



Town Budget Hearing  
January 28, 2021  
Approved Minutes

**Present:** Selectmen Louise Lavoie, Charles Moser, Pete McGinnity; Brenda Wiley, Fire Chief Philip Phalon, EMS Jeff Partridge, Police Chief Kevin Maxwell, Road Agent Dave Morrison, TC/TX Deb Morrison, Board and Commission Chairs Bob Larochelle, Dane Rota, Kathy Chapman, Jim Dore and members of the public.

Everyone agreed to dispense with the reading of virtual meeting checklist.

**Called to Order:** The Budget Hearing was called to order and opened by Louise at 7:30 PM.

Chairman Lavoie explained she would go through each section of the budget, and then take questions. pp 1-3 are revenues, expected amounts.

**4031 Executive:**

Stipends for selectmen are flat, no questions.

**4140 Elections:**

Decreased due to only 2 elections in 2021 instead of the 5 in 2020.

**4141: Registrations and Vitals:**

Line 4141-17 TC/TX Deb asked line be increased from \$0 in the event her office needs to replace a printer. BOS agreed to add \$1 as placeholder for printers.

**4150: Financial Administration:**

Increases to software maintenance and reinstate contracted website service.

Upgrading assessing SW to enable realtors and property assessors to self-service property card requests. Town is transitioning from volunteer webmaster to contracted service which will resolve issues with existing site.

**4152: Revaluation of Property**

4150-03 reflects expense for 5-year cyclical update.

**4153: Legal Expenses**

Flat, need to be available in case of need.

**4155: Personnel Administration:**

5.3% increase due to insurance costs.

**4191: Planning Board**

28.8% decrease much of it due to NRPC consultant.

**4192: Zoning Board**

Level funded

**4194: Government Buildings**

Salary/taxes are the change

**4195: Cemeteries**

Salary/taxes are the change

**4196: Insurance**

Slight increase in Property/Liability insurance.

**4197: Advertising and Regional Association**

NRPC dues down \$35 due to pooling formula they use.

**4199: Other General Government**

Line #4199-02-down due to 2020 settlement with FairPoint. Line #4199-03 Technology is down as we paid for upgrades last year

**4210: Police Dept**

1<sup>st</sup> Patrolman attrition. Difficult to recruit fulltime officers. Prudent not to have both patrolmen be trainees. Opted to increase the part-time line #4210-04 for seasoned officer. Retirement and health insurance is down due to part-timers.

**4215: Ambulance**

7.9% decrease based on 5-year average of Mason calls.

**4220: Fire Dept**

2021 Town proposes hiring an Assistant Fire Chief as a full-time paid position. The position requirements are for a certified Fire Fighter and EMT. There is a need to have better coverage in town during the week. There is only one first responder in town during the day and majority of Firefighters work regular jobs out of town. New lines in the FD budget reflect salary and retirement to fund the new position.

EMS requested \$500 increase to supply line from \$3000 to \$3500. BOS agreed to the increase.

Louise recognized new FD Chief Phalon for his attention to detail in preparing the 2021 budget.

**4240: Building Inspection**

No major changes,

**4290: Emergency Management**

No major changes

**4299: Communications**

Increase related to contract with Hollis Dispatch which serves Police, Fire and Highway.

**4311: Highways**

Overall increase mostly due to wages and taxes. Paved road restoration is same as last year. Russell Road project in permitting process with DES, encumbered funds for anticipated project start date May 2021. Added new line item to cover vehicle lease for new dump truck, after 5 years town owns the vehicle.

**4323: Sanitation**

6.7% increase in Mason's share of the Wilton Recycling Center budget. 5 town cooperatives, maintenance had been deferred over past years. Wilton is in total control of the budget. Wilton hired Carol Burgess, a professional manager. She immediately identified safety and personnel issues. Scales were installed to take the guessing out of pricing on volume, traffic flow was changed, raised platform for glass and cans. It was expensive. A new facility would be hard to find. BOS agreed to update 2021 amount from \$84,504 to latest Wilton amount \$84,362.

**4414: Health**

Flat – important services from 2 agencies.

**4445: Welfare**

Flat with 2020

**4520: Parks & Recreation**

No major changes

**4550: Library**

Judy did a good job with Trustees to manage down.

**4583: Patriotic Purposes**

No change

**4611: Conservation**

No increase

**4680: Energy Commission**

Flat with 2020.

**4723, 4721, 4711: Debt Service**

Total debt service down 26.9%. The backhoe bond was paid off and only the Highway building bond is owed.

Moving from the budget to the rest of the warrant articles proposed as line items in the budget, pending official DRA approved wording.

**4909-03 Warrant Article #** - PD Communication Upgrade \$8,442. The Highway and Fire Dept were upgraded in prior years, PD was not included at that time. Need to replace the PD repeater in 2021 which failed in 2020 and brought on line with temporary repair.

**Warrant Article # – Cruiser fund**

We are not funding this line in 2021, a new cruiser was purchased in 2020. A cruiser purchase proposed for 2021 will not require new monies.

**4909-02 Warrant Article # – Paved roads maintenance –** this amount being added to the number in the budget, and is targeted for the projects under definition. Budget amount covers the general maintenance, warrant article covers restorations of paved roads.

**4915-10 Warrant Article # – FD vehicle capital reserve fund**

Continue to add \$25,000 toward eventual purchase of a new to us fire truck but will need re-equipping.

**4915-20 Warrant Article # – HD Equipment Capital reserve fund**

Continue to ask \$30,000, prior balance used to purchase new to us truck.

**Warrant Article # – transfer funds**

Authorization to transfer \$1500 funds out of forestry account for rail trail maintenance.

**4902-02 Warrant Article # – new cruiser**

Amount to come from revolving (details) fund – \$25,000, balance of \$14,000 from the Cruiser capital reserve fund and \$15,000 trade in of 2016 vehicle– no new monies to be raised.

Charlie moves 2021 budget as put forth after changes be put forth to voters. Peter seconded. Louise:  
Aye Pete: Aye Charlie: Aye

With no other comments, motion to adjourn the budget hearing made by Louise, second by Charlie, 3 votes to close the budget hearing at 9:02 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Louise Lavoie and Brenda Wiley