

Selectboard
January 23, 2023
FINAL

SELECTBOARD MEETING
January 23, 2023
7:30 P.M. - MUNICIPAL OFFICE BUILDING - HANOVER, NH

The meeting of the Selectboard was called to order at 7:30p.m. by Chair Peter Christie. Also present were: Vice Chair Rassias, Bill Geraghty, Selectboard Member, Joanna Whitcomb, Selectboard Member, Nancy Carter, Selectboard Member, Alex Torpey, Town Manager
Absent: None

Chair Christie noted the procedure for public comment.

1. Public Comment

Kari Asmus, Finance Committee Chair and Kim Hartman, school board updated the board that the committee voted unanimously to support the Hanover school district and Dresden district school budgets along with all warrant articles except one.

When voters look at the budget increase, the portion due to educational operational spending will increase the tax rate by 3.2%. Overall, the education tax rate is going up 6.7%. She gave examples of items in the other portions of the increase which are uncontrollable.(3.5%)

She noted the reason to vote "Yes" for article 7.

2. Recommendation to Set Public Hearing on Monday, February 6, 2023 to Accept Unanticipated Funds from the State of New Hampshire in the amount of \$140,244.37 representing an increase in "Rooms and Meals" Revenue

Due to changes in how the State of New Hampshire calculates revenue sharing with municipalities for the Meals and Room Tax, the Town of Hanover is receiving additional unanticipated revenue in the amount of \$140,244.37, for a total of \$896,844.37 in FY 2022 - 2023. As these are unanticipated funds, a public hearing must be held.

Action Requested: Town Staff recommends setting a public hearing on February 6, 2023 to accept these funds.

At 7:35pm, Chair Christie MOVED to Set Public Hearing on Monday, February 6, 2023 to Accept Unanticipated Funds from the State of New Hampshire in the amount of \$140,244.37 representing an increase in "Rooms and Meals" Revenue. Selectboard Member Whitcomb SECONDED the Motion. All in favor

3. Public Hearing to Accept Unanticipated Funds from InvestNH Municipal Planning and Zoning Grant Program in the amount of \$75,000.00 and to Authorize the Town Manager to Execute all necessary documents

The Planning and Zoning Department has applied for and has been awarded a Housing Opportunity Planning Grant in the amount of \$75,000 to implement a campaign of public outreach to educate the community on the need for additional affordable housing and show how affordable housing can be done in a way that doesn't reduce property values or have adverse effects on the local neighborhood or the town as a whole. This work doing education and gathering feedback may result in a revision and re-organization of the Town's Zoning to ensure our policies best match our community's intentions and goals.

Action Requested: Town Staff recommends accepting this grant and authorizing the Town Manager to execute all necessary documents on behalf of the Town.

Public hearing was opened.

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Kari Asmus thanked the board for hosting the public hearings for unanticipated funds. She asked about the procedure and process of receiving funds and how that may or may not affect the approved budget.

Town Manager noted he will check in with staff and get back to her.

Public hearing was closed.

At 7:37 pm, Chair Christie MOVED to Accept Unanticipated Funds from InvestNH Municipal Planning and Zoning Grant Program in the amount of \$75,000 and to Authorize the Town Manager to Execute all necessary documents.

Selectboard Member Geraghty SECONDED the Motion. All in favor

4. Public hearing to Accept Unanticipated Funds from the State of New Hampshire in the amount of \$81,384.71 representing FY 2022 employer contribution reimbursements for the New Hampshire Retirement System

Due to HB 1221, the State of New Hampshire has begun issuing one-time employer contribution reimbursements to New Hampshire Retirement System participating employers. The Town of Hanover is expected to receive \$81,384.71 in reimbursement. As these are unanticipated funds, a public hearing must be held.

Action Requested: Town Staff recommends accepting these funds.

Public hearing was opened.

Selectboard Member Geraghty was unclear why this year we are receiving this rather than having the state keep it and apply it to next year.

Public hearing was closed.

At 7:40 pm, Chair Christie MOVED to Accept Unanticipated Funds from the State of New Hampshire in the amount of \$81,384.71 representing FY 2022 employer contribution reimbursements for the New Hampshire Retirement System.

Selectboard Member Carter SECONDED the Motion. Vote: All in favor

5. Public Hearing to Accept Unanticipated Funds from ReVision Energy, Inc. in the amount of \$6,655.00 representing 1% of their receipts for the Solarize campaign

ReVision Energy agreed to provide 1% of their solar installation sales to the Town of Hanover for their Solarize efforts for the 2022 season. These funds are to be held in a town reserve account designated for installing renewable energy systems at affordable housing units in Hanover.

Action Requested: Town Staff recommends accepting these funds.

Public hearing was opened.

There was no public comment.

Public hearing was closed.

At 7:43 pm, Chair Christie MOVED to Accept Unanticipated Funds from ReVision Energy, Inc. in the amount of \$6,655.00 representing 1% of their receipts for the Solarize campaign. Selectboard Member Whitcomb SECONDED the Motion. All in favor

6. Public Hearing to Amend the Rates and Fees Schedule Regarding City of Lebanon Landfill Punch Cards to increase to \$20.00 per card

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The City of Lebanon has increased the price for their landfill punch cards from \$15.00 per card to \$20.00 per card. Town Staff requests a Public Hearing be scheduled on Monday, January 23, 2023 to amend our current Rates and Fees Schedule to reflect this increase.

Action Requested: Town Staff recommends amending the current Rates and Fees Schedule to reflect the new price of City of Lebanon landfill punch cards of \$20.00 per card.

Public hearing was opened.

There was no public comment.

Public hearing was closed.

At 7:44 pm, Chair Christie MOVED to Amend the Rates and Fees Schedule Regarding City of Lebanon Landfill Punch Cards to increase to \$20.00 per card. Selectboard Member Carter SECONDED the Motion. All in favor

7. Recommendation to Approve Copier Leases for Hanover Police Department and Howe Library and to Authorize the Town Manager to Execute all necessary documents

As part of the adopted budget for FY 2022/2023, a copier replacement was funded for the Hanover Police Department and Howe Library. The Town's standard approach to a copier purchase is via a lease-purchase agreement which was provided to the board.

Action Requested: Town staff recommends that the Board approve the attached leases and authorize the Town Manager to sign the documents on behalf of the Town.

At 7:46pm, Chair Christie MOVED to Approve Copier Leases for Hanover Police Department and Howe Library and to Authorize the Town Manager to Execute all necessary documents. Selectboard Member Whitcomb SECONDED the Motion. All in favor

8. Request to Review and Approve Abatement of Water Charges

The property located at 20 Low Road has been determined to have a faulty water meter which resulted in a water bill in the amount of \$1,697.00 for the billing period of September 1, 2022 to December 1, 2022, instead of the correct usage fee of \$120.00. Town staff will be replacing the faulty meter in the near future.

Action Requested: Town staff recommends the Board vote to abate \$1,577.00 of this water bill.

At 7:48pm, Selectboard Member Whitcomb MOVED to abate \$1,577.00 of this water bill. Chair Christie SECONDED the Motion. All in favor

9. Initial Discussion of 2023/2024 Tax Rate Target and Budget

The board discussed updates to the budget as well as the Selectboard's tax rate target.

Town Manager reviewed and expounded on a memo he had sent out to board members on this topic:

- Timeline
- Approach
 - Internal catch-up
 - Review wage and compensation

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- Department budgets
- Challenges to determining the budget
- Strategies to pay for something that isn't already in the budget
 - New Town master plan is about to be finalized which will assist in decision making regarding creating new development/ adding to the tax base.

Chair Christie noted we are benefitting from a fresh set of eyes this year for our budgeting process with the new Town Manager.

Selectboard Member Whitcomb noted the Sustainability Master plan committee still has a lot of work to do on the master plan in the next few months. These ideas that have been presented tonight are good goals to have, and we should move carefully in the direction of adding to the tax base. Along with extra tax dollars, it draws more on all services such as police, fire etc.

Selectboard Member Geraghty noted Dartmouth College is the largest taxpayer for Hanover and they pay taxes on dorms and food service. They have a housing shortage and are proposing to build new dorms which will add to the tax base, but as they shut a dorm down for renovation, that dorm does not get taxed during that time period. Any additional new revenue for dormitories is several years out.

Chair Christie noted there is organic growth that happens every year and we will begin for this budget deliberately discussing additional growth strategies.

Public comment:

Kim Hartman, school board representative on the finance committee shared they have reached out to the Assessor to gather anticipated growth numbers for next year to use while reviewing the 2024 budget. The number they are using is \$14M in growth.

Kari Asmus, Finance committee noted the town discussed this new growth strategy about 15 years ago and decided not to finance a cost of service study because it was determined the result would be that new growth would not help the bottom line with revenue.

She noted that the school budgets are linked to Norwich and if Hanover grows, and Norwich does not, it creates a swing. She strongly urged caution when thinking that new growth will help us significantly.

Chair Christie noted the board is charged tonight with setting a tax rate increase target for the budget. This will be a high inflation year and wages for town staff need to increase.

At 8:26pm, Chair Christie proposed to set a target tax rate increase of 6%-7% for the 2024 budget.

The board discussed their opinions including the target within the range being 6.5% and not to exceed 7%. Board members know that budget items will be presented to them and which items would and would not be included in order to meet that rate.

Town Manager noted this is not an unreasonable number knowing what goals are on the table and the desire for consistency, rather than a small increase this year and needing a huge increase the following year.

Selectboard Member Geraghty asked for a timeline of when we will have the numbers we need to build the budget.

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The audit is underway, and numbers are coming in. Mr. Torpey sent a timeline to the finance committee.

Public Comment

Kari Asmus, finance committee noted that it's hard for her to determine if this is a reasonable increase based on the minimal information she has at this time. She would like clarification that if last year had higher expenditures than revenue, in which categories did that occur so it can be appropriately addressed this year.

Greg Snyder, finance committee asked regarding the deficit, when will we know what and where the gap is? And does the proposed timetable support being able to address the issue.

Mr. Torpey stated the numbers will be part of the budget presentations in February. He expounded on the process currently underway.

Chair Christie noted the answers to these questions will come out during the budget process. The board will determine a target tax rate, and then as more information comes to light, can adjust if needed.

Ms. Asmus noted the termination benefits fund has \$95,000 which has been there for 10 years so maybe this is the year to utilize it.

There was a consensus among all board members that a 6%-7% blended tax rate increase is a good target for FY24.

Timeline:

Budget meetings with Selectboard Feb 27, 28, March 1 still seems possible, but cutting it close.

This year, rather than finish the final budget numbers live at the budget Selectboard meetings, there will be a couple of weeks following for feedback/ rework before final numbers are set on March 20 or a backup date of March 27.

Social Service agencies:

Selectboard has gone away from having Social Service agencies present during the budget meetings but have given them time at a separate Selectboard meeting. We may not have that luxury this year.

Discussion on this topic occurred as these groups do critical work and it is good publicity for them to come to a meeting and explain what they do for the residents.

There was consensus that the timeline is too short for live presentations prior to the budget hearings. The board is willing to have them come to a meeting in March or April to highlight their needs and accomplishments if they so desire. The Town Manager's Office will reach out to the agencies to determine if they would like to present at a future date.

10. Appointment – Sustainable Hanover and Zoning Board of Adjustment

Catherine Reike, a resident of Hanover for the past 10 years has requested to be appointed as a member of Sustainable Hanover. In addition to volunteering at the Schools, the Howe Library and being a Member of the Planning Board, Ms. Reike and her family have many other interests which make her a candidate to be a member of Sustainable Hanover.

Dick Green, a current alternate member of the ZBA for the last five years, is interested in being appointed to a full member and continuing to participate thoughtfully and consistently in the discussions and matters before the ZBA.

Action Requested: Appoint Catherine Reike to the Sustainable Hanover Committee and Dick Green to the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

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At 8:56pm, Selectboard Member Carter MOVED to Appoint Catherine Reike to the Sustainable Hanover Committee. Chair Christie SECONDED the Motion. All in favor

At 8:57pm, Selectboard Member Whitcomb MOVED to Appoint Dick Green to the Zoning Board of Adjustment-full member. Chair Christie SECONDED the Motion. All in favor

11. Banner Request – ChaD HERO and Dartmouth College

Dartmouth Health Children's has made a request for Light Post Banners and an Overhead banner to advertise the CHaD HERO being held on October 15, 2023. The Light Post banners would be hung from September 18, 2023 to October 26, 2023 and the overhead banner would be hung from October 8, 2023 to October 15, 2023. Staff can accommodate these requests.

Dartmouth College has made a request for a Welcome Home Alumni and Families Overhead banner to be hung June 4, 2023 to June 18, 2023 and a Dartmouth Homecoming Overhead Banner to be hung October 15, 2023 to October 22, 2023. Staff can accommodate these requests.

Action Requested: Approve the CHaD HERO request for Light Post banners from September 18, 2023 to October 16, 2023 and an overhead banner from October 8, 2023 to October 15, 2023.

Action Requested: Approve the Dartmouth College request for an overhead banner from June 4, 2023 to June 18, 2023 for the Welcome Home Alumni and Families and an overhead banner from October 15, 2023 to October 22, 2023 for Dartmouth Homecoming.

At 8:58pm, Selectboard Member Whitcomb MOVED to approve the requested banner requests. Chair Christie SECONDED the Motion. All in favor

12. Donations – Hanover Fire Department

The Hanover Fire Department has received a donation from Cassandra Cummings in the amount of \$75.00 in appreciation of all the Fire Department does.

Action Requested: Accept the donation to the Hanover Fire Department in the amount of \$75.00 from Cassandra Cummings.

At 8:58pm, Vice Chair Rassias MOVED to Accept the donation to the Hanover Fire Department. Selectboard Member Geraghty SECONDED the Motion. All in favor

13. Approval of Minutes – December 19, 2022; January 9, 2023

Selectboard Member Geraghty MOVED to approve the minutes of December 19, 2022 as submitted. Vice Chair Rassias SECONDED the Motion. All in favor with Carter and Whitcomb abstaining.

Selectboard Member Whitcomb MOVED to approve the minutes of January 9, 2023 as amended. Selectboard Member Geraghty SECONDED the Motion. All in favor with Chair Christie abstaining.

14. Administrative Reports

A. Torpey gave his administrative report:

Budget, finance, and HR issues have dominated the Town Manager's time lately. Other updates:

- Human Resources, retention/recruitment, and hiring.
 - Salary study update.

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- HR Director hiring.
- 2023 – 2024 tax rate and budget
- Downtown Hanover
- Sustainable Hanover
 - HANOVER COMMUNITY POWER
 - SPECIAL STYROFOAM COLLECTION
 - NEW CHAIR FOR RECYCLING/WASTE REDUCTION
- Other updates
 - forthcoming new website
 - transit partnerships and goals
 - joint/sharing of staff with Lebanon
 - meeting residents and other community stakeholders
- The sixth episode of the monthly Hanover Happenings newsletter and podcast is online and available at hanovernh.org

15. Selectboard Reports

Selectboard Member Joanna Whitcomb

Sustainable master plan committee reviewed chapters five and three and focused on goals and strategies.

Selectboard Member Nancy Carter

Selectboard Member Carter noted the Sustainable master plan committee members are open to input from community members and great conversations have been had.

Chair Peter Christie

Chair Peter Christie had nothing to report.

Vice Chair Athos Rassias

Vice Chair Rassias had nothing to report.

Selectboard Member Bill Geraghty

Selectboard Member Geraghty had nothing to report.

16. Other Business

None

17. Adjournment

Per NH RSA 91-A:3- a, b, c, d and l, the Selectboard needed to attend a non-public session. At 8:44pm, the board took a roll call vote to enter the non-public session.

Roll call vote: J. Whitcomb-yes, N. Carter-yes, P. Christie-yes, B. Geraghty-yes, A. Rassias-yes

The board entered non-public session at 8:44pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joanna Whitcomb, Secretary

SUMMARY

Item 2

At 7:35pm, Chair Christie MOVED to Set Public Hearing on Monday, February 6, 2023 to Accept Unanticipated Funds from the State of New Hampshire in the amount of \$140,244.37 representing an increase in “Rooms and Meals” Revenue. Selectboard Member Whitcomb SECONDED the Motion. All in favor

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Item 4

At 7:40 pm, Chair Christie MOVED to Accept Unanticipated Funds from the State of New Hampshire in the amount of \$81,384.71 representing FY 2022 employer contribution reimbursements for the New Hampshire Retirement System. Selectboard Member Carter SECONDED the Motion. Vote: All in favor

Item 5

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Item 7

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Item 8

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Item 10

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Roll call vote: J. Whitcomb-yes, N. Carter-yes, P. Christie-yes, B. Geraghty-yes, A. Rassias-yes

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