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TOWN OF WINDHAM, NH
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
November 6th, 2023
Community Development Department
3 North Lowell Rd.
Approved Minutes

8 Attendance:

9 Chairman Ross McLeod- present
10 Vice Chair Heath Partington- present
11 Mark Samsel- present
12 Bruce Breton- present
13 Roger Hohenberger- present

14
15 Staff:

16 Brian McCarthy- Town Administrator
17 Deb Padykula- Finance Director

18 Proposed Tax Rate

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20
21 Mr. McCarthy and Ms. Padykula presented several options to the Board:

22
23 Option 1- \$21.49 8.8% increase

24
25 Option 2- \$21.33 8% increase

26
27 Option 3- \$21.40. 8.4% increase

28
29 Option 4- \$21.21 (borrow \$884,851 from the unassigned fund balance) 7.4% increase

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31
32 **A motion was made by Mr. Hohenberger to use \$884,851 of the unassigned fund balance for**
33 **a tax rate of \$21.21. Seconded by Vice Chair Partington.**

34
35 Mr. McCarthy stated that he is on the other end of the spectrum from Mr. Hohenberger where
36 he does not think any of the fund balance should be used. Mr. McCarthy stated there is a
37 chance that the town will be able to get a loan through a bond bank but not through a regular
38 bank because there is no savings. Mr. Hohenberger stated that, not by policy but by practice,
39 the town usually holds on to \$300,000. Vice Chair Partington stated that he would like to find a
40 way to give a portion of the unassigned fund balance back to the tax payers. Mr. Samsel asked
41 what was "given back" and what was it used for. Ms. Padykula and Mr. McCarthy stated that it
42 was a balance that sat in the unassigned fund. Mr. McCarthy mentioned giving it back to the tax

43 payers in improved services and programs, not just in terms of a lower tax rate. Mr. Samsel
44 asked about the list of projects and asked if this was the type of service that the money would
45 go towards, Mr. McCarthy stated that that would be the case. It is not going to impact the
46 budget according to Mr. McCarthy.

47

48 The Board discussed the amount of money that was not expended over the years, it is typically
49 between \$500,000 and \$800,000 and he does not think it has ever been \$1 million dollars. Mr.
50 McCarthy is in favor of utilizing the money in the unassigned fund balance to fund outstanding
51 projects.

52

53 The Board discussed TANs (Tax Anticipation Note) and how that works to borrow against when
54 the unassigned fund balance runs low and tax bills have not yet gone out. Mr. McCarthy stated
55 that they are in the process of switching banks and the rate is 5% which is a rate they have
56 never had before, so, at least there is some interest that will be being accrued. Mr. McCarthy
57 stated that it does add up over time. Mr. Breton stated that the auditors recommend that the
58 town keep a slightly higher fund balance. Mr. Breton stated that the list of projects has been
59 growing. Chairman McLeod stated that he cannot support taking the large amount out of the
60 unassigned fund balance. Mr. McCarthy does not recommend putting things off until the next
61 year.

62

63 Chairman McLeod invited public comment.

64

65 Mr. Bob Coole addressed the Board. Mr. Coole stated that our bond rating is zero because
66 there have been so many projects that have been put off for so long. Mr. Coole does think that
67 they need a savings program of some type. Mr. Coole stated that he likes the idea that the
68 School Board had of floating a \$5 million-dollar bond for 7 years to take all these small projects
69 that have mounted up over the years.

70

71 **Vote 1-4. Motion fails. All opposed except Mr. Hohenberger.**

72

73 **A motion was made by Mr. Samsel to use Option 3 for a tax rate of \$21.40. Seconded by Mr.**
74 **Breton. 3-2. Motion passes. Chairman McLeod and Mr. Hohenberger opposed.**

75

76 Mr. Hohenberger stated that he is opposed because the money came from the taxpayers 2
77 years ago and belongs in the pockets of the taxpayers.

78

79 Library

80

81 Ms. Sylvie Brikiatis (Director) and Theresa Abbamondi (Board of Trustees) addressed the Board.

82

83 Personnel- this includes regular step increase and health insurance

84

85 Operations line- books and non-print, only \$1,000 increase overall. Ms. Brikiatis stated that
86 they moved things around so eBooks and other electronic resources are now under eResources;
87 this is almost a third of the operations line budget.

88
89 Eresources, webservices and mobile printing service, this is now over one line and it is easier to
90 track. Office supplies and office equipment were also discussed. There is a line for site
91 improvement because there needs to be more meeting room space for people to meet and to
92 run all of the programs. There is a line in the budget to put in funding to have someone to look
93 at the space they have and how they might better utilize the area. Ms. Abbamondi stated that
94 they did a comparison survey/study across the region to see what they might need.

95
96 Additionally, a lot of the programming is now happening outside the library, there was a
97 conversion to more online resources; the library "traffic" is down about 22 percent and they
98 have seen a reduction in those coming into the library. Yet, the circulation has tripled since they
99 opened the building and it has grown since 2019. The resources are being used even more.
100 People are using more digital resources. The town's population has doubled since the library
101 opened. Ms. Abbamondi stated that a lot of the programming has shifted outside and to other
102 locations. There is the meeting and the study space that has also grown. They have also done a
103 usage survey; there is a code for that on the website if people would like to take the survey and
104 they can answer questions like what would get them to use the library more often.

105
106 Mr. Hohenberger asked how the bricks project went. Ms. Brikiatis stated that the bricks were
107 finished on budget.

108
109 Service agreements were also discussed. The pandemic has expedited the use of these apps.
110 There is a mobile printing app that is .15 cents a page. Zoom, remote PC, Assabet (the museum
111 pass) were other apps and services that were used by the community. Ms. Brikiatis stated that
112 these have always been in the budget but they were in a different line item. Ms. Brikiatis stated
113 that they have asked for a net increase of \$1,000 total. Mr. Samsel stated that they do a
114 wonderful job and he appreciates the work they do for the community. Mr. Samsel asked
115 where the \$25,000 was located in the budget; this is for a study on new proposed meeting
116 space in the building. This is now listed as a warrant article according to Ms. Padykula.

117
118 Information Technology

119
120 The proposed budget would increase from \$258,480 to \$286,238, an 11.9% increase.

121
122 Mr. McCarthy listed the contracted services and these did not increase from last year to this
123 year. Mr. McCarthy stated that the internet is a residential account, not a commercial account
124 so there needs to a commercial grade internet. Currently, when there is an outage, the town
125 goes to the bottom of the list instead of a priority as a municipality.

126
127 Mr. Tom Moore from Rockport Technology Group addressed the Board. Mr. Moore stated that
128 Fios is a residential product. The Board discussed converting to Fidium. The recommendation is

129 to go for a fiber circuit and they are waiting for the new year to establish this in a new budget.
130 The new SLA was discussed.

131
132 Mr. Hohenberger asked if the bandwidth would be improved, it will. They are putting services
133 on either side of Route 111.

134
135 MUNIS was discussed by the Board. Mr. McCarthy does agree that the cost is not what they are
136 getting in terms of services. Mr. McCarthy does not think it is worth converting because of the
137 number of items that have been stored in the system. Mr. Breton stated that MUNIS has been
138 put on notice over the years many times. The Board discussed that MUNIS is not a great
139 product and everyone seems to be in agreement about that. The support for the project is
140 lacking and it is not web based so there are a lot of struggles with the product. Mr. Moore
141 stated that they do not have any experience getting away from MUNIS.

142
143 Accufund is one potential product with comparable services and there are probably two others.
144 The programs are not for all of what they do. Town systems have changed and all of their needs
145 are not met with the MUNIS system. There has been a problem with getting the tax bills out on
146 time. Mr. Moore stated that this was an issue with the internet as well. Mr. Samsel asked about
147 Microsoft 365; Mr. Moore stated that everyone on a board should have a town email so that
148 they can all stay within the town system and have a town email address.

149
150 Mr. Wayne Morris asked about fixing the screen as part of the technology budget. Mr.
151 McCarthy stated that he has not been trained on the screen. Mr. Moore stated that converting
152 things to Teams will help with the interface of the screen.

153
154 Solid Waste

155
156 Mr. Dennis Senibaldi, General Services Director, addressed the Board. Mr. Senibaldi stated that
157 there is a salary increase. The Board discussed the administrative assistant. Mr. Hohenberger
158 stated that he is in favor of keeping this as a part time position. Vice Chair Partington is not sure
159 what each of the smaller line items are so he would like to circle back to this at a later time. Mr.
160 Samsel stated that it is important to hold onto good people so he is in support of this becoming
161 a full-time position as this position would support all three departments. Mr. Senibaldi stated
162 that they are still involved in the MS4. Mr. Samsel asked if there was any flexibility in the salary
163 for the position proposed to go from part time to full time; Mr. Senibaldi stated it was not. Mr.
164 Hohenberger asked about shifting some of the administrative work to other departments. Mr.
165 McCarthy stated that this was not advisable.

166
167 Mr. McCarthy also suggested having this position start in July to alleviate some of the cost to
168 the town. The Board discussed the difference in cost from a part time to a full-time employee; it
169 would be a difference of \$50,000 when including taxes and insurance. Chairman McLeod stated
170 that he is in support of keeping this in for the time being. Things can sometimes change in
171 deliberative session according to Chairman McLeod.

172

173 The Board discussed that everything is open at this point. Mr. McCarthy stated that he is willing
174 to find the money for this position. There was also discussion about both light bulbs and fuel.

175

176 Roads

177

178 Fuel log- Mr. Senibaldi stated that the dollar amount is correct but the gallons are off.

179

180 B4- catch basin cleaning increased from \$40,000 to \$52,000. The town can go out to bid for this
181 service next year. The Board and Mr. Senibaldi discussed the benefit of working with a company
182 that was able to get this work done.

183

184 The “never ending” Canopy- Mr. Senibaldi stated that it is “almost at completion” as he will
185 need heat, insulation and doors. Vice Chair Partington stated that the CIP roads for \$126,000
186 should be in the budget.

187

188 Ms. Shannon Ulery, CIP member, addressed the Board. Ms. Ulery mentioned the \$300,000
189 proposed for road work. The CIP is still working as an advisory committee; the roads are a
190 priority but they did not want to throw too much at them at once. Ms. Ulery discussed the
191 \$800,000 in B4.

192

193 Mr. Wayne Morris and addressed the Board to ask about striping. Mr. Morris stated that any
194 town road that had a double strip should also have fog lines on it. Fog lines would be very
195 helpful for any striped road in town. Mr. Senibaldi stated that fog lines are very expensive and
196 the fog line would need about 20 inches or road on both sides. Mr. Breton mentioned the width
197 of road and the 28-foot width of the road. The Board discussed where the fog line would be
198 located on the road. Mr. Morris stated that the fog line is right on the edge of the road when he
199 drives through town roads in other surrounding communities.

200

201 General Government Buildings

202

203 Mr. Senibaldi stated that there were some increases in the supplies. There is also some money
204 in the budget for details. Mr. Senibaldi stated that the alarm systems and fire systems are tied
205 together, there is now a dedicated service for the fire system that is separate from the alarm
206 system. There is now a replacement schedule set for these items. Mr. Senibaldi stated that they
207 are challenged with having some of these older systems still in place with some of these older
208 telephone and wiring systems.

209

210 Ms. Barbara Coish addressed the Board to ask about the replacement of the front door of the
211 senior center. The new door will be part of the property maintenance fund.

212

213 Mr. Breton stated that the square footage of the town hall and then asked about electricity.
214 The cost of electricity for the library is \$15,000 and it is \$13,000 for the town hall. Mr. Senibaldi
215 stated that this \$13,000 is for several buildings. Mr. Breton asked if there is something wrong.
216 Mr. Breton asked if there was a reason for the high price of electricity. Mr. McCarthy stated

217 that they can take a look at it. This line item also includes \$13,000 for Armstrong House which
218 has the cable channels. Mr. McCarthy stated that they will look at the electricity infrastructure.

219

220 Health and Human Services

221

222 There is an increase in the cost due to outside agencies that offer support systems to the
223 citizens; there were 3 organizations shifted into this department. The board discussed some of
224 the agencies utilized by the citizens of the town.

225

226 Trust Funds

227

228 Part of the administration budget; this is a level funded budget. The Board discussed B5,
229 contracted services. \$25,000-line item which is in line for next year.

230

231 Retirement

232

233 This budget is level funded.

234

235 Insurance

236

237 There is a \$2 million-dollar difference; this is a result of shifting everything over from the
238 department budgets and over into once central budget. There will be a 14.6% increase. The
239 Board also discussed the open enrollment period that ends December 8th. They may have a new
240 number to talk about after this date.

241

242 Debt Services

243

244 Ms. Padykula mentioned the Special Revenue Fund. Mr. Hohenberger asked if they have kept
245 up with the balance. Mr. Hohenberger stated that it is more than what was there. Mr. Padykula
246 stated that the \$68,000 was moved to off set the debt service payment. Mr. McCarthy then
247 brought up the water allocation. There was also a check of \$17,000 from Pennichuck Water
248 that is also in the fund.

249

250 Town Officers

251

252 **A motion was made by Mr. Hohenberger to zero out the Selectmen's stipend. Seconded by**
253 **Mr. Breton. Vote 5-0. Motion passes.**

254

255 \$6100 and any benefits for the Selectmen were removed from the budget.

256

257 Streetlights

258

259 The Board discussed LED lights. Mr. McCarthy stated that RFPs are being sent out this week.

260

261 General Assistance

262

263 \$45,540 would decrease to \$34,000. That is a \$11,540 decrease as they are proposing to
264 remove 3 programs from this budget.

265

266 Senior Center

267

268 Ms. Barbara Coish stated that next spring, their lease is up and there are very few things that
269 may change. The Board should expect that they will come in the spring to ask if they can reside
270 there a little longer. The Senior Center budget is down \$325 from the year before.

271

272 Cemetery

273

274 The proposed cemetery budget is \$43,608 which is a decrease of \$148.

275

276 The cemetery does not have physical location on town property where they keep their books.
277 Ms. Coish stated that the records are in their vault, Chairman McLeod stated that it is town
278 information and it needs to be backed up somehow somehow.

279

280 Mr. Peter Griffin addressed the Board. Mr. Griffin stated one of the earlier trustees would keep
281 some of these documents in his or her house and that has not boded well because things have
282 been lost over the years. The Board discussed making sure that town property would be
283 tracked in an organized way.

284

285 Correspondence/Old Business/New Business

286

287 Mr. McCarthy brought up the proposal to move the election day. This will be put on a
288 December Agenda.

289

290 The Board will meet on 11/27. The date will be shared with the school district.

291

292 **A motion was made by Mr. Samsel to approve the October 30th draft minutes as amended.**

293 **Seconded by Mr. Hohenberger. Vote 4-0-1. Mr. Breton abstained. Motion passes .**

294

295 **A motion was made by Mr. Hohenberger to enter non-public session under RSA 91A: II (a)**
296 **and (d). Seconded by Mr. Samsel. Roll call vote: Mr. Hohenberger, Mr. Breton. Mr. Samsel,**
297 **Vice Chair Partington, and Chairman McLeod- yes. Motion passes.**

298

299 Respectfully submitted by Anitra Lincicum