



## OFFICE OF SELECTMEN

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### **SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING February 3, 2022**

Chairman Paight opened the public hearing at 7:00 pm at the Marlborough School. She stated that in accordance with RSA 32:5-I notice of this public hearing concerning the annual budget was advertised in the Keene Sentinel and posted at the Town Office and Post Office on January 25, 2022.

Also present were Selectman Nelson and Ellen Smith, Town Administrator. There were approximately 15 people in attendance.

Chairman Paight noted several increases/decreases that are present throughout the budget: Health Insurance decrease was 8.1%, Dental Insurance decrease was 1.79%, NH Retirement increases effective July 1, 2021, for Town employees was 26% (increasing from 11.17% to 14.06%) and Police was 19% (increasing from 28.43% to 33.88%). Training, mileage, and staff hours were returned to pre-COVID levels. Chairman Paight then went down the list of department budgets noting those with significant changes.

Executive: This budget contains a wage pool of 6% from which the Board can distribute wage increases based on performance.

Election & Registration: Ellen Orkins will be retiring in 2022 and we will need to find her replacement. This budget contains three months of overlap of wages and benefits for the training period as well as the cost of the new employee needing family insurance benefits. There is also an increase due to the voting machine being utilized for two elections in 2022 and the cost of ballot coding.

Financial Administration: The town's annual audit fee will be increasing 3% in 2022 and an additional \$2,500 was added because upon the departure of the tax collector, her records will need to be audited at that time as required by NHDRA.

Legal: The town's current prosecutor is moving and will no longer be providing services after March 1, 2022. At that time the town will utilize the Regional Prosecutor Program. The monthly cost will increase from \$1,550 to \$1,800. Also,

the general legal services budget line item was increased to properly reflect past actual expenditures.

Planning & Zoning: The Land Use Board Clerk is looking to retire in 2022. The budget has been increased to cover several months of training for her replacement.

General Government Buildings: The big increase in this budget is for technology. Our IT company is offering a cybersecurity program that will increase the protection of our computer systems, email, and data. Other municipalities have fallen victim to attacks and we believe that an increase in the cost of added protection well outweighs what taxpayers would have to pay if something were to go wrong.

Cemeteries: Increase in groundskeeping budget to properly reflect past actual expenditures.

Insurance: Significant decreases due to premium holidays.

Police Department: The 2022 budget reflects the department being fully staffed. There are also increases in gasoline, vehicle repairs, and equipment. One taser will be replaced each of the next three years.

Ambulance: Cheshire County is in the process of buying our DiLuzio Ambulance. When the board met with county officials, we were advised to increase our ambulance budget 33% in each of the next three years.

Highway: The cost of a hotspot was added to allow the stormwater asset management/mapping software to be accessible in the field. One of the two-way radios needs to be replaced and the backhoe needs tires. The cost of propane, diesel, gasoline, and road salt all increased.

Street Lights: The decrease properly reflects past actual expenditures.

RTC: There was an increase with the solid waste hauler and landfill testing.

Library: Staffing hours have been restored to pre-COVID levels. Both facility and equipment maintenance were increased to address some deferred maintenance items.

Debt Service: One of the conservation bonds was paid off in 2021 and the payments on the broadband bond have been added. The broadband bond will not have a tax impact as there are revenues from Consolidation Communications that equal the total amount of the bond payment.

Chairman Paight then went through the proposed warrant articles.

1. Fire Equipment Capital Reserve \$50,000, in anticipation of the fire truck replacement. Chief Manning explained the two options being considered and explained that the truck up for replacement is 32 years old and no longer meets safety standards.
2. Police Cruiser Capital Reserve \$15,000—same as last year
3. Highway Equipment Capital Reserve \$20,000—same as last year
4. Town Reassessment Capital Reserve \$5,000 a significant decrease from 2021 which was the year of the last revaluation.
5. Road Maintenance Capital Reserve \$10,000— same as last year
6. Municipal Facility Capital Reserve \$30,000. This is a new reserve fund, that will be used for capital improvements needed at town facilities such as furnace replacement, roof replacement or repair, and the residing of the back of the town office building.
7. Highway Truck Lease \$40,000. The 2007 Sterling needs to be replaced. This will be discussed in detail at the bond hearing later this evening.
8. Monadnock Family Services \$2,620
9. Community Kitchen \$2,500
10. Home Health Care \$5,000
11. Southwestern Community Services \$2,525
12. Stormwater Infrastructure Planning \$75,000. This is the same program used for the current downtown stormwater planning and evaluation program. This \$75,000 would be utilized for the engineering associated with the plan chosen to install proper stormwater infrastructure in the downtown area of Church and School Streets.

Chairman Paight proceeded to go through the revenues noting an increase in the estimated Non-Property Tax Revenues due to an increase in land-use change taxes, payment in lieu of tax, and interest from trust funds. She explained the war credits and overlay amounts.

Chairman Paight asked if there were any other questions. Seeing none, the public hearing was closed at 7:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Smith  
Town Administrator