

2014 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE TOWN OF PITTSFIELD

Moderator Stephen Adams called the 2014 Town Meeting to order at 10:10am on Saturday, March 15, 2014 in the Pittsfield Elementary School Gymnasium.

Members of the Pittsfield Girl Scouts led the *Pledge of Allegiance*.

Moderator Adams explained the rules for the meeting.

Paul Nickerson asked if he could make a motion before the Warrant Articles were read.

Moderator Adams asked Mr. Nickerson to come forward to speak privately.

Paul Nickerson made a motion to have the results of the March 11, 2014 election read during this Town meeting, and going forward, to have the results of each future Town Election read at the Town Meeting immediately following that Election. Jim Pritchard seconded.

Moderator Adams called for a vote.

Motion passed by card vote.

Moderator Adams stated he was not sure voting now to have election results read at future meetings was binding.

Moderator Adams read the introduction to the posted 2014 Town Meeting Warrant:

To the inhabitants of the Town of Pittsfield, Merrimack County and State of New Hampshire, qualified to vote in Town affairs:

You are hereby notified to meet at the Town Hall Meeting Room at 85 Main Street in said Town on the second **Tuesday** in March next, **March 11, 2014**, to act upon the subjects mentioned in Articles 1 through 7. You are hereby warned that on said date and at said place the polls will be opened at **7:00 AM** and will remain open until **7:00 PM** for the reception of your ballots under the Non-Partisan Ballot System. You are hereby warned that on **Saturday, March 15, 2014, at 10:00 AM** at the Pittsfield Elementary School Gymnasium, the matter of appropriations and such other business properly brought before said meeting will be taken up for your consideration and action.

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Moderator Adams read the official results of the 2014 Annual Town Election held on Tuesday, March 11, 2014:

Article 1: To choose by ballot the following officers: one Selectman for a three (3) year term; one Planning Board Member for a three (3) year term; one Trustee of the Trust Funds for a three (3) year term; one Library Trustee for a three (3) year term; one Cemetery Trustee for a three (3) year term; one Supervisor of the Checklist for a six (6) year term; one Town Treasurer for a three (3) year term; and one Town Moderator for a two (2) year term.

Annual Town Election Results:

One Selectman for a three (3) year term –

Gerard A Leduc elected – 136 votes, James Theodore – 102 votes

One Planning Board Member for a three (3) year term –

John “Pat” Heffernan elected – 238 votes

One Trustee of Trust Funds for a three (3) year term –

Ross R. Morse elected – 249 votes

One Library Trustee for a three (3) year term –

James Conrad Allard elected – 172 votes, William R. Tahnk- 55 votes

One Cemetery Trustee for a three (3) year term –

Cedric Dustin III elected – 252 votes

One Supervisor of the Checklist for a six (6) year term –

Elizabeth A. Hast elected – 255 votes

Town Treasurer for a three (3) year term –

Cindy M. Houle elected – 255 votes

Town Moderator for a two (2) year term –

Arthur “Art” Morse elected – 251 votes

Article 2: Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 1 as proposed by the planning board for the Town zoning ordinance as follows: replace the current definition of “agriculture” with the state’s definition of “agriculture” in RSA 21:34-a, II? The purpose of this amendment is to

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eliminate vagueness in the current definition. (Recommended by the Planning Board 5-0-0)

Article 2 passed – Yes (192) – No (63)

Article 3: Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 2 as proposed by the planning board for the Town zoning ordinance as follows: revise Article 10, Manufactured Housing & Manufactured Housing Parks, as follows: (1) eliminate building codes superseded by state law RSA 155-A, (2) eliminate specifications for currently prohibited manufactured housing parks, and (3) change the title of the Article to just “Manufactured Housing”? (Recommended by the Planning Board 5-0-0)

Article 3 passed – Yes (176) – No (78)

Article 4: Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 3 as proposed by the planning board for the Town zoning ordinance as follows: convert the zoning board of adjustment from a board appointed by the selectmen to a board elected by the Town voters? (Recommended by the Planning Board 4-1-0)

Article 4 passed – Yes (187) – No (87)

Article 5: Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 4 as proposed by the planning board for the Town zoning ordinance as follows: revise administrative Articles 5, 6, and 7 to agree with current state law? (Recommended by the Planning Board 5-0-0)

Article 5 passed – Yes (203) – No (65)

Article 6: Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 5 as proposed by the planning board for the Town zoning ordinance as follows: (1) revise administrative Articles 1, 22, 23 (administration and enforcement), and 24 to agree with current state law, and (2) combine Articles 1, 22, 23 (administration and enforcement), and 24 as one Article stating general administrative provisions? (Recommended by the Planning Board 5-0-0)

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Article 6 passed – Yes (195) – No (69)

Article 7: Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 6 as proposed by the planning board for the Town zoning ordinance as follows: revise Article 16, Parking Regulations, as follows: (1) eliminate parking requirements for existing commercial buildings in the Commercial District, (2) eliminate the on-street-parking credit now used to reduce parking requirements for commercial buildings in the Commercial District, and (3) clarify that the table of parking requirements, when applicable, applies both to uses explicitly listed and to similar uses not explicitly listed? The purposes of this amendment are (1) to avoid having to grant a large number of variances that the planning board has historically found will be necessary, and (2) to avoid vagueness about whether the table of parking requirements applies to a particular use. (Recommended by the Planning Board 4-1-0)

Article 7 passed – Yes (194) – No (76)

Moderator Adams then moved to the Warrant Articles that were to be taken up at the 2014 Town Meeting Saturday March 15, 2014:

Article 8: To see if the Town will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Board of Selectmen and Teamsters, Local 633, which calls for the following increase in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

2014	<u>\$9,964</u>	2015	<u>\$8,756</u>	2016	<u>\$10,828</u>
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And further to raise and appropriate the sum of Nine Thousand Nine Hundred Sixty Four Dollars (\$9,964.) for the current fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels. (Estimated gross tax impact \$.04) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 10-0-1)

Selectman Eric Nilsson moved to accept Article 8 as read, Selectman Gerard Leduc seconded.

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Moderator Adams opened the floor for discussion.

Budget Committee Chairman Louie Houle noted the Budget Committee approved this Article, but asked who would be effected by the contract.

Selectwoman Linda Small stated the police officers.

Dan Schroth asked if there were two different groups of police within this contract.

Selectwoman Linda Small responded that this contract covers just the police officers.

Dan Schroth stated he was confused. He read a newspaper Article that referred to a second group.

Selectwoman Linda Small responded that the other group referenced in the Article included two sergeants and the Chief. The contract we are discussing today is just for the police officers.

Phil Gordon stated there are two police unions. Are the Sergeants and Chief not considered officers?

Selectwoman Linda Small apologized, she didn't understand Dan's question.

Phil Gordon just wanted to clarify. There are police officers in both unions. The other contract has not been agreed upon.

Lance Houle asked if any of these officers benefited from the lawsuit he read about.

Selectwoman Linda Small responded that it was not the Teamsters that took a complaint to the Labor Board, it was the other union, and yes, some of those officers that had their complaint heard received compensation.

Lance Houle asked if this was after 2010, and asked if they hadn't had an increase since 2010.

Selectwoman Linda Small responded both unions had a freeze on their increases for the last couple of years due to the difficult economic times. She clarified that the officers involved in the complaint were compensated, but none of the officers have received an increase in salary.

Dan Schroth stated he supports this contract. We should ask the Select Board to put the other contract on the front burner. We've learned we need to follow the Union contract. It is up to the Selectmen to get the best contract they can and bring it to Town Meeting. We need to be fair to the officers and to the taxpayers. It is not worth putting off.

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Selectwoman Linda Small stated there were good negotiations between the Teamsters and the Selectmen. A lot of the issues taken up were due to the Labor Board decisions; management rights that were not as strong as they could be. She urged support of this contract. The biggest change between what they had and this contract is in their leave time. Now the officers would have less leave time. This contract would incorporate vacation, sick and bereavement leave time, reducing the total hours from 264 to a total of 177 if they work for the Town for five years. This will save the Town money. The contract includes an incremental salary increase. There is a 2% increase in the step values from now through 2016. Some accrued time would be paid out at a discounted rate, so they can get some of their earned time off of the books and not lose it. This averages about 3% a year. They are receiving a two part raise. It is not extravagant. They have come down in their leave time to work with the Town.

Moderator Adams called for the vote.

Article 8 passed by card vote.

Article 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.) to be added to the previously appropriated amount for the investigation and evaluation of whether the Town should consider the purchase of Pittsfield Aqueduct. (Estimated gross tax impact \$.09)(Recommend by the Board of Selectmen 5-0-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 8-2-1)

Selectman Eric Nilsson moved to accept Article 9 as read, Selectman Gerard Leduc seconded.

Moderator Adams opened the floor for discussion.

Dan Schroth asked how much has been spent to date and what have we received.

Al Douglas responded the Aqueduct committee started with \$30,000 that was approved previously. \$17,000 was spent on the first RFQ to the consultant, leaving \$13,000 in the account. The committee has been working with the consultant in gathering information.

Dan Greene asked if the water company was for sale.

Al Douglas answered yes the Aqueduct is for sale. This committee was put together in July 2013 to look into the feasibility of purchasing it.

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Chris Cheney asked how it will benefit the Town if we purchase it.

Al Douglas answered the committee has gone through a list of advantages, including local control - billing would be local, flexibility of rate expansion - we would not be subject to PUC regulations , easy access to bond opportunities. Banks by law must invest in local communities. Easier access to grants through private companies, increase efficiency, more responsive service to the Town, and hopefully lower hydrant costs.

Chris Cheney asked if there was a sense of the potential financial impact.

Al Douglas responded that hopefully there would be a positive impact, but that is down the road. Information is still being collected. A decision hasn't been made whether or not to purchase the Aqueduct. A determination really can't be made at this time. The consultant is trying to put all that information together for us.

Bill Miskoe stated he is also part of this committee. If the Town decides to take ownership, we would no longer be regulated by the PUC, allowing the Town to make the decisions as to where and when to make changes to the water system. We also would not have to pay the City of Nashua an 8.6% return on their investment as mandated by the PUC. Right now, the City of Nashua owns Pittsfield Aqueduct and they run it well, but the concern is if Nashua finds itself in a budget bind, they could choose to sell to someone else whose interest in the Town could be quite adverse. He believes the Town needs to control its own destiny.

Fred Okrent stated he is also on the committee. This is not a guaranteed expenditure. The committee asked for the funds due to the time factor between what we are doing now and the next budget cycle. This is basically a "set aside" that may not be used if it is decided not to go further.

Paul Nickerson stated he has been here a long time and seen the problems we've had with the system. It was very extensive early on. If we go further, it would be costly to build facilities and to maintain them. This needs to be taken into consideration. He thinks Pennichuck has done a superb job.

Bill Miskoe disagreed. He responded that the Town could contract a professional company to do this work. Pennichuck actually operates one of their own. The Town would not necessarily have to manage it.

Moderator Adams called for the vote.

Article 9 passed by card vote.

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Article 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Ninety Four Thousand Five Hundred Ninety Dollars (\$194,590.) for the purchase of a Highway Truck Replacement and authorize the withdrawal of One Hundred Sixty Two Thousand Dollars (\$162,000.) from the Highway Truck Capital Reserve Fund created for that purpose. The balance of Thirty Two Thousand Five Hundred Ninety Dollars (\$32,590.) is to come from fund balance and no amount to be raised from taxation. (Reserve Fund balance is \$163,982.79 on 12-31-13)(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0-0)(Recommended by the Budget Committee 10-0-0)

Selectman Eric Nilsson moved to accept Article 10 as read, Selectman Gerard Leduc seconded.

Moderator Adams opened the floor for discussion.

Art Morse asked for an explanation of the statement that none is to be raised by taxes. He believes this is true, but isn't it also true if this Article does not pass, the funds would go back toward reducing the tax rate?

Moderator Adams checked with the Select Board and responded yes.

Budget Committee Chairman Louie Houle representing the Budget Committee noted the Committee recommended this Article because they felt the Town needs this equipment, but do not recommend the other Articles that are funded by fund balance. They are not happy with the method. It is kind of misleading by saying it won't cost you on your taxes, but in essence it has. We could have reduced our taxes if we had not put money into the fund balance. He feels the fund balance needs to be explained.

Selectwoman Linda Small understands there is confusion regarding these next Articles. She clarified that the Article states we will not raise taxes for this Article today. Fund Balance as defined by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board is the residual spendable fund balance after subtracting all above amounts, which are all other commitments. Governmental accounting is a bit more complicated than business accounting. (She gave a monetary example) A surplus in governmental accounting would be called a profit in a business environment. Any surplus at the end of the year would go into that fund balance, unassigned. When the Board set the tax rate in October, they took into consideration that we have not put any money into savings for a couple of years. They were concerned about that. The Board knows that a certain amount is suppose to stay in this account. The Board has been very good stewards of the Town's tax dollars in that they've been able to put money aside for these savings accounts without taxing the people again. The Town of Pittsfield's fund balance policy states: "The Board will maintain an

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appropriate level of unassigned fund balance following the guidelines established by the NH Government Finance Officer's Association (GFOA)", which are as follows: 1.) 5% or 15% of regular general fund operating revenues, or 2.) 8% to 17% of regular general fund operating expenditures. The estimated 2013 unassigned fund balance of \$1,402,968 is well above the highest scale noted above, and there is no reason to keep adding to that amount. It is there to be used as we need it. There has been concerns stated about borrowing money to pay for it. Each year we have a tax anticipation note. Usually our taxes do not come in quickly enough to pay our bills, so we borrow on that tax anticipation note. We probably will have to do that again this year, we do every year. If we have a large expenditure we need to fund it. The Select Board did not put last year's surplus back into the fund so it could be brought before this meeting to show the people the Select Board has been good stewards of their money. She asked for support of all of these Articles and to get money back into the capital reserves. It will not be raised in taxes again this year.

Lance Houle asked what kind of truck would be bought for this amount. The cost seems very high.

George Bachelder responded an all wheel drive vehicle is under consideration, which added \$25,000. The current truck needs chains that need to be replaced every year, which is costly. The current truck has been used for 15 years and trucks are normally replaced about every 10 years. The cost of replacing chains over that period of time amounts to about the same cost as the all wheel drive.

Lance Houle responded he is concerned we have a grader that could be doing the job.

George Bachelder stated it takes 6 hours to plow with a grader, and 3 hours for a truck, and the roads still need to be treated, which the grader is not set up to do. It could be done, but there would be a lot of days without school. This work would wear down the life of a \$350,000 grader. Times have changed. Using the grader for this purpose is not a good financial decision.

Lance Houle stated he still felt it was an extra expense we don't need.

Henry Fitzgerald asked if the fund balance is a liquid asset or a proposed asset.

Selectwoman Linda Small responded the fund balance is equity, the difference of what we own and what we owe.

Hank Fitzgerald confirmed it is not a liquid asset and we would be borrowing against it.

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Selectwoman Linda Small answered that the Town would not be borrowing against the fund balance, and apologized if she had not been clear and welcomed any additional questions regarding the explanation.

Budget Committee Chairman Louie Houle asked how much of the fund balance is uncollected taxes.

Selectwoman Linda Small answered that as of March 14, 2014, the uncollected amount was \$1,364,274.00. \$1,026,436 of that is from 2013. It is a two edged sword – this shows people are having trouble paying their taxes. We need to look for ways to fund these things without raising taxes and this is a way to do that. She believes we will be able to collect most of this, but realizes we probably won't be able to collect it all, and next year it may be more. It could keep increasing if we don't make some wise financial decisions, and she believes using the fund balance is a wise decision the Board has made.

Budget Committee Chairman Louie Houle asked if the Select Board has an anticipated increase in the amount of uncollected taxes from previous years. He stated what the Select Board is saying is that we will need to borrow against the taxes the Town hasn't received yet. He stated we should have been honest in the beginning and put the money toward our tax rate in the fall and leave it up to the taxpayers to decide whether or not to fund these Warrant Articles.

Selectwoman Linda Small responded that was why the Select Board proposed this to the taxpayers in this setting instead of putting it back when the tax rate was set. There is nothing the Board is doing that is dishonest.

Moderator Adams called for the vote.

Article 10 passed by card vote.

Article 11: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Eight Thousand Dollars (\$8,000.) to be added to the Computer Replacement Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from fund balance and no amount to be raised from taxation. (Reserve Fund balance is \$9,457.72 on 12-31-13) (Recommend by the Board of Selectmen 5-0-0) (Not Recommended by the Budget Committee 7-3-1)

Selectman Eric Nilsson moved to accept Article 11 as read, Selectman Gerard Leduc seconded.

Moderator Adams opened the floor for discussion.

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Eric Barbasso asked why the Budget Committee did not recommend these next Articles.

Budget Committee Chairman Louie Houle answered the amount Selectwoman Linda Small says is in the account comes from a lot of different areas including prepaid expenses that money is not in the budget for, and any uncollected taxes. If the money is not collected, we still have to come up with it to run the budget, so we are mandating this if we approve this. Also, there is an RSA that states 10 days after we decide at this meeting to take money out of the budget or the fund, it has to be funded. 10 days from today, legally we would have to fund that money. So in 10 days we would have to go out and borrow that money. It is not prudent.

Ed Vien stated he had the RSA, it is 35:11. He spoke with Cara Marston, and there are two different ways. One is coming out of appropriations and the other is coming from surplus balance. The one Selectwoman Linda Small was speaking of is coming from the surplus balance. It was explained to him that in this case it needs to be dispersed within 20 days of our audit. I think the issue is that the community wants to feel like they know what is going on. He believes we will have to borrow some of this money if the tax revenue does not come in. He asked if we knew the interest rate of the amount that would be borrowed if needed, and when would it have to be paid off. He also asked how much cash was on hand. If the cash is not available, when would the money have to be available to go into these funds.

Selectwoman Linda Small answered they have 20 days after the finalized budget audit to take the proposed amount out of the fund balance. It is also the same for the capital reserves. So if it is voted to put money in the capital reserves today, we have the same amount of time whether the money is taken from fund balance or not. We currently have approximately \$800,000 in cash, so it could be funded in 20 days if necessary. The interest rate last year was a little over 1%.

Art Morse encouraged the Body to vote for these Warrant Articles. He was not happy with how this was put together. He preferred the way it was decided to fund these in the past. He does not think it is sneaky, but it is confusing. Essentially the same thing is going to happen whether it is funded as done in the past or this way. It does have a tax impact, but these capital reserves need to be funded. They have been neglected. He urged the Body to vote for these Warrant Articles.

Hank Fitzgerald believes it would have helped if it had been explained ahead of time, maybe something in the paper. It would have allowed people to digest it and come to the meeting better prepared to make a decision.

Dan Schroth stated we need to focus on the roads this year. He supports these Warrant Articles.

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Jennifer Mika asked how other Towns work. Do they often use fund balance or do they raise the tax rate?

Selectwoman Linda Small responded that she really can't speak for other towns, but when she worked for the Town of Auburn, they would often look to see what they could take from fund balance to offset the taxes. However Auburn is a wealthier town and we really can't compare to them. If we passed all these Articles and had to raise it from taxes it would be an increase of a \$1.06 per thousand. That is a lot to raise above and beyond what has already been raised once. The money is already there. We should use it.

Chris Cheney asked if there was a specific need we are focused on. Why is the current amount not adequate?

Town Administrator Paul Skowron explained the Town is on a computer replacement program. Both hardware and software for about the last 5 years. On average in order to upgrade our equipment incrementally, it costs between \$13,000 – \$18,000 a year. It's an ongoing process. Currently hardware that is very outdated would be replaced. It is a rotation program.

Budget Committee Chairman Louie Houle stated the Budget Committee asked the questions from the beginning what percentage of the fund balance was cash, and were not given the answers. He found the answers from the last posted Selectmen meeting minutes, which stated they were going to be using unspent funds from last year for this year. It would have been prudent budgeting to return the surplus funds of \$1.06 from last year to reduce taxes by \$1.06 and then ask the voters to decide whether or not to raise the funds this year.

Selectwoman Linda Small responded she has the procedure for taking money from fund balance. She read the funds must be turned over to the Trustees within 10 days after determination of surplus following the end of the fiscal year audit. The 10 days start after the final audit.

Faith Whittier felt it was late to be given this information. As secretary of the Budget Committee, they asked repeatedly for the information and did not receive it from the Select Board representative or Town Administrator. If the committee had trouble understanding the process over several weeks, how are the Townspeople to understand it in a few minutes?

Moderator Adams called for the vote.

First visual count was too close to call. Moderator Adams asked the Supervisors of the Checklist to proceed with an official count.

45 yes, 47 no **Article 11 fails.**

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Article 12: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.) to be added to the Police Cruiser Capital Reserve previously established. This sum to come from fund balance and no amount to be raised from taxation. (Reserve Fund balance is \$1,083.34 on 12-31-13) (Recommend by the Board of Selectmen 5-0-0) (Not Recommended by the Budget Committee 8-2-1)

Selectman Eric Nilsson moved to accept Article 12 as read, Selectman Gerard Leduc seconded.

Moderator Adams opened the floor for discussion.

Bill Miskoe realized there is resistance to the process, but stated money needs to be set aside for these funds and asked the people to support the Capital Reserves anyway.

Budget Committee Chairman Louie Houle speaking on behalf of the Budget Committee strongly supported Bill Miskoe's idea to a point, but asked that the Articles be re-worded to state the funds be raised by taxation, and remove the idea of using fund balance. This would be upfront and leave money in the fund and not drain us of the cash. He would much rather see the funds raised through taxation if the voters feel it is important enough. Not every piece of equipment needs to be funded on the same schedule. We need to look at how equipment is replaced. We don't have the same needs as other municipalities.

Moderator Adams pointed out if there were any amendments to an Article, it must be submitted in writing to the Moderator.

Fred Okrent stated it appears there is a conflict between individuals and asked that the question be moved.

Fred Okrent made the motion to move the question. Ted Mitchell seconded.

Vote passes to move the question.

Moderator Adams called for the vote of Article 12 as read.

First visual count was too close to call. Moderator Adams asked the Supervisors of the Checklist to proceed with an official count.

55 yes, 32 no **Article 12 passes.**

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Article 13: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000.) to be added to the Fire and Rescue Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from fund balance and no amount to be raised from taxation. (Reserve Fund balance is \$314,909.99 on 12-31-13) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0-0) (Not Recommended by the Budget Committee 8-2-1)

Selectman Eric Nilsson moved to accept Article 13 as read, Selectman Gerard Leduc seconded.

Moderator Adams opened the floor for discussion.

Chris Cheney asked if there was equipment needed on the horizon?

Fire Chief Rob Martin responded they were looking at replacing a fire truck in 2016. A new fire truck costs approximately \$400,000.

Hank Fitzgerald stated this was the first Town Meeting he had seen funding through past budgets. The purpose of this is for the Town to make the decision. The Select Board is playing semantics with money. It is not money in hand, it is future money. Everyone is going to pay for it either today or next year. It is misrepresented as not raising taxes.

Budget Committee Chairman Louie Houle stated there is a need for these Articles. A lot of them are to catch up. Personally he would support the rest of the Articles. He didn't think this is the right way to do it and hopes we are not shooting ourselves in the foot. He hopes in the future the voters would be respected enough to make their own decisions. That's what he has a problem with. Nowhere did it say in any Selectmen's meeting minutes that this was going to happen, but he thinks these Articles should be supported because they are needed. He hoped the voters supported him in asking for a much more open government that explains what is going on.

Denise Kitson asked why the Select Board decided to go with the fund balance instead of asking the voters to raise the money in taxes.

Selectwoman Linda Small stated the Select Board honestly thought this was a good thing. The Board tried to save the taxpayers money by using money we already have. It was not sneaky, but it is confusing. The taxes will not be raised at a future date, this is taxes that were raised in past years. She understands the main concern is that there will not be enough cash to cover this, but she maintained that we do have the cash right now. If we continue to raise taxes and just keep adding to the fund balance, in the future we are going to have an even more difficult time trying

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to raise cash because people are not going to be able to afford to pay their taxes. This is the first year this has been done because we have a healthy fund balance, and there has been a surplus the last two years, which means we overtaxed in those years. That's why we are trying to use it here. It's not something that is hidden. The Board could have taken money from the fund balance in October, but the Board thought it was better to put it before the voters now so they could decide. The Board is not trying to hide anything, they have brought it all forward to the voters, to make the decision.

Denise Kitson stated she was equating the fund balance to using a credit card.

Selectwoman Linda Small responded that this is a different circumstance. Using a credit card creates liability, and taking money from fund balance is based on equity.

Moderator Adams called for the vote.

Article 13 passed by card vote.

Article 14: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.) to be added to the Department of Public Works Small Dump Truck Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from fund balance and no amount to be raised from taxation. (Reserve Fund balance is \$145.11 on 12-31-13)(Recommend by the Board of Selectmen 5-0-0) (Not Recommended by the Budget Committee 7-3-1)

Selectman Eric Nilsson moved to accept Article 14 as read, Selectman Gerard Leduc seconded.

Moderator Adams opened the floor for discussion.

Ted Mitchell asked what a dump truck costs and how many years can it be in service before replacement was needed.

George Bachelder responded trucks vary. This is the small dump truck. He urged the voters to vote for these reserves. We are behind in saving. These reserves are meant to prevent big spikes in taxes when it is necessary to make these large purchases.

Moderator Adams called for the vote.

Article 14 passed by card vote.

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Article 15: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.) to be added to the Department of Public Works Loader Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from fund balance and no amount to be raised from taxation. (Fund balance is \$125,737.76 on 12-31-13) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0-0) (Not Recommended by the Budget Committee 9-1-1)

Selectman Eric Nilsson moved to accept Article 15 as read, Selectman Gerard Leduc seconded.

Moderator Adams opened the floor for discussion.

No discussion.

Moderator Adams called for the vote.

Article 15 passed by card vote.

Article 16: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.) to be added to the Department of Public Works Grader Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from fund balance and no amount to be raised from taxation. (Reserve Fund balance is \$17,881.51 on 12-31-13) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0-0) (Not Recommended by the Budget Committee 9-1-1)

Selectwoman Linda Small moved to accept Article 16 as read, Selectman Al Douglas seconded.

Moderator Adams opened the floor for discussion.

No discussion.

Moderator Adams called for the vote.

Article 16 passed by card vote.

Article 17: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.) to be added to the Department of Public

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Works Backhoe Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from fund balance and no amount to be raised from taxation. (Reserve Fund balance is \$55,917.75 on 12-31-13) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0-0) (Not Recommended by the Budget Committee 9-1-1)

Selectwoman Linda Small moved to accept Article 17 as read, Selectman Al Douglas seconded.

Moderator Adams opened the floor for discussion.

No discussion.

Moderator Adams called for the vote.

Article 17 passed by card vote.

Article 18: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000.) to be added to the Department of Public Works Sidewalk Tractor Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from fund balance and no amount to be raised from taxation. (Reserve Fund balance is \$32,772.33 on 12-31-13) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0-0)(Not Recommended by the Budget Committee 9-1-1)

Selectwoman Linda Small moved to accept Article 18 as read, Selectman Al Douglas seconded.

Moderator Adams opened the floor for discussion.

Carol Dodge asked why the Select Board was asking for so much compared to the other reserves.

George Bachelder responded it was due to the estimate time of replacement. This is due for replacement in 2016, and it is a \$150,000 machine.

Daniel Welch stated it would be helpful if the replacement timing and estimated costs for each of these capital reserves was listed.

Moderator Adams called for the vote.

Article 18 passed by card vote.

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Article 19: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Five Thousand Dollars (\$35,000.) to be added to the Municipal Buildings Repair and Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund. This sum to come from fund balance and no amount to be raised from taxation. (Reserve Fund balance is \$38,620.07 on 12-31-13) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0-0) (Not Recommended by the Budget Committee 7-3-1)

Selectwoman Linda Small moved to accept Article 19 as read, Selectman Al Douglas seconded.

Moderator Adams opened the floor for discussion.

Bill Miskoe stated in the future it might be clearer if the Articles were worded "this amount has already been raised from taxation".

Moderator Adams called for the vote.

Article 19 passed by card vote.

Article 20: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Twenty Three Thousand Fifty Four Dollars (\$123,054.) for the purpose of ambulance repair, to fund eight hours of the forty-eight hour work week and any ambulance overtime or on-call personnel budgeted line items, paramedic intercepts, and for the replacement and repair of ambulance equipment, and to authorize the withdrawal of that sum from the Ambulance Replacement and Equipment Special Revenue Fund previously created, with no amount to be raised by taxation. This Article is designated as a special Warrant Article and the appropriation shall not lapse until adjournment of the 2015 Annual Town Meeting. (Fund balance on 1-22-14 is \$281,579.79) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4-1-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 10-0-1)

Selectwoman Linda Small moved to accept Article 20 as read, Selectman Al Douglas seconded.

Moderator Adams opened the floor for discussion.

Chris Cheney asked why one of the Selectman did not support this Article.

Selectwoman Linda Small responded she did not feel the Article was clear and does not believe there is a strong enough audit trail.

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Chris Hill asked for the costs for this line item in 2013, and if the budgeted amount was enough to cover costs for 2014.

Town Administrator Paul Skowron answered the annual appropriation last year for the ambulance department was approximately \$400,000. \$123,000 represents the items noted. Approximately \$135,000 in revenue is collected annually. The \$123,000 would come from this revenue. Any residual revenue would go into the ambulance special revenue fund, which is used to support long term needs.

Moderator Adams called for the vote.

Article 20 passed by card vote.

Article 21: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Million Seven Hundred Ninety Two Thousand Two Hundred Sixty Four Dollars (\$3,792,264.) to fund the Town Budget and Capital Outlay as recommended by the Budget Committee. Said sum does not include the sums contained in special or individual Articles of this Warrant. (Recommended by the Budget Committee 11-1-1)

Selectwoman Linda Small moved to accept Article 21 as read, Selectman Al Douglas seconded.

Moderator Adams opened the floor for discussion.

Budget Committee Chairman Louie Houle asked for a point of order. Because this is officially the Budget Committee's budget, they would like to move the Article.

Selectwoman Linda Small withdrew her motion.

Budget Committee Chairman Louie Houle moved to accept Article 21 as read. Jacob Kitson seconded.

Eric Barbasso asked for the tax impact of this Article.

After conferring with the Selectmen Moderator Adams responded roughly \$.50/m.

Chris Cheney asked if it was possible to break down the biggest part of this \$.50/m increase.

Moderator Adams responded that the budget is broken down in the Town report.

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Budget Committee Chairman Louie Houle responded that there was an 11% increase in health insurance, the cost of the full time fire chief, and an increase in retirement costs.

Moderator Adams called for the vote.

Article 21 passed by card vote.

Article 22: To see if the Town will vote to discontinue the Bridge Repair Trust Fund established in 1981. Said funds (\$3,219.58 as of 12-31-13) with accumulated interest to date of withdrawal, are to be transferred to the Town's General Fund. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0-0)

Selectwoman Linda Small moved to accept Article 22 as read, Selectman Al Douglas seconded.

Moderator Adams opened the floor for discussion.

Chris Cheney noted it was just voted to add to other capital reserves. He asked if the money for bridges came from somewhere else.

Town Administrator Paul Skowron responded this trust is for a specific location – on Bridge Street. The project has been long completed and the Selectmen are asking to have this account dissolved and move the remaining funds to the Town's general fund.

Moderator Adams called for the vote.

Article 22 passed by card vote.

Article 23: To see if the Town will vote to establish the Dustin Park War Memorial Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 31:19-a, for the maintenance and upkeep of Dustin Park War Memorial, and to raise and appropriate One Thousand Four Hundred Ninety Four Dollars and Seven Cents (\$1,494.07) to put into the fund, with this amount to come from a capital account originally funded at the 1974 Town meeting for the purpose of constructing a war memorial at Dustin Park. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0-0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 12-0-1)

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Selectwoman Linda Small moved to accept Article 23 as read, Selectman Al Douglas seconded.

Moderator Adams opened the floor for discussion.

No discussion.

Moderator Adams called for the vote.

Article 23 passed by card vote.

Article 24: To transact any other business that may be legally brought before said meeting.

Selectwoman Linda Small moved to accept Article 24 as read, Selectman Al Douglas seconded.

Moderator Adams opened the floor for discussion.

Dan Green asked why there was one abstention from the Budget Committee for each of the Capital Reserve Articles.

Budget Committee Chairman Louie Houle responded that as Chairman of the committee he ran the meeting. If there was a tie, he would then vote to break the tie.

Daniel Welch noted this practice of funding capital reserves with fund balance is an experiment. He requested feedback from the Selectmen as to how it worked out.

Mark Riel asked for an update on the renovations of the library.

Selectman Eric Nilsson responded that the Library Improvement Oversight Committee was waiting for a State Fire Marshal's report. The last Fire Marshall report stated a second means of egress was not needed, but other work needs to be done. The plan is to go forward as soon as the report is received. The committee will keep everyone updated.

Dan Schroth read a letter from the *Concord Monitor* regarding the prohibition of drugs and asked Police Chief Wharem to answer a few questions.

Chief Wharem responded as follows:

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1. What percentage of your budget is spent on dealing with drugs? Roughly 3% – 4%. The Town does not have an active drug unit. We use state services and they absorb a lot of the costs. It would easily cost another \$120,000 if we had to hire someone.
2. What drugs are sending people to the hospital? Heroin, prescription drugs, “spice”, a synthetic drug.
3. What drugs are sending people to jail? Simple marijuana use will not send you to jail, but dealing will.
4. How many drug busts have you had over the last decade, and what drugs does it entail? It’s hard to give a number, it usually involves a number of other agencies and communities. We’ve probably had 6 or 7 over the course of a couple of years. Drugs include marijuana, heroin, oxycodone and crystal methamphetamine, and prescription drugs.
5. Would you make any changes to the drug laws? I would revamp the system to a degree. I believe marijuana is a gateway drug to other drugs. It is not so much the use, but the actions that occur afterward – car accidents, DUI. I don’t think we should be legalizing any more drugs at this time without expanding funding for programs to help people who become addicted to these drugs. I wouldn’t change anything, but I would like to revamp the system to make it more accountable.
6. How much does a gram of cocaine costs in Pittsfield? \$90 - \$100.
7. How much does it cost for a quarter ounce of marijuana? As little as \$10 to \$1000 depends on where it is coming from.
8. Could you tell us about the bust involving a 65 year old woman with lupus who had a couple of plants in her closet? No I can’t. I don’t show it in my records, but if you can give me a name, I will certainly research it. It could have been another agency that was involved. It is the court that decides if the actions of the individual are legitimate or not.

Dan Schroth thanked Town Administrator Paul Skowron for putting up with him at the Town Hall. He felt he did a good job.

Merrill Vaughan thanked the Fire Chief for the outstanding job of the department during the recent Rustic Crust building fire.

Ted Mitchell mentioned the Economic Development Committee had information sheets in back of the room and encouraged people to take one. He also thanked

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the Board of Selectmen and all the other Town officials who have worked with Rustic Crust to help them get back on their feet.

Paul Nickerson stated it was a shame our kids haven't been able to use the children's library. He asked if the Board of Selectmen realized the front library doors are a fire hazard, and asked if it is going to be addressed. Downstairs is safer than upstairs. He believes we need to look into this more closely.

Selectman Larry Konopka thanked outgoing Town Moderator Steve Adams and outgoing Town Administrator Paul Skowron for their service to the Town.

John Topouzoglou encouraged people to get more involved in the Selectboard and other organizations. We need to support families and schools.

Moderator Adams asked that newly elected officials be sworn in after the Meeting.

Carol Dodge made the motion to adjourn the Meeting. Cara Marston seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Erica B. Anthony
Town Clerk