

APPROVED – FEBRUARY 5, 2019

Town of Warner Budget Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 17, 2019

7:00 PM Warner Town Hall



1. OPEN MEETING and ROLL CALL

Martha Bodnarik Michael Cutting (Chairman) John Dabuliewicz (Selectmen) Alfred Hansen
John Leavitt Ray Martin Martha Mical

David Minton - ABSENT

2. Transportation Department – Discussion and Recommendations

Chairman Cutting opened the meeting at 7:00 pm on Thursday, January 17, 2019. The committee reviewed the Operating Budget. The conversation started with Tim Allen of the Highway Dept. Tim reviewed the budget and discussed, snow removal, the Pumpkin Hill line being \$10,000 less, gravel roads \$1750, amount allotted for uniforms equal to last year, discussed Dustin and Iron Kettle roads, Tory Hill will have to be addressed this summer, Latting Hill and Courser's Corner. Martha B. discussed the block grant money, which is money from the state used on roads. Alfred H. asked if Tim's department has money from the state why they are raising money from the town. Jim Bingham stated that money from the State is earmarked for specific projects, that money is restricted and only used with the voter approval. Martha B. said that stipulations of a block grant is that it has to be spent. She said it should be posted as a line item. Mike C. and Martha M. said it will reflected as revenue.

Alfred H. asked what he has for projects and Tim said Schoodac and Tory Hill. John L. asked Tim if there would be an advantage to having a secretary which could alleviate work in terms of bookkeeping. Tim said that it would be helpful although he has his own system of bookkeeping. Jim B. stated that Tracey and Tim track state based numbers.

3. Transfer Station – Discussion and Recommendations

Chairman Cutting stated that the Transfer Station budget changed from \$228,000 to \$336,360. Martha M. asked if the fire alarm system allotment can be cut. \$600 was requested and nothing was spent in previous years. Varick P. stated that Concord called and said they were remiss for billing us for fire protection monitoring. There has been a \$600 placeholder for this service, provided by Bevins. Jim B. said the town pays Bevins \$180 annually for monitoring each building. Martha made a motion to reduce the line items from \$600 to \$300. It was seconded and Martha B. discussed whether it was wasteful especially if the invoices go to Varick at the Transfer Station and not to Tim at the Highway Dept. Chairman Cutting stated that he was sure it would be paid out of the correct department. He moved the motion for a vote and it passed unanimously.

A discussion ensued about transportation costs for Naughton. Disposal of paper, metal by various vendors. Aluminium and brush is transported by the town's Transportation Dept.

4. Budget Reduction – Discussion and Recommendations

Martha M. made a motion to reduce the Board of Selectmen budget by \$4,000 from \$78,000 to \$74,853. This would amount to a reduction in the Town Administrator salary. The motion was seconded and discussion ensued. John L. stated that the committee needed to discuss the goal. Chairman Cutting was disappointed in the budget process in which the BOS did not include the public or the Budget Committee. John L. thought the committee should remove an amount from the bottom line of the budget. Ray M. asked what was the percent of increase in the budget from the previous year. Jim B. stated that a reduction in worker's compensation premium difference was representative of a 2.43% difference. Debt services contributed an increase of 7.49%.

Ray M. discussed the \$163,000 expense for the fire station. We have in the past kept the budget flat and yet we have discussed inflation. I felt this was not the time to discuss salaries, we should slash the budget and pay for it later.

Martha B. expressed frustration with not being consulted by the BOS. We should take off the wage adjustment funds. The BOS need to be better at prioritizing their spending. Martha was committed to taking money off the bottom line.

Alfred H. asked Clyde C. who was present in the audience, what was his thoughts on taking the process out of the hands of the Budget Committee. Clyde C. stated that he felt very differently about the process, he felt that the wage increases should be phased in over time. Although, further discussion was not possible at that time. Chairman Cutting clarified that the committee can make proposals which will proceed to the BOS meeting next Tuesday and then we will consider their counter-proposals.

John L. thought that cutting the budget by \$80,000 would be appropriate, it would make a statement and would be survivable. Alfred doesn't want to make a statement, he wants to reduce the bottom line of the budget and make sure the town can operate. Martha B. stated that we should average out unspent money from previous years. The Chairman stated that all funds not spent are used to reduce taxes each year. Jim B. stated that the town budgets for planned events, some projects don't get done, unforeseen events happen, siding for the police station needs to be replaced, and the generator became a problem, disability, workman's compensation. The BOS needs to have funds available for these kinds of things. Martha B.'s concern is that the BOS is not including the budget committee in the process. John D. stated that it is not fair to criticize the BOS for not spending all available money, we need 5% in reserve, unexpected things happen. Ray interjected that if the BOS overspent we would be upset. Martha M. made it clear that we commend the BOS for underspending. John L. made a motion to reduce the Selectmen's budget. They are asking for \$152,269 and the Budget Committee propose reducing it to \$148,260. The motion was seconded by Alfred and passed with 4 affirmatives and 2 opposed.

The elections total number was \$2,747 a motion to approve was made by Martha M. and seconded by Ray, and passed unanimously.

Martha M. made a motion to reduce the bottom-line of the budget by \$30,000. John L. moved to amend the amount by \$50,000 bringing the total to \$80,000. The motion was seconded. The vote resulted in 3 affirmatives and 3 negative votes, resulting in a tie. The Chairman voted to break the tie, in the affirmative. The resulting vote reduces the bottom-line of the Operating Budget by \$80,000.

The Chairman moved a motion to accept the previously postponed minutes of December 27th, 2019. The motion was seconded by Ray. Discussion: Alfred recommended that the committee not accept the minutes, he would like a bit more time to review the minutes. A vote was taken to accept the minutes of December 27, 2019 resulting in 2 affirmatives and 4 negatives. The acceptance of the minutes are postponed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM

Minutes Submitted by: Janice L. Loz