

**TOWN OF WEBSTER**  
**Office of Selectmen**  
**945 Battle Street/Rte. 127**  
**Webster, NH 03303**

7:00 PM Public Hearing for the 2012 proposed Warrant and Budget – February 14, 2012- DRAFT

Selectmen Present: Chairman George Cummings, Selectman George Hashem and Selectman Bruce Johnson; Moderator Harold Janeway; Financial Administrator Wendy Pinkham; Administrative Assistant Judith Jones; Department Heads and many members of the community.

Moderator Janeway open the meeting with an introduction of the Board of Selectmen. Chairman Cummings noted that this was Moderator Janeway's next to last chance to stand and moderate for the Town Meeting.

Moderator Janeway read Article 1 relative to the election of Town Officers for the ensuing year.

He moved onto Article 2 relative to road preservation.

He then asked the Board if all of the proposed articles were to pass, what would be the projected tax rate increase. Chairman Cummings noted that there was a tax rate projection sheet, which was part of the handout for the public's review. He explained the recent changes in the Payment In Lieu of Taxes for the flood control area due to changes to House Bill #1 made by the Legislature. He referred to the down-shifting from the State to the Local level, noting that less revenue means an increase in the tax rate. He also explained how surplus was used to lower the tax rate. Bob Pearson questioned whether the State recommended the amount of surplus to be retained. Selectman Hashem noted that 5-8% of surplus was the recommended amount, which is the approximate amount that the Town retains. Tom Mullins inquired about the impact of the County and School budgets on the tax rate. Chairman Cummings said that it was an unknown at this time. Dee Blake advised that the proposed School budget is up less than 1% and provided some explanation including the down-shifting impact to the School budget. Kim Fortune asked the Board to clarify the potential increases. Selectman Hashem noted that the amount of increase would vary by each Town in the School District and that there was no clear answer. Chairman Cummings explained the Board's process of "tightening the local budget".

Moderator Janeway continued with Article 3 relative to the "Pillsbury Lake Dam Repairs" with no comments following.

Article 4 relative to compensated absences was read. Selectman Hashem explained the intent and purpose of this article.

Article 5 relative to the operating budget of the General Government was read. Chairman Cummings and Selectman Hashem explained the increases and decreases and the reasoning for each. The Insurance was further discussed with David Collins noting that having insurance through LGC provided the Town with reasonable rates.

Article 6 relative to providing pro-rated single person insurance to those part-time employees who worked a minimum of 15 scheduled hours per week generated a lively discussion regarding how many were eligible at this time; the potential for larger expenses in the future as circumstances change, etc. Mrs. Pinkham advised that there is a HB in the Legislature relative to this subject this year, noting that it would include providing any and all benefits offered to any employee i.e. life insurance, dental, etc. Butch Thornton advised that he had never seen this type of benefit offered. Mr. Pearson inquired as to how many employees were eligible, which was two at this time, and inquired as to whether future hires would be eligible and of course they would. Tara Gunnigle questioned how the Legislation would work, to which no one was able to speculate. Selectman Hashem expressed his opposition to this article. Mr. Mullins thought the benefit was very open-ended and had the potential to be very expensive.

Article 7 relative to the Police Operating budget was read. The increase for on-call time was explained, including past practice and the new proposal for compensation and the rationale thereof. A lively discussion ensued. Selectman Hashem further explained that the past practice of paying on-call time was replaced with the benefit of the officer taking the cruiser home. Chief Dupuis noted that none of the officers had requested reimbursement. However, he believed that if someone provided a service, they should be compensated. As this was done in the past, he would like to reinstate the practice going forward. He expressed concerns that should an officer take the issue before a judge regarding no compensation, and since the on-call time is documented on the time sheets, that the judge would likely rule in favor of the officer and order the Town to reimburse the officer at a rate he chose. There was further discussion by the Board and many attendees on this subject. Someone inquired about the number of hours of coverage provided typically by the Police Department. The Chief indicated that typically it is 7:00 am to 11:00 pm.

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G. C. Cummings

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G. K. Hashem

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B. G. Johnson

Article 8 relative to the Ambulance, Fire Department and Emergency Management budget was read. When asked about the number of firefighters, Fire Chief Colin Colby advised that there were 22 members of which seven were medical responders.

Article 9 relative to Building Inspection/Septic Reviews and Other Public Safety generated no discussion.

Article 10 relative to the Highways and Streets and the Hopkinton-Webster Landfill Transfer Station was read. Chairman Cummings explained the modest increase in the Highway Budget as well as the downshifting of costs to the municipality, noting the loss of \$10,000 in Highway Block Grant Funds. He discussed the continuing need to play catch-up regarding road preservation in general.

Article 11 relative to those appropriations made annually to the various Health Agencies; Welfare; Parks & Recreation; Library; Penacook Community Center and the Conservation and Agricultural Commissions was read. There were no comments.

Article 12 relative to the Long-Term Debt and TAN was read. There was no discussion.

Article 13 relative to additions to the previously established Capital Reserves was read. There was no discussion.

Article 14 relative to additions to the previously established Expendable Trust Funds was read. There was no discussion.

Article 15 relative to the sale of a Town owned lot in the Pillsbury Lake was read. There was no discussion.

Article 16 relative to the expansion of members on the Agricultural Commission as is allowed by Statute was read. Chairman Cummings advised that the Commission had requested this article and the Board had no objection.

Article 17 and Article 18 were read. Each article was to change the Agents to Expend from Existing Capital Reserve Funds. This would mean that expenditures from these funds would no longer require a vote at Town Meeting.

Article 19 relative to the Solar Exemption was read. Chairman Cummings explained that this was a request from resident Jere Buckley and the Board had no objection to putting it on the warrant. Mr. Buckley read a prepared statement of explanation. In short, it would offer 100% exemption from the cost of any increase resulting in the assessed value due to the installation of a solar system to those that qualify by Statute. Currently there is a "Solar Exemption" equivalent to \$1,000 off the assessed value, which meant that in 2011 the savings to the homeowner was \$17.64. Mr. Buckley encouraged folks to vote for this article, which would encourage energy conservation.

Mr. Collins spoke positively about the overall budget and the services provided by the Town. He asked that residents use good common sense at the Town Meeting. He also encouraged everyone to attend all budget meetings, including School and County.

Chairman Cummings advised that the Town is hopeful that the State will address the negative affect that the loss of Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) has had on those communities in the flood control areas. He was in hopes that those communities will join forces and strongly request that the level of funding be returned.

The meeting was then turned over to those running for office in 2012. Each candidate introduced themselves and spoke briefly. The candidates were as follows:

- Roy Fanjoy – Selectman
- Frank (Butch) Thornton – Selectman
- Beth-Holly Duke – Supervisor of the Checklist
- Robert Pearson – Moderator
- Mike Jette – Moderator
- Ellen Kontinos-Cilley – Supervisor of the Checklist
- Henry Bergeron – Supervisor of the Checklist

Each candidate's "speech" was followed by an applause from the audience.

8:47 pm Meeting adjourned.

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G. K. Hashem

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B. G. Johnson

**George C. Cummings, Chairman**  
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**George K. Hashem**

**Bruce G. Johnson**

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**BOS Initials:**

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G. C. Cummings

                      
G. K. Hashem

                      
B. G. Johnson