

Friday, Feb 7, 2020 700pm Town & School Budget Hearing Meeting Minutes

Budget Committee Attendees: Susan Finnegan, Richard Paul, Russ Austin, Dean Priebe; Absent: Wesley Staples

Special Guests: Robert Malay (SAU29 Superintendent), Scott Lazarro (SAU29 Business Agent), Clayton Walker (Selectmen), Madelynn Cassin (School Board Chair), Stuart Adams (School Board), Michael Norkun (School Board), Jo Ann LaBarre (Town Administrator)

Approximately 15 town members were in attendance.

Meeting called to order at 7:03 pm by Mrs. Finnegan.

Next Meetings: Monthly School Board Meeting Monday, Feb 10, 2020 at 630 pm
Town Meeting - Town Budget Review Wednesday, Mar 11, 2020 at 700 pm
Annual District Meeting Friday March 13, 2020 at 700 pm

Mr. Priebe reported out on the proposed Westmoreland School Budget section by section. Discussion around topics of the Boards approach to Teachers' Children attending school at a reduced tuition cost was discussed. Mr. Priebe indicated that the drafted WTA Contract as part of Warrant Article #3 was pending final School Board approval on Monday Feb 10, 2020. Discussion of the top three increases and top three decreases were highlighted. Additionally, it was noted that State Aide increase was a major revenue increase line item. The drafted 2020-2021 School Budget proposal for operating budget will decrease for is slightly favorable by approx. 3.8% & overall School Budget with Warrant Articles will result in an approx. 1% decrease in property Taxes.

Meeting moved to review the Town Operating Budget and Warrants at 745pm

Mrs. Finnegan reported out on the proposed Westmoreland Town Budget section by section. Discussion around topics of the Towns purchase of the Grader last year and Town Maintenance Spend changes from prior years was discussed. Selectman Austin described the approach for our town worker salaries and benefits. Proposed Town Operating Budget before Warrant Articles is down slightly compared to last year. Final Town Budget will be determined by Warrant Article voting at Town Meeting Wed Mar 11, 2020.

Town Warrant Articles were discussed one by one.

All Articles are recommended by the Selectman. All Articles except Article 11 were recommended by the Town Budget Committee. Article 11, \$8,650, to purchase of a top-loading container for paper recycling was brought forward by Petition and not recommended by the Town Budget Committee. Majority vote would be required to pass this warrant.

Specific Discussion on proposed Article #4 (Fiber Optic Broadband) was led by the Advisory Committee Chair, Mr. John Snowdon. Mr. Snowdon described the warrant article in detail and communicated there will be Technical and Business professionals who are leading the project at our Town Budget Meeting on Wed Mar 11. This Warrant estimated at \$2,019,00 will be partially funded by Consolidated Communications and the remaining amount Bonded by the town with bond payments funded by Consolidated Communications. Net impact to town tax payers will be \$0. Funding through Consolidated will come from those residential and businesses that choose to add on the service.

Meeting adjourned @ 8:52pm

Submitted by: Dean Priebe, Budget Committee