

Town of Farmington
Board of Selectmen Public Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 11, 2023
356 Main Street-Farmington, NH 03835

Board Members Present:

Gerry Vachon, Chairman
Charlie King, Vice Chairman
Ann Titus
Doug Staples
Penny Morin

Others Present:

Ken Dickie, Town Administrator
James Reinert, Fire Chief
Ed Brannan, Highway Dept. Supervisor
Kelly Heon, Finance Administrator

1). Call to Order:

Chairman Vachon called the meeting to order at 5 p.m.

2). Non-Public Session A:

Motion: (Vachon, second Morin) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (a)
Compensation passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, King, Titus, Staples, Morin-aye) at 5 p.m.

Motion: (Morin, second Staples) to come out of non-public session passed 5-0 at 5:47 p.m.

3). Non-Public Session B:

Motion: (Vachon, second Titus) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (a)
Compensation passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, King, Titus, Staples, Morin-aye) at 5:47 p.m.

Motion: (Morin, second King) to come out of non-public session passed 5-0 at 6:22 p.m.

4). Reconvene Public Session:

Chairman Vachon reconvened the public session at 6:29 p.m.

5). Pledge of Allegiance:

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

6). Public Input: None

7). Review of Minutes:

Nov. 13, 2023-Public Session Minutes- Page 7, 3rd line, change "Mr." to "Mrs."

Motion: (Titus, second Morin) to accept the minutes as amended passed 5-0.

Nov. 20, 2023-Public Session Minutes- No errors or omissions

Motion: (Morin, second Titus) to accept the minutes as written passed 3-0-2 (Staples, King abstained).

Nov. 29, 2023-Public Session Minutes- No errors or omissions

Motion: (King, second Staples) to accept the minutes as written passed 4-0-1 (Titus abstained).

Dec. 4, 2023-Non-Public Sessions A, B & C- No errors or omissions

Motion: (Morin, second Titus) to accept the minutes as written passed 4-0-1 (Staples abstained)

8). Old Business:

Amended Fire Dept. Budget- Fire Chief James Reinert said he made some revisions and took some stuff out that they ordered this year and reduced his request for 3 full time positions to 2 full time positions with all the associated costs for that. He said his budget is pretty close to level funded if not his calculations are it's about a ½ percent under the 2023 operating budget. Mr. King asked for full impact for the year for the 2 full time positions.

Chief Reinert said on the Excel spreadsheet they received it says projected 2024 and projected 2025 for the full year should be in there and it was about a 2.7% increase over 2024 and that's going off the history of what those individual line items were not associated with the full time costs.

Mr. King said he has a 20 in the spreadsheet for the 2 full timers.

Chief Reinert said initially he put in the numbers for his request for the 3 full timers and then he dropped it to 2 and redid the spreadsheet for 2024 and 2025 projected with the 2 full timers for the full 52 weeks vs. the 40 weeks after Town Meeting.

Mr. Vachon said his amended budget shows a decrease of .68%.

Mr. King asked for the percentage increases for the Chief's pay, the full time officers and the per diems.

Chief Reinert said for the full timers currently on staff he budgeted for up to 3% and the Word document associated with his budget shows what their current wage is and then 3%. He said he did the math it was around \$4,000 for the 3 full timers for the 40 weeks.

He said he was requesting a flat rate for the per diem increases at \$2 an hour and he gave everyone's current rate in that, years of service, what the average is the per diems are making as a whole for the dept. with some statistical information as a comparison and what the current wage scales are. He said it's around \$4,000 total for the full timers...

Mr. King said he said it was up to 3% for the full timers and for the per diems he was saying \$2 which would be like a 10% increase.

Chief Reinert said he put a flat rate vs. a percentage because he is trying to bump that bottom average up.

Mr. Vachon read the average hourly rate for per diem employees is \$18.38 so it's roughly an 11% increase.

Mrs. Morin asked if the .68% decrease is from his proposed budget to what he is proposing now or if it's from his actual budget to what he is proposing now.

Chief Reinert said his actual budget for '23 is his proposed budget for '24 and it's down .05%.

Mr. King said because of the partial year shifting to full time positions and other factors.

Chief Reinert said they reduced the vehicle maintenance line from \$25,000 to \$12,000 and there are other reductions that also brought that down. He said they are reworking the payroll monies that they budgeted this year from the per diems to the full time positions.

Mr. Staples asked if that was a realistic number to be able to cut that almost in half in the vehicle maintenance line.

Chief Reinert said they requested that increase for Engine 3 for the body and paint and that's why the vehicle maintenance line went up for 2023 which they did that for less money. He said other than replacing Engine 4 he didn't have any large ticket maintenance issues that came across through the inspections.

Mr. Staples asked what is wrong with Engine 4 and if it's anything we can fix.

Chief Reinert said there are problems with the frame and it's going in tomorrow to fix the exhaust that fell apart last weekend and there is a whole list of things. It's a 1999 International he said.

Mr. Staples asked if they are known to have a bad frame.

Mr. Vachon said it's the double frame International where the salt gets between them.

Mr. King said he would have to see it to make the same assessment that the Chief has.

Chief Reinert said he was going off other people's expertise and invited Mr. King to look at it. He said they've been working on a dash issue and the dash keeps going in and out and they replaced the floorboards in it already.

Mr. Staples asked if they wash it every day.

Chief Reinert said they wash it every time it goes out and more specifically with the salt and they try to maintain it.

Mr. King asked the Chief what he put himself at for a raise.

Chief Reinert said his current hourly rate is \$35.96 and he is requesting to be brought up to \$38 which is approx. \$3,300 over the course of a year.

Mr. Vachon said that is about a 5.5% or 5.6% increase.

Mr. King said he was glad to see the budget has been revised and is trending downward. He then asked for an update on the fire engine accident that occurred on the way to the Christmas tree lighting.

Chief Reinert said the ladder truck was bringing Santa to the tree lighting and the driver was trying to turn at Green St. and he misjudged the turn and came in too sharp and there was a vehicle pulling up to the STOP sign. The driver of the fire apparatus said he did not see that vehicle and made contact with the driver's side front fender of that vehicle and took out the fender and the tire. He said it made contact with Ladder 1 at front fender and the front fender flare was pushed in and there were some scuff marks 95% of which were buffed out today and there's a little gouge in the paint they have to correct.

Mr. King asked Mr. Dickie if they contacted the driver of the other vehicle and got that information to Primex.

Mr. Dickie said he already gave that information to Primex. He said they have a claim opened up and their insurance company will be dealing directly with Primex.

Mr. King asked if that person has been able to get temporary transportation to use until their vehicle is fixed.

Mr. Dickie said yes we provided them with a rental car and Primex covers all that.

Mr. King asked if they have an estimate on the fire truck yet.

Chief Reinert said no. He said he received an e-mail from a claims adjuster from Primex and he will be contacting us shortly to come out to look at the vehicle damage.

Mr. King said he looked at it that night and it looked like there was some repair needed to that fender skirt.

Chief Reinert said it's a bolt on and he looked at it but he wasn't going to touch anything with that specifically and then the little bit of corrective paint they have at the station. And documentation to follow he said.

Mr. King asked if the Police responded and an accident report was filed.

Chief Reinert said yes and it's already been completed and submitted to Primex.

Mr. King asked if the Town of Farmington is allowed to do that even though it's in our town.

Chief Reinert said he couldn't answer that.

Mr. King said well they did do it and they wouldn't do it if it was a Police cruiser they'd have somebody else do but where it was the Fire Dept.

Chief Reinert said he was comfortable if the board comfortable with it.

Mr. King asked if he knew if the other vehicle was stopped at the corner or if the vehicle was coming up Green St. while the truck had started to make the turn.

Chief Reinert said his understanding is that the vehicle was approaching the STOP sign as Truck 1 was turning and when he saw the angle of where Truck 1 was it was cut in too tight vs. he would have hugged the sidewalk along the way.

Mr. King said there is a difference if the vehicle was stopped there or coming up to the stop.

Chief Reinert said it was more towards the first or second granite pillar right here at the fence.

Mr. Vachon said Mr. Staples had a question about a personnel issue regarding this incident that he would ask Mr. Dickie about later.

Mr. King asked Mr. Dickie to review the dept.'s training requirements and to see if he feels there are areas that need to be looked at such as training or certification because they fall into a category that he thinks now they are exempt. He asked what they are doing to ensure that our people have the necessary training and skill sets to be operating our equipment.

He said now there is less DOT involvement and asked if we are policing ourselves and making sure our people are doing things correctly and safely. Not that I think there is any intentional fault here but I assume we're probably considered at fault but I'm not the one that makes that determination. We have to make sure that we're doing everything as correctly as possible as far as training and making sure we're holding our people accountable to operating safely he said.

Mrs. Titus asked if they could check their driving records although she didn't know if they all drive the trucks or not. She suggested checking the person's driving record when they are hired. Chief Reinert said everybody gets a Dept. of Motor Vehicles check upon hiring. He said this person is a senior member of the dept. and is responsible for most of their driver training that's why when it happened he was surprised at who was behind the wheel but accidents happen and no one is perfect. He has many years behind the wheel of a fire apparatus he said.

Inspection Policy-Chief Reinert said when he was last here this was tabled because Mr. King and Mr. Staples were not here and he didn't see it on the agenda.

Mr. King said he was okay with tabling it until the next time the Chief is here.

Mr. Vachon said it's not on the agenda so they don't have to table anything.

Motion: (King, second Vachon) to continue it to the next available meeting when the Fire Chief is here passed 5-0.

Mr. Brannan said he had other things to discuss besides his budget and offered to allow Mrs. Heon to discuss her topic with the board before him.

Motion: (Morin, second King) that we go out of order and let Kelly go first passed 5-0.

2023 Equalization Study- Mrs. Heon said this was a housekeeping issue and that she needed to get something signed. She said a few weeks ago they talked this that every year we conduct what's called an equalization study based on recent sales in town and the way it happens is our assessor conducts a trial ratio study, the board takes a look at it and she could just leave it with them and she didn't know if it was in their packets.

Selectmen said they didn't see it in their packets and Mrs. Heon said if they don't feel comfortable signing it tonight they could sign it at another time. She said basically it's a report that shows you the sales that they looked at in the last year and based on the sales the assessor is coming up with a median equalization ratio of 60.6. She said because we have our revaluation coming up in 2024 that she was thinking it was going to be by next year maybe even closer to 50% where next year you'll see our assessments brought back to a market value.

Mr. King said the last time we did this it got to a low of 62%.

Mrs. Heon said we'll see what next year brings.

Mr. King asked if the report had the sales and how many there were. He asked if there was one page for each sale or if there were multiple sales on each page.

Mrs. Heon said this was 1 packet for each Selectman. She gave each Selectman a packet and left the report with the board so if they desire to sign it before the end of the evening they can.

Mr. Vachon said if not they will return it to Mr. Dickie for safe keeping.

Mrs. Heon said their signatures were saying they've reviewed the study and that they are okay with sending it on to DRA. She said DRA will then do its thing and they'll finalize it so that is not a done deal and it could change.

Mr. King said the DRA is recording it as an annual review of our equalization but it really doesn't change anything.

Mrs. Heon said when DRA does their analysis it could potentially change the median ratio a little bit because they may decide that some of the sales that are included should not be included.

Mr. King said asked what impact that would have to a taxpayer or to our tax rate.

Mrs. Heon said it has no impact all it does is allow our taxpayers to look at what they're assessed value is now and use that ratio to calculate what the market value would be for them right now.

Mr. King said or for somebody looking at property in town. He said somebody would say they are looking at buying a house in Farmington, the realtor would say this is what it is assessed at, this is the current equalization rate meaning when it gets reevaluated if it was a \$200,000 home that was selling for \$360,000 with an equalization rate of 60% that would equate out to the value they could use to compare it to the sale price.

Mrs. Heon said it has no impact on taxes they're not changing anything they're just telling them that. She said the data is from sales from Oct. 1, 2022 to Sept. 30, 2023.

Mr. King said this could be a good indicator of what our reevaluation will be.

Mrs. Heon said yes but it could change slightly because there would still be some sales between now and then.

Mr. King asked how many sales there were in that 12 month period.

Mrs. Heon read that the sales in the date range were 163 but they only used 117 so they excluded some.

Mr. King said and they gave the reason for the exclusions such as an estate sale or a forced sale.

Mrs. Morin said that is what the numbers are on the side.

Mrs. Heon said the way it happens is when our assessing clerk is looking at a sale and she enters it into the assessing data base she initially makes the call as to whether it's going to be a qualified sale because she might have some information about it that maybe the assessor won't and then he looks at all of them as well. She said sometimes a sale goes from being qualified to unqualified or vice versa and then DRA looks at them as well.

Mr. King said there is a term used on page 5 where there's a column that says "trim" and it's a property that sold for \$110,000 when it's assessed value was \$144,000 so the ratio is upside down its 130% and asked what the trim means. He said it says yes under trim whenever it sold for less than the assessed value.

Mrs. Heon asked if that sale shows up with any other notes.

Mr. King said no it just says trim and it's not in the excluded sales list.

Mrs. Heon said she will find out and she thought that might mean that it's an outlier so they're getting rid of it even though they don't have any information that it should definitely be excluded. She said you can't exclude a sale just because it sold for less than the assessed value. She said there has to be a reason like it falls into a code.

Mr. King said if you're trimming it out that's excluding it.

Mrs. Heon said that's a question she will absolutely get the answer to. She said it is interesting to see the sale prices of a lot of the homes in Farmington vs. their assessed value.

Mr. King noted they listed the book and page not a map and lot number.

Mrs. Heon gave the signature page to Mr. Vachon so they could sign it and leave it with Mr. Dickie tonight and if not she would hit them up another time.

Motion: (Vachon, second Morin) to approve the Equalization Study as presented and to sign it passed 5-0.

Amended Highway Dept. Budget- Highway Dept. Supervisor Ed Brannan said he made a few changes to his budget and if possible it would be nice to increase the rental equipment line by another \$7,000. He said there were a couple of things that folks had questioned and gave board copies of some of the quotes they got and that one of the quotes is for the upgrade to the Town clock.

Mrs. Morin said she saw Rental Highway on the page that's in their packet and it has \$1 in it as a placeholder.

Mr. Brannan said that is in the administration portion and if you go to the Highway & Streets portion there is another Rental Equipment line. He said they have a quote in there from Equipment East and that's to rent a shoulder machine for a month.

Mr. Vachon asked where the line for the clock was located.

Mr. Brannan said it's under Highways & Streets, line 01-4312-20-440 Rental Equipment.

Mr. Vachon asked if he wanted to raise the Rental Equipment from \$15,000 to \$27,000.

Mr. Brannan said it was \$15,000 originally but in order to get the rubber tire excavator they're going to have to bump it up anyways so he put in \$20,000 on his previous visit here and this quote would be another \$7,000. He said that would be for a loader with a shoulder machine.

Mr. King asked how that works and if the loader has a piece of equipment and they're dumping into the bucket or the loader.

Mr. Brannan said this piece of equipment attaches to the front of the loader with a coupler and you dump into the hopper on the road widener. He said that is the machine that puts the gravel to the shoulder and has a blade to grade it all at the same time.

Mr. King asked to accomplish this if we need this piece of equipment and one of our 6 wheelers or 10 wheelers to feed it.

Mr. Brannan said they would probably have a couple of trucks feeding it. He said if they hired this out it would probably be about \$10,000+ a day by the time they do the equipment and the material. He said we have the material so that won't be a cost but this is for a month.

Mr. Vachon asked if they could just rent the road widener for use with our loader or if they have to rent their loader as well.

Mr. Brannan said part of that may be the style coupler that's on it.

Mrs. Morin said this is just to give them an idea on how much it's going to cost for this equipment not that this is where we're going for the equipment because this is a single quote.

Mr. Brannan said he'd be surprised if they could even find another company anywhere within a reasonable distance that would rent this type of equipment.

Mr. Staples asked if there is no town under our mutual aid agreement that has one that we could borrow.

Mr. Brannan said he didn't know of a town around that actually has a road widener.

Mr. Vachon asked if this is more or less a Gilly grader on the front of a loader.

Mr. Brannan said he didn't know. He said this one would have a hopper on the front, a conveyor to feed it and it almost looks like a paver mounted to the front of the loader and then it has a blade on the side to grade it as you go.

Mr. Vachon asked if we have 2 trucks with side dump spreaders.

Mr. Brannan said no we have a 6 wheeler that they made an attachment for that can get the gravel over to the side.

Mr. Dickie said we don't have any that are side delivery.

Mrs. Morin found a picture of the Gilly grader on her computer and showed it to the board and Mr. Brannan. She said it says it's on sale for \$3,000.

Mr. Vachon asked Mr. Brannan what other huge increases he has in this new proposed budget and if anything else changed from the last time he was here.

Mr. Brannan said they did they did end up buying some more salt and he looked at the overtime line a little bit closer and he didn't know if they want to increase them. He said if they had some of the Block Grant money in the budget to help offset them if needed that would work. He said if they didn't use the Block Grant money for that they could use it for either chip sealing or crack sealing on the roads. That's something that definitely helps save and prolong the life of the pavement and there is virtually nothing in this budget to cover that he said.

Mr. King said they have \$350,000 in the Rebuild and Repave line so typically in the past when they have done chip sealing that's come out of that number.

Mr. Vachon said it's been a few years and they have to decide if they're going to encumber the \$350,000 to continue the paving in the spring. He said they didn't do the paving because of the culverts and if they don't encumber with a PO they'll lose it to the general fund as unexpended funds.

Mr. King said if they encumber that they are already budgeting another \$350,000 through taxation.

Mr. Vachon said that would be for different roads next year.

Mr. King said now you'd have \$700,000.

Mr. Vachon said to do the roads they were supposed to do this year plus the roads they were planning to do next year.

Mrs. Morin said so they don't get behind schedule.

Mr. King said that all sounds great and asked where is the plan that says they're going to be able to get all this prep work done. He said just like this year when we ran into work issues

where we slated these roads to do and we couldn't do them because the prep work couldn't get done whether it was a culvert issue with the state or the manpower availability on our side and the inability to get a sub. He said if they are going back to the taxpayers for money they better have a good plan that they're actually going to do that.

He said he will be here next year and if they run into issues where they can't get this road done, they better have a plan of what else they're going to do. He asked if we have \$700,000 worth of paving we have to do and they have these scenarios that he didn't know where they stand like the ones that prevented us this year if they would be able to rectify those to keep those on the slate next year.

Mr. King said then you take this other \$350,000 and asked what the potential hurdles are that would prevent them from doing those and what backup roads would be substituted if some of those fall out of the mix. He said they need a plan a (how to do the \$350,000 for this year they didn't do), a plan b (fallback roads for that), and a plan c (or what else they're going to do) for this year's \$350,000 and a plan a (roads planned for next year) and a plan b (backup roads) for next year's \$350,000.

He said he was not opposed to it because we need to continually fix our roads but based on being unsuccessful this year for a variety of reasons we need to start earlier with a better plan so we can implement it even if it's 5 of these small projects we can put in if this big project falls out. This question may come up at Town Meeting when they say we gave you \$350,000 which almost a \$1 on the tax rate and you didn't spend it so how are you going to spend \$700,000 and Town Meeting is not that far away he said.

Mr. Vachon said neither is the end of Dec. and if they don't encumber it by the end of Dec. it's gone.

Mr. King said he wasn't opposed to encumbering it but if they're going to the taxpayers for another \$350,000 they need to have a pretty detailed plan because if he was sitting in the audience he would ask the question and be hoping someone would have a plan.

Mr. Vachon said they have one more meeting this year. He said Christmas is on a Monday so they have next week to decide if they want to encumber any money under different lines before they lose it.

Mrs. Morin said in his proposed budget he has part time highway help and last year they budgeted \$25,800 and they spent \$12,000, this year they budgeted \$25,800 and spent \$12,000 and next year they are requesting the same \$25,800 and it doesn't seem like they ever get to that \$25,800. She asked if he sees somewhere in his crystal ball where that's going to happen.

Mr. King said when they budgeted the \$25,800 they had certain positions they intended to do and asked what part time positions they were unable to fill this year.

Mr. Brannan said they didn't get much out of the summer help and they've got 8 positions in the Highway Dept. and one of them is a part time position so that was some of that money. He said they had a gentleman for it but he didn't come in and it didn't affect a whole lot that he

wasn't there. He said he didn't think he was going to work out as a part time guy and if anything he is going to go full time which he doubts or stay where he's at.

Mrs. Morin asked if he has a full time opening.

Mr. Brannan said he has a full time opening and a part time opening so he would keep that guy as a part timer for the winter.

Mrs. Morin said so they still aren't going to get to the \$25,800.

Mr. Brannan said they have 2 people that fall under that category to get through the winter and he thinks it's going to be close. He said he thinks they will expend it next year because there are 6 full time people at the highway garage now and they have 2 more positions. He said when he did this budget he didn't really think about it but those numbers do cover 8 full time people instead of 7 full time and 1 part time and if we can get some decent help in there we can certainly work them.

Mr. King said in Highway Electricity line he has \$14,000 and last year they spent \$10,300 and in the DPW Heating Oil line he has \$11,340 over the last 2 years and they spent \$7,200 and asked Mr. Brannan to review them one more time and make sure that is accurate.

Mr. Brannan said the highway oil is probably down a little bit as they've had some issues with the furnace.

Mr. Dickie said he would work with him on that.

Mr. Staples asked how much of their oil is coming from recycled oil.

Mr. Brannan said as far as what they see in this number nothing.

Mr. Staples asked how much of their usage is dependent on recycled oil from the Transfer Station.

Mr. Brannan said they are probably burning maybe 900 gallons.

Mrs. Morin asked out of how many gallons per year.

Mr. Brannan said he was not sure what they were burning at the garage for a total.

Mrs. Morin asked if the "This Year Actual" amounts were only through Oct. or if it was to date.

Mr. Brannan said the numbers they see here are through Oct. and he will have an updated spreadsheet on that hopefully by the end of this week.

Mr. King said they have the Rebuild/Repave line (\$350,000), Gravel Road line (\$20,000), Highway Paving line (\$25,000), Crushed Gravel line (\$20,000) and Winter Sand line (\$20,000). He asked if the Gravel Road line is materials for a gravel road.

Mr. Brannan said the Gravel Road line is more or less for calcium for dust control in the summer.

Mr. King suggested that the word calcium be put in a bracket as part of the title of the line.

Mrs. Morin said clearly that is not done every year.

Mr. Brannan said they didn't do that this year and from what he has gathered from the guys they have been in the habit of putting out calcium every time they grade the roads and that's probably more than is needed and he was not sure if that contributed to the condition of the

roads in the winter time. He said in the summer it works great as dust control and in the winter it works well as a deicer. He said if you have calcium in your gravel and you get cold weather the road may freeze but when it warms up that road is going to thaw out really quick. You could lose a road very easily because of that stuff so we opted to stay away from it for this year and see if it made a difference over the winter months and see if these roads held up a little bit better he said.

Mr. King said he would like to limit it to an as needed basis because of the money and because it's a chemical they put on the road that gets in the water and everywhere else and he is not a big fan of treating on a schedule they should treat when they need it.

Mr. Brannan said this coming late spring/early summer when the roads start to dry out they are going to try to treat where they need to and focus more on in front of the homes and not areas where people are driving through and there's no homes around there's no sense in worrying about it.

Mrs. Morin said as a person who lives on a dirt road she appreciates the calcium in the summer it does get pretty dusty up there.

Mr. King said they need to do it but they need to do it when it makes sense because if they are doing it in the early season the roads don't have any dust or issues.

Mr. Brannan said when he started last fall one of the first things they did towards the end of Sept. was to grade the roads and in late Sept. they wanted to put calcium out but he managed to convince them not to.

Mr. King asked how many times they grade the roads per season on average.

Mr. Brannan said he would say they would be out there at least 4 times.

Mr. King said on the first and last times they're probably not going to add calcium.

Mr. Brannan said that's correct. He said the first time they would be doing it early to late spring when the roads dry out enough so you can get on them with a machine usually mid-to-end of May.

Mr. King said it might be the second and third time they grade and a lot of times when they grade other additionally it's either at the beginning or at the end because of freeze/thaw conditions.

Mr. Brannan said usually you put it out one time and if you get a condition where it dries out a lot if you have the equipment to do it you can spot treat areas as needed. He said you do not want to put that out late in the season and if they have been putting it out as much as he thinks they have it's probably too much.

Mrs. Morin said that might be a line they can reduce as well.

Mr. Brannan said it will be a good line to keep an eye on and see where they're at this coming year. If we can reduce it after this I will definitely try he said.

Mr. King asked if the \$25,000 in the Highway Paving line is for incidental stuff that they do.

Mr. Brannan said yes things like cold patch, hot top patching and small areas they need to fix.

He said next year they may try to do something with mutual aid on that and they know where they can access a paver.

Mr. King said they have a proposal for the Town clock and this started because the clock was not...

Mr. Dickie said it doesn't change when the time changes and it's still on the old schedule.

Mr. King asked how many weeks it is wrong.

Mr. Brannan said it used to be the first of April and now it's early March.

Mr. Vachon said it changes the second Sunday in March.

Mr. King said the estimate to bring this up to date to have it correct an additional 3 weeks a year is \$11,250. He said he would push this to a warrant article and if the taxpayers want to raise and appropriate \$11,000 to have that clock right the 3 weeks of the year that it's not correct they'll raise and appropriate it but he is not in favor of it.

Mrs. Morin said chances are they'll get rid of daylight savings time all together and this will be moot because they would have to have to change it again.

Mr. Brannan said the unit that is in there now you can't adjust but this one they would be able to adjust moving forward.

Mr. Vachon said it used to be the first weekend in April and run through the last week in Oct. so it's wrong in the fall as well. He said it would be wrong roughly 4 weeks depending on when the days fall.

Mr. King said they have not received a complaint about it.

Mr. Brannan said he got a number of calls last spring.

Mr. Vachon said the board may not have received them but there were complaints made to Mr. Brannan and Mr. Dickie about it being off. He said that's why Mr. Dickie did some research to find out why they are responsible for it.

Mr. King said it's our clock that is in the church's building and we have an agreement to maintain it. He gave a brief history of the repairs and improvements made to the clock over the years and then said \$11,000 is a lot of money.

Mrs. Morin said it is a staple in the town that the townspeople have come to know that it's there and they look for it.

Mr. Vachon said the townspeople also knew it was noon time when the air horn at the fire station blew every day at noon but that doesn't happen anymore either.

Mr. King asked how many people look at their watch to see what time it is vs. their phone.

Mrs. Titus said a lot of people look at the clock and they notice if the clock is off and she hears that a lot. She said she was in favor of putting this in a warrant article and let the people decide.

Motion: (King, second Titus) to place a warrant article in the total of \$11,250 to repair the Town clock;

Discussion: Mr. Brannan said this company would come out and inspect it and service it and there's \$300 in the budget for that and it's actually \$395 for them to come out. He said they

would have them come out and take a look at it and service what he can and that may give them a better idea of where we need to be on this.

Vote: the motion passed 4-1 (Morin opposed).

Mrs. Morin said she thought it ought to be in the budget because we own the clock and we should repair it.

Mr. Vachon asked if there were any more questions on Mr. Brannan's proposed budget which is an increase of \$111,477. There were no other questions on the Highway Dept. budget.

Town Clerk Asst. Posting- Mrs. Morin said she was looking at the posting for the TC Asst. and it needs to be clear that this is for training in order to take over the position and run for it and it's a one year position and asked if they don't run for it if they are going to keep that position in the budget to have an Asst. Town Clerk. I don't think we were clear when we went through that at the last meeting that it was a 1 year position and then they would run for it she said.

Mr. King said it should be that it's a 1 year position and if they want to retain that position they will have to run for it if it's available. He said it's projected to be available but we're not there.

Mrs. Morin said she didn't think this posting was clear that it's a 1 year position and she didn't think their motions were clear that it's a 1 year position so she wanted to revisit that if they could. She said she would have to go back into the motion to see what the exact words were and how to adjust that.

Mr. Vachon said that vote was taken at the Dec. 4 meeting and those minutes were not available yet.

Mr. King suggested they take this up again later in the meeting and clarify what that posting should be and Mr. Dickie can revise it so it's more in line with what was proposed to them.

Road Issues- Mrs. Titus said she had a couple of calls on Meaderboro Road about when it would be graded again and they said the road is really bad and asked when the next grading would be. Mr. Brannan said if the weather permits and it doesn't get too bad tonight they are going to try to grade Dodge Cross Rd. and that road has been bad for quite some time. He said hopefully he can put the grader on it and grade it but after that it's going to get colder for a few days and he is not sure the grader is going to work as far as grading the roads there may be a little too much frost in the surface. If that's the case we'll be spreading gravel to fill in the holes and working with them as much as we can to get them smoothed up he said.

Mrs. Morin asked if they still have the teeth for the grader.

Mr. Brannan said they have to get a new serrated edge and he was going to try to get a carbide edge this time which is considerably more but it would last a lot longer. He said the roads aren't frozen now and depending on the temperature tonight they may not freeze up by morning and they might be able to grade something. It's definitely something we're going to be working on he said.

Mr. Vachon said back in Sept. he brought up ditching on Reservoir Rd. after a resident contacted him and he asked Mr. Brannan to let him know what the plan was if there was a plan.

Mr. Brannan said they never made it over there.

Mr. Vachon asked him to call the resident who has been patiently waiting for a phone call.

Mr. Brannan said he would and asked Mr. Vachon to send him the resident's phone number. He said they will get down on that road and do some work too and they are going to try to get around to all of them. He said if they have decent weather they will keep going back out there and try to get these roads flattened back out again. The weather is tough on all the roads but the dirt roads really take a beating in this weather he said.

9). New Business:

Notice of Project Selection-Replacement of 2 Highway Trucks- Mr. Dickie said they were notified last week that the Town of Farmington was selected and Mr. Brannan had put in for 3 trucks-one was a 2005 5500, one was a 6 wheeler and one was a 10 wheeler. He said the 6 wheeler and the 10 wheeler were selected and they have been notified they will be going to the next step but he has not received what the total value is going to be. He said they put in for \$520,000 and then they could be responsible for 20% of that total value. I told them to proceed forward and I'm looking for support from the board that you're willing to put forth the 20% of what they're going to put forth to replace the 10 wheeler and the 6 wheeler he said.

Mr. King said when he got the news from the Chair he said that's about the best news he has heard in a long time.

Mr. Vachon said they're still looking at 300 days out for a cab and chassis depending on the manufacturer.

Mr. Brannan said it depends on how they go and there are trucks available complete.

Mr. King asked in this grant if they are required to take that truck completely off the road.

Mr. Vachon, Mr. Staples and Mr. Brannan said yes.

Mr. King asked for model year of the 6 wheeler that would be replaced.

Mr. Brannan said it's a 2004.

Mr. King asked if they would be able to say kick out the 5500 and keep that truck in the fleet.

Mr. Brannan said a new 5500 size truck is about \$160,000-\$167,000 and that 6 wheeler is \$280,000 so its \$120,000 more completely outfitted.

Mr. Vachon questioned the \$280,000 price for a 6 wheeler and said that's way too much.

Mr. King agreed it was way too much and said "sorry, no sale".

Mr. Brannan said the trucks are basically the same with the exception of another rear end and about 4 or 5 ft. of frame and body.

Mr. King said there's a little bit more than that you have engine power displacement, transmission rating and axle rating in the front.

Mr. Vachon said they specked out a 10 wheeler that mirrors our 6 wheeler with the same motor and different gear ratios from the engineers to make it perform the same so it's the same filters for every trip. Same motor, same axle, same everything and a longer frame and an extra axle and different gear ratios within those axles is the only difference. This was 2 years

ago and it was under \$300,000 for a Peterbuilt with a 330 horse Cummings he said.

Mr. Brannan said that's just one quote the 10 wheeler and the 6 wheeler cab and chassis, same engine, same transmission, same cab literally you're paying for an extra axle and an extra frame and that's it.

Mr. Vachon asked for the cost difference between the cab and the chassis.

Mr. Brannan said they didn't give him the specific cost it was a package deal. He said with what he has for prices he didn't know if he would go with the 6 wheeler anyway and one reason was it was way over powered because you don't need 525 horsepower in a 6 wheeler.

Mr. King said it was great that we were awarded the grant but we need to start looking around for some options.

Mr. Brannan said those are trucks they could have in a month and a half but there are a couple of other options here.

Mr. Vachon said the way he reads the grant is we have to come up with the total cost and then be reimbursed 80% so we would have to pay \$500,000 to be reimbursed \$400,000.

Mr. Brannan said we still have to go through the Governor and Council on this.

Mr. King said that makes this a warrant article. He said if it was \$100,000 he wouldn't have a problem with putting it in the budget but he wouldn't do that with \$500,000. I think they'll approve it but you have to explain it to them we can't add \$500,000 and just put it forward he said.

Mr. Brannan said if that's the case then they have no choice but to go to a warrant article.

Mr. Vachon read the maximum project reimbursement by the program is 80%.

Mr. King asked if there was a maximum dollar amount.

Mr. Vachon said no it depends on what they requested.

Mr. King said they didn't award the 5500 so it's only the other 2 trucks they requested. He asked if that is the 2004 that is at DiPrizio's with the bad box.

Mr. Brannan said no that's the 2004 that's in their garage now with a new box. He said they had no choice but to fix the truck. He said if it goes to a warrant article they're probably looking at a truck somewhere in Sept.-Oct. maybe.

Mr. King said depending on the dealership they could lock up a truck if they have a relationship with them and give them a refundable deposit to hold the trucks contingent on the warrant article. He said we just have to figure out what we want and what is reasonable we know the equipment is going to be a lot of the cost.

Mr. Brannan said all of the truck manufacturers have their issues but with some of them you are driving to Manchester or further for service and International is in Barrington or DiPrizio's.

Mr. Vachon said we'd get a better rate at DiPrizio's but warranty work would have to go to Barrington.

Mr. Brannan said they have to get through the next phase of this and figure out exactly what's required.

Mr. King asked if they have a preferred brand on the wing and plow.

Mr. Brannan said most likely they would stick with Everest and the newest truck a Freightliner has Viking-Cives gear. He said he tends to prefer the Viking-Cives gear over Everest because he is more familiar with it and never had any real issues with it. Everest is good gear, I haven't had a lot of issues with that and spreaders if I had my choice I'd go with Highway he said.

He said if he had his option for the 10 wheeler he would want a side dump spreader with a side mounted spinner because when it comes time to do snow removal or haul gravel they don't have to pull the spreader they just have to put a couple of plates down which takes from 15 minutes or an hour depending on how good they are at putting them in and out. He added the benefit of those too is if there is anything in the body when you're swapping over you put the body back down, pop the tailgate, run the body up and dump what's in it out.

Mr. King said it adds on a complication and adds to the cost of the truck.

Mr. Brannan said if you go with a standard body with a slide-in its a little more money.

Mr. Vachon said the last he knew side dump spreaders were a little cheaper.

Mr. Brannan said the benefit of the slide-in is if your spreader fails and you have to work on it you can take it out of the truck and keep going and with the integrated body if the spreader is messed up that truck is down while you fix it. There's good and bad points to either one he said.

Mr. Vachon said it usually a pretty easy fix though you just put the body up and the bearings and everything are right there.

Mr. Brannan said the big thing with the integrated ones is you have to do the maintenance. They've stepped it up quite a bit he said.

Mr. King said he wanted a stainless steel body on the truck.

Mr. Brannan said absolutely and aluminum tanks.

Mr. Vachon said that's about \$10,000 more for a stainless.

Mr. King said they spent a lot of money trying to keep the bodies good and he did that personally one time and it was a waste of time, effort and money.

Mr. Brannan said stainless is definitely the way to go. He said the new trucks all come with a single frame too.

Mr. Vachon suggested they call the Freightliner rep and see what a cab and chassis for a 6 wheeler would cost. He said maybe they could find out the municipal pricing on a cab and chassis to match the same 6 wheeler is through Freightliner. He said their line card should be on file where they bought that truck 3 years ago.

Mr. Brannan said he would check them out. He said he would check the state bids too and see what they have. He said he wasn't a huge fan of the cab on the Freightliner.

Mr. Vachon said it would give them a price on a cab and chassis the way its set up with the dual steering and the stuff for a plow truck. We can at least get a price on a cab and chassis and a lead time so we have an idea of the cost and the lead time if we had to order one he said.

He said he can probably make a phone call and get an idea on a cab and chassis through

another salesman that he knows that may already have a line card lined up for a plow truck for a 6 wheeler and a 10 wheeler.

Mr. Brannan said he would have a monthly report for the board next week and mechanic John Radcliffe did some of it on the trucks. He said he is a little new to maintenance program they have and he would do the repair orders and everything would go to the Secretary in the past so he has been working with him a little bit to figure it out. It's taken a little bit but we're going to get it straightened out so we can get you guys a good solid report he said.

Mr. King said he wanted to add 1 more line item for him to review and get back to Mr. Dickie on.

Mr. Brannan said he wanted to put the on-call on a separate line in the budget and that was something the Finance Administrator had asked for. He said he would get the numbers for the electric and heat for next week.

Mr. King asked him to add motor oil because they are up \$2,000 and they didn't even expend last year's budget. He said it was \$6,000 last year and they spent \$5,300 and now its \$8,000.

Mr. Brannan said they spent all that money in that budget.

Mr. Staples said that's not what it says on here.

Mr. Brannan said they did spend it they just filled up the tanks.

Mr. Vachon said he was sure John was changing the oil in the trucks before they get beat on for the next 4 months with long hours.

Mr. Brannan said they all got serviced at inspection.

Thanks Everyone!- Mrs. Titus said Friday night was wonderful at the Christmas tree lighting and the FPIO did a great job. She said the Festival of Trees was very nice, Santa was great and Ken did a great job as the MC.

She said there was a lot going on this weekend the Fire Dept. had a pancake breakfast the town was alive this weekend and it was nice to see things going on. She said basketball was also happening and it was nice to see people out and being social.

Mrs. Morin said there was also a craft fair.

Mrs. Titus thanked everyone involved and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

10). Town Administrator's Business:

Sewer Certifications- Mr. Dickie said he had a meeting with the NH DES on Nov. 18 going over their requirements for the sewerage. He said it sounds like they've changed the rules and now they're going to require at least two Level 3 persons at the Sewer Dept. where we used to have 1 and then they changed it so we needed to have a full time person working it but we also had to have a backup in case someone was out.

He said Supervisor Chuck Tiffany is going for his Level 4 on Dec. 22 and the state messed up on the date they posted. He said they were planning on going over last week and they usually have it on a Wed. but they posted it for a Thurs. so now they changed that date to 22nd. He said Jonathan is going in June when he'll have enough class time to go for his Level 3.

He said DES told them about a month and a half ago that they would grant us some leeway knowing that we have a Level 2 going for his Level 3 in June so they would give us a letter to cover us during that time. I just want to make sure that's still the case so I'm going over on the 18th and I'll let you know what I find out he said.

Solar Power- Mr. Dickie on the Transfer Station solar they had Kearsarge Energy from MA express some interest and he told them to put some type of a proposal together and then he can get them in front of the board. He said when he put out the RFQ for that 4 or 5 companies expressed interest but none of them provided quotes and they all completely backed out. He said this one seems like they might be coming forward and that Kearsarge is self-funding and they don't borrow money so they're able to handle smaller sites like our Transfer Station. He said he is waiting for their proposal and then he will put them on the agenda with the board.

Property Auctions- He said he is working with the Town Clerk/Tax Collector to get a list of properties available for auction and he is in communication with the auctioneer to get a list together so they can hold an auction.

Bunker Street Culvert- Mr. King said a few meetings ago he was bothered by the response from DES about a culvert they want to replace on Bunker St. where they told us tough luck you didn't maintain it and we're not going to give you an emergency waiver and asked if there was any update.

Mr. Dickie said he met with Dave at the Pease base in Portsmouth and after going over the whole situation he mentioned replacing culverts on Bunker St. and on Dick Dame Lane in-kind. He said he reviewed that with Tighe & Bond and they weren't familiar with in-kind so he is waiting to see where we land with that.

Mr. King asked if that means they can replace them with what was there.

Mr. Dickie said they could replace it with exactly what you have and if anything happens it's back on us. He said he told Dave he didn't see why that would be a concern because in all the storms he is familiar with he doesn't see FEMA giving us a lot of money and the culvert on Bunker St. has been there since before his father got on the road crew back in 1968 and they haven't replaced it all the time he was there and it just started failing now. That culvert has been in there over 50 years and if I can put the same thing back in there as far as I know we've never had a flooding issue he said.

Mr. Staples said all of the culverts around it are the same size so it's not going to be the only one that fails.

Mr. Dickie said he is waiting for Tighe & Bond to get back to him on what the new quote is going to be. He said the final quote they have coming back is from Hoyle Tanner and they got the quote back from Dubois & King.

Mr. King asked if they are replacing in-kind if it needs an engineer.

Mr. Dickie said Dave said we do and they at least need a plan.

Mr. King joked it could be a sketch plan with "put culvert here where it was" and stamped by an engineer. He then said it was good that at least there was some positive progress.

11). Next Meeting: Monday, December 18, 2023

12). Non-Public Session C:

Motion: (King, second Titus) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (a) Compensation passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, King, Titus, Staples, Morin-aye) at 8:19 p.m.

Motion: (Morin, second Staples) to come out of non-public session passed 5-0 at 9:10 p.m.

13). Adjournment:

Motion: (Staples, second Morin) to adjourn the meeting passed 5-0 at 9:10 p.m.

Kathleen Magoon
Recording Secretary



Gerry Vachon, Chairman

Charlie King, Vice Chairman



Ann Titus



Douglas Staples

Penny Morin