

HOOKSETT DELIBERATIVE SESSION- April 5, 2014

TOWN OF HOOKSETT DELIBERATIVE SESSION MINUTES Cawley Middle School Saturday April 5, 2014

CALL TO ORDER

Moderator, Don Riley called the First Deliberative Session to Order at Hooksett Cawley Middle School Cafeteria Center at 9:02 AM.

Boy Scout Troop led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ATTENDANCE

J. Sullivan, A. Jennings, J. Levesque, D. Ross, S. Loves Orr, D. Winterton, N. Comai, R. Duhaime, and T. Lizotte,
Moderator, Don Riley
Town Clerk, Todd Rainier
Legal Counsel- Steve Buckley
Registered voters – 50 in attendance

PROOF OF POSTING

Proof of posting was provided by the Dr. Dean Shankle.

The Moderator introduced the members of the Town Council in Attendance as well as the Town Staff. The Moderator thanked the Cawley Staff and the Town Staff for all the work in setting up the meeting.

The Moderator recognized all veterans for their service.

A general overview of the rules and procedures were given by the Moderator and are available in writing in the voters guide.

BUSINESS

Moderator Don Riley read the Warrant Articles into the record:

Article 3

Shall the Town raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant, for the purposes set forth therein, and other appropriations voted separately totaling **\$16,681,262.00**. Should this article be defeated, the operating budget shall be \$16,451,761.00, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town meeting, or by law or the Town Council may hold one special meeting, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. Estimated Tax Rate Impact \$6.73. Recommended by the Budget Committee (8-0)

T. Lizotte motioned to move Article 3 as read and placed on the official ballot. Seconded by D. Winterton.

T. Lizotte: The Budget is well outlined in the voter's guide. The biggest thing is the health insurance increase which is 17%. The other pieces are outlined.

J. Michaud, 11 Laurel: If the budget passes, what will be the increase in tax dollars based on the average home?

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Dr. Shankle: If every article passes, that will add .20 to the tax rate which is about \$50 on the average home value of \$250,000.

D. Riley declared Article 3 passed to Ballot.

Article 4

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$180,000.00** to purchase a 14 Yard Automated Collection Truck for the Recycling and Transfer Department and to authorize the withdrawal from the Solid Waste Disposal Special Revenue Fund created for that purpose. No amount to be raised from taxation. Estimated Tax Rate Impact \$0.06. Recommended by the Town Council (6-0), Recommended by the Budget Committee (8-0)

R. Duhaime motioned to move Article 4 as read and placed on the official ballot. Seconded by J. Levesque.

D. Boyce: This is to purchase a smaller automated truck to go down the smaller roads and serve as a backup. This will enhance our program. I am the only department asking for a reduction in the budget. This is coming from the existing fund and will not raise taxes.

Mike DiBitetto: A Peterbilt is being traded. What is the value of the trade in?

D. Boyce: I don't know if we can trade it in and I don't think there is much value if any.

M. DiBitetto: Will this handle the dumpsters?

D. Boyce: Yes eventually it will handle the dumpsters at the schools.

Jim. Michaud: What will be the balance of the fund?

D. Boyce: \$50,000

D. Riley declared Article 4 passed to Ballot.

Article 5

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$100,000.00** to be placed in the Town Building Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund already established. Estimated tax rate impact \$0.06. Recommended by the Town Council (7-1), Recommended by the Budget Committee (8-0).

J. Sullivan motioned to move Article 5 as read and placed on the official ballot. Seconded by R. Duhaime.

J. Sullivan: The main repair is \$160,000 to repair the roof at Town Hall which was built in 1938. There are also lighting and ventilation upgrades at the town garage. We should have a minimum of \$150,000 to address town needs.

J. Michaud: Who are the agents to expend?

C. Soucie: For the majority of the reserves, it is the Town Administrator. The list is on page 33 of the voting guide.

Sid Baines: Was there a vote last year that failed for repairs at the Safety Center?
Does this article supersede that vote?

Dr. Shankle: I think that was 2 years ago. This article allows us to use money from the fund to fix things as needed like the windows at the Safety Center. They are working to keep the building safe.

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Frank Kotowski, 21 Pleasant St: Could the Councilors with the dissenting vote explain their position?

A. Jennings: I was looking out for the taxpayers. A lot of the increase in the budget is the health care and I want to watch out for the taxpayer.

J. Michaud: What is the difference between the \$70,000 for the Building Maintenance Division on Page 23 and this article?

L. Lessard: That line is for General Building Maintenance and janitorial supplies. This article is an emergency fund like for the heating system at Station 1 and the windows at the Safety Center.

D. Riley declared Article 5 passed to Ballot.

Article 6

To see if the Town will vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of purchasing Public Works Vehicles and to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$100,000.00** to be placed in this fund, and to name the Town Administrator as the agent to expend. Estimated tax rate impact \$0.06. Recommended by the Town Council (8-0), Recommended by the Budget Committee (8-0)

D. Ross motioned to move Article 6 as read and placed on the official ballot. Seconded by T. Lizotte.

D. Ross: The purpose is to eliminate the recurring warrant articles for vehicles. This fund is created so the DPW can decide how to allocate the funds as needs arise. The decision on the kind and when are left to those that know best. It will replace another article proposed for a specific vehicle.

Mike DiBitteto: So no vehicles from the Highway Department will come to town meeting after this article is passed?

L. Lessard: This will create a fund. Two years ago we put \$80,000 in a fund to replace plow trucks. We are now increasing it and calling it TRUCKS. Now if something dies or needs replacement, I can go to the Council and ask to use the fund.

Dr. Shankle: This is for DPW vehicles but it is not town wide fund for all town vehicles.

J. Sullivan: This is a similar article that was passed for Fire Apparatus.

T. Young, Joanne Drive: Can impact fees be used to compensate for the expansion?

L. Lessard: Impact fees are only for roadways, not for the highway department. If there is a new development and we want to make a road change, I can use the impact fees to change the road, but not for equipment. This also is not for growth but to replace aging equipment.

John Proctor: I understand the purpose is to prevent spikes in the budget from year to year and allow quick response when a vehicle needs to be replaced, similar to other reserve funds.

D. Ross: The motion we made for the wording included a provision to deplete the existing capital reserve fund. It was too much micromanaging by the general populous. This will be the fund from which DPW vehicles will be purchased. We don't know what the future will bring.

D. Riley declared Article 6 passed to Ballot.

Article 7

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To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$91,884.00** for the salary and benefits for a full-time Town Engineer in the Community Development Department. Should this Article pass, the salary and benefits will be funded in subsequent operating budgets. Estimated tax rate impact \$0.06. Recommended by the Town Council (5-3), Recommended by the Budget Committee (8-0).

D. Winterton motioned to move Article 7 as read and placed on the official ballot. Seconded by T. Lizotte.

D. Winterton: This refers to hiring a new person for Hooksett. Currently, we outsource our engineering work. We collect money from developers and it passes through an outside engineering firm. While we have to by law say it has a tax impact, we can't guarantee what the developers will need. My prediction is this will be a self-funding position and revenue producing fund. Now we don't have an engineer on staff to review plans, we have to send them out. The DPW has taken over some of the onsite work that the consulting firm was doing and has saved developers money and is saving money for the town. Lastly, if we have an engineer on staff, there are other projects that engineer can do.

Jim Michaud: You stated that there is revenue, where is that revenue reflected in the voter's guide?

D. Winterton: At the Planning Board, we have to approve Stantec invoices. Those funds are deposited with the town. Then those funds are distributed to the consulting engineering firm as billed.

Jo Ann Duffy, Planner: Those funds are not reflected in this budget and go into an escrow account and then we pay the invoices when submitted. We did not anticipate those revenue until this article passes.

C. Soucie: If you look on the MS 7 that is reported to the State, it is the second from the bottom. This shows all the revenue.

Bob Ehlers: Are you going to hire a generalist and will you need to still hire specialists.

Dr. Shankle: We plan to hire a generalist and specialists as needed. Remember most of this work is being paid for by the developer and the town is a pass through to the engineer. Instead of the pass through, the income will go to the town. Over the last 4 years, the average hours paid per week is 34. 25 hours. They charge 135/hr. We are looking at \$80/hr. which will still generate \$135,000 for an employee making \$80,000 per year including benefits.

Bill King: What is the ramp up period and your expectation for the future?

Dr. Shankle: The advantage of an in house engineer is as things start to pick up and we get to the higher numbers we have someone to coordinate in house. I have been asked by the Council to work on Economic Development and the developers need to walk in the door and get the answers they need. This will increase the level of service for the people we are trying to attract for little money.

Bill King: I would like to hear from the dissenting votes.

J. Sullivan: As Chair, I vote last. When I voted, I wasn't sure how to vote and if I voted no, it would create a tie and it would eliminate the ability for the voters to decide.

S. Lovas Orr: I understand the value of watching the budget and it is obvious that we save money hiring our own engineer. My focus was an issue of checks and balances. There is a value to having an outside voice. To have all opinions coming from inside the town can create issues later on. It is useful to have a firm that can handle multiple issues. We have been working with the same firm for a long time; maybe the answer is to get bids and get lower rates and still get the value of a complete office with multiple specialties.

D. Ross: The Town Council does not exist to make a profit. The cost has always been passed along and it is the developer's responsibility to handle their own cost. It removes the liability from the town. If we

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have an in-house engineer, there will be more things involved and maybe more staff required. The new hires are long term commitment with retirement and we have to pay these bills for the person. I like smaller government and engineering belongs in the hands that do it for a living and the advantage of outsourcing is valuable. I think the statements on this are electioneering.

Richard Boisvert, 10 Prescott Height: As someone trying to develop a property, I have experience with an engineering firm. We go to an engineer to develop a project. They stamp those plans and you think those plans are appropriate. I came in and had to pay another engineer to review my engineer's work. That cost for my project for my engineer was \$60,000 and the consulting engineer is \$12,000. I had no control and I got a sheet with time spent on the project. This project 7 years prior went to the Planning Board and was reviewed by Stantec and approved. So I upgraded the plan to the current requirements; \$60,000 later, because the consulting engineer said there were too many problems had to be redone. It would be good to have my engineer go to the town and get input at an hourly fee that was realistic. This process took 8 months. All you have to do is take a ride up Route 3, and there are many properties vacant. If a developer has an opportunity to go elsewhere that is friendlier, they will. I agree that this is something the town should do, someone that you can call and ask questions. You don't need to be a specialist but he will make sure everything is in order.

J. Michaud: Is there a job description for this position.

Dr. Shankle: We did put together a job description.

J. Michaud: What is the reporting structure?

D. Shankle: To JoAnn Duffy in Community Development.

F. Kotowski: I sat on the Planning Board for a number of years. I learned that we in the town have been remiss in getting our act together and grow to what we want to be as a town. The cost of building increases. Our tax base keeps us healthy as a community. I think this is one of the better warrant articles that we have. If you were a contractor like Webster Woods, they paid engineering fee to dump rock to make sure it is the right rock. People won't want to do business here if we continue. This will allow us to do things on our own for not too much money. The Conservation Commission has gotten land so we can provide passive recreation opportunity and we could have used an engineer to help us with that.

N. Comai: I want to speak in the positive. Thank you Mr. Boisvert for speaking to a specific case. I've been part of the Budget and the CIP Committee and I think we are moving in the right direction. If we do it and we find it was not the correct decision, we can change it. For the history of the Stantec and the outsides sourcing, we have seen our staff is knowledgeable.

Mary Farwell, 24 Grant Drive: I appreciate that we can listen to all sides of the article. I have concerns about the amount of money and it is not enough. Benefits are around 33% of the compensation package which leave \$60,000. I'm not sure what we can get for \$60,000 in this market. We need to hire well and get a broad expertise. How did you determine that was enough money to get someone with the needed expertise?

Dr. Shankle: When we started looking at this, Joanne Duffy and Leo Lessard looked at surrounding places and they came up with towns that pay \$56,000. We are not a private business and it must be in line with our department heads salary as well. We agreed that was a number that would work.

Rob Duhaime: I'm not in favor of expanding town government but this town is going to expand. There are three (3) highway exits. The expansion is going on at the toll booth. We are going to expand. Hooksett doesn't have a developer friendly personality and with our own engineer that will improve.

M. DiBitteto: I want to bring attention to the fact that this is not the first time the town has a town engineer. We had Walter Norris doing engineering as the highway director. Then we hired Mr. Pantel as engineer and highway director. Then we changed direction and we didn't have a highway director with any

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engineering capability and the need for a consulting engineer was more imperative. We can't pass expenses to the land owners. The landowner's value is dependent on the cost of that developer and we need to be fair to our land owners.

T. Young: I have always been a proponent of an engineer as well as out sourcing. There was a comment made and I didn't get an answer. Was there a review of other communities that outsource this position?

L. Lessard: Other communities do outsource, smaller communities, but similar size communities have their own engineer.

T. Young: I have an issue that we will charge the contractor, we as the town do the work, and charge the owner of the property for the work. There was another revenue generator started with the police. Will we eventually take over the sewer and water and create revenue from that. We are taxpayers that are also developers. We are a town providing a service to the community or we are making sure things are done correctly. I don't see where we hire someone at a mediocre wage and expect them to do what a firm can do.

D. Shankle: We already charge for roads, sewer and water. Users should pay for specific things they use. In these cases, it is not unusual for development departments to be self-funding. The town's people shouldn't fund the developer. The things that are user specific should be paid for.

T. Lizotte: Some of these plans are being reviewed by people that are not engineers and without a contract so there is legal peril. A majority of the costs are management fees and having an engineer with good knowledge can manage this and we need to spear head these things so we understand the legal ramification and not outsourcing. There are things that we are burdening Leo Lessard with and we can augment that. We need a dedicated manager that can bring that control back to the town.

Tom Naleway: The \$91,000. This is not an entire year. With the software, what is the full cost?

Dean: We want to make sure that the number you see is the number going forward. We are going to hold off on hiring so that the other salary will absorb the other cost. This is the total number for one year.

J. Michaud: Could the Town Council have put this in budget?

T. Lizotte: Yes we could have but I think it is important to bring this out so you can ask questions.

***Marlene Lien, 15 Elmer motioned to call the Question. Second.
Vote unanimously in favor***

D. Riley declared the article passed to Ballot.

Article 8

To see if the Town will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Hooksett Town Council and the Hooksett Police Union Local 46, NEPBA which calls for the following increase in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

Estimated increase over prior year

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Salaries</u>	<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>
2014-15	\$40,697	\$11,818	\$52,515

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$52,515.00** for the current fiscal year, such sum represents the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels. Estimated tax rate impact \$0.03. Recommend by the Town Council (9-0), Recommended by the Budget Committee (8-0)

D. Winteron motioned to move Article 8 as read placed on the official ballot. Seconded by T. Lizotte.

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D. Winterton: We had extensive negotiations and came to an agreement on a one year contract. This will put all three bargaining units on the same rotation. Next year we will negotiate with Fire, Police, and Highway. If we put the three together, we can negotiate the benefits to everyone's advantage. The other advantage is the Police Union members receive raises on their anniversary and annually. This will change that to annually on July 1 like all other employees.

D. Riley declared Article 8 passed to Ballot.

Article 9

Shall the Town, if article 8 is defeated, authorize the Town Council to call one special meeting, at its option, to address article 8 cost items only?

T. Lizotte motioned to move Article 9 as read and placed on the official ballot. Seconded by D. Winterton.

D. Riley declared Article 9 passed to Ballot.

Article 10

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$50,000.00** to be placed in the Fire Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund already established. Estimated tax rate impact \$0.03. Recommended by the Town Council (7-1), Recommended by the Budget Committee (8-0)

S. Lovas Orr motioned to move Article 10 as read and placed on the official ballot. Seconded by N. Comai.

S. Lovas Orr: This is a way of saving for the future. If there is a need in case of an emergency, this is a fund established and will provide the needed equipment without a delay.

Chief Williams: This has \$100,584 in the fund and is for the large equipment and apparatus.

A. Jennings: Being the one negative vote, I was looking at the tax base due to the increase in health cost.

J. Michaud: What is the next large purchase?

Chief Williams: Engine 2 in two (2) more years.

D. Riley declared Article 10 passed to Ballot.

Article 11

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$50,000.00** to be placed in the Drainage Upgrades Capital Reserve Fund already established. Estimated tax rate impact \$0.03. Recommended by the Town Council (8-0), Recommended by the Budget Committee (8-0).

N. Comai motioned to move Article 311as read and placed on the official ballot. Seconded by T. Lizotte.

N. Comai: We are all potentially driving older vehicles and due to neglect, our roadways are in need of repair. With the price of oil and future oil prices, we will find ourselves too far behind and not able to keep up. With the past winter and salt, it is an exterior force we can't plan on. Please support this and keep our roadways safe.

M. Farwell: As a resident where the drainage system is failing, I appreciate you will put money away. I appreciate the explanations under the warrant. The explanations cannot be on the warrant. What plans does the Council have to get this out to the voters?

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D. Riley We have a voter's guide, this deliberative session and Dr. Shankle has interviews on the website.

S. Lovas Orr: We have discussed this at length and often people don't have the time to access the information. I like the idea of handing out the guide on site and would entertain whether we can do it legally.

D. Riley declared Article 11 passed to Ballot.

Article 12

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Town Council to enter into a seven year lease/**purchase** agreement for \$248,400.00 the purpose of leasing **an Rubber Tire** Excavator for the Public Works Department, and to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$41,433.00** for the first year's payment for that purpose. This lease agreement contains an escape clause. Estimated tax impact \$0.03. Recommended by the Town Council (8-0), Recommended by the Budget Committee (8-0)

A. Jennings motioned to move Article 12 as read and placed on the official ballot. Seconded by D. Winterton.

A. Jennings: This goes along with the drainage and allows the highway to purchase the equipment rather than lease.

J. Michaud: The average voter may think this is a rubber tire excavator to excavate rubber tires. This may be confusing to the voter.

Norm Forest, 16 Pine Street: I can't afford to live here and can't afford to move. Have we ever needed to use this piece of equipment?

L. Lessard: We used this equipment and will help us replace drain pipes that are deteriorated. It also has an attachment for cleaning swales. When we did South Bow Road, we rented one for \$40,000 for 3 months. We could have leased for that cost for the whole year.

P. Gosselin: Why lease? You mentioned lease purchase. Will we eventually own?

L. Lessard: You lease for \$40,000 for 7 years and then you buy it for \$1.

J. Michaud motioned to amend and strike the word the rubber tire and change to an excavator. Seconded by Senator Boutin.

N. Comai: Is it possible to ask to add Lease/Purchase to the amendment?

D. Riley: One amendment at a time.

H. Murray: If we take the rubber tire wording out, you could also get a crawler machine. If you have a crawler, you have to transport it all around town rather than drive it.

Dr. Shankle: To Mr. Murray, we will buy the same equipment either way so feel free to change the article for clarity.

Vote majority in favor of the amendment

**P. Gosselin motioned to amend to add "Lease/Purchase". Seconded by Tom Young.
Vote majority in favor**

Amended Motion

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Town Council to enter into a seven year lease/purchase agreement for \$248,400.00 the purpose of leasing an Excavator for the Public Works Department, and to

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raise and appropriate the sum of **\$41,433.00** for the first year's payment for that purpose. This lease agreement contains an escape clause. Estimated tax impact \$0.03. Recommended by the Town Council (8-0), Recommended by the Budget Committee (8-0)

D. Riley declared the article passed as amended to Ballot.

Article 13

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$30,000.00** to be placed in the Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund already established. Estimated tax rate impact \$0.02. Recommended by the Town Council (7-1),

D. Ross motioned to move Article 13 as read and placed the official ballot. Seconded by J. Sullivan.

D. Ross: This is required by law and we must do this and this is a reasonable amount.

D. Riley declared the article passed to Ballot.

Article 14

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$20,000.00** to be placed in the Air Pack and Bottles Capital Reserve Fund already established. Estimated tax rate impact \$0.01. Recommended by the Town Council (8-0), Recommended by the Budget Committee (8-0)

A. Jennings motioned to move Article 3 as read and placed on the official ballot. Seconded by J. Sullivan

A. Jennings: This looks out for the safety of the firefighter

Chief Williams: This is the breathing apparatus for the firefighters. This is a total replacement based on the requirements.

D. Riley declare the article passed to Ballot.

Article 15

To see if the Town will vote raise and appropriate the sum of **\$20,000.00** to be placed in this Automated Collection Equipment Capital Reserve Fund already established. Estimated tax rate impact \$0.01 Recommended by the Town Council (5-3), Recommended by the Budget Committee (8-0).

N. Comai motioned to move Article 15 as read and placed on the official ballot. Seconded by T. Lizotte.

N. Comai: As we set precedents by saving money for the future, our superintendent put this forth so we can put aside money each year so in 2020 we will have enough to pick up the cost for additional needs for barrels and equipment.

D. Boyce: I don't know what the future need will be for barrels and trucks and I would rather ask for \$20,000 than \$200,000 in the future.

D. Riley declared the article passed to Ballot.

Article 16

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$15,000.00** to be placed in the Parks and Recreation Facilities Development Capital Reserve Fund already established. Estimated tax rate impact \$0.01. Recommended by the Town Council (7-1), Recommended by the Budget Committee (8-0).

R. Duhaime motioned to move Article 16 as read and placed on the official ballot. Seconded by J. Levesque.

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R. Duhaime: The parks are being used more and need and therefore need more maintenance.

Norm Forest: Of all these articles, the budget committee voted 8-0 in favor of all the articles. Can they speak for these articles?

Chris Morneau: We felt all warrants were needed and the town is growing and needs this support as a whole.

S. Lovas Orr: I was the dissenting vote. There are a lot of important articles. I tried to balance between the revaluation which we have to pay and safety which is needed for the firefighters. I understand maintaining the parks are needed but in balancing the importance, this was lower and I tried to save tax dollars.

N. Comai: The Donati Field is a beautiful place until you get to the building. What better place to welcome people than clean bathrooms. People come to town for community event and you want them to think Hooksett is a good place to live. The bathrooms are deplorable at the field.

D. Riley declared the Article passed to Ballot.

J. Michaud motioned to reconsider Article 3. Seconded by P. Gosselin.

J. Michaud stated that his motion will be to add a stipend for the Budget Committee.

D. Ross asked the tax rate impact needs to be clarified.

Vote 17 in favor and 27 opposed to reconsider. Motion fails

Motion to adjourn at 11:24 am

Lee Ann Moynihan
Minute Clerk