

2014-02-07 Westmoreland Budget Committee meeting and Public Hearing
Draft Minutes

BC in attendance: Russ Austin (BOS rep), Susan Finnegan, Dawn Lincoln, Wes Staples (chair), Mike Acerno (arrived about 7:45)

Called to order by Wes at 630 PM

Russ A - New article 10: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$35,000 toward the replacement of the River Road North Bridge, with said funds to come from unreserved fund balance. No amount to be raised from taxation.

Another new petitioned warrant article to change the selectboard from 3 to 5 members. This will be on the ballot. The required public hearing will be held on February 20th at the regular selectmen's meeting at 7 PM, regular meeting will open at 6 then recess for 7 PM public hearing

2013 spent \$1,222,278 vs budget of \$1,243,798

Russ almost ready to advertise for bids on river rd north bridge

anticipated revenues

yield taxes up – from 8k to 12k, 2013 actual \$16,089

excavation taxes up – 2013 \$1745 budget/actual, 2014 \$3000, anticipating more from Graves?

sale of town owned property – \$2,000 up from \$500 for sale of old highway truck to Scrapit

Only difference in town and BC budgets is the \$1500 less in highway temporary wages in budget committee's budget.

Dawn moves to approve 2014 anticipated revenues for \$570,068. Susan second. Approved.

Moved to hearing room

Public in attendance: Jeannette Hubert, June Hammond, Carrie Staples, Mark Hayward Jr., Wayne ? (SAU), Bob Moore, Pat Bentrup, Russ Kotfila, Carol Austin, Tina Fletcher, Walt and June Derjue, Melissa Hoffman, Deb Hunter, Tom Finnegan, ?? man in plaid, April and Ted Ferguson, Lauren Bressette, Stuart Adams

Wes called PH to order at 7 PM

Doing town budget first since Michael Acerno (school board rep) is running late

Wes - if people have questions, they should holler, presents the 2014 expenses

4130 executive – 2014 budget \$68,547 (2013 budget \$63,178, actual \$62,730)

Wes - Administrative assistant salary – Jo Ann is now up to what she wanted to start with, she earns every nickel of it

Most of the rest is about the same

Jotham Lord wasn't know so we put in \$50 – Russ A says it's going to be \$43

Russ K – on administrative assistant it is up \$4260, do we pay 100% of employees benefits?

Russ A – yes in 1000- 2000 population category (according to a book), about half of the towns still pay all medical/dental, BOS had a long discussion on this. May change next year. Also discussed eliminating dental insurance – is less valuable, since it is capped at a pretty low dollar amount.

Russ K have to fast forward (to later in the budget) – benefits increased 6K for all town employees, which is a raise in itself, so giving 2 raises, can't rectify the large increase for one employee where others are negligible, what's the idea behind this discrepancy?

Russ A are you talking about Jo Ann?

Russ K highway too, 972 for dental and 3072 for retirement then highway dept up over 49K for 3 employees so that's a substantial raise for someone with one being a new hire

Russ A new guy is factored in for insurance

Russ K benefits are a raise which is better for employees since they don't pay taxes on that, going to have to curb that at some point

Susan Finnegan the selectmen looked at what other towns were paying to see where we stood as to where Jo Ann's salary should be and this brings Jo Ann into that area, to keep her here

Russ A only heard one person speak against Jo Ann's raise, she takes good care of us

Russ K I'm not talking against Jo Ann, addressed the increases, she was promised this?

Wes that's what she wanted, not promised

Russ A average pay from the book is \$54000, the 2014 budget shows one quarter at old rate, 3 quarters at new rate

Russ K they are getting two raises, substantially, something has to happen to address an inequity that we can't afford that anymore

Russ A letting them know one year ahead that we might be changing the insurance

4140 Election and Registration – 2014 budget \$27,494 (2013 budget \$25,800 actual \$24,204)

Wes - A little extra for 3 elections instead of just 1 last year

4150 financial administration 2014 budget \$38,843 (2013 budget 38,810 actual \$38,429)

Wes - up a whisker but not much, tried to hold them down, more was asked for but didn't give it

Russ A in bottom line of this area and 4140 there is a new line for workshops, good idea, but it was a lot, by law we have to reimburse her

Jeannette so how's it going to balance out? If she goes and it's not funded?

Russ A if she goes and it's more than budgeted we'll have to find it somewhere, didn't think larger amount was suitable

Jeannette she's going to be encouraged to go, so how will it be paid for?

Tina Fletcher do you have to approve her going?

Russ A she'd have to put in receipts, don't know if she'll sign up for the 2.5 days, tried to put in something, registration is \$50, maybe she'll stay one night somewhere – don't know, she requested over 2K and thought that was too much

Jeannette if we're legally obligated to go, seems like it should be more

Russ A what do you suggest?

Jeannette don't know much about it but seems like we're hanging ourselves out to dry if it costs more and we don't have the \$

April she must have given you some figures

Russ A she gave us a lump sum

Wes she's never been to one before (and has been in the job for a long time)

Russ A talked to head of tax collectors association and she asked for (in Auburn) \$450 plus mileage

Susan not really know, depends if you stay overnight, maybe you just go for a day

Jeannette don't want to take up any more time on this, thank you

4153 legal – 2014 budget \$5000 (2013 budget \$5000, actual \$1986)

Wes - we hope that's enough

4155 personnel administration – 2014 budget \$107,427 (2013 budget \$98,784, actual \$96,423)

Wes – includes health, dental, fica, medicare, retirement

Russ A for health insurance - 1st 6 months at old rate, next 6 months at new rate, this is max it will be , could be less, now we're tied in with the teacher's group which is larger, just town on dental

Bob Moore under insurance dividend (revenues) is that from LGC?

Russ A yes, court mandated order

Bob is that all we're getting? Yes

Melissa Hoffman any discussion on having employees contribute to the premiums, like most plans do,

Russ A yes, some towns have them pay 5%, some more

Melissa town pays 100%?

Russ A yes, we are considering it, thought the fairest thing was to go this year with full benefits still

Wes this is where we've been all along and hopefully next year we can convince them to pay

April in the study how many pay 100?%?

Russ A about half

4191 planning and zoning – 2014 budget \$2,600 (2013 budget \$2,325, actual \$1,992)

4194 general government buildings – 2014 budget \$22,933 (2013 budget \$28,685, actual \$27,426)

Wes - custodian got a little raise, he does do a pretty good job

repairs – ceiling is painted, now makes walls look shabby, so is in budget for this year

4195 cemeteries – 2014 budget \$12,000 (2013 budget \$12,000, actual \$12,000)

4196 insurance not allocated – 2014 budget \$12,577 (2013 budget \$12,704, actual \$11,663)

contingency fund is the deductible we have to pay first on a claim (\$1000)

4210 police department – 2014 budget \$1000 (2013 budget \$1000, actual 0)

Jeannette why \$1000?

Russ A for River Rd (haha – that's where Jeannette lives), a couple of thoughts here, Jack wanted to leave 1000, possible expense could be at recycling center (hear complaints of people without stickers), saw 2 people leaving without stickers, so may hire a sheriff for half a day to enforce, we have annual stickers, have thought about and discussed the closing of the recycling center – for some it's just a terrible idea and a place to socialize

Pat can you put a sign at the dump for when new stickers are needed? I'd never remember

4215 ambulance – 2014 budget \$39125 (2013 budget \$36,545, actual \$36,545)

Wes - with Keene, talked about going to Diluzio and they didn't seem too interested

Russ A present contract is for 3 years and is up this spring, reached out to diluzio a couple of times and asked if they wanted to give us a quote, 2 other towns ahead of us requesting their services so they could not provide any service to us until next year

Jeannette only 2 in area?

Russ A only 2 sensible ones

Carrie Staples Diluzio goes to Winchester, Hinsdale, Gilsun which could make calls take longer

Wes Keene has 3 people every time, Diluzio only 2

4220 fire and rescue – 2014 budget \$32,065 (2013 budget \$30,482, actual \$30,338)

Wes - gear wanted new air tanks to replace outdated ones

April vehicle repair and maint 2013 budget was \$2700 but spent \$7297, why?

Wes don't know what it was

Russ A paid 1900 and 3700 to twin state but not sure what it was for

April don't know how they made that up?

Wes spent much less in equipment, etc., increase in chief's salary (from 1000 to 1500)

Russ A he did not request it, he's been at \$1000 since we started paying him

4240 building inspection – 2014 budget \$1500 (2013 budget \$1500, actual \$1590)

4290 emergency management – 2014 budget \$1,900 (2013 budget \$2400, actual \$962)

Jeannette forest fire control under here not fire?

Russ A right, different thing with mutual aid

4299 mutual aid – 2014 budget \$19,821 (2014 budget \$18,113, actual \$18,113)

4311 highway administration – 2014 budget \$132,500 (2013 budget \$126,000, actual \$133,732)

Wes - permanent wages up a little under 5000 over 2013 actual, temporary wages up \$500 to 2500

Russ A on temp wages, it was high last year, over budget (2000 vs. 8714) due to a combination of flaggers for paving and hired Ronnie Fish for extra when they were redoing London Rd for the 3rd time, got some reimbursement of this from FEMA, wouldn't usually be this large, only difference between selectmen's and budget committee's budget is in this line

Wes they have 3 full time men and shouldn't need that much temp help

Russ K what was the raise for the road agent?

Russ A looked at that book compared with similar populations for road agent and helpers and found we were considerably under so we did give them a raise this year

Russ K road agent is hourly? Yes

Russ A old rate 20.08 per hour, went up to 21.68, other towns paying \$23

Russ K up \$3K

Lauren did you look at miles of road not just population? No

Russ K he gets paid overtime?

Russ A yes

Russ K he's not allowed to be paid overtime, by statute

Russ A I don't know, tried to pay him a salary at one point, Dave is up .66 to \$16/hour, other towns \$16.78

Russ K Dave gets a full family on his benefits which is one heck of a benefit

Russ A right, and that's why his pay isn't as much, new guy started at 15 and after probation over will go to 15.50

April how long has Dave been with town?

Russ A maybe 10 years? or 7 or 8?

April so the new guy's salary started so close to Dave?

Russ A due to Dave's family plan (health insurance)

April how much is it for a single?

Russ A 3850 + 4100 so about 8K, have 1 single, 2 2-person and 1 family

Russ K wouldn't it be prudent to make a plan now? Someone can be hired and say they don't need a plan and then it can change if they want to add to it, keeps increasing, where is the line where we can't afford it anymore?

Russ A part of our business to figure this out every year

Jeannette do you look at the average revenues in other towns as well?

Russ A no

?man in plaid – how many miles of roads?

Russ A about 15 dirt? 1/3 dirt and 2/3 paved?

Wes over 50 miles of road, have paved butterfield hill, wentworth, added about 4 – 5 miles of asphalt

?man in plaid - Alstead has about 70 miles and have 7 FT employees, didn't used to have so many, walpole has 6 and has 60 miles

Melissa any explanation of why amounts for culverts and cutting edges are so much more

Russ A had a lot left over last year and have used them up

Wes cutting edges wear pretty good, steel costs have increased, 2 cutting edges on each truck, on paving we did cut 25K from his request, his new paving with a paver makes a nice road but is more expensive and waiting to see how it holds up through spring frost heaves

4316 street lighting – 2014 budget \$3800 (2013 budget \$4000, actual \$3651)

4324 solid waste disposal – 2014 budget \$87,887 (2013 budget \$93,087, actual \$86,783)

Melissa why 389 (disposal service – trucking) and 390 (tonage) so much different from budget?

Dawn Jo Ann split it out more to better see how money being spent so bottom lines of both together are in alignment

Wes brought up closing of station

Pat Bentrup - big line on Saturday at Keene dump which is one reason people don't want to go there

Ted Ferguson how many stickers have we sold?

June about 300

Ted that's a lot of money because a lot of people don't use it

Pat - Fran Laurent tried to close our dump but was shouted down because it's a social place

Russ A Keene charges \$2/bag for trash and recycle most everything else and pay for some other things

Wes think everybody should consider and think about

Russ A 1/3 of town doesn't go anyhow

Ted this town needs to start cutting back, it's getting expensive to live here, could cut 100K here, and could cut down on sand, used to be able to live here reasonably but now it's getting too much, when I was on police department if we didn't spend everything we gave it back but fire department spends it all and then asks for more the next year, 11 homes for sale I think, people are leaving

Russ A that's why I suggest eliminating this

Ted my company uses Keene and maybe 3 cars during the week but there is a line on Saturdays

4411 health administration – 2014 budget \$280 (2013 budget \$235, actual \$200)

4414 animal control – 2014 budget \$200 (2013 budget \$300, actual \$120)

4415 health agencies – 2014 budget \$5200 (level funded)

Jeannette what are health agencies?

Russ A \$1000 Community Kitchen, there are 4 agencies, home health care \$700, \$500 meals on wheels, 1500 southwest community services, monad family service

Tom are these donations?

Russ A yes, some feel this should not come from taxes but there are also some strong advocates who support this, been this amount for awhile

4441 welfare administration – 2014 budget \$280 (2013 budget \$230, actual \$230)

4442 welfare direct assistance – 2014 budget \$5000 (2013 budget \$5000, actual \$3671)

4520 parks and rec – 2014 budget \$2000 (2013 budget \$1500, actual \$1350)
4550 library – 2014 budget \$32,290 (level funded)
4583 patriotic – 2014 budget \$350 (2013 budget 400, actual 244)
4619 conservation – 2014 budget \$600 (2013 budget \$600, actual 464)
4711 debt service – 2014 budget \$23,250 (2013 budget/actual \$26,500)
paid off tanker, now paying highway truck
4721 interest – 2014 budget \$814 (2014 budget 600, actual 628)
Russ A borrowed for 2 years

Wes total operating budget is \$1,111,368 up from \$1,083,394
Tom what % is this up?
amount is \$27,794, about 2.5%

Warrant Articles

article 5 \$56850 to refurbish 1998 freightliner fire truck – engine 1
Wes we were told that the bids are to remove the body that is rusted to fix it then repaint, don't know if it has holes already, a lot of money to repaint a truck. Committee voted to recommend, but I was against it. They can do it by hand and save a lot of money. Harry says it could last another 10 years. Ted how old? 1998, how often to replace – every 20 years?
Wes thought so from time on fire dept.

article 6 \$37750 for new dump body and hydraulic lines for 2001 international highway truck
Russ A put new transmission last year
Wes how much? 8 or 9 K yes
Tom life span of highway truck?
Wes I ran them for > 20 years
Bob took a new truck and could make it till next year without this
Melissa what's it going to need next year?
Wes probably some know I have run dump trucks my whole life, cab is apparently solid but dump body and lines aren't that much body, seems like a lot of money to me
April we use the same dump body on our trucks until they are completely gone, would Gary investigate a new body if this one is completely gone
Wes it's not gone because he is using it and could put in lines and a floor
Jeannette what would it cost for lines and floor?
Wes don't know but closer to 3700 than 37K

article 7 \$18,952 for 2 generators and propane
Lauren why can't one generator be used since buildings are next to each other?
Wes I asked the question too, would have to have a separate transfer switch and don't see why that would be a problem
?man in plaid – think under PSNH rules that might be a problem, Walpole got one and have to leave it plugged in
Stuart one at school is plugged in
Russ A Bill Chase and Harry have worked on this, they're on different transformers
Susan less expensive to do it this way
Russ A these are smaller ones
Jeannette do these include the tanks?
Russ A can't remember
Bob Moore why?, the school has one so why do it?

Wes FD has a small generator to be able to open the doors, town hall doesn't have anything

article 8 establish capital reserve account for a new roof in the library and put in \$4K

Wes don't know how old roof is

Ted not too old but in poor shape, maybe last 3 or 4 more years

Russ A library is expected to put money towards it as well

article 10 \$35K towards river road north bridge

Russ A already have permission from DRA to take \$100K from surplus and this is the extra and DRA suggested it be presented to the public for approval

Pat has it been put out to bid yet?

Russ A it's in the process

Pat it's been 7 months

Bob total cost of this bridge? Only shows 35K

Russ A will appear on another page

Bob thought it all had to show up somewhere

Russ A \$417,512, engineering fees \$44,100, should get 75% from the state

Pat that's our money that we're getting back from the state

Wes concrete deck, drive piles in ground, FEMA – one plan to replace as it was and another for how it ought to be, plan doesn't show how to fix the brook

Russ A have some agricultural people looking at that from Walpole, go up and clean out trees and then to stabilize the sides of it, separate thing that is not part of bridge money

?man in plaid – put in 2 bridges from Walpole – 1 went through state that cost \$700K, did other themselves for \$300K

Pat how will that cleanup prevent what happened?

Russ A don't know

Wes according to plans it's a 45 foot span, brook will be moved a whisker, current span is 24

article 11 and 12 – long and no money, both are petition articles

11 is to require town boards to review minutes of other boards

12 is to urge NH legislature to ask Congress to move forward a constitutional amendment re: regulating political spending

Russ A have one more that is being handled differently to increase selectboard from 3 to 5 members, checked with laws and has to have a public hearing and go on the ballot to be voted on

Tom what's the thinking on that?

Russ A have no idea, hearing will be on 2/20 at 7 PM

Tina what happens if it's voted in?

Russ A takes effect next year, not one town our size has 5 members – even up to 5000 population only 1/3 have 5

April can maybe shed a little light on this, when 2 selectmen meet at landfill and say did you get that letter – that's a meeting which is awkward, have been to a lot of selectmen's meetings which are fascinating and encourage everyone to go, hear from many boards that regulations are to be enforced by selectmen and could do more with more people like monitor dump, etc. With 3 it's really stretched right out. Hear planning board say have selectmen send a letter. Think it's a healthy thing. I'm sure there are some other thoughts as well.

Russ A called town attorney and he laughed and said that in a year you'll be calling back because someone will petition to try to go back to 3

April we're being regulated like crazy, not police enforcement but from selectmen, could you enforce dump stickers instead of paying \$1000?

Ted upset about how the old town truck was disposed of, it's a crime, June has no idea what the truck is worth, but the town got taken on that when it was sold to Scrapit for \$2000

Russ A how much do they think it's worth

Ted know people who would pay \$5000 to \$10,000, if more selectmen on board would have been more likely to have someone on who knew the value, know the workload would be better and easier to have more people to share the work

Carol I know selectmen are well paid so what would it cost?

Russ A \$4000

Ted rode snowmobile to dewey's, have new ¼ mile road that no one lives on, looks like 91 all nicely sanded and no one goes down there, every little bit you can save helps, on old route 12a they dump salt and there's no need for it there since it's flat, lots of ways to cut the budget

Anticipated revenues \$570,068

SCHOOL BUDGET

regular instruction – 2014-2015 budget \$973,828 (2013-2014 budget \$965,647)

Mike textbooks down because we spent a lot last year on a new math program

co-curricular – 2014-2015 budget \$26712 (13-14 budget \$25,862)

Mike in math counts, geography bee, conservation camp, sports

school services – 14-15 budget \$55876 (13-14 budget \$55,640)

Mike guidance up due to salary increase, health down a little due to change in staff

staff development – 14-15 budget \$16203 (13-14 budget \$16203)

Bob Moore what is the school board's opinion on common core? Trying to get us lined up as all the same. Are we involved in it? Spending money on it?

Mike yes we're involved and have a variety of opinions on it

Mark Hayward – just a curriculum coming down the pike that we're learning, being piloted this year, focused more on skills, focus on reading and math

Bob it's like teaching to the test

Mark have a certain standard and adapt to it how they want, lots of mobility

Reuben Duncan (assistant superintendent) in last year's budget Go Math purchase was move towards common core, more aggressive outcomes then our current standards, less content but much deeper, so the more critical and creative thinking can be focused on in later years, have had a state assessment for a decade so there is probably some teaching so that students are successful on assessments, going to be a difficult change, change has been positive

Bob interested in how it's going to progress

Reuben become very political, state flexibility waiver, teacher assessment, etc

Mark had to do it to keep up-to-date

April when did you start implementing it?

Mark this year, haven't been assessed with it yet

Pat every 10 years or so they come up with something new

educational media – 14-15 budget \$64,992 (13-14 budget \$62,119)

school board and district officers – 14-15 budget \$12,718 (13-14 budget \$12,468)

school administration – 14-15 budget \$171,950 (13-14 budget \$168,637)

building services – 14-15 budget \$206,700 (13-14 budget \$219,431)

elementary transportation – 14-15 budget \$146K (13-14 budget \$140,600)

staff services – 14-15 budget \$2000 (13-14 budget \$2500)

fund transfers – 14-15 budget \$215K (13-14 budget \$253,876)

debt service – 14-15 budget \$93,957 (13-14 budget \$97,269)

one loan paid in 2015, other in 2017

elementary special instruction – 14-15 budget \$374,389 (13-14 budget \$402,557)

high school

regular instruction - 14-15 budget \$761,158 (61 x \$12,478) (13-14 budget \$723,521)

transportation 14-15 budget \$52,000 (13-14 budget \$50K)

special instruction - tuition 3x26,858 = 14-15 budget \$241,722 (13-14 budget \$191,008)

administration SAU 29 14-15 budget \$179,155 (13-14 budget \$177,564)

Total operating budget 14-15 \$3,594,360 (13-14 budget \$3,564,902) up 0.83%

Bob we get money from some funds, not much but didn't see it here, wonder if it's worthwhile to charge \$ for bus for 25 cents

Mike it's to make it a public bus if they pay

Tina not required to transport students after 8th grade

Stuart out of the kindness of the town we offer transportation to high school

Revenue accounts

local property taxes – 14-15 \$2,054,742 (13-14 \$2,158,848) down 4.82%

total property tax decrease of 4.26%

Russ A what's e-rate reimbursement?

Mike help for internet access

SCHOOL WARRANT

article 3 \$15K from unreserved fund balance if any for major renovation/reconstruction

article 4 \$26,858 from unreserved fund balance if any for special education/high school tuition fund

article 5 \$20,000 from unreserved fund balance if any for purchase and installation of security measures

Ted lockdown?

Mike want to improve it

Mark most of cost is for new keys, everything will be rekeyed in case of lockdown can use one key to get from here to there, there will be a code instead of a key

article 6 \$40K from unreserved fund balance for storage room to be attached to the gymnasium

Pat is this a wish list?

Mike if you look back on revenue page, giving taxpayers choice to either use surplus for projects or use it to give back to offset taxation

Bob how much in tuition fund?

Mike \$137K in tuition fund, target 200K

Bob if we don't do this we could reduce our taxes a little

Tina goal used to be 100K in fund

Mike then moved it to 125 and now 200

Jeannette how big storage room

Mike have racks of chairs and stuff in corner of gym

Stuart 12x40

article 7 establish capital reserve fund for legal fees and appoint school board as agents \$1500

Jeannette two legal funds?

Mike no, raise \$1500 every year in budget and don't always spend it

Pat will add to it every year?

Mike don't have to, only if we spend it

Wes any other questions

April how many on school board? 5

Thank you for coming

Adjourned at 9:25 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Lincoln

