

**TOWN OF BEDFORD**  
**BUDGETARY TOWN MEETING**  
**March 10, 2021**

The Bedford Budgetary Town Meeting was held on Wednesday, March 10, 2021 at the Bedford High School auditorium. Present on the stage were Town Moderator Bill Klein, David Gilbert (TC Chairman), Denise Ricciardi (TC Vice Chair), Councilors: Bill Carter, Bill Duschatko, Phil Greazzo, Lori Radke, and Melissa Stevens, Rick Sawyer – Town Manager, Tammy Penny – Finance Director, and Michael Courtney – Town Attorney.

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

Moderator Klein introduced on the stage Dave Gilbert – Council Chairman, Denise Ricciardi – Vice Chairwoman, Rick Sawyer – Town Manager, Tammy Penny – Finance Director, Michael Courtney – Town Attorney, Bill Duschatko – Town Councilor, Melissa Stevens – Town Councilor, Phil Greazzo – Town Councilor, Lori Radke – Town Councilor, and Bill Carter – Town Councilor.

Moderator Klein mentioned the prior evening's newly elected positions: Bill Duschatko – Town Council, Kelleigh Murphy – Town Council, Sue Thomas – Town Council, Ken Peterson – Trustee of the Trust Funds, Walter Gallo – Library Trustee, Jerry Hanauer – Library Trustee, and Becki Kuhns – Supervisor of the Checklist.

Moderator Klein thanked everyone for their efforts: Sally Kellar - Town Clerk, Gloria MacVane - Deputy Town Clerk, the Supervisors of the Checklist including Becki Kuhns, Barbara Chagnon, and Hugh Donovan, Bob Goodale – Assistant Town Moderator and Keith Ballingall who was manning the unmasked room.

Moderator Klein explained that as a result of COVID, they have two rooms that are part of this meeting tonight, the Auditorium and a satellite room in the Commons where those choosing to attend without masks are located.

Moderator Klein stated if anyone makes an amendment they must put it in writing and he would get a copy. He explained that they would be going through each of the articles, but they would not be reading the whole article as some of them were quite lengthy and they will accept them as written. He thanked Jeff Peach who handled all of the audio visual connection between the two rooms. Anyone who wants to speak at the mics, are to have their voter card with them. If someone wants to make an amendment, they will be discussing that amendment only and then voting on that amendment. He's going to ask for a motion to restrict reconsideration after each article has been voted on to prevent a small group coming to the meeting late or if you leave and find out tomorrow that somebody changed the actions that were taken when you were here. Anyone speaking at the mic needs to clearly state their name and address. Anyone who has made a motion speaks to it first and then it's open for discussion.

**Article 4. – Conservation Fund Warrant Article**

**MOTION by Chairman Gilbert to move Article 4 as written in the Town Meeting Handout. Seconded by Councilor Ricciardi.**

Susan Tufts Moore, 27 Bedford Center Road, encouraged everyone to vote in favor of this warrant article. Bedford is fast approaching buildout and this opportunity for a little bit more money in the Conservation Land Fund won't exist much longer.

**Vote taken – Motion passed.**

**MOTION by Paul Brock to restrict reconsideration. Seconded by John Graham. Vote taken – Motion passed.**

**Article 5. – Capital Reserve Fund-Projects and Equipment**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$3,049,050 to be deposited into various Capital Reserve Funds. \$947,050 to come from new taxation, \$2,000,000 to come from Fund Balance Reserves and \$102,000 to come from the Sewer fund.

**MOTION by Chairman Gilbert to move Article 5 as written in the Town Meeting Handout. Seconded by Councilor Ricciardi.**

Robert Kant, 76 Ministerial Road, referred to the \$2m and wanted to know how many available pieces of land does the Town currently have that they need to sell and what's the current market value of those properties. Mr. Sawyer stated that he didn't know if they had identified any properties to sell, so there is no current value to tell him. Mr. Kant stated that he heard in some Town meeting a few weeks ago that there were properties to sell. Mr. Sawyer stated that he's unaware of any properties the Council or the Town Administration has identified for sale. Chairman Gilbert stated that that was correct. They do not have anything at this point in time. Mr. Kant wanted to clarify that the Town had no excess properties or no excess properties they want to sell. Chairman Gilbert responded that that was a correct statement. They don't have any excess properties that they want to sell at this point in time today. Mr. Kant wanted to know what they do with the excess properties. Chairman Gilbert stated that they don't have any excess properties to sell at this point in time. Mr. Kant wanted to know if the Town had excess properties. Mr. Sawyer stated that he wasn't aware of any excess properties that have been identified.

Joseph Hoebeke, 23 Jackson Square, spoke in support of Article 5, especially the allocation of \$2m for a facilities design build. He is the police chief in a nearby town (Hollis) and the Police Department has about 30 employees in total. They operate in a facility that is about 10,500 sq. ft. Bedford operates in a facility that's about 8,900 sq. ft. and they have double the workforce that Hollis does. This is a problem for the Police Department and it's also a problem for the Fire Department. He has the unique perspective of being a chief for an agency that is nationally accredited. With National accreditation, comes certain requirements in terms of meeting standards of compliance. Some of those standards of compliance apply to facilities. The current facility won't meet those requirements and that's problematic. He's a taxpayer and resident and he wants a police agency that functions under best practices and meets very rigorous National standards.

Although some might view this as an expenditure they don't want to agree to, it is a very logical wise-use of money from the Unallocated Fund Balance in order to purchase land in order to build a functional police facility thereby allowing the Fire Department to expand for their needs. He asked for their consideration and support in supporting Article 5.

Robert Kant, 76 Ministerial Road made the following amendment:

**MOTION by Robert Kant that they reduce the \$2m down to \$1m. It was seconded.**

Mr. Kant thought \$2m was a little excessive. With everything going on right now. It's supposed to be a very conservative budget. To come forth with \$2m for land he didn't think it was the right time. He thought maybe a year or two down the road. Maybe buy some of it now and some in the future, but \$2m is way too much money.

Chairman Gilbert thought they needed to understand that yes, they've been impacted by COVID, but at this point in time they have an opportunity to purchase property that might not otherwise be available right now. If they have to come back in a year or two, those properties might not be available and the cost would surely be a lot more. He thought it was the right thing to do to acquire property now and plan ahead. These facilities don't meet our requirements. They've stuffed everybody in there since 1994. They've had at least twice as many employees and the amount of Fire calls has almost tripled and the square footage hasn't changed. It's a problem and they need to fix it. That's what they are attempting to do; acquire property and start the process.

Bill Foote wanted to reduce it by \$2m. He didn't disagree with what the chief said; it's actually very true. He talked with Councilor Gilbert last night and they had a nice conversation about money. It's not a question of is it a good idea to buy the land, the question is why would it come out of the Reserve Fund. That's taxes that are collected and not spent and should be returned to the taxpayer and show up as revenue. He mentioned that Town Manager Sawyer had said that taxes went up on the Town side this year, because they didn't have the revenues. They had the revenues, they just decided they were going to plow it into land instead of reducing the tax rate first. He thought it was a bad faith effort to get the Safety Complex built with money that belongs to the taxpayer first. He wanted to amend the amendment. He wanted to reduce it \$2m and return it to the Unreserved Fund and let the Town Council move forth with some kind of bond next year that would provide for not only the land, but also the design and possible construction of the Safety Complex. Right now they are just spending \$2m because they can or because they want to and doesn't think that's the way they should do it.

Chris Ware, 44 Essex Road, wanted to clarify that the \$2m was for land and design only and the response was yes. Mr. Ware wanted to know if they had an idea of what the proposed building was going to cost. Chairman Gilbert stated not at this time, because they need to acquire a piece of property, so they can decide what to put there. They are going to tell everyone what they are doing every step of the way. That's the way it has to be, because once they get a piece of property, they have to look down the road of bonding

and everyone has to be involved in that. It's not a short process. Mr. Ware thought it was tough that they are asking the voters to approve this money for a facility that they have no idea how much it's even going to cost. It could be 8, 10, 12 million. It's a 7% increase in taxes just this first go around. It worries him that when they look for a building how much their taxes are going to increase. He thought they had to be very thoughtful at this time. They need to look at where the revenue is coming from and where their expenses are going to. He knows that Market & Main got shot down, the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase, which would have been about \$500k of additional revenue. They are in the middle of a pandemic. He's the president of two local associations and they went through every budget line item and they cut as many expenses as they could and looked if they could raise revenue and they couldn't in the middle of a pandemic. He thought they needed to be thoughtful at this time and to put a lot of this burden on the Bedford taxpayers to have to come to the table especially when they don't know what they are going to building for a facility. Heh would like to see the \$2m extracted from everything else and vote on it separately.

Moderator Klein reminded everyone that comments should be made through him and not going back and forth with any other individuals.

Rick Larson, 91 Sebbins Pond Drive, asked the Council what they knew about the history of the substation on South River Rd. Chairman Gilbert wanted to clarify that he was referring to the property they own on Sunset Lane and Mr. Larson responded yes. He wanted to know if the Council knew the history of how that came about. Councilor Radke stated that she thought the year was about 2014. The Town Manager at the time was Steve Daly. They acquired that land for a possible Fire substation. That was the purpose of that building. Chairman Gilbert stated that was correct. At that time, the Council decided to buy the land to put a Fire substation there, but it did not come to pass. Mr. Larson stated that on January 6, 2011, the Town Council had a public hearing on the infrastructure bond for \$13.2m. \$50k of that bond was designated for the layout and design of the Fire substation. \$1.5m of that bond was dedicated to the construction of the Fire substation. On March 8, 2011, the voters approved a \$13.2m infrastructure bond. On February 27, 2013, the Town Council made a motion to add \$1m to the Fire substation. On October 9, 2013, the Town Council made a motion for the Fire substation land not to exceed \$288k from the Land Reserve Fund and \$300k from the infrastructure bond. On March 11, 2014, the Town Council came up with a proposal for a bond for \$3.8m, which would only be \$700k over that \$2.5m that would be used for the Fire substation.

Moderator Klein told Mr. Larson that there was a question in terms of what he's talking about; it doesn't appear to be related to the amendment to reduce this article by \$1m now. They appreciate the history, however, could he tell them how this relates to the amendment before he goes any further. Mr. Larson stated that the taxpayers had already paid over \$2.5m that was supposed to go towards the Fire substation on bonds they are still paying for and wanted to know where the money was. Mr. Sawyer stated that he wasn't Town Manager at the time, but his understanding was the Council through various votes reallocated those funds to other projects including Library work and road work as well as work within the TIF district.

Mr. Larson continued and stated that on November 19, 2014, the Town Council authorized the Town Manager to sign closing documents for 4 Sunset Lane. There was no Town Council motion for additional funds. They had already approved the \$588k not to exceed.

Moderator Klein told Mr. Larson again that what he's presenting to them, he can't see the direct relationship with the discussion on this article. Mr. Larson stated that the Town Council asked the taxpayers to support a \$13.2m bond and specified amounts to go towards the Fire substation. Subsequent Councils reallocated the money and now they are asking for more money they've already paid and still paying on. He wanted to make sure everyone was aware of that before they vote on this. Moderator Klein stated that the Town Manager indicated that the money did not go for that intended use. It was used for something else, which the Council can do with most of the money they have. They can use it for other projects. They are not restricted to use it for something specific. Mr. Sawyer stated that it was an infrastructure bond and there were various infrastructure projects identified and they ended up reallocating those through public hearing processes. They did do some design work for the Fire substation and they did acquire the parcel at 4 Sunset Lane and there was a subsequent bond put on the ballot in 2014 that did not pass. It did not receive the 2/3 required, so the station couldn't move forward at that time. That was also the year that the \$30m road bond authorization was on the same ballot. The voters supported that, but turned down the Fire substation.

Edward Comiskey, 15 Cooper Lane, Apt. 201, wanted clarification that the amount that was originally presented, which is \$2m, was the Council's estimate of what the acquisition of certain parcels of land that would be suitable for emergency use; what the market price would be at this time. Chairman Gilbert stated that was correct. Mr. Comiskey wanted to know if the proposed \$2m amount was a reallocation of already collected funds and wanted to know the impact on this year's tax rate. Mr. Sawyer stated that there was no impact. The way the article was currently written, \$2m would come from Fund Balance Reserves. Mr. Comiskey wanted to know when they vote on the article if any wording could be added to restrict the \$2m to this specific purpose alone. Mr. Sawyer stated that it's specifically written in the article that it's for the facilities design build. It's the Council's intent to use it for the first phase of the facilities plan, which is the acquisition of land for either a combination Police/Fire building or a standalone Police building/standalone Fire building on separate parcels.

Rick Larson, 91 Sebbins Pond Drive, stated that the point he's trying to make is the way it's set up, what's to keep a future Council from reallocating this money to another project like they did with the \$2.5m already. Chairman Gilbert stated that they want to do this and they are going to do this. That's what it's for, Police and Fire. He didn't see any reason to change that.

Bill Foote, 14 Pheasant Run, stated that it's clear they see no reason to change what they've already decided, but the fact is they are taking \$2m of money that should go to reduce taxes first, to buy something they just want to do, just because they want to do it. He's got no problem with a safety complex reconstruction, but that's something that

should be bonded and the taxpayers should get their own separate vote on it. Not melted into an account; use some of that money form the Reserve Fund and just do what they want. Councilor Duschatko thought Mr. Foote was confused. Mr. Foote stated that he was not confused. Councilor Duschatko thought Mr. Foote was confused on how the School system works...Mr. Foote stated that he wasn't confused about how the School system works and how the Town works. They are taking \$2m form the Reserve Fund and just want to buy property with it. Councilor Duschatko stated that he didn't want to sit and argue with Mr. Foote who obviously has an ability far exceeding the rest of us to make judgements. Mr. Foote wanted to know what that had to do with anything. It's not him; he's just a member on a board. That's obnoxious. Moderator Klein asked both of them to refrain from any personal attacks. Mr. Foote wanted to know at what point they considered using Unreserved Funds to make this land purchase and was there any consideration of returning it for taxes. Ms. Radke wanted to know if it would be helpful if they explained what the Unassigned Fund Balance was and how it's used. Some of that was returned to the taxpayers this year. She wanted to know if that could be helpful to explain that process. Mr. Foote stated that they don't have to explain it to them. He gets it. Councilor Radke stated that he may understand it, but maybe other people don't.

Tammy Penny, Finance Director, explained that in 2020, the Town used \$2.3m of that Fund Balance to reduce taxes. It can be used for one-time purchases, so this does meet that requirement. Mr. Foote stated that his contention was that it was bad faith, because the place you collect the money from is the taxpayers. If they want to go and do stuff afterwards, come back with a bond and make them support that vote. He would vote for a safety complex without hesitation, but he didn't like them pulling money from the Reserve Fund. It should go to reduce taxes first before they come up with ideas how to spend it. Ms. Radke stated that that would be easy if they had a parcel of land like with the school. They had that parcel of land and it was easy to put forth a bond, because they already had the land. They are not at that point yet. They have no place to put the proposed Police station and they are asking the voters to allow them some flexibility. Mr. Foote stated that's why they elect the Council. To go through that process and come up with it. Not to submarine money out of accounts to buy what they want. Ms. Radke stated that they can't put anything forward unless they have a place to put it. Mr. Foote stated yes you can. They can assign a value. They could make a bond and make the voters support it or not. Ms. Radke stated they have no place to put it. Mr. Foote stated so buy a pig in a poke and see what happens. Ms. Rake stated they can't it without the funds. They need the funds to buy the land then they come back to the voters with a plan just like they did in 2005 when they put forth the high school. It's going to be the same process. Mr. Foote stated to stop dragging him into the School side. This is Town side stuff. Councilor Radke stated that she was just using it as an example. Mr. Foote stated that it's a poor example, because the Council is doing this all on their own. The School stuff was independent of everything. This should be independent also.

Councilor Ricciardi stated that she hears what Mr. Foote is saying and she appreciates everything and everyone coming out. She is also a taxpayer as are all her colleagues. They work really hard and fine-tuned everything and did everything the best they could. For a really long time...Mr. Foote interrupted and stated nobody cares. Moderator Klein

asked Mr. Foote to not interrupt any speakers. Councilor Ricciardi continued and stated that for a long time they just kept kicking the can and not fixing things. It is not a want. It is a true need. There are so many structural deficiencies at the Police and Fire station, which also happens to house the Public Works Department. It's not private, it's not secure, they don't have proper interview space, the command vehicles outside being ruined, the Sally Port is too small, it's unsecure, unsecured locker rooms, and they can't do proper interviews when it's a juvenile. It's so crowded in there. They have bathrooms with files stacked, because there's nowhere to put them. This is by no means a want. It's a true need. The communications center is so unsecure, vulnerable, and inadequate for the Police and Fire. One of the most egregious things of all is the ongoing sewer and plumber issues where the Police and Fire have to go outside in the freezing cold and use a port-a-potty. That's not okay. Mr. Foote wanted to know what that had to do with the \$2m. Chairman Gilbert asked Mr. Foote to please stop. Mr. Foote wanted to know stop what.

Councilor Greazzo stated that the \$2m is in their savings account. They have more money in their savings account and they can either buy land with the money that they currently have or they can mortgage it with a bond. They can own it outright and real estate is really hot right now, so your values will go up and earn money or you can bond and pay interest and you will lose money. You need to have a facility for the Police Department, which then expands room for the Fire Department, which then expands room for other departments. They don't necessarily need to be building new business space for other employees given the fact that they can remotely work these days. They need a physical building for the Police Department. Mr. Foote stated that he wasn't disputing that whatsoever. Councilor Greazzo stated that the dispute is how to fund it. They can bond it or they can pay for it themselves. That's what the argument is. Mr. Foote agreed. Councilor Greazzo stated that he appreciates his input and everyone's input. It's a savings account and they have more savings. They put money towards lowering the tax rate. This doesn't affect the tax rate. If they bond it, it is going to raise the tax rate. Mr. Foote stated that it doesn't affect the tax rate, because that \$2m would reduce the tax rate by \$0.40. Councilor Greazzo stated that they wouldn't use it to reduce the tax rate, so it still wouldn't reduce the tax rate. They used money to reduce the tax rate, so this bond that would be proposed in some other future election would then now cost more money for whatever parcels of land they could buy today. They can use the money they currently have in your pocket and buy the property less expensively or they can wait until next year and bond it and buy the property more expensively plus then pay interest on it, which will then increase your tax rate.

Sue Thomas, 36 Glen Road, stated that she was on the School Board when the high school was built. She had given this a lot of thought because of the fact that that tax rate was going up, however, it's virtually impossible to go out and purchase a piece of property if you don't have the money to do it. The seller knows that and now the sellers in Town will now know how much the Town has to purchase land, which is a problem. You can't put a bond out with an amount for land if you don't know how much it's going to cost. Unfortunately it's the first step they need to take. She thought the \$2m is saying they need new facilities for the Police and Fire Department and this is the first step. They need to go out and publicize this, because people don't understand just how much of a critical

need this is. Everyone in Bedford likes quality. They like quality education, quality services in Town, but they have to educate the community about the need for this. Unfortunately they need the piece of land. When she was on the School Board, the Superintendent looked at other pieces of land. We didn't love the piece of land that the high school was ultimately built on, except they did own it, which made the whole process a lot easier when they went out and bonded the building. People might think it's working backwards and they should do this first, but she agrees with everything Councilor Greazzo said. They have to do this now with the savings in our bank. When she was on the School Board everyone always asked why they weren't saving for the future; why didn't they have the money there; why are they always coming to the taxpayers when you need something. The School side cannot put money away the way the Town can. It's legally not possible to do. The Town has this mechanism. It's a tough year. COVID has really been hard on everyone, but they still need to have some progress in Town.

Becky Soule, 327 New Boston Road, wanted to know what happened to the land on Sunset Lane. Chairman Gilbert stated that they still own it. Ms. Soule wanted to know why that property can't be used. Chairman Gilbert stated that it could be. They are leasing it to a company next door right now. It is part of the equation. They might be able to put something there. Ms. Soule stated that they already own that land. Chairman Gilbert stated they own the property, and they can't make a plan to buy something and do something until they have the money in the bank. Once they have that they have options. Right now they can't do anything with it. Ms. Soule stated that they already own the property. Chairman Gilbert stated they do; they could sell it or they could put a Fire substation there. They have an option, but they can't make anything happen until they have the money in the bank. Ms. Soule stated that Mr. Larson outlined previous bonds for a Fire station, purchase of land, building design, and funds were reallocated. She suggested they were putting the cart before the horse, and things need to happen a little bit more in conjunction with each other. She understands they may need a new safety complex or a new Police station so the Fire Department can expand, but they need to do it so that that actually passes and the funds are not reallocated. The \$2m is still costing them. It's taxpayer money. It has been over collected and it's still costing them, so stop saying that it's not costing them, because it is. It's their money. At some point it did cost them and it's not being returned to them. It's being used as a slush fund. Two years ago they had a turf field that got voted down and it was stuffed into the budget for the next year. She gets the feeling that the Council counts on people not showing up to this night to vote, so they can use their over collected taxes for whatever they want, and that needs to stop. Find a way to do it legitimately.

Robert Kant, 76 Ministerial Road, didn't dispute the fact that they are probably going to need a new safety complex, he disputes the way they are going about it. If they agree to this \$2m, he can almost guarantee that they are going to spend it on something else. [inaudible] The bond didn't pass last time. Now you are going to have \$2m for design and build on a piece of land [inaudible] He wanted to know if you really had to, couldn't they get the land from eminent domain. Mr. Sawyer stated that if they identify it as a critical need they could take it by eminent domain, but they would still have to pay fair market value for the land. They would still have to show the courts that they had that money in

the bank to be able to pay that as part of the eminent domain process. Mr. Kant wanted to know if it was possible to put a bid on a piece of land subject to it passing the voters then they've got the land upfront if it passes and if it doesn't you walk away and maybe you lose \$50k [inaudible]. Mr. Sawyers responded yes, that is a possibility, but they would have to have a landowner willing to take on that type of risk and hold the property when they might have other opportunities. That's why the Council thought this was the best way. Mr. Kant thought that the whole thing should be bonded [inaudible].

Edward Comiskey, 15 Cooper Lane, thought it seemed they were doing a history lesson on Sunset Lane when it was originally bought for a Fire substation. As one of the requirements for a Fire substation, he wanted to know wouldn't it be placed for the best response times when they are looking for a property to use. Chairman Gilbert stated that he would agree with that. Mr. Comiskey stated that he recalled from the whole history that the demographics of the Town indicated that Sunset Lane was a little outside of what would be the best [inaudible]. Chairman Gilbert responded at that time. Mr. Comiskey stated and still may be at this time. In looking to get the best parcel would be looking to get the best response times for the community [inaudible]. This is a proposal to use funds that have already been collected. The purpose is stated in the warrant article that it's for purchase and perhaps design allocation, so by the stated purposed it is solely for that. It's using what has already been collected and saved instead of deferring because if it's removed from this item it just remains where it stands. There is nothing without a separate article to reduce the tax rate. The Reserve Fund, it's already there. Either way, any change this year has no impact on this year's tax rate. Either they are going to spend the money or they aren't going to spend the money. Chairman Gilbert stated that was correct.

Danielle Basora, 22 Essex Road, wanted to explain the Unassigned Fund Balance. She wanted to clarify that a portion of Unassigned Fund Balance was calculated based on revenues and over revenues. Those can include motor vehicle registrations and receiving more of those in a year than what was expected. She works for a local community and motor vehicles have come in over revenue in almost every community in the area. Other over collected revenues include grants and other funds that the Town may have taken possession of throughout the year. Unassigned Fund Balance also includes short-term receivables, so money that has not yet been collected by the Town such as people who have not paid their taxes yet will still have their receivables counted when they are taking account of the Unassigned Fund Balance. The Unassigned Fund Balance is not just money that has been collected from taxpayers. It is money that belongs to the community and this meeting is the Council asking your permission as taxpayers to utilize that in this purpose. She thought it was important that they recognize that what Councils have done before this one are not the actions necessarily this Council will take. They have to trust that the people they have put in office most recently are the people that they trust with these decisions. She supports Article 5 and felt it was important for them to put forward good faith in allowing the money to go forward; not just for the purchase of land, but also the design.

**MOTION by John Graham to move the question. Seconded by Kelleigh Murphy. Vote taken – Motion passes.**

**Vote taken on the amendment to reduce the article by \$1m. – Motion fails.**

Chris Ware, 44 Essex Road, thought most of the discussion was around the \$2m.

**MOTION by Chris Ware that they extract the \$2m asked for land and planning for the Police and Fire facility from Article 5 and vote on it separately.**

Moderator Klein stated that they couldn't change it at this point in time; they could only vote it out. If he wants to make a motion, the intent would be to decrease the article by the \$2m. This body can't change and add another line item someplace else. It's not part of their agenda. Moderator Klein checked with the Town attorney and the advice from Counsel was that they could not create that 2<sup>nd</sup> article tonight, so it's either vote it out or keep it in. Mr. Ware stated that he didn't want to vote it out. He just thought all of the discussion was about it, so he just thought it would be easier to just vote on it outside of the other funds. He didn't want to decrease it, so he pulled his motion.

Moderator Klein explained that if anyone agreed with that, they would make a motion and vote it down and it would come back up separately at some point in the future. This body cannot take that action tonight.

Councilor Greazzo stated that \$2m is not the amount that the Town is willing to spend on a piece of property, so any developer out there that thinks they are going to get \$2m for their property, that's not what this is. They are looking to get it for much less and then have some design and improvement money left over to go along with it. If anybody wanted to make that friendly amendment to make it specific to the Police Station for this, that would be appropriate thing, but it's definitely not \$2m for property.

**Vote taken on Article 5 as presented – Motion passes.**

**MOTION by John Graham to restrict reconsideration. Seconded by Paul Brock. Vote taken – Motion passed.**

**Article 6. - Town Operating Budget**

Moderator Klein stated that the total appropriation as indicated in the handout is the sum of \$33,472,923. He noted that there was an asterisk – the sum of Articles 5 & 6 at this point since Article 5 has passed, is still accurate, and is a total of \$36,521, 973.

**MOTION by Chairman Gilbert to approve Article 6. Town Operating Budget as written in the Town Meeting handout. Seconded by Councilor Ricciardi.**

Chairman Gilbert stated that as a result of the introduction of the Governor's budget and work by Senator Ricciardi and others, as well as actions taken at the School Deliberative Session, and the Consumer Price Index being set in February, they can now make four

adjustments to the budget to lower the estimated tax rate. They have to be taken one at a time and are shown on page 6 of the handout.

**MOTION by Chairman Gilbert to amend Article 6 to add \$200k of NH State Municipal Grant revenue into the budget. Seconded by Councilor Ricciardi. Vote taken – Motion passes.**

**MOTION by Chairman Gilbert to amend Article 6 to add \$175k of NH State Room & Meals revenue into the budget. Seconded by Councilor Ricciardi. Vote taken – Motion passes.**

**MOTION by Chairman Gilbert to amend Article 6 to add \$58,481 of School Resource Officer revenue from SAU 25 into the budget. Seconded by Councilor Ricciardi. Vote taken – Motion passes.**

**MOTION by Chairman Gilbert to amend Article 6 to remove \$44,375 from various appropriation lines as the contractual Consumer Price Index threshold for granting the cost of living adjustment to our union members was not met. This amendment would reduce the general fund total appropriation of \$30,626,681 with a total appropriation of \$33,428,548. Seconded by Councilor Ricciardi. Vote taken – Motion passes.**

Moderator Klein stated that the operating budget as amended changes the total appropriation to \$33,428,548.

**Vote taken on Article 6 the Town Operating Budget – Motion passes.**

**MOTION by Chairman Gilbert to restrict reconsideration. Seconded by Councilor Ricciardi. Vote taken – Motion passes.**

Town Moderator Klein stated that they had approximately 70 people that checked in and no one showed at the masked area.

Chairman Gilbert acknowledged those Councilors coming off the Board.

He thanked Phil Greazzo for his dedication and service to the Town of Bedford as a Town Councilor. Phil served on the Council from 2018 to 2021. During his term on the Town Council, he served as Town Council liaison to the Historic District Commission and the Water & Sewer Advisory Committee. He also served as Town Council alternate liaison to the Planning Board, Historic District Commission, and the Conservation Commission. He thanked Phil for his service.

He thanked Melissa Stevens for her dedication and service to the Town of Bedford as a Town Councilor. Melissa served two terms on the Town Council. She was first elected to the Town Council in 2015 and was re-elected in 2018. She served as Vice Chair in 2018

and 2019. During her two terms on the Council, she served as Town Council liaison to the Historic District Commission and the BCTV Board. She also served as Town Council alternate liaison to the Planning Board, Energy Commission, Conservation Commission, and the Parks & Recreation Commission. She also served as a resident member on the Zoning Board of Adjustment. They are looking forward to her providing the same commitment and dedication to the Town in her new role as a School Board member. He presented Melissa Stevens with a plaque.

Councilor Ricciardi stated that as Vice Chair, she would like to recognize Dave Gilbert as Chairman for the past year with this plaque. Dave has been a very good leader especially during these really challenging times we've all had. He is truly not only a leader for the Town Council, but truly with the community with all of his extensive work at the Educational Farm at Joppa Hill. It's been an honor and a privilege to work with Dave and is looking forward to their continued work.

John Monson, 24 Wellesley Drive, stated that he knows they all tried very hard on their situation with COVID-19 to make this meeting intelligible to those that are hearing impaired, but a lot of the discussion that took place for someone who is seriously hearing impaired was impossible to follow. He hoped if they had a meeting like this again with everyone mumbling through their masks that somehow they can figure out a way to have either Bluetooth or some sort of screen in which people's speeches are reduced to words. Those of us who are badly hearing impaired could not follow most of the debate.

Moderator Klein thanked Mr. Monson and stated that they will do whatever they can.

Moderator Klein thanked everybody; it's been one heck of a year. He thanked everyone for cooperating and working together to make Bedford the wonderful place that it is.

Moderator Klein called for a motion to adjourn.

**MOTION by John Graham to adjourn at 8:14 pm. Seconded by Moderator Klein. Vote taken – Motion Passed.**

Submitted by:

---

Dawn Boufford, Executive Assistant

---

Sally Kellar, Town Clerk