

**HUDSON, NH BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
Minutes of the November 3, 2009

1. CALL TO ORDER by Chairman Coutu the meeting of November 3, 2009 at 7:02 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting at Town Hall.
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, led by Selectman Jasper.
3. ATTENDANCE

Board of Selectmen: Roger Coutu, Ken Massey, Shawn Jasper, Rick Maddox, Ben Nadeau

Staff/Others: Steve Malizia, Town Administrator; Mark Pearson, Assistant Town Administrator; Kathy Carpentier, Finance Director; Fire Chief Shawn Murray, Police Chief Jason Lavoie; David Yates, Recreation Dept. Director; Kevin Burns, Road Agent; Patti Barry, Town Clerk/Tax Collector; Gary Webster, Acting Town Engineer; Lisa Nute, IT Director; Toni Weller, Rodgers Memorial Library Director; Connie Owens, Pat Nichols, Arlene Creeden; Donna Graham, Executive Assistant

4. BUDGET WRAP UP

A. Review of outstanding items

Selectman Maddox asked if Town Administrator Mr. Malizia could update them on the piece of paper they were given this evening in regards to the motor vehicles. At least start off with the revenue. Mr. Malizia indicated that there was some discussion at the last meeting regarding some revenue so there's been some statistical information presented to you. Yes its town revenue accounts for those who are looking through the paper. We have motor vehicle, ambulance, building permit, and Planning Board fees. He believed these were the 4 areas that the Board talked about, discussed, or had questions on. The First one is the motor vehicle. As you can a comparative report between 2009 and 2010. These are the year we're currently in and the year we have just completed. 2009's budget was \$4.2 million. 2010's budget is \$4 million. You can see that year to date through, he believe, October. We've collected \$1.2 million for motor vehicles compared to \$1.25 for motor vehicles last year. Again, we had a little bit higher budget last year. If you extrapolate this out, it gets us into the ballpark of \$4 million. He's not going to say it's exact; it gets us in the ball park. It's up to the Board if they wish to do something on the revenue line. Again, we're forecasting 2011, which we have budgeted \$4 million at this point in time. So that's the number you're comparing to. Chairman Coutu asked this number takes us to the actual we have 30.36 percent takes us through what. Mr. Malizia indicated October. So we've collected 30.365 percent of the budget through October. Chairman Coutu said so we're almost on target on that line. Selectman Maddox said its 33 percent, right? Mr. Malizia said 33 percent would be an equal amount. Chairman Coutu indicated we were on target. Three percent represents \$120,000. The strongest area as he recollected in past discussions would be the last third of the year. He believed longest usually historically.

Mr. Malizia believed leased vehicles tended to be a quarter of the year. That tends to be a fairly strong quarter. Chairman Coutu indicated that if we hold true to history, he'd say we're on target at the \$4 million in that account. Selectman Jasper you don't agree? Selectman Jasper said he didn't because if you look at what we actually took in FY09 it was \$3,850,000. So right now we're trending for the first quarter we're down \$40,000 almost exactly from where we were a year ago. You're perhaps \$100,000 even if the last quarter is a little stronger, you're probably at least 100,000 down, it brings us down to \$4,750,000 for 2010. That would really be pretty strong to come all the way back up to \$4 million in the next year. We can leave it there, but the fact is we're not going to hit \$4 million this year. We're more likely to hit 37 - 375 this year. Just so Selectman Massey can understand the math that Selectman Jasper has said. He heard 100,000, which to him translated to \$3,900,000. He didn't understand. Selectman Jasper stated he needed to start from the right base. The base when we look at what we collected in the first quarter of '09 which was 1.254 that extrapolated out to a total for the year of 3,850,000. Now if you look at the first quarter we're 40,000 down, which you could say is going to put you a third of the year you're trending 120,000 down from that base...Selectman Massey indicated that he followed that. But what we'd really need to know is what the final number for 2009 for that to be an accurate. Selectman Jasper said right. That is 3,850,799 on page 11 of the summary sheet. Ms. Carpentier indicated it was on page 5. Selectman Massey is trying to understand, and now he understands.

Selectman Jasper said certainly we can leave it at \$4 million, but the reality is it is very unlikely that will trend back up that quickly. Selectman Maddox said that they have to account for the cash for clunkers. That spiked a little bit of even in this first third numbers that probably have adjusted that up a little bit. People were racing off to get new cars with that program how much of a bump we don't know. He thinks that if anything, we're going to see probably a little bit more decline. He would be of mind to reduce that \$4 million to 39 and be realistic in our projection. Otherwise we're going to have to play catch up later on. Chairman Coutu stated if there's a guts consensus that we're not going to make the \$4 million, he would agree that we need to make the adjustment. Chairman Coutu would like to, especially in light of conversations you and he have had about the budget, he would like to be as accurate as we can possibly be this year so that we don't go in with some sort of a delusion of where we're going to be at the bottom line. He'd rather air on the side of caution, and he would support an adjustment at this time. He relies on him. He's been here a lot longer than he has. You're more attuned to the trends. He would trust his judgment. Regardless if it's 39 and we get 4 million, then fine. He would rather not estimate on the high side.

Selectman Jasper said based on where we are, 38, is actually unfortunately a more realistic number which is still optimistic based on where we are at. He didn't want to low ball it, but he really think they're going to come in closer to 37 this year. Selectman Massey stated you pay me now or you pay me later on this particular one. This will no affect the budget at all. It will affect the tax rate. So if you take 300,000 off now, it's going to raise the tax rate by at least \$.07. So we can either affect the tax rate this year by \$.07 or if we're wrong on our projections on the revenue for next year, we adjust the surplus downwards by the delta. It's like he said, you pay me now or you pay me later. You pay me now with a higher tax rate; you pay me later by drawing down by whatever the amount is on the surplus. Remember we're talking June 30, 2011. Selectman Nadeau said the other way is to lower the budget. Selectman Massey said that is another way.

*Motion by Selectman Maddox, seconded by Selectman Nadeau, to reduce line 4201, motor vehicle permits, from \$4 million to \$3,900,000.*

Selectman Maddox said it is our duty to be as realistic as possible. He's going to be a little more optimistic than the Selectman to his left. He's hoping that by 2011 things start to turn around. The cars that didn't get replaced, but he thinks we have to come into this realistic. \$4 million is going to be a real stretch to get to based on the historical numbers. So this is trying to show that we're reflecting what trended in 2009, where we're showing to date in FY2010, and trying to be realistic as much as we can Mr. Chairman for 2011.

Selectman Nadeau agreed with Selectman Maddox on this one. Being in the car business, yes they was some cash for clunkers that were sold and bought, but it just wasn't a large enough number to see this number go up by that much. He definitely thinks it's going to go down. If we reflect it now and you look back at the budgets and see how we can adjust them, he thinks we're better off this way.

Selectman Jasper will support the motion. It is splitting the baby. He just doesn't think that it's going to be lower than this. Selectman Massey makes a good point, and this is a way of dealing with that in a 2 year period of time. Hopefully it won't get a lot worse because if it does, we'll be in even worse shape. He'll try to be optimistic.

Chairman Coutu would like to have one questions answered. If cash for clunkers was a success, it would have impacted in the first quarter, correct? He believed in some of his arguments in the past couple of weeks he had said that he anticipated additional revenues as a result of it. Apparently we're not as fortuitous as he thought they would be in that regard. The numbers are not stacking up. He, too, will support the motion. It is splitting the baby. He's feeling more comfortable at 38, but he'll support the 39 because of its less severe impact on the overall tax structure going into the next fiscal year.

*Vote: Motion carried 5 - 0.*

#### Ambulance Revenues

Steve Malizia said that they are here for the year to day represents two months. That's what's been billed and that's what has been reflected here. Do not take this as 4 months. This is a 3 month revenue. We just raised the ambulance rates he believed at the last meeting so you will see some

increase just if you have the same amount of runs for ambulance service. That's a 3 month number right there.

Chairman Coutu stated if we're going to use the same argument, we would have to increase this number by \$200,000. However, Selectman Jasper said it doesn't seem to hold out because if you took the \$178,000 and did that times 4, we would have been well above the 525. We're actually trending down. Mr. Malizia asked if the 178 for 4 months on that side do you know. Ms. Carpentier said no. It's both the same. Unfortunately based on that, Selectman Jasper stated that the rates went up but it's trending down based on that. We're down \$18,000 for that 3 month period. Then it seems to trend lower. He didn't know why because you just can't take the 3 times 4 and come up with a number so he didn't know what's going on. The month revenue is up a little bit. He guessed he could be comfortable going to \$525,000. Chairman Coutu indicated he would be very comfortable with that. It would certainly offset the last one.

*Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Massey, to increase the ambulance revenue to \$525,000.*

Selectman Massey asked if it was 4730. Chairman Coutu indicated 4730 is correct. Selectman Massey said so from 500,000 to 525,000. Chairman Coutu corrected him by saying 420,000 to 525,000. Selectman Jasper said that was the estimate for the year before. That's where this is confusing because we're looking at estimates and then actuals. Chairman Coutu said okay 500,000 to 525,000.

Selectman Nadeau thought that this is one of those areas that he didn't think we're going to see an increase, even though we did increase our rates, he thought that when people start getting these bills in that can't afford them, that's one of the first bills they're probably not going to pay along with their hospital bills. You're going to see these lines not being as lucrative as you see them here just because the sign of the times. He really thinks if you look at what the calls are and what they go on, a lot of these people - do they have insurance? Don't they have insurance? A lot of people don't have insurance if they are out of work. So this is one of those things that you're going to be billing somebody, and he doesn't think they're going to be collecting on it.

Chairman Coutu asked that the numbers that are reflective here are the monies collected and not monies that were billed, correct? Ms. Carpentier indicated revenues are monies billed. Chairman Coutu repeated - revenues are monies billed. Ms. Carpentier indicated that when we bill out property taxes, she believe motor vehicles is the exception, ambulance bills, and all the bills that is when we book the revenue. Collections is a different animal. Chairman Coutu asked Fire Chief Murray what the collection rate was - 78? Ms. Carpentier said that is what she believed he said. Chairman Coutu said if that's true, and he's looking at the year to date revenues in 2010 at 16870 for the first 3 months to accurate reflect what the actual cash income would be, he would have to multiply that by 78 percent. If he's going to go based on history. Selectman Massey said it's actually the number below - 144,883 is what we've actually collected. Selectman Maddox said that was charge backs. Ms. Carpentier said the second line item is our administrative fee that Comstar gets. That's why it's a negative. Collections would be on a balance sheet. It's our accounts receivable, what people owe us. It's not based on what we've billed out. We have so many ambulance runs and so many bills, that's what gets booked to revenue. It's not the same as what we collect. Chairman Coutu indicated that the 144 is what we're owed and it doesn't mean we're going to get it. Ms. Carpentier indicated Chairman Coutu was correct. Chairman Coutu said if we go by history, we'll get 77 or 78 percent of that. Ms. Carpentier said right, but the 144 is what would be booked to revenue unless we had write offs approved. Chairman Coutu is trying to weigh Selectman Nadeau's argument. He's still not convinced that the income is not going to go up this year as a result of increase in billing. He's trying to reflect on the state of conditions in our town in terms of doing a comparison with other towns, the number of people that might be unemployed that are uninsured as opposed to those who are insured.

Selectman Jasper indicated that all we can do is go based on what we have with all due respect not with Selectman Nadeau's feeling on the state of the economy is. You also have to look at who the primary clientele is or ambulance calls. That's not necessarily tied to whether they have a job or not or whether they have insurance or not because obviously a very large percentage of our patients are elderly who are covered through various programs. We tend not to be as much the younger working people. There tend to be a lot of automobile accidents which tend to be covered through automobile insurance. Unless the department has something to the contrary, he didn't see any real reason to think that we're going to be off.

Chairman Coutu recognized Chief Murray because he had his hand up. Chief Murray thanked the Chairman and members of the Board. He can give them a picture of different insurances and what their collections are. From July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009, our collection rate is 78.94 percent. That's up from a year before from 76.69. Out of all the insurance claims for example from Blue Cross Anthem, we collected 88.48 percent; Medicaid we collected 88.90, Medicare 97.60, other insurances 85.74, collected direct from the patient (someone who wouldn't have insurance) our collection rate is 16.91 percent. That's the lowest of the numbers. The highest percentage of our insurance collections comes from Medicare at 42 percent. Believe it or not, Medicaid is only 7 percent, Blue Cross is 13 percent, and other insurance is 24. Those people without insurance represent 14 percent of all of our collections. So as an example from that time period 7/1/2008 through 6/30/2009 out of a total allowable insurance ability to collect, it was \$628,331.24 and we collected \$495,973. Of course that difference is just the date when they last reported. It did bring us up to that 500,000 mark. Chairman Coutu asked if they gave him a report on those fees which weren't collected last year that they are able to collect this year. Is there such an animal in their reporting mechanism. Chief Murray said they didn't give it to him, but we can get those fees that remain uncollected.

Selectman Jasper asked the Chief if he had a breakdown there in terms of the clientele for each category - what percentage of patients are represented by those who are uninsured, those on Medicare, private ones. Chairman Coutu said he thought he just gave us those. Selectman Jasper said no he gave us the collection rate. Chairman Coutu said no. It was a percentage of those in each of those medical categories that they are billed. Selectman Jasper didn't understand that. Chief Murray said they're comprised of a certain percentage of the runs. For example, people on Medicare comprise 42 percent of all of the runs we submit for insurance. Selectman Jasper apologized. He understood him to say that was the percentage of what we collected 42 percent came from. Chairman Coutu asked what the percentage for Medicaid was. Selectman Maddox said 7 percent. Chairman Coutu indicated that was the impoverished population. Medicaid is on the basis of income to qualify. Chief Murray said that the total charges on that was \$48,000. They only allowed \$17,000. So it's very low as far as what Medicare pays out. Chairman Coutu asked if we bill at their rate, why they aren't paying at their rate. If Medicare and Medicaid say you can bill a certain rate, you can bill us \$100 a run and they say we're only going to pay you 87. Chief Murray said over the past 3 years, they finally transition. You used to be able to bill for everything. Now they've brought everything together and they keep it as one charge. They now call it an ALS charge where before you would charge for a defibrillator, oxygen, a backboard, and on and on. They also base it on regional rates on what's happening regionally and what they're going to pay. That's why they always tell you to when you come in to bill 20 to 30 percent above and beyond the Medicare rates. The Town has always taken a very passive and stayed with the standard rates, which isn't a bad thing either where you look at the cost of health insurance and everything too.

Chairman Coutu didn't think it's so much passive as a concern for our citizens and what the costs are. That's been the attitude of the Board of Selectmen in the past based on his historical knowledge of where this rate emanated from.

Selectman Maddox said for \$25,000 he thought this is a realistic motion. He will support it. We can split this 7 different ways. He thinks that runs will go up in 2011. At that point, we will have raised the rates in October of 2010. With all of that, \$25,000 is realistic. Chairman Coutu tends to agree with that. Ben made a valid argument and he respected that presentation and he wanted to weigh it carefully. He thinks for \$25,000 where it's realistic.

Vote: Motion carried 4-1. Selectman Nadeau in opposition.

#### Building Permits

Steve Malizia stated there was a discussion regarding building permits though you have in front of you the building permit comparison from last year to this year. We've lowered the budget by 20k from the 2009 budget. This reflects 3 months as well. Ms. Carpentier said October - 4 months. Chairman Coutu said we're on target. Selectman Massey indicated that we budgeted 120. Mr. Malizia stated correct. Selectman Massey said the actuals for '09 was 118. Mr. Malizia said correct. Chairman Coutu asked why are we not on target. Selectman Jasper said because the budget is \$130,000. We're on target to make 99,000. Chairman Coutu said you're right. He multiplied by 4 instead of 3. Selectman Jasper stated that unfortunate thing if you look at the 42,000 if you did the simple math, we would have been at 127,500, and we came in at 118. That's

because it's seasonal and you don't get a lot in the second third of the year. Chairman Coutu indicated we're going to be lucky to get anywhere near 99. Selectman Jasper said it's not likely that we'll make 120,000 but given that we're so far out, he thinks it may not be unreasonable to be a little bit more optimistic that after a real lull that housing starts and construction will come up in 2011. Certainly an estimate of 100,000 would probably be more in line with what we're seeing right now. Chairman Coutu agreed. If we're going to realistic on pages 1 and 2, we should also be realistic on page 3.

Selectman Maddox, again, is trying to be more optimistic. On line 4218, building permits, change that from 120,000 to 110,000. A reduction of 10,000.

*Motion by Selectman Maddox, seconded by Selectman Massey, to change line 4218, building permits, from 120,000 to 110,000, a reduction of 10,000.*

Selectman Maddox said, again, to Chairman Coutu we're trying to once again crystal ball a lot of different variables. He's hoping optimistically maybe but he thinks there is a pent up demand in the housing market for repairs, renovations, and all of those things that reducing by 10 we'll probably get pretty close to it. Does the Town Administrator agree? He just saying at this point Mr. Chairman a 10,000 reduction is a realistic number. Again, he sees some pent up demand. There's people that are going to make purchases with the foreclosed home market. A house in his development has been empty for 2 years. Three people are looking at it because the bank has priced it right. They're going to have to spend \$20 - 30,000 renovating this. He's just saying that all of those things are going to stack up Mr. Chairman. He believed that 110 is a realistic number.

Selectman Nadeau said this is another one that he doesn't think is a realistic number. He thinks more of a 100,000 would be the realistic number on this one. There's a lot of buildable lots out there that aren't moving. There's a lot of foreclosed stuff out there, still not moving. We have a house over here on Ferry Street, not moving. He just doesn't think that 120 is a reasonable number. He doesn't think 110 is a reasonable number. He thinks 100,000 on this line would be a reasonable number.

Selectman Massey said we're talking the period July 31, 2010 to June 30, 2011. Folks if we're not on a rebound by then, we have more problems than a 10,000 shortfall on a building thing. He's going to be with Selectman Maddox on this. He wants to be optimistic that the economy will have turned around by then. Again if it isn't, we're looking at far different problems than a 10,000 shortfall on revenues. Chairman Coutu tends to agree with Selectman Nadeau. It's not a question of being pessimistic; it's a question of being realistic. They're predicting that foreclosures are going to be higher next year than they are this year. He knows that in the retail sector, we are just beginning to feel the impact. We have not felt it at all. We are now beginning to feel it severely. He's laid off one employee and talked about possibly laying off a second. Things are going down hill rapidly. In light of the economic situation today and where they're going at the federal level, he just doesn't see it getting any better. He sees it getting worse. He hates to paint a gloomy picture, but he's not going to support \$110,000 because he doesn't think it's realistic. He agreed with Selectman Nadeau. He believes 100,000 is more realistic and that's what we're trying to achieve, so he will not support the motion. Obviously he'll be in the minority, but that's his position.

*Vote: Motion failed 3-2.* Selectmen Nadeau, Coutu, and Jasper opposed.

*Motion by Selectman Nadeau, seconded by Selectman Jasper, to reduce line item 4218 by \$20,000 to reflect \$100,000 in building permits, carried 5-0.*

Mr. Malizia indicated that there was one more that was brought up. It was Planning Board fees, a relatively modest line item. You can see the data in front of you. Chairman Coutu stated he didn't think they should mess with that one. Mr. Malizia stated that was his opinion. Chairman Coutu agreed with him. He asked if everybody was in concurrence. The Selectmen indicated yes.

Chairman Coutu indicated that took care of the revenue side. Unless any of you, before we go into warrant articles that we haven't discussed and before we look at the bottom line, if there is anything individually or collectively within a category that you wish to discuss, now would be the time to do so.

Selectman Maddox asked the Fire Chief to come in and give his presentation that he had been working on in regard to the Selectmen's request to bring that number closer to zero. We saw a 2

percent reduction in the police number. He was wondering what the Fire Chief may have to be able to reduce that number lower.

Chairman Coutu asked Chief Murray to join them. He thought in all fairness to the Fire Chief, Selectman Maddox if you would elaborate so that the Chief is clear as to what it is that you're seeking at this time. Selectman Maddox stated that they looked at a number of numbers and the percent of increase you were looking to keep as close to zero as possible Mr. Chairman. The Police Chief came in and removed 1 position from his budget. He believed 7 percent when the Board originally saw it, down to 5 percent. Selectman Maddox was wondering if the Fire Chief, he knows he did look at different options, is there anything within the Fire Department budget that could reduce that 6.6 percent increase to a lower number.

Fire Chief Murray stated that with all due respect Mr. Chairman, he's not prepared here tonight and go over what alternative plans he might have to do. For him to sit in front of this Board and give you figures or alternatives to cut numbers, he doesn't know what the number is. He has looked at his budget. He does have alternatives and strategies that we have already incorporated over the past couple of years when they were hit with a default budget. He doesn't understand from a public safety perspective if you will just because one of his other fellow department heads had positions or money to give up within their organization because of vacancies and stuff. Again, with all due respect, why it's encumbered on him to have to have the same challenge. Our organization is very different in themselves. The number of people he has, the missions that they have. He's obviously going to have to do whatever the budget allows him to operate under. Out of fairness to sit there and start telling the Board he can do one thing or the other is fair. He doesn't know what the number is.

With all due respect Chief Murray, Chairman Coutu stated that members of the Board of Selectmen were asked if they had anything collectively or individually they wanted to discuss about any budget. You were the first person called. If Selectman Maddox needs to clarify anything, he will do so.

Selectman Maddox said they looked at all the budgets as we went through. All of the other budgets are 5 percent or under. The fire department is 6, other than library which we don't control there are 12. Everybody else came in under zero percent. The highest one was the police. Still in public safety. So he would hope that we would get the fire department down to a 5 percent increase as its maximum. Chairman Coutu asked a question to Chief Murray. The argument has been made that your budget came in at a higher increase level than other departments that made requests. He heard his arguments. Could you tell me Sir of the almost 7 percent increase how much of that is reflected in those things that we are contractually obligated to which be the increase in insurance, the increase in the retirement fund which is mandated by the State, and the increase in wages as a result of contractual obligations that we have with your superior officers. Which level do we still have a contract with? Chief Murray indicated the supervisors. Chairman Coutu said we do have an ongoing contract for another year. So we have increases there - pension, insurance, and step raises. Chief Murray stated that with the exception of that \$20,000 warrant article which was miscommunicated, health insurance went up 16.9 percent. Dental insurance went up 5 percent. The legislature last year voted to pass on retirement system costs to the local towns. That impacted the fire department about \$32,000. We have contractual agreements. There's a cost of living increase in next year's budget for the supervisor's union. He believed that the administrative aide assistant unit also...Mr. Malizia said they don't have a contract next year. It's the supervisors at which you have at least 7 people.

Chief Murray indicated that purely with the exception of the miscommunications by himself on the \$20,000 warrant article, his increase on costs on his \$4.5 million budget is due to personnel and benefit costs. Selectman Massey said statistics is an interesting phenomenon and you can prove almost anything you want with statistics. If you want to look at this budget in some real lights, the total increase is being driven predominantly by the salary line. The salary line is up 7 percent. The operating expenses are up by 3 percent. One of the things we know is because we're dealing with the default budget; we're not looking at realistic numbers. For instance, we learned in our budget hearings that 5715224 our budget for Fiscal 2010 was 17,650. If you look at what we're spending on maintenance for the last 3 years, it's 428, 469, 354. The Chief now has 28,950. We have aging buildings. The biggest cost in that budget is a \$20,000 general maintenance line. When you look at the historical cost of that department, his operating expenses have not materially changed. There's one other item - medical exams. They're up \$5,000. If you look at historically, they've been all over the place. Selectman Massey thought that when you asked the Chief what's he going to

do, unless you're prepared to talk about staff reductions he didn't see that his operating expenses are out of line given where we started with from a default budget. At this point in time, the Chief is right. Based on where he is, he's in reasonably good shape. Again, we're looking at the fact that our insurance costs went up 16.6 percent and our retirement expenses went up 10 percent. Those are just huge increases that the town had to absorb from the State. Most of his costs are in the labor and benefits line. Thank you.

Selectman Jasper wanted to point out in terms of what we're talking about if we're looking at the difference between 5 percent and 6.6 percent is just under \$74,000 on a \$4.8 million budget. Chairman Coutu understands. The reason why he just wanted people to be aware that there are certain costs that are out of our control. We need to live with that because he is so labor intensive that it really affects his department. Chairman Coutu had done those numbers, and he didn't know how extensively you had looked at the budget Selectman Maddox. You have a right to question any budget. Obviously we all do. He was very comfortable with the fact that he felt that it was labor driven and the bulk of his increase was definitely driven as a result of mandates that we have no control over. Unless as Selectman Massey had said unless we're going to look on cutting positions, there's not much else we can do with this budget from Chairman Coutu's perspective.

Selectman Maddox said that is not exclusive to the fire department - the police, the highway - they're all labor intensive. They got closer to zero. That was his only question to say why can't we get closer to zero. If the Board doesn't want to go anywhere, there's no sense having the Chief sitting there and we're all dancing on the side. If we're going to go yup, okay, then let's go yup okay and move on. Chairman Coutu said that's not what it's all about - yup, okay. It's not about yup, okay Selectman Jasper indicated. He thinks they did go through here. The Chief came in with a responsible budget given the things that were passed on to him by the State and with the insurance. Certainly the police dealt with the same thing. He'd like to point out that we're also talking about an issue of scale here. We're talking a \$4.8 million for the police and we're talking a 4.8 almost 4.9 for the fire department, and a \$6.5 million for the police. While the police may be at 5 percent, that's over a \$300,000 increase and the fire department at 6.6 percent is under \$230,000. In terms of dollars and impact on the tax rate, the police budget increase at 5 percent is greater than the fire department's impact at 6.5 or 6.6. You have to look at it at every way and certainly we can look. It's not like gee the Chief did a terrible job coming in at 6.6. There was much that was outside of his control. We'd certainly all be willing to listen to ideas. It isn't incumbent on him to necessarily offer things up. He did talk with him about ideas but he didn't think that if he couldn't find anything he felt was comfortable that he shouldn't be coming forward offering things up that were going to compromise the mission statement of the fire department. Selectman Maddox said the votes aren't there so he's not going to keep pressing something Sir.

Chairman Coutu asked if there were any portions of the budget anyone wished to discuss. Selectman Massey has given it a lot of thought, and he would like to offer the following amendment.

*Motion by Selectman Massey, seconded by Selectman Jasper, to amend cost center 5630, line items 101 through 122, by adding \$37,690, said amount representing 6 months salary and benefits for entry level patrol officer effective January 1, 2011.*

Selectman Massey indicated it represents a salary for 6 months of \$22,901 and then the rest is benefits for a total of \$37,690 and it would be effective January 1, 2011. Three years ago we came before the voters and asked them to hire 2 additional officers. That motion by the voters failed. Two years ago we came back and put it back together, 2 officers, and we explained to the people that the reason for that was to provide more coverage on the third shift, which is one of our most vulnerable shifts, so that we're not (a) having to pay additional overtime but more importantly that we didn't wind up with what we were experiencing at the time which was on several occasions more than you would have wanted to have happened. This is what we told the voters that time. We're winding up with not enough people on the shifts. Remember when you have a DUI, he believed it takes either 2 or 3 officers off the street. Is that correct? Chief Lavoie said usually 2. Selectman Massey said they asked the voters did they want to increase the security of the town by adding those 2 officers. That motion by the voters passed by a good margin. The Chief in putting together this budget did look at that as he could if he had to take it out of his budget. He didn't do it because he felt he didn't need the position, he did it because he felt that he wanted to try and be a good citizen. The Chief has not asked me to bring this to the Board. He's bringing it to the Board because he's looking at what the voters themselves said they wanted to do in that position. He was also mindful before he came and put this on the table, he was not going to do it if it required us going over the default, which it clearly is not going to. He also didn't think he want to go with the full

year salary. There should be at least some recognition the Chief was making a concerted effort to help. Selectman Massey really thinks that in this particular case we owe it to the voters to recognize their response to us when we made the case to them that we needed these 2 positions. The only reason the position isn't being filled right now is because when we finally went through all of the progressions from hiring the new Chief, then we opened up a Captain slot, then we opened a Sergeant slot, then we opened up a Patrolman slot that was towards the end of March. The Board asked the Chief to wait until the end of the fiscal year to bring that position back. In July because of the default budget, the Chief made some very tough decisions for the town. In order to keep within his default budget, he said he will not hire this person. Not because he didn't need him again, but because he has to live within his default budget. He did say he will be back after the first of the year asking you to reinstate that officer. This just delays that request by 1 year. Selectman Massey hoped the Board would look at it on the basis of where the voters said they wanted to be in the police department and what the actual impact in this case is going to be, which is only a 6 month salary and benefits as opposed to trying to put it in for the whole year. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Coutu stated that in light of his experience serving on this Board and having watched pretty much all of the departments and how they operate, and having a special place in his heart for public safety - both fire and police, and being aware of the times that we're in he, again, hated being pessimistic. In light of what's been going on around us for the past 2 or 3 months as a result of the economy, he thinks crime is going to increase. It's going to increase significantly during the night time hours. He's never been one to sit by a police monitor but as your Chairman of emergency management, he is provided with a radio, and have a scanner, and he had been monitoring the activity both in the fire and police department. That also gives Chairman Coutu an opportunity to listen to the ambulance runs. He runs a business so he spends most of his time listening to the radio at night. It might be on while he's watching television. He's listening to increased activity. He's concerned primarily about the public safety, the safety of our officers in particular who are out there in the late night hours. Not that we've seen a rash of break-ins, Chairman Coutu is concerned that he's proud of the fact that we can say that our ability to solve crime and to capture people has been enhanced greatly in the past couple of years within the police force. He attributed that to 2 things. He has good training in management and having the proper staff to do that. He is going to reluctantly support the motion only because he's of a mind to fund the position for the full year. Like Selectman Massey, Chairman Coutu recognized what our Police Chief offered to do in order to help us try to achieve our goal to keep our budget as close to balance as we possibly can going into the new fiscal year and with the impending tax increase that we would like to avoid. Chairman Coutu said he would support the motion, and he hoped his colleagues will do the same.

Vote: Motion carried 4-1. Selectman Nadeau in opposition.

#### Benson Park Project

Chairman Coutu stated they were going to discuss the request for the Benson Park Project. You have a hand out. Mr. Malizia indicated there were 2 sheets. At the last meeting, he believed discussed separating what the Benson Park Committee may need versus what the actual operations are in running and maintaining the park would need. So what you have are the 2 cost centers separated here.

Chairman Coutu had some comments he wanted to make, but its Selectman Jasper's proposal. Selectman Jasper said he spoke with Kevin yesterday about this and what he's really here of course to talk about is 2 interns, which was no particularly his idea, but he believed he could explain it. He was asked to present a budget, which is the \$3,000 for small operating materials, 357 for large operating equipment. Those are really the items that he would be here to discuss. He would open it up to 2 questions because there were members of the Board who did have questions about all of those items.

Chairman Coutu asked Selectman Jasper a question. The total request - let's deal with operations. There's \$53,795. Selectman Jasper indicated correct. Chairman Coutu thought we were saying 2 interns, not that he necessarily agree we need 2, at \$10 an hour. Unless he's mistaken, he sees \$12 an hour now on his sheet. It was 12? Selectman Jasper said it was \$12. Chairman Coutu asked if we really needed 2 interns. Selectman Jasper deferred to Kevin. It was his suggestion, but he's best qualified to speak to that. As he had said for the first year his opinion was that he thought we did because of the work to do in there. Then we could re-evaluate at the end of the first year. Mr. Burns said he didn't really don't even know what he's going to end up with out there long term. So this was somewhat difficult. Usually he can sit here and defend his budget pretty hardily



and feel confident. He doesn't know the level of responsibility that he's going to have. He does know with Benson's alone he's inherited a big piece. His landscaping responsibilities have probably doubled in one big swoop. Does he think we'll spend 80 hours a week in Benson's? No. But does he think there will be weeks when we spend 200 hour in Benson's? Yes. He can't be everywhere at once. We'll probably be at Benson's weekly. He can't be everywhere at once. He still has the cemeteries, and all the other parks, and all the other grounds, the building, the fire stations, police stations that he has to take care of. Just filling those 2 foundations for the barn was 80 hours in labor. There's a lot more of those little things. The parking lot was over 80 hours of labor. Clearing across from the A-Frame was over 80 hours in labor. It adds up pretty quick. So when the guys are in there, they're not somewhere else. There's a good possibility the interns won't spend all their time in Benson's. More likely they're going to be the least skilled employees at \$12 an hour. They would be the ones running the weed whackers at cemeteries and doing around the 200 headstones while the guys with the commercial licenses and the experience running the equipment would be doing more of that type of construction work.

Mr. Burns really can't defend it much more than that because he doesn't have a real strong picture of Benson's is going to be a year from now, 2 years from now, 10 years from now. He knows it's his responsibility eventually. That the volunteers, though he believed they are doing a great job, they will dry up and whatever it is that this Board decides they want out of Benson's will ultimately end up on his desk and will have to pull it off. He's pretty much at the break point with labor. We've downsized. We've eliminated part-time positions. He doesn't know how much more he can do with what he has without some sort of assistance. Does he think that the interns are going to be a big assist to him? Probably not. The busy time for the landscape part of the department is the spring and fall. In spring cleanup everything is a mess. The fall getting everything cleaned up before winter. He didn't know if they'll be hugely effective, but he believed they needed to start somewhere. He's adopted Benson's and his Park's budget is \$20,000. That's for everything, the whole town. All the cemeteries, park, buildings - \$20,000 doesn't go very far.

Being the liaison to the Highway Department, Selectman Nadeau indicated that with hearing what Mr. Burns just said, hearing how much time we spend at Benson's. He's very alarmed. He didn't know that we spent that much time there at Benson's. He's very concerned that we're spending that much time there at Benson's seeing that we have all this other property in town that he mentioned - the cemeteries. He didn't hear him mention Musquash. He didn't hear him mention Merrill Park, which he maintains for \$20,000 for all the other parks that we have in town. Here we are looking at \$13,000 for interns, \$500 for small equipment, for the alarms we need the electricity. The portable toilets - nice to have. New equipment - \$3,000. Is it needed? Probably not all of it. For a total operating budget of \$53,000 where we're telling everybody we're trying to cut \$5,000 here, \$10,000 here, and now we're looking to add in almost \$54,000. He looked at Benson's as a lot of people in this town looked at Benson's as passive recreation. Walking trails, which we have nice walking trails. He didn't think anybody imagined putting this much money into Benson's. He's just amazed at this budget at this amount where a tractor would be nice. We're looking at the economy and the way things are and we're asking the fire department to figure out how he can scale back. The police department how they can scale back, and now we're trying to put in \$53,000 to the Benson's account into the highway department. We have the money in the Benson's account. If we want to buy a tractor, we should use the money from Benson's. If we want to use interns at Benson's, then we should use the money that we have in the account. Selectman Nadeau doesn't think that with the way the economy is and the way we're going that we should be adding in \$54,000 into this department or this line. Is there going to be increased work at Benson's? Yes. Is there increased work at any of the other parks? He hasn't seen any. We're taking on a whole new project here, and we're not even taking care of the parks that we already have, or now we're going to neglect the parks that we already have to do work at Benson's. He finds this very, very disturbing. Thank you.

Chairman Coutu listened very intently to what Selectman Nadeau had to say. What struck him is somewhat odd. He asked both of you if you want to comment. Mr. Burns feel free to do so. You are the liaison for the highway department? Selectman Nadeau indicated yes. Chairman Coutu didn't know what his relationship was in terms of meeting with him on somewhat of a regular basis to go over his needs and what he's up against or what he's doing as most of us do in our various assignments as liaison to different areas. Are you telling me that you're totally unaware of any of the Benson work that they were doing other than what you hear at the Board of Selectmen's meeting? Selectman Nadeau indicated he was totally unaware of the filling in of the foundation. He knew that they were doing the work in the parking lot. He had no idea about the clearing

between the A-Frame and the pond. He knew that there were guys there doing things here and there, working on the storm drain management, that type of thing.

Point of order Mr. Chairman. Selectman Massey said we're not here to talk about what somebody knew or didn't know. We're here to talk about whether the work needs to be done or not. Chairman Coutu said we'll move on then. Selectman Nadeau stated there's some relevance to what we're talking about. If we're really spending this much time...Chairman Coutu was thinking about Selectman Massey's point of order. He can see a relevance.

Selectman Nadeau said if we're spending this much time and we're not realizing it - he has talked to the Road Agent when there's been things that have come up. He's told me things towards the budget, and we've talked about the tractor and stuff like that. To get this handed to him 3 meetings ago and look at it and say, "Wow - 2 interns". He never had the conversation with him with 2 interns. Not once at all. He never had the conversation about a tractor. But if we do need a tractor, we do have money to buy it out of the Benson's account. If we really need these interns, we have the money in the Benson's account to see if it actually works. Why should the taxpayers be burdened with this project when we have an account to do this work out of. If we find out that we've spent \$14,000 of taxpayer's money on something that didn't work and we used it out of the Benson's account, it benefited Benson's great. He just can't see spending this type of money from the taxpayer's money to do this.

Selectman Massey asked for a clarification. He asked Selectman Nadeau if there was a motion on the floor to take all of this money out of the Benson's account, would that do away with your concern or are you concerned that the work actually isn't there? He's having a hard time. Last week the motion was made at the beginning to take all of the money out of the town surplus, which basically would have come from the money left over from Benson's if you want to look at it that way and we got sidetracked on that because of the questions about was the tractor really needed. So he wanted to understand from a perspective is your issue here where the money is going to come from or is it whether the work itself should be done? Selectman Nadeau indicated both.

Selectman Jasper said to Selectman Nadeau that he finds his comments about not having any idea that this kind of money would be necessary for Benson Park to be disingenuous. We have a master plan which has numbers in there of \$7.5 million, which he has never agreed with. But that plan was completed many years ago and has been talked about here in this meeting particularly by Selectman Maddox numerous times. To say that he didn't have any idea that we were talking about money as much as \$53,000 is just disingenuous because the number 7.5 million has been thrown around. At least the last time with the Board of Selectmen, which you and he were not part of, Selectman Massey would have been at that time, put the question to the voters whether they wanted to continue with Benson Park. The master plan was completed at that time. People knew that there was a plan out there that had a price tag projected to be \$7.5 million, and they said yes they wanted to continue. He'll grant you that there was no money attached to that warrant article, but none was requested at that particular time. They have supported 2 other warrant articles at times to put money aside, to purchase Benson's, and then there was money to take money out of surplus he thought it was to put in the capital reserve account. Selectman Massey indicated it was \$250,000 put into an operating fund. Selectman Jasper said the voters have certainly spoken on this project 3 times and the numbers have been large. They are aware. No one except for a few people on this Board have ever thought that this park was going to be just paths. It was always talked about fields for throwing balls around, picnicking - everyone has known except apparently for you that there are going to be large meadow areas, rolling hills that are going to be maintained. All you have to do is look at the master plan and it's on line. There was a lot of acreage that on a regular basis needs to be mowed. Everybody has known that. That's no secret and never has been a secret.

Selectman Jasper said if you walk around there now, you can see all the things that are going to have to be leveled. There's always going to be things that are going to have to be done. Trees will always blow over. That happens. That's 165 acres, and there's always going to be trees blowing over on the walking paths, blowing over on the paved paths, and things that will have to be done. The proposal last week was to take everything except the recurring expenses from the surplus. Selectman Massey said it was \$38,700. Selectman Jasper said right, which didn't include the money for the interns. There's no question in his mind for that first year that they can put more than 80 hours a week in there for 13 weeks. It's short money in a \$26 - 27 million budget. They can do the work in it. Nobody can, he thinks, with a straight face say there isn't that much work in there to do on 165 acres with the condition of the place. That's not even debatable. He does think we

should take out the capital equipment. The problem is we're down to about \$84,000. If you start taking the annual operating expenses out of there, you're not going to have any of the money to do any of the other things that the money was put aside to do - to do the swing sets, to do whatever. We still have buildings out there that are going to be maintained. So he totaled agreed that that \$40,000 roughly should be taken out of the surplus, which is going to get turned over from the work we're not going to be able to do on the Haselton Barn. He thinks that certainly this town is more than willing to make what amounts to a \$15,000 commitment from the tax rate to the annual upkeep of that park. We will have ample opportunity to discuss that through the budget process, with the Budget Committee, and you can make your case on the floor at Town Meeting that we shouldn't do that. This town has spoken. The outpouring of people who are interested in the park has been overwhelming. This \$15,000 annual operating expense is miniscule. Yes it's almost double his total park, but frankly we don't have any parks out there that offer much of anything. Musquash is a conservation area. We're not supposed to do anything out there. It is conservation. Benson Park is not conservation. People need to understand there's a difference. He would be alarmed if the Road Agent were out there doing things with his equipment in the conservation area. He hopes that we can come together finally as a Board of Selectmen and take ownership of this park. This seems to be the problem is that 9 years ago a Board of Selectmen came up with the idea to take ownership of this park. Today the current Board of Selectmen is not willing to take ownership of the park even though they were willing to take the deed. There isn't the willingness to take along the responsibilities which that deed required of us. He hopes that we can put that to bed tonight.

Chairman Coutu would like to make one point. The deed requires us to maintain 3 buildings, and we've more than accommodated that portion of the deed. He resents that remark.

Selectman Maddox had a couple of questions of the Road Agent. Number one, estimate. How many man hours have been spent at Benson's since we purchased it? You rattled off 250 - 300 hours just going with the parking lot and whatever. Mr. Burns indicated that's been about the majority of the work except for the tractor that's been in there opening up the paths originally. Selectman Maddox said trucking material that the volunteers have taken off to the...Mr. Burns' rough guess is 400 hours. If they weren't at Benson's, Selectman Maddox asked what would they have been doing. Mr. Burns indicated that there's been swales that haven't been cleaned, drainage projects that need to be completed.

As a follow up to that, Selectman Maddox said if we're going to argue about the 2 interns, but they don't start until July 1<sup>st</sup>. So all the things that need to be done for Benson's is going to be done on your dime at the expense of the swales and whatever until July 1<sup>st</sup>. These interns won't kick in until the July 1<sup>st</sup> time frame. His question would be two-fold. Number one what's the 2 interns going to get as July 1<sup>st</sup> if you've done 60 percent, 80 percent of the work from April to June 30<sup>th</sup>. Number two, would we be better off just putting 2 seasonal help into the highway department and you will use them as so needed rather than dedicating them to Benson's and having a problem with managing them. If you have 2 seasonal people to do the weed whacking as you said, the lower tech end of the jobs, knowing you have a commitment to Benson's. He was wondering if there's a better approach to this. Thank you.

Chairman Coutu said, "Did you not say Mr. Burns that assuming that provisions were made to hire 2 interns at 40 hours a week that you wouldn't necessarily keep them at Benson's?" Mr. Burns' idea or thought of thing is he's getting 2 full-time seasonal helpers that are laborers that he puts them where he needs. He didn't know that they were committed 100 percent to Benson's. He can't just put 2 interns in Benson's because they're both going to be unskilled, and pretty young, and they're going to need to be supervised by a full-time employee. So if anything there would be one of the interns would be with one of my full-time in Benson's and the other would be out with other people of the full-time crew. He wouldn't just set 2 18 year olds free at Benson's with his equipment and say build us a section of this park. Mr. Burns envisioned more as part-time parks laborers like the City of Nashua has.

Selectman Jasper said that was the very first thing he said when he presented this part of the budget last week. This salary really belongs in the highway budget and not here. But it had to be presented this way because if it wasn't for Benson Park he wouldn't be proposing it. We wouldn't be moving forward with it. This dollar amount really belongs in the highway budget. Kevin is exactly right. It is seasonal labor for him. So it belongs in there. They're not dedicated to there. He's always felt right as Kevin said; you couldn't put 2 interns in there. So it just becomes ultimately part of his budget. That's what we should be doing. Selectman Jasper didn't want to upset the Chairman, but if you look at the deed there are responsibilities we have. We didn't just

get that park just to maintain the buildings and then just let Mother Nature take over. We do have responsibilities in there. Certainly the thought always was. Maybe it's not spelled out, but it talks about all the activities that can take place in there where you can't play all these things in forested overgrown land. Chairman Coutu understands all that. It doesn't require us to do that. Those are the potentials. He's read that deed at least 5 times from cover to cover. Believe Selectman Jasper, he worked on it for years. He knows what the intent is, and he knows what people have been told and what they have voted with the concept of. We do have an obligation. If we had just kept it in a natural state, we wouldn't have gotten it. Regardless, the salaries belong in Kevin's operating budget because they are going to be used according to how he feels their best used.

Selectman Massey never thought he was in one of those people that was going to be categorized as not wanting to support Benson's. He thinks the Board will recall that it was he who made the motion last week to take the money out of the surplus to buy this equipment. He's the only one on this Board, actually he's sorry, Selectman Jasper was on the Board the year he joined. Since the day he's been on this Board, there has always been the conversations with the State that this was more than just trails. This was always going to be a place where we'd be able to put picnic areas as Selectman Jasper said. We talked about up in the big area just somewhat southeast - over near the Haselton Barn there's a huge meadow over there. It's all pucker brush now. To make it viable, it's going to have to be cleared. Once you clear it, it's going to have to be mowed on a constant basis. Because it was intended that it would be a place where people could go play Frisbee. Perhaps if we wanted to do and it did not preclude putting in an athletic field. So there was always going to be multipurposes for this. The passive recreation simply said that we weren't going to be able to go in and do that. We wouldn't be able to put a football stadium in there and have spectators in bleaches kind of thing. It's his way of thinking a soccer field would have been not an organized ball field, it would have been people who wanted to have a pick up game. The same way we talked about doing the volleyball courts. He's perfectly willing tonight to support some things, but the Road Agent has said some things that give him pause to think perhaps Selectman Maddox is on the right track. If the majority of the work that you think you're going to do at Benson's is in the spring and the fall, then these interns don't provide you with any serious support.

Last week, Selectman Massey was doing some arithmetic and he's figuring that if you went to day laborers first of all unless they were day laborers if you had to rely on a manpower type agency where every day you don't know who's going to show up, then you're reliability has a problem because you have the problem of how much supervision you have to provide these individuals. The first question he would ask is if you need the people in the spring and the fall, is it possible to find day laborers that could be there on a regular basis for essentially part-time work for maybe 3 months but not during the summer? He's a little tucked in a quandary Mr. Burns....Mr. Burns indicated that in this economy he could find anyone to work. Selectman Massey said that the quandary he's in is these monies wouldn't be available until July. As Selectman Maddox has pointed out, the majority of the work you're talking about is in the spring.

To be honest, Mr. Burns indicated that the majority of the work in Benson's right now is above the classification of a week whacker. Most of it's like we've been doing. Go in and clear. Once you clear it, you have to maintain it or else it's coming back. There's areas now that we've started to clear that are going to have to be maintained. In the spring of next year, he envisions being tasked certain areas to start reclaiming. Once we reclaim them, we need to maintain them. Selectman Massey asked where he'd get the additional manpower to do that. We've already heard that if you do work in the Benson's, some of your other work is not going to get done. I guess that's the question.

The other question Selectman Massey had, and Selectman Maddox asked it last week, how did you arrive at the cost of a tractor at \$20,000? One of the things he didn't see, he sees a commercial mower with a vacuum system. He was wondering if either that or the tractor would have in addition a snow plow attachment to it. If we're going to use this year round, we're going to have to have snow plows to plow the trails at the very minimum. Mr. Burns said that tractor does have a loader on the front. Selectman Massey indicated the loader wouldn't do plowing would it? Mr. Burns said it could handle the snow around the building. He would envision he would maintain it sort of like he maintains the police firing range. He doesn't plow it that day. He gets to it 2 or 3 days later. It would not be an emergency to pay somebody on double time to plow Benson's. It would be after a day or 2 to do the clearing out there.

If Selectman Massey could just finish up Mr. Chairman, where he's at right now, he would more than willing put his motion back on the table about the use of surplus for the equipment. His only

concern right now is if we put the money in the budget for the workers, it's not going to be there when we need it. He's not quite certain how we would handle that. He does think that Selectman Jasper is absolutely right. There was never in his mind any doubt that we were going to have to spend money to maintain this park. If we thought we could do it without money, we were on a fool errand in his mind. To him it's just a question of when this money can be made available and not if it should be made available.

Selectman Jasper would like to try and clarify something with the Road Agent. Granted we have a problem. College gets out in May. There may be 6 weeks where in order to make this work he may have to find some money in his budget if that was possible to get interns to do this. His feeling was yes the first year there's going to be a lot of creation of the areas to mow, going in there and reclaiming. After this year, there's just going to be a lot of mowing. There's going to be some spring cleanup, but a lot of that may be accomplished through volunteers on an annual basis. We may be able to get people to go there and pick up brush and do stuff like that. That's not an every weekend thing. In terms of spring maintenance and fall cleanup in Benson Park, he doesn't see that as heavy. What he's seeing as heavy is the weekly mowing of the areas that are dedicated for picnicking. His understanding is your crews are already maxed out on doing that. That's where Selectman Jasper was thinking these interns would allow you to maintain the grass. As he's said, he thinks maybe we can establish that after the first year down to 1 inter added on to your crews. He doesn't know; you don't know. Are we on a different wave length here? He's hearing spring and fall and you can handle the mowing in the summer.

Mr. Burns indicated he doesn't know either. He started out this whole conversation and he doesn't know where we're going with Benson's. Selectman Jasper said assuming there's 10 acres to mow in there and trim around buildings and what not, are you saying you can handle that without additional? Mr. Burns said the equipment that he had asked for when we spoke is basically a second lawn crew. If he gets 10 more acres at Benson's he has the equipment to have a lawn crew in Benson's, a lawn crew out doing cemeteries, and then the next day they're going off to do in different facilities. Without really knowing what the heck is required of him, he basically built another lawn crew. He knew that Benson's was going to require a dedicated piece of equipment if people are going to be in there working. An inexpensive way was the Kubota that he specked out. It doesn't have a cab. It's basically a far tractor with a bucket, hydraulics on the back with a yolk rack for either building or maintaining the trails at a reasonable cost. We're not trying to take the grader in there with a 14 ft. blade that costs us \$300,000 to go maintain. It's actually too big for that for walking trails. What Mr. Burns tried to build is what the picture you painted for him. It's a tough piece of canvas to work with.

Just a follow up. Selectman Jasper thought he still haven't answered the question. Envision on an annual basis 10 acres of additional grass to maintain. Do you have sufficient help in the summer to do that or do you need at least 1 intern to do that. Let's not even talk about next year. Say we get everything settled out next year; do you need any additional summer help to do that? Mr. Burns indicated that once it's all built, 2 part timers are probably going to be necessary. He envisions a lot of people using this. You're going to have litter problems, buildings that need to be maintained, painting that needs to be done. That's great for part-time help. The unskilled labor is not going to help him building it. The unskilled labor will help him maintain it. He thinks 2 people on a part-time seasonal basis. He's guessing right now. He doesn't know what we're building.

Selectman Jasper stated perhaps to say interns if we put the money in just your labor account and a part time you could do either. If you want to go out and find somebody given the economy, this was an idea to do it. If we put money in, you can spend it however it works for you. Mr. Burns said he would find it easy to manage if he had a block of hours that he could hire part-time someone. Not necessarily a college kid. If it's somebody that's 25 years old and has some construction experience and is laid off and wants to come work for him for the summer, he would much prefer that over an 18 year old college kid who had the choice of either doing this or bagging groceries, so he decided to come and do this.

Selectman Maddox said as always, Benson's consumes us with all of the things we don't know. To all of us we're guessing what we're going to need, where we are going to need to spend it. From his mind, from what little he has left after all of this, is we put monies into Kevin's part-time labor account starting July 1<sup>st</sup>, but we take money from the Benson's fund to fund May and June so that we have monies to start in May to accomplish this. If you only need them 24 hours one week, you're only going to bring them in 24 hours. It depends on what you feel you need. As far as the equipment, he can see buying another commercial mower and the trailer. The tractor he would

much rather see you just rent that for the times you need it until we know what it's going to take. That way there rather than everyone guessing what it could be, you've got some flexibility with ours. If you don't use them all, bless you. If you need them all, you spent them. We start using them out of the Benson's fund from May 1<sup>st</sup> or somewhere around that point and compute what that's going to be, and we rent a piece of equipment as needed. You have a plan. You rent a piece of equipment and we don't spend \$21,000 unnecessarily until you know that is a piece of equipment that is needed.

Selectman Massey said Selectman Maddox was down the same road, but he wanted to get a clarification. Mr. Malizia the Board of Selectmen are the agents to expend. Are we going to be able without an appropriation to do what Selectman Maddox is talking about - to take out of the Benson's operating monies money for help in the May and June time frame. Mr. Malizia asked when you say the operating monies, you mean the monies you've collected from...Selectman Massey said the money that we've collected. We have about \$84,000. Mr. Malizia indicated we're doing it now. Selectman Massey said so we can do that. He thought that Selectman Maddox's idea is a great compromise because it helps us get to where we want to get but doesn't involve a capital investment if we find out that renting the tractor is enough or that you can use the tractors that you have. The only question we would have is - since we're only talking now July and August, we would not be talking September. We're not talking 13 weeks, we're talking 9 weeks. Selectman Jasper indicated then you'd have to go back to the end of the other year to do the May and June. You need this amount. It will get you through a full cycle. Selectman Massey indicated this is just for 13 weeks, so it gets us through July and August. You have to have the following year May and June. So it's 4 months. So it's 17 weeks.

What Selectman Massey would be looking at is, and we'll let the rest of the Board do it, but to him it would be a motion to pay for the commercial mower with the surplus funds and we'd have to somehow get from Kevin what it would cost to rent for some number of weeks, and then to put 4 months worth of interns into the budget.

Selectman Jasper thinks that renting a tractor is just throwing money away. Kevin has told you pretty clearly we need one there. You're not going to recoup that money. This summer at the school farm the mower broke down and there was no appropriation. We had to rent one for \$3,000 a month just for a mower. Three months is \$9,000. If you're on the similar thing here, you're talking whatever you are, you probably bought half the tractor in the first year and you have nothing to show for it. This is short money coming out of the account. He can guarantee you that tractor will be maybe not used every day in there, but there is going to be a lot of gravel paths still that are going to need after washouts, haul gravel in there, smooth it out. There's going to be areas that it's going to be used to pull stumps and do a lot of that work. It would be a mistake to rent a piece of equipment for a park that we know we're going to have until the Town of Hudson ceases to exist. Tractors last a long time. The ones from Alvirne are now from 1993. The ones he has - we have a '52 and a '56 that we use on a regular basis. These are not something. Chairman Coutu asked if they can stick to the budget. Selectman Jasper said this is the budget. Chairman Coutu indicated this is a Benson's Committee meeting. We went through the police and fire department in a lot less time than we're going over \$53,000. Selectman Jasper made the motion last week, or Selectman Massey did, and we tried to move forward. It was the rest of the Board that wanted to bring the Road Agent in and have the discussion again. Now different ideas are coming. He's just trying to say why he thinks it's a bad idea to rent a tractor.

Chairman Coutu's dilemma is he had a difficult time voting for a half-time police officer when he thinks we need a full-time police officer, and we're discussing whether or not we're going to bring 2 interns in and spend \$13,000. That's his first dilemma. He thinks that no one is going to question his commitment to Benson's. If they do, then they are shortsighted. He's heard Selectman Jasper's argument presented several times about this Board of Selectmen not willing to take ownership of the park. He thinks that we're all ready to take ownership of the park but we all have a different vision. Some of us want to leap, and some of us want to crawl. It's a humungous piece of property. We are at a moment of financial crisis nationally and we're being affected by it right here in Hudson in the State of New Hampshire. To start committing a lot of money for major projects is not something that he's willing to do. That doesn't mean he's not willing to take ownership of the park. That doesn't mean he doesn't care about Benson's. All those arguments can be thrown on the table, but those people who know me and know my commitment and the commitment of other members of this Board, even Selectman Nadeau who at times would appear that he's being abstinent about his position and he's against the park, and then he's not. We all know what his commitment was to the park. We approach this on doing the things that we can initially on a

volunteer basis. He heard your argument and he doesn't disagree with you that we can wear some of these people out over a period of time. He agreed with him. You can't ask the same people to go there in a labor intensive environment week after week after week. They are going to get burnt out. He heard that argument and he can't dispute that. He agreed with him.

Again, Chairman Coutu thinks back to what Mr. Lapin had said in the past. If we don't ask, people are not going to contribute and they're not going to give. There are a lot more people out there who are willing to contribute their time. Fortunately or unfortunately for us, and we have a member of the Benson's Committee here, the bulk of the people who have been doing the work have been the same people over and over again. Of late, we've had a lot more people who have come forward and are willing to volunteer and put some effort into doing this part. He's of a mind at this point. He's come to realize in his tours of that park both with the Governor, without the Governor, and walking through the park with you, with Selectman Massey, and with countless number of other people. We are almost prepared to open that park not to the vision that we expected to see with all these fields, and these meadows, and these play areas, and these picnic areas. We can't accomplish all of that in 1 year, or 2 years, or 3 years. It is an ongoing monumental project that is going to take time. The only way we could accomplish this objective is if we had \$2 or 3 million to put into the park, which would mean close it down, get it done, take a year, get it done, and get it done right. It isn't going to happen that way. We don't have that kind of money. He doesn't like being told that we don't want to take ownership; we don't care about the park. Those are the things that upset him Selectman Jasper. You keep saying that. It's not true. It's not true.

Selectman Jasper said it's not true that he's said that over and over again Mr. Chairman. He said that to him once before tonight in private. That's the only other time he's ever said that. Chairman Coutu asked if they could ever have a conversation where you're not going to upset, and you're not going to get jumpy and yelling. Selectman Jasper said not if you put words in my mouth that I have not said over and over again. Chairman Coutu stated then apparently we're never going to go anywhere with Benson's. This is just going to be a long ongoing discussion until everything gets done your way. Absolutely not Mr. Chairman [Selectman Jasper]. When you say that he has sat here and said over and over again that this Board won't take ownership. This is the first time tonight that he has said that in public. When he said it to him last Thursday night, you said you know what Shawn, you're right. Now you're going back on that. That's the only reason he's angry is because he agreed with him out in the hallway. Chairman Coutu said to him Sir that you're right. We're not taking ownership, but we are taking ownership. We are making the commitment. We've made a commitment. He did say that. He did say you were right. That's certainly the projection. That doesn't mean...Selectman Jasper said he has not said it over and over again. He said it twice in his life. Chairman Coutu said well that's over and over. He's not going to debate this with you any more. He's sick of talking about Benson's. He wants to get something done. He wants to get it open. That's the direction he thought they were going in.

*Motion by Selectman Maddox, seconded by Selectman Massey, to add \$13,435 to line item 5552104 seasonal.*

Selectman Maddox does have a concern for Benson's. He has heard more than once, Selectman Jasper, not to keep this going, but you have said it in other times that this Board has not cared about Benson's. Maybe not in those exact words, but we are trying to move this forward. The best way to do that is to put this monies in the part-time into Kevin's budget that \$13,000 for him to spend as he so needs for FY2011. We will come back at a later date with a number to add hours for whatever you believe in June whatever it may be out of the Benson's monies. That's where he's going to head with this Mr. Chairman. So he has a motion to add monies for a full year for part-time seasonal help. We'll know where we are at that point and we'll go from there.

Selectman Massey is going to support the motion, but he just wanted to understand when we had talked about it originally Selectman Maddox, you were talking about we needed coverage at the front end of the fiscal year and coverage at the back end. That would have been 17 weeks and not 13 weeks. You have July and August and then June. If you want to because we're not really certain where this is going to just leave it at the 13 weeks, he can support that. Selectman Maddox said he's just leaving at \$13,400. If he makes it half weeks for 20 weeks, he doesn't care. That's all the clarification Selectman Massey wanted. Again, he understands it's for year round at that point. You're not restricting it to any specific month. The prime purpose of it to provide the coverage for the additional work at Benson's undertakes even if all of that money isn't spent specifically on Benson's. He can accept that.

Vote: Motion carried 4-1. Chairman Coutu abstained.

Motion by Selectman Maddox, seconded by Selectman Jasper, to increase line item 5556403 grounds maintenance by \$3,000 for the various small hand tools.

Selectman Massey would like to support this motion and he will, however, he would like to see all of this equipment coming not out of the tax rate but out of the surplus. He would be prepared to make a motion later, unless Selectman Maddox does, to add \$38,700 to, depending on what your total number is going to be, to 4999 from \$600,000 to whatever the number is going to be.

Vote: Motion carried 3-2. Selectman Nadeau voted in opposition. Chairman Coutu abstained.

Chairman Coutu is abstaining Gentlemen on the basis that he reluctantly supported the part-time police officer's position because he believes public safety is more important at this time and in this state of economy than spending this money. He's going to continue to abstain on voting on any Benson's appropriations only on principle and not because he doesn't support Benson's. A police officer is more important.

Motion by Selectman Maddox, seconded by Selectman Massey, to put \$15,100 into line item 1501 for a trailer and commercial mower.

Selectman Nadeau said again if this equipment is to be used to work at Benson's, offsetting our stuff that's going to Benson's, then he believed this money should be coming out of the Benson's account, he did not think we should be buying this with the tax dollars. Selectman Jasper said he and Selectman Massey have made that very clear on multiple times that at the appropriate time, we will move to do that. He doesn't know how much clearer we could make that to you Selectman Nadeau. Selectman Nadeau said that's fine.

Vote: Motion carried 3-2. Selectman Nadeau voted in opposition. Chairman Coutu abstained.

Selectman Maddox didn't see a line item for rental. What would you want to put that under either small equipment or does KC have a better place. Selectman Jasper said not to go there. Selectman Maddox said he was going to give him \$2,000 to be able to rent a bobcat or whatever may be necessary. Okay. Then he won't go there. He's fine with that. Chairman Coutu asked Mr. Burns if he was going to be able to handle that with current inventory.

Motion by Selectman Massey, seconded by Selectman Jasper, to increase revenue general fund line item 4999, use of fund balance, from \$600,000 to \$618,100, and increase of \$18,100.

Selectman Massey indicated that the money is going to come out of the fund balance but we're putting in \$84,000 into that fund balance. No, sorry we're not. Mr. Malizia said it would be approximately \$40,000, which is the remainder from the roofing project at the Haselton Barn. Selectman Massey said there would be enough money certainly to cover this. It effectively is coming from the Benson's account. Ms. Carpentier wanted to know how come you're not including all of those motions just made. Selectman Jasper indicated no, just the capital equipment. Selectman Massey indicated he just put the capital equipment. The other appropriations are going to go into the tax rate.

Vote: Motion carried 4-1. Chairman Coutu abstained.

Selectman Jasper said we do have the Benson Park operation, which now has \$16,060 left in the Benson Park operations. He would move that. Selectman Massey asked to 5563. Is that what you're talking about? Selectman Jasper said yes. Small equipment maintenance \$500, electricity \$600, portable toilet rental \$560 - \$16,060 is the budget.

Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Massey, to move the amount of \$16,060 from Benson Park operations into account 5563.

The only concern Selectman Massey has is 1 portatoiley. What was the thought about just 1, why not 2? Selectman Maddox indicated it's better than zero. Selectman Massey understood that, but he's trying to understand why 1 and not 2. Mr. Malizia indicated there was 1 at Merrifield Park. He just took the same number. That's what you're paying for over there, so why would you pay any different over here. Selectman Massey said it's a bigger park for one thing.



Vote: Motion carried 4-1. Chairman Coutu abstained.

Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Massey, to move account 5063 Benson Park Committee in the amount of \$1,000.

Selectman Massey said he'd second that if it's spread across the 4 line that we're talking about. Selectman Jasper said yes. Just for clarification, Mr. Malizia emulated the Energy Committee because we don't have any history obviously, so he had to pick some bogie, so he picked the Energy Committee. The only thing that he didn't foresee this committee having is dues and fees. He didn't put down a line for that. Everything else would be in keeping with a new committee starting up. We don't know what they're going to spend. It gives them something to spend. Selectman Jasper didn't imagine that this printing account is going to be enough, but we can request money to come from the funds that are available. This is a startup. He imagine when they get into printing it's going to be more than this for brochures for the park. So don't be surprised.

Chairman Coutu indicated that this is a committee account request. He's committed to the committee that he would support an operating budget for them to get started. He will vote in favor of this motion, and it's not to show any inconsistency with anything else. This is a committee request. It's aside from the other request that were appropriated. He, too, agreed Selectman Jasper that perhaps the printing account might be a little less than what their needs are. But, again, they can come before the Board at any time or you would come before the Board at any time that you might feel there is an additional request. This is a good starting point for the committee.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0.

The Board of Selectmen took a 10 minute recess at 9:02 p.m. and returned at 9:14 p.m.

B. Review of outstanding warrant articles

Chairman Coutu wanted to point something out to you before we get into some warrant articles. For the purpose of full disclosure, he's had this discussion twice with the Town Administrator, and he felt it was appropriate to do. In light of some of the warrant articles that are going to be coming before us, he'd like to wrap up the budget, look at the exact default number, and see where we're at. As you know, we're going to have certain warrant articles that we are going to have to discuss with regards to pay increases. There is one in this budget. We're going to need to discuss where the consensus is. That would be in the Recreation Department. In the Recreation Department, there had been a request for 3 percent for 2 part-time people that are not represented by any contracts or any union. They're seasonal, and he needs to know where they want to go with that before we move on to warrant articles. That would be the only thing that's in the budget that we need to declare that it's there. It wouldn't be fair...Selectman Massey indicated that there are actually 2 Mr. Chairman. There are 2 [Chairman Coutu]? Selectman Massey indicated one that we can't physically change, but one that we could instruct our representative to the Budget Committee to do or not do. Chairman Coutu indicated that's correct. That would be the library. But the one that we have control over that is in the budget that is an exception to anything else we have until we deal with warrant articles. Selectman Massey said it's not the warrant article. In the library submission budget, there is a 3 percent increase for part timers. Chairman Coutu understood that. That's a separate budget item that we have no control over. That's what is going to the Budget Committee. Depending on what the Board does, Selectman Massey indicated we could instruct our representatives how to vote on that. Chairman Coutu said right, but there is one still existing in the budget that we do have control over. There are going to be some warrant articles for other raise requests. So we need to deal with the one in the budget so we can bring some closure to this budget. It is the 2 seasonal people in Recreation and asked Mr. Yates to step forward and give them an explanation please. You understand why he has to do this Mr. Yates. Mr. Yates indicated yes.

As David Yates discussed last Thursday, we have 2 part-time employees - our maintenance man and our administrator. By giving them a 3 percent cost of living raise it would be a total of \$862 for the year. The maintenance man has been with the town going on 30 years. He works 15 hours a week. Our part-time administrator works an average of 25 hours a week of the 52 weeks. It would be a total of \$862. Just so you know Mr. Yates, Chairman Coutu indicated it's not the money it's the principal and the percentage. If we do it for one, we do it for everybody. If we don't do it, we don't do it. That's where Selectman Nadeau was heading. Chairman Coutu said he has his budget. If

you want to turn to the Recreation budget which is on your tab 5800. What line item do you have that under Mr. Yates? Mr. Yates indicated 5810102 - admin. salaries. Chairman Coutu asked how much Mr. Yates had built into that \$29,637 as a raise request. Mr. Malizia said he had 3 percent built in. The Board removed it the evening he was here. The reason it's being discussed is does the Board wish to do something in conjunction with whatever you discussed later on here. We have removed it. The reason we're bringing it up now is because if you were to put this budget to rest, you may do something over on the non-union side with some of these warrant articles. He just wanted to make sure that we don't forget these people. It's very easy to forget a couple of part-time people who did not get a raise last year either. That's why Mr. Malizia wanted to bring it to your attention. That's solely the whole purpose. You have the available monies. There is no raise budgeted right now. Just so you know where we're at. Again because we're discussing the budget, he thought it would be appropriate to bring it up.

Chairman Coutu wanted to know if they wanted to let it stand. Do you want to hold off on finalizing the number until we go through the warrant articles? What is the wish of the Board by consensus please? Selectman Maddox would like it to stand. Until we know where we're going in the other part, we're just dancing around in circles again. We've already taken it out. If we need to put it back in, then we'll deal with that.

Chairman Coutu asked about the warrant articles. Mr. Malizia indicated that the warrant articles are in front of your book. The first one we'll be discussing is Warrant Article F. Mr. Malizia prepared a range that goes from obviously zero, which is zero, 1 percent, 2 percent, 3 percent to give you an idea what each of those percentages. So if you go through those, you can see 3 percent, 1292 followed by the warrant. Zero was pretty self-explanatory. Again, there's a warrant article written that doesn't have an amount in it nor a percent. It has percentages and the cost of those after it.

Selectman Maddox stated that it has been the practice that we don't do retroactive. These people did not get a raise last year because it was on the warrant and it did not pass. Mr. Malizia said correct. Selectman Maddox thought it was our intent this year to be at zero percent on all of our contracts. So how do we go back and say well they didn't get anything last year. That's the dilemma. How are we going to do that? He was going to say let's put in the 2 percent and explain. Then we're saying we're giving to them retroactive. So, again, he thinks they have to have a discussion. Really we're saying they didn't get anything last year, we're giving them 1 percent last year and 1 percent this year basically is where he was coming from. Again, we've had a policy of pretty much not trying to retroactive on warrant articles that didn't pass for contracts.

Selectman Massey said Selectman Maddox has hit it right on the nail. He thought if they were going to be consistent, we have to be consistent. Unfortunately the dilemma we face is we're going to wind up with salary compression at some point. So we're going to have to face it down the line. He didn't think that we can say yes to one and no to another for the same reason have a different result. So he's not prepared today to forward this warrant article to the warrant. He does it mindful of a he knows that our nonunion folks did not get a salary increase last year. He knows that we're going to pay for it down the line. The consistency on the principal was no meant no. Shame on us that we weren't able to get it to pass last year. Unfortunately, he's going to have to be consistent with his principal on this one. He would not be able to then go back to anyone else and say we're holding the line. Chairman Coutu said that they also need to be mindful that we're also in the midst of negotiating contracts, and we're trying to apply the same principal across the board. He agreed with Selectman Massey.

Selectman Maddox would like to see after the vote in March where we are with the compression factor. We're going to have to deal with that sooner rather than later. We've always tried to be in that 10 percent range. It's something we need to look at. He thinks we're kind of trapped where we're going to be. Selectman Massey said he just unlocked maybe a reasonable way to attach it. There's no doubt in his mind. He can show them one of the departments that no matter what we do there's serious salary compression in that department. However, if we don't have a warrant article and during the year we revisit it all, and we do have many in our budgets, we can at that point make the management decision that it's the right thing to do to do it. But we would not have that option if we put in a warrant article and it's defeated. From his perspective, he has a better sense that he can make it happen if we look at it after the elections, and then make a decision at some point in the next fiscal year as to how we could come out with the money.

Steve Malizia indicated that they really don't have to wait until the election. You have a contract with the supervisors who is the next lowest level to this group here. You already know what the

number is going to be. He doesn't need to wait until March. They've already got a contract that's going to kick in another 3 percent come July. He doesn't need to wait. He can tell them tomorrow.

Selectman Jasper disagreed in terms of being able to do it in this fiscal year because the voters said no to a warrant. Selectman Massey meant we'd have between now and July to think about it and figure out in the next fiscal year some time where the money would come from if we were going to do something. Selectman Jasper agreed with that. When he goes forward to the Budget Committee he can very clearly say that they did not put a warrant article, but they reserve the right to make wage adjustments. We did a few years ago go forward with that plan dealing with compression and now it's getting all screwed up. Selectman Massey indicated that they did that in December of that year if he recalled. It was during the budget period. That's when we went to the Budget Committee through your auspices Selectman Jasper to explain to them why we were doing it the way we were doing it. Again, from his perspective, we have a better chance of making something happen by not forwarding a warrant than we do if we forward a warrant. Again, from the principal perspective, he's not prepared to forward it to the warrant. Chairman Coutu indicated that no motion would be necessary. We're just not going to go with it. Mr. Malizia said if you're not forwarding it, you're not forwarding it.

The next item, which is G, Chairman Coutu was asked on behalf of the Town Clerk to remove that request. So that one does not exist any further.

The next one, H, we have no control [Chairman Coutu]. Selectman Massey told the Chairman he didn't have to forward that. Mr. Malizia said he did. It's a warrant article. You have to forward it. Selectman Jasper said no they didn't. They can petition it on their own. Mr. Malizia said they could. Selectman Jasper said they do not have to forward this because if we forward it, it goes with the recommendation. Mr. Malizia asked if they were going to make a motion to not forward it, or forward it.

*Motion by Selectman Massey, seconded by Selectman Jasper, to forward Warrant Article H to the warrant.*

Again, Selectman Massey's purpose is by saying no, it's no. A negative vote doesn't have the same affect. He would ask you all if you believe on of the things we've done that this would not go to the warrant. So therefore you would vote no on this motion.

*Vote: Motion failed 0-5.*

*Motion by Selectman Massey, seconded by Selectman Nadeau, to instruct our representative to the Budget Committee that when the votes occur that he would support a reduction of three (3) percent in the Memorial Library part-time staff positions and all associated benefit accounts.*

Selectman Massey said that the discussion is if this motion passes, we'd be instructing our representative to the Budget Committee to vote no on this salary increase.

*Vote: Motion carried 5-1.* Selectman Jasper abstained.

Selectman Jasper would like to revisit Warrant Article J - replacement of the fire water tanker. Before we take that up, Selectman Massey wanted to be clear that they have already forwarded I, correct? Mr. Malizia said yes. Chairman Coutu said "I" has been forwarded.

*Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Maddox, to reconsider Warrant Article J.*

Selectman Jasper asked the Chairman to indulge him in this. He will have an amendment to lower the amount in the warrant article.

*Vote: Motion carried 5-0.*

*Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Massey, to amend Warrant Article J by reducing the amount to \$270,000 gross budget, to authorize the withdrawal of \$170,000 from the fire apparatus capital reserve account, and to appropriate \$100,000 from the 2009/2010 unencumbered budget surplus.*

Selectman Jasper said that Selectman Maddox had asked that the Fire Chief sharpen his pencil and look at the numbers. This would be a slightly more stripped down model. Perhaps a few less things with it that we can probably live with some of the things we have now. Also we'll still have some trade-in value, so the total price may be more than \$270,000, but we'll have the tankers to offset that. Take \$20,000 more from the capital reserve account, which leaves a smaller balance, but the net affect of that would be with those 2 changes we'd be taking \$45,000 less from the budget surplus.

Selectman Maddox said the Chief did what he asked. He's going to vote for it. He thinks they can keep putting it off, but for \$100,000 it's a lot less than the \$145,000 originally proposed. We can get rid of 2 tankers. We get one brand new one, and then we have the ability to go after that Quinton - those grant applications. Selectman Massey said the Chief likes the Quint.

Selectman Nadeau asked if they had any idea what the trade-in value is on the tankers? Chairman Coutu said they asked that before, and the answer was no. We don't know. Chief Murray will you confirm that we do not know the value of the trade-in on those 2 tankers. Chief Murray said that is correct. The only thing Chairman Coutu can see [to Selectman Nadeau] is that if the trade-in value is going to significantly impact any of those numbers, he would think that the Chief would deal with it appropriately. Selectman Jasper said it's hard to tell. Generally those trucks from everything he's seen don't end up with a lot of value - \$2,500, \$5,000. We ultimately have the control at the end of the day when the bids come in. The bids are going to come in. They'll spec out trucks, and the bids will be what they are, and the trade-in value. Obviously if the trade-in value is higher, we'll save more money here. He may come in and say well gee since we've got some extra, I want to buy some extra bells and whistles, then it will be up to us to say no I don't think so or yes okay. Mr. Malizia indicated that the money can only be expended for a tanker as you are all well aware. We do have an appropriation on a warrant article. If you do have a net savings or any kind of savings, you can't transfer it anywhere else. It has to be expended for that purpose in that warrant. There is some protection there.

Selectman Nadeau had one other question. We're still in the running for the tanker and we can withdraw this if we do get that before the...Mr. Malizia stated you're probably never required to actually expend the money. You have the authority to, but that doesn't mean you have to. So if you were to say get a tanker through a grant, you don't have to do this. Chairman Coutu asked if the grant request was a perennial or an annual. If it's a perennial, it comes back every year. Selectman Maddox said if we got it Mr. Chairman, then we wouldn't have to take the \$100,000 out of...again, there's a number of options we could look at that point. We could give them many more bells and whistles and not take any money out of the...Chairman Coutu said they might be successful this year because he thought the Fire Chief put the word "please" in the grant application this time.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0.

Mr. Malizia couldn't recall if the Highway Department contract was forwarded. He's not entirely sure. We had discussed Article B. He's not sure if it was forwarded formally. Chairman Coutu didn't recall doing that. Ms. Carpentier didn't believe they did.

Motion by Selectman Massey, seconded by Selectman Nadeau, to forward to the Warrant the multi-year contract for the Highway Department, Article B.

Selectman Massey said this is a negotiated contract that we negotiated with the Highway Department. So we are forwarding it to the Warrant because we agreed with the Highway that this was an appropriate contract to bring to the people.

Selectman Maddox told those who were watching, it's a zero for the first year, 2 percent the second year, and 3 percent the third year. He didn't vote for it when we came out of negotiations because he said this is going to be a tough year to justify 5 percent. He's more than willing to put it on the ballot and see if the voters do in fact vote for it. He thinks it's going to be a challenge for them to be able to push this forward. He would have liked something else, but this is what the Board agreed to. He more than willingly put it on for the voters to decide. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0.

## Default Budget

Mr. Malizia indicated that they had a default budget in front of you totaling \$27,568,075. Chairman Coutu asked the Board if it was acceptable. It is what it is. Selectman Jasper said they have to adopt it.

*Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Massey, to adopt the default budget in the amount of \$27,568,075, carried 5-0.*

Kathy Carpentier said \$5.21 per thousand, which is a 4.9 percent increase of the town tax rate. However, general fund is only up 2.6 percent. Chairman Coutu asked what it's going to look like against the default. Ms. Carpentier stated \$27,491,382. Chairman Coutu said that the budget is less than the default by \$76,693.

*Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Massey, to forward the budget to the Budget Committee in the amount of \$27,491,382, carried 5-0.*

Kathy Carpentier indicated that revenue is \$13,948,902.

*Motion by Selectman Massey, seconded by Selectman Jasper, to approve the revenue of \$13,948,902 to the Budget Committee, carried 5-0.*

Selectman Massey wanted everybody out in the world knows where the town is sitting at. We had \$14,000,574 last year budget. The default budget this year was 13,779. He believed that if we were to look at what we budgeted for fiscal 2010, it would have been more than that. It would have been in the 14 million range. So this does represent a drop in what we're forecasting. As what Selectman Maddox and Selectman Jasper made earlier, it's to make a more realistic picture for the people when they're looking at what it costs to run the town.

To that end, Selectman Maddox thinks we, the 5 of us, need to do a better job of explaining the difference between the default and what we're proposing. So being under, he hoped it would make it easier for people. Last year that \$58,000 seemed like no big deal, but it put monies where we didn't want it, department heads didn't want it. It had a \$300,000 delta with the water and sewer. So he thought we just need to make people aware that not only is the budget we're proposing less than the default, but it's putting monies after all of this ordeal that we put department heads through, and the viewing public - those 3 that are still watching at this point. We're putting these monies where we believe it is best spent. Going to the default you will, again, affect where that money goes and we could have the problems we ran into this year. He doesn't know how they're going to do it Mr. Chairman, but he's sure he'll find a way to explain this better. Chairman Coutu indicated you and I will be the 2 most visible this year, so we'll do most of the explaining he thought.

Selectman Jasper said you're not going to have the same problem. If they approved the default, we'd have to figure out who got to spend more money. The reality is the explaining is going to be how is your default higher than your proposed budget. That's the question people are going to ask because they become cynical when in fact your default is higher than what you're proposing. Selectman Massey said as you'll recall 2 years ago, the school budget default was higher than...Selectman Jasper indicated that we really don't have to do anything except answer questions as they come along. People obviously their opportunity if they don't like the budget is not to vote for the default. It will be to show up at the floor of the deliberative session and suggest changes to the budget that is being proposed. Of course, the Budget Committee will have at it now for the next month or so.

Chairman Coutu wanted to say in conclusion, and he'll give them an opportunity to make comments if you wish, he wanted to thank the bulk of our department heads are here. He thanked each and every one of them for the efforts that they put forth in explaining their budgets and putting their budget together. Chief Lavoie you're still here and despite a couple of rookie mistakes, you did a pretty good job this year. He's sure it was a worthwhile and learning experience for you. Chief Murray, the Recreation Director, and Library even though we might not agree on one line item. Generally speaking considering the magnitude of the library and the unknowns that you're dealing with over there in terms of operation, we understand that the budget that you put forward in terms of your operating side of the budget. The voters will ultimately decide how much money we're going to get and what we're all going to be allowed to spend to run the town. Take pride in the work product that you presented us. It was not that difficult for Chairman Coutu this time around for him

as it was last year. He was able to digest it a lot better. He wished we could operate the town on the cheap but as Selectman Massey always reminds all of us is that as long as in the end we're able to provide the services - it's you Steve that keeps saying to Chairman Coutu, the people become accustomed to police, fire, and having their rubbish removed. If we do that, we've accomplished a great deal each year. We get that plus some done this year. Again, he thanked each and every one of you for your budget presentations and he thanked them for their patience and understanding. He's sorry he kept them there late this evening.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0.

#### Closing Statements

Selectman Maddox - As you thanked the department heads. Again, anybody who has done a budget you mostly do it in your office, your cubical. You don't do it on television as government is a unique experience as we question department heads about how they're going to spend money, why they can't do this on television. That's not how it's done in the other half. It is a compliment to them able to take our questions sometimes not the happiest, but they take our questions and understand that we represent the citizens, the taxpayers. They deserve credit for that.

He thanked his fellow Board members. We disagree and that's great. If it was all 5 to nothing, then we're not doing our job. So once again another budget season. We made it through it, and let's see what the budget committee does. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Selectman Nadeau - Wanted to remind everybody that Town Hall will be closed next Wednesday, Veteran's Day, which is November 11<sup>th</sup>. You'll see it on the scroll at the bottom of the TV, but just be aware that Town Hall will be closed.

Selectman Massey - Nothing tonight Mr. Chairman.

Selectman Jasper - Thank you Mr. Chairman. Benson Park Committee will be meeting Thursday night. It has been agreed that we will have another cleanup on Saturday via a burn weekend coordinated with the Fire Chief to allow us in that nicely cleared off area to burn debris so we don't get the Highway Department in there hauling stuff away again debris, branches, and brush and things like that. In all likelihood, although it will be confirmed or rescheduled for Thursday night, there will be another soft opening probably on the 14<sup>th</sup>. It will be a one-day opening with a rain date. Whether we do that on the 14<sup>th</sup> or the 21<sup>st</sup> is yet to be cast in concrete. So be on the lookout for that. Shadan has been in working on the office building. That roof is looking great. They probably have about one-half of it about done today.

Selectman Coutu - He only has 1 item. He's going to be passing out - he believed that it's been almost a year since we've hired the Assistant Town Administrator. He would like to suggest that at next week in nonpublic session we do an evaluation of the position. He's going to hand you out a copy of the job description as well as a rating sheet. If you could work on that and bring it with you next Tuesday evening, we will do the evaluation if there's no objection. This would be just an annual evaluation.

Selectman Massey said that this position reports to the Town Administrator. Why wouldn't we have him do the evaluation? He evaluates all the other direct reports to him. This would be a very unusual thing for us to be doing. Chairman Coutu asked what is the consensus of the Board. Selectman Jasper hadn't thought of that point, but Selectman Massey makes a good point. The point he was going to make was he didn't remember the last time we evaluated the Town Administrator. It would certainly seem more appropriate for them to be doing the Town Administrator. Whether we do both of them or not, he didn't know. We should decide who should evaluate the Assistant Town Administrator. You make sense, but we could certainly do it. He thought given that it's been a long time since we've done an evaluation of the Town Administrator, we should at least be doing the 2 of them together.

Selectman Nadeau indicated he would be willing to do both of them. Selectman Maddox indicated absolutely. Chairman Coutu said to do both of them together.

Selectman Massey said it sets a precedent that he didn't think he would support. He thought that when you hire somebody and put them in charge of a department and several departments, it is their responsibility to manage that individual. For us to start writing evaluations of the Assistant

Town Administrator de facto that individual reports to the Board of Selectmen and not to the Town Administrator. He thought it might be appropriate for the Town Administrator to ask for any input from the members of the Board, but he thought from a management, an organization structure, it should be done by the individual that they report to. Again, in his mind de facto if we do this evaluation, he reports to us and not to the Town Administrator.

Selectman Jasper said and not having the job description in front of him, he didn't know the answer. He's assuming that Selectman Massey is right. In fact he does report to the Town Administrator, then the Town Administrator should be doing the evaluation. That seems to be the case and therefore would be appropriate for us to not be doing the evaluation. Chairman Coutu said if you don't want to do the evaluation, we won't do the evaluation. How do you want to handle it? Do you just want to evaluate the Administrator? Selectman Jasper thought this brings up a broader issue. He didn't know what's been going on with the evaluations of the department heads. He didn't know if the Chairman's been seeing them. Mr. Malizia stated that they all got a copy, he believed, last year. Selectman Jasper didn't recall. He sees a lot of paperwork in the course of a year. He thought that the Town Administrator should be in the same category as the other department heads. We should review that and if we have comments, we should make them to the Town Administrator, and we should be evaluating the Town Administrator probably at this time if it hasn't been done in some time.

Again, Selectman Massey said the past practice has always been we fill out an evaluation. The Chairman consolidates that, and the Chairman has the one-on-one with the Town Administrator. Selectman Jasper said that's correct. Sometimes that's worked well. Selectman Massey said sometimes it's not worked so well. Correct.

The only reason Selectman Maddox would like to see them do something with the Assistant Town Administrator is that it's a new position. He thought that maybe some members of this Board have different opinions of what this job was supposed to be. If you want to have it go through the Town Administrator, so be it. He thinks it is something that has moved around as far as what this job was really supposed to be and what it has become.

Again Mr. Chairman if he might, Selectman Massey would have no problems if we wanted to provide any input to the Town Administrator. He thinks the job evaluation itself should be written by the Town Administrator and should be delivered to the Assistant Town Administrator by the Town Administrator and not by this Board.

Chairman Coutu asked if they would object - the summary that you have in terms of the evaluation that he presented for us is a compilation of data that was supplied to him, which is part of an evaluation, that is done - as he understands it Mr. Malizia, with all of your department heads. That form that you provided me. What he did was he extrapolated from that there are certain things in there that we are not necessarily that we're not privy to, we're not here that often and interfacing with this position that we would know. These things are things that those 14 items that he outlined are 14 items that he felt that perhaps we would have some knowledge of, and we could comment on and we could rate, and then we could make some observations. He would suggest then that maybe as part of the evaluation process, as this is what you were thinking Selectman Massey and if he's incorrect please correct him, that we give some input via this mechanism or whatever mechanism you feel you're comfortable with to provide to the Administrator when he's evaluating the Assistant Administrator. Selectman Massey stated that would be consistent with what he was thinking. Chairman Coutu is fine with that. Selectman Jasper is fine with that, although there are a number of things in the 14 that you've listed that he has no way of...Chairman Coutu stated he didn't have to comment on them. You divide it by the number that you end up with. If you're only going to comment on 3, divide it by 3 and give him an average of the 3. We'll turn them in. If you don't want to score it, everybody can do it a different way.

Selectman Maddox thought that while we're evaluating the person, he thought they need to evaluate the job description. He thinks that maybe one of the things that have kind of slipped left and right is what we thought the job was going to be and what it has actually become. So maybe that is part of the discussion as well Mr. Chairman. Chairman Coutu thought it's a big part of the discussion. Selectman Jasper thought that may be some sort of a group discussion because he doesn't think he's on the same page. Selectman Maddox is saying it's not what he thought it was going to be. He guessed he's not really sure what he thinks it is. Maybe we ought to have a discussion about that. He's not sure in his own mind it is what he thought it was going to be.

Obviously to Selectman Maddox it isn't. So how do we independently rate that without having a discussion about what it is and what we thought it was going to be?

Chairman Coutu thought what they ought to do is if you want to get into that discussion, we might want to do that in nonpublic session. Selectman Maddox said it's a discussion about what we think the job is. That's not nonpublic. As the liaison, he doesn't see as much community development. He knows he spent a lot of time at Benson's and that was a one-time issue. He thinks that maybe special projects, which really isn't on here in great degree, has become more of his area than community development. Chairman Coutu stated they could review the job description. That's a topic for another day. We can discuss that after we have an evaluation. He doesn't know what they want to set for an agenda for evaluating the Administrator. Do you want him to do the Assistant Administrator first and then we'll do him? Do you want him to do all the department heads and go through the whole cycle? We'll look at the sheets and then we'll evaluate the administrator? Selectman Maddox would like to evaluate the Administrator first and he carries that down to his direct reports. Selectman Jasper supposed he could go back and look at last year's evaluations, but it would seem to him if he's going to do an evaluation based on the last year looking at how he's evaluated the people and what he's recommended now to them would be an important part of his evaluation of the job he's doing. He tended to think that their evaluation of the Town Administrator should take place after he is finished the evaluation of the department heads.

Selectman Massey agreed with Selectman Jasper. Chairman Coutu said they don't have a set process. Selectman Massey said traditionally in the past, the evaluation of the Town Administrators happened in April. Selectman Maddox said he's been here for 6 years and it happened one. Selectman Massey said twice and maybe 3 max. Selectman Maddox said you're still here? Good, okay. He didn't think that was a review. Selectman Massey still agreed with Selectman Jasper. The Town Administrator's review should be after the department heads' evaluations are completed by the Town Administrator. Selectman Jasper asked when they were due. Mr. Malizia stated he did them last year and gave them to everybody for feedback. Nobody ever gave him any feedback. He's basically written most of them already. He hasn't done anything with them. Do you want them before? Do you want them after? The process seems to have kind of changed and morphed through the years. At one point he was just doing them and here you go.

Chairman Coutu said that there should be a policy on evaluations and whether we do it annually, a specific time period. There should be a policy in place on how this is done. Selectman Maddox said that the Assistant Town Administrator should be doing all of that. Chairman Coutu said we should do it before we discuss the budget. Mr. Malizia said he had normally done them once a year at about the June time frame. He'd given them to the Board a year ago. Selectman Maddox asked if they had ones for June already. Mr. Malizia indicated a year ago. You have the previous June. So that we can refresh all of our memories, Selectman Maddox asked for last year's reviews of the department heads just because he didn't remember. You're right. We get a ton of paper. His recycling bin is full.

Chairman Coutu asked Mr. Malizia if he's done most of the evaluations for this year. Mr. Malizia has written most of them not all of them. He's got to complete a couple more. You can certainly start with the ones that he's already done. They're not going to be radically different quite honestly because he thinks the people perform quite exceptionally from year to year. That's his opinion. Chairman Coutu indicated they'd look at those.

5. ADJOURNMENT

*Motion to adjourn at 10:01 p.m. by Selectman Maddox, seconded by Selectman Nadeau, carried 4-1.* Selectman Massey in opposition.



Recorded by HGTV and transcribed by Donna Graham, Recorder.

**HUDSON BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

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Roger E. Coutu, Chairman, Chairman

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Kenneth J. Massey, Vice-Chairman

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Shawn N. Jasper, Selectman

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Richard J. Maddox, Selectman

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Benjamin J. Nadeau, Selectman