**Selectmen’s Meeting Minutes**

**Public Hearing on Proposed Budget**

**February 6, 2023**

**7:00 PM** Meeting called to order by Selectman John **Quinlan.** Also in attendance was Selectman Jack **Esposito** and Selectman Howard **Brown. Quinlan** explained that he would go over the three warrant articles first, then the rest of the articles involving money, and lastly the proposed operating budget.

**Article #4** **Construction of New Library Building $5,950,000**

$2,640,000 bond; Capital Reserve Fund $92,837; Daland Matching Funds $223,151; Sophia Daland Trust Gift $855,000; Friends of the Daland Library Gift $42,000; Mont Vernon Library Charitable Foundation Gift $2,100,000.

Chief Wilson stated that he has concerns with this warrant article and the sprinkler system warrant article being separate articles. He believes that a sprinkler system is required based on occupancy loads, the building and the fire code. Cindy Raspiller stated that it’s not required by the building code because of the size and the design of the building. They’ve requested a waiver hearing with the State’s Fire Marshalls Office. Chief Wilson noted that the hearing has not taken place. If the waiver is not granted, the new library building will have to install a sprinkler system. If the warrant article for the sprinkler system is voted down at Town Meeting, the new library cannot be built because they will not be in compliance with the law. He feels they should combine the two warrants into one. If the waiver is granted and they don’t have to install a sprinkler system, they can just adjust down at Town Meeting. Cindy Raspiller stated that the reason they left them separate was if the library is successful in getting the waiver, but the town wants to add the sprinkler system to satisfy the requirements of the Fire Department, they want to leave it to the voters to decide if they want to add it or not. Bill McKinney stated that under NFPA1, the authority having jurisdiction grants supreme authority to the Fire Chief to require sprinklers when he feels it’s necessary, whether code requires it or not. That’s what the variance request through the State Fire Marshalls office is about; whether we are subject to the Fire Chief’s requirement of a sprinkler system even though the building code says it is not required.

**Article #5 New Library Sprinkler System Design and Installation $150,000**

$150,000 bond.

**Article #6 Construction of Access Road $700,000**

$700,000 bond **Esposito** questioned separate bonds; last week it was noted there would be one bond for the whole thing. **Quinlan** stated that they talked about it and the Library Trustees prefer not to incorporate it. **Esposito** said this is a town road and we the Select Board are supposed to vote on this ourselves. Now we will have two bonds and be close to 4 million when we are finished. Tim Berry asked if they got any more bids other than what he’s seen? **Quinlan** stated that they got approx. 5 bids total. Sean Mamone questioned how they went from 2 to 5 bids. **Quinlan** said that two came from construction management firms and there were another three that came from private road building firms. Mamone said the deadline was January 4th. **Quinlan** said he spoke to a couple of them; there was some confusion over the RFP. There were questions that didn’t get answered quickly enough. He spoke to them and they submitted bids a few days later. That was fine; they were willing to consider them after the deadline date. It was better to have more competitive bids. Eileen Naber said that two were opened at a Selectmen’s meeting; did the Selectmen review the other three? **Quinlan** said he informed the Select Board of the other three. Naber asked if all three Selectmen viewed all five. **Esposito** stated that he only saw two bids.

Cindy Raspiller asked if it was possible to combine all the warrants that involve bonds to get one bond? **Esposito** stated that would be the least expensive because every bond has different fees associated.

Sean Mamone asked if they have chosen a builder for the Library and chosen a company for the road? **Quinlan** said that the Library Trustees and the Library Building Committee did choose a construction firm for the building itself; Turnstone Construction out of Milford. They have not yet chosen a company for the road.

**Article #7 New All-Wheel Drive Fire Truck $895,000**

$600,000 bond. $295,000 from Fire Truck Capital Reserve Fund, appropriate $70,750 for first year bond payment.

**Article #8 Add to Fire Truck Capital Reserve**

$75,000.

**Article #9 add to Capital Reserve for Radio Upgrades**

$25,000.

**Article #10 Highway Block Grant**

$94,050 to be offset by anticipated Highway Block Grant Funds.

**Article #11 2023 SCBA Request**

$20,000 to purchase SCBA equipment.

**Article #12 Establish a Capital Reserve Fund for Town Hall Rehabilitation**

$50,000 for the use of repairs, rehabilitation and renovation of the Town Hall.

**Article #13 Readoption of the Optional Veterans Credit**

Readopt the Optional Veterans Tax Credit for an annual tax credit on residential property of $500.

**Article #14 Proposed Operating Budget**

$3,508,371 from taxes this year. John Arico, Budget Committee Chairman, stated that the Budget Committee recommends that the Legal Expenses line item #415310 be reduced to $40,000. The intent here is that the bottom line of the budget is at an almost 11% increase over last year. They want to get that down below 10%; there are places where they’d like to squeeze some numbers out of the budget. There are large increases under repairs and maintenance for all of the town buildings; mostly for the installation of fire detection systems and sprinkler system. The Budget Committee recommends that those expenditures be covered under a warrant article and not part of the operating budget. It makes the operating budget look artificially large this year and next year will make the decrease look artificially small. **Esposito** stated after this was printed, they realized that there are warrant articles for the maintenance of town buildings from 2018, 2019 and 2020. We can take the funds already existing out of there to cover the fire and sprinkler systems. The Budget Committee recommends adding a $1500 training line under Building Inspector; the reason being that the codes update every three years and there is continuing education needed. The committee recommends that the Highway budget line #431256 Pavement Marking be reduced to $6,500; line #431213 Overtime be reduced to $27,500; line #431254 Cold Patch be reduced to $2,000 and line #431257 Calcium Chloride be reduced to $14,600.

**8:30 PM Public Hearing Ended**

The Board reviewed the minutes from 1/30/23. **Esposito** motioned to approve the minutes of 1/30/23 as written seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

The Board set the date for the Bond Hearing for Wednesday, February 22, 2023 at 7:00pm with a snow date of Thursday the 23rd at 7:00pm.

**9:00 PM** As there was no further business before the Board **Esposito** motioned to adjourn seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Cleary