Allen_____

Board Of Selectmen Budget Hearing #2

February 2nd, 2021

UNOFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED

Present: Dick Bennett, Chairman; Barbara Campbell, Selectman, John Allen, Selectman

Attendees: Hank Benesh, Darlene Ference, Chris Perley, Karen Burton, Linda Terry, Sarah Clemons, Julie Atwell

Meeting via ZOOM conference call with audio/video recording

1. Hearing called to order at 5:15 P.M.

2. Proposed Operating Budget:

- a. **Selectmen:** \$26,280 (vs. \$28,248 budgeted, \$27,672 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: -6.97% (-\$1,968)
 - ii. Discussion: Selectmen made no comments.
- b. **Town Clerk:** \$78,366 (vs. \$77,735 budgeted, \$68,622 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: +0.81% (+\$631)
 - ii. Discussion: Selectmen made no comments.
- c. **Financial Administration:** \$179,277 (vs. \$164,369 budgeted, \$160,230 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: +9.07% (+\$14,908)
 - ii. Discussion: Chairman Bennett highlighted the new Short-Term Rental Administrator line item, which awaits vote at the town meeting.
- d. **Assessing:** \$40,000 (vs. \$40,000 budgeted, \$40,000 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: 0.00% (\$0)
 - ii. Discussion: Selectmen made no comments.
- e. **Legal:** \$35,000 (vs. \$25,000 budgeted, \$23,520 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: +40% (+\$10,000)
 - ii. Discussion: Chairman Bennett commented that the increased Legal budget was appropriate.

- f. **Personnel Administration:** \$443,456 (vs. \$389,322 budgeted, \$383,547 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: +13.90% (+\$54,134)
 - ii. Discussion: Chairman Bennett highlighted the new, increased NHRS rates to take effect in July 2021 for town employees and members of the Police and Fire Departments.
 - 1. Employees: 11.17% to 14.06%.
 - 2. Police: 28.43% to 33.88%.
 - 3. Fire: 30.09% to 33.88%.
- g. **Planning and Zoning Boards:** \$5,500 (vs. \$5,500 budgeted, \$3,035 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: 0.00% (\$0)
 - ii. Discussion: Selectmen made no comments.
- h. **General Government Parks and Buildings:** \$11,000 (vs. \$10,000 budgeted, \$10,157 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: +10% (\$1,000)
 - ii. Discussion: Selectmen made no comments.
- i. **Cemeteries:** \$11,200 (vs. \$11,000 budgeted, \$9,700 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: +1.82% (\$200)
 - ii. Discussion: Selectmen made no comments.
- j. **Insurance:** \$72,563 (vs. \$73,606 budgeted, \$73,606 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: -1.42% (-\$1,043)
 - ii. Discussion: Selectmen made no comments.
- k. **Building Inspection:** \$52,880 (vs. \$46,211 budgeted, \$44,307 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: +14.43% (+\$6,669)
 - ii. Discussion: Chairman Bennett explained the increase as compensation to Kevin Bennett for hours already being worked.
- l. **Police:** \$316,220 (vs. \$315,526 budgeted, \$297,653 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: +0.22% (+\$694)
 - ii. Discussion: Selectmen made no comments.
- m. **Ambulance:** \$21,340 (vs. \$13,740 budgeted, \$13,286 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: +55.31% (+\$7,600)
 - ii. Discussion: Chairman Bennett explained that the increase returns the proposed budget to the value proposed in 2019, where it had been proposed lower in 2020.
- n. **Fire:** \$177,762 (vs. \$175,039 budgeted, \$162,061 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: +1.56% (+\$2,723)

- ii. Changes:
 - 1. The Gasoline/Oil line item was reduced from \$4,000 to \$3,000 (-\$1,000).
 - 2. The Special Equipment line item was reduced from \$17,500 to \$14,500 (-\$3,000).
 - 3. The Training line item was reduced from \$3,000 to \$2,000 (-\$1,000).
- iii. Discussion: Selectman Campbell had discussed the Special Equipment budget with Jay Henry. The original intention was to reduce the Special Equipment budget by \$5,000, but after some negotiation \$2,000 of that reduction was split between the Gasoline/Oil and Training budgets instead.
- o. **Emergency Management:** \$8,500 (vs. \$5,341 budgeted, \$36,506 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: +59.15% (+\$3,159)
 - ii. Discussion: Chairman Bennett explained that the COVID-19 pandemic played a critical role in Emergency Management coming in over-budget in 2020 and in the decision to propose an increased budget for 2021. Selectman Campbell expressed hope that the budget could be decreased as the pandemic de-escalated.
- p. **Highway Administration:** \$215,047 (vs. \$212,297 budgeted, \$209,045 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: +1.30% (+\$2,750)
 - ii. Discussion: Selectmen made no comments.
- q. **Highway:** \$354,873 (vs. \$384,978 budgeted, \$198,065 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: -7.82% (-\$30,105)
 - ii. Changes: \$30,000 was deducted from the Highway Road Maintenance line item.
 - iii. Discussion: Chairman Bennett stated that the Town could draw from a money market account if necessary to offset the deduction from the Highway Road Maintenance budget.
- r. **Street Lighting:** \$9,000 (vs. \$9,000 budgeted, \$6,952 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: 0.00% (\$0)
 - ii. Discussion: Selectmen made no comments.
- s. **Solid Waste Disposal:** \$132,500 (vs. \$121,000 budgeted, \$116,023 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: +9.50% (+\$11,500)
 - ii. Discussion: Chairman Bennett explained that the increased budget accounted for an increase in tipping fees at the Transfer Station.
- t. **Animal Control:** \$1,000 (vs. \$1,350 budgeted, \$500 actual in 2020)

- i. Year Difference: -25.93% (-\$350)
 - ii. Discussion: Chairman Bennett explained that Animal Control issues had been rolled into the Police Department.
- u. **Public Welfare:** \$6,000 (vs. \$6,000 budgeted, \$0 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: 0.00% (\$0)
 - ii. Discussion: Chairman Bennett stated that no claims were made in 2020.
- v. **Library:** \$96,600 (vs. \$112,210 budgeted, \$111,247 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: -13.91% (-\$15,610)
 - ii. Discussion: Selectman Campbell reminded that the decrease was primarily from the painting budgeted for 2020.
- w. **Other Conservation:** \$1,500 (vs. \$1,500 budgeted, \$875 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: 0.00% (\$0)
 - ii. Discussion: Selectmen made no comments.
- x. **Other Culture and Recreation:** \$4,000 (vs. \$3,500 budgeted, \$3,450 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: +14.29% (+\$500)
 - ii. Discussion: Chairman Bennett reminded that the increased budget would cover the cost to host town board meetings on Jacksonflicks.com.
- y. **Parks and Recreation:** \$6,700 (vs. \$6,700 budgeted, \$6,700 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: 0.00% (\$0)
 - ii. Discussion: Selectmen made no comments.
- z. **Debt Service:** \$68,200 (vs. \$68,200 budgeted, \$53,200 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: 0.00% (\$0)
 - ii. Discussion: Selectmen made no comments.
- aa. **Total:** \$2,376,372 (vs. \$2,307,372 budgeted, \$2,059,959 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: +3.01% (+\$69,360)

3. Agents to Expend Capital Reserve Funds

- a. Vehicles and Equipment: \$324,014 in 2020 (for Police cruiser, highway truck, and Fire all-terrain vehicle (ATV))
- b. Other: \$81,506 in 2020 (for sod at Jackson Falls, Plan for Prospect Farm, portable AED, Valley Cross Road Bridge, and Transfer Station Phase 3)
- c. Discussion: Selectmen made no comments.

4. Warrant Articles

- a. **Recurring Capital Reserve Funds:** \$268,500 (vs. \$258,500 budgeted, \$258,500 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: +3.87% (+\$10,000)
 - ii. Change: \$20,000 was deducted from the Fire Department Truck line item.
 - iii. Vote: **Selectman Campbell made a motion to approve the Recurring Capital Reserve Funds warrant, seconded by Selectman Allen. Motion approved unanimously.**
- b. **Recurring Expendable Trust Funds:** \$104,000 (vs. \$104,000 budgeted, \$104,000 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: 0.00% (\$0)
 - ii. Discussion: Selectman Campbell had discussed with Jay Henry about removing the \$500 contribution to the Dry Hydrant Expendable Trust Fund. She then proposed that the contribution be removed from the proposed budget, and the Board agreed to consider the change.
 - iii. Vote: **Selectman Allen made a motion to approve the Recurring Expendable Trust Funds warrant, with exception to the \$500 budgeted to the Dry Hydrant Expendable Trust Fund, seconded by Selectman Campbell. Motion approved unanimously.**
- c. **Recurring Social Services:** \$19,507 (vs. 20,643 budgeted, \$20,643 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: -5.50% (-\$1,136)
 - ii. Discussion: Selectmen made no comments.
 - iii. Vote: **Selectman Campbell made a motion to approve the Recurring Social Services warrant, seconded by Selectman Allen. Motion approved unanimously.**
- d. **New (2021):** \$45,000
 - i. Roof for Town Office/Town Clerk Walk-up Window: **Selectman Allen made a motion to approve the Roof for Town Office/Town Clerk Walk-up Window warrant, seconded by Selectman Campbell. Motion approved unanimously.**
 - ii. Highway Truck Capital Reserve Fund: **Selectman Campbell made a motion to approve the Highway Truck Capital Reserve Fund warrant, seconded by Selectman Allen. Motion approved unanimously.**
 - iii. Amendment #1 - Zoning Ordinance: **Selectman Campbell made a motion to approve the amendment, seconded by Selectman Allen. Motion approved unanimously.**

- iv. **Petition - \$3,000 for Town Clerk:** Selectman Campbell stated that the petition was received from Jackson town clerk/tax collector Karen Burton “to vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,000 for an increase in wages for the Town Clerk/Tax Collector”. Selectman Campbell noted that the petition included hourly rates for the Town Clerk/Tax Collector position in other, neighboring towns, but she argued that this information was inappropriate because the position was salaried and not hourly. She also noted that Karen Burton had previously petitioned to be paid with the same benefits of a regular employee, including health insurance and retirement benefits, rather than an elected official. She then asked how the Board would choose to handle it. Chairman Bennett suggested that, should the petitioned warrant persist, the Board should vote on a warrant to rescind the 3% salary increase, health insurance, and retirement benefits previously granted.

Karen Burton, Jackson Town Clerk and Tax Collector, was recognized to comment. Karen stated that the purpose of the warrant article was to normalize her salary with those of other Town Clerks in neighboring towns. Selectman Campbell reiterated that the Town Clerk position was not hourly and was an elected position paid on salary. In response, Karen decided to rescind the petitioned warrant article. Chairman Bennett suggested making a written request but agreed to accept a verbal commitment to the same effect.

- e. **Previous Year (2020):** \$30,000 budgeted, \$1,658 actual
- f. **Total Warrant Articles:** \$434,007 (vs. \$413,143 budgeted, \$384,801 actual in 2020)
 - i. Year Difference: +5.05% (+\$20,864)

- 5. **Public Comment:** Sarah Clemons was recognized for comment. Sarah stated that she had posed several questions about the formation of the town report book and expressed hope to get answers about whether it could be changed. She also suggested that the total compensation package of all town employees be added to the town report book. Linda Terry was also recognized for comment. Linda asked whether funding would be delayed as a result of the delay in holding the annual town meeting. Town administrator Julie Atwell was recognized to comment on the question. Julie responded that situational, “out-of-the-ordinary” budget items might be delayed, but ordinary items like normal wages and utilities would be paid regularly in spite of the town meeting’s delays. Selectman Allen asked if the reserve fund could be used or borrowed against if necessary, and Julie confirmed that it could be utilized.

Selectman Campbell made a motion to adjourn the budget hearing, seconded by Selectman Allen. Motion approved unanimously.

Hearing adjourned at 5:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Will Reisig