

TOWN OF WEBSTER

SELECT BOARD

MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY FEBRUARY 6, 2024

The Select Board held a meeting on Tuesday, February 6, 2024. The meeting was held at 945 Battle Street, Webster, NH 03303

Select Board Members present: David Hemenway, Marlo Herrick, Normandie Blake.

Also present: Moderator Mike Jette, Town Administrator Dana Hadley, Police Chief Stephen Adams, Fire Chief/Road Agent Emmett Bean, Town Clerk Mary Welch, and see attached attendance sheet.

Moderator Jette opened the budget public hearing at 6:30pm with the pledge of allegiance. He then went over the ground rules for the public hearing. He announced that voting day would be Tuesday March 12, 2024 from 10:00am to 7:00pm. The following articles would be by Ballot Vote.

Article 1: was to elect the Town Officers – Moderator Jette stated that he would give time at the end of the meeting for those running in the election to speak.

Article 2: was the Planning Board housekeeping amendment – Coordinator Tatro stated that this warrant article would allow the Planning Board to adjust the table of contents in the zoning ordinance to match.

Article 3: The amended Transfer Station Agreement – Chairperson Hemenway informed the public that the Select Board had been working with the Hopkinton Select Board to revise the Hopkinton/Webster Transfer Station Agreement. The new agreement would better define how the transfer station would be shared by both Towns. Moderator Jette asked if there were any questions about the proposed agreement.

Christine Schadler asked if the Select Board would be adopting the green bag program with this new agreement. Chairperson Hemenway responded that the Town would not be. He added that in this agreement there was a provision that both Towns would have to vote on any major policy change like the green bag program. The votes would be contingent on it passing in both Towns. However, each Town could create their own polices but they would be responsible for the associated costs and benefits.

Barbara Corliss asked how the revenue for the green program was tracked in the tipping fees. Chairperson Hemenway responded that that Webster paid a portion of the tipping fees based on the proportion of the Town's population.

Moderator Jette stated that the rest of the articles would be voted on at the business meeting on Saturday March 16, 2023 at 10:00am.

Goerge Gagnon commented that he wanted the Town to establish an e-mail notification list for these kinds of meetings. Chairperson Hemenway responded that the Town already had one with the Town website. He then gave instructions on how to sign up on the Town's Website.

Moderator Jette moved to Warrant Article 4: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,834,321 for general municipal operations. Chairperson Hemenway then gave a statement that briefly went over the largest changes to the budget.

Mark Guthier was concerned that his tax bill had gone up by about \$2,000.00 after the revaluation. Chairperson Hemenway reported that on average the Town's assessed value had increased by 60% and if his had been over that percentage he would have seen a tax increase. He also pointed out that overall, the Town's portion of the Tax rate was very small compared to the other tax rates like the schools. Mr. Gagnon commented that he had called the assessor because his rate had gone up and he had disputed the

1 value of his assessment. Goerge Cummings commented that people should check their tax cards for
2 errors. Barbara Corliss added that when she had talked to the Assessor, they had let her know that the
3 smaller homes had increased the most because they were in higher demand than larger homes.

4
5 Moderator Jette moved to Article 5: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of
6 \$469,000 to be added to the Capital Reserve Funds under RSA 35:1. Chairperson Hemenway went over
7 the largest change of increase to the Transfer Station. This was to prepare for the cost of the cleanup of
8 the PFAS contamination.

9
10 Moderator Jette moved to Article 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of
11 \$137,000 to be added to the Expendable Trust Funds per RSA 31:10-a. Chairperson Hemenway went
12 over the largest change which is the decrease in the Road Preservation fund because it was being added to
13 the operating budget.

14
15 Moderator Jette moved to Article 7: To see if the town will vote and appropriate the sum of \$46,968.40
16 for the purchase of a new police cruiser and related equipment with \$46,968.40 to come from the Police
17 Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund created for that purpose. Chairperson Hemenway pointed out that the
18 funding for this was in the previous warrant article. Police Chief Adams added that this was to replace the
19 2016 cruiser and he wouldn't need another cruiser until 2027.

20
21 Moderator Jette moved to Article 8: To see if the Town will vote to establish a contingency fund for the
22 current year under the provisions of RSA 31:98-a for unanticipated expenses that may arise and further to
23 raise and appropriate the sum of \$16,446. This sum is to come from the unassigned fund balance.
24 Administrator Hadley explained that they did this each year to account for emergencies and used the
25 example of using the fund this year to remove trees that fell in a storm.

26
27 Moderator Jette moved to Article 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of
28 \$10,000 to help offset the cost of the bond for "Funds to Repair Dam" passed at the Pillsbury Lake Water
29 District Meeting held August 5, 2026. Selectwoman Blake explained that the dam at Pillsbury Lake broke
30 in 2006 and the Town had been assisting the water district to pay off the cost of the repairs. Ms. Schadler
31 asked when the loan would be paid off. Administrator Hadley responded that it would be paid off in 2026.

32
33 Moderator Jette moved to Article 10: To see if the Town will vote to increase the veteran exemption from
34 \$500.00 to \$750.00. Administrator Hadley informed the public that the impact on the Town would be
35 \$17,000.00.

36
37 Moderator Jette moved to Article 11, 12, 13, & 14: To See if the Town will vote to discontinue the Tax
38 Map Capital Reserve Fund, The Highway Building Expendable Trust Fund, Soccer Field Maintenance
39 Fund, and History Fund. Chairperson Hemenway stated that they were suggesting the removal of these
40 funds because they had not been used for a long period of time or were redundant because other funds
41 existed that served the same purpose.

42
43 Ms. Corliss pointed out that the Historical Fund was used to publish the Town History book and the last
44 time it had been published was in the 1980's. The historical committee, which eventually became the
45 historical society had donated \$1000.00 to start the fund with the next publication in mind. She added that
46 the historical society was currently writing the next book.

47
48 Town Clerk Welch pointed out that there was an error in the wording of the articles and that they needed
49 to specify the funds would be going to the general fund. Administrator Hadley responded that he would
50 fix the error.

1 Debra Goutier Commented that the Town should do further research into how the history fund was
2 established and Administrator Hadley responded that he could do that.

3
4 Road Agent Bean was concerned that he had not been informed that they planned to close the Highway
5 Building Fund. He felt that if something was going to affect his department, he should have been asked
6 about it. He then pointed out that he had several projects that the fund could be used for at the Salt Shed.
7 Gordon Welch commented that it would take more than \$3,000.00 to clean up the salt shed property.

8
9 Moderator Jette commented that the Soccer Field needed maintenance and the fund could be used for that.
10 He also pointed out that the Town Hall could also use some maintenance. Chairperson Hemenway
11 responded that they were in the process of doing that, but they were currently investigating why the paint
12 was peeling because there was likely a moisture problem that needed to be addressed first.

13
14 Moderator Jette moved onto the petition warrant articles. The first article was article 15: from the
15 Historical Society: To raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 for the operational cost of the Webster
16 Historical Society and repairs to the Hy-Mar Museum. Ms. Corliss spoke on behalf of the Historical
17 Society and stated that the amount asked was increased to account for the increased cost of the expected
18 repairs to the Hy-Mar.

19
20 Moderator Jette moved to the next petition warrant article 16: To see if the Town will set Transfer Station
21 fees to a rate not to exceed cost plus 10% where cost is defined as disposal plus transportation. He asked
22 if the petitioner would be able to explain their warrant article. The petitioner was not in attendance at the
23 meeting.

24
25 Chairperson Hemenway commented that traditionally the fees were set by both the Hopkinton and
26 Webster Select Board after discussion and public hearing in each Town. Once both Boards agreed on the
27 fees, they would hold a public hearing to adopt them because they had to match in both Towns. He felt
28 this petition warrant article could cause large problems if it passed in one Town but not in the other. Ms.
29 Corliss added that she didn't even know if this was possible because the disposal and transportation fees
30 changed monthly. Mr. Gagnon felt that an amendment might be in order. Moderator Jette said he thought
31 the Town could amend it at the floor at Town Meeting, but he would have to double check.

32
33 Moderator Jette to the next petition warrant article 17: To request the Town of Webster to seek the return
34 of two Town Owned lots, (Map 6, lots 113 and 114), one and a half acres each, on Walker Pond Rd. They
35 were deemed not for sale by the Select Board, and the Conservation Committee in 2017. These lots were
36 sold, by the Select Board, to a town official on October 9, 2019, in non-public session (sealed minutes
37 too) who made an offer on the "not for sale property" which was valued on Webster Tax Map, at \$22,400
38 each lot, for a total of \$44,800 for 3 acres. The secret offer was for \$7,000 which is one sixth of the value.
39 The sale broke Websters July 3, 2017 "Selling of Properties Policy, "(which was signed by the
40 purchaser), and NH State RSA chapter 95:1 and 95:2 "Barring Public Official from certain Private
41 Dealings, valued in excess of \$200., a misdemeanor. An in-depth investigation followed, for which the
42 buyer was prosecuted and found guilty and by NH law, was removed from the town position. He asked if
43 the petitioner would be able to explain the article and the petitioner was not in attendance at the meeting.

44
45 David Nesbit commented that this felt like Groundhogs Day, and he felt that this had already been dealt
46 with. Mr. Cummings said even that this seemed like certain people in Town had a vendetta against those
47 involved. Mr. Welch said this isn't Groundhogs Day and something needed to be done about this. He felt
48 that somebody feeling are going to get hurt at Town Meeting.

49
50 After this Moderator Jette opened the meeting for those who were running for election to come forward
51 and talk about themselves. After this he closed the hearing at 7:49pm

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- 2
- 3 *Minutes taken by Russell Tatro.*

Approved as Amended 2/19/23