

## The Hudson Municipal Budget Committee FY23 Public Hearing

. The Hudson Municipal Budget Committee met on Thursday, January 13, 2022, in the Hudson Community Center 12 Lions Avenue., Hudson, NH.

With remote access capabilities at: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/753521349> and by phone at (872) 240-3212 Access Code: 753-521-349

### **A. Call to Order**

Chairman Weissgarber called the meeting at 7:00 PM.

### **B. Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Weissgarber led the Pledge of Allegiance

### **C. Attendance**

Chairman Mr. Richard Weissgarber, Vice-Chairman Mr. William Cole, Mr. Normand Martin, alternate clerk Mr. Ted Trost, Ms. Kathy Leary, Mr. Shawn Murray (remote), Ms. Grace Hopkins (remote), Mr. Robert Clegg, Selectman Liaison alternate Bob Guessferd, School Board Liaison School Board Vice-Chair Ms. Diana LaMothe, and clerk Alejandro Urrutia.

### **D. Acceptance of minutes**

The minutes from the 1/5/2022 Budget Committee meeting were not ready to be approved.

### **E. Reports from liaisons**

a. Select Board.

Mr. Guessferd indicated there was nothing to report at that time.

b. School Board

Vice-Chair Diana LaMothe announced that the next regular school board meeting is **on January 24**. The School Board doesn't have one following Monday because it is Martin Luther King Jr. day. Ms. LaMothe said that they always appreciate public input, and they appreciate the individuals participating that night as well.

### **F. Budget Committee Public Hearing Town and School District FY23 Budgets**

a. Overview and Public Comment of School District Budget – Default Budget

Chairman Weissgarber explained the “Rules of Engagement” to the public attending in person and individuals using the remote access. Mr. Weissgarber asked to take the public participating in person, asking them to state their name and address before their budgetary-related input.

Mr. Weissgarber explained to the Hudson residents watching on TV to dial following the instructions in the agenda that includes the phone number and access code. Next, Mr.

Weissgarber explained a link to GoToMeeting, use the app or launch it from the web.

The Chairman opened the public hearing at 7:04 PM.

Mr. Chairman Weissgaber read a statement emailed to the Budget Committee by a resident, Ms. Peggy Huard, against the school operating budget asking to see specific plans to reduce the school operating budget.

She asked the Chairman what the plans were for reducing the school operating budget before the deliberative session. Mr. Weissgarber answered that the warrant articles would be discussed and voted by the Budget Committee members after the public input.

Ms. Fabiana Ficket was disappointed in the Budget Committee reducing the school budget; our students deserve better. We have a low per pupil expenditure; we are in the bottom 10% in the state. Our children and teachers deserve better. Sharon Majors (remote) agreed with everything the previous speaker stated. Victor Oates thinks it is egregious to even contemplate cutting the budget for the school system. We don't pay our teachers enough; we don't fix our school systems enough; to cut the technology budget is appalling. Proposed budget cuts by email should not be considered. The conversation should be in person. Rob Everett referred to the term due diligence. He watched the last meeting and saw the Budget Committee proposed cut and the school district rebuttal; a lot of it was grants; their accounting follows the GASB rules. Being a Budget Committee, everyone should understand that. Regarding the ROTC Instructor cut; if due diligence was done by the Committee, the Committee would understand the requirements. Tracy Pare has two kids in the district; her oldest son had to leave the district to get the services that he needed. It would have been cheaper to hire the person he needed here. Instead you're paying a lot to have him somewhere else. It doesn't make any sense. Katie Brochio echoed what everyone said. We have wonderful teachers and staff here in Hudson that we are losing to other districts. The thought to cut funding doesn't seem right. Kristina Young had a question about how this was going to work tonight; will the Committee vote on the suggested reduction or would the Committee vote on each line and look at the school rationale? Budget Committee Chairman Weissgarber stated that the Committee would not necessarily go line by line, unless a member wanted to. Ms. Young asked if there would not be any speaking to each item to add or take out of the budget. She did not understand the rationale of each item. Mr. Murray added that the items on the spreadsheet suggested for reduction are only given to indicate areas of concern. The district can choose what lines a reduction comes from and goes to. Ms. Young was wondering why the vote would be to take out x amount of dollars. Chairman Weissgarber said the Budget Committee could make a bottom line cut or a line by line cut. Mr. Clegg stated the speaker would probably be more comfortable at deliberative session where changes could be made. Ms. Young stated she is still not comfortable with what the Budget Committee is accepting; it is cutting a variety of things.

Chairman Weissgarber closed the public hearing part of the meeting at 7:29 PM when nobody else from the audience wanted to speak.

Mr. Martin made a statement indicating that in his opinion, the current proposal of \$52,023,797 is a lot of money somebody despite that he understand that it costs money to educate children. Mr. Martin said that the school district consistently has an end-of-year fund balance, and the school uses it to do different projects instead of giving it back to the taxpayers. Mr. Martin also indicated that the school has a capital reserve fund to repair if needed, so this year they're asking the town of Hudson to raise and appropriate \$550,000 for a partial roof replacement. They got \$500,000 in a capital reserve fund, so why does the school want to raise taxes when you have \$500,000 in a capital reserve fund? Mr. Martin thinks that the Budget Committee should hold the school district to that year. The fiscal year 2022 ending on June 30 projected fund balance is \$728,000. \$728,000 probably it is a lot of it from salaries but should be reduced to the budget going into the next fiscal year for 23 said Mr. Martin, 'so you don't have the opportunity to keep returning money'. Consistently having a fund balance ... and having a \$1.5 million of the fund balance in an unassigned fund balance for emergency purposes or to reduce the tax rate, so the school has 1.5 million dollars if they need to spend it in an emergency, so cutting out \$668,894 is a 'drop in the hat'. They can't just spend it, they have to go through the approval process.

School Liaison Vice-Chair Ms. LaMothe thanked Mr. Martin for his observations. She indicated that the dollar amount he sees in the warrant article is set forth by law; it includes the total amount, including all sources of revenue. Because of the ESSER grants in particular for fiscal year 2023, the school has an additional \$2 million in estimated revenue, which is the reason why there increase of 2 million from last year's warrant article; it is all because the ESSER grant funds. Grant revenue is offset by expenditures that are authorized. So the net impact on taxes is 0. Regarding the projected fund balance, at this point in time, it is an estimate. It constantly evolves. As a rule of thumb, for great fiscal management, we want to keep the projected fund balance above 1% of the general fund budget. And in regards to the retained fund balance, it may be used to level the tax rate, which is the primary purpose of that, or for emergency expenses which the RSA very clearly defines and the final step would be approval by the Commissioner of Education. It is for unique extreme emergency circumstances, not general roof repair maintenance items; those do not constitute an emergency.

Mr. Trost wanted to speak regarding money at the end of the year. Mr. Trost said that the school administration and the employees of the school should become commended for not spending every dollar. Mr. Trost indicated that he did not want to create an environment where they feel like the school has to use it or lose it. Mr. Trost raised his concerns that some of the money is often used at the end of the year for special projects that are unbudgeted rather than returning it all to the taxpayers to reduce their tax rate. Mr. Trost wanted to point out that school employees are under Union contract, salaries are negotiated items between the administration and the Union. The budget committee has no impact on Union employees' pay in either town or school. Mr. Murray indicated that school district budget this year the increase in salaries and budgets is \$992,000. That in itself demonstrates that funding is also tied to contractual obligations that the school district legally has to meet. Making the reductions in these budgets, Mr. Murray believes that confidently it doesn't impact the students; these are funds within the thousands of lines in the budget that we consistently see either they are underspent, not spent at all, and at the end of the year there are transfers to an unexpended fund balance; some of this money sits there during the year. Mr. Murray said that the ESSER grants are limited to where they can be spent. If positions are kept after those grants go away, that gap has to be made up, so there are these two sides to those grants; you know getting federal grants isn't always a good thing because of what happens on the end once you spend that money and the funding is gone.

Chairman Weissgarber, regarding the retained fund balance that is two and a half percent, asked Vice-Chair LaMothe what the max amount can go in. Ms. LaMothe explained that the last calculation the school did was approximately \$1.1 million; it was a little over that, so with the fiscal year 21 end-of-year fund balance, the school allocated \$500,000 to the retained fund balance, which brought it to \$1.1 million. When the Department of Education looks at this, depending on what the net assessed value is, they will make sure it does not exceed 2.5% of the net assessed value; we are at the maximum.

**Mr. Martin's motioned to reduce the school operational budget by \$650,000, bringing to \$61,595,033 for 2023; Mr. Murray seconded it.**

Ms. LaMothe asked if there were any specific details behind the \$650,000 reduction.

Mr. Martin said that his research took him up to \$668,000, and now he understood that the school estimated fund balance for fiscal year 22 is \$750,000. Mr. Martin indicated that he went lower despite that he was going to go \$750,000, but he went with \$650,000. He doesn't understand why we need to have a fund balance. Consistently returning money and not using

money that was allocated so they have a fund balance is not understood. That is why he chose \$650,000. A point of order by a public attendant was dismissed.

Ms. LaMothe stated the fund balance at the end-of-the-year, the unexpended unretained fund balance, is returned to the town. During the course of the year, we don't want to have a zero fund balance; it is very risky. The money the end-of-year goes back to the taxpayer. Ms. La Mothe also brought attention to the fact that reducing the budget by \$650,000 will get the proposed budget below the default budget by approximately \$429,000.

Mr. Urrutia indicated that the lack of specifics in the proposed cut does not make him comfortable supporting the motion.

**The roll call to the motion made by Mr. Martin to reduce the school operational Budget by \$650,000, bringing it to \$61,495,033 for 2023**

Mr. Clegg **yes**, Mr. Cole **yes** Mr. Guessferd **no**, Ms. Hopkins **no**, Ms. LaMothe **no** Ms. Leary **no**, Mr. Martin **Yes**, Mr. Murray **yes**, Mr. Trost **yes**, Mr. Urrutia **no**, Mr. Weissgarber **yes**. The motion passed (6-5-0)

Review of School District Warrant Articles – Vote by Budget Committee on School District Warrant articles

**Warrant Article 1 as amended by the previous vote.**

Operating Budget as follows:

**Roll call:**

Motion by Mr. Trost to recommend Warrant Article 1, as amended, seconded by Mr. Martin.

Mr. Clegg, **yes**, Mr. Cole, **Yes**, Mr. Guessferd, **no**, Ms. Hopkins **no**,

Ms. LaMothe, **no**, Ms. Leary, **no**, Mr. Martin, **Yes**, Mr. Murray, **yes**, Mr. Trost, **yes**, Mr.

Urrutia, **no**, Mr. Weissgarber, **yes**.

**The motion to recommend passes (6-5-0)**

**Mr. Clegg** stated his objection to the Selectman Liaison and School Board Liaison participating in the vote as **unelected** officials to the Budget Committee and asked the Chair that their votes do not be considered.

Chairman Weissgarber indicated that the votes made by the liaisons would be counted.

**Warrant Article 2**

**Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Hudson School Board and PSRPs**

**Mr. Trost made the motion to recommend seconded by Ms. LaMothe**

Mr. Clegg indicated that it is not appropriate for Ms. LaMothe to second the motion as Liaisons do not have the right to vote and he would challenge the motion.

Chairman Weissgarber indicated that liaisons are voting. Ms. LaMothe said that the liaisons have been voting, and town and school attorneys agreed that as ex-officio members, they could vote, but Ms. LaMothe withdrew her second.

Chairman Weissgarber said that she does not need to do that. Mr. Clegg seconded the motion.

**Roll call:**

Mr. Clegg, **yes**, Mr. Cole, **Yes**, Mr. Guessferd, **yes**, Ms. Hopkins **yes**,

Ms. LaMothe, **yes**, Ms. Leary, **recused**, Mr. Martin, **Yes**, Mr. Murray, **yes**, Mr. Trost, **Yes**, Mr.

Urrutia, **yes**, Mr. Weissgarber, **yes**.

**The motion to recommend passes (10-0-0)**

### **Warrant Article 3**

#### **Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Hudson School Board and AFSCME**

##### **Roll call:**

Mr. Clegg, **yes**, Mr. Cole, **yes**, Mr. Guessferd, **yes**, Ms. Hopkins, **yes**, Ms. LaMothe, **yes**, Ms. Leary, **yes**, Mr. Martin, **yes**, Mr. Murray, **yes**, Mr. Trost, **yes** Mr. Urrutia, **yes**, Mr. Weissgarber **yes**.

**Motion to recommend by Mr. Clegg Seconded by Mr. Martin**

**The motion to recommend passes unanimously. (11-0-0)**

### **Warrant Article 4**

#### **Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Hudson School Board and the Secretaries**

**Mr. Urrutia made the motion to recommend, seconded by Mr. Clegg.**

##### **Roll call:**

Mr. Clegg, **yes**, Mr. Cole, **yes**, Mr. Gagnon, **yes**, Ms. Hopkins, **yes**, Ms. LaMothe, **yes**, Ms. Leary, **yes**, Mr. Martin, **yes**, Mr. Murray, **recused**, Mr. Trost, **yes**, Mr. Urrutia, **yes**, Mr. Weissgarber **yes**.

**The motion to recommend passes (10-0-0)**

### **Warrant Article 5**

#### **Partial Roof Replacement at Nottingham West Elementary School**

**Mr. Urrutia made the motion to recommend Ms. Leary second the motion.**

##### **Roll call:**

Mr. Clegg, **no**, Mr. Cole, **no**, Mr. Guessferd, **yes**, Ms. Hopkins, **yes**, Ms. LaMothe, **yes**, Ms. Leary, **yes**, Mr. Martin, **no**, Mr. Murray, **no**, Mr. Trost, **yes**, Mr. Urrutia, **yes**, Mr. Weissgarber, **no**.

**The motion to recommend passes (6-5-0)**

### **Warrant Article 6**

#### **Increasing Funds in the Capital Reserve School Renovation Fund up to \$150,000**

Mr. Clegg made the motion not to recommend second by Mr. Martin.

Mr. Clegg said in support of his motion that the school already has \$500,000 to be used for repairs; we said yes to five hundred fifty thousand. Mr. Clegg thinks the school has enough money. It is believed that retained money does not have taxpayer impact, but it does because it does not return to alleviate the taxpayers' tax burden.

**Roll call:**

Mr. Clegg, **yes**, Mr. Cole, **yes**, Mr. Guessferd, **no**, Ms. Hopkins, **yes**, Ms. LaMothe, **no**, Ms. Leary, **no**, Mr. Martin, **yes**, Mr. Murray, **yes**, Mr. Trost, **yes**, Mr. Urrutia, **abstain**, Mr. Weissgarber, **yes**.

**(7-3-1) Motion not to recommend passed.**

**Warrant Article 7**

**Transfer of Property to the Hudson Lions Club**

**Budget Committee did not discuss this warrant article because it is not a money-related issue.**

**Warrant Article 8**

**Add Playground to Dr. H.O. Smith Elementary School**

**Motion to recommend by Mr. Trost, second by Ms. LaMothe.**

Ms. LaMothe explains the need for an additional playground for the Early Learning Center. Kindergarten is at Library St. School and first grade is at Dr. H.O. Smith School. There is one playground; some days the playground is not available for kindergarten, and they need to play on pavement that have cracks in it. If the vote is no, no means no playground going in. The school looked for a grant, but it did not come to fruition. It is extremely needed. So the school presented it as a warrant article as a matter of transparency.

Mr. Murray referred to what he said at the budget committee meeting not favor this warrant article because of the unexpended fund balance at the end of the year. Mr. Murray said this is the type of project that he will favor to support using unexpended fund balance to build this project faster. Mr. Murray noted that unexpended funds could be used in this project, and there is no need to ask the taxpayers.

Mr. Clegg concurred to what Mr. Murray said. And, referring to what vice-chair LaMothe said "no means no", not being able to raise the \$75,000 does not mean the school can't use the funds they already have to build the playground. No to this warrant article means you can't use this warrant to raise money, but as Mr. Murray said the school has the money. Mr. Clegg suggested saying no to the warrant article and asking the school to use the funds already have.

Mr. Trost said that he disagreed with Mr. Murray; Mr. Trost noted that he opposes the use of unexpended fund balance at the end of the year in an unbudgeted item that should be budgeted. Mr. Trost thinks it is correct to use a warrant article or budget it.

**Roll call:**

**Mr. Clegg, no**, Mr. Cole, **no**, Mr. Guessferd, **no**, Ms. Hopkins **yes**, Ms. LaMothe, **yes**, Ms. Leary, **yes**, Mr. Martin, **no**, Mr. Murray, **no**, Mr. Urrutia, **yes**, Mr. Weissgarber, **no**.

**The motion fails (6-5-0)**

Review of School District Petitioned Warrant Articles not received previously.

**None**



Recess – 15 minutes

Overview and Public Comment of Town Budget – Default Budget

**Chairman Weissgarber called to order after the 15 minutes recess at 8:41 PM.**

During the public input, Paul Inderbitzen spoke against doing last-minute cuts when the Budget Committee has received the budgets in November and having the opportunity to review them line by line. He added that, in his opinion, last-minute cuts are not right and expect that they do not happen during the town hearing as was the case during the school portion of the public hearing.

Chairman Weissgarber, not having any other member from the public wishing to speak, closed the public input portion of the hearing at 8.44 PM.

**Article 09**

**Police Facility Expansion and Renovation (3/5 ballot vote required)**

**Motion to recommend by Mr. Trost second by Mr. Martin**

Mr. Trost and Mr. Urrutia indicated that they had visited the station and supported the expansion. Mr. Trost said if we do not do it this year, it will be presented again next year and so on until it is done and will cost more in the future. Mr. Trost told the viewers that the meeting could give the impression that the committee did not discuss the items before, but that is not the case. Mr. Trost invited the residents to view the meetings of the budget committee and see the committee had extended discussions about the budget presented to the committee.

Mr. Murray said that he supports this article for the reasons already mentioned. Mr. Murray suggested the public visit the police station during the open house at the end of January. There is a piece of the previous information on the police department web page.

Selectman Guessferd said that Hudson had an excellent police department, and the renovation is well overdue. Finally, Selectman Guessferd invited the public to support the warrant article at the polls.

Ms. Leary reiterated what has been said, and she indicated she concurred with Mr. Trost's comments that it is needed and will cost more in the future if not done now.

Ms. LaMothe pointed out that it is a bond warrant article requiring a 3/5 vote, meaning that just above 50% will not be enough to pass the article. It needs 60% to pass. The project will cost more if it does not pass, and the bond interest rate will likely increase.

Chairman Weissgarber said that the facility has been undersized since the nineties when it was built. The expansion is also necessary for the town and officers' safety and police morale. Mr. Weissgarber considers that the station is substandard and invites the voter to support the expansion of the police station.

Mr. Martin said that the police department has small room for processing collected evidence from the scene. Still, despite the limitations, HPD collected evidence and arrested a cop killer from Manchester, NH. He wanted to thank the police department for what they do and asked voters to support this warrant article.

Ms. Hopkins indicated that the police have so much impact on the town. When you have to call 911, they will respond, as she has experienced two times during the past year. She asked the voters to think what the town needs from the police.

Mr. Clegg **yes**, Mr. Cole **yes**, Mr. Guessferd **yes**, Ms. Hopkins **yes**, Ms. LaMothe **yes**, Ms. Leary **yes**, Mr. Martin **Yes**, Mr. Murray **yes**, Mr. Trost **yes**, Mr. Urrutia **yes**, Mr. Weissgarber **yes**.

**(11-0-0) The motion passed unanimously**

## **Article 10**

### **General Fund Operating Budget**

**Motion to recommend by Mr. Martin, second by Mr. Urrutia**

Mr. Clegg **no**, Mr. Cole **no**, Mr. Guessferd **yes**, Ms. Hopkins **yes**, Ms. LaMothe **yes**, Ms. Leary **yes**, Mr. Martin **no**, Mr. Murray **yes**, Mr. Trost **yes**, Mr. Urrutia **yes**, Mr. Weissgarber **yes**.

**(8-3-0) The motion passed**

## **Article 11**

### **Sewer Fund Operating Budget**

**Motion to recommend by Mr. Trost, second by Mr. Martin**

Mr. Clegg **yes**, Mr. Cole **yes**, Mr. Guessferd **yes**, Ms. Hopkins **yes**, Ms. LaMothe **yes**, Ms. Leary **yes**, Mr. Martin **Yes**, Mr. Murray **yes**, Mr. Trost **yes**, Mr. Urrutia **yes**, Mr. Weissgarber **yes**.

**(11-0-0) The motion passed unanimously**

## **Article 12**

### **Water Fund Operating Budget**

**Motion to recommend by Mr. Trost second by Mr. Martin**

Mr. Clegg **yes**, Mr. Cole **yes**, Mr. Guessferd **yes**, Ms. Hopkins **yes**, Ms. LaMothe **yes**, Ms. Leary **yes**, Mr. Martin **Yes**, Mr. Murray **yes**, Mr. Trost **yes**, Mr. Urrutia **yes**, Mr. Weissgarber **yes**.

**(11-0-0) The motion passed unanimously**

## **Article 13**

### **Hudson Support Staff Local 1801 Union Contract**

**Motion to recommend by Mr. Urrutia, second by Mr. Martin.**

Mr. Murray spoke in support of this article by saying that the support staff is the backbone of the Town Hall; they support the various offices. Many times, they go unnoticed by many people. They well deserve this contract.



Mr. Clegg **yes**, Mr. Cole **yes**, Mr. Guessferd **yes**, Ms. Hopkins **yes**, Ms. LaMothe **yes**, Ms. Leary **yes**, Mr. Martin **Yes**, Mr. Murray **yes**, Mr. Trost **yes**, Mr. Urrutia **yes**, Mr. Weissgarber **recused**.

**(10-0-0) The motion passed.**

#### **Article 14**

##### **Property Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund Funding**

**Motion to recommend by Mr. Martin second by Ms. Leary**

Mr. Clegg **yes**, Mr. Cole **no**, Mr. Guessferd **yes**, Ms. Hopkins **yes**, Ms. LaMothe **yes**, Ms. Leary **yes**, Mr. Martin **Yes**, Mr. Murray **yes**, Mr. Trost **yes**, Mr. Urrutia **yes**, Mr. Weissgarber **yes**.

**(10-0-0) The motion passed.**

#### **Article 15**

##### **Fire Apparatus**

**Motion to recommend by Mr. Martin second by Mr. Murray**

Mr. Clegg **yes**, Mr. Cole **yes**, Mr. Guessferd **yes**, Ms. Hopkins **yes**, Ms. LaMothe **yes**, Ms. Leary **yes**, Mr. Martin **Yes**, Mr. Murray **yes**, Mr. Trost **yes**, Mr. Urrutia **yes**, Mr. Weissgarber **yes**.

**(11-0-0) The motion passed unanimously**

#### **Article 16 Vacon**

##### **Truck Replacement Capital Reserve Fund Funding**

**Motion to recommend by Mr. Urrutia second by Mr. Clegg**

Mr. Clegg **yes**, Mr. Cole **yes**, Mr. Guessferd **yes**, Ms. Hopkins **yes**, Ms. LaMothe **yes**, Ms. Leary **yes**, Mr. Martin **Yes**, Mr. Murray **yes**, Mr. Trost **yes**, Mr. Urrutia **yes**, Mr. Weissgarber **yes**.

**(11-0-0) The motion passed unanimously**

#### **Article 17**

##### **Energy Efficiency Capital Reserve Fund Funding**

**Motion to recommend by Martin second by Mr. Urrutia**

Mr. Clegg **yes**, Mr. Cole **no**, Mr. Guessferd **yes**, Ms. Hopkins **yes**, Ms. LaMothe **yes**, Ms. Leary **yes**, Mr. Martin **Yes**, Mr. Murray **yes**, Mr. Trost **yes**, Mr. Urrutia **yes**, Mr. Weissgarber **yes**.

**(10-1-0) The motion passed.**

#### **Article 18**

##### **Police Safety Equipment Capital Reserve Fund Funding**

**Motion to recommend by Ms. Leary second by Martin.**

Mr. Clegg **yes**, Mr. Cole **yes**, Mr. Guessferd **yes**, Ms. Hopkins **yes**, Ms. LaMothe **yes**, Ms. Leary **yes**, Mr. Martin **Yes**, Mr. Murray **yes**, Mr. Trost **yes**, Mr. Urrutia **yes**, Mr. Weissgarber **yes**.

**(11-0-0) The motion passed unanimously**

## **Article 19**

### **Establish Capital Reserve Fund for Generator Replacement and Repair**

#### **Motion to recommend by Mr. Martin second by Mr. Trost**

Mr. Clegg **yes**, Mr. Cole **yes**, Mr. Guessferd **yes**, Ms. Hopkins **yes**, Ms. LaMothe **yes**, Ms. Leary **yes**, Mr. Martin **Yes**, Mr. Murray **yes**, Mr. Trost **yes**, Mr. Urrutia **yes**, Mr. Weissgarber **yes**.

**(11-0-0) The motion passed unanimously**

## **Article 20**

### **Benson Park Renovation Capital Reserve Fund Funding**

#### **Motion to recommend by Mr. Leary second by Selectman Guessferd**

Mr. Clegg **yes**, Mr. Cole **no**, Mr. Guessferd **yes**, Ms. Hopkins **yes**, Ms. LaMothe **yes**, Ms. Leary **yes**, Mr. Martin **no**, Mr. Murray **yes**, Mr. Trost **yes**, Mr. Urrutia **yes**, Mr. Weissgarber **yes**.

**(9-2-0) The motion passed**

Review of Town Petitioned Warrant Articles not received previously

None

#### **G. Other Business/Comments**

**Mr. Trost** reminded the people about the elections coming on in March; there are four positions open. Mr. Trost invited people to put their names on the ballot.

**Ms. LaMothe** thanked the public for coming to the meeting and those watching the meeting on TV. Also, she thanked HCTV to make it possible for the people who couldn't come to the meeting to follow it from their homes. Finally, she reminded the people that the deliberative session is coming up; the school is coming first on February 5, and the town is February 12. She hopes that there is a good turnout in both sessions.

**Mr. Urrutia** thanked those who came to the meeting who participated, rendering their opinions in person and by email. In addition, he gave thanks to HCTV because in the absence of town newspaper is keeping the town informed.

**Mr. Clegg** reminded the audience that those who disagree with the warrant articles could come to the deliberative session and amend them.

**Ms. Leary** thanks all of those who attended the meeting and to those that participated remotely. Also, she thanked HCTV.

**Selectman Guessferd** said that he concurred with what had been said. However, he also said he would like to see more participants in person and virtually, by email, rendering their opinions. Also, he said that it is vital for the elected committee members to listen to the voters. If you have any concerns, the select board's budget committee wants to hear, and there is contact information

on the town web page. Finally, he commended HCTV, highlighting the talented people that work there and the work done, especially during the last year.

**Ms. Hopkins** said thanks to the IT for setting up the meeting to allow her to attend remotely.

**Mr. Murray** commented that what he could see from the camera was a poor participation and that makes it very difficult for the budget committee. He said that the complexity of the school and the town budgets, there are two "different animals." The school budget is there to provide the best education. The town side of the budget is balancing several different missions, safety, highway, tax assessments, and everything with the town's running. For someone to suggest that one budget should be treated as the other is not possible; it is complex with thousands of budget lines. So often cannot go line by line because the lines of the school and the town are intertwined that almost we need to wait to the end to see the impact. He suggested that everyone there in public is not happy with the budget. There are open positions; put your name on the ballot to get down to what the budget committee does and make recommendations for the best benefit of the taxpayers. Mr. Murray thanked the school and town employees for their patience with the budget committee. The committee asked for a multitude of information as the committee took decisions on behalf of the taxpayer.

**Vice-chairman Cole** echoed Ms. Hopkins remarks by thanking Mr. McIntosh and his staff for the excellent job.

Chairman Weissgarber thanked HCTV and acknowledged that there's a lot of prep and the time they spend at the meetings, such as budget committee meetings, but there are a lot of boards and committees that meet. He mentioned his appreciation because the budgets they presented to the committee have seen a marked change in about three years as far as what is sent to the budget committee. In the way of reports, what is sent in the form of the budget, he has seen a little bit more collaboration between the town and the school. Regarding the public having input, he would love to see more public input at the budget committee's many meetings during the fiscal and calendar year. Provide information during the hearing and deliberative sessions and the public input portion of each meeting the budget committee has during the year. Finally, he gave thanks to the budget committee members.

**The town moderator Mr. Paul Inderbitzen** spoke about the Deliberative Session. Has it's going to be mostly the way we remember it with some restrictions based on current conditions, there will be no food can't afford to have that with the current situation we have in town. Is asking everyone to wear a mask. The board members are up in the front and would ask when moving through the crowd to get to the seats that everybody wears masks to take it off. There will have shields on the podium going to be trying to eliminate as many aerosols as possible from people speaking instead of having a stand-up mic put a shield around it so we'll ask people to sit there.

The town will have to provide a section for people who are unmasked. Mr. Inderbitzen said that there are going to make it off to the side. Still, part of the meeting will use Shields to put up on tables to keep the aerosols down; they will have a mike there so they can fully participate. The town wants to keep the risk down, especially when the community center does not have the best air circulation.

They will try to pass email with questions, but Mr. Clegg clarified that articles that can not be done online must be in-person to amend the Warrant. Mr. Inderbitzen reminded me that the

questions do not necessarily need to be answered; he will do his best to pass along the queries received by email.

H. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Martin second by Mr. Urrutia the motion passed unanimously (11-0-0)