

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

7:00 PM Public Hearing for the 2013 proposed Warrant and Budget – February 12, 2013

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

Moderator Pearson opened the meeting, announcing that he was not here in any official capacity, just to keep things moving.

Chairman Cummings advised that there were handouts available for the public of the Warrant Articles and the Long Sheet of the Budget showing last year's appropriations, expenditures and the proposed 2013 budget. At the close of the hearing, those available that are running for an elected position will have an opportunity to speak. He also noted that the "tally" vote of the Board to show whether they are for or against an appropriation is not on the Warrant as the Board will meet at the close of this meeting to vote on those Warrant Articles after contacting Selectman Fanjoy to join by speaker phone at a work session to be held in the Selectmen's Office.

Moderator Pearson advised that RSA 658:1 requires the Selectmen to post the final Warrant at least 14 days prior to the Town Meeting. He was advised that the Warrant would be posted by February 25th.

Moderator Pearson proceeded with the Warrant, though he skipped the election of officers and three Warrant Articles pertaining to increasing the term for Tax Collector, Town Clerk and Treasurer from one year to three years.

He then proceeded to Article 5 reading Amendment No. 1 proposed by the Planning Board regarding the definition of "Building". There were questions from Mary Smith, Tara Gunnigle, Jon Pearson, Tom Mullins, Dot Proulx and others regarding questions as to what was considered a "building", set-backs, taxation implications, etc. Planning Board Chairman Jere Buckley spoke on behalf of the PB for further explanation.

Moderator Pearson, upon recommendation, returned to Articles 2-4 regarding increasing the term for Tax Collector, Town Clerk and Treasurer from one year to three years. David Collins inquired as to whether the Board had considered staggering the terms of office so that they would not all be on the ballot the same year. Selectman Johnson understood that other communities did just that, but it was only as a convenience for counting. He did not think that it would be an issue for Webster. However, voters could vote for only one this year and others at a later date.

Moderator Pearson then read Article 6, Amendment No. 2 proposed by the Planning Board regarding changes to the "modification of an existing PWSF". Chairman Buckley advised that this was considered by the PB as there were provisions for new towers, but not for the alterations of an existing tower. This amendment would allow the Board of Selectmen to approve the request without referring the applicant to the Zoning Board or PB, if there were minor changes and no significant impact on the community.

Moderator Pearson continued with the reading of Article 7: "General Government. There was no discussion.

Article 8: "Public Safety". There was no discussion.

Article 9: "Highways, Streets and Sanitation. There was no discussion.

Article 10: expenses inclusive of the Health Agencies; CASA; Parks & Recreation; Library; Conservation and Agricultural Commissions and Old Home Day. There was minor discussion and clarification of the amounts, some of which were added together on the budget available to the public, which caused minor confusion.

Article 11: "Long Term Debt and TAN interest". There was no discussion.

Article 12: the purchase of a new cruiser to replace the 2005 Ford Vic cruiser. There was discussion on the number of cruisers; the number of officers; recap from the audience of discussion from last year's Town Meeting regarding this issue; mileage; coverage; mutual aid agreements; etc. There was input from Jon Pearson; Robert Drown; Tom Mullins; Jaye Terrazano; and several others. It was

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questioned whether the \$32,000 including equipping of the car, which Police Chief Robert Dupuis advised that the \$32,000 was for everything and the cost would not exceed the \$32,000. There was further discussion on the funds requested this year for future purchases of a cruiser to be put in the Capital Reserve.

Ellen Kontinos-Cilley inquired as to what made a Warrant Article be designated as “A Special Warrant Article”. She was advised that this is governed by Statute and includes funds coming from a Capital Reserve as well as going into a Capital Reserve.

Article 13: “Funds to Repair Dam”. There was no discussion.

Article 14: “Road Pavement Preservation”. Sally Embley inquired as to how many miles this would cover. Road Agent Emmett Bean advised that \$100,000 would cover approximately 1,500 feet and that \$40,000 would cover approximately two miles of sealing.

Article 15: funds for previously established “Capital Reserve Funds”. There were questions regarding the Highway Land/Building Fund. The Board advised that the time is coming when the Town will have to have a Highway Department using Town employees and Town owned equipment. Chairman Cummings elaborated on the future needs and expenses. Mrs. Kontinos-Cilley inquired about the committee, chaired by former Selectman David Klumb, which has not been real active over the past year. Mr. Mullins noted that in the past, it was realized how expensive a Town Highway Department would be.

Article 16: funds for previously established “Expendable Trust Funds”. Greg Peck inquired what compensated absences meant. Chairman Cummings advised that it was a liability of the Town should employees leave Town employment as they must be compensated for time accumulated on the books. Mr. Mullins spoke about the “Fire Department Equipment” fund established in 2010, wishing that funds had been better identified as to their purpose, reading a portion of the wording when the original article was established. Fire Chief Colin Colby advised that when the fund was established, the Fire Chief agreed to reduce the equipment line in the operating budget by \$2,500, noting that the main purpose was that if a pump failed, it could be rebuilt at an estimated cost of \$11,000. Mr. Mullins indicated that the purpose was for these repairs and questioned if the funds were spent on repairs. Chief Colby advised that \$6,500 will come from that fund for the recently purchased thermal imaging camera, only after Selectman Johnson’s applications for grants were not awarded. Chief Colby had an estimate of \$15,000, but after speaking to the Hopkinton Chief and taking Hopkinton’s recommendation, he purchased one for \$6,500, with the Selectman and himself approving the purchase. Mr. Mullins said they he didn’t want to be misunderstood, but questioned why the funds were taken for that purpose saying that he stood up in front of the Town Meeting and said the funds were for repairs. Chief Colby said that he had indicated the need of \$15,000 as a ceiling for the funds to cover one pump. If two were to go in one year it would have to come from the budget, of which there would not be enough funds with all the other operating expenses. Moderator Pearson asked if his question was answered. Again, Mr. Mullins indicated that the article was specific and wasn’t certain that this was appropriately used for the cameras. * Quoted from the Town Meeting Minutes of March 13, 2010 “Article 12: To see if the Town will vote to create an Expendable Trust Fund under the provisions of RSA 31:19-a, to be known as the Fire Department Equipment Expendable Trust Fund, for the purpose of covering unexpected equipment expenses and to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000) for this fund and to appoint the Board of Selectmen and the Fire Chief as Agents to Expend. **The Selectmen recommend this article.** Moved and seconded. Chairman Mullins gave the example of when the pumps need to be rebuilt on the fire trucks. It is a costly expense and funds should be set aside each year to prepare for repairs. The Moderator called for a voice vote. **Passed by Voice Vote.**”

Moderator Pearson inquired about the difference between Capital Reserves and Expendable Trust Funds. He was advised that they are each formed under a separate RSA and expended accordingly.

Article 17: 2013 revaluation. Mrs. Terrazzano inquired as to whether this could be put on hold. Chairman Cummings noted that all towns are required to do a revaluation every five years and further explained the reason for this process.

Article 18: Proceeds from the Fire Truck put in the existing Capital Reserve with funds to come from surplus and no funds to be raised from taxation. Jon Pearson inquired of Chief Colby as to whether he had looked into refurbishing as opposed to replacing the fire truck. Chief Colby said he had not. He also pointed out that the funds were not from a trade-in, as stated in the Warrant Article, as the company that built the truck would not take it in trade. The money in the Warrant Article was the proceeds from selling the fire truck to a community in MA. He further explained as to how the selling price was arrived at. The wording will be revised in the Warrant Article. Mr. Pearson again recommended that refurbishing be looked into in the future.

*See Article 12 quoted from the minutes of the March 13, 2010 Town Meeting

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