

## HUDSON, NH BOARD OF SELECTMEN

### Minutes of the Budget Meeting of November 6, 2003

1. **CALL TO ORDER** by Chairman William P. Cole at 7:30 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Town Hall.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** was led by Selectman Ann Seabury.
3. **ATTENDEES**

**Selectmen:** William P. Cole, Kenneth J. Massey, Shawn N. Jasper, Ann Seabury and Teresa Stewart (arrived 7:35 p.m.)

**Staff/Others:** Steve Malizia, Town Administrator; Kathy Carpentier, Finance Director; Priscilla Boisvert, Executive Assistant; Richard Gendron, Chief of Police; Lisa Nute, HPD Information Manager; Jim Michaud, Assessor; David Yates, Recreation Director; Shawn Murray, Acting Fire Chief; Gary Rodgers, Deputy Fire Chief; Leo Bernard; Coleman Kelly, CATV

4. **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

*Motion to accept the Minutes of October 23 and 24, 2003 and refer to file by Selectman Massey, seconded by Selectman Seabury, carried 3-1.* Selectman Jasper abstained, saying he hadn't read them yet; Selectmen Stewart had not yet arrived.

5. **BUDGET DELIBERATIONS/WARRANT ARTICLES**

**A. Wage and Benefits Increase for Police Prosecutor (WA - H)**

Police Chief Gendron said Attorney Dolan does all of the trial work at Nashua District Court, which includes handling misdemeanors, DWI trials, drug possession trials, domestic assaults, felony probable cause hearings and bail hearings. He also works with the County Attorney's Office on certain felony cases. The County Attorney's Office will handle adult felony trials and only misdemeanors that are appealed. They do not handle regular misdemeanor trials; that is done at the District Court level by Attorney Dolan. The Attorney General's Office handles homicide cases, but not felony criminal cases that initiate in Hudson. Some misdemeanor cases involve pre-trial and post-trial hearings, bail hearings, discovery motions, motions to suppress, sentencing hearings and violation of sentence hearings. He prepares and authorizes subpoenas for witnesses, he prepares witnesses for trials and he pre-negotiates cases before defense attorneys and their defendants. He also handles juvenile cases. In Nashua District Court, there are two adult courtrooms and one juvenile courtroom--one of the busiest in the State. He handles all pre-trial and post-trial hearings and juvenile cases and he reviews and approves any diversions for juveniles. He also represents the department in Civil cases regarding the return of firearms, which could be the result of a domestic violence petition and he handles pistol permit denials. He supervises members of the Legal Bureau (a Court Liaison Officer, a Clerk and a Victim Witness Advocate). He also assists officers' investigations, gives legal advice to assist the officers in completing paperwork, accompanies officers and detectives in serving warrants to make sure the department is protected against civil liabilities and he proofreads warrant applications to ensure sufficient evidence is present before an arrest or a petition before the court for search warrants. He is also responsible for a \$10,000 State grant, a \$8,800 Juvenile Accountability Grant and he recently completed the Americorps Grant for \$4,500. He assists in training new officers, instructs new prosecutors at the Police Academy, makes presentations to new officers as part of their in-service training and provides training guides for all officers regarding new case law that comes out of Supreme Court.

The prosecutor is a crucial position. If a prosecutor does not have much success in winning cases, that will trickle down to the officers who would lose confidence in the prosecutor or court system and might not make an arrest if they felt their case would not win in court. That is not the case with Atty. Dolan, who does an excellent job and is well-respected by the officers and by the court. He came to Hudson with two years of courtroom experience, and has been here for three. The County Attorney explained to the Chief the County's hiring and salary levels. An entry level with no experience whatsoever, right out of law school, starts at \$34,874 to \$76,026. For someone of Atty. Dolan's caliber, the pay would be \$68,325. Selectman Seabury interjected that her daughter has a lot of experience, but isn't making anywhere near that. Chief Gendron said Attorney General Coughlin explained there is a difference between courtroom experience and a research or law firm attorney. The Chief said he also contacted Derry, Dover, Bedford, Goffstown, Londonderry, Merrimack, Nashua and Salem and found the average starting pay for a prosecuting attorney is \$52,341 and a maximum pay of \$64,242. For someone with five years experience, the average was \$62,796. From 2000 to present, they have processed 2,151 Hudson complaints in Nashua District Court. Traffic violations are prosecuted in District Court by the officers themselves, not by the prosecutor. Atty. John Dolan handles all trial work and negotiations with defense attorneys.

Chief Gendron said when the Police Department approached the Board three years ago to hire an attorney, it was with the help of a \$35,000 Federal grant. At that time, he was told that it didn't appear that the Town wanted to put any money towards that grant and wondered who they would get for \$35,000. Chief Gendron said he didn't know, but it would probably be someone fresh out of law school. John Dolan, who was hired, came from Middlesex County with two years of courtroom experience. The Chief was asking that this prosecutor, who has outstanding credentials, be paid a little more than the people he supervises. Atty. Dolan's responsibility in running the Legal Department is much greater than the officer who works for him. When Atty. Dolan was hired, it allowed the department to put an officer out on the street. Since 2000, there has been a 70% increase in their case load. He had spoken with then-Town Administrator, Paul Sharon, that the Chief Justice in Nashua District Court threatened to start dismissing Hudson cases if they didn't increase their prosecution staff, so they put John McGregor in to handle arraignments and to assist in juvenile cases, along with his other duties in the department.

Motion by Selectman Massey, seconded by Selectman Cole, to send an article to the Warrant for a \$5,000 comparability adjustment (over and above the projected 3% for nonunion personnel) for the Police Prosecutor.

Selectman Massey said a trial or prosecuting attorney do incredibly different types of legal work than attorneys who do landwork or similar type activities. It takes a special skill and requires a lot of talent. This individual is doing a significantly bigger job than what they heard about two weeks ago. A \$5,000 comparability increase is more than warranted. Chief Gendron said he has the backup from the County AG's Office, if the Selectmen wanted it. Selectman Seabury said she wishes her daughter had had that information before she applied because she isn't getting the salary that was quoted and she was an active courtroom defense attorney in Massachusetts for about seven years. Chief Gendron said Attorney Coughlin could have been present tonight, if asked, to confirm the salary scale. Someone with courtroom experience is paid more than someone without it. Selectman Seabury felt the 3% pay increase was adequate.

Selectman Jasper said he was a member of the Hillsborough County Executive Committee, who reviews the County Attorney's budget, and those numbers weren't familiar to him. If he had known that was going to come up, he would have brought the budget book with him. He will certainly look at that. Chairman Cole asked if having this information might change someone's mind. Selectmen Jasper and Seabury said it wouldn't. Selectman Stewart said she was in favor of the motion. Chairman Cole said if the voters give the nonunion personnel a 3% increase this year, even with an extra \$5,000, Hudson will still be paying their prosecutor the lowest of the surrounding towns. But the driving force is what the individual does--his value to the Town and to the Police Department in accomplishing its mission.

Selectman Jasper said his big problem here is they bring a position in and tell the voters what it pays. It looks like a bargain, so the voters pass it. If they come in at market, however, they know it won't get passed, so they come in below market and then whine and complain there's not enough money for the position. He respects the fact that the Chief is supporting his staff. The Board, however, has to make the tough decisions and he is uncomfortable when they lowball numbers; it's distasteful. Chief Gendron said when they brought this position forward, the former Town Administrator told him they wouldn't get any more than \$35,000 and to start there. If he (the Chief) didn't have confidence in Atty. Dolan, he wouldn't be before them. This position was identified in his budget as needing to be addressed. It's just not fair that this person, with the responsibility he has, makes less than those he supervises.

Vote: Motion carried 3-2. Selectmen Cole, Massey & Stewart were in favor; Selectmen Jasper & Seabury, opposed.

**B. Combined Dispatch (WA - R)**

Following a discussion, the unanimous consensus was not to go forward with Combined Dispatch at this time.

(Start Tape 1, Second Side)

**C. Radio Communications/Interoperability (WA - M)**

Selectman Seabury asked if this would have been shuffled in with Combined Dispatch, had that gone forward. Chairman Cole said possibly, but that would not have solved the problem the Police Department has with regard to not being on VHF and not being digital. In that regard, they are stand-alone issues. Radio communications is an immediate, significant need--a matter of safety. Selectman Seabury asked, if they go forward with Combined Dispatch next year, they won't have to worry about radios because this warrant article will take care of it. Acting Chief Murray said there may be some changeover in the Dispatch Center, but this article will take care of the Fire and Police apparatus.

Motion by Selectman Seabury, seconded by Selectman Massey, to forward a Warrant Article for \$845,000 and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to issue and sell such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon.

Selectman Massey said he had a problem with the amount, because his documentation covered only \$442,000. Acting Chief Murray said that was just the Fire Department's list. The Police Department's list is \$402,068 which didn't get to the Board. The total amount for both the Fire and Police Departments includes bay stations, antennas, digital across the board, VHF--the equipment--in order for the two departments to communicate with each other and with Federal and State agencies. Selectman Massey understood and said there is hardly no overlap between this and Combined Dispatch.

Selectman Jasper said the larger share of the money is for the Fire Department and he wondered if that was so they could talk to the Police Department, because over the years, they've heard the major problem has been on the Police side. He asked if after the changeover, the Fire Department could still communicate with the towns and cities associated with Mutual Aid. Acting Chief Murray said for the most part. Nashua is not on VHF, but is on the trunking system and can cross-patch into Hudson. Selectman Jasper understood, but still had concerns. They heard that if they didn't do this now, it would end up costing more. He thinks those numbers are suspect. Chairman Cole said they are talking about buying digital equipment for both departments, which is a key element because it dovetails into the APCO 25 and the prerequisite that all towns will need to have upgraded to digital in order to apply for grants. Selectman Jasper asked if there will be further cost down the road, other than normal upkeep and maintenance, expansion of fleets, etc. Chief Gendron didn't think so because they would be putting in state of the art equipment and should last at least 15 years. Maintenance costs should be relatively low because of warranties. Acting Chief Murray said when they switch over to a digital communications system, modifications may have to be made to the current radio, which could be up to \$100,000. Selectman Jasper said over the last few years, the Town has spent a great deal of money replacing mobile units, portable units and upgrading the Fire Department's communications. He asked if there was any value in either the

Police or Fire's current system, a trade-in or resale value. Chief Gendron said the Fire Department's equipment will be passed to DPW and Community Development. The Police Department can contact departments in MA, who are UHF, to see if they want to buy it, but it won't bring in a lot of money. Selectman Jasper asked, if the Public Works departments get the analog systems, how they would be able to communicate and wondered why they were being replaced. Chief Gendron said someone on a digital system can communicate with someone on an analog system. If they apply for Federal grants with an analog system, they won't get a penny. Selectman Jasper said if they just did the Police now, they would be able to apply for those grants and he assumed that if they were switching over the Fire Department at some later date, they would be able to apply for grants that would allow them to switch over. Chief Gendron said the Police have to file under the competitive grants, which is about \$2 million. However, the State of NH has secured about \$8.3 million just for Fire and EMS. Now is the time to do it for Fire because next year, the Town will have to foot the whole bill of about \$443,000. Chief Murray said when LawNet became available for the Police Department, the Board opted not to get involved. Selectman Jasper asked if they were doing the bulk of this to be able to apply, expecting to get grant money. Chief Murray said no, they have a need for upgrading communications and this is an opportunity to expand public safety. Selectman Jasper understood that, but said the Town won't know how much they might get and there is the possibility they won't get any. Chief Gendron doubted they won't get anything and, in Hudson, the Fire Department stands to get the bulk of the money versus the Police Department.

Selectman Massey said APCO 25 is proposing standards based on digital-capable equipment and, over time, that will become the standard for all Police and Fire organizations. Transmission and reception is much clearer with digital and he expects there are less deadspots. Chief Gendron agreed, saying their 15-year old system needs to be updated. Now is the time to do it and they should do it right. Selectman Jasper asked when they would apply for the grants and when they will be awarded. Chief Murray said the \$8.2 million should be coming out in June or July. As soon as they are out, they will apply. They've already applied for some of the Homeland grants.

*Motion carried 4-1 by roll call vote.* Selectman Jasper was opposed.

(Start Tape 2, Side A)

**D. Recreation Center Expansion (WA - N)**

Selectman Jasper said, with all of the backup they've received, he was having a hard time locating the warrant articles, and suggested tabs would be appropriate. Selectman Massey suggested he mark the pages with 'stickies.'

Selectman Jasper moved to send a \$350,000 bonded article to the warrant for an addition to the Recreation Center, tied in with the bond for the Radio Interoperability article, seconded by Selectman Stewart. It is time to start addressing the needs of the Recreation Department, but Selectman Jasper didn't think it should come out of the operating budget. If the Interoperability article doesn't pass, they can't do a \$350,000 bond, so that article would have failed and that could be explained in the articles. He assumed this would be a 10-year bond. Selectman Seabury said the Rec Center wouldn't be funded if the Interoperability article failed.

Selectman Massey said the warrant article worksheet indicates that offsetting revenue is \$114,000 and wondered if that was the same offsetting revenue listed in the FY-2005 General Fund revenue. Mr. Malizia said there is a Capital Reserve that has 50k in it and there is money that has been collected from developers and agency funds available for Rec purposes. The total of those two numbers is the offsetting revenue against the gross appropriation. Selectman Massey said he'd rather not see the Town bond \$350,000. If the Rec Center passes but the Interoperability doesn't, there will be a lot of unhappy people. He would support adding \$25,000 to the Capital Reserve for the Rec. Center. Chairman Cole said he's sympathetic to the situation, but in looking at the fiscal realities, he can't support the expansion at this time. Selectman Seabury said she wouldn't be voting for this, either. She'd like to see \$50,000 put into a Capital Reserve fund toward the Recreation facility expansion. Selectman Jasper withdrew his motion, noting the consensus was opposed. Selectman Stewart withdrew her second.

*Motion by Selectman Stewart, seconded by Selectman Jasper, for a 5-minute recess at 8:30 p.m. carried by voice vote.*

**E. Planning Board Expendable Trust Fund (WA - S)**

Town Administrator Stave Malizia said old agency fee funds that could not be returned to developers for various reasons was thoroughly researched by the previous legal counsel, who came up with dollar amounts, with a recommendation to put them into one account. Current legal counsel recommends an Expendable Trust Fund, designating the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend. The monies would be consolidated into one fund and the Selectmen would control how the funds were expended, such as for hiring non-legal consultants, engineers, experts on projects, etc. It went to the ballot last year, but there was a flaw in that it should have been routed through the Budget Committee, even though there isn't any tax impact. It failed by a very narrow margin.

*Motion by Selectman Stewart, seconded by Selectman Massey, to send to the Warrant carried 5-0 by voice vote.*

**F. Operating Budget (WA - A)**

Finance Director Kathy Carpentier said the budget, including the changes, was at \$5.66 including \$.10 in anticipation of the three union contracts, which are still being negotiated. Selectman Massey had some questions on calculations.

*Motion by Selectman Massey, seconded by Selectman Jasper, to restore \$1,900 to the Nashua Soup Kitchen, back to \$7,500 and to offset that increase, decrease Big Brothers/Big Sisters by \$1,000 to \$3,000 and reduce Community Council by \$900 to \$9,298 carried 5-0.*

Selectman Massey explained that, because of the benefit derived from significant services provided by the Nashua Soup Kitchen and Pastoral Care, the Welfare budget is notably reduced. He didn't want to increase the total appropriation for Community Grants, so he reduced the Town's contributions to two other organizations.

- Motion by Selectman Stewart, seconded by Selectman Seabury, to increase 5810-450 Recreation Administration Capital Reserve to \$50,000.

- Selectman Jasper was opposed to this funding, saying it doesn't get them a building today; it only gives them a tax increase. So far, they have accomplished a tax impact of about 7½% and asked for confirmation from the Finance Director, who said it was 5.8%. Discussion on calculations. Selectman Jasper said 5% still isn't acceptable. He'd like to see it less, when you factor in what is going to happen on the school side. This isn't the best way to spend \$50,000.

- Amendment to fund 5810-450 at \$25,000 by Selectman Massey, seconded by Selectman Stewart carried 4-1. Selectman Jasper was opposed. Selectman Massey said he was mindful of everyone's concerns on this issue.

Main motion, as amended, carried 4-1. Selectman Jasper was opposed.

- Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Stewart, to reduce 5552-248 Public Works/Street Overlay by \$25,000 to \$350,000.

- Selectman Jasper said it's important to take care of Town streets, which they have been doing, but this line was increased last year by \$25,000. Selectman Massey said he asked the Highway Department to increase it by \$25,000. Paving costs are going up and to level fund means doing less every year; and the \$350,000 is covered by a State Highway Grant of \$414,000. If they take out the \$25,000 they will still use it, as the money has to be spend on road maintenance. The tax impact will be the same. Removing the \$25,000 would decrease the tax rate by about a penny. Selectman Jasper said, unfortunately, their budget books show the expenditures only for the preceding years, but not the appropriation. If the Road Agent has a mild winter, he has money left over from salt, sand and overtime that he can transfer. Over the years, paving costs have gone down, although it has gone up more recently. Hudson's roads are much better than they were 25 years ago. Chairman Cole said he certainly hoped they were.

(Start Tape 2, Second Side)

Vote: Motion carried 3-2. Selectmen Massey and Cole were opposed.

- Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Seabury, to reduce 5552/105 Public Works/Overtime by \$10,000 from \$120,000 to \$110,000.

- Selectman Jasper said they never fully expend the bottom line in this account. They have had, and continue to have, vacancies in the three large departments, so this reduction was reasonable and an attempt to save half a cent.

- Motion carried 4-1. Selectman Massey was opposed.

- Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Seabury, to reduce 5531-225 Engineering Fees by \$5,000. Selectman Jasper made his notes so long ago, he didn't remember the particulars. Motion and second were withdrawn.

- Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Seabury, to reduce 5571-103 Planning Temporary Salaries by \$2,000 to \$0.

- Selectman Jasper said no backup was provided on this. There was some discussion about hiring an intern, but he didn't think it was from this account.

Selectman Massey said it's ironic they have to review cuts being made by an individual who was not present when these items were being discussed. He does not want to vote on anything tonight that is of this nature without the department heads being here to defend their budgets. It's unfair to them. Someone who wasn't present during the deliberations shouldn't be adjusting the budget.

- Motion carried 3-2 by roll call vote. Selectmen Massey and Cole were opposed.

- Selectman Jasper said, as a point of personal privilege, he didn't know if he would have made the motions he was making tonight on the night he wasn't present because it wasn't until after that evening that he had the opportunity to go through the budget book. He did listen to the debate and the questions that were asked. Sitting at the table, he misses questions and answers because he is often looking at other things. Department heads were on notice the Selectmen would be taking up the operating budget tonight and had the opportunity to be present. He is particularly surprised with Selectman Massey's comments in view of the fact that when they were looking at a 10% increase for the whole Town, including the School District, that was unacceptable. There seems to be a lack of concern about that.

Chairman Cole, on a point of personal privilege, said he sent an e-mail to the Selectmen over the weekend, requesting they respond back to the Chair on any areas of concern they might be planning on revisiting tonight, so the department heads could be present. He didn't receive input from anyone. Selectman Jasper said he didn't get the e-mail, or else he would have responded with his proposed cuts. Selectmen Stewart and Massey said they received it. Chairman Cole asked if Selectman Jasper changed his e-mail address and didn't tell anyone because he and Mrs. Jasper exchange e-mails regularly, using the same e-mail address. Selectman Jasper said he checks his e-mail

two, three times a day—and he did not receive an e-mail from the Chairman. Chairman Cole said he'd accept that the dog ate Selectman Jasper's e-mail, but with regard to the irony of listening to items on issues that were brought up when Selectman Jasper walked out of the room, yet stayed in the building, monitoring the meeting from the TV control room, he could have re-entered the room at any time and addressed some of the items, as opposed to waiting until tonight. Moreover, Selectman Jasper has never apologized to the Board or to the people who elected him for his behavior that night. When he came back the next night, he was welcomed with open arms for his expertise, but he never apologized for his behavior.

Selectman Jasper said he didn't intend to apologize for walking out, but he apologizes for the manner in which he did it. He will stand by the remarks that he made that, in his opinion, it is irresponsible to go through a budget and not have a goal for that budget when it appears that budget will have a very significant impact on the tax rate. That is a total waste of time. That evening, he thinks the Board accomplished very little in terms of addressing the issue of the tax increase, so he does not think he owes the Board an apology for leaving. He was too angry to stay and serve any good purpose. He apologizes for his anger, but thinks it was justified, but it should not have manifested itself the way it did. He did not have the cuts in place at that time without an idea of where the budget needed to end up. It was only after getting the numbers. He talked with the Town Administrator the next day and, having a goal in mind, he was able to go through the budget to make recommendations that he did the following night and tonight. Every dollar asked for by department heads can be justified and well spent, but that doesn't mean the taxpayers can afford it.

Chairman Cole said next year, they will have a goal-setting workshop in conjunction with their direction to the department heads for their budget preparation.

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Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Stewart, to reduce 5571/105 Planning/Overtime by \$3,000 from \$3,600 to \$600.

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Selectman Jasper said this line has not had a lot of use over the years. If there is a need, monies could be found in 101. Selectman Massey said, in the absence of any input from department heads, he intends to abstain on the votes in which he does not understand the impact, based on input from the department head.

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Motion carried 4-0. Selectman Massey abstained.

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Selectman Jasper said Selectman Massey will be glad to know that the only other department in which he proposed cuts was in the Police Department, and the Chief was present.

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Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Seabury, to reduce 5671/105 Overtime by \$3,000 to \$2,000.

Chief Gendron said this covers crime prevention programs, neighborhood crime watch and other presentations they make throughout the community. Last year they spent \$4,800 from this line. The parameter for this year was not to exceed 3%. His department came in at 1% because they already made cuts. If this is cut, programs will have to be, too.

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Vote: Motion failed 2-3 by roll call vote. Selectmen Seabury and Jasper were in favor.

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Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Seabury, to reduce Investigations 5640/105 Overtime by \$3,000.

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Selectman Jasper said this is the largest salary line item and, although it can be justified, it can be funded through money that is left over in salaries. Chief Gendron said they made an effort to reduce their own overtime by \$10,000. He is doing his best to keep costs down, but if they get called out, they have to respond. Selectman Jasper asked what the appropriation was in 101 for 03, but that information wasn't available. He said it's rare that they fully spend any salary line item in a major account.

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Vote: Motion failed by a vote of 2-3. Selectmen Jasper and Seabury voted in favor.

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Selectman Jasper referred to 5671 Support Services, then changed his mind, saying given his lack of success on small accounts. He then referred to 5620 Communications, then said he'd pass on that, as well.

Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Seabury, to reduce Police Patrol 5630/105 Overtime to \$115,000 a reduction of \$37,300.

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Selectman Jasper said the \$152,000 would unquestionably be justified and spent, but the \$38,000 can be made up from other lines. They never spend the full appropriation in salaries. Chief Gendron said the department spent about 42% of its overtime to cover for officers who are out sick or on vacation; 33% for court, which they have no control over; and about 7% for investigations. The argument that they are not at full staff was true years ago, but not today.

Vote: Motion failed 2-3. Selectmen Jasper and Seabury voted in favor.

(Start Tape 3, Side A)

Chairman Cole asked for a recap. Kathy Carpentier said the tax impact is currently \$5.65 which includes \$.10 estimated for the three contracts under negotiation, which is a 5.6% increase. Selectman Jasper asked what the Town's percentage increase was in the current fiscal year when DRA set the rate. Ms. Carpentier didn't have that figure with her, but stated she could get it.

*Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Seabury, for a recess at 9:30 p.m.* The meeting resumed at 9:40 p.m.

Selectman Jasper said last year there was an increase of much more than 10% on the Town side. From 1996-2001, there was a total increase in the tax rate of 24¢. Now, in two years, they are going up \$1.22. Growth of Town government is out of control. The numbers speak for themselves. Selectman Massey said being a math major, it is drummed into your head that there are lies, damn lies and statistics. In order to make a fair comparison, people need to understand the annual increases in the assessed values. If the budget is too high because government is "out of control," someone should explain where cuts should be made. The major increase in a budget is payroll, and the only way to be out of control is if you have more people than are needed. He would be happy to listen to Selectman Jasper tell them where they are out of control. Selectman Jasper said Selectman Massey would disagree with every one of his conclusions and wouldn't support the proposed cut, anyway. Selectman Massey said he was willing to listen to any cut, as long as it was backed up. Selectman Jasper said when Selectman Massey talks about having to know what the increases were in the valuations over the years, there were no years when they had \$100 million increase in the valuation. In all the years he has been here, they have budgeted for an increase of \$35-\$40 million and that number has not changed. To the person paying the bill, what matters is what the tax bill is, not how much the valuation changed. When you look at a 22¢ increase in a two year period, that is substantial. Four short years ago, the payroll averaged \$100,000 - \$105,000; today, it exceeds \$160,000. That is "out of control."

Selectman Massey asked if Selectman Jasper thought the voters were wrong when they voted for the budgets. Selectman Jasper said perhaps the Selectmen were wrong with some of their recommendations. Selectman Massey said claiming a payroll is out of control without explaining where it should be cut is irresponsible. Blanket comments are easy to make, but he was interested in hearing specifics from Selectman Jasper of where they are out of control. Selectman Jasper said if Selectman Massey doesn't see the tax rate increase of the magnitude they've faced over two years as being out of control, and does not see a 60% increase in payroll in four years as out of control, then nothing on earth will convince him. If the overwhelming, indisputable numbers don't convince him, nothing will. Selectman Massey said he was still waiting to hear a number, with substantiating data, that they could vote on that would get the budget under control. All he has heard are words, but no motions so they can take some action. Selectman Seabury said in her 15 years on the Board, there has been an increase in perk programs in the big departments, which amounts to a sizeable chunk of change. The Animal Control Facility has raised costs from \$6,000 a year to over \$100,000. That's where the money is going. It's up to the Selectmen to decide what they are going to present to the public.

*Motion by Selectman Stewart, seconded by Selectman Seabury, that the Board of Selectmen forward to the Budget Committee an operating budget of \$23,736,736 carried 4-1 by roll call vote.* Selectman Jasper was opposed.

## 6. ADJOURNMENT

*Motion by Selectman Stewart, seconded by Selectman Seabury, to adjourn at 9:50 p.m. carried 5-0.*

Recorded and Transcribed by Priscilla Boisvert  
Executive Assistant to the Board of Selectmen

## HUDSON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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**William P. Cole, Chairman**

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**Teresa Stewart, Vice-Chairman**

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**Shawn N. Jasper, Selectman**

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**Kenneth J. Massey, Selectman**

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**Ann Seabury, Selectman**