**Town of Milton**

**BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**

**January 11, 2024**

**ATTENDANCE**:

**Members:** Stephanie Mills, Bob Carrier, Renata Gamache, Peg Hurd, Claudine Burnham, Mike Beaulieu

**Excused:** Kimberly Wischnewski, Laura Turgeon

**Public:** Chief Richard Krauss- Milton Police, Larry Brown

Stephanie Mills opened the session at 6:00PM.

1. **Pledge of Allegiance:** Stephanie Mills led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. **Roll Call:**
	1. Ms. Mills led the roll call of members to determine if a quorum was present.
	Stephanie Mills, Bob Carrier, Peg Hurd, Renata Gamache, Claudine Burnham, and Mike Beaulieu. A quorum was present.
3. **Public Review of 2024 Town Warrant:**Ms. Mills presented the 2024 Warrant. Mr. Beaulieu said the times for the Deliberative Session on February 3rd have changed. The Town Session will begin at 11:30 and end at 1:00PM.

Article #2- Zoning: Revising Article VIII-Wetland Conservation Ordinance. Mr. Brown said the Zoning changes will help property owners understand what they can and cannot do.
Article #3 – Zoning: Added new section ‘Priority Wetlands’ to Article VIII-Wetland Conservation Ordinance. Mr. Brown said there was some concern that the new regulations may be too tight and impact rights of the property owner.
Article #4 – Operating Budget: Because final revenues have not been received, there has been no estimated tax impact rate set. Operating Budget - $5,549,761; if not passed, Default Budget will be $5,615,351.
Article #5 – Highway and Road Reconstruction Fund: Raise and appropriate $360,000. Estimated tax impact $0.72/$1,000.
Article #6 – Bridge Capital Reserve Fund: Raise and appropriate $150,000. Estimated tax impact $0.30/$1,000.
Article #7 – Lease/Purchase Two Highway 6 Wheel Dump Trucks: Raise and appropriate $68,000 as first year payment. Estimated tax impact $0.136/$1,000. According to Chief Krauss, this Warrant Article is more important as there was an overnight fire which totaled one of the existing trucks. They are now completely down to three trucks.
Article #8 – Purchase Police Department Taser 10 Less Lethal Weapons: Raise and appropriate $8,877.69 as first year payment of five-year lease/purchase agreement. Estimated tax impact $0.017/$1,000.
Article #9 – Purchase Police Department Axon Body 4 Body Cameras: Raise and appropriate $9,381 as first year payment of five-year lease/purchase agreement. Estimated tax impact $0.02/$1,000.
Article #10 – Public Safety Radio Communications Capital Reserve Fund: Raise and appropriate $30,000. Estimated tax impact $0.06/$1,000.
Article #11 – Fire Department Equipment and Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund: Raise and appropriate $15,000. Estimated tax impact $0.03/$1,000.
Article #12 – Technology Upgrade Capital Reserve Fund: Raise and appropriate $8,000. Estimated tax impact $0.016/$1,000.
Article #13 – Municipal Buildings Capital Reserve Fund: Raise and appropriate $25,000. Estimated tax impact $0.05/$1,000.
Article #14 – Invasive Plant Species: Raise and appropriate $7,500. Estimated tax impact $0.015/$1,000.
Article #15 – Appoint Public Works Director: No tax impact.
Article #16 – Elected to Appointed Fire Chief: There is no tax impact yet as it hasn’t been determined whether this would be part-time vs. full-time. If the position remains part-time, there are no changes unless retirement is paid. If the position changes to full-time, benefits such as retirement, health benefits would be added. If this article passes, it will take effect in 2025.
Article #17 – Conservation Commission Legal Defense Capital Reserve Fund: Raise and appropriate $1,000. Estimated tax impact $0.01/$1,000.
Article #18 – Elderly Exemptions: Estimated tax impact $0.09/$1,000. Ms. Mills said the Budget Committee recommended removing the word ‘net’ from the Article. Chief Krauss said as the Warrant Article must meet the State’s RSA which includes the word ‘net’, this Article must include the word.
Article #19 – School House Donation: Donation of building to the NH Farm Museum. No tax impact.
Article #20 – Town House Road Bridge: No tax impact this year.
4. **Public Review of 2024 School Warrant:**
Ms. Mills presented the 2024 School Warrant.

Article #2 – Operating Budget: Raise and appropriate $11,595,760. If defeated the Default budget will be $11,613,975. Total operating budget will be offset leaving net budget amount of $6,936,966. Estimated tax impact $13.75/$1,000.

Mr. Brown said the School Board and BOS worked very hard this year to reduce costs to the taxpayer. He said the School District expenses are necessary with significant fuel and building site costs, as well as student costs. He is a strong supporter of the District and believes the new Superintendent brings a lot of energy to the District. The fact that the operating budget only increased by .8% over last year is remarkable. He is very supportive of the School District’s teachers and believes they deserve respect. He hopes both the budget and the teacher contract passes.
Article #3 – Teacher Collective Bargaining Agreement: This is a four-year contract. The first-year increase in salaries and benefits amounts to $482,468.15. Estimated tax impact $0.96/$1,000.
Ms. Gamache said over the four-year contract, the total amount of increases will cost ~$1.6M. Ms. Hurd said at the first negotiation meeting, School Board reps were presented with a first year of $1.1M. After negotiations, they were able to bring the total amount down. Ms. Mills said she appreciates the fact that negotiations brought the first year down to $482,468.15. Ms. Hurd said after the town adds in all their Warrants, the School is asking less than the Town.
Article #4 – Special Meeting: Ms. Hurd said if the contract is voted down, this ~~will allow~~ Article will allow negotiations to start again instead of waiting an entire year to begin the process.

Ms. Hurd said the School Board removed two additional articles based on feedback from the Budget Committee.
5. **Public Comments or Questions:**
Mr. Brown thanks everyone for all their hard work; he understands this can be hard work and feels like it is unappreciated.

Ms. Mills motioned to close the public hearing. Seconded by Ms. Hurd. All were in favor; the public hearing adjourned.
6. **Other business that may come before the board:**
There was no other business.
7. **Next Regular BC Meeting – January 30, 2024**
8. **Adjournment**:
	1. Ms. Hurd motioned to adjourn at 7:10PM; Seconded by Ms. Burnham. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Amy Winslow-Weiss, Recording Secretary – Budget Committee**