



## TOWN OF DEERING

762 Deering Center Road  
Deering, NH 03244

### *Public Hearing*

Meeting Minutes – 9 February 2023

Members present: Chairman Roy Watson, Vice Chair William Whisman, Selectman Jill Smith  
Also present: Interim Town Administrator Peter Flynn, Minutes Taker Elizabeth Kirby

Meeting called to order: 7:00pm  
Pledge of Allegiance

Correction to next meeting scheduled. Should be 2 March 2023, 7:00 pm

#### **Item 1: Action on Consent Agenda**

- a: Minutes – 2 February 2023 – Roy motioned to accept; Bill seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.
- b: Employee payroll – 5 February 2023 –

Roy motion to accept the consent agenda, Bill seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

#### **New Business**

##### **Item 2: PUBLIC HEARING -Per RSA 32:5, I, V**

Selectmen Budget Review for 2023 including the Operating Budget and Warrant Articles.

Roy explained the ground rules for the meeting.  
Bill – please give your name and where you live.

Roy motioned to open hearing. Bill seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

Carol Baker – Town Clerk – Corrections on **Article 1** - Missing positions — No Treasurer for a 3-year term and no Supervisor of the Checklist for the 3-year term.

**Article 2 – To Accept the Town Report – no changes noted.**

**Article 3 – To see if the town will readopt the Optional Veterans' Tax Credit – no changes noted.**

Katie Lavoie – Fisher Road – Question Article 2

To accept 2022 Auditor's Report – do we have all the reports, did we get a management letter, is it posted on the website – Peter to review.

**Article 4 – To Appropriate Operating Budget Funds for the Year 2023 – moved to end of discussion after the rest of the articles.**

**Article 5 – Adds funds to established trust funds** – town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$433, 900.00 to be added to the previously established Capital Reserve Expendable Trust Funds. See attached.

Jill – call out to board that the exotic weed control was increased from \$5,000 to \$12,000 so that anything that is residual will remain in the fund instead of going to the undesignated funds. This allows for remaining funds to accumulate.

Gary Samuels – Hedge Hog Mountain Road – Explained Lake host program. Worried about not having the funds to pay the Lake Host. We need to have the money available for mitigation and make sure future boards budget for salaries. He doesn't want future boards using the Trust Funds for salaries.

Roy pointed out the number listed for Exotic Weed Control was incorrect. Should be \$12,000.00 not \$12,0000. Corrected.

**Article 6: To Purchase an Ambulance**

To see if the town will vote to raise and approve spending \$359,000.00 for the purpose of purchasing a new heavy duty 4 x 4 Type 1 ambulance fully equipped with the necessary items required for certification by the State of New Hampshire and furthermore, to withdraw \$225,000.00 from the Ambulance Revolving Fund, to withdraw \$50,000.00 from the Fire & Rescue Department Vehicle Fund, and \$34,000.00 to be raised from the Undesignated Fund Balance.

Steve Diers – Clement Hill Road – asked for the language to be explained – difference between raising and appropriating.

Peter – Explained – Raising it to support – Appropriating it to spend.

Gary Smith – Peter Wood Hill Road – is this raised by taxation?

Peter – The way it's written it is not raised by taxation.

Dennis Cavagnaro – is there reason there aren't last year's numbers are not included. Could we add a list of past numbers?

Roy – correction – Should be \$84,000 not \$34,000 as noted on original. This was corrected.

**Article 7: To Purchase a Police Vehicle –**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$64,090.00 for the purpose of purchasing a new model year police department patrol vehicle, to include the purchase of various necessary additional equipment and the cost of transfer of certain reusable equipment and the installation of new equipment, and to withdraw the entire sum from the Police Vehicle Replacement Expendable Trust Fund. (rounded off the \$64,090.40 – deleted .40 from quoted amount)

Jill – Article 7 does rely on the passage of Article 5 - \$34,000 to be added to Police funds. Can we change the language to include this information. The \$34,000 will need to be added to the Police funds for Article 7 to have the funds for the new police vehicle.

Peter to update.

**Article 8: To establish a Highway Equipment Expendable Trust Fund.**

To see if the Town will vote to establish and Expendable Trust Fund under the provisions of RSA 31: 19-a, to be known as the Highway New Equipment Trust Fund for the purpose of the purchase of and installation of new equipment, and replacement of Town-owned old equipment, and to name the Board

of Selectmen as agents to expend, and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000.00 to be placed into this fund.

Jill – amend the verbiage to read – raised or appropriated from the undesignated fund balance – this article doesn't say that.

Brian Houghton – Road Agent: this is going to take away line item 221. Things to purchase tools, hand shovels, etc. That's going to go away.

Discussion regarding whether the fund needed to be utilized as a budget line item or as a new trust fund.

#### **Article 9 – To Establish a Planning & Zoning Legal Expenses Expendable Trust Fund**

To see if the town will vote to establish an Expendable Trust Fund under the provisions of RSA31:19-a to be known as the Planning and Zoning Legal Expenses Fund for the purpose of funding legal issues specific to any action pertaining to the above mentioned boards, and to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend, and to raise the appropriate sum of \$1500.00 to be placed in this fund.

Stephen Fogelson – Old County Road – No mention of where the funds are raised from.

Add to Article 9 – funds to be raised by the undesignated funds.

#### **Article 10 – To Transfer Fees Collected to Municipal & Transportation Improvement CRF.**

To see if the Town will vote to approve the sum of MONEY (\$XXXX), the total additional motor registration fees collected in 2022 of \$5 per motor vehicle, both passenger and commercial, with exception of all-terrain vehicles as authorized by the 2008 Town Meeting and transferring said sum from the General Fund to the Municipal and transportation Improvement Capital.

Carol provided the total amounts collected and doesn't feel the article is necessary since this was already voted on in 2008 and approved.

2020 - \$13,845.00

2021 - \$14,211.00

2022 – 13,022.00

Discussion followed to determine how funds would be transferred. Peter to check with legal to figure out how this should be addressed. Doesn't need to be finalized for another 5 or 6 days.

**Article 11 – Tax Impact** – To see if the Town of Deering will vote to require that the annual budget and all special warrant articles having a tax impact as determined by the governing body shall contain a notation stating that the estimated tax impact of the article.

Peter – common practice in most towns to have this done. It may not require a warrant article. Questions and discussion followed.

Jill – Article 5 it also is missing how this would be funded – from taxes or undesignated funds.

Are retained amount is at 24% and the recommended amount is 5% to 17% - last year we decided on 14% so even if we did the highest recommended we still have about 8%.

Bill says leave it coming from taxation and let the town vote on it if that's what they want to do.

Jill disagreed with Bill – the tax impact is huge – Last year we brought it down to 14% and it's now up to 24%.

Peter – so Article 5 will be using the undesignated funds – can be decided at the town meeting.

Roy – we're well above the recommendation. Still 14% above.

Peter it was usually 5-7%. We have a real excess of funds. It's up to the selectmen to decide.

Roy – okay to use the undesignated funds if the town approves.

Question asked – if the \$433K was taken out of the undesignated funds what would be the percentage left? Jill to have information for town meeting.

Roy ballparked at 14%

Peter – Cemetery Trustees have an ask.

Cynthia Krill – Old County Road – It's hard for three people to do this work and we would like to increase number of cemetery trustees from 3 to 5. NHMA says it needs to be brought to the people in a warrant.

**Article 12 – Increase Cemetery Committee.** To see if the Town would agree to increase the Cemetery Committee from 3 to 5 members.

Peter said - If passed – the BOS has the authority to appoint 2 members to make up the 5. One would be a 1 year term and the other a 2 year term. They'd have to run after that for the 3 years.

Jill – Quorum goes up to 3. Will that be a problem?

Roy – to make a motion to accept the warrant article proposition from the Cemetery Trustees under Article 12, Bill Whisman seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

#### **Article 13 – To Transact Other Business –**

Dennis Cavagnaro – Can we have something in the annual report stating how much money was received, how it was used, what's left over, etc.?

Peter – my understanding we haven't used any.

Bill – we'll be taking a look at the funds and if we don't use it we lose it. We'll tackle at town meeting. There was an account created for the funds and the amount will be shown.

Roy – about \$240,000.00 total.

#### **Article 4 – To Appropriate Operating Budget Funds for the Year 2023 –**

Board went through each section and adjusted after discussion. These are the adjustments that were made –

Jill - Don't we typically have the department heads present their budgets? They have only presented to the BAC.

Bill – I say we go to Executive, and we ask the people if they have questions. Just go through it.

Jill wants to make sure it's not rushed. Not all the information has been presented.

Roy – just dive in –

##### **Section 4130 Executive – lines 1 – 24 –**

Stephen Fogelson - line 7 health insurance – amount dropped. Peter – that is reduced because Peter doesn't have to have the medical insurance because of Medicare.

##### **Section 4140 – Town Clerk – lines 25-49**

Carol has asked for an 8% raise and for her deputy. The numbers are representing 6 months for this year and next year it will be for 12 months.

Katie Lavoie – did we account for changing of the software? Was it included in the budget?

Peter – The software was changed a few years ago and it's very complicated and it really is geared to school budgets. Talk of \$30K to change would fit municipal government. This was discussed with previous TA and Finance Clerk. For now, we're working with what we have but we hope to come back next year with a plan for a change.

Jill – this is also included on the CIP(Capital Improvement Plan) so it does have a 2024 date tentatively.

#### **Section 4150 – Financial Administration Lines 50-74**

Peter – line 72 –Under professional services - Auditor cost is going to be closer to \$23-24,000.00 up from the \$18,000.00. he has been soliciting bids. According to other towns it's been closer to \$23,000.00.

Roy – all said – line 72 going from \$18,500 to \$24,000.

Mike Thomas - Driscoll – explain line 74 – what is that?

Bill/Jill – annual services, licenses, website, mapping, etc.

#### **Section 4152 – Property Assessment – lines 75-82**

#### **Section 4153 – Legal - lines 82-83**

Betsy Holmes – Lake Shore Drive – Ms. Smith brought up an interesting suggestion at the BAC – move Planning board legal funds into a general legal trust – what happened with that? It's in one of the warrant articles.

Peter – Regular legal funds were not included.

Stephen Fogelson – with the warrant article are the line items going away?

Jill – the board was nervous about zeroing out both planning and zoning.

#### **Section 4191 – Planning and Zoning – Lines 84-101**

Already talked about line 88 and 97. (legal fees)

#### **Section 4194 – General Government Buildings – lines 102-107**

Stephen Fogelson – heating fuel – line 104 – any movement trying to combine fuels?

Peter – will work on this in the summer – bids on oil, gas, fuel, etc. On list to do.

#### **Section 4195 – Cemeteries – lines 108-110**

#### **Section 4196 – Insurance – lines 111-112**

#### **Section 4197 – Advertising & Regional Associations – lines 113-114**

#### **Section 4210 – Police – lines 115 – 144**

Katie Lavoie – The numbers calculated were based on Officer Davies pay? I see everything is 8% increases. Where is that coming from?

Roy – What the department heads put forth for their budget request.

Katie – Where does 8% come from?

Discussion ensued regarding how to increase wages. Katie works on budgets for large government – HHS – no one got raises like this.

Peter – as an administrator – faced with issues of retaining staff in municipal governments. The more difficult is police and fire. Survey of 6 other towns – neighboring towns – from 2% - 5 or 6% - but most of them have COLA raises every year. This is Peter's opinion. Deering is trying to catch up.

Katie – we just hired someone this year – why are they getting an 8% raise. The way it's calculated everyone got 8% - those that have been here 20 years or 1 year. Not done correctly. One time correction and then increases from there. Police too low.

Bill – 1 full time and 3 part-time positions open.

Katie – 2 issues - didn't budget enough for police. Slapping 8% across the board.

Jill – Issue raised at the last BOS meeting. what is the going rate? What should we be paying. Trish provided numbers – Francetown full-time - \$22 hour – after academy \$25 hour. Antrim \$22.65 and after academy - \$25.47 Bennington - \$25. We do have some data what we should be budgeting for.

Katie- now's the time to fix it.

Stephen Fogelson – explain how budget line items work – not every employee is going to get 8%. The BAC pushed to make sure there was enough funds would be sufficient.

Trisha Whisman- Police Dept. – can't start new hires start at wages that have been here for many years making the same. It needs to be overhauled.

Roy – the Board has identified there is a need to revamp our personnel policies.

Dennis – are we still talking about police salaries. We have two officers that are serving now. How many do we have.

Roy – 2 part time and Captain Cavanaugh

Dennis – we still need a brand-new police car?

Bill – renew every three years – old cruiser goes to the fire chief.

Trish – won't see this vehicle until the fall – we should be full staff by then.

Mike Thomas – health insurance – with staff issues then why the large increase

Jill – built in for increases.

Katie – why do we have nothing in our Administration Assistant line?

Bill – we got rid of that the chief wasn't going to hire an assistant. Rehire the old assistant. Brought her in – took wages from the Chief while he's gone and use to pay the assistant.

Katie – we have to have some money there to pay her. It's not properly recorded.

Jeremiah Smith – are we paying the deployed police insurance?

Bill – when people deploy, we have to hold their job. Good point about insurance.

Katie – requested proper accounting for the administration assistant. We need to account for it the right way, so we know what we're paying Trish. We can't have a dollar there even if it is a bottom-line budget.

Roy – what do we want for the numbers?

Jill – we address after the public hearing.

#### **Section 4215 Ambulance – lines 145-160**

Jill – part -time / per diem wages – last year numbers plus 8%. On call wages down. The fire chief didn't realize he could change the numbers.

Katie Lavoie – mention part time 8% across the board.

Dennis – are we putting money in for a new ambulance?

Jill – warrant article – Ambulances are 18 months out so what we're exploring to order it and then if we don't need it then cancel it. Some folks are allowing towns to back out if needed.

Dennis – we're not going to buy a new ambulance if we're going to contract services.

Roy – we're not making decisions on this right now?

Peter – we can put a warrant article for the ambulance and not use it. If we didn't put it in then we have no new ambulance. We're not ordering through the article, just appropriating money.

Dennis – the money cannot go another direction.

There was discussion on what happens if money isn't used for Ambulance. Questions regarding once warrant article is approved then the ambulance can be bid out and ordered.

#### **Section 4220 – FIRE – lines 161 – 179**

Steve Diers – significant wage change – Fire Chief provided his own adjustment to what it should have been and added 8%.

#### **Section 4240 – Building Inspection – lines 180-185**

#### **Section 4290 – Emergency Management – line 186**

#### **Section 4300 – Other Public Safety – lines 187-189**

**Section 4311 – Highway and Streets Administration lines 190-208**

Katie Lavoie – Comment – says specifically 8% pay raise across the board. Did we just recently hire someone. Are we going to address the pay for the mechanic?

Brian Houghton – had people apply for the job but wanted more money. More than anyone makes. Going to the BAC meeting talked about raising the open position to \$30 an hour and they wouldn't get the 8% pay raise.

**Section 4312 – Highways and Streets – lines 209-223**

Katie Lavoie – There is no road plan. I asked for it. How are we budgeting without a road plan? Very concerned. Are we budgeting too much or too little? We do not have a road plan.

Line 221 being decreased to \$1 and the \$5000 going into a extendable trust fund via warrant article 8.

Jill – from meeting last week – plan for Fisher Road –

Brian – can't get pricing in a week – hopefully get something in the next week.

Jill – need something for town meeting.

**Section 4316 – Street Lighting – Line 224**

Stephen Fogelson - Paid out almost \$4000 – we're keeping it \$3500? Do we anticipate it will stay the same?

Jill – sometimes gets a little out of kilter due to when bills are paid.

Bill – we don't know.

Dennis - We made an investment in solar panels to reduce electrical costs. is there any way to determine any cost savings?

Roy – we should be able to determine.

Jill – looking at data – we didn't process the bill in December – rates were going up. Concerned about shortage.

**Section 4324 – Solid Waste Management – lines -225-227**

Peter – new rate from \$135,492 – bottom line for all combined.

Jeremiah – solid waste – how is that for every person in the town? How do we get charged?

Peter – it's available to everyone.

Jeremiah – should we renegotiate and get a sticker and charged accordingly.

Bill – if Deering resident – no sticker – tell them you're from Deering – can dump my trash from anywhere. They were supposed to do something but never do.

Roy, I think this year everything is negotiable.

Peter – we have a representative for Deering now – we did make that appointment and he's been sworn in.

**Section 4441 – Welfare Administrations – lines – 228-230****Section 4442 – Direct Assistance – Lines 231-235****Section 4445 – Welfare Vendor Payments – Lines 236-238****Section 4520 – Parks and Recreation – Line 239****Section 4550 – Library – Lines 240-249**

Betsy Holmes – Lake Shore Drive – Chair of the Library Trustees – Board has reduced our budget – can we have an explanation.

Jill – Decrease by \$500 for the chairs until regular hours.

Betsy – disappointed no one contacted us. We plan on having regular hours this summer. It should be the Trustees to decide. \$500 will be used to buy halfway decent used furniture. I think when the board is adding almost \$20,000.00 for policemen insurance and \$70,000.00 for salt. I think the Library has the smallest budget in the town for a service is not a large amount to ask.

Bill – Where are you seeing it?

Betsy - line 248 \$1600.00 but the board is recommending \$500 less.

Stephen – any other comment?

Roy – nothing at this time.

Betsy – I was at the meeting, and I don't know if there was a vote taken. It says they approved it.

Future planning – you mentioned covid plans for infrastructure. Is this anything the Library might possibly use?

Roy – The ARPA funds it's my understanding that the funds were restricted for those that lost wages and you can use the for infrastructure for high speed broadband.

Since then, the restrictions have been mostly lifted off. So the Board could spend of anything.

Betsy - Think of us

Jill – if you have a project bring it forward. That's how it gets funneled up.

#### **Section 4611 – Conservation Administration – lines. 250-262**

Katie Lavoie – can we go back on one? Parks and recreation –

Peter - Contract amount for Hillsborough. 12 years - \$25,000.00

Lou Ellen Beard – was \$36,000.00 – brought by petition to be \$25,000.00 – includes parks, recreation, etc. for every Deering child.

Line 250 – moving the stipend?

#### **Section 4711 – Principal Long Term Bonds & Notes - line 263**

#### **Section 4712 – Other Debt – line 264**

#### **Section 4722 – Interest – Other Debt lines 265 -266**

#### **Section 4723 – Interest on Tax & Revenue Anticipation**

**Roy - Anyone else have questions? Made a motion to end this public hearing. Bill seconded.All in favor. Motion passed. Adjourned at 9:11.**