

NORTHFIELD BUDGET COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of February 8, 2018

Present: George Corliss, Scott Haskins, Linda Luedke, Steve Randall, Keith Murray, Kaitlin Lounsbury, Bob Southworth

Also Present: Dennis Allen, Wayne Crowley, Michael Cullen, Diane Cullen, Mike Witzgall, Mark Kelly, Gretchen Wilder, Bill Wilder, Kevin Waldron, Chris Hunt, Andy Buteau, Glenn Smith

The public hearing on the 2018 budget proposal was convened at 7:35pm

Committee members reviewed the 2018 budget proposal and obtained input from members of the public. Questions and comments pertained to telephone expenses, increases in information technical support, salt cost allocations, how salt is used on the roads, recycling, increases in the amount proposed for Hall Memorial Library, and status of the merit pool.

Committee members reviewed the proposed 2018 warrant articles and took input from members of the public. Questions and comments included:

ARTICLE 2: Operation of Keno games

Members inquired as to whether this item was placed on the warrant by petition or not. Sel Southworth responded that the Selectmen placed the article on the warrant and one business has asked that it be on the warrant.

ARTICLE 3: Conveying ownership of Island Park to the Town of Tilton.

Committee members, Chief Raffaely and the public discussed the difficulties of splitting operation of the park between two towns.

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$241,400 to the Road Reconstruction Fund

Kevin Waldron stated that the amount is not enough. Committee members discussed the matter

ARTICLE 5: To see if the Town will vote to establish a Road Repair Revolving Fund

Glenn Smith explained purpose of the fund

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$415,807 to fund road and bridge reconstruction and repair projects

No comments or questions from the committee members or members of the public

ARTICLE 7: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate \$100,000 for the Sandogardy Pond Road State Aid Reconstruction Capital Reserve Fund.

No comments or questions from the committee members or members of the public

ARTICLE 8: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$2,712,679 to fund reconstruction of Sandogardy Pond Road

No comments or questions from the committee members or members of the public

ARTICLE 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$15,300 to purchase lot R08-23 to provide a retention basin in conjunction with Sandogardy Pond Road reconstruction

Citizens inquired as to the extent of the water problems in this area.

ARTICLE 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$75,000 to the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund

Citizens inquired as to whether this was the same amount asked for either year and whether this amount is sufficient to purchase needed equipment. Kevin Waldron asked if this sufficient for this purpose.

ARTICLE 11: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$176,000 to purchase a new Trackless Municipal Tractor

Mike Witzgall testified that he had voted in favor of the purchase when on the CIP committee but now is opposed. Citizens inquired as to the need for this purchase. Steve Randall, Sel. Crowley and Andy Buteau noted that the existing mower isn't working and when it does work it is ineffective and dangerous to use. Sel. Southworth responded that the existing sidewalk machine is working well, the sidewalks are perfect. Steve Randall said that the skid steer is dangerous to operate, has caused injuries to operators and is too wide for town sidewalks. Sel. Southworth stated his opposition, saying that the machine is safe to operate when operated correctly. Andy reported that the mower works but it is old, breaks frequently and is not safe to operate. He also noted that the skid steer used for sidewalk plowing is designed such that when the machine hits something the operator is thrown into the windshield. Several people, including him, have been hurt in this way. He said that the proposed machine should last about 20 years. A member of the public asked if the controls of the existing machine could be reconstructed so that operators are not thrown forward when obstacles are hit. Andy responded that even if it were possible to restructure the controls such that the operator would pull back to move forward this will most likely mean that he would be thrown backward when obstacles are hit. Kevin Waldron noted that he has operated this machine and found it to be woefully inadequate to the task of sidewalk clearing. The machine lacks the pressure to operate the snowblower attachment. Injuries have happened numerous times as the machine hits curbs, sections of broken pavement, etc. while clearing sidewalks. Sel. Southworth noted that he has not seen a Trackless in use as a mower as he travels the state. He also said that the boom is insufficient and the machine is top heavy. He reported that he has found a better, cheaper solution.

Mr. Cullen noted that if the operator is wearing a seatbelt and not driving too fast he should never hit his head on a windshield. Gretchen Wilder asked if a unit can be rented. Sel. Southworth said that he is unaware of any company that rents these items.

ARTICLE 12: To see if the Town will vote to establish a Police Equipment Capital Reserve Fund and to raise and appropriate \$40,000 to be deposited in this fund.

Steve Randall noted that the fund can be used to purchase cruisers and other equipment and funds can be rolled over if a cruiser is not needed in any one year. Committee members discussed the merits of the fund. Kevin Waldron said that he favors capital reserve funds but they should be used to save for big ticket items. He said that nothing the police department buys can't be bought in one year.

ARTICLE 13: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$39,800 to replace a Police Cruiser with funding to come from the Police Equipment Capital Reserve Fund

Members noted that if Article 12 fails a town meeting this article would have to be amended to raise the money by taxation

ARTICLE 14: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand dollars (\$10,000) to the Computer Replacement Fund

Glenn reviewed the warrant article. Mike Witzgall asked about storing this information in the cloud and was told that there is a concern with storing confidential PD files in the cloud.

ARTICLE 15: To see if the Town will vote to raise \$2,350 from the Unassigned Fund Balance to replenish the Facility Emergency Repair Fund

Glenn reviewed the warrant article

ARTICLE 16: To see if the Town will vote to adopt the Commercial and Industrial Construction Exemption

Glenn reviewed the warrant article. Members asked if award is discretionary and were told that it was not. Mr. Cullen expressed concern that existing businesses did not receive this incentive when they located here years ago. Chris Hunt cautioned about giving away too much to new businesses.

Luedke/Southworth moved to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 25, 2018. **Motion passed.**

ARTICLE 17: General operating budget

Randall/Southworth moved to approve the operating budget in the amount of \$3,322,379. Keith Murray objected to the placement of economic development appropriations in an account that does not provide for it going directly to the Northfield Economic Development Corporation. He noted that he is president of the group and feels that this is a direct slap in the face. Sel. Southworth and Steve Randall both expressed concerns that members of NEDC sit on the Budget Committee and vote on the budget. Sel. Crowley said that he would like to see a plan from NEDC as to what they would accomplish with the appropriation. He inquired as to the corporation's balance. Keith responded that they have about \$10,000 in their accounts at this time. Keith noted that the group has started working with UNH on capacity building. Kevin Waldron expressed his support for the group.

Luedke/Corliss moved to reduce the economic development account to zero dollars and add \$5,000 to the account for NEDC. **Motion passed.**

Motion on the operating budget amount of \$3,322,379 passed.

Luedke/Corliss moved to recommend Article 4. **Motion passed.**

Randall/Lounsbury moved to recommend Article 5. **Motion passed.**

Lounsbury/Southworth moved to recommend Article 6. **Motion passed.**

Luedke/Randall moved to recommend Article 7. **Motion passed.**

Randall/Luedke moved to recommend Article 8. **Motion passed.**

Luedke/Randall moved to recommend Article 9. **Motion passed.**

Randall/Southworth moved to recommend Article 10. **Motion passed.**

Randall/Haskins moved to recommend Article 11. Sel. Southworth stated that he is against this article but will vote in favor as he is representing the Selectboard. Keith is opposed given that it specifies Trackless brand. Steve Randall said that he feels it is unconscionable to continue to use the current equipment. Linda Luedke is concerned in that there might be a different piece of equipment available. Kaitlin Lounsbury recommended that the article reference equipment. Steve Randall amended motion to recommend Article 11 if reference to Trackless is removed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:26pm

The meeting reconvened at 9:26pm

The meeting recessed at 9:26pm until 7:30 pm on Thursday February 15th at Northfield Town Hall.

The meeting was reconvened at 7:30pm on Thursday February 15, 2018 at Northfield Town Hall. Budget Committee members in attendance were George Corliss, Scott Haskins, Linda Luedke, Steve Randall, Keith Murray, Kaitlyn Lounsbury, and Bob Southworth

Members were presented with a revised warrant reflecting changes made in response to input received at the first half of the public hearing and information received during the week.

Committee members discussed Article 11. George Corliss recommended removing reference to the proposed use of the new equipment. Members agreed to recommend Article 11.

Committee members discussed Article 12. Sel. Southworth reviewed the article. Chief Raffaely said he was in favor of it. Members agreed to recommend Article 12.

Committee members discussed Article 14 and reviewed the \$20,000 cap for this fund. Members agreed to recommend Article 14.

Committee members discussed Article 15 and its impact on the tax rate. Members agreed to recommend Article 15.

There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 8:05pm

Minutes approved January 3, 2019