

Minutes of the 2023 Budget Hearing February 13, 2023

Members Present: Lynn Sweet, Chairman, Brian Monahan, Chris Garcia

In Attendance: Matt Messenger, Greg Messenger, Randy Young, Michael Richard, Scott Whitehouse, Steve Johnson, Charles Burnham, Joann Brown, Liz Evans, Tom Heald, Betsy Cozine, Larisa Molloy, Jessie Copeland, Lindsay Aucella, Terri Marsh, Steve Goodspeed, Liza Witonis

The 2023 Budget Hearing was called to order at 6:00PM. Ms. Sweet welcomed all those in attendance. She announced that the hearing had been publicized in the Community Calendar, posted at the Town Hall, on the Town Website, and at the Post Office.

Ms. Sweet began with the reading of the Articles noting that Article 1 will be voted on in person on the 14th of March at the Town Hall. The remaining Articles 2-25 will be voted on at the Town Meeting Saturday, March 18, 2023.

2. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$390,000. for Capital Improvements (Drainage work, culverts, gravel and paving) of roads within the Town boundaries at the discretion of the Road Agent, as funding permits.

Matt Messenger commented he hopes to pave Canaan Road, Sloper Road, and a portion of Jo-Al Co Road.

There were no questions.

3. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$864,405. for the operation and maintenance of the Strafford Police Department.

There were no questions.

4. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,000. for the purpose of improvements/maintenance/construction on the Police Department building.

There were no questions.

5. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000. to be placed in the Police Vehicle and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. The Selectmen recommend this article.

There were no questions.

6. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$582,971. for the operation and maintenance of the Strafford Fire Department.

There were no questions.

7. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$144,194. for the purpose of funding a full-time Paramedic position and associated costs.

Steve Johnson, Deputy Chief of the Fire Department explained the Fire Department would like to advance Strafford another level at adding a full time Paramedic. This person would be able

to also perform welfare checks which would be especially helpful with our growing elderly population. With adding this position, the Fire Department would be able to offer CPR classes as well.

There were no questions.

8. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$93,268. for the purpose of funding a full-time Firefighter/Advanced EMT position and associated costs.

Deputy Chief Steve Johnson further explained that this would be a second full time position. The per diem pool is very thin and this would help to fill shifts that continue to be open. This includes night time coverage. By adding this position, there is an opportunity for the Town to add revenue created from other towns.

Joann Brown commented that she fully supports these articles.

There were no questions.

9. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$60,217. for the fourth year's payment of the lease agreement for the new ambulance approved at the 2020 Town Meeting, and to authorize the withdrawal of \$60,217. from the Rescue Vehicle and Equipment Special Revenue Fund to be used for this purpose. This lease/purchase agreement contains an escape clause. No funding to come from general taxation. The Selectmen recommend this article.

There were no questions.

10. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000. for the purpose of purchasing equipment and supplies for the ambulances, and to authorize the withdrawal of \$20,000. from the Rescue Vehicle and Equipment Special Revenue Fund to be used for this purpose, with no amount to come from general taxation. The Selectmen recommend this article.

There were no questions.

11. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$154,161. for the second year's payment of the lease agreement for the new Fire Engine Tanker approved at the 2022 Town Meeting and to authorize the withdrawal of \$154,161. from the Fire Engine Capital Reserve Fund to be used for this purpose, with no amount to come from general taxation. This lease/purchase agreement contains an escape clause. The Selectmen recommend this article.

There were no questions.

12. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$23,058. for the purpose of purchasing a LUCAS Compression Device and associated equipment, and to authorize the withdrawal of \$23,058. from the Rescue Vehicle and Equipment Special Revenue Fund to be used for this purpose, with no amount to come from general taxation. The Selectmen recommend this article.

There were no questions.

13. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$34,548. for the purpose of purchasing (2) Portable Ventilators and associated equipment, and to authorize the withdrawal of \$34,548. from the Rescue Vehicle and Equipment Special Revenue Fund to be

used for this purpose, with no amount to come from general taxation. The Selectmen recommend this article.
There were no questions.

14. To see if the Town will vote to hear the report of the New Fire Station Committee established by a vote at the 2022 Town Meeting to be comprised of the Fire Chief, one Fire Department member, one Selectman, and two Town residents. The committee to report back at the 2023 Town Meeting.
There were no questions.

15. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$153,507. for the operation and maintenance of the Hill Library.
There were no questions.

16. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000. to be placed in the Library Expansion/Improvement Capital Reserve Fund. The Selectmen do not recommend this article.
Chairman Sweet explained that the Board removed an Article for the Town Hall and because there is a large balance in the Capital Reserve and with no plans of a Library Expansion at this point, the Selectmen do not recommend this article.
Jessie Copeland asked what the balance of the account was in the Fund.
Answer: As of January 31, 2023, it was \$54,098.60.
There were no other questions.

17. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000. to be placed in the Town Hall Building Maintenance, Improvements and/or Expansion Capital Reserve Fund. The Selectmen recommend this article.
There is currently \$36,066.76 in this fund.
There were no questions.

18. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000. to be placed in the Future Reval/Statistical Update Capital Reserve Fund. The Selectmen recommend this article.
There is currently \$15,157.79 in this fund.
There were no questions.

19. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000. to be placed in the Highway Department Vehicle and/or Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. The Selectmen recommend this article.
This fund was created last year and there is \$10,206.50.
There were no questions.

20. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000. to be placed in the Reflective Road Signage Capital Reserve Fund. The Selectmen recommend this article.
There is currently \$87.25 in this fund.
There were no questions.

21. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000. to be placed in the Repair/Replace Recycling Center Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. The Selectmen recommend this article.

This fund currently is at \$20,358.

There were no questions.

22. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,811,366. for general Town operations.

Executive.....	\$ 97,681.
Election & Registration.....	35,309.
Financial Administration.....	106,783.
Appraisal of Property & Tax Maps.....	49,399.
Legal Expenses.....	60,000.
Employee Benefits, FICA, Medi & Unemp. Comp.....	44,735.
Planning and Zoning.....	51,809.
General Government Building.....	54,050.
Auto Permits/Town Clerk Fees.....	39,550.
Insurance.....	60,847.
Advertising and Regional Association.....	4,339.
Strafford Regional Planning Comm. Dues.....	5,800.
Contingency Fund.....	16,000.
Annual CPA Audit.....	13,000.
Emergency Management.....	5,000.
Building Inspection.....	27,300.
General Highway Expenses and Town Maintenance.....	709,396.
Street Lighting.....	6,200.
Solid Waste Disposal.....	371,885.
Animal Control.....	1,800.
Cemeteries.....	9,000.
Cornerstone VNA (formerly Roch Dstr VNA).....	3,991.
General Assistance and Welfare.....	10,000.
Community Action.....	2,000.
Haven Sexual Assault Support Services.....	992.
My Friend's Place.....	1,000.
The Homemakers Health Services.....	3,200.
Catamount Womenaid.....	1,000.
Ready Rides.....	1,500.
CASA.....	500.
Strafford Nutrition & Meals on Wheels.....	1,000.
Parks and Recreation.....	5,000.
Patriotic Purposes and Fireworks	6,800.
Conservation Commission.....	2,500.
Interest Expense & Tax Anticipation Notes.....	2,000.
TOTAL.....	<u>\$1,811,366.</u>

(The intent of this article is to raise the sum of \$1,811,366. exclusive of all other Articles addressed.)

There were no questions.

23. Shall the Town of STRAFFORD READOPT the OPTIONAL VETERANS' TAX CREDIT in accordance with RSA 72:28, II, for an annual tax credit on residential property of \$200.? (Majority vote required State is expanding to anyone who has served .)

There were no questions.

24. To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting.

There were no questions.

Having no other questions or comments, a motion was made, seconded, and voted on to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:21PM.