



NORTHFIELD BUDGET COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of February 4, 2021

Present: Steve Randall, Amy O Hara, Kaitlin Lounsbury, Carl Bartlett, Morris Boudreau and Selectmen Representative Kevin Waldron.

Also Present: Town Administrator Ken Robichaud, Selectmen Scott Haskins, Police Chief John Raffaely, Northfield Residents- Mike Murphy, Jon Cilley, and Walter Hall

Excused Members: George Corliss

Vice-Chairman Kaitlyn Lounsbury assumed the role of Chairman for this meeting as Chairman Corliss was not in attendance and called the Budget Committee meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Selectman Waldron resumed the Selectmen's meeting at 6:30 pm in a joint public hearing with the Budget Committee for budget and warrant approvals.

Budget Committee Member Randall stated for the record that the italicized words after each article is not what the committee has voted on yet, he knows it is a "proposed" set of articles; he would like to make it clear that the committee has not voted on them yet.

Chairman K. Lounsbury acknowledges Mr. Randall's statement for the record.

K. Lounsbury states that she would like to review the budget and begin with the Information Technology portion. Software upgrades line where CAI Technologies map overlay system is located. Discussion revolved around a total for a 5 year plan at \$110,000. If the town entered into a 3 year payment plan there would be a savings of \$9,000. Or the total amount for the project would be \$101,000. The Committee opted to fund this project at the 3 year plan and budgeted the 1st year at \$50,000.00.

The Committee left the CAI discussion and moved to review the minutes on last week's meeting with a **motion from Waldron/Randall to approve the minutes as presented, all in favor, motion passed.**

Discussion went back to Information Technology budget and discussed moving the budget along to a vote.

Randall/O'Hara motioned to increase an additional \$25,000 for map upgrades from CAI technologies, to the Software Upgrade line to an amount of \$56,072. All in favor, motion passed.

Randall/Bartlett motioned to accept the bottom line budget amount of \$97,772.00 for Information Technology, all in favor, motion passed.

Discussion moved back to the public hearing on the budget and warrant articles. Selectman Waldron suggested that the committee review the items that they would like to revisit. The committee decided to open up the hearing for public comment. K. Lounsbury opened up the public hearing at 6:42 pm.

Resident Mike Murphy commented and asked questions on the tree cutting amount in the budget and how many trees that you are removing.

Selectman Waldron and Selectman Haskins spoke to this question that \$32,500.00 has been put in the budget for removing about 40 trees at Pines Park. The Selectmen have received a report from an arborist on the condition of the White Pine trees at the Park. The trees in question are a safety hazard to the community, as they stand. The health of the trees is in decline and is in very poor condition. Each storm more and more limbs fall to the ground. The largest concerns with the trees are trunk decay or main stem decay, woodpecker damage, and dead leaders. The Selectmen have a grave concern for the children that spend time under the canopy of trees with Summer Camp and after school care and activities, and do not wish to see anyone harmed or more so, have a fatality from trees that we have been warned about for some time. There are a significant number of hazardous (dead) branches in the trees of the park, with branches of 2 inches in diameter or more. The Selectmen have a responsibility to remove or mitigate the hazard and this is why we have set aside this money.

Mr. Murphy feels that a logger would go in and tell the town what trees have value and what if any junk wood is there, and the town may make some revenue on some of it.

K. Lounsbury commented that the trees have gone beyond their age and value and therefore may not be of any value at this point. Discussion ensued on trees falling on the Police Department or on the Pines which would be bad as well. Selectmen Waldron discussed after the cutting there would be revitalization plan to redo that area.

Selectmen Haskins updated the committee on the open space committee which two years ago looked at Pines Park and removing the trees was discussed back then as well.

Resident Jon Cilley commented on the notes in the budget this year, he stated that it was very helpful in reviewing the lines in the budget and identifying what is in the budget line, he thanked the Selectmen for this.

K. Lounsbury closed the public hearing portion of the budget at 7:09 pm..

C. Bartlett motioned to reduce the \$32,500 in the tree limbing line in the DPW budget to \$16,500. No second. Motion fails.

Randall/O'Hara motioned to approve \$3,633,652.00 as the bottom line of the 2021 budget as recommended by the Budget Committee, vote of 5-1, with Bartlett in minority, motion passed.

The Budget Committee moved into the Warrant Article review.

Article 2 was read aloud, Randall/Bartlett motioned to recommend acceptance of article 2 by the Budget Committee as presented, all in favor, motion passed.

Article 3 was read aloud, Randall/Boudreau motioned to recommend acceptance of article 3 by the Budget Committee as presented, discussion on what roads were being done in 2021 was had, C. Bartlett asked if the Town should take a hiatus on doing the roads, because we have an Interim DPW Director, and are short staffed, Selectman Waldron stated that we are not short staffed and contractors perform the actual road work and not our DPW personnel, vote of 5-1, Bartlett in the minority, motion passed.

Article 4 was read aloud, **Randall/O'Hara motioned to recommend acceptance of article 4 by the Budget Committee as presented, with discussion from C. Bartlett who questioned why this is a 2 year lapsing budget line and the others are 1 year which coincide with the annual budget. It was discovered that by NH State law this is highway construction and it is allowed to lapse in 2 years instead of 1 year, vote of 5-1, Bartlett in the minority, motion passed.**

Article 5 was read aloud, **Randall/Boudreau motioned to recommend acceptance of article 5 by the Budget Committee as presented, Selectmen Waldron stated to the Committee that this is probably the last year that this amount will be requested as the cost of municipal equipment has increased over time and we are behind the times, all in favor, motion passed.**

Article 6 was read aloud, **Randall/Boudreau motioned to recommend acceptance of article 6 by the Budget Committee as presented. C. Bartlett asked what DPW equipment are we buying, a backhoe was the answer. All in favor, motion passed.**

Article 7 was read aloud, **O'Hara/Boudreau motioned to recommend acceptance of article 7 by the Budget Committee as presented, all in favor, motion passed.**

Article 8 was read aloud, **Randall/Bartlett motioned to recommend acceptance of article 8 by the Budget Committee as presented, all in favor, motion passed.**

Article 9 was read aloud, **Bartlett/Randall motioned to recommend acceptance of article 9 by the Budget Committee as presented, all in favor, motion passed.**

Article 10 was read aloud, **Randall/O'Hara motioned to recommend acceptance of article 10 by the Budget Committee as presented, all in favor, motion passed.**

Article 11 was read aloud, **Waldron/Boudreau motioned to recommend acceptance of article 11 by the Budget Committee as presented, 5-1, with motion passed.**

Article 12 was read aloud, **Waldron/O'Hara motioned to recommend acceptance of article 12 by the Budget Committee as presented, 4-2, motion passed.**

Article 13 was read aloud, **O'Hara/Randall motioned to recommend acceptance of article 13 by the Budget Committee as presented, all in favor, motion passed.**

Article 14 was read aloud, **Randall/O'Hara motioned to recommend acceptance of article 14 by the Budget Committee as presented, Selectman Waldron stated that this is the operating budget and not the gross budget amount, all in favor, motion passed.**

Article 15 was read aloud, **Bartlett/Lounsbury motioned to recommend acceptance of article 15 by the Budget Committee as presented, discussion ensued on this petitioned warrant article and if the committee has to accept or not accept a petitioned warrant article. A vote to recommend this article for acceptance failed on a 0-6 vote.**

Randall/Boudreau motioned to adjourn the Budget Committee meeting, all in favor, motion passed.

Selectman Waldron opened the public hearing for the Selectmen review on warrant articles at 8:23 pm.

Jon Cilley made a statement about the previous discussion of the author of the petitioned warrant article that was discussed earlier, The Boards should be careful not to openly discuss opinions of others not in attendance, due to NH RSA 91-A.

Waldron/Haskins motioned to submit the warrant articles as presented in its entirety to Town meeting. All in favor, motion passed.

Selectmen Waldron closed the public hearing portion of the meeting at 8:30 pm.

Other Business:

Town Meeting date and time was discussed and if the Selectmen were going to move the date. Selectman Waldron stated that at this point we are not moving the date or time; we are trying to move the venue to Southwick School, which has more space.

Committee Member Randall requested that the Selectmen review the budget sooner than later next year so that the Budget Committee is not rushing to get the budget done by a certain date.

The T/A updated the Selectmen on the Emergency Management Center update for the emergency generator here at Town Hall and at the Pines Center. Selectman Haskins spoke about the sparse internet access at the Pines Community Center and was this addressed at the EMC meeting. It was discussed at the last meeting on the cost of upgrading the internet speed at the Pines.

No other business to come before the Selectmen, the meeting adjourned at 8:43 pm.

Minutes Recorded by T/A Ken Robichaud

Minutes approved April 22, 2021