

HUDSON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the October 24, 1997 Meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman E. Lorraine Madison called this meeting of the Hudson Board of Selectmen to order at 6:41 p.m. on Friday, October 24, 1997, in the Selectmen's Meeting Room in the Hudson Town Hall basement. Selectman Shawn N. Jasper then led the Board members and audience in pledging allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

ATTENDANCE

Those persons present were as follows:

Members

Present: Rhona Charbonneau, Shawn Jasper, E. Lorraine Madison, and Ann Seabury.

Members

Absent Terry Stewart (on out-of-town vacation).

Staff

Present: Town Administrator Paul Sharon; Finance Director Stephen Malizia, and other department heads as scheduled.

Recorder J. Bradford Seabury.

Preliminary Discussion

Selectman Seabury noted that a *PC Update Plan* document had been included with the budget material. She asked if this plan had been taken from the Computer Committee's study. Town Administrator Sharon said that the plan was based on that study. Selectman Seabury suggested that the Board consider having this plan reviewed by a consultant, pointing out that the members of the Board of Selectmen were not experts in this area. She expressed frustration about the constant changing and updating of hardware and software, as well as the continuing controversy about using customized vs. "canned" software.

Town Administrator Sharon said that Mr. Malizia's plan was a seminal piece of work, long overdue, based on information provided by the unbiased Computer committee to make standard specifications, together with input from himself and from Kathy Hawkins. He expressed a belief that spending more money for a consultant would not be beneficial — and noted that it also would result in a 12-month delay before next year's budget would be prepared.

Selectman Seabury said she needed to know the final cost. Town Administrator Sharon noted that summary sheets at the front of the budget book provided this information. Mr. Malizia then identified the figure as being \$45,000, inclusive of the Police Department upgrade. Town Administrator Sharon noted that the *FY'98 Budget Cost Analysis* document identified the Town costs as \$44,900 for this year and \$51,500 for next year.

Selectman Madison expressed concern about the plan, pointing out that the Board of Selectmen had not approved the Computer Committee's study but had only received it. She pointed out, however, that it was costing \$100,000 per year just to maintain the VAX mainframe system, with this cost then being increased by special software updates. She predicted that the entire computer system would have to be changed within a few years but said she objected to taking it up at this late time in the process. Town Administrator Sharon reminded the Board that the budget process had been squeezed one month ahead of time by the Senate Bill 2 process, stating that all members of the staff had been working "out straight" to get the process completed.

Town Administrator Sharon expressed a belief that changeover to a different computer system would take at least a year, stating that parallel programs would have to be run. Selectman Madison expressed disagreement with this concept, stating that the much larger budget of the School District system had been changed over completely in three days. Selectman Charbonneau noted that an outside company had straightened out the Accounting Department chaos within just a few months, adding that it was being done at a cost that was considerably less than the current maintenance costs being paid by the Town.

Selectman Jasper commented that the computer system appeared to be a black hole that the Town was throwing money into — but pointed out that it had been that way for the past several years, with the same complaints being made, but with nothing being done about the situation.

Selectman Jasper suggested that the Board should begin this budget review process by determining where the Board wanted to end up, by setting a goal. He noted that there were two factors involved: (1) increase in assessed valuation and (2) increase in non-tax revenue.

Finance Director Malizia referenced the first page of the summary section. Selectman Jasper expressed a belief that the

tax rate would probably go down; he then reviewed the trends of past valuation increases and revenues, saying he expected that a growth of \$250,000 to \$300,000 would be a safe starting estimate. He then noted that the total general fund variance currently was stated as \$322,079, adding that the Board was looking at \$800,000 in warrant articles.

Selectman Charbonneau expressed concern about the FY'99 impact of bond payments, but Selectman Jasper argued that the Board could only work on one year at a time. He then reviewed the probable increase in assessment value from proposed new homes, concluding that the Board could add \$500,000 without impacting the tax rate. The Board then agreed on a goal of cutting \$560,000 from the submitted budget, to reach a value that would not increase the tax rate.

Account 5042 Supervisor of the Checklist

Joyce Cloutier, Supervisor of the Checklist, appeared before the Board to answer any questions about the budget for that department. The Board noted that the budget for this account was actually down \$1.00 below last year's appropriation. No questions were raised, and no changes to the budget were proposed.

Account 5030 Town Clerk

Chairman Madison noted that the Overtime line was down \$500, with associated FICA reduction. Finance Director Malizia noted that his plan took out the computers that had been requested for the desk clerks in the Town Clerk's office. Chairman Madison expressed concern about the Town Clerk's office consequently not being able to get computer updates until the year 2002; Finance Director Malizia contended that his review showed that updates were not needed in the Town Clerk's office until that time.

Selectman Jasper moved to amend **Cost Center 5030, Line Item 238**, Postage, currently specified in the amount of \$14,153, decreasing that amount by \$1,153 for a new total of \$13,000. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion.

Vote: Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (4-0).

Selectman Jasper moved to amend **Cost Center 5030, Line Item 411**, Computer Equipment, currently specified in the amount of \$7,085, decreasing that amount by \$7,085 for a new total of zero (\$0). Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion.

Vote: Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (4-0).

Selectman Seabury expressed doubt that any more furniture could be made to fit in the Town Clerk's office. She then moved to amend **Cost Center 5030, Line Item 326**, Furniture, currently specified in the amount of \$1,000, decreasing that amount by \$247 for a new total of \$753. Selectman Jasper seconded the motion. Selectman Madison pointed out that the Town Clerk would be moving into a larger office during the coming year and would need more furniture for that space. Selectman Jasper withdrew his second. Selectman Seabury asked if there were money in the current budget

to remodel the office space in question; Town Administrator Sharon answered in the negative. Selectman Seabury declined to withdraw her motion, and Selectman Charbonneau then seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. Selectman Charbonneau and Selectman Seabury voted in favor; Selectman Jasper and Selectman Madison voted in opposition. Chairman Madison then declared the motion to have failed (2–2).

Account 5041 Town Moderator

Selectman Jasper expressed concern about the adequacy of the proposed budget to handle predictable results of additional elections under the Senate Bill 2 process. He then moved to amend Cost Center 5041, Line Item 102, Part-Time Salaries, currently specified in the amount of \$3,830, increasing that amount a new total of \$6,500, together with appropriate increase in the associated FICA account. Selectman Seabury seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (4–0).

Finance Director Malizia identified the associated FICA change as being an increase of cost Center 5041, Line Item 108, from \$293 to \$497.

Selectman Jasper moved to amend **Cost Center 5041, Line Item 230**, In-Town Meals, currently specified in the amount of \$630, increasing that amount by \$470 for a new total of \$1,100. Selectman Seabury seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (4–0).

Account 5410 Assessor

Assessor James Michaud gave a presentation on his budget, with Town Administrator Sharon distributing amended information sheets for the Board's edification. Assessor Michaud noted that he was proposing a 19% increase in professional services to pay for consulting/legal defense for the utility evaluations, and pointing out that he had also included an increase for refurbishing the Finance Area into which his office would be moving but that he had no money in the budget for painting or reconstruction. Town Administrator Sharon discussed ways by which the required refurbishing would be accomplished as various departments were relocated in the Town hall. Selectman Jasper expressed concern that the true costs of these various relocations might not be trackable, if no detailed paper record were kept. Members of the Board also engaged in discussion with Assessor Michaud with respect to his requests for overnight lodging and out-of-town meals pertaining to conferences.

Selectman Jasper moved to amend Cost Center 5410, Line Item 252, Other Professional Services, currently specified in the amount of \$60,000, decreasing that amount by \$10,000 for a new total of \$50,000. Selectman Seabury seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (4–0).

Chairman Madison stepped down from the chair, turning the chair over to Vice-Chairman Jasper. Selectman Madison then moved to amend **Cost Center 5410, Line Item 236**, Education Reimbursement, currently specified in the amount of \$1,500, decreasing that amount by \$300 for a new total of \$1,200. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Acting Chairman Jasper called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor, and Acting Chairman Jasper declared the motion to have carried (4–0).

Selectman Madison moved to amend **Cost Center 5410, Line Item 303**, Other Office Supplies, currently specified in the amount of \$10,000, decreasing that amount by \$200 for a new total of \$800. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Acting Chairman Jasper called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor, and Acting Chairman Jasper declared the motion to have carried (4–0).

Selectman Madison moved to amend **Cost Center 5410, Line Item 231**, Out-of-Town Meals, currently specified in the amount of \$300, decreasing that amount by \$100 for a new total of \$200. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Acting Chairman Jasper called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor, and Acting Chairman Jasper declared the motion to have carried (4–0).

Extensive discussion then took place among members of the Board about the costs of training and educational conferences scattered throughout the town's proposed budget, with doubt being expressed by Board members as to the need for lodging at the Town's expense for conferences and training sessions held in Massachusetts when other Hudson citizens commuted the same distance to work on a daily basis, despite the contention by Assessor Michaud that after-class discussion sessions and post-conference get-togethers provided significant benefit to the Town in the way of shared experiences and problem solving.

Selectman Madison resumed the chairmanship, with Selectman Jasper resuming his normal position as a regular member of the Board.

Assessor Michaud suggested that the board address the warrant articles he had put forward pertaining to his office. He then discussed his rationale for proposing a property appraiser position, commenting on the increase in population and residential/commercial buildings, with increased assessed values, declaring that he needed additional help in order to do all of the work that needed to be done. He also outlined the kinds of projects that could be accomplished by the proposed property appraiser as a means of bringing in more revenue.

Selectman Jasper moved to approve the proposed warrant article for a property appraiser position, expressing his belief that this was an extremely important department that needed and warranted more help. Selectman Madison seconded the motion, noting that there had been extensive ongoing growth recently in the community. Selectman Charbonneau spoke in favor of bringing in a consultant, questioning whether a high-caliber person could be obtained for the proposed salary range. Assessor Michaud noted that he had taken a position in Nashua for only \$100 more just a few years ago. Selectman Jasper argued that Assessor Michaud could use help while the person in that position was learning the craft, saying he was concerned about getting the best possible help to address the inevitable growth. Assessor Michaud discussed calculations he had worked up to justify the position and the proposed salary. Selectman Madison spoke in favor, citing the importance of assessed value to the community. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. Selectman Jasper and Selectman Madison voted in favor; Selectman Charbonneau and Selectman Seabury voted in opposition. Chairman Madison then declared the motion to have failed (2–2).

Assessor Michaud discussed the warrant article he had proposed for an evaluation update, comparing the costs with the increased cost that would be required for a Town-wide update. He contended that the market was catching up with the assessed values, making re-evaluation necessary, and he expressed concern that most new homes were being under-assessed because he could not change his base without re-evaluation. He clarified that he would need a consulting company to do the Town-wide evaluation, which would be the next step in the process, adding that the cost of the last one had been about \$350,000.

Selectman Jasper suggested that the Board propose a \$50,000 warrant article to establish a reserve fund for the forthcoming Town-wide re-evaluation. Assessor Michaud expressed a desire to participate in drafting the text for such a warrant article.

Selectman Jasper moved to approve a warrant article to establish a reserve fund for a Town-wide evaluation, to be started at a value of \$50,000, to be drawn from surplus revenue. Selectman Seabury seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (4–0).

Assessor Michaud asked what he should do about staffing. Selectman Jasper suggested that the Assessor's "Other Professional Services" account should be increased to allow the hiring of a consultant. The Board members and Assessor Michaud then discussed this concept, with Selectman Jasper clarifying that the intent was not to hire someone to come in and study the operation of the Assessor's Office but to get someone who could work on projects.

Selectman Jasper moved to amend **Cost Center 5410, Line Item 252**, Other Professional Services, currently specified in the amount of \$50,000 as the result of a previous change, increasing that amount by \$10,000 to restore the value to the original total of \$60,000. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. Selectman Jasper, Selectman Charbonneau, and Selectman Madison voted in favor; Selectman Seabury voted in opposition. Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (3–1).

Account 5700 Series Fire Department

Fire Chief Frank Carpentino asked for clarification of the ground rules, stating that he felt he should be given an opportunity to discuss items before they were cut, so that he could explain possible impacts elsewhere in his budget. Members of the Board expressed agreement with this request.

Chief Carpentino noted that there was a 9.7% increase in the Fire Department budget, stating that the majority was out of his control, inasmuch as it pertained to the 100-series accounts. He discussed the need for maintenance expenditures for the two outlying stations (the Robinson Road firehouse and the Burns Hill firehouse), and he described the need for education and training requirements for Fire Department personnel. Chairman Madison at this point stopped Chief Carpentino, suggesting that they go through the budget so that he would not have to simply repeat everything during that process.

Selectman Jasper, a call fireman, noted that he would not be voting on motions pertaining to this department, in accordance with his usual past practice, in order to avoid a possible conflict of interest.

Account 5710 Fire Department Administration

Chief Carpentino noted the move of the Physical Training Instructor position into this account, and noted the addition of the costs of promotional testing, explaining that this cost had never been budgeted in the past but had simply been absorbed into the budget, thereby depleting other accounts.

Selectman Seabury asked why gas cost had increased. Chief Carpentino said that the utility costs had increased, noting that publications also had increased because the department was relying more on training than in the past. A question was raised about the increase in the meals-in-town account; Chief Carpentino explained that he had to provide meals for personnel undergoing training, adding that conference costs were up for the same reason. Selectman Seabury asked about the computer printers; Chief Carpentino explained that this increase was for two printers, to be connected to computers that had been purchased during this current year.

Mr. John Drabinowicz, chairman of the Budget Committee, asked if there were a paper trace in the backup for all of the line-item changes that Chief Carpentino had identified, stating that the members of the Budget Committee would be looking for clarification. Chief Carpentino stated that he could and would provide that information.

No motions being brought forward by the members of the Board, Chairman Madison turned the chair over to Vice-Chairman Jasper and then moved to amend **Cost Center 5710, Line Item 215**, Publications, currently specified in the amount of \$400, decreasing that amount by \$150 for a new total of \$250. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Acting Chairman Jasper called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor except for Selectman Jasper, who abstained, and Acting Chairman Jasper declared the motion to have carried (3-0-1).

Selectman Madison moved to amend **Cost Center 5710, Line Item 230**, In-Town Meals, currently specified in the amount of \$500, decreasing that amount by \$150 for a new total of \$350. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Acting Chairman Jasper called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor except for Selectman Jasper, who abstained, and Acting Chairman Jasper declared the motion to have carried (3-0-1).

Selectman Madison moved to amend **Cost Center 5710, Line Item 231**, Out-of-Town Meals, currently specified in the amount of \$750, decreasing that amount by \$150 for a new total of \$600. Selectman Seabury seconded the motion.

Selectman Charbonneau moved to amend the motion on the floor by increasing the reduction to \$200, thereby decreasing **Cost Center 5710, Line Item 231**, Out-of-Town Meals, currently specified in the amount of \$750, to a new total of \$550. Selectman Seabury seconded the motion to amend. **Vote:** Acting Chairman Jasper called for a verbal vote. Selectman Charbonneau and Selectman Seabury voted in favor; Selectman Madison voted in opposition, and Selectman Jasper abstained. Acting Chairman Jasper declared the amendment motion to have carried (2-1-1).

Vote: Acting Chairman Jasper then called for a verbal vote on the amended motion. Selectman Charbonneau and Selectman Seabury voted in favor; Chairman Madison voted in opposition, and Selectman Jasper abstained. Acting Chairman Jasper declared the motion to have carried (2–1–1).

Selectman Madison expressed a belief that the Fire Department could not get approval from the citizens of the community for both a new heating system and for a new roof. Chief Carpentino stated that, if he had to make a priority, the heating system was the most necessary, as he otherwise would have employees unable to get and stay warm. Selectman Madison then moved to amend **Cost Center 5710, Line Item 325**, Equipment Repair/Parts, currently specified in the amount of \$37,750, decreasing that amount by \$11,900 for a new total of \$25,850, noting that the intent was to take the new roof out of the budget. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Acting Chairman Jasper called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor except for Selectman Jasper, who abstained, and Acting Chairman Jasper declared the motion to have carried (3–0–1).

Selectman Madison resumed the chairmanship, with Selectman Jasper resuming his normal position as a regular member of the Board.

Selectman Seabury moved to amend **Cost Center 5710, Line Item 210**, Natural Gas, currently specified in the amount of \$10,000, decreasing that amount by \$1,000 for a new total of \$9,000. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor except for Selectman Jasper, who abstained, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (3–0–1).

Selectman Seabury moved to amend **Cost Center 5710, Line Item 236**, Education Reimbursement, currently specified in the amount of \$1,500, decreasing that amount by \$300 for a new total of \$1,200. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor except for Selectman Jasper, who abstained, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (3–0–1).

Selectman Seabury moved to amend **Cost Center 5710, Line Item 399**, Miscellaneous, currently specified in the amount of \$6,324, decreasing that amount by \$2,000 for a new total of \$4,324. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor except for Selectman Jasper, who abstained, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (3–0–1).

Selectman Charbonneau moved to amend **Cost Center 5710, Line Item 237**, In-House Training, currently specified in the amount of \$8,580, decreasing that amount by \$2,000 for a new total of \$6,580. Selectman Seabury seconded the motion. Selectman Madison expressed concern, pointing out that this Board of Selectmen had agreed to set up the physical training program and purchase the equipment this current year, and arguing that the Board should now vote to maintain that system. Selectman Charbonneau asked if the employees were participating in this program while getting paid; Chief Carpentino answered that this was true in approximately 50% of the cases, as the training was given at a certain time, with half of the participants being present for work-time and the other half coming in on their own off-time to participate, with the swing-shift situation always resulting in a 50:50 arrangement. Selectman Seabury then withdrew her second, and Chairman Madison subsequently declared the motion to have lost for lack of a second. Selectman Charbonneau requested that the record show that she was not in favor of the budgeted amount.

Chief Carpentino pointed out that this had always been the case, except that this was a part of the promotional training/testing activity that had not been budgeted before. Town Administrator Sharon agreed, stating that this cost previously had been hidden by being absorbed into the operating costs.

Chairman Madison declared a brief intermission at 8:50 p.m., calling the meeting back to order at 9:03 p.m. Finance Director Malizia announced that the Board's cuts had accumulated to a total of approximately \$170,000 at this time.

Account 5720 Fire Communications

Selectman Seabury questioned the increase in Line Item 5720-237, Professional Development. Chief Carpentino explained that he had wanted to combine some of the similar costs shared by different divisions of the Fire Department, but that he had no way to track it. He clarified that this was a contractual matter, leaving him little room to play — but pointed out that this given figure amounted to less than one class for each person employed. Further discussion arose concerning new and replacement furniture listed in the budget, and Chief Carpentino reviewed the intended use and reason for each listed item. Selectman Madison questioned why the new furniture was not being purchased as used furniture; Chief Carpentino responded that he had simply put down the figures he had been given for the items he had requested.

Selectman Seabury moved to amend **Cost Center 5720, Line Item 237**, In-House Training, currently specified in the amount of \$3,200, decreasing that amount by \$1,200 for a new total of \$2,000, noting that the intent was to cut three new-hire employees. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor except for Selectman Jasper, who abstained, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (3–0–1).

Selectman Seabury moved to amend **Cost Center 5720, Line Item 326**, Furniture, currently specified in the amount of \$800, decreasing that amount by \$200 for a new total of \$600. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor except for Selectman Jasper, who abstained, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (3–0–1).

Selectman Seabury questioned the Line Item 399 amount for a light bar. Chief Carpentino explained that the existing light bar was an older unit that had been placed on the recently purchased vehicle, adding that parts were difficult to obtain and that he felt this unit should be replaced with a newer model.

Selectman Seabury moved to amend **Cost Center 5720, Line Item 399**, Miscellaneous, currently specified in the amount of \$2,000, decreasing that amount by \$2,000 for a new total of zero (\$0). Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. Chief Carpentino stated that this would mean that the vehicle would effectively be out of action if the old light-bar failed. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. Selectman Seabury and Selectman Charbonneau voted in favor; Selectman Madison voted in opposition, and Selectman Jasper abstained. Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (2–1–1).

Chairman Madison noted that the Fire Department budget showed monthly lease payments as unit costs, objecting that this was confusing, and she requested that he change the budget write-ups to clarify what was being identified. Selectman Seabury then asked about the increase in Line Item 5720-403, Small Equipment, and Chief Carpentino reviewed the list, identifying each item and explaining why it was wanted. He pointed out that the prices listed in the backup material were list prices, assuring the Board that he would go to State bids for lower pricing whenever possible.

Selectman Seabury moved to amend **Cost Center 5730, Line Item 403**, Small Equipment, currently specified in the amount of \$24,507, decreasing that amount by \$1,507 for a new total of \$23,000, adding that she was not identifying any specific cut and that Chief Carpentino would be free to spend the remaining amount on any of the items, as he pleased. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor except for Selectman Jasper, who abstained, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (3–0–1).

Account 5730 Fire Suppression

Chief Carpentino discussed the Overtime account, expressing a belief that the practice that had been followed in the past had been illegal. He identified details of the accounts, noting that Overtime had increased by \$15,000 with the new arrangement — but then added that he had been communicating with an outside vendor about taking over service of the radios and beepers.

Selectman Madison noted that the Department of Public Works would be able to service some of the Fire Department vehicles if the proposed highway garage were approved by the voters. Chief Carpentino stated that he had been discussing this sort of possibility with the Road Agent, already. Chief Carpentino then identified various items in the division accounts that had been paid previously but had not been budgeted, pointing out that this had given an inaccurate indication of actual operating costs. Chairman Madison requested Chief Carpentino to clarify all such instances in the backup material before passing that documentation on to the Budget Committee.

Selectman Jasper declared that the Board of Selectmen needed to develop a policy position for the increase in Overtime, arguing that the 90-day cap on earned time was of no use to the Town if the employees simply took paid vacation for the remaining time. He noted that the auditor had recommended that replacements be hired as of the departure date of such people, rather than the termination date, so that the salary accounts would be paying for the replacement personnel, with the vacation pay to come out of the earned-time account. Following discussion of this concept among members of the Board and Town Administrator Sharon, Chief Carpentino noted that he could reduce the Overtime account somewhat by budgeting the holiday pay out of regular time; Town Administrator Sharon concurred, discussing the probable reduction, and Selectman Jasper estimated that this could save \$11,000 to \$12,000 — but pointed out that this money would have to come from somewhere else.

Chairman Madison turned over the chairmanship to Vice-Chairman Jasper and then moved to amend **Cost Center 5730, Line Item 105**, Overtime Salaries, currently specified in the amount of \$280,732, decreasing that amount by \$31,720 for a new total of \$249,012. Selectman Seabury seconded the motion. **Vote:** Acting Chairman Jasper called

for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor except for Selectman Jasper, who abstained, and Acting Chairman Jasper declared the motion to have carried (3–0–1).

Selectman Madison resumed the chairmanship, with Selectman Jasper resuming his normal position as a regular member of the Board.

Selectman Jasper noted that this policy of covering all hours was new, stating that the members of the Board ought to consider this and understand it — but that he questioned whether the Town could afford it. Chief Carpentino responded that his position was like playing Russian roulette. Noting that a fire emergency vehicle had just left the adjoining station and passed by the Town Hall on its way to an accident scene during the preceding discussion, he informed the members of the Board that six people were needed in order to adequately cover such an accident — but that he only had five on duty at a time, because of the authorized manpower situation. He discussed the need to cover different situations that occurred regularly, pointing out that each of these required a total of six people when there were only five employees available, and he expressed concern about the associated liability and the likelihood that delayed response in such situations might invite lawsuits. He then discussed the result of increased service requirements because of community growth, arguing that the Town of Hudson actually needed to staff a second firestation at this time.

Selectman Jasper noted that a warrant article was being proposed for four new positions, adding that he supported the new positions, but that he could not see the community agreeing to both the new positions and the increased overtime cost. He added that it had always been true that six people were needed to fully cover the emergency situations — but that the Town could not cover all possibilities.

Selectman Seabury moved to amend **Cost Center 5730, Line Item 105**, Salaries Overtime, currently specified in the amount of \$249,012 (as a result of the previous change), decreasing that amount by \$45,000 for a new total of \$204,012. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. Chief Carpentino expressed objections, stating that this change was undercutting the product of his department, and Selectman Seabury withdrew her motion.

Selectman Seabury then moved to amend **Cost Center 5730, Line Item 105**, Salaries Overtime, currently specified in the amount of \$249,012, decreasing that amount by \$19,000 for a new total of \$230,012. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor except for Selectman Jasper, who abstained, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (3–0–1).

Finance Director Malizia recommended that the computer be removed from Line 5730-411. Selectman Seabury moved to amend **Cost Center 5730, Line Item 411**, Computer Equipment, currently specified in the amount of \$3,200, decreasing that amount by \$2,800 for a new total of \$400. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor except for Selectman Jasper, who abstained, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (3–0–1).

Finance Director Malizia reported that the reduction in FICA amounted to \$735. Selectman Seabury then moved to amend **Cost Center 5730, Line Item 108**, FICA, currently specified in the amount of \$15,132, decreasing that amount

by \$735 for a new total of \$14,397. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor except for Selectman Jasper, who abstained, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (3-0-1).

Selectman Jasper asked that the previous zeroed line items which had not shown any fiscal activity for the past five years be removed from the budget book, contending that there was no need to retain this deadwood.

Account 5740 Fire Prevention

Selectman Seabury moved to amend Cost Center 5740, Line Item 411, Computer Equipment, currently specified in the amount of \$2,800, decreasing that amount by \$733 for a new total of \$2,067, to remove the computer proposed for the Fire Prevention van. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor except for Selectman Jasper, who abstained, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (3-0-1).

Account 5750 Ambulance Service

Selectman Jasper noted that there would be a warrant article to purchase a new ambulance next year; he suggested that the contribution to the reserve fund for ambulance replacement be increased by \$5,000 to narrow the gap between the accumulated savings and the actual full cost. Selectman Seabury expressed agreement and moved to amend Cost Center 5750, Line Item 450, Reserves, currently specified in the amount of \$30,000, increasing that amount by \$5,000 for a new total of \$35,000. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor except for Selectman Jasper, who abstained, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (3-0-1).

Account 5755 Dive Team

Chief Carpentino noted that these were new accounts but not new items. Questioned about the need for training, he confirmed that there was a requirement for the diving training to be maintained. Members of the Board expressed concern about the increasing costs, recalling that this program had started as a "volunteer" program, but Chairman Madison pointed out that most communities now had such a group, either in the Fire Department or the Police Department. No changes were proposed for this division.

Account 5765 Fire Alarm

Chief Carpentino noted that this account had been moved from Account 5720. Chairman Madison asked Chief Carpentino to clarify these moves for the Budget Committee's edification. No changes were proposed for this division.

Chief Carpentino addressed his proposed warrant articles, noting first that he was asking for two new commercial fire engines as replacements for dead or ailing equipment, a full-time Deputy Fire Chief, two FireFighter/EMT-I

positions, a Training Captain position, and \$80,000 for the establishment of a Capital Reserve account for future fire-engine replacement.

Addressing the request for a Deputy Fire Chief, Chief Carpentino stated that he and his current assistant could not continue to do everything that had to be done, protesting that the actual result that everything was not getting done completely. Members of the Board discussed this proposal, coming to the consensus that this was not the year to ask for this position, because of the large number of other things being requested. Selectman Seabury then moved to disapprove the proposed warrant article pertaining to the establishment of a new Deputy Chief position; Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. Selectman Seabury and Selectman Charbonneau voted in favor of the motion; Selectman Madison voted in opposition, and Selectman Jasper abstained. Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (2-1-1).

Chief Carpentino addressed his proposed warrant article for a full-time Captain of Training. Selectman Jasper expressed support for the position but acknowledged concern as to whether the voters would approve the article. He asked if the Training Captain could also take on some administrative duties, suggesting that this might make the concept more palatable to the voters. Chief Carpentino declared that the Training Captain would have to take on some administrative duties.

Selectman Charbonneau expressed herself as being in favor of the proposed fire-fighters but contended that the voters could not accept all of the proposed positions. She then moved to deny the proposed warrant article to establish a new Training Captain position; Selectman Seabury seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. Selectman Charbonneau and Selectman Seabury voted in favor of the motion; Selectman Madison voted in opposition, and Selectman Jasper abstained. Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (2-1-1).

Selectman Charbonneau moved to approve the proposed warrant article to establish two new Fire-Fighter/EMT-I positions; Selectman Seabury seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor except for Selectman Jasper, who abstained, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (3-0-1).

Chief Carpentino addressed his proposal to establish a Capital Reserve Fund for fire-engine replacement, explaining that the intent was to set up a process like that used for ambulance replacement, so that the Town could replace its aging fire engines. Selectman Jasper stated that he had always supported this approach, but that he was not sure this was the year to initiate such a fund, with the ambulance and other things being asked for.

Selectman Seabury moved to deny the proposed warrant article to set up a Capital Reserve Fund for fire trucks. No second was offered, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have died for lack of a second.

Selectman Charbonneau moved to establish the proposed Capital Reserve Fund, but with a reduced initial value of \$70,000. Members of the Board then engaged in discussion concerning the likelihood of such a proposal being accepted by the voters, and Selectman Charbonneau subsequently withdrew her motion, noting that no second had been offered.

Selectman Seabury moved to take \$85,000 from the Ambulance Capital Reserve Account and to take \$15,000 from the taxpayers for a new ambulance. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor except for Selectman Jasper, who abstained, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (3–0–1).

Discussion continued on the issue of replacing the old fire engines, with Selectman Seabury expressing doubt that the voters would approve a warrant article for two fire engines, and questions were raised about the possibility of easing the impact by selecting a different purchase period. Chief Carpentino reported that the cost of a lease-to-buy arrangement would be \$52,887/year for 3 years, dropping to \$33,600/year for a 5-year lease. Selectman Charbonneau and Selectman Madison expressed preference for the 5-year period, contending that the impact would be less. Mr. Howard Dilworth reminded the Board that the lease for the latest purchase had ended this year, at a cost of \$52,000/year, and he pointed out that continuation of the \$52,000 cost thus would not cause any significant impact on the current tax rate.

Chief Carpentino argued for requesting both trucks, stating that the existing 1974 fire engine was permanently out of action and that the 1983 engine currently was on the floor in need of a \$75,000 transmission job — adding that he did not want to spend this much money on that vehicle, as he did not think the Town would get that much use out of it even after repairs. Selectman Madison expressed agreement, arguing in favor of going to the voters for both vehicles. Selectman Jasper stated that he was afraid asking for two fire engines would result in failure, meaning that no replacement truck would be obtained at all. Town Administrator Sharon suggested that the Board propose an alternate warrant article, to be located after the first, allowing the purchase of one fire engine if the request for two did not pass. Members of the Board demurred, stating that voters tended to distrust such proposals.

Selectman Seabury then made a motion to reduce the \$80,000 request to \$25,000, to be used to establish a Capital Reserve Fund; Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. Selectman Jasper protested that this small an amount was impractical. **Vote:** Selectman Seabury and Selectman Charbonneau voted in favor of the motion; Selectman Madison and Selectman Jasper voted in opposition, with Selectman Jasper declaring that he felt so strongly about this that he was breaking his policy of not voting on Fire Department matters. Chairman Madison declared the motion to have failed (2–2).

Selectman Jasper called for a break, and Chairman Madison declared a 5-minute intermission. Following reconvening of the meeting, Selectman Jasper moved to deny the proposed warrant article for establishment of a Capital Reserve Fund for fire-engine replacement. Selectman Madison seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. Selectman Jasper, Selectman Madison, and Selectman Seabury voted in favor of the motion; Selectman Charbonneau voted in opposition. Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (3–1). Selectman Charbonneau requested that the record show that she was in favor of setting up the Capital Reserve Fund.

Account 5130 Emergency Management

Chief Carpentino discussed the various line items for the Emergency Management account, noting that there were six new items, each of which would receive 50% reimbursement from the Federal government. He noted that one of these

was a computer, being purchased because the Federal government would provide the same 50% reimbursement for a "word processor."

Selectman Charbonneau moved to amend Cost Center 5130 by moving \$300 from **Line 411**, Computer Equipment, to **Line 403**, Small Equipment. Selectman Seabury seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor except for Selectman Jasper, who abstained, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (3-0-1).

Finance Director Malizia noted that the proposed computer cost was too low by \$131. Selectman Seabury moved to amend **Cost Center 5130, Line Item 411**, Computer Equipment, currently specified in the amount of \$2,800, increasing that amount by \$131 for a new total of \$2,931. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor except for Selectman Jasper, who abstained, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (3-0-1).

Account 5960 Fire Hydrant Rentals

Chief Carpentino addressed the fire-hydrant rentals. Selectman Jasper stated that he wanted \$25,00 taken out of this account. Selectman Jasper then moved to amend Cost Center 5960, currently specified in the amount of \$798,912, decreasing that amount by \$25,000 for a new total of \$683,912. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (4-0).

Finance Director Malizia reported that the budget had been cut by \$474, so far.

Account 5581 Zoning

Zoning Administrator Susan Snide appeared before the Board to answer any questions concerning her proposed budget. Members of the Board noted that Ms. Snide had included a cost for servicing the new copier; Chairman Madison requested that Ms. Snide check to see if the machine was still under warranty through the coming year, stating that the Budget Committee could remove this funding if that were the case.

Finance Director Malizia recommended moving the telephone component from Line 5581-411 to Line 5581-403, Small Equipment, stating that the Line 411 slot should be reserved for computers so as to allow tracking of the computer costs. A question being raised about the telephone costs, Ms. Snide explained that this cost was for replacement of the deteriorating telephone system, which was to be replaced by a four-line system. Finance Director Malizia clarified that all telephones eventually would be on the same phone system, rather than the present arrangement of separate systems. Selectman Seabury moved to amend Cost Center 5581 by moving \$2,210 from **Line Item 411**, Computer Equipment, currently specified in the amount of \$4,277, to a new Line Item 403, Small Equipment, leaving Line Item 411 in the amount of \$2,067. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (3-0, Selectman Jasper having left the room to make a telephone call).

Account 5582 Building Inspector/Health Officer

Zoning Administrator Snide noted that there was an increase in postage to cover mass mailings to abutters, which had previously been absorbed by the Finance Department. She then discussed details of the meals and conference training costs. Selectman Madison asked about the increase in Flex benefits. Finance Director Malizia explained that he had tediously put these items in their correct locations— adding that the impact of Flex benefits were dictated by the contracts.

Account 5583 Zoning Board of Adjustment

Town Administrator Sharon noted that the budget for the Zoning Board of Adjustment was down from last year. No changes were proposed

Zoning Administrator Snide addressed her proposed warrant article for a replacement vehicle, to be shared by herself and the Town Engineer. She explained that the current vehicle was effectively dead, in need of transmission work. Selectman Jasper moved to approve the proposed warrant article for \$15,000 for a replacement vehicle for the Zoning/Engineering departments; Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (4–0).

Zoning Administrator Snide addressed her proposed warrant article for a pickup truck as a replacement vehicle for the Health Officer, explaining that he needed a vehicle for the equipment he had to carry to various sites, as well as to get access to those site. Selectman Charbonneau stated that she supported the need for such a vehicle, but that she wanted to be involved in the purchase, insisting that it might well be possible to get a better deal than the State bids. Selectman Jasper moved to approve the proposed \$18,000 warrant article for a replacement vehicle for the Health Officer; Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (4–0).

Account 5531 Public Works – Engineering

Town Engineer Michael Gospodarek appeared before the Board to answer questions about details of his operation. Selectman Seabury moved to amend Cost Center 5531, Line Item 236, Education Reimbursement, currently specified in the amount of \$1,200, decreasing that amount by \$200 for a new total of \$1,000. Selectman Charbonneau seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (4–0).

Account 5533 Hudson Conservation Commission

Town Engineer Gospodarek, as liaison officer for the Conservation Commission, explained the proposed concept to sue funds from the Commission's capital reserve fund for part of the aerial fly-over on the basis of identifying wetlands. Some members of the Board questioned the acceptability of this arrangement, but Town Administrator Sharon suggested it was an innovative way of getting the desired results, and Selectman Seabury declared that the aerial fly-over was very important and should be pursued. Selectman Jasper questioned the appropriateness of listing this item as Engineering Fees, however, and he then moved to amend Cost Center 5533, Line Item 225, currently specified in the amount of \$15,000, to zero and to move the \$15,000 into a new **Line Item 252, Other Professional Services**. Selectman Seabury seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (4-0).

Town Engineer Gospodarek addressed his proposed warrant articles, which were determined to have not been included in the budget book and had not been reviewed by the Selectmen. He explained that he was proposing four warrant articles: (1) repair of the bridge at the intersection of Melendy Road and County Road, (2) construction of an emergency boat ramp at the end of Winnhaven Drive, (3) a replacement vehicle for the Environmental Inspector, and (4) installation of a culvert on Winnhaven Drive.

Mr. Gospodarek outlined details of the Melendy/County Roads bridge project, explaining that he had let the original \$75,000 appropriation lapse in order to work out a 20%/80% arrangement with the State, clarifying that Hudson's cost would be only \$52,000 but that the request would have to be for the full \$260,000, with refunding to be returned when the State paid its 80% share. Following discussion, Selectman Jasper moved to approve the proposed warrant article for repair of the bridge at the intersection of Melendy and County roads for a total appropriation of \$260,000, with \$208,000 to be reimbursed by the State, resulting in a net cost to Hudson of \$52,000. Selectman Seabury seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (4-0).

Members of the Board spoke of misgivings about the proposed site for the emergency boat ramp off the end of Winnhaven Drive, citing the extreme slope of the cut at that location, as well as the only marginally better site that had been donated off Oban Drive. Following discussion, Selectman Jasper moved to deny the proposed warrant article for construction of an emergency boat ramp; Selectman Seabury seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to deny the warrant article to have carried (4-0).

Town Engineer Gospodarek asked the Board to consider proposing a warrant article to appropriate \$10,000 for an engineering study, but members of the Board reiterated their concerns about the steep banks at the proposed locations and declined to make such a proposal at this time.

Town Engineer Gospodarek addressed the issue of the Environmental Inspector's vehicle. Following discussion, Selectman Jasper moved to approve the proposed warrant article to appropriate \$18,000 for a replacement vehicle for the Environmental Inspector, presumably to be a pick-up truck or other sturdy vehicle. Selectman Seabury seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (4-0), but Selectman Charbonneau clarified that she agreed that Mr. Webster needed a truck because of the equipment he had to carry and also because of the sites he had to get to, but that she was not authorizing a Bronco or other such vehicle, insisting that a cheaper, serviceable vehicle should be available.

Town Engineer Gospodarek discussed the proposed culvert on Winnhaven Drive, intended to provide a drainage path from Second Brook to Lowell Road, contending that there was a real need to provide a drainageway in this area. Following discussion, however, the consensus of the Board was opposed to such a project, and Selectman Seabury moved to deny the proposed warrant article. Selectman Jasper seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to deny the warrant article to have carried (4-0).

Account 5570 Series Planning Department

Town Planner Michael Reynolds appeared before Board to answer any questions about his budget, noting that Mr. Michael Mancini of the Economic Development Center had been present earlier in the evening in hopes of discussing a request for \$5,000 to be used for advertisement, but had had to leave at 9:30 p.m. Chairman Madison noted that Wal*Mart had given a \$6,000 grant to provide advertising for Hudson. Selectman Charbonneau moved to amend Cost Center 5571, Line Item 217, Association Dues & Fees, currently specified in the amount of \$19,096, decreasing that amount by \$5,000 for a new total of \$14,096, noting that Hudson had had a difficult time in the past with the Economic Development Center and needed to provide for Hudson. Selectman Seabury seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (4-0).

Town Planner Reynolds discussed the Visioning project and the GIS developments, commenting on the need for himself and the Assistant Planner for training and conferences. No other changes to the Planning Department budget were brought forward.

Account 5572 Planning Board

Members of the Board noted that the budget was down lower than last year's appropriation. No changes were proposed.

Recess

No other department heads having been scheduled for this evening's session, Selectman Jasper moved to recess the meeting until 9:00 a.m. the following morning (Saturday, October 25th); Selectman Seabury seconded the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Madison called for a verbal vote. All members present voted in favor, and Chairman Madison declared the motion to have carried (4-0). The meeting recessed at 12:38 a.m.

Date: October 25, 1997

E. Lorraine Madison, Chairman

J. Bradford Seabury, Recorder

Rhona Charbonneau

Shawn N. Jasper

Ann Seabury

Terry Stewart



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