

APPROVED

TOWN OF PELHAM
BUDGET COMMITTEE – MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, September 15, 2022

CALL TO ORDER – Ms. Bressette opened the meeting at approximately 6:41 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Bressette called attendance:

PRESENT: Meg Bressette
Jason Croteau
Philip Haberlen
Eduardo Martony
Garret Abare
Greg Smith
Debbie Ryan
Megan Larson
Paul Grant
Bob Sherman
Ellen Cormier

ABSENT: (None)

MINUTES REVIEW:

Ms. Bressette had changes to the minutes from the September 8, 2022 meeting. Line 44 to change ‘Currier’ to ‘Cormier’. To add Ellen Cormier’s name to the attendance as present. Line 122, to add ‘in the budget’ after the word increase. No one else had any changes.

MOTION: (Mr. Sherman/Ms. Bressette) To place the September 8, 2022, meeting minutes on file, as amended.

VOTE: (11-0-0) Motion passes.

Ms. Bressette said she will review the by-laws at the end of the meeting.

REVIEW OF BUDGETS

CABLE

Mr. Jim Greenwood introduced himself as the cable coordinator.

Ms. Bressette said the 2022 budget for cable was \$153,731.00. The request for 2023 is \$165,647.00.

Mr. Greenwood said:

Salaries: Cable coordinator and production assistant both are getting contractual increases.

The section in yellow is the meetings that are broadcasted and the number of hours it takes for each meeting and up until last year there was \$11.00 in 2021. This year they are asking to go to \$13.00 because it is difficult to find people to come to work. He said every state around us is paying \$15.00. He said he really thinks it should be \$15.00 and that is shown in a note below.

Ms. Bressette asked if the Selectmen approved the \$13.00? He said yes. He said the Selectmen said they could look at the \$15.00 at the Budget Committee or at reconsideration.

Mr. Sherman asked about elections? Mr. Greenwood said the only elections they do are town elections.

Mr. Sherman didn't see it listed. Mr. Greenwood said it's miscellaneous and he is comfortable with what is in there right now.

Mr. Roark said to Mr. Sherman it is listed as town meetings and not elections.

Mr. Greenwood said:

Supplies: Stayed the same and they have stopped using Blue Ray DVD's, they only use DVDs to archive the meetings on.

Mr. Smith asked where the DVDs are kept? Mr. Greenwood said they are in the office and that was started in 2004 and they go into drawers. Mr. Smith asked if that was fireproof? Mr. Greenwood said no, but he also has digital copies of these.

Mr. Greenwood said:

Telephone: He has one main phone line.

Comcast: There is a new addition for \$1,900.00 for internet and a new cable modem. He said he can use this remotely. This allows him to stream in HD. He will debut this at Old Home Day this weekend on YouTube. He plans on using this also at graduations.

Ms. Bressette asked if it was live before? Mr. Greenwood said yes, but they were live on Channel 20 and live on 22, but just on the TV.

Cell phone: He gets a stipend for this.

Repairs: Is \$8,000.00 flatline to replace equipment. He said they are in the process of negotiating a new deal with Comcast and they might be able to get an equipment grant and save some money.

Mr. Abare asked what the \$8,000.00 was used for last year? Mr. Greenwood said several things such as video mixing devices were replaced with HD. Also replacing older equipment such as monitors, cameras and microphones and many other items. They also bought new cameras.

Mr. Sherman asked how many people are given cable service? Mr. Greenwood said by the amount of revenues they are receiving and the fact that is flatlining. He thinks subscribers are dropping and it was around 3500 and he thought it was closer to 3000 now, but he will follow up on that.

Expenses: The central online storage which is the Viabit. The mileage is for using his own vehicle at work and driving around. There are no dues anymore.

Revenues: They are still receiving revenues even though they are not in an agreement with them anymore. He is expecting this year around \$260,000.00 and it has been flatlining. He doesn't think the subscribers are going up, he thinks the reason it isn't going down is the price keeps going up. He said we are still expecting revenue at this point. Mr. Roark said our town counsel is handling the negotiations. Mr. Roark said the Board of Selectmen authorized her to enter into negotiations and she will bring back a tentative agreement. Ms. Bressette asked if it would be a one-year agreement? Mr. Greenwood said it would be ten-year. Mr. Roark said things may change and are hopeful to get a ten-year, as things are changing in that industry. Mr. Greenwood said there would most likely be a provision in there if things change.

LIBRARY

Ms. Jennifer Green introduced herself, as well as Ms. Lynn Garcia, as the president of the board of trustees. Ms. Bressette said the 2022 budget was \$584,374.00. The 2023 request is \$566,655.00 and that is the same as the Board of Selectmen approved.

Ms. Green said she had moved some money around to more accurately portray how the money is spent.

Salaries: Contractual increases and there are some savings. There were some staff changes earlier in the year and she hired to better serve their desk coverage needs and that shows a decrease.

Programs Supplies: Increase of \$500.00 due to rising costs of materials. They've given out over 3,000 STEM and craft kits through curbside services.

Repairs and Projects: They are building sound panels in the children's area and stairwell. They have a request in for \$30,000.00 to ensure there is enough in the project line to complete the renovation. Last year when the increase was asked for, she said that money would go back to the town if it was not used.

Tech Equipment and Tech Plan: A solution was worked out to provide the library with public computers that didn't involve them continuing with their current vendor. A new 3-year contract would cost upwards near \$11,000.00 and they moved the public computers to a separate internet network. That would further protect the town from viruses, and they would use refurbished computers. That would increase the length of time these computers were being used. They drew up a 7-year plan and it would be about \$7000.00 per year to purchase the support costs, solid state drives and Comcast internet connection and then every 4-5 years they would need to roll over town computers. That would put them at about \$4,000.00. The 7-year plan would save about \$10,000.00.

Expenses: There is a \$500.00 increase in both the children and young adult programs. This was money moved in the budget. She is dissolving the program materials lines, as it is underused. She said the children's and young adults have increased significantly. There is an additional \$300.00 for the summer reading program to include adults. This did well over the last 2 years, so she would like to make that part of the budget. There is a \$1200.00 increase requested for staff professional development to cover the costs of professional materials. In the past this was taken out of public materials, but she thinks it's better to keep those for the public. Those items would include the library journal, school library journal and an online catalog program. That will keep the database and catalogs more up to date and not have to purchase new volumes of catalog books every 2 years which costs about \$300.00 each. This new database is much less than that.

Specials: Book budgets are increased due to inflation of materials. This will allow us to maintain the current number of materials they buy for the library.

Database: Is \$1200.00 (they increase every year).

Digital Resources: Increase of \$2801.00 (This covers website marketing, digital software and the digital books).

Mr. Abare asked if they pay for books through a subscription? Ms. Green said they purchase through a company called Ingram and they buy the books at a 40% discount. They buy them with the clear cover over them. Mr. Abare asked what they do with old books? Ms. Green said they are weeded through depending on their condition and usage. She said they sometimes sell them at their book sale, or they donate them. Mr. Abare asked when they decide to take them out of circulation? Ms. Green said it depends on circulation numbers and they are also limited on space to store them.

Ms. Green didn't have the numbers of how many books they buy each year, but she would say for non-fiction it may be about 7-10 books a month for adult fiction and non-fiction. For children's books it depends on the cost. Mr. Abare asked if they ever thought of skipping a year? Ms. Green asked if he meant to not pull books off? Mr. Abare said to slow the circulation. Ms. Green didn't understand. Mr. Abare asked if it was possible to slow the circulation of books coming and coming out. Ms. Green said circulation is based on the people coming in the library and checking out books. It is based on demand as well for certain books. Ms. Bressette said there is also a wait list for certain books. Ms. Green said yes and depending how long the wait list is, they may purchase another copy. She said they use a formula for the wait list. Mr. Abare asked if there were electronic subscriptions? Ms. Green said yes there is and that is the digital resources line. That is increasing this year and the cost for digital books is about 200-400% higher than physical books. If they purchase a digital book, they get the license for only 2-years as there are no copyrights laws. She said it is the same principles as that only one person can check out a digital book at a time and the circulation for digital books doesn't get you the same as a physical book does. She said they pay into the state library subscription plan for digital books and that line is increasing this year. Mr. Abare said he has a kindle and asked if there was a medium to get books through a subscription and then rent them out to the people in Pelham? Ms. Green said they do and that is their system now with a Kindle through an app called Libby. Mr. Abare asked if that was 400% higher? Ms. Green said for the cost of it, but the state library mitigates that cost and spreads it across the NH libraries. Mr. Abare asked if they expanded Libby, would it help with the line-item book costs? Ms. Green said it would, but that is a statewide thing, and she doesn't have any control overpaying more into it to get more out of it. It is done by voting through the state libraries. Mr. Abare asked if there were certain titles not available on Libby? Ms. Green said yes and sometimes if a license has gone through, the state library may not buy that book again. That depends on

licensing agreements. Mr. Abare asked if they have been using Libby for a while? Ms. Green said yes. Mr. Smith said the dollar amounts for databases and digital resources weren't huge, but a percentage wise it is about a 33% increase for databases and about 55% increase for digital resources. Ms. Green said the digital resources are for digital book costs. The state library approved a 20% increase for their digital books. She said that made it harder for the smaller towns to pay for books. She said more people are going towards digital and we can't be held back. She said in terms of databases, they have recently added Peterson's Test Prep to be able to provide testing preparation for free of charge. She said this is very inclusive for all tests, such as student tests, EMT's, postal workers or licensing exams. Another database is called Consumer Reports, and they see a lot of use with this. Ms. Green said in the past some of these lines weren't appropriately budgeted for, so she had moved some things around to better use the money.

Ms. Larson said at the schools they have seen a large increase in digital resources. She said it is across the board.

Mr. Grant talked about the discontinued library events for children such as Daddy and Donuts and what was the reason for that? Ms. Green said it was for lack of demand. She said she saw less people for that program and an increase for generalized story time. Mr. Grant asked what the ages were for the Tuesday and Thursday story times? Ms. Green said it is usually newborns to about 4-5.

Ms. Bressette asked if she went on the library website and put in her number, she asked if it was under digital resources so she could listen to a book? Ms. Green said yes. Ms. Bressette said that came in handy for her when she was in the hospital with her son to listen to the books to help keep him calm. She was happy to have known about that. Ms. Green said that is what is good about digital resources, because some people are not able to get to the library.

Ms. Bressette asked about the noise abatement and said it was still in the default line? She believed it was a 3-year outlook and she thought that last year was the third year? Ms. Green said this is the third year, 2022. Ms. Bressette asked if that stays in the default because it was a special appropriation for a 3-year time? Ms. Penny said she believes it does. Ms. Bressette said a one-year does not. Ms. Larson asked if it was contractual? Ms. Bressette said no. Ms. Penny will look into that. Ms. Larson asked if it would drop to 30? Ms. Penny said the default budget is usually something the budget committee doesn't pass forward, but it is under the governing board's purview. Ms. Bressette asked if there was an update on the noise abatement? Ms. Green said not for this week, but there is a trustee meeting on the 20th and she will be taking her notes and will put forward the request for proposal.

CEMETERY

Mr. Dave Provencal introduced himself as the cemetery trustee.

Ms. Bressette said the 2022 budget was \$176,203.00. The 2023 request is \$177,573.00 and that is the same for the Board of Selectmen approved budget.

Mr. Provencal said it is pretty much level funded.

Salaries: He said went up for part-time help and they had two new people this year and they only worked 20 hours per week.

Expenses: Went up \$720.00.

Specials: Went down.

Mr. Sherman said the cemetery is a separate board, but given gas and oil when they come in January with new figures, would this change? Mr. Roark said yes it would as they draw from their pump. Mr. Roark said they will try and adjust that more accurately. Mr. Provencal said that usually comes up close.

Ms. Larson asked what the recording secretary does? Mr. Provencal said it is an office secretary. Mr. Roark said there is a lot of bookkeeping. Mr. Provencal said it is working on the computer and setting up the lots.

Ms. Bressette asked what line 178, JM Protection was? Mr. Provencal believed that was the computer, for a yearly expense. Mr. Roark said he thought that was the alarm system monthly. Ms. Bressette said maybe for a Docufree subscription.

Mr. Abare asked what the advertising was for? Mr. Provencal said for help wanted and didn't know what else that was for last year. Mr. Roark said in the past they have posted job opening and have had projects that were posted.

Mr. Martony asked about supplies and how the prices have gone up. He asked if they were doing less things this year? Mr. Provencal said most of the supplies they use like grass seed and fertilizer have gone up about 2.5 times. Mr. Provencal said they don't specifically go under or over on that, and he said they are responsible for the bottom line. He said they can juggle things to keep the bottom line within reason.

Mr. Provencal said they get quite a bit done for the money they spend and 80% is for labor. He said what is left they get a lot done and they keep the cemeteries good. He said they maintain the Veteran's circle, the building, 4 acres and they never asked for more money. They use their maintenance funds.

Ms. Bressette asked about specials and asked if the website was still being built? Mr. Provencal said that is ongoing. Ms. Bressette asked about the replacement water system in Gibson cemetery? Mr. Provencal said that is for the lines that go up and down the ranges and they get about 12-15 breaks a year especially in the spring. They are for repairs of split lines. They are in the process of looking into columbarium's, as those are used for over 60% of the burials nationwide. They are getting a lot of people asking for that, so they are planning for that. He said next year they may start putting some units in. Ms. Ryan asked how many cemeteries there were? Mr. Provencal said 6. Ms. Ryan asked if they could get into the North Pelham one? Mr. Provencal said you will be shortly as they've developed an acre in the back and late spring, they will be using that one. He said they got that land for nothing, and they developed it for minimal money. Ms. Ryan said they look fabulous. Mr. Provencal said there are 2 in the center of Pelham (Gibson, Bridge Street North, North Pelham, Atwood Road, Mammoth Road and another one, which is a private cemetery that we take care of).

HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Roark said this is level funded and is a moving target. He said some of these charities make requests for certain amounts from year to year and those vary. He said some years they don't. In 2022 there was still some COVID, and they hadn't requested some funding. The line item "OTHER" is to zero the budget at that amount so we have a similar amount of money to divvy between those types of non-profits and charities listed. He said it is not a limited list, if something comes up that the Board of Selectmen want funded, this is where it would come from. He said some of these are really important non-profits, such as the Pelham Food Pantry, the Homeless shelters, Child Advocacy Center and domestic assault shelters. This is the catch all for those types of requests.

Ms. Bressette asked if they took money out from the Pelham Food Pantry? Mr. Roark said their request was not the same this year. He said if they make a late request in December, we can move it. Mr. Roark said they have a robust program there and only come to us when they need it.

Mr. Abare asked if these are independent organizations that the town is funding? Mr. Roark said yes, typically non-profit and health services. Mr. Abare asked about the Red Cross and does Pelham get anything from that? Mr. Roark said if there were a prolonged emergency, they would come with refreshments for the first responders. Ms. Bressette asked if the town received letters from these organizations? Mr. Roark said yes, and these are all paid through formal requests. Mr. Abare asked if those numbers were available? Mr. Roark said he could get those. Ms. Bressette said last year they would review the letters and asked if she could see them? Mr. Roark said yes. Mr. Smith asked how the food pantry is being handled, as he thought there would be a lot of need this year? Mr. Roark said he would expect them to reach out if they needed and they are pretty self sufficient with their donations. Mr. Roark said he wasn't sure where they got their funding, but they seem to be usually well stocked and well organized. Mr. Abare asked about the 8750 for St. Patrick's Church, and does that go to an independent organization and was the Pelham food pantry is an independent organization from the church, correct? Mr. Roark said yes, but it is just on the church's property.

Ms. Bressette said she believed it was level funded from last year at \$73,700.00 was the request. That was the same as last year.

HEALTH OFFICER

Ms. Bressette said that is the same as last year at \$87,956.00. Mr. Roark said correct.

Mosquito and tick control: Remain the same.

Ms. Larson asked if we currently have a health officer? Mr. Roark said we do, and she works remotely and her name is Karen McGlynn. He said on a weekly basis, she submits her report, and she monitors various things. He said she is interested in phasing out, but not yet.

Ms. Bressette asked what areas get sprayed for mosquitos? Mr. Roark said the parks and that is contracted out. He said some years they do more spraying than others. The testing is also included with that.

HUMAN SERVICES

Mr. Roark said the big change was the Board of Selectmen authorized an hourly rate increase to the welfare administrator and that resulted in the 1820 gain. Ms. Bressette asked Mr. Roark to tell us what that person does? Mr. Roark said anyone in town that runs into financial or social problems, they can meet with our welfare administrator. She will see if they can help that person out in any way. Mr. Roark said typically it's to pay a bill and the applicant has to submit financials and proof. Ms. Bressette asked if that ever gets paid back? Mr. Roark said no. Ms. Bressette asked if she goes through a rigorous protocol to determine if that person receives funds? Mr. Roark said yes. He said Dawn is very experienced at this and will help them with their needs.

Mr. Abare asked if there was a record of how many people she has seen? Mr. Roark said he is sure she does, but he hasn't seen those reports. He said he could get numbers if needed.

Mr. Sherman said the Senior Center is going to ask for a social worker and he asked if there were any thoughts on that? Mr. Roark said the social worker did not make it through the budget process with the Board of Selectmen and that has been tabled.

Mr. Grant said the administrator links up people with assistance and the \$60,000.00, was that for terminal the town supports residents directly? Mr. Roark said yes.

Ms. Bressette said the 2022 budget was \$73,820.00. The 2023 request is \$75,640.00 with an increase of \$1,820.00.

Ms. Bressette asked Ms. Penny about the unassigned fund balance? Ms. Penny said the 2021 unassigned fund balance was \$5,362,747.00. She said the government finance officers association have an expected level to maintain, and the expectation is to maintain between 8 and 17% of the total obligations of the town. That includes taxes collected from the school and the county. She said from the 2021 report, Pelham was at 11% as of 12/31/21. She said we want to watch that carefully. She said the fund balance translates into a balance, which is helpful during times when Pelham is waiting to collect taxes.

Ms. Penny said the 2021 underspend was \$1,254,120.00. That doesn't translate to unassigned fund balance directly because the town also used \$1 million to offset the tax rate in 2021. The underspend was due to vacancies and lack of completed road projects.

Ms. Bressette asked about NHRS. Ms. Penny said the rates are going down. Ms. Penny said every two years the employer contribution rates are set, and they are based on actual evaluation to be able to meet future pension liabilities. She said the rates have changed because the fund did better than expected. Group 1 employees are going from 14.06% to 13.53% effective 7/1/23. Group 2 police are going from 33.88% to 31.82% and Group 2 Fire is going from 32.99% to 30.35%.

Ms. Bressette said there is a tab that shows historical data.

Ms. Larson asked where the NH retirement is reflected in this budget? Mr. Roark said it is passed police on the bottom tabs. Mr. Smith said it is on lines 133, 134 and 135.

Ms. Bressette said she will add town celebrations to the September 29th agenda.

Ms. Bressette reminded everyone that there is a budget conference on 9/20/22 if anyone wanted to sign up, she sent out a link for that.

REVIEW OF BY-LAWS

Mr. Sherman said we should start with Ms. Bressette's recommended changes.

She said they wouldn't be voting on them yet. Mr. Sherman said everyone should look on their tablets at the red-lined changes.

Ms. Bressette said on page 2, Section 1. Section 2 under officers to change chairman to chairperson. Section 2 and 3, same changes.

Ms. Larson said point number 2, she doesn't think an active participant of the meeting should be responsible for recording the minutes. She thought someone could watch the tape and take minutes.

Ms. Bressette asked if someone watching it would be ok? Ms. Larson said if our recording secretary isn't there, they watch the tape. Ms. Larson said it would deter from that person during the meeting.

Ms. Bressette asked if the only responsibility they should have is in Section 1? Ms. Larson said yes.

Mr. Sherman said to eliminate 2 completely.

Mr. Croteau said on the Board of Selectmen's recording secretary just listens to the recorded tape and doesn't attend the meeting in person.

Ms. Bressette said role of recording secretary on page 5, Section 6. Mr. Sherman said page 5, G, he said the budget committee shall employ a recording secretary who is recommended by the town administrator or the board of selectpersons and approved by a majority of the budget committee. The reason he said he put that in was that we are an independent committee and he said we should have the final say.

Ms. Ryan asked if that recording secretary is used by multiple meetings and approved by Planning and the Board of Selectmen, and they come before this board and this board doesn't want them.

Mr. Sherman said they would come back with someone else. He said he is trying to underline the fact they are an independent committee. Ms. Ryan asked if this can be somewhere else, so the recording secretary's role isn't affected anywhere else. She asked if all the other boards are also independent? Mr. Sherman said the independent committees are the library, cemetery, us and then everyone else falls under the town.

Ms. Bressette doesn't see how we can 'employ' them, as they are not under this board's budget? She said we don't go through the hiring process.

Mr. Croteau agreed with that, as the recording secretary is employed by the town and not the budget committee.

Mr. Sherman said that was fine, but the way it's written needs to be rephrased. Mr. Croteau said the budget committee would be provided with a recording secretary by the town administrator or board of selectmen.

Ms. Larson said 'appoint'. Ms. Bressette said, 'The budget committee shall be provided with a recording secretary appointed by the town administrator or board of selectmen'.

Ms. Bressette said we have nothing to do with their salary. Mr. Haberlen said to change appropriate to appropriated in G2.

Mr. Sherman said under 3, he said under the hour of adjournment, you would have the meeting activities and then you end the listing with the hour of adjournment.

Ms. Bressette said on page 8, Section 7B. Mr. Sherman said this is necessary to address capital improvement projects. He said that section shouldn't be eliminated. We need to address how we want to handle these. He put in 'bonded' to make sure when the town is being asked to borrow money, that those things should go to the voters.

Mr. Haberlen asked if he was referring to bonded articles. He said if you look at the CIP, they use the same number and say three years as well. He said they don't include the bonded wording or referring to debt.

Mr. Sherman said they don't refer to anything related to police cruisers. Mr. Haberlen said that was correct.

Mr. Sherman said we have issues that should be discussed. Mr. Sherman asked if they want to continue having a limiting factor for police cruisers and do we want to have the capital improvement for \$75,000.00 or more? He asked how we want to handle capital improvement projects going forward?

Ms. Larson said some of the CIP projects have been included in the budget. She said it is more like a planning tool. She said for the school, they look at what they have and try not to double up on big projects.

Ms. Larson said she doesn't think there should be a limit in the by-laws. Mr. Croteau agreed with that and said this board still has the option to vote it down once it comes before you. Mr. Sherman agreed with that.

Mr. Croteau said it's hard to put positions out if we don't know if we can do it until the end. He said it would allow the town's side to maneuver easier.

Ms. Cormier said if we did that, are they not being as transparent as they can be? She said the voters may lose confidence if they don't see what we see.

Ms. Larson said everyone has the opportunity to see everything, as this meeting is publicized. She said when the school puts out their voter guides, they are very transparent to what they are asking for. She said this town is so far behind because people keep voting no. She said how occupational services cost a fortune to pay contract fees and how it is more beneficial to the town to have that as a position in the budget. She said people don't understand that we have to pay the contract fees per the law anyway and then we end up paying almost double.

Ms. Cormier said if they pay the fee, but it's been voted down, then where does the money come from?

Ms. Larson said it is special education, so for that example, it has to get budgeted for.

Mr. Martony said that example is different because that is by law.

Ms. Cormier asked what is different between what you need and what is getting down that's not a contractual need?

Ms. Larson said they have classes that have 30 kids, and they request another PE teacher for example. Then people vote no, and then we have overcrowded classes because people don't understand the need in the schools. She said if people would be willing to learn about the budget, then they would understand. Ms. Larson said the school budget is on the website under the business office and last years is there to look at.

Ms. Bressette said the school budget is very different than the others.

Ms. Cormier still didn't understand why people are voting it down?

Ms. Ryan said she was on the school board for a few years. She said everything was on warrant articles and most were voted down. She said there was a need for an English teacher and that got voted down and then they had between 40-50 kids in a class. She said the reason people vote things down because it is a lengthy process and people tend to think with their own personal budgets. She said not everyone takes the time to want to learn these details.

Ms. Cormier asked if we need certain teachers, are people voting down warrant articles because there are other things in the bucket that they don't get the opportunity to approve via a warrant article?

Ms. Larson said there is a lot to the budget and people have to really dig down to look at these things.

Ms. Ryan said if there is a warrant article for the town or school and it is voted down even though it's an extreme need, then no means no and it can't happen.

Ms. Bressette said even if the school has funds allocated at the end of the year; they could not put those funds to that article that was voted no.

Ms. Larson said last year full-day kindergarten was in the budget and that was very transparent. She said we were one of the last two communities in NH not to have full-day kindergarten. She said if that was on a warrant article and it got voted down, we could not have implemented it. She said that is not good for students, town values or anyone. She said they were very transparent out that. She said at the school level they have to pick and choose what is best each year.

Mr. Sherman said he is willing to remove his 1 and to leave that to be eliminated. He said number 2, he would like to see the statement 'a replacement capital expenditure can be placed in a department's budget by a majority vote of the budget committee'. He said the police communications is coming up for \$500,000.00 and he views that as a replacement. He wants to make it clear, for any replacement, doesn't have to be put into a warrant article.

Ms. Bressette asked if that was because it is for the safety and health of the community? Mr. Sherman said yes.

Mr. Smith said there is an element of expansion of government, he thinks the voters should weigh in. He said if something is already existing and there is no life left, that isn't a scope expansion.

Ms. Bressette said they also have the deliberative session, where the public can be educated on the budget and recommend things. She said those present can vote upon those.

Ms. Cormier said that was something that was said, that the burden was on us to get the information out. She said that is an opportunity to have input before they show up to vote.

Mr. Smith said the vast majority of the people in town because they don't pay much attention to these things. He said it is hard to educate the folks of the town. He said they rely on us to see what we recommend or not.

Ms. Bressette said if things were changed at the deliberative session, then we would have to vote on whether something would still be voted on at the town meeting or not.

Ms. Larson said an example was years ago there was a portable library classroom at the Memorial school that was cut out by the budget committee and it was added in by vote at the deliberative session. She said that was when people were paying attention.

Ms. Smith said there are a lot of things that are off limits, such as special education. He said the challenges that are faced are when they have to plan for cases a year ahead of time.

Mr. Sherman said 6 and 7 A1, and he would take his replacement language and make that 2, so it would be a 1 and a 2. Now we are down to B, personnel.

Ms. Bressette said we are the only people a replacement capital expenditure can be placed in departments by a budget of a majority of votes by the budget committee. Mr. Sherman said we add the replacement as a number 2.

Ms. Bressette asked if we had a number 1 in that section? Mr. Sherman said the fixed expenses.

Ms. Bressette asked about personnel.

Ms. Ryan asked if any time a replacement capital expenditure goes in a specific department, we have to vote on it, for each individual item?

Ms. Larson used the police as an example for their radios. Ms. Bressette said he wants to allow for it in the budget and doesn't have to go to a warrant article? Mr. Sherman said yes, correct.

Ms. Larson said if you vote for the budget, it would be part of the regular process. Mr. Sherman and Ms. Bressette said yes.

Ms. Ryan said we would still vote on the bottom line. Mr. Sherman said it goes back to what Mr. Smith said about something being a replacement or are they trying to expand something and that was a legitimate concern.

Ms. Bressette asked if we want to set personnel to a number? She reminded the committee that these by-laws can be changed by the committee at the annual meeting or at any time during the season.

Mr. Sherman said life insurance was left out in both options. Ms. Bressette said estimated town portion of family benefits, health, medical, dental life insurance and retirement.

Ms. Larson said if this is kept, it will need to be revised, as it's only talking about the town. She said we are talking about school too, so the language needs to reflect both, not just the town.

Ms. Bressette said that staffing shall be managed by the departments and school board? Ms. Larson said it is really the Selectmen's and school boards budgets. She said this needs to be more generic.

Mr. Sherman said for option 2, talked about the proposed hiring date. He thought we could put in town or the school financial year. He said we are dealing with two financial years here. He said the town goes from January 1 to December 31, so by the time the March budget is approved, the town is already a quarter of the way through the financial year. He said however the school financial year is from July 1 through June 30, so they're already more than halfway through by the March meeting. He wanted to make it clear when talking about salaries, for the school we are talking about a year that hasn't begun yet as opposed to the town, the year is already past.

Ms. Bressette asked if the 12-month language was sufficient? Mr. Sherman just wanted to make the 12-months clear for the town and the school.

Ms. Larson said for the school budget, it gives it for the whole year. She said he wants the town to report what the yearly is. Mr. Smith said that is important to be able to evaluate yearly costs. Mr. Croteau said we ran into that issue last year. Mr. Croteau said a 12-month period is the right way to go.

Mr. Sherman would add to number 2, the town and school boards or school financial year to make it clear. Ms. Larson offered to word smith that with Ms. Bressette.

Ms. Bressette asked if anyone wanted to go by a salary or to keep it non-salary?

Mr. Sherman said to take a poll for option 1 or 2. Ms. Bressette asked if anyone wanted to speak to option 1?

Mr. Martony asked about when the TCT was added to the by-laws, and he asked for explanation?

Mr. Sherman said the TCT history, so previously any full-time position, this committee said it had to be a warrant article. He said even when changing a part-time person to a full-time position. This was to make it easier to hire lesser paid employees and have them put into the town or school budget without having to go to a warrant article. He said they had a formula to do this, and it was around \$90,000.00.

Ms. Bressette said that wasn't really adhered to. Mr. Sherman said last year's committee therefore took the position with a yearly salary could be from April to December 31 and the salary fell below the TCT (total compensation threshold). Mr. Smith said he believed that went against the spirit of what was trying to achieve. He said that goes back to a trust issue with people.

Mr. Martony would prefer to keep the TCT in place.

Ms. Bressette said now that there is an understanding with the town that it is for a 12-month period.

Mr. Sherman said officially we are still on record that what happened last year was legit because we voted and said it did not have to be from January 1 through December 31. Ms. Bressette said because it was unclear. Mr. Sherman said that is where we stand now.

Ms. Bressette said that prior language made it seem where we could force a warrant, but we can't force that, we can only vote no and then it is up to the board's themselves to do that. She said that language was incorrect in our by-laws.

Mr. Haberlen asked if we need to define that full-time means 40 hours a week for 52 weeks?

Ms. Larson said she thought some were only 37 hours. Mr. Haberlen said he was asking because if you set a TCT based on salary and some full time are 42 hours and some are 37, it seems like that needs to be scaled. Ms. Cormier asked if you can just use the term, a full-time head?

Mr. Haberlen said if that's not a fixed number of hours a week and you base the TCT on that, then mathematically that means the salary per hour changes.

Mr. Martony asked if the full-time is defined in the contract?

Mr. Larson said in the school, you are either classified as full or part time.

Mr. Sherman said the other factor is whether they qualify for benefits or not. He asked if the town is at 32 or 35 or 30 hours a week to receive benefits? He said full time means you get benefits, for school and town.

Ms. Larson said she thought it was 30 at the school.

Mr. Croteau didn't know that for the town side.

Mr. Smith said the budget committee doesn't have the authority for the school or town to hire someone on a warrant article. He said the key things are the principles and to document how much it will cost in a transparent way so we can provide a recommendation for the voters. He thinks we should keep it simple and have them give us annual figures.

Ms. Bressette asked who wants to move forward with Option 1? No one raised their hand. She asked about moving forward with Option 2? She said Option 2 it would be, and they will move forward with that.

Mr. Smith said the expectations would be, it would be word smithed and the document will be updated and voted on next week? Ms. Bressette said we would first see the language and then vote on it.

Ms. Larson said we don't have to vote if anyone is uncomfortable with that. Ms. Larson said she didn't think the way we will change it will negatively impact either of the budgets. She said last year we couldn't change things in the middle without notifying them.

Ms. Larson asked if anyone with new positions coming would have to enforce the 12-month?

Mr. Croteau asked if these by-laws got changed next week, are they the new by-laws?

Mr. Sherman and Ms. Bressette said yes. Ms. Bressette read the agenda for next week's meeting.

Mr. Croteau asked if he could give this new proposed language to some department heads? Everyone agreed.

Mr. Martony asked if our town counsel needed to review these? Ms. Bressette said she would send it to him to look over. Mr. Croteau asked if the language could be changed by early next week and send it to Attorney Rattigan before Thursday's meeting? He asked for possibly by Tuesday? Ms. Bressette said okay.

Mr. Sherman said he wouldn't vote on them until he hears back from Attorney Rattigan.

Mr. Croteau said the quicker we get this, the better we are because things change at reconsideration.

ADJOURN

MOTION: (Mr. Martony/Mr. Sherman) To adjourn the meeting.
VOTE: (10-0-0) The motion passes.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Castles
Recording Secretary