



**SELECTMEN'S OFFICE
TOWN OF GILMANTON**

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APPROVED

Board of Selectmen Meeting

August 15, 2022 - Academy Building – 5:03 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER – ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Present: Chairman Mark Warren, Vice-Chairman Vincent Baiocchetti, Selectmen Evan Collins, Town Administrator Heather Carpenter, Administrative Assistant Amanda Davis, Finance Brenda Paquette, CDD Bre Daigneault, Fire Chief Hempel, Police Chief Currier, Transfer Station Manager Ron Nason, Highway Department Paul Perkins, Candace Daigle, Barbara Swanson, Sue Roberts

Public: Guy Knowlton, Joe Haas

CONSENT AGENDA

- **PO # 01307: JLT Painting** – Window Sash Restoration: Total cost \$38,000.00 with a deposit of 50% (\$19,000) – This invoice is for the Old Town Hall Restoration project.
- **Call Firefighter** – Hire Packet for Tobias Warner – Criminal Background check not included
- **Acknowledgement** – Highway Block Grant Funding QTR 1 payment of \$46, 885.44
- **Community Development Items** – **LUCT:** 126-027, 413-112, 419-092, 419-094, 423-043, 423-044, 424-066, 426-002. **Timber Bill & Warrant:** 410-041. **Veterans Credit:** 122-039.

Motion: On a motion by Vice Chairman Baiocchetti and seconded by Selectmen Collins it was voted to approve the consent agenda as presented with the exception of the Hire Packet for Tobias Warner. (3-0)

- ☐ **Action Item:** Criminal Background Check for Tobias Warner, Firefighter.

NEW BUSINESS

Preliminary Budget Presentations

- **Resident Request:** Guy Knowlton – Recommendation for the Elderly Tax Exemption. His request is to increase the guideline from \$27,000 to \$30,000 for a single individual, and from \$40,000 to \$45,000 for a married couple. He is aware of an individual who missed the guideline by \$2,000 due to income and believes that there are others who are experiencing financial hardship as well.

- ☐ **Action Item:** Place this on the agenda for the next Board of Selectmen meeting and discuss whether this will require a petition.

Vice Chairman Baiocchetti – His goal this budget season is to ensure that the pay stays current and competitive for the employees so the town doesn't lose employees, and historical knowledge, and is able to continue providing efficient services to the community.

Selectmen Collins – His goal this budget season is to find a happy medium where they can provide the services needed for the community and meet the inflationary needs of the employees. He would also like the information provided as soon as available to help the budget process move smoothly.

Chairman Warren – The Selectboard is responsible for managing the funding for the overall aspects of the town. The town portion is only 23 percent, but the school and state education are almost 70 percent of the overall budget of what the residents are being taxed for, the county is 4.2 percent. Town services being presented are only a quarter of the services provided for the town. He would like to find the balance between remaining competitive and be mindful of the residents also dealing with the inflationary rates.

- **Cemetery Trustees:** Candace Daigle – They are including the 7 percent COLA increase and a \$2 per hour stipend that they pay their two employees for providing equipment, which is a \$500 increase. No additional Warrant Articles are requested this year.

Selectmen Collins – Questioned whether the Ash trees were able to be removed. Candace confirmed that a \$5,000 warrant article was approved to remove the Ash trees along the driveway in Beech Grove and the work

has been completed. Additionally, last year another \$5,000 warrant article was supported to remove trees within the cemetery. This has been contracted and will be completed by the end of the year.

- **Corner Library:** Barbara Swanson and Sue Roberts, Trustees are requesting an increase of \$825 based on increases in electricity, phone, propane, books, CD's, and DVD's. She noted that they are all volunteers and are only requesting items to keep the library running.
- **Action Item:** Barbara to send in propane usage to calculate budget appropriately *617.9 gallons at \$2.13, total \$1,316.13
- **Executive:** Requested were the 2022 wages with the 3 percent increase and 2023 with the proposed 7 percent increase for comparison. This is a \$54,000.00 difference with the 7 percent increase. This is believed to be a fair request for the services that are being provided through the Selectmen's Office and the Town Clerk Tax Collector's Office for the community.
 - **Line 01-4130 – Operating Budget,** request of \$447,530.00, the difference is \$41,624.00 with the main increase coming from the 7 percent COLA.
 - **01-4130-118** – This was a position that has now been budgeted for 12 months, last year it was partial funding. This line has increased to accommodate the 12 months.
 - All the computer IT lines were pulled from each department's budget and put it under its own line. There was a decrease for this around \$15,000.00 in the Executive budget, and it was placed in the new IT line. There is still an increase of \$41,000.00 due to the budget for the Community Development Assistant position being fully presented.
 - Health Insurance, this has been increased 5 percent. The solid numbers will not be available until October/November.
 - **Line 01-4130-391** – This is minor IT changes; software needs are used from this line. There is a reduction in this line. This includes Guardian Tracking not previously budgeted for.
 - **Line 01-4130-441** – This line has a slight increase. Any contract signed on for software generally have a 5 to 8 percent increase yearly.
 - **Line 01-4130-560** – Printing, these increases based on the Town Report. These increases are due to ink and pictures, also transfer Station stickers and business cards. **This is Line 01-4130-550 for printing.*
 - **Line 01-4130-620** – Office supplies have increased due to rising costs.
 - The Energy Commission is presenting a formal request of \$1,000.00 which was also requested last year, but due to the default budget, it was not moved forward.
 - **Warrant Article** – Approved Liability Fund, this is the fund that if moved forward with that the personnel policy or any variation of, a fund is needed for retirement purposes. Finance will formulate numbers on what the risk is, because we do not currently have a fund. \$50,000.00 is requested. Clarification, this is a fund that if an employee retires and has accumulated benefits and the town assumes the obligation there, this fund would be utilized so it does not get pulled from the Operating Budget.
 - **Warrant Article** – Brick School House Lane, proposed by Doug Towle, requesting discontinuation of the lane because it does not get used.

The request for painting was not brought forward. It will be \$75,000.00 which also includes the cost to paint the Corner Library, \$950.00. The goal is to try to use a grant. TA Carpenter proposes utilizing a grant to include air conditioning, outside painting, interior painting, and two-story enclosed addition to the back portion of the building (as long as it can be structurally accommodated) and this would provide additional meeting space. This grant requires no match and can cover a variety of additional projects and is used where there is a need. This addition can be done as long as it is historically accurate. If the Selectboard did not want to move forward with the grant request, TA Carpenter will be requesting this as a Warrant Article.

Recommendation: Do not write a Warrant Article and move forward with applying for the grant April 2023.

- The computer tech line will come under finance. The request is \$55,559.00. This covers the contract with CCS and IT Services. This will be added after Executive Office as a 4130 number. This includes Guardian Tracking which was with the various departments but is now under its own category. This request also includes a security package, \$42,984.00 is the current annual contract, \$10,451 for the security package and emails, and then Guardian Tracking, \$2,124.00.
 - **Finance:** The major change will be in the audit line.
 - **Line 01-4150-301** - \$23,500 for the contract with Plodzick and Sanders, the auditors for 2022. \$2,000.00 was added in case of a single audit.
 - **Line 01-4150-370** – Computer expenses. Finance is looking to upgrade the payroll software to a cloud base. This is an estimated 5 percent increase to \$6,000.00 in the annual support of payroll and accounts payable and budgeting software. They should have a solid number soon. There is a variation of the end-of-year forms that need to be purchased with envelopes, this is a \$200 increase.
- Total Operating Budget for Finance** - \$124,729.00, this is a difference of \$16,530.00 and this includes the 7 percent increase in wages.

Clarification on Insurance, 5 percent was added, but it could be higher or lower. Further clarification for the public, the Deputy Treasurer is paid out of the Finance Operating Budget, as well as Trustees of the Trust Fund, and Treasurer. These are not included in the 7 percent increases; those are stipend amounts. The Chairman had requested the comparison of impact between the 7 percent versus last year's 2022 request. This does not include Supervisors of the Checklist who are requesting an increase to \$15.00/hour. This does not include Ballot Clerks or the stipend positions discussed.

- **Legal:**
 - **Line 01-4153-420** – There are no known contractual increases. \$10,000.00 additional is being requested because there is more code enforcement going through legal. One case cost just under \$7,000.00 in accrued fees.
- **Government Buildings:**
 - **Line 01-4194** Total Operating Budget request has a \$148,690.00, the difference is \$42,470.00. This is a difference in vendor, materials, and care and maintenance of two historical buildings. There has been an increase of \$10,000.00 in the building line that covers general building maintenance. The current issue is the main line for the sprinkler system only lasts 20 years. It is original to the building and is over 30 years old. There is not currently a fund to maintain the historical buildings. A fund is requested to take care of any maintenance issues that may occur with the OTH and Academy building. Clarification, the Infrastructure fund can be used to fund these repairs, but if a fund is not created for specific use funds may be allocated to other projects. This fund would be only to keep the buildings running and the grant funding is a congressionally directed spending request. For Mechanical Upgrades there is currently slightly over \$3,000.00 in that account currently, the request is \$25,000 for that warrant article. Also requested is the Town's septic, \$30,000.00 and there is just under \$20,000.00 currently. It is not currently known how old these systems are. Town Driveways has a little over \$1,000.00, the requested amount is \$30,000.00. Town roofs is \$20,000.00, there is little funding in this currently because the roof project was completed. Additionally, \$100,000 was added to the infrastructure fund, and a little over \$14,000.00 was utilized for the Meadow Pond Dam project. NH010124-0053 is the reference for the town's septic. Old Town Hall's budget was increased from \$5,000.00 to \$10,000.00 and while there may not been a need for a \$10,000.00 budget for the Old Town Hall, LCHIP was told that the town would start appropriately budgeting for the building. A good portion of work is being done this year and it is not known what future issues may present, but the building will need to be maintained.
- **Building Inspection:**

- **Line 01-4240** - The request is \$47,785.00; the difference is \$3,630.00. This is the 7 percent COLA increase recommendation.

Line 01-4240-370 – Slight increase in computer software.

Line 01-4240-670 – Books and periodicals has been moved to a 2019 code so there is an increase there.

- **General Assistance:**

- **Line 01-4441** – This is the same request as last year, \$25,400.00. This is a decrease of \$33,336.00. This is not reflective of the \$100,000.00 from the default budget. Funding was moved around to fortify other lines and what was left is reflective of that adjustment.
- **Warrant Article** – Request of \$2,000.00 and this will round out the budget to \$50,000.00.

- **Parks and Recreation:**

- **Line 01-4520** – The operating budget request is \$32,367.00, the difference being \$1,240.00. Overall increases are for utilities, advertising, custodial and trash pickup at Crystal Lake Bridge, Nat's Bridge, and one at the boat ramp.
- **Line 01-4520-650** - Groundskeeping for the park has increased.
- **Line 01-4520-430** - Repairs and maintenance decreased.

- **Patriotic Purposes:**

- **Line 01-4583-610** – The operating budget request for good quality flags is \$1,800.00. This is an increase of \$1,260.00

- **Debt Services:** This is zero in all categories.

- **Warrant Articles and Recommendations:** Outside agencies will be presenting before the Selectboard in September.

- **4th of July Association** - \$6,500.00, this can be reduced to \$5,500.00, no estimate was produced.
- **Red Cross** - \$2,000.00, they did assist a Gilmanton resident this year.
- **CASA** - \$1,000.00
- **Community Action Program** - \$5,000.00
- **Iron Works Library** - \$1,000.00
- **Gilmanton Year-Round Library** - \$51,000.00, TBD, Petition Warrant Article.
- **Gilmanton Youth Organization** - \$10,000.00
- **Granite VNA** - \$7,600.00
- **Lakes Region Mental Health** - \$7,500.00
- **New Beginnings** - \$1,000.00
- **Rocky Pond Association** - \$1,000.00, for milfoil.
- **Gilmanton Snowmobile Association** - \$4,000.00, increasing by \$1,500.00
- Total Request:** \$96,500.00

- **Community Development:**

- **Assessing:**

Line 01-4152 - \$3,000 increase. The contracted assessor by the end of June had gone through 60 percent of his budget due to increases in building permits and land development, so his contract will be increasing for next year.

Line 01-4152- 370 – Computer expenses decrease for the software no longer used.

A 5 percent increase in the contracts for the computer software programs, online mapping, Avitar, and GIS mapping.

- **Planning:**

Line 01-4191 – Slight increase of \$1,000.00. This is an estimation of 5 percent for computer program software. LRPC was overdrawn with the default budget last year so the estimated 5 percent increase was added for the LRPC this year.

187 Planning Board and office staff can utilize the funds in the training line. Little funds have been used for Planning
188 Board training, but there is an annual conference they attend or purchase the slides for. Dues and subscriptions
189 had computer software with \$800 in the line to cover, this has been moved to a computer expense line.

190 ○ **Zoning:**

191 **Line 01-4192** – There are minimal increases, around \$270.00. This is for estimated increases for
192 computer expenses. Advertising has also increased. Planning charges the applicant the fees
193 associated, but ZBA does not do this, it comes out of the operating budget.

194 ○ **Historic:**

195 **Line 01-4193** – There are minimal increases, less than \$50.00. This is an estimated increase in
196 advertising. The office supply line was at \$64.00 and was increased to \$100.00.

197 ○ **Conservation & Warrant Articles:**

198 **Line 01-4611** – There were decreases on some lines and increases on others. Training decreased
199 slightly based on use. Computer expenses decreased; Executive Office has taken on the expenses
200 for Zoom because it is used by other boards. Grounds decreased by \$250.00.

201 They have not sought grants on trail maintenance, but have sought them for the Tom Howe Barn on Meeting
202 House. This has been accepted to the Historic registry and is now able to apply for grants. Received was a
203 \$5,000.00 citizen donation that is being used to improve the trails. They are updating maps as they are making
204 these improvements.

205 ○ **Warrant Article:** Establish a forest maintenance fund. If they do a timber cut, they will have a
206 forest management plan. A grant was received from the Belknap County Conservation Coalition
207 to have some forest management plans drawn up. Any proceeds from maintenance of the town-
208 owned forest would be put into the forest maintenance fund and utilized strictly to improve the
209 town forests.

210 ○ **Warrant Article:** Request to vote in the newly donated Welch Family Forest, from John and Ursula
211 Adams, as an official town forest.

212 Any funds left over in the Conservation budget is expended into their Conservation Fund. DRA states that this
213 needs to be voted on yearly because a one-time vote does not carry over. A Warrant Article is drafted to have
214 unexpended portions of their operating budget transferred into their Conservation Fund.

215 ☐ **Action Item:** Community Development Director to get information for the Board; Barbara Richter,
216 from the Belknap County Conservation Coalition, on the forest maintenance fund and its uses for
217 it.

218 ○ **Warrant Article:** Planning Board is in the process of coming up with changes to the zoning
219 ordinance. These will have no impact on taxation.

220 ● **Town Clerk/Tax Collector:** The Selectboard has chosen to wait until September for this presentation. TA
221 Carpenter stated that Town Clerk/Tax Collector is requesting the \$15.00 per hour for the Supervisor of
222 the Checklist for the election budget.

223 ● **Fire Department:** Increases that are presented are mainly salary adjustments including the 7 percent
224 COLA request. The other increase is the full-year funding for the two new positions, last year they were
225 funded for 6 months. Part time, Overtime, and Call wages have been increased to allow the increase the
226 salary lines for the call personnel and ensure they can fund the evening coverage. They have moved into
227 24 hours staffing pattern. There has been an increase with call activity, with 86 calls for the month of July.
228 Additional increases are for electricity, heat, and fuel oil, diesel, and gas costs.

229 ○ **Line 01-4220-391** – Not received are Dispatch Service fees. This is an increase of about \$2,000.00.

230 Additionally, they are looking to replace their 10-year-old ambulance. He feels it's in the best interest of the
231 community to pursue funding for this due to the rising cost and availability. Delivery dates are about two years
232 out currently. The cost of replacement is about \$100,000.00. There is about \$150,000.00 in the Capital Reserve
233 Account. Typically, \$50,000.00 is added on revenue on an annual basis and would bring them up to about half of
234 the cost for the unit and the rest would be done through a lease process as they do with the fire trucks. They are

looking at a modular unit that can be remounted like Ambulance 1, so it will have about a 20-year service life. Clarification on holiday pay and hours, it's 11 holidays, at 8 hours, so it's 88 hours. Further clarified, is the Lieutenant's position with forecasting for a promotion to a Captain's position, but this has not been discussed but the funding for this has been budgeted. The two new positions would start at \$52,300.00 as well as a medic position. Clarification on grants, the AFG grant is for larger items and he does not see them requesting for any grants this year. They were able to utilize the GEOFERR grant funding to pick up some of the things they needed over the last year.

- **Line 01-4220-690** – Miscellaneous, awards and recognitions come out of this line. Vice Chairman Warren requested this to be moved to another line and delete the miscellaneous line.

- **Police Department:** Primary increase is from the 7 percent COLA added to the wages to take care of and maintain employees.

- **Line 01-4210-120** – It was at \$3,000.00 and he is requesting \$40,000.00. This is to add a part time Administrative Assistant and a part time officer. The part time Administrative Assistant will train under Robin, and take her position when she retires in 2023. This would be a partial year, part time position while training until moving into Robin's Administrative Assistant role. The part time office position would help with patrol and investigations. Health and Dental is also increasing to prepare for the incoming requested positions.

- **Line 01-4210-111** – The proposal is for \$54,600.00 for the Administrative Assistant position to keep an experienced individual in the role.

TA Carpenter clarified that Robin's current role as an Administrative Assistant is incorrect. She falls under an Office Manager or Executive Assistant role because she does billing and has additional roles that do not fall under an Administrative Assistant position. She is requesting further discussion because she feels this position was classified incorrectly.

- **Line 01-4210-390** – Prosecuting Services line has a \$3,000.00 increase. This isn't a change, but due to the default budget, the contract was missed.

- **Line 01-4210-410** - Electrical is increasing.

- **Line 01-4210-625** - Postage is increasing \$150.00.

- **Line 01-4210-640** – They have a new trash pickup service; this is increasing by \$420.00 for the year.

- **Warrant Article** – This will be for a new cruiser to replace the 2013 Ford Explorer purchased in 2012 which has about 125,000 miles on it. CIP has them keeping the cruisers for 7 years. McGovern out of Mass had the best price between \$39,200.00 to \$41,900.00.

Selectmen Collins questioned the interest in the part-time positions and if there was potential for finding someone. Chief Currier is unsure. There are talks about doing away with part-time police academy because they are increasing the hours. The best scenario he can hope for is a retiree that still wants to work and can do patrols and investigations. His request of adding a position is based on the wear and tear on the employees he already has. Adding an additional employee will relieve some of the burden off the current staff. As of August 1st, they had the most calls for service they've had in four years. They are currently up 300 plus calls. Car stops have increased and they have doubled in arrests, and just under double in accidents. There are more assaults being reported. They are working closely with the Child Advocacy Center for juvenile assaults.

- **Line 01-4210-411** – There is a 50 percent share on heat with the Fire Department. This is also reflected in the Fire Department's budget.

- **Highway:** There is an increase in wages to reflect the 7 percent COLA request. There was a decrease of \$10,000.00 for grader maintenance. Everything else remained the same on the administration part.

- Highway & Streets – Increase on gravel.

- Road Betterment – He added in matching funds for the Highway Block Grant funds from the state.

- Street Lighting – This has remained the same. Eversource is not going to raise pricing for municipalities. There has been no confirmation from NH Electric Co-op.

283 Chairman Warren questioned where the road contracts were going to be funded from. Paul confirmed that this
284 funding would be coming from Road Betterment, 01-4319-731. Vice Chairman Baiocchetti questioned if the
285 \$2,000.00 requested for signs was going to be enough because some speed signs needed to be updated to match
286 the ordinances. He stated he just picked up the 30 mph signs today and has the posted signs for the spring. Paul
287 will need to order 35 mph signs to match the ordinances. Crack sealing also comes out of 01-4319-731 and any
288 pavement that he can get completed.

289 ○ **01-4312-670** - \$10,000 had been placed in this line for culverts. He did not have a line for ditching
290 so it has been coming out of Road Betterment.

291 Chairman Warren addressed the culvert plan from LRPC from the culvert assessment completed and wanted to
292 know when Paul would be doing the reporting on what has been done, what needs to be done, and what culverts
293 are remaining. Paul will report this at the end of the year. On average Paul replaces 10 to 20 culverts a year.
294 Chairman Warren made a recommendation to create some additional budget lines and clean up the categories
295 and enable the Road Betterment fund to be utilized for the larger projects.

296 Chief Currier addressed the road signs and a discussion was held on the speed signs per NH State statute.

297 **Board Consensus:** Place 35 mph signs to match NH State Statute and the new town ordinances.

298 Chairman Warren recommended the budget increase to purchase the new signs. Paul Perkins and Chief Currier
299 will get together and further discuss the ordinances and signs necessary to update.

300 • **Transfer Station:** Increases for the Transfer Station include a request for 2 additional 25 hour per week
301 positions. Wages increase request of 7 percent for COLA.

- 302 ○ **Line 01-4324-211** -Dental Insurance has an increase.
- 303 ○ **Line 01-4324-560** - Dues and subscriptions has an increase to accommodate the 2 additional
304 positions requested.
- 305 ○ **Line 01-4324-410** – Electrical has an increase.
- 306 ○ **Line 01-4324-411** - Heating fuel has increased.
- 307 ○ **Line 01-4324-680** – This has an increase with the additional staff request.
- 308 ○ **Line 01-4324-800** – This has an increase of 9 percent.
- 309 ○ **Line 01-4324-801** – Hauling fees has a 10 percent increase.
- 310 ○ **Warrant Article:** The baler is going to cost \$112,231.00 to replace. He would like to put
311 \$50,000.00 request in a warrant article to be able to replace the baler in a year or two. This
312 request is funding the Capital Account. He believes there is roughly \$50,000.00 current in the
313 Capital Account. He also has a quote for Compactor 1 for \$35,050.00, this is getting rotted out.
314 This one has been there since 2001. The baler was refurbished two years ago and the cost was
315 \$14,000.00.
- 316 ○ **Warrant Article:** \$5,000.00 request for equipment repair.

317 Selectmen Collins requested information on the Waste Management contract ending in December. Ron has
318 updated numbers for the new Waste Management contract and he was unsuccessful in getting bids from Casella
319 and Pinard. He is waiting on Roy from Waste Management to get him the final numbers and the new contract
320 for the Selectboard to review.

321 Chairman Warren requested information on how Ron planned to utilize the two new requested staff members.
322 Ron clarified that they would be working Sundays, 12:00 to 5:00, Tuesdays 7:00 to 12:00, Wednesdays 7:00 to
323 5:00, Fridays 7:00 to 12:00 baling and getting things caught up, cleaning, and this is a total of 25 hours. If one
324 person is out right now then it leaves him short staffed and not enough people to run equipment, and they are
325 running back and forth trying to help residents.

326 Vice Chairman Baiocchetti questioned what they were doing about uniforms. Ron clarified that they are buying
327 the winter clothing and boots they are required to wear. The uniform consists of and fluorescent orange top,
328 jeans, and steel-toed boots. They have winter shirts, winter jackets at \$250.00 each. The process would be two
329 employees out front assisting with recycling matters, as well as assisting residents with item pricing, and
330 monitoring residents putting items down back that they are only dropping off what should be. There should be

another employee baling because they won't have to stop and get a skid steer if they see paper or plastic, they are allowed 10 percent of the wrong stuff to be in the baler and if someone is there picking out the contaminants, they would save time. Ron discussed further the process of what is required of the transfer station staff while assisting the residents and intaking trash items.

Vice Chairman Baiocchi inquired if there was pricing yet for the security cameras. Ron clarified that he has security cameras but they are not up yet. Two will be placed on the end where traffic comes in, others will be placed at the compactors, two to face the parking lot, and one to face down back, one is the office to face the window. These cameras were purchased from Home Depot, this has a DVR for recording with a SIMS card, these can be monitored from home through Wi-Fi. These cost \$299 for 8 regular outdoor night vision cameras.

PUBLIC COMMENT 8:00 p.m.

- Joe Haas – He sent an email at 1:41 p.m. this afternoon addressed to Chairman Warren and the SAU. He referenced pages 3 and 4 of the printout in regards to the Civics discussions in the schools. There is an event from 8:00 to 9:00 on 8/23 for a special school board meeting for parents' request for school aid. He believes as a taxpayer, he should have a say in this too. He would like the Selectboard to be present to inform them if the statute is not followed appropriately that it could cause the town to be sued. He updated the Selectboard on his lawsuit in Boscawen and the ConVal Trial. Further, he asked, where is the 6 percent going to come from, people have to pay thousands of dollars, and we're going to have to return it, plus 6 percent. Does this come back from the Primex Insurance Company? He stated this is a question the Selectboard should be thinking about. He asked the Selectboard to please contact the Congressional Delegates because he still has a complaint on their 14th Amendment, Section 2.

SELECTBOARD ITEMS, FYI, & OTHER TOPICS

- Deliberative Session Date and Time Determination – Saturday, February 4th, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. with a snow date on February 11th at 9:00 a.m.

Motion: On a motion by Vice Chairman Baiocchi and seconded by Selectmen Collins it was voted to accept the dates for Deliberative Session as stated. (3-0)

- ☐ **Action Item:** TA Carpenter to confirm these dates with Eric through legal counsel.

TA Carpenter stated there are not two meetings in September and let the Selectboard know the next time they see the budget it will be in its full form and requested any recommendations within a week to produce a more refined budget based on the discussion and information provided tonight.

Chairman Warren would like to keep the focus on caring for employees and caring for the residents. He is cautious about adding new positions, but he didn't see any egregious requests this year. He is a CIP person but is cautious about where this is going to put potential tax rates. He recognizes Chief Hempel's request for a new ambulance since it will take two years to get a new one and put in order sooner than later. He also recognizes the need for a new baler for the Transfer Station.

Vice Chairman Baiocchi asked what the total increase to the budget is, and TA Carpenter clarified the total increase is approximately \$531,629.00 from last year's request. And the wage sheets show, excluding Supervisor of the Checklist, shows a \$54,000.00 impact just on wages with the 7 percent COLA increase. He agreed that the \$54,000.00 increase on wages he agrees with. Chairman Warren concurred. The total request for this year's budget is \$4,969, 485.00, and last year's request is \$4,437,856.00 and does not include any warrant articles in the operating budget.

Selectmen Collins stated he understand where all the requests are coming from, but on the surface, it seemed like a lot to him.

Currently, there are 24 full-time employees, 3 vacant full-time positions right now, and 11 part-time positions, with 3 vacant part-time positions right now. TA Carpenters asked if the Selectboard intended to go ahead with the \$15 per hour for the Supervisor of the Checklist positions and then add 7 percent to that or just do straight

379 \$15.00 because this was not clear in the Town Clerk/Tax Collectors budget, but this needs to be clarified when she
380 presents in September.

381 Selectmen Collins did not want to see the budget over 10 percent increased as a whole. Chairman Warren stated
382 his goal was to look after employees, but that there are costs that cannot be controlled like gas and fuel, and those
383 are hard fixed costs. Further discussed were the police cruiser and the ambulance, as well as the baler. They
384 discussed in detail the rising cost and waiting for these items, and they understand the need for these things, and
385 the longer that we wait to purchase the worse it gets.

386 Further discussed the use of unassigned fund balance and making sure the account does not get depleted in the
387 event of an emergency and current obligations.

388 TA Carpenter requested from the Selectboard their input on the presentations and how they would like the
389 information presented at the next meeting. The Selectboard had no issue with the presentation and was happy
390 everyone was prepared, presenting a full budget.

391 Chairman Warren presented another idea on how to present the 7 percent COLA and that it is costing the average
392 person \$717.00 more to live today than this time last year. This is \$8,604.00 more a year it's costing people to
393 live. This number plus the number of town employees is more than the \$54,000.00 COLA increase requested.
394 Selectmen Collins expressed concern on how it will be received. Vice Chairman Baiocchetti expressed that services
395 are provided based on what the public demands and doesn't believe there are any positions that they can do
396 without, otherwise they would be unable to provide services. TA Carpenter expressed the difference between
397 merit and COLA, and that there is an understanding there will be no merit, that the goal is to try to take care of
398 the base needs.

399 ☐ **Action Item:** Deliberative Session confirmed, place online.

400 ☐ **Action Item:** The budget, along with informative sheets will be labeled as draft and placed online under
401 budget.

402 ☐ **Action Item:** Vice Chairman Baiocchetti would like a statement to be put out on the Facebook page that
403 comes from the Selectboard about the process and what they have decided, what they are working on so
404 the community can stay informed from them directly. Chairman Warren will write this but will have the
405 other board members approve it before it goes out.

406 Vice Chairman Baiocchetti prefers fact sheets with a narrative, and charts. The decisions of the Selectboard need
407 to be explained to avoid misinformation. Chairman Warren would like to work to keep the budget under the 10
408 percent increase.

409 **Motion:** On a motion by Vice Chairman Baiocchetti and seconded by Chairman Warren it was voted to adjourn
410 the meeting. (3-0)

411

412 **Adjourned 8:35 P.M.**

413

414 Respectfully Submitted,

415 

416 Amanda Davis, Administrative Assistant

417

418 **Approved by the Board of Selectmen**

419 

420 Chairman Mark E. Warren



Vice-Chair Vincent A. Baiocchetti



Selectman Evan Collins

