

TOWN OF TAMWORTH

SELECT BOARD OFFICE

Location – Cook Memorial Library, Downstairs Meeting Room

Select Board Meeting: 5:00 PM

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

2024 Budget Hearing Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER: Roberts calls the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

In Attendance: Select Board Members Karl Behr, Steve Schaeffer, Lianne Prentice, Emery Robers and Richard Doucette (via Zoom) Town Administrator, Keats Myer, Administrative Assistant/Rec Director Emily Verny. Ed Comeau of Government Oversight. Police Chief, Dana Littlefield; Road Agent, Richard Roberts; Maintenance Manager, Rick Moreau; Fire Chief, Richard Colcord; Town Clerk/Tax Collector, Kim Trammell. Also in attendance: John Wheeler, Jim and Maureen Diamond, Mitch Gordon, John and Shelly Paven, Jim Bowles, Linda Eldridge, Mark Debitetto, Nancy Debitetto, Melanie Streeter, Becky Mason, Mary Cronin, Allie Kaplan-Thompson, Ian Haskell. Via Zoom: Linda Cook, Shauna Peterson, Devon and Eric Ames.

Roberts motions to open the Public Hearing to present the 2024 Budget and Warrant in accordance with RSA 32:5-I. Schaeffer seconds. Roll Call Vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Roberts yes, Doucette yes.

Roberts opens the public hearing thanking the department heads and summarizing the bottom line of the budget: All salaries have a cost of living 3% increase. The overall town budget is down by 3.9% from last year.

Mason asks what the health insurance increase is for 2024. Myer states 15.65%. Mason asks why the Town Administrator line item for Flexible Spending Account (FSA) is increased compared to last year. Myer explains that all FSA money was consolidated into one line item. Mason points out that they are still listed in certain department budgets. Myer noted the correction. Streeter asks why the full-time line decreased. Myer states the salary increased by 3% but then reduced to 35 hours during the summer, summertime has less of a workload, and this saves the town money.

Wheeler asks why the Town Clerk/Tax Collector budget has such a large increase. Trammell explains it is for making the Deputy position full time. Mason asks why the FSA still money has is this line if it was supposed to be combined in the Town Administration budget. Myer states we will correct it. Mason asks why the equipment increase is \$9,000. Trammell explains we are looking at new machines for voting. Discussion ensued.

Unknown person asks if the assessing contract goes out for bid after a contract ends? Roberts states we stayed with the same company this year. Myer states that there is value in the institutional memory when the assessor has been with Tamworth for over 10 years.

Mason confirms the amount listed as year to date does not match the vendors list. Myer states that there are gaps in the billing cycle between the end of year and beginning of year that will get adjusted after the audit.

Mason asks if the Compliance Officer should have mileage included? Discussion ensued. Cook asks if the officer will be authorized to enforce the policy? Prentice states yes, he is authorized to enforce the policy.

Streeter says the Town House has a package deal with telephone/Wi-Fi through Spectrum. The phone line is tied in with the fire alarm with Consolidated Communications. Spectrum should be notified and go down to just Wi-Fi, no phone line. Myer says we will look into it.

Streeter asks why the Energy Committee has budgeted for mileage when this is a volunteer committee? Doucette

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says that if no other committee gets mileage, then we should delete it from the Energy Committee and we should also add mileage to the Compliance Officer. Roberts states we will add \$500 in mileage to the Compliance Officer and remove the \$140 mileage line from the Energy Committee.

Wheeler confirms that they did not cut the budget last year and had requested it to remain the same. We've been giving money back so we're not sure why the budget got cut further. Myer says we requested all department heads to cut a certain percentage. Mason asks when the Cemetery maintenance contracts are up? Wheeler states that we are in the 2nd year of a 3-year contract, with a provision that it could go up with fuel price increase.

Mason asks if the property and liability insurance increase includes the addition to the town office building? Myer says yes it does.

Roberts states that the Economic Development Commission budget will be removed for 2024.

Streeter wonders why the part time PD salary was reduced to \$1,000. Littlefield explains we allocated the money into a full time slot, leaving money open for a vacant position. The part time position line has been allocated for inconsistent part-time help, and noted that when we have a vacancy, we must budget for the full family plan health insurance. Prentice says that ideally, we'd like to see the 3 full-time positions staffed, so we would keep the money in the lines that we want to see filled. Cook asks if the Prosecutor line is being filled by the Chief of Police. Littlefield confirms, yes is it. Is it in the job description? No, it is a separate job description that is assigned to an officer who is seen fit to do it.

Mason asks why we had to double the salary for the Emergency Management Director? Chairman Roberts noted that in addition to the position being more hours than in the past, with weather emergencies and grant writing, the Emergency Management position would be hard to fill with lower pay. Streeter suggests that the office keep track of his hours and asks why he's also receiving a first responder stipend. Roberts confirms we can take the first responder stipend out of the budget.

Wheeler asks why the Highway Department part time help has a large increase? The Road Agent, R. Roberts, says the hourly wage remains the same, but we need the money in the budget to hire more people during the winter months. Cook asks are there any plans to buy equipment and stop renting? Roberts says it's cheaper in the long run to rent equipment and doesn't advise buying equipment. Cook asks why \$132,000 was left in budget from 2023? Roberts says he was trying to save money. Chairman E. Roberts noted that one storm can cost \$100,000 in road repair from damage, and keeping a cushion for that is necessary.

The Recreation Budget increase is due to more programs and the budget for a full-time Rec Director with health insurance for a family plan. Cook asks if there is a full-time summer program? Verny states that there will be 2 weeks of full-time summer camp, Friday field trips, swim lessons and afternoons of sports programming. Streeter asks if there will ever be a full-time summer camp? Verny states there would have to be real demand for it, there is already an existing well established summer camp in town that serves many Tamworth children at an affordable price.

Mason suggests rescinding the 3rd year of the Transfer Station warrant article that was passed in 2022, which was a multiyear warrant article. Discussion ensued. No action taken.

Myer states we've covered total expenses, with the few cuts we've made we're at \$5,216,138.

Mason asks when the 3% overall employee increase starts? Myer states April 1st.

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Chairman Roberts makes a motion to accept the budget as amended. Prentice seconds. Roll Call Vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Roberts yes, Doucette yes.

Myer states the warrant articles that were adjusted are as follows:

- Article 6: \$14,437 Compliance Agent budget (adjusted mileage) + \$500
- Article 6: \$775 Energy Committee budget (adjusted mileage) -\$140
- Article 8: \$14,788 Emergency Management budget (adjusted first responder stipend) -\$372
- Article 31: \$750 removed from Petition Articles -750

Discussion ensued on FSA/HRA calculations, and if there was double counting. All agreed to remove the \$500 from Government Buildings FSA/HRA line.

- Article 6: \$134,526 (adjusted FSA) from Government Buildings -\$500

Roberts makes a motion to rescind the initial approval of the budget as amended. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Roberts yes, Doucette yes. 5 yes, 0 no.

Roberts makes a motion to approve the budget as amended in the amount of \$5,215,638. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Roberts yes, Doucette yes. 5 yes, 0 no.

Roberts and Myer read through the warrant articles.

- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 02. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 03. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 04. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 05. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 06. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 07. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 08. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 09. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 10. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 11. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 12. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 13 as amended. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes,

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- Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 14. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 15. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 16. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 17. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 18. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 19. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 20. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 21. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 22. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 23. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 24. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 25. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 26. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 27. Schaeffer seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice recuses herself, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 4 yes, 1 recusal.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 28. Schaeffer seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice recuses herself, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 4 yes, 1 recusal.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 29. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 30. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 31. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 32. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer no, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 4 yes, 1 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 33. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr no, Schaeffer no, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 3 yes, 2 no.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 34. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.
- Kim Trammell, the Town Tax Collector recommends voting against Article 34, in which paper ballots shall be adopted.
- Roberts makes a motion to recommend Article 34. Prentice seconds. Roll vote: Behr no, Schaeffer no, Prentice no, Doucette no, Roberts, no. 0 yes, 5 no.

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Roberts makes a motion to recess the public hearing until tomorrow evening, February 8th 2024 at 5:00 pm. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.

Myer announces Sue Leonard has resigned from her position as of March 15th. Roberts makes a motion to accept Sue Leonard's resignation as of March 15th. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.

Roberts makes a motion to approve the Select Board Meeting Minutes, February 1, 2024. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.

Roberts makes a motion to approve Nonpublic meeting minutes, RSA 91-A:3, II, (d) Session #1 and RSA 91-A:3, II, (a) Session #2. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.

Roberts makes a motion to approve Accounts Payable Manifests: \$351,973.10 as well as \$4,907.24 and \$100.00. Prentice seconds. Roll call vote: Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.

Total cash used to date: \$1,317,203.22

Roberts makes a motion to adjourn at 8:21 pm.

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February 8th, 2024, 5:00, Location: Tamworth Cook Memorial Library

Behr calls the Budget Hearing out of recess for the purpose of finalizing the warrant. Those present are Select Board members Prentice, Doucette, Schaeffer, Behr, Town Administrator Myer, Ed Comeau of Government Oversight.com. Chairman Roberts enters the room at 5:05.

Myer reads a newly added Warrant Article regarding elderly exemptions. This will become Warrant article #6 (note: this will move all numbers higher than #6 up one in the aforementioned list of warrant articles). Schaeffer moves to recommend the newly added warrant article, Prentice seconds, roll call vote Behr yes, Schaeffer yes, Prentice yes, Doucette yes, Roberts, yes. 5 yes, 0 no.

Board signs the Warrant as presented with the inclusion of the newly added WA #6.

Select Board Update: Doucette notes that he and the ground water protection committee met with the new Code Compliance Officer, Ed Mautone.

Roberts adjourned the meeting at 5:07 pm.

The minutes prepared by: Emily Verny

Select Board Approval:

Emery Roberts

Lianne Prentice

Karl Behr

Richard Doucette

Steve Schaeffer