

Sanbornton Municipal Budget Committee – Meeting and Public Hearing
Meeting Date and Time: Wednesday February 14 2017, Old Town Hall

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ralph Rathjen at 6:05pm. All in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Chair Ralph Rathjen, Selectmen’s Representative Katy North, Roger Grey, Craig Weisman and Justin Barriault

Craig Weisman made a motion to accept the joint meeting draft minutes of the BOS/BC meeting on 1/23. Justin Barriault seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

BC Meeting - New Business

Chair Ralph Rathjen stated that he would like the Budget Committee to review the proposed warrant articles and vote on supporting or not supporting each, and to start with the articles considered less contentious since not all members have arrived. The other members agreed.

Article 01: Operating Budget - Town \$3,861,029

Ralph Rathjen made a motion to support Article 1. Craig Weisman seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Article 02: EMS Billing and Paramedic Intercept Fees \$6,000

Chair Ralph Rathjen noted that if Article 12 passes, as does Article 2, Article 2 would be made null.

Ralph Rathjen made a motion to support Article 2. Justin Barriault seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Article 05: Capital Outlay \$634,468

Craig Weisman made a motion to support Article 5. Ralph Rathjen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Article 06: Police Cruiser \$33,000

Ralph Rathjen made a motion to support Article 6. Justin Barriault seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Article 07: Transfers to Capital Reserve Funds \$275,000

Chair Ralph Rathjen noted that this article is a recommendation of the CIP Committee. Ralph Rathjen made a motion to support Article 7. Craig Weisman seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Article 08: DPW Truck Lease/Purchase \$105,255

Ralph Rathjen made a motion to support Article 8. Roger Grey seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Article 09: To Adopt the All Veterans’ Tax Credit \$500

Chair Rathjen noted that this article is to expand the eligibility of this program but there is no increase to the dollar amount itself. Ralph Rathjen made a motion to support Article 9. Roger Grey seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Article 10: Establish a Capital Reserve Fund for Road Evaluation & Repair \$75,000

Ralph Rathjen made a motion to support Article 10. Craig Weisman seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Article 11: Authorize the Acceptance of Privately Donated Gifts for a Building to Include Recreation

Selectman Katy North explained that this article would allow the donated funds for a future Recreation building to be moved to the correct account. Craig Weisman made a motion to support Article 11. Ralph Rathjen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Chair Ralph Rathjen asked Roger Grey if he had questions on the articles that were voted on prior to his arrival at the meeting. Roger Grey replied that he does have concerns that the Budget Committee did not spend enough time on the budget and did not have ample time to ask questions of department heads. Justin Barriault stated that the attached explanation sheet of each budget line item provided by every department was enough information to make decisions on the budget.

Article 03: To Hire Two Full Time Firefighter/EMT's \$139,800

Roger Grey stated that the Town cannot afford to pay two full-time firefighters and that there are many other projects that need to be addressed and funded, and Craig Weisman agreed. Justin Barriault stated that there are not many self-employed people left in the Town any longer that can afford to be volunteer firefighters. Fire Chief Paul Dexter stated that there are increasing vacancies every year for volunteers because people are having to get full-time jobs. Chair Ralph Rathjen stated that he has not seen a final report from the Fire Department Regionalization Study Committee, but he has reviewed the minutes and has not seen any buy-in from neighboring towns for regionalization.

Ralph Rathjen made a motion to support Article 3. Justin Barriault seconded the motion and the motion passed 3-2, with members voting as follows:

North, Rathjen, Barriault – Yes

Grey, Weisman – No

Article 04: Ambulance \$260,000

Chair Ralph Rathjen explained that the Town is missing out on \$20,000 worth of revenue from missed calls due to only having one ambulance. He stated that the Town currently has to send personnel to wait with a patient before another ambulance can arrive, which costs money. Fire Chief Paul Dexter stated that a new ambulance would allow for him to extend the life of the current ambulance. Craig Weisman stated that there would be no cost to the taxpayers other than maintenance costs for the ambulance, and no new staff would be needed. Roger Grey stated that a town of 2,900 people does not need two ambulances and that other projects should take precedence over this.

Ralph Rathjen made a motion to support Article 4. Selectman Katy North seconded the motion and the motion passed 4-1, with Roger Grey voting No.

Public Hearing

Chair Ralph Rathjen opened the public hearing at 7:05. He explained the summary sheet of the budget provided to the audience and the process of how the Budget Committee arrives at its final recommendations. Tim Lang asked the Committee what the main increases in the budget were from. Chair Rathjen explained that \$50,000 was from increases to insurance that are uncontrollable. The other increases include a tuition reimbursement policy, equipment, and an increase in hired trucking for sanitation which also cannot be controlled. John Vorel stated that he feels certain items in the budget must be increased to lead to a better quality of life and safety for residents. He also suggested that an explanation is given in the budget document for any major increases next time. Don Bormes stated that increased sanitation expenses should be offset

by increases in fees for using the transfer station. Andy Sanborn stated that the Solid Waste Committee is working on this.

BC Meeting Continued

Chair Ralph Rathjen explained to the public that the Budget Committee still needed to vote on Article 12 tonight, but that there will be a special information meeting regarding this matter on February 21st at 5:00 at the Town Offices. Melanie Van Tassel asked what the back-up plan would be if the ambulance were to break down and if this fund was no longer in place. Roger Grey stated that the back-up plan would be to use mutual aid. Tim Lang asked Chief Dexter if discontinuing this fund and returning the money to the General Fund would mean that the Fire Department's fire gear and the Police Department's bullet proof vests could be competing for tax dollars. Chief Dexter responded Yes.

Article 12: Petitioned Article to Discontinue the "Emergency Medical Services Fire and Rescue Apparatus, Equipment and Vehicles Special Revenue Fund" \$273,004

Ralph Rathjen made a motion to not support Article 12. Justin Barriault seconded the motion and the motion passed 4-1, with Roger Grey voting No.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Audry Barriault, Budget Committee Secretary