**Public Hearing Minutes**

**February 1, 2022**

**7:00 PM** Hearing called to order by Selectboard Chairman, John Esposito. Also in attendance were Selectmen Howard Brown and Tim Berry and minute taker, Laurie Brown.

Esposito led the meeting in the pledge of allegiance.

Esposito explained that he would be going over the two bond warrant articles first, then the rest of the articles involving money, and lastly, the proposed operating budget.

Article #03 **New Fire Truck** $520,000 bond. $73,200 from taxes this year. No questions.

Article #04 **Construction of Access Road** $400,000 bond. $54,000 from taxes this year.

K. Marchocki asked if the drainage issues were being addressed in the $400K.

T. Berry said that everything except the top coat of pavement and some incidentals were covered.

Article #05 **SCBA Equipment** $8,000 from taxes this year. No questions.

Article #06 **Final Library Design**. $0 from taxes this year. No questions.

Article #07 **Highway Block Grant**. $0 from taxes this year. No questions.

Article #08 **Add to Fire Truck Capital Reserve**. $55,000 from taxes this year.

J. Arico asked if it was the Chief’s intent to withdraw this article if Article #03 passes.

Chief Wilson said that he will withdraw this article if #03 passes.

Article #09 **Establish Capital Reserve for Radio Upgrades**. $25,000 from taxes this year.

T. Berry asked Chief Wilson to explain.

Chief Wilson explained that MACC may only last another 3 years and we need to be ready to go to another communication center. We will need new radios to be able to match frequencies.

Article #10 **Establish Capital Reserve for DPW equipment**. $25,000 from taxes this year. No questions

Article #11 **Add to Library Capital Reserve**. $20,000 from taxes this year.

J. Esposito asked if this $20K will be matched by the Daland Trust.

C Raspiller answered in the affirmative.

Article #12 **SCBA Equipment** not covered by the expected grant. $18,000 from taxes this year.

E. Naber asked if this duplicated article #05.

Chief Wilson said that it is for equipment not covered by the grant. Things like, an extra pack, one extra mask for each firefighter, training etc…

E. Naber asked what the $8,000 in #05 was for.

Chief Wilson told her that it was the Town’s matching funds to get the $160,000 grant.

Article #13 **Create Cemetery Perpetual Care Trust Fund**. $0 from taxes this year.

E. Naber explained that this was simply to facilitate the bookkeeping process for the Trustees of Trust Funds.

Article #14 **Proposed Operating Budget**. $3,182,615 from taxes this year.

**Account #413000 Town Officers**

J. Arico stated that the Selectmen have asked for an increase in their stipend of $1000 each. The budget committee unanimously agrees that this increase should be spread out over 3 years.

J. Esposito explained that the Selectmen have not had an increase since 1992, or 30 years.

T. Berry read off a list of other small towns in NH that all pay their Selectmen considerably more than Mont Vernon does.

J. Bird figured that, since we have a lack of competition in our Town elections, we might want to sweeten the pot.

**Account #414199 Election Supplies**

P. Ecklund, Chairman Supervisors of the Checklist asked the Board to add $260 to the supply line so that he could purchase an inexpensive laptop for the Supervisors of the Checklist’s use.

T. Berry motioned, seconded by H. Brown to add $260 to the Election Supply line for a new laptop for the Supervisors of the Checklist. All in favor.

**Account #415310 Legal**

K. Marchocki asked why this line was reduced to $40,000.

J. Esposito explained that last year’s number was higher due to the expected legal resolution of Junk Yard properties in Mont Vernon. Luckily, some of these were amicably resolved and no longer require legal intervention.

T. Berry reminded everyone that the money we didn’t spend last year went back into the general fund.

**Account #419110 Planning and Zoning Assistant**

E. Naber asked about the Assistant also working for the Selectmen.

L. Brown explained that the Assistant works a total of 35 hours per week. Some of it is charged to the Selectmen’s line and some is charged to the Planning Board line. She doesn’t get paid twice for the same hours.

**Account #419443 Repairs and Maint – Highway Garage**

L. Brown reminded the Board that they need to add $14,000 to that line to cover a new furnace.

T. Berry motioned, seconded by H. Brown to add $14,000 to the Repair and Maint line for the Highway Garage in order to replace the boiler. All in favor.

**Account #421000 Police Department**

E. Naber asked if there was money in the Police Department’s budget to cover body cameras.

Chief Slavin said that there will be, in 2023.

**Account #424000 Building Inspection**

J. Arico said that the Budget Committee is recommending that, for next year, a line item be added for training.

J. Esposito and T. Berry both thought that it was a good idea.

**Account #431280 Highway Department Mowing and Sweeping**

J. Esposito said that the line was up because the DPW Director plans to have the work done twice in 2022.

**Account #456001 Heritage Fund**

R. Schwarz, Chairman of the Heritage Commission, asked that the Board reinstate the amount of $20,000, as originally requested in order to have enough matching funds to pursue grants.

J. Arico asked if this extra $5,000 was to go after grants this year, or to beef up the fund.

R. Schwarz said that it was for grants this year.

**Account #456010 Heritage Commission Dues, Seminars and Training**

J. Arico said that the Budget Committee has recommended that $1500 from this line be added to the Selectmen’s #415015 Dues and Subscription line instead, as this money is for a subscription to a grant listing service that all of the departments can benefit from.

T. Berry motioned, H. Brown seconded to take $1500 from the Heritage line #456010 and add it to the Selectmen’s line # 415015. All in favor.

**Account # 456050 Heritage Commission Historical Research Survey**

J. Arico asked the Board if they had considered the Budget Committee’s suggestion to zero this line out and add the $1000 to the Heritage Fund #456001.

J. Esposito explained that the Selectboard would like to keep this as a line item for transparency. The money in the Fund should be to match grants.

T. Berry said that they have started working on the survey, and may very well use the money this year. If we don’t use it, it will go back to the general fund.

J. Arico said that the Budget Committee does not want that money to go back to the general fund.

**Account #461270 Conservation Commission Legal**

M. Baker asked why that line was increased $2,500.

J. Wilson said that the money is to be used for property line research and to assist with land donations.

J. Esposito stated that the new budget figure is: $3,182,615.00. That is the budget that will go before Town Meeting in March.

Public Hearing is closed

Selectmen go over each warrant article:

#03 Selectmen Support

#04 Selectmen Support

#05 Selectmen Support

#06 Selectmen Support

#07 Selectmen Support

#08 Selectmen Support

#09 Selectmen Support

#10 Do Not Support

#11 Selectmen Support

#12 Selectmen Support

#13 Selectmen Support

#14 Selectmen Support

**8:25 PM** T. Berry motioned, seconded by H. Brown to go into non-public session to discuss a private matter.

**8:45 PM** Board came back from non-public session.

**8:45 PM** As there was no further business before the Board, Berry motioned seconded by H. Brown to adjourn.

All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Brown