

2023 Town Meeting Minutes
Town of Sanbornton
March 15, 2023

The 2023 Town Meeting was called to order at 7:10pm by the Moderator Timothy Lang.

Matthew Beem the Pastor for the Mountain View Church was recognized to give the invocation. Jim Dick led the legislative body in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Jacquelyn Reindeau presented a plaque to Joel Smith for his twenty years of dedicated service to the Recreation Commission from 2002-2022.

Nina Gardner speaking for the Building Study Committee recognized Jim Dick as a member of the of the Building Study Committee. His work and dedication to the project brought the project together with his efforts as a great organizer and his knowledge of managing projects made him a vital person on the committee.

The 2022 Annual Town report was dedicated to Robert "Bob" Presby. Jim recognized Bob or his efforts running the First Fruit Food Pantry. Bob embodies what it means to be a Sanbornton resident. The First Fruits Pantry gave out over of 21,000 meals to Sanbornton residents this past year. Bob thanked everyone for their support.

Jim Dick recognized outgoing Budget Committee members Ray Masse and Ralph Rathjen for their hard work and service on the Budget Committee. Ray for his work on the keeper of the spreadsheet and Ralph for his dedication to details.

Lang recognized Jim Dick for the introduction: Jim Dick, BOS Chairman, Brandon Deacon, Selectmen Clerk, Robert Lambert, Vice Chair, Trish Stafford, Town Administrator, Juliana Lonergan, Town Clerk Tax Collector, Stephen Bennett Town Counsel.

Raymond Masse, Chair of the Budget Committee, Craig Weisman, Bob Presby, Vice Chair, Scott Fogg and Kate Osgood.

Moderator Lang explained the rules of the meeting.

Moderator, Lang then announced the voting results from the Town Election.

Moderator Lang announced that he has already received and verified the paperwork for two secret ballots for Article #1 and Article # 5.

Moderator Lang read Article 1 as follows:

Article 1 - Operating Budget – Town

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Million One Hundred Eight Thousand Eight Hundred Seventy-Nine Dollars (\$5,108,879) for general municipal operations as

recommended by the Budget Committee. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

(Majority vote required)

Recommended by the Budget Committee (5-Yes, 0-No) Not recommended by the Selectmen.

DRA Account	Account Name	Selectmen's Recommendation	Budget Committee Recommendation
4130 - 4199	General Government	\$1,378,191	\$1,318,708
4210	Police Department	\$782,852	\$783,983
4220 - 4299	Fire Department & Emergency Mgmt	\$717,614	\$699,891
4311 - 4319	Highways & Streets	\$1,139,798	\$1,115,892
4321 - 4329	Sanitation	\$388,137	\$378,137
4411 - 4449	Health & Welfare	\$152,375	\$152,375
4520	Recreation	\$153,796	\$152,435
4550	Library	\$193,411	\$193,411
4583 - 4589	Patriotic Purposes & Other Culture	\$2,751	\$2,751
4611 - 4659	Conservation	\$3,491	\$3,491
4711 - 4799	Debt Service	\$307,804	\$307,804
Total Operating Budget		\$5,220,222	\$5,108,879

**Moderator Lang recognized Ray Massee for the purpose of a motion to Article #1.
Seconded by Bob Presby**

Ray Masse spoke to the article and explained the operating budget. Masse explained this year was very challenging. The key points were focused on wages, inflation and a tight labor market. Masse explained the municipalities are struggling to keep, retain and recruit staff. The Budget Committee budget is up 8.73% over FY 23 budget. Masse explained that the Fire Dept and Police Dept cannot fill open positions. The BOS received a request from Police Chief Hankard to raise wages starting in the current year. The BOS funded these raises in November by using the money in the budget for the sixth officer position that they had not been able to fill. The changes in wages required that the pay matrix be adjusted. Masse explained that this adjustment made other department change their budgets. He stated that the TCTC requested at 18% increase and both the BOS and BC agreed to this increase. He explained that some other department heads request were not granted and were set at 9% increase and some staff were set at 20% cap. Masse explained that the Budget Committee wanted all employees to pay 10% of their health care cost. Masse stated the BC doesn't have the authority to set policy therefore the decided to reduce the health care line by \$34,000 which is like the employees paying 10% of the health care cost.

**Moderator Lang recognized Jim Dick for the purpose of an amendment to Article #1.
Seconded by Bob Lambert**

Jim Dick “I move to amend Article 1- Operating Budget with a new bottom line appropriation of \$5,220,222.00 which would restore the Board of Selectmen budget for the FY24.

Jim Dick explained that the process worked with the BC this year. The difference between the BOS and BC budget is \$111,000. The breakdown is \$89,000 in salaries, \$17,000 from the Highway Dept and \$10,000 from the Transfer Station. The raises are market corrections not cost of living raises. The town has struggled for years without keeping wages inline. Jim Dick explained we are not trying to be the number one town in wages. We need to be able to replace individuals when they leave. Jim explained we are currently the second lowest on tax rates and evaluation in Belknap County. We are in the middle of our spending in the county. Healthcare is part of total compensation, it's a valuable benefit. Towns who charge their employees for healthcare also pay higher wages.

Discussion:

- Andrew Sanborn, spoke to the hot labor market. 9.7 Consumer index which means employees will be 90% less than last year. The labor market is hot.
- Heather Goodwin asked what the Insurance cost would be for town employees. Masse responded that a Single Plan yearly is \$737 which breaks down to \$14 per week, Couple is \$1475 which breaks down to \$28 per week, Family 1991 which breaks down to \$38 per week, Plus add a dollar a week for dental.
- Nancy Durgin asked Masse what is the increase for the PD was? Masse explained the money is back in the budget and the 6th officer is in this budget. Durgin also asked about the 9% cap on the Dept heads. Masse explained that the BC made a decision based on the cost of living and agreed to the 9% increase.
- :Jamal: Randolph: Hadley questioned the flag and the legitimacy of this meeting. Lang stated we are conducting the meeting by the Laws of NH.
- Roger Matte questioned if these raises will keep the PD intact? Chief Hankard said he believes this will keep his current force intact. Roger questioned the difference between the BOS and BC on the budget. Masse replied that every \$50k equals 10 cents on the tax rate. Therefore the \$325K equals roughly 61 cents on the tax rate.
- Randi Douglas questioned the raises and wants the highway dept to receive more money to hire more staff to address road issues.
- Jason Young stated he works for the State of NH and has not received a cost of living raise in five years. Nancy Durgin questioned the welfare dept increase in expenditures. Jim Dick explained that housing, fuel and electricity have gone up increasingly over the past few years. The majority receiving assistance are renters not homeowners. Masse stated if they qualify, we have to provide.

- Valerie Howe asked the BC what the deductible in the insurance was compared to other towns. Our deductible is \$3k single to \$9k family plan. Plus, the town pays half of the deductible.
- Ralph Carter called the questioned. Lang stated after the last speaker in line he would call for the vote.
- Terry Valentine asked if there were any functions in town that could be automated. Jim Dick state that the TCTC dept. has new software for online registrations. Valentine offered to help out if needed.

Lang called for the Assistant moderators to the three ballot boxes.

The Amendment to Article#1 failed: Yes 81 No 100

Moderator Lang read Article 1 as follows:

Article 1 - Operating Budget – Town

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Million One Hundred Eight Thousand Eight Hundred Seventy-Nine Dollars (\$5,108,879) for general municipal operations as recommended by the Budget Committee. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

(Majority vote required)

Recommended by the Budget Committee (5-Yes, 0-No) Not recommended by the Selectmen.

DRA Account	Account Name	Selectmen's Recommendation	Budget Committee Recommendation
4130 - 4199	General Government	\$1,378,191	\$1,318,708
4210	Police Department	\$782,852	\$783,983
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4711 - 4799	Debt Service	\$307,804	\$307,804
	Total Operating Budget	\$5,220,222	\$5,108,879

Discussion: Jim Dick said that the BOS would support the BC budget

Moderator Lang called for a voice vote on Article #1

The vote was in the affirmative Article #1 passes.

Moderator Lang recognized Nina Gardner for a motion to restrict consideration to Article #1. Seconded by Audry Barriault. **The motion passes.** The vote was in the affirmative.

Moderator Lang read Article #2 as follows:

Article 2 – Capital Outlay

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Seventy-Nine Thousand One Dollars (\$79,001) for the following Capital Outlay purposes.

(Majority vote required) Recommended by the Budget Committee (6-Yes, 0-No) Recommended by the Selectmen.

DRA Account	Account Name	Selectmen's Recommendation	Budget Committee Recommendation
<u>4902</u>	<u>Machinery, Vehicles & Equipment</u>		
4902.122	Fire SCBA-Breathing Apparatus	\$39,000	\$39,000
4902.315	DPW Truck 1 Lease	<u>\$40,000</u>	<u>\$40,000</u>
	Subtotal	\$79,000	\$79,000
<u>4909</u>	<u>Improvements Other Than Buildings</u>		
4909.000	Town Roads	\$1	\$1
	Total Capital Outlays	\$79,001	\$79,001

Moderator Lang recognized Craig Weisman for the purpose of a motion to Article #2. Seconded by Bob Presby

Ray Masse explained Article #2 that the Town Roads was moved to a capital reserve account so that money that was not expended could be used in the next year.

No discussion

Moderator Lang called for a voice vote on Article #2

The vote was in the affirmative Article #2 passes.

Moderator Lang read Article #3 as follows:

Article 3 – Appropriate to Capital Reserve Funds

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Million One Hundred Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$1,115,000) to be added to the Capital Reserve Funds, previously established, as follows:

(Majority vote required)

This Warrant Article is designated as a Special Warrant Article.

Recommended by the Budget Committee (6-Yes, 0-No) Recommended by the Selectmen.

DRA Account	Account Name	Selectmen's Recommendation	Budget Committee Recommendation
4915.100	Town Building Improvement & Design	\$0	\$0
4915.110	Town Facilities (Maint. & Operation)	\$50,000	\$50,000
4915.130	Town Hall Repair/Restoration	\$10,000	\$10,000
4915.300	Fire Truck	\$100,000	\$100,000
4915.400	Heavy Equip - Hwy (Incl Road Eval)	\$94,000	\$94,000
4915.600	Police Equipment	\$76,000	\$76,000
4915.800	Road/Bridge Construction	\$750,000	\$750,000
4915.900	Transfer Station Equipment	\$35,000	\$35,000
Total Transfer To Capital Reserve Funds		\$1,115,000	\$1,115,000

Moderator Lang recognized Jim Dick for the purpose of a motion to Article #3. Seconded by Scott Fogg.

Jim Dick explained Article #3. Capital Reserve is money put aside to save for large future expenditures. A good example is the Town Hall, The Town Hall needs to have a comprehensive plan as we now use the building for all our board and committee meetings. The fund currently has \$1125K in the fund and this year we are looking to add another \$10K. Every year we put money aside for a new cruiser.

Discussion:

Ralph Carter questioned account 4915.400 Heavy Equipment (Incl Road Eval) and why is (Incl Road Eval) still includes the Heavy Equipment line. Dick explained that the Road Evaluation was completed but it would take a warrant article next year to remove the language of Road Eval from 4915.500 Heavy Equipment line.

Andrew Sanborn stated that the Capital Improvement Committee has a plan and it is leveled against the tax rate.

Moderator Lang called for a voice vote on Article #3

The vote was in the affirmative Article #3 passes.

Moderator Lang read Article #4 as follows:

Article 4 – Appropriate to Expendable Trust Funds

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000) to be added to the Expendable Trust Funds, previously established, as follows:

(Majority vote required)

This Warrant Article is designated as a Special Warrant Article.

Recommended by the Budget Committee (6-Yes, 0-No) Recommended by the Selectmen.

DRA Account	Account Name	Selectmen's Recommendation	Budget Committee Recommendation
4916.000	Employee Severance Benefits	\$20,000	\$20,000
Total Transfer To Expendable Trust Funds		\$20,000	\$20,000

**Moderator Lang recognized Kate Osgood for the purpose of a motion to Article #4.
Seconded by Brandon Deacon.**

Osgood explained Article #4. This fund is to fund employees departing from the town. Currently the balance is this fund as of June 2022 is \$11K. We are seeking to add \$20k to this fund.

Moderator Lang called for a voice vote on Article #4

The vote was in the affirmative Article #4 passes.

Moderator Lang read Article #5 as follows:

Article 5 - Creation of Two Full Time Firefighter/EMS Positions

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Eighty Thousand Seven Hundred Sixty Dollars (\$180,760) for all salary and benefits for two additional Full Time Firefighter/EMS providers for the Town of Sanbornton's Fire & Rescue.

(Majority vote required)

This Warrant Article is designated as a Special Warrant Article.

Recommended by the Budget Committee (2-Yes, 3-No) Recommended by the Selectmen.

Moderator Lang recognized Jim Dick for the purpose of a motion to Article #5. Seconded by Robert Lambert.

Jim Dick explained this warrant article is about the ability to provide emergency services for 8pm to 8am when there is no one on staff in the fire house. Dick explained that Chief Dexter, and Deputy Taylor are working diligently to keep up with the night calls.

Dick referred to Chief Dexter to further explain the article. Chief Dexter said he has seen a decrease in staffing due to staff housing. The volunteer/paid on call people a majority of them do not live in town. The day shift started in 2017 and now there is need for night shift coverage in This article will add one full time employee to every night. The Fire Chief also explained how the 911 process works for claims. Staff members who have left have left for more money and

for 24 hours coverage. In the past year we have had 359 emergency calls for service. The full cost is \$180,760 for two full time employees with benefits. We currently have 27 members on our roster of that 27 members only 10 live in Sanbornton and two of them are the full-time day staff. The chief explained that he can cut call time by 20 minutes by having staff members in the fire house.

Chief Dexter explained due to DRA requirements he needs to put the total cost of what the two new full-time employees will cost. The total cost of adding these two positions is \$180,760.

There is cost savings in this budget bring the total to \$140K.

Craig Weisman from the Budget Committee explained that the Budget Committee did not support this warrant article. The demand didn't support this warrant article the average calls over the past ten years is 1.26 calls per day. Weisman explained that each time you add a new full-time employee the cost will just raise every year. In 2022 the department payroll spent \$434,585 by 2024 the cost will increase to \$564,764 which is a 30% increase in two years.

Ralph Carter, Osgood Rd, asked are we in jeopardy of our surrounding towns not responding to our call? Does this article effect homeowner's insurance.

Mark Brown what is the ambulance, Ems revenues?

Jon Dunn called the question

Brendan Morrison, Hermit Lake Rd, are any people currently on staff interested in the two positions?

Lang called for the Assistant moderators to the three ballot boxes.

The vote was in the affirmative Article #5 passes: Yes 97 No 94

Moderator Lang recognized Kerri Federico for a motion to restrict consideration to Article #5. Seconded by Paul Dexter. **The motion passes.** The vote was in the affirmative.

Moderator Lang read Article #6 as follows:

Article 6 – Readoption of the Optional Veterans’ Tax Credit

To see if the Town will vote to readopt the Optional Veterans’ Tax Credit in accordance with RSA 72:28, II, for an annual tax credit on residential property of \$500.

(Majority vote required)

This Warrant Article is designated as a Special Warrant Article.

Recommended by the Budget Committee (5-Yes, 0-No) Recommended by the Selectmen.

Moderator Lang recognized Brandon Deacon for the purpose of a motion to Article #6. Seconded by Brandon Deacon.

Deacon spoke to the Article #6, The NH Legislative House Bill 1667
Eligibly, currently active service members are not able to claim this \$500 exemption.

Moderator Lang called for a voice vote on Article #6

The vote was in the affirmative Article #6 passes.

Moderator Lang read Article #7 as follows:

Article 7 – Readoption of the All-Veterans Tax Credit

To see if the Town will vote to readopt the All Veterans’ Tax Credit in accordance with RSA 72:28-b, for an annual tax credit on residential property of \$500.

(Majority vote required)

This Warrant Article is designated as a Special Warrant Article.

Recommended by the Budget Committee (5-Yes, 0-No) Recommended by the Selectmen.

Moderator Lang recognized Brandon Deacon for the purpose of a motion to Article #7. Seconded by Brandon Deacon.

Deacon spoke to the Article #7, expanded the eligibility for active and non-active veterans to \$500.00 exemption.

Moderator Lang called for a voice vote on Article #7

The vote was in the affirmative Article #7 passes.

Moderator Lang recognized Nina Gardner for a motion to restrict consideration to all prior Articles. Seconded by Paul Dexter. **The motion passes.** The vote was in the affirmative.

Moderator Lang read Article #8 as follows:

Article 8 – Discontinuation of the Overseer of Public Welfare Elected Position

To see if the Town will vote to discontinue the optional elected office of Overseer of Public Welfare, to be replaced by a Director of Public Welfare appointed by the Board of Selectmen. In accordance with RSA 669:17-b, the elected Overseer of Public Welfare would continue in office until the next Annual Town Meeting.

Recommended by the Budget Committee (5-Yes, 0-No) Recommended by the Selectmen.

Moderator Lang recognized Jim Dick for the purpose of a motion to Article #8. Seconded by Bob Lambert.

Dick said this gives the option to have a hired position. This person does not have to reside in town, It offers more flexibility if this article passes in 2024 the position will then be hired.

Moderator Lang called for a voice vote on Article #8

The vote was in the affirmative Article #8 passes.

Moderator Lang recognized Nina Gardner for a motion to restrict consideration to Article #8. Seconded by John Olmstead. **The motion passes.** The vote was in the affirmative.

Moderator Lang read Article #9 as follows:

Article 9 – Other Business

To transact such other business that may legally come before the Town Meeting.

Discussion:

Andrew Sanborn Chair of the Planning Board thanked the town for passing all the ordinance on yesterday's ballot. He also thanked Michelle Jackson for all her work on the Aquifer ordinance.

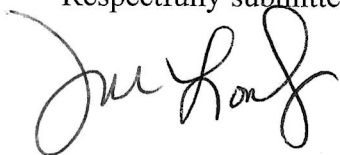
Nina Gardner spoke that the WRSD Annual Meeting is on Saturday, March 25th at 9:00am. She said back on the table was the Career Tech Education project which will expand the opportunities for students entering the work force. She encourages everyone to attend as it's a major part of your tax bill.

Jim Dick spoke to that fact that Boards and Committees are looking for volunteers to serve.

Brandon Deacon spoke to volunteers.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45pm

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Juliana Loneran". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Juliana Loneran Town Clerk-Tax Collector