

1 **SELECTBOARD MEETING**

2 January 5, 2022

3 Attending in person; Merrily Lovell, Maggie Gordon, Dennis Place, Todd Odit, Joy Dubin Grossman, Eric
4 Spivak

5 Attending remotely; Phil Pouech, Mike Loner, Missy Ross, Kathleen Newton, Natacha Liuzzi, Mary Jo
6 Brace, Nick Baker, Any Sayre, Jen McCuinn, Barb Forauer, Paul Lamberson, Bee Cee, Richard Bailey,
7 Bethanne Cellars, Rick McCraw, Josh Olson, Scooter MacMillan, Carl Bohlen, Richard Van Vliet, Alison
8 Lesure, Andrea Morgante, Marianna Holzer, Allison Cleary, John Dunshee, Christine Dunshee, Richard
9 Watts, Anne Sullivan, Steve Knowlden, Lenore Budd, Beth Royer, Carrie Huestis, Jennifer Decker, Val
10 Spadaccini

11 Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

12 Public Hearing – Draft FY 23 Operating and Capital Budgets

13 Todd gave an overview of the capital budget and the plan for the capital budget to be at a point where
14 the impact on the taxes remains flat. In a year where capital expenses are over budget the difference
15 would be made up with what is in reserves. When spending is less, money would be put into reserves.

16 Questioned was if there is a strategy on how big the capital reserves will be allowed to grow. Todd said
17 there is no specific strategy. The goal is to balance using new tax dollars with reserve funds.

18 Phil said he agrees with moving toward putting a little bit of money aside in the capital for some of the
19 larger purchases.

20 John Dunshee asked about the paving budget. How much paving will get done with the \$250,000? Todd
21 said it depends on the price of asphalt and the process we are doing. John asked about paving Pond Brook
22 Rd. Todd said that is a policy for the Board to discuss. Christine Dunshee asked who should the question
23 be aimed to? Merrily said the Selectboard will put that on a future agenda for February or March.

24 It was asked to explain the difference between when a Bond is used and the Capital Budget. Todd said a
25 Bond is used when financing over a 10 to 20 year period and the Capital Budget is for 5 years or less.

26 Richard Bailey asked if the reserve plan has formally been set forth. How was that formally discussed and
27 decided on? Todd said it was discussed by the Board at their retreat in October with the Board's desire
28 to start addressing the infrastructure needs. Richard asked how it will be laid out on the ballot? Todd
29 said the warning shows the capital transfers as a separate article.

30 Jennifer Decker addressed the increase in the Police Budget. She said, personally, she supports defunding
31 and de-arming the police. Todd said that is the Board's decision. If the budget were voted down it would
32 result in further in discussion by the Board.

33 Val Spadaccini asked what the call volume is for response to calls to CVU? Past discussions have
34 questioned why Hinesburg supports the cost. Especially now that CVU has decided not to have a Resource
35 Officer when the cost was spread over the towns that send students to CVU. Todd said he would talk with
36 the Police Chief to include calls to CVU in the reporting of calls.

37 Bret Golann asked for the total cost of salary increases for the positions in the Fire and Police department.
38 His example was the additional benefit cost and the percent of the total cost for all positions. Also costs
39 such as computers, office equipment or training that is anticipated for new positions. This is needed to
40 understand the true cost to tax payers of new positions or significant salary increases. Todd said he does
41 not have that level of detail now but will follow up on the question.

42 It was noted that all Town employees are budgeted to receive a 3% salary increase. There is net increase
43 of \$42,000 for Fire and First Response salary not including benefits.

44 Anne Sullivan asked if the cost of salt is a result of a price increase or use of more salt. Todd said that is a
45 result of the increase in price.

46 Lenore Budd asked about the \$10,000 transfers for future recreation in the Capital Budget. Todd said the
47 idea is to start making additional improvements to the Bissonette Fields and to improve the public areas
48 the Town is likely to receive as a result of the Haystack Development as well as any public recreation areas
49 from Hinesburg Center 2.

50 Richard Bailey asked about the increases in the Town Manager office salaries. Todd explained the
51 increase is in budgeting for actual salaries.

52 Richard Watts thanked the Board for all their work on the budgets. He wanted to address the Police
53 budget. He noted the Center for Research for Vermont did a report a year ago reporting town by town
54 what was being spent on police services. He is hoping the Board would consider amending down the
55 Police Department budget to be put before the voters. Per capita Hinesburg is in the top 30% of 200
56 towns. He said there is a major decision about the role of Police in a town like Hinesburg, do we need
57 armed officers doing some of the tasks that they are doing or can it be accomplished in another way. We
58 have a new officer as a result of grant money but that grant will end and the Town has to pick up that
59 additional cost. Merrily noted comparison of a Town such as Charlotte that relies on the State Police with
60 Hinesburg is not necessarily a good comparison.

61 Dennis Place said voting the Police budget down does not mean you don't want a Police Department, but
62 that you are looking at a different level of service. If you don't like the budget you should vote against it
63 so it can be adjusted.

64 Andrea Morgante asked about if there is a capital improvement plan or written document that describes
65 the improvements noted in the Capital Budget for future recreation? Todd said there are not specific
66 improvements, it is earmarked for making recreational improvements to Bissonette Field and the land
67 the Town will be getting from the Haystack Development as well as land from Hinesburg Center 2. There
68 is also money in there for lot 1.

69 Carl Bohlen said he agrees with Richard W on his points about lowering the cost of the Police Department.
70 He said he not seen enough data that supports having 6 officers. The number of incidents is a good start
71 but it is important to connect that to time those incidents require of the officer. He thinks level of service
72 is important and priorities within the level of service. He was surprised that the COPS Grant was sought
73 to do "fraud of the elderly", he never heard that talked about at Town Meeting or during budget
74 discussions. The examples for 2 person shifts are compelling, but how often does that need arise. What
75 happens in towns such as Charlotte who are covered by State Police, who as he understands do not
76 respond to anything unless it is serious. What happens in those towns, with no local police, to take care

77 of less critical incidents? It is important to evaluate what we want to pay for. Is overweight truck
78 enforcement still being done and where does it fit in as a priority.

79 Bret Golan said we need detail of increasing salaries, there is a need to be more transparent and show
80 the benefit costs too. Todd agrees that the salaries and benefits for each department should be included
81 in the department so voters have a clear picture of the cost.

82 Val S. said going back to Carl's comment on evaluating the level of service in the PD. In the police report
83 there were over 300 personal assist calls in an 11 month period. Some of those include lock out and VIN
84 verification services. In my opinion people need to be a little more responsible for themselves. I would
85 not call the police if locked out of my vehicle which results in a case report and associated hours of
86 paperwork. I would call a friend to drive me home to get my spare set of keys or find some other way of
87 getting into my car. I don't think this is the level of service that is necessary resulting in increased tax
88 costs.

89 Val said on the topic of road salt. The Board has discussed in the past the idea of applying less salt to the
90 roads. I would like to have the Board consider that again. Possibly use more sand. We don't have to have
91 bare roads, drive safely and allow more time to get to your destination.

92 Merrily mentioned an article in the NY Times about the environmental impacts of salt use and feels it is a
93 good thing for the Board to discuss.

94 Barb Forauer asked why the Town has to bear the expense of improving the land the Town will receive
95 from Haystack and Hinesburg Center 2? It should be part of their permission to develop in our Town. Todd
96 said that is a question for Planning and Zoning. He added even if the developer paid the cost of
97 improvements the land is then turned over to the Town and the Town will be responsible for maintenance
98 costs.

99 Richard Watts asked if the PD budget includes their benefits and will that be the total the voters are voting
100 on? Todd said the way the budget is structured now they are not. If the Board wants, he can separate
101 the benefits into the different departments.

102 Barb F commented she supports what Val S said about people being more responsible for themselves.

103 Richard Bailey commented that it is common for police in other towns to assist with lockouts, many towns
104 charge for this. Todd said he would have to follow up on it.

105 Joy said two more people commented they would like to see the benefits included for each department
106 in the budget numbers.

107 Mike L said he thinks doing a survey of what the Town would like to see for police services in the next year
108 would be beneficial. It seems to him the discussion is about possibly eliminating services that make the
109 department a community police department and advocating for them to become just an enforcement
110 department. He does not think that is the way the Town wants to go.

111 Phil said there are number of things the PD does that are part of community policing. When people have
112 a service, they don't want it taken away. It is a good question to figure out what it is that people want
113 and what they are willing to pay for.

114 Andrea M asked what is included in benefits, is it health insurance, or does it also include other taxes etc.?

115 Todd said currently the budget for each department includes the salary, social security tax, employee
116 insurance, opt out, dental, disability, vision and retirement.

117 Natacha Liuzzi commented that the safety of our officers is also involved in community policing.

118 Richard W commented they also did research of incident reports and the Hinesburg PD was the least
119 transparent as far as what they did and about 1/3 of their calls were not qualifying at the time. He
120 addressed Merrily's comment regarding comparison with Charlotte. Charlotte is spending about \$30,000
121 and Hinesburg about \$900,000. There is somewhere in between these two levels.

122 Lenore B asked where the impact fees appear in the budget? Todd said they are not being used so do not
123 show up.

124 Carl B would like to show staffing levels with budgets as well as data and measurements for all
125 departments. He asked about the reduction for the Howard Center in the PD budget. That seemed a very
126 important item and he would like to know what is and is not working with the program. Keep the
127 ambulance budget separate. He asked about the AHC housing needs assessment and wants to be sure
128 there is enough funding to have the CCRPC complete that.

129 Jennifer Decker asked about the contract with the Howard Center. Mike L explained the Hinesburg PD
130 contracted with the Howard Center to have an on call social worker to respond to calls that should not
131 necessarily go directly to law enforcement. The contract is still active and Mike thinks the overall cost was
132 reduced.

133 Beth Ann Cellars commented, excellent point about transparency and staffing levels. It would be a good
134 metric to include, people want services but they need to know the costs.

135 Lenore B wanted to speak again about the impact fees. She asked if they are a revenue to the Town. Todd
136 said the use is restricted so can't count as revenue in the operating budget. Lenore asked if the Town
137 Forest could be considered as a revenue source for more than just managing the Town Forest. Todd
138 pointed out funds from previous logging was used as matching funds for the acquisition of the Carse
139 property.

140 Anne Sullivan said she hopes the library budget request is approved by the Town. Merrily said the library
141 is making their presentation later at the meeting tonight.

142 Paul Lamberson asked for a brief history of impact fees.

143 Todd said there is a plan to use impact fees for a needs assessment for the Fire Station.

144 Eric Spivak said impact fees have been used to help in replacing the furnace and put more efficient heating
145 units in the bays.

146 Phil added there is a study that should be done shortly. The study was to look at the opportunities for
147 using the impact fees we have for police and fire. There has been discussion of impact fees for water and
148 wastewater but there are allocation fees (which are like impact fees)associated with those.

149 Missy Ross said police impact fees are used toward the bond payment for the station.

150 Andrea M said impact fees were used in the new PD.

151 Merrily addressed the request to keep the FD and Rescue budgets separate. There are so many costs that
152 cross over it is difficult to separate them. She understands people wanting a separate cost for the
153 ambulance, but the Town does not have an ambulance yet.

154 Jennifer D asked what the cost is for the PF and FD to drive around Town with lights on for the holidays.
155 Eric said they do that on their own time and are just trying to cheer everyone up. Jennifer said she wanted
156 to explain her question. She has a family member who has epilepsy, bright flashing lights can trigger
157 seizures for people. Something that feels celebratory for some members of the community can cause
158 stress for others. Personally, she was stressed by it, she did not want to be a scrooge for those who enjoy
159 it. She knows the Town is working on creating a more welcoming environment of diversity, equity and
160 inclusion, so when we center our celebrations around a majority faith we are not being inclusive. She
161 also found the amount of exhaust from the vehicles bothersome.

162 Merrily closed the Public Hearing at 8:30 p.m. at which time she called the Selectboard meeting to order.

163 Agenda Additions or Deletions

164 None

165 Public Comment

166 None

167 Selectboard Forum

168 Phil noted the Selectboard terms expiring. He plans to run again. Mike said he also will be running again.

169 Merrily said Amy Sayre contacted her asking if the Board wanted the HCRC to present their budget. Phil
170 said it would be helpful for them to send a presentation to the Board ahead of time so they can understand
171 all the benefits the HCRC offer. Todd said they can make a presentation in February if the Board has no
172 issues with their budget.

173 Approve Minutes of 11/30/21 and 12/15/21

174 Phil moved to approve the minutes of 11/30/21 with any agreed upon edits. Seconded by Maggie and
175 approved with 5 yes votes.

176 Phil moved to approve the minutes of 12/15/21 as written. Seconded by Maggie and approved with 5 yes
177 votes.

178 Presentation of FY 23 Carpenter-Carse Library Budget

179 Beth Royer reviewed the proposed library budget.

180 Merrily asked about the \$8,000 increase in administrative costs. Beth said that cost is for strategic
181 planning which is done every 4 or 5 years. This is not a yearly expense. Merrily asked if the fuel costs
182 should be lower as the library was not open as much due to COVID. Beth said they were open even when
183 the public was not able to come in. Merrily asked about the increase in supplies. Beth said that includes
184 material to cover books and COVID related safety items. Merrily noted the youth program cost has
185 doubled. Beth said that is because it is being compared to a year when they were closed for half of the
186 20/21 budget.

187 Dennis asked about staffing. Beth said there are a total of 7 employees and she is the only full time
188 employee.

189 Phil asked about the solar system. Is there a plan to purchase and are there off takers? He asked about
190 the trustee funds which have usually covered the capital costs, he does not see that in the budget. Paul
191 Lamberson said the solar is producing more energy than the library needs. An investor is renting the roof
192 and has placed the solar panels on the roof. The library is not making any predictions about if or when
193 they may be purchasing the panels from the investor. The investor is in charge of dealing with the off
194 taking. Paul said whether or not they access the endowment funds has to do with how they are doing
195 budget wise as well as how the endowment is performing.

196 Approve Unified Planning Work Program Project Requests

197 There are two areas for projects, transportation related and non-transportation related.

198 The transportation projects are; rte 116 traffic signal timing and optimization study, pavement condition
199 index, scoping study of Hollow Rd bridge and Leavensworth Rd bridge repairs, and looking at
200 improvements listed in the rte 116 corridor improvement plan (enhanced crosswalks, enhanced
201 intersections and sidewalks).

202 Non-transportation is; housing needs assessment update, and municipal by-law modernization grant
203 work.

204 Phil moved to request the Town Manager to request the CCRPC to include the projects shown in the memo
205 as well as those discussed at tonight's meeting to be considered for the UPWP projects for the FY 23
206 UPWP. Seconded by Mike and approved with 5 yes votes.

207 Budget Discussion

208 Phil said he felt there was good discussion tonight on the budget. He thinks it would be good to show the
209 full time equivalent in departments. And to separate the benefits, while we need to understand the
210 benefits are not the same for all it would be good to have a snap shot of the benefits paid. Show the long
211 term debt. Todd said he has not updated the debt but can have a document indicating that. He also said
212 he can pretty accurately break out the benefits to include in the different departments for the proposed
213 and present budgets.

214 Todd said other than the PD there were no concerns raised for departments. Maggie suggested next year
215 when working on budgets to be sure to announce when the PD budget is being reviewed. Merrily said
216 that was done but perhaps needs to be more specific. Dennis said we need to be sure people understand
217 that to vote a budget down does not mean that department is gone, it means the voters want change.
218 The Board would then take another look at that budget.

219 It was agreed to keep the fire and ambulance warned separately as they were last year.

220 Town Manager Update

- 221 • Comments on the post-closure certification for the landfill have been submitted
- 222 • The 6th police department position has been advertised
- 223 • Checked with Caleb about the Howard Center services and was advised it is being used
- 224 • Speed zone changes on rte 116 have been approved

225 • Town Hall roof – getting an estimate on roof repairs

226 Andrea M. mentioned a raise for the stipend for Selectboard members. It usually has to come from voters

227 making a motion from the floor at Town Meeting.

228

229 Approve Warrants and Payroll

230 Phil moved to approve the warrants signed by Merrily and Maggie, including payroll, as submitted by the

231 Town Treasurer. Second by Maggie and approved with 5 yes votes.

232 Adjourn

233 Phil moved to adjourn at 9:40 p.m., seconded by Maggie and approved with 5 yes votes.

234 Respectfully submitted,

235 Valerie Spadaccini, clerk of the Board

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