

Winchester, NH Budget Committee Meeting Minutes for Tuesday January 5, 2021

The meeting was held via Zoom.

Members Present: Chester Lapointe- Chair, Tiffany Melanson, Theresa Sepe, Ben Kilanski (Selectman Representative) Lindseigh Picard (School Board Representative)

School Board Members Present: Tina Perkins.

School Administration Present: Dr. Ken Dassau, Dave Jack, Ian Spencer, Val Carey, Jen Heise

Town Personnel Present: Karey Miner, Mike Tollett

Chester opened the meeting at 6PM.

Chester takes a roll call. All budget committee members are present.

Theresa voiced concern whether the meeting was legal. Ben assured her that the meeting was posted correctly.

Ben made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. Lindseigh seconded the motion. Motion passes 5-0.

Lindseigh read the Zoom RSA that described the legalities of the meeting. All budget committee members stated that they were alone.

Chester started discussion on the town warrant articles.

Theresa had questions for Karey about the loader needed at the highway department. Theresa wanted to know the differences in the warrant article this year and last year. Cost amounts are different, and the price increased. Brand is a John Deere. Last year it was a Volvo.

Theresa asked about the police cruiser needed at the police department. Mike Tollett joined the meeting and described the history of the department's current vehicles. Lindseigh asked if there was a capital plan for the police department. Mike responded that there is and encouraged the passage of the money proposed for the trust fund. In his opinion if the town keeps contributing, they won't have to ask to buy a cruiser as a warrant article.

Lindseigh notes that highway is asking for \$15,000, the fire department is asking for \$50,000 and the ambulance department would like \$20,000. Do these departments have similar plans like the police department for their funds? Ben responded that the town looks to build the funds to get a good down payment for large purchases. That way the payment each year will be lower. These funds are not intended for maintenance. Ben thinks the tax rate needs to be kept in mind.

Lindseigh encourages a plan for each department in town for large purchases.

Chester asks for a motion to accept the articles as submitted. There is discussion on making a motion to recommend each article separately. Theresa would like to recommend one at a time.

Ben made a motion to recommend the warrant article to raise and appropriate \$16,522 to be placed in the existing non-lapsing Assessing and Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund. Chester seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Ben made a motion to recommend the warrant article to raise and appropriate \$10,000 to be placed in the existing non-lapsing Town Owned Building Upgrades Capital Reserve Fund. Chester seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-1 (Theresa No)

Ben made a motion to recommend the warrant article to raise and appropriate \$5000 for the town's share of the state road grant reconstruction costs. This money is placed in the existing non-lapsing Bridge Reconstruction Reserve Fund. Theresa asked how much money was in the fund. Karey responded \$83,594. Motion passes 4-1 (Theresa No)

Ben made a motion to recommend the warrant article to raise and appropriate \$13,000 to be placed into the existing non-lapsing Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund. Chester seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Ben made a motion to recommend the warrant article to authorize the selectmen to enter into a three year lease/purchasing agreement in the amount of \$39,216 with three annual payments of \$13,072 to purchase a 2021 Ford Police Interceptor. Chester seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Ben made a motion to recommend the warrant article to raise and appropriate \$20,000 to be placed in the existing non-lapsing Ambulance Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose of purchasing an ambulance. Chester seconded the motion. Ben noted that the selectmen increased the amount this year. Motion passed 5-0.

Ben made a motion to recommend the warrant article to raise and appropriate \$5000 to be placed in the existing non-lapsing Computer Capital Reserve Fund. Chester seconded. Chester asked how much was in the fund. Karey said \$1038 and mentioned that the fund can be used for any town department. Motion passed 5-0.

Ben made a motion to recommend the warrant article to raise and appropriate \$10,000 to be placed in the existing non-lapsing Beach Ramp Capital Reserve fund. Chester seconded. There was discussion on how much the project will cost. Karey and Ben described quotes of over \$100,000. There is \$18,000 in the fund. Motion passed 5-0.

Ben made a motion to recommend the warrant article to raise and appropriate \$50,000 to be placed in the existing non-lapsing Fire Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund. Chester seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Ben made a motion to recommend the warrant article to raise and appropriate \$15,000 to be placed in the existing non-lapsing Highway Capital Reserve Fund. Chester seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-1. (Theresa- No)

Ben made a motion to recommend the warrant article for the selectman to enter into a 5 year lease/purchase agreement with a non-appropriation clause in the amount of \$129,785 to be paid in 5 year annual payments of \$27,640 to purchase a 2021 John Deere 544P Wheel Loader. Chester seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Ben made a motion to recommend the warrant article to raise and appropriate \$10,000 to be placed in the existing non-lapsing Ashuelot Rail Trail Capital Reserve Fund. Chester seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-1. (Theresa- No)

Ben made a motion to recommend the warrant article to raise and appropriate \$20,000 to be placed in the existing non-lapsing Culvert Repair Capital Reserve Fund. Chester seconded the motion. There was discussion on culverts in town that need repair including Jones Road and Back Ashuelot Road. Motion passed 5-0.

Ben made a motion to recommend the warrant article to raise and appropriate \$5000 to be placed into the existing non-lapsing Grant Writer Capital Reserve Fund. Chester seconded the motion. Chester asked how much was in the fund. \$4504. There was discussion on how the grant writer is paid. The grant writer has been used for the steeple project and to acquire equipment for the fire department. Motion passed 4-1. (Theresa- No)

Ben made a motion to recommend the warrant article to raise and appropriate the operating budget of \$3,670,597. Default amount is \$3,694,477. Chester seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Ben made a motion to recommend the warrant article to raise and appropriate \$309,900 for the Water Department. Default amount is \$309,604. Chester seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Ben made a motion to recommend the warrant article to raise and appropriate \$375,544 for the Sewer Department. Default amount is \$389,439. Chester seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

The budget committee began to discuss the school warrant.

Lindseigh made a motion to recommend the school budget amount of \$12,353,376.98. Default amount is 11,610,865. Ben seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Lindseigh mentioned that the teacher's contract is not ready yet.

Lindseigh made a motion to recommend the warrant article to place \$25,000 in the special education trust fund. Ben seconded the motion. There is currently \$325,000 in the fund. Lindseigh mentioned that the school board supports leaving \$200,000 in the fund and to keep that in mind for future discussion. Motion passed 5-0.

Lindseigh made a motion to recommend the warrant article to place \$125,000 in the capital reserve account for building improvements. Ben seconded the motion. Ben asked how much is currently in the account. \$94,642. Motion passed 5-0.

Lindseigh began discussion on the warrant article to reduce the current deficit. There was discussion on how the figure could be reduced. Chester is in favor of reducing the deficit all at once. Ben asked about the money the school received for infrastructure aid. \$550,000 was approved at last year's meeting. Ben asked if there is \$200,000 left over that could be used to reduce the deficit. Lindseigh explained that \$839,000 was an estimated amount. The school board asked to spend \$550,000. Dave Jack explained that the current deficit is \$745,000 according to the auditors. Val mentioned that there are figures explaining the revenues in each budget book. Theresa asks if the school overspent or paid back too much money to the town. Dave responded that yes, the school sent too much money back to the town

for several years. Lindseigh explained that this happened due to the absence of the annual audit. The school is caught up with its audits and that is how the deficit was discovered.

Theresa stated that she is not comfortable voting on this since she has not received audit reports that she requested. Chester is unsure of how the absence of those reports relates to recommending the article.

Ben made a motion to amend the proposed warrant article to read the following. To raise and appropriate \$400,000 to reduce the school deficit. Chester seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-1. (Theresa- No)

Ben made a motion to recommend the proposed warrant article to raise an appropriate \$400,000 to reduce the school deficit. Chester seconded. Motion passed 4-1. (Theresa- No)

Ben asked about when the budget committee would be discussing the petitioned warrant articles. January 12<sup>th</sup> is the deadline to submit a petitioned warrant article.

Lindseigh asks about the hearing. It is scheduled for January 14<sup>th</sup>. It is not posted as a Zoom meeting. Karey explains how it is too late to change the posting for the hearing.

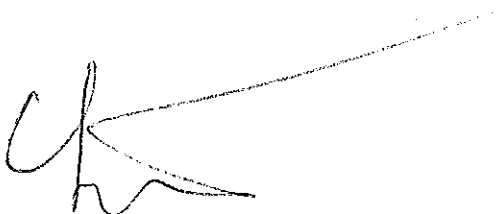
Lindseigh makes a motion to mandate that masks be worn at the January 14<sup>th</sup> hearing. Ben seconded the motion. Theresa asked what will be done if someone shows up without a mask? Motion passes 4-0. (Theresa abstains from the vote)

There was discussion on how town hall can be set up for the hearing.

Lindseigh made a motion to hire an officer to be present at the hearing on January 14<sup>th</sup> and to pay the officer out of the secretary line. Ben seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Ben made a motion to adjourn. Lindseigh seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:16PM.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CK' with a long horizontal line extending to the right.