

HUDSON, NH BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the October 17, 2023 Meeting

1. CALL TO ORDER - by Vice-Chairman Morin the meeting of October 17, 2023 at 7:01 p.m. in the Selectmen Meeting Room at Town Hall.
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE led by Conservation Commission Chairman, Bill Collins
3. ATTENDANCE

Board of Selectmen: Dillon Dumont, Bob Guessferd, Dave Morin

Selectman Roy participated remotely from her residence.

Chairman Marilyn McGrath had an excused absence.

Staff/Others: Steve Malizia, Town Administrator; Elvis Dhima, Town Engineer; Bill Collins, Conservation Commission Chairman; Christine Strout-Lizotte, Town Clerk/Tax Collector; John Beike, IT Director; Vin Guarino, IT Specialist; Doug Bosteels, IT Specialist; Linda Pilla, Library Director; Donna Boucher, Library Trustees Treasurer; Mimi Guessferd, Library Trustees Chairperson; Lisa Labrie, Finance Director; Beth McKee, Town Accountant; Jill Laffin, Executive Assistant

Vice-Chairman Morin then said, I'd like to apologize to Erika and Jill. Last week, I messed up their names. Jill, you got a new last name, and Erika got a man's name. So I corrected that tonight.

4. BUDGET PRESENTATIONS

Vice-Chairman Morin recognized Town Administrator Steve Malizia for an introduction. The Town Administrator began by saying, So just real quick. This is the second night of three scheduled nights for the budget review. Tonight, you'll be basically looking at Engineering, Sewer, Water, Conservation, Town Clerk, IT, Library, and a host of some of the smaller departments. But nonetheless pretty important. At your last meeting, I believe you made one budget adjustment and you looked at Fire and Public Works. You looked at outside the budget requests tonight. You'll I think there may be a minimal amount of those, but you'll have some of those and a few more articles. So with that, I think you should bring the Town Engineer up and start with Engineering, which is under the Land Use tab 5571-5585 says land use and I think it starts approximately page 12. And this is the Engineering budget from the Town Engineer.

Engineering (5585 & Warrant Articles N,Q,R,S)

Town Engineer, Elvis Dhima addressed the Board saying, Thank you. Good evening everyone. Good evening Selectman Roy. As you requested. I am coming in front of you with a level funded budget and an outside of budget request. With that said, I really don't want to take too much of your time. We can dive into it and see if you have any questions. But as I said, level funded, same as previous year as you requested, and we'll just continue to make it work with what we have. I will take any questions you might have.

Selectman Guessferd was recognized and said, just to kind of summarize this as you as you have mentioned, it looks like the only changes are salary and benefits. Appreciate you doing the level funded piece of this as well. I really there's really not a lot to discuss. I don't think in my mind. Selectman Dumont was recognized and said, no, I just echo the same thing. I appreciate the level funded budget.

### Outside the Budget Request

The Town Administrator explained, he does have one outside the budget request relates to engineering. I'm not sure what the page is. I think it's the last page in the section.

Mr. Dhima explained, if we were okay with a regular budget, I'd like to move into an outside of budget request for the Board of Selectmen to consider this. As you recall, we've been very aggressive with grants. We've been very lucky at some of them. And basically, while we cannot afford to hire someone, you know, to do these grants for us, we acknowledge that that's a bit more than we can offer. I think a model that has worked for the town has been utilizing funds that we have available for these grants, and what we've done in the past is Engineering Department has utilized some of the funds already in the budget that can be used for third party opinions on different things such as traffic, structural, this or that. So some of those funds have been used for grants. Moving forward, it appears that there's still a lot of opportunities for us. So I'm bringing in front of you a request for you to consider to put \$20,000 available on the engineering budget for future grants applications. This provides us with an average somewhere between 2 to 3 applications we can do for different things. And just to give you an idea, we have we successfully last year or this year, last year/this year we got about \$200,000 in grants between DES, you know, the boat launch, and this does not include the \$2.5 million that we got for the bridge at the last minute that's currently right now being evaluated for the bids. And it the money is out there if we go for it, but we need to apply for it and we don't have a mechanism right now. So this allows the Board to create that mechanism if you want to continue to pursue it. Everyone is telling us that there's still going to be money available from ARPA from, you know, other programs at the state and the feds are putting out there. But we need to have the mechanism to go for these. And I think the cheapest way, not the cheapest way, but the most cost effective way for us to do it is sub it out to someone without having to hire someone internally to provide the services. And with that said, I'll take any questions you might have and see where you're at with this request.

Selectman Guessferd was recognized and said okay, so right now we're we've been applying for grants. So who's been doing the actual grant applications? Mr. Dhima replied, so it's between myself the you know some of the grants have been done by myself. Some of the grants have been done by the Civil Engineer, but the main ones are being by our consultants, water consultants, you know, landfill consultants, those are the major grants. So the \$4 million ones that we did not get on the first round, that was done by an outside consultant. In addition, there were some other grants that were done by by our water consultant as well. But we sub those out typically. You know, the major ones. They need a lot of effort. You know, we're talking about 20, 30, page reports that needs to go with that application.

Selectman Guessferd then asked, do you know how much we've spent on grants on? Mr. Dhima replied, I want to say somewhere, I want to say probably somewhere between \$10,000 to \$15,000 probably, you know, maybe \$10,000 to \$20,000. I forget because it's been multiple ones, but no more than that. I think the the biggest one we spent was about close to \$10,000, was related to the landfill, the \$4 million grant that we pursued. But everything else has been, you know, smaller amounts. But they all add up.

Selectmen Roy then said, I have a question. I have a question for Steve, I think. How many grants overall have we, have we applied for over the last year? The Town Administrator replied, probably less than 15 if I had to. If I had to speculate overall. Are you talking for the town? Selectman Roy replied, yeah. The Town Administrator said, I'd say probably somewhere less than 15. I'm thinking Police, Fire. Selectman Roy then said, because is it is it worth our while to look into you know, contracting out the grant application work? Mr. Dhima replied, well, every department is a little different, Selectman Roy. So that is the challenge with these. So what I would what require, for example, for an engineering like one of the grants that we did recently was \$100,000 for drainage. That's in the works right now. We're awaiting confirmation for that. That would probably be...Selectman Roy interjected saying, I understand Elvis, but there's firms that do all kinds of grants. And that's my question. Is it worth our while? Instead of having an employee take an hours and hours and hours to to do a grant application that we we investigate contracting it out. Mr. Dhima replied, what I'm trying to say is you have a point. But what I'm trying to say is that every grant has a specialty on a firm. I don't think there's one firm that can do it all. So if the Fire Department is the one you want for their, you know, whatever they need to do, it's just a little different. I can tell you that the firms, for example, that we hired, there's three different ones that we have one for the landfill, one for the drainage, one for the water. They specialize in different things. I don't think

there's one firm you can hire to do it all, but I do know that they have people that helps with the grants and where that is. But as far as the application is a little different, but you can definitely entertain that if you wish to do so. Selectman Roy replied, I would be curious about what what the other members of the Board think about that.

Selectman Dumont was recognized and said, I was going to ask how much, so in the \$10-\$20,000 you're spending, how much are you seeing in in return for grants right now? Roughly. Mr. Dhima replied, so we received about \$200,000 just for us. So about a 1 to 10 returns of every dollar we spend, we usually get about ten back when we get it. So I would say it's beneficial. I mean, if I, if I could invest like that on my portfolio, I would, I would not be here tonight presenting this. I'll be in Vegas. Selectman Dumont replied, I agree but to Selectman Roy's point I would say that it would have to be equal to that for us to entertain the idea. So you wouldn't want to hire somebody and then start to dilute that down, I guess, is what I'm getting at. I don't know what anybody else feels like. Selectman Roy replied, right. But I'm talking about not having one department do it this way, one department do it another way. I'm trying to make it cohesive for folks to for the departments to have one kind of one place to go to, to talk about grants. Vice-Chairman Morin replied, to answer your question on how much money that we brought in last year with grants \$1,800,000. Selectman Roy replied, okay. Thank you.

Selectman Guessferd was recognized and said, yeah, my my thought process, and what I'm hearing, Elvis, is that each one of the departments or each of the areas, there's a there's a specialty involved in actually what they see maximizing the probability of getting a grant. So that's that's kind of what I'm hearing here. But I think what we're more talking about here, and Selectman Roy's talking about is possibly a coordinator like a grant, like a company that coordinates grants across the board for municipalities. I don't know if that exists or if just the way that the industry is that it's that it's very specialized. But but if you had conceptually if you had somebody that said, okay, you know, we will coordinate the grants, we'll send this one out here, this engineering, we'll send this one out here for fire, that sort of thing. I think that's what I'm kind of hearing here. It would be, I guess I'd say optimal if you had something like that. And it was efficient. And like you said, the return was there.

Mr. Dhima then said one complicated part about the grants is that every department still has to follow on their own. So Fire Department files their own grants. They have their own, you know, grants.gov account Engineering has its own and it's usually done from the town Police Department do their own. So at the end of the day, even if you have someone that can coordinate between all departments, at the end of the day, the department still has to do the work. Okay. What's been nice about the grant process recently has been the fact that I can hire a third party. I can give them access to it as a third party, do the application. We can do all the review online, and then when it's ready, I can submit it in. But I still got to do that at the end of the day, because I'll be the point of contact. The Police Chief and the Fire Chief have to go through that same exercise. Either have a guy that I have internally doing it and then they submit it. So it's it's that piece as well. Selectman Roy then said, so they don't allow for agents? Mr. Dhima replied, they do allow for agents, but agents cannot file the grants. It still has to be the owner or the person. So in this case, it will be the Town of Hudson. Like in some cases, been me. It will be the Police Chief. The Fire Chief. Whoever's filing that grant, we'll have to still be the entity out of Town of Hudson filing for that. The agent can help you with the process. They can upload files, but as far as hitting the submit, that has to be by representatives of the town at the end of the day. That's that's what we have done, at least as far as I'm concerned on the engineering side. Selectman Roy replied, okay, thank you. Vice-Chairman Morin asked, Selectman Roy, you have anything else? To which she replied no, I'm all set. Thank you.

Vice-Chairman Morin then said, so for the grants, I know the Fire Department has certain group of people that write their grants. So other than subbing it out, if we hired an employee to be a grant writer, is that considered the town sending it in so that one person could do the grants for all of you and send it in, and it wouldn't be an issue? Mr. Dhima replied they still wouldn't be able to do the entire grant, because they will still need specific support from third parties. Vice-Chairman Morin replied, I understand that, but if their focus is on grants it would take away from all you guys and they could send it in where you said that right now. Mr. Dhima replied so that person that would be working for the Town of Hudson would be the point of contact for all the grants will be submitted through different, if you want to call it different Applications or applicants which is Fire Department,

Town of Hudson, Police Department. Yes. That person can file for all the entities within the town and can coordinate exactly what you said, Selectman Guessferd. But I think the work will still have to be done by certain people within different departments. Vice-Chairman Morin replied but they could send the information to that person and they could put the grant together, which takes that away from you guys, saves you guys time to do your other jobs. Mr. Dhima replied, yes. Selectman Roy said and you just stated, it takes away the time that I'm putting in to put this and have a third party dedicate to that. I can tell you that City of Nashua has someone that's full time that pursues grants and files, those grants. And as you said, if you're collecting \$1.8 million, can you justify the full time position for that? If that's the return, I think we can all agree that the answer is probably yes. If you get in over a million, it's paying for itself and then some, and then allows us the time to do what we need to do, right. Vice-Chairman Morin then said, and on top of that, when they're not writing grants, they can be out there seeking grants, finding grants that we don't know about. Mr. Dhima replied, yup, absolutely. That's something to think about. I don't think, you know, my my take on it is we didn't feel like putting too much in front of you. So that's kind of why we came in with this outside the request. It still addresses the needs that I have as a department to basically seek drainage, sewer, water, whatever we need to. But this might be something that you either might consider in this round or on the next round to basically long term planning for the town as, as we can continue to get bigger.

Vice-Chairman Morin then said, I do have one more question where we have never seen this type of request before, we're obviously taking money from some other area to get the grants? Mr. Dhima replied, yeah, we are. Vice-Chairman asked, where does that come from? Mr. Dhima replied, it's coming out of Engineering Services right now. So things that could be utilized to get a third opinion on a bridge or traffic or that I'm basically saying I'm not going to do any of that because we've been in a, in a situation where I don't need to pursue other things, and I'm using that money to do this and basically closes the books for anything else that we might be able to do for the year. Because the money that I have to seek certain things, it's gone. The second I put that money towards. There's been partnership with DPW on some other things that we've done together saying, you know, I'll pay half, you pay half, but it's just getting harder and harder because as you know, the budget is tight to begin with. You know, we work with numbers pre-COVID we still holding the line. So I just don't want to be in a position where I'm in front of you and saying, we miss that opportunity to get that grant, because we just simply didn't have \$5,000 to apply for. And it just I don't want to be in that position.

Vice-Chairman Morin asked, anybody else have any questions? We'll move on then sir. Selectman Guessferd said, so we'll consider this along with the other out of budget requests at the end.

#### Warrant Article N - Melendy Road Bridge Rehabilitation

Melendy Road Bridge Rehabilitation - This is the bridge that we thought it was a five. Once we got under that deck, we figured out it was a four. We had a very productive meeting with DOT. They basically said, if you get this going, if you get this done, if you meet the NEPA which is the, you know, the federal permitting process, we can support you with the construction portion of it. The 80% of that, we're looking at about \$800,000 from them, which is a huge help for us. We have \$200,000 available right now for the construction piece, and I'm requesting an additional \$100,000 related to the bridge rehab in case we need additional funds once we get committed. While we're going to get help for the construction phase, we still have to take care of any right of way that might be required, or any easements and any utility work related to that. I think it's a small piece to pay if they come up with a big portion to cover us. And the construction doesn't always eh, only covers the construction, but also construction services related to the construction phase, which is oversight, third parties, inspections, things of that sort. There's a significant amount there too. That could be \$100,000 in itself. So if we get the State to help us with \$80,000 out of \$100,000 that's a huge help on top of the \$800,000 for the construction portion as well. So this is coming out of the general fund or surplus. So it doesn't have an impact on the tax. It's just simply something there in case we need it. We might not need it. This is just us being very cautious and making sure that if we get everything ready, we are basically have the additional funds. If something comes, you know, we start digging and we hit a dinosaur and all of a sudden we have to deal with X, Y, and Z. I don't expect it. But in this business, as you learn to plan for the worst and hope for the best, that's right. And it's been the case. But I, I just feel like if we don't, this will be the one that's going to need that additional funds and we're not going to plan for it. So that's kind of what this warrant article is. Vice-Chairman Morin asked, any questions? To which there were none.

Warrant Article Q - Establish Drainage Capital Reserve Fund

Mr. Dhima explained, So Q is establishing a Drainage Capital Reserve Fund, as you have heard, you know, over and over again, you know, we have a significant amount of infrastructure in town. We have roads, bridges, water, sewer. We have the water that's in good shape. We have the sewer it's in good shape. It pays for itself. Same thing with the the water. The bridge program, we're kind of taking care of that every year. We've been working very hard for the past, you know, nine, ten years, and we're almost there. The one thing that we haven't had a chance to pay attention to is the drainage. This summer, it's been a brutal summer, as you all know, with the water we have having a lot of issues out there. We have a lot of people coming to us asking for help and relief. We cannot do much because we have about \$10,000 at the DPW, and I don't have much to do any engineering related to any issues we need to solve. The one thing we have done right now that doesn't cost much money is basically trying to get easements to get into people's property to provide relief. But as far as the physical work, we don't, we can't do that yet. So what I'm proposing in front of you tonight is establishing a Drainage Capital Reserve Fund that every year we put some money aside for things like this that can be used for either physical design or grants that can help us move in in the future, because we can simply not continue to just say, well, we have \$10,000 a year and that's the end of it. We need to do something about this. Drainage is the only thing that has not gotten the attention in town so far, and I think it's probably the one that we really need to start paying attention to and start planning for it. We're very fortunate. We have a very capable public works department, so the intent is to have this funds to do most of the work in. But if he ends up being something beyond our capabilities, we'll bring in third parties in to help us out with X, Y, and Z. But most of them, we can handle it internally. It's just the equipment that we need to rent. It's, you know, the materials we need to buy and, and the staff that needs to be put aside to carry those tasks. But we think that \$100,000 is a good start and might not be able to solve everything, but it shows that you are you as a town, we as a town are acting in good faith to start planning for these. And start building up the piggy bank and and go from there. Vice-Chairman Morin asked, any questions? There were none.

Warrant Article R -Circumferential Highway (Lowell Road to Route 111 segment) Feasibility Study

Mr. Dhima said, this one is your favorite project. As you all know, so after some, you know, after 60 years, we finally come to the conclusion that feasibility study is finally being funded by the by the State. And it needs a 20% match. We agreed not too long ago to basically let the people of the Town vote once and for all, to which way they want to go. They want to put this behind us or we really want to look into it. That's pretty much it in a nutshell when it comes to this warrant article. It's going to have a tax rate impact of \$0.04 per thousand.

Selectman Roy asked so and that's only a feasibility study for the Circumferential Highway, right? That's not looking into any other alternatives? Mr. Dhima replied, correct. This is just simply is this even doable. Is this even worth pursuing? Yes or no? Nothing else. Correct. Selectman Roy replied, okay. The Town Administrator added, and it's the southern portion, correct? From Lowell Road to 111. It's not the whole thing. Mr. Dhima replied it's only the southern, yes. it's from Lowell and Sagamore to 111. It's not to 102, it's you know, over the bridge. This is just a portion that the State has right of way right now available. Again, that is from Sagamore and Lowell, all the way down to 111 approximately by Paul's Auto. If you're familiar with 111. That's it. It's about 4.6 miles. And they will look into is this financially feasible, environmentally feasible, yes or no? And is being funded by the State 80%. We might do a bit better than that, but we have to go and plan again for worse, which is 20%. It could be as little, you know, you know, as you know if there's any other funds out there. But we have to plan for an 80/20 approach. Vice-Chairman Morin asked, anything else Selectman Roy? To which she replied, no, I have nothing else. Thank you.

Selectman Dumont was recognized and said you kind of touched on it at the end there. That was going to be my only question. Was there any thought of looking into any other outside funding or any grant, considering the regional impact that does have? I know obviously Hudson feels it the most, but there's a lot of cut through traffic. It's not just Hudson that would be using it. Is there any way else to try to take some of that burden off the taxpayers? Mr. Dhima replied, it was brought up and we have not had an official commitment, but it's my understanding that this could be as little as 90% to 10%. 90%, from the Town, from the State, 10% from the State. But because there's not a real agreement right now between the Town of Hudson. But I can tell you that I would not be surprised if we plan for an 80/20 and we end up with a 90/10. I think that as good as you know, it's probably is going to get. I cannot guarantee you that. But I'm willing to bet my lunch money, though, that we

might get it. But I'd rather, I'd rather plan for worst case scenario. And if we do better, even better. But yes, there is, there is a small opportunity there to shave the cost for the taxpayers by half. Selectman Dumont replied, they're looking to see that initiative, obviously from us. Mr. Dhima replied, yes, they need a commitment from us. Yes. Once we do that, once we get in the weeds, once see what's available out there, then we can see if we can do better on the match. But yes, there is a there is a chance that the State can come as high as 90% match, which is huge. Selectman Dumont replied, thanks. To which Mr. Dhima responded, you got it.

#### Warrant Article S - South Water Tank Lease with Verizon

The Town Administrator explained, this is for the Verizon lease on the South Water Tank. You talked about this. You're asked for for a warrant article to be drawn up. I had Attorney Lefevre draw the article. And this is the article. It's probably handed out to you to the left. I believe you received that more than likely today. So that's the article. There's no cost to it. But you still have the voters approve it because it's a multi multiple year lease for that project. So again Attorney Lefevre wrote it, forwarded it to us. And all the documentation behind it is something you've already seen I believe at the meeting on the 10th. So just wanted to touch base on it. That's something for you to consider when we look at the warrant. Mr. Dhima added, this is a revenue warrant. The Town Administrator added for the water side.

Selectman Guessferd said, I'm good. Selectman Dumont said, unless there's any other way you can find out to make some money. Mr. Dhima replied yeah, this is it. But, it's a good number. Mr. Malizia and myself worked very hard to try to get these numbers in front of you, as there was some back and for the there. But you're looking at about \$950,000 revenue over 25 hears. That's a good number. There were no questions from the Board.

#### Sewer Fund ( 5561, 5562, 5564)

The Town Administrator explained, as I've said, As I said before, probably countless times, the Sewer is self-funded. So if you're a sewer user, you pay a sewer bill and you fund this. If you're not a sewer user, you don't pay a sewer bill. So this is basically for all the sewer users in town. 4,600 or 4,700 maybe accounts somewhere in that ballpark. Again, this is for all those folks that have the Sewer. Mr. Dhima added, it pays for itself. The Town Administrator replied, it does. And again, no rate change, no rate increase, no rate decrease. The same rate. The first cost center here is basically the billing and collection side. We obviously build this. We build it quarterly. This is our sewer utility clerk Donna Staffier-Sommers. That's where her her cost is. And basically it's mailing the bills and dealing with all of that. Pretty straightforward. It's pretty much salary and benefits at that point. Probably a couple of bucks for postage. I mean we get more mailing and all that cost money. But that's essentially what that covers. Mr. Dhima added, you got costs there related to maintaining it, costs related to maintaining our equipment. The Town Administrator replied, so that's the operations. This is sort of kind of the meat of the budget. This also includes the flow we pay for the flow that goes to the treatment plant. So that's in here and all the other things that we need to do. Mr. Dhima added, upgrades to the treatment facility, because we do own 12.58% of the volume. Therefore, we own 12.58% of any upgrades, updates to the treatment facility as well as the cost of treating it. There's a cost of maintaining it, but again, it's paid through the users and it does not have any impact on the taxpayers. It's pretty straightforward.

Mr. Dhima went on to say, some of the projects we worked on in the past has been updates to our booster stations, lift station. That's done. Generators are all up to date. The one things we're working on, some of the things we're working on right now, is continuing to basically infiltration and inflow program, which is reduce the water going into the pipe and increase our sewer capacity through that program. One of the things we're working on right now is replacing the equipment that we have for the camera. It's about ten years old. It just keeps breaking down. So we're in the process of getting a truck box with, you know, equipment inside it so the crews can basically utilize it and looking for the next level piece of equipment that's going to allow us to of buying additional equipment. We can buy additional add-ons so that provide us additional capabilities internally. That's basically our main thing right now and we're working on that right now. We're shopping. It's getting very difficult to get equipment and we're looking at 12 to 18 months out. Not any different than a fire engine basically. But we're, we're hunting them down. We got a couple demos I'm hoping in a couple of weeks bringing that to the Public Works Department to see what we like, and then put an RFP out and see what what bids will come in at. But that's basically the main thing when it comes to sewer.

Vice-Chairman Morin asked, any questions? He recognized Selectman Dumont who said, line 252, so it looks like the previous years were pretty low. Why this year? I mean, it looks like '24 obviously is the same. So do you know what the the expected expenditure for '24 will be and why '25 it was almost double from '23? Mr. Dhima asked, is that the operation professional services? Selectman Dumont replied yeah. The Town Administrator then said, 5562. So some detail in there talks about the inflow/infiltration that we're still stepping up on. Because the less the less inflow i.e. water coming from outside, the cheaper it is for us because we're not sending clean, clean storm water over to our system. So that's a big piece of it there. And the sewer camera maintenance I think is another thing.

Mr. Dhima then said, we're always looking for areas we try to do every year some areas that we think there is some water going in we shouldn't go. Lowell and Birch we have looked at that in the past. We might be looking at that or something else. That's just, you know, one of the areas that we can look at again, but there's areas where the sewer is under, like some stream or brook. Those are usually the areas that are very sensitive. We like to go back and check it out. In the past we've done like smoke detections out there to kind of see what's connected illegally and legally. But that's basically it in a nutshell. We're always looking for that additional water that shouldn't be going in. The gray water, we consider it or groundwater. We're always chasing that. Selectman Dumont replied, right, right, and then asked, by doing that do you see a reduction? Where would you see the reduction at? Mr. Dhima replied, we would see the reduction at what we're sending to Nashua. And we're also seeing reductions at Industrial Park, for example, was the latest example where we simply pumping less water every day going out. So all our lift stations are telling us that we're basically sending a little bit less out there. Every time we send less sewer to Nashua, we're paying less. Selectman Dumont then said, so that's where would I see that at? Was there a decrease? Mr. Dhima replied oh for what we're sending to Nashua? What are we paying to Nashua? Is that what you're asking? Selectman Dumont replied yeah, you said that if you're if you're finding less or if you're if you're discovering more gray water and you're pumping less, you're spending less. Mr. Dhima replied, so it'll be the the funds that we use for sending it to Nashua for treatment. And I don't have the exact number. The Town Administrator added, 239 is the cost center and \$555,000 was last year's cost. Selectman Dumont said, then it's \$10,000 more for this year. The Town Administrator said, it's about \$5,000. Mr. Dhima added, we do have more people moving to town, so blame them. Selectman Dumont replied that's that's fine. I'm just trying to just justify.

The Town Administrator said, it's a double edged sword. You build more, you add more, but then you're trying to keep. The thing is you're trying to make sure you have the adequate capacity you need for growth. And the more you, the more you wring out of that, the more capacity you still retain. Because we have a capacity limit, 2 million something gallons. Mr. Dhima added what I can tell you is that we've revised it multiple times. And it seems like and I've said in the past, like while it's a limited resource, it appears that we've got plenty in the bank in our balance sheet. That's through that I & I program that we've been doing, trying to cut off all that excess water coming into the pipe. But you do have more people moving in. You are having residential, commercial, industrial, so you won't see a reduction, probably much in the bill, but it will be pretty close to what you pay in the past. So that's basically the addition of what you're bringing in, minus what you're trying to cut out. Selectman Dumont asked, but you expect that to be similar to '23. Is that what you're saying? Mr. Dhima replied probably or maybe slightly a little bit higher. But the biggest thing is our capacity. It's there if some you know, if there's someone coming in saying, I need x, Y and Z. the Town Administrator added, don't forget too, that rates Nashua's rate. So we do the best we can to keep our rates stable. They're not always doing the same thing. Selectman Dumont replied, no I get that. I was just looking at I mean you've got \$32,000 and you've got \$61,000. So it's double.

Selectman Dumont then said, and then the other question I had was ewer, sewage chemicals. Same thing. It was doubled. In previous years it was a hell of a lot lower. Mr. Dhima replied, yeah, chemicals have gone up. You're going to see that with the water as well. Just chemicals have gone through the roof. That's all. Selectman Dumont replied, I know chlorine has and some other things I'm not too familiar with obviously the sewer side of it, but. Mr. Dhima replied, yeah, the chemicals have gone up. Selectman Dumont replied, I'm good.

Water Fund (5591-5594 & Warrant Article C)

The Town Administrator addressed the Board saying, I believe Water would be appropriate to talk about now, which is the next tab down. And again, Water Utility for by the water users. I think there's about 6,600 customer hookups in town somewhere in that ballpark. Commercial/industrial again. No rate increase, certainly no rate decrease, again paid for by the users of this utility. The first costs under 5591 again is with the billing and the collection and the, you know, the folks that work, the two gals that work in that department, Val Marquez and Barb O'Brien, do a great job making sure they're dealing with the customers, because we do all the customer service here and they stay on top of customer accounts, making sure folks are making payments and whatnot. Very dedicated. Again, just some small pressure there with nailing. It just costs more money to mail out the water bills.

On the Operations side, I think there's been a bit of a decrease over there. Again, we you know, we've got, I think, a fixed price contract with Pennichuck to buy the extra water you need. Mr. Dhima added, even though you negotiated a contract, so you've been saving an average of \$1 million a year now moving forward. The Town Administrator added, we just, you know, we've tried to do what we can to keep the rate the same, i.e. and still do the capital type projects we've needed to do. Mr. Dhima added, such as Marsh Road Booster Station, that's our main one. The Town Administrator added, which he's doing over the course of three years. We just finished paying off the Gordon Street Tank project that's last year came out this year. So that was a project to realign that tank and we spread it out over 5 or 6 years. Mr. Dhima replied, five years. And yeah, so that was about \$750,000. The Town Administrator said, yeah, but now we have a resource of the last 20 years. It's in good shape. Mr. Dhima replied, 30 years. I won't be here when they paint it again, that's all I can say.

Mr. Dhima went on to say, that's the main thing. So the one thing we will focus on once you know, the main projects are done. And really the only two major ones right now are Marsh Road Booster Station bringing that above ground. We've done, we got the pumps. We're putting the building right now. And next year we're hoping to basically have someone put it together. The reason we did this is they gave us some crazy number and we're like, no. So we're taking our time to do it. We're saving about \$100,000 per phase. So I think by the time said and done, we'll probably be close to just under \$1 million instead of 1.2. Crazy number that we got so pretty good over there. The towers and the radio program is still going, so we have a special connection from A to B to get signals how things operate. We try to have a backup. That's the radio system we're building right now. So we'll be able to basically talk to our assets in case internet goes down. For some reason it's required by the Homeland Security as well. It's one of the things that came up, and that's basically pretty much it. Overall, we're doing pretty good. The main thing, as I said, will be replacing the pipes once we're done paying off the bond, which is in 2028. So every year you get less and less money towards the interest rate. So it was about \$50,000 or \$40,00. The Town Administrator said, yeah, it declines a bit. So in 2028, the original purchase, the original 30 year purchase bond will be paid off, which will free up capital money that we can sit there and put into the ground because pipes, you know, out of sight, out of mind. But they are getting old. The core section of town in particular. There's a lot of great stuff. Anything new, right to our standards. No Indian pipe. It's all made in the USA, Mr. Dhima added that we know of. The Town Administrator continued, it's all oversized or sized properly. It's the stuff that comes in this part of town. It starts to get water main breaks. Not that they're not going to happen, but they're not prone to happen with older pipe.

Mr. Dhima said, yeah we'll get into that once we once we're done with the bond and we hold the line. And I think that's going to be a huge help. As you know, two of the things we're dealing with is obviously Saint-Gobain right now. Still without trying to deal with that, they're still in the works right now. I think we're getting close. The Board will be presented with something hopefully soon enough, and then I think will be some good stuff in the works too as well, trying to work with the State and other players in the region to see how this is all going to play out, because our system does support other systems as well. So I think that's something in the works as well. It's not cooked yet, but it's getting there. So I think I think long term we're in a we're in a very good, very good position. We'll be a key player, continue to be a key player. Let's just put it that way. So good things for the water. Something to be proud of here, that's for sure. And with that I think if you don't have any questions.

Selectman Dumont was recognized and said so, to get back on but so for the Sewer Utility the billing gets sent out to the property owner, correct? The Town Administrator replied yes. Selectman Dumont then said, or the



Water Utility does it get sent to if there's a tenant and the property owner, it's getting sent to both? The Town Administrator replied cuz the water you can shut off the sewer, you really practically can't. So it follows so you can lean it. So if you had to lean it, you could. But water you just shut them off. Selectman Dumont replied right, so it should be going to the property owner because obviously they're going to be the ones that want to know that. I just figured I don't know the necessity behind sending out two bills. Either send it to the property owner or send it to the tenant for the water. The Town Administrator replied, well, there's two separate bills. Is that what you're trying to say? The water and the sewer? Ms. Labrie spoke up saying for the water it's in the policy. Selectman Dumont asked, has it always been like that? Because I could have sworn that it seemed like it was a recent change. Ms. Labrie replied it's a policy that wasn't being followed historically. And a lot of the owners like it because then they can find out it's an issue before it's an issue before they get shut off. Sometimes the owners will pay and then. Then they go after the tenant. Selectman Dumont replied, I mean for me, I think it should just be going to whoever using the utility, the Sewer I get because you can lean the property. There's a there's an interest stake there. So but for the Water, the usage in my opinion it shouldn't be getting sent out to to. I know it may be a policy, but it might be something that everybody wants to look into. I don't know if anybody else agrees, but it's quite a bit of money to be sending out to bills to everybody. But that's just my opinion.

Mr. Dhima replied, we have it in certain way because we had to learn lessons the hard way. It works. It might take a little bit more money, but remember it's paid by the users, and the users have had the same rate for the past 23, 24 years since 1998. So if it works, if it's not impacting anyone, it's not like it's going to go back to your bottom line. It's going to go back to the Water. Selectman Dumont replied, well, I pay a water bill, so. Mr. Dhima replied, you do and you're paying the same rate because it hasn't changed in forever. So it's really you're not going to get anything back. But there's been issues when there's been cases when there's been issues and I think it's set up a certain way so it closes any loops. The Town Administrator added seems to be an effective tool to help cure some of the delinquencies we were seeing years back we would have people with thousands of dollars in back billing. Selectman Dumont replied I'm sure, just like every other utility, that that responsibility lies on them. The Town Administrator continued saying, or you'd have they leave town and stiff. Now you're kind of a lot more on top of that and enlisting the other folks. Selectman Dumont then said, but if you have I mean, and this is just my question, if you have, let's say you have 50 A and B and A owns the parcel and B doesn't pay their water bill, do you actually find that the homeowner coming in to pay the the other portion? I can't imagine that whoever owns that parcel is going to pay for 50 B is just going to let it go to it'll be delinquent and. The Town Administrator replied, and then shut off, and then they won't have water. And I don't know what else that creates, but after a while you can't live there. Selectman Dumont asked, but if it's a legal address, can you shut off to 50A?

Selectman Roy spoke up saying, I would think the owner would sue the tenant. The Town Administrator replied depending on the connection to the building, some might be single, some might be double. Mr. Dhima added, they're not always separated. Right. Selectman Dumont replied, right, I know they're not always separated but. The Town Administrator replied typically if they have an account they typically have a meter. And if they have a meter you can typically shut it off. Generally. There might be a few occasions. Ms. Labrie then said I think what we were running into too is people that rent, they would just leave and not pay. Mr. Dhima added and then the owner will find out that was outstanding bill, and they wanted to be notified. Why wasn't I notified? There goes a line of one of our three principles here, no good deed goes unpunished. Selectman Dumont replied sure but I'm just wondering, does the owner actually end up paying it because there's no recourse to the owner? It can get shutoff but whoever opens up a new account has a right to, it doesn't fall on them, I guess, is what I'm saying.

Selectman Roy spoke up saying, there's recourse to the owner. They can sue the tenant. Selectman Dumont replied I'm not talking about what they do, I'm talking about from the Town. If the tenant leaves and doesn't pay the bill, and a new tenant moves in and opens up a new account. Ms. Labrie said, then we go after them at that address. Selectman Dumont replied, you'll go after the you'll go after the tenant that left. I just don't see a benefit. I'm not. I mean, unless I'm missing something here. Mr. Dhima replied someone is paying the bill no matter what. The Town is not being stuck with it and we're not doing the chasing because what you're doing is you're notifying. Selectman Dumont replied but the owner doesn't have to pay it, I guess what I'm getting at. There's no there's nothing that holds him to paying that.

Mr. Dhima replied the owner would know there's a deficiency there. So if the owner is notified every month that the guy is not, you know, the tenant is not paying, he's being notified and he's basically. Selectman Dumont replied yea but he's just going to say, well, go get the tenant. He's not I don't I really don't see the majority of property owners chasing the tenant for a bill that. Mr. Dhima replied but the intent is to let them know that there is something, you know, is being paid or not. You know what I mean? Like they're still being notified. I know you might say no. And the second you take it off, for example, you know, then they're going to say, no, I want to be notified. We get that all the time. I want to know I'm dealing with one right now. Yeah. Not too long ago. They want to be notified. The more the merrier. Selectman Dumont replied sewer makes sense because if I own a parcel and someone doesn't pay it, well, then I want to know, because that could be a lean on my on my parcel. The Town Administrator replied no you're paying it if you're the owner. Selectman Dumont replied right. It makes it makes perfect sense. The water, though there is no recourse. That owner is not going to have any obligation to chase the tenant. They're going to just tell you guys to figure it out. I'm not paying the bill. So it just seems like, in my opinion, it just seems like a waste of (inaudible). Mr. Dhima interjected saying, I thought that the owner has to pay, Lisa? If the tenant doesn't pay, they have to. Ms. Labrie replied I think they might have to. Mr. Dhima replied, yeah, because then the account will be closed until that gets paid. I thought that was my understanding that if the tenant walks away. Ms. Labrie replied because the water gets shut off at this property. Mr. Dhima added we won't turn it back on until we get paid. Ms. Labrie said it won't get turned on until it's paid. Selectman Dumont asked, but it would be delinquent in that person's name. Ms. Labrie said but if the person moves out of state or out of town. Mr. Dhima then said, so the the primary is the tenant, the secondary is the owner. They both get notified. So if the tenant doesn't work, it will be up to the owner to pay. And if he wants a new tenant, it we can go after the new tenant. We'll be going after the owner until you know, or they won't get the water turned back on. Selectman Dumont replied we don't have to go. I was just I was mainly curious, but I got to be honest, I don't think that. I think that whoever moves in there for a new tenant would have the right to be able to open up a new account with the Water Department, and...Mr. Dhima interjected saying they can't can't. it doesn't go by the name, it goes by the address. If a tenant moves in and 50 A has a has a deficiency in pay, it won't go on until it gets paid. And the guy might say I'm not paying it and they'll be right, but the owner will. So that's the mechanism someone pays. It's either the tenant or the owner, but the new tenant doesn't get to call in and says, I want a new account. It's the same address. It won't go on until that gets sorted out. Ms. Labrie replied we have to pay for the water. So the water has to get paid in return. Selectman Dumont replied no, I get that. But it's the same thing as any other utility that you can't lean the property if someone doesn't pay their electric bill, the electric doesn't stay shut off at that unit. They go after, after the guy. Whoever moves in for a new tenant...Mr. Dhima interjected saying, but see, we don't see. We don't do that. We don't go after the new tenant. Selectman Dumont replied I know you're not going after the new tenant. That's what I'm saying. Normally when the new tenant comes in, they create a new account and you have service again. Mr. Dhima then said, in a perfect world, when everyone pays their bills because they can you wouldn't probably need to. But the world we live in, when we come in with landlords, we have to notify everyone. That's just how it is. As I said, I think it works. We get to collect our bills and it doesn't impact anyone. It's business as usual and that is the reason why we do them every month. Because as Mr. Malizia said, why don't we just send the electrical bills every three months like we do with the sewer? When we learn the hard way. So there's certain things that we have done over the 20 something years that basically have told, have indicated we should do things a certain way, and there's tweaks and turns until you got it just right. Is it perfect? No, but it works. It works pretty good. That's why you send the sewer quarterly. That's why you send the water every month. Selectman Dumont replied sewer is easy to understand. you can lean the property, but. Mr. Dhima said, wouldn't it be nice to send the sewer bill every. I mean, the water bill every three months instead of every month, you know. But can you imagine that? I'm just saying we did that. They used to do it right until they didn't.

The Town Administrator then said, when we took over the Water Utility they had just before we took it over, they went to a monthly billing because the bills were getting so high that people would get their quarterly bill and go, you've got to be kidding me. So the water company went monthly, and we just kept that because people just get used to a certain thing. And I will tell you, if we went back to quarterly, my bill went up. It didn't. the rate didn't change but you're getting three months' worth in a month. Selectman Dumont then said parcels I managed all of a sudden I started getting water bills that I never got before. And it didn't change anything for me. I just looked at it as a wasted postage stamp. Mr. Dhima replied well you're just being notified. It's a nice thing to know. Selectman Dumont replied I don't care what the tenant uses for bills. I only care if it affects me.

Selectman Guessferd said, I pay my bills electronically and....Ms. Labrie interjected saying we have a lot of people do get them just electronically. Selectman Guessferd continued saying, they still send them out....Mr. Dhima said you still have to send the hard copies. Selectman Guessferd reiterated, they still send a hard copy. The Town Administrator said, I still get people coming down here with cash. Mr. Dhima said we still got people coming with envelopes saying do you have a stamp? I mean, you hear it all, you know, I'm like, you don't need a stamp. The box is right there. Go for it. You hear it all. The Town Administrator added, we did cut out the return envelope, though, so you're on your own. We did. There's no more return. People get upset about that, but, like. No, we cut back. We cut that off. Ms. Labrie said the price went up. The Town Administrator said, so it's always something you're always evaluating. Mr. Dhima said, maybe we just put a smiley face so you don't have to worry. Paying. Smiley face, you're all set. Sad face, get on. Selectman Dumont replied, thumbs up or thumbs down. Vice-Chairman Morin then said, Selectman Dumont you all set? Selectman Roy, you all set, to which Selectman Roy replied, I am more than all set.

#### Warrant Article F - VacCon Capital Reserve Funding

Real quick, whilst he's still here, we. We neglected to look at Article F for the VacCon truck. Every year we like to put an allocation into the truck Capital Reserve Fund. It's \$30,000, which has been the standard. It's split between the Sewer Utility and the Town because it's also it's the drainage. It's the large vector truck you see that services Drainage and Sewer. So it's been a 50/50 split. I just wanted to make sure we touch base on it. It's the same \$30,000 every year. But that is a warrant article in the Sewer Fund. Mr. Dhima said, so this is raised every year to replace the next truck that we need to replace down the road. The Town Administrator then we have to go out and appropriate every 8 to 10 years or so we buy another truck. So this is just a big savings account for that. Mr. Dhima instead of coming up with 300 grand at the last minute, we have this in the bank. The Town Administrator added, it's a little more than \$300,000 now.

#### Conservation Commission (5586)

Conservation Commission Chairman, Bill Collins joined Mr. Dhima for this one. Mr. Collins addressed the Board saying, good evening. Bill Collins Hudson Conservation Commission Chairman. We're presenting the same level of funding as in prior years for the upcoming fiscal year 2024 and 2025, not seeking any increases. I think we do a pretty good job with the money we we receive, and I'm going to try to keep keep that on the same page. Mr. Dhima, staff liaison to the Conservation Commission then said, as expected, as requested by the Board, level funded. There were no questions from the Board. Vice-Chairman Morin said, and I'd just like to say you guys are doing a good job. Things are moving, well. A lot of land purchased lately. Selectman Guessferd agreed saying, absolutely.

Mr. Collins then said, we just completed another land deal off of Tiger Road. Another 43 acres. So all the way around Robinson Pond, the southern end of Robinson Pond is now Conservation Property and open to the public. We don't expect any trails or anything like that going in any time soon because of the lack of manpower to maintain them, but I mean, it is open for hunting and hiking and enjoyment, so awesome. The Board thanked Mr. Collins for coming in.

#### Town Clerk/Tax Collector (5030)

The Town Administrator addressed the Board saying, As you're well aware, the Town Clerk/Tax Collector is currently elected. If you also recall, we had a warrant article last year to separate the combined position. So now we will, and again going forward after March, we'll be able to have a separate Tax Collector from a separate Town Clerk. However, we didn't budget anything in this fiscal year. So in this upcoming fiscal year, which this budget covers, we'll see a pretty large increase in the labor and benefits that is to bring on board the Tax Collector. Basically, I looked at it for just purposes of this exercise. I put the same salary that the Town Clerk makes with the benefits package, and that that's what gets added here. In my opinion, that will go into

default budget because the voters approved separating it. We didn't know the cost at the time, but if we're going to do it and why wouldn't we do it? We asked for it. It's in this budget. So that's the majority of the increase that her budget has. There's a small ancillary bit for fit up in the office if we have to, you know desk/workstation type of thing. So again, that's really the lion's share of what is in the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's budget.

Selectman Guessferd was recognized and asked, what the heck happened with insurance? The Town Administrator replied, that's when I had to add the person. Selectman Guessferd replied, that's 112 versus 27 I know. The Town Administrator said, but benefits also change. Don't forget we you know people change their benefit packages. Selectman Guessferd said, right. I mean it could have been people that needed more benefits. The Town Clerk started to speak. The Town Administrator said, well, I wasn't going to point to you, but it's her. Ms. Strout-Lizotte replied yeah, it's me. And then the new hire. The Town Administrator replied, because we always benefit for the highest level of benefits because we don't know what we're going to get. So if you got somebody that like him or with a family plan, we only budgeted a single, we'd have a big shortfall. Selectman Guessferd replied yeah, it's just it's it's kind of like. Yeah, like a neon. That one came out like okay. It has to be a good reason for that. The Town Administrator replied, it's the mix. It's just quite simply put who elected to take what benefits.

Vice-Chairman Morin asked, Selectman Roy if she had any questions. She replied, I'm not sure if it's here or if it's in another spot about if we have a position for an assistant town administrator currently or if we have to create one. The Town Administrator replied it wouldn't be under the Tax Collector. It's under Administration. You'll look at that a little bit later. Selectman Roy replied, okay. All right I can I can wait. There were no further questions for the Town Clerk/Tax Collector.

#### IT (5530x 5X77's)

The Town Administrator explained, the highlight of the evening, IT. IT has its own slot, it's 5330. Not only is the IT budget here, but as you recall, when we parcel out to the various other departments for their consumable supplies and whatnot, those are also here. So we've got Mr. Beike has the big IT budget, and then he also has the smaller ones. I think we have all that. You have all the small budgets too, right? Mr. Beike replied yes. The Town Administrator then said, and Mister Guarino, is IT Specialist with him and the other IT Specialist is smart enough to sit in the back. Mr. Beike then said, and our Tech Amanda couldn't make it tonight, so she's she's watching on TV.

Mr. Beike addressed the Board saying, so this is my second time doing this. And a majority of our budget is made up of maintenance contracts, licensing. And that's what you'll see those increases. I didn't put in outside requests, but I did put an inside request. And we can talk about that a little later if you have any other questions. One of the things we did do recently is we we did increase our internet speeds. And I think a lot of people saw a big improvement in our issues. That helped out a lot. So that's we did that just recently. Another thing that I changed in here is we used to split the the phone system bill for this building between Fire and Town Hall, and I absorbed that. So when we do the Fire one you'll see that changed and the Fire side. So I just said it's easier for, for me to manage it myself instead of trying to split it with Fire. So we just put a little piece of extra money in the Fire side in case they break a phone or something like that, or they need something extra. You'll see that in there. So if you have don't have any questions up in that part, I want to talk about section 412. Vice-Chairman Morin asked, any questions? There were none.

Mr. Beike continued saying, so if you look at 412 there's a new budget request, I call it. I didn't put a outside request because it actually has to be done. Traditionally the Department would every 4 to 5 years we would purchase 36 server licenses. And when we do that, we'll just that's approximately \$27,000. And we're a small department. We can't even upgrade 36 licenses in a year and a server. So what I did is I spread it. I going to try to spread it across four years. So that's why you see in here for the server, it's \$6,750, which represents nine licenses. I'm going to purchase nine a year. And roll forward from there. So the next server license is 2022. Typically once you get to the fourth or fifth year Microsoft come out with a new license, new serve anyways. So

as we just roll forward each year and purchase nine, we might purchase the next version or the next version, the next version, and just keep rolling forward. Yeah, the price is going to go up a little bit each year, but I think we can manage it better as a department. So that's why you see that figure in there. So you don't have any questions on that? The Town Administrator asked, we have to do it, right? to which Mr. Beike replied we got to we got to do it because it's, you know, it's also security. You know, a big piece of our operation is cyber security. We spend a lot of time on that, you know, training all the employees. That's why the KnowB4, everybody's been through this KnowB4 training. Everybody hates it. But you know, that's that's that's part of our protection is to train all the employees to make sure they understand, you know, if they get a funny email, you're not clicking on it. All the phishing stuff because over 90%. That's how the virus gets in, or the offender comes in through an email, you know, and that's how they get in. So we make a big effort of trying to keep everybody trained not to click on stuff that they shouldn't be clicking on. Everybody smiling. Selectman Guessferd replied we personally have the same issues on our emails we get every day. It's crazy.

Vice-Chairman Morin asked Selectmen Dumont and Guessferd if they had any questions. Selectman Guessferd replied, no, I see the necessity. Chairman Roy was asked if she had any questions and said I just have a question about actually this year I think how is the installation for the Right to Know software going? Mr. Beike replied, it's getting there. I mean it's I don't know if you want to, the Barracuda. Mr. Guarino replied, oh the hardware is installed. It's connected to the server. We just have to configure it. So it's....Selectman Roy interjected asking and how long do you think that takes? Mr. Guarino replied, probably a couple of weeks. We work in fire mode a lot. So projects tend to take a lot longer than we hope. But yeah, we get we're working on it. Mr. Beike added, we get sidetracked a lot of different issues that are happen day to day and stuff. And so our goal is to get it completed this month. Selectman Roy replied, okay. All right. If you could just let me know when it's done, I'd appreciate it. Mr. Beike replied okay, I'll do that.

Mr. Beike went on to say, the second part of that software request is Office 365. Now, typically. Well, right now we're on Office 2016, which is already end of life. Microsoft still supports it for security updates, but there's no more improvements made to it. So we could actually go out and purchase 2021 a perpetual license similar to what we have today. But if we went out and purchased that, it would be about \$120,000 for all the users at the movement. Microsoft has been moving to cloud based stuff. So, you know, eventually we're going to have to join the the rest of the world. So to purchase, you know, roughly 275 licenses of Office 365, which is it's cloud based, but it's on premise, cloud based, because it's it's the professional version. It's roughly it's around \$24,000, as you can see, to purchase that. And that's why it's in there. It's another thing that we're going to have to have to do. It's just, you know, everybody's moving to the cloud. You know, some of the other cloud things are moving. You know, we just finished Telestaff. Telestaff went live today on the cloud. You know, the body camera stuff's all in the cloud. IWorks that we use in Engineering is on the cloud. The next thing coming that we're trying to understand is we're all on Windows 11. The next version of that, it's supposed to be cloud based from Microsoft. So it's getting crazy. And that's all. You know, that's why we need to increase the bandwidth. You know. So there's money in this budget. If we need to hit hit hit the bandwidth again we can. You know so we've been monitoring the bandwidth that we just increased; doing pretty good. But we're probably going to have to increase it again.

Selectman Roy said I do have a question. Do you have any capital reserve funds? Mr. Beike replied, not. Selectman Roy then said, cuz it seems like a lot of stuff is rotating through, right? Like it's on a cycle. Mr. Beike replied, we don't anymore. We did in the past, but previous with that, that was exhausted. So that's why I'm trying to do trying to do the same thing a little bit each year. Keep us ahead of the curve without getting into reserve funds, you know, because we would wait five years to go and make a big purchase, do it again where I think it's easier to manage if we just do a little bit each year. Selectman Roy replied, I have to think about that. Let me just say to back up just a second. Purchasing rotation equipment like purchasing PCs, we've standardized on us on one basic box, you know, for a workstation. And that workstation is about \$1,300. So you'll see those changes within all the different departments that for some reason, some were \$1000, some were \$1100, some were \$1200. But we're all we purchased the same PC every time. So I just went through and corrected them all. So and I settled on an amount of \$1300. You'll see that as we go through this.

#### 5077 - Town Officers IT

Mr. Beike explained, there's really so this is the stuff that's applicable for the Town Clerk's office. Yeah. And again they use a lot of material there, particularly cartridges and whatnot processing. Mr. Beike added most of its cartridges. We have the panic buttons are in there.

#### Town Administration IT

There's no change there. The Town Administrator joked, I'm not getting a new PC? To which Mr. Beike replied, do you want one? The Administrator replied, no. I'm fine. Mr. Beike added you guys are all set for a little while. Thank you. And next year, you'll.

#### Finance IT

And that's where you'll see the \$1,300 for the replacement PC. I forget what it was before.

#### Assessing IT

5477. That's assessing. Now the number that's changed in this one is actually went down. It's the maintenance for the Vision software. We finally get them to give us a number and we put that in there. The Town Administrator replied, yeah, but if I'm not mistaken, we were getting that gratis because I think they gave us a free year of the maintenance when we did the software conversion a year or so ago. So this is the first year we have to pay for. It was either 1 or 2 years. Mr. Beike replied this year we're in now is free. But next year they're going to start. The Town Administrator added, the original deal, which you got either a year or two free. And now a charge for that in this coming up budget. But that was the deal. Like I say, we converted all our records, all our software.

#### Public Works IT 5577

Mr. Beike said, the PC's in there their software subscription for their Checkmate. Land Use IT 5277 Land use, pretty much the same thing. You'll see the the increase there is the is the \$1,300 for the computer.

#### Police IT 5677

There's really nothing changed in there other than all the price increases for all the software that's in here. The radio IP software which controls all the cruisers, VMware Exacom, which is the data recorders. Records all their phone and radio transmissions. They have their criminal investigation forensics software. Well removed the one of them. Celebrate is the mobile phone stuff. Vice-Chairman Morin asked, for the addition, we don't have any expenses for that? that's included in? Mr. Beike replied, that's that's part of why we, the Barracuda, get delayed a little bit. Because that's a major project that we're working on is getting the police online with that expansion, getting the IT, all the phones, the servers, the network switches, the fiber optic stuff. But that's all part of, that's all coming out of the building. Okay. But we've been managing the IT side. Vice-Chairman Morin replied, okay, thank you.

#### Fire IT 5777

You'll see there that I removed 208 the the statewide phone maintenance. And then we added back \$1,000 for replacement phones because the fire uses a lot of the handheld phones and things. They have the same thing the extra Exacom recorder, Power DMS, pretty much the same stuff.

#### Recreation IT

You'll see a big change here. It's not a lot of big dollar change. This is a big percentage change. The software that we use to track the people at the. Senior Center and make the little cards and stuff, they end the life of the software in the middle of us and came up with a new version. And that's that's the price change you see that's in there. Selectman Guessferd said, track the people. Mr. Beike replied, when they check in, it's a software for the seniors. So yeah they track them inside in and out. They have a little card. They come in and they scan the scan their card. So we so Senior Center knows who came in and. So that software was upgraded and you'll see that price change. And I think that's it.

Vice-Chairman Morin asked, any questions? Selectman Roy, any questions on any of it? Selectman Roy replied, I'm all set. Thanks. The Board thanked Mr. Beike for his time.

Library (5060)

The Town Administrator explained, so now the library 5060. It's right after the Water Utility towards the back of the book. And as you're well aware, the Library Trustees are an independently elected group. They are responsible for the Library, the library buildings. And this is the this is the cost that they have prepared and presented. So I think Linda Pilla is here.

Donna Boucher, started off by saying, hello. Donna Boucher, Treasurer, and Linda Pilla, the Library Director. You've seen our budget that we have agreed to as a Board. I guess I'd like to point out that ultimately the increase for our budget is 3.8%. We took some concessions on the operating side, but as you know, most of our income is spent for the salaries. And the 3.8 is less than the average COLA for Social Security over the past five years. If could do anything with inflation we could get closer to zero. So. Any questions?

Selectman Guessferd was recognized and said, I want to say a couple of things. As you know, we just got off default budget. We're now and and I just I understand, I think I just want to make sure everyone understands, not necessarily here, but also out there. As to it's a 6.9 6.2%, 6.2 increase on on on labor because you're not going to this isn't the last time you're going to get this. The Town Administrator added, and benefits so it's benefits because our health insurance premiums are up 10%. Selectman Guessferd replied, right. So just how well are your employees compensated compared to the at the median in the area? Have you done those kind of studies and understand kind of where they are and why you need to do what you have to do?

Ms. Pilla replied, it's it's kind of not even a tiny bit amusing, but there was a job listing that was released today by one of our local, hate to call them competitors, but we're looking for professional staff from the same group of people. This this particular library is is hiring. Their starting salary is for a full time position plus benefits, and they're starting at \$59,000, which is substantially more than the person who's working that job at Rogers Memorial Library. As it turns out, the person who's at Rogers is personally committed to Hudson, personally committed to Rogers Memorial Library, and is not interested in applying for this position. However, since 2021, we have lost 15 staff members, not all to higher pay increases from local libraries, but most of them are have left because of increased pay and other close by libraries. The bottom line is that what happens is that we hire people brand new out of library school or out of college, and we train them and we give them the, the, the knowledge they need, and they hang around forever in decreasing periods of time. Now, the last person we lost was we lost after seven weeks. Who went to this particular library that has just posted a new job today for a \$5.50 cent per hour increase. And so we are trying very, very hard to hold on to the professional and the committed staff that we have at Rogers Memorial Library. Does that answer your question? Selectman Guessferd replied, it does. It does. I think it's important that folks know what we're facing. A lot of times it's across the board, you know. Ms. Pilla replied, yes, certainly. I saw I saw a report from the School Department which indicated they're facing many of the same challenges that we are.

Selectman Guessferd then said, I had one other question. And this is really more about a decrease, that I see \$6000 for janitorial supplies in 24 and only \$2000 this year. Are you going to be able to get by with with a two thirds reduction? Ms. Pilla replied, okay, this is funny because last year I made an error and I neglected our if you look back, you could see the budgets. The year before it was \$3,000. We had increased it for Covid, and then we had cut it back down to \$3000. And in the paperwork that got turned into the Town, I forgot to change it back to \$3000. So the budget was put up to \$6000. I expected that it would get corrected somewhere along the line, and it didn't. When I looked at our actuals for last year, I'm satisfied that given that we are no longer going through the very careful sanitization that we were doing during Covid, that and with our abilities to purchase a really quite good discounts, that this is an adequate budget for us on that line.

Vice-Chairman Morin said, just got one question. You didn't mention who that library is, but can we see who that is if you don't want to mention them? Ms. Pilla replied, yes. Would you like me to bring you the paperwork? To which Vice-Chairman Morin replied yeah, if I just looking for the names. Just so I understand where they are in comparison to to our library. Thank you, I appreciate it. So it compares very close to us. Absolutely. Ms. Pilla replied oh, it does. Vice-Chairman Morin replied, that's what I wanted to know. Thank you. Ms. Pilla replied, close neighbors. Yes. And yeah. Thank you. I was appalled, and especially given the work that we've been trying to do to to really create...we have an amazing staff. We really do. I think if you go around the town and and ask people what they think about Rogers Library, you're going to find out that we are a library that really

makes a difference in the community. And one of the reasons that that is the case is because of the staff, really, and without the staff. We just always spinning our wheels to get going with new people. And what we're trying to do is to create that professional level of expertise that that stays with us and then brings that home to Hudson.

Vice-Chairman Morin then said, and I've got to say, because we've said it about other departments, if we don't start bringing our people up to, to, you know, this type of pay and what we're seeing it in every one of our departments in the town, every one of our departments, and at some point, the taxpayers. I understand it's tough on them, but if we're going to keep people and instead of training people, we probably spend more money on training people that leave than keeping people for long term. Ms. Pilla replied, it's heartbreaking.

Selectman Dumont was recognized and said, I just have a question. Just out of curiosity, mileage reimbursement. What kind of business, I guess. Ms. Pilla replied, okay. We're part of a consortium. There are required monthly meetings for myself that requires mileage reimbursement. There's always there's also training. There's other groups within GMLKS, that's the name of the consortium that other departments are required to attend as part of our agreement with GMLKS and Bob. Bob, our maintenance person, our facilities manager, who does a lot of toing and froing for us. So everything is it kind of goes up and down based on what's going on. Selectman Dumont replied, no, I was more more just curious. I didn't know I wasn't aware of those meetings. So thank you. Seeing no further questions from the Board, the group thanked Ms. Pilla and Ms. Boucher for their time.

#### Trustees of Trust Fund (5020)

The Town Administrator started off by saying, If you're all set with that, we're going up to the tab that says Town Offices. It's at the front of the book tab 5000. There are a lot of the smaller, some elected, some appointed offices up here. And we take a quick spin through these. The majority are pretty level funded. And obviously there's some modest budgets here. First is Trustees of the Trust Funds. I believe the only change is they have a bookkeeper person that assists them. I think there's a 3% increase in that part time bookkeeper wage. Vice-Chairman Morin asked, any questions on that? To which there were none.

#### Cemetery Trustees (5025)

The Town Administrator explained, 5025, it's the Cemetery Trustees, they did send a request and they emailed it in. I think it's in your book that they asked for some additional funds. I think they want to make sure that they're getting their duties done with headstone. Headstone maintenance. They spoke to Mr. Twardosky. They decided they discussed putting enough money. And so they added, I believe \$3800.

Yeah. So they want \$5,000 basically to do the work. So they've had a pretty paltry budget and quite frankly, they haven't done much in the past. But I sense a new energy there with some of the Trustees that we have. Also we've got is it Sunnyside now? We're maintaining that cemetery. So I think they really want to make a concerted effort. And with no money they can't make much of an effort. Selectman Roy then said, the cost of things going up like gas and stuff, it would at least have a small increase. The Town Administrator replied, they conferred with, with Jay Twardosky over at the DPW to, to say, yeah, for this kind of money we can get some good progress. So that's I realize it's above the budget, but it's pretty nominal when you look at it. Selectman Guessferd replied, I think it's necessary.

#### Supervisors of the Checklist (5042)

Supervisors of the Checklist. That's your three elected. We're going past the Moderator. We already talked to him. Your supervisors are your three elected supervisors. They get a stipend based on a number that was set by town meeting. And this is level funded also.



Treasurer (5050)

The Town Administrator explained, your Treasurer is also level funded. That's a stipend. That's an appointed position. If you recall, some years back when you went from elected to appointed, and we have a Treasurer on board, I think he's doing a really excellent job. I think we're doing very, very well, very well. I'll speak for the Finance Department, but I think she's, Ms. Labrie and Ms. McKee both spoke up saying, we're very happy. The Town Administrator went on to say, they're getting timely reports and said working together, they're, they're doing very well with our investment on the Town side of things. So again level funded.

Sustainability Committee (5055)

The Town Administrator said, Sustainability Committee, they had sent me an email. They just wanted to move a couple of buckets around. But the bottom line is the same. They just kind of said, gee, we got to put money here and here and move it from there and there. But the bottom line is they still have the same \$1,300 budget.

Not to jump ahead, but I'll just tell you it's under tab. What tab? They had asked for, and I prepared a warrant article to add money to the Capital Reserve Fund for Energy Efficiency Projects. It was \$25,000 that would be if you forward it to the to the warrant would be put into the Capital Reserve Fund for Energy Efficient Projects. That runs the gamut from soup to nuts. It could be insulation, it could be lights, it could be all kinds of things that fit into that, into that model that was started a few years ago. So again, a modest, a modest request.

Benson Park Committee (5063)

Benson Park Committee again, this is the budget for the Committee work. You know, when they do meals in town, printing and signs and whatnot. This is just to have money available for the for the things they may choose to do particularly you know mostly centered around volunteer activities.

Budget Committee (5070)

The Town Administrator explained, again, a modest budget for the Budget Committee. Of course, they are free to change this if they want at their meeting. But right now it's the Budget Committee's budget.

Vice-Chairman Morin said, can we talk about that just a second. And they can make changes. But there has been discussion related to \$9,000 addition for attorney fees. Now it's my understanding, because they are a town committee, that we already have a attorney, that that represents them for questions. Now, we ran into the issue we ran into last year, and they wanted an attorney to back them for their side. And I know it's going to be a question. And I received an email today if there was any update on that. What's the Board's position on that?

Selectman Roy replied, I think we should only have one legal legal fund that covers the entire town. That's just my opinion. Vice-Chairman Morin said, okay. Selectman Dumont said, I would agree. Selectman Guessferd said, I agree. Vice-Chairman Morin replied, okay. Thank you.

Vice-Chairman Morin then asked, anything else? Selectman Roy, anything else on any of the committees we've talked about? To which Selectman Roy replied, nope. I'm good thanks.

Ethics Committee (5080)

The Town Administrator said, the Town Administrator said, and last but not least in this section is the Ethics Committee. Again, a modest amount, just in case they need to, you know, hear any ethics complaints? Again, pretty pretty modest. And those are the various committees.

BOS/Town Buildings (5110 - 5120 & Warrant Articles L)

The Town Administrator said, next we'll go into if everybody's ready, the Board of Selectmen/Town Buildings. Again I believe other than labor and benefits level funded, but I do have a couple of outside the budget requests to talk about. So if you have questions on the budget, we can ask those. And then right after we can talk about the out of the budget requests. Vice-Chairman Morin asked, any questions on the budget for the Selectmen? Selectman Roy replied, no, I'm good. Vice-Chairman Morin said, nope, go ahead Steve.

Selectman Roy then said, my question from earlier about about having a position as an assistant town administrator. The Town Administrator said, so if you go to page one, two, three, I think it's page five. You'll see an outside the budget request here. And then I've included with the request is the cost which the cost of the position which has salary and benefits, and then a job description of the position. I will I will state that we've had this position in 2009 through approximately 2011. The gentleman, the individual that had it resigned, we didn't replace it. I basically got all those tasks. So at some point in time. Selectman Roy said right, but that didn't go away right? to which the Town Administrator replied, the work didn't go away. I just got a whole bunch more people to supervise. So I'm of the opinion you probably need to do something going forward. Selectman Roy said, that's the problem. That's why I bring it up. This should be you should be supervising less people. Vice-Chairman Morin said, span of control is like five, six tops.

Selectman Dumont was recognized and said so just because I'm sure people will ask, the overall wages aren't \$182,000, that's wages and benefits. The Town Administrator replied, no sir. If you look at page six, you'll see there's a salary. Where that salary come from? It's sort of a mid I say mid-grade. It's you know below the Chiefs below I think the DPW Director. It's just a number again it's what you can get somebody for. But it's a number and the rest of it the majority the other 60 some odd thousand is benefit because again we have to budget for the high level of benefits depending on who we get. Again, from an argument perspective, I think it's probably prudent to get somebody into that role for two reasons. One, obviously, the span of control. And also I'm not getting any younger. I think at some point it's prudent to start thinking this way.

Selectman Dumont asked, do you know what the other other assistant administrators, you know, neighboring towns are paying? I know you said that this was....The Town Administrator replied, a lot of them have assistant town managers, because a lot of the towns our size are managed. So if it's typically towns like that have town administrators, of which we're probably one of the largest, most of those might use their finance director. That's typically what you'll see as an assistant town administrator. So that's a dual role sometimes there. The the larger community, sometimes just have an assistant town manager because they're sufficiently sized. Selectman Dumont replied, just to I mean, I know it's not apples to apples because the overall the layout is different, but what does that town assistant town manager roughly pay? Is it within that? Is it around that 120? The Town Administrator replied, yeah, because typically the town managers are making about 20 to 40K more than myself. So if you just scale it up and scale it down, you'd see numbers about approximately that. Everybody does things a little different. You know.

Selectman Guessferd said, we're a pretty large town, you know? The Town Administrator replied, we're the ninth largest community in the State of New Hampshire. Never mind town. We're bigger than Portsmouth and Keene, which are cities. So population wise again, everybody does things different. But we're in a very busy area. We have a lot going on. some way or another. You know, you've got Land Use. They're all reporting over here. They used to report to the assistant town administrator at some point in time. Way back we had a community development director. Those positions have gone away and not been funded. When I say gone away, we didn't we didn't repurpose it. They just. We just don't have it. We took the money away and said, Steve, you do it. That's sort of where we're at. So I just think we need to deliberate and discuss what you think we should be doing going forward.

Vice-Chairman Morin asked, any questions? Selectman Roy replied no, but I think we need to discuss it. Selectman Guessferd said, yeah. My thought is that this is something that we need to do for the reasons that have been stated. And that the question I think comes to do we put it in the budget. I don't know. I know we don't have to do a warrant on it, but should we do a warrant to see if the what are the pros and cons of doing a warrant for it? The Town Administrator replied so typically if you're adding like think about the police or fire, it's a simple example. You've had 40 police, 40 firefighters. You want to add four more. You're down one because

we've had 40 right. We want to add four. Last year if you think about the the the person we had for the I'm talking about no, no and the Police Department, we added a position to to do that. That's that's a new thing. We've had this position. You can certainly put it on a warrant if you want. But a in the first place, you don't have to for any position. We've already had that discussion, but we've honored the voters' wishes. But this is a position you have. You haven't funded or populated. You can do it either way. But you really don't have to because you've already had the position and you have not funded it. Selectman Guessferd replied, right, right.

The Town Administrator said, so that's that side of it. Now the other side of it is yeah, it's a pretty big ask. And if the budget doesn't pass, you might not get the money for this position. Selectman Guessferd replied, right. And it's not. And it's also just making sure that we don't, I mean to me again it's needed, but we certainly don't want to come across as, oh, we just got our budget passed last year and now we're coming back and we're asking for more, you know, asking for. And I just don't want that to be the, the headline here. So that's my that's that would be on the negative side. I mean I think this is a badly needed position for our town, especially given the study that was done and the recommendations that were made and will help the town run more efficiently.

The Town Administrator then said, I would also articulate that if the budget doesn't pass, you're not necessarily precluded from hiring somebody. Maybe you hire them later in the year because of funding, but if you put it on a warrant and that doesn't pass, you're not hiring. You've boxed yourself in for another two years.

Selectman Roy said, I would be I would be reluctant to fill that position under a default budget. Regardless.

The Town Administrator said, I respect that. I'm just saying. But you still could if you could find the the money and you may have to defer doing it, you're probably not going be able to do it day one. You'd have to you'd have to do it. You know, somewhere later in the year.

Selectman Guessferd then said, yeah. So I, I kind of lean in that direction as well because that's the whole thing about the warrant is that if it doesn't pass, then we're stuck for two years. The Town Administrator replied, and again, I would also say that, you know, whoever replaces me, it's going to be a tall task for them not to have... to have the, the, the range of supervision and activity that they have to manage. Selectman Guessferd said if they walked right into it, as you know. Mr. Malizia said, I've been doing it for a long time. I'm just sort of used to it. I don't mean to poo poo it, but I do think it's going to be a challenge going forward. The other thing, too, is it's always a good idea to have some sort of I'll use term backup person, but somebody that can take take over in an absence or some other issue. I would also foresee possibly if you got the right person and I don't know who the person is, you might be able to do some personnel stuff with this person as we talk about here. That's always been kind of a challenge in a Finance does some of it. I try to do some of it, but hopefully if we had the right person, you might be able to have them do some of that to. Selectman Guessferd said, have a skillset. The Town Administrator replied, I mean you could look for the skill set or at least encourage and train for the skill set. Again, there's a bunch of things you can do, but I just think we need to have the discussion.

Selectman Dumont was recognized and said correct me if I'm wrong but when Fire was in here, didn't we have a similar conversation with how the position existed? But we were opting for the warrant article because of an advisory warrant article that was done in the 90s? The Town Administrator replied, they were looking, they were they were bringing the Training Captain back because they took whatever they had for that and I think they pivoted it over to another position. I think they, we, I don't believe you've done that with this position, but I think they took that Training Captain and made the fire, whatever Mr. Hebert is, I can't remember his title. Selectman Dumont replied he's Fire Marshal now. That was my only. It sounded similar, so I just want to make sure that if it was, I wanted it to be consistent. Vice-Chairman Morin replied, we did the Fire Marshal. We did the the Assistant Planner was that way. We had them and then they went away and came back.

The Town Administrator then said, I'm just pointing out this was this was 2011. We had an individual in that position. They they left that position didn't get filled. The tasks all pivoted over to my, to me, for the most part. And that's where we stand now. So just we've had these conversations. How is it going to move forward? I think it's necessary to, you know, give it some thought. That's all I'm saying. It's in the best interest of the people. Vice-Chairman asked, Selectman Roy, do you have anything to add? To which she replied, I have nothing, thank you.

The Town Administrator said, the next one was, as you're well aware, we talked about and we went through a meeting with the public about a site in town that would potentially be considered for the Town Hall. And some of what I think we heard is we might be prudent to do some sort of analysis of where we are here, what might be possible here, and what the options might be that when we go forward, if we go forward with something, we have a better handle on that. I got the sense that a lot of the public thought we should take a look at this facility. What can you do? What can we do here at a I'll use the term lesser cost because we already own it. And, you know, it might be cheaper to do something here or if that's not going to be feasible, we need to know that. Selectman Guessferd replied, I agree I think we should do it.

The Town Administrator then said, so I put together just you know, I talked to Elvis. We just said \$30,000. Seems like a reasonable number to accomplish that. Selectman Dumont was recognized and said yeah. I mean, I think the townspeople have been pretty adamant about the Master Plan. They were pretty adamant about at the town meeting about the town hall relocation, that before doing anything, they wanted to follow what was in the Master Plan, which was a feasibility study. They also wanted to make sure that they knew what was needed before looking at a property. And then, you know, we had a smaller study done. I get it was a very minute section at the very end, but it also pointed out the exact same thing. So I think this is the way to go.

Vice-Chairman Morin asked, Selectman Roy if she had any comments. Selectman Roy replied, yeah. So it just goes back to my my issue of having a forming a committee to look for, to look for an appropriate property, regardless of of some person out there that we don't know who it is, that is going to offer us a deal. I think we should just go forward with a relocation committee cuz we don't know what, we don't know what that person is proposing. Vice-Chairman Morin replied but yeah, but that's different than what we're talking about here. What we're talking about is a feasibility study, because the Master Plan and the public, when we were talking about them, wanted to take a look at this building....Selectman Roy interjected saying hold on a second, Dave. A feasibility plan for what? Town Hall. Vice-Chairman Morin replied, that's what I'm getting to, yes. Yes, to look at Town Hall and what we actually need before we even move to looking at land. We haven't heard, Selectman Roy interjected saying that's what I'm talking about is we form a committee and we give them parameters of what we what we, we want in a town hall. So that could be something like we don't want to entertain any lease agreements, right? Cuz the town was pretty clear about that a few weeks ago.

Selectman Dumont then said, without the feasibility study though, what would be those parameters? Selectman Roy replied I think that, it might. It is probably a good idea to do a feasibility study on what we need, right? Town Hall. But beyond that, I'm not sure what the feasibility study would do for us.

Selectman Guessferd then said, well, whether or not to me whether or not this building could support the need with a renovation or whether we, it becomes kind of obvious or whatever that might that might be an outcome of we really can't use this, this space to get what we need. So the feasibility study, you know, the the output would be a determination of do we look at this building or what is the feasibility of using this building? What might it cost us to do using this building versus any other X, Y, Z property somewhere else with a new facility? And I agree that that a committee also should, you know, we should also have a committee. But but the committee I think needs first to kind of know what it's looking at. Selectman Roy replied, and I agree with that. I think we should give them parameters up front. Vice-Chairman Morin said, well, that's why we do the study first and give them that study to work with. Selectman Guessferd added, as parameters. Selectman Roy replied, okay. Mean, I'm fine with that. If we want to do it that way, that's fine.

Selectman Dumont was recognized and said, I was just going to reiterate, I think that the feasibility study is necessary. You may find that feasibility study may say that you can do everything right here, and you don't need to look somewhere else until you know what the actual data is behind that, it's just very hard to move forward. So I think that this is this is what everybody kept talking about at the relocation meeting was that there was asked for or a need for a feasibility study. Why haven't you done that? Everybody was upset that we put the cart before the horse with that meeting. So I would be very hesitant to do anything else besides this at this time. Seeing no further questions or discussion from the Board, the Town Administrator said, so those, I think, were the two out of the budget requests. Then we'll go back to the regular budget.

Town Buildings

Oakwood Facility - That's the old Rec building that we just keep the lights on and keep our town storage over there. Keeping storage records over there. And again, part of a feasibility study. Maybe we don't need that facility and we can maybe get rid of it, but for now, we're keeping the records.

Town Hall - That's this physical building. We have our maintenance and I believe with the exception of some very modest labor and benefit, the budget is level funded. Selectman Dumont asked so you said the salaries there, that's maintenance? Is that what that is? The Town Administrator replied, that's our maintenance. Janitorial and maintenance. Selectman Dumont replied, yeah, that's what I thought.

Town Poor (5151)

The Town Administrator said, As I said before, in years before, we're required to provide some level of first level assistance to Town residents of Hudson. Typically would be housing voucher, could be electrical assistance with electric bill or utility bill. Could also be a food, medication. We have a manual policy and whatnot, and we have an excellent employee that manages this program for us. So we were able to reduce this budget. I think going into this year we try to reduce it two years ago, but the default budget put it back up to the original level. So we're down to where we think we need to be. I will say one caveat. If we go over the number, we go over the number. We are required to provide first level assistance, however that doesn't mean is you can cut this to zero and then say, oh, well, we don't have a budget, we have to perform this task. But I think it's very prudent. I will also point out we do have some money in some town for donation type accounts that if we needed to draw on it, we could okay. Like say we have an employee that's very, very well versed in this and does an excellent job of finding other resources. And that'll come up a little later when you get to the Community Grants. We use a bunch of those programs to help keep this cost in check the food pantries, the soup kitchen, the the shelter type places they go a long way to helping us not have to house people and spend direct dollars.

Warrant Article K - Generator Replacement Capital Reserve Fund

The Town Administrator explained, kind of an oddball article. It's down in the article number K, if you recall we started a generator replacement fund several years ago. I'm just looking to allocate the typical \$30,000 into that fund. \$10,000 from the General Fund, \$10,000 from the Water Fund, and \$10,000 from the Sewer Fund. Because of the 21 generators, they're pretty equally divided. Seven I think are Water, seven are Sewer and seven are General. So this is just to keep those pretty large resources to have a funding mechanism to replace them or repair them as necessary. I believe this is just a standard fund, but I just wanted to point it out that it's in here. Capital reserve funding.

Legal (5200)

The Town Administrator said, Next budget is legal, which is the same flat we've had our attorney has kept his rate the same, I believe, for 7 or 8 years. Selectman Roy asked is he still doing the same rate? The Town Administrator replied he did this year. He did for the year we're currently in. But I assumed a 2% increase next year, which would put them up to \$148 an hour from \$145. I don't know what we'll...Selectman Roy said, that's cheap. How does he survive? Seriously? The Town Administrator replied, well, he's in a firm, and I'm sure he has other clients that he probably charges more. But nonetheless, I put in a modest increase because I can't. I can't assume it's going to last forever. I mean, but he's been very good at holding holding the line for us. So I put in a 2% increase to go to \$148 an hour. And don't forget, we do manage this pretty diligently. I try to, you know, either use another resource or try to find another source before we get in touch with him. But he does represent us, I think, on quite a quite a wide range separate from we have a labor attorney, which I think some of you have worked with a labor attorney.

We will have two contracts next cycle. So right now we're working on two. We're working on Public Works and working on Fire. Next year we'll be working on Police and the Support Staff. So we'll be having a professional negotiator come in and work with us when we negotiate those contracts. So that money's in there. There's also a sum in there for defending our values. So typically the utilities in particular put some of the big box places. They will contest their value. They'll hire someone to come in and contest their value. And we have to provide

all sorts of legal assistance to, to maintain or to to to keep our values on assessed property. It's typically these are for the larger cases like PSA or Eversource, the Sam's Club Walmart types of cases. So that's that's the same. But the budget bottom line is flat. So no changes on the budget. We try to hold the line on that. I think

#### Finance (5310, 5320)

Ms. Labrie started off saying, huge increases. No. Umm between the two departments. Oh thank you. Between the two departments, one went down \$1,128 and the other one went up \$333. So overall, between the two departments, I'm down \$795. So basically level funded or a little bit of a decrease.

The Town Administrator then said, and again, in a nutshell, the rest of it is just labor and benefits in the mix of what people take for labor and benefits. But particularly again, I stated it before our health insurance was up 10%, which is pretty good. The rest of our pool is 12 and one half, so we did a little bit better than the pool. And a lot of some of that's our experience right here. So we did a little bit better than the average pool. But you know rates have rates have gone back up. It's out of the pandemic. Now back to going to the doctor back to doing this back to getting their prescriptions and whatever else they're doing.

Vice-Chairman Morin asked, any questions? There were none.

#### Insurance (5910)

The Town Administrator explained, so this is where the workers comp premiums are paid. And the property liability insurance for the town is paid. Some of that is parceled out to the Water Utility parceled out to the Sewer Utility. But in a nutshell, these are premiums that are pretty much based on in workers comp on our payroll. So that's the number and liability on the assets that we have and our liability exposure. Yeah, they did increase. But I don't want to be underinsured. I don't think we can be on the worker's comp. frankly. We have to. It is what it is. We get our insurance through the NHMA. Pardon me Primex. We're now going through Primex. It used to be NHMA, now it's Primex. Which is which is the entity that, you know, probably gives us the best bang for the buck.

The other thing too, is people talk about what we should go look outside. You can do that. If you can go private, that's great. But takes the cap off your liability. So right now there's a cap on liability I believe it's 275 for an incident \$275,000. If you go outside there's no cap. We could be on the hook for millions depending. I say that I don't think it'll ever happen, but you never know. So, you know, we're in a high stress business if you think about it, with the things we do. So it's insurance.

#### Community Grants (5920)

I touched on it briefly when we talked about Town Poor. We use quite a few, if not all of these agencies for some resource or another. Some were very intimately involved with because of food, housing. We contribute to veterans organizations. And I believe you got a handout tonight. We do have one new request. So the majority of these agencies we funded, there was one new one that came in. It's called Millstone Wildlife Center. It came in through our Animal Control Officer, and I believe you have a packet that has the rationale and the request. And the request is for \$1,500. It is not currently in the proposed budget. So that's something if you were inclined to do, you'd need to add it.

Vice-Chairman Morin asked, do you know, if we use them at all? The Town Administrator replied, I believe the Animal Control Officer uses them because that's for wildlife. Vice-Chairman Morin said, oh Windham, I'm familiar with it. The Town Administrator said, not your dog, not your cat, but some of your other animals that need to be housed. Selectman Guessferd asked, how much was that? To which the Town Administrator replied, \$1,500.

Selectman Roy then said so I have a question. We didn't get any requests from either the American Legion or the VFW. The Town Administrator replied I did not receive anything in writing from them.

But, I still put them in the budget because you had funded them last year, so I didn't...Selectman Guessferd said, I was going to ask why all these zeros and then we're still budgeting. The Town Administrator replied, we send out a letter to everybody saying if you want to be part of the budget, send in a letter back to us by date specific. I had them come in as late as last week. Why? I can't I can't explain that, but I don't want to short shift anybody. So I just made sure that at least we level funded to where we were last year because, you know, organizations come to depend on us.

Selectman Roy said I'm in favor towards funding the VFW and the American Legion regardless of request. The Town Administrator then said matter of fact, I think you introduced it last year. They didn't even put in anything and you introduced it. The Board funded it. And this year we sent out a letter, but we didn't get a response back. But I'm not going to assume, you know, I can't explain what goes on at their agencies. I'm just saying, you know, we gave them one. We're just trying to look at, you know what we what we funded this year's appropriations for. And then I figured, well, we'll carry it forward. You know, you have others that ask for more. But I heard the word level funded. These are charitable or these are grants basically from us to them. So we held the line. The Board's free to change these if you'd like. I'm cautious with some of them like the you know.

Selectman Roy then said, oh, I do have another question. I'm sorry. Just occurred to me the Nashua transportation thing. Are we going to be able, do we have enough money to cover that? Because I know last year we had to add money to it. The Town Administrator replied, if you recall, we went from \$16,000 the previous year to \$28,000. I didn't get their request yet, but I have to assume at this point \$28,000 is in the ballpark of what we need. I suppose if something changes, we could take it up with the Budget Committee, because once it leaves your hands, it's out of your hands. But I didn't get anything, so I'm I at least level funded them to the higher level that they asked for last year.

Selectman Dumont asked is that just the elderly transport? The Town Administrator replied that's handicapped folks that particular folks. So what it is, it's a subsidized program for elderly and or disabled. So, you know, there's subsidies out there, federal government or whatever. But then there's rideshare. A lot of these folks pay a \$5, I think, payment, but we subsidize it. Merrimack subsidized it. Nashua subsidized. Selectman Dumont replied No, I'm good with it. I just want I just wanted to make sure I knew what it was. The Town Administrator replied, yeah, it's believe me, the people that depend on it really depend on it. Selectman Dumont replied, no, it's valuable, that's for sure. Like I said, I just wanted to. At first when I saw it, I was thinking the bus system over there. The Town Administrator replied it basically can take folks over to appointments over there, or we have folks go to the adult day program over here, or they may go to an adult day program in Nashua or Merrimack, or they have mobility issues and they need to go to some sort of doctor or some sort of appointment they can get on a regular schedule. It's pretty much a regular schedule type of thing. And believe me, I've talked to folks who have used it and it's pretty much their only lifeline. So again, I didn't see their request yet. I don't know if they don't have their act together, but I couldn't not fund it because it will bite us if we don't for sure.

So again, the only new one we had was the Millstone Wildlife, which I did not add in because I didn't want to presume anything. But if you wanted to, you could add \$1500 or some other number to the appropriation. Selectman Dumont said that request come from them? It came from the Police Department, right? The Town Administrator replied, It came through our Animal Control Officer. She works closely hand in hand with them. Again, you'll get animals that they're not a dog or a cat. So we're not boarding them or they need to go to rehabilitation. It's it's it serves the area. Vice-Chairman Morin added, and they're the only ones around. Selectman Dumont asked, what else is the alternative I mean. The Town Administrator replied, I don't want to say it on TV.

Selectman Dumont then said, I just had one other question. Maybe it was just the one that was in the book was at \$78,900 for for funds requested. And the one that was in the handout tonight was \$95,400. The Town Administrator explained so for fiscal 24 those are the appropriations you approved. When I went to the fiscal 25 funds requested, I did not get in writing requests for the things that say zero. So it just adds to \$95,000. But if you go to the next column, I funded the ones that forgot to ask for the money, if that makes any sense. Selectman Dumont replied, yeah, I'm asking so the bottom number there below that. \$78,900. The one that

was in there that was in our booklet. Was just a typo? The Town Administrator replied, I'm not sure what you're looking at. Selectman Dumont replied, total community grants, paid under fiscal 25 in the booklet at \$78,900. Either way, it doesn't make a difference. Selectman Guessferd replied oh your looking at the original one, yeah. Selectman Dumont then said, I just didn't know it. Was that just a typo? Because it looks like everything was just roughly the same. The Town Administrator then said, oh yeah, Food Pantry. As I told you, I was getting I was getting people sending me requests up until last week. But you already had your books. I see what you're saying. I was still getting requests through last Friday. But you had already had your books. And it's just when I start changing pages on you, it gets a little difficult. Selectman Dumont replied, no, I appreciate this. I just want to make sure if there was what it was. The Town Administrator then said but the right now in the budget is \$104,884. Selectman Dumont replied, I understand that. I just didn't know which one was missing. The Town Administrator said, going forward there will be as updated as I can make it for the Budget Committee.

Vice-Chairman Morin then said, so just to make it clear, because we did not get requests from the VFW and the Legion, do we want to make a motion to add that back in? I know he's got it in there, but we didn't get a request that way. It just the Board did it versus a request. Selectman Dumont said I'm find with it being in there, but do you need a motion? Selectman Roy said, I would support that. I make that motion okay. Selectman Guessferd seconded the motion to fund the FY25 Community Grants for the Hudson VFW and American Legion. The Town Administrator then said, could I make one suggestion? You might want to consider anybody who has a zero to make sure they're in the budget. Selectman Dumont said, if you're going to do them, do them all. The Town Administrator said, the Nashua Transit didn't submit anything yet. Hudson Fish & Game and the Big Brothers, Big Sisters. Those are all perennial agencies. They did not submit. I just if you're doing that, I just think. Vice Chairman Morin asked, Selectman Roy, would you amend your motion? To which Selectman Roy replied, Sure. What am I what what is the verbiage that I should use? I guess I'm asking Steve that question. The Town Administrator replied so we're funding Big Brothers, Big Sisters, the Hudson Fish and Game, the Nashua Transit, the American Legion, and the VFW. Selectman Roy said, I'll amend to that. Selectman Guessferd seconded the amended motion. A roll call vote was taken. Carried 4-0.

The Town Administrator said, you did, Big Brothers, Big Sisters. That was \$3,000. You did Hudson Fish and Game. That's \$500. You did Nashua Transit. That's \$28,549. You did the American Legion, Hudson Post 48. That's \$1000. You did the VFW, Hudson Post 5791, \$1000. Vice-Chairman Morin asked did you say Millstone too? The Town Administrator replied, I did not because that's a separate issue.

Selectman Dumont was recognized and said I was just going to ask before we get on to that. And I mean, I'm fine with the motion, but was it do you need a motion? I mean, if it's in the budget and then we approve the budget. Vice-Chairman Morin replied, but they didn't send us. We did this basically by request and we got requests from them. But as Selectman Roy had brought those two forward in a motion last year. So just to keep it consistent that the Board approved it, that's all. Selectman Dumont said, I just didn't know because when you start getting into the nitty gritty, do you make a motion about everything or are you or are we making a motion. Are we approving the budget at the end? I put it in as an assumption. I just don't want anything to get missed. If you're going to make a motion about something, then you do, you know. Vice-Chairman Morin said well, they just didn't give us a request. So they didn't ask us for anything. We're just supporting just.

The Town Administrator said, I think this is probably the only spot you're really going to see this because it comes outside of us. Everything else we did, we do this. I can't control what they send me. Vice-Chairman Morin said, and the thing is, when we finalize the budget as a whole, it will finalize this as a whole. Selectman Dumont replied, that's what I was figuring. It would just happen anyways that way, but yeah, right. Yeah, I'm fine with it either way. I just wanted to clarity.

The Town Administrator said, if you wanted to consider the millstone, you would have to make a separate motion, because that is, I did not assume that in the budget that would be an addition to whatever's here. That's entirely up to you folks. Vice-Chairman Morin asked anybody like to make that motion? I'm looking at it. We use them quite a bit, and with the support that we have in this town for conservation land and looking at the type of animals that go to this facility, I think it kind of fits right in. Selectman Guessferd made a motion to add in \$1500 to the Millstone Wildlife Center to cost center 5920-259. Selectman Roy seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Carried 4-0.



Patriotic Purposes (5930)

I believe that wraps up community grants if there aren't any other questions. Patriotic purposes. We make contributions to Old Home Days, Old Home Days fireworks and the Memorial Day observance and parade. And this is level funded.

Vice-Chairman Morin asked, do you know how long it's been since we've raised this? Especially with the way costs have gone up? The Town Administrator replied, so at some point, and I can't remember the year, it was \$5300. And this was probably 15 years ago. Vice-Chairman Morin asked do we want to do anything with this line?

Selectman Roy asked, what do you think Dave? Selectman Morin replied this line basically supports the whole the whole town. It's probably the two bigger events that we have, the Memorial Day Parade and Old Homes Day. You know. Selectman Roy replied, yup, I understand that. I just I'm just looking for your thoughts about how much you might want to. Vice-Chairman Morin replied, I was going to I was going to allow questions first.

Selectman Dumont was recognized and said, so I don't think it's a bad idea. I think, quite frankly, I think more people believe that Hudson funds these in totality than than we actually do. But would it be a good idea to maybe try to get some actual numbers? You know what the actual cost for Old Homes was? What the actual cost of the fireworks were? Or do you want to just kind of. The Town Administrator replied I think I think time is probably not in your favor. I think you're better off just making a motion, and I know you're acting blindly, but whatever you're giving is more than you're giving now. I think if you added maybe go to the parade to go to \$2,000 for the parade, maybe go to, you know, \$2200 for the old home days and go to \$3000 for the fireworks. You're probably in that range. Vice-Chairman Morin asked so what's the what's that total?

Selectman Dumont said say even even \$1500. Another \$500 bucks for each of them. The Town Administrator replied, yeah. I think that's not unreasonable. It's been it's been a good 15 years. Ms. Labrie said so \$5600 to \$6600. The Town Administrator, Selectman Guessferd and Selectman Dumont said, no, it would be \$7,100. The Town Administrator said, extra \$500 each. The three of them. Ms. Labrie asked, how many are there? To which the Town Administrator and Selectman Dumont replied three. Ms. Labrie replied \$1500. Yeah. All right. Got it. Selectman Dumont made a motion, Seconded by Selectman Roy to this to Patriotic Purposes 5930-260 to allocate an additional \$500 to the three activities; Memorial Day Parade, Old Home Days, Old Home Days Fireworks. A roll call vote was taken. Carried 4-0.

Other Expenses (5940)

The Town Administrator explained, Other Expenses are sort of a catch all, but amongst there is the main phone system. If there is equipment rental for the postage meter, for example. Contingency. The Board of Selectmen has a pretty modest contingency number here. That's for things that we can't anticipate or plan. And also we also have Contingency. As you recall, we talked to you twice a year about it earned time payouts. If and when we get into a situation, we have some money if we need it to help fund that. Typically it's funded through every department, but if we get into trouble, we could draw on a bucket here. If we don't use it, we don't spend it. Vice-Chairman Morin asked if the Board had any questions. They did not.

Hydrant Rental (5960)

The Town Administrator explained, Hydrant Rental. This is the cost to the Town for having a fully charged hydrant system of over 1000 fire hydrants in town. So it's quite simply goes to the Water Utility, the Water Utility maintains it, and they charge back to the town. Selectman Dumont asked, so this comes out out of there, that cost share? The Town Administrator replied, so basically that this is a revenue into the Water Utility because the Water Utility maintains all the hydrants. When we when we took over the Utility back in '98, we wanted to keep everybody whole. So we kept this on the books, but we've reduced it quite a bit. It used to be \$600,000. We got it down to this number because we could, but there's still got to be some skin in the game because again, the Town's benefiting from a fully charged system which the Water Utility is maintaining. Selectman Dumont replied, and the maintenance of that system is what is what this number is because it's build out? The Town Administrator replied, it's basically the Town's share of the maintenance of the system. That is correct.

Selectman Dumont then asked, do we handle hiring those subcontractors or does the or does that still fall under White Water? The Town Administrator replied, typically for the typical maintenance it's done with White Water, our contractor. So there's there's all kinds of things they have to do; including painting them, testing them dry, checking them. Selectman Dumont then said, I guess I was more thinking about when they have to rebuild one. You see, a lot of times there's a third party there outside of White Water. The Town Administrator replied, well, it depends on when you, yeah that's a different.. that's different than maintaining them. Typically if a developer comes in we make them put the hydrants in. Selectman Dumont replied well yeah that's why I said, I mean our system is built out any new developments, obviously they're putting it in. The Town Administrator replied, but we have to replace existing hydrants. And it's not an inexpensive proposition if we have to replace the whole thing. Selectman Dumont replied, right, no that's why I was wondering. The Town Administrator said, and the Water Utility carries that cost. Selectman Dumont replied, okay. I just didn't know what the what the process for that was. The Town Administrator said, it's on the Water Utility side. But again, there's a charge back to the Town because I think there's over at this point there's over 1000 hydrants, public hydrants. Private hydrants pay a hydrant fee too. But it's private. Selectman Dumont replied, okay, I'm good thanks.

Seeing no further questions from the Board, the Town Administrator said, So I think that's kind of what we had scheduled for tonight. I don't know if you want to do any more. When I say any more we could look at Revenue if you wanted. Revenue is non-property tax revenue. We could do it now. You could do it later. But it's towards the front of the book in the summary section. And the only reason I bring it up is because I think I want to make a recommendation. If you recall last week, I think it was last week, we looked at the tax rate and we looked at how much of the fund balance we were going to take and decided to take. \$1 million in this budget is \$900,000 I believe. I think we should go to the same million dollars next year. We can support it. We can. We can do that. We have the fund balance to do it. And I think it keeps things more even. Selectman Dumont asked, so it's a separate a separate million or? The Town Administrator replied, no, I'm adding 100,000. So if you go to this Revenue Budget and I don't know what page. I believe it's page 13. If you look at page 13 in the Summary Section of the book. It's it's called use of Fund Balance. It says \$900,000. Once you get to page 13 it should be page 13. Selectman Dumont said, oh, okay, I know, And so that's the same thing that we just basically approved. The Town Administrator replied, you just used \$1 million this year. What I'm saying is I put \$900,000 in because. Yeah, just put another \$100,000. And that way we'll bump that up to be equal year over year. I think it definitely benefits the taxpayers to do so, which would make take your revenue from \$18,035,038, to \$18,135,038. I've already bumped up, we've already bumped up the interest on our investments because we know we're doing great there. So we we're always conservative, we're always trailing a little in case things tail off tremendously, we don't want to be ahead of the curve. But we did bump that up. But I think you can safely bump up the Use of Fund Balance for your Tax Rates. Selectman Dumont made a motion, seconded by Selectman Guessferd to change the Use of Fund Balance by \$100,000 from \$900,000 to \$1 million, moving the Revenue from \$18,035,038 to \$18,135,038. A roll call vote was taken. Carried 4-0.

The Town Administrator said, I think, in fairness, you need to listen to the Police and the Recreation tomorrow night. I don't think Assessing has any outside the budget, but you'll hear the rest of the warrant articles. You'll hear the rest of the outside the budget requests. So tomorrow night, if we have time, you could start tackling, looking at those things and what you want to do and what warrants you want to afford at this point. Or if we don't have time, we could append it to the regular meeting of the 24th. But I think at that point in time, you really do need to decide where you're going to be, because we have to start turning the crank, updating everything, getting the books prepared for the Budget Committee. And we are first this year. So I just I put that out there. Any little bit of thing we can do, and I think we've done everything we can pretty much do tonight we should do.

And tomorrow night you'll have, like I say, Assessing Police and Police is a pretty good sized budget, but if we have time, you can start looking at the outside the budget request because you'll have heard from everyone. And again, you saw the warrant articles that we have so far. And again, the only ones I'm not aware of are the two for the labor contracts. Just a reminder. We are meeting tomorrow evening because we needed to change from Thursday, which was originally the schedule. Till tomorrow.

Vice-Chairman Morin asked, Selectman Roy, do you have anything else you'd like to add? Selectman Roy replied, I do, it's got nothing to do with the town. But I want to congratulate my niece and her husband on the birth of their the little boy today. It happened while we were on air. Yeah, a little healthy little boy. Charlie. The group congratulated Selectman Roy's niece and her family. Seeing no further discussion, Selectman Guessferd made a motion to adjourn at 9:16 pm. This was seconded by Selectman Dumont. A roll call vote was taken. Carried 4-0.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 9:16 p.m. by Selectman Guessferd, seconded by Selectman Dumont. A roll call vote was taken. Carried 4-0.

Recorded by HCTV and transcribed by Jill Laffin, Executive Assistant.

Absent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Marilyn McGrath, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dave Morin, Vice Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kara Roy, Selectman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bob Guessferd, Selectman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dillon Dumont, Selectman