

**Town of Milton Budget Committee
Friday January 17, 2014
Milton Town Hall
Meeting Minutes**

The meeting opened at 6:03PM with a Roll Call by Chairman Woodruff.

Members Present were:

- Bruce Woodruff – Chair
- Doug Shute - School Board Representative
- Stan Nadeau – Water District Representative
- Larry Brown – Vice Chair
- Jim Kelley – Member
- Bob Carrier – Member
- Eric Ohlenbusch – Member
- Mike Beaulieu – Selectman’s Representative

Also Present: Rebecca Dean –Recording Secretary

Review and Approval of past minutes

Bob Carrier stated 11.26.13 minutes were approved already.

MOTION to approve the Minutes of December 9, 2013 by Jim Kelley. Second by Stan Nadeau. Discussion: None. All in favor, motion carried.

MOTION to approve the Minutes of December 16, 2013 by Bob Carrier. Seconded by Jim Kelley. Discussion: none. All in favor, motion carried.

MOTION by Jim Kelley to approve the Minutes of December 18, 2013 as amended. Seconded by Eric Ohlenbusch. Discussion: none. All in favor, motion carried.

MOTION by Jim Kelley to approve the Minutes of January 7, 2014. Seconded by Bob Carrier. Discussion: none. All in favor, motion carried.

MOTION by Jim Kelley to approve the Minutes of January 9, 2014. Seconded by Larry Brown. Discussion: none. All in favor, motion carried.

Chair Woodruff stated that the committee would recess until the public hearing begins. When the public hearing is over the committee will meet again, and then recess at 7pm for School Budget, and then do the same thing again.

MOTION by Larry Brown to recess the business meeting until after the Town Budget meeting. Seconded by Jim Kelley. All in favor, motion carried. The committee recessed at 6:13pm.

Chair Woodruff called the Public Hearing to order at 6:31 PM and stated its purpose. The BOS opened their portion of this at 6:31pm.

Public Comments and Discussion

Fire Chief Marique shared information regarding the analysis of the Ambulance revolving account. Chair Woodruff said that yes, he had said it stayed in the black through 2017. Chief Marique said that yes this is correct but when the time comes to purchase another ambulance in 2023 the fund would be short by approximately \$115,422, Doug Shute asked if the town total \$100k repayment goes back into revolving, would there would still be a problem?

The last ambulance cost \$170k. His projection is that it would cost about \$220k. Jim Kelley asked what happens to the old ambulance. Chief Marique said that the oldest would be traded in which is not calculated; he noted that the last one that was traded in only had a value of \$1500.

An audience member suggested fixing the one that the town owns which is a discussion they could have separately.

He also stated the electric line that had been cut by \$500 - Note that the department's current expense through 1.2013 is \$6277.

Another item for heating is \$2000 overspent from 2013 due to final bills. They spent \$8800.

As far as vehicle maintenance, he stated he understood the logic.

Lue Snyder stated she feels angry as a citizen and is upset by outside appropriations. She does not need her tax dollars going for charities. She noted that in the past, the Red Cross had been removed. She questioned that A Safe Place needs tax dollars. She stated her anger at her tax dollars paying for charities and that this is wrong.

Why are we giving to Red Cross and A Safe Place when we need this money elsewhere in town? She stated very clearly and adamantly that there is no need to have charity in taxes. CAP has decided to pull out of Milton - why are these in here?

Chair Woodruff explained the process. The BOS considered requests and the Budget Committee reviews; the process is as it is supposed to be - but in the process, other monies have been cut.

Chair Woodruff noted that in the default budget, the amounts going to these agencies would be much higher. He declined further discussion and stated the BOS had responsibility to answer.

Vice Chair Brown said that CAP is presently providing information to the town welfare officer which is contractual and is used to further document eligibility for those who are applying for assistance.

Stan Nadeau stated that a person of the public has a right to have their question answered.

Town Administrator Dionne agreed to obtain the information.

Linda Anstice spoke - page 3 - Health Insurance - this is a lot of money. For most employees and any business, they pay at least half. Do our town employees pay any of the cost for health and dental? How many years do you have to be here to have retirement?

Selectman Tom Gray said town pays 100% for single person, for family, the employee pays 20%.

Natalie Kelley spoke - she has been to most of these meetings and has seen the votes and who voted for what. Recommendations were presented to BOS. What happened? Jim found \$150k in savings for health insurance if the town went through the exchange. Why hasn't this been considered? We live within a budget ourselves, why isn't the town able to do as well?

Mike Beaulieu addressed emergency vehicles and redoing them, for both police and fire. Ms. Kelley said that trucks are new every two years. He said that these trucks pile upon miles; you can see through the bottoms of the floors and has facts to prove it.

Linda Anstice addressed insurance again. In the 'real world', it's an employer's world. She pays \$500 a month toward her own insurance. She does not understand why to pay an increase in salary and 100% of an employees insurance. People cannot afford it. What can we do to chop some of this stuff? It isn't realistic. Selectman Beaulieu cited an employee making \$13.50 an hour who is trying to support a family. Stan Nadeau said that this proposed budget was a 5-4 vote. There were 4 people on this board who didn't agree.

Chair Woodruff said The BOS made some suggested cuts and did not make others. At the last meeting, the cuts resulted down to 3.664,744.

Stan Nadeau stated he voted against this budget.

Linda Anstice asked about an outstanding \$100k note. Tom Gray said the conservation commission was owed land use penalties. Monies had been directed to the general fund instead of to conservation. Half has been paid (50k) and some property went into conservation as part of this at fair market value. She said the budget, taxes, and school system are preventing her from selling her home. She suggested talking about having Nute students go to Farmington. Why such a big increase in December in taxes, and now a 7%

increase by spring? Tom Gray said that the increase will not be in Spring, but by December since a number of factors are included. Ms. Anstice asked what are we doing differently now versus before? Kathy Wallingford spoke about property revaluation. Development has not been good in town or elsewhere, which helps keep tax dollars down. Growth and development hasn't happen for the past 2 or 3 years, so tax base isn't building up. The state mandates a revaluation in 2014 which increased the budget. If not done, there are penalties and fees which will cost more. The laws and mandates are the same for every town, and we do not have a large staff.

David Hall spoke. He cited his attendance at past meetings. What will pass the voters is a question being asked by the committees; line items and research need to be applied in order to bring the bottom line down. Jim Kelley said he supports this idea.

Michelle Beauchamp asked for clarification on mileage cuts. Who does that affect? They are all in one line, page 2, 4140-840.

Lue Snyder said that the deliberative session can be used to make motions to lower - or raise – budget items.

Ms. Anstice asked if there is a further breakdown of salaries; she cited DPW sum and if it covers one person or several? Pat Smith said this covers 7 employees, including overtime for plowing in the winter. Jim Kelley said that these were available to the committee.

Comments from the Board

Larry Brown said that, at \$13 per hour, and 40 hours a week, a person would earn \$520 per week. After sox security, Medicare, etc. - 25% - this came to 400 per week. This works out to \$20800 per year. 300 per month in health insurance is \$3600. \$17200 is the amount a public works employee would actually get.

Ms. Anstice suggested that perhaps an insurance change could be phased in. and then follow David's recommendation to look at what the real cost is. The costs being paid by the town for employee benefits isn't realistic. Ms. Anstice related a discussion about combining Fire with other local departments to share expenses and decrease the cost to Milton. Do we have someone in town who tries to get business to come here?

Chair Woodruff said that Committee appreciates the public feedback.

Tom Gray said we have a town planner and economic development committee. The unfortunate thing is that the planner's line got cut.

Chief Marique said that combining services have been done across the country and he has discussed it with other towns. He is wide open to the idea and that mutual aid agreements are helpful, but services could be combined.

SN stated that he believes that the default number for 2014 is incorrect, he thinks there are items should not be in there. DS agreed.

Review of Town Warrant Articles

ARTICLE 5 - for Fire Station EMS facility - \$2,864,100. Read in full by Selectman Beaulieu. Public Comment on Article 5 - Ms. Anstice said that this is \$2.93 for all 4 years? Chief said its not the same amount, and its not a cumulative number, so this isn't the same. Bond interest drops every year. The total ends up being the \$2.93 over time, but not at once. Ms. Kelley said she thinks what we have now works. Ms. Anstice asked about adding on to the police statement to make a combined facility. Tom Gray said there is a lot of wetland in that area. Chief Marique said he has written an FAQ to address this.

ARTICLE 6 - Lease Purchase for \$425,958 Highway Department six wheel trucks. Read in full by Jim Kelley.

Public Comment on Article 6 - Ms. Anstice asked how much per thousand tax rate impact this is?

Selectman Gray said this would be later posted on the town website and in the Voter's Guide.

Stan Nadeau said that the lease is risky if the lease funding fails in the future. Pat Smith explained his goals in this. There is an extended warranty. The cost for the truck is \$158k versus 12 years ago, when it was \$79k. The lease purchase would even out the cost and tax impact to the public over time.

Chair Woodruff calculated that this is (approximate) \$0.18 per thousand.

ARTICLE 7 - Town Operating Budget of \$3,664,745, read in full by Vice Chair Brown.

Public Comment on Article 7 - Chair Woodruff asked for discussion on the default budget as part of this warrant article. Ms. Anstice asked how much per thousand tax rate impact this is?

Question by Jim Kelley if this number in the default gets adjusted. SN said this is determined by selectmen.

ARTICLE 8 - Highway Department 6 wheel truck purchase, amount of \$158,486. Read in full by Chair Woodruff.

Public Comment on Article 8 - Ms Anstice asked how this works with the clause if article 6 passes.

ARTICLE 9 - To add \$15,000 to the Highway Department Capital Reserve - Read in full by Stan Nadeau.

Public Comment on Article 9 - David Hall noted that there are three articles for DPW. Pat Smith said this is for smaller trucks. This purchases trucks for plowing smaller streets and town property.

ARTICLE 10 - Highway and Road Construction \$290,000, read in full by Doug Shute.

Public Comment on Article 10. Pat Smith stated that this is for upkeep of town roads.

ARTICLE 11 - Highway Department Equipment Capital Reserve fund \$15,000, read in full by Eric Ohlenbusch,

Public Comment on Article 11. Pat Smith said this covers equipment such as sanders, other special non-truck equipment. Chair Woodruff said this warrant has been present for several years.

ARTICLE 12 - Ambulance vehicles and equipment, fire departments vehicles capital reserve fund - \$10,000, read in full by Bob Carrier,

Public Comment on Article 12 - Chief Marique said that this is being used for small vehicles. Forestry truck came from here as well as command vehicle grant town portion. This doesn't pertain to the ambulance as much since there is revolving fund for ambulance.

Ms. Anstice asked if there is ever money left over. Stan Nadeau said this is the purpose of the fund, for money to accumulate and then be spent. There is no cap on the fund. Selectman Gray explained that the funds are worded for very specific purpose, and how they can be used.

ARTICLE 13 - \$15,000 for Fire Department Apparatus Capital Reserve - read in full by Selectmen Beaulieu.

Public Comment - Chief Marique said that this includes FD Equipment, like air packs, which have to be replaced at about \$100k cost. He noted that Jaws of Life would need replacement soon. Doug Shute said that the committee has balances for each fund available if members of the public were interested. Stan Nadeau said that adding the year to the capital reserve fund information should be part of the information provided; Selectman Gray said this could be in the voter's guide. Karen Brown pointed out the Town Report has this information.

ARTICLE 14 - \$10,000 for Fire Department Vehicle Repair and Improvement Capital Reserve. Read in full by Jim Kelley.

Public Comment - Chief Marique said that the goal is to have trucks redone at 10-year mark; covers major unexpected failures like a pump or motor.

ARTICLE 15 - \$5,000 for Milton Free Public Library capital reserve fund - read in full by Vice Chair Brown.

Public Comment - Ms. Anstice asked what this is for. Betsy Baker said this is for renovations in the building. There are equipment provisions as well. The library requests this yearly. She has been at library for over 7 years and in that time this has paid for bathroom renovation, window reglazing. Stan Nadeau confirmed that

the current total is \$11,429.

ARTICLE 16 - \$10,000 for Milton Recreation capital reserve fund. Read in full by Chair Woodruff.

Public Comment - Karen Brown said this amount has asked for \$5k additional for capital improvements to beach - bathrooms would cost about \$150k from start to finish. Drainage repair is also needed with a quote of \$150k. Ms. Anstice said that a volunteer may be able to help with drainage. She also asked where the money goes from gate proceeds; these go to recreation revolving fund per Karen Brown's response, and she said last years report has a detailed list of what programs are provided.

ARTICLE 17 - \$5,000 for Cemetery Capital Reserve fund - Read in full by Stan Nadeau.

Public Comment - discussion ensued on the fact that the cemetery is privately owned and that state law says the town must have a cemetery.

ARTICLE 18 - \$40,000 Milton Maine Bridge - read in full by Doug Shute.

Public Comment - Tom Gray spoke about purpose of fund to replace bridge on Town House road. There is currently \$35k in that fund now.

ARTICLE 19 - Lease purchase \$240,000 for Highway Department Grader, read in full by Eric Ohlenbusch,

Public Comment - Pat Smith said the town have a 1972 Caterpillar Grader which is in dire need or replacement. It is used to maintain dirt roads and reuse gravel/hot top.

ARTICLE 20 - Milton Public Works Garage \$35,000, read in full by Bob Carrier.

Public Comment - Pat Smith said the building addition is rotted and falling off the building and cited its overall poor condition.

ARTICLE 21 - Police Computer and Radio Capital Reserve \$10,000, read in full by Selectmen Beaulieu.

Public Comment - Chief Krauss said this is a new Warrant and cited the need for equipment and its expense. Software is needed since Windows XP will no longer be supported.

ARTICLE 22 - Police Officer Retention \$90,098 to adjust wages - Read in full by Jim Kelley.

Public Comment - Chief Krauss said that Milton is a training ground for other agencies. We are a department of 8 full time officers but now we have 5 - three went to other agencies. In his tenure the town has trained 13, at cost of \$24k per officer. He explained how this works and that there is a 3 year contract. New officers would have a 3 year, 30k contract, and no increase in time period. Ms. Anstice said posed the question of extending the contract; the Chief said that this matches surrounding towns. Stan Nadeau said that, from a business perspective, we are spending 50k or better every year, over time, on training officers and then we lose them. Selectman Beaulieu said that one of our officers who went to another town had the other town buy out his contract. Ms Kelley said that the fixes are to throw more money, why not extend the contract? Stan Nadeau said that other towns still pay more hourly. Chief Krauss said that extending the contract has to be legally explained as well. The idea of fewer officers being paid more hourly more was discussed. Chief Krauss said there should be 2 officers per thousand people, we are technically one officer short - we should have 9 by FBI standards. An audience member spoke in support of having more. Lue Snyder expressed similar support, and that crime is up for theft in Milton. Stan Nadeau said that that police and ambulance are top at the list of things we have got to have. A discussion ensued about what Milton does - and doesn't - have to offer.

ARTICLE 25 - Trust Fund establishment of \$20,000 for Library structural repairs. Read in full by Chair

Woodruff. Public Comment - Ms. Baker commented on things that need to be covered - immediate needs of egress and handicapped ramp were cited, among a number of other issues. Chair Woodruff asked happens if they are not addressed short term? Tom Gray said the second floor would have to be closed due to lack of egress. Mike Beaulieu said it is in dire need of repair now. The LCHIP grant was denied. Jim Kelley asked about Property Insurance and the egress stairway, discussion ensued. Larry Brown said that the repairs and bids have been sent out and considered, planning has been done. The reason LCHIP did not succeed due to particularity of repairs needed lining up with LCHIP preservation goals.

No further comments were made.

The town public hearing closed at 8:32pm.

The school board public hearing opened at 8:41pm

School Budget

Superintendent Tursi discussed the operating budget. The total is 8,895,738, an increase of \$56,176; it's a 0.65% increase.

Chair Woodruff said that the budget was reviewed with the school board and identified places for cuts, which the school board was able to make.

Doug Shute reviewed the process of back and forth of cuts.

Superintendent Tursi responded to the question if this budget covered with Milton and Wakefield.

Superintendent Tursi responded that the SAU budget is paid for by both towns whereas the school budget is Milton only.

Doug Shute cited the fact that students are still succeeding despite the lack of accreditation.

Anne Walsh said that the Milton school district applied for accreditation 7-8 years ago and the response the town received was that something had to be done about the building before accreditation could happen - because Nute is so bad. Anne Walsh also cited efforts to combine with other schools. The ability to look at combining with Farmington is on the table at this time. Ellen Kreit discussed the schools impact on real estate.

Lue Snyder cited the fact that many students are advanced, but the town is striving to change. A new administrative team has been put into place, it will take a little time but they already have great ideas and are motivated.

Ms. Anstice asked if the superintendent would have bias about moving students to another town. His position is that he is hired to do what is best for students and the community.

Rebecca Dean asked as, a private citizen, what kinds of saving could be realized by sending students into another town? Mr. Tursi stated that our current per pupil cost is about \$13k; and any amount that could be saved by closing in buildings, etc has not been researched. Chair Woodruff discussed the opposite idea of having other kids come to Milton, make some money, and improve the facilities.

Chair Woodruff cited the value of having students educated in the community in which they live. Jim Kelley spoke about the review of the budget and end value, and improvement of school quality overall.

Anne Walsh said that another option would be to add on a second floor to the middle school; it was designed to accommodate one in the future.

Larry Brown discussed Middleton's experience - it would cost to send 1.6 million to put together a feeder middle school to tie in to regional high school. The problems in combining two school districts - almost 85% is impacted by third party federal, contractual. Transportation won't change much. He also discussed Barrington and Oyster River. The lack of accreditation isn't necessarily about quality of education - but size of library, athletic fields, and other things. It would have cost about \$200k more to leave Wakefield in administrative costs.

Mike Beauleau spoke highly about his children's experience at Milton schools. He asked what kind of cut could be realized from a 9 million budget. Superintendent Tursi talked about the need for a cost / benefit analysis.

There is a \$43,000 difference between the default school budget and the school budget presented for consideration.

Ellen Kreit stated she would much rather invest in a school than a new fire station. This would attract people to the town.

SAU Budget

The total is \$925,653. There was general discussion.

School Warrant Articles

ARTICLE 2 was already discussed.

ARTICLE 4 - \$24,200 for computer tablets for grades K-3. Read in full by Chair Woodruff. Ms. Kelley commented that she doesn't understand the need, and doesn't own one herself. She pointed out that this would cover only 4 or 5 classes, not every child. Lue Snyder said that this figure was pulled from the school budget into a warrant article in order to let the people decide. As a Special Warrant Article, if there is money leftover, the money goes back to the townspeople and not into the general fund for the school. Superintendent Tursi said that the need to focus on K-3 literacy is crucial - at that age, they learn to read, and later they are 'reading to learn'. Early literacy makes a huge difference down the road and the tablets are a new type of resource for this. He also stated that these facts work very well for certain kids and won't replace a book. They would not leave the school and are classroom resources. Bob Carrier says that Rochester uses these and related his nephew's experience.

ARTICLE 5 - \$30,000 trust fund for updating and improving security at district schools. Read in full by Chair Woodruff.

Discussion: Doug Shute said there is presently \$30k in this fund. Ms. Anstice asked what kind of security they would cover; Chair Woodruff said that the specific security measures aren't discussed due to their very nature. These discussions normally occur in non-public session.

ARTICLE 6 - \$50,000 for building maintenance and repair. Read in full by Chair Woodruff.

Discussion: Comes from any surplus, there are buildings in need of repair on a priority list. Anne Walsh stated that this money is for major repairs, such as if a boiler/furnace were to fail.

ARTICLE 7 - \$25,000 for expendable trust for educationally disabled children. Read in full by Chair Woodruff.

Discussion: comes from any surplus, if any. Doug Shute commented that the State recommends \$100k. Anne Walsh commented that the fiscal year for the school starts in July.

Mike Beaulieu asked how much teachers pay for health insurance. 5% paid by teacher for single plan, 20% of family. This is part of a negotiated contract. Support staff gets 100% of single plan, no option of family plans.

Doug Shute asked about future plans of what happens if we send our kids elsewhere, to buildings etc.?

Discussion ensued about the school's impact on home ownership and resale.

ARTICLE 8 - \$5,000 for Library Media at Nute Library. Special warrant article. Read in full by Chair Woodruff and Vice Chair Brown.

Discussion: Ann Walsh discussed that there was a verbal agreement for matching funds with the public portion of the library.

General Comments

Eric Ohlenbusch stated that the better the fire department we have, insurance companies look at town rates. It does have an impact.

Selectman Beaulieu said he felt that Article 7 should supersede Article 6.

Larry Brown asked if there is currently \$75k in special reserve fund. Is this fund unused because anticipated expenses are in place? The superintendent answered yes to both questions.

Closed public hearing on School Budget at 9:34pm.

The regular meeting reopened.

Chair Woodruff and the group discussed the process of how and why minutes are posted. Some towns post them with a disclaimer on the Internet.

Selectman Gray stated that someone in the past has taken minutes off the town website and posted them as fact, with errors and misinformation. The disclaimer would theoretically go in the paper as well but that didn't happen. Additional discussion ensued.

Doug Shute emphasized that the deliberative session is February 1st at the school, 1pm and that changes to the lines in budgets could be made there.

Selectman Beaulieu **MOTIONED** to make a change on one line item - return the \$500 from the Operating Line of Fire Department Electric line 410. They are already over. Second by Larry Brown. Discussion: could this reviewed with other items and review all at once rather than piecemeal? Chair Woodruff said it's going

to be piecemeal in a way regardless because of the motion. Vice Chair Brown asked if this could instead be reviewed at the deliberative motion. Voting: in favor 4 Carrier, Ohlenbusch, Brown, Beaulieu; Against: Shute, Nadeau, Kelley, Woodruff. Motion failed.

MOTION by Bob Carrier to recommend Warrant article 7 budget of 3,664,745 be sent to deliberative session. Seconded by Larry Brown. Discussion: none. DS Moved to question. Chair Woodruff said that making no one happy is sometimes the best compromise. Vice Chair Brown said that there are expenses that reducing necessary and prudent expenses
Voting: in favor: Carrier, Ohlenbusch, Brown, Woodruff. Against: Shute, Nadeau, Kelley, Beaulieu. Motion Failed.

Discussion ensued on the fact that one member is missing. The committee members expressed their frustration at the motion failing.

MOTION by Stan Nadeau to make contact with Jennifer Crone via phone to receive her vote, under the understanding that this is a legal method.

Seconded by Jim Kelley

Jennifer Crone voted yes.

This means the board has voted as a group to recommend.

MOTION by Bob Carrier to recommend Warrant article 7 (recommended budget) of 3,664,745 be sent to deliberative session. Seconded by Larry Brown. Discussion: none. DS Moved to question. Chair Woodruff said that making no one happy is sometimes the best compromise. Vice Chair Brown said that there are expenses that reducing necessary and prudent expenses

Voting: in favor: Carrier, Ohlenbusch, Brown, Woodruff. Against: Shute, Nadeau, Kelley, Beaulieu. Motion passed, 5-4.

MOTION to recommend the proposed warrant articles and send them to deliberative session.

MOTION by Jim Kelley to vote on recommending the School Budget of 8,895,738 (article 2) and send to deliberative session. Seconded by Larry Brown. Discussion: none. 7-0, 1 abstention (Mike Beaulieu). Motion carried.

MOTION by Larry Brown to recommend and send the School Administrative Unit (SAU) 64 budget to deliberative session in the amount of \$925,653. Second by Jim Kelley. No discussion. Motion carried, 8-0.

Jim Kelley asked why we do not read the minutes aloud before moving to approve them. Chair Woodruff agreed that this process could be considered, or having a motion to waive this process.

The committee agreed to meet again for the purpose of approving past meeting minutes on Thursday January 23, 2014 at 6:30pm.

MOTION to adjourn by Mike Beaulieu. Seconded by Jim Kelley. All in favor, motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 10:25pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca L Dean

Approved:



, Chair 1/27/14