

**TOWN OF ENFIELD
ENFIELD BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES FEBRUARY 7, 2024**

TIME: 7:00 PM
LOCATION: DPW Facility

PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING– 7:00 PM

Hearings may start later, but not earlier than the posted time.

PRESENT

Budget Committee: Shirley Green, Dimitri Deserranno, Dan Kiley, Mike Diehn, Jane Plumley, Brad Rich, Tina Stearns, James Fickett, John Kluge (SB ex-officio; 7:14pm)

Select Board: Kate Stewart, Eric Russell, Tracy Young, Alice Kennedy, John Kluge (7:14pm)

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF: Alisa Bonnette, Assistant Town Manager; Ed Morris, Town Manager

OTHERS: Emily Curtis, recording secretary; Jean Patten, Leila Tarantelli, Mark Tarantelli, Heidi Sidley

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Deserranno called the Budget Committee (BC) meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Ms. Stewart called the Selectboard (SB) meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING– 7:00 PM

Mr. Deserranno presented a PowerPoint presentation regarding the proposed 2024 budget. He stated that it is not the purview of the BC to make large cuts or changes to a department without discussing with the SB. At the conclusion of the presentation, Mr. Deserranno asked members of the SB or BC for comments or questions.

Mr. Kluge thanked Mr. Deserranno and members of the BC for an excellent presentation and commended their efforts.

Mr. Morris reviewed the increase in expenses related to health benefit cost increases, the road survey, and the building projects. He noted that the Road survey will review road conditions and assist in preplanning the future. He stated that the budget is conservative on purpose and stated that the tax rate usually comes in slightly lower than what is presented.

Mr. Diehn inquired when the state will tell the town the tax rate.

Mr. Morris stated that the tax rates by the state are set in November of each year.

Mr. Deserranno noted that the first tax bill is an estimate, and the second bill is the actual amount of what the state has set.

Jean Patten inquired about a document from January 29th that states there is \$428,684 in unpaid property taxes. She inquired how that is accounted for and how the town handles the lost revenue.

Mr. Morris stated that the properties are taken on tax deed as the state allows, but typically the back due taxes are paid prior to the finalization of the deeding process.

Jean Patten stated that the amount indicates that there are people struggling to pay their taxes and is concerning. She inquired about the staff position created for the Clerk of the Works and the dollar amount allocated for that position.

Mr. Morris stated that the Clerk of the Works is not a new staff position in the town, but it is a contracted consultant, and will cost \$80,000 from the building projects, in addition to \$20,000 which has been budgeted in the general budget.

Leila Tarantelli stated that \$75,000 to clean up the Shed Street property is a lot of money and inquired why the town can't sell the property and avoid the remediation costs being put on the taxpayers.

Mr. Morris stated that it is an EPA ground field cleanup, and it is legally required for the town to do it as they caused the pollution.

Leila Tarantelli inquired if the town should sell property to help clean up the others.

Mr. Morris stated that most of the town owned properties are in use.

Mark Tarantelli stated that we are all making hard choices, and inquired what hard choices the town has made with the presented budget.

Mr. Deserranno stated that people have been trimming the budget for multiple years, but service levels have stayed the same. He stated that he personally believes that people should make recommendations where changes should be made, and it should not be a sole decision of the BC or the SB.

Mr. Diehn and Mr. Kiley agreed with Mr. Deserranno and stated that service and staffing levels will be affected by cuts. It was noted that recommendations to have the Town Manager cut a set number, such as \$250,000, are not productive as the cuts will be based on one person's decision instead of involving the public in the process.

Mr. Kiley noted that there are things being changed in the proposed budget that will affect next years' budget, such as reducing the budgeted police salary for the current year, which means to include it in the future the budget will need to go back up.

Mr. Kluge stated that, to make further cuts to the budget, taxpayers need to decide if we want to reduce current services such as 24/7 police coverage, having roads paved, or having roads plowed and sanded/salted in a timely manner.

Mr. Kiley noted that, with regard to employee salaries and benefits included in the budget, there are two levels of benefits based on how long employees have been with the town.

A member of the public inquired when and why the benefits structure changed.

Ms. Stewart stated that the tiered structure was implemented a couple of years ago to control costs to the town without penalizing long-term employees and noted that it was a difficult decision. She stated that each year benefits are looked at and noted that the municipality used to be able to compete with the private sector.

Mr. Kluge stated that the key element in the conversation is retaining employees. He noted that it has been discussed many times that other towns call our employees and make higher offers for pay, which makes retention challenging.

Heidi Sidley inquired about an RFP not being done for health care providers and when that might be done.

Mr. Deserranno stated that the BC has requested that an RFP is put out next year.

Heidi Sidley inquired about how the town's current plan compares to other local municipality benefit plans.

Mr. Morris stated that most municipalities go with Health Trust, which is the government health care, and agreed that it will be looked at in 2024.

Ms. Green stated that the public should be involved in the process and advise the BC for recommendations on what should be cut.

Bob Cusick stated that he worked with the BC and the CIP to set up the CIP Plan, and he is proud of the work that has been done by all involved. He stated that, since 2000 the town has added services, and all the things we wanted as a town are now building up. He stated that that we can't have nice things without paying for them, and adding more housing would be one way to do it. He noted that revenues could make a big difference and should be focused on.

Sam Cook thanked Mr. Deserranno and the committee members for their time and well-organized presentation. He stated that he doesn't understand the increases in recreation personnel and youth sports in particular.

Mr. Morris stated that the increase in personnel is partially related to the recreation director, but other personnel positions such as lifeguards and camp counselors are reflected in that same line, which also increased. He stated that there will be an increased cost for the youth sports, but there will be an increase in revenue, and part of the recreation director's salary will be collected by the youth sports which will help offset those costs. He stated that supporting youth sports provides better service to the town and noted that he has tasked the recreation director with finding more avenues for revenue within youth sports.

Mr. Diehn inquired if Enfield residents would still pay fees as they do for the current program.

Mr. Morris confirmed that Enfield residents will pay fees to help maintain the program and not burden taxpayers with the cost of the programming, and if other towns do not contribute to the program, then a higher fee for non-residents may be implemented. He stated the goal is to help run a more consistent administration of the youth sports program and look for ways to increase the revenue.

Kurt Gotthardt inquired about the tipping fees for trash and recycling. He stated that a large portion of the recycling goes to the dump anyways because there isn't a market for it, and he inquired if there was a way to temper those costs.

Mr. Deserranno stated that the town pays a fee per ton for trash and for recycling. He noted that, due to the weight of glass and higher recycling fees, putting glass in the trash would result in a lower charge to the town.

Jim Taylor confirmed that the costs recently contracted are \$145 per ton for recycling and \$105 per ton for trash

Mr. Morris stated that the savings on average would be approximately \$5,000 per year to throw glass in the trash instead of recycling.

Mr. Deserranno noted that the cost to the town for disposal of trash and recycling per ton is still the same whether the trash is taken to the transfer station or picked up by Casella.

Heidi Seily inquired if there was any consideration about the impact of the tax increases, from 5.5% to 6.25%, and how that may impact the economic stability of people wanting to come here.

Mr. Deserranno noted that it had not been discussed.

Madeline Johnson requested to clarify that the costs associated with the Byways Grant are for an extra project and the funds for that project are not a part of the budget.

Mr. Deserranno confirmed that the costs and associated funding are only for the project.

Madeline Johnson inquired if there was a correlation study to the taxes increasing and people leaving. She stated if workers can't afford to live here, how does that work with the constantly rising taxes?

Ms. Stewart stated that the SB looks at the reports provided by the tax collector and the percentage of people who have not paid their taxes is actually very low. She noted that it takes three years of unpaid tax debt for the town to be able to take action. She noted that tax deeding conversations come before the SB, and they have had conversations about how to help residents. She added that each time a resident does not pay their bill it impacts people around them, but there are limitations to action that can be taken.

Mr. Kluge stated that payment plans have been set up between residents and the town to help those who fall behind on tax payments as well.

Mr. Morris stated that our percentage of uncollected taxes is relatively low compared to other towns.

Bob Cusick stated that he has a neighbor who has never paid their dues or taxes on time, but nothing is done about it.

Dave Stewart stated that prices have gone up, and the library was supposed to raise the money for their part of the Whitney Hall projects. He stated that if the cost of the buildings didn't fit within the original budget the projects should have been scaled down.

Bryan Pulley stated that there should be a summary of services provided to residents with the associated costs and inquired about having that information available to the public.

Mr. Morris stated that the proposed budget is posted online, and the proposed budget for each department was reviewed by the BC with the associated department head in public meetings.

Mr. Deserranno stated that he has a spreadsheet that he assembled that includes an overview of the wage, benefits, and operating costs for departments that compare the 2023 budget to the 2024 proposed budget.

Tom Claus stated that he and his wife are retired and live on a fixed income and between tax increases and inflation it is very difficult. He inquired if there was some way to scale the building projects back. He commended the town for the unused funds at the end of the year and recommended using more of the unassigned fund balance to help lessen the impact for taxpayers.

Leila Tarantelli stated that the \$500,000 was used to buy land, which was overpriced.

Ms. Stewart noted that all discussion related to the buildings went through Town Meeting, which had a super majority of voters support and approve the projects. She stated that the money did not come from the unassigned fund balance, it came from the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). She stated that funding from the unassigned fund balance can be used to assist in offsetting the tax rate, but the unassigned fund balance is not a large slush fund.

Mr. Morris stated that using the unassigned fund balance to bring the tax rate down and pay less, it only shifts the tax increase to the following year. He stated that utilizing it for one-time projects is the goal as it is not a reoccurring expense.

Ms. Stewart stated that when the original contract with Casella was drafted, there was a fixed rate associated with the trash and recycling. She stated that upon renewing the contract, Casella recognized where it lost money in the previous contract and would only sign a contract based on market costs and not fixed costs.

Mr. Morris stated that Casella would not sign an agreement with a locked in rate as they had done in the previous contract.

Heidi Sidley inquired if there data had been collected and reviewed regarding residents who were retired and on a fixed income, and the impact the increase in taxes will have on them.

Mr. Morris stated that information about someone's employment status or income is personal information, which is not collected by the town, but census data as well as assistance applications received by the town are reviewed. He noted that the town reviews unpaid taxes with the SB on an ongoing basis and noted that the town's human services department is available for residents to meet and discuss their circumstances.

Sharon Beaufait thanked Mr. Deserranno for his work on the budget and everyone on the BC for their work. She stated that the population in Enfield is decreasing, and inquired if the spending was higher than the income.

Mr. Deserranno stated that the proposed budget would be an increase of 13.6%, and the impact of the buildings is large. He noted that the BC is tasked to focus on the annual budget, and it is not in the purview of the committee to propose or make changes related to the building projects. He stated that the projects were brought before voters and were passed at Town Meeting and the loan amounts approved by those votes cannot be changed.

Mr. Morris stated that the tax increase related to the building projects is directly related to the total loan payments approved and confirmed there will not be any further increased costs to those projects.

Sharon Beaufait stated that taking money from the undesignated fund balance is not a continuous solution and she expressed her concern for the use of those funds. She stated the two options are to increase revenue or spend less. She inquired if we should reconfigure the building projects to reduce the impact as some hard choices need to be made.

Mr. Deserranno reiterated that the BC has nothing to do with the building projects.

Peter Hugo stated that we are one of the only towns in NH that is losing residents. He inquired about what we are doing to encourage people to move to Enfield. He stated that as a department head, he has had to be responsible for percentage budget cuts and noted that it is part of the job and shouldn't be put back on the residents.

Mr. Deserranno stated that the budget has been trimmed year after year, and we are in a place we need. He stated that cutting only by percentages is not going to be helpful. He stated that it should not be put directly on the BC or Mr. Morris to make a cut, but part of a conversation as to what taxpayers want.

Mr. Kluge stated that the goal in asking residents for their direct input is to give people a voice in their town services. He stated that the members of the BC are elected by residents, and the Board of Selectmen are also elected, and it is not possible to ask each and every person what to do.

Mark Tarantelli stated that the BC and SB should be making the hard choices of what needs to be cut.

Ms. Stewart stated that the SB makes hard choices on an ongoing basis about what should be done and when, and there are conversations being had on an ongoing basis at SB meetings related to levels of services. She stated that community cooperation is helpful and noted that it is important for community members to have input through constructive feedback and members of the public are welcome to be a part of it. She stated that there is time for public comment in SB meetings and constructive feedback is always welcome.

Mr. Deserranno stated that he does not want to see a major decision that will have a major impact on the entire community being made at a BC meeting where only five members of the public are in attendance. He stated that he has had personal conversations with members of the public regarding their ideas and discussed how one decision could have an impact on expenses but also be of detriment to revenue. He stated that those conversations have emphasized to him why it is important to have residents involved in understanding the whole picture prior to making big decisions.

Dave Beaufait stated that the school budget increased for the first time in four years, and it only increased by 3%. He stated that they have personnel, facilities, and equipment costs and should be consulted because we are not doing a good job at the bottom line.

Ms. Plumley stated that the BC reviews each department, and those discussions were held in public meetings and cuts were made, which is how we arrived at the amount presented for the budget. The goal was to maintain services for the residents and keep our employees because they are doing a good job for us. She stated that the SB and BC are using the public feedback to understand what residents are willing to give up at what cost. She stated that the trash disposal contract was discussed at length, and it was determined that it would require having more resources and personnel to man the town facilities and ultimately it was more cost effective to stay with Casella.

Mr. Rich stated that he doesn't think it should be on the residents to tell the BC and the SB what to cut.

Ms. Plumley stated that cuts have already been made in the presented budget. She noted that it is easy to state a dollar amount to be cut from the proposed budget, but that process does not keep residents engaged and informed of what will be cut. She stated that there are things impacting the overall tax increase that cannot be cut due to legal obligations, but the BC has reviewed the proposed budget in multiple public meetings, department by department, and based on their research and proposal to the SB, it is unclear where in the budget further cuts should be made without having a major impact to the services residents utilize.

Mr. Rich stated that it is his recommendation to freeze hiring new personnel, and not have a 24/7 police force.

Dan Reagan stated that he has found the SB to be very receptive to feedback and appreciates their efforts as well as those of the BC. He stated that there are for areas affecting the increase – including the two buildings, an increase in insurance costs, and the renewed contract with Casella. He noted that we can't control the increase in insurance, and the two buildings were approved in a long process – which included input and voting from the public, and the tough choices we made put us in this position. He stated he respectfully disagreed with the recommendations to make more cuts as we cannot let the pendulum swing to the point where things can't operate effectively, such as not having the police available when they are needed by residents.

Marty Gibson stated that only two or three percent of the taxpayer population showed up to the Town Meeting where the projects were voted on. He noted that, while he doesn't agree with the increases, the projects passed with a small number of the voting population involved. He stated not having more people involved in these types of decisions is an opportunity missed.

Joan Proulx inquired if anyone had looked at a moratorium on new spending, such as not spending any further money on the Johnston Drive property.

Mr. Morris stated that there is a recommendation regarding Johnston Drive that is awaiting final legal review and will then be brought before the SB in an upcoming meeting. He stated that there is also the Methodist Hill Property which will be finalized soon. He noted that the final decisions for those properties will be made in the near future and invited members of the public to participate in those discussions.

Steve Patten stated that we should save money by stopping the surveys of things such as wages and roadways, etc. He stated that having outsiders tell us what we should do is not always necessary.

Madeline Johnson inquired what would make a difference.

Mr. Deserranno stated that he personally believed that we should focus on more affordable housing and increase the revenue side. He stated that the town should make it easier to make improvements and put in more affordable housing.

Roy Holland stated that with 7 people on staff, it takes an average of 2.5 minutes for the on-duty officer to arrive on scene for an emergency and noted that the police are typically the first to arrive on scene for an emergency – including medical calls. He stated that reducing the staff by one full-time officer would require the department to shift to more on-call shifts, which would increase the response time to an average of 18 minutes. He noted that reducing the department budget would save about \$100,000 per year, which is roughly about \$.16 per thousand, or about \$10 per year to each taxpayer. He noted that a taxpayer having an emergency would be directly affected by such a change, and stated residents would need to weigh the value of emergency response times against the cost of \$10 per year.

Mr. Deserranno stated that the information provided regarding services and response time is an excellent example of why the committee is seeking public input, to ensure that residents understand the direct impact cuts could have on the services available. He stated that, knowing that information, his personal preference would be to pay for the officer knowing they would be there as soon as possible in an emergency.

Roy Holland stated that we are in line with surrounding towns for the operating budget increase. He stated that the buildings were passed, and we can't hand cuff the town budget to those increases and it is counterintuitive to say we need to decrease our services because of the two buildings. He added that the proposed budget does not add any services and represents what it costs to maintain the same level of service that is expected of our residents.

Mr. Deserranno noted that, if you don't include the building costs, the budget increase percentage is half of what area towns are seeing for an increase.

Bill Chase stated that, if we didn't have these two buildings, it would dramatically reduce our financial problems. He stated that it should be inquired if it is possible to reduce the overall impact of the buildings.

Celie Aufiero stated that the cost for the buildings is a big bill but, they were voted on and approved, and we have to pay. She added that the school taxes also have a big impact on taxpayers, which should be considered.

Lindsay Smith stated that the Zoning Board applied for a grant to assist in rewriting zoning for the town and encouraged the public to participate in that process as that is also an avenue that can help with town revenues. She stated, regarding warrant articles approved by voters, they cannot be changed so suggestions to reduce those costs are moot.

Mr. Deserranno stated that there was one suggestion to eliminate the road survey, which would reduce the budget by \$12,000. He requested a member of the BC to make a motion to discuss.

Ms. Plumley made a motion to eliminate the road survey from the budget. Mr. Kiley seconded.

Mr. Deserranno requested comments from the BC regarding the motion.

Mr. Diehn expressed that he did not want to eliminate the road survey as it is a comprehensive inventory of the road systems, the quality of the roads, and what needs to be done – including any work that may be able to be put off.

Mr. Morris stated that he recommended keeping the road survey as the road agent uses equipment to study the roadway and the roadbed and their conditions, which can benefit the long-term maintenance schedule. He stated that the study would also give information that can help maintain the roads for a longer period of time.

Mr. Deserranno stated the public hearing was closed at 9:07pm.

Ms. Plumley inquired if it would be a detriment for the road survey to be delayed another year.

Mr. Morris stated that the project is being planned within the undesignated fund balance, so removing that project is not going to have an impact on the tax rate to remove it.

Mr. Kiley called the question.

The motion on the table failed (4-4-1 abstention).

The SB and BC held a brief recess for members of the public leaving after the conclusion of the Public Hearing.

BUSINESS

REVIEW 2024 Warrant Articles

Mr. Deserranno noted that the BC is only discussing the warrant articles relevant to the committee.

Article 2: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the Budget Committee recommended sum of \$9,410,232 for general municipal operations with \$270,500 to come from the unassigned fund balance. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

Mr. Kiley made a motion to vote and approve Article 2 as written. Ms. Plumley seconded. Vote passes in favor of the motion (7-2).

Mr. Kluge made a motion to approve Article 2 as written. Mr. Russell seconded.

Mr. Young suggested that a larger amount be utilized from the undesignated fund balance. He stated that in 2024 and 2025, the town will be anticipating the liquidation of properties, and the funding can be used to replace the unassigned fund balance.

Mr. Morris stated that the funds from the Capital Reserve Funds changed from the anticipated \$111,813 to \$186,291.39. He stated that it is personal recommendation to not roll the full \$186,000 into the undesignated fund balance this year and use a portion of those funds to lower the tax impact.

Ms. Stewart noted that the principal balance of discontinued funds Mr. Morris is referencing is detailed in Article 3.

Mr. Russell stated that he is not in favor of spending down the savings to lower the rate only to have the increases return again the following year.

Ms. Kennedy inquired if the town had gotten in trouble using the funding to artificially lower the tax rate previously.

Mr. Diehn confirmed and stated that, in prior years, the undesignated fund was depleted in the process.

Mr. Kluge stated that the recession had a huge impact on those decisions when it happened, and the town's commitment to not let any staff go due to the recession was a major factor. He stated that he did not support utilizing any more funding to lower the rate.

Ms. Stewart stated that the fund balance policy outlines a minimum of an 8% rate, and we are already dangerously close to falling below that 8%, in addition to only 'kicking the can down the road'.

Mr. Deserranno stated that we are taking \$290,000 out of the undesignated fund balance, and with the current withdrawals scheduled we are on track to fall below the 8% goal. He stated that he would rather spend money from the current balance as opposed to assuming funding will come back in after it is spent.

Ms. Stearns stated her agreement with Mr. Deserranno.

Mr. Diehn stated that he did not think any more funding should come out of the undesignated fund.

Mr. Young stated that he, himself, was not in favor of the idea, but he thought the idea was worthy to discuss as he anticipated that it could come up at Town Meeting.

Mr. Kiley stated that the sale of properties is not a set timeline, and the income timeline could be beyond 2025 for any current property in discussion.

Ms. Stewart returned to the motion on the table with regard to the approval of Article 2.

Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (5-0).

Article 3: To see if the town will vote to discontinue the following funds:

Name of Fund	Created in Year	Principal Balance
Reappraisal	1971	2,298,66
Ambulance	1972	3,185.70
Fire Vehicles & Equipment	1981	50,741.06
Land Acquisition	1998	132,205.11
Salt/Sand Facility	2007	159.52
Total Principal Balance All Funds		186,291.39

Said funds, with accumulated interest to date of withdrawal, are to be transferred to the municipality's general fund.

Mr. Deserranno stated that the Total Principal Balance All Funds amount referenced in previous meetings was \$111,8130; and has been updated to \$186,291.39.

Mr. Kiley made a motion to recommend Article 3 as presented. Ms. Plumley seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (9-0).

Ms. Stewart stated that the SB previously voted and approved Article 3.

Article 4: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$111,813 - \$186,291.39 to be added to the Capital Improvement Program Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised from taxation.

Members of the BC discussed whether to appropriate the original sum of \$111,813 or the updated amount of \$186,291.39 to come from the unassigned fund balance.

Ms. Plumley made a motion to keep the original amount of \$111,813. Ms. Stearns seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (9-0).

Mr. Russell stated that he believed all of the funds should go into the CIP as that is what the money was originally intended for.

Mr. Young stated his agreement with Mr. Russell.

Ms. Plumley made a motion to reconsider the amount. Mr. Deserranno seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (9-0).

Ms. Plumley made a motion to raise and appropriate the sum of \$186,291.39 to be added to the Capital Improvement Program Capital Reserve Fund previously established. Ms. Stearns seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (9-0).

Ms. Stewart requested a member of the SB make a motion to approve and recommend the amount of \$186,291.39 for Article 4.

Mr. Kluge made a motion to recommend Article 4 in the amount of \$186,291.39 to be put in the CIP. Mr. Young seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (5-0).

Mr. Deserranno made a motion to recommend Article 4 with the amount of \$186,291.39. Ms. Stearns seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (9-0).

Article 5: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$600,068 to be placed in the Capital Improvement Program Capital Reserve Fund; \$553,168 to come from general taxation and \$46,900 to come from the unassigned general fund balance.

Members of the BC and SB discussed how Article 3 and Article 4 affect the amounts presented for Article 5.

Mr. Russell stated that, with inflation for the cost of road maintenance, it seems like a good idea to put the money into CIP.

Mr. Young stated that the CIP is facing major expenditures in 2025, including the replacement of a bridge.

Ms. Stearns made a motion to approve Article 5 as printed. Ms. Plumley seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (9-0).

Article 6: To see if the Town will vote to establish a Police Recruitment & Retention Bonus Trust Fund under the provisions of 31:19-a for the funding of Police recruitment & retention bonuses in accordance with the Town's Police Recruitment and Retention Bonus Policy and further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000 to be placed in this fund, said funds to come from the 2023 Unassigned Fund Balance, and to name the Town Manager as agent to expend from the Police Recruitment & Retention Bonus Trust Fund.

Ms. Plumley made a motion to recommend Article 6 as presented. Mr. Kluge seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (9-0).

Article 8: Shall the Town rescind the authority to borrow \$97,500 approved at the 2018 Town Meeting?

Ms. Plumley made a motion to approve Article 8 as presented. Ms. Stearns seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (9-0).

Article 11: To see if the town will vote to establish a Recreation Revolving Fund pursuant to RSA 35-B:2. The money received from fees, charges, and other revenues generated for Youth Sports shall be allowed to accumulate from year to year, and shall not be considered to be part of the general fund unassigned fund balance. The treasurer shall have custody of all monies in the fund, and shall pay out the same only upon order of the Town Manager and no further legislative body approval required. These funds may be expended only for Youth Sports recreation purposes as stated in RSA 35-B, and no expenditure shall be made in such a way as to require the expenditure of other funds that have not been appropriated for that purpose.

Mr. Morris stated that if recreation money is unspent at the end of the year it would fall into undesignated fund balance, whereas this account will allow revenues and expenses related to youth sports to revolve and remain separate from the general fund.

Ms. Plumley made a motion to approve Article 11 as written. Ms. Stearns seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (9-0).

Article 18: (By Petition) Shall the voters in the Town of Enfield vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,725 to be allocated to Advance Transit, Inc. to help support the continued operation of public transportation services in the town in 2024?

Mr. Deserranno noted that Article 18 is a petitioned warrant article.

Mr. Kiley made a motion to recommend Article 18. Ms. Stearns seconded. The motion failed to pass (0-9).

It was clarified that the vote to recommend Article 18 failed, and therefore will be noted to state that the BC unanimously does not support Article 18.

MINUTES

January 25, 2024 & February 1, 2024

Mr. Kluge made a motion to accept the meeting minutes as presented. Mr. Kiley seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (8-0). Ms. Plumley abstained.

OTHER BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Deserranno requested any comments from the public.

Ms. Patten stated that there was a warrant article in 2020 regarding the appropriation of \$40,000 for sidewalks and inquired what is being done with the money as nothing has been done.

Mr. Morris stated that the funds will be expended this year.

Ms. Patten inquired why there has to be a public hearing regarding SB2.

Ms. Bonnette stated that the public hearing for SB2 is required by law.

Ms. Beaufait inquired why the recreation director went from a part-time volunteer position into a full-time position. She stated that she doesn't see anything new that was not happening before for recreation that necessitates a full-time position.

Mr. Young stated that the Mascoma Youth Sports League (MYSL) has experienced a significant amount of difficulty in operating with only volunteer support.

Mr. Russell clarified that the previous position was a paid position and not a volunteer.

Mr. Deserranno stated that MYSL relied on only two or three volunteers to run the sports program for the entire district. He stated that there is also a high turnover in volunteers which contributes to further challenges. He noted that there were some recreational activities supported by volunteers, and no one else is stepping up.

Mr. Morris stated that onboarding a new person full-time has required them to learn the current systems, make adjustments, and look at what programming can be added in a meaningful way. He added that Mr. Marker also manages all of the town building rentals and will be working with MYSL as it is a real need.

Ms. Plumley stated that having youth sports programming available is valuable to the community.

Ms. Labrie stated that, as the previous part-time Recreation Director, she can confirm that MYSL was assisted by the Mascoma Valley Regional Recreation Program. She agreed with Mr. Deserranno that volunteer turnover contributed to additional challenges for MYSL and noted that most town recreation departments run youth sports programs. She stated that taking on youth sports for the town is great for the community, the families, and the kids. She stated that she hopes to see additional programs for other age groups but recognized that developing new programs takes time and there is no handbook for recreation.

Ms. Plumley stated that, with the addition of MYSL responsibilities to the Recreation Department, there will also be an increase in revenue which will help offset those costs.

With no further comments or questions, the BC and SB moved on to adjournment.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kluge made a motion to adjourn the Budget Committee meeting at 9:04pm. Mr. Kiley seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (9-0).

Mr. Kluge made a motion to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 9:04pm. Mr. Young seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (5-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 pm.