



**Office of Board of Selectmen
Town of Mason**

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Selectmen Meeting 01/09/2024

Public Hearing – 2024 Proposed Budget Review

Approved Minutes

Present: Selectmen Kate Batcheller, Charlie Moser, John Suiter; Admin Asst Jen Tenney; Accountant Brenda Wiley, Fire Chief Tony Burns, Police Chief Kevin Maxwell, Road Agent Dave Morrison, Library Director Judy Forty, Town Clerk Deb Morrison, Planning Board Chair Dane Rota, Conservation Committee Chair Bob Larochelle; Resident Pete McGinnity

Non-Residents: Ashley Saari

Called to Order: The Public Hearing was called to order at 7:06pm by Chair Kate Batcheller, attendance was taken by roll call as reflected above.

Selectboard Chair Kate explained she would go through each section of the budget and take any questions or comments at the end of each section. The following discussions ensued:

- “Total Elections” - Increase due to the number of elections in 2024.
- “Planning Board” – Planning Board Chair Dane and the Selectmen discussed the importance of our contracted services with NRPC.
- “Zoning Board” - *Admin Expenses* removed and applied towards *Training*.
- “Government Buildings” – Our current Facilities Manager’s plan of retirement and the need to hire an additional employee for this position contributed to the increase.
- “Other General Government” - Decrease due to IT review and prioritization of projects.
- “Police Dept” - Decrease in wages due to the removal of the onetime sign-on bonus previously implemented for a new hire. The Police Department continues to be well-staffed and well covered compared to other police departments at this time.
- “Ambulance” – Significant increase from the 2023 contract pricing. Unfortunately, the new contract was provided with not enough time to consider using a different contracted service. This may be a consideration for the 2025 budget year.

- “Building Inspection” – This department has seen a significant amount of growth this year, Permit fees are expected to be increased in 2024 which will help offset the increased cost.
- “Highways” – The Road Agent’s salary has been found to be below the low end of the median wage and was increased as part of succession planning. The *Guard Rails*, *Underground Tank Removal* and *Hired Plows* line items were discussed and reviewed with no changes made.
- “Sanitation” – It was noted that the final budget amount for the Wilton Recycling Center has yet to be received since the Town of Wilton’s Budget Hearing was not completed yet.
- “Town Common” – The mower purchased last year is working well.
- “Library” – It was again discussed that the library is back to “pre-Covid” operations regarding the number of patrons, circulated items and programs. Salaries were found to be below the low end of the median wage and were adjusted accordingly.
- 3% wage increase for all other employee’s whose wages were not individually adjusted.

The proposed warrant articles were reviewed. Specific notations are as follows:

- Article 02 “To adopt Planning Board Ordinance re: Floodplain” – Note that the proposed amendments are to comply with the Nation Flood Insurance Plan to allow for insurance coverage.
- Article 10 “To purchase Police Cruiser” - Increased to a sum of \$71k by adjusting the Police Revolving Fund contribution to \$55k and the trade in value to \$16k.
- Article 15 “To adopt Mason Community Power Plan” – This warrant article is to see if the town will vote to support a Community Power Plan. There will be a Public Hearing for more information regarding this on 1/27/24 and 2/8/24. More information can also be found on our website.
- Article 16 – Proposed warrant article to move existing funds for use towards an outside space for the library. Selectmen are in support of a project like this, however, more information and time for review of such a project is needed before including the proposed warrant article. Strike Article 16.
- Pending official DRA approved wording, no other changes were made.

Kate motioned to accept proposed 2024 budget as written and to be put forth to voters, second from Charlie. Roll call vote Kate-aye, Charlie-aye, John-aye. Budget hearing closed at 8:09pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Tenney
 BOS Administrative Assistant