Present: Raymond Youngs, Tracy Currier and Arlene Patten

Also Present: Donna King, George & Martha Morrill, James & Beth Folsom, Francis Muzzey, Doug Campbell, Randy & Andrea Comsteller, Palmer Koelb, Steve Davis, Chief Trott, Glenn Campbell, Noel King, Richard Borger Sr., Ricky Borger, Neil & Angela Borger, Janice Thompson, Kay Bailey, Deborah Vlk, Kevin Gilbert, Peter Kozak, Chief Ames.

The Selectmen agreed that next Meeting would be on February 22nd at 5:00 pm, for the Warrant Article Meeting on the one-percent (1%) cap.

Ray motioned to open the Public Budget & Warrant Article Meeting at 5:11 pm, seconded by Tracy and approved. The Administrative Asst. passed the agenda, warrants and budget to all guests present.

Public Hearing - Budget & Warrant Article Review:

The Select Board began with looking over the Budget and Warrant Articles.

Selectman, Ray Youngs said he’s heard the residents, and understands there are many questions and concerns, with the increase in the Town’s Tax Rate. Ray is doing some research into why the tax rate was increased as high as it was. He’s still not clear as to why and will research and prepare to give an answer before the start of Town Meeting. Steve Davis, believed the Board should not to take the blame for something they had no control over. Mr. Davis went on to give his explanations as to why he felt there was an increase, such as; the property evaluations dropped 18%, because of the property re-evaluations, an increase in the school spending, and an increase of State School funds, totaling 80%. Ray, thanked Steve for his explanation. Ray will speak with the NHDRA and the Town’s accountant at Crane & Bell for a better understanding.

Ms. Thompson asked why there was an increase in the bottom line amount of the budget. She said in the last meeting it was not that high, it seems to continually go up each workshop and wanted an explanation for this increase of $6,000 on this occasion. The Treasurer, Deb Vlk was there and showed the Board where she believed the increase was. During, the final budget meeting the Selectmen agreed that the Warrant Article for the Town Office Generator needed to be raised from $5,000 to $10,000 to cover costs of auto start feature, propane make and installation. They felt the $5,000 was not an adequate estimate. They asked the Admin. Assistant to get three (3) price quotes for Town Meeting. Another cost related to increase was an estimate from Mainstay for a new wireless module to support the Town Offices. Another increase was the Medical/Life Ins. & Reimbursed line items. Another item was for the Forester. After a discussion with the Select Board it was decided to allot more monies ($600) for the Forester. All items were the reason for the increase.
The Select Board started with **Warrant Article 3** (1% Cap) and mentioned that would be discussed at the meeting on February 22nd @ 5:00 pm at Wentworth Elementary School.

**Warrant Article 4** (General Municipal Operations) Mr. Muzzey asked questions as to why there was increases in the Executive Budget of $5,000. The Select Board answered with they felt it was the raise given to the Admin. Assist by choice. She works hard, it’s competitive with other towns of same size, and offers a value and stability in retention, for the employee.

Doug Campbell asked what the difference was in Medical/Life Ins. and Medical Ins. Reimbursed line items. The Select Board answered explaining the elevation in budget was due to the $28,500 Highway Medical being moved to General Municipal Operations. The Select Board went on to say that the Medical/Life Insurance was for the employees who chose the Town’s insurance, and the Medical Ins. Reimbursed was a payout allowed to the employees who opted out of receiving Town’s insurance. It was asked what that dollar amount was. Ray said $7,000 each and also stated he believed they were very generous in the amount.

Mr. Muzzey asked why the Board felt they needed $12,000 for Legal Expenses, when only $4000 was used the year before. The answer was that even though a small amount was used this past year for expenses, it has been known to be very high in previous years, and they were careful not to undermine the expenses. The Select Board said that they always try to solve issues in Town with free legal through the NH Municipal Assoc. first, before using the Town’s Attorneys.

Another question for the Select Board was, why the increase in office equipment. The Office copier/printer/fax machine is outdated and not functioning well. It consistently jams, delays projects and wastes paper. The Town was offered a trade in, which was an exceptional offer value of $4990 for the old machine, apply toward a new all-inclusive machine, with toner supplies, service, and installation, costing roughly $4,000. Also, the Town’s WIFI (wireless module) machine is graded for residential use only, and has created many issues with DNS and accessibility for employees and guest. This is recommended by the Town’s IT Dept. Mainstay.

**Warrant Article 5** (Historical Society) No issues or concerns. Same as read.

**Warrant Article 6** (Generator for Town Offices Bldg) The Select Board mentioned this was the budget item discussed previously with Ms. Thompson.

**Warrant Article 7** (Planning Board) No issues or concerns. Same as read.

**Warrant Article 8** (Health Agencies) The Select Board spoke briefly that the Health Agencies were cut back on requested appropriations. The dollar amount given this year, is half of what was given for last year’s appropriations.

**Warrant Article 9** (Fire Department) No issues or concerns. Same as read.

**Warrant Article 10** (Highway) Also discussed previously was the insurance which was moved to General Municipal Operations and a brief discussion about the Highway Block Grant and how the additional monies awarded by the Governor are to be used in 2018 only, for Road and Bridges.

**Warrant Article 11** (Freightliner 2014) No issues or concerns. Same as read.

**Warrant Article 12** (Conservation Commission) The Select Board mentioned that there was an increase of ($600) from last budget review, for the forester’s line item.
Warrant Article 13 (Capital Reserve Funds) The Board felt it was wise to keep the funds in the CR and not decrease or do away with, as previously mentioned in other budget workshop meetings. No issues or concerns. Same as read.

Warrant Article 14 (Celebration/Recreational - Capital Reserve Fund) There was a discussion about a previous CR on a previously opened acct. for the Celebration Fund. Mr. Muzzey states that you cannot open another, if one already exists. The discussion was that The Admin. Assistant will look into this. The Article can be amended on the floor at Town Meeting if need be.

Warrant Article 15 (Capital Reserve Fund-Investment Advisor for Trustees of Trust Funds) There was discussion on the wording for this article. The questions are is 5 years legal, how is the investment done and what percentage is invested, and what does other expenses incurred mean? George Morrill will research this. The Admin. Assist will look into this with the accountant and the NHDRA on its proper wording of the article.

Warrant Article 16 (Close the Ambulance Service CR) There was a brief discussion with Mr. Muzzey about the wording. It was agreed that the wording of the Warrant Article would be changed. The Admin. Assistant will look into removing the last sentence: Said funds to be used to offset the 2018 ambulance budget.

Warrant Article 17 (Transfer Station) No issues or concerns. Glenn Campbell spoke briefly on the desire to make the Transfer Station, self-sustaining and a money maker to reduce tax dollars. The article remains as read.

Warrant Article 18 (Police Station) No issues or concerns. Same as read.

Warrant Article 19 (Animal Pest Control) No issues or concerns. Same as read.

Warrant Article 20 (Ambulance Service) The Select Board mentioned that there was an increase this year, and Mr. Muzzey spoke up and said he believes it is associated with (per capita of population). He said the Ambulance Service is doing a great job. He also said that the Town of Warren has a lesser population, therefore they will be paying less, this year too. Same as read

Warrant Article 21 (Parks & Rec.) No issues or concerns. Same as read.

Warrant Article 22 (Gazebo) There was a discussion on the floor about the electricity and how it will get to the gazebo. Palmer Koelb mentioned he would like to see the electricity shared with the Fire Dept. or the Library instead of paying a meter fee (roughly $45.00 a month) for a couple of occasions it’s used throughout the year. It was asked about the wires going underground. Donna King mentioned the wires underground would not be going across the road but underground (trenching-grass area) from the pole at end of Common to the gazebo itself. Jenn Meade is overseeing the project.

Warrant Article 23 (Webster Memorial Library) No issues or concerns. Same as read.

Warrant Article 24 (Rock Sculpture) No issues or concerns. Same as read.

Warrant Article 25 (Adopt Veterans Tax Credit) There was a brief discussion on what that article meant and what credit kind of credit is already given. No issues or concerns. Same as read.
**Warrant Article 26** (Old Town Hall) There was a discussion on the floor by Mr. Muzzey as to why it is its own article? Mr. Muzzey suggested that the article (To see if the Town wishes to continue to repair and maintain the Old Town Hall for future use. This is an advisory article only) be taken out and discussed under Warrant Article 27. Mr. Muzzey suggested that it didn’t need its own article. The Select Board agreed. The Admin. Assistant will remove this from the Warrant Article pages and the discussion will be under last said Warrant.

**Warrant Article 27** (Other Business) This Warrant Article will be renamed as Warrant Article 26, after the removal of the above said.

Ray motioned to come out of the Public Hearing -Budget & Warrant Article Review Meeting and go into the Selectmen’s Business Meeting at 6:53 pm, seconded by Tracy and approved.

**Business Meeting:**
Chris motioned to open the Business Meeting at 6:54 pm, seconded by Tracy and approved.

The Selectmen agreed that next Meeting would be on February 22nd at 5:00 pm, for the **Warrant Article 3** (1% Tax Cap).

Selectmen reviewed and/or signed the following:

- Vendor/Payroll Checks
- NHDES – sufficient information per Precision Lumber
- Abatement Application M/L 13/4/20, tax period 2017
- Intent to Cut – OP #17-475-17, 17-475-18 & 17-475-19
- Redemption of Containers purchased outside VT.
- Barbara Hartlen - Family Assistance Specialist
- Draft Wetland Rules Summary – Governor’s Office
- WMUR price quote for general closing ticker
- **PREVIOUSLY SIGNED AT FORMER MEETING - 2/06/18**
- WB Mason Contract for printer/copier/fax machine
- Warren – Wentworth Contract $30,400
- Laptop for Office – Administrative Assistant Desk
- New WIFI Machine for office – supported by Mainstay

**Chief Trott** was invited to give a status update. The Chief mentioned he’s been busy with the usual patrol and everyday tasks.

**Arlene Patten**, Administrative Assistant gave a status update. Arlene mentioned that she’s been quite busy with the final stages of the Budget Workshops, scheduling of Public Meetings, deadline requirements, webpage postings, and the everyday requests from residents, to working with Free Legal and the daily duties of her office.

**Kevin Gilbert**, Road Agent gave a status update on the roads and bridges. He mentioned that the NHDOT has new requirements on any employee that works with a CDL license. Municipalities are no longer exempt from their employees having a DOT physical. The Admin. Assistant scheduled to have the Town Highway employee’s physicals done with Speare Memorial Hospital’s Occupational Health Program. The requirement is that the employees pass a DOT physical and the necessary paperwork is filed with the State of NH, no later than March 2nd. New CDL’s will be issued with the endorsements added. Peter Kozak asked the Road Agent what was happening with the culvert on
the Wentworth Village Rd., and why was there so much water? He went on to mention this water is frozen in early mornings and can be difficult when stopping at the stop sign or entering onto the Village Road. The Road Agent said he would be taking care of the culvert and issue. He’s looking into why the backup of waters and believes it is a frozen culvert. The road will get barricaded off while the waters are high.

Glenn Campbell, Transfer Station Attendant gave a status update. He mentioned that the Transfer Station had recently applied for a grant for a Bailer/Compactor of Cardboard through the NH The Beautiful organization and was awaiting the final letter, granting the $5,000 for the equipment purchase. Mr. Muzzey asked about the doors on the building and the costs pertaining to securing the machine from weather conditions. Glenn replied that the material and labor, for the doors would be donated by the Lumber Mill at no cost to the Town, and the labor to build the doors would also be donated with additional no costs.

The Selectmen invited Mr. Neil Borger to the floor. Mr Borger walked to the front of room and placed two broken-dented mailboxes and with a partial attachment of a broken post, onto the floor. He went on to say that this is ridiculous, and has happened twice. He now has replaced the mailbox for the third time and would like to be compensated for the expense, of $36.00 each times (2). Senior, Mr. Borger came to the front and said that this has happened to him (5) times this year on the same road, and has not mentioned or complained. This is a real issue. The Select Board agreed and asked the Road Agent to have a talk with the employee that plows this route. The Select Board said they want to be notified any time this happens. They said if an employee damages a resident’s property, the Admin. Assistant’s office needs to be notified from the Road Agent if this happens again. The Select Board apologized for the inconvenience and damages to their property. The Board will compensate Neil Borger for the mailbox replacements as requested.

Noel King was invited to the floor to speak. Mr. King says it’s his understanding that the Trustees of the Trust Fund for the Plummer Memorial Forest is oversee by the Forestry Committee, and if there is no Forestry Committee it is overseen by the Conservation Commission, which currently is not active because of a couple of vacancies in positions. The Select Board agreed about the vacancies of positions. Mr. King, said that he would like to join the Conservation Committee along with Mr. Borger, Jr. and Mr. Borger Sr. The Select Board mentioned the (3) gentlemen could be appointed and sworn into Oath after the February 22nd Public Hearing Meeting.

Ray motioned to come out of the Public Meeting and adjourn at 8:03 pm, seconded by Tracy and approved.

Respectfully Submitted by Arlene Patten

Minutes accepted by: