



TOWN OF HUDSON

Town Clerk/Tax Collector



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Minutes of the Deliberative Session of February 4, 2017
Community Center, Lions Avenue
Hudson, New Hampshire 03051

1. **CALL TO ORDER BY THE MODERATOR**, the Honorable Paul Inderbitzen called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.
2. **POSTING OF THE COLORS** by the Police Honor Guard.
3. **THE NATIONAL ANTHEM** sung by Police Lieutenant Charles Dyac.

Moderator Inderbitzen

We're going to have a moment of silence. Former Master Patrol Officer James Stys recently passed from us. He was a former MPO James Stys. If anyone remembered him, please have a moment of silence.

4. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** recited by Selectman Patricia Nichols.
5. **REMARKS BY THE MODERATOR**

Moderator Inderbitzen

We're here today for the Deliberative Session of our Town Meeting. The first part where we will deliberate and set the final form of the warrant to go on the ballot on March 14th which will be the second part where we will elect officers and vote on the budget and the warrants.

We are a legislative body so I'll ask everyone to think of that as they proceed with the discussions. We keep everything non-personal so that we act as the legislature. When you came in and registered you were all issued a Hudson voter card. This is what I will use for voting – for all voting purposes. Make sure you hold onto it and there will be a box at the back on the way out. We'll recycle them and reuse them.

Also in the handouts that you were give there was a sheet of Moderator Rules. Take a look at those. Is there anyone here who hasn't been to a Town Meeting before Deliberative? Have any questions about the process we're using? Look at those rules and if you have a question, always call for a point of inquiry to ask that question just to see if you're not comfortable with what's happening or you have questions, bring it to my attention. Sometimes my explanations may not be as good as they should be. We will vote on any amendments. We will not be voting on the warrant articles because they are going on the ballot as they are presented or as we amend them today. There's no need to vote to put it on the ballot. We will bring up each warrant article. I'll read it. There will be presenter on each warrant article and then we'll open the floor for questions, comments or amendments at which time we will deal with all of those. When everyone is finished talking on an article, I will close the article and that's the way it will go to the ballot. If you want to not have to bring up the article later in the meeting after we discuss an article, there can be a motion to restrict reconsideration. If that motion passes, then that article is done. It can't be brought up again. There are secret ballot requirements. If someone wants a secret ballot, we can do that. We'll go through the checklist again to get a secret ballot since we haven't had one for quite a while. We'll go through the checklist, you'll get a secret ballot form and we'll use that. We'll take a couple of breaks – maybe after the two articles and then if we need one and people want a break, we can take a break. Just let me know. It's something that has to come up.

We have staff present today. Some of them will not be residents but if there are questions that they can answer, including our legal attorney here, they will be called upon to answer. They will be able to speak. Normally if a non-resident wants to speak, I put it to the house to see if that's acceptable. You can vote on whether or not to hear from a non-resident.

At this point, I would like Selectman Luszey to introduce the Board of Selectmen. Thank you.

6. BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Thaddeus Luszey, Chairman

Thank you Mr. Moderator. I'd like to at this time to introduce to you the 2016/2017 Board of Selectmen. To my right we have Selectman McGrath, Selectman Coutu, Selectman Nichols, Selectman Routsis, and we have our Town Administrator and our Finance Director. I want to thank every one of these folks for putting together a great budget which I think serves the town very well this year. Thank you.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. I'll recognize Mr. Keegan of the Budget committee co-Chair for introducing the members of the Budget Committee.

7. BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Eric McDowell

Good morning. Thank you Mr. Moderator. To my left is Chairman Malcolm Price, myself Vice-Chairman Eric McDowell.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Oh I'm sorry.

Eric McDowell

That's okay. I won't hold it against you. Geoffrey Keegan, Ted Trost, Jim Barnes, Joe Fernald, Shawn Murray, Bob Guessferd, Norm Martin, Chairman of the School Board Patti Langlais, and Selectman Rep. is Angela as well. That's the Budget Committee for 2016/2017.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you very much. Sorry for that.

8. STAFF/OTHERS

Patti Barry, Town Clerk/Tax Collector
Steve Malizia, Town Administrator
Kathy Carpentier, Finance Director
Robert Buxton, Fire Chief
Scott Tice, Deputy Fire Chief
Lisa Nute, IT Director
David Yates, Recreation Director

Non-voters

Jason Lavoie, Chief of Police
Donna Graham, Executive Assistant
Charles Matthews, Library Director
Atty. David LeFevre of Tarbell and Broderick
Members of the Press

9. DELIBERATIVE SESSION OF TOWN MEETING

Moderator Inderbitzen

The warrant for the Town of Hudson 2017.

To the inhabitants of the Town of Hudson in the County of Hillsborough, State of New Hampshire, qualified to vote in town affairs. You are hereby notified to meet at the Hudson Community Center, 12 Lions Avenue, commencing at 9 a.m. on Saturday, February 4, 2017, for the transaction of all business other than voting by official ballot. The first session of the Annual Town Meeting will consist of explanation, discussion, debate on each warrant article. Warrant Articles may be amended at the first session subject to the restrictions set forth in RSA 40:13 IV.

You're also hereby further notified that the second session of the Annual Town Meeting will be held at the Hudson Community Center at 12 Lions Avenue between the hours of 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. on Tuesday, March 14, 2017, to elect town officers and to vote by official ballot on all articles set forth in this warrant as may be amended by the act of the first meeting.

The first Article is the election of officers. That will be conducted at the March 14th election. Articles 2 through 5 are zoning amendments. There is in the back of the room a zoning map, and explanations, and copies of the amendments. They've already gone through two public hearings by the Planning Board so we do not discuss them. They cannot be amended anyway at this meeting since they've already had their public sessions. If you have questions, however, Mr. Della-Monica if you see over here, the Chairman of the Planning Board is available to answer questions, if you have any concerns or questions about the zoning amendments and during the breaks you can see him. He'll be here I think until about 11:30.

So we get into Article 6 – construction of a new fire station.

Selectmen's Articles

Moderator Inderbitzen

Article 6 – Construction of a New Fire Station. Shall the Town of Hudson vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,900,000 for the design and construction of a new fire station on Town-owned land located on Lowell Road, with the sum of \$2,100,000 to come from unassigned fund balance and the balance of \$800,000 to be raised from general taxation? This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7 VI and will not lapse until the Fire Station is completed or June 30, 2023, whichever is sooner. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4-1.)(Recommended by the Budget Committee 10 – 1.)

I will recognize Chairman Luszey to present Article 6.

Thaddeus Luszey, Chairman

Thank you Mr. Moderator. Article 6 is for the design and construction of a new south Hudson fire station at 204 Lowell Road. This will replace the current facility located at 88 Burns Hill Road. The current facility was designed as a call fire station back in 1981 and it was staffed by a call fire department. In 2001, the station was opened up as a 24/7, 7 days a week use without any major changes to the facility – no upgrades, no expansions, nothing just the addition of personnel.

The building is currently on its own private septic and well. The proposed facility would be built on town land as previously mentioned and would support the needs of a full-time station and would be heated by natural gas supplied by city and be on public water and sewer.

This is not a bonding issue. This is a simple majority vote required to pass. If this Article should pass, it will add 30 cents to the tax rate for one year. Again, this is a one-time expense. The cost of this Article should it pass would be about \$78.00 for the average single family. The Board of Selectmen did recommend this Article 4 to 1 and the Budget Committee recommended it 10 to zero. If at this time with the Moderator's permission, I'd like to turn it over to Fire Chief Buxton to give us a small presentation and some more details.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Chief Buxton.

Fire Chief Buxton

Good morning. Thank you Mr. Moderator and members of the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee for the opportunity to speak on Warrant Article 6 this morning – the construction of the new station. As the Chairman of the Board stated, the facility was opened in 2001 with full-time staffing and there's been no major updates to the facility. Any updates have been done through work by the staff and the fire station. They live in 700 square feet as we reviewed last year. The expansion on the current facility would not come easy based on the fact that we have wetlands on both sides of the station. An investment in response time would not take place as the location on 204 Lowell Road would give us.

One of the questions that was posed last year that we looked at was could we renovate the current station? As we just spoke about, we talked about the limiting size of the lot due to the wetlands on both sides. So we wanted to do an apples to apples comparison of what the potential renovations costs would be – to bring public water, public sewer into that location. That renovation cost came in at \$2.3 million. We did not find that to be a reasonable approach to how to take care of our needs.

These are a couple of pictures of the current facility. You have a three-bay station which is single deep and you have 700 square feet of living space. The bottom slide show the apparatus floor. You have a small fitness area that is behind the apparatus and you have a cleaning facility. There is no workshop for maintaining tools or workbench within the facility. The protective clothing is located directly behind the apparatus.

You'll note that along the ambulance, we have protective clothing storage. To get into those gear lockers, you actually have to move the apparatus to get to the protective clothing. The picture on the right shows the new facility with the proper gear room and what that would potentially look like in the new facility.

This is a comparison of the apparatus floor at our location on Burns Hill Road in a fire house that we are looking at the model of in Londonderry. You notice the work space around the apparatus. We call that "firematic support". So the crews can get in and take care of the apparatus. Checking in would be a goal so you can get in and out so when they need to respond on calls, they can appropriately do that in a timely fashion.

This is a picture of the current location on Burns Hill Road. You'll note that it is a very small finger of property. The station itself pretty much takes up all of the buildable property. If you get up close to the slide, you'll note that the wetlands come in on both sides. It is actually a retention pond right on the corner of Burns Hill Road and Wason Road that is seasonally filled up to the edge of the parking lot depending on the spring runoff. That leads to its own problems. We are currently up against the rear boundary for the facility so we have our own challenges there.

The proposed facility is approximately 7,800 square feet. It is a two-bay station but it is two deep so we are actually going to gain some storage space in the apparatus floor. There will be a single floor station with two offices – a training facility, kitchen, dormitory. So we're looking at a facility that would be built for the future, allow us some expansion from an employee base. We've talked with the Police Department about the ability to use a second office if needed for patrolmen to fill out a report. Those types of things can take place within that facility. Currently what would happen is the staff would utilize both offices on a full-time basis but it would be available as needed.

This is a quick picture of the proposed layout. You'll note that the kitchen and the dayroom are on the front side of the building. Mechanical room, gear storage room is appropriately located along the apparatus floor so we can get in and out. There's a decon. area so when we come back from an incident the on duty staff has the ability to go into an area, wash down, take care of their contaminated protective clothing, put it into a proper cleaning facility and take care of it.

So we talked about the upgrades to the facility. One of the things that I'd like to point out is the move to Lowell Road actually increases our efficiency delivering emergency services in the south end of town. When the original location

of the current station was selected, the development along the southern part of the town didn't stretch as far down the Dracut/River Road area as Musquash Road. We're actually going to provide services to that area with a less response time so greater service to the public. We talked about the decontamination area within the building. That is something that is near and dear to my heart is providing the opportunity for our employees to have a proper area to decon. their protective clothing. Statistically firefighters show a greater risk of cancer exposure. So we're trying to build those facilities within the buildings and provide them the opportunity to have the proper areas to clean the soot and smoke off of themselves routinely along with any of the contamination that comes back from any of the EMS calls that they respond to.

We will actually reach 307 households quicker out of the Lowell Road site and 191 parcels out of the Lowell Road site quicker than we do out of the current Burns Hill Road station and that is within a five minute response time within the town.

With the help of the Town Administrator, the Finance Director, and the Board of Selectmen, one of the things we looked at this year was how do we fund this differently. We've attempted two years in a row to bond this project. That didn't seem to be supportive by the public obviously because we're here talking about it today. We came up with an avenue to really try to lessen the burden. The town has done a great job. The Board of Selectmen has done a great job putting money away and the unassigned fund balance. We're talking about taking \$2.1 million out of that unassigned fund balance and putting it down on the \$2.9 million construction costs. This is very similar to what you did when you constructed the Highway Department. We took that out of unassigned fund balance and exactly what you did when you authorized the renovation of the Central Station this past year. We need to raise and appropriate \$800,000. So that would come through as a one-time simple warrant article. It would be a simple majority. It would be a 30 cent impact on the tax rate with a \$78.00 cost to the average homeowner in town.

What is \$78.00? What does that represent? So we started trying to put it into tangibles. What does that represent day in and day out? That's 26 cups of coffee from Dunkin Donuts in one year. That is one trip for two to Canobie Lake. That is one family of four going to the movies. When we look at what we pay in and pay out on a daily basis, we believe that we've achieved the ability to find a reasonable way – I'm not trying to say that \$78.00 is not a lot of money and try to minimize that but I'm trying to put it into something tangible for you to say how do we need to look at this on a daily basis. I would ask you that if you'd like a tour of the facility, please reach out to the Fire Department. Call Helen Cheyne at the fire station and she schedules our tours. We'd love to walk you through anytime any day of the week. We're open 24/7. Please feel the ability to go to our Facebook page and follow us. We run warrant article Wednesday. We have been for about 6 to 8 weeks now trying to get as much information out about the station. Certainly I am available to anybody that has any questions on a daily basis.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you Chief. If you would just kind of hang around up here in case there are questions that you can answer. We are now going to open Article to comments, questions, amendments. Any have any questions of the Selectmen, or the Chief, or any comments?

Mike Roy

Good morning. Mike Roy, 138 Barretts Hill Road. The question I have I think this is head and shoulders above the past two years. I like the general concept of building a new station. I understand the need for it but just bonding in general and having that outlay for years to come is not particularly attractive to a lot of voters. I think the way you've done it taking money that we've already saved and put away and using that for the majority of the construction I think is fantastic.

The question I have is what's the cost – I understand that the town owns the assets – the apparatus, the protective clothing, and all the things that a firefighter needs to do his or her daily job but what's the cost of actually outfitting the station with desks, chairs, all these other things that go into a new building. Is the current furniture – I'm just wondering where next where there's going to be another warrant to outfit the station or the money is to provide the furnishings for that building or are we going to come out of a general budget fund or where is that coming for or is that – are we going to actually use older stuff to outfit the station or are we going to buy new things?

Fire Chief Buxton

Yes the \$2.9 million is turnkey. That includes hard costs meaning the station itself and additional soft costs to put the kitchen in and do those types of things.

Mike Roy

That answers my question. Thank you.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Further questions, comments, or amendments?

Richard Maddox

Good morning. Richard Maddox, 323 Fox Run. I stand in support of this Article. I had the chance to take a tour of the Lenny Smith Station that was just renovated. The Chief was nice enough to take me through for the tour. The Selectmen at the time spent money to renovate. It made sense. It's been a beautiful job. It is a station that will support us for a number of years.

The Burns Hill Station does not make sense to do that. Ladies and gentlemen this could have been done for \$2 million three years ago. The price of construction seems to be going up and up. This makes sense to do this Warrant Article this year. Thank you.

Richard Empey

Richard Empey, 104 Musquash Road. Chief you stated that you're going to service 301 properties with this new station in a lesser time. What I haven't heard is how many properties are going to be serviced in less time? The Burns Hill area all those the developments on both sides, Bush Hill Road with the new Hawkview development and the new development at the top of the hill. What are those statistics?

Fire Chief Buxton

So when we looked at our response model across town, each of our three facilities which are now open on a 24 hour basis support each other. With the move one mile from Burns Hill Road to Lowell Road, we pick up a lower section that will see a decreased response area in the south end of town and really that pocket that River Road/Dracut Road area. The Robinson Road Station has the ability of filling some of the void on the backside of where Station 4 went to the north. We talked about – it's very obvious that the house across the street from Burns Hill Road is going to see a couple minute longer response time. We did not see a great drop-off in those fringe areas because the districts and the five minute response model actually overlapped. So we expanded the circle as you would say and they now actually touch instead of overlaying each other. So we didn't see a huge drop off in response time in any area in that section of town that you speak of. The Hawkview area specifically. We examined that because with the homes that were being proposed coming in there, we were worried about to be able to get in and out of that development.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Any additional questions or comments on Article 6 the new fire station construction? If not, then I will declare the discussion on Article 6 closed.

Article 7 - General Fund Operating Budget. Shall the Town of Hudson raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth in the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$25,062,815? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$24,894,750 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town of Hudson or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting in accordance with RSA 40:13 X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised

operating budget only. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4 – 1.)(Recommended by the Budget Committee 10 – 0.)

I will ask the Budget Committee Vice-Chairman Eric McDowell to present the operating budget.

Eric McDowell

Thank you Mr. Moderator. The Board of Selectmen directed the department heads to submit a level funded budget this year. Other major items or new initiatives were to be addressed separately for the Board's consideration either as a request outside the department budget or in the form of a separate warrant article. The Board reviewed each major item and adjusted department budgets for those that were deemed essential to a department's operation. The Board voted to send the Budget Committee the general operating fund budget of \$25,062,815. The sewer fund operating budget of \$1,912,779 and the water fund operating budget of \$4,134,601. The Board also approved a general fund default budget in the amount of \$24,894,750. Sewer fund default budget in the amount of \$1,553,948, and the water fund default budget in the amount of \$3,612,441. After reviewing the general fund operating budget, the Budget Committee is recommending a general fund operating budget of the \$25,062,815. The projected tax rate for the operating budget is \$6.20 per thousand. This represents a 9 cent decrease versus Fiscal '17. The Board of Selectmen recommended it 4 to 1 and the Budget Committee recommended it 10 to zero.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you Mr. McDowell. We will now open the operating budget Article 7 to comments, questions, or amendments.

Shawn Jasper

Thank you Mr. Moderator. Shawn Jasper, 83 Old Derry Road. I rise for I guess questions and comments. Some of you may remember that one of my passions is the fund balance and how we use that fund balance to stabilize our tax rate and do certain projects. Many years ago we had a very healthy fund balance. Selectmen at that time and I'm talking probably back in the '90s used a great deal of the fund balance to mask spending. The problem is if you do that, then if you don't use the same amount the next year the taxes go up. There was a long process where we were weaning ourselves off of doing that because our fund balance continued to go down and the Department of Revenue Administration recommends that we maintain a certain amount. It may be here but I can't find what we're doing with our fund balance on this.

If you go though to page 7 of 9, you will see the amount of \$2,457,000 they used and I believe that's the amount – well most of that is the amount going into the fire station. So there's an additional amount there that's being used of what \$357,000 and then an additional \$600,000 that seems to be used to be masking spending. If you look at the total revenues from year over year, it doesn't look like we're really doing too badly but my concern is we don't know what we're doing based on the numbers that I can find here long term. Where is our fund balance now? Where is it going? I really think it's a very bad idea to use this additional \$600,000 if we're not sure that our fund balance is going to be lowered significantly and particularly if this is only used to mask spending. You have to pay the piper at some point. You're using it for one time projects as we are with fire. The fire station that's fine it has not long term effect on the tax rate but it appears that the \$600,000 is just to mask what we're spending and I'd like to hear a response to that.

Kathy Carpentier, Finance Director

Good morning. We currently have 9.7 percent fund balance retained. 9.7 represents a total appropriations. It's about \$6.4 million. So the Board believed it was a healthy fund balance. We are using \$2.1 million for the fire station if it was to pass and the \$600,000 to offset the tax rate which was done continually for the last five to ten years. It will leave us with a 5 percent fund balance which is the balance that the Board felt was a reasonable level.

Shawn Jasper

Follow up question. What I'm looking at on page 7 and 9 is showing for the prior year – the fiscal year we're in '17 that nothing was used. Is that not the actuals then?

Kathy Carpentier, Finance Director

We use the \$900,000 to do the renovation of Central Fire Station. However this form is just meant to be the operating budget. So the \$900,000.

Shawn Jasper

I appreciate that. My question is last year then there was no money used to offset taxes which is what that last line says, "fund balance to reduce taxes". None was used last year and now we're jumping back up to \$600,000.

Kathy Carpentier, Finance Director

No we did use the \$600,000 last year and \$900,000 for the renovation. Just for clarification, the \$2,457,000, \$2.1 million is for the new fire station and the other one is for an article we're going to speak on later. We've been selling some town property and we'll be putting some of that money into capital reserve funds.

Shawn Jasper

Certainly the way this is done with the actual revenue is very hard to read because it doesn't show the corresponding \$600,000.

Kathy Carpentier, Finance Director

I agree but it's a DRA form.

Shawn Jasper

Well that explains that doesn't it.

Moderator Inderbitzen

We all know how the State works I think. Further discussion on Article #7 the operating budget?

Roger Coutu

Thank you Mr. Moderator. Roger Coutu, 10 Rita Avenue, Hudson, New Hampshire. I would like to make a motion.

MOTION BY ROGER COUTU TO CUT THE OPERATING BUDGET OF \$25,062,815 TO \$25,043,381

Moderator Inderbitzen

Do you want your motion to specify the line item you want to cut?

Roger Coutu

I can do that.

Moderator Inderbitzen

I think to put it in the motion because I think if you don't put it in the motion, then it leaves it open as to where that comes from.

MOTION BY ROGER COUTU, SECONDED BY NORMAND MARTIN, TO CUT THE OPERATING BUDGET OF \$25,062,815 TO \$25,043,381 FROM ACCOUNT 5571-217 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$19,434

ON THE QUESTION

Roger Coutu

I thank you Mr. Martin. I didn't solicit a second but I appreciate it. At one of the Board of Selectmen's meetings when we discussed the budget, I made an argument and I proposed this cut in the budget. There were four members present. The vote was unanimous – 4 to zero to cut that line item. Two weeks later apparently some lobbying may have occurred, a motion to reconsider was made, five members were present, and the vote changed 4 to 1. I maintained my position. Three who voted with me the first time changed their position but the arguments remain the same. What I'm asking for is a cut of \$19,434 in dues. It's not part of the operation of our town. I'm asking that we cut the \$19,434 out of the Nashua Regional Planning Commission dues that we pay annually.

Since I've been a member of the Board of Selectmen, we've spent approximately \$180,000 at the NRPC. If other people get up and speak about supporting paying these kinds of dues, they might tell you that what they do is they provide us maps. The only maps in the almost nine years I've served on the Board of Selectmen were provided to us last year and we had to pay an additional \$3,000 to \$4,000 for those maps. The dues from my perspective have provided us absolutely nothing. They tell us that they consult with us. They come before us when they're under pressure. When they know the funds might be cut. They've done it two years in a row and yet they've provided us nothing. Some of the arguments I heard from the members of the Board of Selectmen who voted contrary to what their first vote was was that we're not saying we're going to spend the money. We're going to see what they're going to do.

Well I've been watching for nine years. Those of you who know me know me well enough to know that I fought very hard to protect our budgets from year one. I've been concerned about every dime that we spend. If I feel contrary to something strongly, I will get up and I will speak up. I'm asking you to support this so that we can send a message to the Nashua Regional Planning Commission that we're not going to sit idly by waiting for them to do something for us. They've done nothing for us. I'm telling you. I'm a guardian of your money. That's what I'm elected to do among a lot of other things. I feel this is an absolute waste of money and I hope you will support the amendment to remove the \$19,434 to send a message loud and clear once and for all. If we're going to give you that kind of money, provide us a service you haven't been providing us. Thank you.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Just a moment. If you look in your green book on page 2 of 9 under appropriations – just so you know where this is all coming from – under general government you have down to 4191 to 4193 – planning and zoning. That line item is in there that the maker of the motion wishes to remove the \$19,434. Thank you.

Thaddeus Luszey, Chairman

Thank you Mr. Moderator. I actually stand in front of you folks in opposition of the motion. I was one of the people that voted in favor of cutting this money out of the budget on the first vote. The reason being is like Selectman Coutu, I don't believe NRPC is representing the Town of Hudson in one very specific area. That is in transportation needs. We have a problem on Lowell Road. We have been asking them for their help and they come back with a lot of excuses. They come back with we'll do a lot of consulting. We'll do some more testing and all that. That's just one small part of what they do for this \$20,000.

Selectman Coutu talked about mapping. The mapping is critical to the police and fire to do their business. They use those maps for how to get to places in the best, shortest time. They provide the ability for Hudson residents to dispose of hazardous waste. If each and every one of us had to do that on our own, it's more than a dollar. I think it's a \$1 a gallon that they charge us to get rid of fluorescent tubes. It's \$3 a tube. We can take those there at the hazardous waste collection days.

I will tell you in the last month or two, NRPC did stand up and support Hudson in terms of traffic. Nashua is about to go for approval for a roundabout at the bridge over there at Twin Falls. They sent a letter into DOT saying not to change the scope of the project. Nashua is paying for that project. So they requested a change in scope of the project to stop the evaluation from Route 102 in Hudson to the Hudson town line which is the middle of the river which then takes no consideration of what it does to the Hudson side of that bridge. Although the commissioners on NRPC which

are the outlying towns around us voted in favor of it, NRPC took a stand and wrote a letter to NRPC attached it to that project and said this is not a good thing to do. You are going to impact a regional roadway in Hudson. Even though I don't agree that they're doing everything they can in terms of traffic, they do help us a lot with master planning, with mapping, with hazardous waste, senior transportation. There are a number of things. There's a whole list of things that I sent to this board that I requested that the Director send us that they provide us with a \$20,000. If you take a look at the individual cost items for those two pages of things, it's well over the \$20,000 if we had to pay for it. That's why I changed my vote. Thank you.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. We are dealing with the amendment to remove \$19,434 the specified line item from the budget on the amendment.

Shawn Jasper

Thank you Mr. Moderator. I rise in opposition to the amendment but with a great deal of empathy for the comments made by the maker of the motion. This is probably an argument that we've been having in this town for probably more than 20 years. Every time it comes back, there is value. The Selectman who made the motion has a special ability that most of us don't have. He's a member of the Board. He only needs to convince two other people on the Board of Selectmen or a majority of the Budget Committee that he is right. He has access which most of us don't have on a regular basis to do that. He was unable to do that in that capacity so I think for a member of the Board to come forward and make the argument here that he was not able to make in his capacity as our representative should give us pause as to whether this is what we should really do here on the fly. He still has the opportunity even if we defeat his motion to be successful because all he has to do is convince two other Selectmen to withhold those dues. Just because we appropriated here does not mean that the Selectmen have to spend that. If he can convince two other Selectmen to have that conversation with NRPC to withhold it and to go over in detail his concerns and how we reach a resolution, that is a far preferable solution than to taking this out and preventing all of us from then being able to go to the hazardous waste collection day and to participate in the many other things.

I would urge the defeat of this amendment and I would encourage the maker of the motion to continue to pursue a solution to his concerns which he will still have after this meeting. Thank you Mr. Moderator.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Further discussion on the amendment to Article 7?

George Hall

Thank you Mr. Moderator. My name is George Hall. I live at 18 Par Lane. I was a commissioner of the Nashua Regional Planning Commission in the previous term. I chose not to ask to be reappointed because I don't believe the Town of Hudson takes advantage of the opportunities that that position gives the town to participate in that organization. I think at this time I raise in opposition of the amendment. It's far too complex an issue to give everybody an appreciation of what that organization could do for the town. I think it's unfortunate that this town doesn't take advantage of it. It comprises most of the towns in the south central section of New Hampshire – Nashua, Milford, Hudson, Litchfield, Mount Vernon. Anyway I'm not prepared to go through the list.

The organization originated because of State Statute. When you have planning issues as far as transportation goes, doesn't it make sense to get all the communities that are affected by the major highway routes in a region to get together and at least understand what the State has in mind for projects and have a voice in deciding which one makes sense? Which one is concerned? Every town is going to have a different concern but wouldn't you get a bunch of people from those towns together to talk about them before the State Highway Department comes in and tells you what road is going to be built? The commission doesn't have a final say in everything but they have a voice. To choose to put that as a separate line item when it looks to the voters like it's a \$19,000 expense for who knows what, it's not the way to do this. I think the previous speaker his presentation was very well thought out. The Selectmen should decide and not the voters based only on the amount of money that's being spent. They have no idea what it's for or how they get a benefit out of it. As I say, the State funds most of the cost of that regional planning commission.

The State Highway Department contributes most of the money that's spent at that commission for different projects that benefit the whole State.

It's unfortunate, like I said, I'm not prepared to do this and I hope I'm not messing up too much. I think it's unfortunate at this time to ask these people here to understand what that commission does and what it benefits the town. Every meeting is attended by a senior member of the Highway Department in New Hampshire and every person on that commission has the opportunity to ask that person any question that they want in very knowledgeable responses. You have direct communication with the State Highway Department. I think there's certainly a benefit and I think it's unfortunate that the Town of Hudson doesn't take advantage of what they could get out of that commission. The idea isn't to just find dollars and cents of what maps the town is going to get. It's far greater issue than that and I don't think this is the time to decide to put it to the voters whether they're spending \$19,000 or not and what value it is to them.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Further discussion on the amendment to remove the \$19,434 – the NRPC dues? Anyone else to speak a first time?

Mike Roy

Mike Roy, 138 Barretts Hill Road. So I've heard two speakers – Speaker Jasper and this other gentleman get up and first of all I should back up. From what I heard today, I'd be in support of voting this amendment down. The point I wanted to get up and make is that although Selectman Coutu is a Selectman in this town, he's also a resident. So for other speakers to get up and say this really should have been handled with the Selectmen and once that vote was done everyone should just not get up as Selectman Coutu has done to voice his opposition. He's a resident and if there's a dissenting vote – I normally get up and I say okay Selectmen have voted with two dissensions on this. Why did they dissent? I normally get up and ask that question. What Selectman Coutu has done is gotten up and prevented me from actually having to ask that question. He's a resident. He should be able to say his peace even though he's on the Board of Selectmen. Thank you.

Moderator Inderbitzen

And that is the purpose of this first part of our Town Meeting. Further discussion on the amendment? Just the amendment please. Mr. Coutu to speak a second time.

Roger Coutu

And it will be my last say. Thank you. I'm not here to prolong this or debate this any further. However I will say that based on what I've heard, the argument was clearly made that we're not getting our monies worth from the NRPC. Chairman Luszey made a statement that up until three months ago, up until three months ago, now the NRPC is interested in talking to us. Of course. Three months ago I made a motion to cut their budget so obviously they were very interested in providing us with what they called facts, figures to support their \$20,000. It's not a line item budget. It's a budget in toto. If this amendment passes and the Board of Selectmen outvote me and find a way to find \$19,000 they think that's that important, they can find it somewhere else and give it to the NRPC and throw it away. This is throwing \$20,000 every single year the taxpayer's money away.

The argument about oh we're not going to be able to dispose of our hazardous material is all going to go away. It's doesn't go away. We have the ability to negotiate with the City of Nashua independently and make available to use the same facility that we've been using all this time and it won't cost us \$19,000 or \$20,000 a year. Again I will abide by the decision made today because unlike what other speakers have said, I respect the fact that each and every single one of you have come here today. We're a town with 14,000 plus voters. We're probably up to 16,000 registered voters now and this is what shows up. I appreciate your listening to what we have to say, the amendments we make, why we make them. I think this to me has been a sore spot for many years. I've fought year in and year out to have this cut. We can debate this forever. I will abide by the decision of this Board. I wanted you to know why I was a dissenting vote on the final vote. However, the majority rules on the first vote. It was 4 to zero for it. Two weeks of lobbying is all it took for that vote to change.

You will notice that in the budget itself I voted against the budget. I voted against the budget because of this. If you don't support my amendment, I will support your position and I will change my vote and I will support the budget. I just wanted you to know why I'm voting against the budget. It was particularly for this waste of \$20,000. Please support it. Thank you.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Further discussion?

Marilyn McGrath, Selectwoman

Thank you. I rise in opposition to the amendment. I'd like to point out to this audience that initially when this matter came up at the Board of Selectmen meeting I wasn't present. I had an accident and I had been hospitalized and was not available to attend. When I was available to attend, I made the argument that I thought that that money should be reinstated in the budget. The other members – I couldn't make a motion because I hadn't been present in voting on the first. The rules of order are that someone that was on the prevailing side could make a motion to reconsider, and then it was open for debate and discussion, and then a vote by the Board of Selectmen. At that time, then the majority voted because the arguments were persuasive to change their vote and to support putting the money back in the budget for Nashua Regional Planning. Unfortunately at that moment Selectman Coutu took great umbrage at that and thus we're here today.

I'd like to point out that Selectman Jasper who spoke in opposition to this amendment served on the Planning Board for a number of years, has served on the Board of Selectmen for a number of years, and now is in the State House as the Speaker of the House. Mr. Hall who got up and spoke in opposition to this amendment is the former Chairman of the Planning Board for many years. His knowledge of what NRPC does for this town far exceeds mine. I can tell you that I've talked to the Town Planner. I serve on the Planning Board. I've been serving on the Planning Board for a number of years – in excess of 30. I know what the NRPC can do and George stated it very well and so didn't Selectman Jasper. So I don't need to restate all of that.

I would urge you all to vote not to support this amendment. I think it's unnecessary. I think that what NRPC does for this town far exceeds what we spend in dues. Thank you very much.

Moderator Inderbitzen

On the amendment to Article 7, any further discussion?

Richard Maddox

Richard Maddox, 323 Fox Run. I was a commissioner also to NRPC. I certainly don't want to disagree with Selectman Coutu vehemently but I do want to say if we resign from this, if we take that \$19,000 and no longer have our dues and be a member, we're going to lose a seat at the table for all decisions made in the transportation areas throughout this region. The NRPC has evolved. When I first was involved with them probably 15 years ago, it was the boneyard for old Planning Board members. That is not the case today. These people are involved. They are working for transportation improvements throughout the region. So to cut the \$19,000 because we don't see what they do, I think you have to rely on what we get in the big picture. The transportation needs of this area of the State are tremendous and for us to not have a voice there, the \$19,000 does not make sense. I stand in opposition. Sorry Selectman Coutu.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Okay. We're on amendment #1. Any further discussion on the amendment? Are we ready to vote? We'll be using your voting cards.

The amendment is to remove \$19,434 from the operating budget with the specific line item of the dues to the NRPC. If you are in favor of the amendment, please raise your voting cards. Those opposed to the amendment, please raise your voting cards. The nay have it. The amendment fails.

MOTION TO AMEND FAILED

We are now back on the operating budget as stated - \$25,062,815. Any further discussion on the operating budget? If not, we will close the discussion on Article 7.

Warrant Article 8 - Sewer Fund Operating Budget. Shall the Town of Hudson raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$1,912,779? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$1,553,948 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town of Hudson or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13 X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5 – 0.)(Recommended by the Budget Committee 10 – 0.)

I will recognize Selectman Luszey to present the Sewer Fund Operating Budget.

Thaddeus Luszey, Chairman

Thank you Mr. Moderator. As you said, Article 8 raises and appropriate \$1,912,779 for the operation of the town sewer utility. The sewer utility fund is a sewer user fee and charges. There are no changes to the sewer rate for 2018. The default budget as the Moderator stated will be should this Article be defeated will be \$1,553,948. There is no tax rate impact since this is a user utility fee. The Board of Selectmen recommended 5 – 0. The Budget Committee recommended this Article 10-0. Thank you.

Moderator Inderbitzen

I'll now open up Article 8 – sewer fund operating budget for questions, comments, or concerns, or amendments.

Mike Roy

Mike Roy, 138 Barretts Hill Road. I'm just wondering what the delta is between the default and what's being proposed? Why is it going up by something like \$350,000? What is the difference between the default budget and the proposed budget?

Steve Malizia, Town Administrator

We're budgeting some replacement of some pumps at the Industrial Drive pump station from a capital reserve fund. So we have to raise and appropriate the money even though it's being offset by a reserve, so that's the main delta. It's \$315,000 to upgrade that pump station.

Mike Roy

Thank you. That answers my question.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Further discussion on Warrant Article #8 the sewer operating fund? If not, we'll close the discussion of Article 8. Let's do Article 9 and take a little break.

Article 9 - Water Fund Operating Budget. Shall the Town of Hudson raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant as amended by vote on the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$4,134,601? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$3,612,441, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town of Hudson or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13 X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5 – 0.)(Recommended by the Budget Committee 10 – 0.)

I'll recognize Selectwoman McGrath to present the water fund – Article 9.

Marilyn McGrath, Selectwoman

Warrant Article 9 raises and appropriates \$4,134,601 for the operation of the town's water utility. The water utility is funded by water user fees and charges. There are no changes to the water rates for fiscal year FY18. The default budget for the water utility is \$3,612,441 should this article fail to pass. There is no impact on the tax rate. The Board of Selectmen has recommended this Article 5 – 0. The Budget Committee has recommended this Article 10 – 0.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. We'll open Article 9 to comments, questions, concerns.

Mike Roy

Mike Roy, 138 Barretts Hill Road. I am asking the same question about why the default budget is 36 and the proposed operating budget is 31. What's the difference?

Steve Malizia, Town Administrator

We have two capital projects in the water utility. One is to put a backup generator and a new fire pump at the Windham Road booster station that will be coming from the capital reserve fund that we've allocated for that purpose. The other is to put a backup generator at the Weinstein Well in Litchfield. That's one of our primary water sources. Again a capital project that's coming from the water surplus so we have to raise and appropriate.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Any further discussion on Article #9? If not, we will close the discussion on Article #9.

MOTION BY THADDEUS LUSZEY, SECONDED BY MALCOM PRICE, TO RESTRICT RECONSIDERATION OF ARTICLES 6, 7, 8, AND 9

ON THE QUESTION

Moderator Inderbitzen

That motion if it passes means that we cannot later in the meeting go back to those Articles. They're done. They're going to the ballot. We cannot bring them up again and change them. Is everyone clear on that? If you are in favor of restricting reconsideration on 6, 7, 8, and 9, please raise your voter cards. Thank you. Those in opposed to restriction of reconsideration. The ayes have it. Articles 6, 7, 8, and 9 are restricted.

MOTION CARRIED

We'll take a 10 minute break if we can.

Thank you and thank you for the Junior Woman's and the Community Club for providing the refreshments for these meetings. Thank you to our Cable group for broadcasting these and streaming it live so we have as many people – there may not be a lot of people here unfortunately. I'm always disappointed when you don't get a good turnout but we know that there are some people that will watch it today or watch it in the future. This will be rebroadcast a number of times. If your friends and neighbors want to know what's going on, you say watch the Deliberative Session. At least there's an explanation there of what's happening.

Warrant Article 10 - The Hudson Police Association Contract. Shall the Town of Hudson vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Town of Hudson Board of Selectmen and the Hudson Police Employees Association which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits: 7/1/17 – 6/30/18 - \$113,937; 7/1/18 – 6/30/19 - \$122,281, and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$113,937 for the 2017/2018 fiscal year, said sum representing the additional costs attributed to the increase in salaries and benefits over those paid

for the prior fiscal year? (This appropriation is in addition to Article 7, the Operating Budget.) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4 – 0.)(Recommended by the Budget Committee 10 – 0.)

I'll recognize Selectwoman McGrath to present Warrant Article 10.

Selectman McGrath

Warrant Article 10 proposes a two-year contract for the members of the Hudson Police Employees Association. This Association covers 54 employees. Employees in this union include police officers, Master Patrol officers, Sergeants, Dispatchers, record clerks, and the Victim Witness Advocate. This contract provides for a two percent cost of living adjustment each year. Eligible employees would also receive a step increase on their anniversary date. This contract would run from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2019. This Warrant Article would add 5 cents to the tax rate in 2017 and would add 5 cents to the tax rate in 2018. The Board of Selectmen has recommended this contract 4 – 0. The Budget Committee has recommended this contract 10 – 0.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. We will open the Police Employees Contract up for comments, questions and not amendments because this is one by State law. Contracts cannot be amended by the meeting. Anybody have any questions or comments on Warrant Article #10? If not, we'll close the discussion on Warrant Article #10.

Warrant Article 11 - The Hudson Highway Department Contract. Shall the Town of Hudson vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Town of Hudson Board of Selectmen and the Hudson Highway Department, Local 1801, which calls for the following increase in salaries and benefits: 7/1/17 – 6/30/18 - \$48,747; 7/1/18 – 6/30/19 - \$44,258 and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$48,747 for the 2017/2018 Fiscal Year, said sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits over those paid in the prior fiscal year? (This appropriation is in addition to Article 7 the Operating Budget.) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4 – 0.)(Recommended by the Budget Committee 10 – 0.)

I will recognize Selectman Coutu to present Warrant Article 11.

Roger Coutu, Selectman

Thank you Mr. Moderator. It's a pleasure for me to rise to speak on behalf of the Hudson Highway Department. I need not tell you what they do. You see it every day especially this time of year with the winter upon us. One of the things that the Town of Hudson can be proud of is the manner in which our streets are cleared and the condition of our streets after each and every storm. You know when you're in Hudson and you certainly know when you're out of Hudson in a snow storm. Our Highway Department does an outstanding job. That's attributable to the 23 employees we have in this union. Twenty-three. That's the number of employees that were there when I became a member of the Board of Selectmen. It's the number of employees I believe that were there when the Road Agent Kevin Burns took over as the Road Agent. There's been no increase in that staff year after year. If any of you follow the Board of Selectmen meetings or are aware of what's going on in town, additional responsibilities are taken on by the department. Benson Park is a clear example of that.

All of these ladies and gentlemen who work for the Highway Department maintain our sewer system on an as need basis as well as our water system. The burdens and responsibilities have increased each and every year. Two percent is a small amount to give as a raise to these outstanding people who do an outstanding job. I hope you will support this warrant article and support our Highway Department. I appreciate that very much. Thank you.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. We will open Article 11 for comments, questions, and we cannot amend this one. It's a contract. Any discussion? Anyone wish to have any questions? If not, we'll close the discussion on Warrant Article 11.

Article 12 – Wage & Benefit Increase for Town Clerk/Tax Collector. Shall the Town of Hudson vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,307 which represents an increase in wages and benefits for the Town Clerk/Tax Collector?

(This appropriation is in addition to Article 7 the Operating Budget.) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5 – 0.)(Recommended by the Budget Committee 10 – 0.)

I will recognize Selectman Coutu to present Article 12.

Roger Coutu, Selectman

Thank you Mr. Moderator. This was one of the articles that was going to be spoken about by Selectman Nichols. As you've been made aware, she's having a little difficulty with her voice and I've been asked to sit in her stead.

I presented this Warrant Article I believe the past two years with success. I think one of the two anyway. I need not tell you about the Town Clerk. If there is – not that everybody doesn't do their job at Town Hall but the one that is most visible to all of us because we register our vehicles, we pay our taxes. There are a lot of things that take place in that office. We're not registering boats. Again another department that is over the years has changed their hours to accommodate the needs of our community, have taken on added registrations in order to make it more convenient for you to register items, works well and coordinates with the IT Department to work with on-line registrations and on-line payments. They've adopted a new system for payments where they take in credit cards. She has taken on the position and the person have taken on added responsibilities to ask for to me what appears to be for a department head supervising I believe six other people in the department and I stand corrected if I'm wrong but its 5 or 6 to ask for a meager two percent raise or \$1,098 I don't think is overwhelming for the taxpayer and I think that the position deserves a two percent raise and I hope you will support it as stated by the Moderator. It was unanimously supported by the Budget Committee for which I have a great deal of respect. I understand the machinations that go on there as well as unanimous vote of the Board of Selectmen and I hope you will support it as well.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. We will open Warrant Article 12 to questions, comments, amendments.

Mike Roy

Mike Roy, 138 Barretts Hill Road. What is the current salary of the Town Clerk?

Roger Coutu, Selectman

The position presently the total salary is \$54,921. We're asking that it be increased to \$56,019. An increase of \$1,098.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Any further questions? Comments?

Sandra LeVasseur

I rise in support of this Article. Patti has always just gone above and beyond to help the Supervisors of the Checklist. She's of course increased her office hours over the years. She's made it possible for people to register vehicles and pay their taxes with a Visa – not a Visa card they don't take Visa – a credit card. Last November when the Supervisors were just overwhelmed with new registrations, her office helped us out with a lot of the data entry. Last year everybody got a raise except Patti. I can just imagine how she felt. A thousand dollars isn't much when you talk about the millions that we're going to spend this year. I urge you all to vote for Patti's raise.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Further discussion, questions?

Marilyn McGrath, Selectwoman

I rise in support of this Article as well. I did have the opportunity to vote on it as a member of the Board of Selectmen but I also wanted to point out as Sandy just did that last year this was on the warrant and it failed. It was stunning to

me that the voters didn't vote to approve a raise for our Tax Collector. She does a phenomenal job. That office is well run. The people that are in there are very pleasant. Every time you go in whether it's to register a car, pay your taxes, ask for questions, register to sign up for various boards, they couldn't be more pleasant to deal with. That's due to Patti's management skills and the way she treats her employees. She doesn't hesitate to get up and go out to the counter and wait on the people that are coming in just as the people that work for her do.

She also spends a great deal of time when there's an election. The Presidential Election this year she was here early, early in the morning far earlier than I got here and stayed late into the night to make sure that all of the ballots were processed efficiently and correctly. I truly cannot say enough about Patti Barry and what she's done for that department and what she does for the town. So I fully support increasing her salary this year. Thank you.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Further discussion on Warrant Article #12? If not, we will close the discussion on Warrant Article #12.

Article 13 – Wage & Benefit Increase for the Nine (9) Full Time Library Employees. Shall the Town of Hudson vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$8,925 which represents a 2 % increase in wages and benefits for the nine (9) full-time employees of the Rodgers Memorial Library? (This appropriation is in addition to Article 7, the Operating Budget.) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5 – 0.) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 8 – 2.)

I'll recognize Selectwoman Routsis to present Warrant Article 13.

Angela Routsis, Selectwoman

Warrant Article 13 proposes a two percent wage increase for the nine full-time employees of the Rodgers Library. Of the \$8,925 being raised, \$7,498 is for the salaries and \$1,427 is for the FICA and pension costs. This Warrant Article would add less than one cent to the tax rate. The Board of Selectmen has recommended this Article 5 – 0 and the Budget Committee has recommended this Article 8 – 2.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. We'll open Warrant Article 13 the wage and benefit increase for the full-time library employees. Questions, comments, amendments?

Kara Roy

Hi. Kara Roy, 46 Marsh Road, and a current member of the Board of Library Trustees. I want to stand in support of this Article. The staff at the library are some of the most professional, hard-working people that I've had the pleasure of working with. A two percent is a small token, a small raise in comparison to the work and effort they put into having to providing an invaluable service to this community and making our library truly a center of the community. Thank you.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Further discussion on Article 13? Any questions, comments? If not, we will close the discussion on Warrant Article 13.

Warrant Article 14 – Ambulance Replacement. Shall the Town of Hudson vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$200,000 for the purpose of purchasing a replacement ambulance and to authorize the withdrawal of \$200,000 from the Ambulance Capital Reserve Fund? (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5 – 0) (Recommended by the Budget Committee 10 – 0)

I'll recognize Selectman Luszey to present Article 14.

Thaddeus Luszey, Chairman

Thank you Mr. Moderator. Article 14 raises and appropriates \$200,000 for the purpose of purchasing a replacement ambulance. This new ambulance will replace the 2009 AEV ambulance that currently responds out of the Burns Hill Fire Station. This ambulance serves as a front line ambulance for all of the southern end of Hudson. All of the funds for this replacement ambulance will come from the Ambulance Capital Reserve Fund which was originally established in 1994. This Warrant Article has no impact to the tax rate and as the Moderator stated, the Board of Selectmen recommended this Article 5 – 0. The Budget Committee recommended 10 – 0. Thank you.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. We'll now open Article 15 – the ambulance replacement to discussion, questions, comments, or amendments. Everyone is comfortable. As long as you're not sleeping. Thank you. I will close the discussion on Warrant Article 14.

Article 15 – Funding 3 Capital Reserve Funds from Unassigned Fund Balance. Shall the Town of Hudson vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$357,000 of which \$119,000 will be added to the Communications Equipment and Infrastructure Capital Reserve Fund previously established, \$119,000 to be added to the Recreation Field Construction Capital Reserve Fund previously established, and \$119,000 will be added to the Major Repairs to Town Buildings Capital Reserve Fund previously established? This sum to come from the June 30, 2016 Unassigned Fund Balance. No amount to be raised by taxation. (This appropriation is in addition to Article 7, the Operating Budget.) (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5 – 0)(Recommended by the Budget Committee 10 – 0)

I'll recognize Selectwoman Routsis to present Article 15.

Angela Routsis, Selectwoman

Warrant Article 15 seeks to appropriate \$357,000 to put funding into three existing capital reserve funds: the Communications Equipment and Infrastructure Capital Reserve Fund, the Recreation Field Construction Capital Reserve Fund, and the Major Repairs to Town Buildings Capital Reserve Fund. Each fund will receive \$119,000. This appropriation is coming from the general fund surplus. This amount represents the net proceeds from the sale of three tax deeded parcels of land that were sold in 2016. The proceeds from these sales were added to the town's general fund surplus. There is no tax impact for this Warrant Article. The Board of Selectmen have recommended this Article 5 – 0 and the Budget Committee has recommended this Article 10 – 0. Thank you.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. We will open Article 15 to questions, comments, amendments.

Shawn Jasper

Thank you Mr. Moderator. I rise in support of this Article. This is not something we traditionally see because that dreaded Department of Revenue Administration actually fouled this up by saying we could no longer do it the way we had always been doing the funding of capital reserves through the budget. There is a Bill whittling its way through the House that would straighten this out so we could go back to funding capital reserves the way we've done it. When you establish a capital reserve and the voters approve of it, it should be done through the voting process which is how we've done in and the ambulance fund was one that I think that was established in the 1970s and always budgeted for through the budget process. Suddenly after all these years they said we couldn't do it. We're going to try to fix that so you don't have to see a warrant article like this because we do have many capital reserve funds which we had been funding. I fought with them and lost that fight but hopefully we will get it straightened out. Please support this Warrant Article.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Further discussion on Warrant Article 15 to add funds to the three capital reserves. Any discussion? If not, I'll close the discussion on Warrant Article 15.

Warrant Article 16 – Create a Capital Reserve Fund for Library Improvements. Shall the Town of Hudson vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of improving and renovating the building, and replacing, and repairing capital equipment at Hudson Libraries and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1 to be placed in this fund and to further appoint the Hudson Library Board of Trustees as agents to expend from this fund? (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5 – 0)(Recommended by the Budget Committee 7 – 3)

I'll recognize Selectman Luszey to present Article 16.

Thaddeus Luszey, Chairman

Thank you Mr. Moderator. As you said, this Warrant Article 16 would establish a capital reserve fund with a purpose of improving and renovating the buildings and replacing and repairing capital equipment for the Hudson libraries. The Library Trustees did propose this Article and they would be the agents to expend from this fund. This Warrant Article has no tax impact and it was recommended by the Selectmen 5 – 0 and the Budget Committee 7 – 3.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. I will now open Warrant Article 16 to comments, questions, and concerns.

Shawn Jasper

Thank you Mr. Moderator. I think this does fall under comments and concerns. This is almost two separate capital improvement programs. Certainly I can see where repairing capital equipment is something that the Library Trustees would need to have control over so that if something goes down in the middle of the year they could replace that. A little bit more concerned about the wording of "improving and renovating the building". "Improving" is a very broad word and I don't think that I have ever seen that used in any of the things that we have done in this way. My question is does this mean additions to the buildings because if it does mean addition to the buildings, then I think that needs to be under control of the voters here not under the Library Trustees. For the record, and this may become an issue now, not 10 years from now but perhaps 20 years from now what does this mean? Is it our intent that this means to allow the Library Trustees if they have enough money to put an addition on the building? I don't think there is any other building that has ever had an addition put on it without the express vote of the voters of the Town of Hudson. So it needs to be clarified or amended in my opinion. I cannot support it with this current wording as ambiguous as it is right now.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Would someone yield to the question about the intent of the purpose of improving the library? Does someone have a yield to that? They'll have to. That's a question that was brought up.

Thaddeus Luszey, Chairman

I would ask the Library Trustees to follow up but my understanding when we had the conversation is they could do an addition based on the conversation. Our intent is improvements would be the physical footprint, no additions but I don't believe that it would prohibit them from doing an addition the way it is currently worded. I think for the record I would like to hear from the Library Trustees their intent.

Robin Rodgers

Hi. Robin Rodgers, 16 Mountain View Drive, Hudson. I'm the Chairman of the Library Trustees. As far as improving and renovating the building, improving is pretty broad like Mr. Jasper said and it would encompass an addition if that's what's needed and if there is enough money in that fund. The fund is being set up so that we can be proactive in keeping the library at maintaining its level of professionalism and architect. We all don't want it to just disintegrate in any way. So we want to have a proactive money fund set up that if something goes wrong we can fix it.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Further discussion on Warrant Article 16?

Ted Trost

Ted Trost, 63 Rangers Drive. I'm very much in favor of capital reserve funds for these purposes. I believe that a lot more work needs to be done to this particular wording of this Warrant Article for it to be palatable to me. I'm one of the Budget Committee members who voted against it in its current state but I hope to make some changes that I can end up recommending its approval by the voters.

The first amendment that I'm going to make at this time...

Moderator Inderbitzen

You're rising for an amendment?

Ted Trost

I am indeed. To insert the words "exterior signage, grounds, driveway, and parking areas" after the word "building", and to insert the word "for" immediately prior to the word "replacing" and change the "and" that appears before "repairing" to "or". I'll let that stand for now.

MOTION BY TED TROST TO INSERT THE WORDS "EXTERIOR SIGNAGE, GROUNDS, DRIVEWAY, AND PARKING AREAS" AFTER THE WORD "BUILDING", AND TO INSERT THE WORD "FOR" IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO THE WORD "REPLACING" AND CHANGE THE "AND" THAT APPEARS BEFORE "REPAIRING" TO "OR".

(Shall the Town of Hudson vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of improving and renovating the building *exterior signage, grounds, driveway, and parking areas*, and *for* replacing *or* repairing capital equipment at Hudson Libraries and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1 to be placed in this fund and to further appoint the Hudson Library Board of Trustees as agents to expend from this fund?)

Moderator Inderbitzen

Do we have that that we can put it up on the screen? While they're doing that, this is the first amendment. Let me read it again.

To add after building "exterior signage, grounds, driveway, and parking areas", and adding the word "for" replacing and striking "and" and adding "or repairing capital equipment".

That was an amendment. Is there a second?

MOTION BY TED TROST, SECONDED BY SHAWN JASPER, TO INSERT THE WORDS "EXTERIOR SIGNAGE, GROUNDS, DRIVEWAY, AND PARKING AREAS" AFTER THE WORD "BUILDING", AND TO INSERT THE WORD "FOR" IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO THE WORD "REPLACING" AND CHANGE THE "AND" THAT APPEARS BEFORE "REPAIRING" TO "OR".

ON THE QUESTION

Ted Trost

So I believe just including the word "building" in this original Warrant Article is too restrictive and I would like to see this Warrant Article be able to be used in the future for other projects that I believe encompass the original intent of the Warrant Article. If we just say "building", they may not be able to use it say the parking lot needs to be repaved down the road or the signage gets taken out for weather reasons or whatever. We might want to be able to use this fund for those purposes.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Discussion? We are now on the amendment to change those words. On the amendment, anyone else to speak on the amendment?

Roger Coutu, Selectman

I certainly respect what Mr. Trost is trying to do but I have a little bit of confusion with the wording. Up front it says after RSA 35 – for the purpose of improving and renovating “the” building. Then you go down two lines and it says something about the buildings.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Hudson libraries.

Roger Coutu, Selectman

Hudson libraries. That’s multiple buildings. There’s a conflict there. I think we need to change one or the other.

Ted Trost

I’d like to point out that that is not within the scope of my amendment but I will be addressing that discrepancy in a future amendment.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Further discussion on the amendment? Anyone else wish to discuss the amendment? If not, are you ready for a vote on the amendment? To add the wordings after building – “exterior signage, grounds, driveways and parking areas” and add the word “for” replacing and change “and” to “or” repairing capital equipment.

Those of you who are in favor of the amendment, please raise your voting cards. Thank you. Those opposed please raise your voting cards. The ayes have it. The amendment passes.

MOTION CARRIED

We are now back on Article 16 as amended with those changes. Any further discussion on Warrant Article 16?

Ted Trost

I’d like to make another amendment. Replace the words “Hudson libraries” with “the George H. and Ella M. Rodgers Memorial Library”.

MOTION BY TED TROST, SECONDED BY SELECTMAN ROGER COUTU, TO REPLACE THE WORDS “HUDSON LIBRARIES” WITH “THE GEORGE H. AND ELLA M. RODGERS MEMORIAL LIBRARY”.

Moderator Inderbitzen

The second amendment is to now to strike the word “Hudson libraries” and insert the words “the George H. and Ella M. Rodgers Memorial Library”. Is that clear to everyone? Mr. Trost to speak to your amendment.

(Shall the Town of Hudson vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of improving and renovating the building exterior signage, grounds, driveway, and parking areas, and for replacing or repairing capital equipment at ~~Hudson Libraries~~ the George H. and Ella M. Rodgers Memorial Library and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1 to be placed in this fund and to further appoint the Hudson Library Board of Trustees as agents to expend from this fund?)

ON THE QUESTION

Ted Trost

So there continues to be a lot of debate in this town over the role of the Hills Memorial Library which I believe would be encompassed by the original warrant article as it was originally presented. This debate continues. I'm one of the people who is very unclear as far as whether this is of any value to the town at all and whether we should be keeping it or not. I do not believe this capital reserve fund should be established for the Hills Memorial Library to only be for the Rodgers Memorial Library. I think that we definitely need to make sure that we have a capital reserve set up to maintain that great building and for the services that are within it. I don't think that we want to be setting aside money for a building that we're not even sure we want to be keeping as a town.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Further discussion on amendment #2 adding in those words.

Shawn Jasper

Thank you Mr. Moderator. I do support the amendment and while I do differ with the maker of the motion on the issue of the Hills Memorial Library, I happen to be a great supporter of that building and think that it is an important part of the heritage of the Town of Hudson. I would agree that we shouldn't be mixing the two issues. We have a public library which has a specific purpose and then we have another building which while it is important I believe to the Town of Hudson shouldn't be part of this. We should decide that issue separately. I fully support the amendment.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Anyone wish to speak to that amendment?

Kara Roy

Kara Roy, 46 Marsh Road. I'd like to speak in opposition to this amendment. The fact of the matter is the Board of Library Trustees does have purview over that Hills Memorial Library right now. Until that changes, we have an obligation that's expressed in a trust document to maintain that building. The other issue would be looking at the future. None of us can predict the future so we don't know if at some point there will be a different building that is associated with the Library or buildings. To look into the future, we should be able to create a capital reserve fund that will continue in perpetuity if you will to support the improvement and renovation of any library buildings. Thank you.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Further discussion on the amendment to Warrant Article 16 the capital reserve establishment for library improvements?

Eric McDowell

Eric McDowell, 24 Oban Drive. I'm here in support of Ted's motion for a variety of reasons. One the library itself in creating this capital reserve fund, it should be used for the library which as of today is the George H. and Ella M. Rodgers Memorial Library. As mentioned, the Hills Memorial Library while a great historic building is not currently used as a library itself. There's a lot of discussion around what its purpose is, kind of who's funding it and how it's supported. As seen in other town capital reserve funds, we do have a major repairs to town buildings capital reserve fund. In the event something happens to the Hills Memorial Library, that fund and other funds can be used to repair that building so that this warrant doesn't necessarily have to have that language. I'm in support of this singular library wording that's used here.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Further discussion on amendment #2 to add the strike out “Hudson libraries” and add the words “George H. and Ella M. Rodgers Memorial Library”. Any further discussion? If not, are you ready to vote? The amendment is as you see it up there add those words, make it a singular library. Those of you in favor of the amendment please raise your card. Those opposed, please raise your cards. The ayes have it. The amendment passes.

MOTION CARRIED

We’re now back on Article 16 capital reserve fund for library improvements establishment as amended twice.

Ted Trost

I just want to point out I’m making these amendments separately because they cover different issues. It was pointed out to me I could make these as a single amendment but they address separate issues.

I wish to make a third amendment at this time. To strike the words “and to further appoint the Hudson Library Board of Trustees as agents to expend from this fund”.

MOTION BY TED TROST, SECONDED BY SHAWN JASPER, TO STRIKE THE WORDS “AND TO FURHTER APPOINT THE HUDSON LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES AS AGNETS TO EXPEND FROM THIS FUND”.

(Shall the Town of Hudson vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of improving and renovating the building exterior signage, grounds, driveway, and parking areas, and for replacing or repairing capital equipment at Hudson Libraries the George H. and Ella M. Rodgers Memorial Library and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1 to be placed in this fund ~~and to further appoint the Hudson Library Board of Trustees as agents to expend from this fund?~~)

ON THE QUESTION

Ted Trost

The creation of this capital reserve fund I believe is the first step in an excellent planning process to be prepared for things that may come down the road that cost a lot of money that we may not want to have a huge impact on all at once. I believe the second part in planning is anticipating what those needs must be and I believe it should be left up to the voters where the priorities lie within this town and when to withdraw money from this capital reserve fund. I’m confident that other people will make the argument that emergencies arise but as Mr. McDowell pointed out a little while ago, there are other capital reserve funds that could be used if there are emergency crisis that are under the control of the Board of Selectmen, especially with the possibility that this fund could be used for adding addition to the library. That decision should also be left to the voters.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. To speak on the amendment.

Shawn Jasper

Thank you Mr. Moderator. I rise in support of the amendment. I want to point out that the maker of these motions and I did not confer on any of these. We just happen to be in agreement. As I said, I have a great deal of concern about the issue of allowing additions to the building being made without the approval of the voters. I think that if the Trustees feel strongly at some point when there’s actually more than a dollar in here, they could split this capital reserve fund in the future but I think we need to start in this direction with the fact that it would be the voters who would control this due to the multi-purpose of this article. I would urge you to support the motion and if in the future there is a need and there is money in there, this can be easily split at that time. Thank you Mr. Moderator.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Further discussion on amendment #3 to strike the Hudson Library Board of Trustees as agents to expend.

Robin Rodgers

I guess I have a question. Robin Rodgers, 15 Mountain View Drive. If you take away the ability of the Trustees to expend the money then it's just the voter? It would have to come at a once a year situation where we would have to ask the voter to use this money. Is that correct?

Moderator Inderbitzen

Right. You would have to use a warrant article at an annual town meeting to remove funds from that capital reserve fund to expend. Yes.

Robin Rodgers

And they're putting that as a block to an addition is that what I'm understanding?

Moderator Inderbitzen

Well I'm not sure what their intent is but this would take the agents to expend would then be the voters not the Library Trustees.

Robin Rodgers

Well I guess I'm in opposition of that. I'd like the Trustees to maintain control and money situations concerning the library as we certainly do now.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Further discussion on amendment #3? Anyone else wishing to speak? If not are you ready to vote? If you are in favor of amendment #3, please raise your voter cards. Thank you. Those opposed please raise your cards. The ayes have it. Amendment #3 passes.

MOTION CARRIED

We are now on Article #16 as amended – the establishment of a capital reserve fund for library improvements. Any further discussion on the establishment of the capital reserve fund? If not, we will close the discussion on Article 16.

MOTION BY SHAWN MURRAY, SECONDED BY THADDEUS LUSZEY, TO RESTRICT RECONSIDERATION OF WARRANT ARTICLES 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, AND 16

Moderator Inderbitzen

If you are in favor of restricting reconsideration please raise your cards. Thank you. Those opposed, raise your cards. Thank you. The ayes have it. Articles 10 through 16 are restricted.

MOTION CARRIED

Article 17 - Discontinue Old Capital Reserve Funds. Shall the Town of Hudson vote to discontinue the following Capital Reserve Funds: Cable Access Center (TV) CRF created in 2001; Future Senior Center CRF created in 2009; the Library Expansion CRF created in 1987; Lowell/River Road CRF created in 1989; Merrifield Park Pond CRF created in 1992; and Merrimack River Boat Ramp CRF created in 1995. Said funds, with accumulated interest to date of withdrawal, are to be transferred to the Town of Hudson's General Fund Unassigned Fund Balance. The purposes of the above Capital Reserve Funds are no longer valid so a majority vote is needed to discontinue them. No amount to be raised from taxation. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5 – 0)(Recommended by the Budget Committee 10 – 0)

I'll recognize Selectwoman Routsis to present Article 17.

Angela Routsis, Selectwoman

Warrant Article 17 would discontinue 6 capital reserve funds whose purposes are no longer valid. The Trustees of the Trust Funds have proposed this Warrant Article. The balance of the six funds is approximately \$73,000. The balance in these funds will be transferred to the Town's general fund unassigned balance. This Warrant Article has no impact on the tax rate. The Board of Selectmen have recommended this Article 5 – 0 and the Budget Committee has recommended this Article 10 – 0.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. I'll now open Article 17 to discuss, questions, comments, amendments. Anyone wish to discuss Article 17.

Jane Bowles

Jane Bowles, 57 Hazelwood Road. I'm glad to hear the total amount but I would like to have each of the six amounts and who is the agents to expend currently on each of these accounts or capital reserve funds.

Kathy Carpentier, Finance Director

The cable access center has approximately \$33,000 and it's the voters who are the agents to expend. The library expansion capital reserve fund has less than \$1,000 and it is the Library Trustees. Lowell Road capital reserve fund has \$4,000 and it is the voters. Merrifield Park/pond is \$2,000 and it is the Board of Selectmen. The Merrimack River boat ramp is \$20,000 and it is the Board of Selectmen. The future senior center is \$14,000 and it is the voters.

Jane Bowles

For the library expansion capital reserve funds – it's the Library Trustees are the agents to expend as the town. Can they vote to disband that fund?

Moderator Inderbitzen

Yes they can. The people who spend the money doesn't have to be the town. The capital reserves are under the control of the town. They can make them or discontinue them at any time.

Kathy Carpentier, Finance Director

By the town you mean the voters. The voters establish capital reserve funds and the voters also discontinue funds no matter who the agents to expend are.

Jane Bowles

Thank you.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Further discussion on Warrant Article 17 – discontinue old capital reserve funds. If not, we'll close the discussion on Article 17.

Article 18 – All Veteran's Tax Credit. Shall the Town of Hudson adopt the provisions of RSA 72:28-b, All Veteran's Tax Credit? If adopted, the credit will be available to any resident, or the surviving spouse of any resident, who served not less than 90 days on active service in the armed forces of the United States and was honorably discharged or an officer honorably separated from services and is not eligible for or receiving a credit under RSA 72:28 or RSA 72:35. If adopted, the credit granted will be \$500, the same amount as the standard or option veteran's tax credit voted by the Town under RSA 72:28. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5 – 0)

I'll recognize Selectman Luszey to present Article 18.

Thaddeus Luszey, Chairman

Thank you Mr. Moderator. Warrant Article 18 would expand the eligibility to receive the Veteran's tax credit to all qualified Veterans and not just those who served during a defined war period. The New Hampshire Legislature passed this law which allows all communities to adopt the all Veteran's tax credit effective 2017 property tax year. All qualified Veterans with the 90 days of active service or more who were honorably discharged may apply for the tax credit with no war defined periods or as a predefined requisite. The Veteran's tax credit is currently \$500 per year. There are currently 905 Veterans or surviving spouses currently receiving the tax credit in Hudson. It's estimated at approximately 500 more Veterans may receive this credit if this Article is passed. Again this Article would take effect in the 2017 property tax year if it is passed. The Board of Selectmen has recommended this 5 – 0. Thank you.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. I'll now open Article 18 for discussion, questions, or comments. Anyone wish to discuss Article 18? Is anyone just as confused as I am about it? These tax credit issues to me are very confusing. Maybe because I don't get any of them yet.

Ed Duchesne

My name is Ed Duchesne. I just have a question as to who would this apply to. I happen to be a Veteran receiving that credit and it's a wonderful thing but who is not covered under the current regulations?

Thaddeus Luszey, Chairman

The government defined a number of war periods like Korea, Vietnam, the Iraq War, the Gulf War. If you were in the service during the time when we were not actively participating in any of those, you're not covered under this. So not all Veterans are created equal right now in terms of tax credits. This here levels that playing field. All Veterans. If you served in the United States armed forces honorably, you'll be eligible for this tax credit.

Ed Duchesne

Thank you.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Further discussion on Warrant Article 18. If not, we will close the discussion on Warrant Article 18.

Warrant Article 19 – Establishment of Benson Park User Fees. Shall the Town of Hudson vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to establish user fees for Benson Park? This article is advisory only. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5 – 0)

I'll recognize Selectman Coutu to present Warrant Article 19.

Roger Coutu, Selectman

Thank you Mr. Moderator. Like you, I'm glad we're at Warrant Article 19. It's the end of the day once we get through this I hope. Warrant Article 19 clearly specifies that this is an advisory warrant article. By advisory it means that it's not necessary for the Board of Selectmen despite how the vote would go for establishing user fees or not establishing user fees. We are not bound by this warrant article. We can do as we wish which we would hope would be in the best interest of the town. I serve as a liaison for the Board of Selectmen on the Benson Park Committee and in that capacity, there has been much discussion that I heard relative to the pros and cons of having these fees. I understand that as citizens of the Town of Hudson where the park is located you might feel that you're paying taxes. You're supporting the park. Why should I pay a fee?

There are other considerations on the opposite side. It is a gem. It's a jewel in our community. It attracts an awful lot of people. It's whether or not we feel that as tax payers we can continue to afford to pay ourselves for the renovations and maintenance of that park. Would it not be fair to have a user fee so that all peoples pay for the use of the park? I myself that coin flips every day. It's going to be a very difficult question for me to answer. I hope that between now and election day someone enlightens me or a lightbulb goes off in my head and says yes it's a yes vote or a no vote. I know it's only advisory but I think the Board would take very seriously an overwhelming vote by the voters. Please give this due consideration. I'm sure that Speaker Jasper will illuminate some of you and I hope he illuminates me but I doubt it.

Shawn Jasper

Thank you Mr. Moderator and I certainly hope to help Selectman Coutu out in his dilemma. I rise as the Vice-Chairman of the Benson Park Committee and a member of the Board of Selectmen which was involved in purchasing the park. As a matter of fact we took possession of the park eight years ago in January. I will never forget exactly when the day was because it was my 50th birthday that we actually got the deed and turned the check over. This is a case of if you build it they will come and they have. We are years ahead of where I thought we would be with this park due to the overwhelming support of the volunteers and the absolutely fantastic work of the Hudson Highway Department. It's an incredible park.

I'm going to ask you to think about this. New Hampshire is a State that to a large degree is built on user fees. How would you feel – we have a State highway system that is run primarily on the gas tax. How would you feel if every time somebody from out of State filled up their gas tank they were exempted from that tax and only New Hampshire people paid for the roads? I can tell you that 40 percent of the money we get from the gas tax comes from people out of State. How would you feel if every time you went out to have a meal you paid that nine percent rooms and meals tax but everybody who came from out of State was exempted from that rooms and meals tax? I don't have the percentage for you on that one but it is a huge number.

So what we've done here in Hudson we knew we were creating a State Park. We got it for \$166,000. We knew that. We didn't know the usage. We didn't know where the people would come from. The park is being worn out now because the usage is overwhelming and we let everybody from the world come in and use that and the only people who are paying for it are the taxpayers of Hudson. The only way to stop that is to have a user fee. Now we can't have a differential for residents of the Town of Hudson but we can have a gate fee but we could also have for anyone in State we could have a year round pass. The Board of Selectmen could set that at \$5, or \$10, they could do family passes but everybody who came there for a one-time usage or came a couple times of year or particularly those who came from out of State could pay towards that maintenance of that park. So the question here is are we going to have this State Park and be the only ones who pay for it or are we going to say that other people whether they come from Nashua, or Windham, or Massachusetts, or Arizona are they going to pay something for that park?

I don't think there's a question in my mind that taxpayers of Hudson should not be the only paying for that park. This gives the Board of Selectmen the ability to create a fee structure which is fair to us. It wouldn't be double taxation hopefully because whatever came in, and there would be a lot of money coming in from people from out of town that would be paying for it. So there would be a reduction in what we're paying in our taxes now. I believe that that park can be self-sustaining even with what it would cost to collect the fees because of the usage. I've gone by there in January and we probably wouldn't be collecting in January but it is used all the time. There is a model that can make this work for the taxpayers of the Town of Hudson and there should be no doubt in anyone's mind right now that what we are doing right now does not work in the best interests of the taxpayers of the Town of Hudson. Thank you Mr. Moderator.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Further discussion on Article 19?

Kara Roy

Kara Roy, 46 Marsh Road. I just have a couple of questions. One – do we have any estimates of what revenue would be raised by implementing these fees and two – what would be the cost of administering a fee schedule? Does anybody have that information?

Shawn Jasper

I'm yielding again as the Vice-Chair of the Benson Park Committee. We have looked at models and the model we looked at assumed that from Memorial Day into October or November there would be staff there to collect those fees seven days a week. That model does not work and I would never expect that it could. I would expect that there would be a model that would start earlier in the year when we would be collecting fees only during the weekends at about the time school went out until school goes back in. We could collect during seven days a week. The answer is we don't have an exact model. The Board of Selectmen have to approve and at this point they're looking for impact that they want to go forward. Nobody is going to be willing to put in the work to try to develop this if we don't know that there is a willingness to put this in.

I am sure that if the voters say yes, the Board of Selectmen are going to look at this carefully and if they can't develop a model that makes sense, then they wouldn't implement it because I know they're smart people and they wouldn't put a money losing proposal into place. If they did put something in which looked positive, tried it for a year and it failed, well then you wouldn't continue with it. What we know is right now if we do nothing 100 percent of the cost will be on the taxpayers and that certainly does not make sense. Thank you Mr. Moderator.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Further discussion on Warrant Article 19?

Joan Plummer

Joan Plummer from 30 Baker Street. As a person who goes to the park, my husband and I or I go at least five times a week. We adore it. When we moved here we were really proud that there was Benson's and we could always show relatives from North Carolina that oh yeah we have this really wonderful thing in New Hampshire that you wouldn't suspect. I feel the same way now but it is such a beautiful park. I fail to see the overuse and the volunteerism is just amazing. I am loathe to vote for this when we don't have any idea of what the Board of Selectmen will select. Do the voters get to vote on what you intend to do with the user fees?

Moderator Inderbitzen

The issue of user fees is strictly the responsibility of the Board of Selectmen. They do not have to get a public vote. They're coming out for an opinion vote so that they know how the voters feel about it before they move forward. It's their responsibility. They have that responsibility for fees like they do for registration fees, for baseball, and all of that. The use of town property – rental fees. That's all under the purview of the Board of Selectmen.

Joan Plummer

Thank you.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Further discussion?

Leo Bernard

Leo Bernard, 3 Bungalow Ave. 9/11 we do all kinds of – 9/11 we have a lot of people. Are we going to charge a fee for everybody coming to the 9/11?

Roger Coutu, Selectman

Mr. Moderator I respect what you said previously and I'm going to reiterate as best I can. This is a question that's being put before the voters so that we can get a feeling from you whether or not you want us to apply user fees to the park. It doesn't mandate that we do it and it doesn't mandate that we don't do it. If the vote was 50/50, we're going to have this discussion amongst ourselves whether or not we want to go in that direction.

The fees that will be established if that's the direction we go, we're going to have some healthy discussion on what is appropriate. You've heard Speaker Jasper say that we might implement a family package fee – a ticket you pay a minimum fee once a year and you have access to the park all summer long. We may have fees for groups. One of the biggest problems we're having right now and we're trying to control is the group usage. On one occasion we had three buses from a school in Massachusetts unloading at the park. Once they were in the park, they took over the playground and they run amuck. I can appreciate one of the speakers saying well I really don't notice any difference in the park. It's as beautiful today as when I moved in. I think it's as beautiful today as when I first walked it as well.

What we don't see is what goes on behind the scenes. What our volunteers do early in the morning before the larger crowds or groups come in. All the work that they do to clear the mess, to clean the toilets when they're not cleaned properly, to pick up the debris when the Highway Department goes in and removes broken and fallen trees and branches. Those are all things that can't be done when there are large crowds in there. All of these things cost money and that's why we're having the discussion of whether or not user fees would be applicable in order to ease the burden on the Hudson taxpayer. To talk about right now how much the fees are going to cost, who we're going to charge. If we're going to have a user fee, everyone is going to pay it. That's the way the deed reads. We can't exempt people from paying a fee however, we can have user fees that are reasonable for families. We're going to look at how many people in Hudson use it versus the people from out of Hudson that use it or out of State. There is so many implication to establishing user fees. It's going to be difficult. It's going to take a lot of work. I'm willing to spend the time. I haven't heard any member of the Board of Selectmen say they wouldn't spend the time if there's an overwhelming support to do this. Asking how much and who – it will be everybody and how much will be determined by the Board if that's the direction we want to go in. Does that answer our question?

Moderator Inderbitzen

The question is Selectman Coutu is special events. That would be up to the Board of Selectmen whether they would do a special event and just open it up to anybody.

Roger Coutu, Selectman

That's correct.

Moderator Inderbitzen

I think they'd have that option to do that if...

Roger Coutu, Selectman

That's correct just like we do the Community Center. It's a piece of property that we own. There are certain people who would want to use this center for a profit purpose and we would charge them a fee to use the center to cover our costs of cleaning, setting up but then if it is someone within the community like we do for AA, every Christmas time they use the facility to help their populous and we don't charge them a fee. It's left as clean when they leave as they did when they came in. We don't charge them a user fee because it's a good community event and it helps the people who are indigent and in need. I think we're going to have that same mentality when we decide whether or not we're going to establish fees.

As far as 9/11, we have fishing derbies for young kids that are sponsored by a nonprofit agency that comes in and all of the kids get a free fishing pole. They get their pictures taken, and goodies, and food is provided for them. Would it be fair to charge them a fee because they're providing a healthy, recreational activity and a learning experience for children? Those are the kinds of things we have to weigh. On that one, I would have to say it makes sense to say no we're not going to charge them a fee.

I think it's going to be written in such a fashion. We might model some of it after the way we do the Community Center but we have to think of the populous as a whole. We have to think of the park as a whole and we also have to factor in what is it going to cost to collect the fees.

Jim Barnes

Jim Barnes, 3 McKinney Drive, currently Chairman of the Benson Park Committee. I think as some of the questions are really a bit premature how are we going to use the money? Exemptions? The Committee has taken a look, a brief look at what kinds of fees could these be. Basically there's three classes of fees that we've looked at.

One is just a per user fee. If you come into the park you would have to pay something. An alternative would be to have a parking fee. You could park in the parking lot. You could just pay per vehicle. Then you don't have to worry about collecting fees from an individual as they come in. Or we could just charge for groups – large groups of people who want to come using it for a wedding, or use it for a company outing, or some kind of school function. Then we have the events that we've been talking about – 9/11 Memorial, the Last Cast Fishing Derby, the Easter egg hunt in the spring. So there are a lot of things like that. All of this, the devil is in the details as someone previously on the Board of Selectmen would always say.

There are a lot of things to be worked out here. How do we collect it? When do we collect it? So there's just a lot of things that need to be worked out. What we're looking for here is some kind of sense from the public – the voters in Hudson – would any of this be supported? We're not mandating collecting anything at this point. We're looking at possibilities of raising funds from this park. Thank you.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Further discussion?

Phyllis Appler

Phyllis Appler, 62 Glen Drive. I'm pretty much opposed to charging fees for just coming in to the park for the day. Benson's is a very special place. It's a very unique place and it's not a place that is held in the memories of just people from Hudson. It's a part of the memory bank of people from all over New England and beyond. I think it's very important that they be able to come here and walk on those paths and try to figure out where the hippopotamus used to be. So I don't think that charging for those people to just come in. If I want to go and take a walk in Mine Falls Park, if I want to have a picnic in Greeley Park, I don't pay for that privilege and we are neighbors to other communities and I think that charging a fee for this is probably inappropriate. But if you want to volunteer when it's volunteering season on that second Saturday of the month, go to the website and check and come in and pay that way. Thank you.

Moderator Inderbitzen

I, too, miss the animals. I had some thoughts about what we could do with politicians to kind of bring that back.

Ed Duchesne

Just out of curiosity, I read an article in last night's Hudson paper that Selectman Ted Luszy that it costs us \$47,000 a year. How much does that really represent on the tax rate to the average home?

Moderator Inderbitzen

Two cents.

Ed Duchesne

Two cents a year. I think I can afford that.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you.

Shawn Jasper

Thank you and I would agree. The \$47,000 we can afford. We can't sustain that park at that rate. That's the problem. It's growing. We don't have bath facilities. The Highway Department is needing to put more and more time in there and I will tell you that the number of volunteers is falling off rapidly. It's fun to build things. It's not nearly so fun to maintain those things. We're into the maintenance phase and that's going to take more to maintain that park.

I would not suggest that we close the park to people from out of State but I shouldn't have to pay for their enjoyment. There's no reason why we're paying and they come in and say hey I want to come in and look around. Okay pay \$5. Really? It's just not unreasonable to expect us to maintain the memories of everyone who ever went to Benson Park for free. We can all pay for that because it's not going to be two cents forever. We need bath facilities in there. There is going to be people maintaining that as the park usage gets more. We're going to have essentially the need for park rangers in there because we're seeing more things.

The Highway Department is seeing things going on in there. In the mornings they have to go in and literally rake the trash off building roofs because people are throwing the stuff in there. They've got to pick all of this stuff up. We need people in there who are going to be paying attention to what's going on. This winter we're seeing benches dragged out into the ice and in some case put in the water ways. We have to be sensible about this. It's not going to hurt us as individuals if the Selectmen handle it correctly and I know they will. If the voters say yes to this, let's not close our eyes to the reality that this is not sustainable at this rate. Thank you.

George Hall

George Hall, 18 Par Lane. I think I'm generally opposed to the fees but I think before – I think you need to put it in perspective for the voters. I've heard a Selectman talk about how much energy and efforts the Highway Department puts into maintenance there. I think it would be helpful to know how much that is in dollars or is that where the \$47,000 comes from. I don't know. I'd hate to find out that after we start charging fees, we'll find all the places that people decide to walk in in locations where you don't collect the money and how much we're going to spend in fencing. I could see if parking is the way we collect money. What if your merchants on 102 or Central Street are complaining about how many cars are in their parking lots – Burger King and the other merchants in that area. Greeley Park and all the other merchants that people are going to park wherever they think they can. Are we going to put parking signs on all the streets around there? How much time is the police going to spend handing out tickets?

I think there's an awful lot of down side. I hear all the issues and concerns of the vandalism and mistreatment of the park. It would be helpful to know just what we are spending. I'm sure you don't know. The volunteers are putting in an awful lot of effort in. If that volunteer rate is falling off, what are we going to make it up with? I think there's an awful lot and I know that all you people have spent time thinking of all these things but I think we need to try to put a dollar value on what it is that we're going to be collecting. I can see that quite a few people use that park in the winter time but is there enough use to justify somebody collecting money. The easiest way out is to close the park because it cost more to collect it than we're going to receive. So we're going to close the park for 2 or 3 months of the year. When you have winter that's a lot of snow fall, not many people are going to use it but last year and this year, there hasn't been that much snow. How many people use it? Is it justified to collect the fees? I think there's a lot of thought that needs to go into it and I know you've put enough. Put some in but is it enough. I'd be cautious as to what the repercussions are for charging money. Thank you.

Thaddeus Luszey, Chairman

If I may to reiterate. This is an advisory Warrant Article. We're just asking the voters their opinion. You can see what's going on here today just with this small crowd. You have some that are in favor of it. Some that are opposed to it. This year the Highway Department is going to be putting utilities in because of a warrant article that was passed last year. I think it was like \$98,000 for water, and electricity, and sewer. That's money that we're going to spending in the budget that's coming out of the Highway Department budget to do that work because that's how that warrant was constructed to keep the cost of putting those utilities in.

There is real costs being born by the town today. We as Selectmen we get the phone calls from taxpayers that may not be using Benson's or maybe using Benson's and don't want to pay for the cost of having all of the non-residents. Quite frankly that's what I hear is you drive by and over 50 percent of the cars are from out of State or the bus loads of kids from some other community. Those are the concerns. Really all we're asking for is direction by the voters how do you want us to deal with this. Do you want us to spend time and energy in putting a plan together on how that might be or we'll keep it as is and we'll figure out as we go.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Discussion on Warrant Article 19.

Shawn Jasper

I just want to try to answer two questions that were asked. The park cannot be closed for three months. That's a deed restriction. The Board can establish hours. The park has to be opened year round so that question. It would not make sense to try to collect fees year round. The Board would look at I am sure when the peak times of use are, collect these then, and the rest of the time it could be open. There is nothing that says once you establish fees those have to be 365 collecting 365. So this is a management issue but yes people could sneak in and I can tell you right now anybody who lives in town when Benson's Wild Animal Farm was open, people snuck in then. Did you all read the story about the guy who didn't want to pay the fees to go see the tiger and he jumped the fence? He and the tiger are gone now.

Matt Keller

Matt Keller, Cedar Street. I rise to move the question please.

MOTION BY MATT KELLER, SECONDED BY GEOFFREY KEEGAN, TO MOVE THE QUESTION

ON THE QUESTION

Moderator Inderbitzen

If you cut off debate, you're ready to cut off debate you would vote in favor of moving the question. It's a two-thirds. If you still want to hear some more discussion and have some more discussion on it, then you would vote no. Are you ready for the question? Those in favor of cutting off debate please raise your cards. Those opposed to cutting off debate. There's a few but it's a clear two-thirds. The ayes have it. We will cut off debate which means that we will close the Warrant Article 19 for discussion.

MOTION CARRIED

That is the end of our meeting. I want to thank everyone for being here. I want to remind you you have a vote in March – March 14th to vote on all these warrant articles plus those people who have signed up for your vote for election for public office. Thank you to the Juniors for the food and cable for making this all possible, my Clerk for recording everything.

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY SHAWN MURRAY, SECONDED BY MALCOLM PRICE, TO ADJOURN

All those in favor of adjournment signify by saying aye. Those opposed. Thank you. We are adjourned. The meeting is adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

MOTION CARRIED

Transcribed by Donna L. Graham

Patti Barry, Town Clerk/Tax Collector