

**TOWN OF BEDFORD
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
February 24, 2021
10 Meetinghouse Road**

1. ROLL CALL: A meeting of the Bedford Town Council was held on Wednesday, February 24, 2021, 10 Meetinghouse Road. Participating were Dave Gilbert (Chair), Denise Ricciardi (Vice Chair) and Councilors Phil Greazzo, Melissa Stevens, Bill Duschatko, Lori Radke, and Bill Carter. Also present was Town Manager Rick Sawyer.

Chairman Gilbert opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Led by Councilor Gilbert.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None

4. NEW BUSINESS

a. Approval of a Payment in Lieu of Taxes agreement with Senior Living of Bedford

Mr. Sawyer stated that on October 22, 2018, the Planning Board approved the 150-bed facility known as Bowman Place. It's an assisted living and memory care and is located on Olde Bedford. The facility is going to be run as a non-profit, but has offered to pay an amount equal to the Town portion of their taxes, which is otherwise known as a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT). This would be the first pilot in Bedford, but they are very common around the State for similar non-profit organizations. He thanked them for making the offer to pay the Town portion. Clearly they are doing this, because they understand they are going to draw down on Police and Fire services as well as DPW services for access to their facility and emergency response. They will file their non for profit information annually with the Assessing Department and if for some reason they lose their non for profit status then the PILOT would go away and that's written into the document.

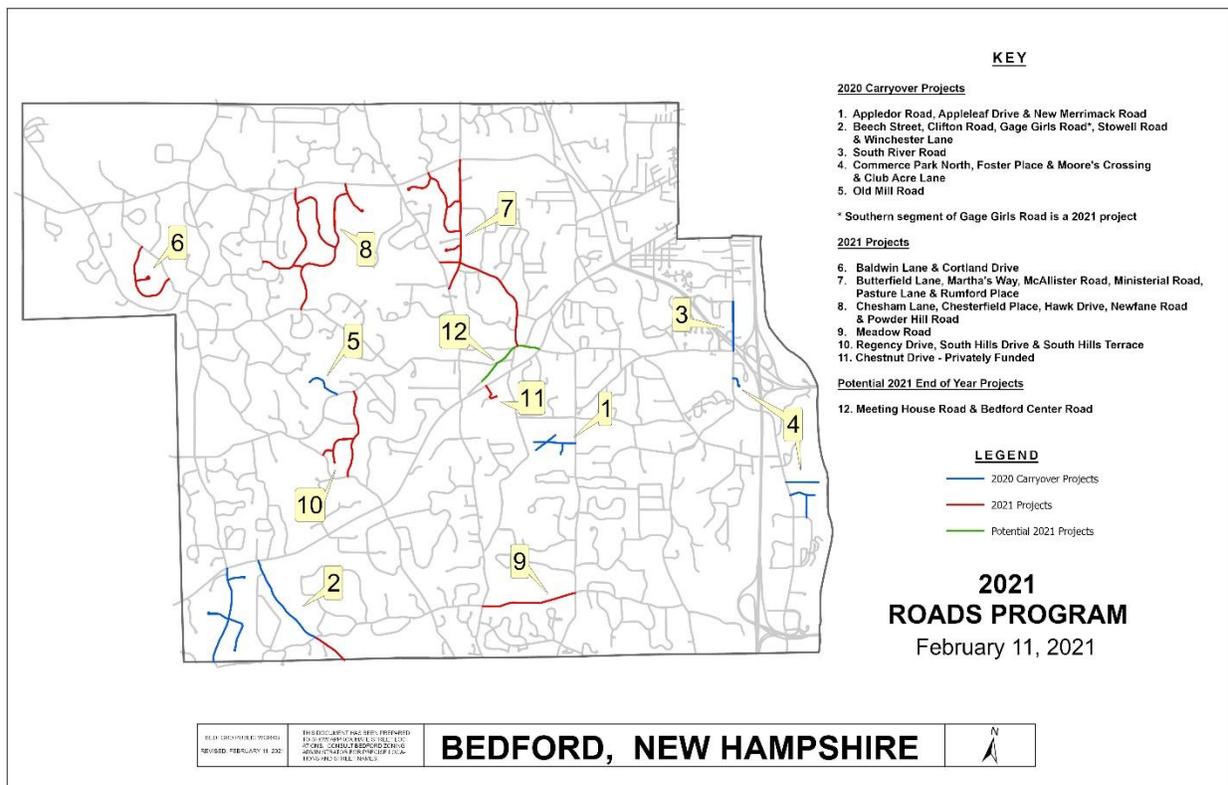
Councilor Radke mentioned that the staff report stated that the Town portion supports the Police, Fire, and Public Works and wanted to know if it goes directly into their accounts. Mr. Sawyer stated that it goes into the General Fund. Councilor Radke wanted to know when they are doing the budget they would take that amount and their bottom line would be less, because you're adding to them. Mr. Sawyer explained that it's covering all departments. He listed those ones as specific, but it covers all Town Administration. Councilor Radke wanted to know if it was going to have an impact on the budget. Mr. Sawyer stated that it would help reduce the tax rate. If they didn't have their payment the taxes would have to go up overall. This reduces the tax rate for everyone overall. It goes into the General Fund. The only place they are going to see it is in the DRA report for when the tax rate is set. There is a line that has PILOT on it, so you list the amount you are receiving from all your other revenues and this is one more revenue source that you'll list separately on your DRA report for the tax rate in October.

Councilor Stevens mentioned that the agreement says the amount will be calculated on or before November 1st and wanted to know if it was each year. Mr. Sawyer stated that was correct. Councilor Stevens wanted to know if it was in perpetuity. Mr. Sawyer stated yes, unless they lose their non-profit status or for any reason either side would want to renegotiate for some reason and it would come before the Council; otherwise it would stay in effect as long as they are a non for profit. The Town attorney has looked at it and fully approved.

MOTION by Councilor Carter that the Bedford Town Council approve the payment in lieu of taxes agreement between Senior Living of Bedford and the Town of Bedford and authorize the Town Manager to execute the agreement. Seconded by Councilor Ricciardi. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 7-0.

b. 2021 Roads Program Update

Jeff Foote, DPW Director, showed a slide on the screen showing the road projects carried over from 2020 and those road projects to be done in 2021 with \$2.7m in carryover and another \$3.3m in 2021 proceeds. The program combines all available funding sources including the annual roads appropriation bond funding and developer offsite improvement fair share contributions. On completion of the work identified on the slide, there would be about \$1.6m remaining of the \$30m road bond approved by voters in 2014.



Councilor Radke mentioned paving the Bedford Common parking lot. She stated that she was on that committee a long time ago and thought the intent back then was never to

pave it; they wanted to keep it gravel. She wanted to know if they changed their mind. Mr. Foote stated that they worked with someone on the committee and looked at the deed and the agreements and it allows the parking lot to be paved; not the trails. He talked about the runoff of water and the benefits of paving it. Mr. Sawyer stated that the Council could instruct him to either do or not do the project, but they had an agreement with the Land Trust to allow them to pave it after the fact; that's why they are able to pave it.

Jen Deml, 31 Old Sawmill Road, stated that Meadow was a dirt road and as far as she knew the residents didn't want that paved, because they didn't want it a big cut-through. Mr. Foote stated that they had some contact from some residents and some are in favor and some are opposed. At some point they base decisions on what's best for the Town. They like to have resident input, but they also have to understand that Meadow Road in particular, they spend more time maintaining that road in the summer for dust complaints and in the winter and spring for rutting, wash boarding, etc. They aren't proposing to impact the existing culvert in any way, but they are proposing to pave the road.

Councilor Radke wanted to know if paving it would help with the flooding. Mr. Foote stated that the lion share of the flooding was relieved when they improved the culverts four or five years ago. They are proposing to pave it at the same elevation on each side of the culvert as is it today. They don't want to create a dam and impact the property that is adjacent to it. They will pave it at the same elevation, so if there is a large storm event that it can top the road. To construct a culvert that will pass the water so it doesn't flood is about a \$2m or \$3m project and didn't think that was a wise use of funding. They are proposing to leave the culvert in place and on the occasional time where the water goes over the road, it will continue to do that.

Councilor Duschatko was also concerned about the flooding. That road is shut every time there is a major rain storm. He's also concerned that it would be creating a high speed thoroughfare. It's already a speedway now and to put another thorough cut-through there was very poor from a safety point of view. Mr. Foote stated that if they push cars one way or the other, you do create that type of cut-through, but when all of the roads are paved it becomes equalized and you don't have a large volume going towards one road or another. That road is no-thru trucking. Greenfield Parkway is no-thru trucking. When they eliminate one means of travel then they push the problem to other areas. The DPW spends countless hours out in the summer, winter and spring maintaining that road. As far as the water going over the road, whether it's gravel or it's pavement, a much more stable condition is to have it paved. They will have less erosion and less maintenance needs. The goal for many years was to pave all gravel roads in Town. He gave examples of dirt roads they've paved and the benefits. In years past the goal was to eliminate the dirt roads, so they could eliminate the need for a grader, which is a capital improvement item that at some they will have to replace. It's 21 or 22 years old now. If they want to rid themselves of that cost, then they need to pave the roads. That's really been the plan as far as he could remember. If they want to stray from that then that's their decision.

Councilor Greazzo wanted to know how much it would cost to pave that stretch and what is the cost to maintain it. If it's a road that has the potential to wash out, repaving it is

going to be something that wouldn't be desirable. Mr. Foote stated that they don't track every time someone goes out and grades the road. They don't track every time they bring in four, five or 10 loads of gravel. The cost to pave the road is around \$500k, which is conservative, so it's likely to be less than that. Councilor Greazzo wanted to know how many other dirt roads would still be in use that they would continue to need the grader. Mr. Foote stated that after this year, there would be four dirt roads remaining: County Road West (2 houses), Polly Peabody (less than 12 houses), Tinker Road (6 or 7 houses), Holbrook Road (about 12 houses). Councilor Greazzo wanted to know if the Town maintains those roads with a grader. Mr. Foote responded that they do, but not to the extent that they spent on Meadow Road or Gage Girls Road or any of those other roads. They've eliminated seven dirt roads and they are proposing to eliminate a couple more this year including Old Mill Road and Gage Girls South. They are very maintenance intensive and that's why they've moved forward with mitigating those concerns and proposing to pave them.

Councilor Carter wanted to know if they had an updated rating of the roads, so they can explain what the \$30m went to. Mr. Foote stated that because they are nearing the end, they have an action item to find a new vendor or go in and update and see what the road index is for each of the roads. They had one a few years ago but it's not that accurate. They've been focusing on the \$30m, so they didn't want to spend money for someone to tell them that it's 100 versus a 0. They want to make a push so they can see what there paving index is Town wide, so they can share that information and know what they need moving forward. If they looked at the attachment to the staff report, they would see that for the last several years the intention was to increase the \$1m to \$2m for road maintenance. Over the last five years the \$1m hasn't really been \$1m for local road maintenance. What they are trying to do at this point is to protect the Town's investment. That's they there isn't a lot of road construction this year. Most of what was shown was glorified maintenance, so they can maintain that paving index. His goal at the end of this year they will have that, so they can share it with the public; what the conditions are and what they need to do to maintain those conditions. Councilor Carter wanted to know if the sign on County Road addressing the pedestrian crossway been looked at. Mr. Foote stated that he hadn't had time, but it's on his list.

Councilor Stevens wanted to know if they ever clarified Market & Main's fair share for South River Rd. Mr. Foote stated that their fair share were the improvements that they've made including the additional turn lane going underneath Route 101 onto Meetinghouse and some median improvements. The total for all of that was just under \$1m. They didn't make a contribution towards the roadway. They just made the improvements that the Planning Board agreed to. They also reclaimed and paved Upjohn St.

Councilor Ricciardi recalled ago they had a meeting where the residents came and there was input. Mr. Foote stated that he was not a part of that, so it had to be more than 18 years ago. Councilor Ricciardi thought they had some conversation about it at some point. Mr. Foote stated that there were a few residents that don't want the road paved, but the phone calls they get to repair the roads are from the residents that don't want it paved. He thought there were as many people that want the road that are opposed to it, but

thought that if they see the plan they put in place, people will understand that it's time to pave the road. The resources that are being expended towards maintenance on that road in particular is more than any other road in Town. They spend a lot of time out there trucking gravel in for washouts, wash boarding. In the summertime they get calls for dust complaints. They spend a lot of time out there. He's not concerned about any damage from an occasional overtopping near the twin culverts.

Councilor Radke wanted to know if they were extending the contract with Continental. Mr. Foote stated that it wasn't an extension. The extension was approved last year. This is just an update for those funds. They will continue the work. Councilor Radke wanted to know how much the cost was per ton for asphalt. Mr. Foote stated that it was dependent on the price of liquid asphalt. The last three or four years the price of liquid asphalt has been very favorable. Over the last three or four months they are going to see it increase, because liquid asphalt is a by-product of drilling for oil. The bid price for Continental over the last three or four years was \$67, but because the price of liquid asphalt has been favorable they've been paying slightly less than that, in the \$63-\$65 range, which is a phenomenal price. They are getting a great deal on paving.

MOTION by Councilor Radke that the Bedford Town Council authorize the Town Manager or his representative to advance the engineering, permitting and to acquire property easements necessary to advance the 2021 roads program. Seconded by Councilor Stevens. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 7-0.

Chairman Gilbert wanted to know when they were going to finish that turn lane at Meetinghouse even though it's the State. Mr. Foote stated that he hoped it was by June. They have no control over it.

c. Award of 2021 Solid Waste Disposal Contract

Mr. Foote stated that this was originally a 3-year contract five 1-year extensions. In the spring of 2015, the Town advertised an RFP for hauling and disposal of municipal solid waste. Covanta Haverhill Associates submitted the most favorable proposal. The original contract was for three years and included up to five 1-year, yearly extensions solely at the discretion of the Town. Over the past six or seven years, the price has gone from \$67.45/ton to \$74.11/ton in 2020. The proposal for 2021, the 4th year of the five 1-year extensions, is at \$74.89/ton, which represents a 1.1% increase over 2020 or an estimated \$35k over 2020. The estimated annual cost to extend the contract with Covanta is \$562k, which is based on the 2020 total of 7,493 tons. He thought the Town was getting a great deal. In 2023, they will have to let this out to bid again. Merrimack's price is going to be in the \$99/ton range in 2022. He didn't think the price was going to diminish in the next couple of years. He thought they needed to start making decisions to minimize what is generated and what is brought to the Transfer Station. One of those action items is food composting. Food waste is 25-30% of MSW mass. If they could take out 5% of that, they could save \$40k a year. With a 25% increase in two years, it's \$150k. The DPW is trying to put the Town in a position where they can start accepting food waste and composting

it along with the leaf litter to make a product that they could give back to residents and avoid sending it to a landfill or incinerator as they do now. He thought the Council should consider that they do need to take action in the next couple of years, because they've got a big increase coming, which is going to affect the tax rate. He thought the discussion should start soon to consider food waste composting at the Transfer Station.

Councilor Carter wanted to know if there was a graph of how much waste they've done over the years. Mr. Foote stated that they could open up December's monthly report. He lists for the last five years. In 2017, they were generating 9k tons, in 2019 it went down to 7k tons. They have consumption data. If you look at the monthly report, they list the previous five years, year-to-date every month. It had been trending down until last year. The January '19 and the January '21 were the same and a spike in 2020. It would be recognizable if they started composting to see if that trend continued or flat-lined. The Town is growing, so there are more houses and generating more material. Councilor Carter wanted information on composting. They want to be very conscience of the conservation out in that area. He wanted to know if that was going to draw certain things out there that they might not want out there. Mr. Foote mentioned that the leaf composting pile had about 200 crows on it, so if that's a concern, it's an existing condition. He mentioned that there were some communities in NH that compost food and he's not afraid to visit those to come up with a plan to make sure they aren't creating a nuisance or a problem. Chairman Gilbert stated that it was a cost savings and thought it was the right time to start doing it before they get hit with a big bill. If they can defer some of that cost by doing this, and he thought the people in Town would get behind it.

Mr. Foote talked about when they started separating the glass and that it is hugely successful. It's the least expensive thing that can be disposed of at the Transfer Station.

Councilor Ricciardi wanted to know how composting was monitored properly so what's being put in should be put in and not. She wanted to know who was going to oversee that and at what costs were associated with the person overseeing it. Mr. Foote stated that there is an educational component to it and thought that the people who want to take the steps to compost won't put things in the bin that shouldn't be there.

Councilor Stevens wanted to know if the EFJH would want to set up some composting there. Chairman Gilbert stated that they do. Councilor Stevens wanted to know if it was open to whomever. Chairman Gilbert stated that some people have come up and asked if they could take it, but they are self-contained. They do it themselves and use it back themselves. He would have to look into it. Councilor Stevens was curious, because she could not compost at her house. It would be too much to take on. She wanted to know if folks wanted to save their household waste and bring it to the EFJH could they do that now. Chairman Gilbert responded not right now, but that's something they could explore.

Kathleen Bemiss, Magazine Street, stated that as an abutter to the Transfer Station, she had no concerns about composting there. She thought they needed to take into account when they are doing this is that there are biodegradable bags that everybody uses and having something in addition to the Transfer Station, a central place where people could

drive by and drop it in a bin that would then be brought to the dump, because the composting that they are having in their house, they don't want to wait five days to bring that up, so having it a little more accessible with biodegradable bags. She thought it was a phenomenal idea.

MOTION by Councilor Ricciardi that the Bedford Town Council extend contract #11-14 to haul and dispose of municipal solid waste for one year with Covanta Haverhill Associates in accordance with the terms and fees of the contract and to authorize the Town Manager to execute the extension. Seconded by Councilor Carter. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 7-0.

d. Award of Bid 1-2021 (2) Six Wheel Cab & Chassis (Dump Trucks)

Mr. Foote stated on February 16th, the DPW conducted a sealed bid opening for the purchase of two six wheeled trucks. Typically, they try to adhere to a seven year lifespan, and they extended this one to eight years. Three firms submitted bids and the lowest qualified bidder was Liberty International/Allegiance Trucks of Manchester, NH. With a total bid of \$185,294 for both trucks. The purchase price doesn't reflect any resale or trade-in value when the old trucks are sold. There is no impact to the 2021 budget as a result of this purchase. This purchase was a result of the DPW underspending its budget and using remaining funds.

Councilor Radke mentioned that they mentioned that they didn't like the fact that they had to have it in by July and wanted to know if he could extend it to August 1st. Mr. Foote stated that they aren't seeing any issues with that. They want the truck delivered in time, so they can send it to the next vendor to have the plow, body wings, etc. put on. Councilor Radke wanted to know if they would meet those deadlines. Mr. Foote believed that they had liquidated damage clause in there that suggest they need to get it in on time.

MOTION by Councilor Carter that the Bedford Town Council award Contract BID #01-2021 to Liberty International/Allegiance Trucks of Manchester, NH in the amount of \$185,294 and to authorize the Town Manager to execute the contract. Seconded by Councilor Duschatko. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 7-0.

e. Award of Bid 3-2021 (2) Six Wheel Equipment

Mr. Foote stated that this is for the equipment to go on the trucks that they just awarded; the front plow, the dump body, the wing and the spreader, etc. Two firms submitted bids and the lowest qualified bid was by Tenco Industries of Barre, VT in the amount of \$176,472 for the equipment for both of the trucks. This doesn't reflect any trade in value that they are anticipating. They found some money within their own budget as to not affect the 2021 tax rate. They are looking to utilize some additional monies authorized in December 2020 for this purchase.

Councilor Carter wanted to know what a pre-wet system. Mr. Foote mentioned the EPA MS4 program. They are trying to put themselves in a position to accommodate the EPA. The pre-wet system sprays out a solution with magnesium in it that you spray at the spreader, so when the material is spread, it gets spread from the spinner on the spreader. It's wet and it sticks to the road and it's not cast off to the side of the road. It's a way to be fiscally and environmentally responsible to try and reduce the amount of salt they use. They won't always use that. It's only when the snow is dry.

Councilor Greazzo wanted to know where he found the money in his budget. Mr. Foote explained that at the December 14th meeting, the \$330k was identified coming out of unspent appropriations. It was an easy winter so they used less material, less overtime, etc. The \$31k that they need to get them over the hump for this came from openings and some payroll money, retirement money, those type of things. Councilor Greazzo wanted to know how the winter budget was looking now. Mr. Foote stated that they have had lingering storms, which costs more money.

Councilor Radke wanted to know if they could take any equipment off the old truck they are going to sell that they could put on the new trucks, so they don't have to buy them. Mr. Foote responded no, because the truck models change, so the equipment doesn't fit on the new trucks. The trucks are used and exposed and left outside year round and deteriorate. Fortunately the Council has always supported the winter maintenance efforts, so they get a reasonable residual value when they sell them. Last year they exceeded what they anticipated and will likely do the same this year.

Councilor Ricciardi mentioned that they are doing an outstanding job during these storms.

Councilor Duschatko wanted to know who was buying these trucks. Mr. Foote stated that last year it was the International dealer that was the low bid this year. At auction it can be anybody, but International has been buying the old trucks back. If the head mechanic feels it's better to send it to Concord to the auction he'll do that, but at the same time he'll put something out on the street and they'll sell it themselves. He does a nice job understanding the market and Mr. Foote thought it has been to the benefit of the residents and taxpayers.

MOTION by Councilor Ricciardi that the Bedford Town Council award Contract BID #03-2021 to Tenco Industries, Inc. of Barre, VT, in the amount of \$176,472 and to authorize the Town Manager to execute the contract. Seconded by Councilor Duschatko. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 7-0.

f. Approval of Employee Compensation Wage Ranges

Mr. Sawyer stated that the CPI Index is 1.1% increase, so what's before you is simply the adjustment of the wage ranges for the non-union employees; the low end and the high end of those ranges adjusted by 1.1%.

MOTION by Councilor Radke that the Bedford Town Council approve the “2021 Bedford Employee Compensations Plan Non-Union Wage Schedule” effective January 1, 2021. Seconded by Councilor Ricciardi. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 7-0.

g. Other New Business

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. Other Old Business

Chairman Gilbert explained that he, Rick Sawyer and a couple of the Councilors had been working on explaining their operating budget, which is Article 6 and also the Capital Reserve Fund, which is Article 5. They’ve come up with some comments meant to help explain to the public what they are doing.

Town of Bedford 2021 Operating Budget-Article 6

- The Town Council has the responsibility to propose a very conservative budget each March with the goal of achieving a stable tax rate, mitigating tax impact on an annual basis, and looking forward past the current year.
- We do not want to underestimate the rate that will be readjusted/finalized in the fall each year.
- Total town appropriations increased from 2020 by 0.85% or \$269,169.

Town of Bedford 2021 Operating Budget-Article 6

- 2021 Budget/Tax rate increase from finalized 2020 rate of \$4.24 is primarily due to the following:
- First Budgetary Meeting in January**

	Cost	Rate
Debt service increase for the last road bond approved by residents in 2014	\$ 895,981	\$ 0.22
Bond was sold prior to the pandemic & repayment cannot be postponed		
NH Retirement system rate increase	\$ 309,111	\$ 0.08
Net revenues used to reduce 2020 tax rate (lost revenue + grants)	\$ 287,100	\$ 0.07
No bond premium in 2021 (non-recurring)	\$ 280,000	\$ 0.07
Health Insurance 7.5% premium increase	\$ 230,221	\$ 0.06
Lost one time tax relief	\$ 191,784	\$ 0.05
Loss of Rooms & Meals revenue from the state	\$ 175,382	\$ 0.04
Local school district contribution	\$ 65,860	\$ 0.02
NH State Highway Block Grant revenue loss	\$ 58,396	\$ 0.01
All other tax rate impacts	\$ 60,000	\$ 0.01
Reduced Capital Reserve appropriation from taxation	\$ (396,305)	\$(0.10)
Projected Tax Rate = \$4.77	Subtotal \$ 2,157,530	\$ 0.53

Town of Bedford 2021 Operating Budget-Article 6

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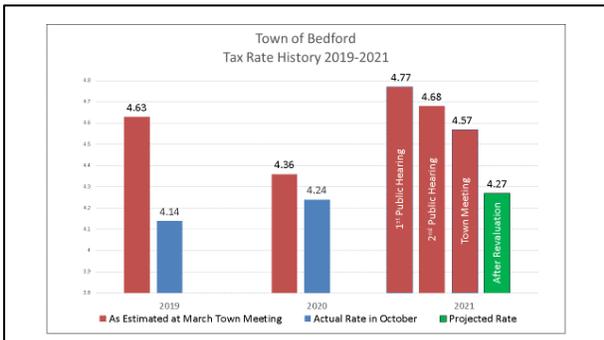
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Loss of Rooms & Meals revenue from the state	\$ 175,382	\$ 0.04
Local school district contribution	\$ 65,860	\$ 0.02
NH State Highway Block Grant revenue loss	\$ 58,396	\$ 0.01
All other tax rate impacts	\$ 60,000	\$ 0.01
Reduced Capital Reserve appropriation from taxation	\$ (396,305)	\$(0.10)
Projected Tax Rate = \$4.77	Subtotal \$ 2,157,530	\$ 0.53

Town of Bedford 2021 Operating Budget-Article 6

- Second Budgetary Meeting in January**

	Cost	Rate
Revenue increase from fund balance	\$ 250,000	\$(0.06)
Decrease of cost of Police vehicles	\$ 142,892	\$(0.04)
Change a PT Planner position to FT	\$ 10,720	\$ 0.01
Projected Tax Rate = \$4.68	Subtotal \$ 403,612	\$(0.09)
- Proposed Changes at March Town Meeting**

NH State Municipal Grant revenue loss added back	\$ 200,000	\$(0.05)
NH State Rooms & Meals revenue loss added back	\$ 175,000	\$(0.04)
SRO Revenue from SAU25 added back	\$ 58,481	\$(0.01)
COLA (Cost of Living) Removed	\$ (44,375)	\$(0.01)
Projected Tax Rate = \$4.57	Subtotal \$ 477,856	\$(0.11)



Town of Bedford 2021 Capital Reserve Fund-Article 5

- Insurmountable safety and security deficiencies of the current facility compromises the efficient execution of the missions of the Police and Fire departments in providing for the safety and security of the public, our employees, and critical infrastructure.
- We currently are unable to comply with several Federal, State, and National Accreditation Standards which would provide the citizens of Bedford with the accountability they deserve.
- The Facilities Design and Build line item of \$2,000,000 is intended for the purchase of land and developing plans for a Police Station and a Fire Substation. Three locations are currently being evaluated. Although accounted for as an allocation of funds for budget reporting, this money is intended for investment in assets, that will provide long term value to the town.
- If we do not purchase property soon, those parcels may not remain available, and the cost would likely increase. For various reasons, the town was not able to acquire 3 potential parcels that we have reviewed in the last 18 months. Frankly, attractive locations are limited.

Town of Bedford 2021 Capital Reserve Fund-Article 5

- Both Police and Fire facilities at the Safety Complex do not meet the current needs of our town
- 1994
 - Population of Bedford was @12,500
 - Police staff 28
 - Fire staff 21, service calls 1,206, sleeping space for 3
- 2021
 - Population of Bedford is @24,000
 - Police staff 55
 - Fire staff 41, service calls 2,976, sleeping space for 7

Town of Bedford 2021 Capital Reserve Fund-Article 5

- Trying to retrofit or modify the Safety Complex is not feasible because
 - It would be cost prohibitive due to insufficient space that is already inadequate for current public safety staff
 - Offers no expansion possibilities
 - Lacks necessary security features for the protection of the public and staff
- By moving the Police Department from the current Safety Complex
 - Becomes possible to expand the footprint of the Fire Department
 - Becomes possible to move the Planning Department from the Town Offices
 - Creates more useable space at the Town Offices
 - There are no plans of any other expansion of facilities at this time
- Prior to creating designs, it is necessary to control a suitable site
 - We are proposing to transfer allocated funds in the Unallocated Funds to provide for land acquisition
 - This uses low interest earning cash for investment in a scarce asset
 - We are keeping with Town Policy of using access reserves for capital investment
 - We will continue to maintain an adequate fund balance allowing the town to meet cash flow requirements that include monthly school and county tax payments

Town of Bedford 2021 Capital Reserve Fund-Article 5

- Unallocated Fund Balance has been built up from higher than expected
 - Motor Vehicle Registrations
 - Ambulance Service fees
 - Interest earned
 - Other non-property tax revenues
- We strive to minimize the impact of highly fluctuating revenues (taxes) through more exact forecasts of non-property tax revenues.
- 98.5% of 2020 taxes have been collected to date.

Chairman Gilbert went through the slides and explained each one. Their plan going forward is to run this on BCTV, social media, and Town website. They are going to finish up the walk-thru videos with the Police Chief and Fire Chief and will post those also. They will have handouts at the Town Meeting and he and Rick are contemplating doing a PSA.

Councilor Stevens wanted to know what the plan was for the other property they own. Chairman Gilbert stated that it has been talked about and is part of the three parcels they are looking at, but they haven't gotten to the point of making a decision about which one to go with. They have to have the money first before they do anything. Councilor Stevens stated that they already own that property. Chairman Gilbert stated that the only thing they could think about putting there would be a Fire substation. Councilor Stevens was concerned that they have a plan for that property; should they purchase another property. They purchased that property with the intent of putting a substation there and now they are just playing landlord; they have property value just sitting there. Mr. Sawyer thought it was important to recognize that they still may recommend building a Fire substation on that piece of property. It all depends on which other parcels are available to them; whether they are big enough to build a Police station with the Fire station attached to it or not. Depending on where the property is located, it may not make sense to build a Fire station where the Police station ends up going just because of the coverage areas that the Fire Chief is adamant about trying to serve. It may be that they still build a Fire substation on that piece, but if not and they build a Fire substation with a Police station on the same parcel, he's sure the Council would recommend selling that piece and use that income to offset these costs. Right now they haven't determined what site they can acquire. They have no appraisals or any of that stuff. All of that would be done after Town Meeting once the money is available to them to take the next steps and identify which parcel they will

actually acquire. Councilor Stevens wanted to know about where the current Safety Complex is and if they have a value for that property and is selling that property something that has been discussed. Mr. Sawyer stated that all of those options were reviewed by the Harriman Associates Architects they hired three years and the team that was put together. They looked at options for every building they have and getting rid of them all or moving all or expanding on that, but the plan at this point based on the facilities subcommittee of the Council, the Safety Complex would remain the main Fire Station, Police moves out, the Fire Department is able to acquire the space they need for the additional locker rooms, storage space, and administration space. They would bring Planning over to the Safety Complex, so all of the core permitting processes would be done at one place. The plan is to keep that building and maximize its usage for Fire, DPW Administration, and the Planning Department as well as the Building Department. Councilor Stevens wanted to know if there was a possibility that they would be utilizing three different properties for Fire and Police and Mr. Sawyer responded absolutely. As a subcommittee, their goal is to try and build the Police and Fire substation together to maximize the savings for the Town, but it all depends on where the parcels are available to them and which ones they can acquire. Councilor Stevens wanted to know if they had an estimate on what it would cost to build a new facility. Mr. Sawyer stated that all of those estimates are from the Harriman study. They have not contracted with any other professionals to give them new estimates. Those numbers are all available on the Town website under Town Manager. Chairman Gilbert stated that that's the next logical step to get that point of how much square footage they need; what the purchase price of the property is, what square footage they need, and then they will get to that point, but they aren't there yet. Councilor Stevens stated that that is where she has an issue, because they are not just signing on to the \$2m for the land acquisition and the design, but they have this unknown cost for the facility. It's not that she is against redoing the facilities, it's they don't know what they are spending money on.

Councilor Ricciardi thought the intention of this was to be very transparent to the public and to the residents. That it's an open discussion and that this money, in a way, could be looked at as a savings account as an asset. It hasn't been determined the best use of it, but with the land being very scarce, any land they do acquire becomes an asset to the Town. Chairman Gilbert agreed and stated that if they don't acquire the land they can't build the buildings. It doesn't make sense to do nothing. Chairman Duschatko stated that if they don't acquire the land they can't design the building.

Chairman Gilbert stated that if they stay with what they've got it's not going to work. They have to move forward. They've outgrown that facility and they need to do something different and the only way to do it is to start the process. The process is acquiring the land and then they go and decide what they need. Councilor Stevens restated that it's not that she doesn't believe that there is a need, but she sees an issue in asking the taxpayers to spend the \$2m and then not be able to tell them what they might need in addition to that \$2m. They are basically saying "let us use the \$2m, we are going to have to come back to you for some more money, but we don't know how much that is." Chairman Gilbert stated that that's what they did with the high school too. Councilor Radke stated that's how it works. At each level they will make that decision whether to go forward or not, but

their job is to present the information and give them the opportunity to be informed so they can make an informed decision. Chairman Gilbert added that if they don't start the process they aren't going to get anywhere with anything. Councilor Stevens stated that they've already started the process with buying the land for the substation. That's where she's scratching her head. They've kind of started to go down this road and she feels like no one really knows exactly what they want or what will work best and so they keep taking these turns without anything that's really decisive about what they actually want. That's where she keeps hitting a wall on jumping on board with this. Councilor Ricciardi thought it was really just to be transparent to the public and get their input and you have to be able to show them something to get their feedback. It's just good planning for the Town.

Chairman Gilbert stated that he wasn't involved in the purchase of the property on Sunset Lane, but since they bought it they haven't done anything with it. He thought they needed to do this. They are going to be transparent and get input from the Town when they come up with a plan, but you have to buy the property first before they know what kind of plan they are going to do.

Councilor Radke stated that the purchase of the property on Sunset Lane was specifically for a Fire station and over the years where they are today is they need something bigger to accommodate the Police Department. As real estate goes up and they were to sell that they would make some money off of it. Over this time they've collected rent on it, so it hasn't been a total loss. Chairman Gilbert stated that in the beginning, the Town voted down putting a substation there. Mr. Sawyer clarified that the Fire substation didn't have a site determined and it was put on the ballot with a figure to buy a piece of property and build a building and that didn't get the full 2/3 that were needed. It was after that vote was turned down that the Town Council acquired the parcel, so they are now doing what the citizens want them to do. They are trying to acquire the parcel and then bring forward the full construction costs.

Councilor Duschatko pointed out that the study was done to identify sites for this Fire substation many years ago. Out of the 20 sites they looked at, the only site they didn't even look at was the site that ended up being purchased and better sites in hindsight went by the boards and had gone to other uses.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Public Session – February 10, 2021

MOTION by Councilor Radke that the Bedford Town Council approve the minutes of the February 10, 2021 Public Session. Seconded by Councilor Carter. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 7-0.

7. TOWN MANAGER REPORT

- 1) March 9th – Local Election Day, 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM, Bedford High School.
March 10th – Budgetary Town Meeting, 7:00 PM, Bedford High School.

- 2) Absentee ballot applications and sample ballots for the March 10th Election are available from the Town Clerk or her website as well as all other Election information.
- 3) The Library team has completed a Voter's Guide based on responses provided by the candidates for the open town and school positions. Copies are available at the Library and Town Office Building or online at: <https://bedfordnhlibrary.org/>
- 4) Town Meeting Handout is on the Town website under the Town Manager's page.
- 5) The last day to register to vote or to make name and address changes prior to the March 9th Election is Saturday, February 27, 2021. The Town Office will be open on Saturday, February 27, 2021, 11:30 AM – Noon. Residents may also register to vote at the polls on Election Day.
- 6) As a reminder political signs are not permitted in any traffic island or on any town owned land without approval of the Town Council.
- 7) PFAS – NHDES and Saint Gobain are testing private wells in southeastern Bedford now that the PFAS standards have been adopted into law. It is unknown how long it will take before we know what solutions will be proposed. If you have received a request for well testing it is critical that you sign the agreement and return the paperwork as soon as possible.
- 8) COVID-19 Pandemic – Bedford has seen a drop in our number of cases with 31 current positive cases. It is my understanding that our current cases are a result of community spread as well as some spread in long term care facilities. We need to continue to be as cautious as possible when out in the public. I strongly encourage all residents to follow the CDC and State of NH recommendations for protecting yourself including wearing a face covering and washing hands as often as possible.
- 9) Drought – Bedford and a much of southeastern NH remains in the condition defined as "Abnormally Dry". Unfortunately northwestern NH has fallen back to abnormally dry to moderate drought conditions after having been cleared from the drought.
- 10) April 17th – Clean up Bedford Spring Event, 9 AM - 3 PM.

Mr. Sawyer stated that this was the regular meeting for Councilor Stevens. He thanked her for her two terms on the Council and all of the work she's done. She was a good go-to person for the voice of what's going on in the community and would share those with him. Her years as vice chair were very helpful to the Department Heads and the Manager. He wished her all the best.

8. COUNCILOR COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE UPDATES

Councilor Greazzo stated that Melissa was going to be missed.

Councilor Stevens stated that the ZBA met last week. They had one application to allow a detached apartment that they denied, but she thought they were going to work things out with the homeowner. She stated that it was her last meeting and it was bittersweet. If she could have run for both Council and School Board she would have, because she really enjoys the time that she spends there, helping the residents, and working with the Department Heads. She thanked the Department Heads: Chief Bryfonski, Chief Hunter, Sally, Tammy, Jane in Recreation who is always a hoot to talk to, Bill, and Becky who has been like a friend over the past few years, Jeff who is the funniest, smartest and genuine

guy you could have working in DPW, Mary Ann and congratulations on her retirement, and Dawn and Rick, you two make everything happen and is so appreciative for everything they do for the Town. She thanked all the Councilors she's worked with. She's learned something from every one of them, even if you don't agree, she's learned something and she's able to turn around and share it with the residents. She finds that to be helpful, especially in this community where everyone is so tight. To the residents, her friends and family, thank you so much for allowing her the privilege to sit there. It really is a labor of love. If you ever need help in the future with something to do with the Town, you can go see her, because she loves to help you out and she will continue to do that.

Councilor Duschatko stated that at their last meeting, the Planning Board reviewed the proposed zoning amendments and moved them to the ballot. They also reviewed the citizens' petition zoning amendment and the Planning Board chose not to support it. He stated that the Planning Board's highlight in early February was approving the proposed Wirebelt facility. Unfortunately, right after they approved it, they announced that they were looking at another site in Manchester, which is an existing building. He thanked Melissa for all of her help over the past six years. They started running together six years ago and their still continuing to run. He's up for re-election on the Council and Melissa is going to the School Board. He wished her luck in the election and knows that she will become a fine School Board member as she was a fine Councilor.

Councilor Ricciardi stated that she's championing for property tax relief. The State has routinely kept more than 60% of Meals & Rooms revenues. In 1993, the State made another promise to catch up on the lost revenue sharing arrangement by dedicating 75% of any increase in total revenues back to the Towns up to \$5m, but they haven't been able to keep that promise. 10 of the last 12 years, the Legislature has put a provision in the State budget that suspends the revenue sharing and increases. This is a fiscally responsible way for the State to start keeping its promises to local taxpayers. By supporting SB99 by returning the 40% promised to tax revenues, it will provide tax relief to all of the homeowners in NH and businesses. She's asking that residents reach out to their Legislators and support this bill so that you can help her help you. She stated that it had been a true pleasure working with Melissa. She has learned a lot from her. She was very gracious when she came on as a new Councilor and thought that she was going to do outstanding on the School Board and she wished her the best.

Councilor Radke stated that she was able to watch a webinar about the vaccination program in NH. She wanted people to know that if they've already signed upon the VAMS program, in NH they are contacting those people who have registered and would be getting their vaccination sometime in April, and they are going to move those people up. If you get a call, answer it, because it might be someone from the State scheduling your appointment to get you vaccinated much sooner than later. They will leave a message. She wished good luck to all of the candidates that were running both on the School and Town side. She thanked Denise for championing SB99. She thanked Melissa and enjoyed working with her and thanked her for her service to the Town.

Councilor Carter talked about the CUB clean-up day on April 17th, 9-3 PM.



He thanked all of those running for office on the School and Town side and wished them luck. He wished Melissa best of luck in her future endeavors.

Chairman Gilbert mentioned the EFJH partnering with Councilor Carter for clean-up day. He thanked Chief Hunter for helping them with their ice skating rink at the EFJH. He thought the season might be over, because it's been a little too warm. He mentioned that there have been a lot of lambs being born. They are doing an Easter event, so check the website. He thanked Melissa for her service. It's been a pleasure working with her. He knows she's going to do very well and she will be on the School Board.

9. NON-PUBLIC – RSA 91-A:3 (if necessary)

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to adjourn by Councilor Carter. Seconded by Councilor Radke. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 7-0.

The meeting ended at 8:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Boufford