

Warrant Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Salisbury Town Hall, Colchester Room 04/26/2022, 6:30 PM

Attendees: Neil Harrington (NH), Karen Snow (KS), Angelica Medina (AM), John Moak (JM), Tom Treat (TT), Larry Cuddire (LC), David Holscher (DH)

1. Call to Order.
2. Approve Meeting Minutes from 04/19/2022

Move: JM

Second: LC

Vote: Unanimous

3. Water Department Update.

Funds were approved at Fall Town Meeting and appropriated. Transition from Pennichuck is scheduled to take place on July 1st, 2022. Pennichuck is assisting with the transition. Chief Frank Giordano has been hired, an assistant and a meter reader are also planned positions. Personnel is set, including a chief administrator working within the DPW office and plan to have a customer service person on staff. The Board of Selectmen are to decide and vote on changing from monthly to quarterly billing.

Two vehicles have been ordered but not yet received, there are two additional vehicles needed along with a trailer which will be placed at the Sewage Treatment facility and connected online to the Town by July 1st.

The transition is well on its way and on track, there is a lot of work to complete but going well. AM questioned monitoring leaks etc. if quarterly billing is approved, NH stated that upgraded meters are being investigated to remote monitoring which will help counter this. Also, could amend regulations to deal with these situations so that owners would not be penalized by being charged for the relative sewer use costs.

4. FY2023 Operating Budget.

See packet handed out at the beginning of the meeting for budget summary. The budget is balanced but not final, some (but not all) CBA's are still being negotiated. Also, budget could be amended at Fall Town Meeting.

The budget is up 4% total. Property tax up 4.6% + \$400K new growth. Debt service excluded by vote, \$939K additional to debt service. State aid not set but increased 3.1%, local recipients -1.3%. Marijuana revenues are down and there are no revenues from the new facilities in this budget.

Excise taxes are down and estimating +\$500K parking. Parking – Town is not looking to increase parking fines. Air B&B tax number of participants is expected to increase. See page 10 of the handout for summary.

JM asked general budget questions, \$223K vs. \$191K Treasurer's Office; part-time personnel raise. Also note Fire Department +10%, department is completely full-time personnel now and funding is in the budget anticipating the next contract. +\$18K for fireworks coverage which were not events during COVID19.

Police – contract increases plus one new full-time patrol position fully funded for FY2023.

Budget general discussion, library discussion re. frozen pipes & installation / design flaw.

Sewer salaries up 7.5%, good idea to set up a rate stabilization fund.

5. Draft Warrant Articles

Special Town Meeting includes Twenty-six articles. Full reading of Articles One through Six, Twelve through Twenty-six.

- Article Six discussion relative to upgrading the Town phone system and changeover to fiber optic; Police Station is already on fiber optic, this article upgrades Town Hall, Council on Aging, and Library.
- Articles Seven through Eleven relative to Sewer and Water Enterprise Funds.
- Article Twelve transfer for purchase of vehicles. LC suggested that the meter reader vehicle could be electric, well received suggestion.
- Article Fourteen, electronic poll check-in, easier method compared to manual check in. Low cost of equipment and \$300 annual maintenance costs.
- Article Fifteen, permitting data conversion – after data migration the project will be complete.
- Article Seventeen, sand from Piscataqua River placement on or near Salisbury Beach. NH \$200K in account, shift funds to a different account for storm event support and address needs. Leave money there for sand; ongoing debate between State, DCR & Town.
- Article Twenty-two, Tax assessor recommends reverting to the plan prior to Fall Town Meeting 2021 vote.
- Article Twenty-three, seed money to stabilize account in case events do not break even. AM looks for the position to eventually generate revenue. It may take a few years to determine events that generate revenue and those that do not.
- JM noted currently, there is \$117K left in free cash, NH attempt to get that amount increased to approximately \$200K by shifting funds in the various article allocations.

Annual Town Meeting includes Fifteen articles.

- Article Four changes how the Harbor Commission funds can be used and makes clear that the West Newbury fees will go into the fund.
- Articles Five through Eight are relative to paying the Debt Service to Lafayette & Bridge Road Sewer and Water Main replacement projects.
- Article Ten changes the Town Meeting posting location to nine buildings and the Town website; update is to address Marie's restaurant is no longer in business.
- Article Twelve – may have Planning Director explain the changes should further detail be needed.
- Article Fourteen is intended to amend Zoning Bylaws to add language stating that residential construction project >3 dwelling units on any single lot is considered a major project and subject to site plan approval from the Planning Board.

6. Other Business

Next meeting to be scheduled on Tuesday, May 2nd at 6:30 PM at Town Hall, Colchester Hall.

Move: JM

Second: DH

Vote: Unanimous

7. Adjournment

Move: LC

Second: JM

Vote: Unanimous