

TOWN OF BEDFORD
BUDGETARY TOWN MEETING
March 9, 2022

The Bedford Budgetary Town Meeting was held on Wednesday, March 9, 2022 at the Bedford High School auditorium. Present on the stage were Town Moderator Bill Klein, David Gilbert (TC Chairman), Bill Carter (TC Vice Chair), Councilors: Sue Thomas, Lori Radke, Denise Ricciardi, and Bill Duschatko, Rick Sawyer – Town Manager, Tammy Penny – Finance Director, Nathan Midolo – Town Attorney, and Sally Kellar – Town Clerk.

Moderator Klein opened the meeting at 7:00 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Moderator Klein stated that there were two articles to address, articles 3 & 4.

Moderator Klein introduced on the stage Dave Gilbert – Council Chairman, Bill Carter – Vice Chair, Rick Sawyer – Town Manager, Tammy Penny – Finance Director, Nathan Midolo – Town Attorney, Bill Duschatko – Town Councilor, Denise Ricciardi – Town Councilor, Lori Radke – Town Councilor, and Sue Thomas – Town Councilor, and Sally Kellar – Town Clerk.

Moderator Klein mentioned those elected at the Town Election: Kathleen Bemis and Dave Gilbert – 3-year term on the Town Council, Phil Greazzo – 2-year term on the Town Council, Mac McMahan – Trustee of the Trust Funds, Pam Van Arsdale – Library Trustee, Barbara Chagnon – Supervisor of the Checklist, and Town Moderator – Brian Shaughnessy.

He recognized Gloria MacVane, John Morrison, and Bob Goodale as assistant moderators.

Moderator Klein stated if anyone makes an amendment, especially one with a dollar amount, they would like it in writing and he would get a copy.

Moderator Klein thanked Sally Kellar - Town Clerk, Supervisors of the Checklist: Barbara Chagnon, Hugh Donovan – Chair, and Becki Kuhns.

Moderator Klein stated that the two articles were the only things that could be discussed. Anything else would be more pertinent to bring up at a Town Council meeting. He wished that everyone tonight would be nice. Any comments or questions should be directed through him. Try and stay away from a back and forth with anyone, especially anyone up on stage. They will have each of the articles moved by one of the Town Council members, someone will second it, and then at that point that article would be open for discussion. Anyone who wants to speak should go to a mic, and their voter card with them. If there is someone who wants to speak and is not a voter, he will determine based on the body present whether or not they want to listen to that person from outside of the Town or if it's a student that's not a registered voter. After each article is moved, he will ask for a motion to limit reconsideration so that at that point that at the very end of the meeting, if some have left, they can't have somebody stand up and change what action those present have

made. Anyone who wants to request a secret ballot, the assistant moderators were prepared to handle that. The voting card is the card to get the secret ballot, which will be handed out at one of the secret ballot boxes. It's a 'yes/no' tear off, so if you want to vote 'yes', tear the yes off and drop it in the box. They are all identified by number, so if they have multiple secret ballots, you are only allowed to vote once on each. Unless they have an excess of people that want to speak, they won't have a time limit, but he asked that they try to keep their comments to under four minutes if they can. Anyone who has made a motion speaks to it first and then it's open for discussion.

Article 3. – Capital Reserve Fund-Projects and Equipment

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$1,394,808 to be deposited into various Capital Reserve Funds with \$1,242,808 to come from new taxation, \$136,500 to come from the Sewer and \$15,500 to come from the BCTV fund.

MOTION by Chairman Gilbert to move Article 3 as written in the Town Meeting Handout. Seconded by Councilor Carter.

Vote taken on Article 5 as presented – Motion passes.

MOTION by Chairman Gilbert to restrict reconsideration. Seconded by Councilor Carter. Vote taken – Motion passed.

Article 4. - Town Operating Budget

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate such sums of money for municipal operations in the ensuing year. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

General Fund	\$34,035,818
Recreation Day Camp	82,569
BCTV	475,240
Sewer Fund	2,260,164
Total Appropriation	\$36,853,791

MOTION by Chairman Gilbert to approve Article 4 as written in the Town Meeting handout. Seconded by Councilor Carter.

Moderator Klein reminded anyone who comes to the mic to state their name and address.

Kevin Rankins, 39 Meadow Road, stated that he was an emergency room physician at the Elliot Hospital and he sees the firefighters and EMT's daily. He thought they were understaffed and overworked. There were only seven of them on at one time, which was not safe for the community, and they need to consider bolstering their staff. There are times when there are multiple calls where they do not have coverage for the Town. He didn't think the residents of Bedford understood how thin they are running in those services. He thought it was something that they could add that would make them safe.

He learned today that there were more nursing home residents in the Town of Bedford than all of Manchester. They are using their services frequently, which means that the rest of the community didn't have access to that.

MOTION by Kevin Rankins, 39 Meadow Road, to add \$600,000 to the Town budget to hire six additional firefighters/EMTs.

Moderator Klein wanted to clarify that Mr. Rankins was making an amendment to increase the bottom line by the amount of \$600,000 and Mr. Rankins stated that was correct.

Motion was seconded by John Snow, 10 Heather Drive.

Kevin Rankins, 39 Meadow Road, stated that in Bedford they have seven working at one time. Merrimack had 200 less calls than last year and they have 11 working at all times in their department.

Charlie Fairman, 243 Liberty Hill Road, stated that they couldn't afford it. The taxes were going up too fast and too much. His taxes had gone up 12% in two years. They couldn't afford this. If they were going to do that then cut something else in the budget; don't just come in and add something. Tell them where they were going to get the money to do that.

Edward Comiskey, 15 Cooper Lane, stated that the amount specified was \$600,000 and wanted to know how that translated to increasing the staffing levels as far as how many EMTs and firefighters.

Kevin Rankins, 39 Meadow Road, stated that he was told that it's approximately six, but he didn't have any other information other than that. Tammy Penny, Finance Director, stated that that was approximately correct.

Kathleen Bemiss, 37 Magazine Street, wanted to ask the Fire Chief what his thoughts were on whether or not that would be an appropriate number, what additional things that would mean for him. It's really hard to find firefighters and EMTs, so was that even a reasonable projection for this particular time.

Fire Chief Hunter stated that this was a hard request to argue with as he advocates for the public safety of the community. He has put forth a plan that gets them to nine firefighters, minimum per shift by 2026, however, if the body would want to do that sooner, they could do it sooner. Effectively, six new firefighters with the additions that are in the budget would get them to nine, fast-forwarding the plan that he proposed.

Charlie Fairman, 243 Liberty Hill Road, stated that the Fire Chief has a plan to grow the number, it's in the budget and it was adequate. Just adding personnel wasn't enough. Every time you add a person, you need to add money for another ambulance, other vehicles, office equipment, computers, etc. that go with adding personnel. It has to go through a plan like the Fire Chief has done for the Town to review and come forward. That's the reason he's totally against this. There's a plan, so let's stick to it.

Mr. Sawyer stated that motions made here tonight update the bottom line, but it's the Town Council's decision as to whether or not they use those funds as moved by the body. Past Councils have always respected the motions that are made and try and implement the requests of the citizens. The Chief pointed out there are two positions already in this budget, so this would be a total of eight new firefighters being added if this motion passes.

Moderator Klein wanted to clarify from the Chief that looking ahead to next year's budget there would be less he would need to ask for.

Chief Hunter stated that this motion fast-forwards the plan he put forward to the Town Council by four years. He addressed the question about additional equipment and stated that they already had a 3rd ambulance that they were unable to staff; they wouldn't need any additional apparatus, however, the gentleman was not wrong about the possibility of other ancillary equipment. They also don't have room in the current fire house for all firefighters, so they would have to be planning for that. It would go along the lines of the facilities plan that's been talked about for a couple of years as well.

Rob Buxton, 43 Hickory Lane, wanted to know from the Finance Director if the \$600,000 would be enough money to cover those positions so they were staffing at a consistent level 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Ms. Penny stated that as far as paying for it, yes.

Chief Hunter stated that adjustments to the budget would also need to be made in the overtime line to maintain that. As they increase the percentage of personnel, they need to increase that by the same percentage, and he would work out that number for them.

Councilor Ricciardi stated that she appreciated the need for more EMTs. They're not going to ask for more firefighters, because fortunately they don't have too many fires. She had confidence in Chief Hunter and he has given them an extensive plan on how to move forward. Her concern was the facilities of both the Fire and the Police Departments. They have a space issue of separation of male and female showers, sleeping quarters, etc. She thought all of those things were important, but they have to rectify and fix one problem before they move forward. As Councilors, they gave the Fire Department the EMTs that they requested to be able to grow at a good speed. They also have coming up in 2023 the SAFER grants, but it also impacts salaries, benefits, etc. She thought being sensible and in a growing pace was probably best for the taxpayers.

Edward Comiskey, 15 Cooper Lane, stated that he appreciated the Chief being there and wisely saying if you want to give him more money, he'll take it. He knows they've got plans that were going to be discussed at some point about the new fire house substation or other location at the southern end of Town, and adding this level of staffing might be better held off until that was completed and staying with the Chief's plan. Perhaps once they have the new facilities, knowing what those costs are, what are the benefits they could have, the plan could be advanced, because at some point there is going to be a need.

Rob Buxton, 43 Hickory Lane, wanted to clarify that the budget proposes two firefighters and wanted to know if the overtime had been adjusted so they have consistent staffing

across the board. That they would have a consistent number of firefighters on duty with those two additional members every single day. Councilor Ricciardi stated yes, that has been addressed. She commended Chief Hunter, because he is on top of everything and presented everything accordingly and they do have the coverage. They do want to grow the department, but they want to grow it in a way that was going to benefit the Town with responsibility fiscally and also protection for all the residents.

Mr. Sawyer clarified that the two positions in the budget were proposed to be 12-hour positions, so there would be an additional firefighter/EMT from 7 AM to 7 PM and then they would lose that additional person overnight, so it's not 24 hours a day coverage with those two additional positions; it's 7 AM to 7 PM.

Rob Buxton, 43 Hickory Lane, stated that if someone was out on vacation, sick leave would they have the funds to backfill that position to make sure that that staffing was consistent. His concern was that they were dropping members and not having a consistent schedule that leads to a bigger public safety issue for him.

Mr. Sawyer thought that the overtime money they needed to complete this plan was there, but the Chief could talk about the minimum staffing.

Chief Hunter stated that last year the Town accepted a SAFER grant for four new firefighters fully funded for three years, and that comes to completion in 2024. This year they asked for two new daytime staff positions to cover things from 0700 to 1900, however, this year they used overtime funds to fund one of those two positions. They would still be at a minimum of seven for the rest of this year until next year. In 2023, the request would be refunding the overtime line with \$84,000 in order to get to eight during the day and seven at night at which time they could be prepared to fully staff the third ambulance. If they went to eight and staffed that third ambulance, there would be times when they sent out three ambulances with six providers leaving two people left to cover the Town for fire. That was not going to be requested until 2023. That may be something the body wants to look up as well as far as fast-forwarding. In 2024, the SAFER grant matures and in 2025 the request to the Council was going to be permission to write another SAFER grant for four more firefighters. If they were successful in that, in 2026 they could get to nine firefighters, 12 hours during the day and eight firefighters at night. The motion on the floor gets them to a minimum of nine immediately 24 hours a day.

Christian Seasholtz, 62 Liberty Hill Road, wanted to know if there was a way to get an estimate of how this affects the tax rate. Ms. Penny answered that \$600,000 would add 12½ cents, which translates to about \$60 a year for a \$500,000 home.

Rob Buxton, 43 Hickory Lane, stated that the Chief used almost \$90,000 in overtime money to fund one daytime attendant this year, so in theory, they have a shortfall in the overtime line of almost \$90,000 this coming year. Mr. Sawyer stated that it's a correct statement, but they have the new bodies, so they don't need the overtime. That's how it was envisioned. Next year they would have a shortfall of \$84,000.

Rob Buxton, 43 Hickory Lane, stated that his point was increasing staffing, but having a consistent model. He understands the staffing issue and the facilities issue; you can't put more people into the same spot, so they have a bigger issue that the Chief was working on a plan for. He wants to see it consistently maintained. He would ask the person who made the motion if they would be amendable to a potential amendment of \$90,000, which might be more sellable this evening, to cover next year's budget.

Moderator Klein stated that procedurally they have the one motion on the floor, so if the other speaker would like to either withdraw the motion to amend the \$600,000 they could do that. Or they could vote for that and they could vote it down and come up with a new amendment for a different dollar amount such as \$90,000 as what was proposed.

Kevin Rankins, 39 Meadow Road, wanted to keep his motion on the table.

Rob Buxton, 43 Hickory Lane, stated that he would like to move the question.

Moderator Klein thought they had sufficient discussion so he would accept moving the question. They were voting now on the amendment to increase the bottom line by \$600,000 for the increase of EMTs and firefighter staffing.

Vote taken – Motion fails – 29-33.

MOTION by Rob Buxton, 43 Hickory Lane, to amend the operating budget to add \$90,000 to the Fire Department's budget for the overtime increase for the two additional firefighters. Seconded by Keith Folsom, 14 Bedford Street.

Vote taken – Motion fails.

There was a request to count the votes.

Vote taken – Motion passes – 38-24

Councilor Radke stated that they work all year on a budget that they want to present to the Town and they have to consider all of the departments. They want to have their voters and their pockets in their mind when they make their decisions and when they put the budget forward. It's not that they don't care, it's not that they don't want more EMTs, they do, and they do need them, but they need to look at the entire picture. They are hoping to bring forth a facility in the near future, so they have to keep that in mind. She cares and she hopes that they get to that point where they have adequate coverage not only in the Fire Department, but in the Police Department as well, not to mention DPW.

Charlie Fairman, 243 Liberty Hill Road, stated that it would be nice to get the Town Meeting Handout before the meeting. It may have been online, but he didn't see it. He thought maybe next year they could have copies at the Library or Town Office so they can be picked up. He had three items he wanted to have addressed. He stated that there

had been a lot of news about the State passing a budget to flow down more money to the Town. Supposedly, taxes were going to go down because of all the money that the State was sending. Moderator Klein spoke up and stated that he wanted to take these up one at a time and make it clear for everybody. He thought it would be much easier.

Councilor Ricciardi stated that when she became Senator, she realized that the State of NH was denying the Town what they promised, which was 40% of Rooms & Meals tax. She wanted to hold their feet to the fire and said that they want that 40%. She fought and advocated for that for the residents and she got 30%. The good news about that was that she amended it, so that it didn't go into the general fund in the State; it goes into the pockets of the residents and to the Town. It will go to the tax rate, and it's quite significant.

Charlie Fairman, 243 Liberty Hill Road, wanted to know if that money was in this budget and if even with this windfall from the State the taxes were still going up.

Mr. Sawyer stated that the revenues from the State was only one part of the budget. A major change from last year was using less Fund Balance. Last year they used \$3.75m from Fund Balance and this year they are only using \$1.25m. Other revenues impact the tax rate as well. In this budget, there was an increase for Rooms & Meals from the State of \$559,954 and an increase of \$74,335 of Highway Block Grant money. This year they didn't include a \$200,000 grant that the Town received in past years from the State, because the State wasn't providing that grant anymore. They had anticipated it in 2021, but they didn't receive it. They also increased other revenues such as vehicle registrations by \$275,000 and ambulance by \$50,000. Investment income was down by \$125,000 and last year at the Budgetary Town Meeting they moved all of the current use revenue over to the Conservation fund, so that's a reduction of \$50,000 in revenue. There were a lot of revenues and appropriations that had to be looked at to get the tax rate. Charlie Fairman, 243 Liberty Hill Road, thanked Mr. Sawyer and all of the members of the Council and Town staff that put the work into the budget. He was surprised the taxes were still going up in spite of the fact that they heard so much about the vast amount of State money that was coming back.

Charlie Fairman, 243 Liberty Hill Road, stated that the road bond was going to be paid off next year, so they were going to have a significant reduction. Second, the TIF bond was going to be paid off very soon and believed there was a significant increase in Town revenues as a result of that. He wanted to know if they should be expecting a reduction in the taxes next year rather than a constant continuous increase in taxes.

Councilor Thomas stated that as far as the roads program, while one of the bonds is being paid off next year, DPW has a plan to try and keep them in great shape. They want to have a fund to keep the roads repaired, so they don't have to go back to rebuilding roads.

Susan Labrie, 14 Jefferson Road, stated that the Unallocated Reserve has always had \$25,000 in it. She stated that they increased it to \$173,247. They were moving \$76,242, the amount requested for the Director of Strategic Initiatives, a new hire, and \$62,000, the money requested for the Police Accreditation Manager, also a new hire. They weren't

hiring those two people, so they moved that money into the Unallocated Reserves. She wanted to know if that meant down the road they were going to hire those people, take the money out of the reserves, and just not tell anybody.

Mr. Sawyer stated that at the 2nd public hearing on the budget in January, the Council made a motion to move those funds into the Unallocated Reserve for future consideration of those positions. The money would be available should the Council chooses at a later date to fund those positions.

Susan Labrie, 14 Jefferson Road, stated that the funds weren't there to begin with. Mr. Sawyer stated that they were in the budget in the lines for wages, salaries, and benefits and the Council moved all of those funds to the Unallocated Reserve line. They could fund those positions later or use the funds for something else. Ms. Labrie stated that they decided they weren't going to hire those people, but take the money they would have hired them with and put it in Unallocated Reserves to hire them later.

Councilor Thomas stated that they listen to all of the staffing needs, and they knew right away that they needed the two emergency service people and another Police detective. The Council was unanimous on that. There were other hiring proposals that they struggled with, because they wanted to make sure that they knew exactly what the role of that person was going to be. The Director of Strategic Initiatives, for example, would work for Rick (Sawyer). Every other town has an Assistant Town Manager. They were looking at what was the right person and when would they hire that person. It was in the budget for this year, but instead of keeping it there and hiring the person, they wanted to make sure that it was the right position and the right job. They kept the money in the budget, but they just moved it to another line item. If that person was hired, the money would go back and that line would go back to \$25,000. Ms. Labrie wanted to clarify that it was in the Salaries line. Councilor Thomas explained that it was, but they already moved it. Ms. Labrie stated that the Salaries line should have been reduced and Councilor Thomas stated that it was. For the last few months, they've moved money around trying maximize the impact of the budget and minimize what was going out to the taxpayers. This was an accounting method that had to happen if they weren't going to hire the person right away; that line is a placeholder. It was potentially for salaries if they hire the people, but they were not committed yet.

Susan Labrie, 14 Jefferson Road, stated that if you look up the explanation of what a Director of Strategic Initiatives is, it's not what was listed in the handout of what they want that person to do. That position and the Accreditation Manager for the Police Department. Those were the positions that were moved to Unallocated Reserves. To her, it looked like a sneak thing. They stuck it over there, because they want to hire those people, but if they say they are going to hire people then the voters were going to get upset, so let's just move the money over here and then after it is all over and everybody's gone home and everything has quieted down, they are going to hire them, because they've got the money.

Councilor Radke stated that if they were to consider hiring those positions that would be a discussion at a Town Council meeting, which is open to the public. That would be the

time to state their concerns. They weren't trying to hide anything. It's going to be an open forum for the public to comment on. Ms. Labrie wanted to know if the Unallocated Reserve would be \$173,000 ongoing or until they decide to move it out. Councilor Radke stated that it would \$173,000 for this year. If they don't spend that money, it would go to Unassigned Fund Balance. The monies they don't spend by the end of the year go into the Unassigned Fund Balance.

Joe Hoebeke, 23 Jackson Square, referred to the previous speaker's questions and presumed that the amount that increased that line item was all inclusive; it included salary, fringe benefits, etc. Chairman Gilbert responded that was correct. Mr. Hoebeke stated that he firmly believed that a town the size of Bedford should have an Assistant Town Manager. He also believed that they should have an Accreditation Manager. He wanted to know if that line item had an impact on the tax rate and the response was yes. Mr. Hoebeke wanted to know why they don't just fund those positions. If they are allocating those funds in a line item within the budget, let them make a command level decision to meet the staffing needs for their agency. He wanted to know if that cost was for a full year. The response was it was half year funding starting July 1st.

Mr. Sawyer clarified that the Accreditation Manager was budgeted for an April 1st start and the Director of Strategic Initiatives was July 1st.

Joe Hoebeke, 23 Jackson Square, wanted to know the balance in the Unassigned Fund Balance. Ms. Penny stated that they don't know for certain, because they have to have audited financials for their 2021 year-end. Their policy is to always maintain between 8 and 17% in Unassigned Fund Balance. It's to meet obligations, because they collect taxes for part of the year and they have to pay the bills all year long. She anticipates the end of year balance to be approximately \$14m, which would be about 14.5%. They are under their goal target of 17%. Councilor Thomas stated that for clarification, that includes the School District. The Town collects the School District money, so it's not just the Town.

Joe Hoebeke, 23 Jackson Square, wanted to know if the \$90,000 could come out of Unassigned Fund Balance so it didn't impact the tax rate. He thought it was a realistic request and keeps them within that percentage of where they want to be and it might alleviate some of the concerns they've heard.

Mr. Sawyer stated that his recommendation would be that they have a separate motion to increase the revenue coming from Unassigned Fund Balance to increase that by \$90,000. He explained that they've increased the appropriation which would have increased the amount needed to be raised by taxes. The proposal is instead of raising it from taxes, they take it from Fund Balance, so they would need to increase the revenue Unassigned Fund Balance from \$1.25m to add the \$90,000 on top of that.

MOTION by Joe Hoebeke, 23 Jackson Square, that they reduce the operating budget by \$90,000 and take \$90,000 from the Unassigned Fund Balance and use it to fund the \$90,000 increase in the Fire Department overtime.

Mr. Sawyer stated that they can't reduce it from the appropriation. They have to appropriate the additional \$90,000 and it's already included in the motion. They need to increase the revenues from Unassigned Fund Balance by an additional \$90,000, so instead of \$1,250,000 of revenue from Unassigned Fund Balance, it would now be \$1,340,000 from Unassigned Fund Balance. The new motion reads:

MOTION by Joe Hoebeke, 23 Jackson Square, that they increase line #10010350 Unassigned Fund Balance by \$90,000 for a new total of \$1,340,000. Seconded by Edward Comiskey, 15 Cooper Lane.

Edward Comiskey, 15 Cooper Lane, stated that there is a motion to change Fund Balance, and wanted to clarify that at the end of this it would change the revenue appropriation that was coming in so that it would offset. Mr. Sawyer stated that was correct. It would return the proposed tax rate to \$4.04 as listed on the front page of the handout. The \$90,000 would have increased that to \$4.06.

Moderator Klein stated that the motion they are going to vote on is to increase the line item on page 13 called Fund Balance Reserve of \$1,250,000 and increase it by \$90,000.

Christian Seasholtz, 62 Liberty Hill Road, wanted to know if the Councilors wanted to share their thought on this change. Councilor Radke stated that she would support it.

Vote taken – Motion Passed.

Susan Labrie, 14 Jefferson Road, wanted to know if she could make a motion to take the \$138,242 out of Unallocated Reserve and put it back into the Salaries line. That would put the Unallocated Reserve back down to \$35,000. Councilor Thomas stated that it wouldn't change the bottom line. They would just be moving it from one line to another. Ms. Labrie wanted to know if they could just reduce the budget by that amount. Mr. Sawyer stated that that's a different motion.

MOTION by Susan Labrie, 14 Jefferson Road to take the \$138,242 completely out of the budget.

There was no second on the motion.

MOTION by Joe Hoebeke, 23 Jackson Square, that they permit the use of those funds effective April 1st and July 1st for the Director of Strategic Initiatives and the Accreditation Manager for the Police Department that those funds be allowed to staff those positions with the passage of the budget.

Mr. Sawyer stated that there were many lines where the money would be appropriated to. It all stays in the bottom line and they could make the adjustment after. It would be up to the Council to agree to use the money as directed at Town Meeting, but that has always been the case in the past. He thought the motion was fine.

Motion seconded by Rob Buxton, 43 Hickory Lane.

Edward Comiskey, 15 Cooper Lane, wanted some clarification on the motion. It wouldn't change the bottom line, it's giving the Town Council specific direction as to what the funds should be used for. The positions were at the discretion of the Council when they are ready to hire. This is just the availability of funds. He wanted to know if that was a correct statement. Mr. Sawyer agreed that that was a correct statement. Mr. Comiskey stated that whether they are in the line where they are currently posted or moved up to the salary line, the impact is the same. The money is available when they wish to use it. Moderator Klein stated that was correct. They don't have to wait until July.

Kathy Shartzter, 7 Roblin Road, wanted to clarify that the position would still be a half year position. Councilor Thomas stated that they were ongoing positions. The budget actually starts in January. The money is in there for the Accreditation Manager from April 1st. There's enough money to fund that position from April 1st to the end of the year. The full year would be in the budget next year. Once they hire someone, they become an employee of the Town. Whenever you have a new hire, you are only budgeting for the amount of time that they are going to be on the books in that year. When the budget first came out, she was in favor of the two Fire positions. They had a lot of conversation about the head count where they were going as a town and what they need. The reason these two positions went into the Unallocated Fund Balance was because there would be two new Council members, they're going to have a retreat and talk about the goals and the things the Town needs. Putting it there they could really talk about when they needed and when it made the most sense. They were all in favor of the Police Department being accredited. It's not something they want to put off, but they need to look at all of the things. The money is there, but they needed to be careful about how they spent it. She personally supports the positions but she also supports the decision they made to put it in the line item that they put it in.

Kathy Shartzter, 7 Roblin Road, thought maybe she wasn't understanding the motion. She wanted to know if the motion was so it could go back to the April and July start. Councilor Thomas stated that the amount of money in there is for a start date of April 1st for the Accreditation Manager and July 1st for the Director of Strategic Initiatives. The amount of money for that was calculated by the Finance Department. Ms. Shartzter wanted to know if they hire before that, they would run out of money and that's her concern. Councilor Thomas stated that they won't hire those positions before those dates.

Councilor Ricciardi stated that they believe that the Police Department should have the Accreditation Manager and that the Manager should have the Director of Strategic Initiatives. They were trying to be judicious in the tax dollars and map everything out. The reason for the allocated funds was to be able to do it at a time where they felt it would be better for the budget. They want the Town to have everything they absolutely need but they were trying to be cautious in how they put it forward. The Police Department should be accredited and the Town Manager should have an assistant, but they were trying to space out the cost. They represent the voters and if this was something they feel they should move forward now they are going to listen to them.

Joe Hoebeke, 23 Jackson Square, stated that the intent of the motion was to permit those two department heads to use those funds to hire those folks effective April 1st and July 1st. The money was already factored into the budget, which impacts the tax rate, so why not use that money rather than have it sit in a line item and pondering a few months from now whether they fund those positions. They know there's a need for these and they've obviously given it tremendous thought. They wouldn't have asked for these positions if they didn't feel as though they needed them. He trusts in Mr. Sawyer and Chief Bryfonski to make those decisions and with the support of the Council it's important that they allow them to hire these positions.

Rob Buxton, 43 Hickory Lane, stated that he supports the motion and he thought it added transparency. They weren't changing the bottom line of the operating budget. They were just moving it back to the salary line and saying as a community they want those positions. They know that the Council was going to take it up at a Council meeting later on in the year, but they are saying they were in favor of it tonight and they are supporting you. That's all this motion says. Instead of having to come out on another Council evening and having a public hearing, they are saying tonight as the people that this is what they want. They understand the impact if they vote positively for the operating budget at the end.

Vote taken – Motion Passes.

Charlie Fairman, 243 Liberty Hill Road, stated that he didn't see anything on the proposed revenue about funds coming from the State and wanted to know where that was hidden.

Mr. Sawyer stated that the last page of the handout, page 13, they probably don't jump off the page. They were in specific lines. The Rooms & Meals was probably in Finance & Tax, which is \$26m. Mr. Fairman wanted to clarify that the Finance & Tax was not what they were raising from tax revenue, it includes other revenues. Mr. Sawyer stated that was correct. It's comingled with some of the State funds. The Highway funds were comingled in Public Works Administration of \$3.6m. Mr. Fairman thought it would be nice and clearer in the future if they had a line item for State funds. Mr. Sawyer stated that it was available online. There is a full spreadsheet. All of the budget documents to up in October and all the single lines are available on the website. The Council holds workshops in November. The budget package (handout) was available in online since the first of January and available at both public hearings that the Council held on the budget and over the last 10 days or so it's been the first link on the Alert bar on the website. If anybody ever has a question or can't find a budget document, can call or come into the office and they would help you find it.

Charlie Fairman, 243 Liberty Hill Road, mentioned the road bond that was going to be paid off next year. The 2013 bond payment was \$741,600. He was given an answer that next year that amount of money would be added to DPW's road maintenance budget. He thought that was a big chunk of money to be added in. He wanted to know if they were also planning that when each one of the road bonds gets paid off, that payment amount was going to be added into the maintenance. So the year after next when the next bond gets paid off, which is a little over \$1m, that payment amount was going to be added, so

each year they were going to increase it by the amount of the road bonds. Councilor Thomas stated that there was a chart on page 8 that shows both the long-term debt and the road maintenance expenses and he would see that last year was the highest year. They eventually want to get to about \$2m - \$2.5m each year in road maintenance costs.

Charlie Fairman, 243 Liberty Hill Road, stated that nobody addressed his question about the TIF bond and if that money was going to come back to reduce taxes or just find another way to spend it. He knows they all work hard to keep the expenditures down. He thought that was a significant revenue coming in and he suspects that the plan was to help fund the upcoming facility stuff. He thought it would be nice if somebody actual said something about that.

Mr. Sawyer stated that the TIF bond was scheduled to be paid off in 2024. They believe they can pay it off in 2023, which would return at this point \$57.5m of additional general revenue; tax base revenue to the general fund. Likely in 2023 but at least in 2024 they would return at least \$57.5m to the general tax base of the community to reduce taxes.

Moderator Klein stated that it was time to vote on the Article, the operating budget bottom line as amended.

Vote taken – Motion passes.

Moderator Klein announced that the estimated check in was 69 voters.

Chairman Gilbert recognized Denise Ricciardi for her efforts over the last three years. She was elected to the Town Council in 2019 and served as the Vice Chair during her 2nd year on the Council between 2020 and 2021. During her years on the Council she served as Town Council liaison to the Conservation Commission, Energy Commission, BCTV-WBNH Board, and served as Town Council alternate liaison to the Highway Safety Committee, Conservation Commission, and the Historic District Commission. She also serves as a resident member of the Telecommunications subcommittee. During Denise's time on the Council, she founded Bedford Cares and still does that. It is a great organization of volunteers that assisted people in Town with errands such as grocery shopping and picking up prescriptions that really helped during the 2019 pandemic. Bedford Cares won the 2021 Spirit of NH award and Denise received a volunteer service award as part of the 2021 NH Spirit awards. She continues to serve Bedford as our NH State Senator. It's been a pleasure working with her and having her on the Council these last three years. He thanked her for everything she's done for Bedford and for what she was going to continue to do for Bedford and presented her with an appreciation plaque.

Councilor Ricciardi stated that it had truly been an honor to be their Town Councilor and to be a volunteer in Town. She loved Bedford and had been here going on 26 years. Their community was really special and she was very grateful to have served them as their Councilor. She hopes to continue to serve them as their Senator.

Councilor Carter stated that Dave Gilbert had been the Council Chairman for the last two

years and he has learned a lot under his tutelage as Vice Chair. He served as Council liaison to the Parks & Recreation Commission for six years. He was a citizen alternate member of the Zoning Board in 2018, 2019 and 2020 and as a regular member in 2021. Councilor Carter presented Chairman Gilbert a plaque recognizing his year as Chairman of the Town Council.

Moderator Klein stated that there were a lot of volunteer positions open on Town commissions and committees. They need more help with elections. The next one is in September, so watch for notices and keep an eye on the Town website as far as opportunities to serve the community.

Moderator Klein called for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION by Councilor Carter to adjourn at 8:28 pm. Seconded by Councilor Radke. Vote taken – Motion Passed.

Submitted by:

Dawn Boufford, Executive Assistant

Sally Kellar, Town Clerk