Town of Northumberland
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**Town of Northumberland**
**Board of Selectmen**
**Public Hearing – 2025 Budget – Minutes - Draft**
**Date: February 7, 2025**
**Place: Town Meeting Room – 10 Station Square**
**Time: 6:00 pm**

Board Members present: Jim Tierney and Jim Weagle
Others Present: Tammy Letson, Nancy Merrow, Dave Auger, Al Rossetto, Clint Bramlet, Jerry Monahan, Kathy Wiles, Rebecca St. Cyr – Minute Taker

J. Tierney opened the Public Hearing at 6:00 pm

1. Pledge of Allegiance – All

2. The purpose of this Public Hearing is to receive questions or comments on the 2025 Proposed Town Budget.

*New Hampshire*
*Department of*
*Revenue Administration*

**2025**
**WARRANT**

DRAFT

## Article 01 Election of Officers

To choose by ballot the following Town Officers:
Three-year term: Selectman, Trustee of Trust Funds, Library Trustee, Cemetery Trustee
Two-year term: Moderator, Trustee of Trust Funds
One-year term: Trustee of Trust Funds

*Discussion on Article 01 – none.*

## Article 02 Operation and Maintenance of the Water Department

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of $351,638 for the purpose of operating and maintaining the water department. Said funds to be raised from the water user fees. Any shortfall in the water user fees will be made up from the accumulated surplus in the "regular water account". No amount to be raised from taxation. (Recommended / Not Recommended by Board of Selectmen #-#-#) (Majority vote required)

*Discussion on Article 02 –*
*Al Rossetto asked if the rates cover the $351,638 now. Tammy said yes, it should now. Al also asked when there is a water break is the water lost billed. J. Tierney responded that it's a loss. J. Weagle said if it doesn't go through the meter, it's a loss. The water budget is $13,500 less*

*than last year. T. Letson noted the water budget detail are on the budget worksheet. They are at the end of the General Fund with the page #'s starting back at 1.*

*Motion to recommend Article 2 by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 2-0*

**Article 03 Operation and Maintenance of the Sewer Department**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of $414,146 for the purpose of operating and maintaining the Sewer Department. Said funds to be raised from sewer user fees. Any shortfalls in the sewer user fees will be made up from the accumulated surplus in the "regular sewer account." No amount to be raised from taxation. (Recommended / Not Recommended by Board of Selectmen #-#-#) (Majority vote required)

*Discussion on Article 03 –*
*J. Tiereny said the sewer fund follows the water fund on the budget worksheet, page 1–3. It's basically flat.*

*Motion to recommend article 3 by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 2-0*

**Article 04 Operating Budget-Town**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of $3,329,961 for general municipal operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. (Recommended / Not Recommended by Board of Selectmen #-#-#) (Majority vote required)

*Discussion on Article 04 –*
*Tammy said this is for most of the first 13 pages on the budget worksheet. This warrant article is going up $54,002 from last year. It's a 1.65% increase. Tammy said our IT company has been sold. The new company that bought them submitted a contract that is a lot more expensive. We shopped and got a couple of quotes and we put in the budget the one that we think would serve the Town best. Because it's a 5-year contract, if they don't add a non-appropriation clause, it will need to be a separate article. We did reach out to them about it, but Tammy won't get an answer until Tuesday. She can add as a separate article without another meeting.*

*N. Merrow asked if the amount shown reflects all of the computer items that are in the budget. Clint commented about contracts, normally IT manages all our programs, and hardware/ software. Tammy said both of the companies will give us business hour coverage; outside of those hours is separate. They charge us per computer regardless if we use a computer daily or not. The contract in the budget will cover us 24-7. They guaranteed assistance within an hour when there is a failure. They are the only contract that will give us cyber security assistance. It's everything except our water status system. If there are any issues with downloading info from the body camera's, they will help us with that.*

*Motion to recommend article 4 by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 2-0*

**Article 05 Appropriate to W/S CRF**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of $40,000 to be placed in the following Capital Reserve Fund at the amount shown. $20,000 to come from water user fees and $20,000 to come from sewer user fees.

W/S Short-Lived Assets CRF - established 2020: $40,000

(Recommended / Not Recommended by Board of Selectmen #-#-#) (Majority vote required)

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*Discussion on Article 05 –*
*A. Rossetto asked if we were forced into having this? J. Weagle said it's part of a grant requirement; they wanted us to have money to fix things in the future. Tammy said it can be used for any short lived asset. Anything that has a 10-year or less expected life span.*

*D. Auger asked if this is the fund for sludge pumping. No, that is an upcoming article. Clint asked about the $40,000 established in 2020, do we maintain $40,000 or is this a reappropriation? Tammy said this will add $40,000 to it. The current balance in the CRF is $160,200.*

*J. Monahan asked if we put $40,000 every year. Tammy said originally we were required to reserve that amount, and it was only a reserve on the books. There is an RSA that allowed the Select Board to create the CRF, as long as it was unanimous at a public meeting. They took the paper reserve and put it in. It's not just the $40,000 since 2020, they started with a larger balance and have made purchases out of it. It comes and goes.*
*Motion to recommend Article 5 by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 2-0*

**Article 06 Water Repairs & Maintenance ETF**

To see if the Town will vote to establish a Water Maintenance and Repairs Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 31:19-a, for the purpose of repairs and maintenance to the existing water infrastructure including rental of equipment needed to perform said repairs and maintenance and to raise and appropriate $20,000 to put in the fund, with this amount to come from water user fees; further to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund. (Recommended / Not Recommended by Board of Selectmen #-#-#) (Majority vote required)

*Discussion on Article 06 –*
*J. Tierney said this is a new fund being created, Tammy said every year Reggie puts $5,000 in the budget to rent a crane. He also had $35,000 in his water break expense line. Some years we have used it, some years we don't. At one of the budget workshops J. Weagle suggested putting the crane in and taking some out of the repair line. Why raise it yearly, but put some into the CRF, then we can stop having to raising it when there is a sizeable balance.*
*Motion to recommend Article 6 by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 2-0*

**Article 07 Appropriate to CRF / ETF**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of $291,000 to be placed in the following Capital Reserve and Expendable Trust Funds at the amounts shown. $20,000 funds to come from unassigned fund balance, said funds being the revenue from the 2024 sale of recyclables and an estimated balance of the 2024 health reimbursement expense line. $281,000 to be raised by taxes.

| | |
|---|---|
| Public Works Equipment CRF: | $ 20,000 |
| Road Maintenance CRF, established 2009: | 100,000 |
| Municipal Buildings CRF, established 2010: | 10,000 |
| Sludge Removal ETF, established 2011: | 50,000 |
| Ambulance Equipment CRF established 2020: | 5,000 |
| Ambulance purchase CRF established 1990: | 20,000 |
| Health Reimbursement CRF: | 2,500 |
| Transfer Station CRF: | 7,500 |
| Legal CRF, established 2023: | 5,000 |
| Town Celebration, established 2023: | 1,000 |
| Fire Vehicle & Equipment CRF, established in 2024: | 50,000 |
| Assess/Revaluation ETF, established in 2024: | 20,000 |

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(Recommended / Not Recommended by Board of Selectmen #-#-#) (Majority vote required)

*Discussion on Article 07 –*
*K. Wiles asked about the Town Celebration in 2029. We have been putting $1,000/year into. The country's is next year. Tammy said the hope is that the committee's will raise their own money. The balance is currently $2,055.70 ending 2024.*

*N. Merrow about the Legal CRF, does the Town have an specific attorney? Tammy said yes, we have a Town Attorney who we've had a long standing relationship with. They are a municipal firm out of Manchester and Portland plus 1 or 2 other places. He's very good.*

*Al Rossetto said last he heard the Town didn't have a firm to do assessing and if we don't it falls to the Select Board? That's how it reads, but DRA is required to help as well. None of the Board members are assessors. We are trying to set up an inter-municipal agreement with 9 other towns. There is a company that's very interested in doing it, they have been given a RFP. J. Tierney further discussed, their office would have to be in Coos County. Al asked if this would have any impact on the AxisGIS file that we use to look up property. Tammy said the AxisGIS program works well and this wouldn't affect that.*

*N. Merrow asked if the new company has certified assessors. Tammy said yes, there was a firm that closed, they had 3 senior level assessors, 2 left the area and one of them is opening her own business and wants to pick up Coos County. She has an employee that lives in Milan and there is another person in Berlin that's interested in working for her. DRA is doing what they can to support us, and they are saying they are willing to go to BTLA with us if needed.*

*N. Merrow asked if it includes the school also, the amounts that we are supposed to get in Coos County are lower than what we were supposed to be getting. Tammy said the school assessment is based on the Town. The State sets the equalization rate, they come through to say what the percentage is between assessed and market value and bring everyone up to the market value. When everyone is at the equalized rate then the County assessment is added.*

*J. Monahan asked how often does a re-val happen. J. Tierney said every 5 years, but you can get extensions. Colebrook is under court order to have one this year, but there isn't an assessor. DRA is offering support, but it could end up being done through Zillow (for example), which doesn't include commercial or utilities.*

*A. Rossetto discussed his property value, Zillow said his property is worth more, but they are not licensed appraisers. Tammy noted that after the re-val we were at approx. 84% ratio. Al said if we have to depend on the web, which means everyone's assessment will go up. Clint further discussed appraisals.*

*Motion to recommend Article 7 by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 2-0*

**Article 08 Technology ETF**

To see if the Town will vote to establish a Technology Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 31:19-a, for the purpose of purchasing or programming hardware and software and to raise and appropriate $20,000 to put in the fund, with this amount to come from taxes; further to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund. (Recommended / Not Recommended by Board of Selectmen #-#-#) (Majority vote required)

*Discussion Article 08 –*
*D. Auger asked what kind of equipment would come out of this fund. J. Weagle said computers, software required by the State, etc.; it's just a way to plan ahead. Tammy said the company that maintains our tax, accounting, and payroll programs has sold. The new company said they*

*will let the current software stay, but will eventually want us to switch to theirs. Eventually we will need to find new software because the new company will shut down the old programs. She would rather put a little away yearly instead of paying a huge bill all at once.*

*D. Auger asked if the Town decided to put up a video cam in the meeting room could that come out of it. Yes, it could. Auger also asked if the computer expense line for the Tax Collector would go away? Tammy said no, it's just for new software/hardware. Example: if a computer crashes, we could take it out of this fund without having to find it in the budget. J. Weagle said with any of these funds, if you don't specifically say what items can be taken out of it; you can't take it out. J. Tierney commented that items in the budget are for the contracts to maintain equipment, the IT company, expenses for ink, etc. Tammy said K. Wiles has a new line this year for potential expenses from the State. They are telling us the tablet they send to us (which allows disabled people to vote), we might need to buy one for ourselves. Kathy said the State charges us $600.00 per election for both the Town and the School. Tammy said it hasn't been approved by the taxpayers yet but if we have to buy a tablet, we need to have the money to fall back on.*

*N. Merrow discussed HB1264 that was quietly passed. It says that any city or town and school District must have at least one accessible voting system at each polling place. It states that every city, town, and school district must bear the cost of programming. That could mean anywhere from - $4,000 to $7,000 for the machine and programming - $500 - $1500 for election time. They can't even guarantee that $7,000 is going to be enough. The cost is high, which is why we put in $10,000.*

*Nancy discussed her problem with this and read an RSA from 2002 that says "the State shall not mandate or assign any new, expanded, or modified programs or responsibilities to any political subdivision. In such a way as to necessitate additional local expenditures by the political subdivision, unless such programs or responsibilities are fully funded by the State, or unless such programs or responsibilities are approved for funding by vote of the local legislative body of the political subdivision." She is understanding that small towns are putting this in a warrant article for voters to say No. Tammy said she has spoken to 2 other towns, she disagrees with doing a separate article because the bill that passed says it's our expense. If the taxpayers say no and the State decides they are not going to listen to the 1st bill passed but listen to the 2nd one passed, then we will find it in our budget somewhere. Tammy discussed an example re: rooms and meals from many years ago and a catch up formula.*

*Motion to recommend Article 08 by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 2-0*

**Article 09 Charitable Organizations**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of $41,479 to fund the following charitable organizations at the amounts shown:

| | |
|---|---|
| North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency: | $12,759 |
| Northern Human Services: | 2,650 |
| Tri-County Community Action Programs: | 5,315 |
| American Red Cross NH & VT Region: | 2,200 |
| Center for New Beginnings: | 500 |
| Northern Gateway Regional Chamber of Commerce: | 446 |
| St. Paul's Episcopal Church "Backpack" Program: | 2,109 |
| Androscoggin Valley Home Care Services: | 10,000 |
| CASA: | 500 |
| Lancaster Food Pantry: | 5,000 |

(Recommended / Not Recommended by Board of Selectmen #-#-#) (Majority vote required)

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*Discussion on Article 09 –*
*N. Merrow asked if they all meet the requirements. J. Tierney suggested leaving them all on the list but let the voters know at Town Meeting if any of them didn't meet the requirements.*

*A. Rossetto asked about the St. Paul's Backpack Program, it shows up every year. N. Merrow said she works for the Backpack Program; they service Groveton, No. Stratford, Whitefield, (Lancaster) and Stark. J. Weagle said it's misleading, it's sending less fortunate kids home with food for the weekend.*

*D. Auger noted the St. Francis Food Pantry would like to request a donation in another year.*

*C. Bramlet asked about the Center for New Beginning, Tammy said their letter will be in the Town Report but she thinks it also assists domestic violence victims.*
*Motion to recommend Article 9 by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 2-0*

**Article 10 Riverside Rescue**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of $500 for the benefit of Riverside Rescue to offset the cost of boarding stray dogs and cats from Northumberland.

(Recommended / Not Recommended by Board of Selectmen #-#-#) (Majority vote required)

*Discussion on Article 10 –*
*This is a new article, they gave us a letter requesting $3,000 and then realized how much taxes are getting hit so they sent another letter for a donation or to go back to what they were doing. What they did before was a contract which the Town has refused to sign. If anyone finds a dog beside the road and takes it to Riverside Rescue and says they are from Northumberland, we would get charged for all expenses; no matter where the dog was found. We have been lucky with strays, the owners have picked them up and pays the bills.*
*Motion to recommend Article 10 by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 2-0*

**Article 11 Granite Guild**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of $5,000 for the benefit of the food pantry Granite Guild will be opening in Northumberland. (Recommended / Not Recommended by Board of Selectmen #-#-#) (Majority vote required)

*Discussion on Article 11 –*
*J. Monahan asked about opening the food Pantry, J. Tierney said yes, they bought the old restaurant near Perras and will be fixing it up.*

*N. Merrow thought there was a grant that was supposed to be given to them? Tammy asked Clint to give us an overview. This is for a specific item within in the food pantry.*

*C. Bramlet said what we are doing, we want to get it on different levels. We starting with the Food Pantry, we want to set up greenhouses to grow some food, and get some kids from the High School involved. We want to keep a control on our inventory and further explained that process. We want to make it a high functioning food pantry. We want to have seminars, classes and do all that we can. We will be doing a lot of things and owe this all to Rick Archer. Archer has reached out to UNH to discuss processes, he's checking with sources for grants, we have a computer programmer at no cost, someone has volunteered to re-do the parking lot. This would be important for the food pantry to get off the ground.*

*N. Merrow asked if because of the location, have you thought about transportation for elderly people that don't drive. Clint said we do have someone that has offered help with rides. We*

*would like to eventually have home delivery also and we also want to get a vehicle. A. Rossetto discussed the shape of the building, he asked what the ETA for opening is. Clint said we don't have a set date but are hoping to open (be functional) this summer.*

*Tammy said Rick was specific in his letter that this is for the bar code system, the software will help them know what to deliver based on health needs, etc. Al asked why are we raising money for a business when we don't subsidize others. J. Weagle said they are non-profit. Al said that means they don't pay taxes, they use all the services, and get money from the government. Clint commented that we do a lot and are very busy; we are just getting off the ground. Al asked if they will be coming back next year? Clint commented, hopefully. J. Weagle remined that it's a request, so it has to be on the warrant, the people will vote yes or no.*

*J. Monahan asked how the rest of the organization is funded. Clint said exclusively through grants. Tammy said currently, there are not any grants available for the computer system. Client said they are also working with the Tillotson Foundation.*

*Tammy gave an example of how this would help the Town. If residents come to the Town for help we are required to provide vouchers for food at the grocery store. J. Weagle said the local store monitors what they are buying, there are items they can't buy. Tammy said we have a budget for General Assistance. J. Weagle said there are rules, but if they are eligible for it, we are required to give it. Clint commented that a large portion of our residents are under the poverty level. J. Tierney discussed the Lancaster Food Pantry; they have approx. 800 people per month from Groveton. Al further discussed his issues with giving them $5,000.*

*Motion to recommend Article 11 by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 2-0*

**Article 12 Appropriate to Groveton Volunteer Beautification**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of $5,000 for the purpose of supporting the Groveton Volunteer Beautification Committee. (Recommended / Not Recommended by Board of Selectmen #-#-#) (Majority vote required)

*Discussion on Article 12 –*
*A. Rossetto asked if we have any data on what the money is spent on. Tammy said we have never received an accounting of what its used for. Al said the Town goes through an audit and there are questions, but there isn't an accounting of where the $5,000 goes. Weagle said we do the flowers, trunk or treat, pumpkins, help with the hayride, etc. Al said they have their own check book, the Library does as well. Tammy said the Library is a department of the Town, they are part of the audit. Groveton Beautification is not a department or committee of the Town. The auditors look at the request, but don't look for how it's spent.*

*N. Merrow said this has changed from what the original Beautification Comm. was supposed to be. It was for the banners and flowers, to her that doesn't come up to $5,000. J. Weagle said the banners are separate. J. Tierney said to bring it up at Town Meeting to the voters. Al didn't realize this was for Halloween too. The Christmas Comm. and the Beautification Comm have always been separate. Al asked if it can be rolled into the Town budget instead of a Warrant Article?*

*N. Merrow asked if the Beautification Committee can provide their expenditures before Town Meeting? J. Weagle will ask Courtney. Tammy said if the Beautification Comm. can get it to her by next week, it will be put in the Town report.*

*Motion to recommend Article 12 by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: J. Tierney All in Favor 2-0*

**Article 13 Forestry funds for Train Repairs**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of $15,000 for the purpose of repairs to the train, with said funds coming from the Forestry Fund. This special Warrant Article will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse

until the train is repaired or by 2030, whichever is sooner. (Recommended / Not Recommended by Board of Selectmen #-#-#) (Majority vote required)

*Discussion on Article 13 –*
*This is the same article as last year, except this year it's non-lapsing. They didn't use the $15,000 from last year. The Town didn't do anything because we thought the Beautification Comm. was working on it; instead of letting it lapse again, this gives them 5 years. The $15,000 could have been part of the match for a grant that we didn't get approved for. We will be applying for a grant again. The granting agency was apologetic, we made it to the final round with 16 applicants for 7 pots of money. Tammy further discussed the grant(s). In a larger grant that she was made aware of, there was only 1 applicant. If the Town crew can help with it, the grant would cover their time, equipment, rentals, etc. It's an in kind match.*

*D. Auger asked if the people at Town Meeting accept an amendment to this article to replace train with covered bridge, could that be done this year? Tammy said there is a rule where you can't change the purpose of a warrant article. Someone might come to vote for the train but not for the covered bridge. J. Tierney said there is a bill in the house that says you can change the purpose of a warrant article. Tammy and Jim T. further discussed. There is no RSA that backs what DRA is saying. J. Weagle noted the funds come from the Conservation Commission. Tammy said it's the Boards decision if they want to change it to include the covered bridge.*

*D. Auger thinks the covered bridge is more of a risk for repair than the train is. He recalls that Jim Wemyss gave the train to the Town. J. Weagle said there was never anything put in writing for the train, we found that the Town owns it but we don't know where it came from. J. Tierney asked Tammy to check with Foresty and if they are ok with adding the Covered Bridge, he will make a motion to add the bridge, if the Conservation Commission agrees.*

*Motion to add the Covered Bridge if the Conservation Commission concurs by: J. Tierney, 2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 2-0*

*Motion to recommend Article 13 in its current or possible amended state by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 2-0*

**Article 14 Community Power**

To see if the Town will vote to adopt the Northumberland Community Power plan, to authorize the Select Board to implement the plan, and to take all action in furtherance thereof, pursuant to RSA 53-E. The Northumberland Community Power plan is an opt-out program that offers more flexible electricity procurement. The plan will initially provide lower electricity rates for residents, or it will not launch. Initial participation in the plan can be declined, after which enrollment becomes voluntary. There is no tax impact with this article.
(Recommended / Not Recommended by Board of Selectmen #-#-#) (Majority vote required)

*Discussion on Article 14 –*
*Al is the Chair of the Committee, he feels we need to stress that it doesn't bind the Town or residents into anything. THE PUC and utility companies have set up a program; the rates are set every 6 months. A recent PUC decision said that the utilities could put in $.08 knowing that it's inadequate. They undercharged and the PUC has allowed the utilities to put a stranded charge on the bill to raise it back up because they lost money. We've talked with CPNH, right now they are higher than Eversource. Listen. If the Legislature reigns in the utilities it could be a savings of $5.00 - $10.00 / month for residents. He believes it should pass but won't launch until feasible. J. Tierney said there is a bill to say NO to PUC they don't have the authority to do that; he further discussed. If down the road you find a different energy supplier that is cheaper, you can opt out. J. Tierney said if passed at Town meeting, the Board still has to implement it.*

*Motion to recommend Article 14 by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 2-0*

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**Article 15 Modify Total Disability Credit**

Shall the Town modify the provisions of RSA 72:35 for an optional tax credit from $700 to $??? for a Service-Connected Total Disability on residential property? (Recommended / Not Recommended by Board of Selectmen #-#-#) (Majority vote required)

*Discussion on Article 15 –*
*Tammy said the Board hasn't discussed this, however we received a request from a resident. J. Tierney asked what was requested. Tammy reviewed the credit amounts from other local towns. She said the Board can say no and remove this article.*

*K. Wiles recommended that it says, "Service Connected." Tammy noted that currently we have 6 people who receive this. In Coos County there are 43 separate and distinct, 7 of the 43 are different than the $700.00. Some towns offer more than us, up to $2,000. J. Tierney asked if there is income or asset info required. The wording is State wording. He asked if the wording says "military." Tammy said it's for any person who has been honorably discharged or an officer honorably separated from the military service of the US, and who has a total and permanent service connected disability, or who is a double amputee or a paraplegic because of service connected injuries. Or the surviving spouse of such a person shall receive a standard yearly tax credit in the amount of $700.00 of property taxes on the persons residence.*

*There is a disability exemption and an elderly and disabled deferral. Our veterans' credit is $350.00. J. Tierney asked if the surviving spouse can get it after the veteran passes. K. Wiles commented that some veterans' won't file, but once they pass the surviving spouse needs it. If you remarry you lose it.*

*Motion to recommend Article 15 with the credit amended to $1,000 by: J. Weagle 2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 2-0*

**Article 16 Discontinue Gould Rd**

To see if the Town will vote to discontinue completely Gould Road.

*Discussion on Article 16 –*
*The resident that submitted this article has requested that it be removed.*

*Motion to remove Article 16 per the request of resident that requested it by: J. Weagle 2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 2-0*

**Article 17 Selectmen to Appoint All Other Officers as Require**

To see if the Town will vote to instruct the Selectmen to appoint all other officers as required by law.

*Discussion on Article 17 – None, this is a standard warrant article.*

**Article 18 Hear Reports**

To hear reports of agents, auditors, committees, or other officers heretofore chosen and pass any vote related thereto.

*Discussion on Article 18 – None, this is a standard warrant article.*

**Article 19 Transact Any Other Business**

To transact any other business that may be legally brought before said meeting.

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*Discussion on Article 19 – None, this is a standard warrant article*

General discussion:
T. Letson said with the sum of all articles, (last year we had the 1.5 million for the sidewalk project, which she took out of this year); bottom line the budget is down $230,339, from what we asked for last year. With a rough guess of our taxes, our tax impact would be down $100,981 from 2024. Tammy wants to revisit that, it may change. When we post the budget on the MS 636, the bottom line is down $230,339.

Sidewalk Project - Tammy said the State got approval to take it from 2 pots of money; they approve $1.2 million of the $1.5. The interim project manager said it was because we added it to our warrant articles last year before the State had discussed it. We took the initiative to say if the State is willing to do it our taxpayers are willing to match it. Because we stepped up first, the State was more willing to dip into a second pot of money to help us. K. Wiles asked about the sidewalks. Tammy said with adding the $1.5 million all of the project in the original plan is still in the plan. J. Tierney said instead of $1.5, now it will be $2.5 million, we have our 20% set aside. The $2.5 still might not be enough, it won't be done until 2027, we started working on this project in 2019.

Budget Worksheet discussion/questions:
Page 11 – for the Library – under Consumer Water there isn't anything for 2024. Tammy said it's in the appropriations line. Last year she worked with Gail and now it's part of the appropriations. The Board was good with that.

Tammy said within the Recreation Dept that number will go up a bit. Right now, we have $17,000 for W/S expenses. It's a huge increase from prior years, because we've been billing the Pool for the wrong rate. Instead of per 1000 gallons we were billing per 100 gallons.

Page 13 – J. Tierney said the Beautification Comm. is already in there? Tammy said yes, everything is in there, the CRF, the Charitable Organizations are there also.

Page 3 – Cemeteries – N. Merrow asked what is the $5,000 for Professional Services? Tammy said that is to hire someone (from No. Stratford) to survey where all the plots are, what we have and where we can expand. He survey's and researches who is where. We looked at other software that would do this, but it was a lot more money. He did surveying in the military.

Page 9 - $11,000 increase on street lighting. Tammy said that is actually the total for the Highway Dept., if you flip back to page 7 and 8 that's where that difference is.

J. Weagle asked if we checked on the salt total? Tammy hasn't spoken with Glenn yet. The salt total might change before Town Meeting due to the usage, we will be reviewing it.

Page 4 – General Government – N. Merrow asked about the $27,000. That's for the IT company that Tammy talked about. J. Tierney said we discussed the article for the computer, Tammy said we are asking the IT company to gives us a non-appropriation clause. You can sign a contract for 5 years if there is that clause.

Page 1 - N. Merrow - under Gasoline, LP or Diesel; J. Weagle said we combined them. Tammy it has a lot to do with when the bills come in. The chart of accounts are large and not meant for each vendor; but each category. All the Department Heads agreed with combining them.

There were no further questions or comments.

J. Tierney closed the Budget Public Hearing at 8:13 pm.

T. Letson said if anything comes up on what we discussed tonight, it can be amended. J. Weagle commented that if something major comes up we would need another Public Hearing.