

Public Budget Hearing & Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 8, 2021

At the Public Budget Hearing and Selectmen's meeting held on Monday, February 8, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. the Selectmen participated via Zoom:

Stanley Holz is at his home in South Carolina, maintaining social distancing.

Peter Corey is at his home in Whitefield, maintaining social distancing.

Shawn White is at his home in Whitefield, maintaining social distancing.

Zoom Participants: Frank Lombardi served as the host for the meeting and shared the documents; Judy Ramsdell; Rob Larson, Public Works Director; Bob Loiacono; James; Tara MacKillop; Tom Ladd; John Ross, Jr., Fire Chief; Melissa Farrow, Recreation Director; Michael Wright; Paul Hayes; Edward Samson, III, Police Chief; Scott Burns; Terry Lufkin; Courtney Vashaw for the Whitefield Public Library.

Chairman Holz called the Public Budget Hearing to order at 6:30 p.m.

Stanley reviewed the Budget Handout:

General Government: 2020 Appropriation: 612,056; 2020 Expended: \$480,188 and the request for 2021: \$554,763, a decrease of \$57,293.

Public Safety: 2020 Appropriation: \$921,155; 2020 Expended: \$888,494; and the request for 2021 is \$982,609, an increase of \$61,454.

Stanley noted that there is a \$30,000 increase for regional dispatching services for the police and fire-rescue departments.

Highways, Streets, Bridges, & Sanitation: 2020 Appropriation: 998,399; Expended: 932,816 and the request for 2021: \$1,032,677, a \$34,278 increase.

Health & Welfare: 2020 Appropriation: \$23,654; Expended: \$14,950 and the request for 2021 is \$26,806, an increase of \$3,152.

Stanley noted that the increase is for an increase in the Health Officer's salary and a line item for health officer supplies.

Culture & Recreation: 2020 Appropriation: \$100,450; Expended: \$51,347; and the request for 2021 is \$95,150, a decrease of \$5,300.

Conservation Commission: 2020 Appropriation: \$2,500; Expended: \$179 and the request for 2021 is \$2,500.

Economic Development: 2020 Appropriation: \$5,000; Expended: \$5,000 and the request for 2021 is \$2,000, a \$3,000 decrease.

Principal Long Term Notes: 2020 Appropriation: \$107,605; Expended: \$107,618 and the request for 2021 is \$84,486, a \$23,119 decrease.

Interest Long Term Notes: 2020 Appropriation: \$23,751; Expended: \$23,736 and the request for 2021 is \$20,087, a \$3,664 decrease

Stanley noted that two notes were paid off in 2020.

Tax Anticipation Notes: 2020 Appropriations: \$7,500; \$0 Expended; and the request for 2021 is \$7,500.

Special Revenue Funds:

Library: 2020 Appropriation: \$46,825, Expended: \$46,825 – 2021 Request: \$46,825

Cemetery: 2020 Appropriation: \$32,000, Expended: \$31,972 – 2021 Request: \$32,000

Airport: 2020 Appropriation: \$9,000 Expended: \$9,000 – 2021 Request: \$9,000

Band Concerts: 2020 Appropriation: \$3,000 Expended: \$0 2021 Request: \$3,000

Total Operating Budget is an increase of \$6,508, 0.23%

2020 Appropriation: \$2,892,895, 2020 Expended: \$2,592,580 and the request for 2021 is \$2,899,403.

Water Department: 2020 Appropriation: \$543,922; 2020 Expenditures: 485,133, and the request for 2021 is \$561,705, an increase of \$17,783.

Sewer Department: 2020 Appropriation: \$426,981; 2020 Expenditures: \$188,505 and the request for 2021 is \$544,760, an increase of \$117,779.

The Water & Sewer budgets do not affect the tax rate. They are a wash on expenses and revenues. Those budgets are funded by the users.

Stanley reviewed the appropriations for Capital Reserve accounts:

Highway Equipment Replacement - \$45,000

Fire Department Equipment Replacement - \$40,000

Revaluation - \$15,000

Bridges/Town Buildings - \$50,000

Sidewalks - \$20,000

Ambulance - \$30,000

Road Projects - \$100,000

Police Cruiser - \$0

Emergency Services Building - \$20,000

Septage Receiving Station - \$5,000

Sewer Collection System - \$10,000

Recycling Center Equipment Replacement - \$5,000

Highway Garage Repair/Replacement - \$25,000

Library Maintenance/Repairs - \$10,000

Matching Grant Fund – Economic Development/Town Departments - \$100,000

There is an increase of \$10,000 for the Ambulance Capital Reserve account. No appropriation for the cruiser capital reserve fund, as we will have a warrant article to purchase a cruiser in 2021. There is a decrease in the appropriation to the Septage Receiving Station Capital Reserve Fund. There are three new capital reserve funds this year: \$25,000 to a Highway Garage Repair & Replacement Capital Reserve Fund; \$10,000 for a Library Maintenance/Repairs Capital Reserve Fund, and \$100,000 for an Economic Development Grant Match Capital Reserve Fund for matching funds required for any grant opportunities for economic development and town departments/operations. The money for the grant match capital reserve fund and library maintenance/repairs fund will come from the 12/31/2020 unassigned fund balance.

Rick Wright has a question on these three new capital reserve funds. Stanley said that these articles will be worded to establish these new capital reserve funds. Rick asked why do we need \$100,000 for the economic development grant match capital reserve fund? Rick said that it seems like a high number to start out with. Peter Corey said the funds for that article are coming from unassigned fund balance. Peter said in his new job with NCIC he said he has seen how successful towns around us have been in securing grant funds because they have money set aside for matching funds. Peter explained that we came to that \$100,000 amount looking at successful towns around us. Littleton used \$900,000 and that fund enabled them to successfully capture grant funds in excess of \$10 million dollars. The Board thought it was a good starting amount for the fund, and would allow Whitefield to be competitive with other towns when we apply for grants. In the past, we have lost out on other grant applications that have been submitted because we say we will seek the grant match at town meeting rather than having it available at the time of the application.

Bob Loiacono asked once the money is approved, who decides how the funds are spent? Stanley said that the warrant article names the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from the capital reserve funds.

Tom said he hopes that the article for the library capital reserve fund is an error on the part of the town listing the Board of Selectmen as Agents to Expend from that capital reserve fund. He hopes this will be reconsidered. He feels that the Library Trustees should be agents to expend. They are responsible for dealing with that and should be the agents to expend rather than the Board of Selectmen.

Courtney Vashaw said when she was trying to put together the warrant article there needed to be a trustee of this capital fund and because it is for major projects it was the feeling that this needs to be at the bequest of the town. Courtney said that she would like a member of the Library Board of Trustees be involved in the discussion when they expend those funds. Courtney said we are talking about major items like a furnace or roof not you every day expenses. Tom Ladd said that is why the Selectmen should not be the agents. The Library Trustees should be the ones and should not have to be beholden to the Town for this capital reserve fund. Stanley is wondering can the Town have a capital reserve without the Selectmen as agents to expend? It is

something we will have to run by Town Counsel if the funds are going to be held by the town, whether the library trustees could be agents to expend. Courtney said she is comfortable either way. Rick Wright said he is thinking that the cemetery trustees don't have to go to the Selectmen to request money from the trust fund accounts. The Board said that this is a capital reserve fund not a trust fund. Judy will reach out to the Town Attorney to check. Shawn White said one reason we did it this way was because in the past any major job done on the library has been done with the DPW and the Selectmen being involved that is why we made that decision how it would be worded. Tom said there may be a good working relationship currently, but it doesn't matter but when things go the other way. Tom said he feels if we leave it as the Selectmen as agents to expend it will end up being more headaches. Tom said that he recommends the library trustees are agents to expend to make sure of the legality. Stanley said he feels if the Town Attorney says it is ok for the library trustees to be the agents to expend, he says we can switch it from the Selectmen to the library trustees.

The Capital Reserve account appropriation if \$475,000, an increase of \$100,000, and \$110,000 will be coming from the 2020 unassigned fund balance.

Frank Lombardi said that Paul Hayes is asking if this will be available after the meeting. The meeting minutes will be posted as a "draft" within 5 business days.

Stanley reviewed the warrant articles for this year:

Pave Kimball Hill Road - \$175,000

Power Cot/Load Stretcher - \$42,000

Police Cruiser - \$50,000 - \$25,000 from an existing capital reserve account

PD Special Details Revolving Fund - \$2,000 – There will be a warrant article to establish a revolving fund pursuant to RSA 31:95-h, where all revenues received for special details from fees, charges, or other income derived from the special details will be deposited into the fund and the money in the fund shall cover wages and benefits of the officers. Any balance of revenues shall be allowed to accumulate from year to year and shall not be considered part of the town's general balance. We are using \$2,000 to start the fund then it will fund itself.

The total for warrant articles is \$269,000, a \$58,000 increase from 2020.

Stanley reviewed the Petition Warrant Articles which are being put on the warrant by signature of 25 registered voters of Whitefield. Judy explained that the Tri-County Cap Programs warrant is one article this year rather than separate articles as was done in the past. The total request for Petition Warrant Articles is \$34,961, a decrease of \$6,420 from the 2020 request of \$41,381.

Total 2020 Appropriations: \$4,491,179

Total 2020 Expenditures: \$3,882,070

Total 2021 Request: \$4,784,829 – a \$293,650 increase (6.54%)

The Projected Tax Rate for 2021 is \$9.16, an 0.11 cent increase from 2020, which was \$9.05. The net town appropriation is \$44,502 more than 2020, \$2,145,512 compared to \$2,101,010 in 2020.

The Board reviewed the warrant articles for recommendations. The Board decided that they will not recommend the petition warrant articles. The Board feels as this does not relate to town operations it will be the voter's decisions. Articles 34 and 35 are also by petition and are non-money articles. Article 34 is the Complete Streets Resolution and Article 35 deals with establishing regulations for Non-Owner Occupied Short-Term Rentals. The Town's attorney feels that the Complete Streets article is likely advisory only. Article 35 appears to be intended as an amendment to the Whitefield Development Code, and the deadline for those petitions were December 9, 2020. She suggested at this point to keep it on the warrant where it is, and have it discussed and voted on during the business session, but the result would be advisory only.

A motion was made by Shawn White to approve the Selectmen's Meeting Minutes of January 25, 2021. The motion was seconded by Peter Corey. Roll Call Vote: Holz: Yes; White: Yes; Corey: Yes. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passes.

Stanley said that the Town Meeting will be held at the White Mountains Regional High School on Tuesday, March 9, 2021. The polls for voting will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and the Town Meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m.

Shawn asked about having a non-public session, and it was decided to schedule it for our next meeting on February 22, 2021.

The meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.