



**TOWN OF GILMANTON
BUDGET COMMITTEE**

PO Box 550, Gilmanton, NH 03237

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Public Hearing 01-10-2024- DRAFT NOTES

Present: Chairman Brian Forst, Member Anne Kirby, Member Betty Ann Abbott, Member Ron Leclerc, Member Alec Bass, Member Grace Sisti and Selectmen's Rep- Vincent Baiocchetti, School

Vice-Chair Joshua Mann: Arrived shortly after the start of the meeting due to a conflict in schedule.

Absent w/ Notice: Selectmen's Rep- Vincent Baiocchetti, School

Others Present: Town Administrator- Heather Carpenter, Fire Chief- Joe Hempel, Police Chief Matthew Currier, Mark Warren

6:04 p.m. **CALL TO ORDER by Chairman Forst**

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Forst (01:40):

Good evening, everyone. Can I get everybody to settle in? Thank you. If we could, I'd like to bring this public hearing to the town of Gilmanton. We're going to address the town budget first, so I'll open the public hearing on the town budget.

If we could start by standing for the pledge, I'd appreciate it. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. Thank you, everyone.

I'm just going to run a few guidelines so that everybody, we got a lot of turnout tonight. I'm really happy to see that. I will present the budget. The idea of tonight's public hearing is for your Budget Committee, which sits before you, to hear public input on the budget so that when we go into our deliberative on Saturday to make whatever adjustments and formulate a budget that will go forward for you, the townspeople, to vote on in March, in order to get that, we need to hear what the taxpayers are feeling about the budget.

We've heard from Department Heads, we've heard from Administration, but we need to hear from the taxpayer who is before us tonight, and I'm happy to see some people here so that we get a feel of what people are thinking.

I would like, when you have questions, you address them to me. I'll find you the answer, whether it's through department heads or administration, but I don't want to get a side banter going. It makes it very hard to keep the hearing on track.

So, with that being said, I'm going to get into the proposed budget for the town at this time. I'm going to give you a few numbers, hopefully you can understand them.

The total valuation of the town of Gilmanton has increased in the last year by about \$6,602,122. That is the addition of assets within the town that will be taxable in the 24' year. As it is presented to us currently, the town budget is up \$698,807 over the budget that was voted last year. So those are the numbers as they are presented at this point.

The school is up quite substantially to that, but I will address the school during that public hearing, just so that we can get a total picture of numbers.

I'm going to run through the numbers. If somebody has questions, if you could throw a hand up, I will recognize you and try to get you an answer to your question. Or if we want to just make a statement about the budget, if we could hold that until I present it as a whole and then make your statement, I'd be glad to hear it. Okay, is everybody good? Thank you.

Executive:

48 The first line in the operating budget for the town is the executive line. It's proposed this year in the
49 amount of \$504,383, which is an increase of about \$52,176 over last year's presentation. What was
50 indicated to the budget committee was that a lot of this increase is centered around a lot of the
51 increase in this town period that we are seeing this year is centered around our largest
52 expenditure, which is our personnel, whether it be in the form of wages, in the form of benefits
53 that is one of the largest expenses that this town has that I see is our people. A lot of what we're
54 seeing in budgets is that insurance costs are up, and wages are being adjusted to compensate. One
55 of the things we keep hearing is that it's harder to retain employees in the town because they can
56 go to the private sector, and more money is being offered in the private sector. So, a lot of these
57 increases are to, one, retain people or try to attract people to fill positions that are open. I'm not
58 going to hit every line, I think, unless people would prefer me to because we'll be here till midnight,
59 but I will hit the lines that represent the largest increases that add up to the \$698,000 that I've told
60 you about. Then, when I'm done with the bulk of the budget, we'll have a discussion on that, and
61 then I'll enter into Warrant Articles.

62 **Computer Technology:**

63 The next line would be Computer Technology, but there's no real increase there.
64 Elections and registration, we're up \$12,512. As you all know, this is a year with more, we're going
65 to have more elections, which results in us having to budget more money to hold them.

66 **Finance:**

67 Finance, we're seeing an increase in finance of about \$22,575. That is a restructuring of the finance,
68 the position of finance and what it's taking to do that job now versus what we had going on prior to
69 this.

70

71 **Town Clerk/Tax Collector:**

72 The town clerk/tax collector we're seeing an increase of \$14,131.

73

74 **Assessing:**

75 Property and assessing, a little less at \$2,731.

76

77 **Zoning:** We actually have a \$300 decrease in the zoning board. I thought I'd throw that in just
78 because we were talking about numbers going up.

79

80 **Government Building:**

81 Government buildings, pretty minimal at \$600.

82

83 **Cemetery:**

84 Cemetery expenses went up \$1,164.

85

86 **Insurance:**

87 Insurance up \$9,917.

88

89 **Police Department:**

90 Our police department budget is up \$176,493. Quite a lot of that is due to insurance structure and
91 requirements for insurance on our employees, and we are having to replace an employee this year
92 who's been with the town for a long time, and they wish to keep that position. They're actually
93 funding a half-year position to train a new person. We've got a position in the police department
94 that's been with us a long time; she's retiring, we're going to replace that position, and a lot of that

95 increase, hopefully, is at one time. The funding of that position for a half-year with two people in it
96 makes an impact on the budget.

97
98

99 **Fire Department:**

100 The fire department is seeing an increase of \$98,283. Again, a lot of that is personnel related.

101

102 **Highway Administration:**

103 Highway administration, \$117,521. I'm sure that's going to be a topic before we're done tonight. A
104 lot of that, again, is related to personnel and changes in the way personnel is being handled.

105

106 **Highway and Streets:**

107 Highway and streets, \$20,000. The bulk of that, we were told, was due to an increase in material
108 costs. \$500 for street lighting. I think everybody's seen their electric bill.

109

110 **Road Betterment:**

111 Road betterment is \$2,005, which isn't much.

112

113 **Hazardous Waste Collection:**

114 Hazardous waste collection is up \$1,851.

115

116 **Transfer Station:**

117 Another large one is our transfer and recycling center. That is up \$163,372. If anybody wishes, I can
118 actually get in and break that down further for you. I don't think there's anybody here that doesn't
119 know we've been through a lot of turmoil with our transfer and recycling center. But it's going to
120 cost money to get it going in the right direction.

121

122 **General Assistance:**

123 General assistance is up \$15,000.

124

125 **Park and Recreation:**

126 Park and Rec. is actually down \$10,000.

127

128 That brings us to the end of the operating budget, minus Warren Articles, which is showing us an
129 increase of \$698,000 with a proposed number of \$5,079,377 is the proposed budget for 2024. This
130 is the Selectman's recommendation.

131 Okay, at this point, I would open it up for questions, comments, or... And if you could state your
132 name for the record.

133

134 (12:09): Rich Harkey, Christine Harkey- what will the overall tax rate be if all the warrant articles are
135 voted in.

136

137 Chairman Forst (12:25):

138 I guess the best answer I can give you there is that for us to sit here and indicate what your tax rate
139 will be is very presumptuous. Because of your tax rate... There are a lot of factors in a tax rate. You
140 have all your revenues during the year, and we project revenues to try to know what they will be,
141 but nothing's fixed until the end of the year.

142 Mark Sisti (13:42):
143 We need to get an understanding of what that really means, okay? I mean, there's a lot of interest
144 in, you know, financial talk, but I think it's a valid question.

145 (15:06):

146 Right. You're referring to the 5.505.

147

148 Chairman Forst (15:27):

149 Five dollars and fifty cents. Per thousand. Per thousand is the total impact, not the increase.

150 Correct? Am I getting what you're asking me, I guess?

151 Go ahead, Josh.

152

153 Vice-Chairman Joshua Mann (16:06):

154 When you look at the tax impact on the town side, it starts from zero. So, if you take at one article
155 four, the number is zero. So if you vote yes for article four, the tax rate on the town side is now five
156 dollars point five zero five. And if you go to the next one article and vote that in, add that up. That's
157 what makes the tax rate. Does that make sense?

158

159 TA Carpenter (16:33):

160 The tax impact depicted here is based on a formula of the valuation of the town but also other
161 adjustments. The tax impact is not necessarily an accurate depiction and more of a guesstimate.

162

163 *Side notes not stated in the meeting in the following manor but helpful: Setting the Tax Rate: Every*
164 *FALL, THE Dept. of Revenue Administration (DRA) compiles all the information necessary to certify*
165 *property tax rates for each municipality, reviewing all appropriations voted on in the spring and all*
166 *revenues expected. That information is then used in the following formula to calculate the local*
167 *property tax rate:*

168 *Voted appropriations minus All Other Revenues divided by Local Assessed Property Value + Rate.*

169 *Multiply the rate by 1,000.00 and you get the property tax rate per \$1,000.00 of property value,*
170 *which is how the rate is usually stated.*

171 *The first tax bill is an estimate, and the official tax rate is usually not set until mid-November-*

172 *December quite a while after the adoption of the budgets in March that establish the basis for those*
173 *tax bills.*

174 *The amount of money which must be raised through taxes- appropriations minus all other revenue*
175 *expected to be received is the major factor which drives the property tax rate.*

176 *Please review the attached documentation for a detailed explanation*

177

178 Further public discussion regarding the question what will the tax rate be if all of the warrant
179 articles are accepted.

180

181 Chairman Forst (18:59):

182 Brett. Go ahead.

183

184 Brett Currier (19:01):

185 Just to get off that subject for a second. I got a question, I guess, for the selectman. On the

186 executive line, the dept. head request is lower than the recommended by the Board of Selectmen.

187 What is the reasoning behind that?

188

189

190 Chairman Forst (20:11):

191 Okay. I guess the answer that's being translated to me is that, again, as I stated in the beginning, I
192 understand your question, Brett, because historically you have what a department had requests,
193 and then you have a selectman's recommendation, and we've seen them go one way or the other.
194 This one is obviously higher than what the department had requested. And the answer that I'm
195 hearing from the selectman is that they are adjusting salaries and adjusting benefits. One of the
196 things that's being discussed is that insurances are medical benefits packages that had a co-
197 insurance situation or a co-pay situation where an employee paid a certain amount towards their
198 benefits. The town is moving towards not doing that now. They're looking towards more of a 100%
199 benefit package, and the reason for that was to try to compete to retain and get new employees.
200 And the reason that we're here to discuss this is, as your budget committee, we need to hear your
201 input on that. I mean, I'm understanding your question about asking us about tax rate. We've been
202 presented with the budget, and to keep a tax rate level, you know, to say next year the tax rate is
203 \$23.39 requires us to do some real work on Saturday to reduce this budget. So, these are the
204 increases that are proposed. We need to hear if there's something you think we should be
205 reducing. I just need to follow up with that.

206

207 Brett Currier (22:20):

208 If I go to the line on the executive, the first line it seems like most of that that I'm looking at is a
209 raise of over \$6,000 for that employee. Almost \$7,000. So there really aren't a lot of benefits in
210 there, but there's a lot of raise. It seems like that position was pretty raised last year by at least that
211 one. It seems like that's the only department head that I'm looking at that is getting that kind of
212 raise that didn't ask for it. I'm kind of confused about that. I guess I've never seen the department
213 head that doesn't ask for a raise of over \$7,000 in a couple of years in a row.

214

215

216 TA Carpenter (23:25):

217 I'm the only department head that got a raise this year. That was the consideration of the
218 Selectman for various reasons. I did not ask for it.

219 The consideration when formulating the budgets was to move forward as an organization without
220 giving a 3% to a 4% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) because we wanted to focus on the benefits
221 package for everyone. When we are trying to hire people, they stop and think if they start having to
222 equate what they're going to have to pay for benefits. The municipal government are required to
223 add New Hampshire Retirement, so that is pretty penny that is deducted. So, when they started
224 equating all these things in their mind, and the dollar amount that you've presented, they can easily
225 go to another town with a 90/10 split and a higher hourly wage. 100% paid benefits is a calling card
226 to draw people in, and it's a longevity card as well, which we're trying to mitigate because we have
227 a lot of turnover in the last year.

228 We decided that we weren't going to do an overall COLA increase this year because it is more
229 expensive for us to go for a 3% or 4% COLA and cover 80% insurance as we normally do. The CPI
230 was 3% when we formulated this budget, It's a significant difference.

231 In this budget the first three months of this year would only cover 80%, as we offer all of our
232 employees now, and the employee contributes 20%. After the election it goes to 100%. The
233 prorated amount is obviously cheaper than the 100%. But additionally, the 100% next year would
234 be cheaper than the 3% or 4% COLA.

235 The other thing that we want to consider right now is insurance has a 15.6% increase this year, and
236 I think it was 11.7% last year. That's more from the COVID/ catastrophic claims issue that the
237 insurance company is experiencing. The year prior to that, before the 11.7%, we had a surplus that
238 was given back to.

239

240 Unknown Speaker (25:48):

241 I was just wondering if that's the same case for the Highway Administration, because the
242 recommendation from the head was one number, and the selectman increased that by \$33,170. So,
243 is that also insurance?

244

245 Chairman Forst (26:08):

246 No, that question I can sit here and answer. Last year at town meeting, there was a petition warrant
247 article to change the position of elected Road Agent to an appointed position of a Director of Public
248 Works. That position the selectmen have worked on this year, they have investigated salaries and
249 so forth, and that is what you're seeing recognized there as a salary for a Department of Public
250 Works director, which will oversee highway transfer and parks and recs. The salary for one person is
251 increased recommendation because it's a different position.

252

253 We have moved to discussing the highway budget, correct? And you're talking about the position of
254 road agent.

255

256 General discussion from TA and the Chairman (27:35):

257 The salary line is a combined position and houses the prorated amount to finish out the Road Agent
258 position prior to the March vote and the 92,328 for the new position of DPW Director. The default
259 budget shows what the Road Agent salary was for last year at \$77,000.00. So that's the difference
260 in the salary, but it's a difference in position.

261

262 Chairman Forst (28:06):

263 It will be a new department head. In other words, that department head, per a petition warrant
264 article, that position is not going to be that position anymore.

265

266 Unknown Speaker (28:20):

267 Okay, so you're increasing it by that amount of money to put in that person.

268

269 Chairman Forst (28:25):

270 Correct.

271 I got the lady in front of Brett had her hand up, and then I'll get to you again Brett. Name? Yeah, I'm
272 sorry I don't know your name.

273 Cody O'Leary: What's the town's turnover rate for 2023?

274 TA Carpenter: How many positions have we lost?

275 Cody O'Leary: You guys are, you have said I think three different times now that a huge part of this
276 entire budget is to retain and to recruit and to not lose people.

277 So there has to be some data on that, right? So, most companies track the turnover. So, I'll take it.

278

279 Speaker15 (29:07):

280 Okay, Heather. When you have this turnover in multiple departments, you have I believe two
281 vacancies in fire. I believe you have two vacancies in heating. You have three vacancies in my office.

282 We removed three individuals from the transfer station, which we need to backfill. Parks and work
283 is a seasonal, so we basically are going a different way, and hopefully the DPW position will take
284 care of that part-time attendance. You'll see that part-time onions were moved to the highway
285 department under the part-time. We have been missing one additional position in highway. We had
286 two at the beginning of the year. We filled one, then we promoted someone to the transfer station,
287 and we're still waiting for them. Oh, in the tax office. We lost the town clerk/tax collector. No, we
288 do not have a percentage presented as data.

289
290 Cody O'Leary (30:04):

291 That would just help if we could see we have a 25% turnover rate compared to an average of 10,
292 that might help justify some of these increases. Right now, people are leaving, apparently, and if
293 you're not tracking the numbers and the reasons, it's hard to just make assumptions. I just think
294 data points are helpful, especially if that's a huge thing, and a track that would be suggested.

295
296 Chairman Forst (30:35):

297 Brett.

298
299 Brett Currier (30:36):

300 So, if I'm hearing this correctly, this highway DPW director, the selection of proposing to pay him
301 \$131,000, is that correct?

302
303 General Discussion (30:49):

304 No, the salary amount is budgeted for \$92, 328. The note right under the salary line states that the
305 DPW annual salary is budgeted at \$92,328, and the Road Agent salary last year is listed in the
306 default budget for \$77,459.

307 It is listed the same way that the PD Executive Assistant is listed as, there is a period that we will be
308 paying the outgoing Admin, who is retiring, and the new hire for the position, the whole amount is
309 not for one person.

310
311 Brett Currier (31:56):

312 Thank you.

313
314 Chairman Forst (32:01):

315 And you do understand that that won't change until after the position changes. In other words,
316 we're paying the 24 budget, we're already into that year. So, we're already paying a Road Agent at
317 a rate now that may change. Something will change after the town meeting. And we will have to
318 pay a different rate of who knows what right now. But we're budgeting for what was presented to
319 us.

320
321 Unknown Speaker (female) (32:41):

322 Thank you. One additional question. Did I hear you say when you were explaining the insurance
323 that you're moving from an employee co-pay to covering that, the town covering that, by 100%?

324
325 Chairman Forst (32:55):

326 That is what was proposed, yes.

327
328 Unknown Speaker (female) (33:15):

329 So, that's a significant move and that is something that the private sector would never see. So, I
330 think that that's very substantial for the town to consider that. I'm kind of blown away, but okay.

331

332 Chairman Forst (33:36):

333 Being in the private sector, a lot of you may not know me. I have a business. It's not unheard of.
334 We're having to change our ways to retain employees. So, I'm not defending it or I'm just
335 presenting that this is what the town has come forward with and asked for. It does come with a
336 price tag. And as we look at all of this tonight, the price tag is fairly substantial.

337

338 In answer to the earlier question, if I was to tally, Vinnie sat here and tallied it, if I was to tally all of
339 the articles on the town warrant minus the petition articles, we're at about \$6.74. This year's town
340 rate in FY23 was \$4.56. Last year's town rate was \$5.17. So, when you tally that rate today, when
341 tax setting time comes, it could be different than that. We can all use that number tonight to look
342 at and however we want to. I understand the theory, but that isn't an etched in stone tax rate.
343 \$6.749.

344 *Note: (Please see side note above to understand the tax rate formula and what it includes and the*
345 *offsetting categories to the tax rate setting)*

346

347 Chairman Forst (35:26):

348 Brett.

349

350 Brett Currier (35:36):

351 So, what is the total number for the cost of insurance as it stands for everyone right now.

352

353 TA Carpenter (35:47):

354 In the budget there is a prorated amount being presented for this year; three months at 80% and
355 nine months at 100%. \$790,000.

356

357 Brett Currier (36:01):

358 \$790,000?

359

360 TA Carpenter (36:02):

361 Yes. So, comparatively, right, we did this because the town inherently gives COLA or merit. We
362 haven't had merit since 2019, but we usually give a COLA. So, basically, when we took the 4%,
363 which CPI was 3.7%. The consumer price index. So, when you take that number, that was 3.7%
364 when formulating the budget, so if we could go in either direction. The 3% or 4%. The number for
365 4% came out at \$877,157.06 for increases. So, for this, your 3% was \$858,597.88. That was at the
366 current rate of 80% coverage. So, at 80% coverage and people still paying their 20%, it was still
367 cheaper for us to do the 100%, and not give the COLA.

368

369 Laura_____ So, the town budget has a positive effect by taking the insurance benefit instead of the
370 increase.

371

372 Vincent Baiocchetti (37:37):

373 Selectmen's Rep: In answer to your question about the percentage of employees we lost, we lost
374 52% of our employees. 52%. We have 25 full-time employees.

375

376 Unknown speaker (37:45):
377 We took out three.
378
379 Vincent Baiocchetti (37:48):
380 One was full-time, two were part-time. But we still lost 52% of our employees.
381
382 Grace Sisti (37:60):
383 Can we state your name for the record for the minutes before you speak? Just so that we have it.
384 Thank you.
385
386 Brett Currier (38:10):
387 So, my name is Brett.
388
389 Speaker10 (38:13):
390 Thank you. So, my question, I guess. I'm hearing from Heather that they didn't get a COLA increase
391 since 2019.
392 Vincent Baiocchetti: No, they haven't received a merit increase since 2019.
393 Brett Currier: They got a monster rate last year. 7-8% across the board.
394 Vincent Baiocchetti: It was still less than what the CPI which was just under 10%.
395
396 Brett Currier: What I'm trying to find out is why are we going from 80% to 100% when this lady is
397 completely accurate. The private sector, they might get a raise, and I'd rather give a raise to
398 performance than just here you go, everybody gets this. It would be different if it was the employee
399 himself or herself. But we're covering families here. That's a big ticket. We out here are feeling it as
400 much as they are, the employees. We're the employees, too, of other people. So, when these big
401 raises come up and everybody's saying that we've got to do it because this town is doing it, we can't
402 compete all the way with every other town. We have to slow the roll down when we're bringing the
403 budget up by 600 or 700 grand in one year. That's a lot of money. If we don't slow it down, when
404 this ball slows down and it's gone, and there's going to be more employees that are out of jobs,
405 then it's real hard to bring that wage back down. And it's real hard to say, we're not going to give
406 you 100% anymore. We've been here already. We gave 100% before in this town. And we rolled it
407 back because we couldn't afford it. And I still think we can't afford it. And I think a lot of people are
408 hurting it. And it's going to hurt a lot of people doing that. And I don't think that the employees in
409 the town aren't really going to hurt that much if they still stay with 80%. Thanks so much.
410
411 Grace Sisti (40:15):
412 Doesn't that cost us more to stay with 80%?
413
414 TA Carpenter (40:20):
415 Yes
416
417 Laura _____ (40:23):
418 If you give them their cost of living, it costs more than giving them this benefit. So, it's in our
419 interest as the town to accept that the employees... I'm sorry, my name is Laura. So, the town this
420 year is going to benefit by giving the extra insurance benefit to the employees instead of a raise. If
421 in a future year it works out differently, then we can sit here and say, let's dial it back. And then you

422 point to that, we've done that before. But this year, the math is in our favor. So, it should be a non-
423 issue.

424

425 Cody O' Leary (41:09):

426 Just a comment. I mean, once you give it, it's very hard to walk back. And I think that you have to
427 look at long-term. I think 100% in the private sector, your company might do it, but it is not very
428 common. It's a very big increase. And with 12 to 14% of health care inflation a year, that means
429 every year we're going to have to eat that 12 to 14% versus splitting it. That would be employees.
430 So, I think if that is really a big part of this \$700,000, I think we have to look at that.

431

432

433 TA Carpenter (41:52):

434 We don't know if it will continue to increase. Like I said, two years ago we had a decrease, and we
435 got incentivized by that, which was great.

436 However, every town in the surrounding area is changing either the percentage to get as close to
437 \$100% as they can, or creating a combination of COLA increase, merit increase, and increased
438 insurance. The reason why we came up with this proposal and why we offered it as our
439 recommendation was because what we heard last year from the public and from the budget
440 committee is they didn't want to continue to see wage adjustments because in our mind you can't
441 change the wage once it is given. If you have someone long-term, there's no opportunity to
442 decrease their wage.

443 If I stay here 10 years, my wage is the wage, less taxes and that caps out as it is shown in the wage
444 scale, and then that's it. So, they didn't want to keep seeing increased wages. We tried to come up
445 with a creative solution. We looked at the numbers. It is more cost-effective this year, and the hope
446 is that next year we won't see another 15.6% increase. But the reason why the employees were so
447 pleased with this instead of the COLA was because it is a good benefit. They don't have to worry
448 about it, they have it...

449

450 Unknown speaker: That's a great benefit.

451 Unknown Speaker: It's mandatory to have one of those, either the COLA or...

452

453 TA Carpenter: It's not mandatory. You're just not competitive. If you don't do COLA or you do not
454 do merit, you're going to fall behind. And that's part of the reason. One of the clerks positions we
455 had this year in the office left for \$6 more an hour. We could not give them \$6 more an hour.

456 Unknown Speaker: The other positions don't do that.

457 TA Carpenter: No, they do. They happen all the time. You're literally having employees being
458 poached from other towns.

459 Unknown Speaker: So, I could look up to any town and go anywhere I wanted to work for a town?

460 TA Carpenter: Right now, that is the current environment.

461

462 Vincent Baiocchetti (44:05):

463 The retirement system in New Hampshire is good for statewide. So, whether you work for the town
464 or county or the state, it's the same retirement system.

465 So, unlike other states, if you leave a town and go to another town, you lose your retirement. Here,
466 which is part of our problem, but that's why we can't keep people.

467

468 Chairman Forst (44:31):

469 It's easier for people to move. It's easier for them to move.

470

471 Unknown Speaker (44:36):

472 So I have a statement and a question.

473 So if the receipt is at 100%, the employee is getting far superior to a raise because it's not taxable
474 increase. So it's a significantly higher benefit than receiving a financial increase in the salary. But
475 then the question is, has there been any, you touched on it a little bit, has there been any changes
476 in the retirement plans? Any more increases in retirement benefits given to any of the employees?
477 Is there anything else in that are in here?

478

479 Chairman Forst (45:07):

480 Well, and again, if you're paying more money, dollars versus benefits, you're putting more in
481 retirement. Because retirement is based on... Any retirement outcome? What's that? Does this
482 insurance change impact anything within the employees?

483

484 Unknown Speaker (45:24):

485 Do they get insurance benefits after retirement that would carry over at all based on this?

486

487 Chairman Forst (45:29):

488 No, your retirement, your state retirement program is strictly a dollar and cents program. It's not a
489 benefits program.

490 So the wages go up then you have to contribute more. And if wages go up, you're going to
491 contribute more to FICA and all of those things also. So, there is, it's not large, it's minimal, but
492 there is some benefit to the insurance versus... We can argue about it all night. But it is different.

493

494

495

496

497 Mark Sisti (46:10):

498 This is a side effect. In reality, employees and employers' benefit by increasing benefits. Right. It's
499 very simple, it's very straightforward.

500 It's a saving situation. And in the long term, in this system, where you have to contribute based on
501 wages, it is much wiser to increase benefits. It is much wiser.

502 And there's no question about it. Now, we're all sitting around here going, well, it's going to be
503 more and this and that. Well, every year it's more. Come on. Where are we going to live? It's more
504 all the time. The question is, how can you shave it? You're not going to shave it by what benefits
505 and increasing wages. I mean, you're double-cutting yourself.

506 So I would say right now that's okay. It sounds to me like it's not a bad little deal. Increasing
507 benefits holds your employees, makes them happier, and it decreases what your contributions have
508 to be to the federal government and to the retirement system.

509 It's all there. You can check the boxes.

510 It's not a bad move. You can pull it off. It's not a bad move.

511

512 Chairman Forst (47:34):

513 That's what we're discussing.

514

515 Laura Steffan (47:38):

516 So, is the reason that the parking recreation is decreased by \$10,000 because you moved it over to
517 the public works?

518

519 Chairman Forst (47:48):

520 At this point. Due to last year's decision to move to a public works, yes, the answer would be that
521 \$10,000 salary is now part of the DPW director's position.

522 TA Carpenter: It's part of the part-time position. It's part of the part-time position, but it's not there
523 because it's being managed in the Public Works department.

524

525 Laura Steffan: So, it's not really a savings of \$10,000. It's just redistributed. It's not there anymore.

526

527 Chairman Forst (48:28):

528 It's someplace else. Correct.

529

530 Laura Steffan (48:30):

531 Is there something else that moves because of the road age of becoming public works? Something
532 at the, I'm sorry, at the transfer station.

533

534 Chairman Forst: Well, you're going to have, instead of a department head at the transfer station,
535 you're going to have a foreman and the director of public works is going to oversee
536 the transfer station as well as the highway department, as well as parks and recs.

537 Laura Steffan: And the foreman is paid less than the department you should assume was? Chairman
538 Forst: Historically, yes.

539

540 Laura Steffan (49:04):

541 At least for starters. Okay. Thank you.

542

543 Chairman Forst (49:08):

544 Best of my understanding in looking at what we're being presented. Yes. Right. Any?

545

546 Liz Brulotte (female) (49:17):

547 Let's rule out errant language.

548 And I guess this is for Heather because she knows the budget. Heather, I just want to make sure I'm
549 understanding this correctly. When you look at, I'm just going with that first page, page 3.3, that
550 the selections are represented.

551

552 TA Carpenter (49:57):

553 I'm sorry, I'm not hearing you all the way. What page is that? Which line in particular?

554

555 Liz Brulotte- The department head is recommending no change. The selectmen are recommending
556 a 7.7% increase. They're saying it's grade 22, step 8, so that's considered merit.

557

558 TA Carpenter (50:27):

559 That would be considered merit.

560 Liz Brulotte: Okay. So a 7.7% merit increase. And then the (insurance) plan change?

561

562 Ta Carpenter: Yes.

563 Chairman Forst (50:55):
564 Does that answer your question, Liz?
565
566 Liz Brulotte (50:58):
567 Yep.
568
569 Chairman Forst (51:02):
570 Adam. I think that's Adam. Yeah, it's Adam. Is that Adam Mini?
571
572 Adam Mini: I think its terrible optics when you are only giving one department head a raise, just my
573 opinion.
574 Vincent Baiocchetti (51:42): Can I address this?
575 Chairman Forst: I think we already have. Okay. But I think that was an opinion or a statement.
576 Adam Mini: Just a statement.
577 Chairman Forst: Okay. Do we have any other discussion on the budget before I get into the war on
578 articles for the town? Yes.
579
580 Mark Warren (52:10):
581 I just want to address that. The last two questions. Because I don't know if we fully addressed the
582 why on the town administrators' wages going up and what they weren't asked for. In looking at
583 wages across the board and trying to equalize on the department head, that was a significant
584 influence in why the select board made that recommendation to try to bring that department
585 forward.
586
587 Chairman Forst (52:56):
588 Okay. Thank you, Mark.
589
590 Chairman Forst (53:01):
591 You just want to make a comment, Brett?
592
593 Brett Currier (53:04):
594 I guess I'd like to make a comment. Are you stating that you are moving towards all Dept. Heads
595 being equal? That seems radical.
596
597 Chairman Forst (53:24):
598 I think we're going to move to war on articles if there's no other discussion about budget amounts.
599 Okay. Proposed warrant articles for the town.
600 • Article 2 is a zoning ordinance. I'm directed to deal with articles that have monetary issue.
601 So Article 2 will be on the warrant as it's written.
602 • Article 3 is the same as the zoning article.
603 • Article 4 is the operating budget to see if the towns are raised appropriate as an operating
604 budget, not including appropriations. By special warrant articles and other appropriations
605 voted separately, the amount set forth in the budget posted within the war or as amended
606 by a vote in the first session for the purpose set forth here in totaling \$5,791,377. Should
607 this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$5,428,078, which is the same as last
608 year with certain adjustments required by previous action of the town or by law. Or the

609 governing body may hold one special meeting in accordance with RSA 40, colon 13, 10, and
610 16 to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only.

611 We've already spent the last almost hour discussing that, so I think I'm going to move on.

612

613 Rich Harkey (55:11):

614 So as you can tell from most of the warrant articles and they have a mill raised on them, are they
615 additive?

616

617 Chairman Forst (55:20):

618 Are they additive?

619

620 Rich Harkey and Christine Harkey (55:21):

621 They added to that 6.7.

622

623 Chairman Forst (55:24):

624 No, no, no. The 6.7 number is all of these. Including these new ones. Everything. That's this budget.

625 Aside from the outside organizations?

626

627 Rich Harkey (55:34):

628 Aside from the outside organizations.

629

630 Chairman Forst (55:37):

631 Correct And petitions.

632 Chairman Forst:

- 633 • Article 5. Add to existing EFTs and non-capital expendable trust funds and capital reserve
634 funds. See if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$165,000 to be
635 deposited in previously established non-capital trust funds and capital reserve funds as
636 identified below.

637 Highway equipment in the amount of \$70,000.

638 Highway vehicle repair, equipment repair, vehicle and equipment repair, \$10,000. Recycling
639 and transfer facility improvements, \$30,000.

640 Recycling equipment, \$50,000.

641 Transfer station vehicle and equipment repair, \$5,000 for a total of \$165,000. Any
642 discussion or questions on that?

643

644 Rich Harkey (56:35):

645 So, is that going to solve our transfer station problems that we've seen over the last few years?

646

647 Chairman Forst (56:42):

648 No. Do you understand the capital improvements and putting money in these funds for future
649 improvements? This is money being put into funds, not money that is being spent immediately in a
650 budget.

651

652 Grace Sisti-School Board Rep-Member of Budget Committee (57:01):

653 It's like a savings.

654

655 Chairman Forst (57:04):

656 In other words, we're going to put \$70,000, if this was to pass, \$70,000 gets placed in the highway
657 equipment fund, which we're saving money for future purchases of highway equipment. Recycling
658 and transfer improvements, we're putting \$30,000 in for future improvements, not immediate
659 improvements. If they were immediate, we would budget it and do it. Do you understand that?
660

661 Rich Harkey (57:32):
662 But I thought that this is for next year.
663

664 Chairman Forst (57:35):
665 No, this is to fund. We already have capital reserve funds in place. This is to add funds to those
666 reserves. The taxation will be this year, but the projects will not be this year.
667

668 Brett Currier: What is the \$50,000 in recycling equipment?
669

670 Speaker10 (57:58):
671 How much do we have in that fund? And what are we lacking where we don't really recycle it?
672

673 Speaker4 (58:07):
674 Well, the fact that it's called Recycling and Transfer Facility...
675

676 Brett Currier (58:13): The following discussion on the name of the CIP fund accounts.
677 It really should be separate because the compactor itself has nothing to do with recycling. It should
678 be spelled out the right way. If this is going to go towards a compactor or something, then it ought
679 to say transfer station. If it's recycling, like you're talking a baler or skid steer or something like that,
680 they can use recycling. Then that's fine. But it just seems like that's all that could be useful.
681 Recycling as well.
682

683 Chairman Forst (58:50):
684 Give me a second and I'll have the answer for how much is in that. The recycling one is... It says
685 recycling equipment. We currently have about \$2,829 in that account. And I don't disagree with the
686 comment that the process of recycling seems to be different now than it was when these things
687 were established.
688

688 Yeah, Liz.

689 Liz Brullot- Heritage Lane. In the past weren't they all individual warrant articles, not clumping them
690 all together?

691 Chairman Forst: No, this is the way this article has been written now for quite some years. If the
692 body was to say we would like to do this but not do this at deliberative session, which when we
693 refer to the first session, that would be your deliberative session. You can go to deliberative, make
694 a motion on the floor to say we'd like to reduce or we'd like to increase or whatever we'd like to do.
695 If it's voted, then that change would go to the ballot. But we've been doing it in this fashion now for
696 a while. .
697

698
699 Brett Currier (01:01:42):
700 So, yeah. The Selectmen recommended this; can I get an answer as to why they recommended this
701 amount for recycling?
702

703 TA Carpenter (01:02:01):
704 Can I take this?
705 V Baiocchetti: Yes, please.
706 TA Carpenter: I disagree with you slightly on what is considered recycling equipment. One of the
707 avenues we were looking into is using compactors for recycling. Just so everyone understands,
708 recycling revenues aren't what they used to be. The only revenue you would be getting is for
709 cardboard, plastic and glass isn't there. Your revenues that might be \$30,000 to \$50,000, are not
710 offsetting the operation of the facility.
711
712 Brett Currier: Mr. Chairman can I ask Heather a question?
713 Chairman Forst: Yes.
714 Brett Currier: I am trying to find out, you said the compactors can be used as recycling equipment.
715 TA Carpenter: Yes, you can.
716 Brett Currier: But we don't, do we?
717
718 TA Carpenter: So, currently, no, because we don't have the staff. The consideration was to go to the
719 single stream just because of lack of staff and we wanted to provide a process for the recycling
720 program, we equally looked at a compactor for recycling and we are moving towards that because
721 there is no real revenue in recycling at the moment. The recommendation from Waste
722 Management was to turn your compactor #2 into a compactor just for recycled material but that
723 becomes an issue on weekends and when summer residents arrive. So, we didn't go in the
724 direction, but it is a possibility in the future. Revenue is not what it used to be for recycling, but we
725 did equally look at a compactor for the solution to recycling.
726 The cap, I can't answer the question about that recycling line for you, but equally, every year we
727 put so much into it based on the age of the equipment, the use, and the potential of where we are
728 going forward.
729 Chairman Forst (01:03:15): And I guess, Brett, if I look at all the accounts, there is no other
730 equipment account for the Transfer Recycling Center.
731 Whether it's titled correctly at this point or not, I don't know. But to try to pose the argument that
732 this is only for recycling equipment, it's for all equipment in that facility. It's not just for recycling
733 equipment. Why is it not correct?
734
735 Brett Currier (01:03:50):
736 Are you going to be able to use it for a compactor that compacts regular garbage? That's where I'm
737 trying, I 'm confused. Because regular garbage compactor, there's no way it is recycling equipment.
738 So, is that what DRA is going to allow? Do we have to come back and vote?
739 Chairman Forst: I'm pretty sure that we've purchased a skid steer out of this before.
740 I don't know what DRA is going to say. But this is not the first year this has been titled this way. It's
741 been titled this way for quite some time, and it's been used. So, if it's not good, then we'd have to
742 rename it.
743
744 Brett Currier (01:04:33):
745 I would recommend that you rename it.
746
747 Chairman Forst (01:04:38):
748 I understand that, but that's something for the selectman's meeting, not the budget hearing. Any
749 other discussion on Article 5?

750 • Article 6. Exterior painting and rot repair on the Academy Building town offices. See if the
751 town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$118,000 for the exterior painting and
752 rot repair at the Academy Building town offices. This amount should come from taxation.
753 There's an explanatory note here that the purpose of this article is to provide exterior and
754 interior paint, repair the areas of rot that are found in the building during that process. The
755 building's exterior is scheduled to be painted every five years and is currently off the
756 recommended schedule. The last time the exterior was painted was in 2017. Discussion on
757 Article 6 or questions?
758

759 Lauran Steffan (01:05:41):
760 Does that go out of the bid, or do you already have those in place?
761

762 Speaker15 (01:05:48):
763 We do have a quote, but we may need to go out of the bid due to the fact that are scheduling
764 conflicts with the quote that we received. Additionally, the interior portion has been removed. We
765 were able to encumber the funds that we couldn't focus on the projects for this year. So, we're
766 going to be doing the interior paint, the basements and main floor looking a little rough. We did
767 reduce the warrant articles, it was originally \$150,000 and we reduced it to \$118,000, which does
768 cover the rot repair and a 10% contingency.
769

770 Rich Harkey (01:06:28):
771 I've got just one point to add. So in this Article 6, it doesn't say anything about what kind of fund is
772 going to go into it.
773

774 Chairman Forst (01:06:39):
775 No, this isn't going to be in a fund. This is raise and appropriate and expend. We have one article for
776 Capital Reserve. This is to raise, appropriate, and expend to paint the building we're in right here.
777

778 Vincent Baiocchetti (01:07:03):
779 It gets painted and the rot gets repaired this year.
780

781 Chairman Forst (01:07:13):
782 Any other questions on 6? Seeing none.

783 • Article 7, add to existing non-Capital Reserve Fund infrastructure and repair upgrades. See if
784 the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000 to be deposited in the
785 Infrastructure Repairs and Upgrades Capital Reserve Fund previously established by 2022
786 town meeting. Again, this amount will come from taxation. Discussion on 7?
787

788 Susan F____: Does that include roads?

789 Chairman Forst: That is what that is. That is infrastructure, repairs and upgrades. And there
790 was a lot of discussion last year when it was established about the name. But if you titled it
791 as roads, you wouldn't be able to use it, let's say, if there was a bridge or a culvert. So that's
792 why it says infrastructure. But the idea is our highway system. Any other discussion on that?
793 Seeing none.
794

795 • Article 8, purchase a police cruiser. See if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the
796 sum of \$75,000 to purchase, equip and prepare for service a new police cruiser. Special

797 warrant article will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32-76 and will not lapse until the
798 purchase of the police cruiser is complete or until December 21-25, whichever comes first.
799 This amount to be raised by taxation. Discussion on 8? Questions?

800

801 Mark Sisti (01:09:08):

802 Just quick, Matt (Chief Matthew Currier), you had a question on that last year on just what that
803 cruiser is and so forth. You're going to have to expect it at deliberative session.

804

805 Chief Matthew Currier (01:09:29):

806 We're not getting any pickup trucks this time.

807 That's the deal.

- 808 • Article 9, add to the existing welfare non-capital expendable trust fund. See if the town will
809 vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,000 to be deposited in the welfare non-capital
810 expendable trust fund previously established by the 2001 town meeting. This amount will
811 come from taxation. Again, this is amount that we're going to raise and put into a trust fund
812 that currently has \$29,000 in it. Approximately. Discussion or questions on that?

813

814 Susan Ferrow (01:10:25):

815 Could you tell me what the definition of welfare line is?

816

817 Chairman Forst (01:10:33):

818 That is where the town has a welfare line in their budget. And welfare is if anybody comes to the
819 town for assistance. Whether it be heating oil assistance or housing assistance or what have you. If
820 that line item in the budget gets over expended, this fund is where they would go because they still
821 must provide welfare by law. So, this fund is where they would go. We, years ago, used to have a
822 lot larger fund. We've reduced it down. The target for this fund is to keep \$50,000 in the
823 expendable trust. Right now, we're at \$29,015. Doesn't quite get it to the \$50. But we've had the
824 people that are administrating our welfare system in the town offices are following law and
825 guidelines that are much more stringent than what we used to follow. Any other questions on that?

- 826 • Article 10. Add to the existing capital reserve for a forestry vehicle replacement fund. See if
827 the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum. \$115,000 for the purpose of a forestry
828 pickup truck equipped with a pump, skid tank, and snowplow package. This special warrant
829 article will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32 colon 76, which will not lapse until the
830 purchase of equipment is complete or until December 21, 25, whichever comes first. This
831 amount will come from taxation.

- 832 ➤ Action Item: Change the following-I just want to make a comment right now that
833 Article 10 is not properly titled. We're not adding to a capital reserve. We're
834 purchasing a forestry vehicle. But I read it as it's written.

835 You guys are tied for your hands up.

836 Unknown speaker: Why is this vehicle so expensive?

837 Chairman Forst: I asked the same question. If Chief Hemple would like to explain to you the cost, I
838 will let him do that.

839

840 Speaker5 (01:13:30):

841 The 115,000, the truck chaise itself runs between \$60,000 to \$65,000, the skid tank with a water
842 pump on it, along with a 250-gallon storage tank is \$25,000 with radios, lighting, and a plow
843 package etc. brings us to 115,000 price point.

844 Unknown Speaker: So, is this like a fire watch type of review?
845 Fire Chief Joe Hempel: This proposed vehicle is to replace a 2006 forestry unit that we currently
846 have in service. And as part of our scheduled replacement of equipment, this was due to be
847 replaced several years ago, we held off on it.
848
849 Speaker19 (01:14:21):
850 Brad.
851
852 Speaker10 (01:14:22):
853 Can I ask the Chief, does the forestry truck now have a plow? No. Are you going to plow the
854 flowers now?
855
856 Brett Currier(01:14:32): Does the current truck have a plow and are we going to be used do plow?
857
858 Chief Hempel: No. What we would use the plow for is our hydrant maintenance. Sometimes the
859 town does not get to our hydrants. So we end up using personal vehicles to plow those out. We
860 also have a need, you know, we run into situations where having a plow on a pickup would be
861 invaluable in the event of a storm trying to get in. So, we're trying to use private vehicles to plow
862 the town.
863
864 Further discussion on town plowing maintenance and the need for the plow on this vehicle
865
866 Chairman (01:15:29):
867 Any other discussion on 10? We'll get the wording corrected, I'm sure.
868
869 TA Carpenter (01:15:57):
870 I will adjust it, thank you.
871
872 Chairman Forst (01:15:58):
873 Article 11, add to the existing capital reserve, repair, replace, purchase, fire, EMS vehicle. See if the
874 town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000 to be deposited into the repair, replace,
875 purchase, fire, EMS vehicle, the capital reserve fund previously established by 2001 town meeting,
876 this amount to come from taxation. Again, this is to add to a capital reserve to replace the, they got
877 a long name there, but it's the ambulance fund.
878 *Side Note: Name of this fund was corrected to reflect the name of the fund and not the purpose.*
879
880
881 Chairman Forst (01:16:33):
882 I understand. And part of the repair, replace is we have gone to a different kind of ambulance
883 where, correct me if I'm wrong, Chief, but we replaced the chassis this year or last year?
884 When did we replace a chassis in the ambulance?
885 Chief Hempel: Two years ago.
886 Chairman Forst: Anyway, we're getting, we're using the body of the ambulance longer and replacing
887 the chassis so that we're getting more value out of our, we've changed the type of ambulance we
888 have. So that's some of the naming of this is we aren't necessarily getting a whole new ambulance
889 when we're replacing, we're only replacing the chassis of the ambulance and the box is being

890 transferred to another vehicle. So that's part of the long-winded name. Questions or discussion on
891 that? Seeing none.

- 892 • Article 12, add to the existing SPCA replacement fund, see if town will vote to raise
893 appropriate sum of \$10,000 to be deposited in the self-contained breathing apparatus
894 replacement capital reserve established in 2011 town meeting, amount to come from
895 taxation. Discussion on 12. Seeing none.
- 896
- 897 • Article 13. Add to the existing fire radio replacement account, see if the town will vote to
898 raise appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to be deposited into the fire radio replacement capital
899 reserve fund previously established by a 2015 town meeting, amount to come from
900 taxation. Discussion on 13.
- 901
- 902 • Article 14, elected official pay. There's no real tax impact or dollar number attached to that
903 so I'm not going to touch on it. I don't know, does anybody want to touch on it? I can read it
904 and I can't explain it that well. We're not going to hit on this a lot though because this
905 hasn't got any money attached to it and I've got a lot to get through yet. Like a lot.
- 906

907 Vincent Baiocchetti (01:19:11):

908 So, no elected official will get any kind of raise without permission of the town. That includes the
909 board of selectmen, town clerk, town treasurer, moderators. There's been salary increases on
910 elected officials and it hasn't been approved by the town, it just happens.

911

912 Brett Currier (01:19:35):

913 So elected positions that don't get paid, if I'm reading this right, can they buy into this town
914 healthcare system?

915

916 TA Carpenter (01:19:45):

917 Any one of them can, currently. Any elected position has the opportunity to, they have to pay 100%
918 but they can join our pool at the offered price.

919

920 Vincent Baiocchetti (01:19:56):

921 Like you being on the planning board. You're eligible for that, correct. Any elected official can do
922 that, but it has to be paid for by the person.

923 Brett Currier: Okay, thank you.

924

925 Chairman Forst (01:20:14):

- 926 • Article 15 is to increase cemetery trustees, no monetary number.
- 927 • Article 16, adding to the existing town building repair, maintenance, non-capital reserve
928 fund. See if the town will vote to raise appropriate the sum of \$20,000 to be deposited into
929 the town building repair and maintenance non-capital reserve fund. Previously established
930 by a 2010 town meeting and to further name the board of its selectmen agents to expend
931 from said fund. This amount to come from taxation. Discussion on 16. Seeing no hands.
- 932 • Article 17, establish a town forest maintenance fund. See if the town will vote to establish a
933 special forest maintenance fund pursuant to RSA 31-113 and to authorize the placement of
934 any proceeds from the management of town forests up to a total balance of \$25,000 into
935 said fund. Said monies to be allowed to accumulate from year to year and to name the
936 conservation commission as agents to expend from such fund. Discussion on 17.

937

938 Liz Brullot (01:21:33):

939 Just a quick question, Brian. What are these funds used for? To buy conservation land or to buy
940 land that's available to put it under conservation?

941

942 Speaker15 (01:21:49):

943 I think this fund, the idea behind this fund is for management of town forests, which would be kind
944 of what it is.

945 Management and maintenance.

946

947 L Brullot (01:22:08):

948 It says proceeds from the management.

949 Some cutting, clear cutting, they have the ability to do that and the proceeds from that cutting
950 would go into this fund?

951

952 Chairman Forst (01:22:21):

953 Up to \$25,000.

954

955 Rich Harkey (01:22:31):

956 Maybe this isn't the right form for this, but what does the town forest group do?

957

958 Chairman Forst (01:22:52):

959 The conservation commission, they're the ones that would manage our conservation lands, they're
960 the ones that would manage our forests or hire people to manage our forests. I guess this is the
961 best answer I can give you. Trails. This is an establishment of a new fund.

962

963 Unknown speaker (female) (01:23:32):

964 Who wrote it?

965

966 Chairman Forst (01:23:35):

967 Conservation commission. It was recommended by the conservation commission, so I'm assuming
968 they wrote it.

969 Mark.

970

971 Mark Warren (01:23:46):

972 I can speak to it just because the conservation commission came before us. The dilemma that
973 they're having is they need to have a management plan to do cuttings or selective cuttings. And it
974 costs money to create these management plans. And so they're saying we don't actually have
975 resources to do this, but yet we have to charge to really manage these forests. So they came to us
976 with a proposal to say how do we do this by saying we have some funds to work with to create
977 these management plans. We can do these cuts and proceed to go back to the town, but we
978 maintain certain health and money to continue on with the management plans of these categories.

979

980 Thank you, Mark.

981

982 Chairman Forst (01:24:35):

983 Any other discussion on 17? Hearing none.

- 984
- Article 18. Establish, manage, control of invasive species in public water bodies to see if the town will vote to establish an expendable trust fund for the purpose of management, control, and remediation of aquatic invasive species to be known as the public water body reclamation expendable trust fund. And to raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000 to put into this fund, which this amount will come from taxation. Further, name the board of selectmen as agents to expend from such fund. Discussion on 18.
- 985
986
987
988
989
990

991 Rich Harkey (01:25:22):

992 So we have a couple of associations. Are they the only ones that are going to be involved in this, or
993 does this get brought up? Because we've got lots of lakes and ponds in this town. It stands a little
994 narrow down here in the bottom of the explanation.

995

996 TA Carpenter (01:25:39):

997 So can I touch on that?

998

999 Speaker4 (01:25:41):

1000 No, I'm going to hit this one. For years, for years, this town has funded remediation of milfoil in
1001 public waters. There's been a ton of discussion about what is public waters, whether there's public
1002 access, on and on. This is a fund, I think last year or the year previous was the first time we had a
1003 second. It was last year. Historically, it's always been Rocky Pond. And you would see a warrant
1004 article for Rocky Pond for \$1,000. What we're doing now is getting back to more of where we were
1005 that this can be used for any body of water in the town of Gilmanton. Public body of water. I'm
1006 sorry. And we have several. And this gets us back to a point where that money could be used rather
1007 than private organizations, but separate bodies of water requesting an amount of money. Now
1008 we're going to put money into a fund that if somebody requests, the money is there instead of a
1009 private, a separate request each year from different ones. Does that make sense? Liz.

1010

1011 Liz Brullot (01:27:10):

1012 What are the bodies of water that are considered public? We assume public bodies of water have
1013 public access, correct?

1014

1015 Chairman Forst(01:27:17):

1016 That has been a strong point of conversation for many years.

1017

1018 Liz Brullot (01:27:23):

1019 So what are the public bodies of water that are included in this?

1020

1021 Chairman Forst (01:27:28):

1022 That's a question I guess I can't hear an answer.

1023

1024 Unknown speaker (01:27:33):

1025 What about Crystal Lake?

1026

1027 Chairman Forst (01:27:37):

1028 That's who's taking the money. But she's asking what public bodies of water in the town are.

1029 We have ten weeks in town. Are you asking which bodies of water qualify for this?

1030

1031
1032
1033 Vicent Baiocchetti (01:27:52):
1034 Nine out of ten. Nine bodies out of the ten we have. Sawyer Lake is a private property.
1035
1036 Liz Brulotte Rocky Pond does not have public access to my knowledge.
1037
1038 Chairman Forst (01:28:03):
1039 It does.
1040 We have that argument every year. It does have access. It does have public access, not in the town
1041 of Gilmanton. Correct. But it has public access.
1042
1043 Chairman Forst (01:28:26):
1044 Yes. Anyway, any discussion about establishing a fund with \$25,000?
1045
1046 Laura Steffen (01:28:35):
1047 Yes. Laura Steffen. Rocky Pond, it's been like around a \$1,000 price point in the past. So how are we
1048 going from \$1,000 to \$25,000? Why are we doing that?
1049
1050 Chairman Forst (01:28:49):
1051 This is where I'll let you... Heather.
1052
1053 TA Carpenter (01:28:55):
1054 There was discussion about how much Shellcamp were going to be asking for. They got state
1055 funding last year and paid 100% of it. The concern is only around the public access point. They're
1056 currently asking, I believe, \$7,500.
1057 If you're establishing a fund, you want to make sure that other public bodies can come to ask for
1058 the money as well. So that's why we picked \$25,000. We don't know, if there are any other
1059 concerns out there, so essentially, we're just establishing a fund for future use if other
1060 opportunities arise for the milfoil to...
1061
1062 Laura Steffen (01:29:31):
1063 So it is the town's responsibility to deal with milfoil?
1064
1065 TA Carpenter (01:29:36):
1066 It depends on who's perspective, right? The town has taken the stance that you have always
1067 approved a thousand dollars for Rocky Pond. Right. It used to be more inclusive to all public
1068 waterbodies.
1069
1070 Laura Steffen (01:29:50):
1071 But if there's 10 or 10 out of 11... Nine out of 10. 10,000 instead of 25,000.
1072
1073 TA Carpenter (01:29:56):
1074 So again, it depends on what grant they can get from the state. They generally do accept, if they
1075 find it and tell you that there's milfoil in it and you've been accepted for the grant, they will pay
1076 100% of the first year and then go from there. Okay. So if you say you need \$7,500 just this year for
1077 shopping, and you only need \$1,000 for Rocky Pond, and we only put those funds... We have to

1078 come to you next year again and ask for the milfoil money. And I can't call it milfoil. I'm sorry. This is
1079 a mouthful. It really is. The state requires this type of language. Or I would call it milfoil all day long.
1080
1081 Brett Currier(01:30:38):
1082 So, this fund is 25 grand. What would you say to your slide grant this year? Does 20 stays in it and
1083 roll over? And gets paid interest with all the...
1084
1085 Chairman Forst (01:30:50):
1086 Yep. Okay. This would be the same idea as all of our capital reserves.
1087
1088 Brett Currier (01:30:56):
1089 Except the selectman can spend it.
1090
1091 Chairman Forst (01:30:57):
1092 Correct. Okay. Well, we have certain reserves they can't expend now.
1093
1094 Liz Brulotte (01:31:05):
1095 Brian?
1096 Is there a limit to how much they can expend each year?
1097
1098 Speaker4 (01:31:14):
1099 No, they are agents to expend.
1100
1101 Liz Brulotte 01:31:16):
1102 However much?
1103
1104 Chairman Forst (01:31:18):
1105 Well, whatever's in it.
1106
1107 Grace Sisti (01:31:32):
1108 I'm just clarifying this whole thing. I imagine it has to be approved before the money is given?
1109
1110 Vincent Baiocchetti (01:31:36):
1111 Yes.
1112
1113 Chairman Forst (01:31:42):
1114 Okay. I'm going to move on. We're going to get into what is defined now as outside agencies.
1115 • Article 19 is by petition to support the Gilmanton Year-Round Library to see if the town will
1116 vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$47,100 for partial funding of the operating
1117 expenses of the Gilmanton Year-Round Library for fiscal year 2024. This amount would
1118 come from taxation. Discussion on 19.
1119
1120 Christine Harkey (01:32:15):
1121 Does my question get directed to you for the rolling article for this? Or same thing?
1122
1123 Chairman Forst (01:32:20):
1124 Yes, the Budget Committee has to make a recommendation.

1125

1126 Christine Harkey (01:32:23):

1127 So my question is, for a library association, why is the town funding approximately 50% of the
1128 annual operating budget for the year-round library when they have enough money to support
1129 themselves at 100%?

1130

1131 Chairman Forst (01:32:52):

1132 The Gilmanton Year-Round Library has been asking the town for assistance with their funding since
1133 their inception. We ask that they show us their budget. I have a copy of it. The Budget Committee
1134 has a copy. They ask for the taxpayers to assist with the funding of the library. This is by petition. It
1135 is not something the town has placed here. So I guess if you were to question why they're asking for
1136 it versus doing it out of their own budget, I would attend one of their meetings and ask them.

1137

1138 Christine Harkey (01:33:43):

1139 I attend all of them.

1140 And I guess that's the big question. So I looked at the budget and if anyone wants to speak
1141 specifically about it, there is over \$400,000 they have in financial assets. I know that there is an
1142 endowment, although it doesn't indicate endowed funds on their 990. I'm assuming it's around
1143 \$275,000, which means unencumbered funds of approximately \$145,600. So with those funds in
1144 the coffers, why would the town end only initiatives for fundraising listed on the budget of \$3,000
1145 for a nonprofit, which I happen to have quite a bit of knowledge about. Why would the town, for a
1146 nonprofit organization, fund 50% of their budget? I find this extraordinarily perplexing when it is
1147 not...

1148

1149 Chairman Forst (01:34:59):

1150 And I guess my question to you is, this is a petition warrant article.

1151

1152 Christine Harkey (01:35:07):

1153 I really think everyone should have facts to make it because the budget does not... I don't even
1154 know what this is. This is not a budget. It's a list of expenses. And it's some kind of extrapolation of
1155 financial assets on the back. It doesn't net out the difference. And these are all round numbers, so
1156 I'm not sure this would be an audited dream to come in and investigate. I don't know a budget
1157 that's based on holistic numbers. But I think we just need to understand generally why a nonprofit
1158 would be asking year over year for approximately 50% of their budget. To me, that's a problem with
1159 a nonprofit that's not able to raise their own funds.

1160

1161 Chairman Forst (01:35:55):

1162 Okay. I've got competition on two hands. Which one of you wants to go first?

1163

1164 Unknown Speaker (01:35:60):

1165 I want to go last.

1166

1167

1168 Chris Schlage (01:36:08):

1169 And just to speak to the budget and to explain the assets of the investments, we do have the utility
1170 fund, which is approximately \$270,000. We're very limited on how we can spend that. We can

1171 spend only the earnings, which would include the dividends and the interest. And we can spend to
1172 a maximum of 4.5% of the average principal over the earliest years.

1173 So that amount isn't needed in the budget. And that's what the use is for our request.

1174 We also have in that total number, the operating funds that we're looking to have until, you know,
1175 the fiscal year.

1176 We have also a donor who gave us \$6,200 that is a provision for putting in an electric boiler
1177 because it was something that the donor wanted us to do.

1178 We have not moved on that yet. We also have in there about \$20,000 for an enhanced children's
1179 fund that it was doing by the NARA family. And those are programs over and above children can
1180 normally do in our budget.

1181 And we do have a capital reserve of \$62,000, which we feel is responsible.

1182 At some point we'll have to replace the roof, the carpets, technology, computers, things like that.

1183 So does that help explain?

1184

1185 Christine Harkey (01:38:14):

1186 Not really, because there's only a line item for solicitation of funds. No packing, no plan for grants
1187 for the year, only \$3,000 for initiatives to raise funds, no payoffs, no independent fundraising. It's
1188 passive fundraising. And it's still, for a nonprofit organization, this is the eighth largest expense
1189 request out of the 19 for everything on the table for the town. And it's not, I mean, programs are
1190 extraordinarily limited, there's nothing in need, there's nothing for adults. Maybe we could get
1191 down into the granular here. 50% is very extraordinary.

1192

1193 Chairman Forst 01:38:55):

1194 Again, and I'm going to ask... This is not a deliberative session. This is a public hearing.

1195

1196 Christine Harkney (39:05):

1197 But the information is not...

1198

1199 Chairman Forst (01:39:08):

1200 Excuse me. You're fairly passionate about this, I understand that. I need to get through two budgets
1201 tonight.

1202

1203 Christine Harkey (01:39:19):

1204 That's fine. I rest my peace, but I think it's just... I've spoken at that point to the library thinking
1205 there would be other initiatives to do such.

1206 And you could not get any detail of information at all on what were available funds. So, if you didn't
1207 realize there were available funds, you would say that was necessary.

1208

1209 Chairman Forst: And I encourage you to, at deliberative session, where you can do something about
1210 this.

1211

1212 Christine Harkey: But looking at the entire overall 19-line items here, for this to be the eighth from
1213 the town, it's extremely...It's a big ask for the town to carry the weight of a non-profit that doesn't
1214 provide services to the entire community.

1215 Grace Sisti: And that's why it's a petition.

1216

1217 Steve Bedard (01:40:10):

1218 Did she just say it doesn't provide services to the town? No, I didn't. Where'd you say that?
1219
1220 Speaker15 (01:40:15):
1221 It doesn't have to help programs in the evening to the entire community. It doesn't.
1222
1223 Speaker4 (01:40:21):
1224 Adam, Mark asked to be last, so...
1225
1226 Grace Sisti (01:40:24):
1227 I just want to say one thing to that. I did go to an adult program last night.
1228
1229 Adam Mini: We're talking qualitatively. This is not a service meeting.
1230
1231 Mark Sisti (01:40:56):
1232 Mark, you said you wanted the final word, so...
1233 I look forward to this debate at the deliberative session. And there are more people here than have
1234 been at the deliberative session for the last five years.
1235
1236 Chairman Forst (01:41:13):
1237 But... There's more people here than I've ever had at a public hearing.
1238 I mean, your points are well taken, but they should be advocated in advance.
1239
1240 Steve Bedard (01:41:33):
1241 So, we're here to give you our opinions about what the budget committee should do. There are a
1242 whole bunch of us here tonight who support the library, who support the library to build it without
1243 taxpayers' money. To only help support, by about 50-50%, to continue the public library in the town
1244 of Gilmanton. And that's why we're here.
1245
1246 Chairman Forst (01:41:55):
1247 Okay. I'm going to move on

- 1248 • Article 20. Support the Gilmanton Fourth of July Association. See if the town will vote to
1249 raise and appropriate the sum of \$6,500 to support the Gilmanton Fourth of July
1250 Association. A community organization for the continuation of Gilmanton's Fourth of July
1251 parade, fireworks, and other events. This amount to come from taxation. Discussion of
1252 questions on Article 20. Seeing none
- 1253 • Article 21. Support the Gilmanton Youth Organization. See if the town will vote to raise and
1254 appropriate the sum of \$5,500 for the purpose of supporting the Gilmanton Youth
1255 Organization, GYO. A recognized 501C3 charitable organization that has operated for the
1256 express purpose of organizing, administering high quality sports programs for the school-
1257 age children in the town of Gilmanton, as well as the continued operation, maintenance,
1258 and development of GYO Park. This amount to come from taxation. Discussion on Article 21.
1259 Seeing none
- 1260 • Article 22. Support the Gilmanton Snowmobile Association. See if the town will vote to raise
1261 and appropriate the sum of \$4,000 for the purpose of supporting the Gilmanton
1262 Snowmobile Association, for the purpose of maintaining trails that are open to the public in
1263 a safe condition for use by snowmobiles, hikers, cross-country skiers, and equestrians in the

- 1264 town of Gilmanton. This amount to come from taxation. Discussion on Article 22. Seeing
1265 none
- 1266 • Article 23. Support the Gilmanton Ironworks Private Library. See if the town will vote to
1267 raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,000 for the purpose of supporting the Gilmanton
1268 Ironworks Library. A recognized 501C3 charitable organization. This amount to come from
1269 taxation. Discussion on Article 23. Seeing none
 - 1270 • Article 24. Support New Beginnings Without Violence and Abuse. See if the town will vote
1271 to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,000 for the purpose of supporting New Beginnings
1272 Without Violence and Abuse, which provides 24-hour crisis support, operates a shelter, and
1273 provides counseling for domestic sexual assault victims. This amount to come from taxation.
1274 Discussion on Article 24. Seeing none
 - 1275
 - 1276 • Article 25. Support the Community Action Program to see if the town will vote to raise and
1277 appropriate the sum of \$5,000 for the continuation of services to low-income residents of
1278 Gilmanton. Through the Laconia Area Center of Community Action Program, Belknap-
1279 Marimack Counties Incorporated, this amount to come from taxation. Discussion of
1280 questions on Article 25. Seeing none
 - 1281
 - 1282 • Article 26. Support the Lakes Region Mental Health Center. See if the town will vote to raise
1283 and appropriate the sum of \$7,500 to support the Lakes Region Mental Health Center,
1284 LRMHC, formerly known as Genesis, which provides integrated mental and physical health
1285 care to area residents with mental illness. This amount to come from taxation. Discussion on
1286 Article 26. Comments, questions?
 - 1287
 - 1288 • Article 27. Support Court Appointed Special Advocates CASA of New Hampshire. See if the
1289 town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,000 for the purpose of supporting the
1290 Court Appointed Special Advocates CASA of New Hampshire. This amount to come from
1291 taxation. Any discussion on Article 27.

1292 Questions about any of the Warrant Articles, all the Warren Articles? Seeing none, that
1293 concludes the presentation.

1294 I'm going to take a brief recess, but what I would like to mention right now before you all vacate
1295 the building is that we are going to present a school budget that as we've spent almost an hour
1296 and 15 minutes on, on this town budget that was up \$698,000, and we've heard much comment
1297 about that. In a few minutes, I'm going to present you with your school budget proposed for the
1298 2024-25 annual year, which is up \$1.538 million.

1299 So I'd really like everybody that has had input about the town to, we're going to take a brief
1300 recess, so if anybody needs to use the bathroom or what have you, and then I'm going to get
1301 into the presentation of the school budget, and I would appreciate it if we could get input on
1302 that so we know what direction to go also. Okay? Thank you.

1303

1304 Recess: Okay, we'll be back at 10 minutes, at 8 o'clock.

1305 **School Budget Public Hearing**

1306

1307

1308 Okay. Yep, I did. Okay. Now we are going to get in the presentation of the school budget. As I
1309 highlighted before the town budget, the school budget is proposed this year. Give me just a
1310 minute. The school budget is proposed this year in the amount of \$14,176,476, which is an

1311 increase over the previous year of \$1,538,548. When we want to talk about tax rates, and this is
1312 not a speech against the school or anything like that, your town tax rate in 2023 was \$4.56. Your
1313 school was \$15.51. As we sat here and discussed the town budget, if you increase by
1314 \$1,500,000, you're going to see a pretty substantial increase in that tax rate for the school also.
1315 I'll get, I assume most of you have sheets on the school. I'm going to present it fairly similar to
1316 the town in that I will present the operating budget of the school, and we'll take questions,
1317 comments, and then we'll present the Warrent article.
1318

1319 Speaker 1 (01:49:52):

1320 I'll give you a few examples.
1321

1322 Speaker4 (01:49:54):

- 1323 • Regular education this year is being presented at \$7,353,546, an increase of about
1324 \$922,741. This is the biggest piece of the increase. A lot of that increase is due to tuition at
1325 Gilford High School. Those numbers are up this year, not so much the enrollment numbers,
1326 but the number that Gilford is giving us as a cost per student number.
1327
- 1328 • Special education, the line item on that is 876-440, \$876,440. That's up \$116,510 over the
1329 previous year, and that is for the placement of a special education student. Yep.
1330

1331 Unknown Speaker:

1332 Can you tell us what page you are on, we can't seem to follow.
1333

1334 Chairman Forst (01:51:09):

1335 Financial summary page one.

1336 No. Is everybody? Hey, I've sat here and done it, so I understand. You got where I'm at?
1337

1338 Public (01:51:35):

1339 Yes.
1340

1341 Chairman Forst (01:51:39):

- 1342 • Co-curricular is at \$88,760, an increase of \$1,900. My favorite line stays the same. I can hear
1343 the giggling of those who know me.
- 1344 • Guidance is at \$157,542, an increase of \$6,928.
- 1345 • Health is at \$61,210, an increase of \$500.
- 1346 • Psychological is at \$82,020, an increase of \$21,710.
- 1347 • Speech is at \$62,916, an increase of \$20,000.
- 1348 • Physical and occupational therapy is at \$103,060, which is a flat line.
- 1349 • Instructional development in the amount of \$54,331, a \$581 increase.
- 1350 • The library in the amount of \$83,042, a \$3,229 increase.
- 1351 • Technology in the amount of \$212,256, a \$30,998 increase.
- 1352 • School board in the amount of \$77,364, an increase of \$17,962.
- 1353 • Superintendent line in the amount of \$174,493, an increase of \$15,393.
- 1354 • Student support services in the amount of \$145,986, a \$1,462 increase.
- 1355 • Principal's office in the amount of \$299,642, which is a reduction of \$2,134.
- 1356 • Fiscal services in the amount of \$194,313, a \$5,822 increase.

- 1357 • Operation to plant in the amount of \$555,787, a decrease of \$33,642.
 - 1358 • Transportation in the amount of \$624,350, an increase of \$37,141.
 - 1359 • Support services and benefits in the amount of \$2,336,451, an increase of \$374,775.
 - 1360 • Food service district support in the amount of \$45,000.
 - 1361 • Debt service in the amount of \$113,690, which is down \$4,080 from the previous year.
 - 1362 • The amount of grants stands at \$250,000.
 - 1363 • And the food service fund is at \$251,547, an increase of \$19,072.
- 1364 A total proposed budget of \$14,203,747. Look at that, I got all the way through it. Now, I would...
- 1365

1366 Sandie MacDonald-Finance Administrator Gilmanton School (01:55:41):

1367 Brian, the columns that you read were the difference between the admin, request, and the total
1368 request, you should have read one more column over.

1369 Chairman Forst: That would have been really good to catch me on the first one.

1370

1371 Sandie. MacDonald: I asked Mr. Beasley to interrupt you, but he said no.

1372 Chairman Forst: So, I screwed all of that up.

1373

1374 Anne Kirby (01:55:59):

1375 So, the Board recommended what we're using for a proposed budget.

1376

1377 Sandie MacDonald (01:56:14):

1378 Yeah.

1379

1380 Chairman Forst (01:56:18):

1381 Okay. So, I saw a few hands. Mr. Currier

1382

1383 Brett Currier (01:56:26):

1384 How many people, how many children, students, go to Gilford? And what is the cost, all the costs
1385 associated with Gilford High School students? Out of the \$1 million.

1386

1387 Bruce Beasley (01:56:43):

1388 Right, if you look on page two, two pages beyond where Brian presented, and you're looking in the
1389 regular ed cost center, down on line 33, you'll see tuition for the Gilford area agreement, 188.

1390 That's, that's 188 students. And the board recommended, recommended cost is \$4,530,988.

1391

1392

1393 Bruce Beasley (01:58:01):

1394 If you look on that same line, you're going to go back to what was voted in 23, 24, 300, 3.9 million,
1395 let's say, and the new cost is 4.6 million. So it's about a \$600,000 increase. About \$3,000 per
1396 student. Increase, yes. Increase.

1397

1398 Chairman Forst (01:58:22):

1399 In Gilford tuition.

1400

1401 Brett Currier (01:58:28):

1402 How many and kids are in Gilmanton? 370. 370?

1403

1404 Public (01:58:45):
1405 Yeah.
1406
1407 Brett Currier (01:58:46):
1408 Is that accurate?
1409
1410 Public (01:58:48):
1411 Yeah.
1412
1413 Chairman Forst (01:59:02):
1414 Yeah. Back to our original discussion at the beginning. One at a time. Names if we please...
1415
1416 Brett Currier (01:59:15):
1417 It costs more. If my math is correct, it costs more for us to teach our kindergarten than it does to
1418 send a high school kid to Gilford. There's something wrong with the math here. I don't know what it
1419 is, but if you figure the student population can get 10 million, it's \$27,000 to teach your kid in
1420 kindergarten. That's a lot of money going in.
1421
1422 Anne Kirby- Committee Member (01:59:44):
1423 The only... I don't... I hear what you're saying loud and clear. The only thing I would suggest is you
1424 take the 4 million out. I think things like this office of the superintendent possibly could be split
1425 amongst both populations. Otherwise, you're pretty accurate.
1426
1427 Brett Currier (02:00:02):
1428 That's a lot of money.
1429
1430 Public (02:00:04):
1431 I would assume in Gilford, we're paying more for teachers, whereas in Gilmanton, we have building
1432 expenses. Right?
1433
1434 Chairman Forst (02:00:14):
1435 The lady beside you had her... Susan.
1436
1437 Susan Farrow (02:00:17): Okay. I kind of looked a few things up when I saw this budget. By the way,
1438 I love kids and teachers. But now I understand it's 370 students. I had come up with about 365
1439 students here. I looked at the statutes across the country, the ratio of number of teachers to the
1440 number of students. Vermont has a ratio, is number one, in the amount of teachers they have for
1441 their students. They have one teacher every 10 and a half children in Vermont. They're number one
1442 in the country. The average, the highest in the country, is one teacher per 22.59 children. New
1443 Hampshire rates as number six in the best public schools in the country. Vermont is above us there.
1444 The average in the U.S. is basically 15.3 students per teacher. Our school has 11 students per
1445 teacher. So when we're talking about the expenses, the most expensive things that we have to pay
1446 for, our people, the benefits, the retirements, the insurance, and everything. And we are using, we
1447 have just 11, we only have 300, I thought it was 364, we have 370 children. With that ratio, so I'm
1448 just saying we may be a little bit heavy on the number of teachers, which again are our biggest
1449 expense going forward always between retirement and everything else in comparison to the
1450 majority of the country.

1451
1452 **Laura Steffan** (02:02:34):
1453 And that's not even including support staff, no.
1454 There's a whole list of support here. You're looking at 28 teachers for 370 students. That's the
1455 problem. That's a big part of the issue.
1456
1457 Chairman Forst (02:02:56):
1458 Any other? People may have put their hands up. I didn't catch everybody.
1459
1460 Christine Harkey (02:03:03):
1461 Of the student population, what, and I was trying to find if you're reading it. What is the number of
1462 students for special education?
1463 In a sense, we need more teachers for our special education. The number, so if there's 370
1464 something, how many students are special education?
1465
1466 Nancy Fournier-Student Services (02:03:29):
1467 At the elementary school, I would say about 35.
1468
1469 Public (02:03:35):
1470 Okay, so 10%, a little under 10%. Yes.
1471
1472 Public (02:03:45):
1473 With three case managers of power of speech. So the extra teachers, we're not even talking about
1474 the regularized, the general ed teachers.
1475
1476 Christine Harkey (02:04:11):
1477 Do we get charged a proportionate share of the fixed expenses for the high school? I would imagine
1478 we do. Right. Yeah. There's already a cost.
1479
1480 Public (02:04:23):
1481 Right. Right. Yeah, that went up like, what is that, like 15% goes up in a year?
1482
1483 Chairman Forst (02:04:30):
1484 Well, and there's a project they're trying to do this year, or they're proposing to do at the school in
1485 Gilford. We have to pay a percentage of that per our area agreement. These were all things that-
1486
1487 Christine Harkey (02:04:48):
1488 How many years into the contract are we? One?
1489 Chairman Forst: Yeah. Year one of 13.
1490
1491 L Steffen (02:04:55):
1492 12, 13. Yeah, somehow we got a 13 year contract. I was here. The voters did it.
1493
1494 Christine Harkey (02:05:07):
1495 And that's something we have nothing we can do about that. The whole Gilford portion- That might
1496 be a discussion for somewhere other than the public hearing.
1497

1498 Chairman Forst (02:05:14):
1499 Right. Yeah, we have nothing we can do on the budget side for that.
1500
1501 Brett Currier (02:05:23):
1502 I've been hearing that the state is starting to get sued for different towns for their portion. And are
1503 they, does anybody know if they're going to start getting in money to help with this stuff?
1504
1505 Ron Le cleric (02:05:36):
1506 That'll be through two or three years before that happens. You know, it'll be- Well, you know, it'll
1507 end up in the Supreme Court. The legislature will bring it to the court. They've already appealed
1508 about it, right?
1509
1510 Joshua Mann (02:05:48):
1511 They've already filed an appeal to the state.
1512
1513 Speaker4 (02:05:56):
1514 So I guess the answer to that is maybe not.
1515
1516 Bruce Beasley (02:06:04):
1517 The decision in the court level was that the state needed to pay more tuition,
1518 it been created in the school plan. But it's appealed to the local courts, and as Ron is sharing, that's
1519 going to take years before that's resolved. What the state pays the tuition, what they pay the
1520 schools in adequacy for adequate education for a student is \$6,000.
1521 Ron Leclerc: So it's, right now it's at \$4,100 per regular kid, and they throw in some additional
1522 money for special education. Kids have been identified with special needs, and some other factors
1523 have-
1524 Bruce Beasley: So it does fall back onto the local government, right? Can I just take a minute to take
1525 the floor? My name is Bruce Beasley, for those of you who do not know me, I'm the superintendent
1526 of the school here in Gilmanton. And I understand that the budget is up. There are three things that
1527 are significantly impacting your budget.
1528
1529 Speaker5 (02:07:09):
1530 One being the tuition rate to go to is up \$600,000. One being that anything to do with insurance
1531 costs, the rates increase in both schools, Gilford and in Gilmanton. So when you see the fixed costs,
1532 you'll see an increase there. And then you're also going to see an increase in the special education
1533 line, as has been shared. And so it's really our contract with our teachers, right? It's the tuition rate
1534 to Gilford, and it's special ed costs.
1535 And when you make decisions, and I understand that the budget is where it is,
1536 but also understand that this is supporting a program that has really been successful over the years.
1537 When you talk about the statistics in regards to New Hampshire in education, the recognition that
1538 the Gilmanton School has in regards to being a Gilmanton School, in the top 40 percent of the
1539 world reported in New Hampshire, all those things.
1540 They're wonderful things, but they come from the efforts of the staff, your teachers, your support
1541 staff, your class sizes.
1542 And that's really what you're going to have to discuss, what is the product that you really want to
1543 have in your Gilmanton school?

1544 Because we get a tuition bill from Gilford. We have representation on the Gilford board, which we
1545 should, you know, the area agreement calls for us to have representation. We have three board
1546 members that sit on the Gilford board.
1547 They develop that budget. Once that budget is developed, then we get a cost per pupil that comes
1548 to us. So we negotiate an agreement with the teachers union. That is what we voted on last year.
1549 So all of those things are costs that we have.
1550 The only place that we can go when we talk about the Gilmanton budget is to look at your local
1551 school and what that looks like at this point.
1552 In terms of staffing, in terms of support, in terms of, you know, so many things.
1553 It's that portion of the budget that sits here, is what we have control over.
1554
1555 Rich Harkey (02:09:42):
1556 Sure. So, again, we're talking back on the state bill of no rights. So, Gilford and Gilmanton are right
1557 next to each other on the road. So it looks to me like Gilford benefits from the education rate,
1558 which is 4.72, and we are 15.51 and going up.
1559
1560 Bruce Beasley: Well, I think that that has to do with your valuations.
1561 Right. I mean, so there are a lot of communities around with a lot of weight on property. So that
1562 changes a lot of different, you know, their taxation.
1563
1564 Rich Harkey (02:10:23):
1565 We're all talking about the global education rate. Yes. Not the whole valuation of what that's about.
1566
1567 Bruce Beasley (02:10:31):
1568 But as you discuss and you make recommendations to the budget committee that will, that, you
1569 know, when they finalize their recommendations in regards to the budget, know that we can tweak
1570 the number of students at Gilford, but we're not going to tweak the cost per student that we have.
1571 And know that if we make reductions, the place that we're going to have to, we're going to look at
1572 making those, if it's in an IEP in special education, we've got to pay that cost associated with that,
1573 whether it's speech services or occupational therapy, things like that. We have to pay those costs.
1574 So where the changes are going to come will be in the Gilmanton school itself, the class sizes, the
1575 number of support staff that work with students and things like that. And that's, that's what the
1576 voters will determine. What does that look like?
1577
1578 Rich Harkey (02:11:33):
1579 So is there any good deal on that tuition? I hear the word tuition. But is it, what is it for students?
1580 Bruce Beasley: Well, I will only tell you, and I, there are, I get tuition information from, because I
1581 have a student that is pending prospect amount on a, it's not on a open enrollment stuff that you
1582 can hear about.
1583 It's a, it's a different component that they are allowed to attend there.
1584 And their tuition rate for that student is similar, if not higher than the Gilford program.
1585 So, you know, there's this conversation about open enrollment, what's that look like, you know,
1586 kind of thing. The tuition rate for that one student in Alton is higher than what we pay for our
1587 students to go to Gilford. But it's under something different than open enrollment.
1588 Rich Harkey: How much is that?
1589
1590 Chairman Forst: (02:12:37):

1591 Twenty-four thousand one hundred one dollars.
1592
1593 Rich Harkey (02:12:42):
1594 And how much was that the year before?
1595
1596 Chairman Forst(02:12:47):
1597 Twenty-one, two seventy-four.
1598
1599 B. Beasley (02:12:54):
1600 About three thousand dollars difference per student.
1601
1602 Cody O' Leary- Is the almost \$200,000 under support service in insurance benefits is that increase
1603 or is that a change in structure?
1604
1605 Chairman Forst (02:13:01):
1606 I'll give it a shot. And if I'm wrong, you guys can correct me. I don't believe there's a change in the
1607 structure of benefits. I believe there's an increase in the cost of benefits. And when you look at the
1608 school versus the town, there is a much larger pool of people pulling on those benefits than there is
1609 on the town side. No, it's more money.
1610
1611 S. MacDonald (02:13:51):
1612 The insurance cost went up.
1613
1614 Chairman Forst (02:13:53):
1615 It went up at what percentage?
1616
1617 Anne Kirby (02:13:57):
1618 Fourteen, for health trust. Ten percent for Cigna that to the teachers.
1619 Cody O' Leary-Thank you.
1620
1621 Chairman Forst (02:14:03):
1622 So, it's pretty substantial.
1623
1624 C. O'Leary (02:14:07):
1625 Oh yeah, I'm just asking where it's from.
1626
1627 L Steffen (02:14:28):
1628 Under capital and expendable trust, there's a category called high school.
1629
1630 Chairman Forst (02:14:36):
1631 Correct.
1632
1633 L. Steffen (02:14:37):
1634 For \$42,000. What is that? You don't have a high school award?
1635
1636 Chairman Forst (02:14:46):
1637 That is a fund that was established to pay tuition.

1638 In other words, when we make a budget, it is budgeted for 188 students to go to Gilford. That
1639 budget is going to go into effect in July. This budget we're talking about doesn't operate the same
1640 as the town. The town is a December to January. The school is a June to July. So, if three students
1641 move into town... That fund was established to try to keep the budget in sync and say, here's where
1642 you can go to get the monies to educate three extra students. However, when we start looking at
1643 \$24,000 a year versus, I think when that was established, we were three students at \$18,000 to get
1644 to the 45, which was done a few years back. I don't know that that now would do three students,
1645 which we originally had hoped for. But that is the purpose of that fund.

1646
1647 Brett Currier (02:16:02):
1648 I guess I'm trying to find out the superintendent. If the Gilmanton School is going up, their fees,
1649 their costs are going up \$900,000 a year. Somebody's got to pay attention to that and realize that
1650 whether you've got 10 kids in the classroom and that's the Blue Ribbon School, or you have to
1651 change your way because the taxpayer can't support it, we've got to go to 12 and 13 and still keep
1652 the school going because Gilmanton residents can definitely not afford a million and a half dollar
1653 increase in one year. In any, either the town hall or the school side. So somebody's got to be
1654 thinking outside the box and not just say, yeah, we're going to spend all this money to get a school
1655 in the school, we're going to get an old school.

1656
1657 Bruce Beasley (02:16:57):
1658 But I think that off the top of my head, I think that the regular ed budget that Gilmanton went up
1659 \$156,000 relates to staffing.

1660
1661 S. MacDonald-
1662 Or in general. The rest of that \$802,000 is tuition.

1663
1664 Brett Currier (02:17:18):
1665 Tuition to where? To Gilford.

1666
1667 L Steffen (02:17:20):
1668 But Gilford didn't go up \$800,000, it went up.

1669
1670 Brett Currier (02:17:23):
1671 I thought Gilford went up \$600,000.

1672
1673 S. MacDonald (02:17:31): Of the \$800,000, that regular ed went up \$616,336,000 was to Gilford.
1674 Plus, another \$30,000 for their bond. So the regular ed budget went up \$802,191. Of that, \$616,366
1675 was tuition. And \$29,328 was bond. So the rest of that is \$156,000. That's how much regular ed at
1676 Gilmanton went up.

1677 Brett Currier: So where did the one and a half million come from?

1678
1679 Chairman Forst (02:18:03):
1680 Is it a collective of all of the increases that I read?

1681 Brett Currier: So that's going to keep happening?

1682
1683 Chairman Forst (02:18:15):
1684 Unless changes are made, yes. Bianca.

1685

1686 Bianca Weber (02:18:21):

1687 Just speaking as a resident, I acknowledge everything is up. But to tell people they don't have
1688 children in the schools, if you want to keep attracting families that have, my husband's a veteran
1689 and we came here and we both worked full time, we support a lot in the school, we volunteer a lot.
1690 We came here because it's a blue-ribbon school, because of the 11 or 12 ratios, and because of the
1691 Gilford High School. We moved back to New Hampshire, and we could have gone anywhere. We
1692 had a 20-mile radius from where our jobs were, and we came here. And if you want to keep
1693 attracting families like ours, you have to invest in the school here. Or else we don't need to pay the
1694 taxes because I would leave the area.

1695

1696 Sarah Benoit (02:19:10):

1697 I'm also a parent of a child with special ed needs who doesn't fit in the main school very well. I
1698 didn't want to say or do what Bianca said. I'm just going to get my words out. I think the community
1699 really needs to, it is a huge topic. It is hard to live here when you count pennies. And I think people
1700 without the kids in the community really need to get more involved in the school. I'm the only one
1701 at every school board meeting. I'm the only one. The teachers attend and they log on, but there's
1702 nobody, there's no involvement. You don't hear all the classes and everything that is going on. They
1703 just see the numbers. They don't like what is going on. So, get out there and tell your neighbors,
1704 you can zoom in, you can call and you don't have to attend. I work right till six and I zoom right on. I
1705 just wish people would get more involved because it's going to hurt. You want to cut that out, it's
1706 going to hurt kids like mine.

1707

1708 Susan Farrow (02:20:04):

1709 So how would a person, you know, that I don't have kids in the school system, how would that help
1710 our issue with, and I understand what you are saying, with what your kids need, how does that help
1711 our issue with being able to pay for this? You know what I mean? How is it attractive to other
1712 people to have a great school system, but how do you do it? We just don't know how to pay for it.

1713

1714 Bianca Weber: (02:20:35):

1715 What would you be able to pay for if we left the area because the school didn't work out? I'm
1716 sorry. How would you pay if you lost one of your taxpayers, through a foreclosure, or not
1717 foreclosure, but by selling and then someone couldn't afford the taxes. You won't have to the tax
1718 base there either.

1719

1720 Chairman Forst (02:20:58):

1721 And I think all of that discussion doesn't necessarily help us understand where to go with the
1722 budget, except for that it's a large increase, and I wanted to make sure that people understood
1723 that, and a big piece of that increase is a little out of our control because it's Gilford. And I think as
1724 Bruce tried to, I think he explained it well, if we cut this budget a lot, I'm not saying there's no place
1725 to cut, but if we cut it a lot, the impact will be felt locally at our school right here in Gilmanton, and
1726 not felt with Gilford, because we're contracted to tuition and students there. So that's the
1727 discussion, I guess, is do you, and that's why I'm glad we've got a room full of people tonight. This is
1728 the first time I've seen it. You know, I've sat here a lot of years that we've had this much input from
1729 the public about a budget, so it's kind of a sign to me about what is going on. But, you know, it's a
1730 double-edged sword. We're either going to cut the budget, and the school board and the
1731 administration is going to have to figure out how to address it, whether it's larger class sizes,

1732 whatever it is, but we can't adjust the amount of students and the cost of those students going to
1733 Gilford.

1734 Alec, I didn't see your hand.

1735

1736 Alec Bass (02:22:51):

1737 No, that's all right. I just wanted to make sure. You previously said there was a 1 to 11 ratio. 11 to 1.
1738 11 to 1. And that was with 364 students and 28 teachers. That was with 364, my calculation was 27.
1739

1740 Anne Kirby (02:23:09):

1741 No. No. No, she took the money and divided the total budget.

1742 Alec Bass: Oh, I see. That's where that came from. Thank you.

1743 Anne Kirby: Yeah. There are different ways to calculate.

1744

1745 Chairman (02:23:21):

1746 I'm going to go with Adam, and then I'll work my way back across. Brian, I think the statement's
1747 true, that you... And I actually said that in Gilford when I sat on the school board, that, I think you
1748 said, for us to deliver a flat budget, you guys all said it to them in the room. As you understand,
1749 your increases, we have to start cutting. As soon as you deliver a flat budget in our taxpayers, your
1750 increases follow the cut. Reminding them of that, the only thing I would say, you have done this
1751 historically the last few years, and I think it's a gamble, and I don't think it's a bad gamble, which is
1752 you just set aside a smaller number of students, rejected students. All you do is based on what you
1753 know. We have, that's the one time in TV your enrollment is 188. You might say, let's say 185, 184,
1754 because you always have a 42, and we have historically never come up to the number that was the
1755 budget. Now, I understand that is a risk. We can always take it every year, but the worst-case
1756 scenario is the message you could be sending is, to the school district is, you're not saying no to
1757 that. If cuts go deep enough, they can kind of assume, pull back the throttle a little bit until they
1758 know the enrollment is down, and then they can lower it back. So just a thought, I think you're
1759 approaching your capacity is solid, in my opinion. I think it's the best place to be able to that
1760 number, and you always have that trust fund to pull back on. So it's a whole thing, but it's enough
1761 to get you somewhere closer to that.

1762

1763 Bruce Beasley (02:24:51):

1764 If I can just jump in on what Adam is sharing. The 188 students is calculated by dropping off our
1765 seniors at Gilford High School and moving our eighth graders up into the high school.
1766 And that's how many students, as we develop this budget, we anticipate will be at Gilford High
1767 School. Now, some of those students will, homeschool, some will charter school, some of our
1768 eighth graders may not go to Gilford, they may go to Bishop Brady. There are reasons that all of our
1769 eighth graders don't go, or somebody homeschooled or something. So that 188 is definitely a moving
1770 target. It can move the way that Brian has talked about, and it can reduce the way that Adam is
1771 talking about.

1772 So just so you know where that 188 comes from, it is our best estimate as we sit here tonight with
1773 our seniors leaving and our eighth graders moving on.

1774

1775 Cody O' Leary (02:25:50):

1776 Just a comment for your guys' information to make a recommendation. But as a resident, as a
1777 person who does not have kids in the school system, I get 1.5 is a huge pill to swallow, but when

1778 you look at the budget, I just don't see glaring issues, I don't see things that easily make sense to
1779 cut. I think our arms are twisted with Gilford, so I don't see why we don't support this.
1780
1781 Christine Harkey (02:26:22):
1782 I do have a question. Does Gilmanton have a say in the teachers' negotiations over in Gilford?
1783 Answer: No.
1784 C. Harkey-Well, that's tremendous.
1785
1786 Adam Mini (02:26:46):
1787 Just the inverse of that. Their taxpayers would not be happy with me. You know what I'm saying? If
1788 we were part of their hiring and negotiating with their contracts, their taxpayers would be more of
1789 that.
1790 Public: They just wouldn't be happy if they didn't have our students.
1791
1792 Rich Harkey (02:27:01):
1793 Yeah, but we're getting a service from them.
1794 I mean, you've got to look at it like a contractual relationship. It's a contract/
1795
1796 Adam Mini (02:27:14):
1797 But collective bargaining is a huge impact on the budget.
1798
1799 L. Steffen (02:27:24):
1800 Comment? Education is important. I don't think we have to be a gold standard. I think silver is good
1801 enough. For elementary education, I'm sorry. That's my position. So, I think that there are ways that
1802 we can save money and maybe we're a notch lower and we're still fine. That's all.
1803
1804 Chairman Forst (02:27:54):
1805 Okay. Any other discussion on the operating budget before I get in the warrant article? Seeing
1806 none.
1807

- Article one is the election of officers.
- Article two, shall the school district establish the salaries for district officers for the coming
1808 year as follows? School district moderator, \$250. School district clerk, \$750. Chairperson of
1809 school board, \$950. School board members, four each at \$825. And the school district
1810 treasurer at \$1,800. Any discussion on article two? Seeing none.
1811

1812
1813 Christine Harkey (02:28:58):
1814 The school board members get paid? Is this a chairperson of a school board?
1815
1816 Chairman Forst (02:29:07):
1817 Yes, they all get a stipend for the job they do. The selectmen also get a stipend for the job they do.
1818 The budget committee doesn't.
1819 Yeah, I think Steve gave us a donation.
1820 At least I got everybody to lighten up.
1821

- Article three. You all set with the statement on the, we're all good with article two?
1822

1823 L. Steffen (02:29:59):
1824 What time is deliberative, the school sheet says 10 o'clock but you said 9:00 a.m.

1825

1826 Chairman Forst: What is the time on deliberative?

1827 What's that? Nine o'clock? Okay, then it's nine o'clock.

- 1828 • Article three- Gilmanton School Leach field Pump Station Capital Reserve. See if the school
1829 district shall vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$7,500 to be placed in the Gilmanton
1830 School Leach field Pump Station Capital Reserve as previously established in 04. Questions
1831 on article three? Brett.

1832

1833 Brett Currier (02:30:54):

1834 I'm just wondering why there's not a tax impact is not on the page like the Towns are? Why are we
1835 doing that?

1836

1837 S. MacDonald (02:31:03):

1838 They're on a different page, but I will let you know that the page is off by one decimal point. So I'll
1839 update this page. So the warrants and tax impact of the 7500 is 0.013.

1840

1841

1842 Brett Currier (02:31:18):

1843 Thank you.

1844

1845 Joshua Mann (02:31:22):

1846 So, to answer your question about the town, the tax impact, the mill rates, the school side, they're
1847 a lot lower because that is actually the impact. So, you take what the mill rate is this year for the
1848 school and add those new figures to that. They do it differently in the town. It's confusing.

1849

1850 S. MacDonald (02:31:40):

1851 Two different government agencies are in front of it.

1852 And that may be why they're not listed on here is because we... It's not this until after the DRA gets
1853 the official from you guys.

1854 So that's why they're not here.

1855

1856 Speaker 1 (02:31:55):

1857 But I divided by 100,000 or so. Your decimal point is off.

1858

1859 Joshua Mann (02:31:59):

1860 I just want to make sure you understand that. That it's a different way to calculate the tax impact of
1861 the school side.

1862 Liz Brulotte- Heritage Lane: On this leach field, when is the estimated or projected replacement of
1863 it? It was started in 2004.

1864 S. MacDonald: That's on another page, Liz.

1865

1866 L. Brulotte- (02:32:21):

1867 Where did it go? It was established in 2004. So I just wanted to know where they estimated it. How
1868 much did they have?

1869

1870 S. MacDonald (02:32:48):

1871 It was established in 2002. It's evaluated every year. It did not do... It generally lasts 20 years. So it
1872 grew about 20-22. It was evaluated this year.

1873 There's \$87,561.50 in the account. The total of the account that they're looking for is \$200,000.

1874

1875 Chairman Forst (02:33:50):

1876 Is that... There's no projected year, right? Yeah. Well, I think that's because there's some work
1877 that's done. We all set with Article 3.

- 1878 • Article 4, roof replacement expendable trust. See if the school district shall vote to raise and
1879 appropriate the sum of \$12,500 to be placed in the roof replacement expendable trust fund
1880 established in 08. Questions, discussion on Article 4.

1881

1882 Stephanie Waite (02:34:22):

1883 I have a question. So, on the non-capital reserve accounts, it says that there was an entire new
1884 training project. So it talks about that. It says the budget amount is, I think, projected to be
1885 \$498,000 or something like that. And it says the projected year to be done is 2020. Was it done?

1886 S. MacDonald: The roof has not been replaced at the end of the school.

1887 It has been on their docket for at least nine years. We have brought it forward each year. We have
1888 an energy committee that can add to what we talk about.

1889 This is the balance of section. \$498,000 will not come close to replacing that. So it's something that'
1890 the Planning board and the school administration met about earlier this year. And we're planning to
1891 meet again in April to put all of that in place.

1892

1893 Stephanie Waite (02:35:34):

1894 Okay. So, like, today we have big issues.

1895 S. MacDonald: Well, there's a seal that needs to be resealed.

1896 A lot of flashings on it is not a huge issue. It needs to be resealed. And it will be replaced. And it will
1897 be fixed. Okay. But the whole roof will need to be replaced. And that's going to be about \$1.2
1898 million. So, it's something that needs to go to a little bigger discussion.

1899

1900 Public (02:36:10):

1901 Are we going to start funding more?

1902

1903 S. MacDonald (02:36:18):

1904 But it should come through a bigger discussion than dropping a million dollars in your budget to fix
1905 the roof. It should go to a bigger discussion.

1906 Brett Currier: The Planning board did talk about this. I think that when that comes to happen, I
1907 think there will be a bond that will be presented.

1908

1909 Public: Well, why is it, if it's three years overdue, why haven't, in these past few years, have we not
1910 looked at bonding that to get it done?

1911

1912 S. MacDonald (02:36:51):

1913 I haven't been here, so I can't speak to that.

1914 Chairman Forst: Can I move our budget discussion along? Sure. Because this is all really good stuff
1915 for deliberative.

- 1916 • Article 5, Tractor Replacement Expendable Trust Fund. See if the school district shall vote to
1917 raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,538 to be placed in the Tractor Replacement
1918 Expendable Trust Fund as established in 2016. Any discussion on that? Seeing none.
1919
- 1920 • Article 6, Technology and Hardware Repair and Replacement Expendable Trust Fund. See if
1921 the school district will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000 to be placed in the
1922 Technology and Hardware Repair and Replacement Expendable Trust Fund previously
1923 established in 2023. Discussion on 6. Seeing none.
1924
- 1925 • Article 7, Facilities and Grounds Maintenance, Repair, and Improvement Capital Reserve
1926 Fund. To see if the school district shall vote to establish a Facilities and Grounds
1927 Maintenance, Repair, and Improvement Capital Reserve Fund per RSA 35-1 for the
1928 maintenance, repairs, and improvements of the school facility and to raise and appropriate
1929 the sum of \$25,000 to be placed in the fund further to name the school board as agents to
1930 expend from the fund. Article 7, Discussion. Questions? Yes.
1931

1932 Cody O'Leary (02:38:45):
1933 \$100,000, what is that for? I understand it's for facility and grounds, but for a new fund, what's the
1934 reason to have that?
1935

1936 B. Beasley (02:38:55):
1937 It's really established because we've had a couple of situations like we've had a roof drain, the pipe
1938 had broken, it would leak into some classrooms, and we had to do some repairs to band-aid that.
1939 So those are things that we might not necessarily include in the budget because we don't foresee
1940 those. So, this would be an expendable trust that would allow us to take care of those general
1941 maintenance issues if they surface, and we hadn't anticipated those and were able to budget.
1942

1943 Chairman Forst (02:39:29):
1944 Any other questions on 7?
1945 8, Article 8, Parking Lot Paving. To see if the school district shall raise and appropriate the sum of
1946 \$255,555 to repave and expand the school parking lot and authorize the withdrawal of \$157,000
1947 from the Capital Reserve Fund created for that purpose in 2008. The balance of \$98,555 to come
1948 from general taxation. Discussion on 8? Adam.
1949

1950 Adam Mini (02:40:13):
1951 I'll say to you guys the same thing about the school board meeting that came up.
1952 My opinion is, when this originally happened, if you remember, we had a warrant article to
1953 withdrawal money to do an engineering study first.
1954 We at the time had said we would come back with recommendations on how much work we would
1955 take to pull from the project. \$100,000 in one year to me is, we should put that number in the fund.
1956 Maybe it's not that bad at school.
1957 That's my opinion. Like, we should put money in, but I don't think we should be doing this. That's
1958 my opinion.
1959

1960 Chairman Forst (02:40:51):
1961 Other discussion on this? Comments?
1962

1963 Stephanie Waite (02:40:55):
1964 I'm with Adam. I don't agree with it.
1965 Brett Currier (02:40:59):
1966 Me too.
1967
1968 Bruce Beasley (02:41:11):
1969 I know, I don't, if I can. I just want you to know that we did go out to bid for this project last year.
1970 This bid was significantly less than either of the other two bids that we had. It was by, I must say,
1971 \$150,000 cheaper than the next closest bidder. And so the company that received the bid agreed to
1972 hold the price for us this summer to do it again.
1973 So, to Adam's point, you can table it, but you run the risk that the project then costs more money.
1974 So that's, you know, I'm not trying to influence people. I just want to put the information out there
1975 for the voters to be fully aware of.
1976
1977 Chairman Forst (02:41:58):
1978 Any other discussion on eight?

- 1979 • Warrant Article Nine is the operating budget. So the school district raised appropriate as an
- 1980 operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other
- 1981 appropriations voted separately. The amount set forth on the budget posted with the
- 1982 warrant or as amended by a vote of first session for the purposes set forth therein, totaling
- 1983 \$14, Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$14,180,556, which is the
- 1984 same as last year with certain adjustments required by previous action of the school district
- 1985 or by law. Or the governing body may hold one special meeting in accordance with RSA 40
- 1986 colon 13 10 and 16 to take up the issue of revised operating budget only. We've already
- 1987 discussed the operating budget. Well, shame on somebody because this is what I was
- 1988 handed tonight. Why do I have two sets of warrant articles? So, everything except for that
- 1989 number is correct? No, no, all the rest of the warrant articles.

1990 Speaker6 (02:44:16):
1991 I was following along all that still sound like them out. I'm going to reread article nine just so that
1992 it's correct.
1993
1994 Speaker3 (02:44:24):
1995 Are there any other? No, no, we're good.
1996
1997 Speaker4 (02:44:27):
1998 Shall the school district raise appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by
1999 special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amount set forth in the
2000 budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session for the purposes set
2001 forth therein, totaling \$14,203,747. Should this article be d47-defeated, the default budget shall be
2002 \$14,176,476, which is the same as last year with certain adjustments required by previous action of
2003 the school district or by law. Or the governing body may hold one special meeting in accordance
2004 with RSA 40 colon 13 10 and 16 to take up the issue of a revised operating budget. Everybody like
2005 that number better?
2006
2007 • Article 10 fund balance retention does not necessarily have a number attached to it. So. it
2008 kind of does.

- 2009 • So, I'm going to read it. Shall the school district vote to authorize indefinitely until rescinded
2010 to retain year-end unassigned general funds in the amount not to exceed in any fiscal year
2011 5% of the current fiscal year's net assessment in accordance with RSA 198 colon 4-B2.

2012 Discussion or questions on Article 10? Adam, you get to go first this time.

2013 Adam Mini: So, I'm not in favor of this personally. I spent nine years with the school board. We end
2014 up finishing the year with a positive balance that unanticipated fund balance. We as a school board
2015 made the selection of certain projects that would be done very achievingly and to not to spend the
2016 whole amount and we returned...

2017 I think in my opinion is not the right approach. (The rest of the statement is inaudible)

2018

2019 Speaker5 (02:46:57):

2020 For me, you can clearly see what the project is worth, what it's worth, and it's dependent on it. I
2021 use that process for what it's worth for years.

2022 The returns for the majority back every year. I just think this is the wrong approach.

2023

2024

2025 Brett Currier (02:47:19):

2026 So, does this mean that if there's extra money, they can take up to 5% and keep it? And not give it
2027 back to the taxpayer that year? Why would you do that? Why wouldn't you give the money that the
2028 taxpayer has worked h pay hard to pay for? Why wouldn't you give it back now? I guess I'd like an
2029 answer to that. Why would you keep that money? For the school board. Go ahead.

2030

2031 S. MacDonald (02:47:50):

2032 So, for example, this year we've been running into a situation. Right now, we're about \$200,000
2033 when we back on our tuition. Probably, historically speaking, we're going to drop kids off. But say
2034 we didn't, and we were in a deficit budget. Then we would go to public hearing and we would ask.
2035 The \$489,000 has historically been kept. I think Adam said that if they were designated for some
2036 projects, it wouldn't all get spent, and then it would sit. It should have been returned to you. So this
2037 year, it all went back to you. That wasn't a function of the school board. That was a function of the
2038 person that was in that position. So, this year, when we're looking at a deficit, we'll have to come to
2039 the town and ask for a special accreditation.

2040 We need to raise more money to pay the deficit. If there was 5%, and it would never be more than
2041 5%, you would keep \$500,000 every year. You couldn't keep more than 5%. Then we would come
2042 to the town without the public hearing. It would be spent \$200,000 of the \$400,000 to complete
2043 this. That would really be the only function.

2044

2045 Brett Currier (02:49:03):

2046 So, the tuition deficit would be to Gilford?

2047

2048 S. MacDonald (02:49:06):

2049 Right now, we're not tuition deficit.

2050 Don't we have a fund for that? We do, but like Mr. Beasley said, we anticipated 185 students. When
2051 we got the bill, and it's based on that (inaudible) enrollment, it was 194 students. What will happen
2052 is at the end of the year, they'll say, okay, your bill is based on (inaudible). We might today only
2053 have 180 students. They'll average all that out at the end of the year and give us the final bill. And
2054 most likely, it's the only thing that we have planned on doing. But there's a chance that we might

2055 not. And that's the kind of situation. Or if the roof has that effect, then we would come to the town
2056 without the public hearing.

2057

2058 Speaker7 (02:50:18):

2059 This provision, this was passed about 10 years ago. And I think we're up to 50% of the school
2060 districts have adopted this provision. Just to say from that, for us to be able to use the budget act,
2061 we have to come to the budget committee.

2062 It can only be used for a lower expense. It can be used for any special project that they want to use.

2063

2064 Ron Leclerc (02:50:45):

2065 So yeah, it's an amount that is calculated on an annual basis by the department of revenue.
2066 Financials made in the school district have been submitted, and the estimated revenues have been
2067 determined. And the school board has an option to hold back 5% if they pass the provision. The
2068 towns already have that in their purview. So, they can withhold and operate more than one month.
2069 It's something that was extended in the school districts. And when it first passes, up to 2.5%, and
2070 when COVID hit, it increases the amount to 5%.

2071

2072 Colleen Harkey – Sergeant Rd. (02:51:35):

2073 That it can be used for over expenditures, not new projects, but what is the qualification for an over
2074 expenditure?

2075

2076 Ron Leclerc (02:51:54):

2077 So, it could be anything in the budget. If your gross budget exceeded, if you have in your voter
2078 appropriations, say it's \$14 million, you spent \$14.2 million, you would come back to the public
2079 hearing to use some of that money to offset it.

2080

2081 Colleen Harkey (02:52:11):

2082 But it's for any item on the budget.

2083

2084 Chairman Forst (02:52:16):

2085 It's for an over expenditure of the budget. It could be anywhere.

2086 You need permission to spend it.

2087

2088 Colleen Harkey (02:52:22):

2089 You need permission to spend it. So, it's got permission to get the budget? Exactly. It's the same
2090 process, one way or the other.

2091

2092 Chairman Forst (02:52:30):

2093 Adam.

2094

2095 Adam Mini (02:52:31):

2096 So, you could create a scenario where you (inaudible)

2097

2098 Ron Leclerc (02:52:44):

2099 The following year, it's nine years, it goes back into the unsigned fund balance, and it's recalculated
2100 at the second time. Right.

2101 Adam Mini: That goes back to the taxpayers, meaning you have to go back into the general fund,
2102 which could be spent any way you want it. That's all I'm saying. That's why I don't like this provision,
2103 in my opinion.

2104
2105 Colleen Harkey (02:53:05):
2106 So, I'm sorry, please clarify that. In the second year, it can roll into another... The general fund.

2107
2108 Adam Mini (02:53:12): The general fund can be used by the school board.
2109 Ron Leclerc: No, no, no. It's rolled back into the unsigned fund balance. And it reduces your gross
2110 appropriation and calculates it as we calculate it.
2111 Adam Mini: It's semantical, because you know that you can have extra money on the budget.

2112
2113 Colleen Harkey (02:53:29):
2114 Correct. Got it. That's what I'm saying. It's semantical.

2115
2116 Adam Mini (02:53:32):
2117 That's what I'm saying. I'm just pointing. I'm not saying it's not legal.

2118
2119 L. Steffen (02:53:35):
2120 Would it be...Is it an acceptable option to have that provision but have it in a smaller number, like
2121 instead of 5% in the lower number?

2122
2123 Ron Leclerc (02:53:45):
2124 I would encourage it if this were ever passed, that the school board would use a lower percentage,
2125 yes.
2126 General Discussion: It just can't exceed 5%. It can't exceed 5%. Right, but if the taxpayer said 2%,
2127 then it could just like not exceed 2%.

2128
2129 L. Steffen (02:54:01):
2130 Because, yes, maybe the town has a similar thing, but the town budget is a smaller number.

2131
2132 Chairman Forst (02:54:08):
2133 Right, but here's what I want to interject right now, because you brought it up. The town already is
2134 saving money in an instance, okay? You would have to hold a special meeting for the school to
2135 expend this fund. At the same time, I'm pretty sure you could hold that special meeting, and the
2136 town, who is the one that disperses all the funds, I think could use the money they have. You
2137 couldn't use the...

2138
2139 TA Carpenter (02:54:39):
2140 No, so we did get that back from legal opinion. So, this is a more detailed conversation at our
2141 regular meetings through the budget process. The Town has an unassigned fund balance that
2142 covers, and the board has kept it at \$2 million in it. It covers approximately three months of the
2143 town's expenses. A part of that expense is the school. However, if they over expend their budget,
2144 we cannot use our budget.
2145 Chairman Forst: Okay, you can only use it, you can use it to pay the school as long as it's within their
2146 designated budget.

2147

2148 Speaker4 (02:55:12):
2149 Right, so say we had a major default on taxes.50% of the town is in doesn't pay the taxes. We look
2150 at our unsigned fund balance, we set up the unsigned fund balance to essentially take care of three
2151 months' worth of bills. And in that bill is also included in the school, because we expense out of the
2152 school.
2153 Sandi MacDonald: We got the same opinion. Yeah, so we all paid legal fees for that.
2154 TA Carpenter Yeah, but I know but it's better than doing it the wrong way.
2155 S. MacDonald: Absolutely.
2156
2157 L. Steffen (02:55:60):
2158 If the budget committee decides that they like that provision, I would ask that the budget
2159 committee suggest a smaller percentage, not five.
2160
2161 Colleen Harkey (02:56:10):
2162 Well, that's a good point. They have to ask us either way. They have to ask to spend the money or
2163 just ask for the money at the same time. Yeah, but so it's a... Because if they don't ask, and you
2164 know, because it's easy to forget, and if it's not asked for and it rolls over, then there is no asking
2165 the next year. It's already into a built-in, baked-in process.
2166
2167 S. MacDonald (02:56:35):
2168 It goes back. It becomes unsigned fund balance, and then all unsigned fund balance is returned. We
2169 don't keep the money. So, if we retain \$489,000 this year, and we didn't spend it this year, it would
2170 become part of what's called the unsigned fund balance, and that goes back. It all comes back. It
2171 goes back. It goes back and becomes part of the next 5%. It comes back as so when we calculate the
2172 operating budget and then the town's budget through taxes, we reduce the operating budget. So,
2173 say this year, our operating budget is \$289,000.
2174 Colleen Harkey: Oh, wait a minute.
2175 S. MacDonald: So, we would lower that to \$12 million...
2176 Colleen Harkey: So, it still typically comes back. It doesn't technically come back.
2177
2178 Vincent Baiocchetti (02:57:21): Correct.
2179
2180 General Discussion regarding process (02:57:23):
2181
2182 S. MacDonald (02:58:26):
2183 I just wanted to clarify, and I'm not going to stress that. The school district is not trying to pay
2184 \$5,000 and then bury it next year's budget. They're not trying to spend it higher. It would never be
2185 more than what that only has 5%, whether it's 2% or longer. With all the detail you have in there, I
2186 can't see how you could hide it. It could happen to all of them.
2187
2188 Chairman Forst (02:58:48):
2189 Okay. Is there any other budgetary discussion that we would like to hear from the public about? If
2190 there is none, I would like to thank everybody, and I would like to close the public hearing. Thank
2191 you all for coming. It's been very enlightening compared to some years previous.
2192
2193 Vice Chair Joshua Mann (02:59:07):
2194 We talk for ourselves, usually.

2195 Chairman Forst, seconded by Vincent Baiocchetti (02:59:11):
2196 Motion to adjourn. (Time not captured on audio)