

1 **TOWN OF GILMANTON**

2 **BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**

3 **AND BUDGET COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING**

4 **WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2017**

5 Members Present: Brian Forst, Chairman, Stan Bean, Vice Chairman, Anne Kirby, Steven
6 Bedard, Joanne Melle, Michael Jean, Selectmen Representative, Richard Bakos, Sawyer Lake
7 Representative, Mark Sawyer and Michael Hatch, School Board representative.

8 Members of the public were included, but not limited to Terry Melle, Donna Forst, Brenda
9 Currier, Brett Currier, Adam Mini, Christine Schlegel, Ralph Lavin, Grace Sisti, Mark Sisti,
10 Heidi Duval, Paul Branscombe, Debra Cornett, Marshall Bishop, Chief Matthew Currier, Steven
11 McWhinnie, Alice Bean and Gail Ober. Some of these members of the public came during the
12 regular budget committee meeting and at the public hearing time of 6:00 p.m.

13 Chairman Forst called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

14 **Review of Anticipated Revenues**

15 Budget Committee members reviewed a list of anticipated revenues in an attempt to estimate the
16 tax rate impact of the proposed budget. It was noted that the MS-4 listed the amount as
17 \$2,124,938.00. It was noted that the police detail of \$98,662.00 was included in the estimated
18 revenues, which, this year, would not be included as it was learned that a warrant article was
19 adopted in 2015 setting up a special revolving fund for police detail.

20 The budget committee would need to deduct \$360,000 from the estimated revenues as this was
21 trust fund monies. Another amount that would need to be deducted was the funds that the town
22 received as reimbursement from the flood disaster. Discussion followed with regard to the ideal
23 number that the committee could safely use to estimate the tax impact of the budget.

24 Mr. Richard Bakos, for the record, stated that it was ridiculous that the committee was not given
25 the correct numbers and that the committee would have to calculate the amount to adjust
26 downward in order to get an estimated correct figure for the committee to use to calculate the tax
27 rate impact of the proposed budget.

28 **Stan Bean made the motion to use the amount of \$1,548,952.00 in order to calculate an**
29 **estimated tax rate impact to the proposed budget. Mark Sawyer seconded the motion.**
30 **Chairman Forst called the motion to a vote. The vote was unanimous.**

31 Mr. Bean noted that the two police grants, namely the DWI grant and the speeding grant warrant
32 articles had not been included in the proposed warrant articles. He stated that the selectmen have
33 to raise and appropriate before they can spend, even if the monies are from grant funds.

34 Chairman Forst stated that the deadline for the submission of petition warrant articles is January
35 10, 2017.

36 **PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED TOWN BUDGET**

Chairman Forst opened the public hearing at 6:02 p.m. He explained that the budget committee is looking for public input and comment regarding the proposed budget. Mr. Forst stated that the estimated revenues for 2017 is \$175,624.00 and the amount was \$183,776.00 in 2016. Brett Currier asked why the amount is less this year? Mr. Forst stated that the committee does not have accurate revenue numbers and that the committee is doing the best that they can with what they have been given.

Brenda Currier recommended sending it back and come back to meet in a few days when the committee has accurate numbers to work with. Mr. Forst stated that this was not possible as there are deadline meeting dates that they need to adhere to. Mr. Bakos stated that the employee raises are included in their wages because the selectmen will not bring the employee raises forward as a separate warrant article. Mr. Currier stated that the public would not know the total cost of raises if it would not be part of a warrant article for the voters to vote on in March. Mr. Currier expressed his frustration at not knowing where the monies were being spent and he stated that the public would not be able to make educated reductions in the budget at deliberative session because they would not have accurate breakdowns of the budget. He indicated that members of the public would not be able to accurately know how much was spent, what it costs to run the town, etc. Mr. Bakos stated that the committee had asked for the employees' salary increases broken out of the employees' wages and the committee never received the requested information. He stated that he had also asked if the wage increases were C.O.L.A. or percentage increases and his questions were never answered.

Mr. Ralph Lavin asked what the default budget would be. Mr. Forst stated that the default budget would be last year's budget figures plus contractual obligations.

Mr. Forst went through the different portions of the budget as follows:

Elections – down by \$9,391.00 from 2016 due to the funding of less required voting days.

Finance Administration – up \$4,000.00 to \$108,214.00. Specifically, the auditor's line was up. Mr. Currier asked if the town had been audited yet? Mr. Forst stated that the audit had been completed. Town Administrator Paul Branscombe stated that the town had just received the 2015 audit report yesterday. Mr. Bakos asked to see the audit.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector – a proposed funding of \$174,042.00. In 2016, it was \$168,465.00. Most of the increase is in salaries and the NHRS tax increase.

Assessing – 2017 - \$112,997.00. In 2016, \$113,279.00 was funded. Mr. Currier asked for the actual 2016 expenditures and Mr. Forst stated that the town would not have the completed figure until mid to late February. Anne Kirby asked why there is only \$104,000.00 expended? Heidi Duval stated that the town is still waiting to be billed for the completion of the mapping project. She stated that she will have the figure by the deliberative session.

72 **Legal** – budgeted at \$35,000.00. Only expended \$20,000.00 in 2016. Adam Mini asked if the
73 remaining \$15,000.00 will be expended? Mr. Branscombe stated that it would not be expended.
74 Mr. Currier stated that only \$25,000.00 should be budgeted and not \$35,000.00. Mr. Bakos
75 stated that the person who should be here this evening to answer these questions was not here.
76 He also reiterated that the committee did not have accurate revenue figures. Mr. Branscombe
77 stated that the legal line item is always an unknown from year to year.

78 **Planning Board** – proposed amount of \$27,852.00. Actual voted on last year was \$51,320.00.
79 Mr. Bakos asked about the consulting fee for the master plan. It was indicated that the
80 \$15,000.00 reduction will be encumbered.

81 **Zoning Board of Adjustment** – proposed budget is \$13,083.00. In 2016 the budget was
82 \$10,694.00. Mr. Forst stated that the salary line had increased as the position changed and had
83 been given additional work.

84 **Historic District Commission** - \$4,705.00 proposed. 2016 appropriation was \$5,097.00. There
85 is a decrease in the salary line item as there was less demand this past year.

86 **General Government Buildings** – proposed \$82,700.00. Budgeted in 2016 was \$71,850.00.
87 The increase is to fund the painting of the Academy building at the cost of \$32,000.00, which all
88 four sides of the building would be painted. Mr. Currier inquired about the building maintenance
89 line item? Mr. Forst stated that the building maintenance line is inclusive of the Old Town Hall.
90 He stated that each department has their own maintenance line item. Mr. Currier asked what this
91 line item covers for expenses? Mr. Forst stated that it includes the cost of electricity, fuel oil,
92 phones and any other expenses to operate the buildings.

93 **Cemeteries** – proposed cost of \$10,480.00. Year 2016, the actual was \$8,996.00. Mr. Forst
94 explained that the increase is due to an increase in the expense of grounds keeping.

95 **Insurance** – proposed \$88,871.00. In 2016, the actual was \$68,089.00. Mr. Forst explained that
96 only six months had been billed in the 2016 year.

97 **Police Department** – proposed budget of \$566,224.00. Last year, 2016, was \$551,566.00. Mr.
98 Forst noted that the increase was primarily in the salary increases and the mandatory increase in
99 funding NH Retirement System. It was noted that a police detail revolving fund had been voted
100 on for approval in 2015 but was never established. It will be established this year. Mr. Forst
101 stated that police detail will no longer be part of the budget. The taxpayer will no longer have to
102 fund police detail as it will have its own revolving fund and any excess in revenues in this
103 revolving fund at the end of the fiscal year will go back to the general fund to offset the tax rate.

104 **Fire Department** – Proposal of \$637,417.00. Last year, 2016, \$615,416.00 was funding. This
105 increase is due to wage increases and NH Retirement mandated funding increases. Also, the
106 vehicle repair line item has increased.

Building Inspection - proposed funding of \$33,508.00. Year 2016, the funding was \$27,136.00. a realization in wage increases and amount of inspections requested.

Highway Management - The amount remains the same at \$2,500.00

Highway Administration – proposed \$423,089.00 funding. Year 2016 was funded at \$410,031.00. Salary increases, NH Retirement mandatory increases and the increase in health insurance.

- **Highway and Streets** – proposed funding of \$346,2763.00. Year 2016 the funding was \$346,263.00. The increase is due to the purchase of signage. Mr. Bakos asked what is the total plowing cost per snowstorm? This information was not available.
- **Street Lighting** – proposed funding of \$4,500.00 from the 2016 funding of \$3,500.00. this increase is due to the increase in cost to fund electricity.
- **Road Betterment** – proposed \$271,995.00. Year 2016 was \$268,363.00. The funds will be encumbered.
- **Total** – 2017 is proposed at \$1,046,347.00. Actually funded in 2016 was \$1,028,157.00.

Hazardous Waste – 2017 proposed funding of \$3,276.00. Only \$85.00 was expended in 2016 as the town did not participate in a hazardous waste day.

Transfer Station – Proposed figure of \$277,902.00. Funded in 2016 was \$253,698.00. The cost of the Concord Waste Facility increased as well as hauling and tipping fees have increased.

Animal Control – Remains the same at the cost of \$500.00 per year.

Outside Agencies – Proposed funding of \$30,882.00. The Gilmanton Youth Organization as requested an additional \$1,000.00 funding from \$2,000.00 to \$3,000.00 for the 2017 year. Mr. Bean stated that, when the GYO had been given permission to use the land, there was no prior approval to partially fund this program from taxpayer monies.

General Assistance – The proposed funding remains the same as last year at a cost of \$24,809.00. Mr. Forst stated that the town has an existing non-capital reserve fund for general assistance and none of these monies were used in 2016. He stated that the committee had talked about using this non-capital fund to reduce this budget.

Parks and Recreation – a proposed funding of \$14,815.00. Year 2016 was funding at \$13,748.00. The proposed increase is realized in the increase in telephone charge and in the salary line and in the increase in the cost of electricity.

Library – proposed funding of \$14,000.00. Year 2016 was funded at \$18,000.00 for work completed on the library building.

Patriotic Purposes – proposed funding of \$4,650.00. Last year, 2016, was \$3,875.00. The flags on the light poles will no longer be privately funded. The increase is an additional \$775.00. Chief Hempel that the flags cost between \$50.00 - \$60.00 each to purchase.

Conservation Commission – The funding request remains the same as the previous year in the amount of \$3,963.00

Principal Debt Service – in 2017 the cost is \$115,468.00

Mr. Forst stated that the proposed budget for 2017 is \$3,638,586.00. Using the estimated revenues amount of \$1,548,952.00, the estimated tax rate per thousand will be approximately \$4.62 per thousand.

PROPOSED WARRANT ARTICLES

Articles 1 – 4 – no tax impact.

Article 5 – will be determined

Article 6

“To see if the town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$48,500.00 to purchase and equip a new forestry truck vehicle and fire pump skid unit and further to fund this appropriation by withdrawing \$48,750.00 from the previously established fire department forestry vehicle replacement capital reserve fund.” It was noted that there would be no impact on the tax rate.

Mr. Currier asked if this warrant article wording is correct? It was stated that the wording of the warrant articles had already been review by the town’s attorney.

Article 7

“To see if the town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$17,500.00 to be deposited in the self contained breathing apparatus capital reserve fund established in 2011.” The tax rate impact is \$0.04 per thousand. Chief Hempel stated that the town will be able to fund the purchase of this equipment in the 2018 year.

Article 8

“To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$8,000.00 to be deposited in the fire radio capital reserve fund established in 2015.” Tax impact is \$0.02 per thousand. There was no public comment.

Article 9

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$34,000.00 for the purchase of 2 power cots for the fire rescue ambulance.” Tax impact is \$0.08 per thousand. Mr. Currier asked how many cots does the department currently have for use. Chief Hempel stated that the

171 department is temporarily using a demonstration power cot.

172 **Article 10**

173 *“To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$42,500.00 to purchase and*
174 *equip a new police cruiser.”* Tax impact is \$0.09 per thousand. There was no public comment.

175 **Article 11**

176 *“To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$60,000.00 to be deposited in*
177 *the highway equipment capital reserve fund established in 2006.”* Tax impact is \$0.13 per
178 thousand. Mr. Currier asked how much monies are currently in this fund? Mr. Forst stated that
179 \$287,000.00 currently exists in this fund.

180 **Article 12**

181 *“To see if the town will vote to establish a capital reserve fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1*
182 *for the purpose of purchasing computer technology upgrades and to raise and appropriate the*
183 *sum of \$20,000.00 to be deposited in this fund and appoint the board of selectmen as agents to*
184 *expend (majority vote required)”* Tax impact of \$0.04 per thousand. The question was posed as
185 to what equipment upgrades would be covered in this fund. Mr. Forst stated that all of the town
186 computers would be included with the exception of the school.

187 **Article 13** – no tax impact

188 **Article 14**

189 *“To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000.00 to be deposited in*
190 *the bridge capital reserve fund established in 1995.”* Tax impact is \$0.11 per thousand. There
191 was no public comment.

192 **Article 15**

193 *“To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$26,210.00 to remove, repair*
194 *and replace the playground at Crystal Lake Park in order to conform to safety and liability*
195 *standards.”* Tax impact of \$0.06 per thousand. Mr. Currier inquired as to why this item was so
196 expensive. Mr. Bakos stated that the town’s liability company, *Primex*, had indicated that the
197 playground is was out code. Adam Mini questioned why the replacement of the playground
198 equipment was so expensive to purchase? Mr. Bakos asked if the town needed a playground at
199 Crystal Lake Park? Ms. Currier inquired as to who had brought this proposal forward? Mr. Forst
200 stated that Parks and Recreation had. A question arose as to how old the equipment was? The
201 answer indicated that the playground had been installed in 1941. Mr. Currier asked what
202 equipment would be replaced? The answer was the swings, slide and bars.

203 **Article 16**

204 *“To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,422.00 to install a*
205 *playground outside the academy building.”* The tax rate impact is \$0.01 per thousand. The
206 question was asked as to why academy building needs a playground set? It was answered that the
207 set is used at various times including at the 4th of July celebrations.

208 **Article 17**

209 *“To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$24,000.00 for the statistical*
210 *update of all properties to be deposited into the revaluation assessment update capital reserve*
211 *fund.”* Tax impact of \$0.05 per thousand. There was no public comment.

212 **Article 18**

213 *“To see if the town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,000.00 to fund milfoil treatment for*
214 *the lakes of Gilmanton.”* Zero tax impact. No public comment was given.

215 **Article 19** – no funds attached

216 **Article 20**

217 *Shall we modify the elderly exemptions from property tax under the provisions of RSA 72:39-b in*
218 *the town based on assessed values, for qualified taxpayers to be as follows. For a person 65 – 75*
219 *years of age, \$80,000.00; for a person 75 – 80 years of age or older, \$100,000.00; for a person*
220 *80 years old or older \$120,000.00. To qualify, the person must have been a NH resident for at*
221 *least 3 years; own the real estate individually or jointly, or if the real estate is owned by such*
222 *person’s spouse, they must have been married for at least 5 consecutive years. The taxpayer*
223 *must have a net income of less than \$27,000.00 or, if married, a combined income of less than*
224 *\$40,000.00 and own net assets no in excess of \$120,000.00 excluding the value of the person’s*
225 *residence.”* (By Petition) There was no tax impact given. Mr. Bakos asked how many residents
226 now qualify for the elderly exemption? It was not known at this time. Mr. Currier asked what the
227 tax impact would be per thousand? It was known at this time.

228 Mr. Bean stated that the DWI and speeding grant warrant articles would need to be added. Each
229 grant is usually funded for \$5,000.00 apiece. Chief Currier stated that the Department of
230 Revenue Administration has indicated that Gilmanton is the only town that has a warrant articles
231 on these grant funds.

232 Chairman Forst stated that the Gilmanton Year Round Library had submitted a petition warrant
233 article in the amount of \$48,500.00 to partially fund the library in the 2017 year. He stated that
234 the Supervisors of the Checklist had verified the signature names today.

235 Mr. Currier asked about the planning board budget proposed funding? Mr. Forst stated that the
236 planning board needs to have their own public hearing. It was noted that, according to state

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237 statutes, the deadline to hold public hearings is January 17, 2017 and the deadline for petition
238 warrant articles is January 10, 2017.

239 **Adjournment**

240 On a motion made by Michael Jean, seconded by Joanne Melle, the members of the budget
241 committee adjourned the meeting at 7::50 p.m.

242 Respectfully submitted,

243 Rachel Hatch, Recording Clerk