

**Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
February 14, 2024**

Present: James Bailey – Chairman, Richard Pelletier – Selectman, Iris Campbell – Selectwoman and Laura Buono, Town Administrator

Others present: Riche' Colcombe, Brett Taber, Samantha Gallo, Trish Bush, Angela Poluchov, Tom & Tammy McClure, Chris Parsons, Kenny Stafford, James Clough, Dennis Yeaton, Ernie Butler and Peter Flynn

Meeting opened at 6:00 pm

1. OPEN SESSION

Trustees of the Trust Funds Annual Report: Trustee, Riche' Colcombe explained why the report was submitted late this year. The bank they switched to is now creating the report. Ms. Colcombe also said that the Trustees are still working on the reconciling the Cemetery balance.

2. MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Bailey made a motion to accept the meeting minutes dated January 24, 2024. Selectman Pelletier seconded the motion, the motion carries.

Chairman Bailey made a motion to accept the meeting minutes dated January 18, 2024. Selectwoman Campbell seconded the motion, the motion carries.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

Chairman Bailey made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda for February 14, 2024. Selectman Pelletier seconded the motion, the motion carries.

- Veterans' Tax Credits – Map 24 Lot 13; Map 12A Lot 289
- Elderly Exemption – Map 12 Lot 67
- Pole License – 118/34Y Bog Road

4. MANIFEST

Chairman Bailey made a motion to authorize the Selectman to sign manifests and order the Treasurer to sign Payroll Check numbers 19117 – 19150 a/k/a Vouchers #5, 6 & 7 in the amount of \$108,399.54 (includes 351 direct deposit stubs) and Accounts Payable Check numbers 031013 – 031143 a/k/a Vouchers #5, 6, 7, 8 & 9 in the amount of \$1,228,389.45. Selectman Pelletier seconded the motion, the motion carries.

5. VETERAN'S EXEMPTION

A letter was submitted to the Selectmen asking them to consider increasing the Veterans' Disability Credit from \$2,000 to \$4,000. Chairman Bailey said the Board would first need to look at how such an increase would impact the budget. Ms. Buono recommends looking at the Elderly

Exemption as well. Ms. Buono will reply explaining the Board will consider the submitted request during the 2025 budget process.

6. 2024 PROPOSED BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

Ms. Buono explained the 2023 budget closed with a \$33,000 balance. Chairman Bailey said the balance shows there is no fluff in the budget.

Chairman Bailey opened the public hearing. Budget information handouts were provided.

Chairman Bailey asked for questions on the proposed 2024 operating budget:

Police Department: There were no questions up to the point of the police department. Police Chief Chris Parsons provided an explanation for some of the items in his budget. Chief Parsons has added (2) full-time positions to help balance the case load of manpower hours. Currently, each officer is working an additional 500/600 hours per year, burn-out and officer wellness is a concern. The courts also have a new system that involves more man-hours. The Chief has been working with the courts regarding the new process and the manpower involved. Support from State agencies has also been reduced over the years.

- Riche' Colcombe asked if the change with the court cases because the county is short-handed. Chief Parsons said the county has returned to the old court system; the problem is how the court has set that up.
- Selectwoman Campbell asked how many officers could be in court for a day. Chief Parsons said it can be up to 6 or 7 officers tied up in court all day.
- Riche' Colcombe asked if there is an updated memo of understanding for the school resource officer. Chief Parsons replied yes.

Chairman Bailey moved on with the budget review.

- *Youth Services/Parks & Recreation:* Salary increase amounts to about \$20,000 to man the summer program with older and experienced staff.
- *Manahan Park:* Riche' Colcombe asked if \$118,000 will be taken from the trust fund to cover Manahan expenses. Ms. Buono said the only expenses covered by the trust fund are for improvements, park maintenance and the telephone. The trust account cannot be used for hiring.
- *Insurance:* Brett Taber said insurance increased by 75%, what were the changes to cause that. Ms. Buono said last year's insurance was underbudgeted.
- Mr. Taber asked what the town's valuation is. Ms. Buono said the estimated value is \$604,148,876.

No further questions were asked about the operating budget. Chairman Bailey moved on to the warrant articles.

- The Board talked about the infrastructure upgrade to the water/sewer system. This upgrade will begin on Whittemore St., Park St. and Park Place 2024. There will be ARPA funds applied to this project as well. There isn't a capacity issue with the current system, it's an infiltration issue.
- The amount of \$495,000 to fund the following reserve funds:
 - Ambulance CRF \$ 100,000.00

- Fire Department Equipment CRF \$ 40,000.00
- Police Department Equipment CRF \$ 40,000.00
- Municipal Buildings Maintenance, Repairs & Upgrades CRF \$ 150,000.00
- Cemetery Maintenance & Repair CRF \$ 10,000.00
- Library Building CRF \$ 25,000.00
- Parks CRF \$ 40,000.00
- Sidewalks CRF \$ 15,000.00
- Software/Computer CRF \$ 50,000.00
- Employee Health & Wellness CRF \$ 25,000.00

Of that sum, \$300,000.00 will come from the Undesignated Fund Balance and \$195,000.00 will come from taxation.

- It was asked what the employee wellness capital expense is. Ms. Buono said last year there was heart health testing on any employee who wanted to sign up for it. The program proved to be very successful in helping to keep the employees healthy. It was a help to one of the staff members in the fire department.
- \$50,000 for software management will upgrade records management for the police department.
- It was asked how much is in the undesignated fund balance. Ms. Buono said there is about 12% in the fund balance (\$7,000,000). However, this year the remaining balance in the operating budget amounted to \$33,000, which is very tight and there was a \$70,000 surplus in revenues which is also tight.
- Assigned roadwork for 2024 is Whittemore St., East Washington Road, Whitney Road and Bog Road.
- The town has been working yearly on the small bridges in town that are red listed. The next bridge scheduled to be worked on in 2024 is Stowe Mountain Bridge. The goal was to repair all the small ones before the town needs to deal with the steel bridge on Contoocook Falls Road.
- Two union contracts are on the warrant this year. One between the Selectmen and the Hillsborough Town Employees for a 3-year agreement as follows:
 - 2024 \$55,282
 - 2025 \$29,361
 - 2026 \$25,095

The second is a 3-year agreement between the Selectmen and New England Police Benevolent Association as follows:

- 2024 \$86,900
- 2025 \$77,061
- 2026 \$44,608
- The highway department applied for a State of NH Grant which has awarded the town \$432,712 towards the purchase of two trucks. The town's portion amounts to \$108,178.
- A lease agreement for a highway grader will be presented in the amount of \$67,142 for 5-years. Trade in value for the current grader is \$170,000.
- Article 23, which is for establishing a fund for Municipal Infrastructure Projects was explained in relationship to the water & sewer department. Because of the w/s upgrades the town will need to contribute towards those upgrades and those upgrades will be happening every 4 years. The fund is primarily being established for future municipal growth projects that includes roads and buildings as well.
- A Recreation Revolving Fund is being established to receive fees and charges for recreation programs. These funds can only be used for recreation purposes.

- An article will be presented for the town to adopt the Hillsborough Community Power Plan. If the town approves the article, Standard Power will be the broker for the town to secure lower electric rates by buying in bulk for the town for those who are with Eversource. Residents will have the ability to opt out at any time and if not, they will be able to choose a rate.

Chairman Bailey closed the public hearing at 8:00 pm.

7. NONPUBLIC SESSION

Chairman Bailey made a motion to go into nonpublic session at 8:08 pm under RSA 91-A: 3 II B Hiring. Selectman Pelletier seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Bailey – yes, Campbell – yes, Pelletier – yes. The motion passed.

In attendance: Chairman Bailey, Selectwoman Campbell, Selectman Pelletier, Town Administrator Laura Buono, Police Chief Chris Parsons.

Chief Parsons informed the Board that the background check has been completed on Cody Lacombe to fill the existing vacant position that was already in the budget. Terms of employment were reviewed and agreed upon and the date of hire will be March 3rd.

Chairman Bailey made a motion to come out of nonpublic session at 8:19 pm. Selectman Pelletier seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Bailey – yes, Campbell – yes, Pelletier – yes. The motion passed.

Chairman Bailey made a motion to hire Cody Lacombe to fill the open position as brought forward by Chief Parsons. Selectman Pelletier seconded the motion, the motion carried.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Selectwoman Campbell said she talked with Ms. Buono about creating a letter of support to the Hillsborough post office for not moving the distribution of mail from Manchester to Boston. The Board agreed, Ms. Buono will create such a letter for the Board to sign.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm

A true record
Mary Whalen
Recording Secretary

Date: _____

Approved by:
Hillsborough Selectboard

James C. Bailey, III, Chairman

Iris Campbell, Selectwoman

Richard Pelletier, Selectman