

MINUTES *unapproved minutes*

Budget Committee Public Hearing and meeting with Selectmen: February 9, 2022 **Present:** Judy Aron, Jennifer Bland, Conan Cook, Claudia Istel, Sue Metsack, Cheryl Sanctuary, Frank Emig, Jim Jennison, Ray Leonard, Glenn Elsesser, Carole Wallace, Brenda Melius, Mike Aron, Bruce Bascom, Dennis Eaton, Gregg Thibodeau, Gary Baber

SM opened the public hearing: 7:00PM

1. SM noted the challenge of budgeting for flood repairs and that the budget being proposed represents a 5% increase in the Town tax rate.
2. Proposed budget and warrant reviewed.
3. GT and BM both questioned flood loan repayment. It was noted the loan matures in November, 2022. At that time interest due will be payable and the loan balance will be converted to a term loan with principal and interest payments due annually beginning in 2023. The principal amount will depend on the amount of FEMA reimbursement received by the Town.
4. JA spoke to State bills in progress which could assist the Town with damage costs.
5. BM noted the School District tax rate is proposed to increase 26%.
6. CW asked why a full crew of four men is being budgeted for the Highway Department. FE explained the Department has had a four man crew for some time. It was also noted having Department capacity to work on flood repairs in addition to regular maintenance will save money otherwise spent on contractors.
7. GB questioned the use of Covid Recovery funds for broadband expansion in Acworth. GT explained Recovery funds can only be used for municipal water, sewer or broadband and the Town does not have municipal water or sewer.
8. BM asked why paving a section of Cold Pond Road is included on the proposed warrant. FE and GE explained the existing base coat will need to be top coated to preserve it and paving costs are rising steadily so postponing will be more costly. SM noted paving is presented as a separate warrant article so the voters can make the decision.
9. With no further questions SM closed the public hearing.

SM opened the joint BC and BOS meeting:

1. Minutes for BC February 2, 2022: Motion CS/CI to approve, passed.
2. There was consensus to consider each proposed money article for recommendation and take separate Budget Committee and Selectboard votes.
3. Article 5: To purchase a highway truck: BC not to recommend; BOS not to recommend.
4. Article 6: To fund the operating budget: BC to recommend; BOS to recommend.
5. Article 7: To fund the fire truck Capital Reserve: BC to recommend, BOS to recommend.
6. Article 8: To fund the Bridge Capital Reserve: BC to recommend, BOS to recommend.
7. Article 9: To fund the Transfer Station Capital Reserve: BC to recommend, BOS to recommend.
8. Article 10: To fund the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve: BC to recommend, BOS to recommend.
9. Article 11: To fund the Revaluation Capital Reserve: BC to recommend, BOS to recommend.
10. Article 12: To fund paving Cold Pond Road: BC not to recommend, BOS not to recommend.
11. SM thanked all members for their work.

Consensus to adjourn, 8:10PM, Respectfully submitted, Kathi Bradt