

Town of Milton
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
January 11, 2022

ATTENDANCE:

Members: Humphrey Williams (Chair), Peg Hurd, Bob Carrier, Mike Beaulieu, Claudine Burnham, Lisa Gautreau, Laura Turgeon, Larry Brown

Staff: Chris Jacobs, Town Administrator

Public: Doug Shute, Abigail Rooney

Humphrey Williams, Chair, opened the session at 6:00PM.

1.) Pledge of Allegiance: Humphrey Williams, Chair, led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2.) Roll Call:

a. Mr. Williams, Chair, led the roll call of members to determine if a quorum was present.

Humphrey Williams (Chair), Laura Turgeon, Lisa Gautreau, Peg Hurd, Larry Brown, Bob Carrier, Claudine Burnham, Mike Beaulieu. A quorum was present.

b. Public participation: Chris Jacobs, Town Administrator, Doug Shute and Abigail Rooney, School Board Representatives, were in attendance.

3.) Review / Approve Minutes:

Minutes of December 28, 2021:

Ms. Hurd made a motion to approve the December 28, 2021, minutes with corrections. Ms. Turgeon seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: **Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Brown, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Burnham, Mr. Williams all voted Yes. Motion Carried – 8 / 0 / 0**

4.) Review and Vote on 2022 Town Warrant:

Mr. Williams reported the Board of Selectmen held a special meeting earlier in the week to vote on the Warrant Articles. The Budget Committee will now vote on each of the Warrant Articles. He confirmed the first session of the Deliberative Session of the Annual Town Meeting will be held Saturday, February 5th starting at 9:00AM for the School Warrant and at 10:30AM for the Town Warrant, at Nute High School Gymnasium. The second session, which will be the actual vote (to elect Town officers and all Warrant Articles), will occur Tuesday, March 8th.

Articles requiring Budget Committee vote:

Article 4: OPERATING BUDGET: Vote to approve an operating budget of \$4,723,991. If not approved through vote, default budget will be \$4,772.952.

Discussion: Mr. Williams explained Finance is still working through final revenue information. The Budget Committee had already previously approved the budget; the BOS voted to approve the Operating Budget Article – 3/0/0. Mr. Williams reported this year's tax impact should be in similar range, or slightly above, last year's tax impact. Once the revenue information is received, then the

estimated tax impact will be determined.

Ms. Hurd made a motion to approve the operating budget of \$4,723,991 and the default budget of \$4,772,952. Ms. Gautreau seconded the motion.

Discussion: Mr. Brown reminded the committee of not needing to approve the default. Mr. Williams agreed and suggested modifying the motion to state the Budget Committee approves the operating budget warrant article as written. Ms. Gautreau rescinded her second to the motion and Ms. Hurd rescinded her original motion.

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the Operating Budget Warrant Article as written. Seconded by Mr. Brown.

Discussion: Mr. Beaulieu pointed out if the proposed budget would pass along with all the proposed Warrant Articles, the final budget would be \$6,143,150 (~\$1.4M increased change).

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Williams all voted Yes. Motion Carried – 8 / 0 / 0**

Mr. Williams explained several of the proposed Warrant Articles are through the unassigned fund balance while five of them will be through direct taxation. The tax impact could increase from \$2.23/\$1,000 to \$2.93/\$1,000. For an average household of \$300,000, this could add to an almost \$900 extra in property tax per year. Ms. Gautreau questioned how many of the Warrant Articles were related to the Capital Improvement Program (CIP)? According to Mr. Williams, most of them are from the CIP. Ms. Gautreau stressed the importance of the CIP which are the big-ticket items.

Article 5: HIGHWAY AND ROAD CONSTRUCTION FUND: Vote to raise and appropriate \$350,000 for Highway and Road Reconstruction.

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the Highway and Road Construction Fund Warrant Article, as written. Seconded by Ms. Hurd for discussion.

This was recommended by the CIP. Mr. Williams stated the tax impact is: \$0.44/\$1,000 with the anticipated block grant of \$130,000. If the anticipated block grant is not received, the tax impact would be \$.70/\$1,000. Recommended by BOS 3/0/0. Ms. Turgeon questioned if the town had ever been turned down for the grant. Mr. Jacobs said they have always received the grant previously. Ms. Hurd asked if the \$350,000 was what is typically requested? According to Mr. Williams, it is slightly higher this year due to cost increases. Mr. Beaulieu asked for clarification on the total- “is the actual amount \$350,000 + \$130,000 expected block grant for total of \$480,000 or would the \$130,000 be deducted from the \$350,000?” (so the town would be responsible for \$220,000). Mr. Williams indicated the latter, with a tax impact of \$0.44/\$1,000. Mr. Brown clarified by law the language of a warrant articles must include the wording “to raise and appropriate”. He also pointed out in 2019 this warrant article had been voted down. Mr. Williams commented that must ask for the full amount, such as the \$350,000, in order to receive the grant money, which would then offset the cost to the taxpayers. Mr. Williams remembered during last year’s Deliberative Session an attendee asked why the monies were not just added in directly to the department’s operating budget. He stated that Warrant Article monies must be used specifically for that particular item, while line-items in the operating budget may be used for other purposes.

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Williams** all voted Yes. Motion Carried – 8 / 0 / 0

Article 6: DAWSON STREET & SILVER STREET DRAINAGE PROJECT – COMPLETE PHASE 2: Vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$781,000 to complete the Dawson Street & Silver Street area drainage project as Phase 2 of the total project. Also authorizing BOS to accept and expend monies received through federal and state governments. Tax impact: \$1.56/\$1,000. This was approved by the BOS 3/0/0 with a stipulation to research ways to reduce the final amount prior to the upcoming Deliberative Session.

Mr. Williams made the motion to open the Warrant Article, Dawson Street & Silver Street Drainage Project – Complete Phase 2 for discussion. Seconded by Ms. Hurd.

Mr. Williams stated he wanted to read through the next related Warrant Article on this project to provide clarification between the two. The next warrant article was originally Article 6: Establish Dawson Street & Silver Street Area Drainage Project – Phase 2 & 3: Vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund for Phase 2 & 3, and raise and appropriate the sum of \$60,000 to be placed into Capital Reserve Fund. This sum is to come from the fund balance and no amount to be raised from taxation. This would also allow BOS to accept and expend additional monies if they became available from Federal and State governments. Tax impact: \$0.00/\$1,000 but, indirectly it amounts to \$0.12/\$1,000 as the money is taken from the unassigned fund balance. Recommended by BOS 3/0/0.

Clarification between the two proposed Warrant Articles ensued: The \$60,000 was a CIP recommendation to deal with the start of the overall project. Ms. Burnham provided additional information to help with understanding. Because of not being able to discuss with Mr. Smith during CIP Committee meetings, the recommendation of the \$781,000 was left in the report. Because of the high cost of the proposed new Article 6, the original Article 6 (\$60,000) is more of a just-in-case scenario to allow for something to move forward. Mr. Williams explained at the previous evening's BOS meeting, he expressed concern that if the warrant article for \$781,000 was put forward, there was a good chance this would be voted down. Having the \$60,000 warrant article included would at least allow for part of the project to continue and enable the town to move forward seeking potential grant money to offset the overall project cost. Mr. Williams also said he recommended applying for a bond for the project, as opposed to a warrant article.

Ms. Hurd – how much has been spent so far on this project? Last year the project was funded \$340,000 with additional expenses of \$20,000 – so currently for Phase 1 it is slightly over at \$360,000. She also questioned if the following Phases have been planned by reputable engineers? As Ms. Turgeon pointed out, Underwood Engineers had quoted Phase 1 at \$340,000 and this phase already exceeded what they quoted. Ms. Burnham explained during the project, they ran into ledge which added to the overall costs. She also explained they requested Pat Smith talk with Underwood to see if Phase 2 could be split into two phases which would reduce the cost by half and would allow the phase to begin to move forward. If this could be done, the amount on the Warrant Article would be changed at the Deliberative Session. Mr. Beaulieu clarified Phase 2 needs to continue, however at this point, Phase 3 does not. According to Ms. Burnham that is correct. As Phase 3 is more cosmetic in nature, that can wait; however, Phase 2 cannot wait. Ms. Gautreau said, as was originally explained by Pat Smith, the three phases could be considered stand-alone.

Ms. Burnham pointed out that by not completing Phase 2, this would leave the roads and sidewalks unfinished which would be a safety hazard for motorists and pedestrians. Mr. Williams said even if the article would not pass, the roads would be paved and returned to their original condition, not just patched and that Phase 2 could wait. Mr. Beaulieu questioned if Phase 2 is needed once Phase 1 is completed (will Phase 1 finally fix the original emergent drainage issue) – that seems to be the critical question needing to be answered. According to Mr. Williams, that had been fixed in Phase 1. Ms. Burnham concurred. Mr. Williams said the original costs for all three phases was ~\$1M. Ms. Burnham agreed and said each phase was estimated at \$350,000 and this is why the suggestion to split up Phase 2 was put forward. Mr. Jacobs explained there could be an issue with who would do the actual work. He said in order to use Capital Reserve Fund monies for improvement projects, it is required you put it out for bid to show it is a competitive process. He believes due to external factors; the town could show it would be more cost effective to stay with current engineers and he believes the state would agree. He also explained through the state revolving loan fund, the town could be eligible to receive ~\$230,000 in grants to offset costs. However, it's important to understand with a grant like this, it is considered more of a loan and would need to be paid back. Mr. Williams – important to remember by putting both articles forward, if only the \$60,000 would pass, this would still allow the town to go back to the state and discuss associated offsets and costs and the town would not be starting from scratch a year from now. Mr. Beaulieu questioned if it could be broken down even further into smaller projects? Ms. Burnham and Mr. Williams agreed it could be possible.

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the Dawson Street & Silver Street Drainage Project Complete Phase 2 as written. Seconded by Ms. Hurd.

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Burnham – Yes; Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Williams - No. Motion Did not pass – 3 / 5 / 0**

DAWSON STREET & SILVER STREET DRAINAGE PROJECT CAPITAL RESERVE FUND:

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the Dawson Street & Silver Street Drainage Project Capital Reserve Fund Warrant Article, as written. Ms. Hurd seconded the motion for discussion.

Discussion: Ms. Gautreau said the \$60,000 could change every year; this is for the current year only. Mr. Jacobs said there are a number of grant programs out there; however, they may be hesitant to approve grants if a town has not already stepped up to the plate on the project with monetary commitment. He does support this Capital Reserve Fund for the project. Mr. Williams clarified the \$0.12 identified tax impact indicated is not through direct taxation, but a measure of how it affects the unassigned fund balance. Ms. Hurd asked if there is no fund balance does this mean this fund would not get started? Mr. Williams said yes that is correct. Ms. Hurd asked if discussion took place about having this not come from the fund balance in case this would also be voted down. Mr. Williams said they are waiting to hear what is left over from this year's budget which would then go into the general fund.

Roll call vote: **Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Williams – Yes; Mr. Brown, Mr. Beaulieu – No. Motion Carried – 6 / 2 / 0**

ESTABLISH PUBLIC SAFETY RADIO COMMUNICATIONS CAPITAL RESERVE FUND: To establish a Capital Reserve Fund and to raise and appropriate \$30,000 to be placed into this fund. Mr.

Williams made a motion to approve the Warrant Article to Establish the Public Safety Radio Communications Capital Reserve Fund as written in the amount of \$30,000. Seconded by Mr. Beaulieu for discussion. This comes from the fund balance with no amount raised from taxation. Mr. Beaulieu –the fire department received new radios back in 2017 and this is already part of police budget. Mr. Williams – the county has already updated their systems and any new purchases would need to function with the new system throughout the county and from town to town, not just in town. Also noted, this is for all departments. Mr. Jacobs said he put all related radio words into the warrant article to cover all related items. He also said Chief Krauss originally approached the CIP about establishing this fund to cover all departments and not just the police department. This should be viewed as planning for the future, and not to purchase radios right now.

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Williams** all voted Yes. Motion Carried – 8 / 0 / 0

AMBULANCE VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT AND/OR FIRE DEPARTMENT CAPITAL RESERVE FUND: To vote to raise and appropriate \$30,000 to be placed in the Ambulance Vehicles and Equipment and/or Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund. Comes from the fund balance with no amount raised by taxation.

Mr. Beaulieu asked is this was for the Ambulance Revolving Fund.

Mr. Williams made a motion to Approve the Warrant Article, Ambulance Vehicles and Equipment and/or Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund, as written, for discussion. Seconded by Ms. Turgeon. All were in favor to allow for discussion. Chief Marique had previously explained revenues for ambulance services are not enough to cover staff, equipment maintenance, etc. This is recommended by the CIP. Ms. Turgeon – this is to be used to cover expenses, not just the ambulance? Mr. Williams – his understanding this is to be used to replace the ambulance. Mr. Beaulieu asked for revenue data for ambulance services. Mr. Jacobs explained any revenues from ambulance services automatically go into this account and Chief Marique is requesting this account be boosted because revenues keep decreasing annually, while costs have continued to increase. He has expressed difficulty around staffing issues as well and has used this fund to help offset costs associated with round-the-clock coverage. The CIP had originally recommended \$50,000; the BOS reduced this to \$30,000. It was noted this fund would be in addition to the already existing Fire Department Equipment Apparatus Capital Reserve. Mr. Jacobs stated this has been the Ambulance Revolving Fund.

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Williams** all voted Yes. Motion Carried – 8 / 0 / 0

REPLACEMENT OF TOWN STREET AND PARKING LOT LIGHTING: To vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into an agreement with Affinity LED Light LLC of Dover and Portsmouth NH to replace all town-owned street and parking lot lights with LED fixture. To vote to raise and appropriate \$38,859.

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the Warrant Article, Replacement of Town and Parking Lot Lighting as written, in the amount of \$38,859. Seconded by Ms. Hurd for discussion.

Discussion: Ms. Turgeon – does town know how much they will save with this conversion? Mr. Jacobs – it's estimated the town bills should reduce by 60% with continued yearly savings. He also said if this was approved, the project should be completed by Fall, 2022.

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Williams** all voted Yes. Motion Carried – 8 / 0 / 0

HIGHWAY TRUCK CAPITAL RESERVE FUND: To vote to raise and appropriate \$75,000 to be placed in Highway Truck Capital Reserve Fund.

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the Highway Truck Capital Reserve Fund Warrant Article as written in the amount of \$75,000. Seconded by Ms. Hurd.

Discussion: Mr. Williams explained this amount has changed from the original amount; the purpose of this article has also changed (originally to purchase 4 new trucks). It's now being requested to start putting away for truck purchase in the future. Mr. Beaulieu – is the Highway Department having issues with current trucks? Mr. Williams: Yes, the maintenance line-item is over as they are experiencing major issues with the trucks. Mr. Jacobs stated the major issues they are having are no longer under the warranty. Mr. Beaulieu – how do we ensure with any new truck purchase, there won't be a repeat of the issues currently experiencing? Mr. Jacobs – Mr. Smith had found out new trucks will not be available until the end of 2023 plus dealers were not able to provide information regarding cost of a new truck. Mr. Williams stated that the information he obtained about 6-Wheel Dump Trucks, with plows and Sanders, is that it would cost about \$168,000 for a new truck and that depending on the value of the trade-ins, a 4-year lease to own would about \$135,000 to \$140,000 per year for four trucks. So, the \$75,000 could cover the lease of two trucks for one year. Ms. Hurd – if that is the case, this warrant would be on every year.

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd- Yes.** Because it was pointed out Mr. Williams read the motion from a previous document that did not explain this would come from the unassigned fund balance and therefore, he asked committee members who had just voted to rescind their votes which they all did. Ms. Hurd rescinded her second to his original motion. Mr. Williams rescinded his original motion to allow for him to readjust his motion with the new wording.

Mr. Williams added the \$75,000 will come from unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised from taxation.

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the Highway Truck Capital Reserve Fund Warrant Article, as written in the amount of \$75,000. Seconded by Ms. Hurd for discussion.

Discussion: No other discussion.

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Williams** all voted Yes. Motion Carried – 8 / 0 / 0

BRIDGE CAPITAL RESERVE FUND: To vote to raise and appropriate \$25,000 to be placed in the Bridge Capital Reserve Fund. To come from unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised from taxation.

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the Bridge Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of \$25,000. Seconded by Ms. Hurd.

Ms. Turgeon asked about the funding of the bridge (at the end of Townhouse Rd.) between Milton and Lebanon. Mr. Williams stated this warrant article was not for the interstate bridges, it is for bridges that are solely in Milton, such as the Winding Road bridge.

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Williams all voted Yes. Motion Carried – 8 / 0 / 0**

MILTON RECREATION CAPITAL RESERVE FUND: To raise and appropriate \$5,000 to be placed in the Milton Recreation Capital Reserve Fund; purpose to replace boat ramp at the town beach. To come from unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised by taxation.

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the Milton Recreation Capital Reserve Fund Warrant Article for \$5,000. Seconded by Ms. Hurd.

Discussion: Ms. Hurd – every year money is added for this ramp. Mr. Williams explained there are multiple stages involved with ramp replacement. Ms. Turgeon – need to have the money first before replacement? Mr. Jacobs – they now have entered into a contract with engineering firm to begin wetlands permit process. At this point, do not have all the money needed for installation.

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Williams all voted Yes. Motion Carried – 8 / 0 / 0**

MILTON FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY CAPITAL RESERVE FUND: To raise and appropriate \$20,000 to be placed in Milton Free Public Library Capital Reserve Fund. To come from unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised from taxation. This was recommended in the CIP.

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the Milton Free Public Library Capital Reserve Fund Warrant Article in the amount of \$20,000. Seconded by Mr. Brown. All voted to enter into discussion.

Discussion: There are currently two funds. Ms. Turgeon – they are using this money for repair and maintenance of the library and not using the other CRF? Mr. Williams said this is a valid question to pose. Mr. Jacobs said how this is currently worded, the monies could go into either fund. It is anticipated this money would be used to repair the building roof. Mr. Williams said it should be modified to add this will go into the Free Library Repair fund to help further clarify where this will go.

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Williams all voted Yes. Motion Carried – 8 / 0 / 0**

ERADICATE INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES: To raise and appropriate \$10,000 to eradicate invasive plant species from bodies of water in the town. Special warrant article recommended by CIP. The sum to come from unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised by taxation.

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the Eradicate Invasive Plant Species Warrant Article in amount of \$10,000. Seconded by Ms. Hurd. Everyone agreed to begin discussion (should be noted Ms. Turgeon was out of the room at the start of the discussion).

Discussion: This is requested every year. This goes directly to splitting the cost with TPPA, town of Lebanon. Mr. Beaulieu stated the waters are key to the town.

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Williams** all voted Yes. Motion Carried – 8 / 0 / 0

HISTORICAL BUILDING – MILTON MILLS: To authorize acquisition of the land and building currently owned and occupied by the Milton Historical Society for purchase price of \$1.00. And further to authorize the Board of Selectmen allow leasing the building back to the Milton Historical Society for 20 years. Estimated tax impact is \$0.00.

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the Historical Building – Milton Mills Warrant Article, as written. Seconded by Ms. Turgeon. All were in favor of opening discussion.

Discussion: Ms. Turgeon – if after buying the building for \$1.00, who pays for any building maintenance and upkeep? Mr. Williams – the town will then be responsible for it. Mr. Jacobs concurred that the town would be responsible for repairs and insurance costs for the building. According to Mr. Jacobs, the Historical Society originally purchased this building from the town; it is very expensive to continue to operate which wipes out their budget, especially regarding insurance. The historical society would continue with the cleaning and regular upkeep. However, for items such as roof replacement, the town would be responsible. Ms. Turgeon – so ultimately by doing this, it would increase the overall town budget. Mr. Jacobs – yes. Town legal counsel drafted this warrant article with this particular wording. The BOS would meet with the historical society to work out the actual lease agreement details. Ms. Turgeon – this is a little deceptive by saying this will not raise taxes because eventually it will. As it is currently, she stated she was fine with the article. Mr. Williams believes the Historical Society will continue to take care of much of the building maintenance needs in the future.

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Williams** all voted Yes. Motion Carried – 8 / 0 / 0

ESTABLISH POLICE TASERS CAPITAL RESERVE FUND: To establish a Capital Reserve Fund to purchase tasers for the police. To raise and appropriate \$3,300 to be placed in this fund. To come from the unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised from taxation. This was recommended by CIP.

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the Warrant Article to Establish Police Tasers Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of \$3,300. Seconded by Ms. Hurd. All were in favor of beginning discussion.

Discussion: Ms. Turgeon questioned how old the current tasers are? Mr. Jacobs stated they are between 6-7 years old and are now running out and are in need of being replaced.

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Williams** all voted Yes. Motion Carried – 8 / 0 / 0

CONSERVATION COMMISSION LEGAL DEFENSE CAPITAL RESERVE FUND: To establish a Town of Milton Conservation Legal Defense Capital Reserve Fund. To accrue sufficient funds in order to potentially defend town-held conservation easements and fee-owned conservation land against violations. To annually raise and appropriate \$1,000 to be placed in this fund. Sum to be taken

from and replace existing Conservation Commission Legal Defense budget line. None to be raised from taxation.

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the Conservation Commission Legal Defense Capital Reserve Fund Warrant Article as written. Seconded by Ms. Hurd. All were in favor of beginning discussion.

Discussion: Mr. Williams – they have already been raising \$1,000 annually in their budget. Mr. Jacobs stated and now they are requesting the monies be directed to this fund instead of going back into the general fund to begin building up the fund in case of potential future lawsuits. Currently anything left over in their budget goes back into the general fund.

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Williams all voted Yes. Motion Carried – 8 / 0 / 0**

TAX EXEMPTION FOR SOLAR, WIND AND WOOD ENERGY SYSTEMS SUBMITTED BY PETITION. To see if town will vote to adopt provisions which will provide for optional property tax exemption from the property's assessed value for properties equipped with solar, wind or wood energy systems. Estimated tax impact \$.08/\$1,000.

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the Tax Exemption for Solar, Wind and Wood Energy Systems submitted by petition for discussion. Seconded by Ms. Hurd. All were in favor of beginning discussion.

Discussion: Mr. Williams explained when this was previously submitted it was thought anyone possessing any of these types of energy systems would have their assessed value written off their property evaluation, reducing their taxes. According to Mr. Jacobs, this must be the primary energy system and the property owner would have to apply for the abatement each year. Mr. Williams said the state has recently tightened restrictions on this as well, which reduced the number of properties this would apply to. Per Mr. Jacobs, the total assessed value that would be reduced from all properties by this warrant article would be about \$35,000 to \$40,000.

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Williams all voted Yes. Motion Carried – 8 / 0 / 0**

5.) Review and Vote on FY23 School Warrants:

Article 2: Shall the Milton School District vote to raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$11,292,375. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$11,382,673, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Milton School District or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only? Warrant article 2 (operating budget) does not include appropriations in any other warrant article. The total operating budget will be offset by federal, local and state revenues by \$4,716,228 leaving a net budget amount of \$6,630,486 (RSA 32:5 III). The amount of \$4,716,228 will not be raised by taxation.

The School Board recommends this appropriation (0 - 0).

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve Article 2, Milton School Operating Budget of \$11,292,375, as written. Seconded by Mr. Brown. All approved to begin discussion.

Discussion: There is increased funding for the year. Taxation is based on the \$6.63M figure, resulting in an estimated tax impact of: \$13.26/\$1,000 – slightly less than current year.

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Burnham, Mr. Williams all voted Yes. Ms. Hurd, Mr. Beaulieu – No. Motion Carried – 6 / 2 / 0**

Article 3: Shall the Milton School District vote to approve the cost items included in the Collective Bargaining Agreement reached between the Milton School Board and the Milton Education Association, which calls for the following increase in salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels over the amount paid in the prior fiscal year:

Estimated Increase

Year 2022-23 \$138,797.20 (estimated tax impact \$0.28/\$1,000)

Year 2023-24 \$144,265.72 (estimated tax impact \$0.29/\$1,000)

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$138,798 for the 2022-2023 school year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits over those of the appropriation at current staffing levels paid in the prior fiscal school year?"

The School Board recommends this appropriation (4 - 0 - 0).

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve Article 3, Collective Bargaining Agreement, as written. Seconded by Ms. Turgeon. All were in favor of beginning discussion.

Discussion: Ms. Hurd provided information on what the teachers have experienced over the past year. They are still low on the salary schedule compared to neighboring communities. They have lost teachers in the past years who have gone to other districts for higher salaries. Ms. Turgeon expressed her frustration at not receiving timely financial information to make informed decisions. Mr. Williams acknowledged the committee members' frustrations and also expressed thanks to Ms. Hurd for her continued work to try and overcome the problems and try to get information to the committee. Mr. Williams stated he wanted to separate his frustration about not receiving the proper financial data throughout the school year from this discussion because the teachers deserved the pay increase because of their work and that without an approved contract they would not even receive a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). Mr. Beaulieu asked if the teachers still got a COLA if this article was not approved. Ms. Hurd stated they would not get any increase, including the COLA if this was not approved. Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Gautreau, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Williams all voted Yes. Ms. Turgeon, Mr. Beaulieu – No. Motion Carried – 6 / 2 / 0**

Article 5: "Shall the Milton School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000.00 to purchase library media for the Nute High School and Library?" This is a special warrant article appropriation.

The School Board recommends this appropriation (5 - 0). (estimated tax impact \$0.01/\$1,000)

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve Article 5, Library Media, as written. Seconded by Ms. Hurd. All were in favor of starting discussion.

Discussion: Mr. Williams expressed his continuing frustration over trying to determine appropriate funding of this item, or any others, since the committee has not seen any expenditure data for this year. Ms. Turgeon questioned why the school needs to have this as a warrant since it falls under the Nute Trust? Ms. Hurd – we are still responsible for providing the library media and such. Mr. Williams explained this fund is different from the others as this is to purchase the media for the library directly. He acknowledged it is confusing when there are line-items in the budget for the library and also for media but that those line-items are not for library media. Ms. Hurd stated that the library was also open to the public, so this article supports the public as well. Mr. Williams stated that this warrant article is on the School Warrant every year.

Note: Mr. Carrier had to leave the meeting just before the call for a roll call vote.

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Williams all voted Yes. Motion Carried – 7 / 0 / 0**

Article 6: “To avoid the need to raise additional taxes, shall the Milton School District use unreserved fund balance (surplus) available on July 1, 2022 and raise and appropriate up to the sum of \$50,000 from this source to be placed in the Milton School District Building Maintenance Repair, Renovation and Capital Project Reserve Fund established in 2005 for the purpose of repairing and maintaining school buildings?” NOTE: Warrant article 6 WILL NOT result in additional taxation

The School Board recommends this appropriation (5 - 0).

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve Article 6, Building Maintenance Repair, Renovation and Capital Project Reserve Fund, as written. Seconded by Ms. Hurd. All were in favor of starting discussion.

Discussion: Mr. Beaulieu - Is any of this money aimed at Damon House? Ms. Hurd – it goes more for the maintenance of buildings. Mr. Williams – this has been the same amount requested for past several years. Ms. Gautreau – is there a reason why the Capital Improvement Program isn't used for this? Ms. Hurd explained this is not for any specific project, but rather for issues that may pop up that need to be fixed. Ms. Gautreau recommends the School Board think about using CIP in the future. Ms. Turgeon – would there be any advantage to having this listed as a capital improvement vs. how it's currently listed? It seems they are already doing this now. Mr. Williams – by using CIP, this would become part of the CIP overall review process and voted on to determine its priority in relation to the other items in the CIP, where this current method is determined by the School Board itself. Ms. Gautreau – by having it in the CIP can also help in applying for other funding. Mr. Brown – the CIP is currently only an advisory role.

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Williams all voted Yes. Motion Carried – 7 / 0 / 0**

Article 7: “To avoid the need to raise additional taxes, shall the Milton School District use unreserved fund balance (surplus) available on July 1, 2022 and raise and appropriate up to the sum of \$20,000 from this source to be placed in the expendable trust fund for the School Bus Trust Fund established in 1993?”

NOTE: Warrant article 7 WILL NOT result in additional taxation

The school board recommends this appropriation (5 - 0).

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve Article 7, School bus Trust Fund, as written. Seconded by Ms. Hurd. All were in favor of starting discussion.

Discussion: Mr. Beaulieu – what is this trust fund used for? Ms. Hurd – currently the SAU contracts out for a special van that is wheelchair accessible. They would like to purchase a wheelchair accessible van instead of contracting. The van could be used for other children as well. By law, the school must provide these services. Ms. Turgeon – makes sense seeing how much is paid per year to contract out the services. She also questioned about potential grants to use for this. Ms. Hurd – they had not researched grants yet. Ms. Turgeon- if there were more unassigned funds available, does the Warrant Article as it's written, limit it to \$20,000? Mr. Beaulieu – if voters approve it, then yes it would be limited to \$20,000. You could change the amount at the Deliberative Session (increase by up to 10%).

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Williams all voted Yes. Motion Carried – 7 / 0 / 0**

Article 8: “Shall the Milton School District vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) to be placed in the expendable trust fund for the education of educationally disabled children established in 2011, with such amount to be funded from the June 30, 2022 unreserved fund balance (surplus) available on July 1, 2022, and no amount to be raised from additional taxation?”

Note: Warrant article 8 WILL NOT result in additional taxation

The School Board recommends this appropriation (5 - 0).

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve Article 8, Education of Educationally Disabled Children, as written. Seconded by Mr. Beaulieu. All were in favor of starting discussion.

Discussion: Mr. Williams – it only takes one student requiring services which would wipe out the entire amount in this warrant article and that is why this is used to increase this trust fund. Mr. Beaulieu questioned what is included in this? Ms. Hurd – anything that is needed which is not in the overall budget. Mr. Beaulieu – why is this not already in the budget? Mr. Williams – it is in the budget, but this is used to help in the event of budget overages. Ms. Hurd explained this is asked for every year to help provide for just-in-case scenarios.

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Williams all voted Yes. Motion Carried – 7 / 0 / 0**

Article 9: “To avoid the need to raise additional taxes, shall the Milton School District use unreserved fund balance (surplus) available on July 1, 2022 and raise and appropriate up to the sum of \$21,000 from this source to be placed in the expendable trust fund for the Maintenance Vehicles Trust Fund established in 2021?”

NOTE: Warrant article 9 WILL NOT result in additional taxation

The school board recommends this appropriation (5 - 0).

NOTE: Ms. Hurd – this should be CIP – it was recommended by CIP. However, Ms. Gautreau disagreed – she said the committee had recommended that happen, but this was never presented to the CIPC.

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve Article 9, Maintenance Vehicles Trust Fund for \$21,000, as written. Seconded by Ms. Hurd. All were in favor of starting discussion.

Discussion: Mr. Williams said this was one of the reasons this should be in the CIP and why there was frustration over this. Ms. Turgeon – last year it was at \$5,000 and this year increasing it to \$21,000. Ms. Hurd – currently, the one-ton dump truck is being used but the major issue is that because dump truck is stored outside it's exposed to the elements and is not only rusting out but the brake failed too. Ms. Gautreau reviewed the CIP and she found there was one recommendation presented to CIP for purchase of dump truck and sander, but not for this maintenance vehicles trust fund. It is for the same amount though. Mr. Williams said is the wording of this Article intended for vehicle maintenance, not vehicle purchase. Ms. Hurd – it's not the maintenance of, rather it's the maintenance vehicle (i.e., dump truck, utility truck, etc.). This is a brand-new fund for the purchase of a maintenance vehicles.

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Turgeon, Ms. Gautreau, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Williams all voted Yes. Motion Carried – 7 / 0 / 0**

Article 10: “To avoid the need to raise additional taxes, shall the Milton School District use unreserved fund balance (surplus) available on July 1, 2022, and raise and appropriate up to the sum of \$10,000 from this source to be placed in the Milton School District Technology Expendable Trust Fund established in 2007?”

NOTE: Warrant article 10 WILL NOT result in additional taxation

The School Board recommends this appropriation (5 - 0).

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve Article 10, Milton School District Technology Expendable Trust Fund for \$10,000, as written. Seconded by Mr. Beaulieu. All were in favor of starting discussion.

Discussion: Mr. Beaulieu questioned what the \$10,000 is needed for? Ms. Hurd – this will be used to replace teacher's computers. Ms. Turgeon asked how this differs from the technology budget line-item. Ms. Hurd – that is for all the stuff that can break that is not covered by a grant. Mr. Williams – this is a grey area since there have been no expense reports to show what has been spent and, at the end of June, the School Board encumbered over \$611K, of which over \$95K was used for Digital Media for the Elementary School, over \$54K was used for Digital Media for the Middle and High Schools, and over \$25K was for new IT equipment. Abigail Rooney – this is used to build up every year the technology fund. Mr. Williams – due to lack of information provided, we can't really determine what was expended and where. As a committee, we have not seen 100% of needed information showing complete breakdown of how the encumbered funds were spent and the lack of data makes it difficult for this committee to make funding decisions. Ms. Hurd – grants are going to run out and we will need to utilize this fund going forward. With remote learning, we have had to replace computers and other items. This fund has been used in the past for replacing many different items.

Roll call vote: **Mr. Brown, Ms. Gautreau, Ms. Burnham, Ms. Hurd all voted Yes. Ms. Turgeon, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Williams – No. Motion Carried – 4 / 3 / 0**

Article 11: Employee Retention Plan to see if the Town will vote to adopt the Employee Retention Plan, which establishes a Step Plan for classes of employees of the Milton School District. If approved, any scheduled increases, as laid out in the Plan and approved by

the School Board, will be incorporated into the operating and default budgets in subsequent years starting with 2023. No funds shall be raised in 2022.

The School Board recommends this appropriation (5 - 0).

There is no vote required by the Budget Committee for this article. Mr. Williams had recommended this to the School Board. Mr. Beaulieu had general questions regarding the overall plan. Mr. Williams said the teachers have a contract that identifies their pay plans. Having an approved pay plan in place for the other employees makes it more transparent as to what the salaries should be and ensures that employees are properly compensated with step raises and COLAs even if the school is under a Default Budget. It has been a major benefit for the town to have an approved employee pay plan.

7.) Other business that may come before the board:

There was no other business.

7.) Public Comments or Questions:

There were none.

8.) Next Scheduled Meeting:

January 17, 5:00PM – Public Hearing

9.) Adjournment:

Mr. Williams stated he would entertain a motion to conclude the meeting.

Mr. Brown made the motion to adjourn at 9:50PM; Seconded by Ms. Hurd. All were in favor.
Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Winslow-Weiss, Recording Secretary – Budget Committee

Minutes Approved on January 25, 2022