



Budget Committee Meeting

January 23, 2025, 7:00 PM

Open Meeting and Roll Call

Mike Cutting explained that the Select Board needs a few minutes to address a few items.

Mike Smith called the Select Board meeting to order at 7:04 PM

Select Board present Mike Smith, Faith Minton, Harry Seidel via Zoom.

The Select Board agreed that Harry Seidel would participate by Zoom.

Faith Minton made a motion seconded by Mike Smith for the Town of Warner to be the applicant of record for a Transportation Alternative Programs Grant (TAP) Round 5 through the D.O.T. in the amount of \$1,358,870. ROLL CALL VOTE Minton YES Smith YES Seidel YES

Tim Blagden stated that for the record the Friends of the Concord Lake Sunapee Rail Trail would raise matching funds and if they fail to raise the funds for the grant the town is under no obligation to accept the grant. He requested that he and Clyde Carson to be authorized to move the grant to the FTP site.

Faith Minton made a motion seconded by Mike Smith to authorize Clyde Carson and Tim Blagden to move the grant to the FTP site. ROLL CALL VOTE Minton YES Seidel YES Smith YES

Chair Cutting opened the Budget Committee meeting at 7:05 PM.

Budget Committee Members Present: Michael Cutting (Chair), Ray Martin, Harold Blanchette, Rick Bixby, Bill Hanson, Alfred Hanson and Robert Blake. Select Board office Judy Newman-Rogers, Clyde Carson and Kathy Frenette.

Approval of Minutes • January 16, 2025

Harold Blanchette made a motion seconded by Alfred Hanson to approve the Budget Committee meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

Review of Precinct Budget

Precinct budget review: Ray Martin stated an additional \$5,000 has been added for the purchase of replacement meters and he explained an adjustment for payroll. He advised the Budget Committee that expenses were budgeted at \$506,600. The actual came in under budget at \$505,200. The proposed budget includes an additional \$25,000 for outside contractors for the replacement of meters.

Precinct Warrant: Ray Martin spoke about the proposed warrant article that will address the copper discharge in the water. He stated that the Precinct has been awarded a \$20 million dollar loan from DES with \$5 million of that immediately forgiven and the warrant article satisfies the requirement from DES. He stated that more grants will be pursued. There was discussion relating to the impact of regulations.

Review of Operating Budget

Mike Cutting stated that the budget before the Budget Committee is their budget which was developed in conjunction with the Select Board. He explained that the Select Board is responsible for the Capital Budget. Ray Martin explained that at Town Meeting the operating budget can be adjusted. James Gaffney stated the combined increase (capital and operating budgets) is roughly \$176,500. He further noted that if everything passes Warner is looking at an increase of \$937,000. He inquired if there is an estimate on how that will impact the tax rate. Mike Cutting stated that a tax rate analysis has not been done yet.

The proposed Operating Budget reflects a 2.35% increase, which has been reduced from 8 or 9%. Mike Cutting stated that the reductions made will impact Warner in future years. There was a discussion regarding the elimination of most of the paving funds and replacement of the grader and backhoe.

Mike Cutting stated the proposed budget is \$4,670,311 an increase of \$107,225 (2.35%). Rick Bixby inquired about the ice rink. There was a discussion regarding the public hearing schedule. Mike Cutting stated that the schedule is a public hearing on January 30th continued to February 4th and the proposed budget is approved on February 6th. Petition warrant articles are due by February 4th.

Harold Blanchette made a motion seconded by Rick Bixby to reduce the Parks & Recreation seasonal wages (for the labor to maintain the ice rink) by \$2,500. Motion passed unanimously

Select Board Budget: proposed budget is \$267,572.29 an increase of \$20,955.26 (8.497%).

Admin Assistant wages: Clyde Carson explained that the approved budget was for 35 hours/week but in 2024 Judy put in 40 hours a week plus overtime. He stated that it accounts for the difference between the \$57,000 and \$73,000. James Gaffney inquired about a reorganization that shifted the building permits to another employee that should have reduced overtime. Faith Minton stated that meetings require someone to run the zoom and the owl recording equipment.

Elections: proposed budget \$5,997, a reduction from last year of \$2,250. No change.

Finance: (Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Trustee of Trust Funds and Finance departments): Mike Smith stated that no decision has been made to combine the Town Clerk and Tax Collector offices. No change.

Assessing: proposed is \$90,819 an increase of \$43,545 (outside services, computer support) No change.

Legal Expenses: proposed \$30,000 an increase \$5,000. No change.

Personnel Benefits: proposed \$692,353.64 and increase of 10.97%. There was a discussion regarding employee contribution. Kathy Frenette explained that an employee group will be looking for ways to make cost effective changes for 2026.

Land Use: proposed is \$65,300 an of 48% increase. Alfred Hanson inquired if the clerk is in a full-time or part-time position. Mike Smith explained that the position is 28-29 hours per week.

General Government Buildings (Town Hall, WCC and old Fire Station): proposed \$65,870 a decrease of \$4,466. No change.

Cemeteries: decreased by \$1,499.30

Insurance (public liability, unemployment and workers comp) proposed \$103,537 an increase of \$10,975 due to the increase in claims. No change.

CNHRPC: proposed \$3,855 an increase of \$330. No change.

Other General Government (CAP): proposed \$17,500. No change.

Public Safety (Police Department): proposed \$423,688 a decrease of \$21,123. No change.

Public Safety (Ambulance): proposed \$89,191. No change.

Public Safety (Fire Department): \$237,442 an increase of \$2,630. No change.

Building Inspection: proposed \$26,510 an increase of \$615 (2.35%). No change.

Emergency Management: proposed \$10,577 an increase of \$202. No change.

Highway Department: proposed \$1,800,034 a decrease of \$99,482

Bill Hanson requested to revisit the General Government Admin Assistant wages stating that the wages are more than the Police Chief. Mike Cutting explained that the Police Chief is a part-time employee. Bill Hanson asked about salary caps and the rate of increases. Faith Minton stated that some of the admin wages reflect the extra hours for attending meetings. Clyde Carson explained that the police chief's hourly wage is higher, and he has retired from the police force. James Gaffney stated that the zoom recordings should be run by the board chair or a volunteer. Bill Hanson stated that he will take over and operate the zoom recordings for the Budget Committee meeting.

Solid Waste: proposed \$372,275 an increase of \$52,553 (16.4%). There was a discussion regarding the safety issues and insurance claims at the transfer station and the difficulties of finding part-time employees. Kathy Frenette stated that she has been working hard to increase safety measures at the transfer station. No Change

Health Administration: proposed \$1,400. No Change.

Health Agencies/Hospitals: proposed \$10,606. No change.

Welfare: proposed \$45,182 an increase of \$7,890. No change.

Conservation Commission: proposed \$951 decreased by \$86

Mike Cutting stated the proposed budget is now \$4,667,811.93 an increase of \$104,725 (2.295%).

Review of Capital Budget

The proposed Capital Budget is \$625,000. Mike Cutting recapped the proposed capital budget items and amounts. Record preservation \$20,000, Police Vehicle \$25,000, Bridge Replace/Repair \$50,000, Highway Equipment \$265,000, Transfer Station Facility \$50,000, Transfer Station Equipment \$25,000, Firefighters Equipment \$35,000, Firefighters Vehicle \$100,000, Property Reval \$40,000, Contingency Fund \$10,000 and Employee Expenditure Trust Fund \$5,000.

Mike Smith spoke about the need for \$50,000 for the Transfer Station Facilities (compactor building). James Gaffney asked about a previous warrant article that encompassed the entire facility. Mike Smith explained that it is clearly broken up into two different funds Highway and the Transfer Station. Mike Cutting asked when the warrant articles would be ready, and how much of the capital budget would need to be raised by taxes. John Leavitt asked about the WCC and Emergency Management capital reserve funds. James Gaffney inquired about the balance of the contingency fund (\$10,000). He suggested eliminating the contingency fund because it has not been used. Alfred Hanson stated that he does not support that. Clyde Carson stated that the

contingency fund does not come from taxes and at the end of the year the balance goes back to the fund balance.

Review of 2025 Projected Revenue

The proposed Revenue Budget is \$1,346,300.

Mike Cutting reiterated that the Operating Budget \$4,667,811.93 and the Capital Budget is \$625,000. Total Proposed Budget \$5,292,811 (3.4%)

Meeting Schedule:

Thursday January 30, 2025, at 7:00 PM Public Hearing

Adjournment

Faith Minton made a motion seconded by Mike Smith to adjourn the Select Board meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Ray Martin made a motion seconded by Rick Bixby to adjourn the Budget Committee meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:51 PM

Respectfully submitted January 27, 2025, at 7:45 PM by Tracy Doherty
Edited by Darcie Buskey, Assistant Clerk

APPROVED 01/30/2025