

Town of Farmington
Board of Selectmen Public Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 22, 2024
Selectmen's Chambers
356 Main Street-Farmington, NH 03835

Board Members Present:

Gerry Vachon, Chairman
Ann Titus
Doug Staples
Penny Morin

Board Members Absent:

Charlie King

Others Present:

Ken Dickie, Town Administrator
Chuck Tiffany, Water Dept. Supervisor
Bob York, Campbell Commons resident
Kyle Pimental, Planning Dept. Director
Tim Andrews, Nobis Group
Melinda Bubier, NH DES
Kelly Heon, Finance Administrator
Chad Roberge, Avitar Associates
James Reinert, Fire Chief
Scott Orlando, Police Chief
Ed Brannan, Highway Dept. Supervisor

1). Call to Order:

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

2). Non-Public Session A:

Motion: (Vachon, second Titus) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (b) Hiring passed 3-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, Titus, Staples-aye) at 5:06 p.m.

Motion: (Vachon, second Titus) to come out of non-public session passed 3-0 at 5:25 p.m.

3). Non-Public Session B:

Motion: (Vachon, second Staples) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (b) Hiring passed 3-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, Titus, Staples-aye) at 5:26 p.m.

Motion: (Vachon, second Staples) to come out of non-public session passed 3-0 at 5:37 p.m.

4). Non-Public Session C:

Motion: (Titus, second Vachon) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) Reputation passed 3-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, Titus, Staples-aye) at 5:38 p.m.

Motion: (Titus, second Vachon) to come out of non-public session passed 3-0 at 5:49 p.m.

5). Non-Public Session D:

Motion: (Titus, second Staples) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) Reputation passed 3-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, Titus, Staples-aye) at 5:50 p.m.

Motion: (Titus, second Staples) to come out of non-public session passed 3-0 at 5:55 p.m.

6).Reconvene Public Session:

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

7).Pledge of Allegiance:

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

8). Open Public Hearing to Accept Special One Time Bridge Payment of \$42,279.76:

Motion: (Vachon, second Morin) to open the Public Hearing for the House Bill 2 that provides a one-time bridge payment being made available to NH municipalities in state fiscal year 2023; Mr. Vachon read the following aloud: HB2 directs the department to divide and distribute a \$10 million one-time payment between all NH municipalities that have municipality owned bridges per state definitions. Fifty percent of the distribution is based on a municipality's percentage of state-wide municipal bridge deck surface area and the remaining 50% of the distribution is based on the municipality's percentage of state-wide population. This one-time bridge payment is not related at all to the quarterly Block Grant Aid payments that a municipality receives. This payment can only be used on the maintenance, construction or reconstruction of municipally owned bridges. These are non-lapsing funds no funds appropriated under this section shall be used to supplement locally budgeted and approved funds for bridge maintenance or construction. The funds appropriated in this section may be considered unanticipated money under RSA 31: 95-b and may be accepted and expended pursuant to RSA 31: 95-b (ii-iv) whether or not a political subdivision has adopted the provisions of RSA 31: 95-b.

At 6:07 p.m. Chairman Vachon said he would leave the public hearing open for 30 minutes.

Vote: the motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Vachon said they cannot run the public hearings concurrently they have to be done individually and moved to Public Input.

9). Open Public Hearing to Accept Special One Time Highway Payment of \$46,156.21:

(See below)

10). Open Public Hearing for Fire Dept. Inspection Fees: (See below)

11). Public Input:

Whippoowill Ridge resident Bob York said before the vote last year on the Town taking over their pump station they promised to put an auto dialer on that pump station but for whatever reason that never got done by the company that was handling it. He said he would like to present the Town with a check for the amount that they approved to put that auto dialer on that pump station.

Mr. Staples asked for the amount.

Mr. York said the check is for \$1,500. He said they are not quite sure what it would cost as they got estimates ranging from \$750 to \$1,500 and they were all over the place. He said they never

got a contractor to do it and they didn't do it. I promised it to Chuck (Tiffany) a few times and we want to make sure that that's taken care of he said.

Mr. Vachon asked if that was from the Home Owners' Association.

Mr. York said yes which leads him to the topic that he is here for now. He said they have a very strong desire in Campbell Commons to dissolve the HOA so they are looking for information on how they need to go about doing that and see if Packy (Campbell) had any kind of deal with the Town that it would last for 20 years or 25 years or whatever that may be they're not sure about that. He said they're interested in information on how to dissolve that HOA they're just about there but now they are looking at the final step and to bring it to the Town's attention and make sure they know what they want to do and try to proceed from there.

Mr. Vachon asked Mr. Dickie if he had any information on allowing them to dissolve the HOA. He then asked if there was an issue with the streetlights.

Mr. Dickie said yes that was the issue he was aware of and what the Town's attorney recommended it would have to be handled in a warrant article at Town Meeting. He said whether they do a petition warrant article or the board puts a warrant article in behalf of the Town is up to them.

Mr. York said the Town Attorney wrote an e-mail and she stated that they could be granted a license for the utility poles if they are within the 50 ft. right-of-way. He said he didn't understand that because Eversource has the license they own all of the light poles that are up there and all of their light poles are within the 50 ft. r-o-w.

He said he wrote the original petition to have the infrastructure, pump station and all of that taken over and when he wrote it he wrote "infrastructure" and he assumed that streetlights were a part of the infrastructure so that's how he wrote it up. He said a few things happened it got kicked off to the side and if the Town wants them to go the route of petition they certainly will. It's the last piece of the puzzle to us there's only 9 streetlights up there and we also have a work order to get them switched over to LED but seeing that we are just a small fish they're taking their time doing that also he said.

He asked what constitutes infrastructure and why they got stuck with the streetlights as not being part of the infrastructure because they are within the 50 ft. r-o-w and Eversource owns all of that.

Mr. Vachon asked Mr. Dickie if he has clarification on that from Att. Roman.

Mr. Dickie said he would dig through his e-mails to find the response she gave him when he questioned it and he send to Mr. York and the board but he will dig it back up as he still has it.

Mr. Vachon asked him to refresh the board on the attorney's response so they can look at it.

Mr. York asked if there was any guidance the board can give them on dissolving the HOA and if there are any requirements thru the Town so they can move forward and try to get rid of this.

Mr. Vachon said he wasn't sure and he would have to talk to Att. Roman and see if there is anything from the Town. He said he didn't believe there is but he has never had to deal with an

HOA dissolving and that's a private thing that the residents have and he would have to check with the attorney.

Mr. Dickie said he didn't know if the Town has any governance over their HOA.

Mr. Vachon asked him to verify with Att. Roman if there is anything from the Town side or if once the streetlight thing is figured out they can just dissolve.

Mrs. Morin asked if he reached out to Mr. Campbell.

Mr. York said he did but he never got an answer from him. He said at the last Town Meeting he was at he was okay I'm all set now I don't have to deal with Campbell Commons anymore.

Mr. Vachon said something like that should have been in the site plan and there should be a note somewhere saying it was resolved. He said he would ask Mr. King (he was on the Planning Board when that development went in) when he gets back from his business trip.

Mr. York said he can get in touch with Mr. King also.

Mr. Staples asked if it was written in warrant article that they were going to do it before the Town took control.

Mr. York said it wasn't written in the warrant article it was just a verbal agreement and he told Mr. Tiffany that before they had that taken over and they were looking to have that put on there anyway just even for their own peace of mind because all of a sudden a light goes on and nobody knew what to do. He said an auto dialer is a smart thing it goes right to the pumps to the people who are maintaining the pumps and then they come out and take care of it. I want it there for you guys for your own piece of mind too he said.

Mr. Staples asked Mr. Tiffany if that is something he feels comfortable with.

Mr. Tiffany said it's not on an auto dialer yet but it's capable to be put on an auto dialer and he had a discussion with AAA Pump and they are going to come down and put on an auto dialer so in the event of emergencies they get called out for it. He said as of right now it's not and he doesn't have a price yet for the auto dialer from them.

Mr. York said they ran him around a bit and then they just never did anything. He said he just wanted to make sure it's done before they dissolve the HOA or however they go forward.

Mr. Staples said he wanted to make sure it wasn't in the warrant article that they were responsible to replace that stuff.

Mrs. Morin asked if they have to vote to accept that money.

Mr. Vachon said they can just to be on the up and up.

Mrs. Morin said she thought they have to but asked if they wanted to accept that money not knowing what was in the warrant article ahead of time because if they accept the money but it says they're going to be responsible for it.

Mr. York said in the petition that he wrote last year he did not put that in there.

Mrs. Morin said it may have been in the minutes from the meeting that they took responsibility for that.

Mr. York said it never came up at Town Meeting either it was just something that they as an

HOA wanted it on there because nobody knew who to call if the pumps went off. He said they were going to do it anyway and it just never got done before the Town took it over. I was hoping that it would get done before Town Meeting and it just never happened he said.

Mr. Tiffany asked what company he contacted.

Mr. York said AAA Pump. He said it was never mentioned in any of the meetings it was just a verbal and they voted on it as an HOA and they voted \$1,500 to have that system installed on that pump. Either way it was going to be done or we were going to pay for it once the Town took over and so now I'm here to pay for that and make sure that the Town gets that on there. It's our obligation and we feel that it's our responsibility just because we said so. We just want to live up to that before we try to dissolve the whole HOA he said.

Motion: (Morin, second Staples) that we accept the \$1,500 towards the purchase of an auto dialer;

Discussion: Mr. Staples said he wasn't a fan of accepting it. He said if Mr. Tiffany has to call and get the pump company to come down and do it for them that's something but not knowing what it's going to cost he was not in favor of accepting the money.

Mrs. Morin asked if they have any obligation to giving us the money and if we have already accepted the pumping station.

Mr. Vachon said we have accepted the pumping station we did that at Town Meeting.

Mrs. Titus asked if they could hold the check until Mr. Tiffany investigates the price and then they could deposit the check and accept it.

Mr. York said he got quotes between \$750 and \$1,200.

Mr. Staples asked if that was a year ago.

Mr. York said it was about a year ago and that was for a Wi-Fi one because they didn't want to go into if the electricity shuts off so is that. He said they wanted the Wi-Fi one so it would just reach out and call the 3 people. He said in answer to Mrs. Morin's question they are not obligated to pay this it's just they gave their word and they want to live up to their word. He said because he didn't have an actual price he was pretty sure the Town can get it for probably less than \$1,500. We just wanted to make sure it's all taken care of he said.

Mrs. Titus asked Mr. Tiffany if he thought it would be more than \$750 to purchase that.

Mr. Tiffany said he had no idea and he was not going to say.

Mrs. Titus asked if the Town would be putting it in.

Mr. Tiffany said AAA Pump would put it in.

Mrs. Titus said there would probably be another charge for that.

Mr. Tiffany said it probably would be included with buying it.

Mrs. Titus said she was just afraid of hidden costs that would be over \$1,500.

Mrs. Morin asked Mr. Tiffany if he would put this in anyway regardless.

Mr. Tiffany said yes they have to.

Mr. Vachon said no matter what it's coming out of the Town budget or they pitch in towards it

because he has to get it on SCADA (software/hardware systems that control, monitor and analyze devices and processes) so it notifies.

Vote: the motion passed 3-1 (Staples opposed).

Mr. Vachon asked Mr. York to give the check to Mr. Dickie and he would give it to the Finance Administrator so she can have it deposited and put it towards the SCADA system for the pump station.

Mr. York gave the check to Mr. Dickie.

Mr. Staples said he appreciated them trying to live up to their end of the deal.

12). Review of Minutes:

January 15, 2024-Non-Public Sessions A, B, C and D- No errors or omissions

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

13). Old Business:

Old Fire Station- Planning Dept. Director Kyle Pimental said the board should have received a memo that he put together summarizing the findings from the Phase II environmental assessment and outlined some potential next steps based on what was found. He said both the exceedances for ambient ground water and soil remediation were some of the things that popped up in some of the testing so that memo he was not going to go into great detail other than it outlines what those contaminants are and a follow-up conversation they had with the Nobis Group which we have Tim Andrews here as well as NH DES to answer any questions the board might have because they need to make some decisions on a path forward.

He said what was in the scope of work that they had that was approved as part of the Brown Fields grant they have done all of that work but there is additional work that really needs to be done to delineate where and how far this contamination goes off the site and what some of the next steps are. He said right now if they were to continue they would need the board's support to amend that scope of work to move forward with that.

Mr. Pimental said if the board is not supportive of that the next buyer is going to take that on. He said the big hang-up there is a private developer is not going to have access to the funds that this municipality has because they're not eligible for Brown Fields funding. That may or may not have an impact on the sale of the property that's hard to tell. Someone may say they are okay with taking on that risk and other potential buyers could say they are not willing to take on that risk or it's going to have a major impact on the sale of the property he said.

He said they are looking to the board for guidance on what to do next. He said he laid out what some of the options might be, what the proposed scope of work would look like but he wanted to step back and let Tim and Mindy come forward and let them speak to more of the specifics.

He said Tim Andrews is from Nobis and they are the ones that have done all the work and Mindy is here from DES that can give them the regulatory side on what the state is going to require regardless of if they stop the process here this still needs to be addressed no matter

what and the board can ask any questions they would like. He said he would leave the more technical questions to Tim and the regulatory questions to Mindy and have them give their thoughts on this project and then he would be happy to come back to the board.

Mr. Vachon asked if they have grant funding for the next steps.

Mr. Pimental said yes and they already have approved the scope of work if Nobis decides to move forward with it so the money is there. He said there is no cost to the Town it would still fall under the existing it would just be an amended scope of work but they are not going to move forward without this board's support.

Mr. Staples asked who it is a cost to.

Mr. Pimental said they could look at it as the taxpayers throughout the country commit funds to federal programs like the Brown Fields Program.

Nobis Group Contractor for Region 1 EPA Tim Andrews and Project Manager Melinda Bubier from the NH Dept. of Environmental Services Brown Fields Program came forward and introduced themselves to the board.

Mr. Vachon asked what the next steps are.

Mr. Andrews said they have identified a lot of options and part of that is working with NH DES within the regulatory framework for the things that will be required. He said there is funding available the EPA already has this money through the stimulus funding that is out there so he has spoken with Region 1 EPA about this and they are his client. He said they said they would support additional work at this time with the funding that they have in place should the Town choose to use it.

He said they haven't fully flushed out the entire scope of work because they need approval to know what they could and could not do knowing these are sensitive items the Town has to deal with and maybe deal with public questions. He said these aren't just desired items they will be required at some point by our state regulatory framework which Ms. Bubier can represent.

Mr. Andrews said there is an interim process to these investigations and they are at the stage where they have done the initial data gathering, identified issues at the site which is not really a surprise given the history of the use and what we know about the fire fighting foam and other things and the historical use of many automotive practices well prior to that and they have identified some issues related to that.

He said they have identification of groundwater that is contaminated above the state regulations at the boundary wells from what they can tell is flowing offsite. He said the next likely step to evaluate that is to go offsite and install additional wells to try to delineate where the groundwater is flowing to where it might meet standards. He said the purpose of our state regulations is to isolate the risk involved, make sure it's managed and make sure that it's understood so that nobody is drinking the water which is fortunate that right now they don't believe anybody is drinking that water because you're downtown and you have infrastructure here.

He said one of the other items they need to evaluate that is to do a potential receptor survey which is regulatory required by our investigation regulations. He said it is a very simple work with your DPW Water Dept. to make sure they understand who is on the water that is supplied by the public water supply and to do a search of other records to see if there are any wells that have been installed so they understand the potential for people to have contact with the contaminated water.

He said they have groundwater contamination on site particularly as it relates to the PFAS (Per and Polyfluoroalkyl substances resistant to heat, water and oil) chemicals. He said they did not have a soil standard when they established this initial scope of work so it made no sense at that time to sample soil when you can't compare it to anything. He said DES is in the process of adopting new soil standards that would apply and the point of this would be to look for any potential sources onsite that could be remediated in the future but also tell the future prospective purchaser who is going to redevelop the site what he is getting into ahead of time. He said they would be building something, they need to manage soil and plan appropriately and this is all information that would go towards future redevelopment needs for the site on top of being at some point regulatory required. He said Mr. Pimental indicated that if the Town doesn't do it now this would be on whoever purchases it later but there's only so much time DES can wait before there is action on this site and if it takes a long time to find a purchaser particularly in light of some of the questions of the environmental concerns then it could be that in the future DES requests that the Town do some of this work. So we're bringing this opportunity to the Town to utilize the additional funding under the existing grant thru EPA to further this work. I would also say that DES has funding available to stop gap things if there weren't additional funding available now and SRPC also has funding available thru brown fields assessments so there are other avenues but this is only available to municipalities for this purpose he said.

Mr. Staples asked what law binds us to treat this and if it is too far above it and we have to treat that foam in the ground.

Ms. Bubier said there are ENBR 600 standards that are for groundwater and soil and the levels of the PFAS's as well as some of the petroleum compounds are above those standards. She said the first issue is always to protect public health and that is where Mr. Andrews was saying about the receptor survey that would be the first ask of anyone once they receive this data formally and a letter would go out immediately that would ask what the receptors are. She said they do believe as Mr. Andrews said that there is not anyone drinking the water but they need to ensure that. We sometimes find the rogue well or the person that didn't want to connect or something like that too so that is always our first priority she said.

She said the second request would be to identify the nature and extent of the contamination and that is laid out in their rules. She said they also have a direct contact standard for the PFAS's in the soil so if that was to be excavated and used for another purpose at the facility that

would have to be taken into consideration also.

Mrs. Titus asked after they do this if there is another process they have to go through.

Ms. Bubier said yes. She said this is the next step where they start to identify the nature and extent and once they get their arms around that looking at some of the soil contamination particularly where they believe there could be a source that would give options as what could be a remedial alternative. She said frankly for PFAS right now there isn't a lot of treatment available but maybe some of the petroleum could be removed and limit the groundwater contamination going forward.

Mrs. Titus asked if that would be funded also or if that was something we have to put up.

Ms. Bubier said they can't commit to that right now but there are quite a bit of funding options available for that right now so she would say they are in pretty good shape for that.

Mrs. Titus asked what the process is and how long this would take.

Mr. Andrews said it's an iterative process he has several sites that they're going through the normal process through the Town not through any brown fields at other fire stations and they can't say in 1 more set of investigation they're done because they don't know until they have the data and what it really means so they have to be cautious about promising it's going to take this amount of time. He said the typical evaluation for what they're seeing now is probably 1-1.5 years to really wrap their hands around the magnitude or the extent of the contamination. He said remedial actions and trying to address it could be a totally different timeframe because we don't have a lot of options for dealing with this as they are very new contaminants. He said a lot of the sites they are looking at from his prospective as a consultant is on-site management and isolating it similar to a landfill so you're capping it so you're not getting a lot of water flow through it and trying to reduce the amount of groundwater contamination that the source is generating.

He said they'll be able to do a little bit more once they have a soil standard to compare against because they don't want to do a soil excavation and not say that's clean but that's dirty we don't have a standard so we can't operate under those circumstances. We'll have more options in the future but right now a lot of this is on-site management and the fortunate thing is we believe that nobody is drinking the water and that's the primary risk at any site like this so with the infrastructure you have the risk to human health is half the battle he said.

Mrs. Morin said this could be a rabbit hole that we do these samplings and we find something else too and it stretches out a little bit longer.

Mr. Andrews said they could find the contamination they discovered has continues to go further and they would not go looking for more different things than they are already evaluating now based upon the results. He said they have no reason to deviate from the contaminants of concern right now which are the primary being PFAS which is not a surprise and he has 6 sites in NH that he is dealing with this on and some petroleum which is again no surprise because of the long history of automotive usage on this site.

He said there is some urban fill there and some soils with some semi-volatile compounds that are buried that are commonly comingled as ash and coal and they found chunks of coal out there unburned. He said concentrated metals if they are ubiquitous to a site which this is an old site can be classified as exempt if they are not creating a huge groundwater contaminate issue which they really haven't seen that. He said it's a very small area that they see petroleum right now but a much larger extent of PFAS contamination across the site.

Mrs. Morin asked if they have no remedy for the PFAS.

Mr. Andrews said not that they would want to pay for and nothing that is practical.

Ms. Bubier said some of this information gathering is to position the site for potential redevelopment so there is less question marks for the next person and once they have a redevelopment plan or scenario some of these questions get a little smaller to answer to her question of how long. She said if somebody came in tomorrow and said they wanted to put housing on it they would have to ask a lot more questions. If you want to just cap it and do a parking lot or some type of building there's maybe less questions or slightly different questions we'd have to answer from a soil management so we're trying to answer 2 questions at the same time-public health and the extent of the contamination but also provide information to someone that might be interested in the parcel that they could use she said.

Mrs. Titus asked if they could put this back on the market and sell that property once this is all cleared and they get an okay from them-maybe not housing but maybe something else.

Ms. Bubier said yes.

Mr. Andrews said it gets more complex there are a lot of options for putting the property on the market that they could speak to legal counsel about on how to position the site while the Town is still-for example he has a brown fields site where the municipality is still controlling a portion of the property where there is contamination to continue to do brown fields investigations while a commercial developer is leasing the property and developing it. He said there are a lot of different models available and they could put it on the market right now as is and see if somebody would come along.

Mrs. Titus said they want to do the right thing and in the future they would like to put it on the market.

Ms. Bubier said they could put it on the market with all of these identified and put in a place where you said that they were taking on the environmental liability and all of this would be public information so whoever is purchasing it would know what they were buying and that's part of the process to inform them a little bit more.

Mr. Staples asked what the risk to the Town would be if they put it up for auction and sold it.

Mr. Andrews said there is no risk this is all discoverable information. He said you're in the public domain at this point and all of this information is being completed through the EPA right now but the Phase I study was done through Stafford Regional Planning Commission's Brown Fields and all of this is public funding that supported this and once you're in state regulatory program

it's obligated to be on the state's website like all of the other sites that are managed. He said if anyone wanted to buy the property they would be obligated to disclose anything that they knew anyway if they're smart about going through their due diligence and working for a number of private companies himself this is the type of site he would initially flag for his client to do an evaluation or assessment of this anyway. I don't want you to feel this wasted effort or we've opened a box that was never going to be opened because at some point if you were going to sell the property somebody would have done an assessment like this and uncovered this. I think you're looking at this as an investment right now while you have the opportunity of funding that the Town wouldn't ordinarily have he said.

Mr. Staples said it could also be a fishing trip that is going to cost the Town a bunch of money where if they just disclose what they know right now and sell it off. He asked if they let him go fishing and he finds its way down here and we have to replace all this soil and the funding dries up because there's a switch of the President, a switch of the Congress and there's no more funding who would foot the bill the taxpayers of Farmington?

Mr. Andrews said there will be an obligation if there is no funding for that to happen yes. He said they could put it on the market now if they wanted to.

Mr. Staples said they could disclose what they know, dump the property and it's no longer on the taxpayers to remediate.

Ms. Bubier said it would still be in the chain from the legal perspective because they owned the property prior the strict liability and you caused the contamination with the Fire Dept. so there is a chain of liability still there even if you sell it. She said if the next property owner doesn't do the right thing then it can come back.

Mr. Vachon said if he remembered correctly there was no storage tanks found in the areas identified by ground penetrating radar.

Mr. Andrews said they did not but those were the areas they did identify petroleum contamination.

Mr. Staples asked if the petroleum levels were above the legal limit.

Mr. Andrews said in the groundwater in one area where the service station was closest to the road that had some tanks they had some groundwater exceedance of petroleum compounds.

Mr. Staples asked how they fix that or if they just monitor it.

Mr. Andrews said that's probably a monitoring situation it's not particularly high concentrations right now at least from one round of sampling above the standard. He said it's an issue but it is not likely something that is spread all over the place. It's only presented in that one well and we have 7 wells on the site so we don't see that signature anywhere else he said.

Mr. Staples asked what the state requirement is to treat the foam or do they just find it and monitor it.

Ms. Bubier said as long as the public health is protected they are in a monitoring only stage.

Mr. Vachon said the last he knew nobody knew what to do with it because it's so new nobody

knows. He said they're saying it's hazardous but we don't know what to tell you to do with it that's why I have 3,500 yards sitting on the ground right now.

Mr. Andrews said you can dispose of it but it's very costly because it's going well out of state most likely to Canada or something like that.

Mr. Vachon said it was \$1 million to Niagara Falls the last he heard on rail from Mass.

Mr. Dickie said they wanted to monitor another well further out to see if the contamination has spread and asked what the remediation plan is if it's found further out.

Mr. Andrews said as long as there aren't any receptors they continue to be in a situation where they're monitoring for it then it just becomes part of the monitoring program. He said typically once they have identified the area of contamination the state would issue a groundwater management permit similar to what you have for your landfill and other sites like that where there is contamination related to leaching that identifies the area where the contamination is present and what is the schedule and reporting requirements for the monitoring just to make sure that it's once a year or twice a year monitoring with a report. He said it's a mechanism to track and continue to understand where the contamination is and where it isn't to assure there are no new changes that may generate new receptors.

Mrs. Morin asked if they do a test well near a residence and give notice to that residence does that relieve the Town of its liability if they say you're in a contaminated area of water use and you find they have their own well and we give them notice that they can't.

Mr. Andrews said he couldn't answer that because that's more of a legal question but he would say if the Town is the responsible party then a third party would have some type of a potential to claim regardless of the circumstances if they feel they have been impacted. He said part of the permit process is a record against the deed of properties within the permit area so that it goes with the chain of title. He said it isn't restrictive in NH to using the groundwater-we don't have anything that restricts the use of groundwater the permit can't do that it's only an institutional control so if somebody purchases the property they go through their title search and it shows up in the chain of title that this is an area within a zone of contamination.

Mr. Staples asked if they were to approve it and let them put more test wells in how they would put the wells in seeing how all of the property around that is private.

Mr. Andrews said the next step would be whether they do it within the Town right-of-way or Town owned properties, sidewalks and things like that that the Town has control of and ownership of or if they look at properties they would like to have a well infrastructure because it tells them more about the location of the contamination but they would have to seek offsite property access. He said that would be the next step for the Town to determine if we are going to look at the whole big picture or are we going to restrict the next step to properties we have control and maintain and don't have to get any approvals on.

Mr. Staples asked what the risk to the housing value in that area would be if they approve this and he went offsite.

Mr. Andrews said he can't speak to that that's not his area of expertise.

Mr. Staples said they could potentially be putting private citizens at risk of having to disclose deadly chemicals that are under their ground.

Mr. Andrews asked do they not want people to know that stuff.

Mr. Staples said they don't know it's there. He then asked if they think it is spreading through the drainage headed down until there's a road.

Mr. Andrews said they are not really sure of the source and the hottest concentration is the well that was installed directly in front of the fire station which could be from rinsing off trucks and rinsing out hoses and things like that and letting it just sheet flow across. He said it could also be the discharge for the trench drain within the station and they are not really sure where that discharge is. He said they thought it would discharge at the end of the building where they did some test pits but they didn't locate any outfalls out there.

Mr. Staples asked if they think it is discharging down.

Mr. Andrews said it could go straight down but they don't have a lot of information about that and that may be part of the next scope to take a look at that and try to scope out that drain to see where it might go. He said it could go straight out the back of that building, they did look along that stream out back to see if there were any discharges but didn't locate anything so it's really undetermined exactly where that's coming from but somewhere in the vicinity of the footprint of the old fire station itself.

Mr. Vachon asked if they were looking for them to approve some scope of work.

Mr. Andrews said they don't have a scope to approve but they're looking to provide them input to determine if they're going to look to move this to the next steps.

Mrs. Morin said she thought there was a proposed scope of work.

Mr. Andrews said they reviewed the options but they don't have all of the details hammered out with that. He said they didn't want to go too far down the road without getting the approval from the Town to actually do so.

Mr. Pimental said what was in the memo was 3 key points to that proposal one was the groundwater receptor survey, then it was the monitoring wells which if the board decides to move forward with this to make a decision as to whether or not they want to keep all the monitoring wells on Town property or let them try to see if there are any private property owners in the area that would allow monitoring wells to be put on their property. He said the last piece was some sort of soil contamination management. Those 3 pieces, obviously there would be a more detailed scope of work that would go to the EPA but those are the 3 pieces that we wanted to make sure that the board was on board with he said.

He said the Planning Dept. has been taking guidance from the Select Board and the Town Administrator throughout this process and their #1 priority is to redevelop this property and hopefully taking these steps they will be able to do that. He said in the memo it mentions the Request For Proposals that they have and whether or not the board wanted to include this once

the final report for the Phase II study is there to re-release that.

He said there were some interested parties that came to the table that never actually submitted a full proposal but there were some ideas that came out from the last round. He said it's a tough environment to build at the moment but hopefully with at least one more round of the RFP put out there it gets some takers. He said he would want to include an update to that including the Phase II results.

Mr. Vachon asked if they approve to move forward if they would see a scope of work to approve the scope of work before it went forward to DES.

Mrs. Morin asked if they were just looking for a nod that they're willing to look at the next step.

Mr. Andrews said the next steps on his part he works for EPA and the EPA is providing the service for them so they can choose not to do any of this stuff that is totally up to them. He said they are just trying to advise on what the next steps would be with the data that they have. He said if the Town approves they are willing to look at some of it but you want to see the scopes the next steps would be he would continue to work with Ms. Bubier and DES, EPA and Mr. Pimental as their representative to flush out what that scope of work would look like so they could present it back presumably to the board to review and understand and approve.

He said they could decide at that time that they don't want additional wells but they are willing to look at stuff on site or we'll do the receptor survey but we don't want to do other things.

This is a grant that services to the Town you're in the driver's seat on what you're getting out of this we're just trying to educate you on the opportunities that you have for the funding that's available and EPA is letting you know that they are willing to take the next steps on this if you so choose he said.

Mr. Vachon said as Ms. Bubier stated if they do nothing at some point they are going to make us do something.

Ms. Bubier said if they decline all of this they would issue a letter outlining probably almost exactly what Mr. Andrews proposes and that's how they work together. She said they are here wearing 2 hats they are advocating for them through the Brown Fields Program but they have a regulatory side that not all people are as willing and cooperate in even having the opportunity for Brown Fields funding so they would issue a letter that states you need to do the receptor survey, identify the nature and the extent and then it would be on the Town to have their consultant do the work.

Mr. Vachon said even if they put it on the market and sell it there's still some liability to the Town if whoever purchases the property doesn't do things correctly.

Ms. Bubier said yes because it would be falling into the chain of strict liability and there could be other ways that you manage that through environmental lawyers and such but ultimately the Town would still be on the hook.

Mr. Vachon said and at that point the grants may have gone away so then the Town would be on the hook for the bill.

Ms. Bubier said yes.

Mr. Staples asked if she was saying right now the DES is requiring us to do further testing.

Ms. Bubier said she is saying they will receive a letter to protect the public health, do the receptor survey and the nature and extent of that.

Mr. Staples said that the DES is going to require that of the Town.

Ms. Bubier nodded yes and said they are not alone. She said Mr. Andrews said he has 6 sites and in their database they probably have 20 sites very similar to those across the state from old fire stations and gasoline stations that add another layer.

Mr. Staples said he misunderstood her earlier when she said there was nothing they were required to do.

Mr. Vachon said right now there is nothing they are required to do but if they don't anything she is going to require us to do it.

Motion: (Morin, second Vachon) that we move forward and get a proposal from Nobis and NH DES to move forward with further testing passed 3-1 (Staples opposed).

Bridge Payment: Motion: (Vachon, second Staples) to close the public hearing for the bridge payment passed 4-0 at 7 p.m.

Motion: (Vachon, second Staples) to accept \$42,279.76 as unanticipated revenue passed 4-0.

Highway Payment: Motion: (Vachon, second Morin) to open the public hearing to accept a Special One-Time Highway payment of \$46,156.21;

Mr. Vachon read the following aloud: House Bill 2 provides a one-time payment being made available to all NH municipalities in state fiscal year 2024 effective July 2023. HB 2 directs the NH Dept. of Transportation to provide and distribute a \$10 million one-time payment between all NH municipalities based on the distribution methods of Block Grant Aid appropriation A. This one-time payment is separate from the regular Block Grant Aid quarterly payments that all NH municipalities receive. In generalized terms and in accordance with statutory provisions for distribution of Block Grant Aid Apportionment A funds this one-time highway payment is based on the municipality's share of statewide mileage of Class IV and Class V highways as well as the municipality's share of the statewide population. HB 2 funds all allowable uses are the same as the normal Highway Block Grant Aid Appropriationments A and B that municipalities receive. Allowable uses include municipal highway construction, reconstruction and maintenance.

Vote: the motion passed 4-0 at 7:02 p.m.

Mr. Vachon said the public hearing would remain open for 30 minutes.

Mr. Dickie asked if the Chair would move to the elderly exemptions next.

Consensus of the board was to grant Mr. Dickie's request.

Elderly Exemptions & 2024 Revaluation- Finance Administrator Kelly Heon said this is just more information and they brought this to their attention a meeting or so ago that our revaluation is happening in 2024 and Mr. Roberge can speak more on regarding how the assessments are

going to likely rise which means our elderly exemptions if they stay as is those recipients of the elderly exemption will have to pay a lot more in taxes. She said they wanted to have a discussion as to how they wanted to handle it and if they wanted to look at having a warrant article at this year's Town Meeting to proactively raise those elderly exemption amounts so that when the revaluation is complete in 2024 and people get their tax bills that those exemption amounts will have risen in comparison to their assessed values. She said the board has a spreadsheet in front of them created by Mr. Roberge to illustrate what exemptions they have now based on current assessments and what he believes a new assessment would be on those properties.

Avitar Associates Assessor Chad Roberge said this is just dealing with elderly exemptions because the way exemptions work is they are taken directly off the assessed value. He said with veteran credits they are taking what I owe in taxes and removing a certain amount where exemptions are my assessment is \$200,000 I'm getting an exemption for \$50,000 and then it calculates my tax bill.

He said the reason why this becomes an issue when they do a revaluation is right now your elderly exemption for somebody who is 65 to 74 covers \$75,000 of their assessment and for someone for instance ½ way down the first page their assessment right now is \$58,000 so they are paying no taxes right now whereas after they do the reevaluation their assessment could potentially go up to \$82,000 and not be covered by the current exemption so they will all of a sudden be receiving a tax bill that they currently might not be budgeting for at all and be surprised because they haven't been paying one.

He said revaluations are unique in that the elderly exemption affects people that are paying taxes because if the evaluations go up typically those exemptions don't unless the Town is really on top of it and looking at it closely. He said he looked the exemption amount, the current assessments and if they are looking at a 40% change in the assessed values what that exemption is equal to so that hopefully we are breaking even in terms of if they were paying before they are going to be paying something equal now even though their value came up and what that impact is.

He said it is done out by categories so the elderly exemption has 3 categories which are ages 65-74 which is \$75,000 currently, 75-79 which is \$95,000 and 80 and older which is \$125,000. He said by his estimations if they were to consider something in the \$105,000 range for an exemption for 65-74 (\$30,000 increase in exemption amount) that would about break even for someone in that category and that's about a 40% change. He said he did the same thing for 75-79 so that would go from a \$95,000 exemption up to a \$133,000 exemption and for the 80+ category it would go from a \$125,000 exemption to a \$175,000 exemption.

Mr. Staples asked if that would keep the burden on the taxpayers about the same.

Mr. Roberge said it would be about the same and because the tax rate also gets adjusted it ends up in almost a wash. He said the only difference might be was he was kind of conservative

and every year they look at the assessments and sale prices for the homes that have sold and look at where the market is in comparison to the assessed values and right now we're at 61% so the market is 39% higher than our current assessment values. He said they have been seeing about a 10% appreciation a year so his guess is that 40% might be a little on the conservative side but he didn't want to overdo it.

Mrs. Heon said they could look at it again next year but the danger in not doing something this year is that it will be extremely impactful to our elderly population and the only way they would be able to deal with it at that point would be the abatement process and that's not necessarily the best route in a revaluation year.

Mrs. Titus asked if she was thinking about doing a warrant article for Town Meeting.

Mrs. Heon said she would like to have a warrant article at Town Meeting this year that proactively raises these exemption amounts so that when the new assessed values are given sometime this summer and the final tax bill is that the elderly exemption recipients are not going to feel any extra tax burden. There may be a little like Chad said because he can't absolutely predict where the assessments are going to go and if they go up more than he's predicting we can take a look at the exemption amounts again next year if we feel that they're not accurate but I feel we at least need to do something for this year she said.

Motion: (Titus, second Morin) to put this on a warrant article for Town Meeting;

Discussion: Mrs. Heon asked if she was saying to accept Mr. Roberge's exemption amount recommendations of \$105,000 for the 65 to 74 category; \$133,000 for 75 to 79 and \$175,000 for the 80+ category. She said those are his recommendations and they didn't have to accept them but that is him crunching the numbers and what he comes up with as reasonable.

Mrs. Morin said it sounds like he thought that was a good place to start.

Mr. Roberge said he thought so and it definitely covers a large majority of it for sure.

Mrs. Morin said and anything that it doesn't cover they could abate.

Mrs. Heon said they can and they can see what happens but at least this gets us closer to not impacting our elderly residents.

Mr. Roberge said either way they will want to be very proactive in sending out letters to them because whichever side of the line we fall on if we don't do anything for them we'll want to send out letters to people now letting them know there may be a burden they're not realizing is down the road. He said if they fall on the side of the line where they do something ahead of time which is great they also want to be proactive in letting people know that.

He said the June bill is always calculated on half of last year's tax rate and the current assessed value so if someone's current assessment is \$87,000 and they're not fully 100% covered it would be if they went up to \$103,000 so their first tax bill would be nothing but when we do the reevaluation their second tax bill is when they get that tax burden back. So we want to be proactive letting them know you won't have anything on your first bill but you will be getting something on that second bill but it shouldn't be any different than what you have normally

been paying in the past. It's just a matter of letting people know what to expect he said.

Mrs. Titus asked if there is an issue these people can come and talk to him.

Mr. Roberge said absolutely. He said they usually field a lot of the calls during the hearings because they see their value go way up and their concern is their exemption and they all know what the exemption is because they see it on the tax bill and they're doing the math.

Mrs. Titus asked if they would put all those figures on the warrant.

Mrs. Heon said they would work with Att. Roman to craft the warrant article with the correct language.

Mr. Roberge said he also wanted to let them know that they will be trying to send out a letter.

Mrs. Heon said they are going to put a letter in the Town Report and probably also on their website that gives more information about the revaluation that is upcoming, what people can expect because this is going to be a little bit trickier than revaluations in the past because of the market appreciation and people will be concerned when they get the letter that their home that was assessed for \$220,000 is now assessed for \$450,000. We're going to try our best to educate people and get the information out there that their assessed value going up doesn't necessarily mean their taxes are going up she said.

Mr. Staples asked about the risk to the elderly if they put this on a warrant article and it failed. He asked if they would lose all of their exemptions or if it would just stay like it is.

Mrs. Heon said it would stay as is. She said she wouldn't be surprised if there are motions or amendments made from the floor at Town Meeting but she didn't think the residents would want that tax burden to fall on the elderly residents the people that are on a fixed income trying to stay in their homes. She said they have been very generous in the past to make sure those exemptions are where they need to be and she didn't see any reason that they wouldn't.

Mr. Dickie said he spoke with Att. Roman about this and if what Mr. Staples just brought up does happen or the adjustments that are proposed and put in a warrant article doesn't appear to be enough and they are still faced with paying more than what they normally would pay then they could institute an abatement program where they could draft letter from Att. Roman to send to the elderly that have the exemption and if they are faced with that they can come before the board and go through the abatement process.

He said so there is that avenue it's the worst case scenario and it wouldn't be something he would advocate up front but we can take of the elderly so they won't be faced with any more financial difficulties than they already have.

Mr. Staples said if it passes he could see an abatement being legal but asked if it failed at Town Meeting and they abated all elderly taxes if that be going against the will of the elected body.

Mr. Dickie said he would have to review that with Att. Roman.

Mr. Staples said no means no and they can't just back door it through.

Mr. Vachon asked if the reevaluation is every 5 years by law.

Mr. Roberge said that is correct and that he has already started a sales analysis and they will

start the field interviews where they drive around town and look at every single property on April 17 and then they will send out the letters of preliminary values to people around June 10. He said after they do the field interviews they will go through everything and make sure they don't have any properties that are changing drastically that they didn't know about and they also send the board a report of all the values in town so they have something that they've seen before they send it out to the taxpayers so if there is something the board knows about that they don't they can let them know before they send the letters out. He said the letters have a lot of information in it but being in the business for so long they have changed that letter every year to make it easier for taxpayers to find certain information they're looking for and there is information in the letter for them to go online and review their assessment as well as look up anyone else's. We strongly feel as a company that we want the assessment and the model to be as accurate as possible so if we can get everyone on there looking at it and thinking my view is worth \$100,000 and I know John down the street is worth more than mine because he has a wider view it should be a higher value. They can do that online so when we have the hearings they are coming with really good questions and we can say they're right or at least explain why there might be a difference. We expect the hearings to be around mid-June he said.

Mr. Vachon called for the vote on putting a warrant article together for Town Meeting to increase the elderly exemption for 65 to 74 to \$105,000, 75 to 79 to \$133,000 and over 80 years old to \$175,000.

Vote: the motion passed 4-0 to create a warrant article for Town Meeting for those exemptions.

Budget- Mr. Vachon said last week the board asked Mr. Dickie to get them some more information pertaining to the general fund budget in regards to the 3 proposals for the Fire Dept.

Mr. Dickie said they had the current proposal, they had the request for no Firefighters added with a flat 3% increase across the board which the Chief provided that shows a half percent decrease so it was about level funded very similar to what was proposed originally with the increases for per diem. He said they had a second proposal from him that was adding 1 Firefighter with 3% across the board and that decrease for this year would be 2.5%.

He said they had the 3 proposals-the existing one, the flat funded across the board and then 1 Firefighter.

Mr. Staples asked if they are going to put new Firefighters on if it has to go to a warrant article.

Mr. Dickie said he believes so.

Mr. Vachon asked if the board had a preference on which way they go with the Fire Dept. He asked if there was any discussion on which way the board would like to see the Fire Dept. go or if the board was okay with the 3% across the board for current employees.

Mr. Staples said he wouldn't mind seeing them not be in the fund and if they want to add Firefighters subject to a warrant article let the voters decide.

Mr. Vachon asked if he wanted to leave the budget this way but put a warrant article for 2 full time Firefighters.

Mr. Staples said if they are going to put on Firefighters full time it should go to Town Meeting as a warrant article.

Mr. Vachon asked if he was in favor of presenting this budget with 3% for all current employees and doing a warrant article for 2 full time Firefighters. He said it would have to be an amended budget if that warrant article passes.

Mrs. Titus said she thought they should go with this and that she was not in favor of a warrant article.

Mrs. Moring said she is not in favor of doing a warrant article.

Mr. Vachon asked if there was any other discussion on the entire general fund budget as presented. Hearing none he made the following motion:

Motion: (Vachon, second Morin) to accept the presented budget for next year's budget;

Discussion: Mr. Vachon asked if this vote will count as their vote to present it to the Budget Committee.

Mr. Dickie said if he could get a general consensus that he would have a majority of the board then he could move forward in getting it ready for the Budget Committee and just confirm the vote next week with a 5-0 vote for this budget. He said he is trying to get this prepared for their presentation to the Budget Committee on Jan. 30.

Mr. Vachon said they have to vote on this prior to that.

Mr. Dickie said the official vote could be on the 29th and he could go in on there and say the board supports 5-0 on this budget.

Mr. Staples said if they wait until next week they can have the whole board here.

Mr. Dickie said 4 of them are here tonight and he needs to know the 4 of them support it then he has the majority vote.

Mrs. Titus said she would say yes.

Mr. Staples said then he could through it and give it the final touch-ups.

Mr. Vachon rescinded his motion and Mrs. Morin rescinded her second.

Consensus of the board was Mr. Dickie could proceed with this budget to prepare for next week's meeting for the board to vote on it.

Mr. Dickie asked if he was good to proceed in getting the package ready for the Budget Committee using the numbers that were presented tonight.

Mr. Vachon said that's correct.

Mr. Dickie said just so they are fully transparent the overall impact would be 80 cents if the revenues stay the same as they were this past year. He said he went back through and recalculated the revenues and he saw that we had an increase of what they proposed-he and Mrs. Heon put together a \$357,531 over last year's actual revenues that came through. He said if we realize those increases in revenues it will be a 63 cent impact. An increase in

revenues means a reduction in the tax rate but it's just an estimate because we are going through reassessments so it's hard to tell where we're going to end up he said.

He said they have increased revenue which would mean a reduction on the tax rate and if we didn't have those increased revenues and everything stayed the same then they are looking at an 80 cent increase with the numbers that are in the budget that he is going to put forth to the Budget Committee.

Mr. Staples said it's concerning because the school is going up almost \$4 if everything passes.

Mr. Dickie said their bottom line budget was \$2.79 and then they have other warrant articles that would increase it to about \$4.

Mr. Staples said which is why if they are going to put Firefighters on it needs to go to the floor and let the taxpayers have the choice-it's their money. He said it's going to be significantly higher than 80 cents if we throw some Firefighters on there.

Fire Chief James Reinert came forward and said he is not asking for any additional monies in the budget to put these additional people on this is just transferring money from specific lines to cover the additional full time staffing. He said even his original budget request was .68% less than they operated on in 2023.

He said they are having a hard time like every other Fire Dept. putting part time per diem people on and he spent a lot more money in overtime in 2023 than what was originally budgeted to cover for those shifts and the additional personnel should help reduce the overtime budget. He said he still hasn't gotten his final end of the year but there was still money left in his per diem line that was not spent with the shifts they were planning on to cover for 2023 so there was no additional ask for money to increase his overall budget from 2023 to 2024. I'm trying to ensure that we have stabilization and coverage and people in the station to respond to calls at a minimum he said.

He said from the Fire Dept. budget point of it they put the 2 people on there's not an increase in the budget process or the tax rate because of the additional Firefighters. He said he was not asking for additional monies it's basically even with-if you look at all 3 of the plans he provided they're all within 2%-2.5% of each other depending on which avenue you go.

He said he has to put that money back into the per diem line with the hopes of ensuring that those people are signing up they have full time jobs and families that's just the way the Fire Service is unfortunately in today's day and age. It's going more towards not seeing volunteers, the on-call, the part timers, it's going to full time and I need to ensure we have that staffing that can respond. By state law we have to have 2 licensed EMS personnel on the ambulance to respond to transport and we have to have that minimum number of bodies in the station that are trained and ready to go he said.

Mrs. Morin said she saw on the spreadsheet add 1 full time Fire Dept. member and it was a decrease of 2.5% instead of 3 and add zero it was a decrease of .5%.

Chief Reinert said he would still have to add money into the overtime line to ensure that they

had money for the full timers so he didn't overspend that line. He said the money fluctuates a little bit the 3% across the board vs. what he initially asked for the standard raise so instead of going 3% on \$325,000 of his initial ask for the per diem now he has to add 3% on the \$400,000 so we're kind of just moving shells around.

Mrs. Morin asked if it is a decrease of 2.5% from his original budget he proposed.

Chief Reinert said he was saying from the operating budget that was approved for 2023.

Mrs. Morin said so there is no change in his percentage of increase by putting 3 on including insurance.

Chief Reinert said that's correct and when you look at all the numbers in one pool of money you're paying FICA the other one you're not, you're paying retirement on one but it's only on a smaller amount, you ask for 3% on \$325,000 to cover per diem is different than \$420,000 vs. what the original request was for the flat rate for everybody to stabilize the Fire Dept. wages with comparative agencies. I have people that are actively being recruited by other towns we have very capable and competent people and they are being attracted by other depts. that pay more money so I'm trying to ensure the continuity and hold them here in Farmington he said.

Mr. Staples asked if they threw 2 new Firefighters on he was telling them there would be no increase next year when they're paying them for the full year.

Chief Reinert said they can't forecast they don't know what is going to happen this year but on the personnel costs he put a phantom budget for the entire 2024 budget and it was a roughly 2.5% increase over 2023's approved budget. He said that was without asking for anything out of the ordinary he just based it on what their average is for vehicle maintenance, supplies, etc.

One Time Highway Payment: Motion: (Vachon, second Titus) to close the public hearing for the highway payment passed 4-0 at 7:30 p.m.

Motion: (Vachon, second Morin) to accept the \$46,156.21 from the highway payment passed 4-0.

Fire Dept. Inspection Fees: Motion: (Vachon, second Titus) to open the public hearing for the Fire Dept. inspection fees as outlined in the policy passed 4-0 at 7:32 p.m.

Mr. Vachon said the public hearing would remain open for 30 minutes.

Fire Dept. Budget (continued from above) - Mrs. Morin said hearing that and having a better understanding of what is in front of her she would be in favor of putting it to a warrant article and then they can do the shell game in that fashion.

Mr. Vachon said he had a question about what they were given in the hard copies and what they were given electronically.

Chief Reinert said he only provided hard copies so there should be no electronic copies unless they were scanned and sent to them that way.

Mr. Vachon said it says add full time Fire 2 and add full time Fire 1 but the per diem line for adding 2 is still \$450,000 for next year. He reviewed some of paperwork and then asked the

Chief what his per diem line is for adding 2 Firefighters because he couldn't find it in the paper copy of the budget.

Chief Reinert said he requested for adding 2 additional full time staff \$325,000 and if they went down to 1 it went up to \$371,176 it's all based on average hours and then at zero it went to \$450,000.

Mr. Vachon then asked the board if they were in favor of doing a warrant article to add 2 full timers.

Mrs. Morin said yes.

Mr. Staples said he didn't care how many they do- they can change it on the floor if they want to and it should go to the voters.

Mr. Vachon said the warrant article would have to be drafted and asked how many they wanted to put in the article 1 or 2.

Mr. Staples said they could put 2 and let them change it on the floor. It's all up to the voters what they want I just don't feel comfortable making the swap without...he said.

Mrs. Titus said she was in favor of having a warrant article drafted for full time Firefighters.

Mr. Staples said last year when they put the warrant article forward they said if they were going to do more they would bring it back to them so he didn't want to sit here and just hire 2 Firefighters without bringing them back to the floor.

Mrs. Titus said let's just hope we can afford 2 new Firefighters full time.

Chief Reinert said there would be no increase.

Mrs. Titus said for this year but there would be an increase the following year.

Chief Reinert said there's always going to be an increase whether it's full time or part time there's a potential increase in wages, insurances. It's not a all of a sudden you're going to see a \$100,000 increase because we're just utilizing already approved budget money and instead of spending it on this thing we're spending it on something else he said.

Mrs. Morin asked the Chief to be prepared to speak to what it is going to cost us in the following year because it's only going to be for 6 or 9 months.

Chief Reinert said he budgeted for April 1 so it would be 9 months and he had given that phantom budget to the board previously.

Mr. Dickie said the board wanted a warrant article written for 2 Firefighters and in that article he would list what the increased cost was for personnel to be added to the budget because right now the budget that's going to be presented has nothing in it just a flat rate 3%.

Mrs. Morin said it still has the per diem in there so they would remove the per diem so that needs to be part of the warrant article.

Mr. Dickie said they want it worded in such a way that the budget would be increased to support that and get it altered to fit what the Chief has proposed.

Mr. Vachon said technically the overall budget would decrease slightly is what the Chief is telling them so they would have to show there would be a decrease in the operating budget of

"x" if that passes.

Chief Reinert said to hire 2 additional full time Firefighters wages and benefits to come out of the approved operating budget and there is no additional cost for the remainder of the year.

Mr. Vachon said Att. Roman could word it to add 2 full time Firefighters with a decrease in the operating budget of whatever he is saying would decrease. He said it would be the baseline budget of this would decrease by this.

Chief Reinert said it was .68% on the original ask for everything. He noted that last time the way the warrant article read it was kind of convoluted in the wording.

Mr. Vachon said they would do the baseline budget to present to the Budget Committee and the people can decide if they want to add 2 full time Firefighters.

Mrs. Titus asked if hiring 2 more full time employees was going to save the Fire Dept.

Chief Reinert said he wasn't saying it was going to save the Fire Dept. what's going to happen is he is going to have people that that's their full time job so that is their #1 priority and they will make Farmington their focus because they have to that's their livelihood. He said he has dedicated people that are part time but they work in other places and they get offered an overtime shift or they get mandated to stay on overtime and they're making \$50 or \$60 an hour and unfortunately Farmington is their part time gig. They're dedicated to an extent but they have other obligations so we need to ensure that we have the people here that are coming to work every day because it's their primary focus their primary job he said.

Mr. Staples asked with the market out there for Firefighters if he thought he could ever fill the positions.

Chief Reinert said he has people in the pipeline that are full time elsewhere and per diem people in Farmington that have strongly stated they would consider making a transfer so he didn't think it would be difficult.

Mr. Vachon asked the board if they wanted to move the Fire Dept. Update & Inspection Policy Approval but then noted they couldn't approve the inspection policy until they get the fees done so they can't do that until the public hearing on the inspection fees closes at 8:02 p.m.

Fire Grant- Chief Reinert said he calls it the forestry grant but there is another name for it now. He said he was looking for permission for an approving agent from the Town either Mr. Dickie or himself to sign it it's a 50/50 match for some forestry equipment that they had budgeted for and was approved through the state.

Mr. Vachon said that is 15 fire line packs which is the old Indian tanks and 2 new chain saws. The Chief said that's correct. He said they changed their acceptance procedure so it has to be signed off and he has to get the Town Clerk to submit some signatures as well.

Mr. Vachon asked if the grant limitation of \$1980 is their 50%.

Chief Reinert said that's correct. He said it is a \$4,000 purchase and we get reimbursed for 50%.

Mr. Vachon asked if he had that money in his line item for grants.

Chief Reinert said that will be in if the 2024 budget goes through if it doesn't go through then

don't purchase them so they will wait until after Town Meeting to purchase the equipment if it goes through.

Mr. Vachon asked if they have to sign a letter of intent for this but they don't have to follow through.

Chief Reinert said they submit it and then they have until Sept. 2025 to purchase and request the reimbursement.

Mr. Vachon read that all requests for reimbursement must be submitted by the close of business on 08/31/24. He said the board could approve this and he could put the paperwork in and if his budget doesn't get approved he doesn't have to utilize it or he could find the \$1980 somewhere else in his budget to continue to utilize it because it's a baseline budget.

Motion: (Vachon, second Morin) to approve the 2024 Volunteer Fire Assistance Funds 50%/50% matching grant in the amount of \$1,980 for the purchase of 15 fire line packs and 2 Husqvarna 450 Rancher saws and to authorize Ken Dickie the Town Administrator to sign all paperwork for this grant passed 4-0.

Strafford Regional Planning Commission Contract- Mr. Dickie said when they were meeting with Kyle Pimental and his Supervisor they were in discussion about his availability and right now he works 4 hours a week for us and has the ability to go up to 8 hours a week for an additional cost.

Mrs. Heon corrected that he is 16 hours a week now and we are looking to go to 20 hours.

Mr. Dickie said they realized in dollar-wise last year we got grants for the Town in excess of \$500,000 so they have it in the budget that the board just approved to go to \$70,000 and give us the additional 4 hours a week and get us to 20 hours in lieu of trying to get a full time Planner. I think its money well spent and I think we could greatly use his additional 4 hours as we begin the transitions and start seeing things materialize in the planning world he said.

He said he had a contract in front of him for the \$70,000 and he was looking for board approval so he could it signed and get it into them so he starts giving us the 20 hours.

Motion: (Vachon, second Titus) to approve the SRPC contract to allow 20 hours a week for a total budgeted number of \$70,000;

Discussion: Mr. Vachon said Mr. Pimental does a great job at whatever he does and he has never heard any complaints from anyone that has dealt with him. He said there came a time a couple of years ago where he had a bunch of hours left at the end of the year and he asked if there was anything we needed him to look into or take care of and he utilized the hours in that way to assist the Town and get more stuff done. He's great with writing grants and he's always looking for grants for the Town he said.

Mr. Dickie said he is a valuable asset to the Town.

Mrs. Titus agreed.

Vote: the motion passed 4-0.

Motion: (Vachon, second Titus) to authorize Ken Dickie to sign that contract passed 4-0.

Police Dept. Update-Police Chief Scott Orlando said he wanted to update the board on the motor vehicle accident that occurred on Jan. 1 that involved a Police cruiser on Main St./Rt. 153 in town. He said he has been working with the Claims Manager from Primex and she has been very responsive and helpful.

He said they have been negotiating back and forth and where it stands today and it is subject to change that vehicle is totaled and they are looking to give us \$32,400 for the Police cruiser minus the \$1,000 deductible so \$31,400 that would be the total reimbursement for the cruiser. He said through negotiations he was able to get 50% of the value of the equipment installed which will be a total of \$42,127.

Mr. Vachon asked what it cost us to buy that cruiser 6 months ago.

Chief Orlando said the next step is they looked at cruisers and they have gone up in price to \$47,580 without any installation of equipment. He said Claremont Ford where we purchased the cruiser said that they would honor their price that they gave us a year ago and will do \$44,915 rather than the sticker price of \$47,580. He said the good news is they have one on the lot because a municipality backed out and it is sitting there.

He said the new estimated cost to outfit a cruiser has gone up a little bit and he is waiting for Adamson Industries to confirm the price but they anticipate \$15,994.

Mrs. Titus asked since this was an accident if the responsible party that caused the accident should be paying for it with their insurance.

Chief Orlando said when there's an accident and both parties have insurance the insurances go over who is responsible so Primex will be reaching out to another subject's insurance and getting reimbursed. He said they have a formula that they use to determine the value of what that cruiser is to replace. He said he is still continually talking with Laurie from Primex regarding the comps how prices have gone up to try to get the most but she has to have that signed off. Our last accident we got 20% of the equipment this time we were able to get them up to 50% he said.

Mr. Vachon said that equipment was quite a bit older and asked when that cruiser went into service.

Chief Orlando said 13,000 miles ago and he didn't know what month it was but it is documented at the Police Dept. He said it was a 2022 but it wasn't put into service until 2023.

Mr. Vachon said by the time we ordered it and got it and had it outfitted it was a year. He said so they would have put it into service at the end of summer/beginning of fall and 13,000 miles on a cruiser is about 3 months because that thing runs non-stop.

He said a 3 month old cruiser depreciated \$13,000 and the equipment depreciated 50% in 3 months so now we have to come up with \$18,782 to replace a cruiser that's 3 months old.

The Chief said that is correct.

Mr. Staples asked what they have in the fund.

Chief Orlando said the potential reimbursement they will get from Primex today is \$42,127, the

cost of a new cruiser and to outfit it is approx. \$60,909 and Fund 08 currently has \$36,683 in it. He said if the board authorizes them to move forward and use money in Fund 08 that would leave us a balance after purchasing and outfitting of \$18,782. He said he is asking the board today is for authorization Claremont Ford is holding that vehicle but he would like to put a deposit to officially hold it for approx. 2 weeks until the salvage yard receives our title. He said once the salvage yard receives the title on the totaled cruiser Primex will cut the check to the Town then he would like to come back to the board for approval to have a check to deliver to Claremont Ford for the purchase of the cruiser. We'll secure that, bring it to the Police Dept., hopefully we have an updated quote from Adamson's and I can deliver that to you then you can take another vote when everything is cut he said.

Mr. Vachon asked how much of a deposit he needed.

Chief Orlando said he would like \$1,000 or \$500 either way the board wanted. He said Claremont Ford has been wonderful and they are holding it currently without a deposit but he said he would follow up with them tomorrow.

Mrs. Morin asked if there are any salvageable components on the other cruiser that they can outfit the new one with.

Chief Orlando said a lot of it was damaged but on Friday he removed the radar detector and explained this to Primex too that he didn't know if it's going to work so she authorized him to remove it but also gave her the invoice of the radar detector that we purchased and they will cover the 50%. He said he did that with the radio as well and he is only able to take out the head unit and the computer bank that's in the back. He said the conduit that runs through the middle of the vehicle has a lot of wires in it and they are pinched and cut so they would have to buy that. He said other parts of it it's very difficult because of the wiring and the front end impact damage and a lot of things aren't retrofitted even if you get the same vehicle but they did their best for that.

Mr. Vachon said he hated getting 50% of what that cost when it's only been in service for 3 months but that was a pretty hard impact. He said he would be worried something may be wrong with those electronics it may look fine for now but if an officer needs that and it stops working because of that he would hate it to be because we tried to save a couple of bucks and reused a radio or something.

Mr. Staples asked if he needed a motion to take that money and put it on deposit.

Chief Orlando said he would look for a motion to be able to put a down payment on the Town's credit card to secure that vehicle for an additional 2 weeks in hopes that we do receive the funding from Primex. He said then he can come to the board a subsequent time to ask permission to pay the remaining balance of the car.

Mr. Vachon said they could probably pull that \$1,000 out of Fund 08 and the excess is going to come out of that anyways.

Chief Orlando said logistically he didn't see why not and he would communicate with Mrs. Heon

to make sure that's okay.

Mr. Vachon said if you put it on a credit card and they get it done tomorrow they will have to pull those funds from somewhere when the bill comes in.

Mr. Dickie offered to put it on his card if it makes it easier.

Mr. Staples asked the Chief how confident he was that he could get the title in 2 weeks.

Chief Orlando said he intends to have a conversation with the Town Clerk tomorrow.

Mr. Dickie said they have the title it's in the Town Clerk's office and he has to sign it and send it.

The Chief said Mr. Dickie would sign it, send it out by certified mail tomorrow-he has the address that it has to go to in Alfred, ME and he will call Primex and say it's been mailed. He said he would follow-up the following week to ask if they have the confirmation and then she should send a check.

Motion: (Staples, second Titus) to authorize Scott to put the \$1,000 down payment on a cruiser on his credit card to be paid from Fund 08 when it comes in passed 4-0.

Mrs. Titus said she wanted to thank the Police Dept. and the Fire Dept. regarding the incident at Valley View School as they were right on it and it was appreciated.

Water Dept. Budget Changes-Mrs. Heon said they made a housekeeping change and put the utility billing software in Mr. Tiffany's budget where it should be. She said it had been in the Town's budget where all the software had been lumped into 1 category but they separated them all out to their respective depts. and so it's just a small amount \$885 for sewer and water for their billing software.

Mr. Tiffany said the second change was building and liability insurance and they previously budgeted \$3,894 and it went up to \$13,835.

Mrs. Heon said regarding the property and liability insurance that's a number from Primex that's a one lump sum number for the entire Town. She said she was not sure how it was broken out in the past but new this year Primex has a spreadsheet and they give you the tool to be able to break out what portion of that larger lump sum should be allocated to each dept. based on that dept's payroll and buildings. She said they were able to actually break out what should be the portions for the Wastewater Dept. and for the Water Dept.

Mrs. Morin asked if this is divided and it didn't really go up by \$10,000.

Mrs. Heon said no and if you look at the Water Dept's portion it's \$13,835 but the Wastewater's is \$33,690. She said you could say it hasn't gone up it's just we have a better tool for allocating it to the depts. rather than what was done in the past. It might have been a percentage that they used but we use the actual tool that Primex gave to us she said.

Fire Dept. Inspection Fees- Motion: (Vachon, second Staples) to close the public hearing on the Fire Dept. inspection fees passed 4-0 at 8:03 p.m.

Mr. Tiffany said the next change would be office supplies and he went up \$100 on that because he over expended it this year at \$504.78. He said he proposed \$400 earlier and he wanted to

bring it up another \$100.

He said the next one is telemetering and it was over expended when they got all the bills in and he was asking for \$3,700 and he wanted to bring it up to \$4,500 and that has to do with all of Eric's work he does down at the wells.

Mr. Vachon asked if that is the radios on houses or if that is in another line.

Mr. Tiffany said that's different this is the telemetering on the well system itself.

He said the next one would be electricity and they raised that for a bit more of a comfortable buffer to \$45,000.

Mrs. Heon said that's a reduction from last year and last year it was too high.

Mr. Tiffany said he wanted to raise the vehicle maintenance line by \$1,500 from \$3,500 to \$5,000 because they lost a transmission this year that was expended onto this year's bill.

Mr. Staples asked what truck that was in.

Mr. Tiffany said it was in the new one ton truck.

Mr. Staples asked if they plow with that one too and if they split the cost with the highway garage.

Mr. Tiffany said yes and that he split the cost with the Highway Dept.

He said the next one is lab supplies and testing and it was the same story when they got the final bills in so they increased it. He said Eastern Analytical and the state went up on their testing costs mid-season so there won't be any increase this year foreseen yet.

He said they put a mileage line in because it was taken out of the gasoline line before so it would be more transparent. He said he tried to break it down the best he could for what the guys do for classes, how many times they bring samples up to Concord and he uses his car here but it is kind of hard to nail it down. He said he started out with \$2329 so they will see where that lands and adjust the next year accordingly.

Mrs. Heon said they look at the bottom line for the Water Dept. the 2023 budget was \$394,627 and he is looking to increase that to \$440,000 and the major players in those increases are personnel with a 3% increase for the union members that is part of their Collective Bargaining Agreement, overtime is increased from \$4,500 to \$14,000 also as a part of the CBA their on-call is all overtime now and when they get called in it's a minimum of 3 hours overtime so they had to increase that, health insurance increases which they've before and those are out of our control. She said the property and liability insurance is not really an increase but is just a better way for them to allocate it to the depts. She said sodium hydroxide and pump repair also increased and asked Mr. Tiffany if he had to do some major things this year.

Mr. Tiffany said the pump repair went up because they have to clean Town Well #5 and he will be presenting it to the board with the new prices before they go to do it.

Mrs. Heon said as they know from previous discussions they needed to pin down the final budget for water and wastewater before they could have the bigger conversation about what the rates were going to be so they are still working on that. She said that will be another larger

discussion for the board and that would fall into a public hearing. She said their goal would be that they get that sooner rather than later and that the rate increase happens with the first billing of 2024 which is in April.

Sewer Dept. Budget Changes- Mr. Tiffany said they put the utility billing software in this for \$885 because it's half water and half sewer. He said he increased the general plant maintenance from \$40,000 to \$42,000 to reflect what he spent last year.

Mrs. Morin asked if he was bringing it up from \$30,000.

Mr. Dickie said their centrifuge is acting up and needs to be repaired.

Mr. Tiffany said the centrifuge gear boxes need to be replaced and another big ticket item not in this budget because that line has gone over by \$11,000 is the band screen finally died and he had to buy a new one.

Mr. Dickie said he also needed to remember the drives and the electronic units-the cards in them need to be replaced and that's a high dollar ticket item.

Mr. Tiffany said the next one is vehicle maintenance and he was asking \$2,500 and they added \$1,500 onto that. He said he added another \$200 onto the grease and oil because they have to change the gear box oils and a couple of other jobs that are coming up this year for oil changes. He said they added a new mileage line in again on this side and he added the same \$2,329 and he has the break down if the board requested it.

He said they changed the name of the telephone line to Telephone/Internet to be more transparent.

Mr. Tiffany said he proposed \$107,000 for the electricity but they went over on that.

Mrs. Heon said the electric bill just for the wastewater treatment plant runs \$9,000 to \$10,000 and sometimes its \$11,000 so they took an average of \$10,000 a month so they are bumping that line up to \$120,000.

Mr. Tiffany said after they got all the figures in for the lab supplies they went over on that and he was asking for \$20,000 and he increased it to \$21,500 because they went up on their lab testing and they get their lab supplies from Eastern Analytical for that.

He said they put a new line in for sewer for Campbell Commons to reflect taking out the sewer stuff separately. He said he was starting with \$5,000 which will cover the yearly maintenance on it for cleaning and does not include the auto dialer because he does not know how much that will be yet.

Mrs. Morin asked if they are always going to keep that one broken out.

Mrs. Heon said they don't have to be just decided to do it this year so they could see how much additional that is going to cost.

Mr. Tiffany said to keep a running tab on what that is going to cost us every year and he broke out the electricity, the maintenance and the propane to see what it's historically spending.

He said they increased the overtime from \$11,000 to \$14,000 for the contractual change for the union. He said last but not least was the liability insurance that went from down from \$38,661

to \$33,690.

Mrs. Heon said it's not a decrease and that Mr. Tiffany was saying it was a decrease from his original budget. She said last year it was \$33,648 and that was almost spot on to what they're asking for this year and that is based on the accurate representation she got from the Primex site for how to allocate that insurance cost.

She said if they look at the bottom line of the wastewater budget last year it was about \$713,000 and this year is about \$801,000 so it's almost an \$80,000 increase and looking at what comprises that there's about \$12,000 added to general plant maintenance, \$2,000 added to vehicle maintenance, \$9,000 added to electricity, one of the biggest ones is the \$25,000 added to the chemicals line which is out of Mr. Tiffany's control, personnel bumped up a little bit due to raises in the CBA and the overtime as well based on CBA.

She said she wanted to mention that personnel liability is at \$11,417 this year due to an impending retirement for a long term employee that we will have to pay vacation and sick time to. She said they bumped up health insurance also due to that particular employee who actually does not take the insurance he takes the buyout so if they wanted to replace that person with somebody that took insurance they wanted to make sure they had enough in that line and also due to the increase in health insurance this year.

She said new equipment was also bumped up from last year's budget of \$3,000 to \$14,000 and those increases make up the majority of the overall increase to the wastewater budget.

Mr. Tiffany said one of the big new equipment things was the refrigerated sampler that they talked about last time that needs to be replaced because the refrigerator no longer works.

Mrs. Morin asked if this budget is already in Mr. Dickie's overall budget.

Mrs. Heon said it is not because it is not part of the Town budget.

Mr. Dickie said it's separate from operating budget and this gets transferred out.

Mr. Vachon said then shortly they would have to have that bigger discussion (about the rates).

Mrs. Heon said it's a bigger and more painful discussion.

Mr. Dickie asked if the board was okay with him using the figures in the DRA system to transfer out where we sit with water and sewer.

Mr. Vachon said he was and that everything is going up. He said some lines went up and some went down based on things he has to do and you can't really cut too many corners when it comes to water and sewer.

Fire Dept. Update & Inspection Policy Approval- Mr. Vachon asked to be corrected if he was wrong but the fees are nothing new but they could not find a record of any official approval therefore they had the public hearing to allow comment and to approve these fees.

Chief Reinert said the inspection policy was adopted at Town Meeting in 2003 and he did find a copy of the inspection schedule but he couldn't find one with the adopted date on it. He said he remembered coming before the board around 2010 when they put the fee schedule in and then shortly thereafter they made an amendment to the life safety inspection fee which

brought it from \$25 down to zero to help get compliance from some of the property owners in town that were having issues at the time. He said they've been in place since and it's not often that they have to implement the fees it's just as a safety measure because they schedule out and they're busy. He asked if the board had any questions on the policy itself. He said it has gone through Att. Roman, some minor edits were made and the board has the final draft copy. Mr. Vachon said he didn't think there were any changes in it and the public hearing was for the fees in it and getting them approved.

Mrs. Titus asked when they do an inspection on a business if they charge them every time they go out there.

Chief Reinert said if they have to go out for a missed inspection without proper notice that's when the inspection fees would kick in.

Mrs. Titus asked for the record how much the fee was to go out there.

Chief Reinert said the initial life safety inspection is zero dollars, a re-inspection if they have to come back out if violations were found it's \$50, a second re-inspection if you still haven't fixed the deficiencies is \$100, a missed or no show is \$25 and for an oil furnace permit it's \$25.

Mrs. Titus asked if this is just for apartments or for businesses too.

Chief Reinert said it's any life safety inspection.

Mrs. Titus asked if you have a new business if he charges to go do an inspection.

Chief Reinert said no the initial is to get in get in compliance so they can have a better working relationship. He said the board can vote to go that way if they so choose and they have the discretion to do that.

Mrs. Morin said it has a re-inspection and a second re-inspection and asked if that is just for deficiencies.

Chief Reinert said pretty much yes so if they had to go out for a re-inspection because of a blocked egress and if they had to come back out for a second and third re-inspection because it was still non-compliant that's when the fee went up. He said these numbers have been in here for about 10 years now.

Mrs. Morin asked if they would want to call it a non-compliant fee instead of a re-inspection fee because that might hold some more weight.

The Chief said he was indifferent to either one.

Mr. Vachon asked if they would call it that for both the non-compliant and a second non-compliant not re-inspection for either.

Mrs. Titus said it could be that they don't have the money or they have to do something that's a big cost and they ask for an extended time.

Mrs. Morin said they could ask for an extension without getting charged.

Chief Reinert said the re-inspection is they found a deficiency they spoke with the property owner and give them written documentation typically if it's something pretty extensive that they can deal with or it doesn't have to be addressed immediately. He said they put out a plan

it's going to cost "x" amount of money they don't have that up front and they work with the property owner on a timeline. He said they give them the deadline that this has to be done within 30, 60, 90 days and they go out for the re-inspection and it's still not compliant or completed that's when they would say hey.

Mrs. Morin asked if prior to the re-inspection if they could call and say they're not ready yet if there would be some leniency.

Chief Reinert said yes depending on what the issue is. He said sometimes it has to be addressed within 24 hours or before they leave the property because they can't chain egress doors. He said its all case depending and they are willing to work with the property owner to ensure there's compliance with life safety codes and how they can do that with minimal impact to the property owner while ensuring the life safety of tenants, employees and customers.

Mrs. Morin said that's the only thing she would change in that fee schedule.

Mr. Vachon asked if there were any comments from the board on Mrs. Morin's request.

Mr. Staples said his comments should be made in non-public session.

Mrs. Titus said she didn't think it was non-compliance if it's a money issue and they have to hire someone and that might take time. She said she didn't think that was really non-compliance and they can call the Chief and say they need extended time because they can't get Joe Smith down here to change their wall or whatever it is. She said some old houses have windows in apartments that have to be replaced with a certain type of sheet rock and some owners don't have that skill and others do but it takes time. I don't think it's non-compliance but maybe at the inspection they should say they need more than 30 days she said.

Chief Reinert said there are times when they find deficiencies that don't require a re-inspection they just need proof within 30 days that it their heating system has been serviced by a licensed technician with a picture of the receipt and the tag on their furnace and they accept that so they don't have to set up a re-inspection and charge a re-inspection fee. It's rare that we institute that part of the policy he said.

He said there are certain things they have to go out and visually inspect because it's more than just a picture of a permit.

Mr. Vachon said it's 6 of one half dozen of the other for him-either you go out back out to re-inspect the life safety inspection or you go back out a second time because it was not in compliance for their annual life safety inspection and it didn't matter to him which way they go.

Mr. Staples asked the Chief when he goes out to inspect businesses for their annual inspection what he would call it.

Chief Reinert said an annual inspection.

Mr. Staples said they had a complaint that his guys inspected a business in town on a Saturday. Chief Reinert said that was not an inspection. He said they had new people in the dept. and the Deputy Chief was doing on the job training showing people who aren't familiar with the town who are now working for the Fire Dept. high hazard occupancies in town so they were driving

around to places on Rt. 11 and in the SAU area. He said they drove into the area and said this is what this business does and they were greeted by someone standing in the doorway, there was a small conversation as to what was going on and that they were just showing the 2 new Firefighters and they were invited in for a tour.

Mr. Staples said he wanted to make sure it was not an inspection because there was a clause in there and he wondered if that was a change.

Chief Reinert said there is a clause in there because they try to be customer friendly they don't want to be the hammer because you're not going to get compliance that way. He said there may be a time if you have a drinking establishment in town that they find out at 11 p.m. that's over crowded that there are issues on that they have to then address those immediately. He said they will set up the annual inspection in advance like they have always done.

Motion: (Vachon, second Morin) to approve the Farmington Fire and Rescue Administrative Policy 401 Life Safety Inspections and the associated fees within passed 4-0.

Highway Update- Highway Dept. Supervisor Ed Brannan said as far as the new trucks are concerned they were originally talking about the Freightliner 108 SD 10 wheeler but in order to get the power they think they need they had to upgrade a model higher. He said they spoke with the Freightliner dealer and after doing some research on what other towns are buying they felt that this was the step they needed to take.

He said on the 10 wheeler truck pricing they still have a few items that they are looking to get added to them they want spare tires and wheels, a stainless oil pan and they are trying to get the shift controller located better. He said presently in Freightliner trucks they are dash mounted and are not very convenient and they tend to do a lot of shifting back and forth so they are trying to make it more convenient.

He said he is not sure what the extra items will be but the 10 wheeler right now stands at \$142,738. He said to build the truck it's another \$123,775 which brings you to \$266,513.

He said the 6 wheeler truck is \$114,017 to build it will be \$94,585 for a total of \$208,602 which brings the total cost for both trucks equipped to \$475,115 (less a few other items hopefully they can get a firm price on by the end of the week).

Mr. Staples asked if they need to put down 20% of it.

Mr. Brannan said that would be \$95,023.

Mrs. Morin asked if that was for the 2 trucks.

Mr. Brannan said yes the grant portion would be \$380,092.

Mr. Staples asked for the balance in the Capital Reserve Fund.

Mr. Dickie said there is approx. \$150,000 (in the Highway Dept. Motorized Equipment CRF).

Mr. Vachon said if they pull it out of the CRF there will be no tax impact for 2 brand new trucks.

Mrs. Morin asked if they already motioned to go forward with the grant.

Mr. Vachon said yes because they had to put that notification in.

Mr. Staples said they will have to put it to a warrant article.

Mr. Dickie suggested putting in a warrant article to approve up to \$472,000 from the state with a maximum that we would use \$566,400 with a 20% match of the \$472,000. He said he expected it to be less but at least we'll have that amount to go with.

Mrs. Morin asked if they were putting the tax impact amount on there as zero.

Mr. Dickie said it would be zero.

Mr. Vachon said they have to pay for it out of the general fund and then get it reimbursed into the general fund. It will be no tax impact but we have to come up with the "full boat" to submit our receipt to get repaid he said.

Mr. Dickie said they just have to have authorization to spend it out of the general fund to be refunded. He said the DRA wanted a warrant article for that so they have to do that.

Mr. Vachon asked if these have the dual steering boxes to make it easier on the guys. He said he didn't know if he had requested that and some places are doing it standard now but are not spelling it out. He then found a listing for power steering with an auxiliary gear so that would be the dual steering which is so much nicer for plowing.

Mr. Brannan said there is an option for a stainless steel oil pan. He said they've got a 2021 Freightliner that they will order a stainless steel oil pan for so they'll have it in stock.

Mrs. Morin asked if they will undercoat these as well.

Mr. Brannan said they will get sprayed (with NH Oil) but he is not a big fan of it. He said the good thing about these trucks is they have a single rail frame instead of a double rail frame so the typical frame issues they have won't be there.

Mr. Staples asked when the last time they treated the roads was and if they went out Saturday.

Mr. Brannan said no.

Mrs. Morin asked why they omitted the front bumper.

Mr. Vachon said because they are putting a plow on it.

Mr. Brannan said he wanted to get the front bumper because in the summer they will take the plow frames off and then you won't have any protection on the fenders so they will cut up the bumper and do some fabrication work and put something back in there to protect the nose of the truck.

Mr. Vachon asked if he added the front bumper back on to the order.

Mr. Brannan said he sent an e-mail to the sales rep to put that back in. He said they added fender mounted mirrors that are heated, a spare set of tires and wheels with studs, aluminum rims and they haven't gotten the price on that yet.

He said both trucks will have On-spots (automatic tire chains activated by the driver from a dashboard switch).

Mr. Vachon asked if he had a price to put radios in these trucks and if they would come outfitted with all the strobes and everything.

Mr. Brannan said all the strobes are on but he did not have a price for the radios.

Mr. Vachon said the radios that are in those trucks should be fairly new.

Mr. Brannan said it would just be a matter of having the company come down and reinstall them.

Mr. Vachon asked him to remember that for the final quote. He asked if he did slide-in shakers or if he checked out the side dump spreaders.

Mr. Brannan said the 10 wheeler will have a side dump spreader and the 6 wheeler will have a slide-in shaker and both of them are stainless steel. He said he still has to get asphalt shoes quoted in for the 6 wheeler. He said he didn't think all of this was going to affect the price they're going to pay maybe \$2,000 at the very most.

Mr. Staples asked how often they clean their trucks.

Mr. Brannan said they clean them at least once a week maybe a little bit more.

Mr. Staples asked when the last time they plowed was.

Mr. Brannan said last Tuesday and most of the trucks got cleaned up between Wednesday and today. He said it was a bit of an issue trying to get them all washed and rinsed because they only have 2 hoses but they do have everything to put in a 2 inch water service into the building so they can get a couple lines in to help wash them out easier and quicker.

Mr. Vachon asked if they knew how the oil pan on the 2021 rotted out so fast.

Mr. Brannan said the maintenance probably wasn't the best but they don't last and it seems to be a common thing with a lot of vehicles. He said the same thing when they put transmission lines on it that's how they noticed the oil pan and they had everything right in stock so it's a common thing.

Mr. Vachon said usually if it's in stock it's not common and if it's out of stock its common.

Mr. Brannan said he has a feeling that they stock enough of them so they can keep it covered.

Mr. Vachon said this was more of an informative discussion because they don't have the final numbers yet and it has to go to a warrant article anyway. He said they just have to tell the state that we want the grant that we're going to proceed and now we have to do the warrant article at Town Meeting and we can't do anything until they say we can take money out of the general fund to pay for this and get reimbursed.

Mr. Brannan said he spoke with the sales rep about ordering the trucks and the cab and chassis are 8 months out.

Mr. Vachon said that's better than the quote he got from a different manufacturer for 300+ days.

Mr. Brannan said the sales rep said if they are pretty sure they're all set with the grant they could order the trucks and if they don't take them they can sell them.

Mr. Vachon said they can't do anything until Town Meeting. He asked if they have the allocations for us to order trucks and if they are holding them until Town Meeting for us.

Mr. Brannan said that would be one good reason to put in an order. He said if they wait until March they're probably looking at Dec. or Jan. before we see a truck.

Mr. Vachon said he was not going to motion to order anything of this cost without knowing the

taxpayers are going to fund it. He said he was saying they could get out of it but they may not and depending on how they want them done they may not get out of it because someone may not want to buy that truck so they may get roped in. I would not be in favor of ordering it until we get the approval. The meeting after I'll make the motion he said.

Mr. Brannan said even if they did order the trucks right now they probably wouldn't get built until mid-summer. He apologized for not submitting a monthly report because things got a little busy and hopefully he can get them to the board and try to provide something to go back on time wise.

Mr. Vachon asked how the fleet is holding up with the storms we've had so far this month.

Mr. Brannan said they were holding up decently. He said they had to put a turbo on the 2007 10 wheeler that's going to be going down the road. He said they've had an issue with it since he's been here it keeps loosening up and the problem was it's a re-manufactured unit and 2 of the studs that hold it on have threaded inserts where they repaired it and the inserts were pulling out and they couldn't keep a gasket in it. You can't buy just the housing you have to buy the whole unit he said.

Mr. Vachon asked him to pull the paperwork and see if we paid for a re-manufactured unit because it wasn't cheap.

After some discussion about turbo replacements done to the trucks in the past Mr. Brannan said he did not have anything else for the board but he would remain at the meeting for the discussion on the proposed parking ban changes.

Mr. Dickie said he was going to recommend that the board table that topic because he just got the revised parking tonight from Att. Roman and he hasn't had a chance to review it. He said he would print it out and put it in the board's packets and they can vote on it next week.

14). New Business:

Winter Parking Ban Proposed Changes- Motion: (Vachon, second Staples) to table the winter parking ban proposed changes until next week passed 4-0.

Warrant Articles- Mr. Dickie said he didn't have an official amount for the undesignated fund balance and he was estimating somewhere between \$300,000 to \$400,000 knowing they also have about \$93,000 coming back from Lincoln St. which would put us up to around \$400,000 or \$500,000. He said what he has come up with for warrant articles is the elderly exemptions, the grant for the trucks, \$145,000-\$150,000 for the recycling building project, 9 culverts that need to be addressed, bridge repairs and the levee. He said he reached out to the Army Corps of Engineers to see where they stand for their estimate to do their assessment on the levee and he has not heard back from them yet and he would contact them again tomorrow. He said it would be an 80/20 split where they cover 80% and we cover 20%.

He said they also have to keep the salt shed in mind because the CEO/Bldg. Insp. is on the cusp of condemning our existing salt shed. He said he and Mr. Brannan have been talking about putting up a 3 sided pole barn with sloped roof and reach out to DES and make sure there is no

issue with putting it up at the Town garage.

Mr. Dickie said they took \$30,000 out of the building repair line for the boiler at the Town Hall. He said this year they were able to expend the majority for the boiler for this building out of last year's budget with the residuals from the ARPA funds so that will be covered. He said he thought they would want to replenish the building repair line so if anything else goes wrong he has something he can go back to.

Chief Reinert said typically there is a warrant article in for SCUBA account.

Mr. Staples said the landfill closure fund is also usually included on warrant.

Mr. Dickie said he was looking for direction on what items the board wants prioritized out of that list and what they think they want to put money into. He said they definitely have to put money into the recycling project because it is set to get underway pretty soon.

Mr. Vachon asked if they have to decide this tonight or if they could put it in the packet for next week.

Mr. Dickie said he would come back next week with a firm dollar amount. He asked the board to be thinking about their priorities so he could get them into the DRA system in order with the right wording and have Att. Roman review it. He said he could put the dollar figures in later he just needs the warrant articles for what they are looking to cover. He said they need to have this done by Jan. 29 so they can vote to approve them and put that in the warrant article with the tax impact for presentation to the Budget Committee on Jan. 30.

He said he would e-mail the list to the board and asked them to indicate their priorities and send it back to him.

Mrs. Morin asked him put a star next to what he thought should be prioritized or put it in the order he thought it should go and let them see if they agree.

Mr. Vachon asked him to verify the reoccurring warrant articles.

Mr. Dickie said he would check the Annual Town Report for that information.

Voting Reminder- Mr. Staples reminded everyone that the Primary election is tomorrow.

School Crosswalk Sign- Mrs. Titus said the school crossing light is still out at the crosswalk before Mill's Market on Spring St.

Mr. Vachon said the batteries may need to be changed after being there for about 5 years.

15). Town Administrator's Business:

Mr. Dickie said he received an e-mail on Jan. 19 from a resident stating that he would appreciate it when they call an elected official to assign rumors to him that they call him first to verify the information. Having said that please provide me with any phone logs of any Town of Farmington phone or personal phone calls made to_____.

He said he replied back we do not have a call log for outgoing call from the Town Hall and he attached a redacted call log of the calls he made to the personal phone as the Town Administrator to the phone number he cannot disclose. He said he fully disagreed with his accusation and he spoke to the person on the School Board about an emergency program the

school purchased. He said he told the person he learned there was a request to create a policy for this program that would involve 2 dept. heads and that he instructed his dept. heads to stop work on them until they get direction from the Select Board.

He said he told the elected official the Town is not in the business to create a policy for the school but we would assist if we could. He told him that both the Town and the school need a better understanding of how this program works which would greatly assist in creating a solid procedure.

He told him this was something the school purchased and they need to get a better understanding of how the program works and whether it would be supported by Strafford County Dispatch. He said this was something their board would need to better understand before a request for a policy was made.

He said this is the conversation he had with the elected official so the School Board had clear understanding where the Town was with this. He said he would have a conversation with the Chair on this. Given the request involved and the involvement of the Town's Public Safety Dept. for this program it is not only appropriate but necessary that the Select Board be part of this discussion to provide direction. Given that it is also entirely appropriate not to mention courteous and professional for me to let the School Board know the Town's current position in our process.

Going forward I would greatly appreciate it that you go through myself and the Select Board before a request is made of any dept. heads to work on something dealing with this program because it has to go through the Select Board. He said then he attached the redacted forms as the attachment to go out to this person.

I'm trying to fully disclose I'm not hiding anything. I did make 3 calls to this individual as I discussed-one was on this program, one was for the Budget Committee who was having support of an employee because it got a little heated and the third call was purely to find out what the intent was of the person that e-mailed him. Once I learned that I got this e-mail conducted. I'm fully disclosing the calls I made to this elected official. I'm not hiding anything it's on my phone he said.

Consensus of the board was they agreed with his response.

15). Next Meeting: Monday, January 29, 2024

16). Non-Public Session E:

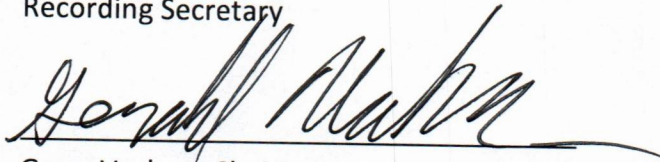
Motion: (Vachon, second Titus) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) Reputation passed 4-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, Titus, Staples, Morin-aye) at 9:05 p.m.

Motion: (Vachon, second Titus) to come out of non-public passed 4-0 at 9:25 p.m.

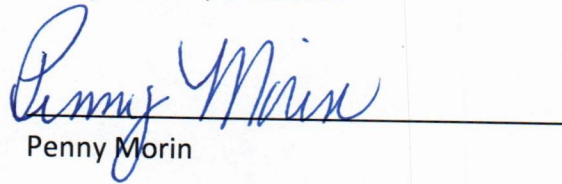
17). Adjournment:

Motion: (Staples, second Titus) to adjourn the meeting passed 4-0 at 9:25 p.m.

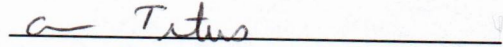
Kathleen Magoon,
Recording Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerry Vachon", written over a horizontal line.


Gerry Vachon, Chairman

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Penny Morin", written over a horizontal line.

Penny Morin

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann Titus", written over a horizontal line.

Ann Titus

A horizontal line for a signature, with no text or signature present.

Douglas Staples