



**TOWN OF GILMANTON  
BUDGET COMMITTEE**

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January 4, 2023

**MINUTES APPROVED**

**Town and School District Public Hearing**

**6:00 PM – Academy Building**

**6:00 PM - CALL TO ORDER by Chairman Forst**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Committee Members Present:** Chairman Brian Forst, Vice Chairman Anne Kirby, Members Alec Bass, Joshua Mann, Ron Leclerc, Grace Sisti, Sawyer Lake Village District Rep. Rich Adams, School Board Rep. Michelle Heyman, and Selectmen's Rep. Vinnie Baiocchetti.

**Members of Town Present:** Town Administrator Heather Carpenter, Fire Chief Paul Hempel, Police Chief Matt Currier.

**Members of School Present:** Principal Julie Couch and Director of Student Services Nancy Fournier.

**Members of SAU #79:** Superintendent Bruce Beasley and Finance Director Sandie MacDonald.

**Members of School Board Present:** Vice Chair Jonathan Stearns, Kelsey St. James and Bianca Weber.

**Public Present:** Resident Adam Mini, Liz Brulotte, Zannah Richards, Joanne Melle, Sarah Akerstrom, Tessa St. Jean, Teresa Burlingame, Katie Bass, Carolyn Schofield and other members of the public.

Chairman Forst explained the procedures for the meeting.

**Town Budget:**

Chairman Forst stated the Town is proposing an operating budget without warrant articles of \$5,135,200. This is a 15.71% increase over last year's budget with about 7% of that increase for personnel compensation. The remaining percentage increase is due to inflation increases for things like fuel costs, utility costs, etc. There are no new initiatives in this budget.

**Executive Line – \$452,207 – No Comment**

**Computer Tech – \$55,559 –** Chairman Forst explained this new line is not a new initiative it was created to better track all computer associated costs within the Town under one line. Previously this line was spread out within all the individual department budgets. You will now see a reduction within each budget for this.

Resident Mini questioned the amount based on the list that is on the sheet under this budget. TA Carpenter stated there are other costs in the number that is not itemized.

- Action Item: Check the CCS amounts showing on budget documents as they don't match.

**Election & Registration – \$11,094 –** This line is down as there are less elections this year.

**Finance – \$177,795 – No Comment**

**TCTX – \$251,437 – No Comment**

**Prop Tax/Assessing – \$58,415 – No Comment**

34 **Legal** – \$80,000 – No Comment

35 **Planning Board** – \$13,893 – No Comment

36 **Zoning Board** – \$2,850 – No Comment

37 **Historic District Board** – \$660 – No Comment

38 **General Govt Bldgs** – \$150,365 – No Comment

39 **Cemetery Expense** – \$16,963 – No Comment

40 **Insurance** – \$111,867 – No Comment

41 **Police Department** – \$787,212 – No Comment

42 **Fire Department** – \$1,000,319 – No Comment

43 **Building Inspector** – \$47,785 – No Comment

44 **Emergency Management** – \$2,500 – No Comment

45 **Highway Administration** – \$565,949 – No Comment

46 **Highways & Streets** – \$506,900 – No Comment

47 **Street Lighting** – \$5,000 – No Comment

48 **Road Betterment** – \$274,232 – No Comment

49 **HHW Hazardous Waste Collection** – \$3,701 – No Comment

50 **SW Transfer/Recycling Ctr** – \$487,779 – No Comment

51 **Animal Control** – \$0 – No Comment

52 **General Assistance** – \$25,400 – No Comment

53 **Parks & Recreation** – \$32,367 – No Comment

54 **Library** – \$8,150 – No Comment

55 **Patriotic Purposes** – \$1,800 – No Comment

56 **Conservation Commission** – \$3,000 – No Comment

57 **Total Town Operating Budget** – \$5,135,200 – Member Bass asked for clarification on the new part time  
58 positions. Chairman Forst stated there are proposed new part time positions. Chief Hempel clarified that the  
59 Fire Department budget is \$1,000,319 not \$1,319,000.

60 Chairman Forst explained this is the time for the public or the taxpayer input, if they have a concern. The  
61 Budget Committee will meet on Saturday to deliberate a budget and that number is what goes forward to  
62 Deliberative Session. If there is a concern, please voice it so the Budget Committee can understand how the  
63 taxpayer is feeling about it. The committee was elected to do a job and would like to hear what the public is  
64 thinking.

65 **Town Warrant Articles:**

66 Chairman Forst presented the Town Warrant Articles, which are attached.

67

68 Comments by the public:

69 Article #05 – Chief Hempel explained the delivery for this vehicle is up to 26 months.

70 Article #10 – Resident Brulotte stated she noticed a lot of these have verbiage saying to further designate the  
71 Selectmen as agents to expend money from this fund. Is that to supersede it from being a warrant article in the  
72 future. Thus, giving the Selectmen the authority rather than getting a vote from the Town. Chairman Forst  
73 stated this is an expendable trust fund. These are funds set up in case of an emergency. In an emergency we  
74 need the Selectmen to be agents to expend the money rather than wait or hold a special Town Meeting to  
75 expend those funds. If the verbiage is not in the warrant article, then the Selectmen can't expend the funds.  
76 School Board Rep. Heyman added that when the Selectmen or School Board wants to expend money from those  
77 accounts, they need to hold a public hearing so there is a process behind this. It would be very expensive to  
78 hold a Special Town Meeting to do this.

79 TA Carpenter added the warrant articles are for specific funds that can only be used for what the fund is for and  
80 they are required to be established by a warrant article. An example is the tax rate hasn't been adjusted for this  
81 market yet because the amount in the fund for the revaluation doesn't have enough to allow us to do that. If  
82 funds are put in there annually that would give the Selectmen the opportunity to make that kind of decision in  
83 the future whereas, right now they can't.

84 Resident Richards asked if this is to establish a new fund, where did the money come from. Chairman Forst  
85 stated prior to this the money would have come from the operating budget. The Town is starting to see  
86 retirements with larger buyouts. The concern is the operating budget would be in jeopardy if there wasn't a  
87 fund to do the payouts. It is a tool being set up for future need so it doesn't strap the operating budget.

88 School Board Member St. James asked about the cruiser replacement last year. Chairman Forst explained there  
89 was a cruiser on the warrant last year in 2021 that did not pass so no new cruiser was purchased. The cruiser  
90 rotation was to have one cruiser replaced in 2021 and because that didn't happen, they are trying again. Police  
91 Chief Currier stated this is for a 2013 cruiser that is designed to be replaced after seven years and we are going  
92 on ten years.

93 Article #12 – Resident Brulotte asked, "How many residents are estimated to get this credit?" TA Carpenter  
94 stated we have a level but this is a readoption of the language that is being required for us to do by the State.  
95 Based on the language it would not bring new people to get the credit as it is a readoption of the original  
96 language.

97 Article #13 – TA Carpenter explained this is also just a readoption of the language required by the State.  
98 Resident Richards stated this makes it seem like its being added on to. TA Carpenter explained that the All  
99 Veteran's was adopted last year by the Town. The Veteran's Credit is what we've always had. It can be better  
100 explained when it goes to the public.

101 ➤ Action Item: Create explanation of the readoption.

102 Article #14 – TA Carpenter explained there is still conversation between the Selectmen and the Conservation  
103 Commission. This article may or may not move forward or it may have language added to it. There is potential  
104 for some change to this.

105 Article #17 – A resident asked how many people are receiving the exemption. TA Carpenter stated she will put  
106 those out prior to the deliberative session.

107 ➤ Action Item: Publish numbers of how many people are getting the elderly exemption and Veteran's  
108 credit.

109 She asked why it's being petitioned as it isn't a huge increase. Chairman Forst explained this is a petition  
110 warrant article and didn't come from the Selectmen. TA Carpenter stated the Town currently has an elderly

111 exemption for the amounts that were voted in last year. This petition article is based on someone petitioning to  
 112 increase the amounts because they missed the qualification by a small dollar amount.

113 Article #20 – Resident Melle stated this seems twice as much as last year and is concerned about the Town  
 114 owning GYO by asking for the amount of support. Resident Bass representing GYO explained the amount of the  
 115 increase and they are responsible for the maintenance of the park and is very appreciative of the support from  
 116 the Town. Selectmen’s Rep. Baiocchetti mentioned the Selectmen asked for information weeks ago and want to  
 117 know where it was. Resident Bass stated she believed the information was sent yesterday but would have to  
 118 check on that. Chairman Forst stated they need to make sure this information is sent to the Selectmen’s office  
 119 before Friday so they can support or not support this on Super Saturday.

120 Resident Akerstrom, who is also on GYO board, mentioned it has been very hard to sustain the program with the  
 121 lack of volunteers over the years and it has totally fallen on the Board of Directors, which hasn’t been a full  
 122 board in many years either. Although many of the Board of Directors, whose children have aged out, are staying  
 123 to still try and help out so she is asking that GYO still be supported.

124 Resident Richards asked if the last 8-10 articles are the same amount as last year. Chairman Forst stated  
 125 without exact numbers he believes that GYO and snowmobile club are up. Most of these are similar and is  
 126 based on the services they have provided.

127 ➤ Action Item: Check on the dollar amount of the petition warrant article for the Gilmanton Year-Round  
 128 Library.

129 Resident Brulotte asked what the difference between the 4<sup>th</sup> of July warrant article and the patriotic purposes in  
 130 the budget. Chairman Forst stated the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Association are the people who put on the celebration.  
 131 Patriotic Purposes are for the flags you see on the telephone poles, etc.

132 Resident Richards asked if the operating budget is \$5,135,200 would the \$4,894,138 be last years defeated  
 133 budget. Chairman Forst stated the default budget is based on the prior year’s budget plus any contractual items  
 134 of the Town. TA Carpenter stated what will be seen in the default budget will be adjustments to contracts and  
 135 obligations, increases on mandatory items the Town has to pay, and how the default budget was adjusted based  
 136 on last year. It is higher than last year’s default budget due to these items.

137 School Board Member St. James asked for Article #11, is there any penalty now that we are off schedule. Police  
 138 Chief Currier stated, “no”. School Board Member St. James asked who pays for the detail and Police Chief  
 139 Currier stated the vendors.

140 **School Budget:**

141 Chairman Forst stated the School is proposing an operating budget without warrant articles of \$12,763,326.

142 **Regular Education Line** – \$6,541,001 – No Comment

143 **Special Education Line** – \$753,021 – No Comment

144 **Co-Curricular Line** – \$74,460 – No Comment

145 **Attendance Line** – \$1 – No Comment

146 **Guidance Line** – \$144,929 – No Comment

147 **Health Line** – \$53,710 – No Comment

148 **Psychological Line** – \$60,310 – No Comment

149 **Speech Line** – \$41,113 – No Comment

150 **Phys. & Occ. Therapy Line** – \$110,676 – No Comment

151 **Instructional Development Line** – \$53,750 – No Comment

152 **Library Line** – \$76,919 – No Comment

153 **Technology Line** – \$183,385 – No Comment

154 **School Board Line** – \$59,402 – No Comment

155 **Superintendent Line** – \$159,101 – Resident Brulotte asked what the difference is for. Chairman Forst explained  
 156 what the increases were for. Resident Brulotte asked since the Superintendent is leaving why is there an  
 157 increase for the salary. School Board Rep. Heyman stated they have not filled this position but knowing what  
 158 the market has been doing and with all positions they have had to back fill so they left the amount. Resident  
 159 Brulotte asked if there was hope to fill it for less. School Board Rep. Heyman stated that is always the hope but  
 160 it hasn't played out that way each time they have backfilled for a position.

161 **Student Support Services Line** – \$138,958 – No Comment

162 **Principal's Office Line** – \$287,547 – No Comment

163 **Fiscal Services Line** – \$184,341 – Resident Brulotte asked why are some lines 0 for salary adjustment and some  
 164 are showing as an adjustment and some as salary adjustment. School Board Rep. Heyman stated the  
 165 superintendent had a multiple year contract so that contract is built into this. There are other positions that  
 166 didn't have a multiple year contract so they are in the salary adjustment. Last year there were many positions  
 167 that were removed from the salary adjustment line to a wage line. If you have a multiple year contract you are  
 168 in the salary adjustment line as the exception to the rule.

169 **Operation of Plant Line** – \$594,205 – Member Richards stated this has a huge increase and wanted to know  
 170 what is causing the increase. School Board Rep. Heyman stated it is commodities that is causing the increase.  
 171 Resident Richards stated that recently the bulbs and things were changed to more energy efficient. School  
 172 Board Rep. Heyman stated only part of the school did. The newer part of the school has the smart bulbs and  
 173 technology upgrades. There are still a lot of energy projects to do. Chairman Forst stated for electricity and fuel  
 174 oil it is a \$100K increase.

175 **Transportation Line** – \$597,209 – No Comment

176 **Support Services and Benefits Line** – \$2,004,043 – No Comment

177 **Food Service District Support Line** – \$45,000 – No Comment

178 **Debt Service Line** – \$117,770 – No Comment

179 **Grants Fund Line** – \$250,000 – No Comment

180 **Food Service Line** – \$232,475 – No Comment

181 **Total School Operating Budget** – \$12,763,326 – No Comment

182 **School Warrant Articles:**

183 Chairman Forst presented the School Warrant Articles, which are attached.

184 Comments by the public:

185 Article #9 – Chairman Forst stated they should list in there that they are repurposing \$15,369.

186 Article #10 – A dollar amount was added of \$156,908.

187 Article #12 – Vice Chairman Kirby asked how the default budget is higher than the proposed operating budget.  
 188 She stated they have to have an answer on Super Saturday. Chairman Forst also stated he would like hard

189 evidence for Super Saturday as to why the default budget is higher than the proposed operating budget. In all  
190 his years on the budget committee he has never seen that.

191 Chairman Forst asked why the warrant articles have recommended and not recommended on them since the  
192 Budget Committee hasn't made a recommendation yet.

193 There was some discussion regarding the default budget being higher.

194 Resident Richards stated she was disappointed that there wasn't a hand out for the warrant articles. Finance  
195 Director MacDonald stated there was a miscommunication and apologized.

196 Public Hearing closed at 7:34 pm.

197 Chairman Forst stated the January 14 School Super Saturday meeting will need to change the venue. It was  
198 agreed to hold it at the Gilmanton School at the same time.

199 **MOTION:** On a motion by Selectmen's Rep. Baiocchetti and seconded by Member Bass it was voted to adjourn.  
200 (8-0)

201 **ADJOURNMENT:** Time approximately 7:37 p.m.