

**MINUTES**  
**SELECT BOARD**  
**TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH**  
Tuesday, January 15, 2019 – 5:00pm  
1 Grove Street, Peterborough, New Hampshire

**Present:** Barbara Miller, Karen Hatcher, Tyler Ward

**Also Present:** Rodney Bartlett, Nicole MacStay, Brenda Fox-Howard, Alison Kreutz  
Budget Committee: Ronald Patten (chair), Mandy Sliver, Bob Hanson, Carl Mabbs-Zeno, Ronnie McIntire, Ed Henault, Paul Sullivan

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Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM

**Proposal to put forward Warrant Articles to Amend Property Tax Exemptions and Credits**

*Veteran's Exemption & Tax Credit*

Ms. MacStay explained the Select Board asked for a review of elderly exemption income and assets limits, tax credits for service-connected total disability, and tax credits for veterans. During the review, it was found that blind exemptions have been given for a number of years, but the origin of blind exemptions are not anywhere on the books, so if the Town would like to continue granting that exemption, it should go to town meeting. Chair Miller said the state legislature passed recommendations regarding veteran's exemption and credit, and said she is very much in favor of the recommendations, as our "veterans deserve everything we can do for them." Total estimated impact for the Town would be \$66,000 dollars, for both Veteran's Credit and Service-Connected Total Disability.

Ms. Christina Reichl, a resident who is a disabled veteran, came to voice her support for the warrant article.

*Motion:* Ms. Hatcher made a motion to bring Veteran's Exemption and Tax Credit warrant articles to town meeting.

*Vote:* Mr. Ward seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

Mr. Bartlett clarified the vote was to bring the warrant article forward to town meeting.

*Elderly & Blind Exemption*

Chair Miller explained there are no current legislative limits or recommendations for elderly exemptions – elderly exemptions are determined entirely at the discretion of the Select Board. The Select Board looked at the elderly exemptions of 31 other area towns. Under consideration is the raising of the single income limit from \$28,000 to \$34,000 and raising the married income limit from \$45,000 to \$52,000, keeping the asset limit (which includes personal ownership of things like investment accounts, but does not include property) to \$100,000. The *amount* of the exemption itself would not change – the vote regards the reduction of assessed property value.

Mr. Bob Hanson asked the Board to clarify what at what age 'elderly' begins. It was explained that there are three age categories within the exemption, but eligibility begins at 65. The exemption level is different for each of the categories, but the new income limits would apply to all three.

*Motion:* Mr. Ward makes a motion to bring Elderly Exemption to warrant at town meeting.

*Vote:* Ms. Hatcher seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

*Motion:* Ms. Hatcher made a motion to move the Blind Exemption warrant article, as written, to town meeting.

*Vote:* Mr. Ward seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

**Request to Extend Drum Contract to Provide Social Media Services**

Christine Dennler of the EDA said the EDA would like to extend contract with Drum, who has been doing social media posts to Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter on behalf of the Town. Drum typically posts 3 times weekly, mainly in the form of short videos, with additional posting as warranted for events of special interest.

Drum provides the EDA with metrics concerning outreach regularly. In six months, tracking analytics will provide a better idea of how effective outreach has been. The EDA feels they are getting good value for what they are paying.

Mr. Ward said he had found the posts “entertaining and personal.”

*Motion:* Ms. Hatcher made a motion for Town Administrator to approve and enter into Drum’s contract.

*Vote:* Mr. Ward seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

### **Review and Approval of Cranberry Meadow Pond Trail License**

Ms. MacStay said the property involved (currently owned by the Badrawy family) is formerly the Fernald property. The trail cuts through the side and back end of property. The license allows the Town to use it as recreational trail area, and the hope is that it will preserve the trail for recreational use for many years in the future.

Chair Miller said the Select Board should write a letter thanking the Badrawy family.

*Motion:* Mr. Ward made a motion to accept the Cranberry Meadow Pond Trail license agreement.

*Vote:* Ms. Hatcher seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

### **Review and Approve the Minutes of January 8, 2019**

*Motion:* Ms. Hatcher made a motion to accept the minutes from Select Board Meeting held January 8, 2019

*Vote:* Mr. Ward seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

### **Other Business**

At 5:25 PM, Chair Miller invited members of the audience to speak.

Mr. Jason Pelletierri, who the Select Board had approved as alternate member of Heritage Commission at the meeting on January 8<sup>th</sup>, introduced himself. Mr. Pelletierri said he is happy to be involved and has a great appreciation for Peterborough’s historic heritage.

Mr. Doug Ward had a question regarding the Demolition Review Committee – As the Demolition Review Committee is a subcommittee of the Heritage Committee, and all members of the Heritage Committee are required to be vetted, is it necessary for members of the Heritage Committee that would like to serve on the Demolition Review Committee to be vetted a second time, having been vetted into the Heritage Committee already?

Chair Miller said she felt there was no need to be vetted again for the Demolition Review Committee if one is already a member of the Heritage Committee.

#### *“From Scratch” Branding*

Ms. Hatcher reported that she attended a meeting last week regarding the branding of locally produced items. The meeting was attended by Victoria Cimino, Director of Travel and Tourism for the State, who had been invited by Amelia Tracy. Ms. Hatcher said some interesting branding had been developed in Tamworth: “Scratch Made” New Hampshire. There was an idea put forward for Peterborough to consider adopting such a brand as part of a state-wide branding initiative. Ms. Hatcher voiced that she felt the concept was versatile as it could be applied to food, products, or people.

#### *Green Star Awards*

Mr. Ward reported that the Recycling Center Advisory Committee has come up with a ‘Green Star’ program to recognize local businesses that have sustainable practices. Steele’s Stationers and Cooper’s Hill Public House were awarded Green Stars this past month.

Recycling Center Advisory Committee is currently looking for members.

*Phaze Open House*

On January 16<sup>th</sup> there will be an open house at MAxT for the Phaze Welding Technology Center. Phaze is offering 130 hours of training towards welding certification. Mr. Ward said this is a “rare opportunity that’s getting great buzz”, and over 50 people have RSVP’d to the event.

Pete Throop informed the Board that the piece written by the NH Business Review journalist (invited to Peterborough by consultant Dawn Wivell) will be published on January 18<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Hatcher shared that there would be a Community Conversation at 7:00 in Bass Hall. The topic is Cannabis Legalization.

The next Select Board meeting, which will be a joint meeting with the Budget Committee focusing on police, fire, and ambulance budgets, is scheduled for 5:00 on Tuesday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Budget Committee.

At 5:34 PM, Chair Miller proposed a 20-minute recess.

The meeting resumed at 5:56 PM with the Budget Committee present.

**Joint Budget Committee and Select Board Meeting**

Budget Committee Chair Roland Patten introduced the present members of the Budget Committee: Mandy Sliver, Bob Hanson, Carl Mabbs-Zeno, Ronnie McIntire, Ed Henault, and Paul Sullivan. Budget Committee member Rich Clark came in a few minutes later.

Mr. Patten asked Mr. Bartlett for an introduction of the overall budget for FY2020. Mr. Bartlett presented the Draft Budget Review, which contains all usual and customary operating expenses for all departments. The current draft represents a 4% increase, and the goal was 2%. Mr. Bartlett said Administration recognizes that over the next few weeks that 4% increase could be reduced to 2% or less.

He also mentioned the Main Street Bridge number will be adjusted, as several annual payments were mistakenly added together, which will cause a ripple effect throughout the analysis. Administration is still going through the spreadsheets and making sure all links are accurate. “We’ll be meeting weekly for at least a few weeks.”

**ADMINISTRATION**

Ms. MacStay presented the Administration budget. She said most line items are flat, if not down. Administration intends to make the two part-time administrative assistant positions (45 hours weekly) into one 40-hour full-time position. There would be a decrease in budgeted salary, but an increase on the benefits side of things.

Ms. MacStay said that every year, fewer and fewer of the printed Town Reports are taken by residents, and every year the cost rises. If only the required information is printed, the Town could potentially print the reports in-house, which would save a lot of money. Other features and information previously printed in the Report could be made available online. Chair Miller voiced her support of they idea.

Regarding Outside Services, \$10,000 has been budgeted to redesign town website. Much of the site maintenance work can be completed in-house, but a professional web designer is needed to do an overhaul of the site.

Health, dental, life, and disability expenditures have been taken out of all budgets funded by taxation and moved into Other General Government. To make the comparison of the FY2019 and FY202 budgets more comprehensive, this adjustment was done on the numbers for FY2019 as well.

More land had been coming out of Current Use status, which is reflected in revenue.

The amount of revenue from flood control should not go up, and may decrease in future years. Peterborough's flood control structures are part of a flood control network that benefits New Hampshire and Massachusetts by preventing flooding during spring thaws and periods of heavy rain. There were seven homes and some operational farms that had to be moved in order to build the MacDowell Dam, and so the Town receives reimbursement, partly from New Hampshire and partly from Massachusetts.

Regarding Human Resources Advertising – the budget reflects that there's been a need to be more aggressive with job posting advertising. As the unemployment rate is so low, it's taking longer to fill open positions, and so it's necessary to increase postings and extend their duration.

Human Services has a more-or-less stable budget. The largest increase is found in Other Public Assistance, which is money the Town gives to organizations that provide services the Town would otherwise need to provide out of welfare funding. The Food Pantry, River Center, and Monadnock Family Services are examples of such organizations. There is a budgeted increase of \$10,000 (from \$20,000 to \$30,000) as many federal and state grants that previously supported these organizations no longer exist, and so the organizations are leaning a little harder on towns for support.

#### FINANCE

Finance Director Brenda Fox-Howard explained Finance budget has gone up primarily due to the request for a part-time position to go full-time, and multiple large capital projects in town. There are potential retirements happening in FY2020, which will require additional man hours. There was also a significant amount budgeted for the new software program. Remaining portions are relatively flat.

Chair Miller noted it seemed like several things like advertising, supplies, and mileage went up \$100 or \$200 dollars and asked for clarification about how those numbers were determined.

Ms. Fox-Howard said 2% was added because Finance was running out funds for new equipment. Folding machine is wearing out and has needed a lot of repairs. It will need to be replaced over the next budget year and could be anywhere between \$300 & \$500.

Ms. Fox-Howard said advertising will be needed for assistance, and Ms. MacStay said needed funding for that can come out of Human Resources. Ms. Fox-Howard said that, in that case, that number can be reduced.

Ms. Fox-Howard said postage has increased. When the tax department has to send out notifications to residents in delinquent status, they often have to add tracking, which incurs extra cost.

Mr. Clark asked why the salary amount was down but taxes were up. Ms. MacStay said salaries should not be down, and that will be investigated.

Mr. Clark asked for clarification about the Special Article. Ms. Fox-Howard said it was for the software.

Ms. Fox-Howard that she could reduce those increases back to flat if needed.

Mr. Patten said that may be a good idea - Office supplies are up 30%, and that number "should be hashed over a little bit."

Mr. McIntire asked if a new vendor been selected for the software.

Mr. Bartlett confirmed, and said Ms. Fox-Howard performed an extensive review, aided by IT and Valerie Jenkins from CIP. Four vendors were looked at, and BSNA out of Michigan was selected. Hookset was very happy with them, and there are several other towns in the state that are looking to switch over to them as well.

Mr. Patten inquired about the increased revenue.

Ms. Fox-Howard attributed that to taxes, timber yield, interest down, and meals & room tax, and said all were based on numbers that are coming in now, and Finance will probably exceed the numbers that were budgeted for FY19.

Mr. McIntire asked for clarification about 'In Lieu of Taxes.'

Ms. MacStay explained that's what's assessed to non-profit organizations in town. If they qualify, they pay only the municipal portion of taxes, and don't pay towards school or state.

Mr. Ward asked what the source of the extra \$15,000 was, and Mr. Henault suggested it may be due to increase in assessments. Ms. MacStay agreed that may be the case

Chair Miller asked about the revenue transferred from Water & Sewer departments.

Ms. Fox-Howard replied that's their portion of enterprise funds for the cost of the new software.

Mr. Bartlett confirmed it would be an expenditure in Water & Waste Water departments and show up as revenue in Finance.

There was a discussion about the cost of software, and how it was broken down in expenditures and revenue, and Ms. MacStay determined there was \$200,000 shown in the revenue that should be in expenditures. There should only be \$50,000 in revenue for Capital Reserve, and then \$50,000 (combined) in revenue from Water & Sewer, and then there should be \$250,000 in expenditures. Mr. Patten agreed, and added clarification was needed for the amount to be raised by taxpayers, which should be \$150,000. Mr. Bartlett said that would be cleared up.

#### ASSESSING

Ms. MacStay said a new budget was created for Assessing this year (it was previously budgeted half in Administration and half in Finance). There is currently a \$75,000 placeholder for Corcoran consulting.

Mr. Bartlett said there would be a meeting with them tomorrow to establish a hard number.

Mr. McIntire asked if the salary amount represents one or multiple individuals.

Ms. MacStay replied it represents half of an individual salary, as the Assessing Clerk's salary is split between Assessing and Public Works.

#### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community Development Director Pete Throop reported that revenues overall are up, largely due to \$30,000 in transfers from TIF districts. Revenues will be used to offset the addition of Assistant Planner to department.

Mr. Throop recommended a decrease in the revenue. Mr. Throop said the department tries to be more conservative due to the uncertainty in the economy - Revenue is based on how much development comes through the door, and there have been wild swings in stock market and increase in interest rates, and there is no way to predict how that will affect business. He added that they've had a banner year in terms of building permits and will probably have a surplus of \$20,000, which goes back into General Fund.

Regarding expenses, wage-related expenses have increased, related to addition of Assistant Planner and the new Code Officer, who was hired at a slightly higher wage. Mr. Throop explained the increase in mileage - Code Officer Tim Herlihy lives in Milford, and as town vehicles may not be parked overnight at employee residences, Mr. Herlihy often uses his own vehicle to go to trainings and so is reimbursed for mileage. Mr. Ward asked if, since the Code Officer generally uses his personal vehicle and not the town-owned vehicle, it would be possible to sell the town-owned car and give him magnet for his own? Mr. Throop said the town car is a hand-me-down from the Police Department, and has a lot of mileage on it, and so would not generate much revenue if sold.

The biggest increase involves a request of \$9,500 for a consultant. There's going to be an update to the housing chapter of the Master Plan, hopefully by late summer or early fall, and then the department will be working on a zoning amendment for FY2020. There will be a lot more public engagement and outreach, and the consultant will assist with design and organization of outreach efforts.

Additional increases in rental and leases are associated with room rentals used for public outreach purposes. It's also anticipated they'll do a few town-wide mailings.

Increase in dues and publications as the State is predicted to adopt the 2015 building code, so new code books will be needed.

Chair Miller asked if there will be a zoning amendment this year.

Mr. Throop replied there will be; mostly housekeeping amendments, an amendment to Wetland Protection Overlay Zone, and the Planning Board is considering possible amendment to zoning ordinance related to special exceptions.

Mr. Clark asked about Outside Services – he said a grant was used a couple years ago. Is that not still available? Mr. Throop said they were looking into it - “If we can use it as an offset, we will.”

Ms. Reichl asked for clarification on mileage related to the Code Officer’s situation, and Mr. Throop said reimbursement was just for the cost of going to the trainings, and not for driving home afterwards.

EDA

Mr. Throop said the major change is the removal of the salary line. He said the \$4,000 in general supplies should only be \$3,000.

#### MISC GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Ms. MacStay said the Select Board instructed Administration to consider at cost of living increase of 2% and merit increase of 3%. Cost of living for department directors is accounted for in General Government, and the rest are in the various department budgets. The 3% merit may not be entirely used – which employees receive the merit increase, and the percentage they receive (up to 3%) is left up to director discretion.

Mr. Mabbs-Zeno asked why 3% was budgeted across the board when not every employee would receive the increase. Mr. Bartlett said employee evaluations are done in September, so it’s hard to gauge potential merit needs in preparation for the new fiscal year. He added that most employees are “good employees and perform well,” but they would consider that point and consider it going forward.

Ms. MacStay said health, dental, vision, disability and life insurance expenditures are all flat – there will be no increases for town employee insurance provider. Everything else is also relatively stable, but she would look into why worker’s comp is down.

Mr. Clark asked for confirmation that health, dental, life insurances were transferred from the operating costs of all departments to General Government?

Ms. MacStay confirmed and said she also adjusted this for FY19 to make the budgets for the two years more easily comparable. Part of the reasoning behind the change is that currently the Finance department has to break insurance bills out to 13 account numbers every month. With the new break down, the bills can be coded to one account, greatly simplifying things on the operations side.

She also noted it can be very onerous on individual departments to hire younger people who have families, as insurance costs for those people can be higher, and the Town didn’t want it to discourage conservative budget-minded department heads from hiring those individuals. Taking those costs out of individual department budgets could allow department directors to be more comfortable with hiring younger people.

Mr. Andrew Dunbar said he had several questions, but will submit questions on all budgets via email.

Mr. Rich Clark requested a get a break down for last 4-5 years of how much the total taxation has gone up each year. He said if all the warrant article pass it’s another 12%. He was concerned about the Town’s Debt Service, especially with Sharon backing out of library and Greenfield backing out of fire department.

Mr. Patten said, regarding the budget bottom-line: “We’ll do our best to make it palatable to all taxpayers, not just some of them.”

Audience member Ms. Richl asked why so much money was granted for the library, when she was under the impression that library use has decreased in modern times.

Mr. Hanson replied that the Town overwhelmingly supported the new library project.

Mr. Scott Johnson, a Peterborough resident in the audience, inquired as to what percentage of the Town was represented at Town Meeting, and said he felt it was an overstatement to say that the Town overall supported the library.

Mr. Hanson clarified that the residents who *came* to Town Meeting overwhelmingly supported the library, and that all residents are invited to attend and vote.

Mr. Johnson said he, like Mr. Clark, was also concerned about the Debt Service, and the amount to be spent on a new building for the fire department, and he felt he represented the “silent majority that was fed up.”

Mr. Patten suggested Mr. Johnson go and look at the current state fire department building, which was constructed in the 1950’s, and told him that the project had been delayed for years.

Mr. Ward added that the \$3 million the town taxpayers were responsible for regarding the new library was approximately the same amount (or less) than was required for the repairs to keep the current building functioning. He invited Mr. Johnson to come to more meetings and stay involved.

Mr. Patten explained how delaying repairs can cost the Town more money in the long run, as has been the case with repairs to the Town House roof.

Mr. Bartlett added that infrastructure is expensive, and there are national and state grants that were available previously that have dried up.

Mr. Dunbar said there are many people who use town facilities who don’t live here, and vocally support infrastructure improvements.

Mr. Johnson said there should be a quorum of representation at Town Meeting, like there is in Washington.

Mr. Clark said, regarding the Riverwalk Parking Lot and Brenner’s Bridge, that originally it was supposed to be a granite slab and drainable concrete structure and it was changed to and asphalt and steel, and wanted to know why \$1.6 million was spent on plans that were so different from the original.

Mr. Ward interjected that \$1.6 million was not what was paid for that project.

Mr. Bartlett explained that cost estimates done by the architectural firm were dramatically under what actual costs were. The Town canceled the contract with the architectural firm, and between parking lot and bridge the final cost came to just under \$800,000, which was very close to the original estimate.

Mr. Clark said he felt what the town voted on was not what was provided, and Mr. Bartlett replied that the bridge design installed was, in fact, the design that was presented at Town Meeting.

Mr. Ward voiced that overinflating numbers (as in the \$1.6 million parking lot example) poses the danger of misinforming the public and unnecessarily upsetting residents, and that the Select Board, Town staff, and Budget Committee work for many months on the budgets. He added that longer the Town waits to fix things, the more expensive the repairs ultimately are. Chair Miller added that the Board has always been careful that the operating budget never increased more than the inflation rate, in order to maintain a flat budget.

Mr. Clark said the budget was not flat, and the Board was “manipulating” the numbers, and Chair Miller strongly disagreed, and said “manipulating” was not an appropriate word to use for the efforts of the Board.

Chair Patten asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

*Motion:* Mr. Mabbs-Zeno made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

*Vote:* Ms. Sliver seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

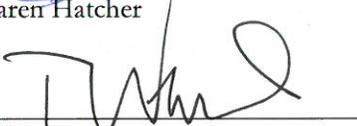
Meeting adjourned at 7:24 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Alison Kreutz, Administrative Assistant

PETERBOROUGH  
SELECT BOARD:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Barbara Miller, Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Hatcher

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Tyler Ward

**ACTION ITEM PENDING LIST**

- 1.