

Nottingham Select Board Meeting

12/12/2023

Budget Workshop Minutes

Approved January 8, 2024

1 Call to Order

2
3 **Members present:** Ben Bartlett, John Morin, Tim Dabrieo, Matthew Shirland, and Steve Welch.
4 Others: Town Administrator Ellen White.

5
6 **Members of the public:** none.

7
8 **Members Excused:** none.

9
10 **Pledge of Allegiance:** meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Bartlett noted that
11 Nottingham received its second ambulance. Setting it up and getting it certified within the next
12 two weeks is a significant step toward enhancing emergency response capabilities in the area.
13 Having an additional ambulance can contribute to better coverage and faster response times,
14 ultimately improving the overall emergency medical services in the community.

15 16 2024 Budget Review

17
18 Ms. White explained the differences between the 12/04 and 12/12 budget sheets and said that she
19 also provided the Board with the number for estimated revenues.

20
21 Ms. White provided a comparison between last year's estimated revenues, totaling \$2,506,786, and
22 this year's projections, which amount to \$2,479,070, which makes the difference of \$30,716
23 between the two years. It is brought to attention that last year's estimated revenues may have been
24 overestimated due to an issue related to the inclusion of revenues from 2022, particularly for the
25 highway truck.

26
27 She then explained the color coding on the budget sheet and noted that she had looked at the line
28 items that were calculated incorrectly and fixed them. One example was the FICA line which was
29 not calculating correctly to begin with.

30
31 There was discussion about potentially cutting the Road Reconstruction and Paving line from the
32 budget and moving into a Warrant Article, just as the Social Services line, which used to be a
33 Warrant Article previously. It was noted that the Budget Committee member was against moving
34 the road reconstruction/paving funds from the operating budget (about \$200,000).

35
36 Then there was discussion about how much the Board would still need to cut in order to meet the
37 4% tax cap. That number has been determined to be \$216,577.

- 38
39 1. There was discussion about road Warrant Articles and whether it would be beneficial to
40 divide the \$600,000 road maintenance budget into separate Warrant Articles, allowing
41 residents to have a say in prioritizing specific roads for repair. Concerns were raised about

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42 presenting a substantial sum without a detailed plan for road selection, although it was
43 acknowledged that there is a highway management plan in place, but it was mentioned that
44 it is several years behind.
45

46 Another conversation touched on the fact that the acceptance of new roads by the Town may have
47 increased the workload for road maintenance despite the fact that the Town has been maintaining
48 them before officially accepting them.
49

50 Various suggestions were made for adjustments to the budget, such as reducing the Planner's fee,
51 cutting some money from the merit compensation pool, and moving Social Services to a Warrant
52 Article.
53

54 Members discussed future implications of having a 4% tax cap and that at some point it may affect
55 not only services but employee retention and compensation.
56

57 Then there was another lengthy discussion about whether to present one Warrant Article for road
58 maintenance to the voters or split it into several. Another option was to see if anyone would suggest
59 putting some money back for road maintenance into the budget, thus reducing the amount of the
60 Warrant Article and whether it was reasonable to hope for this outcome.
61

62 Members agreed to reduce HYW Contracted Road Maintenance Projects (Line 282) by \$200,000
63 and move it to the Warrant Article for which a solid plan would have to be developed for road
64 maintenance.
65

66 Then members discussed cutting the Planner's salary (underspent in 2023 by almost \$10,000) or
67 taking some money out of the merit compensation pool to meet the 4% tax cap amount. Concerns
68 are raised about the complexity and time-consuming nature of the planning board's work,
69 especially with upcoming development projects, emphasizing the necessity of a thorough review
70 process.
71

72 There was a deliberation on allocating funds for the Master Plan. Concerns were raised about the
73 outdated Plan's impact on development and impact fees. The Board contemplated moving money
74 from other line items to support the Master Plan budget, emphasizing its importance for future
75 planning. The possibility of a non-lapsing Warrant Article for the Master Plan was considered to
76 ensure flexibility in spending and completion within an extended timeframe.
77

78 After discussing the current and future development activity in Town and the impact on town
79 planning, members agreed to reduce Planner's salary line item (Line 102) by \$6000.
80

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81 The Board also discussed adjustments to the budget's Highway Equipment line (Line 264).
82 Suggestions included reducing the highway equipment parts budget by \$5,000, given the
83 underutilization of the existing budget.

84
85 The remaining amount to meet the 4% tax cap - \$5,659 was decided to be taken out of the Merit
86 Compensation Pool line item (Line 5).

87
88 Members then discussed the historic fluctuations related to the tax cap. Ms. White mentioned that
89 it typically ranged between 3.4% and a little over 4%. Then members talked about the current
90 year's budget, where expenses, especially payroll items and healthcare costs, have significantly
91 increased. They noted that Town staff was at full capacity and the addition of six full-time
92 employees in the context of addressing the rising costs. The conversation briefly focused on
93 specific budget items, such as the new fire station heating costs and potential savings with the
94 installation of new boilers. The members expressed the need to potentially reduce Warrant Articles
95 as a strategy to manage the budget amidst inflation and rising prices.

96
97 Ms. White said that there was discussion about approving abatements for veterans' tax credits. The
98 Board received letters from affected property owners, some citing hardship. The consensus was
99 that there is enough justification for an abatement.

100
101 *Mr. Dabrieo made a motion to approve the abatements for all veterans tax credits. Mr. Shirland*
102 *duly seconded. Motion carried with a 5:0 roll call vote in favor. Mr. Bartlett – aye, Mr. Morin –*
103 *aye, Mr. Welch – aye, Mr. Dabrieo – aye, Mr. Shirland – aye.*

104
105 Next, members discussed potential Warrant Articles:

106 **Police Department's Technology Capital Reserve Fund (\$10,000):**

107
108
109 Aimed at covering technology needs, including body cams, laser replacement, etc. Body cams
110 funding will come partially from a grant, but the Town portion needs to be secured, therefore the
111 latter was put in the Operating Budget.

112 Member were in favor of drafting this WA for further discussion.

113
114 Ms. White noted the two Warrant Articles for Gym Floor and Wall Safety Upgrades (\$25,000) and
115 Audio-Video Meeting Room Update (\$50,000) that were proposed in 2023 but did not make it to
116 the Warrant Articles. Gym floor replacement was being reconsidered after under drain repair, and
117 the meeting room equipment update was postponed due to potential space changes for the
118 Recreation Department.

119 **Fire Department Flooring Replacement and Miscellaneous Repairs (\$12,000):**

120 Includes repairs for the main bay area and potentially other sections.
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Member were in favor of drafting this WA for further discussion once the Board is able to get a better determination of what those include.

Base Radio Replacements for Fire and Rescue (\$15,000):

Necessary due to outdated or malfunctioning equipment.

Member were in favor of drafting this WA for further discussion.

Members discussed leveraging ARPA funds for critical repairs if feasible.

Baler for the Recycling Center (\$12,000):

Member were in favor of drafting this WA for further discussion.

Various Infrastructure and Equipment Needs for the Highway Department:

Asphalt road maintenance and reconstruction (\$600,000).

Capital reserve fund addition for highway department equipment (\$100,000).

It was suggested to cut the \$100,000 for Highway Department equipment and leave only Road Maintenance WA.

Phase 2 Library Parking Lot and Culvert Replacement (\$20,000):

Ms. White said she needs to get more details on that from the Library.

Gym Floor and Wall Safety Upgrades (\$25,000):

Members agreed to put the WA up for discussion.

Repaving of Basketball and creating a Pickleball Court (\$10,000)

Members agreed to put the WA up for discussion.

Investigation of New Police Station (\$40,000):

The discussion suggested a need to expedite the investigation of a new police station, potentially due to urgent issues with the current facility, a desire to prevent further delays, and an acknowledgment of the lengthy planning process involved.

Invasive Species Capital Reserve Fund and Expendable Trust Fund (\$10,000):

Members agreed to put the WA up for discussion.

Community Center Back Building Renovation (\$120,000):

Members agreed to put the WA up for discussion.

Accounting System Replacement (\$40,000):

Ms. White will find out whether the newly purchased existing software will support the desktop users and if so, the replacement could be pushed to the future.

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Moving the Recreation Department and meeting space in the Town Hall (no monetary value as of yet):

Members agreed to discuss this further.

Salary Figure for the Chief Position for Fire Department (\$70,000):

Members agreed to discuss this further.

Participation in New Hampshire Retirement System for Group 1 Employees (no monetary value as of yet):

Members agreed to discuss this further. Ms. White will provide exact numbers.

Ms. White will draft all the Warrant Articles for consideration and further discussion at a future meeting.

Then there was discussion about whether the Board would like to discuss the Facility Maintenance candidates and go into non-public for that. All members were in agreement.

Non-Public Session

Mr. Dabrieo moved to enter non-public session at 8:36 PM pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (b). Mr. Shirland duly seconded. Motion carried with a 5:0 roll call vote in favor. Mr. Bartlett – aye, Mr. Morin – aye, Mr. Welch – aye, Mr. Dabrieo – aye, Mr. Shirland – aye.

Non-public session was entered at 8:36 PM

Mr. Dabrieo moved to exit the public session at 9:15 PM, Mr. Shirland duly seconded. Motion carried with a 5:0 roll call vote in favor. Mr. Bartlett – aye, Mr. Morin – aye, Mr. Welch – aye, Mr. Dabrieo – aye, Mr. Shirland – aye.

Resumption of Public Session

The public session was resumed at 9:15 PM.

Adjournment:

Mr. Dabrieo moved to adjourn; Mr. Shirland duly seconded. Motion carried by a 4:0 roll call vote. Mr. Bartlett– aye, Mr. Dabrieo – aye, Mr. Welch – aye, Mr. Morin - aye.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Submitted by Alvina Snegach

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