

TOWN OF WEARE, NH
2023 DELIBERATIVE SESSION MINUTES
FEBRUARY 4, 2023

Moderator Jon Morton called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and asked everyone to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ricky Hippler, Chairman, Board of Selectmen, introduced the Board of Selectmen: Kevin Cahill, Jon Osborne and John Van Loendersloot.

Moderator Morton recognized those residents of Weare who passed away in 2022.

Moderator Morton explained the rules of order guidelines for the deliberative session – today's votes will be cast using the red/green colored voting card; if you are a registered voter and do not have a card, you must sign in with the Supervisors of the Checklist to receive one; if you are not a registered voter you cannot participate in voting and must be seated in the designated area for non-voters. The warrant article will be read as it appears on the warrant and placed on the floor for discussion, debate, and/or amendment so there is a final version that will appear on the ballot for March 17th. If someone would like to restrict reconsideration, once an article has had a final vote, a motion must be made to do so. Any voter may question a ruling by the moderator by asking to appeal the ruling to the body as a whole; a majority vote is required to overrule the moderator. The selectmen, Finance Committee, and/or petitioner will be called on, as appropriate, to speak first to an article. The floor will then be opened to questions, comments, and/or amendments by the voters. If someone would like to speak on an article, please stand in line at the microphone and when you are recognized to speak, state your name clearly prior to beginning. All speakers will be required to show their voter id, sticker or card – only registered voters will be allowed to speak unless a majority of the voters present decide otherwise. Mr. Morton asked that the Police Chief, Interim Public Works Director and Town Counsel be given permission to speak at this session without objection. Questions and/or comments will be directed to the moderator and no conversation directed to others on the floor will be allowed. A motion to call a question will not be accepted until all have had a fair opportunity to express their views. In order to make this meeting run smoothly and efficiently, please be brief and non-repetitive with comments and stick to the subject matter within the article; if a speaker is repeating what has already been discussed, the moderator will ask them to move on to any other questions or comments they may have. Amendments will be accepted however, they must be in writing in order to eliminate any confusion and will only be accepted once the selectmen, Finance Committee, and/or petitioner have an opportunity to speak – only one amendment will be allowed on the floor at any given time; once an amendment is voted on, the moderator will ask for any other amendments. An amendment cannot change the subject matter, purpose or intent of the article as posted. A request to have a paper ballot must be in writing and signed by five registered voters.

Moderator Morton announced that there was a request to move Article 21 to the front of the docket this morning. The request failed on a vote.

Moderator Morton proceeded onto the warrant articles beginning with Article 5.

ARTICLE 5

Shall the Town raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling Seven Million Nine Hundred Seventy-Seven Thousand Five Hundred Forty Dollars (\$7,977,540)? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be Seven Million Four Hundred Nineteen Thousand Three Hundred Forty-Eight Dollars (\$7,419,348), which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. (Recommended by Board of Selectmen)

Chair Hippler moved the article as read. The motion was seconded.

Chair Hippler explained that this year's budget represents adjustments made to encompass the cost of operating the town for 2023; the last budget they were operating on passed in 2019 and, even with current inflation being at record highs for the last few years, the town has managed to operate without any cuts in service by combining positions and using unfilled payroll funds to make up the cost increases. He provided an example of road salt which went from \$53.33 a ton in 2019 to \$79.22 this last purchase; items such as these are driving this budget a little higher but it's still only a 7.52% increase.

Tom Clow, Finance Committee Chair, acknowledged other Finance Committee members: Vice Chair Janice Mathews, Tom Flaherty, Elizabeth Evans, Gary Evans, John Merva, Maria Fossiano, Bill Anderson and James Drury.

Tom Clow, Finance Committee Chair, was recognized to speak. The committee unanimously supports this article and views it as the most important town article for passage by the voters. The town has been operating on default budgets for three straight years. The default budgets have resulted in ever-increasing critical funding shortfalls in fuel, salt, parts, trash hauling and IT needs. The most obvious example is the over \$300,000 difference in proposed/default budgets for the Highway Department/Transfer Station. Each additional year with a default budget expands the gap between the proposed and default budgets. The tax rate for the proposed budget is \$3.29 and the default is \$2.86; the \$0.43 difference represents a \$150 difference in property taxes on a \$350,000 property. The town has also made a conscientious effort to minimize the tax impact of other warrant articles by using other funding sources in an effort to get the operating budget approved. The committee applauds and supports these efforts.

Richard Butt, Old Town Road, proposed an amendment with the reason being to provide funding for the town to purchase tools necessary for the Highway Department to service town vehicles. He noted that currently, the town is borrowing those tools from an employee – the tools being used at the Highway Department to service Highway Department vehicles as well as other town vehicles, are borrowed. He indicated that this became known to the selectmen early in the budget process; they set aside \$75,000 to purchase tools which was later reduced down to \$58,000 and then reduced further down to \$15,000. He feels that the selectmen cut this because

they wanted to keep the budget under \$8 million. Mr. Butts amendment is to add \$43,000 back into the budget.

Moderator Morton clarified that the amendment would change the \$7,977,540 to \$8,020,540; the difference in the tax impact would go from \$3.29 to \$3.33.

Gerry Little, Woodbury Rd, asked if the proposed increased in the budget with the amendment is specifically limited to use on one particular line item for tools or just increasing the bottom line of the budget.

Laura Spector-Morgan, Town Counsel, responded that it would just increase the bottom line and the selectmen have the discretion to move money around in the budget however they like.

Neal Kurk, Mt Dearborn Road, asked what the total amount of surplus was at the end of calendar 2022.

Chair Hippler responded approximately \$185,000 after the Selectmen's Board made the end of year expenditures.

Mr. Kurk noted that the year-end expenditures were \$133,000 making the total surplus roughly \$318,000. As he understands, there are currently a number of vacant positions in which there will be a substantial surplus in this year's budget, default or proposed, for far more than \$43,000 so he doesn't believe that it's necessary to raise the bottom line in order to have enough money for these tools.

Tom Clow, Concord Stage Road, asked the members of the board to explain why the cuts were made in that tool line.

Chair Hippler responded that they did want to keep the numbers under \$8 million. He explained that, at the end of the year, they spent \$17,000 to purchase and make a good start into the tools needed. The interim DPW Director, whose tools they are using, made a comprehensive list of tools that are needed for the town which totaled \$85,000. He indicated that they would be at \$30,000 to \$32,000 if they spend the \$17,000 from last year and \$15,000 in the one-time purchase line moving forward.

Mr. Clow clarified that it was stated that the town is borrowing the tools but this is not correct noting that they have entered into a lease agreement on a monthly basis for the use of some of the mechanic's specialty tools which will become replaced over time. He added that they have decided to attack this in a periodic purchase over the course of a number of years. He pointed out that equipment and tools change quickly but the fundamental tools are accounted for in the \$30,000.

Frank Campana, Quaker Street, asked if there could be a commitment by the Board of Selectmen that, if this amendment passes, this line would be funded to satisfy the amendment.

Chair Hippler replied that they haven't had this discussion but he would personally, as one member, be in favor of it but is not going to say absolutely yes.

Mr. Campana supports the amendment with the caveat that he's not convinced that the selectmen wouldn't take the money for something else.

Heleen Kurk, Mt Dearborn Road, asked how much they are paying to borrow/rent the tools currently.

Chair Hippler responded that the cost is \$250 per month.

Ms. Kurk inquired whether there was currently anything in the budget for tools.

Chair Hippler replied that there is currently a one-time tool purchase line for \$15,000. He clarified that there isn't a line item for Highway Department tooling in the proposed budget.

Ms. Kurk is concerned that the current board may say they will do this but a future board may change their mind and find something that they think is more important. She wondered, to ensure that it goes for which it is meant, if it couldn't be added to the very last article which is anything else that comes before the board.

Moderator Morton responded no and clarified that it would need to be added to this article.

Richard Butt, Old Town Road, understands that the town is paying to borrow tools questioning whether the lease agreement is binding and what are the conditions.

Selectman Cahill explained that as they appointed the interim DPW Director, at the same time, the selectmen found out that he was using his own tools with an agreement with the previous DPW Director. He clarified that the agreement was not in writing and was not approved by the board; it was then stated that, as part of assuming this responsibility, he wanted some form of compensation for the use of his tools which was discussed and agreed along with his monetary compensation with hourly time.

Mr. Butt inquired whether there is a lease agreement for that person for a year, six months, etc. He further inquired what happens if that person leaves.

Chair Hippler noted that they do not have an agreement with him and if he leaves his position, the tools go with him.

Mr. Butt stated that in crafting the proposed budget, he believes that the selectmen should be putting money in the lines that reflect what their needs are.

Chair Hippler responded that he misspoke noting that he thought it was under a one-time purchase line but it is a line item in the budget.

Mr. Butt noted his concerns with the town renting/borrowing tools. He feels it's important to have the money available for tools and feels it would be a benefit to the employees.

There being no further discussion on the amendment, Moderator Morton announced that the vote on the floor is on the amendment. The proposed amendment failed.

Moderator Morton noted that discussion is open on Article 5 as originally read.

Neal Kurk, Mt Dearborn Road, indicated that he's been looking at two different figures for the effect of this article on the tax rate; one is in the booklet that the selectmen prepared which suggests the rate is higher than the Finance Committee's rate at \$3.29. He asked for clarification to the anticipated tax impact if the proposed budget passes.

Moderator Morton responded that the \$3.29 is the tax impact.

Mr. Kurk pointed out that the tax rate for the default budget would be \$2.86 noting that this represents a 15% increase in taxes. He noted that the budget is up 8.8% but the tax rate would go up 15%.

Naomi Bolton, Town Administrator clarified that the \$3.29 and \$2.86 is correct and represents 7.52% not 8.8% like the booklet had at the public hearing. She pointed out that they had the public hearing on January 16th at which time they listened to everybody, regrouped and reduced fuel, salt and tools which is why there is a final number that was posted.

Mr. Kurk noted that even the final number, \$3.29, represents a 15% increase on the tax rate that would be in effect if they rejected the proposed budget and the default budget became effective.

After a brief break, Mr. Kurk indicated that he believes he has clarity on this. He thinks he is correct by stating that the budget in total dollars went up by approximately 8% but the tax rate went up from \$2.86 in the default budget to \$3.29 in the proposed budget which is a 15% difference. From a taxpayer's point of view, he explained that if they vote for the proposed budget you are raising on the town portion, budget only, by 15%; this 15% is approximately \$178 on a \$350,000 home – just on this item and has nothing to do with the schools or the rest of the warrant articles.

Frank Campana, Quaker Street, understands the needs of the town but noted his concerns with his own household budget.

David Erikson, Poor Farm Road, feels that this budget is taking care of him; he wants the town services such as plowing and the transfer station.

Tom Clow, Concord Stage Road, moved the question. The vote to move the question passed.

Moderator Morton announced that Article 5 would be placed on the ballot as written.

Naomi Bolton, Town Administrator, moved to restrict reconsideration. The motion was seconded and passed.

ARTICLE 6

Shall the Town approve the cost items contained in the one (1) year collective bargaining agreement reached between the Board of Selectmen and the New England Police Benevolent Association (NEPBA) Union for the Police Department Employees, which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

<u>Fiscal</u>	<u>Estimated</u>
<u>Year</u>	<u>Increase</u>
2023	\$59,266

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty-Nine Thousand Two Hundred Sixty-Six Dollars (\$59,266) for the current fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels? (Recommended by Board of Selectmen)
Estimated tax impact = \$0.05

Selectman Cahill moved the article as read. The motion was seconded.

Selectman Cahill explained that this is an 8% increase, a one year contract, for full and part time officers' wages. He pointed out that this number includes payroll taxes, NHRS contributions, and wages. He noted that this is the CBA roster: 1 Captain, 3 Sergeants, 1 Corporal, 6 full time officers (1 vacancy at this time), and 2 part time officers for a total of 13 employees; this does not include the Chief and/or administrative assistant. He further explained that the total cost for the full year of 2024 would be \$67,805; this item is for a 9 month agreement. He pointed out that the primary purpose of this item is for employee retention.

Tom Clow, Finance Committee Chair, was recognized to speak. The Finance Committee recommends this article. The committee supports this one year agreement. It will give 8% increases across the board with no change to primary benefits. The \$59,200 amount in the warrant reflects nine (9) months funding for 2023; annual recurring costs will be approximately \$79,000. Hiring and retaining police officers is a nationwide problem; it is even more difficult for small communities like Weare. We cannot compete with larger cities which are offering sign-on bonuses, better benefit packages and broader career opportunities. We are currently down one position, with the potential of losing two additional officers. Hiring new officers requires investment in time, training and equipment at an estimated cost of up to \$70,000 per new recruit. Once ready for service, it is imperative we do all we can to retain these individuals by staying competitive with salary/benefits. Even with the 8% increase, our salary structure will still be below some similar sized communities.

Chief Moore added that it's his understanding that they are going to be below all towns within the surrounding area. He indicated that Henniker, Dunbarton and New Boston are all on the State Police scale and believes that they are going up 10% and Weare is already below the State Police scale; Goffstown does its own pay structure and are above them also.

Frank Campana, Quaker Street, is pleased to see that the Finance Committee has included the twelve month dollar cost. He asked for the tax impact for a full twelve month period.

Selectman Cahill responded that the estimated tax impact for twelve months would still be five cents.

Mr. Campana inquired as to the current average salary of a police officer for the Town of Weare.

Chief Moore responded that it varies; the lowest paid officer is right around \$50,000 per year and the highest paid officer is around \$65,000 per year.

Referencing the Finance Committee report specifically, "we cannot compete with larger cities", Mr. Campana asked if the town is striving to compete with larger cities.

Chief Moore replied no stating that they are not even competing with the local agencies pointing out that Weare is at the bottom tier. He added that, when you compound the fact that the budget repeatedly fails which doesn't provide the necessary safety equipment for officers, it's a compounding effect as to why they lose an officer every 3.8 months.

Mr. Campana asked if they are headed to competing with larger cities.

Chief Moore responded no but just to be competitive locally.

Tom Clow, Finance Committee Chair, clarified that the language used by the committee was not suggesting that they need to compete with larger communities but really competing with communities our own size and Weare is on the low end of that.

Brent Dickinson, Dels Way, stated that using this as an example, they can't compete with the surrounding towns to retain anybody; at some point in time, it's going to have to come to fruition that the Board, Planning, Zoning and School get together and come up with a long range plan. He indicated that Weare is very unique because they don't have the income for taxes, the revenue, to sustain basic services; at some point in time, they have to get together to find out what they need to do to bring in commercial, industrial and retail. He feels that the town needs to re-establish a business solution for revenue or they are going to keep losing really good officers, teachers, etc.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Morton announced that Article 6 would be placed on the ballot as written.

Naomi Bolton, Town Administrator, moved to restrict reconsideration. The motion was seconded and passed.

ARTICLE 7

Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of Ninety Eight Thousand Two Hundred Twenty-Five Dollars (\$98,225) to be used for raises for non-union Town and Library personnel? If approved, this addition would become part of the annual budget with an estimated annual cost of

One Hundred Twenty-Five Thousand Five Hundred Eighty Four Dollars (\$125,584).
(Recommended by Board of Selectmen)
Estimated tax impact = \$0.08

Vice Chair Osborne moved the article as read. The motion was seconded.

Vice Chair Osborne explained this represents increases in wages for 58 full time and permanent part time employees plus numerous Parks & Recreation employees as well as on-call firefighters. He noted that 39% of this warrant article is for increases to the Department of Public Works personnel; 34% is for increase of first responders; the remaining 27% is for Town Clerk Office, Assessing, Library, Selectmen's Office, Tax Collector, Finance, Land Use, Parks & Recreation, Code Enforcement, Welfare and Health Departments.

Tom Clow, Finance Committee Chair, was recognized to speak. The Finance Committee recommends this article. The committee supports moving away from standard across-the-board percentage pay raise. In recent years, Weare has had difficulty hiring employees as our wage scale was non-competitive with both the public and private sector. This led to multiple warrant articles in the past two years requesting across-the-board raises and added raises for some employees. This warrant article takes a better approach at attacking the problem by allocating a pool of money where most needed to close the gap in selected job categories thus making it easier to fill and retain personnel. The town then envisions moving to merit based pay raises in future years.

Richard Butt, Old Town Road, understands that this is a 5% wage increase but wanted to point out that it's 57% over last year's wage increase; last year was \$62,377 approved by the voters and this year is \$98,225 for the same nine month period. He asked for an explanation as to how this money will be distributed.

Chair Hippler indicated that, the way this is crafted, it would be a 5% increase to their hourly rate or salary. He noted that what this board wants to move to, which they have not done in the past, is a merit based raise approach.

Mr. Butt noted that it is his understanding, based on what he heard from the Finance Committee Chair, that the distribution of the pool of money wasn't strictly based on everyone getting 5%.

Chair Hippler noted that it's in their privy as the board to give the lower paid individuals more if they see fit but the number was derived by 5% for every employee that was not covered by CBA.

Mr. Butt feels like the distribution of money is different from previous years noting that in previous years, everybody got the 5% and prior to that, based on merit review.

Chair Hippler indicated that they are trying to go back to the merit based but they are not there yet. He clarified that the board has the ability to decipher where the money goes for different individuals.

Mr. Butt stated that he is not trying to distinguish capabilities or abilities of employees or as to whether they make \$100,000 or are a lower paid individual, but feels that a \$100,000 employee is just as important as a lower paid individual. He feels that if they are doing something it should be based upon merit and not how much a person is making noting that this is discriminatory. Tom Clow, Finance Committee Chair, indicated that the committee understood that the amount in the article represented 5% but through the discussions that they had, they believed that the total amount would be distributed in such a way that, where they were having difficulty finding and keeping employees, those salaries may be increased more than some others. He asked if he is correct that it's not an across the board 5% for everybody even though it totals that.

Chair Hippler responded that to craft a number to put on the ballot it was 5% for every employee that was not covered by CBA and/or in their contract. He explained that this board has the means to decide that the lower may get more, etc.

Selectman Cahill stated that this is the board's intent noting that they do have inequities and have hourly salaries that they want to adjust to become more competitive to fill the vacancies they currently have. They are going more towards the merit based adjustments as opposed to a flat across the board.

Heleen Kurk, Mt Dearborn Road, feels that a problem is the use of the word "merit". She understands that they want to go to merit but if they do that, they are going to have to have evaluations. She pointed out that evaluations have to be done regularly enough to warrant it and the evaluator can't be biased; if they take the word "merit" out it would be more understandable.

Selectman Cahill explained that this was based on a suggestion by Ms. Kurk made at a board meeting a half a year ago that they have now implemented a formal evaluation system.

Richard Butt, Old Town Road, noted that the Police Chief has been included in the pool of money previously for these cost of living increases and inquired whether this has changed.

Selectman Cahill responded that has not changed.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Morton announced that Article 7 would be placed on the ballot as written.

Naomi Bolton, Town Administrator, moved to restrict reconsideration. The motion was seconded and passed.

ARTICLE 8

Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000) for the replacement of approximately 25 aging pagers and chargers that are unserviceable at this time for the Fire Department Call Personnel with said funds to come from the Fire Department Equipment and Vehicle Special Revenue Fund? (Recommended by Board of Selectmen)
Estimated tax impact = \$0.00

Chair Hippler moved the article as read. The motion was seconded.

Chair Hippler indicated that this article is intended to replace aging radio pagers that the Fire Department members wear to be alerted of incident and monitor the radio traffic as they unfold. He stated that the current pagers are no longer sold or supported by the manufacturer making it difficult to keep the current equipment in operating order. He added that there is no impact as these funds are being utilized from the Fire Department Equipment Special Revenue Fund; the current pagers they are using were released in 2005 and discontinued in 2014.

Tom Clow, Finance Committee Chair, was recognized to speak. The Finance Committee recommends this article. Pagers provide a critical link to ensure time-critical emergency response for Fire/EMS personnel. This article has no current year tax impact and will be funded from the Fire Department Equipment and Vehicle Special Revenue Fund. The fund is supplemented each year from ambulance reimbursements. The revenue received last year was \$185,000 bringing the funds current balance up to \$543,000. The \$15,000 expenditure for the pagers will have minimal impact on this fund.

There being no discussion, Moderator Morton announced that Article 8 would be placed on the ballot as written.

Naomi Bolton, Town Administrator moved to restrict reconsideration. The motion was seconded and passed.

ARTICLE 9

Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Five Thousand Dollars (\$105,000) for the purchase of one (1) fully equipped Utility Truck for the Fire Department with said funds to come from the Fire Department Equipment and Vehicle Special Revenue Fund? This vehicle replaces the existing 2003 F350 Utility Vehicle. (Recommended by Board of Selectmen)
Estimated tax impact = \$0.00

Chair Hippler moved the article as read. The motion was seconded.

Chair Hippler explained that this article intends to replace a 2003 F350 which has had vast uses for rescues, wires down calls, details and has a plow on it to open up driveways in an emergency to get ambulance and fire apparatus to a scene. He added that there is no tax impact as the funds are being utilized by the Fire Department Equipment Special Revenue Fund.

Tom Clow, Finance Committee Chair, was recognized to speak. The Finance Committee recommends this article. The committee supports replacement of a twenty year old utility vehicle which is used to haul equipment in response to emergencies. It is especially important in incidents where advance clearance for safe passage is required in inclement weather. The Fire Department Special Revenue Fund has a sufficient balance, \$543,000, to fund this article thus avoiding any tax impact this year. The minority opinion did not dispute the need but expressed concern using the Special Revenue Fund in consideration of large fire apparatus and ambulance purchases projected between now and 2027.

Frank Campana, Quaker Street, noted that this is an addition to the fleet pointing out that, while there is no tax impact, there will be maintenance impact. He asked if the vehicle being replaced is going to be handed down to the highway department.

Chair Hippler replied that is the way it is intended.

Mr. Campana pointed out that if the vehicle being replaced is handed down to the highway department, it becomes an addition to the fleet with maintenance and replacement at some point.

Brent Dickinson, Dels Way, in regards to the transfer of duty in the vehicles, asked for clarification in the chain of custody that happens between the departments.

Laura Spectrum-Morgan, Town Counsel, stated that all the vehicles are owned by the town and none of them are owned by a specific department. She doesn't know what happens internally in terms of turning over the keys but, legally, all are owned by the town.

Mr. Dickinson noted that if they are all going to have different budgetary requirements or comes from different budgets allocated by the town, he can see where others would have concerns. He is not against this but feels where the point of concern lies is the accountability and traceability as to who owns it and who's responsible for it so it doesn't get lost in the budget.

Chair Hippler noted that it wouldn't be lost in the budget and would all be tracked properly.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Morton announced that Article 9 would be placed on the ballot as written.

Naomi Bolton, Town Administrator, moved to restrict reconsideration. The motion was seconded and passed.

ARTICLE 10

Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of Seventy Eight Thousand Ten Dollars (\$78,010) for the purchase of one (1) fully equipped front line police cruiser, with Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000) to come from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds and the remaining balance of Forty-Eight Thousand Ten Dollars (\$48,010) to be raised by taxation? This would replace a vehicle that has already retired. (Recommended by Board of Selectmen)
Estimated tax impact = \$0.04

Selectman Van Loendersloot moved the article as read. The motion was seconded.

Selectman Van Loendersloot explained that this is to replace a vehicle that retired in 2019. He indicated that, currently, the police department is authorized a fleet of seven vehicles; five patrol and two command vehicles. He pointed out that they only have six – four Chargers, one Tahoe, and one Explorer that was purchased in 2011/2012.

Police Chief Moore stated that they have seen where they have been unable to respond to calls for service because of a lack of vehicles. He provided examples of a call for service that were delayed due to vehicles being out of service. He highlighted a report, WPD Fleet, in which he projected replacing one car a year, two one year, and how long these cars would actually have to last them in patrol – one would have to last until 2027 and one is projected to have 180,000 miles. He pointed out that these cars are not going to last that long and they will be short cars before they are able to have an adequate fleet which will ensure they can respond when they are called. He noted that calls for service have gone up by 1,000 as a three year comparison; incident reports are neutral; arrests have almost doubled; traffic accidents are neutral; DUI arrests have gone up significantly from two years ago; speeding arrests for vehicles tracked 20 mph over the limit are almost three times higher. He added that they like the hometown feel and typically when they stop somebody they treat it as an education opportunity so it's usually one out of every eight stops that end up with an actual violation rather than a warning. He stated that their directed patrols, responding to community concerns, has increased almost double.

Tom Clow, Finance Committee Chair, was recognized to speak. The Finance Committee recommends this article. The committee supports adding this vehicle to augment patrol operations. It is anticipated the Chevy Tahoe will be the vehicle of choice for its suitability in accessing varying road conditions in Weare. It also has large cargo space for equipment. This will bring the complement of patrol vehicles to four (4) Chargers and two Tahoes. It will provide flexibility to meet patrol and departmental needs. The tax impact has been reduced by using \$30,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The minority opinion felt the current number of vehicles is adequate to support operations and would have had no issue with replacing a vehicle but not adding to the inventory.

Neal Kurk, Mt Dearborn Road, asked why they wouldn't pay for the entire vehicle in ARPA funds instead of only paying \$30,000.

Selectman John Van Loendersloot responded that when they received the ARPA funds it was in the amount of approximately \$985,000 and one of the biggest deficiencies they have is their radio infrastructure system; the board elected to earmark the majority of that money to rebuild and improve that radio infrastructure. He indicated that this is in the process and they have multiple options in front of them that the board has not yet discussed in terms of the final step of doing that; the total to rebuild the radio system was over \$1 million and they've gotten it down, with the help of the vendor, to substantially less than that with a couple of different caveats. He noted that this is not completed yet, adding that the cell tower they were proposing to use fell through so they are potentially going to have to erect a \$150,000 tower in the north end of town to give them the radio coverage they need. He stated that this is why they elected not to use a large amount of the ARPA fund for other things yet until they can finish the radio system.

Frank Campana, Quaker Street, applauded the way that the dollar amounts are indicated in the article; it gives the true dollar amount being spent. Referencing the last sentence in the article "this would replace a vehicle that has already retired", he stated that the only vehicle he sees that this would apply to is a Ford Taurus.

Chief Moore responded that the Taurus and Crown Vic have both been replaced; both wouldn't pass inspection. He indicated that the Explorer came out and went to the Taurus and the Crown Vic has never been replaced, it's still a vacancy.

Mr. Campana inquired whether any vehicles would be repurposed.

Chief Moore noted that the Tahoe would go into a patrol vehicle in the front line and one of the Dodges would come out and serve as a second command vehicle.

After additional discussion in regards to vehicles being repurposed, Mr. Campana noted his objection to the last sentence noting that although it may not be necessarily misleading, he feels that it doesn't belong in a warrant article. He presented an amendment to the article to eliminate the last sentence.

Moderator Morton announced that the amendment presented would eliminate the last sentence of the article "this would replace a vehicle that has already retired".

Diana Kelly, Dels Way, speaking on the article as written, is in favor of the Board of Selectman using ARPA funds and holding them back in anticipation of the radio system being replaced. She is happy to hear that this is a priority and likes how they chose the \$30,000 to go towards this article while still allowing the radio system. She does fully support the article as written because the department has been down a vehicle for some time and this is replacing a vehicle that is already retired.

Speaking on the amendment, Mr. Campana feels that the article, as written, is misleading and doesn't feel that the last sentence is appropriate within the article.

Eileen Meaney, Quaker Street, asked for clarification as to the amendment.

Moderator Morton clarified that the amendment is to eliminate the last line of the article that reads "this would replace a vehicle that has already retired".

There being no further discussion on the amendment, Moderator Morton announced that the vote on the floor is on the amendment. The proposed amendment failed.

There being no further discussion on the article, Moderator Morton announced that Article 10 would be placed on the ballot as written.

Naomi Bolton, Town Administrator, moved to restrict reconsideration. The motion was seconded and passed.

ARTICLE 11

Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of Two Hundred Forty-One Thousand Nine Hundred Forty-One Dollars (\$241,941) to be added to the previously established Highway Truck and Equipment Replacement Capital Reserve for the purpose of purchasing one (1) new fully equipped 10-wheel plow truck for the Highway Department, and to fund this appropriation by authorizing the withdrawal of that sum from the Undesignated Fund Balance? (This amount

represents all of the unanticipated revenue received from the state as Additional Highway Block Grant per SB401) (Recommended by Board of Selectmen)
Estimated tax impact = \$0.00

Vice Chair Osborne moved the article as read. The motion was seconded.

Vice Chair Osborne explained that this would replace a 2005 Volvo six-wheeler; a ten-wheeler would provide 50% more sand/salt mixture capacity for longer runs before returning to the garage. He noted that, as of December 31, 2022, the Highway Truck and Equipment Replacement Reserve Fund balance had over \$22,000 in it. He stated that their intent is to take some of that money and add it to the \$241,000 so they can come up with the \$260,000 that is anticipated this vehicle will cost.

Tom Clow, Finance Committee Chair, was recognized to speak. The Finance Committee recommends this article. The committee supports a continuing replacement program for our aging plow truck fleet. The town is still playing catch up from purchasing no plow trucks over the six year period 2009 through 2014. This article will add sufficient funding to the Highway Truck and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund to allow purchase of another 10-wheel plow truck to replace a 17 year old 6-wheeler with a rusted bed and high maintenance costs. The 10-wheeler will provide more efficient operations with increased hauling capacity. The town has used alternative funding from a one-time highway block grant last year which will offset any tax impact this year.

Benjamin Knapp, Perkins Pond Road, noted his support of getting a new truck. He disagrees with taking the block grant money to pay for the truck; one truck has been supported every year since 2016. He noted that the money is specifically meant to be a boost in addition to your road network.

Frank Campana, Quaker Street, doesn't feel that this article has full disclosure of \$260,000 and feels that this article could have been written clearer. He noted that the article references the money is going into the Highway Truck and Equipment Capital Reserve and later the article includes authorizing the withdrawal of that sum from the Undesignated Fund Balance; he asked for clarification as to how they are going to take it out of the Undesignated Fund Balance.

Chair Hippler stated that these are approved by town counsel and DRA. He explained that they have to announce what they are going to raise and that its coming from the Undesignated Fund Balance to be transferred into the Capital Reserve Fund.

Mr. Campana pointed out that it indicates that it is being withdrawn from the Undesignated Fund balance.

Laura Spector-Morgan, Town Counsel, explained that the money is going to come from the Undesignated Fund Balance into the Capital Reserve Fund and then the truck is going to be purchased with money that is in the Capital Reserve Fund.

Neal Kurk, Mt Dearborn Road, is concerned in regards to the estimated tax impact being zero. He inquired whether the Undesignated Fund Balance is including the \$318,000 that was surplus in 2022.

Chair Hippler replied that they received the block grant from the state, unanticipated revenue, into the Undesignated Fund Balance.

Mr. Kurk asked if this was included in the \$318,000.

Chair Hippler responded no.

Mr. Kurk feels that, as a taxpayer, the board is taking money from their surplus, Undesignated Fund Balance, and with the permission of voters, spending it on this. He feels the other option, at the discretion of the selectmen, would be to take that \$241,000 and use it to offset taxes.

Chair Hippler responded no explaining that when those funds came in, there were specific usages for them.

Mr. Kurk feels that they could have used the \$241,000 to offset some of the expenses on the 2024 Highway Department and thereby freeing up this \$241,000 of other money to be used to offset taxes. He added that if the selectmen came forward with a straight article for \$241,000 to purchase a truck, the voters would vote for it because they understand, each year, they need to replace one of these trucks. His take is that this is an expenditure of \$241,000 of taxpayers' money that, if not spent for a truck, could be used to reduce taxes.

Chair Hippler referenced the NH Municipal Association which states HB401 will provide fundings with restrictive uses meaning that may be used to supplement, not supplant, local budgets. The supplement, not supplant, provision requires that these funds must add to supplement not replace local budgeted funds when providing services that repair, maintain, construct municipal bridges and repair and maintain class IV and class V roads or require the equipment necessary to contain said roads. You cannot reduce your tax impact. He stated that they are utilizing it so there is no tax impact.

Tom Clow feels that some of the confusion is coming because the term Undesignated Fund Balance is used and it really isn't undesignated because this money was put into the fund balance as a holding place until a decision was made as to how to spend it.

Naomi Bolton, Town Administrator, stated that her understanding is that its Undesignated Fund Balance but it's committed for something.

Tom Flaherty, Sunrise Lane, stated that they annually receive highway block grant funding and the money involved here is from an unanticipated second grant adding that they are restricted on its use.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Morton announced that Article 11 would be placed on the ballot as written.

Naomi Bolton, Town Administrator, moved to restrict reconsideration. The motion was seconded and passed.

ARTICLE 12

Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000) to be added to the previously established Government Building and Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose of funding unanticipated failures to aging infrastructure, and to fund this appropriation by authorizing the withdrawal of that sum from the Undesignated Fund Balance? (Recommended by Board of Selectmen)

Estimated tax impact = \$0.00

Chair Hippler moved the article as read. The motion was seconded.

Chair Hippler explained that this article injects \$30,000 into the fund for unanticipated failures to include heating system failures, redoing bathrooms in the town hall, and anything in between; it covers every town building that they have. He added that the board likes to maintain at least \$60,000 in this fund but they are currently down to \$23,629 in this fund.

Tom Clow, Finance Committee Chair, was recognized to speak. The Finance Committee recommends this article. The town has historically maintained this fund at approximately \$60,000 to use for unanticipated maintenance needs in our aging buildings. The fund currently has \$29,000. This appropriation restores it close to the desired level. Funds will be withdrawn from the Undesignated Fund Balance. The minority opinion felt the funds should remain in the Undesignated Fund Balance for potential use to offset future taxes.

There being no discussion, Moderator Morton announced that Article 12 would be placed on the ballot as written.

Naomi Bolton, Town Administrator, moved to restrict reconsideration. The motion was seconded and passed.

ARTICLE 13

Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000) to be added to the previously established Road Reconstruction Capital Reserve Fund for road reconstruction and resurfacing of roads with up to Two Hundred Eighty-Three Thousand Nine Hundred Sixty-Five Dollars (\$283,965) anticipated from the State of New Hampshire Highway Block Grant (pursuant to RSA 235) and the remaining balance to be raised by taxation? (If the Town receives the anticipated amount of the Highway Block Grant, the amount to be raised by taxation will be \$216,035. If the Town receives less than anticipated, the difference will need to be raised by taxation, and if the Town receives more than anticipated, less will be raised by taxation.) (Recommended by Board of Selectmen)

Estimated tax impact = \$0.17

Vice Chair Osborne moved the article as read. The motion was seconded.

Vice Chair Osborne explained that this article provides funding for the primary responsibility of the Highway Department which is to repair, rebuild and maintain the roads to insure safe travel. He pointed out that road improvements and upgrades lead to less maintenance in the future adding that roads are the largest infrastructure asset the town owns and, without proper maintenance, costs will be extremely expensive. He noted that the balance in the Road Reconstruction Capital Reserve Fund is just under \$146,000 which some of this will be used in conjunction with this \$500,000 in 2023.

Tom Clow, Finance Committee Chair, was recognized to speak. The Finance Committee recommends this article. The committee supports this article in the interest of sustaining a road maintenance program. Allowing roads to deteriorate to a level that requires complete reconstruction is especially costly. The road reconstruction bond passed by the voters in 2019 provided a critical boost to extending the life of our roads and keeping them in good condition before costly reconstruction is required. While funding this article has increased in recent years due to higher asphalt costs, the town reduced it from an original \$640,000 down to \$500,000 in order to reduce the tax impact while pressing for the proposed operating budget.

Chair Hippler added that the initial funding that was requested was \$640,000 but with the \$140,000 in that account already, they wanted to make sure they spend it all; it is still the \$640,000 number presented to the CIP and to everyone on the board this number will still be obtained with this article.

Richard Butt, Old Town Road, noted the bond was for resurfacing and repair roads to get more life out of them. He asked if most of this Highway Block Grant was specifically used to construct new roads.

Chair Hippler responded that to be correct.

Tom Clow, Concord Stage Road, believes that the reason, over the past few years, that this has been increased is to take up the slack for the maintenance to preserve roads as well as the reconstruction.

Benjamin Knapp, Perkins Pond Road, stated that it was increased every year to try to do reconstruction on a certain amount of road and to maintain the preservation process. He noted his disappointment that it was cut back this much. He stated that there was always \$100,000 left in this fund every year on purpose in case there was a disaster. He inquired whether the town was still planning on doing the library parking lot this summer.

Chair Hippler responded that he was unsure.

Mr. Knapp relayed his concerns with not keeping the funding up there.

John Lawton, Oak Hill Road, noted his confusion as to whether this block grant money can be used for new construction or to maintain current roads. Referencing the dump road, he questioned whether resurfacing would come out of this block grant.

Chair Hippler responded that it potentially could.

Mr. Lawton asked if the block grant money, for the most part, is used to address roads that are currently in existence.

Chair Hippler answered that it's not meant to make a new road to a new development but meant to preserve and maintain structure they already have.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Morton announced that Article 13 would be placed on the ballot as written.

Naomi Bolton, Town Administrator, moved to restrict reconsideration. The motion was seconded and passed.

ARTICLE 14

Shall the Town vote to establish a Recreational Courts Replacement Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 to fund the replacement of the existing tennis courts and creating a multipurpose recreational court facility and to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000) to be placed in this fund. Further, to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund? (Recommended by Board of Selectmen)
Estimated tax impact = \$0.02

Selectman Van Loendersloot moved the article as read. The motion was seconded.

Selectman Van Loendersloot explained that this article is to create a fund for the purpose of rebuilding the existing tennis court. He noted that it was just resurfaced which will buy a few more years but the asphalt is failing.

Janeen Lentsch, Parks and Recreation Commission, stated that the tennis courts behind the library are 46 years old and were resurfaced last year with a grant. She added that they can no longer, at this point, be repaired. She noted that the \$20,000 in this article is to start with a five year plan, approximately \$180,000 to \$200,000 to restore both courts. She added that fundraising by local clubs and possible state grants could offset the rest of the cost needed.

Tom Clow, Finance Committee Chair, was recognized to speak. The Finance Committee recommends this article. The town has only two (2) tennis courts built in 1976 located behind the library. A short-term repair was made last year to extend their service life for three (3) more years. Parks and Rec (PARC) notes the courts have seen increased use in the past two years for the growing sport of pickleball. Funding this year would be the first installment towards engineering/site surveys. The project is not locked into the current location. PARC projects additional requests up to a total of \$170,000 over four years from 2024 thru 2027 to complete planning and construction of the replacement courts. It would also be necessary to coordinate this project with any library expansion efforts. The minority opinion believes PARC should develop a more strategic plan for the town recreational needs and priorities before looking at this specific project.

There being no discussion, Moderator Morton announced that Article 14 would be placed on the ballot as written.

Naomi Bolton, Town Administrator, moved to restrict reconsideration. The motion was seconded and passed.

ARTICLE 15

Shall the Town vote to establish a Parks and Recreation Facilities Revolving Fund pursuant to RSA 35-B:2, II, for the purpose of maintaining, improving, and/or adding to equipment, buildings, and grounds overseen by the Parks and Recreation Commission, and to name the Board of Selectmen as agents of said fund. All revenues received by Parks and Recreation facilities and services, to include fees, charges or other income derived from the activities or services supported by the Parks and Recreation Commission, will be deposited into the fund, and the money in the fund shall be allowed to accumulate from year to year, and shall not be considered part of the town's general fund balance or surplus. The town treasurer shall have custody of all moneys in the fund, and shall pay out the same only upon order of the Board of Selectmen and no further approval is required by the legislative body to expend. Such funds may be expended only for the purpose for which the fund was created?. (Recommended by Board of Selectmen)

Selectman Van Loendersloot moved the article as read. The motion was seconded.

Selectman Van Loendersloot explained that the purpose of this article is to create a revolving fund which would be funded primarily from Chase Park fees and any other fees that Parks and Recreation would receive. He stated the intent behind this is that the maintenance line for Parks and Recreation is very minimal but it costs more and more to repair/replace damage whether intentional or unintentional; it's more and more common that they are exceeding their repair budget and this is hopefully a fix for this – it's going to be less on taxpayer impact and more on fee based.

Janeen Lentsch, Parks and Recreation Commission, stated that the goal of the Parks and Recreation Commission is to fund this account with 100% of funds received from monies collected by Parks and Recreation. She added that the purpose of this fund will be to allow Parks and Recreation to update, repair, replace, maintain and, if necessary, add to all equipment, facilities and grounds overseen by their commission. After listing several projects needing attention, Ms. Lentsch pointed out that the existing Parks and Recreation operating budget will not be altered or eliminated as a result of establishing this fund; this fund is not intended for general operating costs.

Tom Clow, Finance Committee Chair, was recognized to speak. The Finance Committee recommends this article. This article would allow Park and Rec (PARC) to place all fees collected into a revolving fund. Currently fees are collected as town revenue and used to offset the tax rate. Fees generally amount to \$5,000 to \$14,000 annually. The change would allow PARC to accumulate funds which could then be used by PARC, as authorized by the Board of Selectmen, for PARC repairs/expenses. The committee supports establishment of the fund. It

will give PARC some flexibility in funding unanticipated expenses, such as from vandalism. The small loss to the town in revenue would have a minimal impact on the tax rate. The minority opinion supported the current process which require PARC to go to the Board of Selectmen to identify funds.

Bruce Fillmore, Gould Road, commended the selectmen for adding this and noted his support of this article.

Brent Dickinson, Dels Way, hopes that the board would put forth some type of requirement for surveillance to be put in at Bolton Field.

Richard Butt, Old Town Road, wonders if the board would consider putting a minimum amount that would be allowable to be expended without having to go through the Board of Selectmen noting that it could take weeks and some items may be emergency repairs suggesting that it go through the Town Administrator who is more readily available. He asked that they provide some flexibility and the ability to react quickly.

Neal Kurk, Mt Dearborn Road, pointed out that they just heard from the Finance Committee that this would divert between \$5,000 and \$14,000 a year from the General Fund into this special fund. He questioned why there isn't a tax impact since there obviously is one. He further questioned whether this money could be used to reconstruct tennis courts.

Selectman Van Loendersloot responded that is one potential possibility.

John Lawton, Oak Hill Road, pointed out that a lot of the Capital Reserve or Revolving Funds they've had in the past have always had kind of a limit on them. He wonders why this wasn't included in this article.

Selectman Van Loendersloot replied that this was the language that was provided to them by Parks and Recreation as they requested it.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Morton announced that Article 15 would be placed on the ballot as written.

Naomi Bolton, Town Administrator, moved to restrict reconsideration. The motion was seconded and passed.

ARTICLE 16

Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) for cemetery improvements and fund this appropriation by authorizing the withdrawal of said sum from Cemetery Trust Funds Cy Pres Account? (Recommended by Board of Selectmen)
Estimated tax impact = \$0.00

Selectman Cahill moved the article as read. The motion was seconded.

Selectman Cahill explained that this article is for the maintenance of the town owned cemeteries with the monies withdrawn from the Cy Pres Account with no impact to the taxpayers. He added that the account balance of the Cy Pres Account as of the 3rd quarter of 2022 is \$142,739.40.

Tom Clow, Finance Committee Chair, was recognized to speak. The Finance Committee recommends this article. This is an annual warrant article used to withdraw funds from the Cemetery Trust to maintain town cemeteries. There is no tax impact. There are sufficient funds \$141,000 in the trust to support the withdrawal.

There being no discussion, Moderator Morton announced that Article 16 would be placed on the ballot as written.

Naomi Bolton, Town Administrator, moved to restrict reconsideration. The motion was seconded and passed.

ARTICLE 17

Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000) to allow the Conservation Commission to secure contracted services with a Licensed Forester for forestry services including plan updates, harvest layout, harvest management, forest inventory, invasive species control and other related services, and to allow the Conservation Commission to contract or purchase materials or services for maintenance and upkeep of town forests and fund this appropriation by authorizing the withdrawal of that sum from the Town Forest Account?
(Recommended by Board of Selectmen)
Estimated tax impact = \$0.00

Selectman Cahill moved the article as read. The motion was seconded.

Selectman Cahill explained that this article is to contract for professional services to manage and ensure the best use of the town's forests. He noted this is funded out of the Town Forest Fund and there is no impact to the taxpayers. He added that the Forest Fund Account balance as of December 31, 2022 is \$32,280.10.

Tom Clow, Finance Committee Chair, was recognized to speak. The Finance Committee recommends this article. The committee supports the contracting of professional services to manage and ensure the best use of the town's forests. There is no tax impact. The account has sufficient funds \$32,000 to support the contracted services.

There being no discussion, Moderator Morton announced that Article 17 would be placed on the ballot as written.

Naomi Bolton, Town Administrator, moved to restrict reconsideration. The motion was seconded and passed.

ARTICLE 18

Shall the Town vote to readopt the Optional Veteran's Tax Credit in accordance with RSA 72:28, II for an annual tax credit on residential property of \$500? (If adopted, the credit will

apply to every resident who is a veteran, as defined in RSA 21:50, and served not less than 90 days on active service in the armed forces of the United States in any qualifying war or armed conflict listed in this section, and continues to serve or was honorably discharged or an officer who continues to serve or was honorably separated from service; or the spouse or the surviving spouse of such resident, provided that training for active duty by a member of the national guard or reserve shall be included as service under this subparagraph; (b) Every resident who was terminated from armed services because of service-connected disability; or the surviving spouse of such resident; and (c) The surviving spouse of any resident who suffered a service-connected death. If approved, the credit granted will be \$500, which is the amount previously adopted by the Town) (Recommended by Board of Selectmen)

Selectman Cahill moved the article as read. The motion was seconded.

Selectman Cahill pointed out that the most significant change to note is that they have both Articles 18 and 19; this is mandated by the NH Department of Revenue. He explained that what it does is breaks the previous veterans and active veterans into two separate warrant articles. He emphasized that both Articles 18 and 19 have to be voted "yes" on or it will revert back to the \$50.00 tax credit.

Laura Spector-Morgan, Town Counsel, clarified that every town in the state has to do this this year because there was a statutory amendment that expanded the class of people who were eligible for the credit; every single town in the state has these two warrant articles and every single town in the state has to vote to readopt them and if they fail, it falls back to the \$50.00 credit.

Tom Clow, Finance Committee Chair, was recognized to speak. The Finance Committee recommends this article. The committee supports passing both of these articles in appreciation of those men and women in uniform who have served or are serving our country. A change in the State Law now allows members currently serving on active duty to be eligible for the credit. As a result of the State law change, both of these articles must pass in order to continue the \$500 annual reduction on property taxes. If both do not pass, the reduction would drop to \$50 and veterans and those on active duty would have to reapply to the town with their documentation. The abstention was from committee member who directly benefits from this tax adjustment.

Richard Butt, Old Town Road, inquired whether both articles needed to pass in order to retain the existing veteran's credit.

Ms. Spector-Morgan explained that they are separate credits; if the optional passes and the all veteran's doesn't pass, the all veteran's goes away for everyone. She stated that the optional tax credit applies to people that served in the time of war and the all veteran's tax credit applies to everyone else – this brings active duty into the fold.

Mr. Butt asked if Article 19 doesn't pass it wouldn't affect Article 18; if it fails and goes back to \$50.00 can the town, at the next meeting, raise it back up to \$500.00.

Laura Spector-Morgan, Town Counsel, responded they could.

Moderator John Morton stepped down from moderating to speak as a resident. He stated he is one of those veterans that served during war time. He thanked all the fellow veterans for their service.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Morton announced that Article 18 would be placed on the ballot as written.

Naomi Bolton, Town Administrator, moved to restrict reconsideration. The motion was seconded and passed.

ARTICLE 19

Shall the Town vote to readopt the All Veteran's Tax Credit in accordance with 72:28-b, for an annual tax credit on residential property which shall be equal to the same amount as the standard or optional veterans' tax credit voted by the Town under RSA 72:28? (If approved, the credit will be available to any resident who is a veteran, as defined in RSA 21:50, and served not less than 90 days on active service in the armed forces of the United States and continues to serve or was honorably discharged or an officer who continues to serve or was honorably separated from service; or the spouse or surviving spouse of such resident, provided that training for active duty or state active duty by a member of the national guard or reserve shall be included as service under this paragraph; provided however that the person is not eligible for and is no receiving a credit under RSA 72:28 or RSA 72:35. If adopted, the credit granted will be \$500, the same amount as the optional veteran's tax credit voted by the Town under RSA 72:28.)
(Recommended by Board of Selectmen)

Selectman Cahill moved the article as read. The motion was seconded.

Selectman Cahill noted that it's been made clear how the state has broken these two articles up and the importance of voting for them.

There being no discussion, Moderator Morton announced that Article 19 would be placed on the ballot as written.

Naomi Bolton, Town Administrator, moved to restrict reconsideration. The motion was seconded and passed.

ARTICLE 20

Shall the Town vote to disband the Board of Firewards and return control back to the Board of Selectmen? If approved, this change will be effective one year from today.

Selectman Van Loendersloot moved the article as read. The motion was seconded.

Selectman Van Loendersloot indicated that the Board of Firewards voted to make a recommendation to disband the Board of Firewards. He proposed an amendment to add in language that states: "and be governed as described in NH RSA 154:1 I (b): A fire chief appointed by the local governing body, or by the town or city manager, if any, with firefighters

appointed by the local governing body or manager, upon recommendation of the fire chief?"
The amendment was seconded.

Moderator Morton opened discussion on the amendment to the article.

Neal Kurk, Mt Dearborn Road, asked for an explanation as to what this does.

Selectman Van Loendersloot responded that it would put it in line with the hiring practices that the board currently has; currently any hiring is done by the Board of Selectmen whether its police, highway or any other department. He noted that this would then also have the firefighters, EMT's or any other first responders follow in line with the hiring practices of that.

Board of Firewards Chair Steve Roberts, Concord Stage Road, explained that the board was established in 1978, State RSA 154 deals with the organization of fire departments, says that the town can establish that control organization how they want to but have to vote for it. In 1978, the current board make up was proposed – a seven member board consisting of 3 fire department members, 3 members elected at-large, and the sitting Fire Chief. He stated that things are vastly different with the complexity of the modern departments so this change is being brought forward to move toward a more streamlined direction.

There being no further discussion on the amendment, the amendment was voted on and passed.

Moderator Morton opened discussion on Article 20, as amended.

Tom Flaherty, Sunrise Lane, noted that about a month ago this article was to remove the Fire Department members of the board and replace them with residents. He noted that this article feels hasty to him and may have not been thought out completely. He is aware that there is a lot of conflict within the board and feels that there was a lot of change in the last minute.

Mr. Flaherty proposed an amendment to the article.

Moderator Morton read the amendment which would be to add to the wording "shall the town vote to study disbanding the Board of Firewards. The amendment was seconded.

Chair Hippler asked Mr. Flaherty as to what he is looking to accomplish and who would be the people that would study it.

Mr. Flaherty responded he thinks the Board of Selectmen could work with the current board and the Fire Chief to figure out what the right change is rather than disbanding all together.

Chair Hippler stated that there was an article on one of the drafts of the warrant that was to change the composition which was brought forth by one member of the Board of Firewards. He added that there was discussion at the Board of Selectmen level to gain a consensus of the Board of Firewards as to their direction; the result of their discussion was to disband the board.

Richard Butt, Old Town Road, agrees with Mr. Flaherty and feels this should be re-evaluated. He additionally noted his concerns in regards to not having a Fire Chief to weigh in on this.

Heleen Kurk, Mt Dearborn Road, supports Mr. Flaherty's proposed amendment.

Tom Clow, Concord Stage Road, is not in favor of the proposed amendment. He pointed out that the article was put forth by the entire Board of Firewards and not just one individual. He feels it was done appropriately and doesn't see a conflict here.

Gerry Little, Woodbury Road, recalls lawsuits that discuss how they, as citizens, at deliberative sessions can change the warrant article as presented; they can't do anything that would negate the language. He asked whether Town Counsel could clarify this for him.

Laura Spector-Morgan, Town Counsel, responded that they actually can amend an article to negate it but what you can't do is amend an article to eliminate the subject matter; the subject matter remains the organization of the Fire Department so the amendment would be fine.

Neal Kurk, Mt Dearborn Road, feels that this amendment has a very important salutary effect by placing a greater burden on the Board of Selectmen which doesn't have the adequate staff available to do current jobs let alone take on new responsibilities as acting as the replacement for the Board of Firewards. He feels that it's important to study this but to implement it now and put an additional burden on the Board of Selectmen is not good management of the town's resources. He feels that they should be voting in favor of the study of this rather than the implementation.

Steve Roberts, Concord Stage Road, reiterated changes over the years. He feels that this should be streamlined to how the town is operating every other budget; with his experience in the fire service, he feels that the time is now. He explained that the reason it would take effect in one year is that, by state law, it requires a change to take place in a year so that change can be effectively transitioned without operation of the emergency department.

Eileen Meaney, Quaker Street, inquired as to the vote on this by the Board of Firewards in terms of supporting this.

Selectman Van Loendersloot responded that the Board of Firewards vote was 4 to 1 to disband the board.

Frank Campana, Quaker Street, is in support of the proposed amendment.

There being no further discussion on the amendment, the amendment was voted on and failed.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Morton announced that Article 20 would be placed on the ballot as amended.

Naomi Bolton, Town Administration, moved to restrict reconsideration. The motion was seconded and passed.

ARTICLE 21

To see if the Town will vote to pave Orchard Hill Road and Appley Way? (By Petition)

Chair Hippler moved the petition article as read. The motion was seconded.

Chair Hippler explained that the board has no input on this as this is a petition article.

Interim DPW Director Jason Fiske indicated that this item would set back some of the items they want to do this Spring; they are unsure on money yet as there will be some tree work, gravel work, and drainage work in order to keep the pavement in good condition. He stated that it's their opinion to complete some of the neighborhoods that they already started before moving on to making any dirt roads pavement.

Jeanne Vaillancourt, Apple Way, stated that Apple Way has a culvert issue and is constantly washing out. She pointed out that, comparatively, it's a very small road to some of the other ones being paved.

Moderator Morton clarified that this is an advisory article and is not raising and appropriating any money at this time.

Tom Clow, Concord Stage Road, feels that an article such as this sets a bad precedent and believes it's up to the Department of Public Works Director and the Board of Selectmen to set out a plan for reconstruction and/or repaving of roads.

Alex Mennella, Apple Way, doesn't know if an article is the best way to accomplish this but is looking for a solution; if it's an article, then she is in support of it – if there is a better way to do this, then she is open to that as well. She noted that it's affecting their quality of life.

Bill Buck, Apple Way, stated that the town does a good job with the grader the once or twice a year that it comes out but it doesn't last long – it becomes like a washboard, has streams going down in and a lot of pot holes.

Rhonda Buck, Apple Way, indicated that she was told that this is the process for this item. She pointed out road issues along as being an issue for many veterans and elderly. She noted her concerns with emergency vehicle access on the road.

Dan Vaillancourt, Apple Way, noted his concern with the apron coming off on the road from 114. He noted that when the road is graded and then it rains, the roads are bad again. He feels that paving would be cheaper for the town in the long run.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Morton announced that Article 21 would be placed on the ballot as written.

Naomi Bolton, Town Administrator, moved to restrict reconsideration. The motion was seconded and passed.

ARTICLE 22

We the Town of Weare hereby call upon our State and Federal elected representatives to enact carbon-pricing legislation to protect New Hampshire from the costs and environmental risks of continued climate inaction. To protect households, we support a Carbon Free and Dividend approach that charges fossil fuel producers for their carbon pollution and rebates the money collected to all residents on an equal basis. Enacting a Carbon Cash-Back program decreases long-term fossil-fuel dependence, aids in the economic transition for energy consumers, and keeps local energy dollars in New Hampshire's economy. Carbon Cash-Back has been championed by US economists (Jan 17, 2019 WSJ) as the most effective and fair way to deliver rapid reductions in harmful carbon emissions at the scale required for our safety. We expect our representatives to lead in this critical moment for the health and well-being of our citizens and for the protection of New Hampshire's natural resources upon which we all rely. The record of the vote approving this article shall be transmitted by written notice to _____'s State Legislators, to the Governor of New Hampshire, to _____'s Congressional Delegation, and to the President of the United States, informing them of the instructions from their constituents, by _____'s Select Board, within 30 days of this vote. (By Petition)

Chair Hippler moved the article as read. The motion was seconded.

Elizabeth Evans, Oak Hill Road, explained that cash-back carbon pricing puts a price on pollution and incentivizes conservation innovation to place fossil fuels with clean energy solutions. She stated that all the money collected after administrative costs is rebated to all New Hampshire households on an equal basis; two-thirds of all households will break even or get more than their equal share of money collected than they pay in higher costs due to the fee. She indicated that New Hampshire residents want action on climate and economists agree that this is the approach; it's a more cost effective and fair way to reduce climate pollution. She pointed out that this warrant doesn't commit the town or state to specific legislation but simply asks their representatives to address this issue and use the cash-back carbon pricing to do it. She stated that this would simply be a study to look into the details to see what the impacts are and help people live healthier and stronger lives and having options to run their own budgets versus having those made for them by Wall Street and fossil fuel providers.

Brent Dickinson, Dels Way, is not in support of this article.

Janice Mathews, Woodbury Road, noted that, as written, this article is non-actionable because of the blanks. She feels that passing this would be a waste of time for the Board of Selectmen and town to deal with because of the way it is written and presented on the article.

Alex Mennella, Apple Way, seconded Ms. Mathews comments.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Morton announced that Article 22 would be placed on the ballot as written.

Naomi Bolton, Town Administration, moved to restrict reconsideration. The motion was seconded and passed.

ARTICLE 23

To transact any other business which may legally come before this meeting?

Neal Kurk, Mt Dearborn Road, congratulated Moderator Morton on moderating his first meeting.

Kyle Parker, Old Franchestown Road, pointed out that, as of last night, this meeting was not posted on the town's website.

Chair Hippler indicated that Selectman Van Loendersloot is not running again and that the board thanks him for his service.

Naomi Bolton, Town Administrator, clarified that the warrant went up after it was signed on Monday and was on the town's website, posted at the school, and posted at the town offices; it was not on the front page but on the Selectmen's page.

Moderator Morton thanked everyone for their participation.

Chair Hippler moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and passed.

*A true copy; I attest:
Michelle Mulholland*


Maureen Billodeau

Town Clerk Weare