

FINAL



WEARE BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 20, 2020

**PRESENT:** JON OSBORNE, SELECTMAN; JAN SNYDER, SELECTMAN; FREDERICK W. HIPPLER, CHAIRMAN; SHERRY BURDICK, SELECTMAN (absent: Vice Chairman Meaney)

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:** Naomi L Bolton

**GUESTS:** Police Chief, Chris Moore; Fire Chief, Robert Vezina; Public Works Director, Benji Knapp; Finance Administrator, Beth Rouse; Finance Committee Members, Tom Downing, Matt Whitlock, Keith Erf, Neal Kurk, Chris Hague, Dennis Aubin, James Drury, Nicole Herbst; Library Trustees, Brenda Cannon, Heleen Kurk; Clarence Gardner; Richard Butt; Frank Campana

Chairman Hippler opened the meeting at 6:27pm, called to order at 6:27pm.

**NONPUBLIC SESSION:**

**Chairman Hippler moved, Selectman Osborne seconded to enter into nonpublic session @ 6:27 p.m. pursuant to the authority granted in RSA 91-A:3II (a & c). A roll call vote was taken, Selectman Osborne - yes; Selectman Snyder – yes; Chairman Hippler - yes; Selectman Burdick – yes. Passed 4-0-0**

**Chairman Hippler moved, Selectman Osborne seconded to exit this nonpublic session @ 6:40 p.m. A roll call vote was taken, Selectman Osborne – yes; Selectman Snyder – yes; Chairman Hippler – yes; Selectman Burdick – yes. Passed 4-0-0**

**Chairman Hippler moved, Selectman Osborne seconded to seal and restrict these nonpublic session minutes. Passed 4-0-0**

Chairman Hippler welcomed those present to the January 20, 2020 meeting of the Weare Board of Selectmen and proceeded with the pledge of allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**DEPARTMENT HEAD/COMMITTEE ITEMS:** None

**MINUTES:**

**January 13, 2020 Minutes: Selectman Burdick moved to accept the minutes of January 13<sup>th</sup> as written, Selectman Osborne seconded; passed 3-0-1, Chairman Hippler abstained.**

**MANIFEST:** Chairman Hippler and Selectman Burdick, moved to accept the manifest as follows, which passed 4-0-0.

*To order the Treasurer to sign the payroll and accounts payables checks dated January 23, 2020, as included in the following manifests:*

<i>Payroll Manifest</i>	\$	57,606.55 (Weekly & monthly payroll)
<i>2019 Accounts Payable Manifest</i>	\$	10,296.89
<i>Accounts Payable Manifest</i>	\$	41,856.32
<i>Supplemental Accounts Payable Manifest</i>	\$	16,875.00
<i>Total</i>	\$	<span style="border: 1px solid black;">126,634.76</span>

#### **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:**

Facility Use Public Hearing, Monday, February 3, 2020 at 6:45pm has been posted in paper for two weeks. An invitation was given to those that use the Town Hall on a regular basis.

##### Government Building-

- Gordon Brown, dates will be decided to see about a site walk to check for potential water damage.
- Town Offices, ongoing septic problem, Granite State Plumbing changed a wax ring, will follow up with a camera to locate the sag in piping along with estimates.
- Town Hall Sign, wait till spring
- Historical Building Sign, to freshen up

#### **CORRESPONDENCE & OTHER BUSINESS:** None

**PUBLIC HEARING:** To hear public testimony and comment on the 2020 overall Proposed Town Budget, including all separate, special, and petitioned Warrant Articles, as well as disclosure of the Default Budget

Chairman Hippler opened at 6:52pm

Article 4- (operating budget) Neal Kurk asked about revenues. Town Administrator Bolton replied that for the March ballot we have always conservatively estimated. The revenues are revisited again in August and one last time when the tax rate is set in October. There were two things that occurred in 2019 that may not happen again in 2020, one is the sale of Town property and the other is one large timber cut.

Frank Campana inquired about the default number in words as it doesn't match the numerical numbers. Town Administrator Bolton stated that she will be correcting words to match the numbers

Chris Hague discussed the proposed Library budget of \$233,657.00, "I would like to know if they changed anything since the original proposal?" Chairman Hippler responded, I don't believe they've changed anything. Chris Hague asked is there still a 10% raise for the new Director, the answer was yes. Chris Hague stated that

salary increase would put it up in the range of Goffstown and Bow. It would be above towns of our like size. She believes it would be a substantial raise. She also, asked if there were raises for the staff because in her opinion they are below standard and need to come up. Brenda Cannon responded, the reason for the increase in the new Director's salary was for "recruitment and retention... without those two things you're gonna have a tough time." She described surrounding towns such as Goffstown, New Boston and Henniker as having a higher salary than Weare. Chris Hague recited numerous surrounding town's hourly salary and feels based on our tax base, Weare is in a reasonable range, but the staff is not.

Neal Kurk stated, "The salary increase for the Library Director is buried in the budget. I thought we had a practice in this town... putting all raises in warrant articles... for the little people, for their two and three percent raises we have a separate warrant article. But, for the big people we apparently don't. The Library Director is getting a \$10,000.00 or \$20,000.00 increase. The Fire Chief just got a \$10,000.00 increase by the Fire Wards." He feels this goes against what the people of this town are asking for, they want to vote when people are getting salary increases. He also feels, "the Board of Selectmen, the Library and the Fire Department are very wrong in trying to circumvent the wishes of the town."

Article 5- (3 year collective bargaining agreement) Neal Kurk asked for further information pertaining to the salary percentage increase each year, other factors, and is this a good deal or a bad deal for the town. Town Administrator Bolton explained after three meetings with the NE Police Benevolent Association they came in at \$100,000.00 less than where they started. Along with certain housekeeping aspects, changes such as vacations accrual on a monthly basis, and a clothing allowance that is now on a reimbursement basis. The first year's large increase, 6.39% from April to December, is intuitive to keeping the cost for recruitment for one person under the replacement cost. She explained, it is roughly \$40,000.00 to get someone through the door as a police officer, with training, currently we have two openings. Going forward, years two and three are at a 3% increase. Neal Kurk questioned the first year's raise with an annualized rate of roughly 8%. He then asked about, "...eliminating the very restrictive provisions in the contract with respect to the number of officers who have to do each shift with respect to... the use of part time officers, ...use of regular officers...overtime." He stated giving the Chief more flexibility would provide better service for the town. He then asked, "Were there any changes made to give management, the Chief, more flexibility in the deployment of officers?" Town Administrator Bolton responded, "The Chief has a lot of management rights." She continued to expound on the current situation. The problem stems from not having enough staff ...five out of the eleven police officers cannot be on the street. Neal Kurk feels the officers are getting an exceptionally large increase. He asked about any changes in the contract that would offset this increase that would be benefitting to the town. Chief Moore explained, "It's a marketing adjustment, (along with retirement), NH is not a very desirable state to be a police officer, as well as the nation right now. The media's killed us. Nobody wants to be a police officer anymore, everybody has vacancies." He explained further the hardships to recruit and keep quality officers. He also stated, the CBA demands two officers per shift, our officers have waived that, the day shift is primarily one officer and they are getting the job done. They are working a lot and doing a very good job. He went on to say, "It's a cost benefit analysis."

Frank Campana asked about education and uniform allowances. Town Administrator Bolton explained, educational incentives are aligned with what kind of college degree they have, uniform reimbursements are dispensed when items are purchased, and vacation time is accrued. Clarence Gardner asked about our current police roster. Town Administrator Bolton explained we have two vacancies, one on desk duty waiting for medical clearance (shot on duty), and one on military leave. Frank Campana asked about holiday pay and a clarification on insurance contributions.

Article 6- (3% raises non-union, DPW increase) Richard Butt stated, historically Weare has always been involved with approving wage adjustments above and beyond the 3% for non-union employees. He inquired

about the Weare wage adjustments from 2018 at \$26,855.00 to \$61,832.00. He feels the DPW Director raise of \$8000.00 should be voted on in a separate warrant article. He feels it is wrong to roll it into the non-union employee raises. Heleen Kurk asked for a breakdown of how many staff are making under \$15.00/hour and a wage higher than \$40,000.00/year. She is concerned for the library staff making \$9.00/hour that have worked there for years and stated it is unreasonable. For example, the library staff at a 3% raise will get a .27 cent increase and someone making over \$70,000.00 is getting a “big chunk.” Beth Rouse replied only seven people are under \$15.00/hour. Heleen Kurk is interested in those individuals whose livelihoods need boosting up.

Benjamin Knapp stated last year he felt his employees were not making enough and he asked for a separate warrant article for an increase. He went on to say he didn’t think we should segregate between what the hourly wage is. He feels a 3% raise is a 3% raise, regardless of an hourly wage. Chris Hague suggested reviving the Benefit Review Committee and reiterated the library staff is under paid. Neal Kurk stated having the DPW Director’s \$8000.00 salary increase in with the non-union 3% staff increase is misleading the public. He believes the article should clearly state there is a 3% raise across the board and insert the DPW Director’s increase of \$8000.00. It is his belief this needs to be amended for clarity and fairness to the voters. Frank Campana outlined as well in order for the Board or Department Heads to be transparent and mean it, they need to have the DPW Director’s raise in a separate article. He also stated consideration should be given to the ordinary person, that 3% across the board is excessive. He also questioned the previous suggestion of the increase for the non-union aligning with the police increase. Selectman Osborne answered that the Board did talk about the non-union employees and the police increase last week. Selectman Snyder said a 4% increase for non-union was talked about. Town Administrator Bolton explained the staff thought 4% was too high. Frank Campana repeated, there is a disservice by not having the DPW Director’s increase in a separate article. Tom Clow added, part timers at Dunkin Donuts make \$12.00/hour, though a town job has different responsibilities. He suggested creating a base for non-union employees in reference to that first year increase so that town employees aren’t making less than a part timer at Dunkin Donuts. Richard Butt asked for clarification as to how many town employees, other than the library, are making \$12.00/hour or less. Beth Rouse answered 13 part timers. Richard Butt went on to reiterate in establishing a base, one needs to consider benefits when comparing employees with other towns. Such as how much do they get in insurance, do they get an educational allowance. He asked, what’s built into their salary? He further stated, “You don’t know, so when you start talking salaries, establishing a base, you really need to consider other factors if you’re comparing it to other towns. I think it’s very dangerous, it’s a slippery slope when you’re getting into that situation.” He went on to explain trying to be competitive with other towns does not compute. It does not depict all the contributing factors. He explained, Weare is small comparatively, and is never going to match up, departments are small, and there is limited promotions. Heleen Kurk added, there are no benefits for library staff. Selectman Burdick clarified that is in reference to part time library personnel. Frank Campana asked if the DPW Director would also get the 3% increase on top of his additional \$8000.00 salary increase. The Board answered yes. Richard Butt repeated, \$8000.00 plus the 3%.

**Chairman Hippler moved to pull the DPW Director’s \$8000.00 increase from the warrant article making it a separate standalone article. Selectman Snyder seconded, passed 4-0-0**

Article 7- (hiring one new DPW employee) Clarence Gardner asked if this article is in addition to the money set forth in Article 4. Chairman Hippler answered, yes. Neal Kurk suggested changing the wording to explain how this new employee would be utilized, stating what they would be doing to justify the need for additional staff. Town Administrator Bolton stated such a description would, “Tie your hands.” Without a specialized title/description this new employee could be utilized as the Director sees fit. Neal Kurk asked what changed in the town, wondering, is there an additional work load. Benjamin Knapp replied, this position is advertised as a truck driver, they are always under staffed, we have 10 – 15 new roads and he has vacation time to cover. Frank Campana asked with this new hire would the current part timer stay on staff. Benjamin Knapp answered yes. Frank Campana stated if extra roads equals a new full timer then why keep the part timer. Benjamin Knapp

responded this part timer is mainly just for plowing snow, budgeted for 10 hours a week, and the new employee will be a CDL driver.

Article 8- (hiring two new firefighters/EMTs) Richard Butt asked if this passes does that mean the default budget would be reduced as well. Town Administrator Bolton answered yes, next year's default budget would. Richard Butt asked Chief Vezina where we are headed. He wondered if he would be looking to add two more additional people next year, etc. Chief Vezina explained last year he came forward with a multiyear plan, paying for coverage 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. 365 days a year. He stated back in 2009, the department could not handle the calls coming in. So, in getting the ball rolling, he is putting this together gradually, making it palatable for the tax payers. His design is 2 additional fire fighters a year for four years, amounting to 8 fulltime staff. Augmented with our call force could provide a good base for 24 hour coverage. Frank Campana then asked if the fire department was included in the Article 6 pay raise. The Board answered yes. Frank Campana went on to say in his opinion the Board of Fire Ward work in their own zip code. Explaining last July they gave a \$1.00/hour increase to fire department personnel, the Board of Selectmen had no control and a \$10,000.00 raise to Chief Vezina. Mr. Campana asked what the perceived impact on the operating budget, personnel benefits, and holiday pay would be. He asked will this include vehicles to take home. Mr. Campana asked about housing the eventual 8 staff members and Chairman Hippler explained the current fire house is set up to accommodate them now.

Article 9- (Library) Tom Clow pointed out the article doesn't mention the department. Chris Hague asked if it was adding a day or just the hours. Brenda Canon stated they are only increasing one part timer to fulltime and extra staff hours for the new director to decide how to use. The article was amended by Neal Kurk and Brenda Cannon for the library.

Article 10- (fitness equipment for FD w/ Buxton Trust Fund) Frank Campana said a couple of years ago the same article came up and a resident donated equipment and he wondered would this be added to the current equipment. Chief Vezina replied, this new equipment would be in addition to. Frank Campana asked would it be feasible to put out feelers to see if perhaps another resident would be looking to unload more fitness equipment instead. Chief Moore reminded everyone you have to be careful with donated equipment placed in a town building. They require a warranty and inspections, and he stated you really can't take donated equipment. Clarence Gardner asked Chief Vezina if he already had something in mind for this specific amount of money. Chief Vezina said yes and explained the fire department was graciously awarded this money through the Buxton Estate. This warrant article is seeking permission to use the funds for the health and wellness of his members at no cost to the tax payer.

Article 11- (purchasing two new police cruisers) Neal Kurk explains the article as written is not accurate. The true tax impact is actually larger. He went on to explain that when you take money out of the Unreserved Fund Balance then it's not available to lower taxes. Therefore, technically it is a .12 cent tax impact and not .08 cents. He indicated spending the money vs. giving it back to tax payers to supplement the cost of two cruisers is not transparency. Neal Kurk would like it stipulated this is "not a freebie, the extra four cents is really coming out of our taxes." Richard Butt then stated he doesn't agree with the article and how the cruisers will be distributed. He mentioned last week the wording changed from "equipped" to "serviceable," and questioned the reasoning behind this. He then asked can one of the new cruisers be described as a fully equipped, marked cruiser. Chief Moore answered no, fully serviceable means it can go out on the street and answer calls for service. He further explained, the cruisers are the same vehicle, a Chevy Tahoe. One is fitted exclusively as a police pursuit vehicle. The other is administrative in nature with a different set of tactics and the incident command system. Both vehicles can do the same thing, one is marked and the other is not for specific reasons. Richard Butt feels both cruisers should go to officers doing the daily work, especially, where a police cruiser currently, the Charger's,



are causing issues with personnel in terms of medical problems. He also stated the article doesn't precisely portray the difference between the two cruiser's functionality. Mr. Butt stated in his opinion the Fire Chief Vezina's article is very clear and article 11 is not. Frank Campana believes two vehicles with two different up fits, should be two different articles. Tom Clow reminds the Board that last year it was conceived to wait to see what the new chief wanted before deciding about new vehicles. He believes the town waited and now Chief Moore has stated what he needs and we, as a town, need to support that. Mr. Clow then went on to express the rotating of vehicles such as the Unit 6 cruiser being allocated to the Animal Control officer just makes sense. The town is growing, departments are filling positions, and therefore, we need to support the chief in this transition. Frank Campana referenced a previous meeting where Chairman Hippler asked Chief Moore how long he planned on running his vehicle. Mr. Campana states the response from the Chief was a 5 or 6 year range, then roll it down to administration and at that time get a new one. Mr. Campana wants the article spelled out. Chief Moore spoke next and stated Mr. Campana's statement is incorrect. Chief Moore delved further into the six year rotation cycle of his department vehicles.

Article 12- (fully equipped 10 wheeler) no comment

Article 13- (fully equipped medium duty 6 wheeler) Benjamin Knapp explained it replaces the former one ton. Matt Whitlock questioned why another 6 wheeler. Benjamin Knapp clarified it is for cold patch and plowing parking lots, a couple of small roads, not to be heavily out fitted. Frank Campana addressed Articles 12 and 13, "trying to draw a parallel" to Article 11. He asked since Article 11 is combined, then, shouldn't Article 12 and 13, if you're trying to be transparent and consistent. James Drury stated Article 12 and 13 should also be written as fully serviceable not fully equipped, to be consistent. Tom Clow concurred, fully serviceable would be clearer wording. Benjamin Knapp responded, in order to not have to stay here all night, change the wording, he's fine with that.

Article 14- (bridge reconstruction) Chairman Hippler verified that this was the last of 4 installments to the original plan that was predicted for 20% of the red listed bridges. River Road, Lull and Old Francestown are the bridges in question.

Article 15- (road reconstruction) Benjamin Knapp stated this is \$20,000.00 higher to stay in tune with continuing road maintenance. Last year's road bond was for preservation and when that's over we need to continue to get that number up, so we don't have to stop road work. He went on to say \$11,000.00 was put into the operating budget, specifically, for calcium chloride for dirt roads.

Article 16- (Radio Communication Capital Reserve Fund) no comment

Article 17- (Government Building) no comment

Article 18- (Town Hall) no comment

Article 19- (Cemetery) no comment

Article 20- (fireworks) no comment

Article 21- (forester) no comment

Article 22- (Town forest land) no comment

Article 23- (petition, FD Special Revenue Fund) Dennis Aubin stated he wrote the petition after he noticed the burden the FD was putting on the budget with additional fire personnel. He suggests any money generated beyond what the department had listed in their CIP in their 10 year plan be put back in the general fund. Clarence Gardner then asked how revenue is being generated. Chairman Hippler explained it's from ambulance billing. Chief Vezina then spoke to the disclaimer on the bottom of the spreadsheet that the petitioner used in his presentation. He inquired with his vendor based on a 2012 fire truck cost \$450,000.00, to build that truck today the price would be \$550,000.00. That translates into a 5% – 7% increase a year going forward. He continues explaining, extrapolating those figures out to 2023 puts us in the \$600,000.00 plus range. Adding to that extent, the ambulance in today's dollars is \$308,000.00, for 2025 around \$320,000.00. He explained further, at this rate by 2025 we would be out of money. He feels the savings account is just smart business, it's the best avenue to buy apparatus. It also encompasses a hardship policy. Benjamin Knapp cautioned against this petition because things are getting better and if we zero out, then people are going to have to go without. He feels there is no danger in having this account because the tax payers are still the agents of it. Benjamin Knapp is a strong advocate for the privilege of buying needed equipment with a zero tax impact. Dennis Aubin responded to the Chief by saying based on what he said tonight, what he gave the CIP was not accurate. He states the Chief wasn't worried about the town and their funds. Mr. Aubin referenced the Chief as irresponsible for not having accurate numbers in the CIP. Chief Vezina addressed comments made by Mr. Aubin, "I do take great offense to the last comment." Chief Vezina spoke to the inconceivable notion that he is "fiscally irresponsible" when he has come in under budget his entire employment with the town. He went on to express his success, doing some really great things, making accommodations and purchases putting this town in the best position.

Article 24- (PARC, Quaker Street and Rt 114) Chairman Hippler confirmed the Board dropped their warrant article in lieu of this one. Tom Clow suggested the area along Route 114 would be appropriate for another building for the town based on its close proximity to the town center, i.e. a new library or separate building for police. Chris Hague asked about the tax impact.

Matt Whitlock asked what happens if the unreserved fund balance only has enough money in it for one or the other in regards to Article 11 & 17. Town Administrator Bolton and Chairman Hippler explained they never would have been presented if there was not enough money to cover them. All Articles can be altered at the Deliberative Session.

Frank Campana is looking for an answer to the two articles coming from the unreserved fund balance. He feels the balance is too low, "unserviceable." He states it's below 5% and it should be built up. Town Administrator cites the 2020 Municipal Budget Summary explaining to Mr. Campana that all is well.

Chairman Hippler closes the Public Hearing at 9:18pm.

Chairman Hippler's report for the Town Report, ok with adding the new staff Kyle, Kelly and Karen

Selectman Osborne felt the cruiser article should be divided as they are different vehicles. The consensus of the board agreed.

**Being there was no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Hippler moved to adjourn at 9:32pm, Selectman Burdick seconded; passed 4-0-0.**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

A True Record.

*Karen Nelson*

Karen Nelson transcribed from  
TA Bolton notes & YouTube recording