

HUDSON, NH BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of the March 4, 2014 Meeting

1. CALL TO ORDER - by Chairman Maddox the meeting of March 4, 2014 at 7:02 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Town Hall.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - led by Kathy Carpentier.

3. ATTENDANCE

Board of Selectmen: Rick Maddox, Roger Coutu, Ben Nadeau, Ted Luszey

Absent: Nancy Brucker

Staff/Others: Steve Malizia, Town Administrator; Kathy Carpentier, Finance Director

4. PUBLIC INPUT - None

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Informative discussion relative to Town Warrant Articles

Chairman Maddox indicated that the workshop this evening is meant to just remind people of what is on the ballot this Friday in the HLN. You'll get a sample ballot. There are a number of items on the ballot and we would just like to spend a few minutes going through some of them to be able to hopefully provide some information. If you do read the Hudson/Litchfield News, you'll see in the Thumbs called in by people that aren't willing to put their name on them saying that the tax increase is going to be \$800. We'd like to explain that tonight and hopefully alleviate some of those fears that it's going to be that kind of increase because we are nowhere near that.

Chairman Maddox noted we have five contracts on the ballot. The idea was to control the rising health care costs. If anybody has looked at health care over the last number of years, you'll know that there are a number of increases that happen and we are in a unique position where within our contracts the providers are named. One of the things we have worked to get out of the contracts that are on the ballots this year is those named contracts so we can hopefully find a better way of containing our costs. If you go to the next slide...

Selectman Luszey asked to go back to the previous slide. I think it's important if the people that are watching and they're seeing item #2 which is to provide a modest cost of living adjustment. That was part of the give and take during the negotiating process for us to get the unions to give us what we needed back out of the health care provisions in the contracts. It wasn't just to provide a modest cost of living. It was through the give and take of that negotiation that we gave a little and they gave a lot.

On the next slide, again, Chairman Maddox stated this will change from the Blue Cross JY which probably doesn't mean a lot to anybody but I guess it is one of the best plans that are out there to a lesser plan, the Blue Cross 100 is the base. Ms. Carpentier is here to keep me factually in line with her special signal that it's almost \$900 - the savings between the two plans. Ms. Carpentier stated yes. Again Chairman Maddox stated in this first year we may not see as much but going forward these numbers will hopefully stay stable if not go down because also this is going to freeze a couple of things that presently was tied to that JY plan. As Selectman Coutu has pointed out, this is kind of boring but I just don't know how else to say people we did as Selectman Luszey said tried to balance with our employees the reduction in health care costs. The offset was a modest increase in their pay. The other thing that we have is if people opt out of the insurance. Those numbers are going to be reduced over time.

Chairman Maddox indicated we have a number of warrants.

Selectman Coutu told the Chairman that this was going to be boring and we're heading in that direction. I want to make some statements that I think that is important that we make. You hit on one of them Mr. Chairman which is that people have a tendency to write to the local daily - the Hudson/Litchfield News, and they don't affix a signature but they make statements that are quite brass and irrational. One of the things that was said that really disappointed me because it showed true ignorance and really upset me because it was so unfactual. In a Thumbs several weeks ago there was an implication that we are hiding information from the public. Nothing can be more transparent than the budget process. Each and every single department head comes in here. They explain what their budget is about, if there are any changes in their budget, what it is, and we have the opportunity to discuss it with them. We have the opportunity to reject it, or we have the opportunity to accept it. From here, it goes to the Budget Committee. They go through the same vetting process. They have the opportunity to cut it. They have the opportunity to accept it or reject it just as we do. So to imply that this is all under some secret umbrella, I don't know where we meet. We must meet at Ben's shop because nothing else goes on there except his father working hard, and we devise this scheme to sneak this budget in that no one anything about except us and the Town Administrator and the Finance Director apparently because we're the people that deal with the numbers.

Selectman Coutu certainly didn't want the people to get the impression that 1) everything you read in the Thumbs is accurate or correct - and that was a brazen lie. Number two Mr. Chairman, I've had a couple of inquiries relative to the contacts and the negotiations of the contracts. We are mandated to negotiate contracts with our employees. It's not something we look forward to. I don't enjoy sitting there negotiating. The give and take can get heated. I've walked out of sessions. Not the first one I've ever

walked out because I did lose union contracts way back many years ago and I know what it's like. It's a little simpler today. It's a little easier today - calmer heads more often than not prevail. This year went relatively smooth. The unions knew what we wanted and what we expected. We expected that they were going to make concessions on insurance because every year insurance goes up. Kathy this year it went up 5 percent I believe. That would have been 5 percent that we would have saved but that 5 percent if it continues to grow is also compounded from year, to year, to year. What is it that Einstein said about compounding? Steve Malizia stated the greatest wonder of the world. Selectman Coutu noted you ladies and gentlemen know like I do what compounding is - mortgage payments, car payments. That interest where the money makes the bank. It's on the compounding. The greatest wonder of the world.

Selectman Coutu stated we would have been able to say that and beyond that every single year that we sit down and we negotiate a contract, what is the estimated cost Mr. Malizia for negotiations for one contract let's say approximately. Mr. Malizia said \$4,000 to \$5,000 at least in out of pocket costs not counting our time. Selectman Coutu noted if we negotiate a 3 year contract for a union or a 2 year contract, that's 2 or 3 years that we don't have to pay an attorney to come in and represent us. Again, it just keeps compounding. The insurance increase, the labor negotiation costs, and I make \$8 a day. I enjoy coming here to the meetings and I enjoy taking constituent complains and answering them and trying to help them out and guiding them through a process. It's not pleasurable to have to come in and negotiate contracts because I know that we want something from them in order for us to give them something in return. It doesn't seem fair. It's like give and take. You've got to give a little to get a little. Do they come out ahead or did they break even? Does the Town come out ahead or does the Town break even?

In essence, Selectman Coutu said that's what negotiation is about. It's always the bottom dollar. How much more am I going to get? When you see when we negotiate, and we have some astute negotiators on the other side of the table, they got the calculators out and they're trying to figure out what am I going to get out of this? We as representatives of our government need to figure out what is in the best interest of the Town of Hudson not how much he or she is going to get or how much we're going to save, and how much we can lessen the impact on the taxpayers. We need to ascertain that whatever we do, especially in negotiations, that 1) it fairly represents a position that we think is going to be best for the town; 2) that the employee is willing to make the concession in order for us to arrive at that; and 3) we need to be able to convince the voters that not only are we bargaining in good faith and realizing a benefit as a result of that bargaining but the end result is going to be a tremendous work ethic and product for the town from our employees who have gone without raises for many years. I know a lot of people have said to me I'm sick and tired of you saying these poor people haven't had a raise in 3, 4, 5 years. What should we do punish them for the next 20? When does it end? The economy is getting a little better. Not as great for some people as others. I for one am at the poverty level. I haven't taken a pay check since November. I'm living off my savings because business is in the toilet. I'll pay \$68 to give my employees in this Town a pay raise because I know it's not that they're worth it, it's that they earned it besides the fact that they're worth it. They've earned it and they've negotiated in good faith for a small stipend increase.

Selectman Coutu said at the same time, they're giving a concession on insurance. That insurance has a greater impact after July 1 for every new hire because those people cannot benefit at all from a JY plan. It's an automatic savings of - KC somebody who's coming in on a family plan from JY to the BC/BS 100? Kathy Carpenter said about \$900 a year for a single so it's about \$1,800 for a family. Selectman Coutu expressed that if somebody comes in and they have a child and a wife, that's a family plan? Ms. Carpentier said yes. Selectman Coutu noted we would no longer have to assume 80 percent of the responsibility of \$1,800. Ms. Carpentier commented correct. Selectman Coutu said 80 percent of \$1,800 is \$1,450 we'll save on every single employee who's a family member coming in. Now compound that. Each employee coming in, no concession on the insurance, we're still stuck with JY. You start compounding that, we hire 5 employees next year times \$1,800, ladies and gentlemen, its simple math. In the end, we all benefit by the negotiated contracts. I know we're going to discuss a little about the budget Mr. Chairman. Yes the budget went up. Costs go up. My electric rate just went up 40 percent this month. Forty percent. It went from \$600 average per month in the winter to \$1,000. Had I stayed with PSNH, the bill would have been \$1,300. I'm glad I have an alternate provider. It just went up 40 percent. That means my \$1,200 monthly bill in the summer time is going to go around \$1,600 to \$1,700 a month. I can't afford to keep consuming all these costs on overhead and yet at the same time I can't jack up my prices because people are going to go elsewhere to buy their beer, cigarettes, and grocery items that I sell.

Selectman Coutu knows that we're all hurting and we're all paying a little more. We don't go to the supermarket and say well I'm not going to buy food any more. We don't shut off the electricity. We certainly try to consume as best we can. We're trying to do the same thing. However, we are faced with those costs. When we negotiate our contract this year for utilities, you're going to find that the rate is going to go up and we're going to pay more. We're not going to have the same rate we had last year in that group plan that we were in. We're going to pay more this year. We're going to pay more for office supplies. We're going to pay more for fuel. We're going to pay more insurance. Our budget can't absorb all these costs. Just like the household budget finds it difficult to absorb the cost. So we need a little more money. The good thing we've got going for us Mr. Chairman, and you sit on the Planning Board so you're more astute and aware of what's going on in terms of growth in our community and the business community, people are complaining that we're about to lose a big industry. Well the fact is that there are several others looking into the community and one of them looks like they're about to make an announcement. The construction has been not where it was at its peak but we're still growing. There's still construction going on and we'll hopefully have more projects coming in this spring. All of these things help our tax base. The more businesses we have, the more valuable the property, the more houses we have, more money we collect on taxes, and we're able to kind of stabilize the budget. Stabilized doesn't mean that it stays balanced. What it means is that we're not running like every other community around us is going sky high. You can go to Pelham, NH, and the same house I have the taxes would be about \$1,700 more per year than I'm paying and you have to bring your rubbish to the dump and their streets aren't plowed properly like ours are, etc., etc., etc. Citizens of Hudson, we are giving you a tremendous bang for the buck. A tremendous bang for the buck and I appeal to you tonight to listen closely to what we're going to present to you. Keep in

mind the word "compounding". If we start saving money now, it compounds and we save a lot more in the future years. That's the message I think we're trying to get out there. Thank you Mr. Chair. I hope I made that interesting.

Chairman Maddox thanked Selectman Coutu. I knew you could not say anything. If we could go to page 3, slide 2. This is what Selectman Coutu kind of just went through. If you look at the screen, the current tax rate is \$6.37 per thousand. Our increase in the budget will raise that \$.07. That would bring us to \$6.44. If you are so gracious as to grant us positive votes on all of the warrant articles, that will cost \$.17 and bring it to \$6.61 per thousand. Not an increase of \$6.61 but the total tax rate per \$1,000 of valuation of \$6.61 for your town portion. Steve Malizia stressed for the town portion. I don't want anybody to think that that's the bottom line of the whole rate. It's for the town portion. Chairman Maddox stated the average home in Hudson is assessed at \$256,000. If all of the warrant articles passed, you would see an increase of \$61.44.

For disclosure Mr. Chairman, Selectman Coutu stated that's approximately what my home is valued at. There are some people on this Board that have homes that are appraised for much more than that. I'm not one of those people. That is what I'm willing to pay. I'm willing to pay \$61.44 in order to meet our expenses and to give our employees a minimal pay wage. More than willing to pay the \$61.44 extra at the end of the year. I don't think I'm going to belly up for \$61.44. It's a cup of coffee a week if that. Steve Malizia noted the other important message is when you read sometimes the Thumbs Up and Thumbs Down, there's been the number \$800 expressed. Selectman Coutu said the numbers speak for themselves - \$61.44 on a \$256,000 assessed home.

Mr. Malizia stated we also don't have a \$40 million surplus for anybody else who's reading the Thumbs Up Thumbs Down. We maintain I believe a 7 to 8 percent surplus which what does that mean? If you take the total appropriations of the town and the school where good financial practice mandates basically somewhere between 7 ½ and 10 percent. We're in the 8 percent range. I believe for the town side, it's \$4.6 or \$4.7 million as opposed to what you've heard being about \$40 million. We have money in capital reserves funds. I think we have \$14 million in those but those are reserve funds that were approved by the voters, appropriations were approved by the voters, and think about them savings accounts for future, large ticket type expenditures. That's inclusive of sewer and water. Those utilities basically have some very healthy capital reserve funds for the replacement of various components of those systems. When you look at Hudson, the Board, the Budget Committee, the voters, we've done a good job of weathering some of the tough times but we are not under a \$40 million surplus. I see that and it's just not accurate. Just to clarify that. Surplus is about \$4.6 - \$4.7 million which you want to have so that in case you have an issue or something happens, you can keep the tax rate stable. That's really what the goal is. We don't want wild swings in our tax rate - one year you're paying \$6, the next year you're paying \$8, or \$3. We've kept I think a stable tax rate so people can have some predictability in their at least expenses from the town.

Chairman Maddox said if we went to put out a bond or something, the financial community is looking for that type of...Mr. Malizia stated when your bond rating is determined, they look at those kinds of factors. We have, I believe, an AA1 which is pretty much equivalent to what the NH Bond Bank has. So we have a very good credit rating. We are not a very high debt town. Realistically speaking the only real significant debt we have was the water utility debt, which everyone remembers when we took the utility over. We financed that purchase. It was \$27.5 million. That's being paid for by the water users. It's through the water rate that we are paying that bond off. Other than that, the town side is very conservative. There maybe a couple of bonds outstanding for the schools. I think Hills Garrison and the renovation of the middle school from 10 plus years ago. From a town's perspective, we're very conservative. This town is very conservative. I think they take the approach save the money and then pay for things, hence the reserve funds which is a very good way to do things and obviously voted on by the voters. You out there get to vote on that. Whether it's a new one, or expending money from them most of the time. Basically the voters have some sort of say. It is a very transparent process. All these meetings, all the budget meetings are televised. They're open to the public. Comments can be solicited. We try to put most of the documents in a timely manner on the web page so if people want to look through them, they're more than welcome to. Our doors are open. Your phone numbers are published. I don't know how else to say that but I think there's a lot of transparency as you said in the process.

Chairman Maddox didn't want to make it boring. We want to make it so that people understand that the 5 of us - I did not say at the beginning that, again, Selectman Brucker will not be with us until the end of March. The 5 of us were here for budget season. This Board went through every line item, reviewed and sent it off to the Budget committee where they did it again. We did do a couple of things this year to set up more reserve funds and whatever. Just like the Town Administrator was saying, we're now going to break out the water and sewer because what ends up happening is there's years when say Nashua wanted to add some piece of equipment that we got to pay \$300,000 towards, that just kind of skews the numbers. This way here, it will always be in its own line item if you would rather than being part of the town budget. To make that even more transparent, that's why that's on the warrant this year. The State just said the legislature said you're allowed to do that. We're putting it on there so people can see as transparent as we can. We set up a couple of different revolving funds to be able to - same thing - to be more transparent - the senior citizens. They're put money into this and as they take the various activities, it will come out. Rather than putting it in the budget where it kind of fluctuates...

Steve Malizia indicated it can lapse at the end of any given year. Selectman Luszey said it helps that program be self funded versus appropriating dollars to put into the budget for programs. For their activities, Mr. Malizia stated think of the trips that they take or whatever other fee based activities they have. The can pay the fee, it stays in an account designated for that purpose, monies can be expended for that, and any balance left can remain and roll over year, to year, to year which then gives them money for deposits for the various activities they do that have a long lead time where you have to reserve something 6 months, 9 months in advance. Basically it's just another tool that allows us to be able to provide those activities without having to really affect the tax rate. Selectman Luszey noted that's the important point.

Selectman Luszey indicated same with the cable which will become after not this year but the year after should that pass will become a self funding center/operation franchise fees which folks pay through their cable bill will go into an account. Expenses will then be spent out of that account for the purpose of providing cable television to the residents and cable access to folks who want to take the opportunity to put something on the system, for us to put these government meetings on, whatever the case may be. That won't start until next year because we want to make sure it passes before we try to do anything with that. That was key there.

Chairman Maddox stated all four of us will be at the Community Center for some parts or all of the day. If you have questions, ask us. We will try to answer as many as we can. Without the Finance Director, sometimes it gets a little fuzzy with all of the numbers that we've got here. The whole idea of going through this evening's presentation is to try to put as much information before you without boring you and to be able to say to people these are the facts. The four of us are sitting here, our name plates are in front of us, this is not something illusionary. It is the four of us. I think we all voted unanimously on the budget items. We believe these are the right ways to go ladies and gentlemen. I would ask Selectman Nadeau, do you have any thoughts on this?

Selectman Nadeau said no. We can move on to Article 14. We're talking about capital reserve funds and this one is to establish a capital reserve fund for the purpose of major repairs to town buildings. Chairman Maddox indicated near and dear to his heart. Selectman Nadeau said it is because for many years when we needed roofs, we'd have to budget them and you're talking \$40,000 - \$50,000 for some roofs. I think it's a good idea. We've done capital reserve funds for the equipment for the Fire Department - major equipment apparatus, and I think this is something that we should have done probably 20 years ago but now is a good time to start so that we can get the money in the account and when we have to do some major renovations to the town buildings, we won't be looking to the taxpayers for \$300,000 - \$400,000 to do something. If we have it in this account and the purpose of this account was to use the money from land that we sold off in the future to put it in this account or if we see fit in the next year or two to start putting in \$25,000 - \$35,000 into this account budgeted in every year so that, again, it doesn't make the tax rate fluctuate.

The next one is Article 15. Again, Selectman Nadeau stated it's another capital reserve fund. This one is for recreational equipment. We have some really nice playgrounds in town and they cost a lot of money to buy new pieces for them. For example at Bensons, that is a few years old and stuff is going to start breaking down. We have one at Merrill Park. If we're looking to build another park in the future, we'll have money in this major capital reserve fund for recreational equipment.

Article 16, again, Selectman Nadeau said it's just another capital reserve fund that we're trying to build and we're putting \$1 in it this year. This one is for field construction capital reserve fund for the Recreation Department. Another thing, we're just trying to plan ahead for future fields. If we look to build a field at Benson's or we get some property in the near future and we want to build a field on it, fields are anywhere from \$150,000 to \$250,000. If we start a capital reserve fund and put \$20,000 - \$25,000 in it so that it stays equal on your tax rate, then it's something that we've been trying to do. That's all the capital reserve funds.

Selectman Coutu didn't like this discourse to be other than a personal discourse amongst ourselves other than a lot of formality. You're Ben, you're Rick, - what's your name again, oh Ted, Steve and KC. I want people to know that we're human beings too. We're real people. I want to say something and it is not my intent to insult or hurt anybody's feelings. I'm going to be blunt. I usually am. I'm going to be blunt about something. Seven years ago we agreed on two things - something that had been hanging in the air for many, many years. We agreed that we were going to put our best foot forward and we were going to pursue Benson Park, and we were going to buy that land, and we were going to build this park, and we did it. We met with the seniors and ironed out some difficulties and problems that they were having with some of the folks that dealt with youth programs and we kind of ironed that out. We promised the seniors that we were going to get them the senior center. Come hell or high water, we'd figure out a way. With some creative financing, we were able to put it together and they're going to have their senior center once and for all. I'm appealing to the seniors because I know that on Election Day they show up to vote. They do their civic duty. I'm going to say this to everybody from the outset is that whether you agree with me or not or the Board of Selectmen relative to the budget or the warrant articles, I respect your positions especially if you go out and vote. Don't come and complain to me two months later, well geez the taxes went up. We did this. You had the right to go and vote. Your vote is your voice and that tells us in what direction we're going to go.

At the same time, Selectman Coutu didn't like exclusiveness when people go to vote. What happens is if there's something that affects the school side of the budget, a lot of school employees and their families show up to support that. I'm asking them to look at the town ballots as well and to vote on both sides of the issue - the town and the schools. We need to work together as a community. Something we've been striving to do. We need to pull our resources together to make things work. The seniors wanted their senior center and we did what we could for them to be able to realize that dream. They put a lot of hard work, raised a lot of money, and we were very fortunate that they were willing to cooperate with us and pooled all of our resources and we're able to build this beautiful building which we're going to open hopefully sometime near the end of May.

Selectman Coutu wants the seniors to understand that there are things that we have to spend money on that does not relate to them. What brought all this to mind was when Ben was talking about monies for fields, and monies for replacing equipment in recreation. Although the seniors may not use this and think it might be a waste of money, their children, their grandchildren, their great children are going to benefit from these natural resources that we have and what we do to enhance them to make them recreational opportunities for our citizens. More often than not when you go down to Benson Park, there are a lot of seniors walking around in that park enjoying that park. I've had more seniors tell me they enjoy so much watching the kids playing on the playground equipment. It reminded them of their days. We didn't have the kid of equipment we have and I don't want Ben to give

you the impression this equipment is all breaking down because it isn't. This is an expensive piece of equipment and we paid good money for it. Eventually you're right Ben - it may need some maintenance.

Selectman Coutu noted that we're asking you to look at the package in total not just what's good for me, what's good for the whole town - the youth, children in schools. I don't have any children in school why should I pay for taxes for schools. I certainly sympathize with you but when my 4 kids were going to school and older people in my community of Lowell didn't have any, they helped pay for my children's education. I'm paying it back today. I understand that concept. It's what we do as a community. We support each other. I'm asking you to look at both ballots - the school and ours and think about well this isn't going to benefit me. I'm not going to vote for that. It benefits the community. Yeah it's not about a senior center this year. There are things in our overall budget that if the voters say no unless we can find money somewhere, we're going to have to figure out a way how we're going to finance the operation of the senior center. There are some costs that are going to be involved there. Hopefully they'll pass the budget but I'm asking also to make an investment in these warrant articles each and every one of them. Some of them will only have a zero dollar amount in them because in our discourse when we discussed the budget, we made it very clear that we may cease on the opportunity of selling land that we have to raise some money and we will apportion it to some of these capital reserve funds so that we may be able to build a park, so that we'll have money to fix a roof here and then. We can't predict when we're going to have capital improvement needs in our community. Things happen and we have to respond to it whether we have money in the budget or not. We can't let a leaky roof continue because it's only going to cause more damage. Thank you.

Chairman Maddox stated when you started this evening saying you weren't going to speak, I said...Selectman Nadeau also stated he told us he wasn't going to speak any more after the last time.

Selectman Luszey thought Selectman Coutu did a fine job stating I think this Board's overall opinion on how this package looks. We spent a lot of hours vetting it. The Budget Committee spent a lot of painful hours vetting it. It is in the best interests of our community. I guess I do have a few things to say. When companies are looking at communities where they might want to relocate or build their business, they do look at the town and its totality. The infrastructure that it has available, the roads, the condition of the roads, the communication networks, and even the schools. One of the things if you read other papers from other communities, companies are beginning to migrate to those communities that are providing the skills the worker and with the skills to do what needs to be done. The jobs that are coming are no longer the non skilled manufacturing jobs. These are skilled jobs and we need to make sure that its part of the total package. We need to make sure that we have water, sewer, and skilled labor available. I think all the budget, both sides, reflect that.

Chairman Maddox said on the ballot, the sample which will be in the HLN this Friday, there's been a question of why we put the years that they did not have a contract. It has been the Board's practice in the past to show that on the Article 2 for police employees that there's been 4 years that we did not have a contract with them. So we've always showed those years that having no dollar amount expended. People are saying it's a 7 year contract; well it's really a 3 year contract. We're just pointing out showing that this was the last time there was a raise was the year before that. So there are 4 years of zeros in that contract. We can certainly look whether that makes more sense and do it another way next year but that is the explanation for that.

Next. At the last Presidential election, Chairman Maddox noted 12,412 people went through the Community Center in that one day. Last March, there was 3,238. So a quarter. It will go through quickly. Don't remember the November Presidential Election and say I don't want to go. I guess we're all kind of pleading with you to come and vote. I think Selectman Coutu pointed out that it is a right but it's also an obligation. If you're allowing 20 percent of the citizens of Hudson to make the decisions, you may not like what you get. If you can come out next Tuesday, March 11, we'll be there from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. If you have questions, ask us. We just hope that you will review this and come into the ballot prepared. Again if you have any questions, let us know.

Selectman Coutu wanted to point something out. I did the math. I took the average starting pay for a police officer. People think that we get a pay raise to these people they're going to somehow accumulate some small wealth. The average police officer will receive as a result of a .0275 pay raise, \$21.59 extra every week before taxes. Say that's minimum. They'll probably lose about \$.59 of that. The average police officer or the starting police officer is going to make an extra \$21 a week. We're not giving them an awful lot of money here. We're making an investment in the people that we have. Every single time we lose an employee, there's an added cost over and above the insurance. There is an added cost. We had that discussion today Rick at the store and I said that the cost isn't \$38,000 because we're going to be paying their wages anyway. If in this case we're hiring - what did we just hire in police officers 5, 7. We got a total of 7. Seven people ladies and gentlemen. That's 7 police officers. We have one that's coming in certified. So we have 6 less police officers on the road. The crime rate is not going down. The crime rate is going up. We're very fortunate in this community that we have a tremendous detective squad that's out there making an awful lot of arrests so they're on top of things. Drugs are rampant in every community. We're not immune to it by any means. When people say not in my back yard, not in my community, it happens everywhere and we are not immune to it. These are calls and these are things that they have to deal with on a daily basis. So when you're looking at \$21.59 to make people happy, it's a small investment in our community to keep good people here.

Selectman Coutu couldn't point the finger at any one. I certainly can't think of one off the top of my head and usually they stand out when I have an employee I'm not too happy with. I can't think of a single one. A single one -police, fire, administration, clerical staff. You name it; I cannot point a finger at any one and say that I think that that person is not earning their paycheck. All of us who represent this government, the 5 of us who sit here, first and foremost because we have an obligation, a duty to carry out and that is to serve the Town of Hudson according to State law and the Bylaws of our town, and to do it in a fashion in which we feel individually or collectively, and hopefully more often collectively than not, is in the best interest of our community.

(Selectman Coutu) We hear very often compliments from people. How many times have we received e-mails that messages came down from doctors from the hospitals to the Fire Department saying had that paramedic team not worked on that person, that person would not be alive today. How many times have we heard or read in the Thumbs column - these are the kinds of Thumbs I like to read - that people were so pleased with the service that they were given when the Fire Department responded to their homes. How many times have we read about the service rendered by our police officers and how people recognize it and said that was a great job? How many times does our Fire Department go out and collect money for charities, collect coats for the needy in the northern country. The Police Department putting on Halloween parties for the kids, trying to get blood for people who need blood to resupply our hospitals. These are above and beyond what they get paid to do but they provide those services for our community. Other things that they do that are unknown, and I'm going to speak with these two right now because they're our public service agencies. The monies that they collect through their own unions, a lot of that money goes to charitable causes within our community. I think you know firsthand Ben both police and fire will do things to raise for funds and whatever for the food bank. Those are those two agencies.

Within our own town structure, our Town Hall, Selectman Coutu noted KC is here. She is an employee that on occasion will raise money to provide funds for needy families at Christmas time and other times of the year. We do a Toys for Tots collection here at Town Hall because it's something that we feel we need to do as a community. We hear about the people coming in and what great service they've been getting at Town Hall. The pleasant demeanor of the girls at the Clerk's Office, how well the Community Development new team is working and what a better response they're getting there. Those are our clerical people. They don't make an awful lot of money. I've never heard anybody complain about the condition of Town Hall - geez it looks crappy or it's dirty. Apparently even the maintenance man is doing his job. When you look at the Highway Department, the parks are maintained, Benson Park is maintained, they go above and beyond. People compliment us every year. They compliment us but its not us it's our employees compliment us about what a beautiful town it is at Christmas time. What a great parade we put on for Memorial Day.

When you think you it - Rick, Ted, and Ben - Selectman Coutu stated we have a great deal ourselves to be proud about. We represent a large community. We're the 9th largest in the State of New Hampshire. We have every reason to be proud of the people we surround ourselves with. Who do we surround ourselves with? We surround ourselves with the Town Administrator, a Finance Director, and all the other various department heads. We have people working in the Police and Fire Departments that are in the administrative positions like Captains, Lieutenants, Sergeants that are doing their job every single day. From the top man, which would be you because we're not on the ballot for a raise this year, that would be you Mr. Malizia. I don't want to pinpoint a low man but if we're going to do a scale, you'd say from the custodian on up. Everybody is doing their job and they're doing it well because the compliments keep pouring in. Let's make an investment in our employees. Let's continue to make the investment in our community that we've been making. It's the right thing to do and I'm appealing to people to don't be selfish when you pick up a ballot and say this doesn't apply to me. It may not apply to you personally but it applies to our town. I hope you have enough pride in your town to want to do the right thing. Thank you Rick.

Chairman Maddox didn't think he could do any better. I'm going to say that's it and we thank you all for joining in and hope to see you next Tuesday. Kathy Carpentier said not to forget your IDs. Chairman Maddox said they are going to be checking IDs this year at the polls and practice for November.

Selectman Nadeau noted it's now the law so hopefully you can sign an Affidavit but its very time consuming and the State will be checking on all the Affidavits as they have in the past. It's just easier to bring your ID with you so that you don't have to go through the aggravation and headaches. If you have any questions on these, you can look at the town website. All the warrant articles are on there. The town ballot is on there and the budget is on there. If you want to go through the budget items, you can look at them on line and see exactly where the money is going.

Selectman Luszey asked is the list of acceptable IDs listed. Selectman Coutu said it's whatever the State mandates which is usually a driver's license, a State of New Hampshire non-driver's ID which my wife has, a valid passport. It has to be valid. It hasn't expired. Military ID is also acceptable. Student IDs are not an acceptable ID.

To your point, Kathy Carpentier said is it listed on the website, we'll look.

Selectman Coutu said the only ones that the State allows us to accept, and they said they are the only ones that are permissible by the State for alcohol and cigarette purchases so I would assume that same law would apply to voter registration. I know that student IDs are just not acceptable. I've seen so many student IDs that are phony it's unbelievable.

Chairman Maddox thanked everyone.

6. OTHER BUSINESS/REMARKS BY THE SELECTMEN - None

7. NONPUBLIC SESSION

Motion by Selectman Luszey, seconded by Selectman Coutu, to enter Nonpublic Session pursuant to: RSA 91-A:3 II (b) the hiring of any person as a public employee, carried 4-0 by roll call.

Chairman Maddox Nonpublic Session is being entered at 7:50 p.m., thus ending the televised portion of the meeting. Any votes taken upon entering open session will be listed on the Board's next agenda. The public is asked to leave the room. Open session is being entered at 10:14 p.m.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 10:15 p.m. by Selectman Luszey, seconded by Selectman Nadeau, carried 4-0.

Recorded by HCTV and transcribed by Donna Graham, Recorder.

HUDSON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Richard J. Maddox, Chairman

Roger E. Coutu, Selectman

Benjamin Nadeau, Selectman

Ted Luszey, Selectman